



Location: _____
City: _____
Date: _____
Building: _____

PREPARING FOR YOUR INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

PLEASE NOTE: This outline was designed as general information for all programs; however, some details may not be applicable to your particular program. More information will be given to you during your program specific orientations.

I. General Session

All program participants will meet together for the first session. Tennessee Consortium for International Studies (TnCIS) policies, the Rules of Conduct Contract which apply to all programs, and safety will be reviewed.

II. Your Program Specific Orientation

****PLEASE REGISTER YOUR ATTENDANCE ON THE SIGN-UP SHEET**

Following is a list of topics which will be covered by your program director/s and faculty. In addition, some of the topics will include important points, which apply to all TnCIS programs. Your director(s) will provide additional program specific details.

- Please ask questions!
- Take notes.
- Please pay attention so that you will be as prepared as possible for a rewarding experience abroad.

If you have any papers from the TnCIS office that still need to be turned in, please remember to mail them back as soon as possible, or give them to a TnCIS representative. If you lack certain information (i.e. passport # or insurance information) please turn in all other papers, and send in the remaining forms when you have complete information.

III. Logistics and Helpful Hints

A. At the airport

1. Arrive at the airport 2-3 hours in advance of the flight.
2. You will receive your boarding pass, TnCIS I. D. card, and insurance card at the airport from the Director.
3. Carry your plane ticket information (boarding pass) in a safe place.
4. If delayed en route to the airport, call the TnCIS office to let them know your arrival time at the airport: 865-539-7279
5. Carry snacks with you to tide you over. Airport food is very expensive!

Post 9-11 Caution

Do not pack any sharp objects in your carry-on luggage. Things such as manicure scissors, clippers, pocket knives, and other metal instruments WILL be confiscated at Airport Security.

In addition, no bottled drinks may be taken through security. Such objects can safely be packed in checked luggage only. Locks on checked luggage may be broken by airport security.

Further travel and security information can be found at TSA's website: www.tsa.dhs.gov

B. Program Itinerary, Calendar and Scheduled Activities

You will be given a program itinerary, calendar of events, and schedule of activities at the program specific orientations.

C. Money, Foreign Currency, Credit Cards, Travelers' Checks, and Money Exchange

1. Checks on American banks cannot be cashed abroad.
2. In most countries, you can get local currency with your ATM card or with a MasterCard or Visa debit card. It is much easier and less expensive than converting traveler's checks. Check with your bank on fees and alert them to the fact that you will be traveling abroad using your card and to make sure you understand your bank's policies. Be sure to memorize your PIN number!
3. You may want to consider carrying a Visa or MasterCard in your name and perhaps some traveler's checks to have in case of emergency.
4. You may want to purchase a small amount of foreign currency at the airport or from your local bank before departure - about \$20 - to have with you when you arrive at your destination.
5. Hold on to some U.S. dollars - approximately \$20 - (tuck it away in a safe place) for your return to the U.S. *You'll be glad you did!*
6. Plan your weekly spending budget ahead of time and stick to it! Plan for any weekend travel, meals not covered by the program fee, souvenirs and emergencies.

7. Budgeting for expenses not included in the program fee (laundry, food, personal spending, etc.)

D. Photos

1. Bring two extra passport photos with you. You may need extra copies.
2. Most cameras are now digital. If you have a film camera, buy all of the film that you will be carrying in the U.S. Processing film abroad is very expensive.
3. Do not pack film in checked baggage. The x-ray used in the security check will render it useless.

E. E-mail and Mail

1. Plan to use email for all of your correspondence. You may know the address where you will be staying before your departure; however, regular mail takes so long that it is impractical.
2. How internet works in your country. (ask the Program Director)

F. Phone Calls

1. Local calling can be different from what you are using in the U.S. The Program Director will let you know at the on-site orientation what local methods are used. The director will also give you tips on making international calls.
2. Your Program Director will outline the conditions under which you may make/receive calls at the program site. Be sure to tell your family and friends of those conditions. Learn the time difference between the program site and home.
3. Your Program Director can provide information on the use of cell phones in-country, both yours and purchased phones.

G. Passports/Visas

1. All travel abroad requires a valid passport. (Passports must be valid for at least six months after your return date.) Currently, no visas are required in European countries for TnCIS students who are U.S. citizens (*those who are citizens of other countries may need a visa*). Travel to Brazil, India, and China requires a visitor's visa. Non-U.S. citizen participants may require a visa and/or additional documentation.

H. Textbooks

1. Your Program Director will inform you about required reading materials. Unless otherwise indicated, you will need to purchase your books in advance of the trip. You may be required to purchase textbooks or class packets at the airport so be sure to have U.S. dollars/currency if that is the case. More information will be available at the program specific orientation.

I. Packing

1. You will always be responsible for carrying your own luggage so pack accordingly.
2. Many airlines now permit only one free checked bag and weight restrictions are closely watched.
3. Consider a backpack as a carry-on, which can also be used for excursion travel.
4. Weather can vary greatly. Check with the Program Director and internet sites for average temperatures and typical weather conditions at the program site.
5. Dual wattage hair dryers are recommended (available at Wal-Mart, etc.) as are wattage converters for other grooming appliances. Remember to carry an adaptor plug too. *U.S. oriented plugs will not fit in foreign outlets.*

6. Other suggestions: small battery-operated radio, travel alarm, and a lock for your suitcase to help secure valuables even when not traveling.
7. Check the airline's website to read about weight limits on checked baggage, and pack accordingly. *If you are over the weight limit, the airline will charge you a sizeable fee for the extra weight.*

J. Independent Travel/Free Time

1. *Don't walk or travel alone unless absolutely necessary.* Develop a "buddy" system.
2. Always inform the Program Director and one other person of your planned departure time, destination and return time.
3. DO NOT ride in cars with someone you don't know, or go to a private home with someone you have just met. *Use common sense and exercise caution!*
4. If you find it necessary to travel by taxicab, be sure that the taxi is licensed and metered. *It is best to call a taxi or have someone call for you rather than hailing one on the street. Women should never sit in the front seat of a taxi.*
5. During periods of free time in the program, tell at least one other person where you intend to go and when you plan to return.

NOTE: If you are missing or do not return when expected, the authorities will be notified at the end of the day on which you were expected to return, and your emergency contact person in the United States will be called.

K. Pre-Program Reading

1. Inform yourself of what to expect; you'll have a head start!
2. Your Program Director will suggest readings, websites, blogs, etc.

L. Accommodations

1. Your Program Director will explain housing arrangements including hotels, dorms, home stays (if applicable), etc.

IV. Health and Safety

A. Transporting/Possession of Required Medications, Supplies, etc.

1. Carry an extra supply of prescription medication with you (even a double supply) in the original containers.
2. Have a TYPED copy of a generic prescription in case of emergency.
3. Pack extra eyeglasses/contacts/dentures and eye care prescriptions (again TYPED).
4. Carry a small first-aid kit including band-aids, antibiotic ointment, aspirin, anti-diarrhea medicine, etc.
5. All medical providers abroad will require **cash** payments. Be sure to request a receipt – you will need to keep all paperwork and the receipt to submit a claim to the TnCIS insurance provider. Your program director and/or the TnCIS office can provide a claim form. You are responsible for these payments and any reimbursement.

B. Other Important Items

1. Living abroad is not just a quaint version of life in America. Do not expect the same conditions as you are accustomed to in the U.S. Be cautious! Small phrases and actions of little consequence in the U.S. can cause significant problems in another culture.
2. **Make a copy of your passport and keep it in a location separate from the actual passport to assist in obtaining a duplicate passport if necessary.**
3. Keep a low profile and refrain from drawing unnecessary attention to yourself. Avoid loud, boisterous behavior in public places. BLEND IN.
4. Avoid easily-identifiable American clothing (fraternity/sorority shirts/jackets, t-shirts with logos and the like). Women should refrain from wearing highly provocative clothing.
5. Avoid crowds, protest groups and potentially volatile situations.
6. Avoid divulging personal or program information to strangers.
7. Petty crime, particularly in large cities, can be prevalent. Invest in a travelers' pouch or other travelers' security items for your money, passport, rail pass and other important items. Keep your valuables close to your chest and/or out of sight!

It's best to always exercise caution and common sense

C. Disease Prevention

1. Your Program Director will provide you with information about drinking water, food cautions and other local health issues once you're on site. A general rule to follow is not to drink out of public drinking fountains but to carry bottled water with you.
2. HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases are as prevalent in other countries as in the U.S. Please behave accordingly.
3. Check with your local health department before departure to determine if there are any recommended inoculations for your program country or go on line at www.cdc.gov.

D. Traffic and Road Risks

1. Traffic injuries are the primary cause of death to travelers under the age of 35.
2. TnCIS does not permit participants to operate a motorized vehicle of any kind. In addition, bicycles may not be used on public streets.
3. Be aware when you are a pedestrian that traffic patterns and flow are different in other countries.

E. Alcohol and Substance Abuse/Use

1. The use of substances that are illegal in the United States is strictly forbidden by TnCIS, regardless of local laws.
2. Laws controlling alcohol and drugs in foreign countries are often **extremely** strict and strictly enforced. Students should become informed about the customs, laws and penalties of the destination program site before departure.
3. Some prescriptions can be considered illegal (narcotics). Check with your doctor to obtain this information.

V. Behavior

- A. Each program has specific rules of conduct and each student has signed a program contract addressing behavior.
- B. Being a "foreigner" does not excuse anyone from conducting themselves with restraint and courtesy. You will be representing your country, your school, your state and the TnCIS program as a whole.
- C. A more complete review of the Rules of Conduct Contract will be held.

Misuse of alcohol in a TnCIS program is the single most common cause of dangerous incidents, and will result in disciplinary action or possible expulsion from the program!

A NOTE ON ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

Students who have grown up in the U.S. are not acculturated to the alcohol use patterns of other countries. Freed from the constraints of U.S. laws, students may be both inexperienced with the effects of alcohol and tempted to overindulge. Alcohol will be readily available in most foreign countries, and often the alcohol content may be higher than in the U.S. American students drinking in a foreign bar may be plied with drinks by a bartender more concerned with profits than with student safety. Laws regulating the serving of alcohol and the liability of servers may differ from those in the U.S. Environmental factors such as altitude can also alter a student's physical reaction to alcohol.

An impaired student can take inappropriate risks ranging from crossing the street inattentively to not paying proper attention to his or her personal security. He or she can be a target for criminal activity such as theft or assault, and is also more likely to commit assaults against others.

VI. Removal from the Program

- A. Behavior-related incident reports will be made in writing by the Program Director or a faculty member. The participant involved will be asked to provide a written response either acknowledging or refuting the action.
- B. Should removal be necessary, a written statement will be provided by the Program Director, in consultation with the home institution point of contact, specifically outlining the events leading up to the decision to remove a participant.
- C. Should removal be necessary, there will be no refund of any part of the program fee.
- D. Should removal be necessary, the participant will be responsible for his/her expenses to return to the United States.
 - 1. Should removal be necessary, the participant will no longer have any practical (such as the use of program housing) or legal connection with TnCIS from the effective date of the removal forward.
 - 2. Voluntary withdrawal from the program after it has started results in forfeiture of all program fees and requires the student to return to the U.S. immediately.

NOTE: If a student is removed from a TnCIS Program, his/her home institution and emergency contact will be notified only for the purpose of alerting the home institution and emergency contact when the student will arrive in the United States.

VII. Academics

- A. TnCIS programs are primarily ACADEMIC in nature and are conducted in keeping with generally accepted academic standards.
- B. *Attendance in all classes is mandatory!* No absences are permitted without a verifiable, documented medical reason.
- C. After arrival at the program site, you will be given two days to add or drop a class. *Students who begin attending a class after the drop/add period will not receive credit for that class.*
- D. Any unexcused class absence **WILL** result in a grade reduction, and multiple absences may result in expulsion from the program.
- E. Your Program Director and/or faculty will provide specific information on class schedules, expectations, assignments and methods of evaluation.

VIII. Security Concerns of Americans Abroad

During an unsettled time in world history, it is imperative that Americans pay particular attention to their personal security on a *daily basis*, whether in the United States or abroad. Several points in that regard have been made in this orientation outline for TnCIS participants. *It cannot be stressed enough* in light of current events that each individual student must be constantly aware of his/her own security while in foreign countries. Toward that end:

- Be aware of your surroundings at all times.
- Avoid locations where Americans tend to gather, such as Hard Rock Café and other similar venues.
- Avoid wearing “typically American” clothing such as logo t-shirts/sweat shirts/baseball caps.
- *Avoid loud, boisterous behavior that draws attention to you and your companions. Blend in.*
- Avoid large gatherings such as demonstrations, protest marches, and other potentially volatile situations.
- *Do not give out your personal information to anyone you don't know such as address where you're staying, where classes are held, etc.*

***Your well being is the first priority of TnCIS,
and it should be yours as well!***

Helpful Websites:

http://www.state.gov	U.S. Department of State and Travel Alerts
http://wwnc.cdc.gov/travel/	Center for Disease Control
http://studentsabroad.state.gov	Students Abroad (U.S. State Department)
http://travel.state.gov	Bureau of Consular Affairs
http://www.xe.com/ict/	Currency Exchange Website