

Preparing to Go

By now, you've likely been accepted to a program - congratulations! The following list of tasks should help guide you through the next steps.

1. Confirm your study away plans.

To confirm your spot on a study away program, you will typically be required to pay a non-refundable program deposit within one or two weeks of acceptance to the program. (For students in the Class of 2022, please see the [GEO Finances page](#).) If you're on financial aid, the program deposit will be included in your study away budget, but may be expected to be covered from your family contribution. Please consult with the Office of Financial Aid for more information.

Confirm your study away plans with Amherst by completing the program confirmation step in the Off-Campus Study Checklist and register your travel in the Side Trip tab in the Amherst College Travel Registry.

2. Pay for your program.

If you're on financial aid, set up a meeting with Dean Gentile in the Financial Aid Office. Be sure to read more about [financial aid for off-campus study](#) prior to that meeting.

If you do not receive financial aid, please refer to our [Finances for Study Away](#) page.

3. Apply for your passport and/or visa.

A **passport** is an official document, typically issued by a country's government, that certifies your identity and citizenship, and allows for international travel. *You will need a passport to travel outside of the United States and obtaining one can take up to 8 weeks, so apply well in advance of your program start date.* If you do not have a passport, you can apply for one through the mail at U.S. post offices and some town halls. For detailed information, including application materials and how to expedite your passport, refer to the [U.S. State Department](#) website. If you already have a passport, make sure that its expiration date surpasses the end date of your program by at least six months.

A **visa** is an endorsement on a passport that allows you to legally enter, leave, or stay for a specified period of time in a country. Consult with your program to determine whether or not you will require a visa to enter your host country. It is the student's responsibility to apply for and obtain the visa. Protocols and processing times vary greatly; apply early and make copies of all your documents. Some students might want to enlist the assistance of a company that can assist with obtaining the visa. These companies are particularly useful if you need your visa expedited. Fees vary depending

on destination, citizenship, and if you want expedited service. Previous students have consulted with [Travisa](#) and [A Briggs](#), as well as [VFS Global](#) for those going to the UK, but it is up to the student to determine if such a service is appropriate.

Some visa applications require you to submit a "statement of good conduct" from a police station. Amherst College Campus Police is not able to produce this letter for you under Massachusetts state law, but you should either check with your hometown police department or make a formal request to the [MA Criminal History Services Board](#).

Students studying in Italy or Austria will need an enrollment verification letter from the Global Education Office. To obtain this letter, send an email to GEO with the following information: your legal name (as it appears on your passport); your major(s); the name and location of your program; the term you will be abroad; and the location of the consulate through which you'll apply.

If you are not a U.S. citizen, consult with the international student adviser in the Center for International Student Engagement to make sure your visa and any other documents are in order.

4. **Book your flight.**

You will need to book your airfare to your host country. Note that some countries require proof that you have a departure flight upon entering the country. Check with your program to learn if this is the case where you'll be studying.

For students on financial aid, roundtrip airfare is included in your study away budget and is expected to be covered from the family contribution. High need students may be eligible for an advance of financial aid to pay for a roundtrip ticket to a study away program site. Students need to consult the Office of Financial Aid to determine if they are eligible, and if so, they will be advised of the process.

If you are attending Yale-NUS College or UIC Yonsei exchange programs, you will receive instructions for booking your flight from the Global Education Office after admittance to the program.

5. **Arrange for any healthcare needs.**

Your health, wellbeing, and safety are the most important aspects of any study away experience. Please refer to our [Health, Wellbeing, and Safety page](#) to learn more about preparing for and managing your healthcare needs while away from Amherst. *Do not assume that your medications or any other healthcare accommodations will be available in your host country or city.* Be sure to communicate with your program and healthcare providers well in advance of your departure to ensure your healthcare needs can be met in your host location.

6. Complete the Moodle "course" and attend a pre-departure meeting hosted by GEO.

Once you have confirmed your study away plans with your program and the Office of Global Education, you will be enrolled in a Moodle “course” where you will find the pre-departure webinar and quiz, a copy of the study away handbook, emergency travel benefits, and other crucial information for your study away experience.

The Office of Global Education will notify you towards the end of the semester about the quiz due date.

In addition to the Moodle “course”, students planning to study away must attend a pre-departure meeting. Details about the times and locations will be sent out towards the end of the semester.

7. Request storage, if necessary.

If you will need storage while you’re away from Amherst, please refer to the [storage options](#) listed on the Office of Residential Life webpage.

Note: During your semester away, ResLife and the Registrar will invite you via email to participate in room draw and pre-registration for the semester you return to campus.

8. Check with your program for additional pre-departure steps.

In addition to the steps you need to take at Amherst, your program will likely require additional pre-departure tasks, including but not limited to submitting copies of your passport and/or visa, health forms, and housing questionnaires. Please check with your program to learn of their requirements.

9. Get to know your host location.

Last, but certainly not least, it’s time to get excited about your new home for the next few months or year! We assume you’ve done some research that led to your program choice, but now is a good time to take that research a step further. Prior to arrival, it can be helpful to know some basic information about your host location. Try to answer some of [these questions](#) (or [these](#)), read [student program evaluations](#), or check our blog, [Beyond the Bubble](#), to see if any of your peers have written about your program or host location.