



Safe abroad - exchange students

- Departure orientation for exchange studies



You have the right to a safe study environment - even abroad

- “A safe study and work environment abroad is also a right of every member of the educational institution and the university community, and it cannot be compromised under any circumstances. As a student, you have an important, own role to play in ensuring safety.”
- Martikainen S., Ranta T., (2019). Turvallisesti ulkomaille - opiskelijan opas



What is recommended and what should you take care of in advance?

- Plan your trip in advance - when you are well prepared, you won't be so easily surprised.
- Get yourself country-specific insurance that will protect you in more unfortunate and unwanted cases.
- Find out the local restrictions and instructions in advance so that you know how to follow them.
- Also, check in advance what you are allowed to take with you to the destination country legally.
- Take care of and ensure health-related matters (vaccinations, medications, etc.) well in advance.
- Make sure your travel documents (passport, visa) are in good condition and valid for a sufficient period.
- Find out how your credit cards work in the destination country, verify and protect their use, and reserve cash for situations where card payment is in use/does not work or involves clear risks.



Plan your trip and assess the risks

- Consider and Map at least the following:
 - What are the differences between the country and the destination country in terms of culture, religion, living conditions, safety and security?
 - Note that there may be large regional differences, especially in the safety and security situation
 - If there are several travel destinations in your plans, find out the situation of each destination separately
 - Actively monitor the development of the safety and security situation - crises often break out suddenly and unexpectedly
- What risks do you identify in relation to:
 - Your personal qualities?
 - To your property?
 - To the destination country?
 - Your mode of travel?
 - For your accommodation?
 - In your free time?



Health information, prescriptions and vaccines

- Find out in advance the health regulations and major health risks of the target country.
- If you have a long-term illness, talk to your doctor about the risks of traveling. General information on these matters can also be found on THL's website.
- It is recommended that you book a compilation of your own health information for your blood type, your underlying conditions and your regular medication with you, and keep it in a place where medical staff can find it if needed.
- Book the amount of medicine you need to take with you on a regular basis - be sure to include the prescriptions for any border and safety checks.
- Check the vaccination recommendations in the target country in time and get the necessary vaccine protection. Ask for a vaccine certificate in case you become ill.



How to get information about the safety situation and help in an emergency

- You can find country-specific Travel Bulletins (matkustustiedotteet) on the website of the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Ulkoministeriö). Information is available for those countries where Finland has a mission or reliable information is available.
- Get as much information as possible about the destination country and location in advance. More detailed information is also available from the foreign ministries of other countries. Save the information of the Finnish Embassy in your destination country. From there, you can get help when traveling in all emergencies, such as crime, accidents and illness.
- Also check the emergency numbers of the authorities in your destination in advance. The State Department's emergency center also helps in various emergencies 24/7.
- Make a travel report (matkustusilmoitus) to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs - then the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will know that you are traveling in a certain country, and you will be able to be contacted if, for example, there are sudden changes in the safety or security situation in the country or region.



Abroad - consider the different culture, safety and security situation

- Safe routes and modes of travel
 - Note the differences in traffic culture
 - Avoid moving in slums, areas known to be dangerous, and especially in the evening and at night alone.
- Safe and secure housing
 - The street level floor has the highest risk of burglary, the floors above the 5th floor are more difficult to escape in case of fire (etc.).
 - Explore emergency exits and alternative exits.
 - Check fire alarms and the condition of electrical equipment.
 - Keep your valuables and travel documents in a safe place. Try to avoid carrying them with you.
- Free time
 - Being heavily intoxicated puts you at risk of accidents and also of being involved in various types of crime.
 - Working in a group and caring for each other brings safety for all



However, if the unexpected happens

- Bad things happen - fortunately rarely, but they are easier to deal with when you are prepared.
- Write down your most important contacts
 - Local consulate / embassy, local emergency number, domestic relatives, local contact or partner
 - Save the ICE (In Case of Emergency) contact on your own phone so that the authorities can contact your relatives, for example in the event of an accident.
 - Stay in regular contact with your loved ones, your travel companion, and your local organization to help identify any emergencies as quickly as possible.
 - When moving from place to place, keep only the necessary items with you so that, for example, your passport, money and valuables do not end up with a robber or pickpocket.
 - A wallet from the back pocket or a handbag from the back of the chair is easily carried.
 - If you are the victim of a robbery, favorably hand over to the robber what he demands.



Report a crime or an accident

- If you become a victim of a crime, it is important that it comes to the attention of the authorities, those close to you, the host organization and the sending university.
 - Due to possible (insurance, etc.) compensation and follow-up, it is important that a formal criminal report is made.
- The loss of the passport must also be reported to the local police as soon as possible.
 - You can apply for a new passport at the Finnish embassy
 - If there is no Finnish embassy in the country, you can obtain an emergency travel document from the embassy of another EU country
 - If you find a copy of your lost passport, it will help you to file a report and apply for a new passport.



Be wary

- For too helpful strangers
 - They are often a part of common tourist scams.
 - Taxi rides without a taxi meter
 - The accommodation recommenders
 - The money changers on the street

Respect and follow

- Local laws and practices
- Religion and culture
 - You may be expected to dress or behave in a certain way due to religion or social rules.

Be careful

- When shopping at ATMs, petrol and other ATMs.
- When paying the restaurant bill.



In case of emergency and exceptional status

- Be attentive and follow the situation.
- Be sure to charge the cell phone battery.
- Save important phone numbers on your phone.
- Bring a passport or other travel document with you so that you can verify your identity with the authority if necessary.
- Follow the news from the local media or international media (BBC, CNN, etc.).
- In all cases of doubt, consult your local authorities. Follow the instructions and recommendations of the authorities.



Have a nice and safe exchange study!