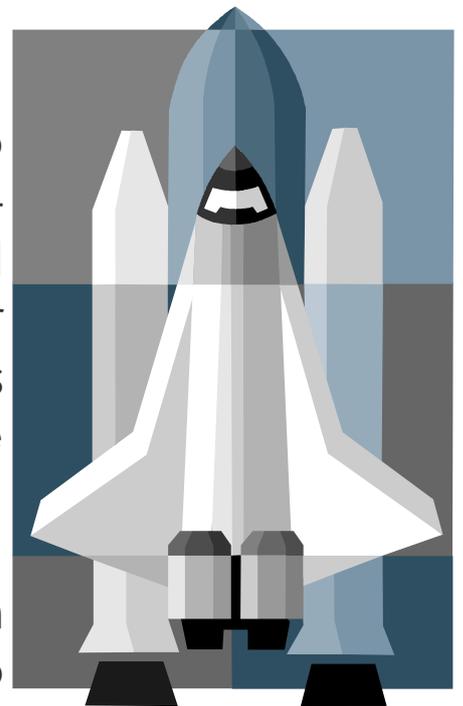


TAKING YOUR STUDENT GROUP ABROAD

It's exciting that you want to go away.....

We love that our students want to do bold and magical events for their members. A trip abroad, when organised properly, can be a holiday that your members will never forget. But if things go wrong, it could turn out to be the holiday from hell!

Read this leaflet for more information and guidance on organising a trip abroad.



FURTHER INFORMATION

Student Development

Tel. 0121 251 2424

www.guildofstudents.com/studentgroupsandvolunteering

studentgroups@guild.bham.ac.uk

Counter opening times

Monday — Thursday 11—5.30

Friday 11—4.30

Stuff to think about when going abroad

It's a small world after all...

Make a distinction between a trip and a holiday. That's best done by setting out aims and objectives early. Be precise, so you know what you're doing and why. It also avoids misunderstanding, and allows you to take decisions based on solid reasoning. You might want to clarify some educational, cultural, artistic or sporting objectives for the event.

The best laid plans of mice and men...

Plan your trip at least 8 weeks before you plan to go. Involve your members in the decision making process. Ensure that it's as accessible as possible to your members. Supplying an itinerary, kit list and holding an event briefing in advance of your event are easy ways to make sure everything works well and simple things aren't missed.

Safety concerns

Did you know that the UK government advises against travel to Somalia? Or that racially motivated attacks in Russia increase around the time of Adolf Hitler's birthday? You would if you'd read the travel advice from the Foreign Office. It's all available at www.fco.gov.uk—click on "travel". It's a wonderful resource of endless detail.

Don't have nightmares...

There are a number of safety concerns to think about. You don't know the area, you might get too 'relaxed, tired and emotional', and you're an obvious target for criminals. Allow for this by having a really good risk assessment in place, work out a good ratio of stewards to participants and take realistic steps to reduce the chances of any hazards occurring. It also means thinking through what to do if someone is injured, harmed or gets lost and stranded. It helps to have a plan in place as you'll probably panic first and think later.

“SAUSAGE, EGG AND CHIPS PLEASE...!”

There's no point in taking all the time, effort and money to go abroad whilst cocooned in a self-constructed impenetrable bubble of Britishness. Do your cultural awareness training and a bit of language learning. Explore areas of life that are unfamiliar, from the plumbing arrangements in Greece to the dress codes in devoutly religious areas. People are much more accommodating if you make an effort to speak in their language or understand their beliefs.

Drugs—Just say No!

If you are considering taking drugs abroad, or even bringing some back with you, think again, otherwise your holiday could be ruined, Bridget Jones style, although it won't be as funny! Don't think just because you're abroad that drugs have to be an essential part of your trip. They don't. People who have enjoyed their trips abroad have been those who resisted the temptation to simply go out and get wrecked every night just because they could. There is a huge wealth of things to do after dark. Don't let drugs dominate and lead to you missing out on what a trip has to offer. Being out of control in a foreign country could lead to you being vulnerable and easy prey for criminals!

Here are some facts you might like to consider when thinking about drugs in foreign countries:

- Over 1000 Britons are currently being held for drugs related offences.
- Many countries outside the UK will not grant bail before trial.
- You can still get a criminal record in the UK even if you are caught with drugs abroad.
- If you have been caught with drugs whilst on holiday, it is unlikely you'll ever be allowed to visit the country again.
- If you get injured or ill as a result of drugs, your holiday insurance could be invalidated and your tour operator could refuse to fly you home.

Check out <http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Foreigntravel/IfThingsGoWrong/> for more details.

- Pack all luggage yourself and make sure it's securely fastened.
- Keep your luggage with you at airports and other departure points and be aware of approaches from people at airports - even seemingly innocent requests to look after someone's possessions can lead to problems.
- Don't carry anything through customs for someone else. If drugs are found **YOU** will be held responsible. For similar reasons don't cross borders with people you don't know or drive across borders with unknown companions.
- Carry a doctor's prescription for any medication you may need to avoid unnecessary delays at customs and immigration checks.
- Be cautious when accepting gifts from people abroad - it's easy to hide drugs etc. in items such as trainers, cosmetics and children's toys.

They've got a ticket to ride...

If you wish to travel abroad you must hold a full ten-year passport, even for a day trip. Apply in good time. In the UK you can get advice from <http://www.british-passport-help.co.uk>.

Some countries have an immigration requirement for a passport to remain valid for a minimum period, usually six months, beyond the date of entry to the country. Therefore, ensure your passport is in good condition and valid for at least 6 months at the date of your return. This is a requirement of the country concerned, not the UK Passport Service. Any questions should be addressed to their embassy. Outside the UK, you should get advice from the nearest foreign office. Foreign office staff can issue standard replacement passports in most places. However all missions are able to issue emergency passports if more appropriate.

Passport tips

- Make a note of the passport number, date and place of issue and keep separately in a safe place.
- Check the passport expiry date.
- Write the full details of your next of kin in your passport.
- Leave a photocopy with a friend or relative at home.

- Take a second means of identification with you.
- Keep your passport in the hotel safe and carry a photocopy with you.

If you lose your passport abroad report the loss to the police and get a certificate of loss from them. Then take that certificate to the British Consulate and apply for a replacement passport.

You can renew your passport overseas at most British Consulates but best to check that they do provide this service. Passport renewals take around ten working days.

Insurance Advice

- Make sure you and your members have taken out the appropriate insurance—the Guild insurance policy is not appropriate as personal insurance cover
- Make sure it includes comprehensive medical and repatriation cover and that it provides cover for your whole trip whether one day or a year.
- Make sure it covers you for all activities, including hazardous sports.
- Disclose pre-existing medical conditions.
- Take your policy number and the 24 hour emergency number.

Other bits of travel advice

Visas

If you plan to travel outside British territories, you may require a visa to enter the country you are going to. Check visa requirements with your travel agent or contact the consulate or embassy of the country you plan to visit. If you are a British Dependent Territories Citizen, British Overseas Citizen, British Subject, British National Overseas, or a British Protected Person, you may need a visa that is not required by British Citizens. You'll need to check if any of you're international students need special Visa's for travel

It's just a little prick...

Check what vaccinations you need at least 6 weeks before you go and consider whether you need to take extra health precautions.

Getting help when you need it...

Using 112 instead of another emergency number on a mobile phone may be advantageous, since 112 is recognised by all GSM phones as an emergency number. Dialling 112 forces the phone to make the call on any network possible. Some GSM networks will not accept emergency calls from phones without a SIM card, or a SIM card without credit. Make sure your mobile phone will work abroad if you're relying on using it.

Can I be "out" while travelling abroad? (for LGBT travellers)

This is a decision that you need to make for yourself after having carefully examined the local situation. In many parts of the world an element of homophobia and macho-ism is prevalent, and LGBT people often maintain a low profile. Public handholding, kissing and other outward signs of affection are not commonplace in many countries around the world, and excessive physical displays of affection are often frowned upon for both heterosexual and same-sex couples.

While some cities may appear to be gay-friendly destinations with distinct gay 'neighbourhoods', outside of these districts, and especially in rural areas, LGBT travellers may experience open hostility. It is normally best to use caution in situations where you are unsure of the reception you may receive, as you

**Can you advise on the age of consent overseas?**

In many countries the age of consent is different for the heterosexual and same-sex relationships, and can vary from region to region within a country. For more information have a look at www.avert.org/age-of-consent.htm

Trips Abroad

Health & Safety

Risk Assessment

Risk Assessments are legal document required under Health and Safety law. Failure to do so can have some dire consequences for you: the prosecuting authorities can hand down any punishment they see fit - that's potentially an unlimited fine and/or up to six years in prison. Risk assessments for an event like this need to be handed into Student Development at least **8 weeks** before your event. This is so we can help you make sure your event is safe and well prepared, we advise you to do this before making any firm bookings.

Trips Abroad cover form

A trips abroad cover form must also be completed and handed in **8 weeks** before your event. The cover form acts as a checklist to ensure you have thought of all the Health & Safety risks that you should have. Although your form has to be in 8 weeks before your event, you may not be able to gather all the information you need until closer to your trip. That is fine, but we will not sign your risk assessment off till you have handed everything in.

Annual risk assessments and trips abroad cover forms can be downloaded from the committee members resource page of our website www.guildofstudents.com/studentgroups and volunteering.

Health and travelling to Europe

You should obtain a European Health Insurance card (EHIC) before leaving the UK. The EHIC is available free of charge through most UK post offices or through the UK Department of Health via their website at www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAdviceForTravellers/ or by telephoning 0800 555 7777 and obtaining their leaflet "Health Advice for Travellers". The EHIC is not a substitute for medical and travel insurance, but entitles you to emergency medical treatment on the same terms as you would at home.

Trips Abroad

You will not be covered for medical repatriation, on-going medical treatment or treatment of a non-urgent nature. We strongly recommend that you obtain comprehensive travel and medical insurance before travelling. You should check any exclusions, and that your policy covers you for the activities you want to undertake. These are really easy to get hold of and they're sent out very quickly.

Stewards

This is a bit different to running a bar crawl or a more conventional event. You'll need to have one steward for every fifteen people going away. Your stewards will need to know what to do during all parts of the event, what their responsibilities are, and who to report emergencies, injuries or any problems to. One of your committee should be designated 'Chief Steward'. All queries during the trip should go through that one person. They will also be the person responsible for contacting the Guild in an emergency.

Whatever stewarding process you decide on, you must include it within your risk assessment.

First Aid

As a group you should maintain your own first aid kit to ensure that any minor injuries can be treated safely and effectively. **If you are not confident in administering first aid don't do it - call for assistance from a trained individual instead.**

An "In case Of Emergency" Card

These should be given out to all attendees of your event giving details of planned events, important phone numbers for where you're visiting, key times for the trip, what to do in an emergency and what to do if you get lost or into trouble together with contact numbers for key organisers.

Trips Abroad

Missing People

You need to have a clear policy and procedure outlining how to cope with people not turning up at arranged times and locations. How long are you willing to wait? Will waiting risk missing connections for your journey to or from your destination?

Before heading to that wild festival or club, follow the advice of mothers everywhere and arrange for a meeting point in case you and the people you are with are separated. If you haven't done so and find yourself alone, go to a sensible home base such as your hotel room, the train station, or your car and stay put. If your companion is still a no-show, contact mutual friends by cell phone or email, letting everyone know exactly where you are. The embassy can get in touch with hospitals and local officials, and, if necessary, put out word about a missing person.

Stranded in a foreign country

So the worst happens: You've been mugged, or left your wallet in a taxi. Your hotel room or hire car has been broken into. However it might happen, thousands of travellers experience being stranded with no cash abroad. So what do you do if this happens?

Reduce the Risks

The obvious way to avoid losing everything in one go is to be sure to keep your money in a separate place and take a mixture of cash and travellers cheques. Keep traveller cheque receipts and emergency contact numbers for lost credit cards in a safe place. It's also worth keeping some spare bank notes or a credit card in a money belt with a secret compartment in it.



If completely stranded...

...and you have no money at all, contact someone in the UK by reversing the charges and ask if they can send you out some money. One of the most efficient ways to have money sent to you is through Western Union (tel:(+44) 0800 833 833, 24 hours). It can send money to banks and offices in 200 countries. You can normally collect the cash within a few hours by showing your passport, and sometimes answering an agreed test question.

If you can't arrange this, the nearest British Consul might agree to cash a cheque, with a cheque card, for up to £100. In extreme cases they might agree to make a short-term emergency loan.

Travellers' Cheques and Credit Cards

Replacing lost traveller's cheques should be straightforward - they are designed for this problem. As long as you still have the cheque receipts listing the emergency number, you can call to order replacements. Most issuers should be able to issue them within 24 hours, sometimes longer in remoter parts of the world.

Without the receipts, a refund is possible but will take longer. Replacements for lost credit cards should also take about 24 hours, though some issuers take three days or more.

Illnesses Abroad...

Lots of travellers get diarrhoea from eating or drinking something contaminated. You can also get diseases like cholera, typhoid and hepatitis A from contaminated food and water. Here are a number of really simple things you can do to reduce the risk of getting ill or having an accident while you're away.

Trips Abroad

Food and Drink...

- Always wash your hands after going to the toilet and before handling food or eating.
- If you're not sure whether the water is safe, sterilise it by boiling it or using purification tablets, or use bottled water (preferably fizzy) instead. Always use clean water for washing food and cleaning your teeth as well as drinking.
- Avoid ice unless you're sure it's made from treated chlorinated water. This includes ice used to keep food cold as well as ice in drinks.
- Make sure food has been freshly and thoroughly cooked and is still piping hot - avoid food that has been kept warm.
- Avoid uncooked food unless you can peel or shell it yourself.
- Avoid food that is likely to have been exposed to flies.
- Avoid ice-cream from unreliable sources, such as kiosks or street traders.
- Avoid, or boil, un-pasteurised milk
- In addition, fish and shellfish can be suspect in some countries. Uncooked shellfish, such as oysters, are especially risky.

Taking care in the sun

As well as giving you painful sunburn, heatstroke or sunstroke, too much sun can age your skin and increase the risk of getting skin cancer. Remember, the sun is extremely strong in many holiday destinations so don't underestimate its power. Protect your eyes by wearing sunglasses with proper UV filters, and follow the Sun Smart code, as recommended by Cancer Research UK:

Stay in the shade between 11am and 3pm

Make sure you never burn

Always cover up

Remember to take extra care with children.

Then use factor 15+sunscreen.

Driving abroad...

If you're planning to drive, make sure your insurance covers you for medical or hospital expenses in case you have an accident.

Road Safety

Traffic accidents are the major cause of death amongst travellers. Whether you're driving or walking, always check the local traffic regulations. If you are in a car, always wear seatbelts and put children in a child restraint. If you are on a motor or pedal bike, always wear a helmet and put children in a child restraint. If you hire a car or bike, check its condition and your insurance cover. **Never drink and drive.**

Dangerous Sports

If you're taking part in potentially hazardous sports like skiing, canoeing, mountaineering or diving, you must:

- Follow all the relevant safety guidance
- Make sure that there are adequate medical emergency facilities on hand
- Check that your holiday insurance covers you in the event of an accident.

Insect and Animal Bites

Use an insect repellent, and keep your arms and legs covered if there's a chance of being bitten. Make sure you follow the precautions on avoiding malaria. Remember, you can catch tick-borne diseases in cooler countries, not just in the tropics. Animal bites can lead to serious, and even fatal infections. Keep away from animals, even if they seem tame. Read the information on avoiding rabies, and what to do if you are bitten by an animal.

Lost or Damaged Luggage

If your luggage gets lost or damaged:

- File a report with the airline for damaged bags within 24 hours of arrival, or your claim could be dismissed.
- Keep a list all the Pack fragile items very carefully in checked bags, or better yet, keep them in your carry-on.
- Airlines may advance passengers cash or reimburse them for necessary items. Ask the airline for more information.
- Always label your bags clearly.

What to do When Disaster Strikes...

The Foreign Office fields thousands of calls asking about UK citizens in troubled areas— more than 15,000 inquiries were made for the 2004 Tsunami alone. To keep loved ones from worrying unnecessarily, always leave a detailed itinerary of your trip. If its impossible to get word to family and friends that you're OK, contact a consulate and give permission to relay the message.



Drink Spiking and Safe Sex

You must be aware of the realities of drink spiking with both men and women as victims. Anyone suspected of drinks spiking or being a victim should be reported to the venue staff immediately. You **MUST** provide information to your members on what to look out for. Bottle top stoppers are a great way of raising awareness.



When people are drinking they're more likely to practice unsafe sex. The ARC, based in the Guild, provide some excellent information for students. You **MUST** provide this information to your members. You might want to take a supply of condoms with you. Be aware that many sexual health products are not as readily available abroad as they are in the UK and quality can differ depending on where you are. Take some British Condoms with you.

Pick & Mix leaflets are available on a variety of topics, designed to assist you as thoroughly as possible with running your group or understanding the Guild of Students generally

To find out more information, visit the Guild online:
www.guildofstudents.com/studentgroupsandvolunteering

The Student Development department is located on the ground floor of the Guild of Students, and supports student groups, volunteering and training.

Student Development Counter:

The first port of call for any queries and for any administration regarding your group, volunteering or training. During holidays, we're open 12-3pm Mon-Fri, and our general Term-time opening hours are:

11am-5.30pm Monday - Thursday
11am-4.30pm - Fridays.

The general student group area for committees is open 9am-9pm on weekdays and 10am-8pm at weekends, which you can use for committee meetings, checking emails and organising your group. You have access to computers, a printer and photocopier, workspace and your pigeonholes.

Disclaimer: The information in this leaflet only provides general guidance. The leaflet should not be regarded or relied upon as a complete or authoritative statement. University of Birmingham Guild of Students will not accept any liability for any claims or inconvenience as a result of information in this leaflet.