

RISD↓
↑GLOBAL



Off-Campus Exchange Student Handbook

by RISD Global

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Predeparture

Forms to Complete

Prior to departure, all RISD students must complete and submit to RISD Global the Learning Agreement Form, Terms of Agreement, and a copy of your passport photo page for Off Campus Study.

Packing

It is important to remember NOT to pack everything! Please be certain that your passport along with any other valuables (wallet, money, jewelry, medications) are in your carry-on rather than in your checked baggage.

Remember that electricity is not the same in most countries – be prepared! If you bring your laptop or cell phone you may need to find an adapter for the specific country you are traveling to.

If you have a host family or are planning on staying with family and friends in the host country, it is common to pack a gift. Something small that may represent the region you are from such as calendars, local food products, or photo books.

In-Country Preparedness

Before you leave be sure to have reviewed information about the country you are traveling to. What is the climate? Are there cultural dress norms you should be aware of? For specific information about your host country:

<http://travel.state.gov/>

<http://www.countryreports.org>

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations>

Travel

Getting There

You are responsible for booking your round-trip travel to the exchange program site host institution. Please be sure to read all the information sent to you by your faculty member/host institution to ensure you arrive at the appropriate airport and send any arrival information required to your faculty member/host advisor.

In some cases the host institution may send someone to pick you up at the airport. While this is not common, it is important that you obtain these details before you schedule your travel.

Many students find it useful to purchase an International Student Identity Card (ISIC) before they travel. The card typically entitles holders to a variety of discounts and provides basic travel insurance as well as a 24 hour emergency hotline. For more information or to purchase the card: www.myisic.com.

Passports & Visas

You must have a valid passport well in advance of travel. For U.S. passport application information please visit the Department of State's website (travel.state.gov). Applications for passports are accepted at the Post Office and you can also go to the *Boston Passport Agency*.

You must also determine whether or not you are required to obtain a visa for the country you are studying in. To determine what the country specific visa requirements are, read carefully the instructions sent to you from your host institution. You can find a list of foreign consular offices in the United States at:

<http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/fco/>

Allow plenty of time in applying for a visa as you may need to submit your passport to the foreign consulate. You may be required either upon entry to a country or to obtain a visa to present:

- Proof of sufficient funds for the duration of your stay
- Letter of acceptance from your program or University
- Proof of medical insurance and any required immunizations
- Letter of confirmation for full-time enrollment at RISD (this can be obtained at the Registrar's Office).
- Passport-size photographs (carry 2 with you)

*Ultimately, the student is responsible for securing the visa well before the expected travel date.

International Students

International students at RISD who have either a Form I-20 or DS-2019 must speak to their international student advisor in advance of departure. In order to maintain your student status, you must provide appropriate documentation and information to your International Student Advisor.

Money

Financial Aid

If you are receiving financial aid at RISD it will carry over during your time on exchange. That said it is crucial that you contact the Financial Aid Office (x6636) before you depart to be sure your payments are up-to-date and they have all the information they need.

Expenses

Read carefully through your program materials to determine what is included in the fees

and what you will need to purchase or pay for upon arrival. You must also ensure that you have the appropriate form of payment - although not typical, traveler's checks may be the best choice for certain host institutions.

While ATMs are common in most countries, you should look into the fees associated with taking cash from the ATM. Using your credit card tends to be the most cost-effective way to spend money in foreign countries as the exchange rate is up-to-date, but keep in mind that it is important to have some cash on hand. Credit cards are not accepted everywhere! You must also be mindful of high interest rates on your cards that may end up costing you a great deal. You might want to look into a credit card with no foreign transaction fees.

In general carry as little cash as possible and in some cases it may be advisable to wear a money belt. Before you leave you should look into the local exchange rate via websites such as: x-rates.com or oanda.com.



Returning to RISD

Returning from study abroad can be a challenging and difficult time. For some, readjusting to life at home or at school can be a similar experience to adjusting to your host culture abroad.

Reconnecting

The process of readjusting to being at home or back at RISD can take some time. It is important to give yourself time to cope with the experience. Developing a strategy can prove vital for some, including:

- **Tell others about your experience.** If you would be interested in talking with prospective study abroad students, please contact RISD Global. We may be able to help put you in touch with other returnees as well.
- **Stay in touch with people from your host country and/or program.** This will help you to maintain that connection and feel that you haven't broken completely away from the experience that you've just had.

- **Continue taking language courses.** If you were in a country where the primary language was other than English, continue to pursue that language.

If you would like to seek advice or canceling, please visit [Health Services](#) as they will be able to provide you the assistance you may need.

Credit

It is important that if you have received grades from another institution while away, that you bring back any information about the courses you have taken. This could come in the form of a course syllabus or other material(s). This will assist the Registrar and your Academic Advisor in making the appropriate decisions with regard to credit transfer.

If you have worked directly with RISD faculty while away, your credits/courses will be graded as if you were on campus.

Career Planning

Now that you have had this incredible experience, use it to your advantage. Your resume is a marketing tool to introduce yourself to potential employers. Meet with the [Career Center](#) to discuss ways in which you can incorporate your study abroad experience to enhance your career planning.

Please remember to check your RISD email!

You are automatically readmitted to RISD based on the time of return you designated.

The Registrar's Office will send registration information via email to all returning students. Please check your emails!! If you do not receive an email from the Registrar's Office with information about the timing of registration for the following semester, please be in touch with GPP.

Obtaining your transcript and receiving credit for your semester abroad, as noted above, is up to you. Students that are returning for their last semester at RISD should be on top of this so as not to jeopardize graduation! Be sure to save all your written work to as ensure credits you take while on exchange are awarded upon your return. You may need to present work to your Department.



Academics

Prior to leaving, the Learning Agreement needs to be completed! This includes signatures from your Academic Advisor, Department Head and Dean of Liberal Arts (if wanting to receive credit for any Liberal Arts Course Abroad).

Questions sometimes arise regarding credits awarded while on exchange, therefore it is prudent to keep copies of all written work for the courses you took while on exchange.

Photo documentation of art & design projects completed while on exchange is useful as well, so that the Department Head can review upon your return.

Upon return, the Department Head will complete a form for the Registrar that documents how credits will be distributed on your transcript. The course and credit is recorded with no letter grade (pass/fail). If the credits are liberal arts credits, you will be required to meet with the Dean of Liberal Arts to negotiate how the credits are recorded. If Liberal Arts credits are taken during your exchange semester we recommend these courses be approved beforehand, if possible, to ensure credit upon return.

Full-time Enrollment

Normal full-time student load is 12-15 credits per semester. Students with less than a 12 credit equivalent while on exchange run the risk of jeopardizing financial aid and possibly (for international students) immigration status.

In systems that do not use a comparable credit hour method, you will need to demonstrate that you were enrolled in a full course of study at the host institution. If you are uncertain of what a full course of study consists of, consult the program advisor on-site and ask for something in writing to verify you have taken what is normally considered full time at the host institution.

Keeping in Touch

Family & Friends

Your family and friends understand that you are away for this time. While it is tempting to be in touch either via Skype or over the phone, you are encouraged to reach out to the local community as much as possible.

You should let family & friends know where you are, and of course keeping in touch will be helpful in your successful transition back to RISD.

RISD

As noted, if you have academic concerns, keep in touch with your Academic advisor to ensure you stay on track with your program. Checking your RISD email (or forwarding your email to a personal account if that's easier) is crucial.

The Office of GPP will send periodic emails to you while you are away. Please be sure to read these emails as they may be important to your successful integration and/or return!



Health & Safety

***If you experience a health and/or safety emergency that requires or would benefit from RISD in Providence support, please call
RISD Public Safety at 1-401-454-6666.
This line is open 24/7.***

Health

Your medical needs will depend largely on your host country. To find out more about the health environment you are entering, visit the Centers for Disease Control's travel website ([cdc.gov/travel](https://www.cdc.gov/travel)) or the World Health Organization ([who.int/itc/](https://www.who.int/itc/)). Some countries may have immunization requirements or vaccinations. It is the student's responsibility to ensure they secure appropriate immunizations. Be aware, you often need to begin obtaining these months prior to departure.

If you have prescription medications, speak to your doctor before travel abroad. It is important that you both have the medications you need and find out if the medications you are prescribed are legal in the host country.

Mental Health

If you are currently seeing a therapist, be certain to discuss your impending travel so that you can arrange for an in-country therapist (as available) or to continue your therapy virtually. Do not discontinue any mental health medications you may be taking (for depression, anxiety or other mental health conditions). Mental health is not viewed the same in all countries, so be prepared for this by talking with your current mental health professional. If you are not currently seeking mental health care but are worried that you

may want assistance while away, please visit the RISD Health Center.

Safety

The U.S. State Department issues consular information sheets and travel warnings that summarize entry requirements and health & safety issues for all countries. Please read the appropriate information sheet for your host country (travel.state.gov).

In general, safety has much to do with common sense and awareness of your surroundings. Please be aware of the cultural norms of your host country in addition to the reading you should do before you leave.

Relationships

Some of you may choose to be sexually active while abroad. It is just as important to be as aware of sexually transmitted diseases as you are while at home. It is very important to take responsibility for your actions and to use protection at all times. Be sure to contact your physician prior to departure if extra medical supplies are required.

Gender & Sexuality

Cultural norms related to gender and sexuality vary greatly and can become a safety issue. Behavioral norms in the United States do not apply across all countries. Understanding your host country's social mores and gender norms will help you to make informed choices about your behavior, dress, etc.

Sexual harassment is particularly difficult because of the variation among cultures. It is essential that you report any behavior that makes you feel threatened or uncomfortable to your host program/advisor. If you feel that for any reason you are not able to speak to your host program or advisor about this, please contact the RISD Public Safety (1-401-454-6666) – we will assist you as best we can from afar.

Rhode Island School of Design is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment and will not tolerate acts of sexual harassment, sexual violence or acts of retaliation against or by any employee or student. When sexual harassment or sexual violence has occurred and is brought to the attention of RISD, we will take steps to end the harassment or violence, prevent its recurrence, and address its effects. Please contact our Title IX Coordinator for more information or to file a complaint:

Sarah Caggiano
Title IX Coordinator
20 Washington Place, Room 435
Providence, RI
Office Phone: 401.454.6689
scaggian@risd.edu

Insurance

HTH: Mandatory

All students will be enrolled in supplemental travel insurance by the Office of Global Partners & Programs. HTH worldwide provides coverage for most medical needs a student may face while traveling outside of the United States. Students will also have access to their website which includes worldwide travel warnings and tools to find appropriate care. Please be in touch with gpp@risd.edu to provide your information for this insurance and/or ask questions about it.

In the case of a natural or political disaster, HTH does cover students (who have enrolled) for evacuation when deemed necessary.

Housing

Before leaving RISD consider your housing arrangements for return. If you live in campus housing, speak to Residential Life well in advance of your departure to ensure you have made appropriate arrangements for your return. It may be possible to arrange for an incoming exchange or international student to sublet your apartment if you live off-campus. If you are interested in this you should speak to RISD Global to obtain further information.

Read the information sent to you from your host institution about housing! Housing types and costs vary widely depending on your host institution and country. Although costs vary by site, the basic costs of exchange are often similar to costs during a semester at RISD. Students participating on exchange are required to pay RISD tuition while they are away. The cost of living expenses are the responsibility of the student.

Though rare, some institutions offer on-campus housing. It is likely, however, you will have to find a place to live in the surrounding city/town of the host institution. Your Global Learning Advisor advisor will help you to contact the exchange coordinator at your host institution before you leave RISD as they may be able to help you find a place to live.

In some cases students going on exchange may be able to swap housing with a foreign student coming to RISD during the same semester – be in touch with your Global Learning Advisor as soon as possible if this is of interest to you!

It is important for you to research current currency rates so that you have a good understanding of the cost of housing in your host country.

Cultural Adaptations

After you arrive in your host country it is common to go through a period of culture shock. Many times culture shock displays symptoms similar to depression. You are not alone! Culture shock usually sets in one to two weeks after you arrived and may last for just a few days, or several weeks.

It is important that you make friends in your local environment and become involved in activities – both academic and social/cultural. Many institutions will have scheduled programs and events for visiting students. Keep an open mind.

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Resource List

1. *Department of State: travel warnings, country specific fact sheets, etc.*
2. *U.S. Embassy websites worldwide*
3. *Center for Disease Control & Prevention*
4. *The Travel Clinic: medical information while traveling*
5. *The Lonely Planet: country specific travel guides*
6. *HTH Worldwide: travel insurance site*
7. *Disability travel information*
8. *RISD policy website*
9. *RISD Health Services*
10. *RISD Career Center*
11. *What's up with Culture*
12. *Culture Matters: The Peace Corps Online Workbook*
13. *Students Abroad Handbook on Reverse Culture Shock*
14. *Study Abroad.com's Student Guide*

Student Safety Checklist

- Do not leave your bags or belongings unattended!
- Safeguard your passport: you will need it to check-in to hotels, cash traveler's checks, and as identification most places. Keep it safe!!
- Never keep your important documents and money in one place or suitcase. Make copies of the important documents you have – leave copies at home and carry a copy with you.
- Carry your cell phone at all times!
- Keep a list of emergency contacts with you.
- Know how to contact someone for help.
- Keep your group/faculty informed of where you are at all times.
- Always be careful about traveling alone – whenever possible travel in a group.
- Have sufficient funds.
- Be conscious of cultural practices that are specific to the area you are traveling to, which may include dress, behavior, etc.
- Do not flash money or documents in public places.
- Look out for your friends!
- Leave expensive jewelry at home.
- Use a money belt or concealed money pouch to carry cash and other valuables.
- As needed, use official taxis and/or taxi stands.

Learning Agreement

Students should access their exchange schools online course catalogs (if available) and remember, that if any of these courses change once you are on their campus, to notify their department and to please submit an updated version of this agreement to RISD Global. You are welcome to email to: gpp@risd.edu or fax to: 401-454-6755.

Student Name: _____

Student ID: _____ **Major:** _____

Expected Graduation Year: _____

Exchange School Abroad: _____

Exchange Location: _____

Plan of Study:

Course Code	Course Title	Credits	RISD Equivalent	RISD Credits

Approval & Signatures:

Student Name (Please Print): _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Academic Advisor (Please Print): _____

Academic Advisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Department Head (Please Print): _____

Department Head Signature: _____ Date: _____

Dean of Liberal Arts (Please Print): _____

Dean of Liberal Arts Signature: _____ Date: _____

RISD Global Approval: _____ Date: _____

Terms of Agreement

Terms of the Off-Campus Exchange Global Learning Agreement

The parties to this Release are _____ (*Student Name*),
_____ (*Student's parents or legal guardian, if student is under 18, all referred to hereafter jointly as "Student"*) and the Rhode Island School of Design (*hereafter, "RISD"*).

The Student, with the consent of the Student's parents or legal guardian, has chosen to participate in a RISD Off-Campus Global Learning Program _____
_____ (*dates/semester*).

The Student understands that it is their responsibility to meet the terms of eligibility for Off-Campus Global Learning.

Assumption of Risk

Student understands and agrees that foreign travel presents risks to Student and her/his property. These can include, among others: unfamiliar or different terrain, climate, food and drink, customs, laws, social and sexual mores, safety practices and regulations, communications, criminal and law enforcement activities, disability access, driving practices, disease risks, and health care. Student is responsible for researching and evaluating the risks she/he may face and is responsible for her/his actions. Any activities that Student may take part in, whether as a component of Global Learning or separate from it, it will be considered to have been undertaken with Student's approval and understanding of any and all risks involved. This includes risks associated with the consumption of alcoholic beverages and drugs, of loss or injury, or death occurring from traffic accidents, assault, and theft. Initials: _____

Adherence to Standards

Student understands and agrees to abide by all policies, rules, and regulations of RISD and all rules, regulations, and laws of the respective countries to be visited. Student further agrees to obey all rules, directions, and precautions issued by RISD or its representatives, by any associated individuals, institutions, or organizations, or by the United States Government. Possession or use of narcotic or unlawful drugs is a criminal offense; violators of the law are subject to prosecution and imprisonment. The consumption of alcohol by Student is not allowed if Student is less than 21 years of age. Initials: _____

Termination of Participation

Student shall not engage in inappropriate conduct including the use of physical or verbal violence, open abuse of the customs or mores of the community, and unauthorized absences from course activities. Student understands that, in its sole discretion RISD or its representative may terminate Student's participation in the Global Learning at any time, including before departure or during the trip. Reasons for termination may include, but are not limited to: inappropriate conduct or other behavior by Student deemed detrimental to the best interests of the Global Learning; emergencies; or health or safety considerations. Such termination shall not diminish or otherwise alter Student's obligations to make any

payment required for the course, nor shall RISD be required to make any refund to Student. Initials: _____

Release of Claims

In consideration of RISD accepting Student for Global Learning, Student, his/her heirs, executors, administrators, employers, agents, representatives, insurers, and attorneys, hereby release and discharge RISD, its officers, trustees, faculty, employees, agents, and representatives (hereafter "released parties") from any and all claims which may arise from any cause whatsoever, including any negligent act or omission by the released parties. Student further releases and discharges the released parties from responsibility for any accident, illness, injury, or any other consequences arising or resulting directly or indirectly from Student's participation in Global Learning. The Student recognizes and agrees that the released parties assume no responsibility for any liability, damage, or injury that may be caused by Student's negligence or willful acts committed prior to, during, or after participation in Global Learning, or for any liability, damage, or injury caused by the intentional or negligent acts or omissions of any other participant in the course, or caused by any other person. Initials: _____

Indemnification and Hold Harmless

Student hereby agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the released parties from any loss or liability whatsoever including reasonable attorneys' fees, caused by the act or omission of Student resulting from direct or indirect participation in Global Learning. Initials: _____

Program Participation

Student understands and agrees to attend and participate in all activities that are part of the Global Learning. Student understands that failure to do so may result in the reduction of grade, including the possibility of course failure, termination from the course, or both. Should Student cancel Global Learning after the expenses have been incurred, Student will be responsible for the reimbursement to RISD for those expenses. Initials: _____

Activities Outside Program

Should Student choose to remain overseas at the Global Learning location or elsewhere after participation in the travel course, RISD will cease to act as a sponsor for Student. Should Student drop out of the Global Learning voluntarily or involuntarily, RISD will cease to act as sponsor for Student thereafter. In either of the foregoing events, this release shall remain in full force and effect. Initials: _____

Severability

It is understood and agreed that, if any provision of this release or the application thereof is held invalid, the invalidity shall not affect other provisions of applications of this release which can be given effect with the invalid provisions or applications. To this end, the provisions of this release are declared severable. Initials: _____

Governing Law

This release shall be construed in accordance with, and governed by, the laws of the State of Rhode Island. Initials: _____

Construction and Scope of Agreement

The language of all parts of this release shall in all cases be construed as a whole, according to its fair meaning, and not strictly for or against any party. This release is the only, sole, entire, and complete agreement of the parties relating in any way to the subject matter hereof. No statements, promises, or representatives have been made by any party to any other, or relied upon, and no consideration has been offered or promised, other than as may be expressly provided herein. This release supersedes any earlier written or oral understandings or agreements between the parties. Initials: _____

Student acknowledges that she/he has read this release and that she/he understands its meaning and effect. Student has read and understands the information that is outlined for their Global Learning destination in the US State Department website: <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country.html> Initials: _____

Location of Program: _____

Start/End Dates of Program: _____

Approval & Signatures:

Student Name (Please Print): _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Name (Please Print): _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

(If student is under 18)

RISD GPP Office Signature: _____ Date: _____