



University of Essex

# GOING OVERSEAS?

STAY SAFE

Travel Money





## Going Overseas? Stay safe

Your health, safety and security when working or studying overseas are important. Safety standards in many non-UK countries are not as good as those we enjoy in the UK. There may be hazards that you don't usually worry about, such as disease, natural disasters, poisonous animals or civil unrest. When things go wrong the lack of familiarity with the Country, its cultural differences and language barriers, can make a relatively minor incident into a major incident. However, with good preparation many of the potential travel pitfalls can be avoided.

## Travel Insurance

It is vital that you have appropriate travel insurance. If you are travelling on University business, research, or work/study abroad you will be able to travel under the University's travel insurance. To arrange cover complete the Travel Insurance Application Form at [www.essex.ac.uk/staff/activities-health-and-safety/overseas-travel](http://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/activities-health-and-safety/overseas-travel) or [www.essex.ac.uk/student/activities-health-and-safety/overseas-travel](http://www.essex.ac.uk/student/activities-health-and-safety/overseas-travel) and submit it to the University's Insurance Team.

## Booking Travel and Accommodation

When arranging trips for work, research or study, you must book your travel and accommodation through one of the University's approved travel management providers. As well as sourcing suitable flights/transport and accommodation, they offer a range of services to enhance safety, such as travel risk information email/texts and a 24-hour emergency travel reschedule service. They will also have carried out health and safety checks on the suppliers they recommend. Find out more at <https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/travel-and-transport/booking-business-travel>.

Use hotels you know and trust, or have been recommended by the University's travel management providers. Reputable four/five-star hotels are not just for comfort, they have higher security standards and good medical emergency procedures. Note that the University does not allow the use of Air BnB.

### The University's Travel Insurance

The University's travel insurance is designed specifically for our needs and provides you with the following services:

- Emergency travel and medical assistance
- Travel security advice and alerts
- Country Guides
- Online security training and guidance



## Travel Health

Find out about country specific health risks by going to the NHS Fit for Travel website. Do this in good time (at least 8 weeks before travelling), as it may take a few weeks for you to arrange travel vaccinations and medication.

If you have an existing medical condition that may affect your fitness to undertake overseas travel, you should discuss this with your GP (or for staff the University's Occupational Health Team), and get confirmation of whether you are fit to travel and, if so, what precautions may be needed to ensure your health while away.

When you complete the Travel Insurance Application Form you will be required to confirm that you are medically fit to travel (your insurance could be invalidated if it is subsequently found you were not). Staff will also need to answer some travel health questions and may be referred to the University's Occupational Health Team for further advice prior to travel.

## Before you go

If you are travelling to a country that is new to you or that you have not been to for some time, do some research.

- Look at the country information on the Gov.UK and University approved travel advice websites.
- If you know anyone who has been to, or lives in the country you are visiting, ask them for their tips on travel, accommodation, culture and safety.
- Look at the information available via the University's Overseas Travel website.
- Travel guides and the internet can also be good sources of information.

You will find links to the website referred to above on the back of this leaflet.

## Risk assessment and approval

For locations, identified as being high risk or extreme risk, you will need to carry out a formal risk assessment and obtain approval for the trip.

You will be advised of what to do when you submit the Travel Insurance Application Form to the University's Insurance Team. Students travelling abroad on study, research or work placements can get help with their risk assessment from the Essex Abroad Office.

## Online Security Training

There is a short online travel security e-learning course designed to reduce your exposure to risk. Those travelling to locations that are of high or extreme risk will need to complete the course before they go. However we recommend that all overseas travellers complete the course. You can find out how to enrol onto it at the University's overseas travel website.

## Crime and security

Travellers can be seen as soft targets, so take extra care when you are abroad. This is particularly important where there is a high risk of serious crime against overseas travellers (e.g. kidnap, terrorism). The Gov.UK and University approved travel websites gives information on how to minimise crime risk.





# Going Overseas

## Advice on planning a safe trip

### When you are there

Remember **SAFER**

#### **S**ituational Awareness and Preparation:

Good planning is essential. Be aware of what and where the risks are in the location you are visiting and remember that situations can change rapidly. Subscribe to the Gov.UK security alert services so that you keep up to date with what is happening in the location you are visiting. Keep photocopies of important documents in a safe place and make sure you have access to emergency funds.

**A**void routine. Vary routes to locations you regularly visit and be particularly alert at the start and end of the journey when you will be most vulnerable.

**F**ollow security procedures: Follow security advice given to you by Gov.UK and those familiar with the risks in the area you are visiting. Don't increase your risk by wearing expensive jewellery or openly carrying valuable items, putting a wallet into your back pocket or placing all your money and credit cards in one place.

During civil or political unrest avoid demonstrations and large gatherings. Find out about emergency procedures in place, including the location of any emergency shelters or secure areas. If you are concerned about your safety arrange to leave the country at the earliest opportunity, in line with travel advice given by Gov.UK and remain in your accommodation until it is safe to attempt departure.

**E**nsure reliable communications: Make sure you have a fully charged mobile phone (and charger) with you, and pre-programme important emergency numbers into it. Keep hard copies of important

telephone numbers with you and with a home/work contact. Arrange to keep in regular contact with someone at home/work. Give them a copy of your itinerary and establish a plan of what to do if no contact is made at planned times. Also find out the contact details of your local Embassy/consulate, in case you need their assistance in an emergency.

**R**emain anonymous: Show respect for local customs and traditions and make sure your behaviour doesn't make you a target. Don't discuss details of your itinerary with people you don't know and safeguard personal information.

#### **Transport / road safety**

Road traffic accidents are a major cause of injury to overseas travellers, due to poor standards of driving, or of road or vehicle maintenance. In some countries overcrowding or poor maintenance of internal transport systems such as trains and airlines can also be a significant risk.

Transport tips:

- Check country specific travel information before you go, so that you can plan to use the safest practical means of travel. Try to avoid travelling on overcrowded transport systems.
- Use reputable drivers or taxi services organised by your hotel.
- Try to avoid travelling at night on poorly maintained or lit roads and paths.
- Wear seat belts if they are provided.
- If driving, make sure you familiarise yourself with local driving rules, including speeding and alcohol limits.
- Expect the unexpected: local driving styles may be very different from the UK.
- When crossing the road remember traffic may approach from different directions and there may be different rules at pedestrian crossings.

**Use the box below to note important numbers and keep this leaflet with you while you are abroad.**

## **Useful Contacts / Numbers**

### **Local emergency numbers**

Fire:  Ambulance:  Police:

Local contact:

Insurance emergency number:  Policy number:

Local Embassy/Consulate:

Home Contact:

University contact:

University Information Centre (24 hour): **+44 (0)1206 872125**

*Information Centre will alert relevant staff*

## Health and safety hazards

Standards of safety can vary greatly. You can reduce risk by staying in a reputable hotel and being aware of common health and safety hazards.

- Always check fire evacuation routes and exits. Make yourself aware of procedures for other emergencies (e.g. earthquakes) if they can occur in the country being visited.
- Don't use electrical equipment that has exposed live cables, damage or burn marks.
- As a rule, only drink bottled or boiled water and only eat freshly prepared food that is thoroughly cooked and served very hot. Read the NHS advice on healthcare abroad for further tips (see link below)
- If you are not happy with the safety standards where you are staying or working, do something about it.

## Useful websites

### Overseas Visits: University health and safety standard:

[www.essex.ac.uk/staff/activities-health-and-safety/overseas-travel](http://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/activities-health-and-safety/overseas-travel)

[www.essex.ac.uk/student/activities-health-and-safety/overseas-travel](http://www.essex.ac.uk/student/activities-health-and-safety/overseas-travel)

This site also includes information on how to access country specific travel advice from our travel insurers.

### Booking business travel

<https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/travel-and-transport/booking-business-travel>

### Travel insurance

<https://sp.essex.ac.uk/sections/finance/SitePages/Business%20Support.aspx>

**Gov.UK Travel advice:** Information on country specific risks: [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) and what to do in a crisis: [www.gov.uk/how-to-deal-with-a-crisis-overseas](http://www.gov.uk/how-to-deal-with-a-crisis-overseas), including contact details of local embassies and details of how to subscribe to regular travel alerts.

### NHS Fit for Travel: [www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk)

Guidance on Country specific health risks and vaccination requirements.

### NHS Travel Health: [www.nhs.uk/Livewell/travelhealth](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/travelhealth)

General travel health advice.

### NHS Healthcare Abroad: [www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad](http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad)

Advice on obtaining *European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)*. (For UK travellers to Europe).

## Contacts for further help:

Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Health and Safety advice

**T** 01206 872944

**E** [safety@essex.ac.uk](mailto:safety@essex.ac.uk)

Travel health advice (staff)

**T** 01206 872399

**E** [ohqueries@essex.ac.uk](mailto:ohqueries@essex.ac.uk)

University of Essex Insurance Team:

**E** [insurance@essex.ac.uk](mailto:insurance@essex.ac.uk)

Essex Abroad Office

**T** +44(0)1206 872632

**E** [saoadmin@essex.ac.uk](mailto:saoadmin@essex.ac.uk)

