



PREDEPARTURE HANDBOOK

SANTA ROSA
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
SICILY & BAY OF NAPLES
SUMMER 2019

AIFS Staff

AIFS Staff is there to help with arrival and settling in, provide an orientation, answer your questions, give travel and sightseeing advice, offer support for homesickness and/or culture shock and generally help facilitate the program to make sure you have the best possible experience! The AIFS staff member will have a 24-hour duty cell phone which students can call at any time in the case of emergency during the program. You will receive this number in your predeparture materials prior to the program departure.

Contact Details

For non-urgent questions before the program please email jlees@aifs.co.uk

Program Manager in London

Jessica Lees

jlees@aifs.co.uk

Introduction

Your upcoming study abroad experience may well change your life. It will certainly change your perceptions and lead you to new thoughts and directions.

As you prepare to leave the U.S., take some time to consider your plans and expectations. It is interesting and fun to compare them before your departure and after your return. Many come true. Others are tempered by the reality of your experience abroad. Flexibility in attitudes and expectations will enhance your ability to enjoy a new culture and to experience another country's lifestyle. Try to be open-minded and don't compare everything to what you are accustomed at home. Sure, life may seem less luxurious and comfortable, but there are many other things to compensate for this.

What you get from your time abroad will depend on how much effort you put into breaking away from your American group and meeting new people in the communities you're visiting. AIFS will do everything it can to provide you with advice, information, resources and suggestions on how to do this. Make the most of this assistance and get out and see Italy.

You are sure to have many questions and concerns before the start of your program. You will be able to answer many of your own questions if you take the time to review this pre-departure handbook and do a little extra research before your departure. This will enable you to leave feeling more confident and prepared.

Topics Covered

- Communication
- Money
- Packing
- Travel
- Culture Shock
- Safety and Security
- Embassy Registration
- Connect with us!

Communication

Keeping in touch with friends and family back home is very important but luckily it is easier than ever. While updating your Facebook status is nice, nothing beats getting a real letter in the mail! If you have any questions about any of this information, please email jlees@aifs.co.uk

Internet Access

We realize that the internet is the main way people keep in contact by using email, Facebook, Twitter and Skype. As part of the program you will have access to wireless internet. It can be slower/less reliable than in the USA and any illegal streaming/downloading will not be tolerated.

Your accommodation will have wifi access. The Study Center in Syracuse also has free wifi access that students can use during office hours. Many cafés and restaurants also have wifi. Normal practice is they will give you the password when you make a purchase.



Your US Smartphone in Europe

We've all become very attached to our smartphones. If you are planning on bringing your smartphone, please consider these points:



- Make sure it is insured. (Thieves like them.)
- Contact your US phone service provider before departure. (Calls from Europe can be \$1/min)
- Check the prices and decide if you want an international plan or European data roaming package. (Can be \$25+ for 100MB)
- Know how to turn off data roaming on your phone and use it with (free) available wifi networks only.

Students with smartphones have mainly used them with free wifi networks only turning on data roaming when there was no other option or in times of need e.g. to look at maps.

Italian Cell Phones

Some students purchase an Italian cell phone on arrival. Most work on a pay-as-you-go basis with pre-paid minutes.

One big difference from the USA is that it does not cost anything to receive calls on an Italian cell phone in Italy. However, there is a charge to make local calls and you may find that cell-phone-to-cell-phone calls cost more than in the U.S. Calling the U.S. directly from an Italian cell phone will be expensive and is not recommended.

Prices vary but €30-€60 will get you a basic phone and SIM card with some phone call credit. More detailed information will be available upon arrival. A cell phone purchased in Italy can be used in other European countries; however, you will have to pay roaming charges. You will often be required to show ID (passport) when purchasing a phone.

European SIM Cards + US Cell Phones

You can purchase an Italian SIM card to use in a U.S. cell phone, provided that your phone is unlocked and compatible. Some U.S. providers can unlock your phone for you for a charge before you leave the U.S. Be advised that this may void your warranty so you are no longer covered in the event of loss, damage or theft.



A SIM card and a basic plan will cost between €10-15 per month. The main providers often have offers so please ask and check with AIFS Staff before making your purchase.

Internet-based Phone Services

There are many different services available which allow you to use your laptop or smart phone to call other users for free. Skype



www.skype.com allows you to create an account and add credit so you can call any number. Google Hangouts provides a similar service and calls (over Wifi) to some US numbers are free! For users of Apple products, [FaceTime](#) is very popular. All require an internet connection, and the quality of your call can vary greatly depending on signal strength.

If you plan on using this method to keep in touch, we advise doing a test run before you depart for Europe. Don't forget the considerable time difference between the U.S. and Italy. Also, please call at sensible times and be considerate to roommates.

Telephones / Payphones

It is unlikely you will have a landline. We advise using Wifi based services for the majority of your communication.

Payphones do still exist but they are normally used for emergencies only. The instructions for use should be listed in English. All local calls in Italy cost money.

Calling Cards

This could be an AT&T (www.att.com) or MCI (www.mci.com) card that you purchase in the U.S. or a pre-paid calling card that you buy in Italy. If you buy a



calling card whilst in the U.S, make sure that you ask for one that allows you to call from outside the U.S. back to the U.S. and NOT one that allows you to call internationally from the U.S.

Mail

As your program is based in several locations, we do not recommend you receive mail. In an emergency, you may have items posted to the Syracuse study center or Naples hotel. Please speak to your Tour Manager for this.

Regular mail to or from the U.S. takes at least one week, but usually longer. On receiving a parcel in Italy you may have to pay a small fee (a customs tax) for parcels sent from the U.S. Usually this applies if the stated value of the parcel is over \$50. If you wish to send important items, FedEx or UPS are safer / quicker and you can track the package. Mail should not be sent to student accommodation, use the address above.

Note to parents and friends: When sending care packages or parcels, state on the customs declaration that you are sending "**used personal items**" otherwise they may be held at customs as if you were importing goods. If this happens there will be delays in delivery and often customs (import) fees to pay.

Please do not send prescription drugs / vitamins / contact lenses / cosmetics / food or anything that could be mistaken for these items. They will be stopped at customs, lots of paperwork will be requested and taxes may have to be paid.

Money

Using an ATM machine to withdraw cash with your debit card and having access to a credit card and/or a Travel Money card are the safest and simplest ways to access money in Europe. It's always a good idea to use a combination of at least two methods so that you are covered in the majority of situations.

Accessing Cash - Using your Debit Card in an ATM

The Italian refer to an ATM as a Bancomat. In almost all cases your U.S. debit cards can access money from the ATMs of European banks. All you need is your 4-digit PIN number. Withdrawing a large sum of cash in the beginning and keeping it in a safe place at home, and carrying only what you need daily is generally a good way to cut down on fees.

Please pay attention to exchange rates and any out of network / overseas transaction fees your bank will charge in the U.S. These vary depending on your bank and can be an unwelcome surprise. If you make an ATM withdrawal overseas it is a good idea to check your statement online and see exactly how much it is costing you in U.S. dollars.

Also, check before you leave the U.S. to see if your bank has a relationship with any European banks which might save you some money in withdrawal fees.

Currency

The main currency used throughout most of Europe is the Euro. If possible, you should get some Euros prior to your departure from the U.S. particularly if you are not taking the AIFS group flight package. Having some cash on you is handy for refreshments while traveling and if you arrive late at night. Check www.xe.com for current exchange rates.

We advise not bringing U.S. currency with you as many places will not change it while those that do tend to charge high commission rates. If family and

friends want to give you money as a gift before departing advise them to place it directly into your bank account so you can access it through the ATM once abroad.

Coins are used more frequently in Europe and banknotes have different sizes and colors. It's worth taking a minute to familiarize yourself with the currency before arrival.



Please don't carry around large sums of cash. If it is lost or stolen there is no way to replace it and it is generally not covered by insurance.

Travel Money Cards



Gaining popularity as a back up to a regular bank account are pre-paid cards, e.g. [Visa Travel Money](#), [Cash Passport](#), or [FairFX](#). Available in the U.S. before

departure, they work in the same way as regular debit/credit cards by using a PIN number for withdrawals and transactions. They are a secure way of using money overseas and in the event that the pre-paid card is lost or stolen it can be replaced quickly.

Credit Cards

It is strongly recommended that you apply for a credit card if you do not already have one. Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted in Europe. American Express is less widely accepted. Some U.S. banks now offer international cards with



a “Chip and PIN” system, so check with yours before you leave.

Please keep in mind that credit cards are not accepted everywhere, especially U.S. style cards where you have to sign for your purchase. Always check if a business accepts your credit card before making a purchase. Many places have a minimum spend if paying by card. Please also have some photo ID with you as well as it is normal to be asked for some at the time of payment.

Banking

It is very important that you contact your bank and inform them when and where you will be overseas – otherwise they may block your account when they see purchases in Europe and getting them unblocked can be frustrating and take time.

Make sure you separate any joint checking/savings accounts you have before you leave the U.S. Such accounts do not exist in Europe and therefore ATMs cannot access your card details. You will only be able to access money from your checking account so please make sure that you transfer funds into this account.



Please keep your cards extra safe whilst in Europe. If they are lost it can be a complicated procedure to get them replaced. In most cases your bank will only send replacement cards to your American address, not your overseas address, so you could be left without cards for a while.

If your bank account has an online banking capability, it's a good idea to sign up for that service, so you can manage your money more effectively.

We suggest that you come to Italy with two debit cards from two different banks for emergencies. If one of your debit cards was ever stolen or lost it would be easier and more economical to transfer money from one bank account to the other one.

Students will not be able to open bank accounts during their study abroad program.

Emergency Money Transfers

The fastest way to get money transferred to you while you are abroad is through [Money Gram](#) or [Western Union-Money in Minutes](#). This can be done at any Western Union or Money Gram office or online with a credit or debit card. Please bear in mind that it is expensive to send money this way, so it should only really be used in emergency situations.



There is no charge to receive funds; all you need is some ID and the reference number (given to the sender of the money) to pick up the money anywhere in the world.



Tipping

Finally, let's talk tipping. As a rule we don't tip excessively in Europe. It's just a cultural difference. Most people employed in the service industry are paid a reasonable wage, therefore, Europeans only tip if they have received good service. You are not expected to tip in bars or taxis in Italy.

The finer points of tipping will be discussed during your program orientation when you arrive.

Packing

Deciding what to bring and what to leave behind can be difficult. Past students nearly always find that they brought more belongings than necessary. Pack light, it is much easier to get around. To help you with your clothing choices, the statistics below show the average rainfall and temperature annually.

June	Average Low Temperature	Average Temperature	Average High Temperature
Catania	61°F	73°F	85°F
Naples	61°F	70°F	79°F
July	Average Low Temperature	Average Temperature	Average High Temperature
Catania	66°F	79°F	90°F
Naples	66°F	77°F	86°F

Weather

Summers in Italy can get very hot but Italians rarely have air conditioning in their apartments because of the high cost of electricity. Luckily, however, most Italian apartments are designed to keep cool with uncarpeted floors and shutters to keep out the sun. Packing correctly will ensure your comfort for the program and activities.

Pack light!

Please keep in mind a few key points:

- You will have to carry your entire luggage yourself (airport/plane/bus/taxi/stairs).
- Airplane luggage allowances are strict but reasonable. (One checked bag, maximum weight 50lbs / 23kgs and one carry on, maximum weight 17.6lbs / 8kgs is enough.)
- It is highly likely your accommodation will not have an elevator. (Lots of stairs)
- Closet space will be limited and you may not have many clothes hangers.
- If you are traveling after the program, you will have to take your bags with you or store them.
- Don't forget if you buy souvenirs, they will take up space in your luggage on the return leg.

Travel tips

- Have a sturdy label on your luggage and attach something (sticker/belt) to identify it easily.
- Pack spare socks/underwear, pajamas, a change of clothes and a few toiletries in your carry-on bag in case your checked baggage gets delayed.
- Make sure any liquids you are transporting are securely wrapped to prevent leaks in your luggage.

Clothing

Only bring some of your favorite, comfortable clothes that you know you will wear. There are stores in Europe with clothes at reasonable prices and we've found most students want to buy at least one piece of clothing while studying abroad.

You will be living in the heart of a busy city, not a college campus. Europeans tend to dress appropriately to the situation e.g. pajamas at home and bikinis on the beach. One of the best ways to fit into your new surroundings is to think about what you are wearing. At all times of year when visiting churches you need to have your legs and shoulders covered.



Do bring

- Clothing that you can re-wear and layer. E.g. jeans, long and short-sleeved t-shirts, sweatshirts, sweaters etc.
- Comfortable socks and underwear. You may also want to bring some footwear to wear in the house.
- Shoes that keep your feet warm, dry and are good for lots of walking. You will walk a lot!
- A coat that will keep you warm and dry whilst walking to school. Hat and gloves if coming in winter months.
- Sports shoes or sneakers in case you decide to take part in any sporting activities.

Do not bring

- Too many dressy outfits, as opportunities to wear them are usually limited. However, if you do like to go out in the evening, many clubs will only admit people who are suitably dressed (no sneakers and/or jeans).
- Clothing with special washing instructions (e.g. "dry clean only").
- Clothes you might wear. Only bring things you are sure to wear.

Practical items

Do bring

- ATM and/or Credit Card. You will need access to funds and having more than one option is a good idea.
- Photocopy of your passport / credit card / driving license. (Just in case you misplace originals).
- Your laptop and/or iPad/tablet device. Don't forget the chargers.
- Towels (Only one bath towel and maybe a small hand towel, no more).
- Adapter for European outlets. US are flat with two flat prongs. EU ones have rounded two or three pins.
- If you use prescription medicine please bring enough for the duration of the program.

- Camera and charger. You will be taking lots of pictures.
- Contact lens supplies; bring enough for the duration of the program. Don't forget your glasses as well.
- A small selection of your favorite cosmetics – they may not be easy to replace abroad.
- A small selection of pain relievers and cold/cough medicines that you typically use, just in case.

Do not bring

- Bed-linen or pillows - these are all provided.
- School supplies. Paper, folders etc, they can be purchased abroad (paper sizes are different to the U.S.).
- Anything that will distress you if you lose it or it gets broken in transit.
- Hairdryers and straighteners - the electrical voltage is different, which prevents US hairdryers from working in Europe. Both are available relatively cheaply and you can maybe even share the cost with your roommates.

Please ensure that you have adequate insurance for any personal effects such as digital cameras, laptops etc. that you may be considering bringing.

Luggage allowance

Please check with your airline before you fly as luggage allowances vary. For example, [Lufthansa](#) allows you to have one checked piece of luggage, weighing no more than 23kg (50lbs) for free. If your bag weighs more than 23kg (50lbs) then you will be charged \$150.

Most intercontinental airlines also allow one standard size carry-on and one small "accessory" (small purse/laptop bag/camera bag), so this should be plenty.

If this is not enough for you, you can pay extra to take a second bag, but remember, you will be responsible for carrying it.

Traveling

During your Study Abroad Program you may have free weekends during which you can travel. To make the most of your opportunity, it is a good idea to do some research before the program starts. When you arrive, AIFS staff will give you plenty of advice and assistance. If you have a question, please email us at jlees@aifs.co.uk

Train

Trains in Italy are comfortable and reliable and are a great way to explore the country.

There are two different train companies in Italy; the state-run *Trenitalia* and the privately-owned *Italo*. From the U.S. you can look at www.trenitalia.com and www.italotreno.it to find details and prices of trains (in English). Both train companies have a limited number of cheap tickets available for every route. To get hold of these “economy” tickets, you will need to book your tickets well in advance.

Please be aware when purchasing tickets that there is more than one train station in Rome. *Trenitalia* trains leave from Rome Termini, the main train station which is connected to both lines of the metro and is also an important bus hub. *Italo* trains leave from Rome Tiburtina which is on line B of the metro.

If you want to travel to other parts of Europe, you'll find that train travel is not as quick as the plane and is usually more expensive. However, it is certainly more relaxed, with no luggage restrictions or excessive security. If you book far enough in advance you may find some great deals. During busy periods (Italian holidays and festivals) it is always advisable to book in advance.

If you are thinking about getting a Eurail Pass, visit www.eurail.com for details. If you decide to get a pass, it is best to do so before you leave as delivery to Italy will be more expensive. Think carefully before buying a multi-day pass as you would have to do plenty of travelling in order to get value for money. Please also remember that even if you have a Eurail pass, you are still often required to pay a reservation

fee on high speed trains meaning that the pass may not be as good value as it may seem at first. Also be aware that the pass is not valid on all types of train so think carefully on where you want to go and how you are going to get there before buying a pass. If, for example, you have bought a two-country pass for Italy and France you will not be able to change trains in Switzerland on the way to France and the pass may not be valid on the direct overnight train so you may end up not being able to use your pass at all!

Bus

Sometimes the cheapest way to get around Europe is by bus. Be warned that it will be a slow and often uncomfortable way to travel but you will get there, eventually...

Eurolines is a good place to start: www.eurolines.com.

Most buses have a bathroom, make regular stops and you do get to see some of the countryside en route.

Car Rental

Fancy driving yourself? Renting a car in Europe is often more trouble than it's worth. Normally you have to be over 25 years of age, the cars are stick shift, parking is a nightmare, gas is \$8+ a gallon and there are plenty of traffic circles to negotiate! If you are really keen, talk to AIFS staff before booking.



Where to stay?

Hostels – Don't be afraid of staying in a hostel. Modern hostels are clean and comfortable and are great places for getting tourist information and meeting people. Many hostels also have the option of a private room with bathroom. Take a look at www.hostelworld.com for more information, photos and guest reviews.

Hotels - There are a variety of hotels and guest houses across Europe. Rooms are much smaller than in the U.S, rarely have air conditioning and if they are booked for two people that is the maximum number allowed.

Prices vary hugely depending on location and season. Be aware of Easter and local holidays that will push up prices. Often rooms will come with breakfast included. Check previous guest reviews on www.tripadvisor.com and use an online map so you know exactly where it is located. Good places to start looking for hotels are www.booking.com and www.trivago.com.

Apartments - When traveling in a group, a private apartment could be an ideal option. Check out www.airbnb.com or www.vrbo.com and read previous reviews carefully.

Student travel companies

There are companies in Europe aimed solely at the student travel market. They arrange weekend tours that depart after class on Thursdays (sometimes by

bus or you buy your own flight) and return Sunday evenings.

They can be a convenient way of traveling however, we advise you to consult with AIFS staff and ask the company plenty of detailed questions about what the itinerary includes and type of accommodation before booking. Some companies we can recommend are: www.bus2alps.com and www.wsaeurope.com

International Student Identity Card (ISIC)

In order to prove you are a student whilst in Europe, it might be worth getting an International Student Identity Card. These are usually cheaper to purchase in Europe (€10) and are available at numerous places in Italy. The cards are recognized all across Europe, providing discounts at hostels, movie theatres, museum entrances etc. www.isiccard.com / www.isic.it.

Further research

Take a look at the following resources. Don't forget most travel guides can be obtained in digital format and/or have an app you can download for your laptop/tablet.

Let's Go Travel Guides. Written by students and updated each year: www.letsgo.com.

Time Out. Good city guides and you can get newsletters by email: www.timeout.com.

Lonely Planet. Great travel guides and has a useful website: www.lonelyplanet.com.

City Spy Maps/Guides. An often funny, alternative spin on European cities: www.thespymap.com.

Culture shock – What is it?

Study Abroad can be a wonderfully exciting, rewarding, culturally enlightening and expanding experience, not forgetting what a great opportunity it is for personal growth and your own cultural competence! However it can, at times, also be a stressful experience. Students are at a stage where a lot of transitions are taking place in their lives, and all students will experience and deal with these transitions in different ways. All transitions have common symptoms and stages - the symptoms may include irritability, frustration, disorientation, helplessness and withdrawal.

In transition experiences, first we may *fight* that which is new, or we may choose to take *flight* to escape the challenging situation. We may literally leave the environment or withdraw internally. Taking part in a study abroad program does not eliminate stresses students may have at home, and may even exacerbate them. What may initially appear to be a crisis is just a normal developmental phase of adjustment known as 'culture shock'. We believe, the more you know about 'culture shock' the more equipped you will be to understand and deal with it.



But what is 'culture shock'? We could list many academic definitions but, to put it plainly, 'culture shock' can be defined as a clash between our own views of the world (which are determined by our home culture) and our new cultural environment. It can feel like we have a lack of control, that we are helpless in this new culture. 'Culture shock' is a developmental phase that is common amongst study abroad students, it is normal to experience it. Culture shock is also often described as an adjustment cycle, initially we feel really excited and optimistic about going on a study abroad, we can't wait to get to the country we will be calling home for the next however long. This is the high point of the cycle or, what is often referred to as the 'honeymoon stage'. Then we hit the second phase or the low point of the cycle, 'the disintegration or crisis stage' where all we can see is difference, but not in a positive way; nothing works in the same way, food is different, it's not like home, we begin to miss our support system and all our creature comforts.

We have to navigate our way through a culture that has different rules, behaviors, food and language (even when initially it seems that we share a common one!), and it can really feel like an uphill struggle. 'Culture shock' is about this struggle to become culturally competent in a different culture. This is perfectly natural, and it can help us to learn and grow from the experience. As it is a developmental process, how long and how we work through it depends on what resources we have available to us. Some individuals will seem to have no problems adjusting whilst for others it can be a real struggle. The W-curve (see overleaf) provides a good illustration of the stages of adjustment which one may experience.



Based on Oberg (1960) and Gallahorn & Gallahorn (1963)

- **Honeymoon Phase** – occurs when you first arrive in a new culture. The excitement of being somewhere new and different!
- **Cultural Shock** - may be noticeable after a few days or weeks. Those initially exciting cultural differences may now cause you to feel insecure or confused, as you struggle to understand the rules of the new culture you find yourself in. At this stage, you may find you miss your family and home support structures the most.
- **Initial Adjustment** - you may find you feel irritated, or frustrated with the cultural differences you come across in daily life: perhaps with the learning and teaching environment, or in your relationships with staff or other students, or with your accommodation. You will probably find you make comparisons with your home culture and decide you prefer home! You may be consciously or unconsciously assessing your own cultural values and trying to make sense of them.
- **Mental Isolation** - you will by now probably worked out how to operate in your new cultural environment - how to satisfactorily interact with people and make friends, where to shop, eat and socialize, as well as to understand and cope with your new learning environment. You will most likely start to accept the differences between your home culture and those of the new culture and to feel more relaxed.
- **Acceptance and Integration** - brings with it a feeling of self-assurance and more complete understanding of your home and the new culture. Differences and similarities are valued and important and you feel confident about handling most or all situations.

(Source: <http://www.bris.ac.uk/international/yearabroad/study/documents/culture.doc>)

It is important to remember not everyone will experience the above, some will for differing lengths of time, and some may only experience parts of the W-curve. To help ease the transition keep in touch with your home country, ensure you take care of yourself and talk to someone about how you are feeling. And remember what you may experience is normal and that other students will be feeling the same way as you.

This is just a guide to help you to understand some of the emotions you may encounter during your time abroad no matter how short.

Safety and Security

AIFS has been arranging study abroad for American students for over 50 years and we have had over 1.5 million participants on our programs. As you prepare for this exciting experience, we want you to know that our primary concern is student safety. One of the most frequently asked questions from parents is “Is it safe to study abroad?”. I hope the following will answer any questions you may have and help to reassure you that we take our responsibilities very seriously.

- 1) AIFS provides detailed security briefings to students on behavior, dress code and general awareness in their Study Abroad location. We do not display signs saying American or U.S. outside our student centers.
- 2) All students are asked to register with the American Embassy before they arrive (instructions are in this handbook). We also keep copies on file of passports and photo ID of all current students when they subsequently arrive.
- 3) AIFS has a 24/7 emergency number that students or their families can use to reach AIFS staff immediately in an emergency. If necessary, duty staff can reach senior AIFS staff instantly. AIFS has an incident response plan and all staff members are trained in how to handle any situation which may arise.
- 4) All students are given the number they need to call to reach the local emergency services (police, fire, ambulance), and are advised to call this immediately in the event of serious incident, illness or injury. We ask that they also immediately contact AIFS staff using our emergency procedures so that we can provide any additional assistance required. If a student needs to see a doctor or is hospitalised, AIFS staff will accompany/visit them and keep doing so until they are well.
- 5) We receive and monitor all U.S. State Department advisories and inform students of areas (if any) that are temporarily not recommended for visits by U.S. Citizens. Individuals can also look at State Department information on the web at this address: <http://travel.state.gov/>
- 6) We go to great lengths to be aware of the current whereabouts of all AIFS students. Of course, we know their addresses in their program location and our on-site staff is in close contact with them on a regular basis. We also require students to log their travel plans, addresses and contact details with us when travelling outside the city at weekends. We advise students to purchase inexpensive, personal cellular phones and we record their phone numbers so that we can contact them easily.
- 7) In the highly unlikely event of the U.S. State Department issuing a specific Travel Warning that U.S. Citizens in any AIFS study abroad city should return to the USA (this would be unprecedented), AIFS will suspend any currently operating program, fly the students home (with timing as appropriate to the situation) and rebate pro-rata program fees subject to the usual deductions outlined in our agreements.
- 8) AIFS medical insurance provides extensive coverage for students/schools who have taken it (see http://www.aifspartnerships.com/pdf/insurance_summer.pdf for details). This includes a Team Assist plan which provides a worldwide 24-hour emergency telephone assistance service. Multilingual help and advice will be provided in the event of any emergency. Please check with your home university whether AIFS medical insurance has been included in your program fee.

Embassy Registration

For security reasons AIFS strongly advises all its students to register with the U.S. State Department before leaving the U.S. We are unable to do this for you – you must do it individually on-line. You will need your passport information before you can do this.

Go to the following website: <https://step.state.gov/step/>



Smart Traveler Enrollment Program

A SERVICE OF THE BUREAU OF CONSULAR AFFAIRS
U.S. Department of State



Sign In or [Create Account](#)



[Forgot Username](#) or [Password?](#)



What is STEP?

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service to allow U.S. citizens and nationals traveling abroad to enroll their trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

Benefits of Enrolling in STEP

- ☒ Receive important information from the Embassy about safety conditions in your destination country, helping you make informed decisions about your travel plans.
- ☒ Help the U.S. Embassy contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency.
- ☒ Help family and friends get in touch with you in an emergency.

Stay Informed, Stay Connected, Stay Safe!

1. Click on **Create Individual Account**.
2. Fill out the password and security information – note this down and keep it somewhere safe. Fill out as many details as possible.
3. Add Passport information.

4. Add Emergency contact information – please enter as much information as possible to allow the State Department to contact your next of kin in the event of an emergency while you are abroad.
5. Add Privacy information – this is at your own discretion but it is advisable that you allow family members to have access to this information in the event of an emergency.
6. Confirm your account details and print for your records. This will now take you back to your Profile Information.
7. From here you should click on **Add a Trip**; this will take you to the Itinerary page.
8. Destination Info – please enter your first location as follows:

Country – **Italy**
 Local Embassy – **Rome**
 Type of Visit – **Extended Stay**
 Date of Arrival and Departure – *please enter the dates of your program*
 Purpose of Visit – **“Study Abroad”** *plus the name of your home college.*

9. Address – please enter as follows:

Destination Type – **School**
 Address Line 1 - **AIFS c/o Syracuse Academy**
 Address Line 2 – **Piazzale San Marziano 1**
 City – **Syracuse**
 Postal Code – **96100**
 Country – **Italy**
 Phone number – **0931 61424**

10. Travellers – please enter your own information. One form of contact information must be entered here – home address, telephone number, e mail address, fax number.
11. Email list – add your email address if you would like to be kept up to receive email Travel Warnings, Public Announcements and other information from the State Department. You will then see any relevant information recently issued about your destination country.
12. Finally you should confirm the summary of information. When you click on **Finish** it will take you back to the Profile page from where you can logout or add other trips, if necessary.

Connect with us!



aifsabroad

<https://www.instagram.com/aifscustomized/>
<https://www.instagram.com/aifsabroad/>



AIFS Study Abroad

<https://www.facebook.com/AIFScustomized/>
<https://www.facebook.com/AIFSAbroad/>



@aifscustomized

<https://twitter.com/aifscustomized>
<https://twitter.com/aifsabroad>