



Off-Campus Programs Student Handbook



2019-2020

Calvin University Off-Campus Programs Student Handbook

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Academic Matters

Students will typically earn between 12-15 credits during a study abroad semester. Although many of the courses taken during your program are taught by local professors, they will appear as Calvin credits on a transcript. No transfer of credits will be necessary. Grades from classes taught by Calvin professors will be figured into your total Calvin GPA. Grades from non-Calvin courses will appear on your transcript but will not be figured into your GPA.

Before leaving campus, you should have worked out a tentative schedule for the following semester with an academic advisor. You will register for classes for the next semester from your study abroad location, and it may be difficult to communicate with your advisors regarding registration during the semester abroad. Although your program director is available to answer some questions, you should rely on your own academic advisor for specific information about your individual program.

Banking / Money

As you prepare to study abroad, make sure you understand what is and what is NOT included in your program fee and plan accordingly. The Off-Campus Programs budget spreadsheet (<https://calvin.edu/offices-services/off-campus-programs/forms-and-resources/student-orientation-handouts/>) can help you with this. Another helpful resource are students who have participated in the



program in the past. Ask them what kinds of expenses they had and how much they spent. Some common expenses include books and supplies, daily snack costs, independent travel, toiletries and over-the-counter medicines, etc.

In most cases, it is not necessary to exchange currency before you leave. Do not carry large amount of American currency with you. Many overseas banks will not exchange money for non-clients, and American cash is often suspected to be counterfeit. The simplest way to obtain local currency is by withdrawing it from an ATM in-country. Contact your bank and credit card companies to inform them you will be traveling outside the country for the semester. Make sure you have a toll-free number to call in case your bank card is frozen because your bank suspects fraud. If possible, have more than one source for funds.

In some semester programs students will receive a biweekly stipend for food and transportation. If this is true for your program, please turn in your banking information to the Off-Campus Programs office as soon as possible.

In country, it is generally better to withdraw larger amounts of money less often in order to avoid bank fees. However, be careful when carrying large amounts of cash. Whenever possible, withdraw funds from well-known banks and avoid miscellaneous ATMs on the street. If your card is confiscated by a machine, inform your home bank immediately. You may also go to the bank that owns the ATM and may be able to have the card returned to you when you show identification.

Taxes and Study Abroad

If you are abroad during the spring semester, you will be abroad on Tax Day, April 15th. You have a couple of options for filing your taxes.

- **Where to File:** You can file at an American embassy or online. If you do not have a job while studying abroad, you won't have to file anything for your time overseas, but you can use your travel abroad as a tax deduction for educational expenses.
- **File on-line.** Typically, students filing the short form can use free software to file on-line. All you need is your W-2, which many companies provide electronically. You can also have your parents take a picture of your W-2 forms and send them to you.
- **When to File:** If you are a U.S. citizen or resident alien residing overseas, or are in the military on duty outside the U.S., on the regular due date of your return, you are allowed an [automatic 2-month extension](#) to file your return and pay any amount due without requesting an extension. For a calendar year return, the automatic 2-month extension is to June 15. If you qualify for this 2-month extension, penalties for paying any tax late are assessed from the 2-month extended due date of the payment (June 15 for calendar year taxpayers). However, even if you are allowed an extension, you will have to pay interest on any tax not paid by the regular due date of your return (April 15 for calendar year taxpayers). If you qualify for the 2-month extension but are unable to file your return by the automatic 2-month extension date, you can request an additional extension to October 15 by filing [Form 4868, Application for Automatic Extension of Time To File U.S. Individual Income Tax Return](#), before the automatic 2-month extension date. However, if you qualify for the 2-month extension, penalties for paying any tax late are assessed from the extended due date of the payment (June 15 for calendar year taxpayers). Otherwise, if you do not qualify for the 2-month extension, penalties for paying late are assessed from the original due date of your return (April 15 for calendar year taxpayers). Also, even if you are allowed extensions to June 15 and/or October 15, you will owe interest on any unpaid tax amount from the original due date of the return (April 15 for calendar year taxpayers).

<https://www.irs.gov/uac/Free-File:-Do-Your-Federal-Taxes-for-Free>

Voting (Absentee)

If you are abroad during an election year and want to vote, you can vote by absentee ballot. Register to vote before you leave. Consult the Federal Voting Assistance Program website <https://www.fvap.gov/> and your local election officials to find out what steps you need to take to vote absentee. Depending on what state you live in, you may need to have your vote notarized by the US embassy or consular in your host country.

For more information, visit the Youth Vote Overseas Organization website <https://www.overseasvotefoundation.org/vote/home.htm>.

International Travel Procedures

Passport

1. Get your passport well in advance of your trip (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports.html>). You can have your passport photo taken at Walgreens, CVS, the UPS store, or even the Calvin University Audio-Visual department.
2. Make sure you have a **signed** passport valid for at least 6 months beyond your return date.
3. Make sure you have at least three blank pages in your passport.
4. Make a copy of the photo page of your passport and save it in electronically and hard copy.
5. If your host country requires it, get a valid visa for the duration of your stay.

Airline tickets

1. As soon as you have been accepted into your program, contact Calvin Travel (Cristi Payton) (travel@calvin.edu) to make your flight arrangements. While the cost of the group flight is part of your program fee, any travel deviations will have to be billed separately.
2. If you have frequent flier status with the airline, let Calvin Travel know your frequent flier number.
3. In general, the paper ticket is a thing of the past. When you arrive at the airport, present your passport at the ticket counter or the kiosk and you will be given your boarding pass.
4. If you download the airline app on your mobile device, you may check in electronically and get your boarding pass on your phone.

Luggage

1. Typically, a standard checked luggage size wavers around 27 x 21 x 14 inches with a maximum allowable weight of 50 pounds. Check with your airline's website and always err on the low/small side. Fees for oversize or overweight bags are very high!
2. Generally, your checked bag will travel directly to your final destination and you will not see it en-route. If you need to clear customs before your final destination, you may need to claim your bag first and then re-check it once you have cleared customs.
3. Most airlines allow one carry-on bag and one "personal item"—a purse or small backpack. The maximum dimensions for a carry-on bag are usually 9 inches x 14 inches x 22 inches (22 cm x 35 cm x 56 cm), including handles and wheels.
4. Security restricts what you may transport in your carry-on: Liquids, gels and aerosols packed in carry-on must follow the 3-1-1 liquids rule: 3.4 ounces or less per container; placed in a 1 quart size, clear, plastic, zip top bag (all liquids must fit in bag); only 1 bag per passenger. Pack this near the top of your bag for easy access.
5. Keep electronic devices close and easily accessed.
6. Review the prohibited items list for both carry-on and checked baggage. *link*
7. If you purchase a baggage lock, be sure to get one that is TSA recognized.
8. Tape a card with your name and contact information on your electronics, leave an identifying card in each of your bags in case they are lost.
9. If the plane is smaller, you may be required to "gate check" your larger carry-on bag. This means that your bag will be tagged, and you will leave it at the airplane door. When you get off the flight, you will wait in the gangway while airport workers unload those bags directly outside the door. If

you are required to gate-check your bag, be sure to remove any medicines, electronic devices, and important documents (ie. passport) before you leave your bag.

10. If your luggage is black or “generic” mark it with a unique luggage tag or another indicator to help you locate it easily at the luggage carousel.

Airport Security

<https://www.tsa.gov/travel/frequently-asked-questions>

1. Unless your boarding pass says “TSA Precheck” you will get into the Standard Screening line.
2. Have your boarding pass and identification (passport) out for inspection.
3. Remove the 3-1-1 liquids bag and place it in a bin.
4. Ensure that your pockets are empty (keys, tissues, currency, wallets, cell phones, etc.) and remove bulky jewelry (valuable items can be placed in carry-on).
5. Remove your shoes and place them directly on the X-ray belt.
6. Remove personal electronic devices larger than a cell phone from your carry-on bag and place them into a bin with nothing placed on or under them for X-ray screening. (ie. laptops, tablets, e-readers and handheld game consoles.)
7. Wait for the security agent to invite you to pass through the screening device.
8. Remember to check the bins and collect all belongings after going through screening.

Motion sickness

It's been found that motion sickness is aggravated by anxiety and stress, meaning it doesn't necessarily go away after your flight. But there are a few easy ways to avoid these side effects, or at least mitigate them after they've already started.

Avoid reading. While doctors recommend zoning in on a stable scene or horizon line when you're experiencing motion sickness, reading isn't going to improve your situation at all. What you're doing is adding even more movement that could further mess with your inner equilibrium.

Watch What You Eat Before Your Flight. Avoid taking in a lot of calories and skip salty foods the day before your flight. Salty foods only aggravate dehydration, which also happens on flights where the air is drier (pro tip: drink lots of water). Also skip any greasy foods that would regularly upset your stomach.

Use the Air Vents to Your Advantage. Direct airflow can make a world of difference when you're experiencing motion sickness symptoms in a confined space, such as an airplane seat. Look to the air vent above your seat to provide a bit of relief in times of nausea and distress.

Acupressure. For motion sickness, try using your thumb to push into your wrist about two inches down from the crease of your wrist. Hold it down for a few minutes with varying pressures to find out what works best for you.

Opt for Ginger Ale. Ginger is great for your digestive system. Avoid taking large gulps — you don't want any air bubbles to add to your stomach discomfort. Hard ginger candies can also do wonders for an upset stomach.

Pack Some Dramamine. If all else fails, they do make medication to help curb motion sickness. Be careful, though: Some of these medications can cause severe drowsiness.

Passport Control and Customs

What is the difference between Passport Control and Customs?

Passport Control (immigration) checks passports, visas, and other travel documents. Immigration is responsible for ensuring a person is entering a given country legally. Customs is about making sure that certain illegal or otherwise non-importable things are not entering a country. Customs also ensures that appropriate documents are signed, and taxes paid on certain items. Whenever you enter a country, you will be asked if you have items “to declare” at Customs.

1. After deplaning you will pass through **passport control**. You will need to present your passport, perhaps answer a few questions, and get a stamp in your passport.
2. Many airports forbid the use of cell phones or cameras while waiting in line.
3. Have all your documents, including your passport, plane ticket, and completed landing card (if required) ready to go before you reach the Immigration officer’s window.
4. Answer the Immigration officer’s questions calmly and briefly. Don’t supply extra information unless you are asked to do so.
5. Claim your check luggage and then pass through **customs**. In some this may be as simple as walking through a door that states “Nothing to declare.” In others you may have to fill out documentation or answer questions. Ask your program director for specifics about your host country.



Automated Passport Control (when returning to US)

Automated Passport Control (APC) is a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) program that expedites the entry process for U.S., Canadian and eligible Visa Waiver Program international travelers by providing an automated process through CBP’s Primary Inspection area. Travelers use self-service kiosks to respond to CBP inspection related questions and submit biographic information.

Instead of filling out a paper Customs declaration form, eligible passengers can proceed directly to the APC kiosks in the passport control area. Travelers are prompted to scan their passport, take a photograph using the kiosk, and answer a series of CBP inspection related questions verifying biographic and flight information. Once passengers have completed the series of questions, a receipt will be issued. Travelers then bring their passport and receipt to a CBP Officer to finalize their inspection for entry into the United States. The kiosks allow people residing at the same address to be processed together.

International Students

U.S. Visa

If you are an international student at Calvin and are studying abroad you must check in with the immigration coordinator at Calvin months before to make sure all of your paperwork is up to date, including your visa and I-20. If you are studying abroad during your final semester/year please ask the immigration coordinator how it might affect your OPT application and options.

Travel

When you are working with Travel Services to book your plane ticket to your study abroad location, double check to make sure that you do not need a transit visa for any countries that you will be flying through. If you have an overnight layover that requires a stayover, check that you do not need a visa to enter that country. Double check for these things **BEFORE** the flight is booked.

Visa to Study Abroad

Many of our study abroad locations require students to get a visa. International students who are participating on a Calvin study abroad program often will need to supply extra documentation to receive student visas in their study abroad location. You will need to supply your U.S. visa information as well as documentation from your home country. This process has to start very early on in the semester, right after you have been approved for the program. The visa process to some countries can be long and arduous depending on diplomatic relations between your home country and the host country.



Communications

Think about what option you'll want to take when it comes to your communications abroad. Consider:

- Will I need to use data?
- Will I need GPS access for traveling?
- Can I just get by with making calls and texts only, and not use data?
- Do I want the cheapest means of communication?

Answering these questions will help you decide whether you will need a data bundle with a small amount or a large amount of data allotment; or just a simple call and text plan with no data (basic handheld phone and SIM).

Here are your main options when it comes to cell phones abroad:

Get an international plan with your current carrier

An easy option is to activate your U.S carrier's international plan, allowing your phone to work in your new country exactly as it does at home. You get to keep your number, and it doesn't cost friends and family back home anything extra to contact you. Of course, locals in your host country will not want to call you on that number! Keep in mind that an international plan will cost more than your domestic cell phone plan.

Some carriers offer a flat daily fee that lets you use the talk, text, and data that is included in your current plan, while others charge a certain amount for minutes, texts, and data. Ask your carrier about your international options and whether your current phone will work in the country you're visiting.

Use WiFi and VoIP apps

One way to help limit your costs is to use WiFi as much as possible. Do your research ahead of time to see if free WiFi is available where you're staying or studying.

If you can rely on WiFi, use Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) apps that offer voice and video options, such as Apple's FaceTime, Microsoft's Skype, or Google's Duo to call home. Messaging services like iMessage on an iPhone, WhatsApp, and Facebook Messenger can also help you avoid racking up extra charges for texts.

Just remember to turn off any automatic settings that use cellular data, such as app updates, before you connect to WiFi to prevent any unintended charges.

Choose a phone plan in your new country

A less expensive option is to get a phone plan in the country you'll be living in. You'll need a new, local phone number, meaning anyone that calls you from home will be calling an international number (unless they use a VoIP app). On the plus side, calling anyone in your new country won't cost as much.

You'll need a phone that is compatible with international SIM cards. All recent iPhones will work, and any Android phone that has a SIM slot will likely work (remember to check ahead of time).

Your phone will need to be compatible with the network in the country you are visiting, and you'll also need to check that your phone is unlocked before you add a new SIM card. If your phone doesn't fit these criteria, consider buying an inexpensive prepaid phone once you reach your destination. Prepaid phones are easy to get and can be found at most airports and at many convenience stores.

To get the best deals on a local plan in a foreign country, you need to have a local address and the ability to set up recurring payments. This means you'll probably need to wait until you're in the country to set it up. Research your options ahead of time so you can activate your plan as soon as you get there. Some plans might require you to sign a one-year contract, or you could opt for a monthly pay-as-you-go plan.

A pay-as-you-go SIM card is easy to buy and lets you add the amount of data, minutes, and texts you want. The options can range from unlimited data, text, and talk for a set amount of time to paying just for what you use, when you use it.

Having access to a cell phone while studying abroad can make it easier to navigate your new country and stay in touch with family and friends back home. Research and consider your options for an international phone plan ahead of time to take the stress out of planning, allowing you to fully immerse yourself in the experience.

<https://www.cheapair.com/blog/how-to-choose-a-phone-plan-when-studying-abroad/>

Health and Medical Issues

As soon as you have been accepted into your program, complete Part II of the Horizons online application. You will be asked to supply physical and mental health information and to give your program director access to this information.

Make sure you are up to date on your vaccinations. Visit Calvin Health Services to receive any additional vaccinations that your program may require.

If you have an ongoing health concern, talk to your health care provider about your trip. Ask your doctor for a letter stating your medical history and prescribed medications. Check with your insurance company about buying sufficient medications for the duration of your program. Medication should be carried in its original pharmacy packaging, along with copies of prescriptions. During travel, keep your medication in your carry-on luggage.

Bring along enough contact lenses and/or an extra pair of glasses, if you wear them. Bring along a written prescription from your eye doctor.

Make or buy a first aid kit for common health concerns. Include pain and fever medication, cold remedies, tweezers, scissors, bandages and mosquito repellent. Bring medication to help prevent and treat diarrhea.

Inform your program director about any special needs or any concerns you may have. We will do our best to accommodate you!

Health Abroad

Report Medical Conditions

We strongly encourage you to inform your program director of any medical or psychological conditions you experience. The stress of being off campus, especially during the first few days or weeks, may cause the recurrence of past conditions. If you have any questions or concerns, consult your health care provider and/or counsellor.

Lead a Healthy Lifestyle

Eat well, exercise regularly, and get enough sleep! Remember that as well as the cultural adjustments you will be making, your body will also need to get used to a new time zone, a new climate, a new diet. Getting plenty of sleep will help you adjust more quickly to be able to enjoy your new location fully.



Wash your hands
Your mother was right! Wash your hands with soap and water, especially before eating and after using the bathroom. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand cleaner with at least 60% alcohol to clean your hands.

Water

Ask about the water safety in your host country. If tap water is not safe to drink, be sure that you drink only boiled water or water from bottles with an intact seal. Do not use tap water to brush your teeth and keep your mouth closed in the shower (no singing!).

Food

Ask your program director whether you need to avoid certain foods or places to eat in your host country. Sometimes raw foods may be washed in unfiltered water. Some foods may be undercooked, or food storage temperatures may be different than at home. Although locals may be able to eat certain things without ill effects, your digestive system may not be able to cope!

Mental Health

Studying abroad is not a cure for mental health conditions and at times may exacerbate pre-existing conditions. You will likely not have access to the same kinds of services that you do at home. In addition, culture shock, language barriers, and homesickness can magnify isolation or depression.

If you have a mental or psychological condition that may require treatment while you are abroad, make a plan ahead of time with your doctor. Is there a support system in place that you can rely on? Can you connect with your health services in the US via technology? Does the host city have resources you can use?

Do not make changes to your existing treatment plan while you are abroad. This is not the time to experiment with different treatments.

Sexual Health

Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Sexually Transmitted Infections, including HIV/AIDS, are among the most common infections worldwide. The most reliable way to avoid transmission of sexually transmitted diseases is to abstain from sexual activity. For more information, see the CDC page here:

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/std>

Housing

If you live on campus at Calvin, inform the Calvin Housing office that you will be participating in a study-abroad program. If you plan to live in on-campus housing during the semester after your study abroad, make sure that you have communicated your intentions to the Housing office.

Housing options during your study-abroad semester will vary according to your program. No matter what kind of housing you have, students are not permitted to have overnight guests. Visitors should plan to stay in a hotel or other public accommodation.

Independent Student Travel Policy

One of the goals for your study abroad experience is to learn about your host location, its history, culture, and people. To learn about another place, you need both to travel and to stay put, to venture forth and to reflect. You need to study contexts, but also experience artifacts in situ. You need to meet people, read, think, wander, and wonder.

In keeping with this goal, you are strongly encouraged to stay in-country, and even in the city itself, during the weekends. Any travel away should be balanced by staying in your local host city, since many cultural, sports, and church activities occur over the weekend. If you do leave your host location overnight, you must file an "[Independent Travel Form](#)" with the program director, including your travel destination, your itinerary, and your anticipated date of return.

In no case will a student be excused from a class assignment, quiz, or test because of travel.

When you travel, be sure that all your travel and identity documents are in order and that you understand the laws and regulations of the place that you visit. Stay alert and be "situationally aware" so that you can have a safe and enjoyable experience.



Independent Travel Form

Please fill out this form if you are going anywhere overnight. We recommend that you also share your travel plans with friends and family.

Your Name: First name Last name

Your Email: email address

Your Phone: Preferably a local cellphone

Today's Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

Names of Everyone Traveling with You: List as many names as necessary

Travel Destinations and Dates: Location / Date. Location / Date. Location / Date.

Transportation Details (include as much detail as possible): List flight companies and numbers, bus companies and numbers, etc.

Hotel/Hostel/Host Contact Information: Where are you staying & how could we contact you there?

Comments/Additional Information: Include any other information that might be helpful for the Program Director.

During my Calvin University semester abroad program, I am exercising my option to travel independently, and I hereby acknowledge that I am responsible for my own health and safety during this time. I further acknowledge that the appropriate sections of the waiver and release agreement I signed prior to departure on this program/course remain in effect.

Electronic Signature: Click or tap here to enter text. Date: Today's date.

PLEASE SAVE THIS FORM AND SEND IT AS AN ATTACHMENT TO YOUR PROGRAM DIRECTOR.

Safety Abroad: Before you go

We suggest copying the front and back of any important documents you carry in your wallet. In case of loss or theft you will have the relevant information as well as the toll-free numbers to call the institutions. Save your documents in multiple locations—in the cloud, with family, a hard copy in a safe location.

Make sure you are up to date on your immunizations. Know how to contact your insurance company. Have a copy of your insurance card.

Learn the language. You should at least practice a few survival phrases and be able to greet someone and respond politely.

Learn about the culture in the host country. Avoid the most glaring mistakes and learn how to fit in with local culture.

Safety Abroad: While you're away

Behavioral expectations

Calvin University students who participate in study abroad programs are representatives of Calvin and are expected to conduct themselves appropriately and respectfully while abroad. Students abroad, just as on-campus students, are expected to abide by the Student Conduct Code:

(<https://calvin.edu/directory/policies/student-conduct-code>)

Crime

A recent study of self-reported criminal victimization rates among study abroad students found that victimization rates were generally low, but they were moderate to high in regard to incidents of sexual harassment, unwanted touching and property theft (without force).

<https://journals.sagepub.com/stoken/default+domain/10.1177%2F1028315319861354/full>

You may stand out as different in your new location and be less able to read verbal and non-verbal cues that may signal danger. This may make you more vulnerable and a target for crime. However, there are simple things that you can do to reduce the possibility that you will become a victim of crime.

- Avoid walking alone at night. If you are alone, walk close to couples or groups of others.
- Avoid dark areas at night.
- Trust your instincts. If you think you are being followed, go to public place and ask for help. Take immediate action to remove yourself from situations that feel unsafe or just uncomfortable.
- Get a sturdy bag. Wear your backpack facing front.
- Don't draw attention to yourself as a foreigner. Try to blend in.
- Don't wear flashy jewelry or exhibit expensive technology. Use your smartphone discreetly and consider switching out hi tech earbuds for a less expensive model.
- Avoid behaviors and situations that put you at risk.

Always inform your program director and the relevant local authorities if you have been the victim of crime. You should also complete a Safety Incident Report on the Calvin website:

<https://calvin.edu/offices-services/off-campus-programs/safety-incident-report/>

Alcohol

Although there may be no minimum drinking age in your host country (or a lower drinking age than in the U.S.), the customs regarding alcohol use in your host country may be very different from those in the U.S. You may be tempted to slip into—or to maintain—patterns of alcohol misuse while abroad. Such use may occur for a variety of reasons: a mistaken impression of how alcohol is used in your new surroundings; cheaper costs in some countries; a lower minimum drinking age; more lenient laws against drunkenness; or a desire to experiment or fit in. Alcohol abuse and misuse are not tolerated globally and will not be tolerated on Calvin study abroad programs. Alcohol misuse is defined as any use that is harmful or potentially harmful to oneself or to others. Alcohol abuse is planned, systematic misuse of alcohol.

Violation of local laws and/or Calvin regulations or policies may result in (a) immediate dismissal from the program; (b) academic withdrawal from the university for the semester in progress; and (c) disciplinary action upon return to campus.

Alcohol misuse is present when:

- A student misses any scheduled event because of the effects of alcohol consumption
- A student becomes ill due to the effects of alcohol consumption
- A student is disrespectful of others sharing the same or neighboring housing, due to the effects of alcohol consumption
- A student engages in inappropriate behavior toward other individuals as a result of alcohol consumption
- A student becomes so intoxicated that he/she cannot walk unassisted
- A student engages in destructive behavior toward property as a result of alcohol consumption
- A student does not abide by the laws of the country in which he or she is staying
- A student engages in behavior that causes embarrassment to the other members of the group, the program leader(s), or the in-country host(s) as a result of alcohol consumption
- A student engages in behavior that causes his/her companions concern for the safety of the individual or the group
- Students in a group encourage or ignore a fellow student who is misusing or abusing alcohol or
- Students transport quantities of alcohol to program sites with the intent of sharing the alcohol with members of the group



You are encouraged to use good judgment if consuming alcohol at private homes or other accommodations during non-program hours. Student groups should discuss with the program leaders(s) issues related to alcohol abuse by other members of their group. Peers should look out for each other and keep each other safe.

If a student becomes incapacitated due to alcohol overuse, or if he/she is in need of medical attention, others are strongly encouraged to contact a local emergency medical service and/or the program leader immediately in order to protect the health and well-being of the affected student. The person (or persons) making the call will not be subject to disciplinary action.

Do not endanger yourself, others, property, or the future viability of the program by using or misusing alcohol. Know when to say "no," stay with your friends, and look out for each other!

*from: <https://mystudyabroad.asu.edu/students/alcohol>

Dating Abroad:

Off-campus romances can be enticing, but they also hold additional challenges. A romance between two Calvin students will be played out in front of everybody else in the program and can easily compromise the dynamics of the whole group. A romance between a Calvin student and a host country national student can be even more problematic and potentially traumatic. Be very cautious. Keep in mind that sexual misconduct can result in expulsion from the program—you will be sent home with no refund.

Sexual Harassment

Although men are also the target of crimes, women are often seen as easy victims and are more likely to be the victim of sexual assault. Some people may have stereotypes of American women as being looser and more relaxed with their personal boundaries. This perception can be reinforced by American movies and television. Women should be extra vigilant while abroad and do their best to prevent ending up in a dangerous situation.

Even though what you might perceive as sexual harassment in the US may be considered normal in another country, cross-cultural sensitivity does not mean you have to relax or adjust your personal boundaries in this regard. If you feel you have been a victim of sexual harassment, immediately inform your program director.



If you are experiencing sexual harassment, follow these guidelines:

- Say NO! Say it firmly without smiling or apologizing. You may also write a letter to the harasser clearly communicating your objections.
- Keep a record of what has occurred and how you responded. Include direct quotes, dates, places, times and witnesses to the harassment. Save all harassing cards, letters, or voice mail messages.
- Talk to someone for support.
- Recognize that you have a right to report all incidences of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation regardless of the offender's identity or position.

The following resources are available to you in case of sexual harassment:

Jane Hendriksma, Dean of Students for Judicial Affairs: 616-526-6116 (office),
jhendrik@calvin.edu

Director of Off-Campus Programs: 616-526-6551 off-campus@calvin.edu

Calvin College I Will Report It service: 616-526-IWRI (616-526-4974)

Message line designated for phone reports from students, faculty, and staff relating to sexual harassment or assault—trained Student Life professionals monitor and respond to all calls.

Preventing Physical or Sexual Assault

- Cultivate a sense of situational awareness. Be constantly aware of your surroundings. Anticipate what might happen next and how you might respond.
- Know the emergency numbers for your location.
- Notice people or activities that could distract you from noticing a theft taking place.
- Trust your instincts. If something doesn't feel right, remove yourself and others from the situation.
- Signal confidence as you navigate new surroundings. A confused or uncertain person communicates vulnerability to criminals.
- Avoid high crime areas. Don't walk alone. Try to take transportation with a person you know.
- Dress in line with local customs and try not to call attention to yourself.
- Make responsible decisions related to alcohol. Don't accept drinks from strangers (alcoholic or non-alcoholic). Always monitor your drinks.
- Use the buddy system whenever you go out. Take responsibility for one another.

Responding to a Physical or Sexual Assault

If you are assaulted, remember that it was not your fault, and that you are not alone. If you are the victim of an assault:

- go to a safe place
- do not shower or change clothes
- get help from a trusted person
- contact your program director
- follow the guidance of your program director for medical, psychological, and legal support.

Your program director can help you in a number of ways, including providing support for you while you make choices about what to do next. Your director may help you contact your family if you wish to inform them and can connect you to local sources of emotional support.

Resources

Information at Calvin University: <https://calvin.edu/offices-services/student-organizations/sexual-assault-prevention-team/>

RAINN: Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network <https://www.rainn.org/>

Article: "Female Travelers and Sexual Harassment: Tips and Advice"

<http://www.traveller.com.au/female-travellers-and-sexual-harassment-tips-and-advice-for-women-tourists-overseas-h06c8w>



Visitors

Check with your program director to see if there are specific policies for your program about receiving visitors. If visitors are allowed, make sure to inform your director who is visiting you and when. No matter what kind of housing you have, students are not permitted to have overnight guests. Visitors should plan to stay in a hotel or other public accommodation.

Your friends and family may be eager to visit you while you are studying abroad. Before you make arrangements, consider the following pros and cons.

Pro

- It can reduce your homesickness. When things are feeling overwhelming, sometimes just a few days with familiar people can make you feel better.
- Your friends and family will see how much you've learned and appreciate all your accomplishments. Roles may be reversed—now you are the one who will lead and guide your parents!
- People will understand your reverse culture shock better when you get back. When you're feeling nostalgic for your study abroad place and people, they'll get it!

Con

- It can increase your homesickness. After finally getting adjusted to your new surroundings, seeing people from home can sometimes throw you right back to the beginning of your cultural adjustment.
- It will interrupt your cultural immersion. The point of going abroad is to become part of something new and going back to your own culture part of the way through your experience can hurt your acculturation. If you are on a language program, being around English speakers, even if it's only for a few days, can set you back weeks in your language education.
- It will interrupt your academics. Remember that you are participating in a study abroad program. You aren't free to miss classes or skip studying for tests so that you can play tour guide to your family.

If you have visitors, do not have them come during the first few weeks or the last few weeks of your program. You need time to adjust to your new city and culture as well as time to be with classmates and friends before your program ends. If schedules permit, try to have your parents visit after your program is over. That way, you can see your family without having to worry about school and you will already be very adjusted to the language, city, and culture.

Student Conduct Code & Discipline Process

Review the Calvin University student conduct code prior to departure

<https://calvin.edu/directory/policies/student-conduct-code>. You are required to fulfill the academic and program expectations of your program such as completing your course work, attending classes, communicating regularly with the program director, following rules for independent travel, and complying with other expectations of the program.

The conduct code continues to apply to Calvin students studying abroad. This includes policies related to alcohol use (moderation versus intoxication) and sexual integrity. Following the conduct code can contribute to staying safe and getting the most out of your off-campus experience. If you have questions about the implications of this for you while off campus, please ask your program director or the OCP office. A violation of the conduct code or failure to uphold academic or program expectations could result in you being sent home at your own expense without receiving course credit.

Process for Addressing Violations of the Student Conduct Code

The program director has the responsibility to maintain order and an atmosphere within which the students can feel secure and make progress toward the program's objectives. On those rare occasions when a student's behavior disrupts good order, endangers the reputation and good standing of the program, or seriously affects group safety or morale, the director will intervene.

If an alleged violation of Calvin's Student Conduct Code occurs, the semester program director must report the situation to the Director of Off-Campus Programs. Likewise, if students are concerned with the behavior of a fellow student, they should report it to the semester program director and/or the off-campus programs office. Once an alleged incident is reported the following process will be enacted.

Fact-finding

The director will be assisted by the Director of Off-Campus Program and other campus resources to seek a full picture of the situation. This process will review facts relevant to the incident, including:

- Nature and scope of the offense.
- Student response to the incident.
- Student's prior activities within program.
- Extenuating circumstances.
- Impact of incident on members of the group and the integrity of the program.
- Safety implications for individuals, the group, and the program.
- Risk implications for the individual, group, and program.

Decisions

After reviewing all the information, a decision and/or strategy will be made to address the specific situation and come to the best resolution for the student, the group, the program, and the university. Some possible conclusions:

- No response needed: No action will be taken against the student.
- Student warning: Consultation with student to review program and university expectations.
- Written contract: Contract would be between the student and the program director outlining behavior expectations and consequences.

- Referral: Program director refers student to appropriate resources at the off-campus site or in Grand Rapids.
- Parental Contact: Program director contacts the student's parents to inform and to request support.
- Formal report: The incident is reported to Student Life for possible adjudication/response upon student's return.
- Voluntary withdrawal from the program: The student returns home and may complete academic expectations when feasible and appropriate.
- Student dismissed from the program: Student is sent home and forfeits academic credit.

Appeal process

- The decisions reached by the Director of Off-Campus Programs (in consultation with offices on campus) are final and not subject to appeal.

