

# Overseas Travel Pre-Departure Briefing

## Notes

*Risk management during overseas Professional Experience  
Placement*



1. **Have you visited the [Smartraveller travel advice website](#) and consulted your GP to get comprehensive medical advice specific to your travel route and placement location?**

This step will need to commence at least 10 weeks before your travel and will include:

- Immunisations including boosters for Tetanus & Polio need to be checked; MMR, Japanese Encephalitis, and meningococcal vaccines for some Asian countries; Hepatitis A & B are worth considering.
- Malarial prophylaxis for destinations that require it.
- Advice on emergency medication for any current or potential health problem. Consider documentation for any prescription medications taken and ensure original packs with a label that shows the medication and your name.
- A letter or some document about any existing health problems (an acute attack of asthma could be a challenge when travelling.)

2. **Are you aware of the risks of infectious diseases in your chosen destination?** Such as COVID19, Hepatitis A, B, & C, and HIV? What about mosquito-borne viruses like Dengue and Zika?

- The practice of 'universal precautions' using gloves and other protective equipment to avoid needle stick injuries, and exposure to potentially infected body fluids is important and needs to be observed at all times – no exceptions.
- Will you have access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)? Will your host organisation supply it or do you have to take supplies with you?
- For any incident where there could be exposure, tell your supervisor and follow their advice on testing and management. And remember you will need to report the incident to the University.
- In the event of an incident, accident, or injury whilst on placement, please complete the [Student Placement Accident, Incident or Injury Report Form](#).
- Risks can also be surprisingly high in developed countries, so the same advice applies.
- Remember that the greatest risk of blood-borne viral infections for students on all overseas placements is still from the usual routes of transmission: sexual intercourse and IV drug use. *Practice safe sex always. Do not share needles. Take DEET insect repellent with you.*

3. **Have you read the information on Smartraveller about personal safety and security, including the risk of assault and/or kidnapping for your chosen location, available at <http://smartraveller.gov.au/countries?>**

- Property theft is common in many destinations and in some countries visitors are subject to 'express kidnapping', where they are forced to withdraw money from an ATM under duress.
- Assault, including sexual assault, can occur anywhere but can be particularly distressing when you are away from your support.
- Your passport is a valuable document that is attractive to criminals; it always must be stored in a safe place.
- Follow the guidance provided by **Smartraveller** and speak to your supervisor about any risks particular to your destination.
- Do not take unnecessary risks and ***try not to travel anywhere alone.***
- The general threat of terrorism against Western interests overseas has increased in recent years. You should stay informed, both before and during travel, of developments that could affect your safety in the countries you are visiting by consulting DFAT.

- You should endeavor to avoid large public gatherings or demonstrations; be alert in public areas such as clubs, restaurants, bars, hotels, places of worship, cultural and tourist sites, schools, or outdoor recreational events.
- Exercise caution in areas outside major areas and ensure communication channels are available.
- Monitor country-specific travel advisories and announcements issued by the government of the country to which you are travelling or in transit, due to the risk of attacks on commercial aircraft.

4. **Are you aware of the cultural differences between the country you are visiting and Australia?**

- Expectations about appropriate clothing and interactions between men and women can be quite different. There can be serious unintended consequences from cultural misunderstandings.
- As a visitor it is important to ensure you are aware of and respect the culture of the people you are visiting as well as the laws of the country.
- There are guides to visitor's etiquette available on the internet, check these out. It is also worthwhile asking for advice from your supervisor about their culture and customs.

5. **Do you know the rules for safe food and drink when travelling?**

- Drink bottled water; eat cooked food or fruit you can peel.
- Ask your supervisor about the safety of the tap water and any other food/drink precautions they can suggest.

6. **Are you aware that injuries in road traffic crashes are particularly common in young travellers?**

- Think about safety before taking a taxi ride or bus trip.
- Reconsider your desire to travel on a motorcycle or scooter.
- Your insurance may not cover you while undertaking this activity and medical expenses in foreign countries can be very expensive.

7. **Do you have all the documentation you need?**

- Passport, visas, health certificates, etc. Your Placement administrator can assist. If your original documents are stolen or lost would you be able to prove who you are?
- Ensure you have photocopies of all documents in at least one other secure place in your luggage and possibly with a family member back in Australia.
- Information on consular assistance and passport services while abroad can be found at the [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade](#) website,

8. JCU provided **Medical Malpractice Professional Indemnity insurance** covers legal liability to others for personal injury arising because of actual or alleged medical negligence of student health practitioners in respect of the practical clinical work undertaken as part of their course.

- All treatment given by you must be under the direct supervision or express instruction of a qualified practitioner, all patients/clients or guardians must be fully informed, and consent must be obtained before commencing any care, procedure, or intervention.
- You should also check with your supervisor to see if their professional indemnity will cover you (in some developing countries they may not have covered).

9. Students are covered under JCU's **Public Liability** insurance for any personal injury or property damage (excluding motor vehicles) to a third party, caused by the student in the course of practical clinical work, and for which they would be legally liable.

10. **Do you have travel insurance for any private travel?**

- The JCU Business Travel Insurance Policy covers you for the approved travel to, from, and during your placement, subject to policy terms, conditions, and exclusions.

- You will need to purchase your travel insurance for any private travel you undertake outside of these periods or for the entire duration of your travel if you plan to participate in any activities excluded under the JCU Policy.
- More information on this can be located at the [JCU Insurance](#) website.

11. **Have you registered your travel plans with Chubb Assistance, and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade?**

- It is recommended that you:
  - Register with Chubb Assistance using JCU's Policy Number 04PP007672 for additional travel advice (if you have already registered, simply log-in to update your destinations).
  - Subscribe to travel advice with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) by visiting the [Smartraveller](#) website.

12. **Money – how much will you need, how will you access it, and how will you keep it safe?**

- Best advice is to have more than one form – not everyone accepts debit/credit cards, and what if there are no ATMs? Have some small denomination notes in \$USD to use in emergencies – the greenback still talks in many countries.
- When travelling in a riskier situation, have small amounts of money in several different pockets rather than keeping it all in a wallet in one place.
- Avoid letting anyone see you get your wallet out - that is an invitation to have it stolen!
- Remember to remove all non-essential credit cards, bank cards, and ID from your wallet before departure

13. **Have you left contact details with your family/next of kin and the University?**

- How will they/we contact you in the event of a major incident? Have you arranged to contact your family or next of kin at regular intervals?
- Email and phone calls are ideal and need only be brief.
- Facebook or WhatsApp could also be a reliable option to contact family and friends while abroad with public WI-FI available in many areas.

14. **Whilst you are in the air be aware of Deep Vein Thrombosis and Jet Lag.**

- Students travelling on long trips are at risk of developing deep vein thrombosis (DVT).
- Risk factors include previous DVT, malignancy, hormone treatment, recent surgery, family history of DVT, abnormalities of blood clotting factors, and recent trauma involving lower limbs.
- Check with your doctor if you have any concerns and follow all advice.
- Drink plenty of water, walk around whenever you can, and regularly stand up and stretch and do the recommended foot and leg exercises.
- Jet Lag can affect students crossing multiple time zones and symptoms of jet lag may include; drowsiness, insomnia, and irritability.
- It is recommended that students drink plenty of water, before, during, and after the flight and try to remain awake once they reach their destination to allow the body to adjust

15. **Climate and Natural Disasters**

The climate at the overseas destination might differ from that experienced in Australia. Planning should include consideration of the effects of the climate change, such as:

- The time required for acclimatisation.
- Clothing suitable for the climate, ensuring that it also provides health and safety protection, e.g., long sleeves in tropical regions to protect against insect bites and sun exposure
- Increased water consumption in arid and tropical climates
- Seasonal and geological factors should be considered when planning overseas Professional Experience Placement to minimise the risks carried out in areas prone to flooding, severe storm, avalanche, volcanic eruption, earthquakes, tsunamis, and other such occurrences.

16. **Insurance coverage relating to COVID-19**

- JCU insurance will cover cancellation and curtailment expenses or loss of deposits relating to COVID 19 only when
  - the covered person is certified by a doctor as being unable to continue a journey as planned or commence a new journey; or
  - the covered person is directed by a health authority to quarantine, preventing them from being able to continue a journey as planned or commence a new journey.

*The important thing is that there needs to be direction from a doctor or health authority. Please read the [JCU Student Travel Insurance Brochure](#) for further clarification.*