

Packing for a Semester Abroad

We know there is a lot to consider when packing. One of the adages in travel is to pack light and smart. Some of the most important items to ensure you pack are your **passport/visa** and any **medications**.

Please use the list below as a guideline to select what is essential for you. Consider weather and seasonal patterns at your location. Please do additional research to identify items you may want to bring abroad, but please note that anything you bring you are responsible for carrying/moving. Some students will have to transfer their luggage from a bus to a building that requires walking a distance. We also recommend you leave some room in your luggage for souvenirs.

If you're looking for more information on what to bring to your specific location, our **N.U.in Pre-Departure Orientation** as well as the **Destination webinar** later this summer will provide additional details.

Baggage Tips for International Travel

Checked Luggage

- **Students participating on the group flight will have one checked bag included with their ticket.** Historically, some students have paid for an additional checked bag which they purchased through the airline during the check-in process. Students are discouraged from bringing more than two checked bags of luggage.
- Do not pack medications or valuables in checked luggage.
- Make sure it meets airline size and weight requirements. You can look this up on every airline's website.
 - Smaller aircraft are often used on connections and luggage capacity is limited.
 - Limit the number of bags (excess baggage and overweight fees will apply) you are taking. Please note that room accommodations in Europe are often smaller than in the US.
 - Take only what you can carry yourself in one trip.
 - Use packing/compression bags inside your suitcase or roll your clothing.
- Be able to identify your luggage.
 - Put your contact information on the outside (purchase secure bag tags) and inside your bag.
 - Take pictures of the exterior of your bag and of the items in your bag.
 - Make the outside of your bag unique and easily recognizable.
 - Black luggage is the most popular color but makes it hard to locate.
 - Use ribbons, stickers, colored taped or brightly colored baggage tags.
 - Purchase electronic bag trackers.

Carry On Luggage

- **Students participating on the group flight will have one checked bag included with their ticket.** Historically, some students have paid for an additional checked bag which they purchased through the airline during the check-in process. Students are discouraged from bringing more than two checked bags of luggage.
- Most international flights allow one carry-on piece and one personal item.
- Go to the airline's website to see what they allow as carry-on and personal item.
- Pack important items (especially medications) in a manner that they are easily taken onboard the aircraft. Prescription medications should be in the original containers with doctor documentation. More information on packing medications can be found towards the end of the packing list. Students can also contact mytravelplans@northeastern.edu with any outstanding questions.
- Please keep in mind that sometimes carry-on luggage must be checked at the gate and will be stowed below with checked luggage.
- Pack enough clothes and toiletries for 2 days in your carry-on luggage.
- Make sure you know what cannot be carried onboard i.e. liquids are limited, lithium batteries rules, etc.

Preparing for and at the airport for check-in

- Weigh your bag before heading to the airport.
- Check-in early. If you are late your bags may not make it onto the flight.
 - Payment for overweight and excess baggage takes extra time. In some airports there may be a separate line to pay before you are allowed to enter the check in line.
- Make sure to remove any old airline tags and stickers before checking in.
- You will be given a unique baggage receipt.
 - Do not leave the check-in counter without this receipt.
 - Take a picture of the receipt. Send a copy to someone at home.
 - Make sure it shows your final destination airport not any connecting airport.
 - Often the baggage receipt is stapled to the boarding pass. Separate it and keep the receipt in a safe place. Boarding passes are easily replaced, baggage receipts are not.

General Packing List

Clothing

- Several changes of clothes
 - We recommend bringing 5 sets of clothing for each season that you are abroad.
 - Be sure to check the temperature averages for your site on the N.U.in location specific webpages
 - Consider layering as a technique with outer layers like sweaters and sweatshirts
 - Items that are easily matchable or you can wear together will go a long way
- Comfortable shoes
 - Sturdy walking shoes
 - Water resistant shoes (consider your site and how much rain is in the forecast!)
 - Flip-flops, shower shoes, and/or shoes to wear around your housing
- Socks
- Underwear
- Swimsuit (optional)
- Hat
- One professional outfit/outfit for the End-of-Semester Banquet
- Colder weather gear: scarf, gloves, and hat
- Raincoat/waterproof outer layer
- Winter/colder weather coat
- Sleepwear
- Athletic wear (for exercising, sports)

Miscellaneous

- Laptop
- Charger(s) for computer and all other devices you will be bringing
- Converters/adapters and voltage converter
- Phone
 - All students are required to have a phone plan that includes both **data** and **calling** on-site. If you wish to purchase an in-country SIM card, you must ensure that your phone is **unlocked**. If you have questions regarding how to unlock your phone or to understand if your phone is locked/unlocked, you can contact your phone carrier/provider (Verizon, AT&T, etc.)
- Water bottle
- Backpack (for school and for any overnight trips)
- Compact towel
 - Some residences include towels, some residences require you to bring your own, and at some sites you will want a towel for water-related activities (Going to the beach, etc.)
- Umbrella
- Scientific calculator (only applicable to certain courses/majors)
- A small amount of local currency (\$50–\$100)
- Textbooks (if applicable)
 - Students can refer to their location's [N.U.in Academic Handbook](#) to understand textbook requirements
- Laundry Bag or Tote

Important Documents

Please refer to your specific visa/travel process for documents or materials you will need to travel with. The below items are a general guidance for all students and should be placed in your Carry-On Luggage.

- Passport
- Visa documents (if applicable)
- Flight itinerary (boarding passes will be issued directly to students by the airline at the airport)

- Photo ID besides Passport if you have one
- Paper copies of all credit/debit cards, passport and visa (and leave copies at home)
- Health insurance card/documentation
- Emergency contact and arrival information

Medicine and Toiletries

- Prescription medicine
 - Make sure you can travel internationally with your prescription; verify what documentation you need to legally transport your prescription. If possible, consult with your doctor about obtaining a supply of all medications for the duration of the program.
- Comb/brush
- Toiletries and cosmetics you use on a day-to-day basis
 - You can buy toiletries (i.e. toothpaste, deodorant, feminine hygiene products, razors, etc.) in your location as the need arises. We discourage students from bringing any cosmetic appliances such as hair straighteners & hair dryers due to their incompatible voltage with European outlets.

- Over-the-counter medications you use on a frequent basis
 - There are a number of pharmacies that can provide over-the-counter medications on site, but be advised that availability and accessibility may differ from the U.S.
- Razors/nail clippers
- Eyeglasses and sunglasses
- Contact lenses and solutions
- Sunscreen

Traveling with Medications

- Before leaving home, familiarize yourself with your host destination's laws and regulations regarding drugs and medications. If you're on any prescription medication, make sure to research the legal status of that medication within your destination. Some controlled medications require a permit to import.
- If you regularly take prescription medication, make sure to bring enough of your medication with you (as legally allowed), as well as a note from your doctor, should it be requested from local authorities.
- Carry your medications in their original labeled containers in your carry-on bag and bring a copy of your prescriptions.
- Do not direct anyone to ship you medication internationally. The medication may be confiscated by customs, and you could face fines/arrest depending on the location.
- Contact mytravelplans@northeastern.edu or the Northeastern Global Safety and Support Network, if you have questions once you've spoken to your home doctor if you still have questions about traveling with medication or need help figuring out the legal status of your medication abroad. The consulate or embassy of the country you will be traveling to is also a good resource to contact for location specific information.
- Prescription refills are not covered by the university's urgent and emergency coverage. You will need to rely on your personal health insurance. U.S. prescriptions may not be accepted abroad, and it may take time to obtain a local prescription. Please carefully keep track of your medications abroad and if there are any issues, do not wait until you run out of medication to seek assistance.
- Laws pertaining to drugs can vary significantly across the globe. The possession and/or use of drugs (or paraphernalia), including marijuana, can result in severe penalties including hefty fines and jail time depending on the laws of the city, region, or country you will be visiting. The use of all illegal drugs is prohibited on all Northeastern programs. Marijuana is still illegal in most countries. Even if you carry a prescription for marijuana, it is unlikely that it will be valid in a different country. Having a prescription from your home doctor will not exempt you from local laws. If you violate local laws and/or the policies of your program, please remember you are also held to the Northeastern code of conduct while on a university program.