International Relations

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# Pre-Departure Session

## 2026 - 2027

# Agenda

## Part 1: Travel Essentials

- University responsibilities
- Student responsibilities
- Travel documents
- Insurance
- Health & Wellness
- Safety, Risk & Responsibility
- Living Abroad
  - Accommodations
  - Finances
- Culture and Adjustment

## Part 2: Academics

You must remain for the entire session

# University Responsibilities

We've got your back

Your International Relations team is here to support during your time abroad.

- Pre-departure briefing/resources
- Travel advisory monitoring
- Emergency response

# Student Responsibilities

## Look before you leap

You are responsible to fully understand and prepare for your time abroad:

- Pre-departure research
- Travel documents
- Travel/health insurance
- Health & wellness
- Safety, risk & responsibility
- Accommodations
- Financial preparation
- Cultural awareness
- Academics

# Student Responsibilities

## Plan ahead

- Schulich Travel Registry
  - Liability Form
  - Emergency Contact Form
- Forms will be shared shortly
- Failure to submit these forms prior to departure may result in cancellation of your exchange

# Pre-Departure Research

Knowledge is power

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Preparation is key to having a successful and safe experience abroad. Utilize resources to research and understand what to expect in your host country / institution.

**Government of Canada resources**

- Travel.gc.ca
- Travel Advice & Advisories
- Country Insights

**Those who've gone before**

- Exchange Reports
- Connect with other students going to, or returned from, your destination

# Travel Documents

What you'll need to go

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## 1. Passport

- Check expiry date (> 6 months)
- # of blank pages remaining
- Dual citizenship
- Keep your passport secure at all times

## 2. Visa

- What are the entry requirements of your destination country for exchange students?
- Do you need a visa? What type of visa? What about transit visas? Timeline?
- Check with host institution, embassy/consulate – use only official sources!

## 3. Entry & Travel Considerations

- Research and understand all entry requirements of host country, and any other countries you may visit/transit
- Border challenges/delays; be prepared

## 4. Proof of Travel Reason

- Carry proof of your reason for travelling (i.e.: exchange acceptance offer, confirmation of conference invitation, etc)

Check the expiry dates on ALL documents!

# Travel Documents

What you'll need to return

## Returning to Canada

- All students, regardless of citizenship, need to comply with Canada's entry protocols, if in place upon your return.
- It is your responsibility to review and understand the requirements to re-enter Canada, as these may change at any time

**<u>Additional Considerations for non-Canadian students:</u>**

### Permanent Residents (PR)

- A valid PR Card is required to return to Canada. ***Check validity*** (usually valid for 5 years) before travelling
- If PR Card expires when outside Canada, you will need to apply for a PR Travel Document (PRTD)

### International Students

- Check your study permit AND travel document (TRV/eTA) expiry dates. Must be valid for your return to Canada
- Graduating students – do you need a **bridging study permit** to ensure sufficient time to obtain grades and apply for Post-Graduation Work Permit?

# Travel Insurance

## Risk mitigation

We **STRONGLY advise** that you consider purchasing travel insurance to cover:

- Flight cancellations / missed flights
- Trip cancellation/ interruption
- Baggage/personal belongings

- Consider “cancel for any reason” (CFAR) insurance
  - Offers most cancellation flexibility
  - Usually available as upgrade to travel insurance plans

Current geopolitical unrest and new border requirements may impact flights, or entry/transit points. Having adequate insurance can mitigate costs if your travel is interrupted.

*Schulich is not responsible for any trip interruptions or cancellations due to external factors.*

# Health Insurance

Be protected from unexpected costs

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## Travel Health Insurance

- All students are **required** to have comprehensive health insurance for the duration of your time outside of Canada
  - We do not require coverage by a particular insurer. It is your responsibility to research and select best coverage for you
    - Consider York University's Guard.Me International Travel Insurance – includes crisis response and evacuation
  - OHIP and UHIP do not cover out-of-Canada expenses
    - May be possible to get refund for UHIP when outside Canada; however, keeping as base plan may make supplemental insurance cheaper. Contact UHIP office
  - York U Supplemental Plans (YFS or GSA) – may provide some out of Canada coverage, but likely not adequate
- If you already have supplemental travel health insurance (via workplace, parents, credit cards, etc), do NOT assume that it provides adequate coverage
  - Review policy and understand what is and is not covered
- Do NOT base your decision on price alone
- Answer any insurance questionnaire accurately and disclose information such as pre-existing conditions to ensure that your coverage is suited to you

# Travel & Insurance Information

Be prepared

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## Be Prepared!

Make 2 copies of travel itineraries & insurance documents

- 1 copy (or email) with emergency contact, family member, friend or school
- Carry a copy (separate from originals)

Write down all important contacts and information

- Emergency contact
- Insurance policy # and contact

Call your insurance company before obtaining care

- Some services are not covered without prior approval
- Make sure it's an authorized service or provider
- Have phone/connection numbers readily available

Always carry hard copies of important documents (i.e.: entry documents, health insurance, etc)

# Health & Wellness

## Important preparations

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**It is important to plan in advance for your personal health while travelling:**

- Visit your doctor or travel medicine clinic well in advance of your travel
  - Many pharmacies may also provide travel medicine consultation/vaccinations
  - Ensure your routine immunizations and any recommended travel vaccinations are up-to-date
- Prescriptions (enough for entire stay)
  - Bring copies of your eyeglass and drug prescriptions
  - Review "travelling with medications" to ensure you can bring medications with you
- Travel medicine kit
  - Bring familiar medications for common ailments (stomach upset/digestive issues, headaches, cold/flu, etc)
- Medical/Emergency Contacts & Documents
  - Make list of family doctor, medical specialists, and emergency contacts
  - Make 2 copies of travel itineraries & insurance documents (leave one with emergency contact)
- Call your insurance company before obtaining care
  - Some services are not covered without prior approval
  - Make sure it's an authorized service or provider

Canada.ca > Travel > Travel abroad > Travel health and safety

### Travel health information

As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Make informed choices about where you go and what you do there by being informed and prepared for issues that may come up when you travel outside Canada.

Government of Canada:
Travel Health Information

# Safety, Risk & Responsibility

## Emergency preparedness

- Register with Foreign Affairs in your home country
  - Registration of Canadians Abroad: https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/registration
- Carry emergency contact info
  - Health insurance policy # and contact, emergency phone numbers
  - Consular Assistance
    - Canada: https://travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-assistance
    - Home country embassy/consulate
    - sos@international.gc.ca
  - Contact information for host exchange coordinator / Schulich exchange coordinator
  - York U Emergency Line: can call collect (416) – 736-5333
- Bookmark Government of Canada Emergency Information page
  - Contains links to information/resources on various emergency or crisis situations
- Know emergency procedures & notification systems in host country (i.e.: 911) and security services at host school
- Keep up to date on current/local events
- Make a communication plan with family/friend
  - i.e.: Regular check-ins (email, phone, text, etc)
  - Always alert someone when you travel

### Email:

- sos@international.gc.ca
- Emergency contact form

### Telephone:

**From outside Canada**

- Call the nearest embassy or consulate.
- +1 613 996 8885 (call collect where available)
- Toll-free numbers in some countries

**From inside Canada (non-passport-related)**

- 613-996-8885
- 1-800-387-3124 (toll-free from the U.S. and Canada only)

**Emergency passport services within Canada (weekends and statutory holidays)**

- 1-800-567-6868 (toll-free from Canada only)

### SMS:

- +1-613-686-3658 (carrier charges may apply)

### WhatsApp:

- +1-613-909-8881 (carrier charges may apply)

### Telegram:

- Canada Emergency Abroad

### Emergency information

The following information and resources can assist you to manage emergency or crisis situations that may arise while you are abroad.

- Arrest and detention
- Child abduction and parenting or custody issues
- Conversion therapy
- Death abroad
- Financial assistance
- Forced marriage
- Hijacking, hostage takings and kidnappings
- Large-scale emergencies abroad
- Lost or stolen belongings abroad
- Missing persons
- Passport security
- Physical assault abroad
- Sexual assault abroad
- Sickness or injury

# Safety, Risk & Responsibility

## Street smarts

- Taking risks and making choices
- Be aware of your surroundings
- Know which areas to avoid
- Be wary of strangers approaching you
- Trust your instincts!

# Safety, Risk & Responsibility

To share or not to share?

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## SOCIAL MEDIA SMART

- No personal information
- No provocative photos
- Assume it is permanent
- Be wary of strangers asking to take your photo
- Do you have internet privacy?

## PHOTOGRAPHY POLICY

- Ask permission
- Military, police, government, religious sites?

# Living Abroad

## Accommodations

- Secure a place to stay
  - Check with your exchange school about on-campus accommodation options
  - Research off-campus accommodation options
  - May need to stay in a hotel for a few days
- Provide address details to school, family and/or friends
- Get receipts for payment of rent

# Living Abroad

## Financial preparations

- Review "Travelling and Money"
- Notify your bank & credit card company; verify your card will be accepted abroad
- Have local currency for taxi/bus fare, food
  - Ideal to obtain local cash before leaving Canada
- Check to see if there is a departure tax/airport service fee
- Avoid fraud overseas and protect your money
- Check for available scholarships for Canadians to study abroad

# Culture & Adjustment

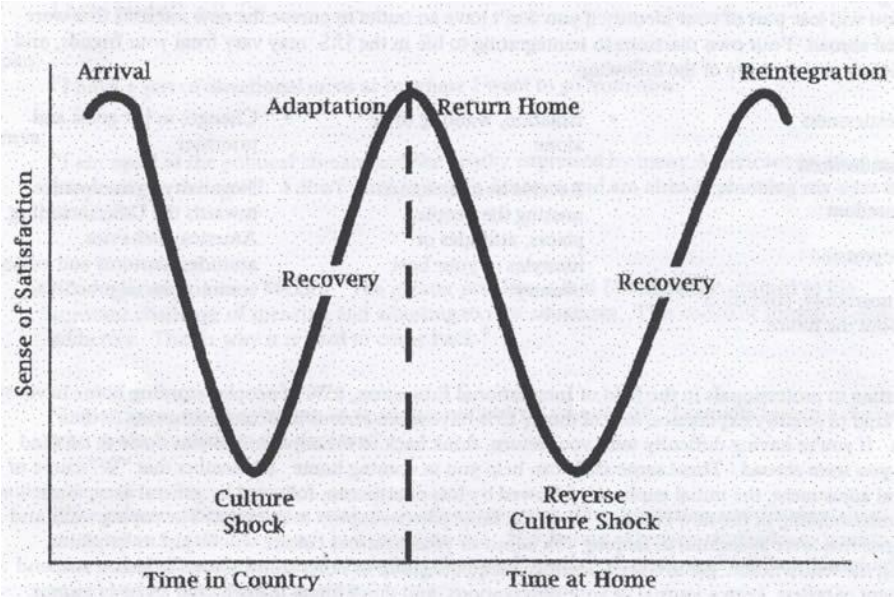
## Immerse yourself

- Communication and language
- Sense of self & space
- Food & eating habits
- *Relationships*
- Values & norms
- Beliefs & Attitudes
- *Dress & appearance*
- Work habits & practices
- Time & time consciousness
- Mental processes & learning

# Culture Shock

Adjusting to your new environment

1. Honeymoon Phase
2. Crisis (Shock) Phase
3. Adjustment Phase
4. Acceptance Phase
5. Reverse Culture Shock



# Honeymoon Phase

"I can't believe I'm here!"

- Excited
- Eager
- Anxious
- Enthusiastic
- Engaged
- Adventurous

# Rejection

"These people are so aggravating"

- Anger, discomfort, frustration, irritability
- Boredom, fatigue inability to concentrate
- Negative feelings about people and culture of host country
- Compulsive eating and drinking, excessive sleep
- Homesick

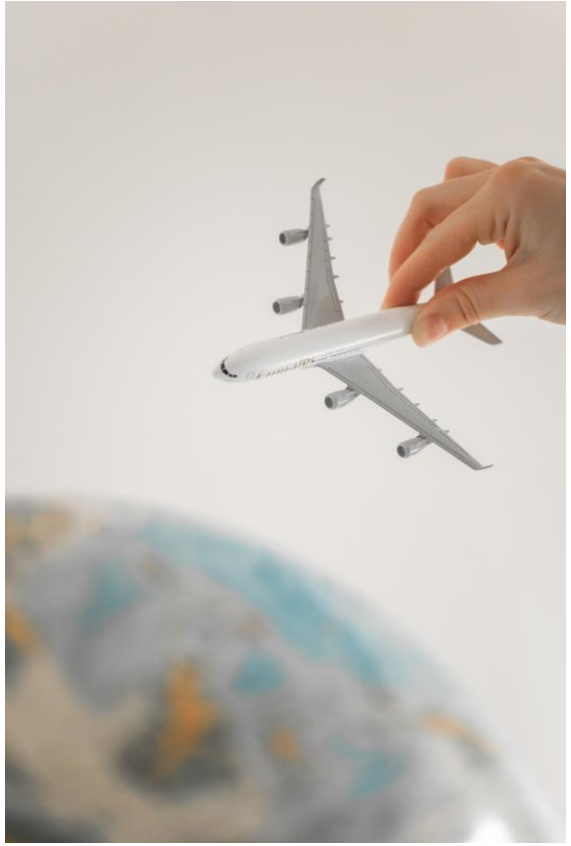
# Adjustment

Not strange, just unfamiliar

- Understanding of new culture
- Increase in self-confidence
- Beginning to feel at home

# Reverse Culture Shock

"Sucks to be home"



- People have changed
- View home culture differently
- Longing for host country
- Cycle begins again

# Culture Shock

## Coping mechanisms

- Give yourself time to adjust and remember that an adjustment period is normal
- Stay in touch with family & friends at home
- Make new friends in your new locations
- Find the familiar (comfort food, listen to music)
- Document your trip (photos, journal, blog)
- Get involved with host school
- Have a sense of humour and curiosity, stay active and be kind to yourself
- Build your self-care and resiliency skills (self-esteem and coping thoughts)
- Contact Exchange Coordinators
- Talk to someone/seek support

# Part 2:
# Academics