

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO STUDENTS AND THEIR  
FAMILIES...

**A STUDENT VISA must be obtained prior  
to departure for most Albany programs!**

To get a visa, you must first have a passport.

If you do not already have a passport,  
submit your application right away!

Also check the web site of the country where you will  
be studying to see what the rules are for your visa.

You are responsible for obtaining a passport, the required visas (if any), and also the required inoculations (if any) for entry to the country in which your study abroad program is located (and for return to the United States). **Requirements change frequently. It is your responsibility to keep informed of them.** Many embassies now maintain web sites where you may obtain forms and other useful information.

A U.S. passport is necessary identification for every U.S. citizen traveling abroad. It establishes that you are a citizen of the United States, and that you have permission from the government to travel outside the U.S. and return here. It is an extremely valuable document!

**If you do not already have a passport, apply for one immediately.**

Passports often take two months to obtain. Most students traveling overseas also will need to obtain a visa from the embassy of the country where they will be going, and you must have a passport in order to obtain a visa. **Sometimes it takes a month or more to get a visa**, so get your passport right away if you don't already have one. You can pick up an application at most post offices. In addition, you can see all the rules for getting a passport and even download an application if you go to <http://travel.state.gov/passport/index.html>.

If you already have a passport, check its expiration date. Make sure that your passport will not expire during the period of your program abroad nor for three months **after** your program ends. If it is due to expire before this date, you must renew it immediately; otherwise, you will not be able to obtain a visa.

If you need to apply for your first passport or renew your old one, consult the General Information Handbook for more information.

## Visas

**A visa is issued by the authorities of the country where you will study or travel.** It gives you permission to enter and remain in the country for a specific purpose. The visa itself is frequently a stamp in your passport, not a separate document; it may also be a piece of paper that is attached to your passport.

Most students will need to obtain a student visa; it will depend on your country of citizenship and your destination. You may need additional visas to travel as a tourist in some countries. It is important that you check with the Consulate or Embassy of the country where you will be studying and of any countries you plan to visit to find out what requirements there are for your specific case.

**Visa processing varies from country to country.** If you are going on an Albany program, we will provide you with specific instructions concerning the application process for a student visa in the country where you will study. Albany students on non-Albany programs should obtain visa information from the campus sponsoring their program.

Make a photocopy of your visa when you obtain it!

### Applying for Your Visa

**Check with the appropriate authorities to be sure that you understand the exact visa application requirements.** The process may be lengthy and require you to gather considerable documentation. Visas are issued at the country's embassy here in the United States or at consulates located in major U.S. cities. You will need to work with the appropriate embassy or consulate that serves your state of legal residence here in the United States. (For example, if you are a California resident but are studying here in New York, you would need to apply at the consulate in California.) **Even if you live far away from an embassy, it may be necessary to appear in person to obtain your visa.** Therefore, plan ahead and be sure you understand the requirements. Follow all the instructions you receive very carefully so that you get the appropriate visa(s). If you have any questions, contact the embassy that will issue the visa. They establish the requirements and are the only ones who can assist you.

**IMPORTANT: Prevent theft of your passport!! If you must mail your passport to obtain a visa, be sure to send it either by registered mail or by another equally secure means. Priority mail is not secure – don't use it.**

### Passports and Visas for Non-U.S. Citizens

Consult the General Information handbook for more information.

### Health Certificates

Some countries will not let you enter unless you can show that you are in good health. Albany will provide you with instructions concerning these procedures if they are necessary for your study abroad program. If you do need a special medical report, make an appointment as soon as possible. Some test results take a long time to obtain, and you will have to show the test results to get your visa. You may be required to submit the results of an AIDS test as part of your application for a visa. Keep a copy of any physician's reports that you submit to Albany or with your visa application. You may be asked to present them upon arrival in some countries.