2021 Annual Security and Fire Safety Report
Issue for 2022/2023 Academic Year
Education | Awareness | Prevention
REPUBLIC OF PANAMA CAMPUS
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**Introduction**

The purpose of this guide is to provide the reader with updated and relevant information about safety and security at the Florida State University-Republic of Panama Campus. This guide is updated annually and is produced in accordance with the Federal Jeanne Clery Act of 1990.

Your safety and security in Panama is always uppermost in our minds as we strive to provide all students with the best possible international education. Studying abroad is all about experiencing new cultures and learning new perspectives, by living outside of what is familiar. Study abroad also has some extra dangers, therefore, often because the laws and customs of the host country are unfamiliar. Our goal is to enable you, as FSU students in Panama, to experience all the benefits of study abroad and equip you to handle the challenges as safely as possible.

The current world climate makes the goals of studying abroad and becoming better-educated world citizens, seem even more relevant and immediate. We have always provided students and faculty with instructions on what to do if there is a crisis situation, such as the events of September 11th 2001. We closely follow the advice of the State Department, US Embassy and Panama Police in formulating our security procedures. Panama's many attractions and opportunities for amazing educational experiences still make it one of the best places in the world to study abroad.

The goals of this safety guide are to provide useful knowledge and information about safety and security in Panama. After reading this guide you should have knowledge of FSU-Panama's policies and procedures regarding safety and security. You should also have knowledge of how to make good decisions about your own safety in Panama, what to do if you do become a victim of crime, and what to do in the event of an emergency.

*THIS PUBLICATION IS AVAILABLE IN ALTERNATE FORMAT UPON REQUEST.*

**Reporting Crimes and other Emergencies**

The safety and security of at FSU-Panama is the responsibility of every employee and student on campus. Immediately report suspicious persons, incidents, and unsafe conditions to the Housing Coordinator or the Program Assistant as soon as possible so that we can assist you. If an emergency occurs, dial 104. You will be required to complete a police and incident report. Occasionally, we may notify all students of an incident, via memos or email, in order to warn people to be vigilant. At all times, it is important for you to be observant and aware of your surroundings will help ensure that FSU-Panama stays a safe place to learn, teach and work.

The Clery Act recognizes certain University officials and offices as “Campus Security Authorities (CSA).” The act defines these individuals as “officials of an institution who have significant responsibility for students and campus activities, including, but not limited to, student housing, student discipline, campus judicial proceedings, health services, Title IX and athletics. CSAs are responsible for reporting crimes to the FSU Police Departing, including crimes where the victim chooses to remain anonymous. Reports filed with CSA’s are counted and disclosed in this annual security report.
Voluntary, Confidential Reporting

If you are the victim of a crime and do not wish to pursue action within the University or criminal justice system, we encourage you to make a confidential report to FSU Victim Advocate Program or mental health providers locally or at the FSU Counseling Center. The purpose of a confidential report is to comply with your wish to keep your personally identifying information confidential, while taking steps to ensure your safety, the safety of others and provide resources.

Emergency and Contact Numbers

Administration: 317-0367
Rector: ext. 228
Academic Vice-Rector: ext. 238
Director of Student Affairs: ext. 223
Program Assistant (female): 6672-1075
Program Assistant (male): 6678-4969
Police: 104
Fire: 103
Emergency disaster 335
Emergency Ambulance Services contracted/EMI 236-5050

Important Meetings and Documents

In addition to this security report, the following meetings and documents also pertain to student safety in Panama and form an integral part of our safety procedures:

- Emergency Contact Cards
  In addition to the contact information provided in the student orientation packet, students are provided a wallet size card with pertinent contact/emergency information (program assistants, police, hospital, fire, public transportation, etc.)

- Student Orientation
  There is a mandatory orientation the first week after your arrival in Panama. It is vital that all students attend this orientation, which will cover essential information for your stay in Panama, including many of the points raised here, in more detail.

- Meeting with Housing Staff on Safety and Security Concerns
There is a mandatory security meeting with the Housing Coordinator which is part of the orientation process during the first week of class. This meeting provides important information about terrorism, crime prevention and personal safety.

- **Student Handbook**

You will receive a briefing of the contents of the Student Handbook during orientation week when you arrive in Panama. This document details most of the rules and regulations that students should be aware of while at FSU Panama. It also contains useful information about the local area and services available to students, including important safety advice.

**Safety on Campus and Housing Units**

Our main building (#227) and library (#225) are located in the City of Knowledge, which is considered a relatively safe neighborhood. Our housing facilities/apartments are located in building #158, which is a housing complex recently constructed by the City of Knowledge. The student lounge and kitchen is on the ground floor and the student rooms are on the first floor. The City of Knowledge provides the exterior security (security camera and guard patrols). Access to the lounge and kitchen is controlled by a biometric (fingerprint recognition) security system. Notwithstanding, we strongly recommend that you take the following precautions, regardless of whether you reside on or off campus.

These simple tips will help to support your safety:

1. Make sure to shut the door when leaving the room, and keep the balcony door closed. Do not lend your key-card to anyone. Lock all outside doors and deadlock windows when you are not at home.
2. Always keep all valuables in the safes provided in the housing units.
3. If you live in university housing, make sure the outside light is on at night.
4. In the housing units, visitors/guests are allowed between 9:00 am and 12:00 pm. No overnight visits are permitted.
5. If you receive an obscene or threatening telephone call or note, tell a member of the Student Affairs Office or campus security.
6. Do not assume that another roommate will make your housing secure when you go out. Make sure you always leave the house secure.
7. If you are going away overnight, let a roommate you trust or the Student Affairs Office know where you are going, when you should be back, and leave a telephone number where you can be reached in the event of an emergency.
8. Do not leave the key-card in the common area or any place where someone else can take it. Leave the key-card in a safe place where you can find it easily. In case you need to leave in a hurry.
9. If you are leaving the house for a period of time, it is suggested that you purchase a timer for your lamp and radios to make it look as if someone is in.
10. If you return to your housing unit and see signs of a break-in (e.g., smashed windows or open doors), do not go in. Go to a friend or neighbor’s house and contact the university security office or a housing official. Do not touch anything when you do go back in for you could destroy valuable evidence.
11. Security cameras have been installed in the corridors, and the common area, which allow 24-hour monitoring of all activities.
12. All classrooms are equipped with security cameras, which allow 24-hour monitoring of all activities.
Safety Off Campus

It is safe to walk on the streets in Panama. However, you should avoid walking alone at night and use your common sense wherever you are. You should avoid exploring areas of Panama you are not acquainted with, unless you are accompanied by a trusted friend or colleague who is acquainted with the area. If you are returning home late at night, walk in a group or call a taxi service. The university provides a listing of important numbers during orientation, among which are recommended taxi services, as well as Uber and Cabify services. Avoid putting yourself at risk by taking shortcuts like walking through dark alleyways or parks.

Do not carry large amounts of cash with you when you are out. Always carry enough change and/or a cell phone or telephone card to make a phone call. Be alert and brief when using a mobile phone. When using a public telephone, stand face outwards, so that you can see what is going on around you. If you feel you are being followed, cross the street (more than once if necessary). If you are still not comfortable, move as quickly as possible to a public area, such as a restaurant or bar, and ask for help. It is not necessarily the best idea to use the first telephone you see if it is in an isolated spot.

Avoid confrontations - it's better and safer to walk away if you are being provoked or hassled. Be aware of others around you at ATM machines and try not to use them at night or in poorly lit areas. If you must use an ATM machine, go with a friend and leave as soon as you have your money. Always memorize your PIN (personal identification number) to access your money from an ATM machine. Never write down your PIN or give it to anyone else. Have your keys ready well before you reach the door of your car or house. Carry your bag close to you with the clasp facing inwards and wear the strap across your body.

Panama is a relatively safe city with a low violent crime rate compared to many US cities of an equivalent size. However, petty theft such as pick pocketing and bag snatching is common. When in public, always remain alert to the risk potential of becoming a victim, especially if alone. Avoid flashing money, jewelry, cameras and other electronic equipment. Enjoy yourself, but try to keep a low profile. As in any large city, you need to be streetwise and be alert to dangerous places or situations.

How to avoid becoming a victim of crime:

- Do not carry your wallet in your back pocket.
- Make sure you fasten your purse and wear it across your body if it has a strap, so that it is not easily accessible.
- Do not leave your belongings on the floor in a pub, restaurant, shop, or movie theatre. Strap your belongings around your ankle or under a chair leg.
- Be aware of people trying to distract your attention.
- Do not carry your passport with you, unless it is necessary. Always carry a notarized photocopy of the main page of your passport.
- Make copies of all your important documents and credit card numbers, including the numbers to call to cancel your cards if you need to have them replaced. Keep these copies in a safe place.
- Be conscious of your belongings in busy places such as tourist spots, bus stops, and shopping malls.
- Be very careful when carrying valuables in your backpack in busy areas.
- Think about what you need to take with you. Do you really need all your credit cards and all your cash?
• Remember that alcohol consumption impairs your judgment.
• Do not accept drinks from a stranger or leave your drink unattended in public places, as 'spiking' drinks with drugs or alcohol is on the rise.
• Set aside some money separate from your wallet, so you can always get home.
• Do not walk alone at night - take a licensed cab.
• Never accept a ride from someone offering you a taxi.
• Avoid dark streets and alleyways—use busy, well-lit streets, even if you have to take the long way home.
• Use your common sense—avoid strangers and questionable circumstances, even if it means turning around or crossing the street.
• If you feel uncomfortable or think someone is suspicious - make momentary eye contact, so they know you could identify them to the police.
• Walk tall and confident, and make sure you know where you are going. You should know where you are going before you go out.

**If you are attacked or have your belongings stolen:**

- Give up your belongings to avoid being hurt.
- Scream and shout to attract attention.
- Consider purchasing a personal sonic alarm - the noise can startle and throw an attacker off-guard temporarily.
- Report it to the police by calling 104.
- Report it to a member of staff (call the Program Assistant or the Housing/IP Coordinator).
- Cancel your credit cards if stolen.
- We can arrange counseling, if you need it.

**Common sense precautions:**

- Use the “Buddy System”—always tell your roommates where you are going (even if it is just to the supermarket) and when you expect to be back.
- Register your cell phone number with the administration office, so we can contact you in an emergency (we will not use it for any other purpose).
- Always carry your FSU card with you.
- Always carry a government issued picture ID. International students should carry a notarized copy of their passports until their student visa card is issued by Immigration Services.
- Never leave your belongings unattended in a public place, including on-campus buildings, and especially on public transportation.

**Alcohol & Drugs**

Florida State University-Panama has established standards of conduct concerning the possession, sale, serving, and consumption of alcoholic beverages and drugs on the Florida State University-Panama Campus. These policies and rules reflect a concern for the health and safety of the campus community and apply to University faculty, staff, students, guests, and visitors. The possession and consumption of alcohol is only permitted in the housing units, by students, their guests and visitors who have reached the age of eighteen—the legal drinking age in the Republic of Panama. **Possession and/or consumption by students, guests or visitors under the age of eighteen is prohibited.** The possession and consumption of alcoholic beverages is also prohibited at all University related activities on campus.

Failure to comply with the above policies will result in disciplinary action taken by the
university, including expulsion from the program. Violations of the University Code of Conduct are handled through the Office of Student Affairs. Violations of the Panamanian drinking age regulations are subject to the laws of Panama and will be handled by the Panamanian police.

If you are drinking, whether on - or off-campus, never leave your drink unattended or in the care of strangers under any circumstances, in order to prevent strangers from meddling with the contents of your drink.

**Counseling Services**

Even though students are not on the main campus, they have access to many resources should they encounter issues while abroad. Program staff members are available to support students in a variety of ways, including connecting students with other professionals locally and/or on the main campus.

**University Counseling Center**

[https://counseling.fsu.edu/](https://counseling.fsu.edu/)

The Counseling Center is a welcoming and confidential place located on the main campus to discuss questions and concerns such as homesickness, struggles with relationships, sexual identity, cultural issues, and more. Online counseling sessions may be arranged either through FSU counseling center or through the program’s insurance company. Additionally, there are local counseling services that may be arranged.

**Sexual Assault**

The following precautions may help you avoid becoming a victim of a crime of a sexual nature:

- Remember that alcohol consumption impairs your judgment.
- Refrain from being alone (e.g., in a car, home or isolated place) with someone you do not know well, especially if you are not sober.
- If you do separate from your friends while you are out for the evening, let them know where you will be and give them a contact number. If possible, make sure you contact someone to let him or her know your whereabouts.
- Never leave your drink unattended, or accept a drink from someone you do not know well. As in the US, there have been incidents in Panama where drinks have been spiked, which makes you appear very drunk, renders you unconscious and causes memory loss.
- Remember that cultural norms and expectations are different. Your assumptions based on the situation (e.g., conversation, body language, manner of dress) may be very different from another person's assumptions.
- If you are a victim of rape, sexual assault or harassment, you should inform a member of staff, such as a Program Assistant, or call the IP Coordinator immediately. All cases will be treated with sensitivity and information will only be shared on a need to know basis. Please be aware that FSU employees are mandatory reporters and as such will comply with FSU Title IX policies and procedures. However, confidential resources will be provided.
- Do not clean yourself or the crime scene, if possible, as it may affect the ability to prosecute the attacker.
• We can help to arrange counseling and after care.
• The university will take any allegations of rape, sexual assault or harassment very seriously. Student's accused of crimes of a sexual nature will be subject to university judicial procedures.
• In addition to university sanctions, they may be subject to criminal prosecution under Panamanian laws.

**FSU Support Services for Sexual Assault**

Even though students are not on the main campus, they have access to many resources should they encounter issues while abroad. Program staff members are available to support students in a variety of ways, including connecting students with other professionals locally and/or on the main campus.

**Victim Advocate Program**

[http://victimadvocate.fsu.edu](http://victimadvocate.fsu.edu)

A victim advocate is available 24 hours a day to respond to the needs of victims of crimes, including victims of sexual battery. Advocates offer emotional support practical assistance (such as contacting professors when requested), and necessary referrals (to counseling, legal aid, medical attention, etc.). Whenever possible, the University will assist student victims in rearranging class schedules and room assignments if requested. The goal of the program is to help students cope with their victimization and continue to have a rewarding college experience.

**University Counseling Center**

[https://counseling.fsu.edu/](https://counseling.fsu.edu/)

The Counseling Center is a welcoming and confidential place located on the main campus to discuss questions and concerns such as homesickness, struggles with relationships, sexual identity, cultural issues, and more. Online counseling sessions may be arranged either through FSU counseling center or through the program’s insurance company. Additionally, there are local counseling services that may be arranged.

**Center for Health Advocacy & Wellness**

[http://chaw.fsu.edu/](http://chaw.fsu.edu/)

The Center for Health Advocacy & Wellness encourages students to make healthy lifestyle decisions that facilitate academic success and lead to life-long health and wellness.

**Student Rights and Responsibilities**

Through the student judicial process, students charged with violations of the Student Conduct Code are informed of their rights, held responsible for behavior that adversely affects the university community, and ultimately guided in making better decisions about their conduct.

**Safety While Traveling**

09/10/2022
**Smart Traveler Enrolment Program (STEP):**
This is a free service provided by the US Government to US Citizens who are traveling to, or living in a foreign country. The STEP program allows the State Department to better assist you in an emergency and to provide you with updates, travel alerts, and other information. Go to: [https://travelregistration.state.gov](https://travelregistration.state.gov). All students should register for the period that they will be staying in Panama. Students may also register any other trips that they plan to take while on the program.

**Travel Form:**
Students are requested to fill out a travel form if they are planning to be away from the study center overnight. The online travel form is located at the top right corner of International Programs’ website: [https://international.fsu.edu/](https://international.fsu.edu/). Students are asked to also inform their roommates of their travel plans and when they are expected to return. If the students are delayed, they are asked to contact the study center staff.

**State Department Travel Advice**
Students are advised to consult the US Department of State website before traveling. Go to travel.state.gov on information regarding travel advisories, entry requirements, immunizations, and safety concerns.

**Cultural Sensitivity**
There are many subtle cultural differences in the way people behave in other countries, including Panama, which you should be sensitive to, in order to protect yourself and avoid offending local people.

Wherever you go, be informed about your destination and check the news about unusual situations so you do not find yourself in difficulties. In general, it is best not to stand out too much. It is advisable not to discuss politically sensitive issues in public, and not to get involved in any local politics or protests.

Learning a few key phrases of the language is also essential—*hello, goodbye, yes, no, please, thank you, I'm sorry, can you help me?, do you speak English?*—will get you a long way and make your trip more enjoyable too.

**In the event of a criminal action or other emergency**
In the event of a criminal action or other emergency, FSU-Panama students should follow these steps:

1. Immediately call the Police at 104 and report all the facts surrounding the criminal action or other emergency.
2. Call the Program Assistant at 6672-1075 (cell) or 6678-4969.

The FSU-Panama educational campus is located in the City of Knowledge which has a contracted security force. Additionally, there is a police station located within a couple minutes of the FSU campus and the Clayton residential areas where our housing units are located. In addition, there is an FSU-Panama "Incident Report Form" which must be filled...
out. This report is used by students and the university administration to document all incidents occurring on FSU-Panama campus property and the Clayton housing apartment (dorms).

**Security and Fire Safety**

**Geography and physical Location**

The physical facilities which comprise FSU Panama are part of the City of Knowledge complex in the community of Clayton, Republic of Panama. We follow all regulatory policies and guidelines of main campus, especially those that relate to the safety and security of the FSU community in Panama.

The FSU Panama Campus is comprised of the following physical facilities:

1. Building #227 (main building housing administrative offices and classrooms)
2. Building #225 (Library)
3. Building #158 student housing (lounge and kitchen facilities/ground floor and student rooms/first floor).

Note: building #158 is comprised of three different towers which are connected and FSU occupies one of these towers. The distance between our housing facility and main campus (#227) and Library #225) can be covered by a 15-20 minute walk. The City of knowledge is the landlord of these facilities and as such has primary legal jurisdiction. FSU Panama utilizes these facilities on a contractual/rental basis.

The City of Knowledge is managed by a non-profit organization (foundation), and is part of the Government of the Republic of Panama and operate with a high degree of autonomy. Geographically, it is comprised of 120 hectares (200+ buildings). It was established for the purpose of business, academic, scientific and humanistic collaboration. The objective is the promotion of human and sustainable development based on transferable knowledge.

**Crime Statistics**

Our current population is approximately four-hundred students. Because of this small number, the incidence of crime is nearly non-existent. Our annual crime submission report during the past six years has reflected “no crimes to report” (see table below for crime statistics for 2018-2020). Our records indicate that the (Office of Student Affairs) last time a serious crime (crime against people) was reported was during the Summer of 2012 (rape/sexual assault). Our immediate surrounding environment is comprised of institutions, which employ primarily technical and professional staff (City of Knowledge). This surrounding area is also has a low incidence of crime, due to many control factors which include low population density, routine security/police patrols, and area covered by a significant number -of security cameras.

The Office of Student Affairs is the location were statistics or chronology of events relating to events, which violate Student Conduct Code, are maintained (investigative files, student complaint log, events that require documentation). Situations out of the ordinary
(crime/larceny or attempted burglary) are dealt with by an informal reporting system which involves the participation of one or more of the administrative officers (Rector, Vice rectors, & Student Affairs Director).

**Daily Crime Log & Fire Log**

FSU-Panama maintains a Daily Crime & Fire Log of all incidents reported to them. This log identifies the type, locations, and time of each criminal incident reported. Upon request, a copy of any maintained Daily Crime Log will be made available for viewing, within forty-eight hours of notice.

**Emergency Response and Evacuation Procedure**

Significant events/emergencies affecting our students and physical facilities are communicated immediately to main campus authorities. We have documented policies, which describe our Emergency Response Procedures, which are reviewed and tested annually. Students and visiting faculty are notified of the emergency response procedures during orientation upon arrival on campus. This procedures include the identification of emergency meetings points.

Additionally, we have a police officer (RP police) on a contractual basis who is present Monday to Friday (10am-6pm) at building #227 (Administrative and classrooms). During the weekend and holidays there is a contracted private security present 24 hours a day. This private security maintains close communication with the RP police and the City of Knowledge Security services, who provide additional 24-hour patrols.

**Timely Warnings And Annual Security Report**

FSU Panama maintains close communication with the City of Knowledge security services and the Panamanian Police. Whenever there is a suspicious situation of a potential serious nature, which could place members of our community at risk, we deal with such in a proactive manner. The Panama Police is presently in the process of organizing a university crime watch program with which we will be participating. We have complied as required during the past with the submission of the FSU Panama Safety Guide. In terms of criminal statistics FSU Panama does not have “any serious crimes to report” during 2018.

We follow the same procedure and policies of main campus regarding confidentiality and reporting requirements as it relates to our students. These policies and guidelines are available to students and the community at large on the FSU Panama Web-Site (Frequently Referenced General Policies and Information)

Alleged Student Conduct Code violations are handle by the Office of Student Affairs (Student Affairs Director) to include all steps of the process as described in the International Programs Student Conduct Resource Guide (receipt of complaints, counseling and information regarding the steps (due process, rights, responsibilities, appeal rights, investigations, disciplinary process, etc.)

Public Property adjacent to campus and complemented by 24 hour security guard patrols. A description of our housing facilities enhanced by a security system comprised of a biometric access system (student lounge and building, and includes the latest safety and security measures. The safety of our students is ensured through drills of the fire evacuation procedures for both the administrative and housing buildings.

### Hate Crimes Report for FSU Republic of Panama 2021

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<th>Offense</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>National Origin</th>
<th>Sexual Orientation</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
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<td>Murder</td>
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<td>Res</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>OC</td>
<td>Res</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negligent Manslaughter</td>
<td>OC</td>
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<td>OC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>OC</td>
<td>Res</td>
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<td>PP</td>
<td>OC</td>
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<td>NC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aggravated Assault</td>
<td>OC</td>
<td>Res</td>
<td>NC</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Res</td>
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<td>OC</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Res</td>
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<td>OC</td>
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OC = On-Campus
Res = Residence Hall (there are not any residence halls on the Panama City Campus)
NC = non-campus
PP = Public Property adjacent to campus

### Fire Safety Annual Compliance Report

The Administrative Building (#227) is equipped with a fire safety system including fire extinguishers and hoses on each floor, smoke detectors and emergency exits signage. Annual fire safety inspections are done by the local fire department, which is located at the City of Knowledge.

Drills of the fire evacuation procedures for both the administrative and housing buildings occupied by FSU students are completed bi-annually.

As of January 2018, our students are being housed in the recently constructed City of Knowledge housing complex/Building #158. This facility meets the definition of a "Green building," and includes the latest safety and security measures. The safety of our students is enhanced by a security system comprised of a biometric access system (student lounge and kitchen facilities). The overall complex is monitored by a plural number of security cameras and complemented by 24 hour security guard patrols. A description of our housing facilities
(building #158) can be seen at the FSU Panama Web-Site under "Housing." The housing is equipped with a fire safety system.

While the City of Knowledge has the primary responsibility for the management of the facility, FSU policies and guidelines govern the student conduct. In the event of a need to document any fire event (Fire Safety Log) such would be reported immediately to the International Programs and documented in the Office of the building Manager (Maintenance Supervisor, building #227, first floor).
Florida State University Panama Study Center Crime Report Form Student(s)

**Involved:**

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**Incident Details:**

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**Description of incident:**

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<td>Signature</td>
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**Witnesses to the incident (if any):**

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