FSU International Programs

Broad Curriculum, First Year Abroad, First Semester Abroad Pathway

2019-2020
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**IMPORTANT CONTACTS**

**ACADEMICS**

ACADEMIC MATTERS
FSU ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMS RELATED TO STUDY ABROAD
ITALIAN STUDIES MINOR
TUTORING RESOURCES
STUDENT DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

**BEFORE DEPARTURE AND PROGRAM SPECIFICS**

PASSPORT
VISA REQUIREMENTS
FLIGHT INFORMATION
IN TRANSIT
ARRIVING IN FLORENCE
FSU FLORENCE STUDY CENTER
HOUSING
TRANSPORTATION IN FLORENCE
PERSONAL TRAVEL
CLIMATE AND PACKING

**COMMUNICATION AND ELECTRONICS**

MAIL
CELL PHONES AND COMMUNICATION
COMPUTERS

**CURRENCY AND BANKING**

EXPENSES WHILE IN FLORENCE
CURRENCY
BANKING

**HEALTH**

INOCULATIONS/MEDICAL CONCERNS
ALCOHOL AWARENESS AND ILLEGAL DRUGS

**POLICIES AND SAFETY**

RULES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
SAFETY AND SECURITY

**TIPS AND RESOURCES**

TIPS FROM STUDENTS ON WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW
ONLINE RESOURCES
SUGGESTED READING

**EXPLORING ITALY INFOGRAPHIC**
IMPORTANT CONTACTS

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS OFFICE
A5500 University Center
282 Champions Way
P.O. Box 3062420
Florida State University
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2420

PHONE 850.644.3272
1.800.374.8581
FAX 850.644.8817
850.645.4659
EMAIL IP-Info@fsu.edu
WEBSITE international.fsu.edu
HOURS 8:00a.m. to 5:00p.m. EST, Monday - Friday

THE FLORENCE STUDY CENTER
Florida State University International Programs Italy (FSUIPI)
Borgo degli Albizi, 15
50122 Florence, Italy

The location of the Florence Study Center is expected to change during Summer 2020 or Fall 2020. All updates will be communicated to program participants through the IP student portal.

PHONE 011-39-055-2340604
FAX 011-39-055-2476938
WEBSITE http://www.florence.fsu.edu
HOURS 9:00a.m. to 5:00p.m. CET, Monday - Friday

STAFF CONTACTS
Frank Nero, Director
Email fnero@fsu.edu
Cell Phone 011-39-324-790-3571

Lucia Cossari, Associate Director
Email lcossari@fsu.edu
Cell Phone 011-39-338-539-7290

Charles Panarella, Academic & Program Service Administrator
Email cpanarella@fsu.edu
Cell Phone 011-39-351-246-5581

Ilaria Mugnaini, Housing Coordinator
Email imugnaini@fsu.edu
Cell Phone 011-39-349-708-4526

Laura Buonanno, Program Coordinator
Email lbuonanno@fsu.edu
Cell Phone 011-39-335-573-6280

Tamara Pfeil, Financial Coordinator
Email tpfeil@fsu.edu
Cell Phone 011-39-347-812-3699

Vanessa Kummer, Financial Assistant and Faculty Services
Email vkummer@fsu.edu
Cell Phone 011-39-328-837-4993

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS
Emergencies (Local Police) 113

U.S. Consulate
Lungarno Vespucci, 38
50123 Florence, Italy

PHONE (011) 39-055-266951
FAX (011) 39-055-284088
WEBSITE https://it.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/florence/

INTERNATIONAL CALLS
Making international calls from the U.S. to Italy: First dial “011” (for international call), followed by “39” (the country code), then the specific area code (dropping the first zero) and location number.

Time Differences: CET - Central European Time ahead by Eastern Standard Time by six hours, Central Standard Time by eight hours, Mountain Standard Time by nine hours, and Pacific Standard Time by ten hours. Daylight Savings Time changes often occur on different dates in Europe than in the U.S.
ACADEMIC MATTERS
This program is first and foremost an academic one, so you should be prepared to invest as much time, effort and thought into your coursework as you do at your home campus. Since classes are small, you will have more interaction with your fellow students and with faculty than you have on main campus. There will be a greater emphasis on participation in class discussions. This means you must be prepared to maintain a high level of performance by being an active and committed participant in your classes.

FSU ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMS RELATED TO STUDY ABROAD
FSU students are encouraged to get involved with the Garnet and Gold Scholar Society and the Global Citizenship Certificate program. These two resources provide special recognition as global-ready graduates.

The Garnet and Gold Scholar Society program facilitates involvement and recognizes the engaged, well-rounded student who excels within and beyond the classroom in the areas of Leadership, Internship, Service, International, and Research. A student who has met the criteria in three of the five areas is eligible for consideration. All study abroad programs organized through the International Programs Office qualify for the international experience portion of the International Area. Visit http://garnetandgoldscholar.fsu.edu/ or email GarnetandGoldProgram@fsu.edu to learn more.

The Global Citizenship Certificate program helps undergraduate students develop invaluable cross-cultural skills and global competencies needed to be a global-ready graduate. Students who enroll in the certificate take 1 required course, Global Perspectives, and 3 electives. The required course counts toward FSU Liberal Studies X, E-series, and writing requirements. Students can choose from 500+ courses to fulfill the elective course requirement. In addition, students participate in 8 intercultural events on campus and a sustained international experience abroad, which you have already done! Enroll in the Global Citizenship Certificate to ensure your study abroad experience counts toward the certificate. Visit cge.fsu.edu/globalcitizen to learn more about the benefits, criteria, and requirements. You can also email us at globalcitizen@fsu.edu with questions.

ITALIAN STUDIES MINOR
The Italian Studies Minor enhances and focuses a student’s program in Italy. It requires 15 credits, 9 of which must be earned in Florence and include a cultural component. Students can choose from various disciplinary perspectives on Italian Studies. A maximum of 9 hours may be counted in a single academic discipline. A minimum grade of “C-” must be earned and a minimum grade point average of 2.0 must be maintained for all courses taken for the minor. Contact Sarah Lovins Bacani (slovin@fsu.edu) for more information.

TUTORING RESOURCES
There are a number of tutoring resources available at Florida State University to assist you academically, both in Tallahassee and abroad. Online tutors are available through the following programs:

- Reading & Writing Center (RWC) http://wr.english.fsu.edu/Reading-Writing-Center/RWC-Online
- Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) [http://ace.fsu.edu/] ACE provides free tutoring in many subject areas, including accounting, biology, chemistry, economics, math, statistics, and physics.
- University Libraries: Office of Distance Library Services https://www.lib.fsu.edu/department/distance-learning

OFFICE OF ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES (OAS)
OAS provides reasonable and appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Documented disabilities and accommodations vary in nature, and though the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 do not apply extraterritorially, we do our best to accommodate our students. If you anticipate needing to request accommodations for a documented disability, please schedule an appointment with OAS by calling 850-644-9566 (Voice) or 850-644-8504 (TDD). For more information, visit http://dos.fsu.edu/sdrc.
VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR U.S. CITIZENS

Fall, Spring, First Semester Abroad Pathway (FSA) and First Year Abroad (FYA) Students: In order to enter Italy legally, you must apply and obtain a valid student visa. Please review the following important aspects of the visa process.

- **Passport**: You must hold a U.S. passport that is valid for at least 6 months beyond your return from Italy and contain at least 2 blank visa pages.

- **Visa Instructions**: A “Visa Packet” will be added to the [IP student portal](https://ip.fsu.edu) when finalized with up-to-date information and guidance on applying for the student visa. Failure to complete the visa application process within the stated timeline could result in late arrivals or inability to participate in the program. Any financial penalties associated with delayed arrivals or cancelations will be your responsibility. Once the visa has been issued, you are required to bring copies of your passport pages (including blank pages, font, and back cover) with you to Florence.

- **Flight/Visa Restrictions**: When you are applying for a visa, you can request that the visa be valid up to 5 days before the start date of the program. However, visa requests outside of your program dates are never guaranteed. If you intend to travel outside of your program dates, travel insurance is strongly recommended. You will need to enter and depart from the Schengen Area within the limits of your visa. For more information on Schengen and a list of countries that fall within the Schengen Area, please visit the [U.S. Department of State website](https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/schengen-fact-sheet.html) or contact an International Programs’ Immigration Specialist at [IP-Visas@fsu.edu](mailto:IP-Visas@fsu.edu). Due to airline restrictions, traveling on a one-way ticket may not be allowed. Please check with your airlines before purchasing a one-way ticket.

- **On the first day of Orientation at the FSU Florence Study Center (day after arrival), the FSU staff will help you fill out your Permit-of-Temporary-Residency. This is required of all students so they have legal status in Italy for the duration of their stay. In order to complete this process, **once the Visa has been issued**, Fall, Spring, and First Year Abroad (FYA) students are required to bring the following to Florence:
  - **Copy of EVERY page of their passport** (including the cover and blank pages). The copy does not need to be in color, but you need to do it at home and bring it with them to Florence.
  - **Stamped Consulate Packet**: International Programs will provide you with a stamped consulate packet with the return of your passport and visa. Please make sure to bring this packet with you to Florence, including an extra copy of the first page.

- **Travel outside the program dates**: International Programs and the Italian Consulate will be in possession of your original passport during visa processing. Therefore, international travel during the months prior to the start of the program will be limited. Please contact an Immigration Specialist at [IP-Visas@fsu.edu](mailto:IP-Visas@fsu.edu) if you have international travel plans.

- **If you are not participating on the FYA program and intend to study abroad for two consecutive semesters**, you will have additional visa requirements. You must contact an Immigration Specialist as soon as possible at [IP-Visas@fsu.edu](mailto:IP-Visas@fsu.edu).

Summer Students: Summer students do not require a visa but will still have immigration restrictions. Please review the following:

- **Passport**: You must hold a U.S. passport that is valid for at least 6 months beyond your return from Italy.

- **Flight/Immigration Restrictions**: You are allowed to reside legally in the Schengen Area for 90 days within 180 days without obtaining a student visa. You **CANNOT** stay in Italy or any of the Schengen States for more than 90 days within 180 days. For more information on the Schengen Area, please visit the U.S. Department of State website, [http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/schengen-fact-sheet.html](http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/schengen-fact-sheet.html), or contact an International Programs’ Visa Specialist at [IP-visas@fsu.edu](mailto:IP-visas@fsu.edu). Due to airline restrictions, traveling on a one-way ticket may not be allowed. Please check with your airlines before purchasing a one-way ticket.

VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR NON U.S. CITIZENS AND U.S. CITIZENS LIVING ABROAD:

If you are a non-U.S. citizen or U.S. citizen living abroad, contact an International Programs’ Immigration Specialist at [IP-Visas@fsu.edu](mailto:IP-Visas@fsu.edu). You may be required to apply for a visa on your own or you may have additional visa requirements and expenses.

All visa information is correct at the time of publication, but terms, fees, and guidelines are subject to change without notice.
FLIGHT INFORMATION
There is no group flight for this program and your Program Fee does not include airfare. As previously stated, traveling on a one-way ticket may not be allowed due to airline restrictions. Please check with your airlines before purchasing a one-way ticket.

As an admitted Broad Curriculum, First Year Abroad, or First Semester Abroad Pathway student, you may purchase airfare for your program. You should arrive in your study abroad location on the start date of the program and depart on the end date of your program as stated on the International Programs website and IP student portal. You may need to depart from the U.S. one day before the program’s start date in order to arrive on time. For example: if the start date is August 30, you have to depart the U.S. on August 29. The on-site Orientation is mandatory for all students. All travel arrangements must be made so you can attend Orientation. Orientation always takes place the morning after the start date of the program.

Your program housing will begin on the start date of your program and end on the end date. IF YOU PLAN ON ARRIVING EARLIER OR WISH TO STAY LATER, YOU MUST MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO STAY IN A HOTEL. Click here for a list of suggested accommodations. You must check out of program housing on the morning of the last day of your program. You will be responsible for getting yourself to the airport in time for your departure.

The size of the medieval streets prohibits coaches from easily accessing various areas within Florence, including our housing locations. Therefore, we are unable to provide group pick-ups from the airport or train station to the housing locations. You are responsible for securing transportation to your residence.

First Year Abroad students only: you are welcome to arrange to stay in university housing between semesters. Please discuss your housing needs with the FSU Florence staff. You cannot stay in university housing prior to the start of the fall semester or after the end of the summer semester.

Once you have completed your travel arrangements, you must submit your flight itinerary through the IP student portal. Your flight arrangements will be provided to the Florence staff and it is important that they receive this information in order to monitor student arrivals.

You may want to consider purchasing travel insurance when booking your flight. Travel insurance typically covers flight cancellation fees, lost luggage or other losses incurred while traveling, etc. Speak with your airline for more information. If your flight is canceled, delayed, or you miss a connection on your way to Florence, contact the International Programs staff via email or phone.

IN TRANSIT

- **Domestic flights.** In general, arrive at the airport ticket counter two hours before your departure time. Check with your specific airline to find out the recommended pre-flight allowance.
- **International flights.** Arrive at the airport ticket counter three hours before your departure time.
- **Keep your boarding pass** until you have landed, cleared immigration and customs, and have collected your luggage.
- **Have your passport and immigration letter** accessible in your carry-on luggage.
- **During your flight** make sure to drink lots of water to stay hydrated. Get up and walk around once an hour to help your circulation. Do simple stretches while in your seat. Try to sleep; it will help you combat jet lag. Wear layers, as the temperature on the plane and in airports can vary.

ARRIVING IN FLORENCE
When you arrive in Florence, check-in to your residence first. You will receive an email from the staff in Florence with the address of your residence a week or two prior to departure. **You should not go to the Florence Study Center.** A Program Assistant or staff member will be present to check you in to your residences. Again, you are responsible for securing transportation to your residence.

**From Florence**
Most students fly directly into Florence or arrive by train. This is usually the best option! From the Florence airport, you must take a taxi to the address of your residence as supplied by the study center staff. **You should not come directly to the Florence Study Center.** The taxi from the airport into Florence costs about €25-30. There is also bus service from the airport to the Florence train station. The bus fare to the train station costs approximately €6. Once at the train station, take a taxi to the final destination. The taxi from the train station to student residences costs around €10-15.

**Taxis in Florence do not take ATM or credit cards, so have cash in Euros prepared.** There is no Uber service currently in Florence.

**From Rome**
The nearest major international airports (other than Florence) are in Pisa, Rome and Milan. If you arrive in Rome (Fiumicino), taxis are available from the airport to the central train station (Stazione Termini), but the cab fare is about €50-€60. The Leonardo Express is a train that runs directly to and from the Rome airport (Fiumicino) and the Stazione Termini (train station). A one-way ticket costs approximately €14. After going through customs follow the signs to “Ferrovia” (Railway) or FFSS. Purchase a ticket in front of the track from which the train leaves. Once at the Termini train station, look for signs that say “biglietti,” and then buy a ticket to “Firenze.” The ride is less than two hours, and the fare is about €44. A third option is to take the airport shuttle, which can be reserved in advanced online www.airportshuttle.it.

**From Milan**
Take the Malpensa shuttle airport bus (not a taxi, it’s very expensive) to the main station (Stazione Centrale, Milan) where trains leave almost hourly for Firenze (Florence). The shuttle costs €10 and the website is www.malpensashuttle.it. You can buy tickets online or at the airport. From the Milan main station, you can take a train to Florence for around €50 and lasts under two hours.

**From Pisa**
If you arrive at the Pisa airport, take the Terravision bus (www.terravision.eu) or the Airport Bus Express (www.airportbusexpress.it) to the Florence train station. Purchase your ticket at the Terravision desk inside the airport for €5 or directly from the bus driver for Airport Bus Express. Either bus company is reputable. You can also take a bus to the Central Pisa train station and transfer there for a train to Florence. The train takes about one hour and the bus from the airport to the Florence train station takes 70 minutes.
FSU FLORENCE STUDY CENTER
The FSU Florence Study Center, a restored 14th century urban palace, Palazzo Alessandri, is located in the heart of the historic district, just a few blocks away from the Duomo and Bell Tower, the Uffizi and Bargello museums, and the Arno River. To find the Study Center, start in Piazza della Repubblica with your back to the arch and follow the street directly in front of you. The name changes from Via degli Speziali, to Via del Corso to Borgo degli Albizi. The Study Center will be on your right. The main entrance to the courtyard (library, computer lounge, classrooms), is at Borgo degli Albizi, 15.

The Study Center includes:
- a well-stocked and air-conditioned library
- a computer lab with Internet access
- a comfortable student lounge
- classroom space
- administrative offices

The FSU Florence staff is available during operational hours, for emergency calls after operational hours, and offers support with academics, housing, activities, and other day-to-day needs during the program. The Study Center also serves as a place where you can gather to meet peers, receive tutoring, check the FSU Florence bulletin board for upcoming events or use the Internet. You will also have full access to all of the resources available at the study center. Again, the location of the Florence Study Center is expected to change during Summer 2020 or Fall 2020. All updates will be communicated to program participants through the IP student portal.

HOUSING
Students will be housed in Florentine-style apartment complexes throughout the city. All of the housing locations will be within a 25-minute walk to the Study Center. Some of the housing locations may not be exclusive to program participants. You will be notified about your housing location approximately one to two weeks prior to departure.

Be aware that housing check-in cannot occur before 9:30am on the first day of your program. If you are unable to check-in to your room when you arrive, there will be space available for you to store your belongings. Rooming assignments and locations will be made based on a combination of factors such as type of program, housing preference, availability and special needs as indicated in the information you provide on the Medical, Special Needs, Housing questionnaire in the IP student portal. Roommate assignments are made in Florence by our Study Center staff and cannot be changed. You will be notified about your housing location approximately one to two weeks prior to departure. You will receive your roommate assignments upon arrival.

During your on-site orientation, you will be advised of the Florence Study Center Housing Rules & Regulations. Violation of any of the housing policies is grounds for dismissal. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the housing rules and regulations for your specific program. Refer to the FSU International Programs Contractual Agreement as it outlines your contractual obligations as a participant on our program.

All residences in Florence are governed by Italian ordinances restricting noise after 11:00p.m. in historical downtown areas.

HOUSING AMENITIES
- The apartments are mostly triples, with some doubles and quadruples.
- All of the apartments have an efficiency kitchen with dishwasher and cookware, bathroom with a shower curtain, and a small living area.
- Cleaning products and toilet paper are your responsibility.
- Linens and towels are provided. A cleaning service comes once-a-week to change bed linens and towels and do a general cleaning of the common areas. We ask that you do not to bring any extra linens from home as it is easy to confuse the supplied linens with those brought from home.
- Laundry facilities are available, but clothes dryers are not common appliances in Italy. IP cannot guarantee all residences will be equipped with dryers.
- Wi-Fi access is available.
- The electrical current in Europe has two times stronger voltage (220 volts) than in the U.S. (110 volts). Do not bring anything electrical, such as hair straighteners, blow dryers, or curling irons. Hairdryers, hair straighteners and curling irons can be purchased at a low cost at local shops.
- You will have an individual safe in your room or you will have access to a safe located in the Study Center.

We cannot guarantee that each residence will have the exact same amenities. Each student housing facility has safety and security measures. They may vary by location.

At the end of the program, the housing facilities will be inspected. They should be neat, clean and in the condition in which they were found. If your housing is left in an un-fit state or if any damages are found upon your departure, additional charges may be assessed to your FSU account.

TRANSPORTATION IN FLORENCE
You will have no difficulty getting around Florence. The city’s downtown area, where our Study Center is located, is relatively small, and you are close to everything. Florence is predominantly a “walking” city, though bus transportation and taxis are readily available, and relatively inexpensive. A bike sharing service called Mobike is also available https://mobike.com/it/.

Good railroad and bus services will help you travel outside of Florence, around Italy and through Europe in general. Never hitchhike. Florence is a safe city, but we strongly advise students to not walk alone late at night.
PERSONAL TRAVEL
You are no doubt eager to explore Italy and areas of continental Europe. The academic schedule is arranged so that you will have three-day weekends, as well as a 10-day break (fall and spring term only).

Please wait until you have arrived in Florence and have received your class schedule before you book any trips away from Florence.

Waiting until classes have started will allow you to make your plans around the following factors:

- Academic deadlines for exams, papers and presentations. You do not want to book a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Prague only to discover that you have a major research paper due around that time.
- You will receive a cultural calendar of activities planned for all students upon your arrival. It would be a shame to book a trip that clashes with an activity arranged by the Florence Study Center that cannot be changed.
- The travel plans of your peers. One of the joys of studying abroad is the opportunity to build friendships through travel and shared experiences.

Do not plan travel that will cause you to miss classes; strict academic standards will be maintained on the programs. Your grade may be reduced by any unauthorized absence from class.

Summer programs may have mandatory academic excursions that take place over a weekend. If you are participating in a summer program, you should be flexible with your weekend plans. Due to the compact nature of the 5 and 6-week summer programs, course meeting times will be intensive and independent travel time may be limited.

For safety purposes, you will be instructed by the Florence staff to fill out a mandatory online independent travel form each time you plan on traveling outside of Florence. More information will be provided to you in the IP student portal prior to departure.

CLIMATE & PACKING
All airlines have different policies regarding the number, size, and weight of bags allowed on domestic and international flights. Fees for having too many bags or exceeding size and weight limits are steep, and also vary by airline. It is important that you determine the restriction on your particular airline before you pack. Please be aware that you will be responsible for carrying your own bags, packs, etc. Restrictions regarding carry-on baggage are different for each airline and sometimes vary depending on your originating, transferring and/or terminating airport. Also, requirements change based on current events. It is imperative that you check your specific requirements just prior to your departure and plan accordingly. Use the IP luggage tag you received to ensure your bag is marked in capital letters with your name, address, and final destination both on the inside and on the outside of the bag. It is recommended that you pack 1 or 2 outfits in your carry-on in case of flight delays/cancellations or lost luggage.

Make several photocopies of the pages in your passport that contain the issue date, your signature, and your photograph. Leave one copy at home with your family and take another copy with you in case your passport is lost or stolen. Carry a copy separate from your passport when you are traveling.

Plan to bring textbooks and other required course materials with you to Florence. You will receive information from the International Programs office when it is time to register for classes with details about textbooks. As a reminder, textbooks are not included in the program fee and will most likely need to be purchased prior to departure. We recommend researching ways to access a textbook as an eBook (electronic book) through the FSU Bookstore, Amazon, or other online sites. Keep in mind that not all textbooks are available as ebooks. If you wish to ship textbooks or other course materials to your study abroad location, reference the Mail section of this document and contact the Florence staff with any questions.

The weather in Florence varies. The summer and early fall can be very hot and most buildings, including our Study Center, are not air-conditioned. Late fall and winter can be cold and damp and Europeans do not heat their buildings as warmly as buildings are heated in the U.S. Italian law prohibits turning on the heat before November 1. Some of the churches, museums and other public buildings will have little heat.

You should monitor the weather before departure to plan accordantly: https://www.accuweather.com/en/world-weather.

When packing for summer, remember that churches do not allow shorts, halter tops, or miniskirts. Bring a cardigan or light jacket to cover your shoulders during church visits. During the fall or spring semester, bring clothes that can be layered. It is advisable to bring a raincoat, a warm jacket or coat, sweaters/cardigans and good walking shoes or boots. You will also want to bring warm indoor clothing like a robe, pajamas and slippers. Past program participants recommend bringing thermal underwear. You may also want to bring an overnight bag for weekend trips. It is important to keep in mind that Italians/Florentines dress stylishly, so you will want to include some dressier apparel with your wardrobe.

You should not bring any valuable or sentimental items such as jewelry, expensive watches, expensive cameras, or keepsake items you would regret losing. You also don’t want to bring any electrical appliances such as hair dryers, heaters, etc. The electricity in many countries is twice as powerful as in the U.S. and will cause those items to burn out.

Reference the International Programs packing list for more packing tips!
**MAIL**
Please share the following information with those in the U.S. who are interested in sending you mail while you are abroad. Priority mail between Italy and the U.S. may take from 6-10 days.

When sending packages to Italy, the sender should not overestimate the value of the materials in the package because you may be charged up to 30% customs duty on the declared value.

**WE STRONGLY ADVISE YOU NOT TO SEND PACKAGES BY UPS or the U.S. Postal Service as you will more likely be charged a higher fee to obtain your package from customs.** You may use Federal Express to send packages, but again, do not overestimate the value of the package.

You should have mail sent to the FSU Florence Study Center address, as listed in the Contact Information section of this packet. Mail cannot be received at the student residences because they don’t have 24-hour reception services.

**CELL PHONES & COMMUNICATION**
Staying connected to your family and friends while you are abroad is extremely important. Establish a communications plan prior to departure. Whether it’s setting up a Skype meeting every Sunday night, sending them messages over WhatsApp, or checking-in with them on social media, make sure you keep in touch!

Though it is not mandatory to use your cell phone abroad, consider one of the following options. **Do your research to see which option is the best fit for you:**

- **Add an international plan through your current service provider.** This tends to be the most expensive option. Talk to your service provider for details. Each provider offers varying international plans.

- **Purchase a sim card in-country for your current phone.** You will need to unlock your phone and make sure your phone is GSM-capable before departure. You can buy a prepaid Italy SIM plan, either for phone calls only or for calls and data.

- **Purchase an inexpensive phone with a local plan in-country and pay for more minutes/data as needed.** You can purchase a phone for as little as $40, but check first with the study center to see if there are any available for loan. The phones can be used for both calls in Italy and for calls to and from the U.S. and continental Europe. Local stores will sign you up with the carrier who is offering the best rates available at the time of your purchase. You can expect to pay approximately €0.40 a minute for calls to the U.S. and €0.15 per minute for calls to Italian numbers. All incoming calls are free while in Italy, so give your Italian number to your friends and family – you won’t be charged if they call. Calls made or received while you are in other countries will be very expensive. We highly recommend that you only use your phone for emergencies while outside of Italy.

**We strongly suggest that you do not buy a pay-as-you-go cell phone in the U.S. to take to Italy.** Students who have done this in the past have frequently found the phones do not work. It is far cheaper and more efficient to buy the pay-as-you-go phone in Italy.

- **Use the Wi-Fi available in the Study Center and around the city while the phone is in airplane mode.** Make sure to turn off roaming before you leave, just in case. Otherwise you might end up with a very large phone bill when you return to the U.S. Apps you can easily use while connected to Wi-Fi include Skype, FaceTime, Viber, and WhatsApp. If you have a smartphone, download these apps before you travel abroad so you will be able to activate the account.

**If you have access to a landline phone, you can purchase a calling card to make international calls.** We advise that you wait until you have arrived in Italy to purchase a calling card because many of the ones in the States are costly. The calling cards are readily available at local corner shops.

**COMPUTERS**
There is a computer lab at the Study Center in Florence, though many students choose to bring their own laptops. If you want to bring your laptop, we recommend doing the following:

- Check if your computer has a built-in transformer that is capable of handling the different voltages. You will need an adapter for the plug (i.e. from flat to round prongs).
- Please note that if you take a laptop with you, it is at your own risk. Check your homeowner’s insurance to make sure that it is covered when you are away from your primary residence. If not covered by your homeowner’s insurance, you may want to check into laptop insurance through http://www.safeware.com/, a worldwide insurance provider for all electronic devices (e.g. laptop, digital camera, iPod, etc.). They also have a provision for non-electronic personal property.
- **Do NOT pack your laptop or laptop charger in your checked luggage.**
EXPENSES WHILE IN FLORENCE
In estimating your financial needs while you are in Florence, calculate the amount of money you will need for meals for the entire period of your stay; your transportation and lodging costs for any personal trips you will be taking on the 3 day weekends and the 10-day midterm break (Fall and Spring programs only), and your personal entertainment and social activities costs.

- Based on past participants’ feedback, a 15- to 16-week semester budget of $3,000 - $6,000 is needed for meals, incidental expenses in Florence, and personal travel. The average estimate of student spending during a summer 6-week term is $2,500. Many students spend more, depending especially on how much independent travel they do and how frequently they dine out. In general, you can buy a lunch for about $8 and dinner in an inexpensive restaurant for around $15 in Florence.
- A good way to estimate what you might need in Florence is to assume that whatever you spend here in the U.S. (in dollars), you will spend the same (numerical) amount in euros. Take that dollar amount and convert to euros using the current exchange rate.
- If you plan on traveling around Europe, you should expect to spend at least $70 per day.

MEAL VOUCHERS
As part of the program, you will receive meal vouchers that can be used at local restaurants, pizzerias, sandwich shops, cafes, and trattorias throughout your program. A list of our local meal voucher partners and their locations around Florence will be provided to students during orientation. All participants will receive ten €5 meal vouchers per week school is in session that will be distributed during orientation.

CURRENCY
Italy uses the euro as the national currency. Exchange some dollars ($75-$100) for euros before you leave the U.S. Don’t exchange more than $100, you just need enough to get you to Florence and to a bank abroad. Visit http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/ for the current exchange rate.

BANKING
We recommend you set up online banking for your bank accounts prior to departure from the U.S. so you can monitor your account while overseas. The easiest way to access money in Florence is with an ATM card. THE FSU CARD ONLY WORKS WITH ONE ITALIAN BANK and is, therefore, not the most convenient ATM card. You can use a Debit Card at any ATM to withdraw cash whenever you need it though there will often be a withdrawal fee of up to €5. Keep in mind that many smaller restaurants and shops in Italy only accept cash.

Bring or have access to at least one credit card in the event of an emergency. If you need to visit a doctor or hospital, you will likely have to pay prior to the service, and then submit an insurance claim afterward. Credit cards are also useful for everyday purchases and offer excellent exchange rates. MasterCard and Visa are the most widely accepted credit cards overseas. A credit card with “chip and pin” technology is recommended, as this is the standard abroad.

Before using an ATM or debit card overseas, we recommend the following:
- Contact your financial institution(s) before you leave the U.S. to make sure your ATM or debit card is activated for international use. You will also need to inform them of your dates/location abroad. If you fail to contact your financial institution(s), it is not unusual for credit card companies to “freeze” an account if suspicious or fraudulent activity is suspected.
- Make sure your debit/ATM card is linked to a checking account, rather than to a savings account, so you will have access to your funds.
- If you have a pin longer than 4 digits or based on letters, you may have trouble using it abroad. You will need to change your pin before departure.
- You should also contact your financial institution for information regarding ATM transaction fees. You can limit the fees if your U.S. bank has a ‘sister’ bank in the host country and/or if you limit your withdrawals, though we do not advise keeping large sums of money on your person or stored in your residence, even if a safe is provided. If a safe is not provided, we encourage students to lock valuables in their suitcase when leaving the housing accommodation.
- Keep a record of all credit/debit/ATM card numbers and the phone numbers you would need to call, with area codes, if they are lost or stolen. Keep this record in a safe place separate from your cards, and you should provide a copy to family at home.

For those who receive financial aid, ensure that any student loans you have requested will be available for disbursement during the term you are abroad. Disbursement usually occurs after students have left the U.S., so make arrangements for your check to be deposited, if that is your chosen method of disbursement.
IMMUNIZATIONS/MEDICAL CONCERNS
Florida State University requires certain immunizations prior to your registration for classes. All newly admitted degree-seeking students (freshman and transfer) and non-FSU students must complete the required Student Immunization Form. If you fall into one of these categories, you will be required to submit this form through the IP student portal.

It is very important that you make yourself aware of specific requirements and health matters in your program location. The FSU Health and Wellness Center offers a travel clinic which provides immunizations. Additional information is available through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s site: www.cdc.gov/travel/. Please note that some countries have specific requirements for inoculations based on past location(s) the traveler has visited. It is the student’s responsibility to confirm whether or not the previous travel requires additional inoculations.

Be sure to bring sufficient quantities of your prescription medication with you to last for the duration of your stay. Keep these in their original containers with copies of the prescriptions and place them in your carry-on luggage. Bring a copy of a legible prescription from your doctor and be aware that not all U.S. drugs are available elsewhere. In particular, Adderall and Concerta are not available in all countries. Don’t postpone discussing your prescription needs with your doctor. You will likely need to work with your insurance company to cover your vacation prescription. If you experience difficulty in obtaining a prescription for your time abroad, seek assistance from our office.

We also recommend doing the following:
- If you wear glasses or contact lenses, take an extra pair and/or the prescription if you wear glasses or contact lenses.
- Complete routine medical and dental care before you leave.
- A tetanus booster shot is suggested if you have not had one within the past 10 years.

The CISI insurance provided is included in your program fee and the policy is available on our website: http://international.fsu.edu/Documents/HealthSafety/CISIInsurancePolicy.pdf. You will want to familiarize yourself with the coverage details. This policy is NOT intended to replace your domestic coverage.

ALCOHOL AWARENESS & ILLEGAL DRUGS
The legal age for the drinking of alcohol in Italy is 18. This means that you will likely have the opportunity to buy and drink alcohol legally. It is in your interest to recognize that this right carries a great deal of responsibility. The Florence Study Center has a strict code of conduct relating to the use of alcohol, violations of which will likely result in a judicial hearing with the possible outcome of being dismissed from the program. For instance, no hard liquor is permitted in all FSU residences, and no open containers are allowed on FSU-sponsored transportation and excursions. In short, know your limits and drink within moderation if you choose to do so, but not to excess.

Florida State University has a zero-tolerance policy regarding the possession, use, manufacture, production, sale, exchange or distribution of illegal drugs by students participating in FSU study abroad programs. Violation of this policy may result in immediate dismissal from the program and disciplinary action onsite or upon return to campus. International Programs’ policies follow either the U.S. law or local law, whichever is more stringent with regard to drug use. For complete information on student judicial processes, victim’s rights, and appeals see the Student Conduct Code at: http://dos.fsu.edu/srr/.
SAFETY & SECURITY

Our highest priority is the welfare and security of our students, faculty, staff and facilities. We have emergency plans in place for each of our locations and work closely with our insurers and 24/7 emergency response providers to monitor and respond to all situations worldwide. It is our policy to follow guidance from the respective U.S. Embassies, U.S. State Department, as well as local officials and keep students apprised of any new information. For more information on IP’s security policies and procedures, please contact our Director of Risk and Emergency Management, Chris Carroll at 850.644.7823 or ccarroll@fsu.edu.

- **Resources.** 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.** The University takes very seriously all types of victimization, including sexual violence, relationship violence, and domestic violence. Advocates are available and on-call 24 hours a day to provide confidential support services, even for students who are abroad. For more information on the Victim Advocate Program, visit [http://victimadvocate.fsu.edu](http://victimadvocate.fsu.edu).
  - **University Counseling Center.** The Counseling Center is a welcoming and confidential place to discuss questions and concerns such as homesickness, struggles with relationships, sexual identity, cultural issues, and more. Visit [https://counseling.fsu.edu/](https://counseling.fsu.edu/) for more information.
  - **Center for Health Advocacy & Wellness.** 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. For more information, visit [http://chaw.fsu.edu/](http://chaw.fsu.edu/).

- **The U.S. State Department** maintains a web site of information for Americans studying abroad, including current travel advisory warnings, at: [http://studentsabroad.state.gov/](http://studentsabroad.state.gov/).

- **The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)** is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency. We strongly recommend you register here: [https://step.state.gov/step/](https://step.state.gov/step/).

- **Waivers.** All IP participants must sign and submit a Waiver of Liability through the IP Student Portal.

- Be aware that you are subject to the laws of the country in which you are traveling.

- Always carry a photocopy of the picture and signature pages of your passport with you. Keep another copy in your room separate from your passport. Leave one copy at home in the U.S. with your family or a relative.

- Use the buddy system—try to travel with friends as much as possible and always tell your roommates or friends where you are going and when you expect to return. Bystander intervention is a powerful opportunity and responsibility for those within our community.

- **Valuables.** Students should not take sentimental valuables on their program. Students should not leave cash, passports, or other items of value unattended in their rooms. If a locker or safe is provided, students are strongly encouraged to use it to store anything of value at all times. Students should plan regular visits to the cash machine rather than leaving large amounts of cash in their rooms. Students are responsible for ensuring their rooms are left secure at all times – do not prop open doors, do not leave doors and windows unlocked, do not give keys to anyone. If students notice others in the building leaving the main entrance door unsecured, they should notify the IP staff immediately, even if there are others living in the building who are not FSU program participants. Students are strongly encouraged to purchase insurance that will cover their belongings while abroad, whether a standard homeowners or renters policy. The International Programs insurance policy does not cover loss or theft of participants’ possessions.

- **Pickpocketing.** In most large cities throughout the world, pickpocketing is the most common crime and can happen anytime, anywhere! We caution you to always be aware of your surroundings. While traveling in some areas beware of beggars who try to distract you with papers, boxes, or excessive body movements. Coats and purses are often stolen in crowded areas. Keep them close to you and lock your pack zippers with a combo lock. Secure your valuables if you are traveling on an overnight (“sleeper”) train.

- **Weapons.** Students are strictly prohibited from keeping or using firearms, knives, weapons (including pellet, air guns, paintball guns or other dangerous articles or substances). Furthermore, mace and/or pepper spray may be illegal in the countries that you visit. It is your responsibility to know the laws regarding weapons in the host country if you intend to bring any item for self-defense.
TIPS FROM STUDENTS ON WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW
These comments came from students who recently attended our study abroad program in Florence:
• Be sure to read the registration materials when you are notified regarding selected textbooks being available for check-out at the library in Florence (check Student Central when registering for classes).
• Comfortable shoes are a must since Florence is a walking city and you will be walking a lot during excursions.
• Leave extra space in your suitcase for souvenirs.
• Research the weather in Florence before leaving.
• Consider bringing a thermos or water canister with you, along with over the counter medication in the event you get sick (Vitamin C, DayQuil/NyQuil)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
The more information you find out about the country beforehand, the better off you will be once you get there. Here is a list of a few web sites that may be helpful as you begin your information search.

http://www.tripadvisor.com (online travel guide)
http://www.trenitalia.com (train travel in Italy)
http://www.italotreno.it (New train company that offers competitive prices between major Italian cities)
http://www.theflorentine.net/ (local bi-monthly newspaper in English)
http://www.railpass.com/ (Eurail pass information)
http://www.letsngo.com/(on-line travel guide, check out the “HotLinks” button)
http://cnn.com/WEATHER/ (daily weather forecasts)
http://travlang.com/languages (brush up on your Italian!)
https://it.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/florence/ (U.S. Consulate General in Florence)
https://www.roughguides.com/ (travel guide)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florence,_Italy (general facts about Florence)
https://nolesabroad.international.fsu.edu/ (FSU International Programs blog with articles from former program participants)

USEFUL APPS
Google Translate (instantly translates words, phrases, and web pages between English and over 100 other languages)
Dark Sky (With down-to-the-minute forecasts, you’ll know exactly when the rain will start or stop, right where you’re standing)
Mobile Passport (authorized by U.S. Government to get through customs upon your return to the U.S. Allows you to use the dedicated mobile passport line in 21 participating airports).

(Note: Florida State University is not responsible for the content of external internet sites.)

Connect with International Programs on social media
International Programs Facebook
International Programs Twitter
International Programs Instagram
FSU Florence Facebook
FSU Florence Instagram

Last updated 8/2019
ATTRACTIONS
- Leaning Tower of Pisa
- Sistine Chapel
- Colosseum
- Herculaneum
- Amalfi Coast

- Uffizi Gallery
- San Marco Basilica
- Cinque Terre
- Grotta Azzurra
- Lake Como

EXPLORING ITALY
FOODS TO TRY
Prosciutto  Peppardelle
Margherita  Gelato
Bistecca alla Fiorentina  Cantucci

BASIC ITALIAN
Hello  Salve  SAHL-vay
Goodbye  Arrivederci  ahr-ree-vehr-DEHR-chee
Hello / Goodbye  Ciao  CHOW
Please  Per favore  PEHR fahr-VOHR-eh
Thank you  Grazie  GRAHT-syee-eh
You’re welcome  Prego  PREH-goh
Pardon me  Mi scusi  meh SKOO-zee
English  Inglese  ehn-GLEH-zeh
Yes  Sì  see
No  No  noh

QUICK TIPS
1. Make sure shoulders and legs are covered during church visits.
2. When interacting with locals, greet them in Italian out of respect for their culture.
3. Try to break large euros (€20/€50) at popular tourist locations. Most small businesses won’t take large notes.
4. Most restaurants will not split the tab when dining in a group.
5. Waitstaff, bartenders, taxi drivers, and baggage handlers don’t expect tips. However, tips are appreciated when dining in large groups.