All of the information in this packet is accurate at the time of publication. As we have referenced in several other documents, forms and websites, the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic is such that all elements of our programs are subject to change. We will do our best to update this packet and notify you as changes occur.
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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. - 5:00p.m. EST
        Monday - Friday

FSU-PANAMA CAMPUS
Calle Jacinto Palacios, Building 227
Ciudad del Saber (City of Knowledge)
Clayton
Panama, Republic of Panama

PHONE (011) 507-317-0367
(011) 507-317-0366
FAX
WEB SITE https://international.fsu.edu/studycenterpanamacity.aspx
HOURS 8:00a.m. to 5:00p.m. EST, Monday - Friday

You may use the physical address listed above for receiving
DHL, FED/EX or UPS packages; but NOT for letters and
regular mail items sent through regular postal services. For
regular mail, please use the following mailing address:

MAILING ADDRESS IN PANAMA
Florida State University – Panama
c/o (Student’s Name)
PO Box 0819-05390
Panama, Republic of Panama

IMPORTANT FSU-PANAMA CONTACTS
Dr. Carlos Langoni, Resident Director
Phone  (011) 507-317-0367, ext 228
Cell   (011) 507-6674-2545
Email  clangoni@fsu.edu

Dr. Alexandra Anyfanti, Vice Rector
Phone  (011) 507-317-0367, ext 238
Cell   (011) 507-6676-4071
Email  aanyfanti@fsu.edu

Hector Miranda, Housing/International Programs Coordinator
Phone (011) 507-317-0367, ext 251
Cell   (011) 507 6678-4969
Email  hamiranda@fsu.edu

The first points of contact for you regarding assistance,
guidance or support are the Program Assistants (Resident
Assistant). Upon arrival, you will be given the Program
Assistant’s emergency contact numbers, which are also
posted in each housing unit. If you need further assistance or
cannot reach one of the Program Assistants, you should use
the phone numbers previously listed, in this order: Hector
Miranda, Alexandra Anyfanti, Carlos Langoni.

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS
Emergency Services  911
Ambulance        (011) 507-236-5050
                 Code: 13417
Police           (011) 507-317-9142
                 (Central Dispatcher 104)
Fire Department of Balboa  (011) 507-228-2837
Fire Department of Clayton (011) 507-512-6177
                 (Central Dispatcher 103)
Red Cross Emergency 228-2187

U.S. EMBASSY AND CONSULATE - PANAMA
Building 783
Calle Basilio Lakas
Clayton, Panama
Republic of Panama

PHONE 507-317-5303
AFTER HOURS/EMERGENCIES 507-317-5000
WEBSITE https://pa.usembassy.gov/

INTERNATIONAL CALLS
Making international calls from the U.S. to Panama: First
dial “011” (for international call), followed by “507” (the
country code), then the location number.

Time Differences: Panama time is the same as Miami and
Tallahassee (EST) except when the States are on Daylight
Saving Time. Panama does not observe Daylight Saving
Time, thus they will be one hour behind during our Daylight Saving
Time.
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 in many subject areas 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/
- University Libraries: Office of Distance Library Services - https://www.lib.fsu.edu/department/distance-learning

On-site assistance is also available in the area of Mathematics through the FSU Panama Math Learning Center.

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, contact OAS at 850-644-9566 (Voice) or 850-644-8504 (TDD) as soon as possible so we can assess our ability to provide appropriate accommodations. For more information, visit https://dsst.fsu.edu/oas.
AIRFARE

**FLIGHT INFORMATION**

There is no group flight for this program, and your program fee does not cover airfare.

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.

Do not purchase airfare until you are notified by International Programs to do so. You will receive a notification in your IP Student Portal. If you choose to purchase airfare before you are instructed to do so, International Programs is not responsible for any fees associated with your flight changes or cancellations.

Some countries may require COVID-19 testing and/or vaccination to enter the country or for other purposes. Even if a country does not currently have such requirements, FSU cannot guarantee these or other measures will not be implemented before or during your program.

Once you are notified by International Programs to book your travel arrangements, you must submit your flight itinerary through the IP Student Portal. Your flight arrangements will be provided to the Panama staff. It is important that they receive this information in order to monitor student arrivals.

We strongly advise you to purchase airfare and travel insurance directly with the airline 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 details. Click here for more information about travel insurance and trip cancellation policies. **Note:** Airfare costs are not included in your program fee, and FSU will not reimburse any costs or fees associated with flight changes or cancellations due to COVID-19 should they occur.

We advise against the Spirit Airlines flight(s) that arrive in Panama City late night or early morning. These flights may be cheap, but it is not the safest time to arrive in Panama and you would incur additional costs for taxis to and from the airport. If, however, you choose to disregard our advice and take a flight arriving late at night/early morning, you must advise the IP Office of this (in addition to submitting your travel itinerary).

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**WHILE YOU'RE IN TRANSIT**

- **Keep your boarding pass** until you have landed, cleared immigration and customs, and have collected your luggage.
- **Have your passport** 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.

If your flight is canceled, delayed, or you miss a connection on your way to Panama, contact the International Programs staff via email or phone.
ARRIVAL

ARRIVING IN PANAMA
When filling out your landing card, your address will be the address of the Florida State University Panama Study Center – Ciudad del Saber (City of Knowledge) in Clayton listed in the Contact Information section of this packet. When you land in Panama, you will go through Immigration and will need to show your passport, plane ticket, proof of Covid vaccination, and the QR code you’ll receive by email once you submit the affidavit electronic form prior to departure. Have your passport readily available—not packed in your checked luggage.

There will be two group pick-ups to accommodate those arriving on the start date of the program. An FSU van will leave from the airport at approximately 2:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. Panama time from Tocumen Airport on the start date of your program. Meet the group as you exit the customs hall at the passenger pick up area Zone 6; this is located outside of the airport. Students whose flights won’t arrive at the times mentioned above are welcome to wait for the closest group pick-up.

Two airport drop-off shuttles will be provided on the end date of your program. The flight information will be collected from the group and the shuttle times will be chosen based on the student needs. If your flight is at a different time than the airport drop-offs, you will be responsible for getting yourself to the airport in time for your departure. Our staff can help coordinate transportation.

If you miss the group pick-up, we recommend you do the following:
As you exit the Panama Customs area on the ground floor of the airport terminal with your baggage, walk towards a small kiosk located inside the terminal area and located in between the automatic sliding exit doors called "Autoridad de Turismo Panama" (Panama Tourism Authority). Tell the agent (in English or Spanish) you need to take a taxi to go to Florida State University located in the City of Knowledge (Ciudad del Saber) building 227 in Clayton.

The agent will ask you a few questions to better serve you and direct you to a waiting taxi outside the doors behind the kiosk. The taxi fare for transporting you to CLAYTON should be approximately $40. ALWAYS VERIFY THE TOTAL COST OF THE FARE WITH THE DRIVER BEFORE ENTERING THE TAXI! The taxis in Panama are small and only two people per taxi are recommended when there is luggage.

Although there are plenty of taxis waiting outside to take passengers, there is better control over the taxis that the Autoridad de Turismo recommends. So, we recommend that you do not just jump in any taxi you see. When you reach the City of Knowledge, request to be taken to the location indicated in the email from International Programs.

Recommended cab companies:

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<tr>
<td>America Libre</td>
<td>221-3492/2211932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxi Concordia</td>
<td>236-7848/236-7820</td>
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You will be housed in the City of Knowledge, Clayton. You will receive an email indicating which residence you should check-in if you miss the group pick-ups. If your flight arrives at night, you should go directly to your residence.

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 to view our recommended hotels lists. If your program requires a visa, you may not be permitted to arrive before the program start date. Consult your immigration introduction or visa packet in the IP student portal or contact IP-Visas@fsu.edu prior to planning independent travel before your program.
THE PANAMA CAMPUS
Florida State University’s first international campus opened in Panama in 1957. It has served thousands of students seeking either short-term study abroad experiences or associate and bachelor’s degrees. We are based at the City of Knowledge where our classrooms and administrative office building overlook the rainforest in one direction and a quad/park in another. The City of Knowledge is located in the suburban area of Clayton, just across the street from the Miraflores Locks of the Panama Canal. Other international universities with local and study abroad programs will be represented as well, allowing for possible networking with FSU students. Feel free to check out the online tour of the City of Knowledge campus: http://www.ciudaddelsaber.org/en.

Florida State University Panama has recently renovated a multi-purpose sports court in the City of Knowledge near building 227. This investment was funded solely by FSU Panama as a contribution to the City of Knowledge Foundation in order to promote a healthy lifestyle. It can be used for football, basketball, volleyball and several other sports and is available free of charge to all FSU students and users of the City of Knowledge anytime during daylight hours. FSU Panama students also have access free of charge to all sports facilities in the City of Knowledge.

HOUSING
At the present time, you will be housed in a dormitory style complex within the City of Knowledge. Each room has two single beds, two night tables, two safes, one small refrigerator, independent bathroom, intelligent AC, hot water, balcony, telephone, television and wireless internet. In addition, you will have access to a living-dining area and a fully equipped kitchen, coin-operated laundry, and vending machines. The complex is located in the City of Knowledge, within a 15-minute walk to the main classroom building. Shuttles are available during weekdays between the main building and the dormitory complex.

You will be provided with linens and a bath towel upon arrival. Rooming assignments will be made based on a combination of factors as indicated in the information you provide on the housing questionnaire in the IP student portal. Roommate assignments are made in Panama and will be communicated upon arrival. These assignments cannot be changed.

During your on-site orientation, you will be advised of the 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 and the Housing Terms and Conditions for details. You are required to sign the FSU International Programs Contractual Agreement as it outlines your contractual obligations as a participant on our program.

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 the flat 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 PANAMA
The cheapest way to travel in Panama City is by using a car share app like Uber, but you can also take a taxi. The fare from FSU-Panama to the heart of downtown Panama City should be no more than $10-$12 (one-way). A tip is not necessary. ALWAYS VERIFY THE TOTAL COST OF THE FARE WITH THE DRIVER BEFORE ENTERING THE TAXI!

Travel outside Panama City requires plane, bus, or car. Most in-country flights depart from Albrook Airport, located only two miles from the FSU-Panama campus. Express buses leave from downtown Panama City to all parts of Panama frequently every day. The Bus Terminal is only a 10-minute car ride away from the FSU Panama Campus.

Riding the local buses is also a great cultural experience and a very economical way of going places. The new bus system (Metrobus) requires the use of a card which can be purchased at most supermarkets. One of the Metrobus lines goes through Morse Street, only a block away from our dormitory complex, and takes you to the bus terminal at Albrook where you can connect to other areas of Panama either by bus or by the subway. A bus ride currently costs 25¢. Routes that connect to the suburban areas of Panama City cost $1.25. We suggest you start riding the city buses only when you are familiar with the different places and have a better sense of the distances. Avoid riding the bus at night unless you know exactly where you are going, and you are certain about the bus routes.
PERSONAL TRAVEL
Due to the uncertain nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, all program elements including the program calendar, weekly schedule, classroom environment, course delivery method, housing arrangements, transportation policies, and international or in-country travel restrictions are subject to modification at any time in order to comply with local public health restrictions as well as the policies and practices of Florida State University.

FSU’s current independent travel policy allows students to travel independently commensurate with any local, national, or international guidance and restrictions.

FSU will continue to review its independent travel policy as conditions abroad change, but there is a possibility independent travel could remain restricted or limited during your program. Failure to adhere to the independent travel policy could have significant consequences, including potential removal from the program.

Please wait until you have arrived and received your class/program schedule before booking any independent trips.

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

For safety purposes, you will be instructed by International Programs to fill out a mandatory online independent travel form each time you plan on traveling outside of your program. More information will be provided to you in the IP Student Portal prior to departure.

CLIMATE
Panama City is warm, averaging around 80 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit in the day and cooling down in the evenings. The “dry season”, usually between December-April, brings little rain. Tropical rains are common the remainder of the year. So be prepared for the 15-minute walk to class by bringing rain boots, jacket and an umbrella.

PACKING
As an FSU Panama student, you will purchase your textbooks in Panama City. You should not purchase any textbooks or course required materials prior to departure. Wait until you meet with your professors on the first day. By now, several materials are available as e-resources through the FSU bookstore or other online platforms.
COMMUNICATION & ELECTRONICS

COMMUNICATION & CELL PHONES

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 virtual 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 SIM plan, either for phone calls only or for calls and data.

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 large phone bill when you return to the US. Apps you can easily use while connected to Wi-Fi include Skype, FaceTime, GroupMe, and WhatsApp. If you have a smartphone, download these apps before you travel so you will be able to activate the account. Note: Students who plan to purchase a sim card or phone abroad should use this option in the meantime...or to save on data use!

Purchase an inexpensive phone with a local plan in-country and pay for more minutes/data as needed.

You can buy cell phones in Panama at very low prices. We strongly suggest that you do not buy a pay-as-you-go cell phone in the U.S. to take to Panama. 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 Panama.

COMPUTERS

Students should plan to bring a laptop or tablet with them for use in their residence, while traveling, or when required for health reasons.

The housing units are wireless and each student has an electronic safe in their bedroom for storing up to a 17” laptop and other valuables. The main building and the Library located in the ground floor of building 225 also have wireless internet connection.

We recommend doing the following prior to departure:

- Check if your computer has a built-in transformer that is capable of handling the different voltages.
- Just as on main campus, check your homeowner’s insurance to make sure that your computer is covered when you are away from your primary residence. If not covered by your homeowner’s insurance, you should 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.

MAIL

Please share the following information with those in the U.S. who are interested in sending you mail while you are abroad.

The Panamanian mail system is sometimes unpredictable. Airmail will take from 7-14 days, but local holidays or other contingencies may stretch this time. Use international airmail stamps; regular mail will cause your letter to go by boat, taking about six weeks to deliver. When sending packages, neither overestimate nor underestimate the value of the materials in the package. You will pay up to 30% customs duty on the amount shown as the insured price. There should be no commercial value on the package. When mailing items from Panama you need to buy local stamps available at the nearest post office. Please be advised that the boxes and packages you receive are opened in order to clear customs and you will have to pay a percentage of the registered value of the items in the package. The Panamanian Customs Office will not tax personal packages whose reported insured price is under $50. Anything more than $50 will be taxed between 5 – 20% depending on the item. Also note, there is no door to door delivery of packages in Panama unless you pay a courier company which is very expensive, and it is not a good idea to send good and items through Panama Postal office to our P.O. Box because they can get lost. Therefore, think twice before having items mailed to you. You may be able to purchase those items in Panama at a much lower price than the cost of shipping and taxes.
EXPENSES WHILE IN PANAMA
When estimating your financial needs abroad, calculate the amount of money you will need for meals for the entire period of your stay and your personal entertainment and social activities costs.

By most standards, you will find the cost of living in Panama is about the same as in Tallahassee and you should plan your budget accordingly.

Class-related excursions are included in the program fee for most classes. Occasionally, there are additional fees to cover expenses such as theatre tickets. This information is available in the textbook compliance section when you register for classes in my.fsu.edu.

CURRENCY
Panama’s medium of exchange is the U.S. dollar. Bills larger than $20 ($50 and $100) are rarely accepted by small businesses (carry lots of singles and fives).

BANKING
We recommend you set up online banking for your bank account(s) prior to departure from the U.S. so you can monitor your account(s) while overseas.

You should bring two types of cards with you:

Debit Card
• A debit card can be used to access funds from an ATM or bank.
• 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 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.

Credit Card
• Credit cards are useful 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.
• Consider applying for a credit card with no foreign transaction fees/international fees.

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 during the dates and in the locations in which you will be abroad.
• 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.
HEALTH & WELLNESS

INOCULATIONS/MEDICAL CONCERNS

BEFORE DEPARTURE:
We encourage all students with underlying health issues that may increase the severity of infection should they contract COVID-19 to discuss their study abroad plan with their doctor/specialist.

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 will be asked to complete and submit the required Student Immunization Form through the IP Student Portal.

Familiarize yourself with the specific requirements and health matters in your program location. The FSU Health and Wellness Center offers a travel clinic which provides immunizations. Click here for additional information available through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s site. Some countries have specific requirements for inoculations based on past locations the traveler has visited. It is the student’s responsibility to confirm whether or not the previous travel requires additional inoculations.

In addition to a tetanus booster (tetanus booster would be needed only if you have not had the vaccine in the last 10 years), we recommend Hepatitis A and B and Typhoid vaccinations (at least six weeks prior to departure) to protect against viral infections. **Malaria prophylaxis is only required for those students that plan to trek into the deep rainforest.** In addition, Panama is a country with a risk of yellow fever transmission. Although the yellow fever shot is not necessary for your entrance to the country you may wish to discuss getting it with your local doctor, especially if you are planning on visiting other Latin American countries that do require the vaccine or in the event that you will be traveling outside the urban area of Panama. You will need to bring your International Certificate of Vaccination to Panama.

WHILE ABROAD:
Your program fee includes international medical and evacuation insurance coverage through Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI); Click here to access the policy online. The coverage will be effective for participants from the day the program starts until the day the program ends. It includes coverage for treatment of ill students, including those with COVID-19, as well as COVID-19 testing for those who are symptomatic, or those who have had a known exposure to a person who tested positive. It does not cover preventative evacuation due to pandemics, or preventative treatments such as vaccinations. There are Teleconsultation Services available. This policy is NOT intended to replace your domestic coverage.

ALCOHOL AWARENESS & ILLEGAL DRUGS
The legal age for the drinking of alcohol in Panama 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. Should students violate the FSU Panama conduct code regarding drugs and/or alcohol, they will undergo a student conduct code process, where outcomes are appropriately assigned. In short, know your limits, and drink in moderation if you choose to do so, but not to excess.

Florida State University does not tolerate 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. For complete information on student judicial processes, victim rights, and appeals see the Student Conduct Code: https://sccs.fsu.edu/.

MAPPING YOUR IDENTITIES
Our Mapping your Identities guide will help you explore your identities and evaluate your overall wellness to aid in your preparation for a successful and enriching study abroad experience. It will also help you understand others on your program and be better allies for them.
POLICIES & SAFETY

RULES, POLICIES & PROCEDURES

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 Emergency and Risk Management, Tina Brooks, at 850.644.3786 or cbrooks2@fsu.edu.

- **Resources.** Even though you are not on the main campus, you have access to many resources should you encounter issues while abroad. Program staff members are available to support you in a variety of ways, including connecting you 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 https://dsst.fsu.edu/vap.
  - **Counseling & Psychological Services at FSU.** Counseling and Psychological Services 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/ for more information.
  - **Center for Health Advocacy & Wellness.** The Center for Health Advocacy & Wellness encourages you 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/.

- **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/.

- **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/.

- **Waivers.** All IP participants must sign and submit a general Waiver of Liability and COVID-19 Waiver 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.** You 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 & RESOURCES

TIPS FROM STUDENTS ON WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW
These comments came from students who recently attended our study abroad program in Panama:

- Leave extra space in your suitcase for souvenirs.
- Research the weather in Panama before leaving.
- Bring closed toed shoes or sneakers for the excursions.
- Bring a reusable water bottle with you, along with any favorite over the counter medication in the event you get sick (Vitamin C, DayQuil/NyQuil)

ONLINE 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://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panama (general information about Panama)
http://www.worldpress.org/newspapers/AMERICAS/Panama.cfm (Panama newspapers and magazines)
http://www.statravel.com (student travel information)
http://www.panamainfo.com (Panama Travel Guide)
http://cnn.com/WEATHER/ (daily weather forecasts)
http://www.birdlife.org/worldwide/national/panama/ (learn about conservation of the heritage of Panama)
http://studentsabroad.state.gov/ (U.S. State Department’s info for Americans living abroad)
http://www.studyspanish.com/freesite.htm (brush-up on your Spanish!)
http://panama.fsu.edu/ (FSU-Panama’s own web site)
http://www.wordreference.com (translation/Spanish dictionary)
http://www.nolesabroad.international.fsu.edu/ (FSU International Programs blog with articles from former program participants)

USEFUL APPS
Duolingo (brush up on your Spanish!)
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 US Government to get through customs upon return to the US. 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 US ON SOCIAL MEDIA
International Programs Facebook
International Programs Twitter
International Programs Instagram
FSU Panama Facebook
FSU Panama Instagram
FSU Panama Twitter
FSU Panama Admissions https://www.instagram.com/fsupanama_admissions/

Last Updated 8/2022
FOODS TO TRY

Empanada
Plátanos Fritos
Ceviche
Ropa Vieja
Tres Leches
Sancocho

BASIC SPANISH

Hello  Hola  OH-lah
Goodbye  Adiós  an-dee-OHS
Please  Por favor  POUR fah-VOEUR
Thank you  Gracias  GRAH-zyahs
You're welcome  De nada  DAY NAH-dah
Pardon me  Perdón  PEHR-dohn
English  Inglés  een-GLEHS
Yes  Sí  see
No  No  noh

QUICK TIPS

1. Time is perceived with fluidity. Panamanians may show up an hour or two late to a dinner party. Lunch and dinner can extend for hours.

5. Waitstaff, taxi drivers, tour guides, and bartenders will appreciate tips of 10%. Baggage handlers value $1 per bag.
EXPLORING THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

ATTRACTIONS
Panama Canal / Panama Viejo
Casco Viejo / Ancon Hill
Biomuseo
Sáboreos del Chorrillo
Taboga Island
Contadora Island
Embera Village

Metropolitan Natural Park
Amador Causeway
Avenida Balboa – Cinta
Costera 2 and 3
The Fish Market
Albrook Mall