



GUIDE

SAFER TRAVEL AND STAYS

ABROAD

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1. Introduction

More and more of HZ University of Applied Sciences- students are travelling and staying abroad as part of their degree programme. It goes without saying that there are risks involved.

Although it's going to be a fun and instructive experience you are always first and foremost responsible for your own safety. This guide is offered by the HZ and has been designed to help you by providing advice. The guide contains a wide range of security tips to help make you aware of the opportunities to prevent risks and therefore to help you travel more safely.

Some of these tips may already be very familiar or may not be relevant to your specific planned trip. Preparations for a visit to Vienna, for example, will be less extensive than those for a trip to Cairo, in terms of safety.

Generally speaking, you're at most risk when on the move: travelling, driving a car, walking, etc. This guide will therefore take a closer look at such aspects. We advise you to take the time to read these valuable tips.

Based on the travel advices of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs HZ determines whether a study/internship abroad is safe. When the risk is considered to be disproportionately high beforehand, the trip will be cancelled or an alternative solution sought. Once again, it goes without saying that you too have your own responsibility in this.

We wish you a safe journey, a fantastic and educational study /internship and a safe return home.

2. Preparing for travel:

Knowing and recognising national and local tensions in advance will be extremely useful and may reduce any risks, as you are able to adapt your own travel behaviour accordingly.

2.1 First

- ***Make sure all your data in the Studielink-file is up-to-date (including mobile telephone number and private e-mail), so we can get in touch with you outside office hours;***
- Conclude an adequate health-, cancellation and travel insurance;
- Inform yourself on travel advices on the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (in Dutch), www.minbuza.nl, and on www.wilweg.nl (choose English) and download the Travel advice-app: "24/7 BZ Reis" (also in Dutch). The HZ-policy of traveling abroad is based on the information of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Another useful website in English <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>
- Put the 24/7 telephone number of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in your telephone; **+31- 247 247 247;**
- Put the 24/7 emergency number of ISP in your telephone; **+31-320 331 343;**
- Put the emergency telephone number of your insurance companies in your telephone;

- Make sure you're carrying information on your blood-type with you. In addition carry other important medical information with you such as a medication passport. Apply at the pharmacy for this.
- Register at the Embassy (which one depends on your nationality) in the country where you are staying;
- Make sure the data in your mobile telephone are also saved in the "Cloud" so you still have access to his information should you lose the telephone;
- Take notice of cultural differences ("do's and don'ts");
- Register your medical ID in your mobile telephone;
- Inform with the GGD (Dutch) www.ggd.nl which vaccinations are necessary for your destination.

2.2 Country information

It's important that you prepare well for your trip before departure, especially when travelling to a country which may have an increased risk profile. There are lots of proactive options. Consider the following aspects:

- Political situation;
- Health risks;
- Police and emergency services;
- Areas/ situations prone to violence;
- Cultural and religious aspects;
- Acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in public/religious locations;
- Infrastructure/ public transport;
- Specific travel requirements/ import limitations (take care with medication);
- Climate;
- Hospitals/ medical assistance;
- Addresses of embassy/ consulate of your home country.

This information is available on the Internet, via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website for example:

www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/reisadviezen

In order to get a different perspective, you could also visit the website of the United Kingdom Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for example.

Link Ministry of Foreign Affairs UK: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

2.3 Sharing personal information

You may be requested to have a copy made of your passport or identity card, when checking into a hotel or hiring a car, for example. This should be avoided, due to the risk of identity fraud.

Make sure you have a number of photocopies of your passport with you, on which you have blocked out your personal BSN ID number. Also include a couple of photocopies on which your photo is blocked out.

2.4 Information for the home front

- A description of the trip, giving the airline company and flight number, departure and arrival times, transfers, names and addresses of the hotels and the people you will be visiting;
- If changes are made to your travel schedule after departure – let them know;
- Medical information, including your blood-type, medication, allergies, etc.;
- Addresses of the embassies in the countries you will be visiting;
- The name and telephone number of the contact person of the International Office of the foreign institution or internship-company for family;
- The name and telephone number of your family contact person for the International Office of the foreign institution or internship-company;
- Put in your telephone under 'contacts' 'ICE' (=in case of emergency) and indicate the names and telephone numbers of persons to contact in case of an emergency.

3. Means of communication

Your mobile phone plays an important role with regard to your safety.

It can be used to warn you, to establish contact in an emergency, to send 'OK' notifications or to confirm your safe arrival. There are also often options for Internet communication, either on your mobile phone or in an Internet café. Many hotels offer not only Wi-Fi for your laptop but also the option of working online on a desktop PC.

3.1 Phone

- Make sure your mobile phone is always sufficiently charged.
(Take an adapter along, suitable for the country in question, and a power bank)
- Be aware that you will not always have a good mobile signal. People familiar with the area can give you more information on this.
- Mobile phones work as a transmitter and receiver. Conversations can therefore be quite simply tapped into by criminals or government departments.
- Keep your conversations brief and to the point, and avoid exchanging any sensitive information.

The same applies to telephones in hotels, etc.

3.2 Internet

Internet is not suitable for the exchange of sensitive information, whether it be via your mobile phone, laptop or PC in a hotel or Internet café. It is quite simple for employees, criminals or government departments to read or 'tap' your communication.

Visiting political, religious or porn websites can get you into trouble.

3.3 Contact information and passwords

Make sure you have important telephone numbers, e-mail addresses and other contact information on paper, in case your phone becomes broken or lost. Make sure you encode any passwords so that only you can use them.

Assure that all important data on the telephone are filed in the 'Cloud' so that in case your telephone is lost this information can easily be retrieved.

4. Travel

4.1 Airports, train and bus stations, and ferry departure points.

You are generally at more risk when travelling than when staying in one place.

When travelling by plane or public transport, pay particular attention when waiting for a connection.

- At an airport or international train station, you can ensure that you do not need to hang around the departure or arrivals hall, by already having your tickets and knowing your travel schedule; the same applies at bus stations and ferry departure points.

- When possible, checking in online ensures quick passage through the procedures;

- If you must hang around such locations, make sure you have overview of the situation and pay attention to 'unaccompanied' luggage, children's buggies, etc. Be alert to strange behaviour.

Signs being given by people through gestures, their attitude, the way they look around, the position someone takes, any goods they are carrying, etc., can all mean that they have certain intentions. Certain clothing can also raise the alert.

Never hesitate to inform security staff if you notice anything;

- Do not enter into a discussion with the authorities, such as customs, police or security officers.
- Never make jokes about terrorism, explosives, drugs, etc.
- Carry a 'robbery-wallet' with you, a wallet with for example € /\$ 10 that you can give to the attacker. By doing this you won't 'disappoint' the attacker.

4.2 Luggage

- **Never** carry any packages for and from others through customs (this also applies during your stay);
- Keep a close eye on your luggage. Luggage can be removed and/or switched. Drugs or other goods can also be stashed in it;
- Do not use any stickers, labels or anything else on your luggage which refers to your destination or other personal information;
- Try not to take any keys or access badges with you;
- Don't take any literature which might get you in trouble. In some countries, even normal glossies are regarded as pornography;
- When taking medication, you must have a doctor's statement in English. Some types of medication are seen as narcotics in other countries. Take extreme care with this;
- Do not take alcohol to countries where it is forbidden;
- Remember that pocket knives, nail files and other sharp objects may be regarded to be a weapon;
- Preferably don't carry a backpack on your back unless there's nothing in it of value.

4.3 Clothing, money and valuables

- Wear neutral clothing with no reference to the school, our country, etc.;
- Adapt to the local culture;
- Jackets and T-shirts with political or religious prints will attract unnecessary attention and can also result in irritation or aggression;
- Your purse or wallet with passport, tickets, etc., are best kept in fastened (inside) pockets or in a special holder around your neck or waist, under your clothing;
- Make sure you have enough cash at hand for minor expenses and tips, so you don't need to keep accessing your valuables;
- Loss or theft of passport, money or other valuables should be reported with the local police. Always ask for a declaration in writing. If necessary, contact the Dutch Embassy (+31 – 247 247 247) or the Embassy that fits your nationality.

5. Points of attention abroad

5.1 Behaviour and culture

- Adapt to the local culture;
- Your attitude should be self-assured yet reserved. Always keep a low profile;
- Avoid festivities and large gatherings, and stay away from riots and demonstrations;
- Smoking is often regarded to be undesirable, for women in particular, and especially in public places and on the street;
- Tattoos can sometimes be regarded to be extremely undesirable, for women in particular;
- If you are in a same-sex relationship, it is extremely inadvisable to express this in public;
- On arrival at the airport or station, make 'meet and greet' arrangements via the company or address you will be staying, or make use of the hotel collection service;
- When meeting strangers, do not be too forthcoming about your personal circumstances, study, company, travel schedule and purpose of your trip. If you find the contact to be suspicious, let it be known that you are part of a group.
- Using your telephone in public spaces means you are less alert to your surroundings. When possible therefore, wait until you are in a more protected environment. That also helps prevent people 'listening in';
- Stay alert to what is happening around you, and avoid alleyways and deserted parks, backstreet shops and 'vague' parties;
- Be alert to 'onlookers' when registering at your hotel, at foreign exchange offices, when buying tickets for public transport, etc.;
- Store the (emergency) number for the local police in your telephone.
- Pay attention to local newspapers and television;
- Your sources of information can also be local customers or business partners. Remember that their sympathies can change by the day;
- In high risk countries, keep in close contact with the embassy and other befriended companies in the area;
- Don't share taxis with strangers.

5.2 Accommodation

- Only use reputable accommodation, such as hotels, B&B or addresses from reliable sources; pay attention to the safety in the neighbourhood;
- Stay away from accommodation in remote parts of a city or in night-life neighbourhoods;
- Be very alert if there are sudden changes in your planned accommodation;
- As soon as you arrive at your accommodation, check out the following;
 - Emergency escape routes;
 - Emergency exits;
 - Staircases;
 - Smoke detectors;
 - Procedure and operation of the telephone.
- Only hand over your (locked) luggage if you receive a receipt;
- Do not leave any valuables or important documents in your room and use the hotel safe if available;
- Do not invite strangers to your (hotel) room but arrange to meet in the lobby instead;
- Before going to sleep, get into the following habit;
 - Close and lock all windows and doors;
 - Keep your keys and documents in a spot where you can find them immediately;
 - If the windows or doors cannot be locked, improvise where possible by placing a chair under the doorknob, for example, or placing an object on top which will fall off when it is moved.
 - If there is a door-chain, use it.

6. Traveling abroad

6.1 Areas for special attention

- Ask for information locally about the safest route and times between your accommodation and destinations, for all trips. Arrange to be accompanied by a professional guide, when possible;
- Do not go alone down the street and do not visit remote area's;
- Use common sense;
- Make sure the hotel reception, your fellow students or the person responsible for your accommodation, are informed of your destination. Also inform them who you have appointments with, the route you will be taking and when you will be back. If you do not feel confident with the local people, you can also use the school in the Netherlands to keep in contact and monitor safe progress of your trip, and for any extra assistance;
- When travelling by public transport, you can always decide not to get on board, at the last minute, if you do not trust the people around you;
- If you have any doubts about a taxi, do not get in;
- Do not accept any offers of lifts;

6.2 Hiring and driving a car

- Only hire a car which is in good working condition;

- Avoid any bright colours or striking accessories, or cars which stand out in any way;
- Always make sure you have sufficient fuel;
- Try to keep the walking distance from your car to visiting address or hotel as short as possible;
- Drive in daylight where possible.
- While driving, keep windows, doors and car boot locked; Always lock the car when parked, also when you are in it.
- Whenever possible, try to also have passengers in the car; Stay alert to your surroundings and the possibility of being followed;
- Make sure you have an emergency assistance number;
- Never take hitch-hikers with you;
- Make sure you know where you are at all times;
- Always park a vehicle by reversing in.
This gives you overview of the situation and you can drive off quickly if need be;
- Do not leave any articles in your car, visible or not, which might enable someone to trace your identity and place of stay;
- Never leave the car unsupervised. During lunch, etc., keep a clear view of the car;
- When confronted with roadworks or someone requiring assistance, or you become involved in a traffic accident, keep in mind that it may have been staged.
In case of doubt, stay in your car and warn the police.
- Pay attention to different traffic rules. Furthermore in many countries when being fined for an offence, the fine must be paid on the spot. This also applies to foreigners.
- Take care when approaching animals on the road, such as cows for example (considered sacred), which you are expected to treat with respect.

6.3 Threatening situations

If a situation becomes threatening due to intrusive behaviour or being followed, on foot or otherwise, find yourself a safe location as quickly as possible, which is also accessible after office hours, such as a:

- station;
- hospital;
- military building;
- large police station;
- large hotel;

During office hours, other options are a:

- bank;
- museum;
- town hall;
- school;
- large(r) shop.

What these buildings have in common is the number of people there. Security staff, cameras and other security measures will probably discourage would-be criminals.

7. Backpacking

When backpacking, you often need to be even more self-supportive. The tips and advice are even more essential in your case. Also important is that you always communicate your route planning and any changes in schedule to the home front or to your travel base.

8. Emergency assistance and crisis situations

If you encounter problems which you cannot solve yourself using local resources (International Office foreign institution, internship-contact, friends, hotel staff, police, medical staff, etc.), please use the following telephone numbers for the emergency assistance agreed by your organisation with the insurance company and/or International Security Partners.

Relevant telephone numbers:	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs	+31- 247 247 247
	ISP Emergency	+31 (0)320 - 331343
	HZ	+31- 118 489 200