

Passport

You must have a current passport for participation on any program outside of the US. Your passport must be valid for six months after your expected date of return to the US. Many countries require the passport you will use to study abroad be submitted with the visa application several weeks prior to the program start date. It can take four to six weeks to obtain a US passport. You should apply for a passport (or renew if necessary) now. You will be required to submit a copy of your passport information page by the date indicated in your acceptance letter. Information on obtaining a US passport is available at the following website: http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html.

Visas

Most countries require that you obtain a student visa. In many cases Pitzer College and if necessary the exchange program institution will provide the sponsor letter(s) you will need before you apply for your student visa. It is your responsibility to understand the process for obtaining a student visa for your selected destination. Although the study abroad staff can provide some guidance with this process, no one at Pitzer has control over the timing or requirements of the visa process.

If your program requires a student visa, these are the typical challenges that you may face.

- **You must have a passport before you can apply for a student visa.**
- For most countries if you are a US citizen **you must be in the United States to obtain the student visa.** This may cause a conflict if you are applying for more than one destination for a yearlong experience. You need to research the visa process for each destination to be sure there is time to obtain a visa between the two programs' ending and starting dates.
- **Countries along your travel route may require a visa** if you will be in the country for more than a designated period of time (sometimes hours). Check before you fly.
- **The student visa process can take as long as 90 days or as little as a few days.** You should find out now about the length of time required for your visa and plan accordingly. You cannot travel out of the country during the visa process because the consulate will retain your passport during the visa process. **Before you make plans to travel in the summer or winter break before your program, check the logistics of the visa process. It may mean that you will have to choose between your travel plans and your semester of study abroad.** There are cases where both are not possible.
- These are the questions you should research about each of the programs you are planning to attend:
 - Do you need a student visa for your program?
 - What is the process to obtain a student visa? What documents are required?
 - How long does it take to get the visa once the application is submitted?
 - Do you have to appear in person at the consulate to obtain your visa?
 - Which consulate(s) in the US will process your visa application?
 - Do you need to make an appointment? If so how far in advance?
 - Do you have to be in the US to get your visa, or is it possible to apply while overseas? *In most cases, the answer to the latter is "No."*
 - If you hold a passport from another country, what is the process for citizens of that country to obtain a student visa?
 - How much does the visa cost?
- **Notify the Office of Study Abroad and International Programs now if you have dual citizenship or if you will travel on a non-US passport.**
- Please note that **the visa process can change without notice.**