

# PASSPORTS AND VISAS

## PASSPORTS

Anyone traveling between countries needs a passport. If you have a passport, please check the expiration date. Your passport must be valid six months beyond the end date of your program. If you need to apply for your first passport or apply for a renewal, you should do this right away. Regular passport processing is taking anywhere from 8-10 weeks and 4 to 6 weeks for expedited processing.

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### HOW TO APPLY FOR A US PASSPORT

For information on how to apply for or renew a US passport, please go to the US Department of State's website at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports.html>. Depending on your circumstance, you may be able to submit your renewal by mail if you meet certain criteria. Please verify if you can submit your passport renewal by mail here: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/have-passport/renew.html>

If you have never had a passport, you will be required to appear in person at a passport acceptance facility. For students in Claremont, the closest facility is the Claremont Post Office by appointment only. You may search for other passport acceptance facilities here: <https://iafdb.travel.state.gov/DefaultForm.aspx>

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### NON-US PASSPORT HOLDERS

If you have a passport from another country and it is expired or will be before your program ends, please work with your country's embassy and renew your passport as soon as possible.

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### IF YOUR US PASSPORT IS LOST OR STOLEN

If your passport is lost or stolen while you are abroad, report the loss immediately to local police authorities and the nearest US embassy or consulate. In addition, you should report your passport lost or stolen by visiting the US Department of State's website for details: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports.html>. A copy will expedite the replacement process. It is wise to email a copy of your passport to yourself and keep a photocopy of your passport in your luggage or with your on-site program representatives.

## VISAS

Your program sponsor and/or the study abroad office at Pitzer will advise you on the visa process for your program. Most students will be required to obtain a student visa for their time abroad. For some countries, the visa process may require more than two months to complete. In other countries, you may obtain the visa at the airport as you enter the country and pay the visa fee. Before you can obtain a visa, you will need to have a passport that is valid for the length of your stay and, in many cases, for a period of up to six months after the end of your program. For some countries, your passport must be valid for at least a year beyond your last day in the country. Some destinations require that you have several blank pages remaining in your passport. If your passport does not have blank pages remaining, please arrange to get additional pages added to your current passport or renew for a new passport with plenty of blank pages

The process for obtaining a visa can be bureaucratic and, in some cases, frustrating. More and more consulates and embassies will want you to visit their websites for visa information, hours of operation, etc., rather than calling. In some cases, you can call, but there may be no way to leave a message. Be proactive, patient, persistent, and polite when contacting the consulate officials. Procrastination will jeopardize your participation in study abroad. Pitzer College has no influence over a foreign government's visa rules and cannot intervene on your behalf. **Ask about the amount of time that you should allow for**

**processing and plan accordingly. In some cases, you may not be able to travel outside the US for an extended period since you need to relinquish your passport to the consulate or embassy processing your visa.**

**Many consulates require students to apply in person by appointment only.** If you can apply by mail, please be sure to follow the consulate's instructions for mail-in applications. In most cases, whether you apply by mail or in-person, you may be required to submit many of the items listed below. **This list is only provided as a sample of documents that are commonly required. Every country is different, and each consulate may have varying requirements.**

- your passport
- passport-sized photos
- a letter from the university or program you will be attending on official stationery, stating that you have been accepted as a student for a specified period (the letter must list the beginning and ending dates)
- proof of sufficient funds to finance your stay abroad – this may be a copy of your financial aid award or a bank statement showing that you have adequate funds (or your parents do) for your support while in the country
- proof of insurance coverage (sometimes this will need to be translated into the host country language)
- proof of your health status (an increasing number of countries have established regulations requiring AIDS/HIV testing, COVID vaccinations, and some require a tuberculosis test or other screening tests before obtaining a visa)
- a police report or FBI background check stating you have not been convicted of any felonies
- a copy of your airline ticket to provide proof of the date you plan to return to the US or other home country
- I-20 for international students in the US on a F-1 visa
- an application fee. If you have limited time for getting your visa, there may be agencies that can expedite the visa process (depending on the country) – for a fee, of course. If you would like more information on these services, check on-line by Googling “visa agencies”. Pitzer will reimburse students who submit a receipt for visa fees paid. Students are responsible for agency fees if they choose to use an agency.

**If your itinerary includes layovers or stops in other countries on the way to your destination, you may need a visa for those countries even if you do not need a visa for your destination country. Please check with your travel agent and the relevant embassies for information.**

We strongly suggest that students who are planning to travel to other countries after the end of the program consider obtaining their visas before departing the US. Although it may be possible to get visas after your arrival in the host country, the process of obtaining a visa in the host country, if even possible, may involve visits to an embassy at inopportune times or relinquishing your passport, which is not advised.

In the weeks and months leading up to your semester abroad you will receive important information about the visa process for your program from both the study abroad office and your program coordinator. Please read all emails thoroughly and work through required steps. If you have any questions about forms or the visa process, please contact the study abroad office and/or email your program coordinator.