

## GENERAL VISA INFORMATION for STUDY ABROAD WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

This handout, along with the visa brochure, are meant to provide you with some helpful information & reminders to start preparing for obtaining a visa to study abroad. Your study abroad program will have information that is more specific to acquiring your visa and are the BEST resource for ALL questions related to the visa process.

*Failure to obtain a visa prior to the beginning of your program means that you will not be allowed to participate in that program. **REFUNDS WILL NOT BE GIVEN and withdrawal fees will be assessed to your student account if you have to withdraw from your study abroad program as a result of not obtaining your visa on time, which will be passed on directly from your program to Bryant.***

1. If your passport is already expired or will be expiring within 6 months of your anticipated program's return date, you MUST renew it ASAP before you complete your visa application, as this information will be asked of you on the visa application.
2. Your visa application can only be completed once you have received your official acceptance from your program, as your acceptance packet will provide information that is needed for filling out the visa application correctly.
3. The consulate's website will indicate if you have to attend the appointment in person, if you are able to send in all of your paperwork for review, or if you can obtain it through an online submission process. Consular jurisdictions, with the individual consulate web links for discovering which consulate you should use can be found through the country's main embassy's webpage.
  - If you do have to appear in person for the appointment per the consulate's website, you should make your appointment at the correct consulate based on your permanent address, or in some cases, by where you attend school (if it is in a separate consular jurisdiction).
4. The consulate will keep your passport until they have issued your visa, which will be affixed inside your passport. Therefore, you *SHOULD NOT* have any other international travel plans scheduled for the time immediately following your visa appointment, or until you receive your passport back from the consulate.

## VISA MATTERS

Any additional questions you may have about the visa process should be directed to your program provider (e.g. API, IAU, TEAN, etc.) or institution's International Student Office (if you're participating on a direct partner program), as they field visa questions and stay apprised of visa processes and any applicable updates constantly. *The time between submitting all your visa paperwork and receiving your visa varies by consulate, it is not an immediate process.*

\_\_\_\_\_ Finish your program's application materials (even those pieces that list a later deadline) so you can receive your official acceptance early.

\_\_\_\_\_ Inquire with your program about the visa type you need for your study abroad program EARLY on and retain all communications with them pertaining to this.

\_\_\_\_\_ Research which of the consulates you will be using for obtaining your visa from based on your permanent or school address's consular jurisdiction, and what items are required from that consulate to receive your student visa. Bookmark the consulate's page listing the required items needed to obtain the visa or print it out for your records and start a visa folder to keep all of your required items together.

\_\_\_\_\_ Once you know which of the consulate's you need to make your appointment at, pick a day that you know you can appear in person (if required by the consulate) for your appointment, as well as whether you need to appear in person a second time to pick up your passport again. Then, schedule your visa appointment so it falls as close to the start of the 90-day mark before your program's start date as possible. This should leave plenty of time to receive your visa and will reduce stress and anxiety that you may not receive it in time before you have to leave.

\_\_\_\_\_ After you receive your program's acceptance and are sent your various documents needed for your visa, collect the original letter(s) and documents according to what your designated consulate lists as required for submission, and put them in the folder you should now have for your visa paperwork submission. Make sure to make and keep the exact number of copies of your documents as required by your consulate in this folder also, so they can be submitted with all of the original items.

\_\_\_\_\_ Also, retain a copy of ALL items you have to submit to the consulate for your own records in case the consulate contacts you.

\_\_\_\_\_ A week before your appointment, review the required list of items one more time and make sure you have everything ready for your appointment in your visa folder, including the ORIGINAL documents and the exact number of copies. Make sure you have the consulate's address handy, as well as know how to get there and what form of transportation is easiest to take to get to the consulate.

\_\_\_\_\_ On the day of your appointment, give yourself PLENTY of time to arrive and get to where you need within the consulate.

***Remember that you need to wait to receive your passport back from the consulate. They either will return it via a traceable delivery method or will contact you to pick up your passport in person. The traceable delivery method should be listed as one of the required items on your consulate's website for what needs to be submitted with your visa paperwork.***



# Study Abroad Visa Process



One of the most important things that students need before they study abroad for a **semester** is a student visa. This is a legal document that allows students entry into their destination country for the duration of their study abroad program. The Bryant Study Abroad Office works with partner programs for our study abroad opportunities, and these programs are **best** equipped to help with answering visa questions. Students who are unsure if they need a visa to study abroad should **inquire with their intended program** about this document and its process.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS who study abroad through Bryant (Students on F or J visas)

Due to the rise of overseas visa denials, we STRONGLY recommend obtaining your visa **BEFORE** leaving the U.S.

As a U.S. student, the consulate's office in your home country is highly unlikely to issue you a visa for your study abroad program.

If you return to your home country without your study abroad visa, and then are denied your study abroad visa by the consulate of your study abroad destination, you have two options:

1. Either return to the U.S. ASAP and attend a scheduled visa appointment in person at the designated consulate where you will submit all necessary paperwork; OR
2. Defer or withdraw from your program and be prepared to pay Bryant for any fees incurred with up until that point of your withdrawal.

## Recommendations for Students

- ⇒ Visit the designated consulate's website according to the your home jurisdiction (e.g. if you are going to be studying in Italy and live in NY, visit the Italian Consulate of New York's website for visa information) and review their information regarding obtaining a student visa.
- ⇒ Make your appointment with the designated consular location (e.g. you live in Ohio; use the Chicago office). That said, ALL Bryant students are able to use a Boston consulate location IF the consulate has an office there.
- ⇒ Keep ALL of your visa documentation in ONE place (e.g. a visa folder).
- ⇒ Follow all of the consulate's directions given for obtaining a visa (number of copies, payment procedures, mailing, etc.).
- ⇒ If you cannot get an early enough appointment, check the website 7-8 times a day until you find an opening, and still have plenty of time left to receive the visa before your have to leave.

# Parent Information to Support Students

The student visa process can be long and, at times, anxiety-producing. Here are the most important things we want you to know about what it entails for students to apply for their visa:

- ⇒ In general, consulate offices do not offer expedited services, so planning early is a must. A student should plan for a visa to take **AT LEAST** 4 to 6 weeks for processing.
- ⇒ If students wait too long to make a visa appointment, they run the risk of not obtaining their visa on time.
- ⇒ In most cases, consulates require the person needing a visa to appear in person and submit the appropriate paperwork.
- ⇒ Bryant's Study Abroad Office staff does not have the authority from any of the consulates to appear on behalf of our students; therefore, we cannot offer this option to our students.
- ⇒ Depending on the country, some consulates may allow a program provider representative to submit the required visa paperwork on behalf of their upcoming semester student participants through a process known as "batch processing."

- ⇒ If batch processing is an option through your student's program, it does usually require an additional fee. Unfortunately, very few countries offer this option. If batch processing is available, students will be informed of this benefit early so as not to miss the opportunity, if they wish to participate in this option.
- ⇒ If students are provided with the opportunity for batch processing, but miss the deadline set by the program, the student then must make arrangements to get their visa on their own.
- ⇒ If students are unsure of any document or requirement listed on their provider issued visa checklists, they should contact their program for clarification well before their scheduled consulate appointment.
- ⇒ If a student does not arrive for the visa appointment with all the required documentation, then they may be denied their visa at that time. The consulate may allow the student to reschedule the appointment, but the new appointment may not be in time to go abroad.
- ⇒ If a student does not receive their visa on time, they will not be allowed to study abroad for their intended semester. In this case, the student will have to withdraw or defer their plans, which may result in additional fees. These fees would be the student's responsibility, and have been explained to them throughout their application process.

## BRYANT UNIVERSITY CONTACT INFORMATION

Bursar: 401-232-6030 Study Abroad: 401-232-6209