

# ***Study Abroad Guide to Italy***

Please use this booklet in conjunction with the

*Study Abroad Handbook*



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## University of Denver Programs in Italy

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***Congratulations!*** You have been accepted to participate in a **University of Denver Study Abroad program** at one of the following programs in Italy:

**Milan:**

IES Milan

**Florence:**

Studio Arts Center International (SACI)  
Arcadia in Florence

**Rome:**

ISA-American University (AUR)  
Arcadia in Rome

**Siena:**

IPSL Siena

**Perugia:**

Arcadia-Umbra Institute

**Sicily:**

Mediterranean Center for Arts and Sciences

**Lecce:**

Università del Salento (Arcadia)

**Multiple Cities:**

International Student Exchange Program  
(ISEP)

This handbook provides you with a general overview of issues related to living in Italy. Please use this in conjunction with our general Study Abroad Handbook.

Studying abroad is an exciting opportunity. Nothing during your college years is likely to change you more. How much you gain from this opportunity will depend on your preparedness, flexibility, and responsibility. Review the general pre-departure information we provide you. Complete the administrative and academic matters that need to be taken care of before you leave. Research the country and city where you will be living for the next several months. Review some of the suggested readings in our Study Abroad Handbook about what it means to go abroad. Be respectful of other cultures—things aren't better, they aren't worse, they are just different. Learn to accept, not expect. Remember, you are there to complete an academic program successfully, just as if you were at DU. Good time management and goal setting are keys to handling a challenging academic program and becoming familiar with life outside the classroom.

Most of all, we want you to have a great experience and to make the most out of this opportunity. When you return, be ready to share your stories with other students. Your personal experience will be the best source of inspiration for others.

Safe Travels,

*DU Study Abroad Office (DUSA)*

## Italian Student Visa

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All U.S. citizens going to Italy to attend a study abroad program longer than 90 days must apply for a student visa, a type of documentation required by the Italian government that allows you to legally stay in Italy for the length of your program.

**Applying for a student visa and making sure you comply with all the application requirements is your responsibility. No one else can do this for you! Governments, not universities, determine visa regulations.**

The information provided below is to serve as a guideline to assist you in understanding the Italian Student Visa application process. However, Italian Consular laws can change at any time without prior notification to this office, you, or the public. Please note that the information provided is current as of the time of printing this information (April 2012). **Always verify with the Consulate website that you have the correct documents before you submit your visa application.**

## How to Apply for a Student Visa

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***ATTENTION IES Students: Follow the instructions given to you by IES. The visa information given here does not pertain to you.***

Unless you are attending a program in Italy through IES, you have two options on how you can apply for a student visa:

- Option 1: Apply to the Chicago Consulate
- Option 2: Apply to the Consulate serving your state of residency

Further details about each option are described below. Regardless of which option you choose, please be aware that obtaining a student visa is your responsibility.

### ***Option 1: Apply to the Chicago Consulate***

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Students residing or studying full-time in Colorado fall under the jurisdiction of the Chicago Consulate, and may submit their passport and visa application by mail (details can be found on the Chicago Consulate website - [http://www.conschicago.esteri.it/Consolato\\_Chicago/Menu/I\\_Servizi/Per\\_chi\\_si\\_reca\\_in\\_italia/generalreqvisa.htm](http://www.conschicago.esteri.it/Consolato_Chicago/Menu/I_Servizi/Per_chi_si_reca_in_italia/generalreqvisa.htm)).

Please note that you are allowed to mail your visa application directly to the Chicago Consulate and do not need to apply in person (that's the good news). HOWEVER, the Consulate has strict instructions for what forms must be notarized and by whom. If you don't follow their instructions, they will simply return your application without processing it. Read the website carefully for this information (the above link has the details).

***You can find a complete list of the items that you need to submit on the Chicago Consulate website [http://www.conschicago.esteri.it/Consolato\\_Chicago/Menu/I\\_Servizi/Per\\_chi\\_si\\_reca\\_in\\_italia/study.htm](http://www.conschicago.esteri.it/Consolato_Chicago/Menu/I_Servizi/Per_chi_si_reca_in_italia/study.htm).***

**There can be NO MISTAKES on the application form. I recommend that you complete the application form electronically and then print it so that it is clearly legible.**

### **IMPORTANT**

The following items must be notarized:

- Visa application form (found on the Consulate website; this form must be notarized by me)
- Copy of your Student ID
- Copy of your Driver's License
- Affidavit of Support (found on the Consulate website)
- Affidavit of Health Insurance (found on the Consulate website)

I am a public notary and can notarize these forms for you, but only by appointment (303-871-4912). The Consulate requires that I notarize your visa application form, but for the remaining documents, you may also go to any other public notary for this service (simply check Google for listings; banks and UPS stores are examples of places where you can go for notary services).

While I can notarize your forms, **DO NOT CONFUSE ME WITH THE CONSULATE**. I don't have any authority over whether or not you get your visa, and it's up to you to make sure that your application is **CORRECT** and **COMPLETE**.

### ***Option 2: Apply to the Consulate serving your state of residency***

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If your permanent residency is in or close to a city with an Italian Consulate, it may be easier for you to apply to that Consulate over the summer when you are home.

To find out to which Italian consulate you need to submit your visa application to, go to the Italian Consulate Network site at:  
[http://www.ambwashingtondc.esteri.it/Ambasciata\\_Washington/Menu/Informazioni\\_e\\_servizi/La\\_rete\\_consolare/](http://www.ambwashingtondc.esteri.it/Ambasciata_Washington/Menu/Informazioni_e_servizi/La_rete_consolare/)

Please be aware that some consulates require you to appear in person to make your application. If that is the case, you may be required to travel by car or plane to the city in which the consulate is located. DU does not reimburse for expenses related to obtaining the visa, only the visa application itself.

### ***Student Visa Application Forms***

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The student visa application consists of many pieces, but there are **three forms** that can be downloaded from the consulate website:

1. The visa application form
2. The Affidavit of Support
3. The Affidavit of Health Insurance Coverage

#### **For students applying through the Chicago Consulate:**

The checklist of forms and documents you need to collect can be found on the Chicago consulate website:

[http://www.conschiago.esteri.it/Consolato\\_Chicago/Menu/I\\_Servizi/Per\\_chi\\_si\\_reca\\_in\\_italia/study.htm](http://www.conschiago.esteri.it/Consolato_Chicago/Menu/I_Servizi/Per_chi_si_reca_in_italia/study.htm).

Note: The DU Office of International Education will provide you with the **Letter of Enrollment**. The **Letter of Acceptance** comes from the university or program in Italy you are attending.

To date, there is no fee for an Italian student visa application.

**For students applying through any Consulate other than the one in Chicago:**

First, locate the appropriate Consulate that you should use on the Italian Embassy website:

[http://www.ambwashingtondc.esteri.it/Ambasciata\\_Washington/Menu/Informazioni\\_e\\_servizi/La\\_rete\\_consolare/](http://www.ambwashingtondc.esteri.it/Ambasciata_Washington/Menu/Informazioni_e_servizi/La_rete_consolare/).

Follow the instructions for a student visa on the appropriate Consulate's website. Read through all directions carefully!

### ***When to Apply For a Student Visa***

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The visa application process can take several weeks. You can submit your visa application documents **within 90 days of your program start date (BUT NOT before that time), and with no less than FIVE WEEKS prior to the start of the program.**

You should begin gathering the required documents immediately. Issuance of a student visa is dependent upon the satisfactory health and character clearance conducted by the Italian government. If your application needs to be revised, it may take more time to finalize the process. ***Delaying your student visa application until the last moment may interfere with your travel plans.***

Due to the processing time, do not plan any international travel over the summer. There is no guarantee that you will have your passport back from the Consulate in time for you to undertake additional travel.

### ***Immigration and Permit to Stay***

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The Permit to Stay is a legal document that registers non-EU citizens with the local Italian government officials so that they may remain in the country legally. By law they must apply for a *Permesso di Soggiorno* (Permit to Stay) within eight (8) business days of their arrival in Italy at one of the appropriate Public Offices as required by the Permit to Stay procedure. Based on latest Italian immigration law, students staying over 3 months in Italy will be required to get fingerprinted by the local police station.

Don't start stressing out about it though! Your program abroad will help to facilitate this process. Sometimes, this means that the program/university abroad will tell you where to take these documents. Other times, they may process the documents on your behalf. The following list is a sampling of the documents you should be prepared to produce for the Permit to Stay. Most of these documents you need for your visa, so you will already have them ready to go!

- A declaration from your university assessing your regular enrollment
- 4 passport photos (take extra photos with you, they might be useful)
- A valid identification document/card and a photocopy of it
- Copy of the health insurance certified by the Italian Consulate or Embassy in your home country
- Copy of the visa
- Proof of your means of financial support
- A residence declaration (recommended) released by your house owner/landlord in your city.
- Permit to Stay processing fee (Note: Cherrington Global Scholars will be reimbursed for the Permit to Stay fee **if you provide an original receipt to your OIE Advisor**).

The residence permit is generally issued according to the visa (type and duration) that has been issued by the Consulate, and it is the only document (not the visa itself) which entitles foreigners to stay in Italy. For this reason, the residence permit must be carried at all times and must be shown with the passport at the request of the Italian authorities; it allows the foreigners to exit and reenter Italy for the entire period of its validity.

## Travel Arrangements

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Refer to the OIE website for details on booking your flights to and from Italy (<http://www.du.edu/intl/abroad/forms.html>).

## Customs Regulations

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At the airport, once you have found your luggage, you have to go through customs. Make sure you have letters from both schools (DU and the Italian institution) and your passport. Italy is not noticeably stricter than most customs, but in general there are a few things you cannot bring and they include:

- fresh foodstuffs
- plants or plant products
- animals or wildlife or their products
- drugs
- firearms or other weapons

## Prescription Drugs

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If you are taking regular medication, you should contact an Italian Consulate well before departure to confirm that the medicine and the quantities you will be carrying are permitted into the country. You should also find out what documentation you need to provide to the customs agents. We advise you to get a letter from your doctor that describes the medication you are taking and certifies that the medication has been supplied to you for a particular medical condition. Bring this letter in your carry-on. The maximum allowable amount is usually a three-month supply. **Keep all medications in their original containers.**

## Academics

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### Academic Culture in Italy

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Italy hosts some of the most reputable centers of education, notably the University of Bologna, which is the oldest university in all of Europe, and the University of Padova, the famous university of Galileo and his classroom. The antiquity of Italian culture reflects a great respect for education in the arts, music, literature, politics, and many other fields of study.

As you meet other students your age, it will become more and more evident how important education is for the current generation of youth. Like any other country, Italy faces challenges, one of which is unemployment. You will immediately learn that education has become increasingly important for students your age, who stay in school much longer, often earning multiple degrees. You will meet many individuals who are stretching their time in school in order to avoid the Italian job market or who are trying to receive a better education in order to be hired in another country.

## Academic System in Italy

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Students studying abroad in an Italian university system (Bocconi U. and U. of Bologna) should be aware of a few differences in the university educational system:

- Class registration can be a different process than in the U.S. You may not be able to register for classes until later into the semester. Most likely, you will audit your preferred courses when the semester starts, attend them regularly, and officially register for the course later on.
- Examination tests are often oral, rather than written. Many professors have their students answer questions orally in front of the class during examination periods. This can be frustrating, but talking to your professors ahead of time and letting them know you are an international student may help.

For those attending a U.S.-based program such as SACI, AUR, Arcadia, and IES, your program will be structured similarly to that of a U.S. university.

## Assessment (Grading)

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The credits and grades earned on a DU program will appear on your DU transcript and are considered “resident credit.” They will not count as “pass/fail.” In order for the credit to apply to your general degree, you must pass with a “D” or better. However, in order for the credit to apply to your major or minor, you must generally pass with a “C” or better (check with your major/minor department to verify what will be accepted as passing grade). While the credit earned is considered DU credit, these grades will not be figured into your GPA.

The grading system at U.S.-based programs is similar to that at the University of Denver. The grading system at Italian universities (i.e. University of Bologna or Bocconi University) differs from the U.S.-based programs grading system. The grading system is as follows:

29-30+ = A  
28 = A-  
27 = B+  
25-26 = B  
24 = B-  
23 = C+  
21-22 = C  
20 = C-  
19 = D+  
18 = D  
0-17 = F

## What Your APR Will Look Like

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When you return to DU, the general 16-credit study abroad placeholder course will remain on your APR until our office has received your host university's transcript. It can take a while for the transcript to be sent, but once we've received it, we will need an additional 10-14 days to apply those credits to your APR (assuming you have had all of your courses approved by a DU academic advisor). Therefore, your actual credits and classes that you took abroad will not be visible on myWeb until a few months after you return.

Once the transcripts have been received, the Registrar's Office will use your course approvals to place your study abroad classes in the proper requirements for graduation. If one of your courses was never approved by a DU academic advisor, the course will be placed in a general elective category by default. **If you are planning to graduate at the end of winter or spring quarter, it is important to let us know so that we can arrange for rushed delivery.**

## Course Load & Credits

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In general, students attending a U.S.-based program must observe the following rules:

- *Enroll as a full-time student at the host institution.* This means registering to take a full-time course load, ranging from 12–15 semester hours. This is also the equivalent of being a full-time student at the University of Denver.
- Be enrolled in enough credits to be above the minimum amount required to maintain the student visa status, as applicable.

**At a U.S.-based program, you will earn semester credits, which will convert to DU quarter credits:  
1 U.S. semester credit = 1.5 DU quarter credits.**

Students attending an Italian university will have to:

- Verify with the host university the "minimum" or the "average course load"
- Be aware of the equivalency of credits from a European institution –European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) vs. the U.S. credit value, and make sure you are earning enough credits to maintain your degree progress at DU on track.
- Be enrolled in enough credits to be above the minimum amount required to maintain the student visa status, as applicable.

**At an Italian university (U. of Bologna or Bocconi U), you will earn ECTS credits:  
1 ECTS credit = 0.75 DU quarter credits.**

## Learning Disabilities

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If you have special needs in the classroom such as reading assistance or note taking assistance, please inform your OIE Advisor. He or she will find out what services are provided by your specific program. Also be sure to make DU's Disabilities Services Program aware that you are going abroad.

## Living the Life of an Italian Student

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### Housing

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Many of you will be living independently for the first time when you go abroad. This means you will have to deal with issues you've never had to deal with when you lived at home or on campus at DU, as well as the issues arising from living in an entirely different country. Depending on your living situation, you may or may not be provided with living "essentials" —i.e., bedding, towels, dishware, etc. Before you get to Italy contact your program and see how exactly your apartment will be supplied. If there won't be some of these "essentials," you can either pack some of them or buy them once you get to Italy. It will really come down to a question of whether or not you want to save space or money. If you are living with a host family you won't have to worry about these things.

If you live with a host, you have a unique opportunity to experience authentic, daily Italian living. As a guest in someone else's home, you want to be courteous and respectful. Communicate your plans. For example, if you're going to miss a meal or will be travelling over the weekend, let them know. Cultural misunderstandings are to be expected, but do all that you can to reduce them by asking questions, observing the way your host lives and organizes their lives, and joining in whenever possible. The more you engage with your host, the more you will benefit.

## Damage & Unpaid Bills

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The University of Denver secures housing on your behalf through its program partners in Italy. ***Exceptions to this rule apply to U. of Bologna and Bocconi U., where participating students have to secure their own housing.***

Some of our U.S. based program partners may require a **refundable** deposit to secure your place. If so, you are responsible for paying that deposit as it will be refunded back to you after completion of your program (granted you don't leave behind any unpaid incidental bills or housing damages). In cases where a 'secure placement deposit' was paid by DU on your behalf, should there be any damage to your housing or other unpaid bills when you leave the program, the cost of those damages will be paid by DU and DU will pass on charges to your DU account. You will owe that money to DU plus the cost of wiring and at the current exchange rate, (i.e. it will cost you more if you leave behind unpaid damage costs than if you paid for the damage on-site). Either way, failure to pay will result in the program abroad not releasing your transcript or a hold will be placed on your DU account, hindering you from registering for classes at DU.

## Behavior

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If you consider yourself old enough and mature enough to live independently, then you should act accordingly. You need to respect quiet hours, guest policies, and other rules of the housing complex. Your mature behavior ensures that DU can continue to house its study abroad students in those apartments.

## Meeting the Locals

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Although you will be studying in Italy with other American students, the idea of study abroad is not to just hang out with all of your American friends. Get out of your comfort zone and meet some Italians! Here are some pointers for meeting the locals and learning about their lives.

1. **Make an effort.** Because the universities host new study abroad students each semester (some of whom promise to keep in touch with the locals but never do), the Italian students may not immediately try to befriend you. As the “outsider,” you must show that you want to meet the locals and get to know their culture. Be friendly and genuine.
2. **Take advantage of the cultural excursions or activities your program may offer.** If your program offers Italian cooking classes, Italian conversation partners, or just guided tours throughout the city, make sure you get involved! You will be more likely to meet Italians and get an Italian perspective (as opposed to the tourist perspective).
3. **Stick around.** While you may be tempted to head out every weekend to travel, doing so could impede your chances of making friendships with local students. Constantly talking about your travel, particularly about expensive excursions, could also turn off the local students.
4. **Practice Italian with local vendors.** You will likely shop for food at a local fresh food market where the same vendors work daily. Many students find specific vendors to regularly buy food from. Like any other culture, Italians appreciate Americans who make an effort to use and learn their language. Just by making mistakes and continually trying to learn, you’ll find that Italians are happy to help correct and teach students. This type of interaction opens the door for cross-cultural friendships.
5. **Be respectful.** Compare and contrast gets old fast. Instead of talking about and dwelling on what you are missing in America, think about and enjoy everything you are experiencing in Italy! Although it may be difficult to adjust, embrace the cultural differences and try not to insult the Italian people and their way of living. Most likely, when you return to America, you will miss Italy and the Italian lifestyle just as much as you initially missed America!

## The Siesta or La Pausa

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As in many European countries, Italians generally take a long lunch and/or nap during the afternoon, which means that many businesses and stores are closed during the afternoon. Each business owner’s siesta will vary, but generally, siesta lasts between 1 and 4 p.m. While this may be frustrating at first, you will learn to love it! Go take a well-deserved nap or a stroll in the park and enjoy your afternoons if you don’t have class.

## Gym Membership

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Most of the universities in Italy are small and limited in space (i.e., you will not find a Ritchie Center equivalent anywhere). There are gyms to join around the cities but they tend to be bit expensive and may have outdated equipment.

## Internet

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You will have access to the Internet and computers at your university library and/or labs; however, there may be a long wait if computers are limited. Students who bring their own laptop to Italy may

have the option of paying for a wireless internet card. Also, the city you live in will have numerous internet cafes available to purchase Internet at hourly rates. Some apartments will include wireless internet for no additional charge.

*TIP:* While email is a great way to keep in touch with family and friends back here, too much time spent on Facebook, chat, or Skype may prevent you from having a full study abroad experience.

## Medical Facilities

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It is not unusual to catch a cold, the flu, or just generally feel a bit run down as you adapt to a new climate and different eating and sleeping patterns. The best advice is to eat sensibly and get enough sleep. Don't try to do too much at once! While your program may provide you with information on walk-in doctor offices around the city, there are also on-call doctors who will come to your apartment if necessary. If available in your area, the on-call doctors will likely charge a visitation fee that will vary depending on your city or home location.

## Pharmacies

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Pharmacies, or the *Farmacia*, in Italian, are an interesting phenomenon in Italy. They are marked with a universal green cross (like our Red Cross) and can be found all over European cities. They look the same as their American counterparts, but their function is somewhat different. In general, when Italians get a cold or the flu, they tend to go to the pharmacist first to ask for advice and later on to the doctor if symptoms are not getting any better.

Most pharmacists will recognize an American immediately and a sign language conversation will ensue if they cannot speak English or you cannot speak Italian. Remember your dictionary to describe your ailments. If your throat hurts, you point to it. If you have a cough, perform your cough. The pharmacist is much like a physician's assistant in the U.S. If you have allergies to medications, do not hesitate to describe this! If you have bilingual friends, take them along so that you may better describe your illness. Do not get worried about the medications! In the experience of past study abroad students, they found the service to be highly useful in getting over their colds and other ailments.

When you arrive in your host city, take note of the nearest *Farmacia* to your school and your housing. Most cities have one or two 24-hour pharmacies—take note of where these are located as well. Keep in mind also that most *Farmacias* take part in the siesta and may not be open during the afternoon.

## Transportation in Italy

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Important general things to know:

- You cannot hail taxis in Italy! You can get taxis either by going to designated taxi stands or by calling for one to come pick you up. Be sure you keep a taxi company's phone number in your phone or on you at all times!
- Be aware that public bus and tram services tend to go on strike. The interesting thing, though, is that the public transportation company will usually announce a strike, or *sciopero*, and it will only last for a few hours during the day. You will either hear people talking about the upcoming

*sciopero*, will read about it in a newspaper, or you can go online to the transportation company's website for announcements.

## Safety, Homesickness, & Mental Health

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### Personal Safety

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- The majority of deaths in Italy are under the age of 30 and occur from motor vehicle accidents. Most accidents have been linked to drinking and/or speeding during the early hours of the morning after bars close.
- Please note that pedestrians do not have the right of way. Always be alert when crossing streets or turning corners!
- There have been cases where people on motor scooters have grabbed purses from women walking on the crowded streets and sidewalks. If you are walking along a street, be conscious of your belongings and try to hold them on the opposite side of the street so that they are not vulnerable to theft.
- Avoid carrying large sums of money with you. Carry only what you need for the day and remember—tourist cities attract pickpockets, so always be aware of your possessions and surroundings, especially in crowded places or on crowded buses or metros.
- Leave your passport, credit cards, and other important documents in a safe place. While you should always carry a photocopy of your passport with you, be sure to keep photocopies of it and other important cards or documents at home as well.

### Personal Safety for Women

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Foreign women can get a lot of unwanted attention from Italian men. Most of the time, no harm is intended—it's just annoying. The best way to protect yourself from this unwanted attention and to ensure your personal safety is to conform to local cultural expectations. We recommend that you stay in groups of three or more late at night. Adopt an Italian mode of bearing and appearance and do not acknowledge attempts to get your attention. If someone insists on following you, step into a public place or get on a bus and ask for help. If necessary, yell "*va via*," (go away!) but do not lead the person to where you live.

**ALWAYS carry enough extra money in case you need to take a cab.**

### Apartment Safety

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To safeguard your property and for your own personal safety, you should always follow these simple precautions in your apartment:

1. NEVER give your apartment key to anyone else.
2. If your key is stolen, report it to the Housing Office so the lock can be changed if necessary.
3. ALWAYS lock the windows and doors of your apartment when leaving, even for a short time.
4. Make an effort to get to know the neighbors and to stay on good terms with them. They can be most helpful in preventing problems in your building.

5. Post the number of the local police station near your phone. The main emergency number for the Police is 113.
6. Be familiar with emergency procedures concerning fire, water leaks, gas leaks, etc.
7. NEVER open your door to unidentified visitors.
8. Don't invite unknown people back to your apartment.
9. Report any suspicious behavior near your apartment to the Housing Office or to the police.

## Homesickness and Mental Health

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Moving abroad and living in a country that probably doesn't speak your native language is hard, but it's an adventure! It will be difficult adjusting and immersing yourself in this new culture, but embrace it as much as you can. Use each and every experience to speak Italian and learn more about where you are. If you don't, you will come home wishing that you had. Yes, it's scary and difficult, but each time you try, you will improve that much more. It will be exhausting, and sometimes your brain will hurt, but keep in mind that speaking as much Italian as you can every day will make you that much more fluent than everyone else that chooses to speak English. And it will get easier. You'll even find yourself using phrases and verb tenses that you never understood in class without even thinking about it. It's amazing! So don't give up.

If you are seeing a counsellor in the U.S., you may want to look into the possibility of seeing one in Italy as well. Culture shock and homesickness tend to exacerbate depression, anxiety, and other emotional and physiological concerns. Even if you're not used to meeting with a counsellor, you may want to consider doing so while you are abroad. Be willing to verbalize the changes and adjustments you are going through to make your study abroad experience as positive and stress-free as possible. Ask your program about services they may provide or recommendations they can make for you.

As for dealing with homesickness, remember that everyone experiences it at one point or another and to varying degrees. There are multiple ways to deal with it, too. You can either try to view everything that is different as a new experience, or you can find something that reminds you of home and connect with that, or sometimes calling home helps. Once you've found a way of dealing with it, it is easier to get over it and enjoy abroad! Despite how bad it might seem, and how much you might want to come home, always remember that homesickness does go away, so just give it time.

## Communication

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### How to Call Home

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First things first, call home as soon as you can after arrival because your family is anxious to hear from you. Give your family your abroad phone number, email address and mailing address so they know how to reach you in the event of an emergency.

To make an international phone call from Italy, you need to use the following numbers: 00 + (country code) + (city code) + (number). To call the US, you dial: 00 + 1 + (area code) + (7 digit phone number).

### Calling Cards

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Pre-paid calling cards in Italy are inexpensive, while calling rates with cards from the U.S. are much higher. Therefore, we recommend you get a calling card when you arrive in Italy. Cards can be purchased almost anywhere: at the airport, train stations, *tabacchis*, etc. The L'EUROPA calling card, for instance, costs 5 Euro for approximately 250 minutes of call time to the U.S.

If you prefer to use a U.S. calling card, you can access several long-distance carriers while in Italy such as AT&T, Verizon, or Sprint. You will need to provide your calling card number if charging the call to your personal account or hold for an operator if you are calling collect. Be sure to obtain the international phone number of your desired phone service provider before departure.

## Time Differences

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All of Italy is under the same time zone. Whatever calling method you use, consider the time difference before you call home. During *Mountain Standard Time (MST)*, which goes from last Sunday of October to first Sunday in April, the time difference from Italy is 9 hours ahead.

During *Mountain Daylight Time (MDT)*, which goes from first Sunday in April to last Sunday in October, time difference from Italy is 8 hours ahead.

For information on what time is in a city of Italy and what time is in a location in the U.S., go to [www.timeanddate.com/worldclock](http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock).

## Cell Phones

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Many students buy or rent cell phones to use while abroad. Your program will provide information on the various cell phone options available to you. With a cell phone, you can cheaply send text messages or call other friends with cell phones in Italy and often get good deals on calling the U.S. without the hassle of continually buying calling cards and having to use payphones.

## Email

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Continue to check your DU email address while you are in Italy. This account is the primary means of communication between you and the Office of International Education.

## Money Matters

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### Italian Currency

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Italy converted from the Lira system to the European Monetary Union just before 2000. Start to familiarize yourself with the currency—both bills and coins—as well as exchange rates, which fluctuate on a daily basis. For the most



up-to-date information, and for easy conversion rates calculations, visit [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com).

We suggest you carry a small amount of local currency before you leave (€50 to €100 Euro), especially if you plan to arrive on a weekend. You can exchange money at a U.S. bank or airport before departure or at an Italian airport upon arrival.

## Banks

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It is not necessary to open a bank account in Italy and it is much too difficult to do anyway. Your ATM card, credit card, and travelers' checks will be your primary money sources. You will use bank ATM machines, called *bancomats*, which charge a transaction fee. If you want to keep transaction fees minimal, consider taking out larger amounts of money at a time and keeping it secure. Keep in mind that your bank in the U.S. will also likely charge you an additional transaction fee.

We recommend only withdrawing money from a bank ATM during bank hours. On occasion, ATM machines have been known to not give back cards or to show that a transaction occurred without dispensing the money. In this rare occasion, it is better to be able to handle the situation immediately as opposed to waiting until the bank opens the next day. Sometimes ATM machines will cancel transactions without you knowing, but it's always safe to double check with the bank and make sure that no money has been withdrawn from your account that you didn't receive.

If you do have a problem outside of bank hours, don't panic—just write down the time that the problem occurred and go to the bank at the soonest available time. Also, sometimes contacting your U.S. bank can resolve the problem, specifically if it is an issue of the transaction going through on your account when you never received the money.

## Tipping

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Most restaurants in Italy have a service charge, a charge for bread, and even a charge for water. As a result, you are not expected to tip, but you can leave a little extra if you feel the service warrants it. If there is no service charge, you should consider leaving a 10% tip, but this is not obligatory. In bars, Italians often leave small change as a tip, like €0.10-0.20. Tipping taxi drivers is not common practice.

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## General Information

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### Weather

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To convert from Fahrenheit to Celcius, subtract 32 then multiply by 5/9. To convert from Celcius to Fahrenheit, multiply by 9/5 then add 32.

Approximate maximum/minimum temperatures for your study abroad city are listed below:

	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
<b>Bologna</b>	65/49	43/31	64/46	83/63
<b>Florence</b>	69/49	51/35	66/44	85/61
<b>Milan</b>	64/43	45/25	62/40	80/57
<b>Perugia</b>	70/51	54/35	66/45	83/62
<b>Rome</b>	71/53	56/39	65/47	81/63

## Electricity

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Electricity in Europe is 220-240 volts. In the U.S. it is 110 volts. This means that if you plug your 110v hair dryer directly into an Italian plug it will BURN OUT. Transformers/converters are therefore required and these are probably best bought in the U.S. Make sure, however, that your transformer is configured for the 2-prong Italian plug. Anything that produces heat – hair dryers, straighteners, curling irons – is better left at home and purchased in Italy. Even with transformers and adaptors, they tend to fry upon first or second use, though some people are lucky and manage to get it to work throughout their stay. The good news is that most computers and camera chargers are now equipped to convert the voltage and you might just need a way to plug it in.

If you cannot get an adaptor in the U.S., consider buying one upon arrival to Italy. Keep in mind that if you buy appliances in Italy, you will almost certainly have trouble running them when you get back to the U.S. Below is a diagram of European adaptors:



## Packing Tips from Italy Study Abroad Alums

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### Things to Take:

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- Warm clothes, sweaters, and scarves for layering
- Lots of black and neutral clothes
- An umbrella
- A towel for staying in hostels that you don't mind leaving behind
- Boots and rainboots
- Pictures or small things that remind you of home
- A towel, pillowcase, and maybe even a travel sheet for when you spend the nights in hostels

### Things to leave behind:

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- Stiletto high heels or flip flops—neither are very practical for walking around the cobblestone of Italy
- Toiletries—if you're looking to save space, you can buy everything you need for the bathroom once you get to Italy unless you have a particular brand or item that you prefer to have (i.e. contact solution, feminine products, etc)
- School supplies—you can buy all of that in Italy as well