INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL POLICIES

SIPA students traveling abroad for research, study, summer internships, or other university business are required to submit the following documents before departure to the Office of Student Affairs:

Documents Required by OSA

- Travel itinerary, personal contact information, and emergency contacts using the I-SOS Travel Locator.
- Columbia University SIPA Assumption of Risk, Waiver, and Release (PDF)

International SOS (I-SOS) Travel Assistance Program

With the well-being of travelers as a top priority, Columbia University has retained International SOS (I-SOS) to provide worldwide travel assistance services for all faculty, staff, and students. International SOS provides 24-hour, worldwide emergency medical care and security evacuation services when traveling abroad. Personal travel, including vacations or travel home to visit family, is not covered. Please refer to Using the I-SOS Program for more information on International SOS and answers to Frequently Asked Questions.

Please refer to the Columbia International SOS Travel Assistant Program website for general guidelines on I-SOS for Columbia students Columbia International SOS Travel Assistant Program website.

SIPA students need to do the following well before their scheduled departure:

- Obtain a laminated I-SOS card from the Office of Student Affairs, Room 600, IAB, or print one online.
- Register your profile, travel itinerary, and emergency contacts using the I-SOS Travel Locator. You must also update your travel information (flight, hotel, country, etc.) in the I-SOS Travel Locator if it changes during your trip. If this is not possible, you should notify SIPA’s Office of Student Affairs of any change of plans. This allows us and I-SOS to reach you in case of an emergency and to reach out to your emergency contacts.
- Update your emergency contact information in Student Services Online (SSOL): http://ssol.columbia.edu.

Health Insurance

I-SOS is not health insurance. If you are enrolled in the Columbia Student Medical Insurance Plan, your travel insurance benefits, including medical evacuation, are provided by On Call International (Travel Assistance Program). For information on coverage and exclusions, see the Student Health Insurance Plan brochure.

If you are enrolled in another health insurance plan, you should become familiar with its policies on overseas coverage and payment requirements.

Before departure, make sure you visit a travel health clinic or meet with a doctor to ensure that all immunizations, vaccinations, prescriptions, and preventative health needs are taken care of. Columbia offers these services on campus for students paying the Health Services fee. Please refer to the Columbia University Medical Services website for information on Columbia health services Columbia University Medical Services website.

Please refer to Columbia University Travel Assistance Information for a good summary of On Call International and I-SOS Columbia University Travel Assistance Information.

Visa Requirements

Check and verify visa requirements for each destination country and plan ahead, as visa procurement can take several weeks. Visit the host country’s Office of the Consulate General website for information on visa requirements. US citizens may refer to the US State Department’s general visa information service website.

International students must verify with the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) that travel meets the condition of their student visa. Please visit the Columbia University International Programs and Services website.

SIPA Travel Grant Program

SIPA provides internship grants to qualifying students to help defray the costs of unpaid or low-paid internships abroad. For more information, please refer to the SIPA Travel Grant section.

SIPA Contact Information

Students in the Economic and Political Development (EPD) concentration frequently participate in workshops abroad. EPD students who may need assistance should first contact Ilona Vinklerova: (212) 851-4105; iv2105@columbia.edu.

Students in the MPA in Development Practice (MPD) degree program must complete a summer internship. MPD students should first contact André Corrêa d’Almeida: (212) 854-2636; ac3133@columbia.edu.

All other students should contact SIPA’s Office of Student Affairs: (212) 854-8690; Stefan Brown, Senior Assistant Dean, asb167@columbia.edu (stefan.brown@sipa.columbia.edu).

Other Useful Resources

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides helpful tips for travelers and health information specific to the country you will be visiting.

For background information on your destination(s), visit the U.S. State Department website. Keep the US or your home country’s in-country embassy address and contact information with you when you travel.

The International SOS/Columbia University portal also houses helpful pre-travel information in Country Guides and E-mail Alerts.

For additional resources on Health & Safety and General Travel, please consult Columbia’s Office of Global Programming. The site contains passport and travel agency information for students and has a link to an online training course for travel abroad called “What's Up with Culture?”

Please review the Security Guidelines for International Travel (PPT) for information about data security during international travel Security Guidelines for International Travel (PPT).