

STUDY ABROAD PRE-DEPARTURE GUIDE

Florence Summer Semester 2018 Academic Calendar

Student departure from US	June 12
Student arrival in Florence	June 13
Student Orientation	June 14 - 15
Academic program begins	June 18
Day trip to Siena & San Gimignano	June 23
Overnight trip to Mantua and Verona	July 7 - 8
Academic program ends	July 26

BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME: PRE-DEPARTURE ESSENTIALS

Congratulations! You are about to embark on what may be one of the most exciting and meaningful experiences of your life – overseas study. Preparing to study and live overseas can seem overwhelming and confusing at first, but with sufficient planning you will find that the process is not too difficult. This document is designed to lay out the essentials of preparing to study overseas.

PRE-DEPARTURE TIMELINE

IMMEDIATE

Apply for your Passport: If you think there is a high probability that you'll be studying overseas – even if you haven't yet been accepted – you should apply for your passport. If you already have a passport, be sure that it is not due to expire before your return home.

Visit Your School's Study Abroad Office: Speak with a study abroad advisor to find out what you must do before studying abroad. Inquire into the process of registering for classes for the subsequent semester while you are overseas. Take the steps required to ensure that your credits will transfer (if needed). If your school does not have a study abroad office, you should see your academic advisor about these details.

Upon acceptance to Accademia Italiana

Purchase plane ticket. AI offers airport pick-up to students whose arrival date meets particular requirements (typically the day prior to the first day of orientation). If you choose to utilize this service, be sure that your flight arrival corresponds to the indicated date on which AI staff will meet students at the airport. Students who schedule their arrival on a different date will be responsible for arriving at the school on the date indicated in the acceptance packet.

*****For Florence Summer semester 2018 students, please arrive on Wednesday, June 13 between 11:00am and 2:00pm for airport pick-up at the Florence (FLR) airport. *****

Some students travel in Europe or Italy prior to their study at AI and inquire into whether they may be admitted into their student apartment a few days early. This may be possible on a case-by-case basis. Please contact us with your request at: study@ai-it.it.

Please be sure to notify AI of your arrival date, time and flight details as soon as possible.

Purchase international health insurance. All students need international health insurance in order to study in Italy. You might also consider including travel insurance in your coverage. This will cover your expenses for unforeseen circumstances such as flight cancellation/delay, lost luggage, etc. Some universities provide student health insurance that covers international study. Your study abroad office should be able to advise you as to what coverage is available or recommended. Our students who have used HTH and CISI insurance have been satisfied with their coverage and service.*
More information can be found at: www.hthstudents.com and www.culturalinsurance.com.

4 to 6 weeks prior to the first day of class

Receive housing information. During this time you will receive a letter confirming the address of your accommodation, the landlord's name and contact information, the amount of monthly rent and instructions on how to pay the first month's rent and security deposit. This letter confirming your accommodation may be required for the student visa.

AI's study abroad students are housed in student apartments located in the historical centre of Florence, within walking distance to the school. They are all fully furnished and include a washing machine and TV. Students have three

housing options: a private bedroom in a student apartment, a shared bedroom, or a one or two-room studio apartment.

Please note that in accordance with Italian regulations only students renting the apartments can sleep there. We suggest arranging accommodation for visiting friends and relatives via internet sites such as www.booking.com or www.expedia.com.

Please note that in Italy it is not possible for landlords to pro-rate the rent. Rent is paid for a full month regardless of whether you stay for the entire month.

Purchase student identification card. Some students choose to purchase a student identity card. Student ID cards are inexpensive (around \$25) and owners receive discounts on select airfare, ground transportation, accommodation, museums and other centers of culture as well as access to a 24/7 emergency help line and basic travel insurance coverage. Below are links to some popular student ID card administrators.*

STA Travel:

http://www.statravel.com/cps/rde/xchg/us_division_web_live/hs.xsl/student-discount-card.htm

International Student Exchange:

<http://www.isecard.com/isecard/aboutb.html>

**Note: AI is not affiliated with nor endorses any particular provider.*

Upon arrival in Florence

Your arrival. Students who arrive at the designated pick-up time will be met in the airport after they exit customs by an AI representative holding up an Accademia Italiana sign. Students who schedule their arrival on a different date will be able to take a taxi from the airport to the school or to their apartment. Taxis are plentiful, affordable and safe. Those planning to arrive in Florence independently should meet at the school on the date indicated in their acceptance packet. Please be sure to inform the school of your travel plans and details as early as possible.

Student accommodation. Students arriving on the designated date will be accompanied by AI staff to their apartments, where they will meet the landlord and receive an orientation that includes the apartment and immediate vicinity

as well as directions from the apartment to the school. Students arriving independently will be provided with instructions for meeting their landlord at the apartment.

Orientation. Before the start of classes, you will have a couple of days to adjust to life in Florence and get to know your surroundings and the school. During this time our staff will show you around your neighborhood, the school and the center of Florence and explain day-to-day operations such as taking public transportation, grocery shopping and so on. You will also discuss issues related to safety and conduct both in the academic setting and beyond. During this time you will register for classes and receive your academic schedule.

Our staff will assist you in getting your permit to stay (*permesso di soggiorno*) during this period.

At this time any outstanding tuition should be paid.

WHAT TO BRING

Packing for several weeks or months in another country can be a challenge! AI would like to offer some pointers for packing appropriately for Italy.

- Pack light! You may have to walk several blocks or lift yourself and your luggage onto a public bus or train. Do a “trial run”. Can you walk down the street and up at least 2 flights of stairs with your luggage? If not, you may want to consider lightening your load.
- Bring layers of clothes to be prepared for the extreme temperatures. Summers can be quite hot in Italy and while the stone buildings cool the air within, air conditioning is uncommon. Bring lightweight clothing for the warm weather months.
- Bring sturdy shoes. Many of the cities’ roads are cobblestone and they can be difficult to navigate in flimsy footwear.
- Feel free to bring your favorite cosmetics and toiletries. To save room in your suitcase, however, you may consider buying them in Italy. Pharmacies and supermarkets in Italy carry most of the major brands. AI staff will point these stores out to you during orientation.
- If you are bringing prescription drugs with you to Italy, be sure that all drugs are labeled with their proper names. Before you leave find out their generic names (the active ingredients) as brand names may be different in Italy. Bring your original prescription from the doctor.
- If you have any special health-related needs, please bring an explanatory note from your doctor and be sure to let AI know of your needs before arrival.

- You may consider bringing a smaller pack for day- and weekend-trips.
- Pack photocopies of your passport and visa in your suitcase. Pack a change of clothes, essential cosmetics and prescription medicine in your carry-on in case your luggage gets lost; also keep a photocopy of your passport/visa, your insurance card and contact information for AI in Italy with you in your carry-on. If your luggage does get lost, put Accademia Italiana's address on your claim form so that your luggage will be delivered to the school (not your student apartment), where there is always someone available to receive it.

What Not to Pack: Students often ask whether they should bring art supplies and materials from home. Although you are welcome to do so, it would be to your advantage to wait and purchase your materials in Italy. The prices are about the same as in the US, and you will receive a student discount at designated stores. In addition, you won't know exactly what you'll need until the first day of class so in terms of packing light it would be better to make purchases once you are here.

Receiving Packages and Mail:

Any packages or mail sent to you must have the school's address and your name indicated as recipient. The commercial value of items sent should not exceed \$30 if they are for personal use. We strongly suggest that you not have new items sent from the U.S. (such as tablets or other electronics) because Italian Customs may require the payment of duties of up to 40% of the item's purchase price prior to delivering it. Please do not have food, cosmetics or medicines sent to you, as packages containing these items will be held at customs and you will be required to pay for the health inspection and clearance.

Technology (Cell Phones, Laptops, Electrical Appliances)

Cell phones. You have three options when it comes to using a cell phone while in Italy:

- 1) *Bring your own phone.* Check with your service provider to find out whether your phone will work in Italy and if so ask for complete information on the service costs. This is crucial as the higher cost might be a deciding factor for you. Smartphones in particular can incur hefty fees for data roaming overseas. You might also check if your provider will give you the code to "unlock" your phone, which will allow you to use an Italian SIM card with your phone, giving you local call rates.

- 2) *Purchase a cheap cell phone* for your use while here. Many of our study abroad students choose this option. During orientation, you will have the opportunity to meet with a cell phone company representative to find out more about renting or buying a phone.
- 3) *Purchase a SIM card for your own phone.* This can be a good option provided you are certain that your phone will accept a foreign SIM card. It's imperative that you check before leaving rather than assume that it will work.

Laptops. AI encourages students to bring their own laptops, although having a laptop is not mandatory. Our schools are equipped with computer labs; Florence has two computer labs (Mac) and Rome has one lab (PCs).

Wireless Internet is available for students throughout AI's buildings and in all of the student apartments.

Electrical matters. If you plan on using your own 110-volt appliances, you will need a voltage converter, unless your appliance is designed to also work with 220 volts electricity (dual voltage). For example, most laptops and some electric shavers are designed to work both at 110 and 220 volts. Plugging in an appliance that is not designed to run on 220 volts electricity without using voltage converter will most likely break it.

Italian sockets are designed to accept round prongs. If your appliance has flat prongs, you will need a plug adapter.

Adapters and converters can be found in many US pharmacies like CVS and Rite Aid, travel equipment stores like REI, online and at airports, and are also easy to find in Italy.

Managing your money while abroad:

We recommend that you use your US debit card to get out cash for normal expenses. Most ATMs have a 200-250 euro limit to the amount you can withdraw daily (which is for the best since it is not advisable to carry around large amounts of cash). It is a good idea to find out about your US bank's fees for international transactions and to let them know you are going to be abroad. Credit cards are not as widely used in Italy as in the US, although that is changing quickly. Smaller independent stores and markets generally prefer cash. Opening a bank account at a local bank is almost impossible for students who are not residents of Italy and is therefore not advised.

Emergency Contact Information

Students at Accademia Italiana rarely find themselves in emergency situations. However, if you encounter problems during your travel here or upon arrival please do not hesitate to contact us immediately. We can be reached by cell phone 24 hours a day at the numbers below.

Please note that if you are calling from within Italy you do not need to include the country code (39).

We suggest you leave a copy of this contact information with someone at home.

For students studying in Florence:

Barbara McHugh, Director of Operations:

Cell phone: +39 333 338 0737

Email: bmchugh@ai-it.it

Accademia Italiana in Florence: +39 055 211 619

For students studying in Rome:

Maria Zarriello, Executive Secretary:

Cell phone: +39 340 238 7249

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Best of luck with your preparations. We look forward to seeing you soon!

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