Participants should:

1. Read and carefully consider all materials issued by UNCW and Maynooth that relate to safety, health, legal, environment, political, cultural and religious conditions in Ireland and other countries to which they may independently travel.

2. Consider their health and other personal circumstances when applying for or accepting a place in a program.

3. Make available to UNCW accurate and complete physical, mental and personal health information necessary in planning for a safe and healthy study abroad experience.

4. Assume responsibility for all the elements necessary for personal program preparation and participate fully in orientations.

5. If necessary, obtain and maintain insurance coverage in addition to the mandatory HTH Worldwide policy and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers.

6. Inform parents/guardians/family and any others who may need to know about their participation in the study abroad program, provide them with emergency contact information and keep them informed on an ongoing basis.

7. Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct and emergency procedures of the program, and obey host-country laws.

8. Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to Maynooth staff or other appropriate individuals.

9. Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well-being of others and encourage others to behave in a similar fashion.

10. Accept responsibility for one’s own decisions and actions.

11. Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining emergency health and law enforcement services in the host country. The local equivalent of 911 in Ireland is 999 (or 112 also works). If you plan to travel to another country during your time abroad, you get the 911 of that country as well. This link will provide the necessary information: [www.sccfd.org/travel.html](http://www.sccfd.org/travel.html).

12. Follow the program policies for keeping program staff informed of student’s whereabouts and well-being.

**Staying Safe**

When traveling abroad, be sure to use common sense and abide by the following safety precautions:
- Label your luggage inside and out, but not so that it can easily be read by someone else passing by.
- When traveling, bring only those items that you need and never keep all of your documents or money in one place. Keep copies of your passport, visa and ID separately in case they are lost or stolen.
- If you find yourself in uncomfortable surroundings, stay calm, keep a low profile and try to blend in to the environment.
- Avoid crowds and demonstrations and beware of potential scams or pick-pocketing set-ups. Sometimes these are disguised as interviews or involve children.
- Use caution when traveling alone, and try not to walk alone at night; try to find an escort.
- Do not stop to be “interviewed” by anyone. This approach is usually a scam or set up for harassing you.
- Do not engage strangers in discussions about drugs or black market exchanges of any type for any reason.
- Be cautious about to whom you give your address and phone number, or who might overhear a conversation about where you are staying or where you are traveling. Report any suspicious people or activities to on-site staff immediately.
- Avoid clothing and behaviors that will draw attention to you or identify you as an American. Flashy jewelry, shirts depicting U.S. sports teams, fraternity/sorority letters, American flags, etc. should be left at home. Don’t speak loudly, and stay away from American hangouts (McDonald’s, etc.).
- Keep the on-site director informed of your travel plans.
- Stay out of the bad parts of any given city. Ask a local or a program representative which areas to avoid. Traveling alone in risky areas is especially dangerous. In large cities, stay on well-lit streets, or call a taxi.
- Don’t flash around your money or credit/debit cards. You may wish to use an around-the-neck wallet or an internal waist belt for valuables and keep it inside your shirt. Try to avoid large denomination bills.
- Diversify your money and don’t keep it all in the same place. Carry cash, bankcards and credit cards, but in different places. Even if you lose one, you still have a backup source. If you leave some in your suitcase, pack it creatively. Even if someone rummages through your things, they may not check a vitamin C bottle for cash.
- Never, ever count money in public. This is an open invitation to be mugged.
- Women should be especially cautious about maintaining eye contact with men. This action can be considered either rude or an invitation to trouble.
- Do not be naïve enough to believe that AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases don’t exist in other countries.
• If you should run into personal difficulty abroad, contact the on-site staff at Maynooth, the Office of International Programs at UNCW or the U.S. embassy in Dublin. Contact information for all of the aforementioned will be provided to you at a separate time.

Airport Tips

• Do not leave your bags or belongings unattended at any time. Security staff in airports and train stations are instructed to remove or destroy all unattended items. Do not agree to carry any packages or bags for anyone. Keep an eye on your luggage to be sure that no one places any items in your bags.

• Don’t send anything through x-ray machines until you’re ready to go through yourself. Someone in front of you holding up the line leaves your items unattended on the other side.

• Keep your luggage in sight at all times. It’s also a good idea, if you have small carry-ons or purses, to tie or hook all the pieces together. A light scarf or removable shoulder strap is great for this.

• If you’re planning on sleeping in the airport or on a train, locking your luggage or back pack to the chair with a bicycle lock can protect it from being taken. It could still be cut or opened, so be cautious. Small luggage locks are good to keep people out of your bags.

• Check out the Transportation Security Association Web site for packing rules, lists of prohibited items and other airport travel tips at: www.tsa.gov/travelers

Getting Through Customs and Passport Control

• Carry a print out of your NUIM offer letter with you travelling in case you are asked to produce it at immigration in Dublin airport.

• The Immigration Official may ask you why you are coming to Ireland and how long you intend to stay. They may also remind you that you must register with the local Immigration Officer.

• They will stamp your passport with a date which may be up to 3 months away or only a few weeks away, it does not matter really as you will register with immigration as soon as possible after registering with NUIM and then will be free to leave and enter Ireland as you wish.

Train & Subway Safety Tips

• Have your fare ready when entering the subway. Buying day/weekly passes keeps you from pulling out your wallet in the station so thieves never see where you keep it.

• When waiting on the platform, stand far back from the tracks.

• Be extra cautious in over-crowded subway cars. Pickpockets and thieves are less likely to be noticed by their targets because of the close quarters.
• Avoid riding in an empty car. If you find yourself alone, simply exit one car and enter another at the first available stop. Remember, it’s usually the center cars that receive the most use.

• Constantly referring to your subway map advertises that you’re not sure where you’re going. Instead, sit where you can see the route map posted in the car.

• Stand defensive and prepared.

• Keep one hand occupied, and the other hand free.
  o Keep a hand on your purse and close to your body and use the other hand to stabilize your body while the public transportation is in motion. Don’t hold on with the same arm that should be protecting your bag! To further stabilize yourself, if you can’t get a seat, make sure to center your body in front of the pole, seat or other handhold so you won’t be thrown off-balance. Stand with your knees slightly bent to react with turns and bumps. Angle one foot in the direction of the braking action (forward for example).

Tips on Avoiding Pickpockets

• If carrying a purse, try to put the strap across your body so it can’t be snatched. It’s a good idea to have a thick enough strap to prevent its being cut or to carry a purse with two straps. If it has an opening flap, place the front against your body to make it harder to get into. Get in the habit of holding your hand over the opening.

• If you’re carrying a day pack or small backpack, do not keep valuables in the outside pockets; the best way to prevent theft is to wear it in front, kangaroo style.

• If you put your bag on the floor, even for a second, slip the strap through your foot to secure it.

• Remember, thieves can work in teams, so if a stranger is causing a distraction, you may be in a high-risk situation for theft.

• Be a difficult target – make it hard for them to get to you!
  o Walk with purpose and keep moving
  o Be unpredictable
  o Don’t stop to talk or answer questions from strangers
  o When traveling in groups, designate lookouts

• Protect your belongings – make it difficult to get to your stuff!
  o While drinking or eating outside, NEVER put your purse/bag on the ground or hang it on the chair behind you
  o Consider using a money belt
  o Bring the bare essentials when you can