

3 What should I pack?

What will you need during your time abroad? Many international students take too much stuff! Remember you'll have a luggage allowance on your flight. Go online to check what your luggage allowance is. The airline will charge you a lot of money if your luggage is too heavy.

Start thinking about what to pack a few weeks before you leave, especially if you haven't lived abroad long-term before. This gives you time to buy things before you go. Check the website of the institution where you are going. It often has suggestions for what to pack.

You'll also need to think about dividing up your luggage into carry-on luggage and what goes into the hold.

Carry-on luggage

Carry-on luggage is the luggage that you take on the plane with you. You have access to this during the flight. This can also be called "hand luggage."

You'll need to decide what you're going to take as carry-on and what items you'll put in your main luggage that goes into the hold. Remember airlines have restrictions on how much carry-on luggage you can take and what you can take, in particular regarding liquids and gels, so check the website of the airline you are flying with.

These are some of the things you should carry with you in your carry-on luggage:

- your passport
- your visa if you need one
- your credit card or bank cards
- details of your travel or health insurance

- a list of people to contact in case of emergency
- details of any significant health issues
- prescriptions for medication, contact lenses, or glasses
- documents relating to your study, such as the enrollment details for your classes, results from previous study, transcripts, etc.
- Anything of high value, such as jewelry. You don't want to risk things being stolen while being handled by the airline.

You might also want to consider taking the following:

- Toothbrush and toothpaste. Don't forget that you can only take a very small tube of toothpaste in carry-on luggage.
- a clean pair of underwear and change of clothes in case your luggage goes missing on your flight

Most airlines are pretty good about returning lost luggage to passengers. Often this takes place within 24–48 hours so you don't need to take too much with you on the plane.

Clothing

Don't pack vast amounts of clothing. Remember that the fashions and climate in your home country are likely to be different from those in your study country.

Make sure you research the climate of the place where you'll be studying. Don't trust what you've heard about the weather in that country: depending on where your campus is, the weather may be very different from season to season, and even from day to day. Go online to do research. There are lots of good websites where you can find out about local weather.

A good plan is to pack enough clothing for the first couple of months, and then one key item of clothing for the other seasons. For example, if you're arriving in early fall/autumn,

check the weather, pack clothes for that weather, and then add a warm coat, a scarf, a pair of boots, etc. for winter, and assume you'll need to buy more after you arrive.

Don't forget the small things like an umbrella. Also, comfortable shoes are useful, especially if you're heading to a large campus where you may end up doing lots of walking.

Most students (and often staff as well) dress very casually at colleges/universities in English-speaking countries. Most colleges/universities don't have a dress code, though you will be expected to wear shoes inside buildings. In some places, you may be asked to take off your hat, or remove your hood, when you go inside.

If you're very different in size or shape from the local people where you'll be staying, it may be hard for you to find clothes and shoes. You may need to shop online.

You may see students wearing clothing that exposes more of the body than you're used to during summer. In English-speaking countries it's acceptable and normal for men and women to bare their arms and calves, and they may bare more than this when it's hot.

Food and drink

We don't recommend bringing food, drink, or cooking equipment from home. Trying new foods is part of living in a new country. You may find that your favorite foods are available where you're studying anyway, especially if you're in a multicultural city or university town. If you really need foodstuffs from home, organize to buy online or ask someone to mail them to you once you've arrived.

Australia and New Zealand have very strict laws about importing foods, and may take them away from you at Customs when you arrive. Don't take food in your suitcase if you're going to Australia or New Zealand. In the UK, you're not allowed to bring in any meat or dairy products if you're traveling from outside the European Union (EU), and there

are limits on other foods too. The US also has strict rules on meat or dairy products from anywhere outside the country.

Toiletries

Pack enough toiletries to last you for the first few weeks: small bottles of shampoo and conditioner, toothbrush and toothpaste, shaving cream, and/or cosmetics if you use them.

Don't bring big bottles and tubes: buy toiletries at your destination. If you can't get your favorite products there, see if you can order them online and have them delivered to where you're staying.

Most airlines will only let you carry very small bottles and tubes of liquids in your carry-on luggage. Check with your airline and put anything too big in your checked luggage.

Other

If you plan to bring electrical devices, check what voltage and what sort of power sockets are used in your destination country. You'll probably need to buy adaptor plugs. For more details check this website: www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets/.

Consider bringing an electronic translator and a small bilingual dictionary (which translates from English into your language and also from your language into English). These are usually faster, cheaper, and more accurate than using your cell phone/mobile phone to access translations on the Internet.

Don't fill your suitcase with sheets, towels, blankets, and pillows. Many residences will provide these, and if yours doesn't, you can buy them cheaply at your destination.

Don't bring lots of stationery such as notebooks, pens, and so on. Buy these at your destination.