How To Plan A Trip Abroad

First, remember that ALL trips (UK and abroad) must be reported to the Students’ Union by the trip leader. Most of these can be reported via an online form: sheffieldsu.com/societysupport.

With A Tour Operator:
When going on trips abroad, most societies will choose to go through a tour operator. If you do this, it’s essential that the tour operator is ABTA/ATOL registered (you should be able to find this out from their website). The tour operator will be responsible and primarily liable for your trip. However you still must notify the Students’ Union about your trip at least 2 weeks in advance – and you can do this via an online form: sheffieldsu.com/societysupport. As trip leader(s), you will still have a duty of care to ensure the safety of the participants because you’re going abroad as a ‘society’, and therefore as part of the online form you must agree to the rules and risk assessment stipulated.

Without a Tour Operator:
If you wish to plan a trip abroad yourselves, without a tour operator, then the liability on you (as the society) is higher because you will be the main trip organisers and will need to ‘steward’ the trip, which involves some key responsibilities. If you are planning a trip without a tour operator, then you must notify the Activities & Sports Zone (activities@shef.ac.uk) at least 6 weeks in advance – and we will need to meet with you and advise you on your risk assessments and responsibilities.

This guide is intended to give you hints and tips to help you along the way if you are planning a trip abroad without a tour operator.

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Top Tip!
• **Transport:** Lots of societies go abroad now at some point in the year. It’s usually better for the environment if you stay in the UK! There’s loads of great places to visit as a group. The Biomedical Science Society went to Edinburgh and had an amazing time. If you really do want to go abroad, try to go via land transport and avoid flying!
  - By train: www.seat61.com has all the answers!
  - By coach: check out Flixbus / Eurolines, or just book your own coach.
  - For all the possibilities: www.rome2rio.com shows how it can be done
### Trip Planning Checklist:

#### 1 Outline Planning:
- You need lots of planning time – at least 2-3 months, but preferably longer, in order to keep ticket prices affordable.
- When and where do you want to go? Consider the **objectives** of your trip – is it educational or purely social? What do your members want?
- Work closely with your Treasurer – look at places/dates with prices in mind.
- Decide from the beginning which committee members are responsible for which aspects. If committee members can’t afford to attend, they may be able to help plan it.

#### 2 Budgeting:
- All incoming & outgoings must go in and out of your society account. Familiarise yourself with the ‘Treasurer’ guide to better understand your account(s).
- The Activities & Sports Zone can set you up with a ‘trip’ account if you’d like to keep your finances separate from your other society expenditure.
- Always underestimate ticket sales and include ‘contingency’ money in your price, to ensure you can break-even. You’ll need to budget carefully (staff in the Zone can advise you). You’ll only be able to pay for your trip if the money is in your account.
- Work closely with your Treasurer to decide how to sell tickets. You could do this through the SU website (read the ‘Using the SU Website’ guide to find out how).

#### 3 Health & Safety: As trip leaders, there are specific health & safety aspects to consider. Key information is detailed on P3 – 5 but key things you’ll need to do in advance are:
- Provide the Student Group Coordinator with initial trip details at least 6 weeks before the trip and have trip safety meeting.
- Submit ‘trip’ form, risk assessment & participant details at least 2 weeks prior to trip.
- Check that all participants have their own EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) and medical/travel insurance. The SU *does not* insure trip participants.
- Hold an **event briefing** or send guidance to participants in advance to provide information (see ‘Factsheet’ on P 5). Participation & Medical Statements may be appropriate.

#### 4 Marketing & Publicity:
- You should be marketing your trip early on to ensure that tickets are sold in advance of making payments. But at this stage, it can be nice to publicise the trip and start getting participants excited about the fun ahead 😊

#### 5 Operational Planning:
- Come up with **ideas** of what to do in advance, buy a Lonely Planet guide, look online for recommendations, including activities that are cheap or free.
- Decide how much of the trip you want to be ‘organised’ and how much ‘free time’ you want participants to have. Get their ideas on board too!
- Provide participants with an **itinerary**, map and kit list, as well your contact details and emergency procedure information.
- Decide who will be ‘stewarding’ the trip. Those people will need to keep a list of participant details with them and the University Security Services number with them at all times in case of a serious emergency – see further details on P 3-4.

#### 6 Evaluation:
- Convene your committee and document recommendations for future committees.
- A personal evaluation can help you articulate your skills for future job applications.
Trip Leaders and Organisers: Your Responsibilities

The trip leader and organisers have overall responsibility for the trip, and your role in supporting the group is incredibly important – both before and during the trip.

While you’re abroad, the usual Students’ Union procedures and rules (detailed in the Rules & Safety Handbook and Alcohol Code of Practice in the Society Support Hub) apply to your activities, as do university rules on student conduct. It’s important that all participants maintain good and safe conduct throughout the trip for the purposes of their own welfare and the reputation of your society and the University.

There should be one ‘trip leader’ and at least an additional two organisers per trip. As a team, your key responsibilities include the following:

Before the trip:

1. Before booking anything, find out the country’s risk: www.fco.gov.uk - there are some high risk areas advised against by the government (e.g. due to political instability).

2. Check the visa requirements either through your tour operator or the embassy of the country you’re going to visit. There may be occasions where international student members need a specific visa – the Student Advice Centre may be able to advise.

3. Consider your activities while you’re abroad - how high risk are they? Large socials involving alcohol have an enhanced risk - e.g. bar crawls. This will need to be assessed in your risk assessment and you'll need to adhere to the Alcohol Code of Practice.

4. Report the trip to the Students’ Union. If you’re organising the trip yourself, contact activities@shef.ac.uk at least 6 weeks in advance.

5. Collect a list of participants, their mobile numbers and registration numbers. Find out about any medical and/or disability issues and seek advice from staff if necessary.

6. If it’s a large trip, pack a First Aid kit (the Zone Desk can lend you one). If you contact activities@shef.ac.uk with plenty of notice then one of your organisers may be able to receive free accredited First Aid training before the trip.

7. Provide guidance to participants in advance. This should cover: health & safety (you can give them a copy of the Factsheet on p5), trip timings/schedule, what to take, important phone numbers (including yours), what to do in an emergency.

1. **Hand out ‘trip emergency cards’** (obtainable, for free, from the Activities Zone Desk). These are handy little cards that you can give to each participant, with space for you to write in key information including your contact details, address of your accommodation, and your departure times/location (see below & right).

2. **Perform headcounts** in situations where everyone is expected to be there, e.g. on arrival to the accommodation, on the transport back to the airport/ferry, at arrivals etc.

3. **Keep a list** of all participants and their contact details with you at all times.

4. On nights out, at least one trip leader must **remain sober** – you’re the key contact in case of a problem or emergency.

5. **Save key contacts** in your phone in case you need them. Important numbers include: the British Consulate in the country, Sheffield University Security Services (+44 114 222 4085) and EU emergency services (112).

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**What if…**

**Someone loses their passport abroad/it gets stolen:** They need to report the loss to the police and get a certificate of loss from them. Then take that certificate to the British Consulate and apply for a replacement passport.

**There is a medical emergency:** Call the number for emergency services in that country you’re in (or call 112 which will connect you to the EU emergency services – works from GSM phones). If there’s a First Aider nearby, enlist their help. If it’s serious, call University Security Services (+44 114 222 4085) who will contact the next of kin if necessary. The person’s travel insurers may need to be informed early, if a claim is to be made.

**Someone goes missing:** Ask the trip participants if they have seen them, the hostel reception, and try to contact them on the phone. Contact the British Consulate who can get in touch with local police and hospitals. Call the University Security Services number (+44 114 222 4085) who will inform the Students’ Union on your behalf and will contact the students’ next of kin if necessary.
**Someone gets arrested:** Contact the British Consulate. Call the University Security Services number (+44 114 222 4085) who will inform the Students’ Union on your behalf and will contact the students’ next of kin if necessary.

**Factsheet for all participants**

1. **Passport:** Check it's valid and in date (for help see: [www.gov.uk/browse/abroad/passports](http://www.gov.uk/browse/abroad/passports))
   Take an additional means of ID abroad.

2. **Visas:** It may be relevant to obtain a visa for the country you’re visiting. This might be more complicated for international students, and there may be occasions where it’s impossible for certain nationalities to obtain a visa for certain countries. You can get advice from the Student Advice Centre.

3. **Vaccinations/medication:** Find out what you need at least 6 weeks before you go and consider whether you need to take extra health precautions.

4. **European Health Insurance card (EHIC):** You must obtain an EHIC if you’re travelling in Europe. EHIC is available free of charge through most UK post offices or through the NHS website: [www.nhs.uk/ehic](http://www.nhs.uk/ehic). The EHIC is not a substitute for medical and travel insurance, but entitles you to emergency medical treatment on the same terms as you would in the UK.

5. **Travel and medical insurance:** This is NOT covered by the Students’ Union, and must be obtained individually. Ensure it covers you for the whole trip, has comprehensive cover for all activities, including:
   a) Repatriation to the UK;
   b) Funding for a friend or relative to stay with the participant if hospital stay is required;
   c) Cover for repatriation of remains.

   **Remember to take your policy number and the 24 hour emergency number with you.**

6. **Mobile phone:** Make sure it will work abroad. Before you leave, save: the trip organiser(s) phone number(s), the international emergency services number (112 in the EU), local taxi numbers, and the address of your accommodation.

7. **Money:** Exchange currency in advance, keep cash in separate places, and take traveller’s cheques and/or working cash card with you as well. If you run out of money while abroad, you could use a Western Union (+44 0808 234 9168).

8. **Family/friends at home:** Let them know in advance exactly where you’re going and when you’re expected to be back.

9. **Luggage and valuables:** Pack it yourself, keep it with you or locked away safely at all times. You’re responsible for your personal effects and should obtain your own insurance for this.

10. **Health and wellbeing:** Reduce the risk of getting ill by washing your hands regularly, drinking bottled water, ensuring food is thoroughly cooked (especially meat). Plus read the general advice on Safety & Security on the Students’ Union ‘Safety and Security’ pages - key things to remember are to drink in moderation, and never walk alone at night. It’s not worth the risk.