

## 2024 | Pre-departure FAQ

Please read this carefully before contacting the AIA Rome Center Staff with questions.

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### ***pre-departure & student services***

Q. Will we receive pre-departure info or on-site student services?

A. You can find pre-departure advice and forms on the programs blog website. This includes a digital handbook. You will get other orientation material when you arrive. AIA will participate in a pre-departure meeting to address student life, housing or other questions. In Italy, student services staff will be available during regular office hours, and students will have access to a 24/7 emergency hotline.

Before arriving, all students will need to sign a housing contract, a participant agreement with the AIA Code of Conduct and other waivers and releases regarding personal responsibility, privacy rights, national health policies, etc.

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### ***cell phone***

Q. What cell phone service is available in Italy, and can I use my US phone?

A. We suggest you get an Italian phone plan. The major Italian service providers are Vodafone, WindTre, TIM, and Iliad. Plans and SIM cards can also be purchased with the Italian Post Office. You can buy a SIM chip in Italy for a compatible, US phone. Refillable SIM cards are cheap and there are many plans with calls, text and data. While many US carriers offer service plans that work in Italy, NOTE that with these plans it will be an expensive international call for others in Italy to call your US number. AIA will not make calls to student's US cell numbers for non-emergency reasons.

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### ***visas***

Q. Do I need to get a visa?

A. If you are not a citizen of a European Schengen area country - AND - if you are in a program that lasts longer than 90 days, you will need a study visa. Students from countries without a visa waiver agreement with Italy will need a visa even if their program lasts 90 or fewer days.

Q. When do I need to get my visa, and will I get some advice?

A. You cannot apply for your visa until 90 days prior to arrival, but you should make a visa application appointment as soon as you can. Apply for a passport right away if you don't already have one. AIA will provide you a visa application advice form.

## Program FAQ - Academic Initiatives Abroad - AIA Rome Center

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### ***acceptance letter***

- Q. Will we need an official acceptance letter from the Rome Program in order to apply for a student visa?
- A. If you are applying for a visa individually, you will need an individualized letter. AIA will forward them directly to your study abroad coordinator to distribute to you. If you are applying as a group we may supply one letter to your study abroad office. Ask your study abroad office if you have any questions.

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### ***travel in the Schengen Area***

- Q. How long can I travel in the Schengen Area?
- A. The Schengen Area is a group of 27 European countries that share a visa treaty to allow visa-free travel between them. Many visitors, including U.S.A. nationals are allowed to stay in the Schengen Area without a visa for up to 90 days. Others, notably students with a Chinese passport, will need a visa even for program of 90 days or fewer. Check the Italian Consulate website for the most accurate and up-to-date info, but here are some common situations:
1. Students with a Study Visa (programs over 90 days) - may typically travel in the Schengen Area for up to 90 days before or after their visa period.
  2. Student with a Study Visa from countries without a visa waiver agreement (China and others) - will need a visa and must enter and leave the country within the dates of their visa period, unless they are able to obtain an additional tourist visa.
  3. Students in programs lasting fewer than 91 days who do not require a visa - may remain in the Schengen Area for a maximum of 90 days, including their program period. Note: the 90 day total includes any days spent in the Schengen Area in a 90 day period before or after the program dates.
  4. Students with a Schengen Area passport - may travel freely for as long as they wish in the Schengen Area.

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### ***insurance***

- Q. What kind of insurance do I get / need?
- A. AIA does NOT provide insurance to students. Be sure you have medical insurance to cover your stay in Italy before you arrive. Italy's nationalized health care system covers emergency care for visitors, but it will NOT cover private doctors. If you prefer to go to a private doctor, you should understand what your personal insurance will cover before you arrive. Check with your study abroad coordinator about any coverage your university might offer.

AIA also advises students to purchase traveler's insurance to cover loss or damage of property, changes to flights or repatriation, etc.

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### ***documents to bring***

- Q. What other documents should I bring?
- A. If you obtained a visa, bring any original documents you have from your visa application, including any documents the consulate returned to you.

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### ***computers and software***

- Q. Will we need specific software for our computers?
- A. Check with your professor. As students rely on their own computers, there are limited program computer resources and no sophisticated software is provided, so bring what you need. To facilitate printing, students may be allowed to install approved student versions of software on to the program computer, but AIA cannot offer support for this software.

NOTE: Students often lose data during the semester. We suggest that you back up your entire system before you leave, and have a way to back up your work regularly once here.

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### ***calendar / break / field trips***

Q. When are our field trips? When can I plan personal travel?

A. Your professor, will issue a draft calendar as early as possible, but if you need to apply for a permit of stay (UNL students), You will need to make an important immigration appointment soon after you arrive in Italy. You cannot miss this appointment so you should not make non-refundable personal travel plans until you know that date. (In recent years these appointments have been scheduled for after the program period, and so have not presented a conflict, but there is no guarantee this will continue to be the case.) See your program description and check with AIA to see if you will need a Permit of Stay.

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### ***personal travel after field trips***

Q. Can I keep traveling on my own after a class trip, and will I need to find my own transportation back to Rome if I do?

A. If you choose not to return from a field trip with the group, it is your responsibility to find transportation back to Rome at your own expense. The program cannot make travel arrangements or buy tickets for individual students, and there is no refund for unused group travel.

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### ***visiting friends and family - travel***

Q. Can my friends and family travel with the program?

A. Academic travel is for students only, it is not possible for friends and family to travel on program provided coaches or stay in your hotel rooms. Ask your professor about others traveling alongside our trips and staying in the same cities, but remember that all program travel is academic in nature and organized activities usually run throughout the day.

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### ***visiting friends and family - housing***

Q. Can my friends and family stay in group housing?

A. No, this is not allowed. To insure the safety of all participants, and in accordance with Italian law and landlord rules, only registered tenants are allowed in the apartments. Rent is based on a per person cost and additional tenants would incur additional cost. If you want a place for your friends or family your housing agent may be able to accommodate them near your housing, but you must ask well in advance. Otherwise they should find their own lodging.

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### ***shipping and customs***

Q. Where should I have packages sent? Is there a customs fee?

A. Refer to your handbook and arrival guide for a mailing address. Customs duties may be levied on goods mailed to Italy. Refer to the AIA SHIPPING ADVICE FLYER for important customs advice.

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### ***luggage storage***

Q. I want to travel before arriving in Rome. Can I ship my bag to AIA so it is there when I arrive?

A. Unfortunately, we don't have the space to accept people's luggage, and our offices are typically closed the weeks just prior to program start dates. Most students bring what they need and travel as lightly as possible. If you plan to ship additional items to yourself consider shipping times to be sure you arrive before your package does.

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### ***packing***

Q. What should I pack/bring with me?

A. There is a packing advice checklist in your handbook and a pre-departure PDF. The key is to travel as lightly as possible. If you are traveling with large luggage, consider bringing an additional smaller bag for field trip travel.

## Program FAQ - Academic Initiatives Abroad - AIA Rome Center

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### **Italian class**

Q. Will there be an Italian class?

A. Yes. AIA will offer an Italian class. Check with your program to see if credit is offered.

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### **Uber**

Q. Is there Uber in Rome?

A. Currently, only the more expensive service is available, Uber Black, Uber Lux, and Uber Van. There are also many taxi services and apps, buses, trams and a subway system.

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### **scooter-rental**

Q. Are there scooter rental sites in Rome?

A. Unfortunately, yes, but AIA very strongly discourages students from riding standup or sit-down scooters. Rome streets and traffic are treacherous, and scooters are extremely dangerous for the rider and pedestrians. Use your feet.

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### **gym membership**

Q. While in Rome will it be possible to join a gym?

A. Yes, many gyms near AIA and your housing will offer short term memberships for students. In order to join you will need to present a medical certificate from an Italian doctor. This can be done once you arrive in Rome (see the Pre-Departure materials for our medical resources) and we will go over this during Orientation.

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### **housing**

Q. What is program housing like?

A. Housing will be simple, but comfortable, convenient and safe. Here are a few details:

- Apartments and exact amenities will not be identical, but everyone will enjoy the same basic quality and conveniences.
- All students will be living in residential neighborhoods about a 20-30 minute walking distance from the AIA Rome Center. Apartments will also be close to public transit.
- Each student will have a single bed in shared double or larger triple bedrooms.
- Students will not share apartments with participants of other programs.
- All student housing will include linens and towels, a kitchen with utensils, a clothes washing machine and clothes drying racks and Wi-Fi internet access.
- Furnishing and decor are comfortable, but simple and suitable to student residents.
- Basic cleaning services of common spaces is provided weekly, but students are responsible for keeping the apartments and bedrooms clean and taking out the trash regularly.
- Students can file maintenance requests through an online portal
- Before the program start date AIA will provide an online form where students can provide apartment and roommate preferences. The form will include a description of the apartment layout (number of bedrooms and baths) and locations.
- Housing is in condominium apartment buildings with local residents. No parties are allowed and clear, common sense rules will be strictly enforced regarding noise and basic respectful adult behavior. Serious or repeated conduct violations can result in eviction.