

FSU FLORENCE PROGRAM SAFETY GUIDE 2023-24



FSU Florence Study Center at the Bagnesi Palace



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Introduction:

Studying abroad at the FSU Florence Program is one of the best ways a student can achieve greater cultural awareness and global enrichment, aspects vital to formulating a well-rounded individual prepared to meet the demands and challenges of the future. Students who immerse themselves in a new culture in order to learn and appreciate differences in language, lifestyle, cuisine, and art are rewarded with substantially broadened horizons that enhance their overall university experience. The FSU Florence Program was founded in 1966 and is one of the oldest American study abroad programs in Florence with a state-of-the-art study center housed in the sixteenth-century Bagnesi Palace. Florida State University is highly esteemed in Italy and has developed a respectful and collaborative relationship with Florence and Florentines. The program has been officially recognized by Italian governmental agencies, charities, local businesses, Fine Arts authorities, and the U.S. Consulate General for its excellence and community outreach. As a result, students need to keep in mind that although they are American citizens, they are subject to the laws of the nation in which they study and reside. This guide was conceived to provide study abroad students with some commonsense tips regarding safety, and outline FSU Florence Program's policies and aspects of Italian law.

This guide is only one of many steps the FSU Florence Program takes to ensure

students' stay in Italy is a safe and pleasant one. All information is updated annually and produced in accordance with the Federal Jeanne Clery Act of 1990.

Meetings and Documents:

Student Orientation and Student Handbook:

The first weekend after students' arrival at FSU Florence, the study center staff conducts a mandatory orientation for all students, large portions of which are dedicated to student safety, security, and health. During orientation each student is provided with an FSU Florence site-specific handbook, so students have this information documented for easy, individual reference throughout the semester. The handbook is updated at the beginning of each semester so that it is kept current. The Handbook contains useful and important contact numbers and information, including emergency services, doctors' services, and English-speaking psychologists and psychiatrists.

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP):

FSU and the U.S. Department of State highly recommend that study abroad students register with STEP for the duration of their stay in Florence and Europe. STEP is a free service provided by the State Department to U.S. citizens who are traveling to or living in a foreign country. STEP allows American consular officials to better assist students and travelers in case of an emergency situation, providing all enrollees with updates, travel alerts, and other useful information according to their travel plans.

To register, please visit: <https://step.state.gov/>

Emergency Contact Cards:

The FSU Florence Program provides all students with an emergency contact card that contains phone numbers of emergency services, as well as program assistants, at-home medical services, and the FSU Florence Program Emergency Number. Students must keep this card with them at all times, preferably in their wallets.

Common Sense Safety Tips:

StudyCenterSafety:

- The study center is equipped with video cameras on the exterior of the building and in common areas

- The study center employs a 24/7 security guard stationed at the reception desk inside the building
- The study center uses a facial recognition system to allow students to enter. Upon arrival in Florence, staff will take the students' picture and enter them into the facial recognition system.
- The study center is staffed Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Program Assistants are on duty Monday to Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.
- Please help the staff of FSU Florence keep the study center safe. If a student notices anyone or anything suspicious, please let a member of the staff or faculty know immediately.
- The FSU Florence Study Center is equipped with firefighting equipment and a computerized fire alarm system

Safety at Home:

- A rotating security guard roams all of Florida State's residences. Security personnel are operative from 11pm to 7am every evening for the duration of the semester. The security guards monitor the entrances and exits of the student residence and make rounds to ensure the student code of conduct and FSU Florence's housing regulations are enforced. Each residence also has an FSU Program Assistant housed with students.
- Apartment windows and doors should be closed and locked by students when leaving their apartments. Italian doors have different locks than in the U.S. Even though a door will preliminarily lock when closed, doors must always be locked with a key from the outside and turned three times until all of the bolts of the lock engage.
- FSU will inform students when maintenance and cleaning services come to the residences. Therefore, students should not let any uniformed persons gain entrance to the residence without prior notification.
- Students should not lend their keys to anyone and should not put their address on their keys.
- Keep valuable items away from windows.
- No smoking of any kind, including vaping, is allowed in any of the residences or buildings operated by the FSU Florence Program.
- Hard alcohol is not permitted in any of the residences or FSU buildings.
- No outside guests are permitted without signing the FSU Florence Guest Registration Form 24-hours in advance. All outside guests must leave the residences by 11 p.m. Guests who are students on the program must leave residences that are not their own by 1 a.m. Because of the nature of medieval and renaissance townhomes, the municipality of Florence has a citywide anti-noise ordinance after 11 p.m.
- Each student apartment is equipped with a personal safe for each occupant. The FSU Florence advises students to keep their valuables,

cash, and meal vouchers within their safes.

Safety Away from Home:

- Wallets should not be secured in a back pocket. Put them in your front pocket to avoid pickpockets.
- Purses or backpacks should not be placed on the floor or on the back of a chair in a bar or restaurant.
- Police in Florence are authorized to ask for identification at any time. Students should keep a photocopy of their passport with them at all times.
- Make a photocopy of all your important documents and keep them at home.
- Walk or jog with a friend. Avoid jogging after dark and always stay in well-lit areas. The “buddy system” should always be employed by students, especially when returning home after nights out on the town
- Tell someone where you are going and when you will return
- Always use ATM machines that are in well-lit areas and make sure no one is watching while you enter your pin number. Students should only use ATMs associated with banks, avoiding those installed in tobacco and souvenir shops. Keep a copy of your credit card and ATM card information at home in case your card gets lost or stolen. Before students’ arrival in Florence, they should notify their banks they will be studying abroad so credit cards and ATM cards will not be blocked or in case any suspicious usage is verified.
- Taxis cannot be hailed in Florence, so students should make sure they have their emergency contact cards with them. On these cards are located phone numbers for 24-hour taxi service. Taxi companies in Italy mostly accept cash only, so students should make sure they have enough cash on them when going out late at night. Alternatively, students can use a taxi texting service through the WhatsApp by sending the location of the taxi pickup to: 334/6622550.

Safety at Night:

- Students should only carry a photocopy of their passports, small sums of cash, and one credit card.
- Do not use cellphones in a way that may draw attention, especially when alone.
- Alcohol accounts for most problems American students have in Florence. Students should always practice responsible independence.
- Drinks should never be left unattended.
- If problems are encountered on the way home, call the polizia or the carabinieri. Their numbers are on the Emergency Contact Card. If it is an emergency, seek a police officer or enter the nearest public place and call the police from there. Students should then call the 24-hour FSU Emergency Phone for assistance from a staff member.
- Students should avoid strangers who approach them on the streets at night. Students should avoid making eye contact or all attempts at

conversation. If strangers are persistent, seek a police office, enter the nearest public place for help, and/or contact an FSU staff member.

- Do not outwardly display a lot of wealth or electronics in a way that could draw attention.
- Students should not tell strangers where they live.
- The use of pepper spray and mace is prohibited in Italy, so do not pack these self-defense materials.

Safety While Traveling:

Many students choose to take advantage of their long weekends to travel throughout Europe and should take the following precautions.

- Students must fill out a travel form if they are away from the study center overnight. The online travel form is located at the top right corner of the International Programs website: <http://international.fsu.edu/>. The link can also be found in the FSU Program Handbook, and is posted to the study center's Facebook group each Thursday as a convenient reminder.
- Inform your roommates of all travel plans and estimated days and times of return. If a student becomes significantly delayed, please email, make a post to the Facebook group, or call a member of the study center staff.
- Students should familiarize themselves with where they will be traveling by reading a guidebook or taking advantage of online resources. It is also a good idea to check out the US Government travel website, <http://www.travel.state.gov> for helpful information about the countries they visit. Students are subject to the laws of the countries they are visiting. Many countries have laws that are more severe than the U.S. Students are also advised to check the CDC website, <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list/>, for health and immunization requirements.
- Cultural Sensitivity—There are many cultural differences of which students should be aware in order to protect themselves and avoid offending people.
- Read the news and be informed about your destination. In general, it is best to try not to stand out too much and try to comport oneself as the locals do.
- Learning a few key phrases of the language is essential.
- When traveling you must bring your passport with you, even if you are remaining in Italy overnight. Passports are required to check into hotels and hostels.
- Avoid political demonstrations or gatherings of large groups of people.

Alcohol and Drugs:

Alcohol:

Many students studying in Florence may find they can legally drink in bars, pubs and restaurants for the first time. FSU advises students to be especially careful if they should decide to go out for a night of drinking. Most incidents ending in physical or sexual harm are the result of a student not being in control of their faculties. FSU promotes responsible decision making; if students choose to drink while in Florence they must do so legally and responsibly. If they do not, they could face university sanctions including probation and expulsion from the program. All FSU policies relevant to alcohol and controlled substances are enforced in Florence, and the use of illegal substances is not allowed at any time. These policies and rules reflect not only respect for the community of Florence, but a concern for the health and safety of the campus community and apply to university faculty, students, staff, visitors, and guests.

- Never get separated from your friends when out at a pub or bar
- Never leave your drink unattended
- Do not accept rides home with someone you have just met
- Do not walk home alone – call a cab. As mentioned above, taxi services only accept cash so designate someone to hold enough money for the return trip to the residence. Florence does not have Uber or Lyft service.
- Carry your emergency contact numbers
- Students should not give out their home addresses
- Do not outwardly display wealth or electronics in a way that could draw attention.

Italian laws regarding the consumption of alcohol and the possible consequences of your actions:

- Article 689 of the Italian Criminal Code states that sale and distribution of alcoholic drinks and beverages by the manager of a bar/cafeteria or food and beverage shop, in a public place or in place open to the public, is prohibited to individuals under 18-years-old and those who are mentally ill or have a clear mental deficiency caused by any other illness
- Article 688 of the Italian Criminal Code prohibits, in a public place or in a place open to the public, clear drunkenness that could cause a danger to society at large
- Article 690 of the Italian Criminal Code prohibits, in a public place or in a place open to the public, the serving of alcoholic beverages to an individual that cause the individual to become intoxicated. Article 690 also prohibits, in a public place or in a place open to the public, the serving of alcoholic beverages to an individual who is already clearly intoxicated

In the FSU Florence Study Center and all the FSU residences, local Italian laws

and the FSU Student Code of Conduct apply.
They are as follows:

- No person under 18 years of age may consume alcoholic beverages in the residence halls. S.C.C. 5 (h)1
- Students who display intoxicated behaviors (e.g., glazed eyes, slurred speech, etc.) or students who require staff assistance due to their consumption of alcohol shall be subject to judicial action.
- Possession of alcoholic beverages and containers is not permitted in the residence halls by individuals under 18 years of age.
- Residents are not permitted to have open containers of alcohol in any area of the Study Center, e.g. classrooms, hallways, lounges, bathrooms.
- Decorative container collections e.g. bottles, cans, bottle caps are not permitted.
- Kegs, beer balls, funnels, bongos, and other devices that promote irresponsible drinking are not permitted in the residence halls.
- No alcoholic beverages are allowed on FSU hired transportation, including Italian trains.
- Intoxicated or suspected intoxication are not permitted on any FSU-sponsored excursion or activity, including the display of open bottles.
- Although FSU Florence does serve wine during our group meals, students are not permitted to order additional alcoholic beverages than those provided, and are prohibited from bringing their own alcohol to group meals.

Illegal Substances:

- The unlawful possession, use of, or distribution of drugs will not be tolerated. If a student, staff member, or faculty member is discovered to be using illegal drugs, in possession of illegal drugs, or intends to distribute illegal drugs, the university will take appropriate legal action, including expulsion from the program or the university. In addition to university sanctions students may be subject to prosecution under Italian law.
- If a student is apprehended with even relatively small amounts of illegal drugs, he or she could be prosecuted as a drug trafficker.

Support Services in Florence:

Students who seek alcohol or drug abuse counseling should speak with a member of the FSU Florence staff who can refer them to appropriate English-speaking healthcare professionals covered by International Programs' insurance provider.

Support Services in Florence

Alcoholics Anonymous counseling in English is

available at: St. James American Church
Via Rucellai, 9
Tel. 055/ 294417
Email: englishaaflorence@gmail.com

Sex Offenses:

The following tips can help a student avoid becoming a victim of sexual assault:

Staying in Control

- Trust your instincts and try to be as careful as you would be at home.
- Try to avoid potentially risky situations by being aware and alert! Know your surroundings. If a female student becomes lost, when possible ask another woman for directions.
- Display confidence. Act like you know where you are going even when you don't.

Be firm when being followed and do not react to cat-calling, obscene or aggressive gestures, or acts of indecent exposure. Walk away when approached by strange people. Never walk alone at night.

Going out at Night

- Always tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Make sure you know the address and the phone number of your home and how to get back to it.
- Know what standard dress is for women and dress accordingly. Blending in will limit harassment.
- Be aware of new friends you have made or if you are travelling with other tourists. People are often sexually assaulted by someone they know.
- Be aware that alcohol and drugs can cause you to lower your guard, becoming less alert and less aware of your surroundings. If you are going to drink alcohol, know your limit. Alcohol is the most frequently used drug in drug-assisted rape.

What to do if you find yourself in trouble

- Stay calm and try to be firm and direct.
- Remember that you always have the right to say "no" at any time.
- If you feel pressured get out of the situation. Never assume it won't happen to you. Get away from the person you are with and go to a safe place.
- If you feel uncomfortable or in danger, do not be afraid to draw attention to yourself. Shout, make a fuss, and make people aware that you are being threatened. In Italy you can shout "AIUTO" (aye-YOO-toh) which means "help".
- Call the 24-hour FSU Florence Emergency Phone local authorities.

If You Are the Victim of a Sexual Assault:

- Try to remain calm and alert and immediately call a member of the FSU Florence staff. You have the option to notify local authorities and FSU staff member will help you contact them.
- FSU Florence adheres to all codes and procedures governed by Title IX, including privacy concerns and the proper reporting of incidents. The university will take any allegations of rape, sexual assault, or harassment very seriously. Students accused of crimes of a sexual nature will be subject to university judicial procedures. In addition to university sanctions they may be subject to criminal prosecution under Italian laws.
- Do not change your clothing.
- Do not clean your body or clothes.
- Do not disturb or alter the crime scene.

Support Services in Florence

The FSU Florence Program has relationships with several English-speaking professionals who are covered by the International Programs' insurance provider. Students can make appointments on their own by using the numbers provided in the handbook, or seek the assistance of a staff member.

The group Artemisia is an Italian Association that offers support for women who are victims of sexual abuse.

Associazione Artemisia Centro donne contro la violenza Catia Franci ONLUS

Via del Mezzetta 1, 50135
Firenze

www.artemisiacentroantiviole.nza.it tel 055602311 -
601375

fax 0556193181

Email: cfranci@fol.it, artemisia@fol.it

Reporting a Crime in Florence:

FSU in Florence has a working relationship with local authorities, the United States Consulate General, and The Association of American College and University Programs in Italy to help make students more aware of safety concerns specific to studying abroad in Florence.

Additionally, updates regarding security threats, programs to inform students and employees about crime prevention.

If the student is a victim of a crime or if something of high value is lost or stolen, notify a member of FSU's staff in Florence. They can help students with the process of filing a report with the police.

If students would like to file a police report regarding an incident or a lost item on their own, some police stations have English-speaking officers who can take the report. Students should bring their passports with them as identification. *If students do report the incident on their own, it is still important that they notify a member of FSU's staff.*

For lost items the police will provide students with legal proof of the lost item, which students often need when they request replacement of credit cards, driver's license, school identification card, and other personal documents. If students have travel insurance, the insurance company may also want a copy.

The addresses and numbers for the Polizia and the Carabinieri where one can file a report are listed below:

Polizia	Carabinieri
Emergency number 112	Emergency number 112
Via Zara 2 (Headquarters)	Borgo Ognissanti 48
055 497 71	055 27661
Commissariato Firenze San Giovanni	
Lungarno della Zecca Vecchia 20	
055 497 7800	

In the Event of a Security Alert:

The FSU Florence Program is in constant contact with the security officers at the U.S. Embassy in Rome and the U.S. Consulate in Florence. All U.S. government alerts for citizens abroad will be posted in the FSU study center and on the program’s internal social media. Specific security procedures are outlined during student orientation and in the FSU Florence Program Handbook for consultation.

Florida State University – Florence Program Incident Report

Student(s) Involved:

Name	Name
Permanent Address	Permanent Address
Telephone Number	Telephone Number
Date of Birth	Date of Birth

Incident Details:

Date of Incident	Time
Location	

Description of incident:

Name of person documenting incident

Name	
Signature	Date

Witnesses to the incident (if any):

Name	Name
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