

# Communication

During your study abroad program, it's important to stay in touch with the Study Abroad Office or your supporting unit.

In this module, we'll cover:

- Communication expectations and requirements
- Program-related phone use
- When and how to communicate with parents, families, and emergency contacts
- How to handle media inquiries

☰ **Expectations and requirements**

☰ **Program-related phone use**

☰ **Communicating with parents, families or emergency contacts**

☰ **Media Inquiries**

☰ **Summary**

☐ **Quiz**

☰

# Expectations and requirements

## Expectations

During your time leading the program, you are expected to maintain communication with a variety of stakeholders.

### You are required to:

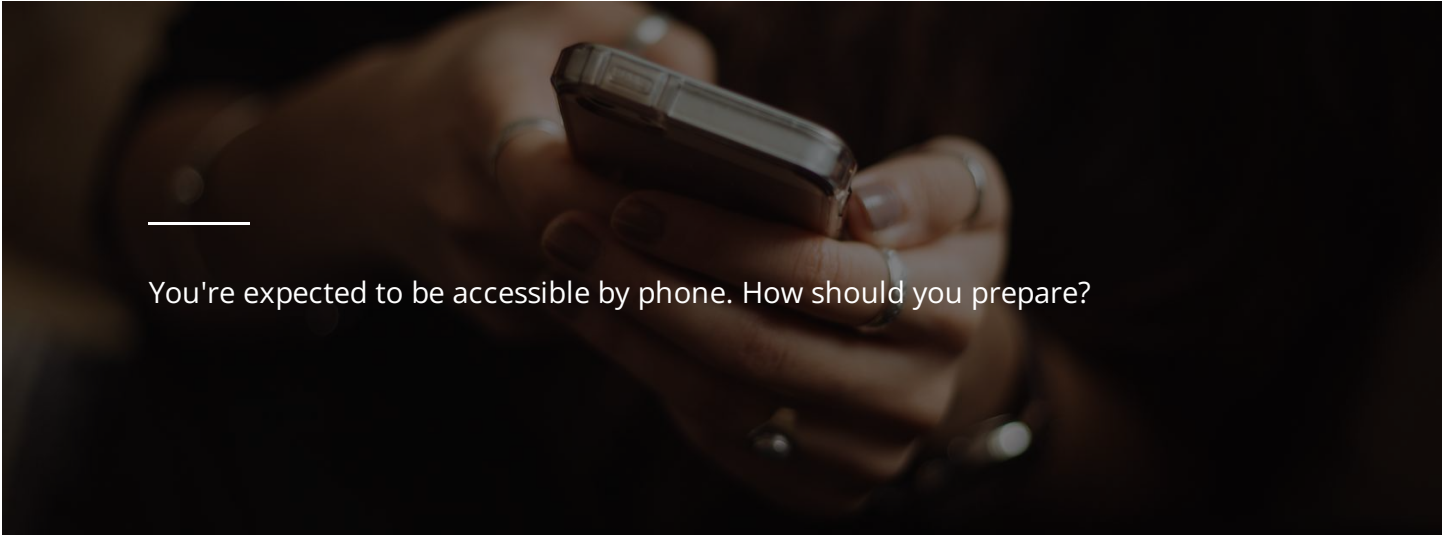
- 1 **Carry a mobile phone at all times.**
- 2 **Provide a mobile phone number** to the SAO/UNC supporting unit, the students, and the local program staff. If you acquire a local number upon arrival, it is your responsibility to provide your contact info as soon as possible.
- 3 **Be reachable at all times** in case of emergency.
- 4 **Ensure that appropriate program and emergency support are in place**, and that the SAO, your supporting unit, students, and onsite staff know who to contact in the event of an emergency if at any point during the program you plan to travel away from the program site.

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## Program-related phone use

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You're expected to be accessible by phone. How should you prepare?

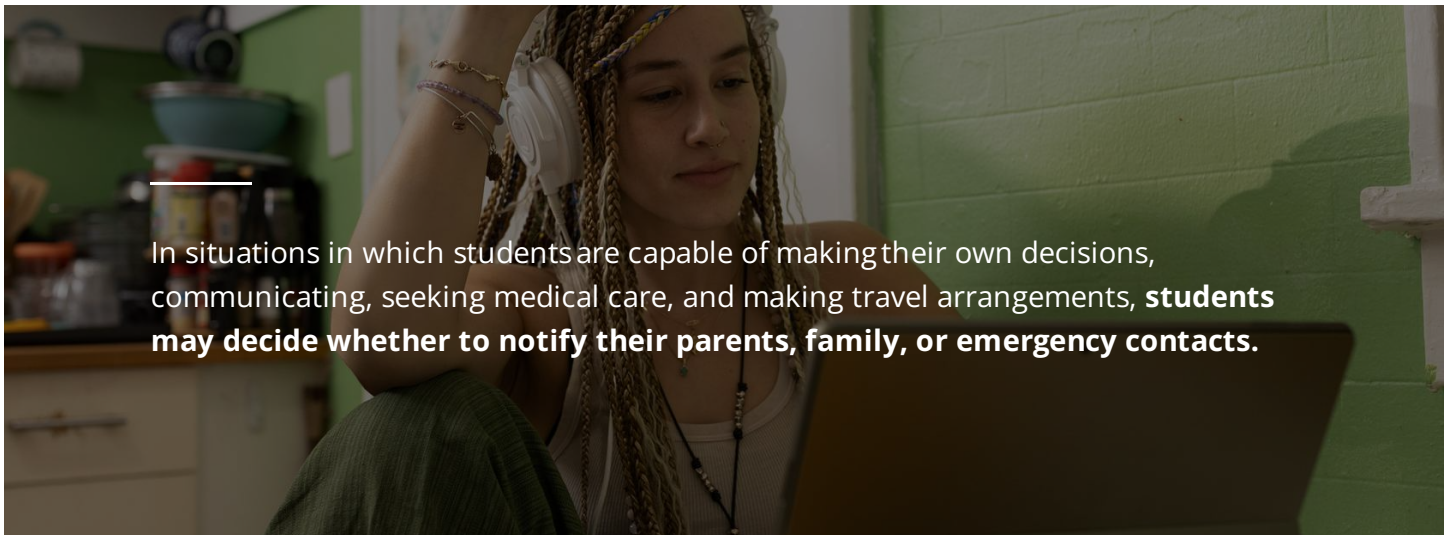
### International Phone Information

Make sure that you have discussed the following with the Study Abroad Office or your supporting unit:

- Has program-related phone use been factored into the program budget?
- How/will program-related phone use be reimbursed?
- Do you prefer to use your own phone or purchase an inexpensive phone on arrival?
- What are the options for international phone plans (pre-purchased international plan, local sim card, etc.)?

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## Communicating with parents, families or emergency contacts



In situations in which students are capable of making their own decisions, communicating, seeking medical care, and making travel arrangements, **students may decide whether to notify their parents, family, or emergency contacts.**

In the event that a parent/guardian makes direct contact with you or if the student is unavailable or incapacitated, please **be aware of FERPA guidelines** before sharing any pertinent information.

**i** As a reminder, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines remain active while you are abroad.

Participation in a study abroad program is considered as a course; therefore a student's **participation in a study abroad program cannot be disclosed without the student's consent/FERPA release.**

Note: **You may share student information and discuss concerns about students with UNC staff** if they have a **legitimate educational interest** and the information is necessary to carry out their official duties.

### Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

As a general rule, under FERPA, personally identifiable information **may not** be released from a student's education records without his or her prior written consent.

Education records are those records directly related to a student and maintained by the University. For example:

- Electronic records accessible in SIS or Connect Carolina
- A paper or exam that has been submitted to a professor
- Emails between instructors or administrators regarding a student
- Class lists or rosters

## Sharing student information when a concern or emergency arises

**Disclosure of a student's personally identifiable information** to appropriate parties, including the student's parents, **is allowable if in connection with an emergency** and the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or others.

**Follow the steps below.**

1

**Contact the SAO or your supporting unit**, who will coordinate with the Office of the Dean of Students and/or the Office of University Counsel, as needed, to determine and properly document the decision that a health or safety emergency exists.

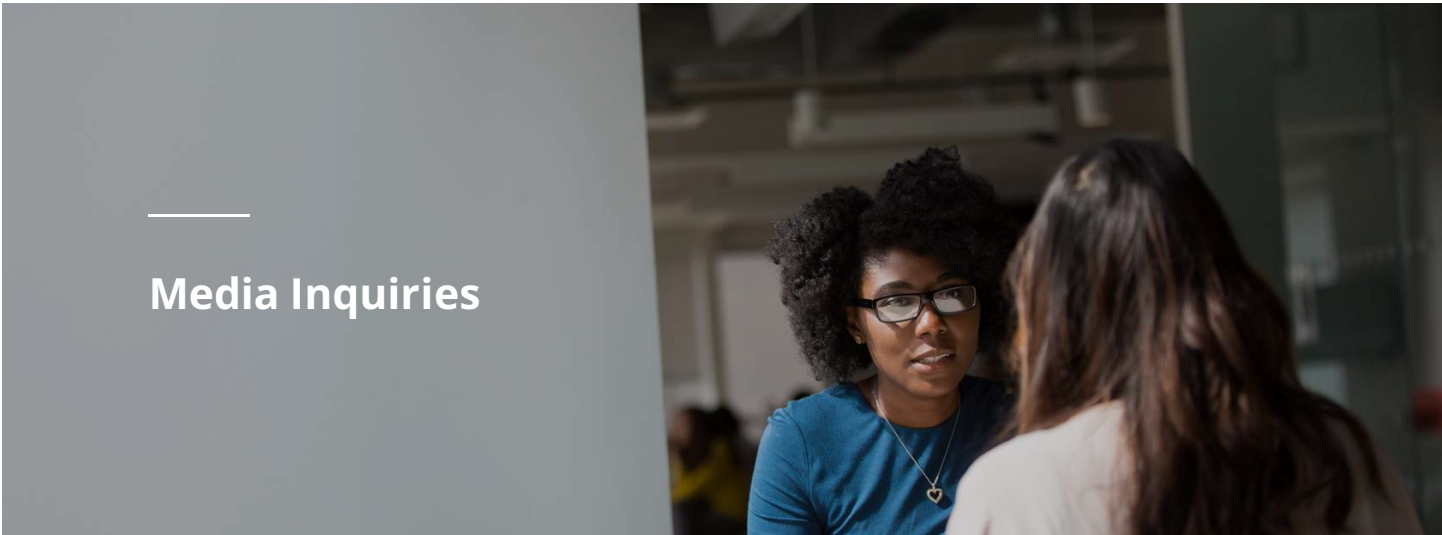
If there is an articulable and significant threat to health or safety, the University may disclose information from Education Records to anyone who needs the information in order to protect the health or safety of the student or others.

2

The Study Abroad Office or your supporting unit will guide you through follow up communications.

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# Media Inquiries



## Media Inquiries

While leading your program you might receive a media inquiry in response to an incident or emergency in your location. Rapidly changing situations abroad or even events back in the United States that have global implications could be of potential interest to the media.



Queen Elizabeth billboard

### For example

The media might be interested in a situation related directly to a student or they might be interested in how a natural disaster or global event is impacting your program at large.

- i Faculty and staff should connect with the Study Abroad Office or your supporting unit. You should **not** attempt to handle media inquiries while abroad, rather should focus on attending to your program participants' health and safety.

### What to do if you receive a media inquiry

The primary goals in any communication are to:



- Protect the health and safety of students
- Protect the privacy rights of students and their families

**In the event news media contact you while you are abroad, please consider whether the inquiry is related to the following:**

**Your academic work and not your role as a Faculty Program Leader** —

If yes...

Feel free to talk to the media directly about your academic research. If useful, UNC Media Relations is happy to help guide and support you when responding. They are a resource for the Carolina campus and here to help if you need them.

**The study abroad program you are leading** —

Do not respond to the inquiry but instead forward it to UNC Media Relations, which monitors their inbox 24/7, and copy your School or College Media Relations and global programs office Program Administrator. UNC Media Relations will assess the inquiry and determine the best approach. This is standard operating procedure and UNC Media Relations will bring your school or unit communicator into discussions at the appropriate time and coordinate any response to the inquiry.

UNC Media Relations will provide this support so that you can focus your attention on protecting the health, safety and privacy of your students.

Media Relations Contact Information:

- [mediarelations@unc.edu](mailto:mediarelations@unc.edu)
- +1.919.445.8555

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# Summary

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Maintaining open lines of communication allows all of us to address any issues that arise.


## Key Takeaways

Check the box to say "Got it!"

- You must be reachable at all times.
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines remain active while you are abroad.
- You may respond to media inquiries if they relate to your academic research, but NOT if they relate to your study abroad program.

Lesson 6 of 7

# Quiz

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Question

01/03

True/False: Faculty and staff are responsible for being accessible only during program activities.

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True

False

Question

02/03

True/False: Faculty and staff should always refrain from talking to the media and direct all inquiries to UNC Media Relations.

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True

False

Question

03/03

True/False: FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) remains active even while you're abroad.

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True

False



Thank you for completing this module. Please close this window to go to the next module.