



SEMESTER AT SEA®

**Parent FAQ &
Additional Resources**

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FREQUENTLY ASKED

QUESTIONS

General FAQ

[After admission, what do I need to do to prepare my student for Semester at Sea?](#)

The most important steps for you to take in helping your student to prepare for Semester at Sea are attending to the necessary vaccinations, securing proper visas, and making sure that your student has an updated passport. In the weeks following your student's admission you will receive a plethora of information from us outlining exactly what you need to do.

[What visas does my student need and how are they obtained?](#)

Visa requirements vary depending on the countries included on the voyage itinerary. For most voyages, students typically need to secure 2 or 3 visas. After students have been admitted they will receive detailed information concerning how to obtain the necessary visas.

[What are the passport requirements?](#)

Please click here for the most accurate [Semester at Sea Passport Requirements](#).

[What vaccinations/medications are necessary or recommended?](#)

You will be informed of the vaccinations necessary for your student's particular itinerary well in advance of departure. We suggest that you visit the website www.cdc.gov which will provide recommendations for other vaccinations depending on region. Additionally, it is wise to confer with a travel clinic or physician that specializes in travel vaccinations and medications before departure.

Making Payment FAQ

[What is the Payment Policy?](#)

Cabin space is not guaranteed solely upon admission. Therefore, once students have been admitted to Semester at Sea they must confirm their intent to participate by submitting their \$1,000 deposit online at www.semesteratsea.org/deposit. Deposits are accepted by check (payable to Institute for Shipboard Education) or by credit card (Visa, MasterCard, American Express, or Discover). The deposit is not a supplemental expense and will be their first payment toward the total cost of the program. The entire balance is due 90 days before departure and the exact deadline will be indicated on their invoices. If students are anticipating financial aid they should plan to provide documentation of approval from the aid source(s) indicating details of the disbursement to ISE. The necessary forms will be provided to them. Documentation of any financial aid that is to be credited to a student's account (such as Stafford loans or Parent PLUS loans) must be submitted to ISE by the payment deadline. Participants who have not made arrangements for full payment by the due date may forfeit enrollment in the program. NOTE: The cabin deposit is refundable or transferable until the final payment deadline. Participants confirmed into cabins from the waitlist will have two weeks to make full payment.

[What is the deadline for complete payment?](#)

90 days before departure.

[Will students be charged late fees?](#)

A penalty of \$250 is assessed on outstanding accounts after the due date. Participants enrolling with the [payment plan](#) and those receiving documented pending financial aid are exempt from this late fee.

[What does the shipboard account entail? How and when should it be paid?](#)

The MV *World Odyssey* operates on a cashless basis. Food at the snack bars, items at the campus store, and In-country Programs are all paid for through students' shipboard accounts. Before embarking on the ship your student will be asked to provide a credit card to which shipboard account expenses will be billed each month of the voyage. We suggest that students bill their shipboard account to a credit card that is independent of the primary credit card that your student uses in port.

[What are the cancellation and withdrawal refund policies?](#)

All cancellations or transfers must be mailed, e-mailed, or faxed by the participant. All funds received on a participant's account are refundable until the 90-day payment due date for the voyage. Please [click here for the detailed cancellation policy](#).

Financial Assistance FAQ

Can I use my student's existing financial aid on Semester at Sea?

Yes, you may use any federal aid or loans that your student currently receives, such as Pell Grants and Stafford loans, to pay for Semester at Sea. However, the use of aid from sources such as your student's home school must be determined by said source.

Does Semester at Sea offer separate financial assistance?

Yes. ISE offers a variety of need [and merit based financial awards](#). Students who qualify for federal aid and loans can also receive ISE assistance. Students who do not typically qualify for federal aid/loans will also be considered for ISE assistance.

How do I apply for financial assistance?

For federal aid and loans you should complete the Federal Application for Financial Aid (FAFSA) on your home campus. The information that this process generates will be used both for federal aid and loans and for ISE assistance. For Semester at Sea aid, indicate on your application that you wish to be considered for financial assistance. You will be sent a separate financial aid application packet about eight months prior to the semester.

On average how much financial aid does Semester at Sea reward?

Semester at Sea awards approximately \$5 million financial aid each year. We encourage parents and students to consider this option.

Visiting the Ship FAQ

Do I need authorization to board the ship?

Yes. As a parent you are eligible to visit the ship while it is in port. Due to heightened security in recent years, it is a logistically cumbersome process to add people to the visitor manifest; therefore, ISE reserves the right to decline some requests. Please note that visitors are not allowed to board the ship in the final port once the voyage has concluded.

A visitor is limited to participant's immediate family members only (spouse, children, father, mother, sister, brother).

Written requests from the voyage participant (student, faculty or staff) for visitors must be received by the Assistant Executive Dean at least two weeks in advance of arrival in the port of the requested visit.

Request forms are available in the administrative office on the ship and require detailed information about the special visitor (e.g., relationship to the participant, full name, address, date and place of birth, gender, passport number/date of issue/date of expiration/authority). In addition, participants should expect to provide proof of the family relationship, especially if surnames do not match.

The information required to board the ship is as follows:

- Name
- DOB
- Passport Number
- Passport Expiration Date
- Passport Country of Origin
- Embarkation Date/Disembarkation Date
- Affiliation to Semester at Sea
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Please note that visitor approval by the deans and captain of the MV *World Odyssey* is not a guarantee that local immigration and customs officials will allow the visitor to board the ship. Visitors may visit the ship between the hours of 0800 to 2000 only (overnight visits are not allowed).

Visitors are asked by the ship's gangway security to show proper identification and will receive a "special visitor ID badge" each time they embark the ship. This badge must be worn while on the

vessel and will be surrendered to the ship's gangway security upon each debarkation. Upon the ship's arrival to port, visitors may board once the ship has been cleared by customs and immigration and the critical mass of participants have disembarked. Visitors must disembark on the day of departure prior to "on-ship time" (generally two hours prior to sailing).

Visitors must be accompanied by their host at all times while aboard the vessel. If the host of the special visitor is not present at the gangway upon embarkation, he/she will be detained by ship's security at the gangway or the purser's office until their host can be located.

The host of the special visitor is accountable for the behavior of his/her visitor.

Staying In Touch FAQ

What is the best way to keep in contact with my student?

You have several options for staying in touch with your student. Email is the most convenient and economic method. All students receive a free email account. The ship is also equipped with wireless internet access that enables participants to access web-based email services. A limited amount of free Internet time is allotted to students, and after it is used up, additional access minutes may be purchased on the ship. Phone services are also available. To place a call to the ship, dial toll-free: 800.305.9203. You will be asked to provide a credit card that will be charged approximately \$3.95 per minute. A shipboard operator will answer the call, and connect you to the phone in your student's cabin. Internet phone services such as Skype are not available on board.

Why isn't Skype available?

While Skype, and other voice-over-Internet services, were piloted on previous Semester at Sea ships, it was quickly found by our Internet Service Provider to consume all the available bandwidth on the ship, which presented a risk to our critical systems, such as navigation, that rely on satellite bandwidth to function properly. As a result our Internet Service Provider has blocked the use of Skype and other such services, and has done so for the past few years.

How do I send mail to the ship?

You cannot send mail directly to the ship, but you may send it to the port in which the ship is headed. Mail will be collected in each port and delivered directly to the cabin of your student. Once your student has been admitted you will receive a list of each port address for their itinerary. It is recommended to send international mail at least two weeks in advance preferably via courier. Do not send currency, food or medicine. Sending packages is not recommended because of customs restrictions and/or duty charges (as a result, packages are not always received by the intended recipient onboard). ISE is not responsible for any mail not delivered to the recipient. The port agent in each country is able return delayed packages to the sender at the sender's own cost.

Should I be worried if I don't hear from my student everyday?

Before departure we encourage you to establish a system of communication with your student while they are away. However, do not worry if you do not hear from your student as regularly as you would like. The demands of travel in so many different ports can make communication difficult at times. If there is any cause for concern you will be notified by ISE and Semester at Sea officials immediately.

Will students have telephones in their rooms that can call out? Will I be able to call these telephones?

Every cabin aboard the MV *World Odyssey* is equipped with phones that enable around the clock ship-to-shore calling (both receiving incoming calls and placing outgoing calls). Students can make outgoing calls by purchasing pre-paid calling cards at the Purser's Desk on the ship. Family members and friends can call the ship 24-hours a day by dialing the toll free number: 800.305.9203. The caller will be asked to provide a credit card that will be charged approximately \$3.95 per minute. Your call will then be connected directly to your student's cabin.

Pirates FAQ

Are pirate attacks a legitimate concern?

Acts of piracy are decreasing in many parts of the world but they are increasing in areas off the coast of Somalia in eastern Africa and the Gulf of Aden in Yemen. While most incidents have

involved cargo vessels and small pleasure crafts traveling closely to the coast, these events are being closely monitored by the Institute for Shipboard Education.

What safety precautions does Semester at Sea take in preventing piracy and other threats?

Semester at Sea and the senior officers of the MV *World Odyssey* take proactive measures to mitigate piracy and other threats. Our ship travels at a considerable and safe distance from the Somali coast, where the majority of piracy occurs. In addition, our high freeboard (distance from the waterline to the upper deck) makes our ship nearly impossible to board. When nearing the Gulf of Aden we enforce a 24-hour security watch and maintain constant contact with international maritime agencies that monitor vessel traffic. In addition, we deploy widely used anti-piracy devices to ward off potential intruders.

Additionally, are there any guns on board the ship or people qualified to protect and defend passengers from any violent threats?

Combat is not considered an option and as a result there are no guns aboard the MV *World Odyssey*. When the ship is at sea, high-powered industrial water hoses can be rigged to prevent unlawful embarkation of the vessel.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Other resources especially for the parents of prospective students are listed below, which should help in your planning of a successful voyage.

Miscellaneous Travel Resources

- [World Clock](#): Find out what time it is anywhere in the world.
- [Interactive Currency Converter](#): Figure out how many dinar are in a peso.
- [Lonely Planet World Guide](#): Check out the interactive map to learn more about the countries on our itineraries.
- [CIA World Fact Book](#): Get recent data and images about countries around the world.

Travel Document Resources

- [Passport Services and Information](#): Learn how and when to apply for or renew a passport.

Government Agency Resources

- [U.S. State Department Bureau of Consular Affairs](#)
- [U.S. Embassy](#)
- [Foreign Consular Office](#)

Funding Study Abroad Resources

Below are some links to outside resources which may help you as you work toward funding your Semester at Sea experience.

- [Fastweb](#): A very popular American college scholarship database. Registration required (no-fee).
- [FinAid](#): Good overview of college financial aid.
- [GrantNet](#): Funding Opportunities for Training in the Biological and Medical Sciences.
- [International Education Financial Aid](#): IEFA is the premier Internet resource for financial aid information for students wishing to study in a foreign country.
- [NAFSA – the Association of International Educators](#): Provides a good introduction with its “Basic facts for students” along with grants and scholarships.
- [StudyAbroadFunding.org](#): A comprehensive directory of study abroad scholarships, fellowships, and grants to find funding for study outside the US at an undergraduate, graduate, or professional level of study.
- [U.S. Department of Education](#): Financial Aid Information
- [Best of the Web](#): A list of options for scholarships and grants to study abroad as well as links to scholarship search services
- [StudyAbroad.com](#): Links and information for popular study abroad financial aid and grants, international education fellowships and general education abroad funding.

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