

POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR STUDY ABROAD

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Do I need a Power of Attorney while I am studying abroad?

Many students who are studying abroad often select a person to serve as power of attorney to take care of their financial affairs while they are out of the country. The George Washington University Office for Study Abroad recommends that all financial assistance students arrange for a power of attorney. Some instances when a power of attorney may be necessary are:

- a. to sign a Stafford loan check
- b. to handle issues related to deposit of financial assistance checks or refunds
- c. to access information in your student account and/or financial assistance files
- d. to process banking or insurance transactions

2. What are the steps to assigning a Power of Attorney?

Assigning power of attorney is a legal process that involves the drafting of a document, which assigns to another person the power to act as your legal representative in specific situations. There are two ways to go about assigning power of attorney. The first is to meet with an attorney to draft a power of attorney document. This will usually involve a fee, which will cover advice on the implications of assigning power of attorney, the drafting of a power of attorney document, and the notarizing of that document. The second approach does not require a lawyer's assistance and involves filling out the Power of Attorney form from the Office for Study Abroad and then having your signature notarized. **Note: the power of attorney document must be signed in the notary's presence. This can be done on campus at Colonial Central and at some local banks.**

3. Whom should I ask to be my Power of Attorney?

You should select a person you consider trustworthy to make decisions in your best interests and sign on your behalf. Most students select a parent, significant other, or long-term friend. A casual acquaintance is NOT recommended. University staff, including the Office for Study Abroad staff, may not act on your behalf as it may be considered a conflict of interest.

4. For what period of time should I have a Power of Attorney?

If you plan to travel prior to and/or after your study abroad experience, the power of attorney should include the entire time you plan to be away.

5. Whom should I notify that I have a Power of Attorney?

You will want to notify the GW Office of Student Financial Assistance, and of course, the person you have designated as your Power of Attorney.

6. How far in advance should I begin arranging for Power of Attorney?

You should take care of arranging your power of attorney well in advance of your departure and notify the appropriate offices.

For questions about financial assistance, consult the Office of Student Financial Assistance.