

Article Date	Headline / Summary	Publication
22 Jul 2024	Off to study abroad? Check your travel insurance	Deccan Herald

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Exigencies are aplenty, so securing all ends critical

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Studying abroad is an exciting and enriching experience for many Indian students. However, it comes with its own set of challenges and uncertainties. One crucial aspect that students often overlook is travel insurance. Having comprehensive travel insurance ensures that students are protected from unexpected financial burdens while they are away from home. Here's what Indian students should focus on when selecting travel insurance for studying abroad.

IMPORTANCE

Travel insurance provides a safety net against various risks that students might face while studying abroad. It covers medical emergencies, trip cancellations, loss of personal belongings, and other unforeseen events. Without adequate travel insurance, students and their families could face significant financial strain in case of an emergency.

KEY FEATURES TO LOOK FOR

Medical coverage

Medical emergencies can be very expensive in foreign countries. Travel insurance should include comprehensive medical coverage, including hospitalisation, surgery, doctor visits, and prescription medications. Ensure the policy covers both illnesses and accidents.

Emergency medical evacuation

In case of severe medical emergencies, students might need to be evacuated to the nearest medical facility or even back to India. Emergency medical evacuation coverage ensures that these costs are covered, which can otherwise be exorbitant.

Repatriation of remains

In the unfortunate event of a student's death, repatriation coverage ensures that the costs of transporting the remains back to India are covered. This is a critical aspect that many families overlook but could be essential if such a dire situation arises.

Trip cancellation & interruption

Travel plans can change unexpectedly due to various reasons like health issues, family emergencies, or political unrest. Trip cancellation and interruption coverage reimburses the non-refundable expenses, ensuring that students do not face financial losses due to unforeseen changes in their travel plans.



Indian students evacuated from Ukraine, disembarking at Hindan Airbase, in March 2022. FILE PHOTO: PTI

Loss of passport and travel documents

Losing a passport or important travel documents can be a nightmare. Travel insurance should cover the costs associated with obtaining a new passport, including the application fees.

Loss or delay of baggage

Luggage can get lost or delayed during travel. Insurance should provide compensation for the loss of personal belongings and cover the cost of essential items in case of baggage delay.

Personal liability

Personal liability coverage protects students from financial liability if they accidentally cause injury to someone or damage property while abroad. This can include legal expenses and compensation claims, which can be substantial in some countries.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Pre-existing conditions

Some travel insurance policies exclude coverage for pre-existing medical conditions. It's essential to check whether the policy covers pre-existing conditions or if additional coverage can be purchased.

Adventure sports coverage

Many students engage in adventure sports and recreational activities while studying abroad. Ensure that the travel insurance policy includes coverage for injuries sustained during these activities, or consider purchasing additional coverage if needed.

Policy duration

Choose a policy that matches the duration of the study program. Some policies offer coverage for short-term trips, while others provide long-term coverage for extended stays. Make sure the policy duration aligns with the length of stay abroad.

Network hospitals and cashless treatment

Check whether the insurance provider has a network of hospitals in the destination

country. Cashless treatment facilities in network hospitals can simplify the process of receiving medical care without the need for upfront payments.

24/7 assistance

Opt for an insurance provider that offers 24/7 assistance. Having access to a helpline can be invaluable in case of emergencies, providing guidance and support whenever needed.

HOW TO CHOOSE RIGHT

Compare different policies

Use online platforms and aggregators to compare different travel insurance policies. Look for comprehensive coverage that fits the specific needs of students going abroad.

Read reviews and ratings

Check reviews and ratings of insurance providers. Feedback from other customers can provide insights into the claim settlement process and overall service quality.

Consult experts

Consult with insurance experts or brokers to understand the various options available. They can provide personalised advice based on individual needs and preferences.

Understand the terms and conditions

Carefully read the terms and conditions of the policy. Understand the inclusions, exclusions, and claim procedures to avoid surprises later.

CONCLUSION

Travel insurance is a crucial aspect of planning for studies abroad. It provides financial protection and peace of mind, ensuring that students can focus on their academic and personal growth without worrying about unexpected financial burdens. By understanding the key features to look for and making informed choices, Indian students can ensure they are well-protected during their time abroad.

(The writer is Head - Health & Travel SBU, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance)