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*Pregnancy includes pregnancy, childbirth, and medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth.
Your UCEAP Network

Local UCEAP Support

Campus EAP Office
The Campus EAP Office coordinates recruitment, student selection, orientations, and academic advising; and serves as your primary contact during the application process.

UCEAP Systemwide Office
The UCEAP Systemwide Office establishes and operates programs and coordinates UCEAP administration for all UC campuses from its headquarters in Goleta, California. You will work closely with the following Systemwide Office staff:

- **Program Advisors** provide academic and operational program information to you and your campus as well as administrative support for all aspects of your participation.

- **Operations Specialists** manage the logistics of the program. They coordinate document requirements, visa application instructions, health and safety precautions, acceptance and placement by host institutions, arrival and on-site orientation, and housing arrangements.

- **Academic Specialists** advise on academic policies, review courses taken abroad for UC credit, and document your registration, grades, petitions and academic records.

- **Student Finance Accountants** assist primarily with UCEAP statements, program fee collection, and financial aid disbursements (in conjunction with your campus Financial Aid Office).

Contact Information

Program Advisor
Michelle Hertig
**Phone:** (805) 893-2831; **E-mail:** mhertig@eap.ucop.edu

Operations Specialist
May Pothongsunun
**Phone:** (805) 893-6152; **E-mail:** mpothongsunun@eap.ucop.edu

Academic Specialist
Eva Bilandzia
**Phone:** (805) 893-2598; **E-mail:** ebilandzia@eap.ucop.edu

Student Finance Accountant
Annie Sikora
**Phone:** (805) 893-5928; **E-mail:** studentfinance@eap.ucop.edu

UCEAP Systemwide Office
6950 Hollister Avenue, Suite 200
Goleta, CA 93117-5823
**Phone:** (805) 893-4762; **Fax:** (805) 893-2583
**UCEAP Online**

Bookmark your Participants program page. This resource lists requirements and policies you need to know before you go abroad, including your Predeparture Checklist, UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad, Program Calendar, UCEAP Student Budgets, and payment instructions.

Connect with us! Join our Facebook network via the UCEAP Vietnam page

**Study Center Abroad**

The Vietnam program is administered on site by a UCEAP Resident Director. The Resident Director will work closely with you on both academic and logistical matters and serves as a resource for housing, medical, and personal issues. A local program assistant from Hanoi University (HANU) also assists the Liaison Officer with program administration.

Ms. Ginger Davis, UCEAP Resident Director  
UCEAP Study Center  
Building A, Room 306  
Hanoi University  
KM 9 Duong Nguyen Trai  
Thanh Xuan  
Hanoi, Vietnam  

**Cell phone:** 0984 701 818  
**E-mail:** ginger.davis@gmail.com  

**Phone Number Codes**

- U.S. international code....................... 011  
  *(dial this to call from the U.S.)*  
- Vietnam country code ....................... 84  
- Hanoi city code ............................... 4

**Approximate Time Difference**

Add 15 hours (or 14 hours during daylight saving time)
VICEAP STUDENTS SAY...

"The professors here are in love with their work, and that is what makes the classes interesting and enjoyable. Because of the low student-faculty ratio, we really got to interact with our professors. Academically, UCEAP can really help you understand and appreciate Vietnam. The best experience comes from being able to combine academic learning and personal experience in the country.

Take advantage of the fieldwork opportunities in the courses; it’s the best way to engage Vietnam."

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

This program consists of a required core course with extensive fieldwork, Vietnamese language study, optional service learning internship, and Hanoi University (HANU) coursework taught in English.

Required:
- Minimum of 19.5 UC quarter units; four or five courses
- Core course “Vietnam Studies” for letter grade (P/NP option not permitted)
- Vietnamese language course; may be taken for P/NP or letter grade
- Participation in study trips

Core Course: Vietnam Studies

Taught by the UCEAP Resident Director, this course offers an interdisciplinary approach to the study of Vietnam that chronologically and thematically explores the evolution of the country’s economy, culture, politics, society, and environment. You will investigate local and global processes to gain a deeper understanding of Vietnam and the meaning of “being Vietnamese” over time. The central feature of the class is a group project bringing together both HANU and UC students for in-depth study of topics such as gender, labor, the environment, health, urbanization, politics, culture, and the media. It includes local field trips and substantial integrated study trips to other parts of Vietnam.

Vietnamese Language Study

Vietnamese language study is required and is offered at the introductory, intermediate, and advanced levels. You will take a language placement exam after arrival.

Service Learning Internship

You can undertake a service learning activity for 8–10 hours per week and participate in a weekly service learning course, which integrates academic coursework and reflection with community service. The focus is to acquire firsthand experience with Vietnam’s social, cultural, and environmental activism through international or local nonprofits, such as an NGO organization focused on environment, a center for children with autism, or a training school for physically impaired teenagers and adults. The main feature is the service activities that you will perform during your time with the nonprofit organizations.
Hanoi University (HANU) Courses
You will also take one or two courses taught in English at HANU. Previous HANU courses include:

- International Business
- Principles of Marketing
- Macroeconomics
- Consumer Behavior
- Strategic Management
- Development Economics
- World Economic Geography
- Globalization and Third World Development
- History of Vietnam Foreign Relations

Study Trips
The study trips are led by the UCEAP Resident Director and may include multiday excursions to northern, central, and southern Vietnam, and day trips in the Hanoi area. These required trips are an integral part of the program. Details will be provided after you arrive in Hanoi.

Independent Study, Research, & Internships
If you are interested in independent study or research, discuss the opportunity with your Campus EAP Advisor prior to departure. The Campus EAP Office will forward the request to the Academic Specialist, who will consult with the Resident Director.

Independent Research
Independent research opportunities are limited. If you wish to do any kind of research in libraries or archives, you must be fluent in either French or Vietnamese. The use of local resources requires procuring letters of introduction, filling out applications to use libraries or archives, and acquiring sponsors. All newspapers are written in Vietnamese, which requires a minimum of intermediate-level Vietnamese reading skills.

Volunteer and Internship Opportunities
A wide range of volunteer and internship positions are available, both for credit and non-academic. You could volunteer in a program with a middle school in an underprivileged village to the north of Hanoi, where students visit on weekends to teach the children English. In the past, UC students have interned at the U.S. consulate, the Vietnam Economic Times, and at such nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Hanoi as Counterpart, Catholic Relief Services, and the Red Cross. Volunteer positions are common, especially ones that involve teaching English for nonprofit organizations (e.g., the Hanoi Orphans’ Center and the Research and Training for Community Development Center).
Academic Culture

Vietnam’s educational system is undergoing rapid changes reflected in new styles of teaching and classroom dynamics. You may find an interesting mix of traditional Vietnamese teaching styles and Western styles, such as student discussions and seminars.

Vietnam’s culture places a premium on higher education as the way to achieve social position and economic well-being, and the demand for higher education in Vietnam has surged dramatically in the past decade.

Professors in Vietnam are traditionally treated with respect and deference. Remember to use the formal, respectful forms of the language when speaking with a professor.

HANU classes tend to be large with a weekly formal lecture and a weekly seminar. Instructors are likely to be more formal than those at UC, and there are generally fewer opportunities for class discussion. Language classes are less interactive and more intensive than those to which you may be accustomed.

In the HANU classroom, be prepared to be the focus of a lot of interest; you may be called upon to explain American attitudes or experiences on a given topic. You will notice a wide range of ambitions among your Vietnamese peers, from those who are merely there to graduate to those who are really there to learn.

Grades

Class attendance is mandatory and absences affect your final grade. It is expected that you come to class on time. Keep this attendance policy in mind when considering travel.

It is inappropriate for students to question instructors about test scores or grades. You may seek clarification of course requirements from the instructor and inquire about your progress in a course, but do not confront your instructors about grades. Discuss your grades only with the UCEAP Resident Director.

Grades are usually available by mid-January.
UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“...You will probably feel fatigued from the weather, the culture shock, the frustrations of always having people around, and haggling over the price of everything. It helps to be ready for it. Get a copy of Lonely Planet’s Vietnam and read it cover to cover. It will help you to get a feel for the country and get some good advice to start.

Take some novels. Try to coordinate with the other UCEAP students in advance so you don’t take any duplicates.

Be prepared for limited research text material in English. You might want to pack your own books and course readers.”

CULTURAL AWARENESS

Educate Yourself

Get acquainted with your new host city, country, and culture. Travel guides and travel-related websites, such as Lonely Planet, are excellent resources. Understand the local culture and history, and keep up with current events. Attitudes and behaviors accepted in the U.S. may be offensive or even illegal in other countries. Learn about and respect local customs and culture. The more you know, the more rewarding your experience will be.

The following resources will help you prepare for your experience in Vietnam.

Websites


Vietnam Culture. Various articles about Vietnamese culture.

Recommended Books


UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“People did not accept the fact that I’m Vietnamese until I told them I’m Viet Kieu (overseas Vietnamese). They were more willing to believe that I’m Japanese, Korean, or Chinese.

Identity is a choice. It has nothing to do with genetics and it has nothing to do with blood. It has everything to do with what we choose to associate with. While I identify as a Vietnamese-American, I realize in no way can a single term sum up who I am. For all of us, identity goes beyond words.

Americans do not really accept that I’m American, and the Vietnamese do not really accept that I’m Vietnamese. I suppose my peers and I will continue to struggle with two cultures that don’t really accept us, but two cultures from which we were born.”

Social Conduct

Adjusting to a new environment can be a powerful experience for even the most seasoned traveler. Laws, customs, and gestures once taken for granted may no longer apply. Your values may be challenged or you may experience prejudices. You may no longer have the opportunity to converse in your native language or you may find yourself singled out.

Race Relations

Most visitors to Hanoi do not experience anti-American sentiment. The Vietnamese are welcoming of Americans, curious about their culture and society, and enthusiastic about the opportunities for mutual exchange and development.

Students of Vietnamese Origin

Being Viet Kieu (“Overseas Vietnamese”) is often difficult for students, especially if they do not speak Vietnamese well. Relating to local Vietnamese while feeling American is a very common sentiment, and it may take some time to assimilate the differences. Ask your Campus EAP Office for the names and contact information of past participants with whom you can discuss this issue.

There have been problems with U.S. consular access to American citizens. Frequently the embassy or consulate general is not immediately notified when U.S. citizens are arrested or detained. The Vietnamese government considers all people born in Vietnam or born to Vietnamese parents to be Vietnamese citizens unless they have formally renounced their Vietnamese citizenship with the Vietnamese government. For this reason, Vietnamese officials may treat U.S. citizens of Vietnamese origin differently from other U.S. citizens. Vietnamese citizens are subject to laws and restrictions that may be applied differently to foreigners. For example, the investigative detention law enables the government to detain Vietnamese citizens for longer periods of time while alleged criminal activities are under investigation.

Harassment

Men and women alike may comment about your appearance and behavior. What is perceived in the U.S. as low-level sexual harassment occurs in Hanoi. The best thing to do is take note of how your Vietnamese peers act and emulate them in style and dress. Western-style dress, especially fashions that bare shoulders, necklines, legs, and midriffs, will bring public scrutiny and unwanted attention. Vietnamese women who dress like that would get the same treatment, although they are often more mobile (e.g., riding independently through crowds on their own motorbikes). Be prepared to hear comments about your weight regardless of your size. Vietnamese may deal with harassment differently and may not follow American norms. If you find yourself in a situation in which you feel harassed and feel threatened or uncomfortable, walk away, and talk to the Resident Director immediately.
Relationships
There are differing perspectives toward romantic relationships in Vietnam. American students tend to form more intimate relationships rapidly and often have several girlfriends or boyfriends before settling down. However, the ideal among most Vietnamese remains to fall in love once with a courtship leading to marriage. Problems can arise when local students misinterpret gestures of friendship as signs of romantic interest. Biracial couples can also face forms of harassment or discrimination. Exercise good judgment in your relations with Vietnamese, and keep the emphasis on friendship.

There are no laws against same-sex relationships, and for the most part, attitudes toward members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community are relatively tolerant (don’t ask, don’t tell). For more information see the UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad.

Politics
Individual freedom of speech in Vietnam is limited, and public criticism of the Communist Party or State and their policies can be punished severely. Though most Vietnamese can be critical of issues like corruption or incompetence, they are proud of their country and may dislike criticism from a foreigner. Exercise caution when discussing political or social issues, and let the person you’re speaking to take the lead in setting the boundaries of the conversation. Do not participate in rallies or demonstrations that do not have official permission. If you find yourself caught up in a demonstration or other disturbance, find a way to leave the area quickly and safely.

Improve Your Language Skills
Knowing some Vietnamese before departure will make your time abroad more rewarding. If you have not studied Vietnamese, try to become familiar with the language by studying a beginning textbook or talking with Vietnamese-speaking friends.

If you already have some Vietnamese language background, spend some time working to improve your written and spoken Vietnamese.

Following are ways to prepare:

- Read aloud in Vietnamese for 20 minutes at a time; make a recording to pinpoint problems in pronunciation and intonation.
- Read Vietnamese newspapers using a dictionary as necessary.
- Watch Vietnamese movies and listen to Vietnamese music.
- Seek out Vietnamese speakers for conversations and vocabulary practice.
- Keep a journal of Vietnamese phrases, expressions, and sentences to add to your vocabulary.
UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“Take an electronic translator.

The people of Hanoi are fond of pointing out that their city has four seasons. I suspect one of them is unbearably hot in August. Another one might be raining like you forgot to turn off the faucet. In December, it abruptly changes into unbearably cold.

There’s a good chance that you’ll have to learn how to use a squatting toilet instead of a sit-down one. But once you overcome the psychological impediment, the hardest part is over. You’ll need to bring your own toilet paper, but don’t throw the toilet paper into the squatter—use the trash can. Once you’re finished, take a pail, fill it with water, and dump it into the squatter. Repeat as necessary. Once you have successfully used a squatting toilet, you’re ready for absolutely anything that Vietnam has to throw at you.”

ARRIVAL & ORIENTATION

Travel Documents

▶ Additional information about passports, visas, and other required documents is provided in the UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad and in the online Predeparture Checklist.

Pre-Program Travel

Be careful about traveling outside of the U.S. after finals at UC and before the program begins. Each year, the host university sends acceptance letters on different dates, sometimes only a short time before the program’s Official Start Date. You need to be in the U.S. to receive the acceptance materials and apply for a visa.

Student Visa

A student visa is an endorsement, usually a stamp or sticker, placed in your passport by the Consulate General of Vietnam. It grants you permission to enter and reside in Vietnam as a student. You are required to obtain a student visa in the U.S. before departure. You will not be allowed to enter Vietnam without a valid passport and student visa.

Your student visa is only valid for a single entry into Vietnam (per host university and government rules). Therefore, you may not exit and reenter Vietnam during the program. Schedule recreational travel before entering Vietnam or after the program is over.

If you enter the country on a tourist visa or visa exemption for overseas Vietnamese, you will not be able to participate in the program. If you book your flight through a travel agent, make sure they know that you will be receiving a student visa, and that you will not need either a tourist visa or a visa exemption.

Packing Tips

Always carry your passport, visa, ticket, prescription medications, and money while traveling. Never put valuables in your checked luggage. Leave extra credit cards at home.

Essential

▪ A limited and conservative wardrobe, including washable, easy-to-care-for clothing, lightweight shirts, slacks, shorts, and jeans, preferably of natural fabrics (cotton, linen, etc.). Most laundry shops will air dry your items.
▪ Sandals and comfortable shoes for walking (large sizes will be difficult to find)
▪ Warm socks and a lightweight coat for winter
▪ Some nice clothes for formal dinners and special events
▪ Umbrella or rain coat
▪ Vitamins and personal hygiene products (may be difficult to find, particularly if you have a preferred brand)
▪ Prescription medication (for information on taking prescription medications abroad, see the Health chapter of this guide)
▪ Liquid hand sanitizer or antibacterial tissues (containing at least 60 percent alcohol)
UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

When we arrived in August, the weather was extremely humid. Your skin always feels sticky.

Pack cool clothing since the weather is humid, but don’t wear clothing that’s too revealing. People are very conservative and locals will stare.

Laundry is brutal on your clothes. Expect that everything will get beat up.

Don’t take too much to Vietnam. You’ll shop a lot there. Many of us bought designer purses, shoes, jeans, baseball caps, and tons of other stuff—all fake but eerily reminiscent of the real thing.

• A Vietnam travel guide
• Camera
• A few typically American gifts for foreign hosts and new friends (gift suggestions include Frisbees, T-shirts, UC pens and pencils, decals, baseball caps representing Major League and NBA teams, California pistachios or almonds, California postcards or scenic calendars). Any items marked with “Made in the USA” are also appreciated.
• A medium-sized backpack (around 30 or 40 liters) for field trips

Optional
• Athletic gear, including a swimsuit
• Laptop

Climate and Dress

The rainy season will be winding down when you arrive in August. Typhoons typically hit the central and north coasts and have been increasing in frequency over the past few years. Be prepared for wet, hot, and humid weather. Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated. Take lightweight clothing for the heat and humidity as well as an umbrella and clothing for the wet weather. Even with the hot and humid conditions, tank tops, short shorts, and provocative clothing are culturally inappropriate for both men and women, and tend to draw attention.

December can get cooler, and previous UCEAP participants recommend taking a least one sweater or lightweight jacket. Keep in mind that most buildings in Vietnam are not heated.

➢ The UCEAP Student Budget does not include funds for the purchase of clothing abroad.

Travel to Vietnam

➢ Despite rumors on this subject, you will not need to bribe immigration officials. With the proper travel documents, it is a smooth process. Previous UCEAP students have passed through airport immigration without trouble.

It is recommended that you arrive at the Noi Bai International Airport in Hanoi. You must travel to Hanoi and arrange transportation to Hanoi University to arrive before the official start date. The official start date is available in the Calendar section of your Participants program page. If you fail to arrive before the official start date, you will be subject to dismissal from the program (see Student Agreement, Section 10, in MyEAP).

You are strongly urged to purchase a changeable airline ticket; standby tickets are not appropriate. UCEAP is not responsible for any unrecoverable transportation charges you may incur for independent travel arrangements. International flights are routinely changed or canceled, so confirm your flight schedule with your airline at least two weeks before departure.

See the UCEAP online Predeparture Checklist for detailed arrival instructions and maps.
Financial Aid Students
Your financial aid package is based partly on the UCEAP Student Budget for the program. The estimated round-trip airfare is based on the cost of a changeable student fare to Vietnam. If your independent travel costs are greater than the airfare estimate in the UCEAP Student Budget, notify your financial aid counselors. Neither UCEAP nor the Financial Aid Office can guarantee that the additional cost will be funded by financial aid.

Even if you are on full financial aid, you are responsible for reserving and purchasing your own ticket. The Financial Aid Office is not responsible for purchasing tickets.

Orientation
An orientation of several days begins when you arrive in Hanoi. The orientation with the UCEAP Resident Director includes:

- Health, safety, basic shopping, and access to banks
- Student housing, the campus, the neighborhood, downtown Hanoi, and transportation
- Walking and bus tours of the city and local neighborhoods
- Registering with a medical clinic and the U.S. consulate
- A language exam to determine your placement
- Hanoi University (HANU) and MyEAP course registration
- Introduction to community service organizations

Your attendance at all orientation sessions is mandatory (see the UCEAP Student Agreement, Section 10, in MyEAP). If you miss the Study Center orientation, you may be dismissed from UCEAP.

➢ Throughout the program, attend all meetings called by the Study Center, respond promptly to messages, and maintain contact with the UCEAP Resident Director.
UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

Bus #2 is the most frequently used bus by UCEAP students. It leads directly to Ho Hoan Kiem and the Old Quarter. It also happens to be the bus that is the most crowded, which means you'll rarely find a place to sit.

The bus is a pretty popular mode of transportation. We have free bus passes.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Safety

Chaotic traffic conditions and traffic accidents pose serious safety problems in Vietnam. Streets in Hanoi are clogged with motorcycles, cars, buses, trucks, bicycles, cyclos, and pedestrians.

You are cautioned to adhere to the following safety guidelines:

- Do not drive a motorized vehicle of any kind.
- Take advantage of the public bus system (UCEAP buys you a monthly pass).
- Use licensed automobile taxis if you require transportation that cannot be served by a bus (taxi fares are low, especially if you share with other students).
- Do not ride a bicycle in heavy traffic.
- Be vigilant and use caution at all times, even on foot.

For more information about transportation safety concerns, see the Safety chapter of this guide.

Travel within Vietnam

Bicycles

You can rent or purchase a bicycle locally; it can serve as an easy method for getting around campus.

Buses

The public bus system continues to expand and provides coverage to most areas of Hanoi. Information on bus routes and how to use the bus services is maintained by the Hanoi Transportation Corporation.

Taxis

There are several metered taxi services available. The rates are reasonable for short-distance travel. Use only clearly marked taxis that have meters and the taxi driver’s identity card clearly displayed on the dashboard.

Trains

Trains are the recommended mode of transportation for long-distance travel. Vietnam Railways operates more than 1,600 miles of train tracks throughout the country. Tickets can usually be purchased directly at the train stations or through authorized travel agencies.

➤ The UCEAP Student Budget does not include funds for recreational travel.
FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Understanding Your Finances

Understanding your finances before, during, and after your program is crucial to having a successful time abroad. The following list outlines just a few of the many things you will need to know before departure.

Detailed information on the following topics can be found in the Money Matters chapter of the UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad:

- Contact information for finance questions
- How to estimate the cost of your program
- Budget instructions and information
- How to and who can make payments to UCEAP
- UCEAP student account information
- Banking before and after arrival
- Fees and penalties
- Loan information
- How financial aid works while abroad (how do I get my financial aid from my home campus and how are my fees paid?)
- Various forms (e.g., direct deposit, etc.)

MyEAP Student Account

Your MyEAP Student Account is similar to your UC campus financial account. It will be available as soon as you are selected for your program in MyEAP. You can make payments through this account using e-checks or credit cards (MasterCard, American Express, or Discover). The fees that you owe UCEAP will be applied to your account after your program predeparture withdrawal date, which is listed in MyEAP. For the amount due to UCEAP prior to fees being posted on your account, refer to the UCEAP Student Budget Payment Vouchers. Program fees are subject to change.

UCEAP Student Budget

Carefully review your UCEAP Student Budget. Your UCEAP Student Budget lists the fees you will pay to UCEAP and an estimate of the personal expenses you will need to plan for. It does not include the cost of recreational travel or personal entertainment. Review your UCEAP Student Budget frequently. The Payment Vouchers are on the second page of the UCEAP Student Budget.

Instructions

- Download and print your UCEAP Student Budget and Payment Vouchers.
- Note the deadlines on the Payment Vouchers.
- Give the UCEAP Student Budget and Payment Vouchers to the person responsible for paying your UCEAP bills. Sign this person up for Third Party Authorization so they can make payments online.

For further information see the Money Matters chapter of the UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad and the Money Matters tab of your Participants Portal. If you will be receiving financial aid, see also the UCEAP Financial Assistance web page.
UECAP STUDENTS SAY...

“If you look Western (or even look Asian but sound Western) you’ll be charged more money than locals. Get used to it; it will happen everywhere.

Vietnam has a culture of negotiation. The essential point is not necessarily to get the best price, but a fair price.”

It is important that you carefully read all of the information available in the UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad and discuss it with the person who will assist you with your finances while you are abroad.

Handling Money Abroad

- The official currency unit in Vietnam is the dong (abbreviated VND or D). Carry only small amounts of cash and few credit cards.

Initial Funds

It is recommended that you take cash (crisp, non-marked U.S. $100 bills), an ATM card that will allow you to withdraw money from your U.S. account, and a credit card for emergencies. Keep the credit card safe in your dormitory room once you arrive. Citibank has a few ATMs in both Hanoi and Saigon that will allow you to withdraw money with a lower fee if you have a Citibank account. Since it is impossible to purchase dong outside of Vietnam, you will exchange currency after arrival.

Bank Services

- Your expenses can be minimized if you plan to eat local cuisine and live in the Vietnamese Student Dormitory.

As a foreign national on a short-term visa, you will not be able to open a Vietnamese bank account. Your ATM card is the best way of accessing money from the U.S. There are international ATMs in Hanoi that will allow you to withdraw money from accounts held at most U.S. banks. Note that ATMs have relatively low maximum withdrawal limits and each transaction will involve fees. All withdrawals in Vietnam must be made in Vietnamese dong.

If you need to have money wired to you, you can use Western Union or the currency transfer services commonly used by the Vietnamese communities in Orange County and San José.

Credit Cards

Major credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard, and American Express are accepted in some restaurants and stores. Check with your bank before departure about services available abroad. If you are taking a credit card with you, be sure to alert your bank and credit card companies that they will see activity on your account originating from Vietnam.

Tipping

Tipping is not customary in Vietnam; however, it is appreciated for exceptional service. Consider tipping hired drivers and guides. It is also polite to leave a small donation at the end of a visit to a pagoda.

Bargaining

Bargaining is a way of life in Vietnam. Bargaining in markets is a good way to practice Vietnamese and enjoy a form of cultural exchange. If the idea of bargaining is intimidating to you, spend some time watching how others do it. A general rule is to ask the original price, and then offer about half of that price and work from there. If you are perceived as a foreigner, the original price may be higher.

Note, though, that prices for prepared food (e.g., street food stalls) are fixed, as well as prices in stores or department stores where prices are marked on the item.
You need a cell phone in Vietnam.

Cell phones in Vietnam do not operate on a monthly plan with a set number of minutes available. Instead, you buy a card with a certain amount of money on it. One minute of cell phone usage is about 2,500 dong, whereas a text message costs 400 dong. On the other hand, incoming calls are free. Once the money in the phone is depleted, you have to get another card.

Take a laptop for class assignments and easy Internet access. Make sure to bring a flash drive. And back stuff up because you will probably end up getting a virus one way or another.

Communications Abroad

Mail
You will learn your mailing address after your housing contract is finalized. Do not ship goods to and from Vietnam.

Phone & Fax

- Approximate time difference: add 15 hours (14 hours during daylight saving time)

Phones and fax machines are available in most Internet cafés, hotels, and convenience stores. The post office usually offers the least expensive overseas phone rates. Students often set up cell phone service for local calls.

Most students either take their cell phone with them or purchase an inexpensive phone upon arrival. If you are taking a phone from home, make sure it is unlocked and accepts a SIM card. You can get your phone unlocked in Vietnam, but the cost can be more than the price of an inexpensive new phone. Once you have an unlocked phone and local SIM card, you can buy pay-as-you-go phone cards in a range of denominations. Calling and texting within Vietnam is cheap, but international calls are expensive.

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), the technology for transmitting voice conversations via the Internet, is popular with students who take a laptop abroad. Social networking software such as Skype is commonly used to make free or low-cost calls over the Internet.

Computer Access & Use

The computer access and facilities to which you are accustomed at your UC campus may greatly differ from those in Vietnam. The public computer facilities at HANU are extremely limited. Internet will be slower than you are used to at home, and it may be unstable or even go down for hours (same goes for electricity).

You can access computers by visiting Internet cafés and many coffee shops and cafés now have WiFi. You can also take your own laptop and connect to services through the International Student Dormitory. Unless you have your own router, you will have to share connection time with your roommates.

If you decide to take your laptop to Vietnam, be aware that there is a risk of theft. You are advised to take a security cable and obtain personal property insurance beforehand. Take steps to minimize the risk of theft (e.g., lock the laptop in a closet when not in use).
UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

Your housing choice basically boils down to your motives and reasons for studying in Vietnam. The international dorm is a great place to live comfortably while learning about Vietnamese life and culture, whereas the Vietnamese dorm is a great place to meet and interact with Vietnamese students and get a better idea of real Vietnamese college life.

The international dorm was a valuable experience because I got to bond with other students in the program and meet other international people I wouldn’t have met otherwise.

The Vietnamese dorms have 8 to 12 people per room, bamboo mattresses, squatting toilets, and a huge basin to bathe in. However, you get to live with local students, really improve your language skills, and it’s cheap. Our dorm management team was really cool.

Housing & Meals

Where Will I Live?

You will stay in the International Student Dormitory during the first week of the program for orientation. The dormitory is located on the Hanoi University campus in the Thanh Xuan district, southwest Hanoi about 40 minutes by bus to the city center. Following orientation, you may remain in the International Student Dormitory or move to the Vietnamese Student Dormitory. Dormitories are conveniently close to classes and other on-campus activities.

International Student Dormitory

The International Student Dormitory provides good social opportunities, and it is easy to quickly make friends with the other international students and scholars housed there. The housing staff is accustomed to foreigners (who may seem to have odd hours). The room types are triples, and amenities include air-conditioning, television, wired Internet access, a refrigerator, a bed, a study desk, and a bathroom with shower. Linens are provided, and there is weekly maid service. Single rooms are not available.

Vietnamese Student Dormitory

Accommodations in the Vietnamese Student Dormitory are considerably sparse. Eight to twelve local students share large dormitory rooms with no air-conditioning. There are desks, bunk beds, and lockers for personal belongings. All other facilities are shared. Nevertheless, if you really want to immerse in local university life, it is pretty hard to beat.

How Do I Prepare?

Q: Is a housing application required?
A: There is no housing application required prior to departure. Rooms at the International Student Dormitory will automatically be reserved for you. You may move to another housing option after orientation. Any required documents will be completed on site.

Q: How much is rent?
A: The cost will vary depending on the type of accommodation. The International Student Dormitory costs approximately U.S. $150–200 per month; the Vietnamese dorms are less than half of that. Both housing options require that you pay rent in advance at the beginning of each month. There are no refunds on rent.

Q: Are there housing regulations?
A: You must be willing to adapt to different living standards and will be expected to follow all housing regulations. UCEAP students have been concerned about surveillance in the past, which is typical in all Vietnam housing. There is a guard at the entrance who monitors students and visitors at all times. Guests must be registered, and visitors cannot stay overnight in the dormitories. There is also a curfew.

Q: What is provided in the dorm rooms?
A: The amenities in the International Student Dormitory include air-conditioning, a refrigerator, a telephone, Internet access, a television, linens, and a bathroom with shower facilities. In the Vietnamese Student Dormitory, there are desks, bunk beds, lockers, and a shared bathroom and shower facilities. Building security and resident caretakers are also assigned to dorms.
UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

The international dorms are comparable to any dorm in the U.S. Actually, the rooms are bigger than U.S. dorms, plus you have cleaning services, optional laundry services, and security.

If you’re sensitive to MSG, you’re in for a real treat in Vietnam—there are fistfuls of the stuff in many dishes. Learn to say ‘no MSG please’ in Vietnamese.

Stay hydrated!

The following are random things I learned about dining etiquette in Vietnam: When you invite someone to eat, you pay for the bill. You always bring a gift when someone invites you to their house for dinner. It’s rude to start eating before the oldest person at the table or your guests start. When giving cheers, always tap your glass below the glass of a person who is older. When serving people with chopsticks, reverse it and pick up the food with the other ends. No one tips.

Q: Are laundry facilities available?
A: Laundry services are available and typically charge by the kilogram.

Q: Can I cook in the dormitory?
A: No. The dormitory does not contain a kitchen and cooking is not permitted in the rooms.

Q: Will my dormitory room have a Western-style toilet?
A: The International Student Dormitory has Western-style toilets. The Vietnamese Student Dormitory has squatting-style toilets. Regardless of your housing arrangements, past UCEAP students recommend that you learn how to use a squatting-style toilet for when you are traveling around Vietnam.

Q: What’s in the neighborhood?
A: The campus has a large playing field, student cafeteria, several garden areas, library, and computer lab. The Thanh Xuan area is a typical Hanoi suburb, which means that within walking distance you can find a local market, many small shops, cafés, plus most kinds of inexpensive Vietnamese food sold at street stalls and small restaurants. Within a ten-minute bus ride south to the urban center of Ha Dong, you will find a larger selection of restaurants and shops.

Q: Can I rent an apartment off campus or live with family?
A: No, you are required to live in university-arranged housing.

Meals

Cuisine in Vietnam can differ between the regions. Rice and noodles are basic elements always present. Pho is a common noodle dish. Many of the meals also include fresh vegetables and herbs.

Q: What types of restaurants are available?
A: A wide range of food stalls, small snack stands, restaurants, and well-appointed luxury restaurants (both local and international) are available in Hanoi. While the prices can vary dramatically, it is entirely feasible to eat out three times a day and spend less than $10 per day for tasty, balanced meals.

Q: Is it difficult to follow a vegetarian diet?
A: Strict vegetarians may have a difficult time and need to adjust their diet by adding fish, dairy, or eggs. Fish sauce is a staple in Vietnamese cuisine. Animal fats, fish sauce, or broths are often used in its preparation even if a dish does not include pieces of meat. Buddhist restaurants, however, have vegetarian meals, but these restaurants are much rarer in the north than in the south. Western restaurants will typically have some vegetarian dishes on the menu and there are a few dedicated vegetarian restaurants with correspondingly higher prices. Halal cuisine is available on a limited basis.

Q: Is local water safe to drink?
A: Do not drink the tap water. Bottled water is reliable, inexpensive, and available everywhere in Vietnam. Even locals drink boiled or bottled water.
Extracurricular Activities

Get Involved

Participating in extracurricular cultural and social activities while on UCEAP is an excellent way to meet people, improve your language skills, and integrate more fully into the community. Join sports, musical, theater, or arts groups; volunteer at local organizations; attend lectures and receptions held in academic and community circles; and get the most out of your time abroad.

Cultural Activities

Hanoi provides many opportunities for cultural enrichment. You may visit such sites as the Temple of Literature, the One Pillar Pagoda, and the Old Quarter, known as the 36 Streets (each named after the crafts sold there).

Legacies of Hanoi’s more recent past are evident at such sites as Ho Chi Minh Museum, Ho Chi Minh House, History Museum, Army Museum, Air Force Museum, Museum of the Revolution, and what is left of Hoa Lo Prison, formerly known as the Hanoi Hilton.

Sports

You can participate in numerous sport activities, including soccer, volleyball, tennis, cycling, hiking, and basketball. Previous UCEAP participants have even joined intramural sports teams. There is a sports field and recreation center near the dormitories.

Volunteer Opportunities

If you are interested in volunteering, see the Academic Information chapter of this guide. The UCEAP Resident Director can assist you with finding an appropriate organization for volunteering.

Outdoor Activities

Vietnam has numerous National Parks, including Cat Ba, Bach Ma, and Fansipan. You can enjoy hiking, bird watching, and trekking.

Performing Arts

There are many venues in Hanoi for theater performances, cinema, and live music. You can see plays, including the water puppet theater, based on scenes from Vietnamese life; enjoy dance performances ranging from folkloric to classical; and hear music ranging from traditional to symphonic. There are also numerous art galleries in the city, including monthly exhibitions at the Fine Arts College.

Shopping

There is a wide array of goods for sale in Vietnam. Many students like to shop at the local markets. Major centers like Hanoi and Saigon now feature upscale shopping malls.

Religious Services

Religious services for most denominations are available in Hanoi. Ask around when you arrive to find a service that meets your needs or interests. The American embassy can provide information regarding services and organizations.

UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“Try new things. I took ballroom dancing classes. Dancing lessons are available at the Hotel Polonez as well as other smaller locations.

I played soccer and volleyball on the university playing field with the local students.

Take advantage of fieldwork opportunities. It’s the best way to truly engage and break through the superficial.

The International Women’s Group publishes an annual guide to Hanoi that is available in larger supermarkets around the city.

Be prepared to sing. UCEAPers will be put on the spot to sing whenever they meet a group of Vietnamese people (e.g., Buddhist monks, mountain villagers, Vietnamese students). Singing is a favorite Vietnamese pastime, and if you don’t know some songs it will be disappointing.

Put yourself out there in talking to locals and hanging out with other students. I made some local friends in Vietnam that truly feel like family to me now. Plus, this will help you improve your Vietnamese and feel like you are in more of an immersion situation.”
UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

Prior to departure, the campus health center was extremely helpful. They thoroughly reviewed what was needed and the possible health risks in Southeast Asia.
Carry alcohol wipes with you to wash your hands.”

HEALTH

Health Tips:

- Notify the Study Center about serious medical conditions.
- When traveling to and from Vietnam, you may encounter health surveillance at airports.
- Understand what you must do to prepare for your health and safety abroad.
- If you have a pre-existing chronic condition that requires special attention, consider wearing MedicAlert medical ID.
- Pack a travel first aid kit
- Be aware that alcohol or drug use will impair your judgment

Physical Health

Before Departure:

- Read the Health and Safety chapters of the UCEAP Guide to Study Abroad.
- Access the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Travelers’ Health website for travel health information on any destination.
- Take an adequate supply of personal medications (including prescriptions).
- If you have a chronic health condition, contact your physician before departure to ensure that you are able to go and/or to design a plan in case of need or an emergency. Make sure your doctor is aware of where you are going and the duration. The stresses of international travel, especially if it is over a longer period of time, can often intensify pre-existing medical conditions. Be sure to obtain referrals or resources that will help you while in Vietnam.

Adjustments Upon Arrival

The first few days in Vietnam may be the hardest. You will experience jet lag (or flight fatigue; a temporary condition that causes fatigue, insomnia, and other symptoms due to air travel across time zones). You will also immediately face Hanoi’s incredible heat, noise, crowds, and pollution. You will have to learn new ways to do many things, from bartering to crossing streets, which can be frustrating. It is important to slow down, take everything in stride, and realize that it will take time and patience to adjust to your new surroundings.

With the change in diet, climate, and sanitary standards, you may experience an upset stomach and diarrhea. Former UCEAP students recommend that you bring an antidiarrheal medication with you to Vietnam. In addition, be prepared for sinus illnesses and allergies, which may be worse than in the U.S. due to the pollution.
Health Care Facilities

If you feel sick or have a medical emergency, seek medical attention and contact the Study Center immediately. The Resident Director can help with the necessary UCEAP medical insurance claim forms to complete.

For routine health services, including English-speaking counseling, contact the Study Center to make arrangements with the following practice. The UCEAP assistance provider, Europ Assistance, will make arrangements for direct payment once they are notified of the need for services.

Family Medical Practice Hanoi
Van Phuc Compound
298 I Kim Ma Road
Ba Dinh District

Phone: +84 4 3843 0748
E-mail: hanoi@vietnammedicalpractice.com

Be aware of the health care limitations in Vietnam. Medical facilities in Vietnam do not meet international standards and frequently lack medicines and supplies. International health clinics in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City can provide acceptable care for minor illnesses and injuries, but more serious problems will often require medical evacuation.

Also, cultural differences may make communication with doctors difficult. Medical personnel in Vietnam, particularly outside Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, may speak little or no English. Doctors and hospitals expect immediate cash payment for health services.

During orientation, you will tour health care facilities and receive an emergency card to carry at all times. The emergency card will include the local telephone numbers and instructions for ambulance services and use of health care facilities. The U.S. Embassy in Hanoi also maintains a listing of English-speaking health care providers.

Emotional/Psychological Health

Speak with returnees and gather as much information as possible before you leave for Vietnam.

Do not be surprised to think, “It’s not what I expected.” Expect the unexpected and be sensitive to romanticized misconceptions or unrealistic expectations. Living abroad is stressful by its very nature. Life in Vietnam, fast-paced as it is, adds crowds, noise, and a foreign surrounding. Ask for insight from locals and acknowledge that this is a valuable learning experience.

Culture shock and homesick feelings are normal. It is easy to become worn down from physical and mental stress due to the vastly different environment. To counter this, eat well, stay hydrated, get plenty of rest, share concerns with the UCEAP Resident Director, and be open to and accepting of the differences you encounter. It will make your stay more enjoyable as you adapt to the new environment.
**Prescription Medications**

Commonly prescribed U.S. medications are not available in Vietnam. If you require prescription medications, prepare to take a full supply of your prescription medications to last your entire stay abroad, provided that it is non-perishable and legal in Vietnam.

Keep your medications in containers that clearly show your name, the prescribing doctor’s name, and the prescription number to facilitate your clearance through customs. A copy of the prescription or letter from your physician with a detailed explanation (including the generic name, dosage, and purpose) should accompany all medications.

If a prescribing doctor advises against taking a large supply of medication, they should provide a note with the diagnosis and the recommended medication so that a Vietnamese physician can fill your prescription properly. In some cases, this physician may conduct an examination and confirm the diagnosis before filling the prescription provided by your doctor.

Always pack prescription medications in your carry-on luggage.

**Health Risks**

**Water and Food Safety**

Consider all local water contaminated, and boil tap water for drinking, brushing teeth, and making ice cubes (bringing water to a good rolling boil is sufficient). You may also brush your teeth with bottled water and avoid using ice cubes altogether. Bottled water is widely available; check cap seals and ensure that bottles are uncapped in your presence. Hot tea is advised as a beverage.

Much of Vietnam’s produce is contaminated by polluted water and pesticides. As a general rule, avoid eating fruits and vegetables that have not been freshly peeled and/or cooked. Avoid salads. Eat only well-cooked meat and seafood. Local dairy products are not considered safe. Use dairy products imported from New Zealand including long-life milk and butter. Contaminated food and water pose the greatest risk for travelers’ diarrhea. To reduce the risk of salmonella, avoid raw and undercooked eggs.

**Avian Flu and Other Infectious Diseases**

UCEAP continually reviews information from the CDC and World Health Organization, works closely with medical experts on the UC campuses, and monitors local host university and country health resources.

Avian flu continues to be reported among bird populations in Southeast Asia. It is important for you to exercise care while abroad and avoid poultry farms, contact with animals in live food markets, and any surfaces that appear to be contaminated with feces or fluids from poultry or other animals; also be sure to eat only thoroughly cooked poultry products. Refer to additional information on the UCEAP website.

Note that, in the event of a pandemic, UCEAP’s ability to assist students abroad may be severely limited by restrictions on local and international movement imposed for public health reasons by foreign governments and/or the U.S.
UECAP STUDENTS SAY...

“Get used to regularly putting on insect repellent and tucking in your mosquito netting at night.”

Insect Protection

There are many more insects and rodents than you may expect to see. Protect yourself from mosquito bites. Insect repellent with DEET and after-bite medication is recommended.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), mosquitoes transmit diseases such as dengue fever and malaria. Wear long sleeves, long pants, hats, and shoes (rather than sandals). For rural and forested areas, boots are preferable, with pants tucked in, to prevent tick bites. Apply insect repellents containing 25–50 percent DEET (N,N-diethyl-3-methylbenzamide) or 20 percent picaridin (Bayrepel) to exposed skin (but not to the eyes, mouth, or open wounds). DEET may also be applied to clothing.

Don’t sleep with the window open unless there is a screen. If sleeping outdoors or in an accommodation that allows entry of mosquitoes, use a bed net, preferably doused with insect repellent, with edges tucked in under the mattress. If the sleeping area is not otherwise protected, use a mosquito coil, which fills the room with insecticide through the night.

Waterborne Diseases and Parasitic Infections

To prevent serious parasitic infections, avoid swimming, wading, or rafting in bodies of fresh water, such as lakes, ponds, canals, streams, or rivers. Swim only in moving water, such as the ocean, and well chlorinated swimming pools to avoid infection with schistosomiasis.
UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

“Be aware of your surroundings.
Be prepared for pushing in crowded areas, traffic congestion, and pollution.

Women should be prepared for frequent stares, comments, and other mild forms of harassment on the street. You look different and will attract unwanted attention. Feel free to discuss this with any of the professors or UCEAP Resident Director; they can provide cultural explanations and suggestions on how to handle such situations.”

SAFETY

UCEAP takes the safety and security of participants very seriously and provides credible and timely advice during predeparture and while in Vietnam. However, as in the U.S., you are ultimately responsible for your own personal safety. Before traveling, ensure that you are fully prepared, that you are aware of any risks, and that you have mitigated them. International travel is a great opportunity, and you should know how to optimize the experience for yourself. While UCEAP provides resources aimed at facilitating a safe travel experience, it cannot ensure that your travels and stay in Vietnam will be problem-free or account for all the potential health and safety risks that you might experience.

Living and traveling in an unfamiliar environment, having a limited understanding of local language and culture, and being perceived as well-off, are some of the factors that can put you at risk. Prepare for your new environment by learning about the sociocultural norms of your host country.

Studying and living abroad requires changes in your lifestyle preferences and habits to respect the host country cultural expectations and to minimize your personal security risks.

Crime

Although most travelers in Vietnam feel relatively safe, pick-pocketing and petty crimes occur. Violent crimes such as armed robbery, kidnappings, and murder against westerners or tourists remain rare.

Drug use, which contributes significantly to the crime rate, is an increasing problem in Vietnam, particularly the increasing use of methamphetamine and intravenous drugs.

Tips for Staying Safe

- Be aware of your surroundings at all times.
- Do not resist if you are victim of a theft.
- Do not carry your passport with you after you arrive. For identification while in Hanoi, carry a photocopy of your passport identification page and student visa. When traveling outside of Hanoi, the Study Center will provide you with specific instructions on required identification.
- If you are the victim of a crime while in Vietnam, immediately report it to the Study Center, U.S. Embassy, and local police.
- If you choose to drink alcoholic beverages, do so responsibly; alcohol impairs your judgment and healthy decision making. Criminals are known to target vulnerable individuals whose judgment is impaired by intoxication.
- Do not leave drinks unattended in bars and nightclubs. Instances of drink-spiking have been reported. Drugs can easily be mixed into drinks when unattended. These drugs can disorient you, dramatically impair your judgment, or cause you to lose consciousness. Once you lose sight of your drink, do not continue drinking.
Motorcycle Robbery
Motorcyclists have been known to grab purses or other valuables items from pedestrians. This is especially dangerous if you have the straps of your purse across your upper body or around your neck. The perpetrator may drag down the victim if the straps do not break. There have been several serious injuries and fatalities as a result of this type of purse snatching. Consider using a money belt under your garments or alternative methods for carrying valuables. If you use a purse, walk with it only hanging from one shoulder facing away from the edge of the street.

Drugs
> The penalty for possession, use, or trafficking of illegal drugs in Vietnam is severe. Convicted offenders can expect long jail sentences and, in some cases, the death penalty.

Drug use is a large and growing problem in Vietnam. Heroin is the most common, but ecstasy and crystal meth are increasingly available. According to the U.S. Department of State, illicit drugs in Vietnam are extremely potent and several Americans have died of accidental overdose. Avoid drug use of all kinds.

Nightclubs
There are many nightclubs in Hanoi that are sources of entertainment, cultural exchange, and social interaction with the locals. Be aware, however, of drug use and dealing that occurs at some nightclubs and surrounding areas. Nightclubs are also a place where cultural miscommunications can get out of hand, and even lead to violent confrontation. Do not go to unfamiliar nightclubs alone or leave your drink unattended. Remember that it is always better to defuse a situation than to escalate it. When leaving a club late at night, travel in a group and take only reputable taxis.

Road & Transportation Warnings
The two most dangerous activities in Vietnam are crossing the street and driving or riding in traffic.

You are strictly prohibited from driving motorized vehicles. U.S. drivers’ licenses and international driving permits are not valid in Vietnam. You risk prosecution and/or imprisonment for illegally driving without an endorsed Vietnamese license. As any accident can lead to major safety, legal, financial, and medical consequences, UCEAP prohibits operating any kind of motor vehicle, including motorbikes, while enrolled in the program. If found in violation of this policy, you will face disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Motorbikes in Hanoi are the most common vehicles (nearly 85 percent of all local transportation). They share the road with trucks, buses, cyclists, and pedestrians, posing a serious risk of accidents, injury, and death. Despite the fact that helmet use is now mandatory, Vietnam still has the highest rate of death due to head injury in the world. Major factors in accident are youth, inexperience, and alcohol use.

Pedestrians
• Be aware that vehicles do not yield to pedestrians.
• Be alert. Watch for traffic from all directions before crossing streets, even when using a pedestrian crosswalk. Learning how to cross the street safely is an important session during orientation.
UCEAP STUDENTS SAY...

The traffic is awful. Be careful.

Crossing the street will be more difficult than you think. Imagine the 405 freeway with motorbikes—you have to bite your lip and hope everyone can dodge you.

I'm glad I survived the crazy streets.

Consult the Department of State’s Road Safety Overseas and the ASIRT (Association for Safe International Road Travel) websites for more information.

- Never dart into traffic or make sudden, jerky movements once you are in the traffic.
- Successfully crossing the street entails stepping into the traffic and moving slowly and steadily across the street. This enables oncoming motorists to gauge where you are and predict where you are going so they can avoid you. Motorbike drivers tend to ignore lights.
- Sidewalks are extremely uneven and congested, and drivers routinely ignore traffic signals and traffic flows, and even drive on sidewalks.

Public Transportation

If possible, travel during the day, using the highest class of travel available and the most direct booking. If overnight travel is required, reserve a lockable cabin. Avoid traveling alone.

Most Vietnamese travel within Vietnam by long-distance bus or train. Both are slow, and safety conditions do not approach U.S. standards. Local buses and taxis are available in some areas, particularly in the larger cities. Safety standards vary depending on the individual company operating the service, but are generally much lower than what exists in the U.S.

Traffic & Road Conditions

Traffic in Vietnam is chaotic, and accidents occur frequently. The most common victims are motorbike riders and pedestrians. At least 30 people die each day from transportation-related injuries and many more are injured, often with traumatic head injuries.

Driving standards and vehicle and road maintenance are generally poor.

Traffic accident injuries are the leading cause of death, significant injury, and emergency evacuation of foreigners in Vietnam. Traffic accidents, including those involving a pedestrian and a motorized vehicle, present the single greatest health and safety risk to U.S. citizens in Vietnam. Exercise extra caution in the countryside, as road conditions are particularly poor in rural areas.

The road system throughout Vietnam is underdeveloped, and traffic rules are widely ignored. The lack of open sidewalks and adequate traffic controls creates a precarious situation for all pedestrians and motorists. It is not uncommon for visitors/residents to be involved in some type of road incident while attempting to cross one of the many motorcycle-clogged streets in Hanoi.

Flooding

Be aware of massive street flooding that commonly occurs in many of the cities during the rainy season. Many city streets are not equipped with the proper sewage systems needed for draining the large amount of rainfall that occurs in a short amount of time. This inordinate amount of rainfall often overwhelms the capacity of the existing infrastructure, causing flooding that makes navigating the streets difficult.

Taking Photographs

Taking photographs of anything that could be perceived as being of police, military, or security interest is illegal, and punishment can be severe. Be cautious when traveling near military bases and avoid photography in these areas.
**Emergency Contacts**

**What Is an Emergency?**
An emergency is a serious, unexpected, and often dangerous situation requiring immediate action. The following are considered emergencies:

- Any life/death situation
- A traumatic event requiring immediate assistance
- An arrest
- Civil unrest or natural disaster in the host country

**In an Emergency**
Contact local emergency services first and then contact the following:

**If you are in the U.S.**
- During office hours (8 a.m.–5 p.m. Pacific Time): Contact your Operations Specialist at the UCEAP Systemwide Office
- After office hours: Call the 24-hour emergency phone number at (805) 893-4762

**If you are abroad**
Carry the local emergency contact information at all times:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambulance</td>
<td>115</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>113</td>
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</tbody>
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Emergency operators may not speak English. During an emergency, seek assistance from the Study Center and the U.S. embassy.

**U.S. Embassy in Hanoi**
American Citizen Services
Rose Garden Building
Second Floor
170 Ngoc Khanh St.
Hanoi, Vietnam

**Phone:** (84-4) 3850-5000 ext. 6133  
**Fax:** (84-4) 3850-5010

**Regular Hours:** Monday through Friday: 8–11:30 a.m., 1–3 p.m. by appointment only

**After-Hours Emergencies:** (84-4) 3850-5000  
**E-mail:** acshanoi@state.gov  
**Web:** vietnam.usembassy.gov/uscitizenservices.html

If you have a health, travel, or safety emergency and do not have access to local or UCEAP representative emergency information, contact the UCEAP travel assistance provider, Europ Assistance, available 24/7:

- **Call international collect:** 1+202-828-5896 or
- **Call within the U.S.:** 1+866-451-7606  
- **E-mail:** ops@europassistance-usa.com