

Nicaragua Safety, Health, and Security

Be Prepared: Use International ISOS. By now, you have registered with International SOS. Prepare for your visit to Nicaragua by visiting their website (<http://www.internationalsos.com/>), signing in with Northwestern’s group membership number (11BCAS000003), and reading the **Medical Tools** pages as well as the **Security Tools**.

ISOS Travel Security Risk Summary on Nicaragua: “Protracted economic problems and the resultant high levels of unemployment fuel rising crime. Most crime is economically motivated rather than drug-related. Armed robbery from banks and business premises in main towns has increased substantially, but violent assaults on foreign visitors are rare. Petty, opportunistic crime is the main risk to business travellers, particularly in towns, though high unemployment also makes it a feature of rural areas. In the capital Managua, the main risks stem from crime and civil disturbances.

Carjacking, robberies, assaults and stabbings, have been increasing in the poorer neighborhoods of Managua. Purse- and jewellery-snatching from motorists is known to occur at stoplights. Youth gang violence has been blamed for a significant portion of the high homicide and violent crime rate. Most violence occurs between rival gang members, but foreign visitors face a risk of random attack.

Street blockades may be set up for political demonstrations and strikes that sporadically occur. Protests are especially common whenever international economic forums are held in country, or during local meetings conducted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the US-Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) or the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).”

Recent alerts on the ISOS website have been related to political protests in Managua. We do not anticipate any demonstrations in Ciudad Sandino, but know that GESI students are not allowed to participate in protests.

Emergency Phone Numbers	
United States Embassy in Managua 2-252-7100	FSD San Francisco’s Office (1-415) 283 4875
You should call all of the following numbers if your credit card have been stolen or lost: Equifax 1-800-525-6285 Experian 1-800-397-3742 Trans Union 1-800-680-7289	
Program Director María de Jesús Zepeda: Ciudad Sandino Instituto Augusto C. Sandino 2 cuadras abajo 1cuadra al sur Telf. 505-88656584, 86107025	
International Program Coordinator Jenna Harvey De los bomberos, media cuadra al sur, frente de la biblioteca Telf. 87707135	

Local Program Coordinator

Karen López

Ciudad Sandino Instituto Augusto C. Sandino 2, cuadras abajo 1 cuadra al sur

Telf. 505-89889061

Health.

General health preparation is covered in your FSD Predeparture Packet. **If you are ill (and it is not an emergency), FIRST please contact the FSD site team and your host family.** In addition, here is a list of medical contacts that you should have with you at all times. Program them into your cell phone.

FSD-recommended Doctors

- Ciudad Sandino Dra. María Elena Cortez
- Masaya: Dr. Bravo

FSD-recommended Hospitals

Managua/Ciudad Sandino			Masaya
First Option	Second Option	Third Option	Hospital público de Masaya 505-2522-4166
Hospital Vivian Pellas Carretera a Masaya, Km. 9.8, 250 metros al oeste, Telf. #2-255-6900	Hospital Militar Lomas de Tiscapa Telf. # 2-222-2763/ 2-222-2765	Hospital Bautista Barrio Largaespada Telf. 2-249-7070	Clínica privada Dr. Bravo médico internista 505-2522-2778 505-2522-3075

Remember, HTH can also help direct you to the nearest physician or hospital. Call (collect) **+1.610.254.8771**. **ISOS** can “advise you, help you select the correct doctor and hospital, and make any necessary appointments on your behalf.” Call **+1 (215) 942 8226**.

Northwestern Contacts. If any incident arises that involves your on-site administrators and you do not feel comfortable broaching an issue with them (including, but not limited to, discrimination or sexual harassment), please know that you can contact staff members at the NU GESI Office:

- Brian Hanson: bhanson@northwestern.edu, **847-491-5058; cell: 847-660-3771**
- Nicole Patel: nicole-patel@northwestern.edu, **847-467-0844; cell: 847-602-3616**

Mental Health. Your mental health is critical to your success on GESI and to your overall wellbeing. If there is anything that you think the FSD site team, your host family, or GESI staff might need to know about your mental health history in order to help you stay healthy while you are abroad, don’t hesitate to let us know. As long as you are not a risk to yourself or others, we will keep this information confidential.

While you are in country, the FSD site team is always available to discuss your mental health and to provide you with recommendations for mental health care. If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, contact the FSD staff on their cell phones. Alternatively, Northwestern’s Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) has a crisis counselor on-duty 24 hours a day. During daytime (CST), call **(847) 491-2151**. After hours, call **(847) 491-8100**. Ask to speak to the crisis counselor on duty. They will help you talk through your situation and decide what next steps to take.

The Northwestern University Study Abroad Office and Counseling and Psychological Services has put together a helpful web resource to assist you in caring for your mental health abroad. You can access it here: http://www.northwestern.edu/studyabroad/health_safety/Mental_Health_Abroad.html.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

You may already identify yourself as a heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender student, or you may still be exploring these issues. In either case, you will find that the social climate, laws, and personal interactions of your host culture often differ from the U.S.

Gender roles in your host country may differ greatly from those in the U.S. You may choose not to behave in exactly the same ways a local men and women do; however, it's important to educate yourself about cultural gender roles within your host community in order to make sensitive choices about how you will behave while abroad, and to understand how your personal views and opinions may be interpreted by your host culture.

In preparing for GESI, it will be important for you to research the LGBT climate of Nicaragua. You should be informed about specific laws pertaining to sexual behavior and sexual/gender orientation. When doing your research, try to ascertain:

- The legality of same-sex sexual behavior (sometimes male-male sexual behavior while female-female sexual behavior is not)
- The age consent for sexual behavior
- Restrictions on freedom of association or expression for LGBT people
- Anti-discrimination laws
- Sodomy laws

Your FSD Predeparture Packet includes a short summary of attitudes and laws relating to gender and sexuality, but you may want to conduct your own research in order to understand the complete picture and increase your comfort level before arriving in-country.

For more on this topic, visit the NAFSA Rainbow Special Interest Group website (<http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/student.htm>). This is a very comprehensive site on issues of concern to lesbian and gay students abroad. Another site with Nicaragua-specific resources is <http://www.iglhrc.org/cgi-bin/iowa/region/105.html>.