

# Power of Attorney

## Power of Attorney

Many students who are studying, working, or traveling abroad appoint a trusted person to take care of their personal, business, and financial affairs while they are out of the country. The Learning Abroad Center recommends that all students, especially financial aid students, arrange for a Power of Attorney. Some instances when a Power of Attorney may be necessary are:

- Completing financial aid paperwork
- Handling issues related to deposit of financial aid checks
- Processing banking transactions, including checks made payable to you and the University of Minnesota
- Processing insurance transactions
- Filing of tax returns
- Addressing leases and housing issues

## What are the steps to assigning a Power of Attorney?

Granting a 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 (Attorney in Fact) in specific situations. There are two ways to go about assigning Power of Attorney. The first is to make an appointment with an attorney or other type of legal service to draft a Power of Attorney document. This may require a fee which will cover advice on the legal implications of assigning Power of Attorney, the drafting of a Power of Attorney document, and the notarizing of that document. If you are a University of Minnesota–Twin Cities student, the Student Legal Services (SLS) are free to all current fee-paying Twin Cities students. They do not charge. If you are a student from another college, check with your home institution to find out if you have legal services available to you.

The second approach does not require a lawyer's assistance and involves purchasing a generic Power of Attorney form from an office supply store, filling it out yourself, and then having your signature(s) notarized.

A Power of Attorney is a legal document with serious implications, the Learning Abroad Center strongly recommends that you seek legal advice before drafting a Power of Attorney document. Note: If someone is currently taking care of your financial paperwork, this does not mean they have Power of Attorney. It may only be granted by completing the legal document with a notarized signature.

## Who should I ask to be my Attorney in Fact?

Select a person you consider trustworthy to make decisions in your best interests and sign on your behalf. Most students select a parent, long-term significant other, or long-term friend. A casual acquaintance is not recommended. Staff in study abroad offices should not be asked to act on your behalf as it may be considered a conflict of interest.

## What type of Power of Attorney form do I need?

There are several types of Power of Attorney forms. Students usually only need to complete the statutory short form, as you will most likely limit the powers granted and the duration.

## How can the Student Legal Services help me with a Power of Attorney?

As a University of Minnesota student and paying the student service fee at the time you were accepted on a study abroad program, you are entitled to use the services of the Student Legal Services (SLS) office located at 160 West Bank Skyway. SLS can provide you with a Power of Attorney form and advise you on the legal implications of assigning various powers to another individual. For current fee-paying University of Minnesota students, there is no charge for these services. Appointments can be made online at [sls.umn.edu](https://sls.umn.edu) or calling **612-624-1001** to make an appointment. Be sure to take proof of your student status to your initial appointment. If you choose not to use SLS, consult with a lawyer recommended by family or friends.

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

The Power of Attorney should include the entire time you plan to be away, including terms of study, work, and travel.

## Who should I notify that I have granted a Power of Attorney?

You should provide a copy of the Power of Attorney form to the Office of Student Finance and the office sponsoring the program you have selected, if they will be processing financial aid paperwork or payments for you while you are away. Also, provide a copy to the Learning Abroad Center in case your contact person needs to contact us.

## How far in advance should I begin arranging Power of Attorney?

You should take care of arranging your Power of Attorney well in advance of your departure and notify the appropriate offices. There can be up to a five-day waiting period if you use the services of SLS to complete the Power of Attorney forms.

## LEARNING ABROAD CENTER

230 Heller Hall, 271 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55455  
612.626.900 | [UMabroad@umn.edu](mailto:UMabroad@umn.edu) | [UMabroad.umn.edu](https://UMabroad.umn.edu)