MA in Humanitarian Assistance & Crisis Management

Preparing for the Program 2026-27

HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR ARRIVAL IN COUNTRY

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School for International Training | 1 Kipling Road, PO Box 676 | Brattleboro, VT 05302-0676 USA
Tel 802 258-3112 | Fax 802 258-3110 | graduate.sit.edu

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LOCAL CULTURE, CUSTOMS, FOOD & TRANSPORT

There are numerous guidebooks and online resources for Jordan and Morocco that students are strongly encouraged to research and read prior to departure. To learn about local customs and culture, check out the **Culture Smart: The essential guide to customs and cultures** series, though check the publication date to ensure the most up to date edition. For a list of other guidebooks, click here.

PRE-DEPARTURE MEETINGS

Approximately one month prior to departure, students will be invited to two virtual meetings with admissions, program chair and country coordination teams to go over program expectations and highlights, arrival day and orientation, health, safety, and well-being, and answer all student questions. These meetings will be recorded but all students are strongly encouraged to attend.

ARRIVAL AND ORIENTATION

In Jordan and Morocco students will be met at the airport by an SIT Graduate Institute staff member on the first day of the program. The first several days in each country are an orientation period for students to get accustomed to life in that country prior to the start of classes. The group will be staying in a hostel or modest hotel together during orientation before moving into their permanent housing. Please note that, while not recommended, students can arrive earlier than the start date, but they are responsible for all expenses including transportation from the airport and hotel costs. Orientation in each location will include a cultural orientation, while the orientation in Jordan also will include getting-to-know-you activities and information about SIT and the Humanitarian Assistance & Crisis Management program's degree requirements.

> **Commented [BA1]:** Perhaps we should also refer to the fact that students arriving before the beginning of the program will not benefit from SIT health insurance

ACADEMICS

SIT's teaching and learning philosophy is grounded in the experiential learning theory developed by Robert Kolb (1984; 2015) and informed by scholars such as John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Kurt Lewin. Experiential learning theory recognizes that learning is an active process that expands beyond formal curricula and that involves both content (what you learn) and process (how you learn).

What does this mean for you as a Global Masters student? By the conclusion of your program, you can expect to have achieved the following Learning Outcomes (which include knowledge, skills, and awareness):

- Demonstrate knowledge of humanitarian aid and crisis management as an interdisciplinary field encompassing legal, political, ethical, and professional standards and frameworks as well as critical practice.
- Demonstrate professional competencies and leaderships skills needed in the field of crisis management and humanitarian action, including the competencies to plan, deliver, and advocate for humanitarian assistance in collaboration with all stakeholders in the context of emergencies.
- Apply ethically sound methods to identify, study, and innovate solutions to plan, respond, and advocate for humanitarian aid and human rights of forcibly displaced and disaster-affected populations.
- Articulate global and comparative perspectives on the humanitarian sphere relating to causes of the humanitarian crisis; social, health, and political impacts; and responses across different environmental, socioeconomic, and geopolitical contexts.
- Apply fundamental research skills to conceptualize, design, and develop a unique capstone project in the form of a research-based paper, a policy-advocacy paper, or an evidence-based recommendation that addresses gaps or needs in a humanitarian crisis.
- Design a risk analysis and crisis management plan.

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To achieve these Outcomes, you will participate in a wide variety of learning experiences (e.g., readings, lectures, discussions with professors in class and with local experts, research, visits to local sites of practice) and opportunities for reflection (e.g., in-class discussions, preparing projects and presentations, writing papers). Your learning also will benefit from the vast diversity of cultural backgrounds, training, and teaching styles of your faculty.

Please note that as an accredited institution, all SIT courses are required to meet minimum regulations regarding the earning of graduate credit. Thus, students will spend approximately 15 hours in class and related activities plus 30 hours in individual and/or group work, for a total of 45 hours, for each credit earned.

WHERE CLASSES ARE HELD

In Jordan students will be attending classes at the SIT Program Center. In Morocco students will attend classes at Langzone Rabat. A few classes will be field based either at NGO offices or Humanitarian assistance sites such as refugee settlements or complex emergency centers for landslide victims.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

A typical week in each location will include approximately four or five class sessions ranging from two to three hours each, as well as site visits and time for completing course readings, working on projects or papers, and personal reflection.

LOCAL LANGUAGE LEARNING

While the program does not offer credit-bearing language courses, students will receive basic language training in Arabic while in Jordan and Morocco, along with basic cultural etiquette. If students would like additional language training, they can arrange private lessons at their own cost, and/or enroll in Mango Language Learning which is free at the SIT Library. Access to Mango Languages will begin on the first day of orientation.

PRACTICUM

Beginning in the first semester in Jordan, you will meet with the program chair prior to the practicum search process. SIT will support you in finding an approved practicum in the field of humanitarian assistance and crisis management in a global location. You will also have access to an online career workshop run by SIT's Career and Practicum Service Center, which will guide you in the practicum application process

You will meet with the practicum instructor multiple times throughout the year to facilitate a well-chosen practicum that aligns with your professional trajectory. During the third semester (your practicum semester), you will meet regularly and remotely with your practicum instructor and cohort to discuss practicum experiences across institutional, cultural, geographical, and political settings.

CAPSTONE

Upon completion and approval of their Capstone proposal and Human Subjects Review application students demonstrate, assess, and synthesize their learning through the preparation of a capstone project and participation in a one-week capstone seminar at the end of their program. Researching and writing the capstone paper takes you deeply into the experiential learning cycle, where you'll explore the meaning of your reflective practice experience, integrate theory and practice in a written and oral presentation, and make a contribution to the field of humanitarian assistance and crisis management.

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SIT EMAIL - LIBRARY - CANVAS ACCESS

Approximately 30 days before the start of the program, all students will receive an encrypted message from SIT's IT department with their SIT email address and login. Once students log into their account the first time, they will find an email from the SIT library with information about how to log into the library and SIT's Canvas site. SIT uses Canvas as our learning management system.

COMMUNICATION & MONEY

Students may want to be in regular communication with friends and family from home during the term abroad, but please bear in mind that different time zones, unreliable phone lines, and changing program activities can complicate communication.

It's important to be clear with family and friends about your availability during your Global Master's program. SIT Graduate Institute recommends moderating time on social media to engage locally. Constant communication with friends and family at home can impact your ability to acculturate.

PHONES

As part of SIT's commitment to student safety and security, all students are required to have a working smart phone capable of making and receiving both local and international calls throughout the duration of the program. For that purpose, students are required to either (a) bring an open, unlocked smart phone from home to the program that can accept a local SIM card, and is compatible with and usable at the program location, (b) work with the program director within the first week upon arrival in country to purchase a smart phone locally, or (c) bring a dual SIM smart phone. DO NOT purchase an international plan. It is critical that you have a local SIM with a local telephone number to connect.

MONEY

It's best to bring a debit card to withdraw money in local currency rather than bringing cash. All students must contact their bank to let them know of their travel plans and dates so that the debit card is unlocked in all locations. US banks can also provide a list of ATM machines in each country that is compatible with students' debit cards. It is also advisable to alert your credit card companies that you will be traveling for twelve months. SIT does not recommend students open local bank accounts.

MONEY TRANSFER

Wise.com is an international money transfer service that is safe, and charges low rates should students need to transfer money to local bank accounts.

ADDRESS IN COUNTRY

Receiving a package at the program sites can be expensive and problematic. Customs agents must inspect all packages and students, as the recipients, are responsible for any fees. In addition, there are cases of items being lost in the mail or taking so long to reach the recipient that the recipient is nearly back in the US by the time the items are received. For these reasons, sending packages should be done only for emergency situations. Additionally, sending valuables is highly discouraged. SIT does not forward student mail and cannot be responsible for lost mail.

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Despite cheaper prices, reliance on the US Postal Service is not advised due to delays and unreliability. If it is an emergency and necessary for someone to send you mail, then program staff can assist you with the most appropriate address to give the sender. Posted letters and packages should be sent via DHL as this is the service that we have had the most success with for international mail. When given the option, it's always a good idea to send packages certified and with a tracking number that allows the sender to track the package.

FREETIME

SIT Graduate Institute encourages students to schedule visits from friends and family in each location after the conclusion of the formal program when possible. Students are expected to engage in all program activities and coursework during the academic semester. Students will not be excused from program components to attend to visitors. Please note that visitors are responsible for their own accommodations and travel expenses.

TRAVEL

Independent travel is permitted on the weekends and assigned breaks. During orientation in each country the SIT staff will provide guidelines for independent travel.

FAMILY & PARTNERS

SIT Graduate Institute recognizes that, on occasion, students may wish to have a "companion" (defined as an immediate family member, or partner, to include dependent children) accompany them on their semester abroad. It is important to recognize that the academic and acculturation components require extensive time and energy. Students are expected to engage in every program activity including site visits, excursions, courses, and guest lectures. There are long days with sometimes unpredictable itinerary shifts due to local realities and rigorous academic assignments. SIT requests that students intending to host a companion provide SIT with at least 90 days' notice of the request. All such requests require approval from SIT. Please contact Student Health, Safety & Well-Being office for more information.

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