No matter where you are living, Villa Natalia, Villa Colletta, an off-campus residence, or a homestay, you should receive your mail at Villa Natalia. Simply give your friends and family the following address:

Your Name  
c/o New York University  
Villa Natalia  
Via Bolognese 106  
50139 Florence, Italy

Please advise friends and family that they must include their return address and your full name on all mail they send to you. It is possible that mail without a return address mail will not be delivered due to security concerns.

Students’ mailboxes are located on the ground floor of Villa Natalia in the lobby area. There is a slot for each letter of the alphabet, and mail is divided according to the student’s last name. Please remember to check the mailboxes often as mail and other types of notices from the OSL are placed here.

The Italian Customs Office is very strict about inspection and customs fees, so it is advisable not to order items online from outside the EU or have care packages sent from outside the EU by your friends and family.

Please note that five categories of shipped items are automatically stopped for mandatory inspections which result in fees you must pay before receiving your package. The cost for clearing these items can be VERY high, so please think twice before sending them.

The five categories of items to AVOID OR LIMIT are:

1) food items  
2) cosmetics or personal hygiene items (even toothpaste, shampoo ...)  
3) medicine (including vitamins)  
4) electronics  
5) new clothing

Please remember the following tips:

❖ Many of the more well-known American food brands can be bought in specialty stores and in supermarkets in Florence. Imported food undergoes mandatory Health Department checks which entail more fees added to your shipment. You cannot ask for exemption from customs duty for food items.

❖ Most common cosmetics and personal hygiene products can easily be bought in Florence, though the brands might be different. Both cosmetics and personal hygiene items also undergo the mandatory Health Department check and fee.

❖ Many medications are available locally and economically, and the Customs Office will not allow you to import them if they exist in Italy. If there is no exact equivalent of your medication in Italy, and you must have medicine sent, the Customs Office will require that a form be signed by an Italian doctor and that you pay customs fees, which can be costly. Processing can take several weeks. Some medications cannot be imported into Italy from outside the EU at all. For
example, ADHD medications may not be shipped from outside the EU, as these are considered controlled substances in Italy. Students must bring a full supply of such medications with them to Florence or, alternatively, have a family member or friend bring the medication to them at some point during the semester.

- Regarding electronics, the value on new items is high, and the corresponding VAT taxes to pay (21% of the declared value) are consequently very high. The importation of new electronic items (especially computers) is always blocked by Customs and very, very expensive to clear.

- Whenever possible, have the sender request the option “free domicile” which should ensure that the recipient of the package will only have customs fees to pay (should there be any) and no other transportation fees. When the “free domicile” option is not chosen, the transportation cost from the Italian border to final destination (Florence) is often added to the delivery cost. The sender should also avoid the word “gift” on the list of contents and should always put “used personal items, no commercial value” when applicable, especially when shipping clothing. Again, the VAT tax, when new items are imported to Italy, is approximately 21% of the declared value of the contents.

- When sending items through the Post Office, always choose the option that provides a tracking number. Without this number, it is almost impossible to obtain information on a lost or delayed package. All courier-sent packages are automatically provided with a tracking number, which is essential in tracing a delayed shipment. We also recommend that you avoid receiving important documents through the United States Postal Service’s regular mail, as their tracking system is limited to packages sent within the United States, and the delivery is not rapid.

- The Customs Office will not separate the contents of a shipment, so you cannot ask to receive part of the package’s contents and leave the “problematic” items to be returned to the sender. Each shipment carries its own number and contents paperwork and this cannot be altered in any way.

The Villa Natalia reception staff accepts and distributes mail during regular hours of operation (Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM), sorts the mail, and places it on the mail shelf in the lobby of Villa Natalia. Packages and registered mail are held until the addressees request them and sign them out at the reception. Yellow notices in your mail grid indicate that a package or registered mail has been received and no charges are due, while red notices indicate that delivery charge costs must first be provided to the Office of Student Life before the package can be delivered and signed out. The reception staff will only release packages and registered mail to the person to whom the mail is addressed. If the Office of Student Life receives mail for you after your departure at the end of the program, the staff will ask the courier or postal worker to return the mail to its sender.

We sincerely hope these mailing guidelines will help you know what can easily be sent and what is better not to have sent, in addition to helping save your money in the process.