

Congratulations!

You've been accepted into a study abroad program and will soon be on your way to the adventure of a lifetime! Whether your program is for a few days over the Spring Break or for an entire academic year, the experience will be valuable to you for years to come.

You don't want to get to your destination and find that you've forgotten something important. We've written this handbook so you would know what to do to get ready and what to do once you've arrived.

Make sure you read everything so you don't miss any vital pieces of advice. You'll enjoy your time abroad much more if you're prepared.

Congratulations again on your decision to study abroad and on your acceptance into a study abroad program.

Sincerely,

The Study Abroad Center Staff

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Checklist

All students

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If you'll be gone more than 2-3 weeks

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If you'll be gone more than one semester

- ___ Make plans to pre-register for your semester of return
- ___ Make graduation arrangements, if necessary
- ___ Make plans for your return

If you will be traveling before or after your program

- ___ Make travel arrangements

Registering For Your Program

- **If you're doing a short-term or group study abroad program receiving ISU credit** – this includes the programs offered over Spring Break, Winter Interim, Summer, Design in Rome, and several other programs – you will register for your program by on-line registration, using the ISU course number provided by your program leader, unless otherwise instructed.

- **If you're transferring credit back to ISU and are NOT going on an exchange** – this includes Iowa Regents' Semester in Wales, Australia, or Ireland; Semester in New Zealand; or any program not coordinated through ISU – you will be registered by the Registrar's Office after you have clicked "commit" in ISUAbroad.

For students going on any program NOT coordinated through ISU – you'll be registered by the Registrar's Office after you have clicked "commit" in ISU-Abroad.

In either case, you will be registered for INTED (International Education) credit, which will keep you in student status at ISU and will allow your ISU financial aid to be released when it's time to pay for your program. The INTED credits will be replaced by the credit you bring back on your transcript from your time abroad.

- **If you're doing an exchange program** – the Registrar's Office will register you for EXPRO (Exchange Program) credit after you've clicked "commit" in ISUAbroad, which will keep you in student status at ISU and will allow your ISU financial aid to be released when it's time to pay for your program. The EXPRO credits will be replaced by the credit you bring back on your transcript from your time abroad.

- **For ANY program (exchange, non-exchange, or non-ISU) receiving transfer credit** – You will **register for your classes at your host school**, typically during the week or day prior to the opening of the semester (few non-U.S. institutions have pre-registration a semester ahead as you are familiar with here at ISU).

- At the conclusion of your term of study, make sure that an **official transcript** will be sent to ISU from the school you attend. Your credits, but not your grades, will be entered onto your ISU transcript and will appear as Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory; the **grades for transfer credit will appear** on the "Credit Transfer Evaluation" that is sent to your adviser and may affect whether or not your credits earned can be used toward graduation and/or toward your course requirements.

Apply for your passport

- **You will need:**

- an official passport application (which you can download from the State Department website at <http://travel.state.gov> or pick up at the Downtown Post Office in Ames – check with your local Post Office or Courthouse if you're applying from outside of the Ames area);
- a previous passport or a certified copy of your birth certificate (If you don't have this, write to the Records Department at the courthouse in the county in which you were born to request one; it must have the raised seal to be accepted as a certified copy)
- two identical 2"x 2" passport photos (these can be done at the Study Abroad Center or any of several other places in town);
- a photo ID (your Driver's License is good); and
- two checks: one to the Postmaster to execute the application and another to the U.S. Department of State for the actual passport.

- **Processing time varies.** If you're in a hurry, talk to the personnel at the Passport Office about expediting your application (there's an additional charge for this service). There are also services that will walk your application through for you for \$150 or less. **Get your passport** as soon as you have been accepted by your program!

Apply for your visa, if required

- **If a visa is required**, you can obtain the necessary application forms from the Consulate or the Embassy of the country you're visiting or through your travel agent. Some countries require that you send photos, a financial statement, a medical report, your acceptance letter from the school you'll be attending, and payment for a visa. **You have to send your passport with your application (the visa will be stamped into your passport).** This is another good reason not to delay obtaining your passport: If you must wait the full six weeks for the passport, and then send it along and wait an additional several weeks for your visa, you might not be prepared in time for your program!

Make housing arrangements, if necessary

- **On short-term programs**, housing is usually included in the cost of the program, and arrangements for housing (and often for meals) will have already been made. A few programs offer a home-stay option for at least part of the duration of the program, which you may want to consider. It's a great way to get a feel for the country you're visiting and really get to know some people who live there.

- **On semester programs and exchange programs**, you will sometimes have

a choice of lodging arrangements (such as dormitory, home-stay, and private apartments). If you're staying in a dormitory or apartment, you might have the option of whether to share a room with someone from the host country (or with another international student) instead of someone from your own program. Take your lifestyle preferences into account when choosing, of course, but don't automatically select the "safe" approach of rooming with someone you already know. Having a roommate from the host country or another country can be a wonderful way of exploring other cultures. Check with the coordinator of your program if you're unsure of the housing options available or don't know whether housing and meals are included in the cost of your program. Be aware that you may have to pay for room and/or board in advance and may have to bring references.

Make arrangements for payment of your program expenses

- **ISU programs**, whether short-term or semester-long or for a full academic year, will be billed to your ISU account, visible on AccessPlus. Instructions regarding due dates and installment payments will accompany your bill. Typically, the cost of a program will be added to your bill at the same point in the semester that financial aid for that term is released. As a result, especially for short-term Summer programs, you may have already returned from your program before the bill for it arrives. Academic-year programs will be billed as two separate semester charges, just as when you're here on campus.
- If your financial aid is greater than the cost of your program, or if you've prepaid part or all of your program fee before financial aid is released, the difference will be refunded to you if all your other university obligations (parking tickets, overdue library book fines, etc.) have been met. The funds will be direct-deposited to your bank. Be sure you have completed a direct deposit authorization.
- If you are participating in a semester or exchange program that includes tuition and fees but not room and board, you will be responsible for those additional charges at the host institution. Some home-stays are paid directly to the family, but in most cases your lodging, and often your meal plan, will be billed to you by the host institution. A few programs have housing (and some meals) built into the program cost but allow the students to choose to live off-campus. In that case, the host institution will be responsible for refunding to you the costs of accommodations (and meals, if included).
- **If your program is not through ISU**, you are responsible for arranging billing and payment with the institution sponsoring your program. If you're re-

ceiving ISU financial aid, and if you have no outstanding debts to the university (parking tickets, overdue library book fines, etc.), the funds will be direct-deposited to your bank. You can then use these funds to pay for your program through the sponsoring institution.

If your financial aid will be released after your program departs

- Make arrangements through AccessPlus for automatic deposit into your bank account.
- Be sure the Registrar's Office has your forwarding address, or the address of a friend or family member in this country, especially if you are not going to make arrangements for automatic deposit.
- Release your aid via AccessPlus (contact Shannon Grundmeier in Student Financial Aid if you're uncertain how to do this; studyabroadfi-naid@iastate.edu).

Make an appointment with ISU's Travel Nurse

- **Update your immunizations**, regardless of where you're going. Don't ruin a trip to the beach by wondering whether that scratch you got on the coral will result in tetanus! Depending on where you're going, you may need to begin medication or injections to prevent malaria, yellow fever, and a host of other diseases not common in the U.S. Check with the Travel Clinic (294-4474) on campus or with your personal physician regarding what you'll need.
- **Medical and dental check-ups** are a good idea, too, especially if your program is going to be physically rigorous or if you'll be gone more than a few weeks. Get any problems taken care of before you travel, and get any prescriptions you'll need written and refilled. A toothache is no fun at home and is even worse when you're nowhere near a dentist who speaks English!

Check with your health insurance provider

- **Medical insurance** is a necessity (In fact, ISU requires that all students going abroad have proof of health insurance before leaving). Check your current policy to see whether you have coverage when outside the U.S. If not, see if such coverage is available on a short-term basis (for the length of your studies plus your travel time) for policy-holders. Be aware that you will have to pay the doctor's or hospital's bill and then submit a claim to be reimbursed.
- **If your insurance carrier won't cover you outside the U.S.** and doesn't have a supplemental policy you can purchase through them, there are other sources to consider. Check with the company that provides your auto or renter/homeowner insurance to see whether they have a policy that will meet your

needs. Check, too, with the Study Abroad Center. Brochures are available from several companies that offer health insurance on a short-term basis to students who will be studying abroad. Be aware, however, that most of these companies only offer basic coverage for accidents and health emergencies and that you will have to pay the doctor's or hospital's bill and then submit a claim and wait to be reimbursed.

Apply for an International Student Identity Card

- **The International Student Identity Card (ISIC)** is required of all students studying abroad on an Iowa State University program. At \$26, it can prove to be one of your best investments. Not only will it make you eligible for discounted airfare (domestic and international), but it also provides a supplemental health insurance policy (for such unforeseen but expensive events such as emergency medical evacuation or repatriation of remains) and a 24-hour-a-day traveler's assistance service (for assistance in any language in the event of theft of your passport, need for medical or legal referral, etc.). Application forms and processing of applications are available at the Study Abroad Center or at any STA Travel office (on-line at <http://www.myisic.com>). If you don't obtain your ISIC at the Study Abroad Center, you'll need to contact SAC with your ID number.

Make travel arrangements, if not included in your program

- **Airline tickets** may have been purchased for you in advance by your program leader, especially if you're participating in a short-term group program. If you are responsible for making your own flight arrangements, you'll want to start making phone inquiries as soon as you know your required arrival date. Several agencies give discounts to students; ask for this when you contact an agent. Also consider contacting some or all of the agencies listed below; they specialize in discounted fares for students (not just airfare, either: many also handle BritRail and Eurail passes, bus tickets, etc.).

- **Rail passes**, bus passes, and plane passes are another consideration, especially if you will be doing a lot of traveling on your own before, during, and/or after your program. Some passes are only available for purchase in the U.S. (you can't get them in Europe, though regular tickets are available there, and Inter-rail Passes can be purchased if you've been a resident for at least six months). Several different types of passes exist, and which one you need depends on how much traveling you'll be doing over what period of time. Available from your travel agent, your agent will be able to help you determine what kind of pass, if any, will be best for you.

- **Discounts** are available to students for all kinds of travel-related services.

Several agencies give student discounts on airfare, rail passes, and other transportation. The agencies used most often by ISU students include:

- STA Travel (1-800-226-8624)
- KITT (1-800-282-8212)
- Educational Travel Center (1-800-747-5551)
- AAA (233-6636 in Ames; 1-800-222-1333 elsewhere)

These agencies typically purchase blocks of seats from various airlines and then resell the seats to students at prices that are usually lower than those available from commercial travel agencies or from the airlines. Because one agency might have sold out its seats on a certain flight while another may still have seats available, it's always a good idea to contact more than one discount agency when making flight arrangements. Talk to these agencies, too, about rail passes, bus schedules, etc.

Make a realistic budget

- **Use the budget worksheet** in the "Money" section of this handbook to help you determine what your expenses will be. Be sure to include airfare, ground transportation (taxi, bus, train), and other "major" expenses as well as the "little things" like phone calls (local and international), snacks, gifts for friends and family, postage, etc.

- **Get your finances under control.** Pay any outstanding bills (including rent and utilities) before you go, or turn them over to a trusted friend to pay (consider temporary Power of Attorney status for whoever will be taking care of things for you). Buy travelers' checks and check with your bank to learn whether your credit card and/or ATM card will be accepted in the country where you'll be and what the charges per transaction might be.

Learn about where you're going

- Check out the resources at **the public library**, or stop by the **Study Abroad Center library** and borrow videotapes and/or books on a variety of topics, including specific countries, how to pack, traveling alone, tour options, etc.

- **Travel information** can be obtained in a variety of ways. **Bookstores** stock or can order books, maps, travel guides, videotapes, etc., on any country you'd like. [Survival Kit for Overseas Living](#) (see the Bibliography in the "Resources" section of this handbook) is an excellent resource, too.

- **Country-specific information** also be obtained through the State Department Travel Warnings and Consular Information Sheets and the State Department Background Notes (both at <http://travel.state.gov> in the left margin) and in the

CultureGrams (Study Abroad Center library in the Memorial Union or at <http://www.culturegrams.com>).

- Talk to your **travel agent**, too, about places to see, places to avoid, and average costs. Check the **World-Wide Web** for information (use the country name and “tourism” as keywords), and check the “Resources” section of this Handbook.
- For **health-related information**, including necessary vaccinations and medications, check the Centers for Disease Control’s website at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm> or contact the ISU Travel Nurse at 294-4474.
- **News broadcasts and newspapers** are other good sources of current information on the various countries you’ll be visiting. Visit www.onlinenewspapers.com. Check for magazine articles in the **Reader’s Guide to Periodical Literature** at the library.
- The **Travel, Culture, and Resources** sections of this handbook also have valuable information and websites for country-specific information, travel information and discounts, cultural differences, etc.

Learn about where you’ll be studying

- **Information about your program** can be obtained in a variety of ways. Ask your program coordinator for names of former participants.
- Stop by the **International Students and Scholars office** in the Memorial Union and obtain names of students from the country (and perhaps the school) where you’ll be studying.
- If you’re going to a university abroad, check their **website** to learn more about the campus.
- **Learn key phrases** of the local language, if you don’t already speak it.

Make copies of all your important documents

- **Your passport/visa(s) and Travelers’ Checks** are prime candidates for the photocopier. So are your credit cards, your acceptance letter if you’re attending a school abroad, your airline and train tickets, and anything else that seems important enough to need a copy or would be difficult to replace without the information that it contains. Your passport can be scanned into ISUAbroad.

- **Carry the copies** separate from the originals. Leave a set of copies at home, too, with family or a trusted friend. These copies will come in handy if, like all other human beings, you lose or misplace the originals or if you are “relieved” of them by a pick-pocket. Also carry an extra set of passport photos.

Find out how to communicate from abroad

- **Keeping in touch** isn’t all that hard from overseas, but it may take some planning on your part. Check with your **cell phone** carrier about discount opportunities available to you while you’re abroad. A “calling home” card can save considerable expense, though each card is only valid for a single telephone number. **Postcards and letters** are always welcomed by those at home, though they’ll mean finding time to sit down and write. Postcards will also provide a pictorial record of what you’ve seen during your travels. **E-mail** may be available to you, depending on your program. **Skype and pre-paid phone cards** are additional options.

Get photos of home and of campus

- Photos of **family and friends** will not only keep you “connected” while you’re abroad but will enable you to “introduce” your new friends and acquaintances to your U.S. connections.
- Photos of **ISU**, or ISU postcards from the University Book Store, will let you show off the campus and might help encourage students at your host school to try an exchange here!

Learn about the educational system in your host country

- See the **Resources** pages of this handbook to learn about the structure of higher education in the country in which you’ll be studying. Not all countries have 12 years of public education followed by 4 years of college or university study, and knowing how your classmates are taught will help you prepare for classroom life.

Prepare yourself to be an ambassador

- Remember that you’ll be representing **ISU, your home state, and the U.S.**, and that you’re going abroad to experience a different way of life and learning. Don’t expect everything to be the same as at home, and don’t try to change the way things are done in your host country or at your host school.
- Do some reading about your home community and state so you’ll become aware of population size, economic activity, famous people, etc.

If you will be gone for more than 2-3 weeks

Make arrangements to have your mail forwarded

- Be sure to leave a forwarding address. If you are expecting anything to be mailed from the University, give your new address to the Registrar's Office. This can be your address overseas, your permanent (parents') address, or the address of a trusted friend.
- Remember that your fraternity/sorority friends and/or roommates probably won't be sending most of your mail along to you while you're away. Give them and the U.S. Postal Service a forwarding address in the U.S. where your mail can be sent and where any bills that arrive will be dealt with appropriately.

If you will be gone for more than one semester

Make plans to pre-register for your semester of return:

- Be sure to maintain contact with your adviser during the term(s) you're away. E-mail, phone, or "snail mail" will enable you to work out your courses with your adviser so that you're not closed out of classes you need when you come back.
- Use the RAN provided by your adviser to pre-register via AccessPlus.

If you are graduating

- **If you're a senior**, be aware that ISU requires that the final 32 credits be taken on campus; however, a waiver can be obtained if you're studying abroad. Be sure to talk to your academic adviser or your departmental office to complete the necessary procedure.
- **The Graduation Requirements Office** in 10A Alumni Hall can help you make the necessary arrangements for graduating either in person or in absentia and for forwarding of your diploma.

Make plans for your return

- **Pre-register** for classes (see the section above on pre-registration).
- **Make housing arrangements**, whether that's with your former roommates, with the Department of Residence, or by having someone watch the ads for apartments. Check the ISU Study Abroad Center's Facebook page for listings, too.
- Watch for **re-entry shock**. Just as you needed to prepare for the culture shock of being in a new place, you'll need to plan in advance for the shock of being

home. You'll have spent time away from your "former world", and life has gone on there just as it has for you — but without you! See the "Culture" section of this handbook for more on re-entry shock.

If you will be traveling before or after your program

- **Transportation:** See the notes on transportation information in the "Travel" section for basics on airfare and train passes.
- **Lodging: Youth Hostels** are an inexpensive way to bed down when traveling. Most hostels provide either dorm-like rooms or smaller shared rooms in close proximity to rail stations and/or airports. Designed for the traveler, accommodations vary from large shared areas with wall-to-wall beds to private or semi-private rooms in restored villas. Bath and toilet facilities are usually shared; availability of meals varies from on-site restaurants to kitchenettes to vending machines. Holders of a Youth Hostel Card (\$25 for 12 months, available from some travel agencies or from Hostelling International at <http://www.hihostels.com>) can make reservations in advance and receive a discount on the already-affordable rates. In some countries, **pensiones** or **bed and breakfast** establishments are an option and are sometimes even more reasonably-priced than hostels (and often include a simple meal in the price of the room).
- **Your destinations: Travel information** can be obtained in a variety of ways. Chain and private **bookstores** either stock or can order books, maps, travel guides, videotapes, etc., on any country you'd like. For less-expensive armchair traveling, check out the resources at the **public library**, or stop by the **Study Abroad Center library** and borrow videotapes and/or books on a variety of topics, including specific countries, how to pack, traveling alone, tour options, etc. Talk to your **travel agent**, too, about places to see, places to avoid, and average costs. Check the **World-Wide Web** for information (use the country name and "tourism" as keywords).

Conduct

Student behavior abroad is governed by:

- ISU Student Disciplinary Regulations (Code of Conduct)
- ISU Study Abroad Conduct Code
- Host institution's conduct code
- Host country's laws

Study Abroad Conduct Code

An Iowa State University (ISU) study abroad program provides the student involved with an opportunity to pursue academic study for credit outside the United States. Students are expected to take advantage of the cultural opportunities involved and are responsible for their behavior during the program. The Study Abroad Center (SAC) has developed the following Study Abroad Conduct Code that all students are required to follow while studying abroad:

Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure, General

A student participating in an ISU study abroad program assumes a dual status as an ISU student and a student of the host institution and/or host country. ISU students abroad are subject to, and should be familiar with, ISU student conduct policies as well as the laws of their host country and the academic and disciplinary regulations of the host institution or residential housing program. Students should note that SAC policies for students studying abroad are more strict than ISU campus disciplinary policies because of the broader consequences of student conduct when abroad; e.g., student conduct may affect ISU's relations with the host institution and local community or arouse anti-American sentiments. In addition, students should note that SAC disciplinary procedures are more compressed than campus procedures due to the short duration of many ISU programs, the need to address disciplinary matters more quickly while traveling abroad, and the limited resources that are available in the host country to resolve disciplinary issues.

Student Conduct

Student Agreement, Conditions of Participation

Before departure, ISU students studying abroad sign the *Conditions of Participation* form acknowledging their understanding of SAC policies governing study abroad. The *Conditions of Participation* state:

1. I understand and agree that, as a participant in an Iowa State University study abroad program, I am subject to the following: a) ISU Student Disci-

plinary Regulations (Code of Conduct), b) the ISU Study Abroad Conduct Code, c) host institution conduct codes, and d) host country laws.

2. I fully understand that the procedures to be used in the event of my violation of any of the respective conduct regulations are the Study Abroad Disciplinary Procedures contained in the Study Abroad Conduct Code.
3. I understand that I may be dismissed from the program if: a) I engage in actions endangering to others or myself or b) my conduct is considered to be detrimental or incompatible with the best interest and welfare of the program. I further agree, if dismissed from the program, to be responsible for all expenses incurred in returning to the United States.
4. I understand that I am subject to the laws of the host country and agree to abide by those laws. It is further understood that Iowa State University may be limited in its ability to provide assistance in the event of my arrest. ISU may also institute disciplinary proceedings concerning my violation of the laws of the host country.
5. I agree to participate fully in all portions of the program and agree that any deviation I will make from the program design must be approved in advance in writing by the program director.
6. I agree to notify the program director if I am planning extended individual travel during the program. Where possible, I will provide the director with details of the proposed trip including plane, bus, and train schedules.
7. I understand that students participating in ISU programs need to be willing to learn about their host cultures and be open to new ideas even though they may be culturally challenging. I am aware that it is both inappropriate and culturally insensitive to promote religious or political agendas in a host country; further, that such behavior can cause offense and potentially place me in harm's way. I understand that I cannot expect to change the society I am visiting and as a representative of Iowa State University, I should not engage in such activities. I understand that freedom of expression is not a universal right and may not be protected by law in some countries. I will demonstrate a respect for the host culture even though I may not agree with all aspects of that culture, and I understand that behavior that is inconsistent with this statement may lead to my dismissal from a program.
8. I understand that behavior that is not in accord with these Conditions of Participation may result in my need to return all or part of my financial aid.
9. I understand that program directors may establish additional conditions of participation or requirements for a study abroad program, and I am subject to all policies and requirements of a program in which I participate.

Prohibited Conduct: Misconduct by ISU students studying abroad can lead to removal from the study abroad program and may, in addition, result in a decision

by ISU to impose further sanctions, such as suspension or dismissal from ISU. Misconduct abroad refers to student actions that, in the judgment of the Program Director and/or officials of the SAC, jeopardize the student's own welfare or that of fellow students and/or the integrity of the program. Such actions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Academic dishonesty;
- Obstruction or disruption of teaching or other university activities;
- Unauthorized absence from class and/or other organized program activities;
- Use of, or threats of, physical violence;
- Violating the laws of the country in which the student is traveling or living;
- Violating the academic or disciplinary regulations of the host university or residential housing program where the student is studying;
- Openly abusing the customs and mores of the host community;
- Damage to, or destruction of, property of others;
- Alcohol or substance abuse; and
- Eviction from one's lodging.

ISU Student Disciplinary Regulations (Code of Conduct) also apply to students in study abroad programs. A complete list of conduct and behavior that are subject to disciplinary sanctions by the ISU Dean of Students can be found in Section 4.2 of the ISU Student Disciplinary Regulations (Code of Conduct). <http://policy.iastate.edu/policy/SDR>

Special Note on Substance Abuse: Student use or possession of controlled substances may be punishable by severe penalties. Students caught with illegal drugs are subject to local laws of the country in which the student is traveling or living. In addition, personal involvement or association with others involved with drugs of any kind may be considered misconduct abroad and a violation of the Conditions of Participation.

Study Abroad Disciplinary Procedure

1. **Reporting Misconduct:** The person who has observed or is aware of alleged student study abroad misconduct should contact the Program Director and report the misconduct and alleged violation.
2. **Investigation and Conduct Meeting:** The Program Director is responsible for carrying out the initial investigation of all alleged student violations of the Study Abroad Conduct Code and ISU Student Disciplinary Regulations (Code of Conduct). Normally, this investigation should consist of interviews

with the reporting party and any witnesses and a review of any written materials related to the misconduct. The person alleged to have violated the regulation or standard of conduct shall have the opportunity to explain what occurred at a conduct meeting with the Program Director. When the person alleged to have violated a regulation or standard of conduct is interviewed, he/she must be informed of the nature of the allegation, the regulations or policy allegedly violated, his/her right to respond, and the procedures to be followed.

3. **Verbal Warning:** Program Directors or instructors are empowered to issue a verbal warning if they observe or have determined that a student's behavior is not in accord with the Study Abroad Conduct Code.

- Verbal Warning: An official, although oral, warning to the student that his/her conduct is in violation of the Study Abroad Conduct Code.

4. **Written Warning:** If, after the investigation and conduct meeting where the student involved has the opportunity to discuss the alleged misconduct violation, the Program Director believes that disciplinary action is appropriate, the Program Director may issue a Written Warning.

- Written Warning: An official written notice to the student of the study abroad misconduct violations and that failure to meet expected behavior or repeated violations may result in dismissal from the study abroad program.

Written Warnings, whenever possible, shall be faxed or otherwise communicated to the SAC within 48 hours of the occurrence. The SAC may distribute the information to other campus units as appropriate.

5. **Dismissal from the Study Abroad Program:** This sanction removes the student from a study abroad program. It is permitted when a student either fails to meet the conditions of a prior Written Warning or commits such a serious violation that it is contrary to paragraph #3 of the Conditions of Participation.

Certain behaviors may lead to dismissal from a study abroad program. These include but are not limited to academic misconduct, eviction from housing on grounds of inappropriate conduct, exceeding the number of unexcused absences from class allowed for the program, willful destruction of property, posing a safety hazard to oneself or others, and criminal conduct.

If, after an investigation and conduct meeting where the student involved

has the opportunity to discuss the alleged misconduct violation, the Program Director believes that dismissal is appropriate, the Program Director will contact the SAC. All dismissal decisions shall be rendered in consultation with the SAC. The SAC may conduct an independent investigation of the incident and may request additional information. If a decision to dismiss the student from the program is made, the Program Director shall issue a Dismissal Notice to the student.

- Dismissal Notice: An official written notice to the student stating the study abroad misconduct violation(s) and the terms of the student's dismissal from the study abroad program.

Completed Dismissal Notices, with the student signature whenever possible, shall be faxed to the SAC within 48 hours. The SAC may distribute the information to other campus units as appropriate. Although dismissal from a study abroad program does not constitute dismissal from ISU, ISU may elect to impose sanctions in addition to those imposed by the study abroad program. If a student from another institution is attending an ISU study abroad program and is subject to disciplinary action while in the ISU study abroad program, the student's home institution may also be notified.

6. **Appeal:** A student may exercise his/her right to appeal a dismissal decision. This does not alter the student's obligation to absent him/herself from all premises used by the program for the duration of the program and return to the United States. The appeal must be in the form of a letter to the ISU Dean of Students. This letter may include any relevant documents and testimonials that the student wishes to enter into the record.

The Dean of Students or his/her designee shall either concur with or overturn the dismissal decision of the Program Director and the SAC. He/she will inform the student in writing of the decision. This decision will also be communicated to the SAC Director, Program Director, and host institution, if appropriate. The SAC will be responsible to inform any other appropriate campus offices or officials. If a student from another institution is attending an ISU Study Abroad Program and is subject to disciplinary action while in the ISU study abroad program, the student's home institution will also be notified.

ISU Student Disciplinary Regulations

If the student's conduct is also in violation of the *ISU Student Disciplinary Regulations (Code of Conduct)*, the ISU Office of Judicial Affairs may undertake

disciplinary action, including imposing sanctions of suspension or expulsion from ISU. Such actions are pursuant to proceedings under Section 5.6 of the *ISU Student Disciplinary Regulations (Code of Conduct)*.

Consequences of Dismissal

Upon issuance of a Dismissal Notice, the student's participation in the study abroad program shall be concluded immediately. Dismissal of a student from the program shall not diminish or otherwise affect the student's obligation to make any and all payments to ISU. A student who is dismissed from a study abroad program may receive a grade of "F" in all course work in progress. In addition, the student will not be entitled to a refund of fees, may be required to reimburse ISU for financial aid received, and is responsible for all non-recoverable costs incurred by the host institution as well as personal financial obligations, e.g., utility bills, rent. A student's registration at ISU may be blocked pending the meeting of all such financial obligations and/or disciplinary action. Once a student has been dismissed from the program, he/she shall be required to absent him/herself from all premises used by the program for the duration of the program and return to the United States at his or her own expense.

February 2011

Safety

ISU Study Abroad Statement on Safety and Security

The safety and well-being of students, faculty, and staff who are participating in ISU programs abroad is of the highest importance. The Study Abroad Center (SAC) has established policies and procedures designed to safeguard the safety and well-being of study abroad participants.

Iowa State University (ISU) will not operate ISU Undergraduate International Travel and Study Abroad Programs in countries where the U.S. State Department has issued a Travel Warning unless approval is granted after a special review process. ISU not only cancels ISU administered programs, but ISU also withdraws its support and sponsorship of Affiliate and Non-ISU programs in locations under a Travel Warning.

The SAC continuously monitors safety and security at all program sites. Study abroad program participants abroad are notified if the U.S. State Department issues a country-specific Travel Alert or Travel Warning.

The SAC is on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, through an emergency cell phone. To contact the ISU Study Abroad Center **24 hours a day, 7 days a week, call ISU Police (001) 515-294-4428**

You may also contact the SAC during office hours at (001) 515-294-6792.

Addressing safety and well-being begins with training the Program Directors and providing all program participants with pre-departure orientation. Program participants are provided with extensive written information and resources, available both in print and on the SAC website.

Student Responsibilities

The SAC encourages students to take responsibility for their own safety and security by carefully reading the information, advice, and resources provided, including the following websites:

www.travel.state.gov

<http://studentsabroad.state.gov>

www.cdc.gov/travel

Students should also do the following:

- Register with the U.S. State Department through the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program at <http://studentsabroad.state.gov>
- Check to make sure emergency contact information is current in ISU-Abroad.

- Leave an itinerary and contact information with your Program Director or on-site staff for all additional travel not associated with the program.
- Carry the ISU Emergency Card or an emergency telephone contact list.
- Know the local equivalent of 911 for your program site.
- If you have a cell phone, store your emergency contact's phone number under ICE (In Case of Emergency) so that emergency/medical personnel can contact your family.

U.S. State Department Safety Information

Must-read U.S. State Department safety information for students traveling abroad:

www.travel.state.gov

<http://studentsabroad.state.gov>

From www.travel.state.gov:

Tips for Traveling Abroad

- Sign up for the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program so the State Department can better assist you in an emergency: Let us know your travel plans through the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, a free online service at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui>/<https://travelregistration.state.gov>. This will help us contact you if there is a family emergency in the U.S., or if there is a crisis where you are traveling. In accordance with the Privacy Act, information on your welfare and whereabouts will not be released to others without your express authorization.
- Sign passport, and fill in the emergency information: Make sure you have a signed, valid passport, and a visa, if required, and fill in the emergency information page of your passport.
- Leave copies of itinerary and passport data page: Leave copies of your itinerary, passport data page and visas with family or friends, so you can be contacted in case of an emergency.
- Check your overseas medical insurance coverage: Ask your medical insurance company if your policy applies overseas, and if it covers emergency expenses such as medical evacuation. If it does not, consider supplemental insurance.
- Familiarize yourself with local conditions and laws: While in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws. The State Department web site at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html has useful safety and other information about the countries you will visit.
- Take precautions to avoid being a target of crime: To avoid being a target of crime, do not wear conspicuous clothing or jewelry and do not carry

excessive amounts of money. Also, do not leave unattended luggage in public areas and do not accept packages from strangers.

- Contact us in an emergency: Consular personnel at U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad and in the U.S. are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to provide emergency assistance to U.S. citizens. Contact information for U.S. Embassies and Consulates appears on the Bureau of Consular Affairs website at <http://travel.state.gov>. Also note that the Office of Overseas Citizen Services in the State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs may be reached for assistance with emergencies at 1-888-407-4747, if calling from the U.S. or Canada, or 202-501-4444, if calling from overseas.

Terrorism

Terrorist acts occur unpredictably, making it impossible to protect yourself absolutely. The first and best protection is to avoid travel to areas where there has been a persistent record of terrorist attacks or kidnappings.

Most terrorist attacks are the result of careful planning. Just as a car thief will first be attracted to an unlocked car with the key in the ignition, terrorists are looking for the most accessible targets. The chances that a tourist, traveling with an unpublished program or itinerary, would be the victim of terrorism are slight. In addition, many terrorist groups, seeking publicity for political causes within their own country or region, may not be looking for American targets.

Nevertheless, the following pointers may help you avoid becoming a target of opportunity. These precautions may provide some degree of protection, and can serve as practical and psychological deterrents to would-be terrorists.

- Schedule direct flights if possible, and avoid stops in high-risk airports or areas.
- Be cautious about what you discuss with strangers or what others may overhear.
- Try to minimize the time spent in the public area of an airport, which is a less protected area. Move quickly from the check-in counter to the secured areas. Upon arrival, leave the airport as soon as possible.
- As much as possible, avoid luggage tags, dress and behavior that may draw attention to yourself.
- Keep an eye out for abandoned packages or briefcases, or other suspicious items. Report them to airport authorities and leave the area promptly.
- Avoid obvious terrorist targets, such as places where Westerners are known to congregate.
- Watch for people following you or "loiterers" observing your comings

and goings.

- Report any suspicious activity to local police, and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.
- Keep a mental note of safe havens, such as police stations, hotels, and hospitals. Formulate a plan of action for what you will do if a bomb explodes or there is gunfire nearby.
- Select your own taxicabs at random. Don't take a vehicle that is not clearly identified as a taxi. Compare the face of the driver with the one on his or her posted license.
- If possible, travel with others.
- Be sure of the identity of visitors before opening the door of your hotel room. Don't meet strangers at your hotel room, or at unknown or remote locations.
- Refuse unexpected packages.
- Check for loose wires or other suspicious activity around your car.
- Be sure your vehicle is in good operating condition.
- Drive with car windows closed in crowded streets. Bombs can be thrown through open windows.
- If you are ever in a situation where somebody starts shooting, drop to the floor or get down as low as possible. Don't move until you are sure the danger has passed. Do not attempt to help rescuers and do not pick up a weapon. If possible, shield yourself behind a solid object. If you must move, crawl on your stomach.

From: <http://studentsabroad.state.gov>:

Emergencies

You can find a list of 9-1-1 Emergency Contact Numbers Abroad at <http://studentsabroad.state.gov>

Before you Travel

Enroll Your Trip at <http://studentsabroad.state.gov>

Contact U.S. State Department

If you need help, consular personnel are at U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad and in the U.S. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A complete listing of U.S. Embassies is available online. Contact the Office of Overseas Citizen Services at studentsabroad@state.gov or

Toll free in the U.S. or Canada **1-888-407-4747**

Outside the United States and Canada **1-202-501-4444**

Hotel Safety Tips

- Keep your hotel door locked at all times. Meet visitors in the lobby.
- Do not leave money and other valuables in your hotel room while you are out. Use the hotel safe.
- If you are out late at night, let someone know when you expect to return.
- If you are alone, do not get on an elevator if there is a suspicious-looking person inside.
- Read the fire safety instructions in your hotel room. Know how to report a fire, and be sure you know where the nearest fire exits and alternate exits are located. (Count the doors between your room and the nearest exit; this could be a lifesaver if you have to crawl through a smoke-filled corridor.)
- Know the identity of any visitors before opening the door of your hotel room. Don't invite strangers to your hotel room, or to remote locations.

Local Laws

Look, we don't mean to nag. But if there was ever anything worth nagging you about, it would be this: Obey the local laws of the country you're visiting. An arrest or accident during a trip abroad can result in a difficult legal — and expensive — situation. Your U.S. citizenship does not make you exempt from full prosecution under another country's criminal justice system, and the U.S. government cannot bail you out. Many countries impose harsh penalties for violations that would be considered minor in the United States, and unlike the U.S., you may be considered guilty until proven innocent. Ignorance of the law is no excuse, so be informed. Go from here.

Keep track of the credit limits on your credit cards. Not only does this make good financial sense, but also good legal sense. Americans have been arrested for innocently exceeding their credit limit abroad. Ask your credit card company how to report the loss of your card from abroad. Keep in mind, 1-800 numbers do not work from abroad, but your company should have a number that you can call while you are overseas.

Take plenty of pictures, but only if you know it's okay. In many countries you can be detained for photographing security-related institutions, such as police and military installations, government buildings, border areas and transportation facilities. If you are in doubt, ask permission before taking photographs.

Make smart purchases. Americans have been arrested for purchasing souvenirs that were, or looked like, antiques and which local customs authorities believed were national treasures. This is especially true in Turkey, Egypt, and Mexico.

Familiarize yourself with any local regulations of antiques. In countries with strict control of antiques, document your purchases as reproductions if that is the case.

Don't accept packages from anyone. Some Americans think it's a good idea to take advantage of an offer for an all-expense paid vacation abroad in exchange for carrying a small package in their luggage. However, if you are caught, ignorance is no excuse. If the package contains illegal drugs or substances, the fact that you didn't know will not reduce the charges. You could miss your flight, your exams, or several years of your life during a stay behind bars.

Don't import, purchase, use, or have drugs in your possession. Drug charges can carry severe penalties, including imprisonment without bail for up to a year before a case is even tried. A conviction carries several more years of imprisonment in a foreign jail. In some countries it doesn't matter if you're underage either; you can still be charged as an adult. Mommy!

Do not carry weapons. Even a pocketknife can result in a serious weapons charge while on foreign soil - even if the knife is found during a search or arrest for an unrelated offense. Visitors driving across the border to Mexico should ensure that their vehicles contain no firearms, ammunition, or weapons – Americans have been imprisoned after one single bullet was found rolling around in the trunk.

Avoid participating in demonstrations and other political activities. Here in the U.S. we enjoy many liberties. However, political activities in other countries can result in detention and/or deportation by officials. Even demonstrations that are intended to be peaceful can sometimes turn violent, and you don't want to be caught in the middle. You can "stick it to the man," but on your own soil.

If you find yourself in a legal jam, contact the closest U.S. embassy or consulate for assistance. Keep in mind, U.S. Consular employees cannot arrange for local officials to release detained American citizens.

Drinking and Drugs

Let's be serious about this. When traveling overseas, it's important to obey the laws and regulations of the country you're visiting, especially those pertaining to drug and alcohol use. Every year, many American students are arrested abroad on drug charges or because of their behavior under the influence. Ignorance of the law is no excuse, so be informed.

Avoid underage and excessive alcohol consumption. Many arrests, accidents, rape, and other violent crimes have occurred because of alcohol abuse. While abroad, driving under the influence and drinking on the street or on public transportation may be considered criminal activities by local authorities, as they would be in many places in the United States.

Make sure your prescription medication is not considered an illegal narcotic. If you are going abroad with a preexisting medical condition, you should carry a letter from your doctor describing your condition and medications, including the generic names of prescribed drugs. Any medications carried overseas should be in their original containers and clearly labeled. Check with the foreign country's embassy here in the U.S. to make sure your medications are not considered illegal narcotics. A listing of foreign embassies and consulates in the U.S. is available on the Department of State's website.

Don't accept packages from anyone. Some Americans think it's a good idea to take advantage of an offer for an all-expense paid vacation abroad in exchange for carrying a small package in their luggage. If you are caught, ignorance is no excuse. If the package contains illegal drugs or substances, the fact that you didn't know will not reduce the charges. You could miss your flight, your exams, or several years of your life during a stay behind bars.

Don't import, purchase, use, or have drugs in your possession. Drug charges can carry severe consequences, including imprisonment without bail for up to a year before a case is tried, physical abuse, and sentences ranging from fines and jail time, to years of hard labor. Some crimes even carry the penalty of death. Contraband or paraphernalia associated with illegal drug use can also get you in trouble.

For Women Travelers

Everyone traveling abroad should research safety and local customs, but young women should be especially attentive. Stay safe.

If you are a young woman in a foreign country, even dressing in a burlap sack and sensible shoes may not protect you against the unwelcome advances of strangers. Always try to stay with a group when exploring locally and avoid walking alone at night. In addition, don't feel the need to be overly polite if you are bothered by someone. While it may seem rude to be unfriendly to a stranger, creating boundaries to protect yourself is important. Use facial expressions, body language and a firm voice to fend off any unwanted attention.

Traveling through foreign lands gives you a unique opportunity to observe a rich tapestry of cultures and customs – which may include very different ideas about gender roles. Some countries have more conservative views about what constitutes appropriate female behavior. Remember, you’re a visitor. Do some research on social mores before you go, and respect the customs of the nation. You may not agree with all of the cultural practices you learn about, but you should abide by them while in that country.

In some countries, wearing the wrong clothes can get you arrested or lead to a dangerous situation. What you think is casual may actually be considered provocative or unacceptable in other cultures. Know before you go, and pack accordingly. On arrival, note what local women are wearing and try to follow their lead. Stay away from anything too revealing or tight. Don’t wear excessive makeup, and keep jewelry to a minimum to avoid attracting attention. Any fashion statement you DO make should show consideration for the country you are visiting.

For GLBT Travelers

Attitudes and tolerance toward gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (GLBT) persons vary from country to country, just as they vary among U.S. cities and states. Some countries offer many legal protections to those who are GLBT, while other countries criminalize homosexual behavior. Most GLBT travelers encounter no problems when overseas, but it helps to prepare before you go.

Research, research, research...

Educate yourself about the social culture, the laws, and support resources. This will help you protect yourself.

Take the time to learn about the:

- Laws of your destination
- Norms and social culture of your destination
- GLBT organizations, hotels, and support resources
- General attitudes toward GLBT persons

Homosexual activity remains illegal in about 70 countries in the world. Penalties in these countries vary from a minimum penalty to long-term imprisonment or even a death sentence. Violence against GLBT travelers also remains a concern in some countries, as detailed in the State Department’s 2007 Human Rights Reports. Remember, civil and human rights are only as protected as the local laws allow.

Travel Tips

- If you experience difficulties, don’t be afraid to contact the nearest U.S.

embassy or consulate. Seriously, there are consular officers available 24/7 at every embassy who provide emergency assistance to Americans. It’s what we do. We won’t pass judgment on you, and we will protect your privacy.

- Thoroughly investigate the country you’re traveling to. GLBT travel guides provide country by country advice. It’s also worth checking for local gay newspapers or websites to obtain more information. After all, no one understands the local attitudes better than those who live there.
- Use discretion. As an American, you may already stand out. Outside gay neighborhoods or resorts, public displays of affection may draw even more attention.
- Check for GLBT or “gay friendly” hotels and lodging. Some hotels won’t accept bookings from same sex couples – others actively seek GLBT bookings.

Be alert and try to avoid potentially unsafe environments. The general openness of GLBT settings can sometimes be taken advantage of by criminals. Look out for yourself and your friends, especially late at night.

Travelers with Disabilities

Traveling through foreign lands gives you a unique opportunity to observe a rich tapestry of cultures and customs — this is true for those living with or without a disability. Living with a disability in no way prevents you from experiencing international travel. With plenty of vigilance, your trip abroad can not only be safe, but it can also be accessible.

Before You Go

- First things first. Check with your doctor to make sure that it is okay for you to travel.
- Research study abroad programs to find one that will accommodate any special needs you may have. Your study abroad office can direct you to many programs that set aside extra funds to make reasonable accommodations such as: personal care assistants, foreign sign language interpreters, oxygen providers, etc.
- Thoroughly research your location(s) and its accessibility—wheel chair ramps can be narrower, hotel bathrooms may not have safety bars, and crossing lights may not have a sound indicator. Accessibility laws vary from country to country, so it’s better to be prepared for what you may encounter before you go.
- Before you book your flights, contact the airline early to confirm that your medical equipment (ventilator, wheelchair, etc.) meets the airline’s regulations; and obtain copies of the airline’s policies on the rights of

passengers with disabilities. Ask plenty of questions such as, “Will I be required to purchase a second seat for my medical equipment” or “is the airplane bathroom wheelchair accessible?”

- Obtain a letter from your doctor on letterhead, explaining your need for any medical devices and medications. If possible, have this letter translated into the language used in the locations you will be visiting.
- Do you require oxygen service? Currently, passengers are not allowed to bring their own oxygen canisters aboard to use during flights; and legally, airlines are not required to provide oxygen service. Find out in advance about your airline’s procedures for allowing oxygen suppliers to meet you at the arrival gate.
- Make sure you have more than adequate medical insurance to be prepared for the unexpected. Are you covered under your parents’ policy or through your school? Now is a good time to find out if your current coverage covers you overseas. Consider obtaining supplemental insurance to fill in any gaps your current provider misses. And be sure to read the fine print about pre-existing conditions. See a list of companies that offer overseas medical coverage and other services.
- If you’re planning to travel to another country with your service animal, start the necessary documentation early. The amount of paperwork involved in bringing an animal into some countries can take from as little as a few weeks up to the course of a year! Be sure to contact the nearest embassy or consulate of the country you will be visiting to find out the requirements of the country you will be visiting. (Some countries even require the implantation of an identifying microchip!) Ask your doctor to write a letter explaining your need for the animal, and get the health and rabies certificates from the animal’s veterinarian documenting that the animal is up-to-date on all shots. Know how to obtain medical care, if needed, for your animal abroad.
- If you already use the services of a personal assistant, chances are, you’ll want similar services abroad. Make arrangements with your study abroad program to arrange for the services of an assistant or to find out how your current assistant can be accommodated. Apart from program tuition, funds need to be set aside for your assistant’s transportation, lodging, and day-to-day expenses.
- Since many other countries use 220-volt electricity while U.S. appliances use 110-volt electricity, you may need to purchase a “converter” or a “transformer” to be able to use your medical devices or equipment. Check with your manufacturer to find out what will work best for your devices.
- Find out from your study abroad program officials who to contact in case of a medical emergency, and create a list of the names and numbers of

nearby medical facilities.

- Join disability organizations and support groups located at your destination to create a support system to help you with the transition of living in another country. The Mobility International website is a good place to start!
- Learn how to say and/or write simple phrases in the language spoken at your destination explaining your disability, and how to ask for or reject help. (“Thank you. I do not need help.” “I am blind. Can you help me cross the street?”)
- Bring an extra quantity of any medications with you and pack it in your carry-on, just in case your checked luggage gets lost. Just remember to keep it in its original container and clearly labeled. And while you’re at it, check with the local embassy to make sure that your medication is acceptable to carry into the country. Visit www.tsa.gov for current medication screening procedures.
- If you use a ventilator, try to carry a spare ventilator with you abroad. Having some simple tools and a few replacement parts on hand doesn’t hurt either.

En Route

- Whether you require a wheel-chair or a sight-guide, you can request assistance at your airline’s check-in to help you maneuver through the airport and to make your travel experience easier.
- Know your rights when going through airport security screening both here and abroad. For example, the Transportation Security Administration’s (TSA) limit of one carry-on bag and one personal bag does not apply to medical supplies and assistive devices. Visit the current TSA policies as it relates to disabilities.
- If you are required to undergo a personal search and you need privacy, you can request for the screening to be conducted in a private area of the security checkpoint. Feel free to request a disposable paper drape for additional privacy or if you want the Security Officer to change their gloves.
- It’s a good idea to carry a Pacemaker Identification Card (ID) when going through airport security. Do NOT walk through the metal detector or be hand-wanded. Show the Security Officer your pacemaker ID ahead of time, and request a pat-down inspection.
- Normally, oxygen sources are temporarily disconnected during security screening. If you are not medically cleared to be disconnected or if you have concerns, ask the Security Officer for an alternate inspection process so you can remain connected.

- Allow at least 90 minutes between connecting flights to make sure you have enough time to transfer between gates.
- If you use a ventilator, know your ventilator settings in case the dials get knocked around while you're traveling. Check those settings regularly while traveling and try not to be separated from your ventilator during your travels.
- If you need help, don't be afraid to ask airline or airport personnel. Be assertive and specific!

While You're There

- Each day, carefully pack everything you'll need to take along while you're away from your lodging for the day. Be sure to bring back-up supplies in case of emergencies.
- On a periodic basis, reach out to your support group of friends, family, faculty, officials, and locals to help ease any culture shock or homesickness you may experience.
- **If you take medication or use other supplies, keep up with your schedule, and take inventory often to make sure you're not running low. A vacation or study abroad is a great opportunity to try new things, but this is not the time to experiment with not taking your medications or mixing alcohol with medicine.**
- Take it easy. Resist the urge to try to fill every waking minute with activities. Every day presents an opportunity for a new adventure. You'll have plenty!
- Above all else, be safe. There are predators everywhere that try to take advantage of foreigners — there are others who particularly, may try to take advantage of your disability. Ask for help when you need it; but be careful when accepting assistance from strangers. Whether you simply shake your head with a stern look on your face, or unapologetically say “no,” be firm when declining unwelcome “help” from strangers. Always practice basic safety rules like not flashing excessive cash or valuables, and traveling in groups; and always be aware of your surroundings. If something doesn't feel **right** or look **right**, you have the **right** to leave the situation immediately!

Road Safety

At an October 2000 Congressional hearing on “Safety in Study Abroad”, it was stated that the major cause of student injury or death in overseas programs is traffic accidents. According to the U.S. State Department, road travel is the greatest risk to healthy Americans abroad.

This doesn't just refer to those who drive a car but also **refers to you as a pedestrian and as a rider in a taxi or bus.**

The following helpful checklists are from the website of the Association for Safe International Road Travel at www.asirt.org.

Pedestrian Safety Checklist

These guidelines serve as suggestions. Each suggestion will not necessarily apply in your country or location. Be alert is traveling in a country where vehicles travel on the left side of the road.

Good habits while on the road

- Be aware of local traffic patterns. Understand local road culture.
- Be alert at intersections in countries where traffic pattern differs from yours.
- Be alert to reckless driver behaviors (e.g. speeding, inattention to driving, disregard for pedestrians, signs and signals).
- Many countries have narrow, winding streets where visibility of pedestrian is compromised.
- At night, wear or carry something reflective or carry a light, so that motorists' attention will be attracted to you.
- At night, cross where the lights are bright and visibility is good.
- Avoid walking where you cannot be easily seen.
- Remember that the **KERB DRILL** (Look right, look left, look right again) must be reversed in countries where the traffic pattern is reversed.
- Be alert for vehicles which can suddenly turn into the street.
- Walk on the sidewalk where there is one. Where there is none, walk on the road bank or on the right side of the road in single file, facing oncoming traffic.
- Always stand on the sidewalk, or at the edge of the road, not in the street while waiting to cross.
- Be just as alert and careful when crossing in groups as when alone, and do not depend on others to watch out for you.
- Always look very carefully when crossing the road from behind or in front of stationary vehicles.
- Use provisions for crossing (e.g. Police Officer, Pedestrian Crossing, Traffic Lights).
- Look and listen for warning signals of motor vehicles especially when crossing at a bend. If possible, don't cross where there is a bend in the road.
- Cross where there is a clear view in both directions, when it can be done safely.

- Be alert for train crossings that might not be marked or obvious.
- When you have alighted from a vehicle, wait until it moves off before crossing.
- Do not adopt the attitude that because you have the right of way in the pedestrian crossing, you are automatically safe to cross. In many countries drivers ignore stop signs, signal lights, pedestrian right-of-way.
- Jaywalking may result in severe fines in various countries.
- Get into or out of a vehicle on the side nearest the sidewalk or edge of the road. If you use the door on the street side, wait for a break in traffic to exit the vehicle.
- Remember most road fatalities are pedestrians.

Personal Safety of Pedestrians

- Avoid crowds when you have to slow down. Every time you slow down while walking in a street you become an easier target.
- Be suspicious if somebody slows you down (e.g. falls in front of you, clothing gets stuck on something). It may be a pretext to facilitate an accomplice who is behind you.
- Be aware of who is behind you. If the same person is behind you for a few minutes, be suspicious.
- A decoy wallet may help distract the thief. The thief will target your very visible wallet, while your money is somewhere else (eg, in another pocket).
- Avoid walking with big luggage. The bigger the luggage, the more visible you are and the harder it is for you to defend yourself. Backpacks can be easily opened even while you are walking.
- In most countries it is inappropriate to approach strangers (especially women). Anybody who approaches you, no matter how friendly, should make you a little suspicious. Keep your guard up and be careful when talking to strangers. Americans tend to be more trusting and open than other people. Understand that this may be used to put you in an unsafe situation. Locals know that Americans are raised to be nice to people who are nice to them. Do not smile at people you do not know. A smile can be interpreted as “I am saying no but I mean yes”.
- In most countries women never respond to strangers. For a foreign woman it is not good to respond to men who approach her. The appropriate behavior is cold silence and indifference.
- Walk fast all the time. Every time you stop to browse, shop, write a postcard or take a picture you become an easy target.
- Dress modestly. Do not dress to call attention to yourself.
- Be suspicious of any one who asks to see your money.

- Avoid hitchhiking

Taxi Safety Checklist

Suggestions for Road Safety

- Learn which taxi companies have a good safety record. Do not ride in unofficial taxis.
- Avoid overcrowded taxis. Avoid taxis that are in poor condition. Do not travel at night, especially in rural or mountainous areas. Carry a cell phone.
- Carry important information with you, including Study Abroad contacts, host family contacts, language tips, detailed local maps, public transportation schedules and locations, approved transportation companies, medical contacts and U.S. Embassy phone number.
- Ride in back seat of taxis with assessible and functional seat belts. If you must ride in the front seat, push seat back as far as possible. Alight from curb side of taxi. Wait until taxi drives away before crossing.
- Do not ride with drivers who seem to be fatigued, under influence of alcohol or medication or distracted.
- Be alert for irresponsible driving (e.g. speeding, inattention to driving, disregard for signage and signals).
- Speak out if driver is speeding or driving irresponsibly.
- If driver continues to drive irresponsibly, politely ask to be let out at first safe opportunity.

Suggestions for Physical Security

- When unsure of which taxi companies are acceptable, inquire of program staff, airport information desk, hotel concierge, shopkeeper, or restaurant personnel. Have a local person write your destination for the taxi driver to read.
- Take hotel card with you to show taxi driver, particularly where language is an issue.
- Before going out, plan ahead how you will get home.
- Take a business card with the phone number of a reputable minicab or taxi company.
- When possible, do not travel alone.
- Call for a taxi instead of hailing one, especially at night.
- Try not to let anyone overhear you ordering a taxi as they may pretend to be the taxi service you ordered.
- If you have ordered a taxi, wait for the driver to approach you. Do not approach a car that you think is your taxi.
- Ask the driver the name and destination of the passenger he was assigned

to pick up to be certain he is the driver you ordered. Do not get into a taxi you have not ordered.

- If you must hail a taxi, spot one from a reliable company. This requires advanced knowledge of taxi companies in the area.
- Before getting into the taxi, make sure the driver agrees to take you to your destination.
- When you get into the taxi, note the company name, code number displayed, driver's name, ID and photograph.
- Do not accept rides from drivers who randomly approach you.
- Do not get into a taxi that has two drivers or another individual in the back seat.

Information on Taxi Fares

- Ask a trustworthy individual to approximate the fare prior to engaging a taxi.
- Make sure you understand the fare or how it is computed.
- Ask the driver what the fare is before getting into the taxi. Once you sit down, you are the taxi's next fare. If the driver tries to bargain instead of using the meter or claims his meter is broken, get out of the taxi.

Bus and Minivan Safety Checklist

- Become familiar with public transportation system.
- Learn safest modes of transportation and plan accordingly. Take seasonal risks into account.
- Learn which private companies have good safety records.
- Learn bus schedule and route.
- Avoid buses and minivans that appear to be in poor physical condition.
- Be sure that minivans are equipped with functional and accessible seat belts for all passengers.
- Avoid overcrowded, top heavy and overweight buses and minivans.
- Avoid local, less expensive forms of transportation, such as rickshaws, matatus, open trucks, scooter and motor vehicle taxis, and people/animal drawn vehicles. They generally have poor road safety records.
- Wait for the bus in a safe place—away from the road.
- Stay seated at all times.
- Be alert for irresponsible driving including speeding, inattention to driving, apparent drowsiness, disregard for signage and signals.
- Elicit help of local resident to convey desired action to driver if you feel your safety is being compromised.
- If the driver is not driving responsibly, get off at the first safe opportunity.
- Consider planning an alternative mode of transportation if chosen mode

seems unsafe.

- Carry important information with you, such as study abroad contacts, medical contacts, language tips, public transportation schedule and stops and U.S. Embassy phone number.
- Carry a cell phone.
- Be especially careful when disembarking from minivans and buses that do not go to the curb when letting passengers off.
- After getting driver's attention, cross the street in front of the bus. Never go behind the bus. Many bus accidents occur when buses are going in reverse.
- If you drop something near the bus, tell the driver before you pick it up.
- Give itinerary and contact information to study abroad program officials when traveling independently and maintain contact.
- Avoid night travel, especially in rural or mountainous areas or in countries with poor safety records.
- Determine if a long distance buses have a relief driver.
- Minivans should be equipped with seat belts.
- Be aware of traffic patterns and local road culture.

Driver Safety Checklist

Driving a rental car should be discouraged. It is generally safer to hire a responsible, trained professional driver than to drive a rental car.

If your study abroad program permits renting a car:

- Rent well maintained vehicles, equipped with safety features including functional safety belts, daytime running lights, and air bags.
- When renting a vehicle, insist that front and back seats belts are functional and accessible.
- Specify need for automatic or standard transmission, 4-wheel drive, etc.
- Check rental vehicle for current inspection and registration information.
- Check tires (tread and pressure), headlights, wipers and brakes.
- Become familiar with controls before driving, preferably during daylight hours.
- Learn about driving conventions, driver behaviors, terrain, highway hazards, physical obstructions, road conditions, dangerous roads, law enforcement, advisability of night travel.
- Carry a cell phone, but avoid using when driving.
- Be aware that quality, clarity, placement and availability of signage varies.
- Roads may be dirt, gravel or sand. They may be poorly maintained and lack shoulders and guardrails.
- Learn regulations, road culture, speed limits, road signs, right of way

conventions.

- Fines for speeding are often high and payment may be required on the spot.
- Learn what steps to take if you are involved in a road crash.
- Take seasonal hazards into account when planning to drive.
- Obtain supervised driver training when inexperienced in driving on opposite side of the road. Affix an unobtrusive visual on reminder on vehicle dash.
- Determine safest route to your destination.
- Recognize that driving after consuming alcohol and medications that influence alertness or judgment is dangerous and may lead to serious legal consequences.
- A lack of familiarity with locale, road culture, and language increases the already compromised road judgment of the impaired driver.
- Enforcement of the BAC (Blood alcohol content) limits may be rigorous.
- Carry contact information, including emergency numbers, language tips and medical contacts.
- Avoid night travel, particularly in countries with poor safety records, inadequate signage and lighting, and mountainous terrains.
- Avoid motorcycle, scooter and moped travel. If using one, insist on a regulation helmet or bring your own.

Bicycling Safety Checklist

Itinerary and Contingency Planning

- Understand road realities and local “road culture” with respect to cyclists before planning itinerary. In some countries, drivers do not always yield to cyclists.
- Plan the safest route. Plan alternate routes in case of adverse weather or road conditions.
- Choose a route suited to your riding skills and physical condition. Determine what type of bicycle is best for planned route.
- Check availability of accommodations along planned routes. Make reservations when needed.
- Leave a copy of your itinerary with Study Abroad resident manager or host family.
- Take a cell phone with Study Abroad and host family contacts, language tips, detailed local maps, public transportation schedules and locations, approved transportation companies, emergency medical contacts and U.S. Embassy phone number.
- Consult weather forecast for planned route. Call for updates.
- Take appropriate clothing and supplies for probable weather conditions.

- Wear bright clothing by day and reflective armband or vest by night.
- Always wear a regulation helmet, even when it is not required by law. Add reflective tape to increase your visibility.
- Be sure to have the following equipment:
 - At least two independently operating brakes
 - A clear headlight and a red tail light
 - Yellow reflectors on the pedals
 - At least one white or yellow reflector on wheel spokes
 - A clear sounding bell
 - Tools and spare parts for minor repairs.

Bike Lane Regulations and Customs

- Remember that cyclists are subject to the same traffic laws as motorized vehicles, including stop signs, traffic signs, and lane restrictions.
- Learn the local driving culture. While motorists are not permitted to drive or park in bike lines, drivers commonly do in some areas.
- Signal if moving out of or into a bike lane from general traffic lanes.

Cycling Risks

- Poor road conditions and/or maintenance.
- Narrow, winding roads, with inadequate shoulders, especially in mountainous areas.
- Heavily traveled, high speed roads, especially with significant truck traffic.
- Adverse weather conditions, including high winds.
- Times of reduced visibility—night, dawn, dusk, fog, etc.
- Intersections. Drivers tend to focus on other cars rather than cyclists.
- Riding in the extreme right of the slow lane. Drivers are less likely to see you.
- Driver’s “blind spot.” If you cannot see the vehicle’s mirrors, the driver cannot see you.
- Vehicles making right turns. Drivers generally focus on other cars when turning and do not look out for cyclists.
- Drivers/passengers that open the door of a parked vehicle unexpectedly.
- Cars pulling out from a parallel parking space.
- Jaywalkers or children running out into the street.
- Animals darting onto the road.
- Vendors’ carts, encroaching onto the road.

When renting a bicycle

- Choose the right size of cycle—important for comfort and safety.
- Adjust seat and handlebars to a comfortable height.
- Adjust the bike seat so your leg is extended fully when pedals are in their lowest position.
- Be sure your torso clears the frame when standing with both feet flat on the ground. (Especially important when cycling in urban areas, requiring frequent stops.)
- Check that handlebar grips are below your shoulders and in good condition.
- Assess the bike's condition:
 - Inspect the frame to see if it is straight and dent free.
 - Be sure that the handlebars are in line with the front wheel.
 - Check to be sure the spokes of the wheels are straight and in good condition.
 - Determine that rims dent free and straight.
 - Test the wheels to see if they spin freely and do not wobble.
- Evaluate the condition of the tires: Ascertain that tread is adequate, tires are properly inflated and sidewalls free of damage. Check tire inflation regularly while traveling.
- Test the brakes to see that they work properly. Brake cables should be taut and not frayed.
- See if the pedals spin freely and evenly.
- Be sure that the chain is clean, rust free, properly lubricated and adjusted and that the chain guard is secure and does not touch the chain.
- Check whether the gears shift smoothly and are working properly.
- See to it that accessories are securely attached.
- Be sure that lights function.
- Ascertain whether a regulation helmet is included in the rental fee. If not, take a helmet that meets safety standards.

Winter Cycling

- Studded tires (if not prohibited) or tire chains give added traction on snow-covered roads.
 - Studs give a smoother ride on pavement.
 - Chains provide more traction in deep snow and/or thick, compacted slush that traffic creates on unplowed roads.
- Rims should be checked periodically. Sand causes increased rim wear. This is a greater problem in hilly or mountainous terrains.

Sexual Harassment and Assault

The Study Abroad Center considers sexual harassment and sexual assault to be an issue of safety. Your safety is vital to having a positive, successful study abroad experience. Therefore, we share the following to inform and invite you to critically consider how you can reduce your risk of harassment or assault.

Misperceptions host nationals may have about North American women and men

People around the world watch movies. Without context, others can easily make assumptions that all women are sexually active and want sex. Relationships with men can be seen as a ticket to the United States. While not universally true, stereotypes and assumptions do exist and need to be talked about and understood, not just considered an elephant in the room.

Unfortunately, we have had students who have been harassed or assaulted while studying abroad. Thankfully, it is not common, but we know that many situations are not reported to us. Harassment or assault experiences reported include:

- Catcalls or remarks from a distance while out in public. Some students have been approached on the street for conversation with suggestive comments.
- Physical groping in a crowded space, such as a bar or concert.
- Host family extended family member offering a ride and, instead, taking a student to a hotel, followed by rape.
- Student leaving a bar with a host national and allowing that person to return to the student's apartment or dorm, with unwanted and uninvited sexual consequences.
- Date rape drugs served by a bartender (paid off by someone) and waking up in a strange place hours later.

We are talking about someone else's behavior here, so if something DOES happen to you, remember: **It is not your fault.** That said, we offer some suggestions that we hope might reduce your risk of this happening to you.

Communicate clearly

Given that you will not be automatically aware of cultural cues or meanings, communication can be a challenge. Sending a clear message is **impaired by use of a second or third language.** Consider asking a classmate or host family sibling for clarification of social norms and dating behavior.

If you find yourself in a situation in which you feel threatened or uncomfortable, **speak firmly and clearly, even physically move away if the behavior continues.**

Some cultures consider catcalls and inappropriate touching as a recreational sport. While such behavior may not be condoned, it is not punished either. **Ignore inappropriate remarks and walk away.**

Be safe

We hope you make good decisions, though we encourage you to consider abstaining from sex. If you do decide to engage in sex, be sure to **use a condom.**

If you choose to drink, remember to:

- Watch while your drink is poured.
- Carry your drink with you, even when going to a restroom.
- Never overindulge.
- Make sure you are with friends (“buddy system”).
- See that everyone gets home safely.

If you start to feel nauseated after taking a drink, tell a trusted friend immediately. **DO NOT** go anywhere with a stranger, as you may have been slipped a date rape drug.

Talk to us

We cannot stress enough how important it is to **report these behaviors** to a local program director or to the Study Abroad Center so that we can take appropriate measures to reduce the risk of something happening to other participants. Feelings of guilt after more serious events are common, but please let us know so we can help you get the support you need and deserve.

Know before you go (and ask again when you arrive)

What are the:

- Gender roles and stereotypes?
- Harassment issues?
- Places that are unsafe?
- Prevalence of date rape drugs?
- STDs, HIV, contraception: things I should know about my site?

Gratefully acknowledged resource: University of Delaware, Institute for Global Studies, Study Abroad – Once Accepted, nine-minute video on their website, accessed on 1/21/2011, http://international.udel.edu/studyabroad/onceaccepted/orientation_movie_pages/orientation_harassment.html

Health

Health Information for International Travelers

Must-read health web site for everyone traveling abroad:

U. S. Centers for Disease Control – www.cdc.gov

The CDC recommends that all travelers review the status of the following inoculations:

- Tetanus
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B

General information from ISU

Immunizations:

- At least 4-6 weeks prior to departure, contact your doctor, clinic, state health department, or the Travel Clinic at ISU’s Thielen Student Health Center regarding immunizations and medication.

Travel insurance:

- You are required to have adequate health insurance coverage while abroad. The types of insurance coverage required are 1) repatriation, 2) evacuation, and 3) health care.
- You are required to purchase an International Student Identity Card (ISIC). The ISIC provides adequate evacuation and repatriation coverage and a small amount of emergency medical care coverage. The card is available from the Study Abroad Center, from STA Travel, and at www.myisic.com. Please note that the ISIC does not include adequate health coverage. You are free to purchase any policy of your choosing. The Study Abroad Center has compiled a list, accessible on the SAC website, of some of the available options. If you are already covered by an existing policy, check with the company to determine if you are covered while abroad. Students carrying the ISU student health plan may have adequate health coverage, but check your coverage dates to ensure that they include your program dates.

Prescriptions:

- Take enough **refills** to last the entire trip.
- Keep all prescription medication in the **original containers**.
- Take an **original written prescription**, preferably written for a generic version of your medication.
- If you wear **glasses or contacts**, take along a spare pair and take your

lens prescription with you.

- If you take a **narcotic**, take **more than two** medications, or take a medication by **injection**, take a letter from your physician that describes your medical condition and the need to carry the medications and/or syringes with you. Having a copy of the letter translated into your host country language might be beneficial, too. In fact, you should check with the local embassy to make sure that your medication is acceptable to carry into the country. Some countries may consider your prescription medication to be **illegal**.

Chronic medical conditions:

- Wear a **medical tag** explaining your illness or allergies. Medic Alert Foundation International is a worldwide organization that supplies tags containing an identification number, the medical information, and a toll-free telephone number to call in case of emergencies. Once you join, you are a lifetime member. Check at your local drugstore, or contact Medic Alert, P.O. Box 1009, Turlock CA 95380.
- **Carry a card** in your wallet identifying your illness (Medic Alert can supply this, also) and have someone translate the information into each foreign language you will encounter on your trip.
- Learn **helpful phrases** in foreign languages (“I am a diabetic”, “I need a doctor”, etc.).

First-aid kit:

- Especially if you’re traveling extensively or going to remote areas, consider taking along the following: insect repellent, water disinfectant, thermometer, Band-Aids, moleskin for blisters, Pepto-Bismol or Imodium for diarrhea, antacid, aspirin or substitute, cold and cough medication, mild laxative, sunscreen, sunburn medication, anti-fungal/anti-itch medication, anti-bacterial cream or spray, tweezers, and bee sting kit (if you’re allergic).

Traveler’s Diarrhea:

- The biggest problem with diarrhea is dehydration.
- Drink lots of fluids: water or Gatorade, later add fruit juices or soft drinks without caffeine.
- Eat salted crackers or other starchy foods (rice, bread); bananas are good, too.
- Avoid dairy products.
- If no improvement in a week and accompanied by fever, see a physician.
- Take an Imodium-type product.

Dealing with jet lag:

- Drink lots of fluids: water, juice, soft drinks (without caffeine).
- Avoid alcohol.
- Eat lightly.
- Get up and walk around at least once an hour.
- Try to get plenty of sleep before departure.
- Anticipate a day of adjustment for each time zone you cross.
- Try the **Ehret method** of dealing with jet lag: Three days in advance of your trip, start shifting your activities as if you are already in the new time zone. Alter your eating habits as follows:
 - Three days prior: Feast day, with three full meals; make breakfast and lunch high in protein, dinner high in carbohydrates.
 - Two days prior: Fast day, with low calories and low carbohydrates (soups and salads), with caffeine only in the afternoon.
 - One day prior: Feast day (see above).
- Day of departure: Fast day, with lots of liquids.
- On arrival: If you arrive in the morning, eat a high-protein meal; if you arrive in the evening, eat a high-carbohydrate meal.

Additional Health Information from: <http://studentsabroad.state.gov> Staying Healthy

Checking out other countries doesn’t mean ignoring the health habits you practice at home. In fact, you’ll need to pay even closer attention to what you are doing, eating, drinking or even just walking down the street.

Eat, Drink and be Wary

Thinking about sampling the native cuisine? Of course you are! Enjoying local delicacies is part of the wonderful experience of overseas travel, but eating the wrong things could make you very sick. Many countries don’t have the same food handling and preparation standards found in the United States. Food that is not stored or cooked properly could make you sick. Do your research on which local foods and drinks to avoid.

- Stay away from raw foods.
- Choose your local restaurants carefully. If it looks dirty in the dining room, it could be worse in the kitchen.
- Local water supplies could also be a breeding ground for bacteria. Always use bottled water (even to brush your teeth), and beware of fake bottled water – tap water sold as bottled. Be aware that ice may also be made from local tap water.
- Practicing healthy habits, like washing your hands regularly, will help ensure that you stay healthy and enjoy your entire trip.

- While you are keeping your eye on what you are drinking, make sure you keep an eye on who's pouring it as well. Without sounding too scary, there's the possibility of being served something you didn't order. A number of illegal drugs can be slipped into your drink. These drugs can make you sleepy, unaware, or even unconscious. Remain aware of your drinks and:
- Don't drink anything you did not open yourself or that you didn't see being opened or poured by a bartender.
- Always watch your drink at parties and bars and get a new one if you leave it unattended for a while.

Get more health information from these expert sources:

- Travel Health Information from the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*
- Travel Health Information from the *Food and Drug Administration*
- Travel Health Information from the *World Health Organization*

Mental Health

Traveling or studying overseas is not a cure for health conditions such as depression or attention deficit disorder. Sometimes going abroad may in fact amplify a condition. A student may not have adequate access to their prescription medication or mental health facilities. In addition, culture shock, language barriers, and homesickness can deepen isolation or depression.

Workable Plan

Before traveling, create a workable plan for managing your mental health while abroad. The availability and quality of mental health services differ widely from country to country. In many countries, students will find it difficult — and sometimes impossible — to find treatment for mental health conditions. With your health services provider or your school, put together a workable mental health plan before you go overseas:

- If you have a medical or psychological condition that may require treatment while you are abroad, discuss this ahead of time with your doctor. A vacation or study abroad is a great opportunity to try new things, but this is not the time to experiment with not taking your medicine or mixing alcohol with medicine.
- Research the social culture of your destination to learn about how mental illnesses are viewed. Attitudes toward mental health can vary greatly between countries.
- If you are studying abroad through your university, talk to your university about access to mental health services at overseas programs. Your

study abroad office can help you decide what program would be best for you.

- If currently receiving mental health services — including prescription medication — find out if those services and/or medication are available at your destination. Also, check out our info about carrying **prescriptions** abroad.
- Consider the support system you'll have in place while abroad. If possible, know ahead of time who you can consult with about your mental health.

Money Matters

Traveling cheaply

- Most of us have to refrain from spending very much money when going abroad, but it would be a mistake to travel in the cheapest way possible. This could mean putting yourself at risk, and you might end up paying a high price on your health or state of mind. Instead, try to get the most for your money while accomplishing your goals for the trip and having a great time. Some of the ways to save money are:
 - find a low-priced airline ticket
 - go with a group such as a package deal or a tour
 - get discounts with an International Student Identity Card (ISIC)
 - stay in youth hostels or other safe but inexpensive accommodations
 - eat at local eateries or buy groceries and prepare your own meals
 - most importantly: develop a reasonable budget and stick to it.

Taking money abroad

- **Take money abroad in as many of the following ways as possible. It is advisable to have several options of accessing money available to you.**
- **Travelers' checks** are the safest way to carry money abroad as they can be replaced if lost or stolen. They are useful for emergency backup in case the bank machines are down or there is no other way to access cash. It is best to buy them in the U.S., then exchange them for currency abroad. Disadvantages are that you may be charged a fee when you cash them, not all stores or hotels accept them as a form of payment, and some banks in developing countries will not accept them. Additionally, in certain countries they are difficult to cash and/or generally not accepted. Check with your program coordinator or inquire at your country-specific pre-departure orientation regarding the situation for your destination. Travelers' checks come with receipts, which should be stored in a safe place, separate from the checks themselves, so that you can replace the checks if lost or stolen. The most widely accepted brand (and easiest to replace) is American Express. AAA, some banks, and some credit unions issue them with no fee to members.
- Exchanging some U.S. money for **local currency** when you first arrive, at least enough for phone calls and taxi from the airport, is a wise idea. This can be done at major banks or in currency exchange offices at international airports.
- Consider purchasing at least \$100 in local currency **before** you leave the U.S. in case you cannot exchange money right away or can't find

an ATM. Several banks in Ames offer this service. Carry cash in a safe place on your body, such as in a money belt or a pouch around your neck, hidden under your clothes.

- Students spending a semester or more abroad will be able to set up a **bank account** in a local bank after arriving at their destinations. Travelers' checks will be accepted when opening an account. Opening an account will allow you to obtain a local ATM card and not have to worry about locking up large amounts of money. You can choose a local bank or a branch of a U.S.-based bank. Some banks will require a letter of recommendation from your home bank in the U.S. There are usually large fees for transferring money from your home bank to your new account. Be prepared for a 4-to 6-week waiting period while they activate your account.
- **Credit cards** are widely accepted in most countries and are necessary in an emergency. Credit cards are convenient, reduce the amount of cash you need to carry, and automatically give you a good exchange rate. You should carry at least two credit cards from different companies, for instance one Visa and one MasterCard.
- **Remember**, the interest rates may be high if you don't pay off your card every month, they are subject to theft, it is easy to spend money you don't really have, and they can become de-magnetized. You can access cash from your credit card (you will need to know your international PIN if using an ATM to do this) but the interest rates are extreme, so avoid this option if possible. If the card goes missing, call immediately so you will not be charged for items you did not purchase.
- **ATM cards and debit cards** are very convenient abroad to obtain local currency. Find out from your bank your international PIN for abroad (some are 4 digits, some 6), if your card is connected to a world-wide system (Cirrus, Plus), if fees are charged for using a foreign ATM, and your daily withdrawal limit (some banks will raise it if you ask). Be sure that your withdrawal limit is going to be sufficient for your needs when you are abroad. Talk with your bank officials about this and the availability of ATM services and the system used by your bank in your target country(s). **Watch for thieves when using an ATM, and do not use the ATM after dark, if possible.**
- You can find **ATM machines** abroad via the Internet. MasterCard and Cirrus cardholders can check www.mastercard.com/cardholderservices/atm, and those with Visa and Visa Plus cards can use www.visa.com/pd/atm/main.html. Though American Express doesn't have an online ATM locator, cardholders can call 800-227-4669 in the U.S. or 910-333-3211 collect from abroad for locations.
- **Prepaid travel money cards** can be used as a debit card or with a PIN

in a Visa ATM machine. The advantage to these cards is that they are not connected to your bank account; if lost, you lose no more than the prepaid value of the card. There is a minimum value of \$300. A fee is charged each time you use the card (similar to prepaid telephone cards).

- **Personal checks** drawn on a U.S. bank will NOT be accepted abroad.

Sending money abroad

- Sending money overseas is time-consuming and expensive; it's best to avoid doing this.
- Transferring money from the US is possible to do between accounts at **most major banks**, but it is expensive and may take a few days.
- If money is needed right away, you can instantly wire money through an agency such as **Western Union, American Express, or Moneygram**. The fees are high, usually 10% of the total amount being wired, and money can be picked up only at certain locations in major cities. You may need to show a passport for identification when picking up money that has been wired to you.
- **In an emergency**, you can have money sent via the State Department's Citizens' Emergency Center. Emergency here means destitution, hospitalization, or death.

Exchanging currency

- **Exchange rates** vary from day to day and from source to source. Rates in the U.S. are typically less favorable than abroad, so do most of your exchanges after you arrive. Shop around, but don't waste too much time on it. In general, the exchange at the airport and at banks in large cities will have the best rates.
- To get an idea of the exchange rates for various countries, try **<http://www.xe.net/currency>**.
- **Coins** won't be exchanged when you return, so spend them before you leave the country.

Tipping

Tipping is not customary in every country. In some countries, it is rude to tip but in others it is rude not to leave some extra payment for the server, so be sure you consult a guidebook before you go.

SETTING UP A BUDGET:

Documents:

passport _____
 visa(s) _____
 Youth Hostel membership _____
 International Student ID Card _____
 insurance policy _____
 travelers' checks _____
 foreign currency purchased _____
 in advance _____

Transportation:

airfare _____
 train pass(es) _____
 local transportation _____
 departure tax _____

Medical:

medications to take _____
 inoculations before you go _____
 spare glasses/contacts _____

Daily expenses (X travel days):

food, tips (consider drinking age and your habits) _____
 accommodations _____
 entertainment (theatre, museum fees, sight-seeing) _____

Shopping:

personal _____
 gifts _____

Postage/Phone/Internet access:

Miscellaneous:

Emergency fund:

TOTAL:

Packing

- Above all else, **pack lightly**. You'll be lifting your bag out of the trunk of the car, through the airport, off the luggage carousel, to the train station, to the bus stop, onto the bus, off the bus, back a few kilometers because you missed your stop, up six flights of stairs, and onto the dresser. If you can't carry your luggage around the block three times, you're taking too much.

- Choose luggage that's sturdy, on wheels (2" diameter or larger to navigate curbs and cobblestones), and portable (even into a bathroom stall). If on the move, use a backpack instead, especially one with an internal frame, padded belt and shoulder straps, and side pockets.

- Find out your airline's luggage limits (dimensions and weight) and if there is a fee for oversized or overweight baggage. Baggage limits on the major carriers vary by destination, so check with your carrier(s) before finishing your packing.

- Check the Transportation Security Administration website at www.tsa.gov just prior to departure to find out what items are allowed in your carry-on bags.

What do I pack?

See packing list that follows.

Don't forget:

- A **day pack** to hold maps, phrase books, guidebooks, water bottles, sunglasses, etc.
- A **neck wallet or money belt** is recommended, regardless of where you're going or how you're getting there.

Clothing:

- **Pack** enough underwear for 7-10 days.
- If it's an **extended trip**, pick one color scheme and stick with it. Black travels very well.
- Plan on **bad weather**; specifically, plan on colder and wetter weather than you'd expect, or, in the tropics, hotter than you'd expect. Ask yourself: what would I put over/under this outfit if it gets cold/starts to rain?

Luggage:

- What you carry needn't be expensive, but ask yourself: Will I be carrying my luggage a lot (**big backpack**), or am I staying in one place for a long time (**suitcase**)?

- Could my luggage withstand a lot of **rough treatment**? Are the straps and handles strong enough? Will the zippers hold?
- Does all my luggage **lock** (to discourage theft)? If not, buy a Transport Security Administration (TSA)-approved lock or locking strap.
- Can TSA easily search and reclose my luggage?
- Does any of my luggage have **wheels**? Wheels smaller than 2" diameter are bound to snap off at the first cobblestone or curb. A suitcase with big wheels or a sturdy folding luggage cart with big wheels can really help the suitcase traveler.
- Label the inside of your luggage with your name and address, in case your luggage is lost. Attach distinctive ribbons or yarn to luggage. Everyone has black!

Other packing tips

- Research **culturally appropriate clothing** (for religious sites, discos, conservative Muslim countries, etc.), as some places may not let you in with immodest dress. In some Asian countries, shoes are removed at the door and must be easy to slip on and off.
- Take **nothing you'd be sorry to lose** (except your camera), as it is easier to lose things while traveling than in everyday life.
- A **tiny flashlight** comes in handy.
- Put a copy of your itinerary in each bag.

Electricity and appliances

• Appliances such as hairdryers run on a certain voltage of electrical current. There are two standard voltages in the world: 110 (used in the U.S.) and 220. An appliance designed for 110 voltage cannot run on 220 without a **converter** (or may run for a while and then burn up). In addition, plug-in (outlet) types vary the world over and require an **adapter**. If you must take an appliance, be sure to take the proper converter and adapters. If you will be abroad for a while, consider buying the necessary appliances abroad. Better yet, consider living without your appliances altogether. Laptops typically will convert to the voltage automatically, however, you will still need a plug adapter.

Packing valuables

- Do not bring valuables unless absolutely necessary.
- Carry passport, cash, credit cards, and other important documents on your body in a neck pouch or money belt. Pack photocopies of important documents in one place and never pack them in checked luggage.
- Photocopy valuable documents such as passport, visa, credit cards, prescrip-

tions, driver's license, etc., and keep copies in your bags and separate from the originals. Leave a copy at home with your parents, too.

- Pack prescription medications in your carry-on, in case your checked luggage is lost (see "Health" section of this handbook).

How to pack

- Stuff socks and underwear in plastic bags and then stuff the bags in shoes.
- Roll your clothes to take up less space.
- Pack largest items first (clothes, shoes, toiletry bag), then tuck smaller items in between.
- Bring toiletries in plastic bottles, not glass (lighter and unbreakable).
- Carry toiletries in a plastic bag in case they leak.
- Consider buying toiletries abroad unless your trip is short or you need certain kinds (e.g., plastic applicator tampons, specific brand of contact lens solution).

For the traveler on the move (i.e., backpacking)

- Bring half of what you think you'll use. You only need three of anything: "One to wash, one to wear, one to spare."
- Prepare to wash clothes in the sink and hang dry. Bring a thin towel (one that will dry quickly).
- Choose a backpack carefully, as it will determine the number of miles you are willing to walk to find cheap or clean housing or to see the sights.
- Bring an old sheet for hostels in case required.
- Bring flip-flops or Crocs for nasty showers and cheap and easy beachwear.

Additional Packing Information from: <http://studentsabroad.state.gov>

Packing

Khaki cargos or jean shorts? Your tortoiseshell glasses or contacts? Travelers' checks or credit cards? Whoa, Nelly! So many things to consider, so little time. Here are some essential packing tips from the obvious to the not-so-obvious.

Before you start daydreaming about all the great outfits you're going to pack for your trip, here are some things you should actually leave behind:

- Anything you would kick yourself for losing; that expensive watch, the Tiffany's locket your dad bought you for your birthday, unnecessary credit cards, wads of cash, your Social Security card, and any other valuables.
- Copies of your travel documents. Leave a copy of your passport identification page, airline tickets, driver's license, the credit cards you're taking, serial numbers of your travelers' checks, insurance information, as well as

the addresses and phone numbers of the places you'll be. Having copies of these documents at home will allow your family or friends to contact you or help you in case of an emergency. (Carry additional copies of these documents with you on your trip, separate from the originals.)

- Anything that would be considered a weapon. Even a pocketknife can result in a serious weapons charge while on foreign soil – even if the knife is found during a search or arrest for an unrelated offense.
- Toiletries and amenities that may already be available at your hotel. We know you only use your favorite brand of Vanilla Chai scented lotion, shower gel, and shampoo, but if you are only traveling for a short time, find out if your hotel will provide in-room amenities like a hair dryer, towels, an iron, soap, shampoo, etc. You'll have less to carry around, plus room for any presents that you bring home!
- Handbags and fanny packs. (Yes, there are still people who wear fanny packs.) Wearing a big purse or a fanny pack is like wearing a neon sign that says, "Rob me!" Your passport, cash and credit cards are most secure when locked in a hotel safe. When you have to carry them on you, inside pockets and a sturdy shoulder bag with the strap worn across your chest are somewhat safer. Another safe place to keep valuables is in a pouch or money belt worn under your clothing.

Now that we've talked about what you shouldn't bring overseas, here's what you should bring:

- Many other countries use 220-volt electricity while U.S. appliances use 110-volt electricity. If you plan on bringing electric gadgets like a hairdryer, electric razor, or even a laptop, keep in mind that you will need to purchase a "converter" or a "transformer" to be able to use your appliances. Plug prongs can also be different abroad, so you may need a "plug adapter" as well.
- Pack an extra outfit in your carry-on just in case your luggage is lost, or if you are separated from your travel gear.
- Do you have a prescription for a medication you literally cannot live without? A prescription written in the U.S. cannot be filled abroad. You will need a prescription written by a local doctor to obtain medications abroad. Make sure to bring a back-up supply in case you are delayed during your trip. Keep it on you when you travel in case you and your luggage get separated. All prescriptions should be clearly marked in their original containers. In fact, you should contact the embassy of the country you are visiting to get a list of drugs that are considered illegal narcotics – just to make sure your medication is not included. Get a letter from your doctor listing your medications and explaining why you need them. Also, carry instructions for treating any allergies or other unique medical conditions you might have.

- Pack appropriate clothes. Find out what the weather conditions are for your destination, and pack accordingly. We wouldn't want you in your hat, scarf and gloves at the height of your destination's summer season. Remember that just because it's one season here, doesn't mean it's the same elsewhere. Also, know the local dress code, especially for holy places. Whether it's a mosque in Dubai, a cathedral in the Vatican City, or a temple in Tel-Aviv, you may want to avoid bare shoulders and shorts, and you may be required to cover your hair.
- Don't forget the little things. It may be a good idea to bring a small first-aid kit, sunscreen, and a mild pain reliever. You never know when these things may come in handy.
- Make sure your luggage is labeled with your name, address and telephone numbers inside and outside of each piece of luggage. Use covered luggage tags to avoid becoming a target, and if possible, lock your luggage. Check the Transportation Security Agency homepage for guidelines regarding locked luggage and other current airline travel regulations.
- If you decide to take a pet abroad, you should check with the embassies of your destination regarding specific requirements that must be met before a pet may enter the country. Many countries have strict health, quarantine, agriculture, wildlife, and customs requirements and prohibitions. A listing of foreign embassies and consulates in the U.S. is available for your reference.
- Bring an international calling card to make phone calls. It is a convenient and inexpensive way of keeping in touch. You can even purchase one before you depart and then call your loved ones to let them know that you arrived safely!

View official checklists at <http://studentsabroad.state.gov>.

Packing Lists

Essentials (in a neck pouch or money belt):

- passport/visa
- credit cards/ATM cards
- travelers' checks
- tickets
- cash
- driver's license
- ISIC
- prescriptions
- glasses or contact lenses

In Your Carry-on Bag:

- photocopies of all important documents
- prescription medication (see "Health" section of this handbook)
- list of traveler's check numbers
- laptop computer
- cell phone charger
- camera

Clothing:

- culturally appropriate clothing
- comfortable walking shoes, already broken in
- sandals and/or shoes to wear with nice outfit
- one nice outfit (for going out or special occasion)
- clothing (washable, matches everything)
- socks
- raincoat/rain poncho or waterproof windbreaker
- heavy sweater/down vest/fleece
- underwear
- swim suit
- pajamas (bathrooms may be down the hall)
- sun hat
- coat that will take you through several seasons if needed

Toiletries:

- glasses and contact lens equipment
- extra pair of glasses or contacts
- cosmetics (if necessary)
- shower gel

- toothpaste
- toothbrush
- small towel
- deodorant
- comb or brush
- razors
- shampoo/conditioner
- pads/tampons
- manicure items
- small, unbreakable mirror
- Kleenex
- hair equipment
- condoms (may be unavailable or difficult to obtain)

Supplies for the Road (put these in your checked luggage):

- water bottle
- safety pins
- needle
- thread
- zip-lock plastic bags (for wet or leaking items)

Accessories:

- a day pack or small canvas bag
- neck wallet or money belt
- reading material for traveling
- adapter/converter for voltage
- flashlight (small)
- battery-operated alarm clock
- camera/video camera
- batteries for digital camera
- address book
- journal
- a good guide book
- phrase book or dictionary
- gifts
- nylon expandable luggage, for more space
- sunglasses
- compact umbrella
- combination locks for luggage
- a few photos of family and friends
- something to remind you of home
- flash drive for extra media storage

- blank CDs to burn for photos

For Serious Traveling (i.e., Backpacking):

- hand sanitizer
- laundry soap
- flip-flops or Crocs
- cable lock to lock luggage to bed frame
- Swiss army knife (must be carried in your checked luggage)
- instant coffee/tea
- chocolate or energy bars

Basic Health Items:

- bandaids and antibacterial cream (Neosporin)
- pain reliever
- vitamins
- sunscreen (may be expensive at your destination)

For Remote or Developing Regions:

- Lomotil or Imodium (for diarrhea)
- Kaopectate (for cramps)
- decongestant
- malaria pills
- water purification system
- mosquito repellent
- disinfectant
- aloe vera (for sunburn)

Taking Your Computer Abroad

Taking advantage of cybercafés can be a great alternative to carrying your computer with you. Remember to bring memory sticks and to take them with you when you leave the café.

Books that can provide you with a wealth of information on how to stay connected include:

- *The Rough Guide to the Internet*, Angus Kennedy, Rough Guides
- *Cybercafés: A Worldwide Guide for Travelers*, Kath Stanton (Ten Speed Press)
- *Internet Café Guide*, Ernst Larsen

Also check out the Web guides at <http://www.netcafeguide.com> (also by Ernst Larsen) or <http://www.cybercaptive.com>.

Safe Computing While Studying Abroad

Using public computers at Internet cafes, airports, libraries, and other public facilities is not without risk. Some may have keystroke loggers or other software installed on them to capture information. If you must use public computers, try to find a reputable location and keep the following in mind:

- Never leave the computer unattended. Watch out for people looking over your shoulder who might be trying to discover account names and passwords.
- Don't enter sensitive information when using a public computer. It is not recommended to do any kind of banking or purchasing with these machines. If you use your e-mail accounts at these locations, change your passwords regularly.
- Delete all files you have created on hard drives.
- Always logout of all applications. Logout of Web sites by pressing logout instead of just closing the browser. Close down all applications and reboot the system when you are finished.
- Remember to remove CDs, memory sticks and other personal belongings as you leave.
- If you are taking a computer with you and plan to use networking resources available to you while you are abroad, do the following before you leave:
- Update your operating system with the latest patches. Also apply the latest updates to any application programs that you'll be using.
- Verify that you have installed and are running a current antivirus program. Make sure that the virus definition files are up-to-date.
- Many machines become compromised because there are poor passwords on the machine accounts. Check to see that all accounts have complex, hard-to-guess passwords. Do not share your passwords with anybody.
- Close down any file sharing that might allow a hacker into your system.
- Install an anti-spyware program that will regularly check for spyware on your machine.
- Check to see if you need a special power adapter.

Travel

Planning Transportation

- **When reserving flights, ask about:** 1) visa or ID documents required for the destination country; 2) limits on checked and carry-on luggage for each leg of the trip; 3) seating (do you need a window or an aisle seat?); and 4) special needs (special diet, wheelchair, etc.).
- **At least 72 hours prior to departure,** call the airline(s) to reconfirm your flight(s) and the information in the four items above. Some airlines will cancel your space if you do not reconfirm. Ask if there have been any flight or schedule changes.
- **Know your flight options.** Assume changes will need to be made to your schedule so delays or cancellations won't be so stressful. Have an alternate plan ready in case your flight is delayed or canceled. Jot down some possible alternate airline phone numbers. Sometimes it's faster to make a reservation from an airport public phone or Internet kiosk than to stand in line at a ticket counter.
- **Plan your budget,** with some extra cash or credit line just in case the worst happens: needing an airline ticket, or a night or two in a hotel.
- **Bring something to do:** a favorite book, MP3 player with headphones and tapes, travel diary, guide books.
- **Check the weather** at your destination and connecting cities along the way. You can't do anything about the weather, but you can be prepared for it. Check the Internet for domestic and overseas conditions (www.weather.com and others).
- **Pack lightly and smartly,** with prescription medicines, a change of underwear, and toothbrush in your carry-on just in case your luggage doesn't arrive with you. If your luggage doesn't have wheels, bring along a folding luggage carrier on wheels.
- **Once you've landed. . .** The best-laid plans for ground transportation can get all fouled up when planes are late or diverted. Foreign bus and train travel can require a reservation. If you simply arrive at the station, you may not be able to leave until the next day.

On the travel day:

- **Call the airlines.** Are the flights on schedule?
- **Check in at the airport** at least two hours early for international flights, at least one hour early for U.S. connections. You should receive a boarding pass and seat assignment for each flight. Verify information with airline personnel (not fellow travelers and computer displays).
- **If you have problems** with an airline, review your options calmly with airline personnel. If an acceptable solution cannot be reached, speak with a supervisor. Generally, airlines will not take responsibility for mechanical or weather-related delays, but they must provide alternate flights. If the delay is their fault (over-booking, etc.), they must provide lodging, a long-distance call if someone is waiting for you, and meal expenses or denied boarding compensation, plus an alternate flight. (Exceptions may apply on charters and bulk-purchase fares.)
- **If luggage is lost or damaged**, a claim must be filed at the airport. Keep your claim checks. Often, airlines will pay for immediately needed items (toothbrush, underwear, other things needed within 1-2 days) while your bags are being located. Be sure to ask before leaving the airport.
- Carry your **tickets (or receipts, if using e-tickets) and documents** with you at all times.
- **Thieves and pickpockets** frequent airports, bus stations, train stations, etc. Be on guard. Keep your luggage between your feet, and don't leave your bags unattended.
- Bring some **foreign currency** with you, especially if you might be arriving late or after banking hours.
- Some airports add "**transit costs**" of up to US\$30; keep reserve funds available.
- Pack your **sense of humor** and keep it with you. Don't expect any from security personnel, immigration, etc. Watch what you say. Do not joke around security personnel, and never mention bombs or weapons.
- **Be patient.** Relax and enjoy the trip. You're almost there!
- **On board**, talk to the flight crew and fellow travelers. Ask about relative

costs, distances, money exchange, tipping, ground transportation, what to expect on arrival, etc.

- If you're facing an **unexpected delay**, try calling your family en route to advise them of the delay. If you arrive very late, consider spending the first night on arrival at a local hotel. If you're staying with a host family, call them, as well. If you're calling an "after hours" or "emergency" number at your destination, it's possible that you may have to call several times.

On arrival:

- Proceed through **immigration and customs**. It's best to hand-carry your bags – don't accept help from fellow passengers.
- To get **from the airport**, it's best to rely on official airport transport (bus, van, cab) rather than private companies or for-hire drivers.
- If you're taking intercity **ground transportation**, make sure you go to the correct station to make your connection. Remember that you may have to wait for the next available bus or train due to the volume of travelers, advance reservations, etc.
- Try to **call home** or send e-mail right away, but realize that you may not be able to. It may take two or three days to learn the phone system, to find the office from which you can call long distance, etc. Notify your family of this before you go; if there's an emergency, they can contact you at your host school.

Returning home:

- **Call** the airport and reconfirm your flights at least 72 hours prior to your return, or you may lose your reservation. Call again the day prior to check changes in departure times or schedules.

Cultural Adjustment

Culture Shock

We are surrounded by elements in our own culture that influence who we are and how we relate to the world. Because we have grown up with this culture, we are comfortable with it. Our values and attitudes have been shaped by our experiences in our native culture. What happens when we suddenly lose cues and symbols that orient us to situations of daily life? What happens when facial expressions, gestures, and words are no longer familiar? The psychological discomfort one feels in a foreign situation is commonly known as culture shock.

Cross-Cultural Adjustment Cycle

Each stage in this process is characterized by “symptoms” or outward and inward signs representing certain kinds of behavior.

- **Honeymoon Period:** Initially, you will probably be fascinated and excited by everything new. Visitors are at first elated to be in a new culture.
- **Culture Shock:** The visitor is immersed in new problems: housing, transportation, food, language, and new friends. Fatigue may result from continuously trying to comprehend and use the second language. You may wonder, “Why did I come here?”
- **Initial Adjustment:** Everyday activities such as housing and going to school are no longer major problems. Although the visitor may not yet be perfectly fluent in the language spoken, basic ideas and feelings in the second language can be expressed.
- **Mental Isolation:** Individuals have been away from their families and good friends for a long period of time and may feel lonely. Many still feel they cannot express themselves as well as they can in their native language. Frustrations and sometimes a loss of self-confidence result. Some individuals remain at this stage.
- **Acceptance and Integration:** A routine (e.g., work, school, social life) has been established. The visitor has accepted the habits, customs, food, and characteristics of the friends, associates and the language of the country.

Return Anxiety, Re-entry Shock, Reintegration

While these stages play an important role in a visitor's adaptation to a new culture, many students are surprised to experience the very same feelings upon

reentry to the U.S. Re-entry shock can be even more difficult than the initial culture shock because it is so unexpected.

Suggestions for Dealing with Culture Shock

- Try to look for logical reasons why things happen. This may help you view your host culture in a more positive light.
- * Be slow to judge; observe first, show respect, and invite conversation. Try not to dwell on the negative things about your host culture, and don't hang around with people who do.
- Explore! Get a sense for the physical environment, look for parks, sports facilities, bus stops, etc. Get a sense for the behavioral norms; how do they greet each other, wait in line, etc. Find out where people meet and socialize. Make an effort to go to those places.
- Try to fit into a rhythm of life in your host culture. Adjust to their time schedule for meals and work. Read local newspapers and books.
- Keep your sense of humor!
- Set small goals for yourself, as high expectations may be difficult to meet.
- Speak the language of the country you are in, and don't worry if you only know a few phrases.
- Take care of yourself by exercising, getting enough sleep, eating properly, and doing things you enjoy.
- Keep in touch with friends and family at home.
- Draw on your personal resources for handling stress. You've done it many times before, and you can do it again.

Communicating Across Cultures

There are a number of skills and guidelines that can be suggested for communicating successfully in cross-cultural situations:

- **Pay Attention.** Clear your mind of its various preoccupations so you can concentrate on what is being said. Remember that there is no point in talking if you cannot pay (or receive) attention. If you cannot, try to postpone the conversation.

- **Set your assumptions and values aside** and try to hear not just what the other person is saying but what is meant by what was said. (This may require asking many questions.) It is easier to understand if you set aside your ideas and try to explore theirs thoroughly.
- **Withhold judgment.** You will have more success in communicating with other people if you are trying to understand them rather than to evaluate them.
- **Be complete and explicit.** Be ready to explain your point in more than one way and why you are trying to make a particular point in the first place. Give the background; provide the context; make clear "where you are coming from".
- **Pay attention to the other person's response.** You can usually tell whether you have blundered or failed to make yourself clear by taking time to notice the other person's verbal and nonverbal reactions.
- **Paraphrase.** After the other person has spoken, restate what you heard the other person say and what you thought was meant. You can say something like this: "As I understand it, you are saying. . . . Is that correct?" This can help avoid situations where you and the other person assign different meanings to the same word or phrase.
- **Ask for verification.** After you have spoken, try to get confirmation that you have been understood. As the other person to restate what you have said. It does not usually work to ask the other person, "Do you understand?" Most people will say "yes" whether they understand or not.
- **Be alert for different meanings** being assigned to certain words, phrases, or actions. Sometimes you will think you are understanding what the other person is saying and suddenly realize you do not.
- **Do not ask questions you would not or could not answer yourself.** If you do not want to tell the other person about your sex life, for example, don't ask them about theirs.
- **Analyze communicative behavior.** Learn to be aware not just of what is being said in a communication situation but also of what is happening in the situation. Here are some aspects of the communication process that it helps to watch: Does your conversation partner seem to be paying attention? Are you paying attention yourself? Do you both appear to understand each other's meanings? If you become aware of the way the communication process works, you will be able to more readily identify breakdowns.

• **When you are having trouble communicating, talk about the trouble you are having.** Using phrases such as “I don’t understand that point” or “Let me explain why I’m telling you this”, you can focus your attention on the process of communication within the group rather than on the topic you were discussing.

Special Student Issues

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues

Attitudes toward sexuality vary greatly from country to country. Some cultures are open about homosexuality, and strong gay communities exist in many cities; however, some cultures and peoples are intolerant of different sexual preferences, and strict taboos or laws against such relationships may exist. We encourage you to find out how different sexual preferences are viewed overseas and where your support may exist, so that your time overseas can be as enriching as possible. Consult your program director for more information on gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender issues in your destination country. For additional resources, contact the ISU Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Student Services office.

Students of Color

No two students studying abroad ever have quite the same experience, even in the same program and country. This same variety is true for students of color. Reports from past participants vary from those who felt exhilarated by being free of the American context of race relations, to those who experienced different degrees of ‘innocent’ curiosity about their ethnicity, to those who felt familiar and new types of prejudice. Try to find others on campus who have studied abroad and can provide you with some counsel. For additional resources, contact the ISU Multicultural Student Affairs office.

Students with Disabilities

Many of the disability accommodations or services that are provided at U.S. universities may be different or unavailable overseas. You should try to arrange for any disability accommodations at overseas sites before you depart. Receiving accommodations once you are abroad will be more difficult and may not be possible. Disclosing accommodation needs does not influence your acceptance into a program, and it is to your advantage to be certain that accommodation you need will be available. For additional resources, contact the ISU Disability Resources office.

Knowing Iowa and ISU

As you travel, people will want to know where you’re from and what it’s like to live here. How well do you know Iowa and Iowa State University? Here are some hints:

How many people live in Iowa? About 2.9 million (30th state in population).

How big is Iowa? About 56,290 square miles (23rd in land area).

What’s the largest city? Des Moines, with 196,917.

What’s the racial make-up of Iowa? About 93% white, 2% black, 4% Hispanic.

What percent of Iowa’s land is cultivated? 95%, more than any other state!

What are some Iowa products? Tractors and farm equipment, agricultural products, food, grain (Iowa ranks first in the nation in pork, corn, and soybean production).

What is the average size of an Iowa farm? 325 acres.

Is Iowa in any movies? Twister, Field of Dreams, and Bridges of Madison County were filmed here.

What is the climate like? The average temperature in January is 25 F, in July 86 F; Iowa averages 31 inches of snow and 33 inches of rain each year.

How old is ISU? About 150 years.

How much does it cost for a non-resident to study at ISU each year? About \$16,000.

Name some famous ISU graduates. George Washington Carver, John Atanasoff, Christian Peterson, Carrie Chapman Catt, Henry Wallace, Griffith Buck.

How many majors does ISU offer? Over 100.

ISU is part of the prestigious Association of American Universities; how many other U.S. and Canadian institutions are included? 62.

How many students attend ISU? About 26,000.

What percentage are international students? 12%.

How many faculty and staff are employed at ISU? 1800 faculty, 4300 staff.

What grade point average is needed to graduate from ISU? 2.00.

What are ISU’s intercollegiate sports? Basketball (men and women), cross-country (men and women), football (men), golf (men and women), gymnastics (women), softball (women), soccer (women), swimming (men and women), tennis (women), track and field (men and women), volleyball (women), wrestling (men).

Re-Entry

- Just as you will have to brace yourself for a period of psychological disorientation when you leave the U.S., you should know that after your time abroad you might also have to prepare yourself for a parallel period of readjustment when you return home.
- Before you return home, prepare yourself for the adjustment by connecting with family and friends. Also, find out what's happening in the U.S. Stations such as CNN are available worldwide, and many newspapers (including the ISU Daily) are available on the World-Wide Web.
- It takes time to get used to being back home, and it can be quite stressful. Do not try to jump back into your old life. If possible, give yourself a few “transitional” days to relax and reflect before returning to a busy schedule.
- Acknowledge re-entry as a part of your overseas experience. It is easier to deal with the mood swings that often accompany reverse culture shock if you are aware that it is normal to have these feelings. Almost all returnees experience some adjustment difficulties.
- **Situation:** You may feel confused, especially during the first few weeks after your return, because the values, attitudes, and lifestyles you learned while abroad conflict with those back home.
- **Recommendation:** Differences in cultural patterns require time to explore and understand. Take time to evaluate both cultural perspectives before deciding on your preferences and integrating them into your lifestyle.
- **Situation:** Family and friends at home may not seem interested in hearing about your experiences abroad.
- **Recommendation:** Realize that they may be adjusting to changes that have taken place in you. They may never have had an experience comparable to yours and so may have difficulty relating to it. Be patient and seek out other returnees who can help put your experience in perspective.
- **Situation:** Friends and family may treat you as the same person you were before you left, without recognizing the changes you have been through. As a result of these changes, however, you feel a need for new or modified personal relationships that acknowledge the new dimensions of your personality.
- **Recommendation:** Remember that your friends and family may not have been expecting you to change. They may be uncertain about how you feel and how you have grown. Discuss your feelings with them and try to encourage positive

changes in old relationships. Also, seek out new friends who are compatible with who you have become.

Additional Re-entry Adjustment Advice

- If you do find that you are experiencing a great deal of stress, practice stress management techniques: exercise, maintain a healthy diet, get plenty of rest, etc.
- Keep a journal. This will help you make sense out of what you are feeling, how you have changed, and what you have gained from your time abroad.
- Keep in contact with the friends you made in your host country through phone calls, letters, e-mail, etc.
- Continue to explore the new hobbies and interests you developed abroad. Look for ways to use new skills you may have acquired in your host country. Integrate the new you with the old.
- Find ways to share your experience with others. Make yourself available to advise other students who will be studying abroad in your host country, and befriend exchange students from your host country. Remember that they are going through the same process of culture shock and adjustment that you did while abroad. You can learn a lot from one another and help each other in the process. Join clubs or organizations that have ties to your host country or that have an international focus.
- If you find that you miss your host country, see films, eat food, and listen to music, etc., from that country. Also, look at your photo albums and reread your travel journal.
- Remember the importance of having a support system. It is particularly helpful to form a support group of people who have been through similar experiences. Get together regularly and discuss your time spent abroad and your feelings about being back home. If you still find you are having a great deal of difficulty, seek help for a counselor, psychologist, or study abroad advisor knowledgeable in this area.
- Plan to use your experience abroad as a marketable skill. Transferable skills include working with diverse work teams, demonstrating flexibility, solving problems creatively, dealing well with change, taking initiative, willingness to take risks, demonstrating sensitivity to people from other cultural backgrounds, willingness to travel.
- Be patient! Re-entry may take some time, but most returnees find the process to be a valuable experience leading to personal growth and increased self-knowledge.

Resources

Educational Systems Abroad

Regardless of where your studies are taking you, it's a good idea to know something about the educational system in which you'll find yourself. You can get an idea of how your host country's system works by pointing your browser to the following sites:

Australia: Australian Education Office

<http://studyinaustralia.gov.au/Sia/en/Home.htm>

Canada: Study in Canada

<http://www.internationaleducationmedia.com/canada/>

Finland: Finnish University Directory

<http://www.university-directory.eu/Finland/Finland-Universities.html>

France: Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale

<http://www.education.gouv.fr/>

Germany: the German Higher Education System

<http://www.euroeducation.net/prof/germanco.htm>

Ireland: Higher Education Authority

<http://www.hea.ie>

Korea: Korean Ministry of Education

<http://english.mest.go.kr/enMain.do>

Mexico: The Mexico Channel

http://mexicochannel.net/menu3_en.htm

Scotland: ScotFind, the Scottish Search Engine

<http://www.scotfind.com/links/Education>

Spain: Spanish Embassy Education Office

<http://www.sgcι.mec.es/usa/>

Switzerland: Swiss Education and Research site map

http://www.siliconglen.com/Scotland/17_1.html

United Kingdom: British Council's Education Information Service
<http://www.EducationUK.org/>

Regardless of where your studies take you, teaching and learning methods may be different from what you've experienced in the United States:

- classes may be lecture-only, with the expectation that you will take verbatim notes;
- attendance may be required at tutorials but not at lectures;
- you may have long reading lists from which you will need to determine what to read, skim, or just be aware of;
- attendance may be required for some classes but not for others;
- you may be required to work more in groups or make more presentations;
- you may have more homework, or none at all;
- essay style may be more research-based or more opinion-based; or
- you may need to learn more on your own, outside of class, than you are accustomed to doing.

Strategies for dealing with these differences in style can include:

- borrowing lecture notes from other students;
- introducing yourself to your instructors and asking what to do if you have questions;
- seeking out academic assistance (e.g., tutors or help with writing skills) on campus;
- organizing or joining study groups with other students in your classes;
- studying more than the local students;
- meeting with your instructors periodically, to determine how you're doing in the class;
- budgeting your time so that you're learning throughout the semester, in case the end of the term is harder than you'd anticipated.

Student support services may vary, too:

- You may not have an academic advisor and will need to seek out help when you need it;
- student counseling and other supports may not exist on campus or in that culture;
- there may be fewer on-campus activities, so be prepared to create your own social life;
- dorms may not have staff in residence, so you may need to resolve housing issues on your own.

When in doubt, be persistent in asking your study abroad advisor or exchange coordinator abroad for assistance.

Bibliography

Travel Series

Berkeley Guides, published by Fodor's Travel Publications, New York, and written by students, for students, with very specific tourist information

Culture Shock!, published by Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company, Oregon, usually written by U.S. citizens living abroad; the books discuss deeper cultural issues rather than travel

Eyewitness Travel Guides, published by Dorling Kindersley, London, are glossy guides with a mix of photos, graphics, history, and tourist information

Fielding's, published by Fielding Worldwide, California, are designed for the older traveler and are updated every year

Frommer's Complete Travel Guides, published by Macmillan Travel, New York, cover much the same tourist information of the other series listed here

Insight Guides, published by APA Publications, Singapore, are primarily photo-journalism, with good background information and without the tourist information

Knopf Guides, published by Alfred A. Knopf, New York, have wonderful photos, graphics, and information for those wanting more than an overview

Let's Go, published by St. Martin's Press, New York, is a series written by students, for students, as a classic tourist guide with very specific and very accurate information

Lonely Planet, published by Lonely Planet Publications, Australia, has an eye for the local culture and mixes cultural background with practical tourist tips

The Rough Guide, published by Penguin Books, is primarily text; don't look here for photos, but do consider this as a primary source for in-depth information

General Travel / Adjustment

Do's and Taboos Around the World by Roger Axtell, Parker Pen Company, 1985

Culture from the Inside Out by Alan Cornes, Intercultural Press, 2004

Old World, New World by Craig Storti, Intercultural Press, 2001

Survival Kit for Overseas Living by L. Robert Kohls, Intercultural Press, 1996

Citizen Diplomacy by the Kennedy Center, Brigham Young University, 1983

Europe Through the Back Door by Rick Steves, John Muir Publications, 1998

First-Time Europe by Louis CasaBianca, Rough Guides, 1997

Gestures by Roger E. Axtell, John Wiley & Sons, 1991

Figuring Foreigners Out by Craig Storti, Intercultural Press, 1999

For Diverse Populations

A World of Options: A Guide to International Exchange, Community Service, and Travel for Persons with Disabilities, edited by Christa Bucks, Mobility International USA, 1997

New Manual for Inclusions of Persons with Disabilities in International Exchange Programs, Mobility International USA, 1996

Able to Travel: True Stories by and for People with Disabilities, edited by Alison Walsh, The Rough Guides, 1994

Gutsy Women: Travel Tips and Wisdom for the Road by Marybeth Bond, Travelers' Tales, Inc., 1996

Traveling Solo by Eleanor Berman, Globe Pequot Press, 1997

Are You Two...Together? A Gay and Lesbian Travel Guide to Europe by Lindsay Van Gelder and Pamela Robin Brandt, Random House, 1991

Detour's London: An Alternative Guide by Jonathan Nicholson and Jonathan Williams, Detour Publications, 1993

Handbook for Women Abroad, edited by Jane Wemhoener, 1991, available from Kenyon College, Office of International Education, Gambier OH 43022

Web Resources

General Travel

Centers for Disease Control
<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm>

CultureGrams
<http://www.culturegrams.com/>

Frommer's
<http://www.frommers.com/>

Let's Go
<http://www.letsgo.com/>

Lonely Planet
<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/us>

Rough Guides
<http://www.roughguides.com/>

Tourism Offices Worldwide Directory
<http://www.towd.com>

Travlang's Foreign Language for Travelers
<http://www.travlang.com>

U.S. State Department Background Notes
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/>

U.S. State Department Travel Warnings and Public Announcements
<http://travel.state.gov/>

Diverse Populations

Mobility International USA
<http://www.miusa.org/>

Disability Travel and Recreation Resources
<http://www.makoa.org/travel.htm>

Emerging Horizons Travel Information
<http://emerginghorizons.com/>

Resources

Journeywoman

<http://www.journeywoman.com>

NAFSA: Association of International Educators Rainbow SIG

<http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay>

NGLTF: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

<http://www.thetaskforce.org>

STUDY ABROAD EMERGENCIES

To contact the ISU Study Abroad Center, call the

ISU Police (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

(001) 515-294-4428

You may also contact the Study Abroad Center during office hours at

(001) 515-294-6792

As a student on a study abroad program, you should first contact your Program Director or the on-site emergency staff member for your program; however, if this individual is not available or is otherwise incapacitated, you may need to respond on your own.

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