

Study Abroad Student Handbook



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EXPLORING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

A. GENERAL

It is very hard to know what life is really like in a country or region whose culture one has never experienced directly. But, it is very easy to have the illusion of knowing what it will be like--from images furnished by popular communications media, from reading, or perhaps having met a few people from 'there,' here on home ground. Simply 'knowing about' another culture, however, is not the same thing as knowing what it will feel like to be learning and living there, on its terms. Every culture has distinct characteristics that make it different from every other culture. Some differences are quite evident, even to the unsophisticated (e.g., language, religion, political organization, etc.). Others can be so subtle that while foreign visitors may be vaguely aware of them, making adjustments is a complex process and one may remain uncomfortable and off balance for quite some time.

One of the difficulties students and other travelers have in adjusting to foreign life comes about because they take abroad with them too much of their own 'cultural baggage': misleading stereotypes and preconceptions about others, coupled with a lack of awareness of that part of themselves which was formed by U.S. culture alone. As a result, suddenly feeling like a fish out of water is a not uncommon experience. It is in fact something which should be anticipated as normal and likely, at least for a while.

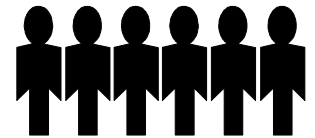
According to Robert Kohls, formerly the Director of Training and Development for the United States Information Agency, "Culture is an integrated system of learned behavior patterns that are characteristic of the members of any given society, ...the total way of life of particular groups of people. It includes everything that a group of people thinks, says, does, and makes--its customs, language, material artifacts and shared systems of attitudes and feelings. Culture is learned and transmitted from generation to generation." It is not identical with the genetic heritage that may differentiate one group of people from another. These differences in shared systems of attitudes and feelings is one of those more subtle areas of difference that foreigners experience when they leave 'home.'

B. CULTURAL STEREOTYPES

Numerous studies have been done to identify specific characteristics that distinguish one culture from another. This anthropological approach to cultural differences and similarities of course can and should be studied. Most overseas visitors and those who receive them, however, often unfortunately are captured by misleading and often dangerous stereotyping. Most Germans, Japanese, Italians, etc., have stereotyped perceptions of 'the American,' just as most Americans have stereotyped images of 'Germans,' 'Japanese,' 'Italians,' etc. In short, misperceptions may exist on all sides. Frequently, the stereotype of the American is far from complimentary: the boorish tourist who expects everyone to speak English, the arrogant patriot who thinks every country in the world should pattern itself after the United States, the drunken reveler who sees the anonymity of traveling abroad as an opportunity to drop all civilized inhibitions--all have contributed to the development of this unfortunate stereotype. It is up to you to behave in a manner that will convince your hosts that this is indeed an unjustified stereotype that cannot be applied arbitrarily, at least to yourself.

Survival Kit for Overseas Living: For Americans Planning to Live and Work Abroad, L. Robert Kohls, ed. 3rd ed. Intercultural Press, \$11.95 plus shipping.

It may seem a bit contradictory to suggest that because of the unique social and cultural milieu in the United States, most Americans tend to be less reserved, less inhibited, and less restrained in their efforts to



communicate friendliness and sociability. But in some areas abroad this outgoing manner, especially on the part of young women, can be grossly misinterpreted: a friendly smile and a warm "hello" on the streets of Rome could easily be interpreted by an Italian Lothario as something more than mere friendliness. This is to say that until you develop a feel for the social customs characteristics of the area where you are living and studying, it is wise to be more formal and restrained in your social contacts. By the same token, do not expect the local populace to welcome you immediately, with open arms; their formality and restraint are not necessarily an expression of unfriendliness but may simply be characteristic of their social manner with strangers.

Unfortunately, attempts to categorize cultural characteristics often end up in cultural stereotypes that are unfair and misleading. In adjusting to your study abroad environment, you will therefore have to deal not only with real cultural differences, and also with perceived cultural differences. Keep in mind that people of other cultures are just as adept at stereotyping the American as we are at stereotyping them-- and the results are not always complimentary. The following are a few examples of the qualities (some positive, some negative) that others frequently associate with the "typical" American:

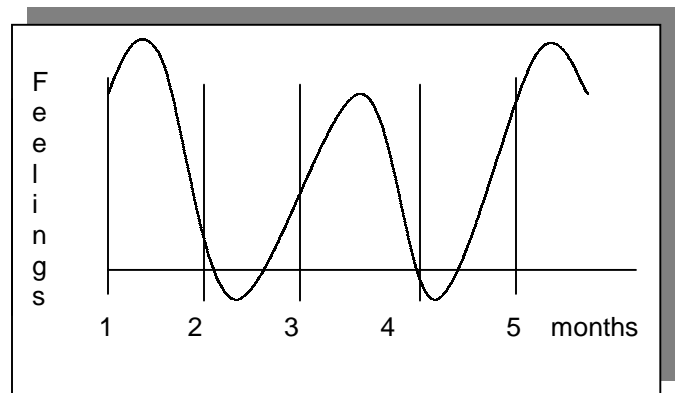
- outgoing and friendly
- informal
- loud, rude, boastful,
- immature
- hard working
- extravagant and wasteful
- sure they have all the answers
- lacking in class consciousness-
disrespectful of authority
- racially prejudiced
- ignorant of other countries
- wealthy
- generous
- promiscuous
- always in a hurry

While a stereotype might possess some grain of truth, it is obvious when we consider individual differences that not every American fits the above description. The same is true about your hosts vis-à-vis your own preconceptions, for example, about the Germans, the English, the Japanese, the Italians, the Spaniards, the Russians, etc.

C. CULTURE SHOCK

Many travelers go through an initial period of euphoria and excitement, overwhelmed by the thrill of being in a totally new and unusual environment. As this initial sense of "adventure" wears off, they gradually become aware of the fact that old habits and routine ways of doing things no longer suffice. They gradually (or suddenly) no longer feel comfortably themselves. If this happens to you, as it is likely to, you will feel like the outsider you in fact are. Minor problems may quickly assume the proportions of major crises, and you may find yourself growing somewhat depressed. You may feel an anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse, a kind of psychological disorientation. You will indeed be experiencing what has come to be referred to as "Culture Shock". Such feelings are perfectly normal, so, knowing this and with a bit

of conscious effort, you will soon find yourself making adjustments (some quite subtle and perhaps not even noticeable at the conscious level) that will enable you to adapt to your new cultural environment.



There is no clear-cut way of dealing with culture shock. Simply recognizing its existence and accepting one's vulnerability to it is an important first step. As long as you know in advance that you will probably fall victim to culture shock at a certain level, you can prepare yourself psychologically to accept the temporary discomfort and turn it into an advantage by learning from it. Remember that you are not the only one experiencing occasional frustration, irritability, and depression, etc. Falling victim to culture shock, in other words, does not imply the existence of any psychological or emotional shortcomings on your part. As Robert Kohls says, "Culture shock is in some degree inevitable... and is the occupational hazard of overseas living through which one has to be willing to go through in order to enjoy the pleasures of experiencing other countries and cultures in depth."

Undergoing culture shock is in itself a learning experience that you should take advantage of. It is a way of sensitizing you to another culture at a level that goes beyond the intellectual and the rational. Just as an athlete cannot get in shape without going through the uncomfortable conditioning stage, so you cannot fully appreciate the cultural differences that exist without first going through the uncomfortable stages of psychological adjustment.

D. FITTING IN

Social customs differ greatly from one country to another. It is therefore impossible to give guidelines that will be applicable in every culture. Generally speaking, you can be yourself as long as you remain friendly, courteous, and dignified. Always keep in mind that you are the

guest in someone else's country. Therefore, you would be safe to assume that your behavior should be regulated pretty much in the same manner as if you were the guest in someone else's home. On the other hand, as an outsider, especially if you err on the side of being respectful, some allowances are likely to exist for the things you do not immediately understand or feel comfortable with.

POLITENESS: In keeping with the relatively formal manner of social customs abroad, you should place much more emphasis on the simple niceties of polite social intercourse than you might at home. Be prepared to offer a formal word of greeting to whomever you meet in your day-to-day activities. For example, should you approach a clerk in the local market in Strasbourg always be courteous enough to begin your conversation with, "Bonjour, Madame (Monsieur, Mademoiselle)" before you launch into your inquiries about the products, and become familiar with the appropriate expressions of gratitude in response to your hosts' hospitality.

HUMOR: While each country has its own particular brand of wit and humor, very few cultures appreciate the kind of "kidding" to which Americans are accustomed. Comments, even when intended to be humorous, can often be taken quite literally.

SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE: When it comes to language, most people will be extremely flattered rather than amused at your efforts to communicate in their native language. Do not be intimidated or inhibited when practicing your own limited command of the language. A couple of words of caution might be in order: do your best to avoid slang expressions, which are usually unique to the particular culture, and which may therefore be totally meaningless or inappropriate in the context of another culture. Be aware of the differences between the "familiar" and the "polite" forms of address and be sure to use them properly.

Do not try to translate American idiomatic expressions direct into the native language. Idioms as a whole may be complete nonsense when translated into another language. While it is not true that all people speak English, it is true enough for you to be wary of making impolite or tactless comments on the presumption that those within hearing distance will not understand what you are saying.

PHYSICAL CONTACT: When establishing social relationships, "play it by ear" in

determining the level of familiarity that you should adopt at the various stages of your relationship. Physical contact, for example, may not be especially appreciated or understood by someone unfamiliar with the American idea of camaraderie; a cheerful pat on the back or a warm hug may be quite embarrassing and uncomfortable in certain cultures.

All cultures have different notions about social space, for instance how far away to stand or sit when conversing, or how to shake hands or wave farewell. Restraint is advisable until you learn how the locals do it and what they expect of you.

PERSONAL QUESTIONS: Let your hosts point the way when engaging in "small talk." While Americans may find it easy and quite appropriate to talk about themselves, in some countries, your hosts may view this as being as impolite as asking personal questions of them.

DRINKING AND DRUNKENNESS: Be extremely sensitive of others' attitudes and feelings when it comes to drinking. You will probably find that your hosts enjoy social drinking as much as any American, but they might not look upon drunkenness as either amusing or indeed tolerable. Know the law, local customs, and your limits.

PRICE BARGAINING: Haggling over prices can be another sensitive and vague subject. Haggling is not only appropriate but even expected in some circumstances. The trick is to know under which circumstances haggling is appropriate. Unless you clearly understand the difference between appropriate and inappropriate circumstances for this sort of social bargaining, you may very well find yourself insulting the merchant and further reinforcing a negative stereotype of Americans. You can always test the waters by politely indicating that you like the product very much but that it is a bit more than you had anticipated spending: if the merchant wishes to bargain further, this will give him the opening he needs to offer you the product at a lower price; if it is not that kind of an establishment, you can simply (and politely) terminate the conversation.

TALKING POLITICS: Expect people abroad to be very articulate and well-informed when it comes to matters of politics and international relations. Do not be at all surprised if your counterparts try to engage you in political debate. There is certainly no reason for you to modify your own convictions, but you should be discreet and rational in your defense of those

convictions. Here again you may very well find yourself butting heads with another of those unfortunate stereotypes, such as the arrogant American who thinks everyone must fall in line with the United States.

PHOTOGRAPH ETIQUETTE: You may want to record many of your memories on film, and it is often convenient to include some of the local populace in your photographs. However, remember that the people you 'shoot' are human beings and not curiosity objects. Be tactful and discreet in how you approach photographing strangers; it is always courteous and wise to ask permission before taking someone's picture.

SUMMARY: Social customs differ from one country and culture to another, and there is simply no way you can fit in and be at home unless you learn what is and isn't appropriate behavior. It is impossible to make generalizations that can be applicable to every situation. Therefore, it is not inappropriate to inquire politely about local customs and social niceties. Expect things to be different overseas. One of the basic reasons for your participation in a study abroad program should necessarily be to develop a sensitivity to and appreciation for the people and customs of a totally different culture and way of life. Anyone who goes overseas demanding that everything be the same as what (s)he is accustomed to in the United States will be sorely disappointed and probably better served by staying at home. Be flexible and receptive in dealing with these differences and you will find your own life experiences will be greatly enriched.

E. REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

Just as you will have to brace yourself for a period of psychological disorientation when you leave the USA, you should know that after your time abroad, you may also have to prepare yourself for a parallel period of readjustment when you return 'home.' Why? Simply because if you have had a full experience living and learning overseas, you are likely to have changed some while you have been away; likewise, the place you return to, may itself appear to have changed, as it indeed might have. Even though these changes are seldom huge and may not be apparent to others, you are likely to be very aware of them. This can be confusing, all the more so, because it is unexpected. Brigham Young University's Culture Grams offer many insights on customs and lifestyles of individual countries. Phone 1-800-528-6279 or visit the website at <http://www.culturgram.com/>.

Immediately after your return, you can probably expect to go through an initial stage of euphoria and excitement. Most people are overwhelmed by the sheer joy of being back on their native turf. But as you try to settle back into your former routine, you may recognize that your overseas experience has changed some or many of your perceptions and assumptions, your ways of doing things, even what it means to 'be yourself.' You might have become, in a sense, a somewhat new person. After all, that is what education is all about! But this intellectual and personal growth means that you can expect a period of disorientation as you adjust to the "new" environment at home.

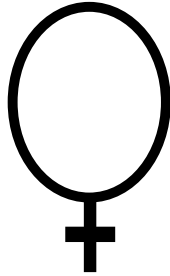
The re-adjustment period is usually rather short-lived, since 'home' will never be as "foreign" to you as the foreign environment you adjusted to overseas. Also, your experience of dealing successfully with culture shock abroad will have provided you with the psychological tools for dealing with the challenges of readjustment. Obviously, the more you have changed--often a by-product of the time you were away and how deeply you immersed yourself--the more difficult it will be to have things go back to a previous notion of normality. However, if you are aware of the changes (seeking to learn from them), smooth adaptation is more likely.

As a means of readjusting and staying in touch with the international scene, you may want to consider contacting students who have been abroad, who are currently abroad, or who are thinking about going abroad. There are many ways of maintaining contact with friends you made overseas, foreign and domestic, and also of remaining in touch with the culture you entered and now have left--via letters, e-mail, phoning, magazines, books, etc. and other means. Discussing things and sharing experiences with others is almost always worthwhile. Remembering what it was like for you to have been, for a time, a 'foreigner' should inspire you to try to get to know the international students on your campus or others from 'minority' backgrounds, who may themselves be feeling some of the same social dislocation and alienation you once felt when you were overseas. The key is to build on the cross-cultural coping skills you now possess and to find conscious ways of integrating your new 'self' into your evolving personal and academic life, not seeing it as a 'dream' or something irrelevant to your future.

F. SPECIAL NOTE TO WOMEN

Some women students in certain overseas

countries (e.g., South America, the Middle East, and parts of Europe) have a hard time adjusting to attitudes they encounter abroad, in both public and private interactions between men and women. Some (but not all) men in such countries openly demonstrate their appraisal of women in ways that many American women find offensive. It is not uncommon to be honked at, stared at, verbally and loudly praised, and to be actively noticed simply for being an American woman. Sometimes the attention can be flattering. However, it may become very annoying, and potentially even angering. Indigenous women, who often get the same sort of treatment, have been taught how to ignore the attention. Many American women students find this hard to do. Eye contact between strangers or a smile at someone passing in the street, which is not uncommon in the States, may result in totally unexpected invitations. Some women feel they are forced to stare intently at the ground while they walk down the street.



You will have to learn what the unwritten rules are about what you can and cannot do abroad. Women can provide support for each other, and former students suggest that you get together several times early in your stay overseas to talk about what works and what doesn't for dealing with the unwanted attention. American women are seen as "liberated" in many ways, and sometimes the cultural misunderstandings that come out of this image can lead to difficult and unpleasant experiences.

Needless to say, this special and surprising status may make male-female friendships more difficult to develop. Be careful about the implicit messages you may be unintentionally communicating. Above all, try to maintain the perspective that these challenging (and sometimes difficult experiences) are part of the growth of cultural understanding which is one of the important reasons you are studying abroad. Prepare yourself by trying to understand in advance not only the gender roles and assumptions which may prevail elsewhere, but also the uniqueness of American gender politics, which may or may not be understood, much less prevail, in other countries.

G. RACIAL AND ETHNIC CONCERNS:

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 and those from U.S. minority ethnic or racial backgrounds. 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 they met both familiar and new types of ostracism and prejudice and had to learn new coping strategies. Very few minority students conclude that racial or ethnic problems which can be encountered in other countries represent sufficient reasons for not going. On the other hand, they advise knowing what you are getting into and preparing yourself for it. Try to find others on your campus who have studied abroad and who can provide you with some counsel.

H. BEING GAY, LESBIAN, OR BISEXUAL ABROAD:

It is important to be aware of the laws pertaining to homosexuality in other countries, as well as the general attitudes of the populace toward gay, lesbian, and bisexual members of their community. The countries you visit may be more, or may be less, 'liberated' (on a general U.S. scale of values) in these regards, but will in all cases be at least somewhat unique. Moreover, whatever the general rule, there will always be pockets of difference and personal idiosyncrasies. Country-specific information is often available from campus offices, personnel, and student groups. You should certainly talk with other students who have been where you will be.

For information on issues and resources pertaining to gay, lesbian, and bisexual travel, you also may want to consult publications available in some bookstores and libraries which carry such literature.

Further Readings:

THE ART OF CROSSING CULTURES. Craig Storti. 1990. 136 pp. Intercultural Press. \$15.95 (plus shipping)

SURVIVAL KIT FOR OVERSEAS LEARNING: FOR AMERICANS PLANNING TO LIVE AND WORK ABROAD. L. Robert Kohls, ed. 1996 (3rd ed) 181 pp. Intercultural Press. \$11.95 (plus shipping)

ON BEING FOREIGN: CULTURE SHOCK IN SHORT FICTION. Edited by Tom Lewis and Robert Jungman. 1986. 293 pp. Intercultural Press. \$17.95 (plus shipping)

BACK IN THE USA: REFLECTING ON YOUR STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE AND PUTTING IT TO WORK. Dawn Kepets. 1995. 34 pp. NAFSA. \$5 (plus shipping)

CROSS-CULTURAL REENTRY: A BOOK OF READINGS. Clyde N. Austin. 1986. 284 pp. ACU Press. \$14.95

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

A. GENERAL

The risk of becoming ill while traveling abroad may depend on three important factors:

1. Making adequate pre-departure preparations
2. Knowing what health and safety risks are involved where you are
3. Following sound medical counsel

In addition, you should know that living away from the cultural environment you are used to can sometimes cause a degree of mental and emotional stress--which, in turn, can trigger physiological consequences. The impact of studying abroad on personal relationships, on counseling sessions (if you are in therapy), and on your general health (if you are on medication of any kind) is something you need to consider as you prepare for your sojourn abroad.

In most developed countries and regions, such as Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and Western Europe, health risks may be no greater than comparable risks while traveling in the United

States. On the other hand, in the countries of Africa, Asia, South and Central America, the South Pacific, Middle and Far East, living conditions and standards of sanitation and hygiene can vary greatly, depending on where you are. Some cities in these areas provide safer and healthier environments than outlying rural areas. But the opposite can also be true. The key to survival and good health is, beyond everything else, in knowing what to expect.

Wherever you go, if your travel is limited primarily to tourist areas, there is understandably less risk of exposure to food or water of questionable quality, and thus the risk of disease remains narrow. But as a student, you may travel to cities off the usual tourist routes or live in small villages or rural areas for extended periods of time. In doing so, you of course enrich your education, but you may also run a greater risk of acquiring infectious diseases through exposure to water and food of uncertain quality.

Some Not-Too-Uncommon Diseases:

Diarrhea is a common affliction that can often strike a traveler a couple of days after arriving in a new area of the world; it seldom lasts longer than about five days. Diarrhea is nature's way of ridding the body of noxious agents; intestinal motility provides a normal cleansing mechanism for the intestines. The most effective way to cope with the discomfort is to maintain adequate fluid intake, most importantly, to prevent dehydration. Most cases of diarrhea are self-limited and require only simple replacement of fluids and salts lost in diarrhea stools. Fluids that are readily available such as canned fruit juices, hot tea, or carbonated drinks, may be used. Your physician may be able to prescribe medication to take along for relief of the symptoms. However, it is strongly recommended that you consult a physician rather than attempt self-medication if one or more of the following occur: your diarrhea condition is severe or does not resolve itself within a few days, there is blood and/or mucus in the stool, fever occurs with shaking chills, there is persistent diarrhea with dehydration.

Tetanus, commonly known as "lockjaw," is an infection of the nervous tissue produced by a contaminated wound or injury. Severe muscle spasms are produced, and if left untreated, tetanus can be fatal. Cleanliness (lots of soap and water to remove contamination of a wound or injury) is one of the most effective weapons to prevent



this kind of infection. Tetanus immunization is available, often in combination with the diphtheria vaccine. Tetanus boosters are recommended every ten years after the initial series of three injections administered one month apart.

Hepatitis A (Infectious Hepatitis) is most prevalent in North Africa, the Middle East, and the Caribbean. However, it is possible to contract the disease anywhere (including in the United States) that living conditions are crowded and unsanitary. Hepatitis A is transmitted orally through the ingestion of contaminated food or water; clams, oysters, and other shellfish, especially if eaten raw, are common sources of the disease in contaminated areas. A variety of symptoms are associated with the disease, including fever, loss of appetite, nausea, abdominal pain, and yellowing of the eyes.

Malaria, which is transmitted by the female Anopheline mosquito, is common to parts of the Caribbean, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Anti-malaria medication is available and is required for those who will be participating in a program in Africa. Instructions on taking the medication must be followed carefully to insure adequate protection; you must usually begin taking the medication prior to your departure, during the entirety of your visit, and for two or three weeks after return to the United States. (The organisms that cause the disease do not invade the red blood cells until about a week or so after the bite of the mosquito.)

Other Infectious Diseases: Certain viral, bacterial, and parasitic infections acquired abroad may not result in any immediately illness. Some diseases (such as malaria) may not produce symptoms for as long as six months to a year after a traveler returns. Should you become ill even well after returning to the United States, you should not hesitate to inform your physician of your travel outside the United States within the 12 months preceding onset of the illness. Knowledge of the possibility of exposure to certain diseases abroad will help the physician arrive at a correct diagnosis.

B. FOOD AND WATER

In areas where chlorinated tap water is not available, or where hygiene and sanitation are poor (most of Western Europe is excluded from this category), travelers should be advised that only the following may be safe to drink:

1. Beverages, such as tea and coffee, made with boiled water.

2. Canned or bottled carbonated beverages, including carbonated bottled water and soft drinks.
3. Beer and wine: Where water may be contaminated, ice (or containers for drinking) can also be considered contaminated, and it is generally safer to drink directly from the can or bottle of a beverage than from a questionable container. Wet cans or bottles should be dried before being opened, and surfaces that come into direct contact with the mouth should first be wiped clean. If no source of safe drinking water is available, e.g. verifiably safe bottled-water, tap water that is uncomfortably hot to touch may be safe, once it has cooled and put in a thoroughly cleaned container; it can also be used for brushing teeth as well as for drinking.
4. Fresh Fruit and Vegetables: In areas of the world where hygiene and sanitation are known to be poor, to avoid illness, fresh food should always be selected with care. You should avoid unpasteurized milk and milk products, such as cheese, and eat only fruit that you have peeled yourself. Since the sources of the organisms causing travelers' diarrhea are usually contaminated food or water, precautionary measures are particularly helpful in preventing most serious intestinal infections. However, even when you follow these general guidelines for prevention, you may still develop diarrhea. You may prepare your own fruit juice from fresh fruit. Iced drinks and non-carbonated bottled fluids made from water of uncertain quality should be avoided.
5. Street-food: Many developing (and developed) countries offer an abundance of food sold from stands along the road. It is advisable to avoid such food unless and until you have ample evidence from reliable local sources that it is safe for visitors to eat. Note: many locals may have no trouble with such food or drink, but this is often because they have developed over time bodily immunities against its possible impurities, which is not the case for visitors. You will be tempted, but be careful.
6. Restaurants: It is difficult to generalize



about the quality of restaurant food in the U.S., and even more so to do this about all the varieties of restaurant food you are likely to encounter overseas. General principles obviously apply: establishments which cater to outsiders and/or are in the expensive price ranges, are almost always going to offer safe and nutritious food, while those at the other end of the economic spectrum and serve locals may or may not. Assuming that there are no such restaurants or you are on a limited budget, and also that you would like to sample local foods and eating styles, the best advice is to seek sound advice from reputable travel guides or, even better, from your program director or on-site hosts.

C. PRESCRIPTIONS

Should you currently be under the care of a physician or require regular medication or injections (e.g. insulin or allergy shots), be sure to check with your personal physician for any advice or recommendations concerning your welfare while abroad. It is a good idea to notify the on-site coordinator of any special needs you may have.



If you need medications regularly, take an adequate supply with you. Do not buy medications "over the counter" while you are overseas unless you are familiar with the product: "Over the counter" drugs abroad are not regulated by the US Food and Drug Administration.

If you have diabetes, are allergic to penicillin, or have any physical condition that may require emergency care, carry some kind of identification--a tag, bracelet, or card--on your person at all times indicating the specific nature of the problem and spelling out clearly what must or must not be done should you be unable to communicate this information yourself (e.g. in case of unconsciousness).

Prescription medicines should be accompanied by a letter from your physician. This letter should include a description of the problem, the dosage of prescribed medications to assist medical authorities during an emergency, and the generic name(s) of medicine listed.

Any special health needs or medical conditions should be noted on medical history forms you

are advised to travel with you. If you are required to take a medicine containing habit-forming or narcotic drugs you should carry a doctor's certificate attesting to that fact. It is also advisable to keep all medicines in their original and labeled containers. To avoid potential problems and because laws may vary from country to country, if you need to carry such medicines you should consult the embassies of the countries you will visit before departing the US (from Gist, published by the Bureau of Public Affairs, Department of State, March 1986).

D. INSURANCE

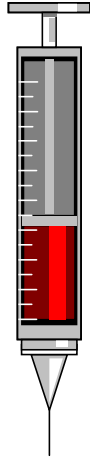
- Be sure that you have adequate health insurance and understand your family and/or institutional policy, especially what is and isn't or may not be covered outside the U.S.A.). Make sure you know how this system works, meaning how bills are paid, in the case of a medical emergency, and also routine treatments.
- The International Student Identity Card (ISIC), available from campus offices or Council Travel, provides basic coverage only, though it does include emergency medical evacuation and repatriation of remains.
- Personal liability insurance against injury or damage caused by or resulting from your acts or omissions during enrollment in any program is highly recommended.

Should you require medical attention abroad, it may be necessary for you to have sufficient cash on hand to make payment at the time of treatment since the foreign physician and/or hospital may not be able to process medical bills through an American insurance company. In such cases, be sure to obtain a receipt to submit with your insurance claim for reimbursement upon return to the US. It might also be helpful to carry a few blank claim forms with you in case you should need them while abroad.

E. IMMUNIZATIONS

At the present time, no immunizations are required for entry to or return from Australia, Western Europe, Japan, Israel, or the Commonwealth of Independent States (Russia). This, of course, can change periodically, depending on the prevailing health conditions, so it is always a good idea to check on the latest status just prior to your departure. This is especially important if your post-program travel plans include visits to countries other than the

above-mentioned. Information on immunizations can also be found via the World Wide Web. Protection against cholera and yellow fever are recommended for those going to certain parts of Africa, along with medicine for protection against malaria. Remember that to be effective, these anti-malaria drugs must be taken regularly and in strict accordance with the doctor's instructions. Even though you may be limiting your travel to western Europe, you may still wish to discuss with your personal physician the advisability of receiving certain basic immunizations, like tetanus and typhoid fever. Since you will probably be doing a lot of knocking around overseas, it will be easy to suffer a few minor cuts and abrasions on occasion; it is always a good idea to have protection against tetanus just in case such a wound might become contaminated.



F. MEDICAL CARE ABROAD

The on-site coordinator or director of your program should be able to help you contact the appropriate physician or other medical authority when attention is required. In order to provide such persons and local medical authorities abroad with sufficient information to respond promptly and effectively to situations that require medical attention, many programs ask you to complete a medical history form at the time of acceptance.

During weekend or post-program travel, you may find yourself in a variety of unfamiliar and possibly remote locations. If you are not fluent in the language of the host country, of course try to seek out an English-speaking doctor if you need medical attention: when it comes to health matters, you will not want to take any chances on a breakdown in communications. American embassies and consulates, many large travel agencies (e.g. Thomas Cook) and a number of the larger hotels abroad will have lists of English-speaking physicians. Some agencies have also been established to assure travelers needing medical care (e.g. with a pre-existing medical problem) a reasonable, preset fee with reputable physicians fluent in English.

If you have a pre-existing medical condition or simply are concerned about health facilities while you are overseas, you must take steps to find out about health care in each country in which you expect to spend any time. [See

below]

G. AIDS

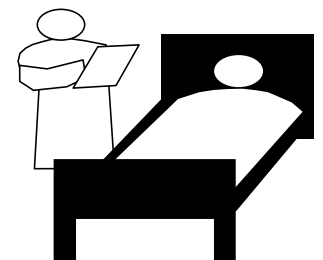
The following is excerpted from a brochure prepared by CIEE on AIDS and International Travel.

Everything you already know about what AIDS is and how it is contracted is as deadly true overseas as it is at home. Knowing this and taking all advised precautions is the only way to protect yourself. AIDS is considerably less an epidemic in some countries than in the U.S., and considerably more in others. Whatever the situation in the country you are going to, you are not more likely to contract AIDS there than here—IF you act sensibly and refrain from unprotected sex and other behaviors and habits that carry the risk of infection. As The World Health Organization states: "AIDS is not spread by daily and routine activities such as sitting next to someone or shaking hands, or working with people. Nor is it spread by insects or insect bites. AIDS is not spread by swimming pools, public transportation, food, cups, glasses, plates, toilets, water, air, touching or hugging, coughing or sneezing." This is as biologically true abroad as it is in your hometown.

However, since you will not know your environment overseas as well as you do at home, or might not be able to control it to the same degree, there are some things you should be concerned about in advance, to prepare yourself for all eventualities.

Knowing Your HIV Status When traveling abroad be aware that some countries may require HIV antibody tests, a test for antibodies to the human immune-deficiency virus (HIV) that causes AIDS. You should also know that some countries may not have the resources to adequately screen blood or provide sterile needles.

Living overseas in certain areas MAY present greater risks to those who test positive for the HIV virus. Some overseas locations have limited medical facilities that cannot monitor the progress of such infections. Therefore, if you believe you may be infected, knowing your HIV status will help when planning your trip.



If the Country You are Going to Requires an HIV Antibody Test: Some countries now require incoming foreigners, including students, to take the HIV antibody test. Usually this is required for long term stays. Check to see if the country you are going to requires HIV-testing. You may need a "doctor's certificate" showing the results of an HIV antibody test. Consulates in Washington DC and/or New York City carry information on HIV testing as well. If you decide you want to be tested, do so only at a center that offers pre- and post-test counseling. There are many institutions whose primary focus is AIDS counseling. Allow yourself two weeks for the testing process. Finally, consider getting tested twice-first anonymously (which allows you the privacy to decide what you want to do if the result is positive), then again for a doctor's certificate, if needed.

Overseas Blood Transfusions and Blood Products And HIV Screening: While many countries such as the United States, Australia, Canada, Japan, and the western European countries have mandatory screening of donated blood for the AIDS virus, not all do. You should find out before you go from your campus resources, from your local Red Cross and/or western embassies about safe sources of blood overseas. In some locales, ascertaining the availability of HIV-screened blood and blood products may be difficult. Because of obvious uncertainties, consider these precautions: If you are injured or ill while abroad, avoid or postpone any blood transfusion unless it is absolutely necessary. If you do need blood, try to ensure that screened blood is used.

Regardless of the blood screening practices abroad, always try to reduce the risk of serious injury which may require blood transfusions by taking everyday precautions. If you are sexually active, ALWAYS USE A LATEX CONDOM. Take a supply with you as conditions, manufacturing and storage of condoms in other countries may be questionable. Take good care of yourself while traveling! Don't wear yourself down, watch out for excessive exposure to heat, drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration, and get plenty of sleep!

Overseas Injections and AIDS: Here in the United States, we may take for granted disposable equipment such as needles and syringes. Be advised that some foreign countries will reuse even disposable equipment. In some countries, if injection is required, you can buy needles and syringes and bring them to the

hospital for your own use. Avoid injections unless absolutely necessary. If injections are required, make sure the needles and syringes come straight from a package or have been sterilized with chemicals or by boiling for twenty minutes. When in doubt, ask to see how the equipment has been sterilized.

Caution regarding instrument sterilization applies to all instruments that pierce the skin, including tattooing, acupuncture, ear piercing and dental work.

The Center for Disease Control recommends that "Diabetics or other persons who require routine or frequent injections should carry a supply of syringes and needles sufficient to last their stay abroad." It is not uncommon to bring needles for your own use. However, be aware that carrying needles and syringes without a prescription may be illegal in some countries. Take a note from your doctor if you do need to carry needles and syringes. Some countries have needles and syringes for sale. DO NOT use or allow the use of contaminated, unsterilized syringes or needles for any injections, e.g., illicit drugs, tattooing, acupuncture, or for medical/dental procedures.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

1. For information on worldwide health conditions, call the [Center for Disease Control](#) and Prevention call (404) 332 4559. You can obtain or receive information by fax by calling (404) 332 4565 to obtain an information sheet for ordering documents, then call again with the requested information number.
2. The [U.S. State Department](#) Overseas Citizen's Emergency Center number is (202) 647 5225, which is handy for information on medical, financial, or legal problems while abroad.
3. The International Association for Medical Assistance for Travelers offers information on English-speaking doctors abroad and other helpful items. Call 716- 754 4883. Write: IAMAT, 417 Center Street, Lewiston, NY 14092.
4. [International SOS Assistance](#), a Philadelphia-based emergency worldwide medical and travel assistance service, provides insurance for travelers to cover emergency medical needs and other services, including 24-hour multilingual assistance in centers around the world. Call (800) 523 8930 or

(215) 244 1500

5. Additional information about health issues abroad is available from:
American College Health Assoc.
15879 Crabbs Branch Way
Rockville, MD 20855

SAFETY AND SECURITY

A. TIPS FOR SECURING VALUABLES DURING TRAVEL

Packing: Don't carry everything in one place! Never pack essential documents, medicine-- anything you could not do without--in your checked luggage. Put them in your carry-on bag.

Cash: Never carry large amounts of cash. American Express travelers' checks are a good idea. Have three lists of checks. Leave one at home. Carry one list with your checks and carry one list separately from your checks. Keep two lists up-to-date as you cash checks. Keep the receipts for your checks separate from your travelers' checks. For the small amount of cash you need, try using a necklace pouch or a money belt.

Credit Cards: Take only the cards you will use on the trip. Keep separate a list of cards, numbers, and emergency replacement procedures.



Insurance: Since it may be necessary to contact your insurance agent(s) while abroad, keep all names and phone numbers, as well as your policy number(s), with you, in a safe place.

Luggage: Mark all luggage, inside and out, with your name and address. If you have an itinerary, put a copy inside each bag. Keep a list of what is in each bag and carry the list with your other documents. Mark your bags in some distinctive way, so they are easily found. **COUNT YOUR PIECES OF LUGGAGE EACH TIME YOU MOVE!** Try to travel light, it's safer and less cumbersome! Remember: Some airlines allow only 44 pounds (20 kilos) for checked luggage. Overweight charges can add up so pack carefully (see section on packing below).

Medicines: Take all you need for the trip. Take copy of your prescription(s), with the generic name of the drug(s). Keep medicines in original drugstore containers. Take extra glasses and your lenses prescription with you.

Passport: Carry with you--separate from your passport--two extra copies of your passport, and a certified-not photocopied-copy (not the original) of your birth certificate or an expired passport. If your passport is lost, report to local police; get written confirmation of the police report and, take the above documents to the nearest United States Consulate and apply for a new passport.

Ticket: Make a copy of your ticket or list your ticket number, all flights included, and name and address of issuing agency, and keep this list separate from your ticket.

B. OVERSEAS SECURITY MEASURES TO REDUCE THE RISK OF CRIME, VIOLENCE, DISEASE PROGRAM SAFEGUARDS:

Overseas study programs recognize their responsibility to do their utmost to provide a secure and unthreatening environment in which you can safely live and learn. Responsible campuses and programs consult regularly with colleagues around the country who are involved in the administration of study abroad programs; with resident program directors of programs; with responsible officials of foreign host universities; with contacts in the U.S. Department of State and other governmental and non-governmental agencies and with other experts, including faculty who are well-informed on issues and events. It is in no one's interest to risk your safety and well-being.

The ability to communicate almost instantaneously worldwide via fax machines and electronic mail enables campuses (and parents) to obtain and share information quickly and accurately, in the event of an overseas emergency that may have repercussions for study abroad programs and students. In short, most campuses and programs have in place an effective system of consultation and consensus-building in order to make proactive and reactive decisions concerning the safe operation of their programs.

CRIME, VIOLENCE, AND TERRORISM: Most countries in the world have less street crime and personal violence than is potentially present in urban and suburban American. Indeed, in many countries U.S. students report when they return that they had never felt safer in their lives. This

does not mean that there is no crime and that your safety is assured--because of, or in spite of, the fact that you carry a U.S. passport in a perhaps statistically more peaceful local environment.

The simple fact of being a foreigner and not knowing quite what is and isn't safe behavior--not being certain where and where not to go or how to act--increases, at least somewhat, the possibility that you can be victimized by petty crime, such as fraud, robbery, theft, or even physical attack. Further, in certain places and at certain times, it is very possible to get caught in the midst of forms of political strife which may not be directed at you personally or even at you as an American, but nevertheless can be very dangerous.

With regard to the threat of terrorism, in those few sites where even remote danger might occasionally exist, program directors work with local police and U.S. consular personnel and local university officials in setting up whatever practical security measures are deemed prudent. In such places, you will be briefed during orientation programs and reminded at any times of heightened political tension about being security conscious in your daily activities. Terrorism is a twentieth-century reality and is not likely to diminish (or increase) significantly. To succumb to the threat by reacting in fear may well be the objective that terrorists seek to achieve. Nevertheless, there are certain rather obvious precautions that American students abroad can take. Among these are the following:

COMMON SENSE PRECAUTIONS

Do your homework, listen and heed the counsel you are given, and remain vigilant. Here are some essential Do's and Don'ts which will serve you well:

- Keep a low profile and try not to make yourself conspicuous by dress, speech, or behavior, in ways that might identify you as a targetable individual. Do not draw attention to yourself either through expensive dress, personal accessories (cameras, radios, sunglasses, etc.) or careless behavior.
- Avoid crowds, protest groups, or other potentially volatile situations, as well as restaurants and entertainment places where Americans are known to congregate. Keep abreast of local news. Read local newspapers, magazines, etc. and speak with local officials to learn about any potential civil unrest. If there

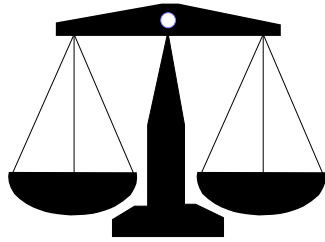
should be any political unrest, do not get involved.

- Be wary of unexpected packages and stay clear of unattended luggage or parcels in airports, train stations, or other areas of uncontrolled public access.
- Report to the responsible authority any suspicious persons loitering around residence or instructional facilities, or following you; keep your residence area locked; use common sense in divulging information to strangers about your study program and your fellow students.
- If you travel to countries beyond your program site and expect to be there for more than a week, register upon arrival at the U.S. consulate or embassy having jurisdiction over the location.
- Make sure the resident director, host family, or foreign university official who is assigned the responsibility for your welfare always knows where and how to contact you in an emergency and your schedule and when you are traveling, even if only overnight.
- Develop with your family a plan for regular telephone or e-mail contact, so that in times of heightened political tension, you will be able to communicate with your parents directly about your safety and well-being.
- The US government monitors the political conditions in every country around the world. For current information, advisories, or warnings contact the State Department in Washington DC (202 647-4000) or the local US embassy or consulate where you are (see the section on US embassies or consulates abroad in this handbook).
- Be aware of local health conditions abroad: especially if you are traveling to remote areas, you should be aware of any public health service recommendations or advisories. For current health conditions abroad contact local officials or have your parents contact the country desk at the State Department (http://travel.state.gov/travel_warnings.html) (202-647-4000), or the Centers for Disease Control (404-639-3311). [See Health]
- Know local laws: laws and systems of justice are not universal. Do not assume that just because it is legal in the United States that it is legal abroad.
- Use banks to exchange your money: do not exchange your money on the black

market, on the street. Do not carry on your person more money than you need for the day. Carry your credit cards, etc. in a very safe place.

- Do not impair your judgment due to excessive consumption of alcohol, and do not fall under the influence of drugs.
- Female travelers are sometimes more likely to encounter harassment, but uncomfortable situations can usually be avoided by taking the following precautions: Dress conservatively. While short skirts and tank tops may be comfortable, they may also encourage unwanted attention. Avoid walking alone late at night or in questionable neighborhoods. Do not agree to meet a person whom you do not know in a non-public place. Be aware that some men from other countries tend to mistake the friendliness of American women for romantic interest.

LEGALITIES AND COPING WITH EMERGENCIES



PRE-DEPARTURE RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONCERNS

ABSENTEE VOTING: For some students the first opportunity to vote coincides with their period abroad. Just because you are not in the U.S. at election time, does not mean you cannot cast your ballot. Before you may vote from abroad, however, you must be registered to vote at home. Check with your local city or town hall to obtain information on procedures for voting by Absentee Ballot, including timing. Remember to make note of your party, ward, district, and voter registration number (if one is used). If necessary, your Absentee Ballot can be notarized at a U.S. embassy or consulate.

INCOME TAXES: Attention Year-Abroad and Spring Semester Program Participants. If you have earnings which require you to file federal and/or state income tax returns, you must remember that you will be out of the country between January 1 and April 15th. Persons temporarily living abroad may normally request an extension on the deadline for filing federal income tax. The extension is usually until June 15th. The best advice is to contact the American Consulate or Embassy in your host country for

information on your tax obligations; they may have 1040 forms and may even be willing to help you with questions. You can file from abroad if you make arrangements with your parents to send you the necessary state and federal forms and other documentation.

POWER OF ATTORNEY: If your signature will be needed for any official or legal document during your absence, you should make arrangements for "power of attorney" to be held by an appropriate person to act on your behalf. You can do this by writing out in detail the specific duties that the person you choose will execute. Take this to a notary and have it notarized.

PROPERTY INSURANCE: Student travelers should have insurance to cover at least partially any loss of money because of trip interruption or cancellation, as well as loss of baggage and personal effects either while traveling or living in residence halls. Many, but not all, homeowner's insurance policies contain a clause about this coverage extending worldwide--check yours to see if it does. Normally, a copy of the police report filed at the time of loss or theft will be required by the insurer before any claim will be considered. Theft or property loss from negligence is not an altogether uncommon occurrence for the inexperienced traveler, and you would be well-advised to take some preventative measures.

PASSPORTS

All travelers between countries must have a passport. The passport is your official identification as a citizen of the United States. It is issued by the Department of State, and is good for a period of 10 years (5 years for those under 18). You must have a valid passport on your person to show border and customs authorities when you enter or leave the United States or when crossing most other national borders, as well as on various other occasions that require official verification of your citizenship. These days there are some exceptions, e.g. between the U.S. and Canada, between various European nations, within the Nordic countries. But one never knows for sure, as controls are often tightened in times when extra surveillance is needed, so it is best to assume that you should always have it available to show.

Then put it away in a **VERY** safe (but accessible) place. Losing a passport while you are overseas is not the end-of-the-world, but it will seem like it, since the procedures for being

issued another are very complicated and often extremely time-consuming.

Passports are issued at any office of the U.S. Passport Agency or through one of the several thousand federal or state courts or U.S. post offices authorized to accept passport applications.

The completed passport application for those who have never been issued a passport by the U.S. before must be accompanied by:

- proof of citizenship--a naturalization certificate if you are a naturalized citizen or a birth certificate if you are a citizen by birth. Birth certificates must be official, i.e., bearing the seal of the state in which you were born; hospital certificates are not official and will only delay the processing of your passport application. Applications for official birth certificates can also be obtained from the local post office.
- two identical photographs (2" square on white background) taken within six months of the date of your application.
- proof of your identity, such as a current driver's license with your signature and photograph.
- The required payment. The standard passport fee is \$60.00 This fee is collected at the time you submit your application. Allow about three to four weeks for processing of your application.

If you already have a U.S. passport AND IT WILL EXPIRE BEFORE YOU COMPLETE YOUR TIME ABROAD, you should apply for a new passport before you depart from the U.S. Your current passport usually suffices for identification of your birth and citizenship, but new photos and the fee are of course required.

For more information, write to:

The Bureau of Consular Affairs
Office of Passport Services, Room 386
Department of State
1425 K Street
Washington D.C. 20524
phone: 202-647-0518.

Domestic loss or theft of a valid passport should be reported in writing immediately to Passport Services (address above), or to the nearest passport agency. If the loss occurs while abroad, you should IMMEDIATELY notify the

nearest US consulate or embassy. Theft of a passport should also be reported to local police authorities. Addresses and telephone numbers of US embassies and/or consulates abroad can be found in elsewhere in this handbook.

It is important to remember that your passport is your most important legal document while traveling overseas. In some countries it is required that aliens carry their passports at all times. Guard your passport carefully and do not travel away from your study abroad site, and particularly away from your host country, without your passport.

DO NOT DELAY APPLYING FOR A PASSPORT. THE PROCESS TAKES A MINIMUM OF TWO TO FOUR WEEKS, EVEN LONGER IN THE BUSY SEASON. DO IT NOW.

DUAL CITIZENSHIP

Different countries have different laws concerning citizenship. Some countries may claim you as a citizen of their country if you were born there, if one of your parents is a citizen of that country, if you are married to a citizen of that country, or if you are a naturalized US citizen but still considered a citizen of the country under that country's laws. If any of these circumstances apply in your case, be sure to clarify your status with that country's embassy or consulate BEFORE YOU LEAVE. If you want to terminate any such previous citizenship, you will need to consult with the State Department.

VISAS

A visa is official permission to visit a country and is granted by the government of that country. Visa formats vary considerably, from a simple stamp imprinted on one of the pages in your passport at the time you enter the country to an official document with your photograph attached. For Americans, some countries (e.g., Commonwealth of Independent States-Russia) require advance processing of visas while other countries (e.g., West Europe) require no advance processing for brief visits, usually up to three months.

If you plan to do ANY travel beyond the country where your program takes place, you must check the visa requirements for all the countries you plan to visit by contacting the nearest consulate for that country. Single copies of "Visa Requirements of Foreign Governments" (Publication M-264), a publication that lists the entry requirements for US citizens traveling to

most foreign countries, are available free from:

The Office of Passport Services
Department of State, Room 306
1425 K Street NW
Washington, DC 20524

You may be required to submit your official acceptance letters to the program from your program or host university overseas with the visa application. Save your acceptance letters (or copies) in a safe place until needed.

Note to Non-U.S. Citizens: Visa procedures and customs requirements are different for students holding non-United States passports. Contact your on-campus adviser if you do not hold a United States passport. It is very important to initiate this process as soon as possible, if overseas communications are needed (as they are likely to be). U.S permanent residents must check with the US Immigration Service concerning regulations for re-entry into the U.S.. it is particularly important to verify procedures for those who contemplate being outside the U.S. for more than one year.

REQUIRED IMMUNIZATIONS

Because of specific health concerns and conditions in various countries, proof that you have received certain immunizations may be required. If you are going to such a country, an official record of your immunizations must be carried with you and is usually asked for when you enter the country and have also to show your passport and required visa. The sponsoring organization or institution for your program will advise you on what is required for entry into the country where your program occurs. BUT, if you plan personal travel to other countries before, during, or after your program, it is your responsibility to know what immunizations are required. And it is probably wise to find this out and have the shots before departure.

You can demonstrate that you have had the required immunizations by having this information listed on an "International Certificate of Vaccinations." This form is issued by the US Department of Health, Education and Welfare and approved by the World Health Organization. It is obtainable from your local Department of Health, a passport office, or from many physicians and travel agencies. It must be filled out and dated by the physician or medical clinic which provides the immunizations.

Most campus health service offices can either provide this form, as well as any needed

inoculations and other assistance, OR can refer you to clinics where these can be obtained.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IDENTITY CARD (ISIC)

There are a number of special privileges and discounts available to students throughout the world, including such things as reduced or free admission to museums, theaters, concerts, and cultural as well as historical sites, To qualify for them you have to be able to affirm your student status. The ISIC does this, wherever you go. It is the most widely recognized form of proof of your student status. Other ISIC benefits include low fares, and discounts on travel. In the event of serious injury or death, it also provides emergency evacuation and the repatriation of remains--coverage which may supplement what is covered by your college or other private health care plans.

Purchase of this card is highly recommended. Its cost is \$22.00, an amount you are likely to earn back in savings, perhaps many times over. The ISIC is valid for one January-to-January calendar year, but can be purchased in advance. Information on benefits and the card itself can be obtained directly from CIEE or any Council Travel office.

ARRIVAL IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS INSPECTIONS

As you enter ANY country from another country via an international flight (or other means) you have to show your passport and any required visas and proof of immunizations. This usually occurs just after you have left the plane and entered the airport but before you have your luggage. Remember that admission to the country is entirely at the discretion of the immigration officer. It is wise to be polite and to dress neatly. The immigration officer, who determines the length of stay to be authorized and stamped into your passport, will normally ask you about the purpose of your visit and how long you plan to remain in the country. All of this can be unnerving at times, but it is nevertheless generally routine and always required.



After your passport has been stamped, and you have collected your luggage, you must pass

through a customs inspection. You will probably receive a customs declaration form to be filled out on your plane (or train). This will be examined by customs officials when they look at your luggage. Your bags may be very carefully examined, and you may be detained or asked to pay duties if there are any irregularities or violations of customs regulations. You may also be waved through with no special attention whatsoever. Note: Do not 'joke' about 'bombs' or smuggled items!.

Most major airports and train stations offer banking services, so if you have not brought with you any local currency, it is possible to purchase some with U.S. dollars, other foreign currency, or travelers checks, often a good idea, to get you through the first week. Do not change too much, as exchange rates at airports and train stations are usually much higher than at local banks. Change only enough to cover local transportation and for a meal or two.

DUTIES AND TARIFFS

Thinking ahead to your return to the U.S., you will want to register any camera, tape recorder, radio, typewriter, personal computer, etc. (particularly new and foreign-made items) which you take with you. By registering these items with U.S. Customs before you leave, you avoid being questioned about whether or not they are subject to any duty when you return. Contact the U.S. Customs Office in advance of your departure for further information and obtain a copy of their publication, "Know Before Your Go" (also available by writing to P.O. Box 7404, Washington DC 20044). You should also get and save sales slips for any major purchases you make overseas and intend to take home.

Returning to the U.S.: According to the Customs Procedural Reform and Simplification Act of 1984, United States residents are permitted to bring into the US \$400 worth of foreign souvenirs and gifts duty free: You will be assessed on import duty based on 10% of the fair market value for anything in the \$400 to \$1400 range. Import duty varies according to the nature of the articles when you go over \$1400. All articles acquired abroad and in your possession at the time of your return to the United States must be declared to Customs officials, either orally (if you do not exceed the \$400 limit) or in writing. Declaration forms will be distributed during your flight back into the US.

Personal belongings of US origin taken abroad may be sent back by mail duty-free if, on the outside wrapper, it is stated that the articles

were taken out of the US as personal effects and are being returned without having been repaired or altered while abroad ("American Goods Returned"). Should you need assistance on matters relating to US Customs while abroad, customs representatives are available in the American Embassies.

OBEYING LOCAL AND NATIONAL LAWS

While you are visiting another country you are subject to the laws of that country. Legal protection taken for granted in the United States is left behind when you leave the US. American Embassies and Consulates are very limited in the assistance they can provide: the names of competent attorneys and doctors, but not any financial assistance in paying for legal or medical services. Nor can they intervene on your behalf in the administration of justice as seen from the point of view of the host country.

Bail provisions as we know them in the United States are rare in many other countries and pre-trial detention without bail is not uncommon. Prison conditions in developing or fundamentalist countries may often be deplorable, in comparison to conditions in the United States. The principle of "innocent until proven guilty" is not necessarily a tenet of legal systems abroad. The best advice is of course to know the laws and obey them scrupulously. If you get in trouble, seek local legal assistance as quickly as possible.

DRUGS: Avoid any possible involvement with drugs. Drug laws of course vary from country to country, but in many cases they are extremely severe, regardless of whether the drug in your possession is for personal use or for sale to others. Bail is not granted for drug-trafficking cases in most countries. Pre-trial detention, often in solitary confinement, can last for months. Many countries do not provide a jury trial, and in many cases you need not even be present at your trial.

Most prison and law enforcement officials abroad will probably not speak English, the significance of which you may not fully appreciate until you are confined and feeling helpless, in very hard conditions. The average jail sentence in drug cases worldwide is about seven years. In at least four countries (Iran, Algeria, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Turkey) the death penalty can be imposed for conviction on some drug charges. Do not wrongly assume that buying or carrying small amounts of drugs cannot result in their arrest. In reality, Americans have been jailed abroad for

possessing as little as three grams (about one-tenth of an ounce) of marijuana.

WORKING ABROAD LEGALLY

In other countries, as in the U.S., holding a wage-earning job while you are on a student visa is considered illegal and can be grounds for expulsion. Your student visa authorizes only living and learning in the country, usually only for the period of your formal enrollment, plus perhaps some additional time for tourism. You are likely to be busy enough with your studies and the other demands and pleasures of being in a new place that you will not have time to do much else.

If you wish to add a work experience to your time away, this must be done either before your program begins or after it ends, and can only be done legally if you have a Work Permit. Work Permits are simply not available for work in certain countries, and are very difficult to obtain in most others, since employers are usually forced to demonstrate that a potential employee from another country has skills and experience which are not possessed by the citizens of that country. This is usually a very hard case to make.

But the United States and a limited number of countries have entered into agreements which allow for the reciprocal exchange of students seeking short-term paid employment in each other's country. The biggest and best known of these arrangements is administered by the Council on International Educational Exchange. You must apply for the Work Permit before you depart from the U.S. It cannot be obtained overseas. The application process is non-competitive. The cost is \$200. Opportunities for three- and in some cases six- month Work Permits exist for any time of the year in Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, and Ireland, and in the summer in Costa Rica, Jamaica, and New Zealand. Work permits for Britain can be obtained via BUNAC, P.O. Box 49, South Britain, CT 06487, 1-800-GOBUNAC, <http://www.bunac.org> and Interchange, <http://www.interchange.org>

Although CIEE gets you the work permit, you must find the job and a place to stay on your own. For basic information, eligibility, criteria, and application forms, see the CIEE Work Abroad brochure from CIEE Work Abroad, telephone: 800/INTL- JOB or e-mail: wabrochure@ciee.org The CIEE Participant's Handbooks, included in the program fee, provide invaluable suggestions for

finding a job and place to live in that foreign country.

OTHER RESOURCES:

Helpful information might also be found in the Directory of Overseas Summer Jobs available from Writer's Digest Books, 9933 Alliance Road, Cincinnati, OH 45242.

If you decide to seek employment abroad through an employment agency, A Word of Caution will help you evaluate the agency in terms of fees charged and services provided. This publication is available free of charge from the Director:

Office of Public Information and Reports Staff
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

A good starting point for a search for overseas work is Bill Nolting's U-Michigan website: <http://www.umich.edu/~icenter/overseas>

Many campus libraries and career services offices have information on working abroad, internships, and voluntary service. Some titles include Work Study Travel Abroad, Work Your Way Around the World, and Teaching English Abroad. Free copies of the bibliography Reference Sources for Employment Opportunities and Voluntary Service in International Affairs are also available. TRANSITIONS ABROAD magazine regularly features articles on working abroad.

AMERICAN EMBASSIES AND CONSULATES

http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/contacts/keyofficer_index.html
http://www.state.gov/www/regions_missions.htm
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Should you encounter serious social, political, health, or economic problems, the American Embassies and/or Consulates can offer some, but limited, assistance. They can, for example, provide you with a list of local attorneys and physicians; they can contact next of kin in the event of emergency or serious illness; they can contact friends or relatives on your behalf to request funds or guidance; they can provide assistance during civil unrest or natural disaster; they can replace a lost or stolen passport.

They cannot, however, provide the services of a travel agency, give or lend money, cash personal checks, arrange free medical service or legal advice, provide bail or get you out of jail, act as couriers or interpreters, search for missing luggage, or settle disputes with local authorities. Remember that their primary occupation abroad is to help fulfill the diplomatic mission of the United States government; they are not there to play nursemaid to American travelers.

There are several useful pamphlets about travel and residence abroad, prepared by the Bureau of Consular Affairs of the U.S. Department of State. Two are of particular interest: "A Safe Trip Abroad" and "Your Trip Abroad." You can usually pick them up free in any U.S. Passport Office. Otherwise, you can order them for \$1 each from: The Superintendent of Documents U.S. Government Printing Office Washington DC 20402.

It is recommended that U.S. citizens residing abroad for any extended period of time register with the local U.S. Embassy or Consulate. If you are on a study abroad program, this will usually be done on your behalf by program staff, but this is not always true. Check to be sure.

OFFICE OF OVERSEAS CITIZENS SERVICE

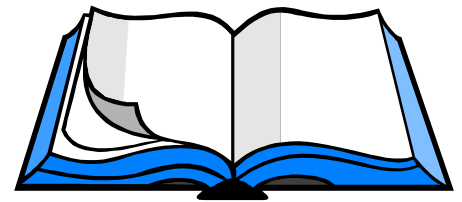
Should your family need to contact you while you are traveling (e.g. after the program is over), emergency assistance is available through the Citizens' Emergency Center of the Office of Overseas Citizens Services (OCS), operated by the [State Department's](#) Bureau of Consular Affairs can be reached at (202) 647-5225, Fax: 1-202-647-3000, <http://www.state.gov>

This office can transmit emergency messages from your family, provide protection in the event of arrest or detention while abroad, transmit emergency funds to destitute nationals when commercial banking facilities are not available, etc. It would be wise for you to provide your family with at least a tentative itinerary so that in an emergency, they can give the State Department some idea where to begin looking for you.

ACADEMIC CREDIT

Whatever else living and learning abroad is and will come to mean, if you are enrolled in a study abroad program and remain a U.S. degree-seeking student, earning academic credit for your studies is likely to be of utmost importance to you, to your institution, and to your family. As a registered student, taking a full-load of courses overseas, you qualify for financial aid, should your economic circumstances warrant this. Ideally, credit for courses taken in any program can be counted toward your degree, and sometimes toward the satisfaction of academic major or minor requirements. However, this is far from automatic, so it is important to understand fully what is involved.

"Academic credit" has no universal meaning, nor are there any national (much less international) standards for awarding it. Rather, whether or not you actually receive credit for your formal studies overseas is dependent on two overriding considerations:



1. the QUALITY OF YOUR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, as judged by your teachers in the overseas courses you take; and
2. further (and definitive) judgments made by YOUR HOME INSTITUTION as to whether these courses AND your performance pass academic muster BY HOME INSTITUTION STANDARDS AND POLICIES.

In short, "doing well" in your course work is the first step; the second is making sure that the courses themselves are of a quality consistent with earning credit on your home campus.

KINDS OF CREDIT

Home institution credit: If you enroll in a program actually sponsored by your home institution, by definition, the courses are of a standard which will earn credit, so the only question lies in the quality of your academic performance. Indeed, the courses you take may be listed in your college catalog, and it will be clear what sort of credit--graduation, elective, major--is possible. This is usually the case whether your institution provides the instruction or it is offered via an

overseas host institution or agency.

Transfer Credit:

If you enroll in a program not directly sponsored by your institution, the courses you take and the quality of your performance will be evaluated and judged by your home campus via its normal "transfer credit" procedures and standards. Those on your campus who are likely to be involved in the decision over whether or not to award credit include the registrar, faculty, and overseas studies personnel. The process usually involves examining records which must be furnished by (a) the overseas institution or agency which does the teaching and assessment; and/or (b) by another U.S. college or university or consortium which sponsors the program and provides credit recommendations. In addition, you may be required to furnish supplementary evidence of your studies-- papers, tests, journals, etc.

Credit by examination:

It is sometimes possible to earn credit by taking and passing examinations (written or oral) given by your home institution, based on what you have learned overseas, taken shortly after your return. This is quite frequently done to judge language proficiency or gains in other skills areas, e.g. in the performing arts, in social science research, in field science, where course work per se may not be offered or is considered less relevant as a learning tool. If you do well on these exams, you will usually receive home-campus credit.

Note: Sometimes there is a charge for the testing and/or the credit.

Credit for Work, Internships, Volunteer Service:

Few if any colleges or universities grant credit for travel alone or simply for living overseas. But if your college gives credit for domestic off-campus work or service, it may also give credit for similar activities overseas. If this is the case, it is important for you to learn what you need to do beforehand to qualify for such credit. Almost always, this requires finding an advisor who will oversee and evaluate your experience and activities. Frequently, in addition to whatever you actually do overseas, you will be asked to keep a journal, write reports, do additional readings, conduct interviews, and in general demonstrate that you have done some serious reflection on the meaning of your activities. In short, credit is not granted on the experience alone.

PRE-APPROVAL

Almost all campuses have procedures and policies in place for pre-approving program selection, participation, and credit. This protects both the institution and the student. It is important for the institution to give students clear guidelines and standards for earning credit for study abroad, so as to minimize misunderstandings after the fact. It is important for you to know in advance what is and isn't possible. No two institutions have the same policies and practices. Further, pre-approval is not just a matter of deciding whether or not earning academic credit is possible in general, but in determining what sorts of credit and at what levels--graduation credit, elective credit, upper- or lower-division, academic major or minor credit.

By definition, programs wholly or jointly sponsored by your own institution are pre-

approved for credit--which is something apart from your applying for admission and being admitted. Beyond this, your institution may have a list of other programs which are automatically pre-approved for credit. If it does not, or you wish to enroll in a program not on this list, there is probably some sort



of program review and approval process set up by the study abroad office and conducted by the campus adviser, in consultation with faculty. There may, in addition, be a formal petition process. The point is to know what is required and to take the necessary steps to apply to a program and get approval for the credit you anticipate earning. It is never advisable to leave your campus without clear assurances that, upon successful completion of overseas course work, you will receive the credit you expect to earn, in the designated areas and at the appropriate levels. Your chances of earning credit after you return, without this pre-approval, are usually minimal (though not absolutely impossible, if you can find ways to demonstrate what you have learned).

Getting pre approval usually involves the following:

- Getting the appropriate faculty members to sign off on your courses. Most campuses have some sort of form for this. Their signature attests to the course content at the overseas institution as being "creditable" for graduation credit. Note that this is for

- graduation credit only. For concentration credit, you will need to consult with your concentration advisor prior to leaving .
- Making sure that the institution in which you are interested has been approved for the transfer of credit. This means that the program is either on a campus "approved program list" OR that you have submitted a petition and received approval for that particular institution. Guidelines and advice for how to submit a successful petition are available from your campus study abroad adviser.
 - Satisfying the Registrar's regulations for the minimum number of credit hours, in order to ensure a timely graduation schedule.

ENROLLMENT CHANGES ON SITE

If you make any changes in your pre-approved courses, it is your responsibility to write (e-mail is quicker) the faculty member who signed your approval form with information about the new course. If you are considering courses in a department from which you have not received prior approval, know that each Department has its own requirements. It is VERY important to write to the department before you commit yourself to the new course.

GETTING A TRANSCRIPT

In order to receive credit for programs which are not sponsored directly by you institution, you must have the overseas or domestic institution or agency send a transcript to your college registrar. If the institution does not issue transcripts, you must have them send a certificate of attendance or diploma, indicating the courses you took and a written evaluation of your work.

In all cases you must complete a full-load of courses as required by the foreign and your own institution, with the equivalent of a C- or better in order to receive credit. Institutional policies on grading and grade transfer vary widely. Know, in advance, what yours is.

POST-APPROVAL

In certain cases, noted above, you will need to seek post-approval for your courses. This is applicable if you have:

- Taken courses for which you had no prior approval

- Taken courses under the rubric of departments which will not grant you credit until they examine the course descriptions and the work you did in your classes overseas.
- Taken courses that you want to apply as concentration credit. Again, each situation may require evidence of work, including papers, exams, notes from oral presentations, portfolios.

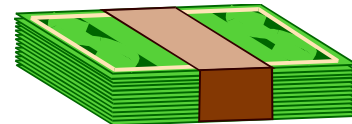
In general, because there may be further questions about your credit, **YOU SHOULD KEEP ALL OF YOUR RECORDS FROM ABROAD:** all syllabi, exams, papers, notes, projects, and portfolios.

COSTS

AFFORDING STUDY ABROAD

It is virtually impossible to generalize about the costs of studying abroad. Ideally, its expense is roughly equivalent to the costs of home campus study, and is afforded by the same student, family, and institutional financial means. But this is not always the case. The questions you must therefore ask, in

choosing a program and location, must concern not only what it costs, but how it can



be afforded. Program costs can vary (a) by location, (b) by sponsor, (c) by program type, (d) by duration, and (e) by home campus tuition and financial aid policy.

Most, but not all, program expenses are incurred overseas; there are also U.S. administrative expenses which need to be paid. Overseas costs vary by country: e.g. the cost of living in Western Europe is, for instance, likely to be more than the cost of living in Latin America. They vary by location within a country or region: e.g. Paris is a more expensive place to live than a village in Provence. They vary by program: some programs include more features, better support services, more on-site supervision, tours and excursions, etc., than others; and some take place at institutions which charge more tuition or higher room and board fees, than others. Finally and obviously, costs vary by program duration. You should be aware, however, that there are economies of scale, so that, e.g., a year program rarely costs twice as much as semester program costs doubled, since fixed administrative and travel costs are spread over a longer period of time; summer programs, when

travel is taken into account, can cost almost as much as quarter or semester programs, and often financial aid is harder to get.

Program costs also vary according to the financial resources and policies of U.S. institutions. Some institutions, private and public, charge full home-campus tuition (including or not, room, board, and fees) for participation in home-campus-sponsored programs (including direct exchanges with foreign institutions) and/or in any other program--in which case you are paying for the cost of comparable home campus credit. Other institutions ask you to pay a small or large home-campus administrative fee, but otherwise you pay whatever is charged by the domestic or foreign program sponsor. Some campuses have one fee for their own programs, and another set of charges for other programs. Other institutions charge nothing extra; you only pay the domestic or foreign program sponsor. Sometimes, if you are trying to transfer credit into your institution from a program which has not been pre-approved, there is a charge per credit unit.

As you read campus and program materials and try to estimate the full costs of study abroad, you should become absolutely certain what is, and is not, covered in the stated fees. While an aggregate figure may be stated, read the fine print carefully. Be especially alert to when the program formally begins and ends, in relation to your arrival and departure, and whether vacation and holiday periods are covered. Here is a check list:

- program tuition, domestic and/or foreign
- fees (above and beyond tuition, e.g. labs, computers, etc.)
- overseas room (for all days and weeks, arrival to departure)
- overseas meals (all, not just some, arrival to departure)
- instructional materials (e.g. books, supplies)
- international and in-country domestic transportation, to and from your program site, and any commuting costs to get to/from campus
- program-related excursions and other cultural enrichment activities
- visa, passport, and other costs of required documents
- medicine, inoculations, etc.

In addition, you must take into account the costs of your social life, of buying clothing and souvenirs, of mail and other long-distance communications. Some such things will amount

to less than what you spend on campus, and much will cost more. Past participants or program representatives can perhaps help you with these estimates.

FINANCIAL AID

The amount of financial aid available to assist you and your parents may depend upon one or more of the following considerations:

- The amount of financial aid you now qualify for home campus study
- The amount of additional aid you might qualify for overseas study
- The commitment of your institution to fostering study abroad opportunities for undergraduates and extending financial aid to such participation
- Participation in an approved program which can be defended as part of your on-going degree studies
- Any additional scholarship aid you might be able to be awarded from private or public sources.

In general, while there is no huge pot of "extra" financial aid designated nationally for study abroad, aid exists from:

- federal and/or state financial aid resources
- scholarships for undergraduate study abroad--e.g. the National Security Education Program.

Of these categories by far the largest is federal and state aid. Federal aid is money supplied through Title IV of the Higher Education Act (recently updated and extended). If you are participating in a study abroad program which is approved by your institution (and are taking a full-course load), and via which you will be earning credit toward your degree, you qualify for that amount and type of federal aid assistance you are otherwise normally qualified to receive for your home campus studies.

This aid package may be made up of one or more of the following:

- Grants and Scholarships (e.g. Pell and Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants); plus State monies of this sort, if it exists.
- Work-study funds (if your institution via its program can employ you overseas)
- Educational Loans (e.g. The Perkins

Loan program, Federal Family Educational Loans, the Stafford Loan, the Plus Loan for parents, and the new Direct Loan. Some states also have loan programs. Repayment on all such loans is usually deferred until after you graduate.

Perhaps needless to say, qualifying and applying for such monies and the process of delivery and repayment is a very complicated and time-consuming business. You therefore need the assistance of your campus Financial Aid office. Make an appointment with the person in this office who is designated to process aid for study abroad. Do this as soon as you think you might wish to study abroad. Also seek the help of your study abroad adviser, who can also provide encouragement and guidance. On-line resources: <http://www.finaid.org>, <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/Students/>, <http://www.finaid.org/finaid/picks.html>

BUDGETING

The overall cost of living abroad can sometimes be higher, or lower, than at home. Because you are in an unfamiliar environment, with local costs stated in a currency you may not be able to translate immediately into dollars, it is easy to be misled. You may also be confronted with an almost endless array of entertainment possibilities and attractions. A go-slow approach to buying much makes sense. Try to live within a prudent budget which will take care of all necessities and allow you to live on the means available to you for the duration of your stay. There is little more dismaying than to run out of funds overseas, with no easy or quick means of replenishment. The following suggestions may be helpful:

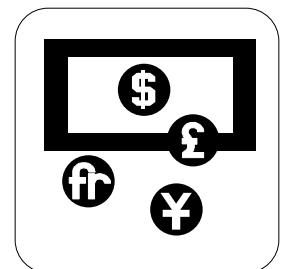
- Make both weekly and daily budgets and stick to them.
- Learn the "value" of the money (i.e. in relation to the currency you know, the US\$) wherever you are and as quickly as possible.
- Be consistently alert for special student rates and discounts, wherever you go, and know what is available through the use of your International Student Identification Card (e.g. travel, accommodations, entrance fees, some entertainment, etc.
- Take advantage of less expensive alternatives whenever possible. Cook for yourself (especially breakfasts) if possible, or use refectory or student

cafeteria meals rather than restaurants--saving even moderately priced restaurants for special occasions.

- Plan your entertainment and recreation around the availability of free, inexpensive, and discounted events--on campus or in the surrounding community.
- Shop when possible in street markets or major chain supermarkets. Avoid specialty shops and convenience stores (which add a 20-30% mark-up). Put off making major purchases as long as you can, when you have learned the range of available selections and prices--or learned that you don't really need that expensive item, after all.
- When you travel, stay in Youth or Student Hostels, or in modest bed-and-breakfast accommodations, as opposed to hotels which cater to tourists and business travelers and charge accordingly.
- Take care of your belongings and safeguard your travelers checks and cash. Losses from carelessness are difficult enough at any time. They are even more unhandy abroad and pick-pocketing is universally common.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE

To live in a foreign country, you will have to learn to use a new currency, which you can purchase with U.S. dollars, travelers checks, and the like. Exchange rates can fluctuate daily. To find out current rates, contact <http://www.travlang.com/money>. It is not recommended that you carry large amounts of cash with you. Traveler's checks are the safest and most convenient way for carrying your money. Lost or stolen cash cannot be replaced; traveler's checks can be refunded. Be sure to keep a separate record of the serial numbers of your traveler's checks. It is best to have three copies of these. Should the checks be lost or stolen, you will need to have these numbers available in order to obtain a refund.



Traveler's checks are available in various denominations of various currencies (e.g. American dollars, British pounds, French francs, etc.) and can be obtained at most banks. The

major companies dealing in traveler's checks are Citicorp (First National City Bank), American Express, Thomas Cook, Bank of America, and Visa. There is a 1% or more commission charge for traveler's checks purchases. Buying traveler's checks in small denominations means carrying a bulkier package of checks with you, but it also means that you have greater control over the amount of currency you receive each time you cash one or more of these checks.

American currency can be exchanged for foreign currency at most international airports prior to your departure; at the international airport after you arrive; and at most major banks and railroad stations abroad. It is often helpful to have some local cash-on-hand before you leave the airport, for buses, taxis, a cup of coffee or a snack. The exchange rates and service fees at U.S. airports are invariably less favorable than at the international airport of your arrival. Try to avoid having to exchange currency at hotels, restaurants, or retail shops, as the exchange rate will generally be outrageous.

Banks abroad afford you the fairest exchange rate available. You can expect to pay a commission (which varies from one country to another) every time you exchange currency. In some countries the commission is based on a percentage of the amount you exchange, while in others there is a flat fee regardless of the amount of the transaction. The flat fee rate makes it to your advantage to exchange larger amounts to avoid repeat visits to the bank window, although this necessarily means that you might be carrying more cash than advisable. You need to find a happy medium between carrying large amounts of cash and paying repeat bank commissions for exchange transactions.



BANKING

Domestic ATM cards with a cirrus designation can often be used to obtain foreign currency from foreign ATM units at a pretty good exchange bank. Check with your local bank to see if this is possible in the overseas locations(s) to which you will be heading. Make sure that your PIN can be used overseas. Most students wait until arrival in the country to establish a bank account--your program

orientation will usually tell you how to do this. This lets you become acquainted with the various banks and the services and with the different types of bank accounts and to find the branch office closest to where you will be during banking hours. Many banks have their own bank cards, allowing you to make withdrawals from their ATM's. While there are advantages to having your own foreign bank account, it is also possible to use VISA or MASTERCARD at many foreign banks, to get cash in the local currency, drawing on money you or your parents have deposited. If you have a credit card or bank card that is on e.g., the CIRRUS network, you should be able to withdraw money from most bank machines in Europe, and increasingly in other regions. Find this out before you depart.

TRANSFERRING MONEY FROM HOME

If you run short of cash while abroad, money can be sent from home in a variety of ways:

1. The quickest way, although the most expensive, is by cable transfer from your American bank to a bank abroad. It is wisest to investigate this before you leave. Your hometown bank may have to process cable transfers through an internationally recognized American bank, which will in turn have to deal with a comparable internationally recognized bank overseas.
2. American Express money orders are relatively fast. Transactions must be initiated at an American Express office in the United States and completed at one of their branch offices abroad, either of which could prove inconvenient, depending on their location. American Express can cable money to one of their overseas offices, where it can be picked up, with appropriate identification. Since not all American Express offices can prepare money orders or cable money, it is wise to find this out in advance.
3. It is also possible to obtain from an American bank a foreign currency draft drawn against a recognized bank in the foreign country (e.g. a check in Spanish pesetas drawn against the Banco Hispano-Americano in Madrid for a student in Salamanca). This draft can then be sent to you (by registered or certified mail) for cashing abroad.
4. Should you prefer receiving a bank draft in American currency, a cashier's check drawn against a major American Bank (e.g. Chase Manhattan) can probably be

obtained from your hometown bank and forwarded to you abroad (Use Registered or Certified mail). However this may prove to be a relatively slow way of obtaining the money you need, since you still have to wait for the foreign bank to confirm the check's validity.

Needless to say, personal checks drawn against your local hometown bank will be virtually worthless because of the long amount of time it takes each bank to clear the check.

CREDIT CARDS

Credit cards make foreign currency transactions easy and are invaluable in a financial emergency. Take a credit card along, if you can. but USE IT WISELY; overspending is so easy to do and fees and interest charges can be costly. Also, the loss or theft of a card abroad can be a huge inconvenience when you are traveling.

Possession of an American Express card, Visa card, or MasterCard will be helpful should you need to acquire emergency funds while awaiting money from home. You can go to an American Express office and cash a personal check for up to \$1000 (only the first \$50 will be provided in cash, the balance in traveler's checks). With a Visa card you can usually obtain a cash advance against your account from a foreign bank. The bank will take your passport number and your credit card number and phone them both into a central computer to prevent you from exceeding the established limit.

Credit cards can also come in handy when you wish to charge a purchase to your account rather than pay cash. However, not all merchants abroad accept credit cards, regardless of the name brand: many of your gifts and/or souvenirs may be obtained at small shops and bazaars that do not provide charge services. The amount charged to your credit card bill is based on the exchange rate on the day that your bank or credit card company processes the transaction.

In the case of all financial transactions abroad, be sure to have adequate identification with you (e.g. your passport).

Note:

Not all of the preceding counsel may be true in every country--indeed, it is probably more accurate for the major Western European countries, than for the rest of the world. But,

banking IS a world-wide phenomenon these days, so the above is more or less accurate for many locations.

PREPARATION AND STUDY ABROAD

Your time abroad will be a wonderful way of enriching and diversifying your education. You will learn a tremendous amount simply from living and learning in a new social and cultural environment, from the people you meet, and from life as it vicariously unfolds. Additionally, for many students the study abroad experience stimulates not just a new way of looking at themselves and the world, but new ideas about what comes after they graduate, which is to say: jobs and a career. Many express regret afterward that they didn't do more to prepare for the working world before and during their time away--something echoed by campus career advisers.

Employers generally look favorably at applicants who, in addition to having a strong academic record, also have some hands-on work experience. In the increasingly globalized economy and job-market, and international work experience may be seen as especially valuable. Many study abroad programs have internship components; some are even centered around internships. It is also sometimes possible to set up some sort of work project, volunteer service, etc. in the community surrounding your program, as long as you can do with without conflict with your studies. In any of these instances, your home institution may or may not grant credit. Its policy is best something you find out about as early as possible.

Here is a check-list of things you can do before, during, and after you study abroad, to maximize its career-enhancing potential. It is adapted from a handout written by Jane Cary, formerly of Amherst College:

THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU GO

- Make a list of alumni from your college living in the city/county where you'll be. Get names and addresses from the Alumni Office.
- Talk with current students who are back from your Study site. Did any of them work or perform an internship while there?
- If yes, did they do it during the semester

- or after? How did they arrange it?
- Read the sections of all "work abroad" books that mention the country/city where you'll be.
- Read back issues of TRANSITIONS ABROAD magazine.
- Prepare a resume, in case you need to show an employer or internship adviser overseas what you've already done.

THINGS TO DO WHILE ABROAD:

- Maintain a "contacts" notebook. Include the name, address, and phone number, e-mail address, etc. of every interesting professional you meet
- Contact alumni. Meet them at their place of business or socially. Express your interest in staying on after your program of study ends, or your interest in returning after graduation.
- Check out the local "yellow pages" and scan the daily paper's want ads for future reference.
- Look for schools which teach in English. Go check them out. What qualifications do their teachers have?
- If in a home stay, talk often with adults in the family about the local economy. Take every opportunity to meet the family's friends and extended family to network.
- Practice, practice, practice the local language--if English, learn the idioms, accent, vocabulary, etc. Speak with 'natives' in all walks of life, constantly. Read the local and national papers and periodicals.
- When you encounter 'older' Americans living locally, introduce yourself. Make note of where they are employed and how they obtained their positions.
- Pay attention to the cost of living, as opposed to the U.S. Figure out how much money you would need to live there.
- Have a standby friend at home pick-up and save summer job and internship information for you.
- If graduate study in that country might be an option, get application information while you're there.

AFTER RETURNING:

- Visit your campus Career Center early after you return, and often, to learn about its services for job-hunting seniors; attend all relevant job-seekers workshops.

- Learn whether firms with offices abroad recruit on campus. Don't be distressed to learn that you might have to work in the U.S. first.
- Ascertain whether you will need a higher degree to obtain the job you want. What graduate entrance exams are required? Where in the U.S. or abroad can that degree be earned?
- Make time to gather and pursue short-term and more permanent work-abroad resources.
- Prepare your resume. Make sure it adequately describes your experience abroad and all skills you acquired, including language competency.
- Keep in touch with all the contacts you gathered abroad. Write to them, stating your serious interest in returning to work in that country after graduation (if your ARE serious).
- Investigate short-session programs that teach the Teaching of English as a Second Language. Do they help with job placement?
- Determine your financial situation. Must you earn \$ before you go? How long can you afford to live abroad?
- Find a buddy to job hunt with. Two heads are better than one, and you can share leads and contacts.

DOCUMENTS

To all governments, your national 'identity' is of major importance. If any such authority should have questions about who you are or where you come from, you must be able to answer them. What follows is a guide on how to acquire and secure the essential verification documents needed for trouble-free travel and return.

PASSPORTS

All travelers between countries must have a passport. The passport is your official identification as a citizen of the United States. It is issued by the Department of State, and is good for a period of 10 years (5 years for those under 18). You must have a valid passport on your person to show border and customs authorities when you enter or leave the



United States, when crossing most other national borders, as well as on various other occasions that require official verification of your citizenship. These days, there are some exceptions, e.g. between the U.S. and Canada, between various European nations, within the Nordic countries. But one never knows for sure; controls are often tightened in times when extra surveillance is needed, so it is best to assume that you need always have it available to show.

Passports are issued at any office of the U.S. Passport Agency directly or by mail via one of the federal or state courts or U.S. post offices authorized to accept passport applications. For more information, write to:

[Bureau of Consular Affairs](#)
Office of Passport Services
Room 386, Department of State
1425 K Street
Washington D.C. 20524
phone: 202--647 0518

National Passport Information Center
1-900-255-5674

The completed passport application for those who have never been issued a passport by the U.S. before must be accompanied by:

- proof of citizenship--a naturalization certificate (if you are a naturalized citizen) or a birth certificate (if you are a citizen by birth). Birth certificates must be official, i.e., bearing the seal of the state in which you were born; hospital certificates are not official and will only delay the processing of your passport application. Applications for official birth certificates can also be obtained from the local post office.
- two identical photographs (color, 2" square on white background) taken within six months of the date of your application.
- proof of your identity, such as a current driver's license with your signature and photograph.
- The required payment. The standard passport fee is \$40.00 for individuals under 18 years of age, and \$65.00 for individuals 18 years of age or older. This fee is collected at the time you submit your application. Allow about three to four weeks for processing of your application.

If you already have a U.S. passport AND IT WILL EXPIRE BEFORE YOU COMPLETE

YOUR TIME ABROAD, you should apply for a new passport before you depart from the U.S. Your current passport usually suffices for identification of your birth and citizenship, but new photos and the fee are of course required.

DO NOT DELAY APPLYING FOR A PASSPORT. THE PROCESS TAKES A MINIMUM OF TWO TO FOUR WEEKS, EVEN LONGER IN THE BUSY SEASON DO IT NOW.

Your passport is your most important legal document while traveling overseas. In some countries, it is required that you carry it at all times. Do what your program asks. Guard it **VERY CAREFULLY**. Never travel away from your study abroad site, and particularly away from your host country, without your passport.

Losing a passport while you are overseas is not the end-of-the-world, but it will seem like it, since the procedures for being issued another are very complicated and often extremely time-consuming. At home, loss or theft of a valid passport should be reported in writing immediately to Passport Services (address above), or to the nearest passport agency. If the loss occurs while abroad, you should **IMMEDIATELY** notify the nearest US consulate or embassy, and of course your program or institution. Theft of a passport should also be reported to local police authorities.

VISAS

A visa is official permission to visit a country. It is granted by the government of that country. Visa formats vary considerably, from a simple stamp imprinted on one of the pages in your passport at the time you enter the country to an official document with your photograph attached. For Americans, some countries (e.g., Commonwealth of Independent States-Russia) require advance processing of visas while other countries (e.g., West Europe) require no advance processing for brief visits, usually up to three months; instead your visa status will be stamped in your passport when you enter and leave the country. When you are accepted into a program, you should get information on the visa requirements of the country or countries you will visit. Don't delay in following instructions, as soon as possible. The [US State Department's web page](#) makes information available regarding visa requirements.

If you plan to do any travel beyond the country where the program takes place, you should check the visa requirements for all countries you plan to visit by contacting the nearest consulate

for that country. Single copies of "Visa Requirements of Foreign Governments" (Publication M-264), a publication that lists the entry requirements for US citizens traveling to most foreign countries, are available free from:

Office of Passport Services
Department of State, Room 306
1425 K Street NW
Washington, DC 20524

<http://www.travisa.com/> offers information on visa requirements and the application process.

You may be required to submit your official acceptance letters to the program or foreign institution with the visa application. Save your acceptance letters (or copies) in a safe place until needed.

Non-U.S. Citizens:

Visa procedures and customs requirements are different for students holding non-United States passports. U.S permanent residents must check with the US Immigration Service concerning regulations for re-entry into the U.S.. It is important to verify procedures, especially if you might be outside the U.S. for more than one year, to permit re-entry to the U.S. International students studying in the U.S. should find out if leaving the U.S will cause difficulties for re-entering this country. Overseas communications may be needed, and this can be time-consuming.

REQUIRED IMMUNIZATIONS

Because of specific health concerns and conditions in various countries, proof that you have received certain immunizations may be required. If you are going to such a country, an official record of your immunizations must be carried with you. This is usually asked for when you enter the country. The organization or institution which sponsors your program can advise you on what is required for entry into the country where it occurs. BUT, if you plan personal travel to other countries before, during, or after your program, it is again your responsibility to know what immunizations are required. It is wise to find this out and have the shots before departure.

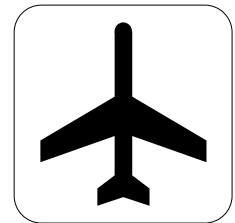
You can demonstrate that you have had the required immunizations by having this information listed on an "International Certificate of Vaccinations." This form is issued by the US Department of Health, Education and Welfare and approved by the World Health Organization. It is obtainable from your local Department of

Health, a passport office, or from many physicians and travel agencies. It must be filled out and dated by the physician or medical clinic which provides the immunizations. Your campus Health Services might be able to provide this form, as well as give the needed inoculations and other assistance, or it can refer you to clinics where these can be obtained.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IDENTITY CARD

There are a number of special privileges and discounts available to students throughout the world, including such things as reduced or free admission to museums, theaters, concerts, and cultural as well as historical sites, to qualify for them you have to be able to affirm your student status. The International Student Identity Card (ISIC) does this, wherever you go. ISIC is sold in the U.S. through:

Council on International Educational Exchange
(CIEE)
205 East 42nd St.
New York, NY 10017 Phone:
1-888 COUNCIL



It is one of the most widely recognized forms of proof of your student status. Other ISIC benefits include low airfares, and discounts on travel. In the event of serious injury or death, it also provides emergency evacuation and the repatriation of remains--coverage which supplements what is covered by the health care plan of your institution (if it applies overseas) and most private health care plans.

Purchase of this card is highly recommended. Its cost is \$22.00, an amount you are likely to earn back in savings, perhaps many times over. The ISIC is valid for one January-to-January calendar year, but can be purchased in advance. Information on benefits and the card itself can be obtained directly from any Council Travel office, or by mail from CIEE in New York. To receive the card, you must bring or send a passport photo and proof that you are a currently enrolled student, along with the application form and payment.

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH HOSTEL CARD

The International Youth Hostel Card is usually required if you wish to stay in a youth hostel and normally must be purchased in the country

where you hold residence. In the US, cards are available at all American Youth Hostel Office locations or through the national headquarters. Write to Hostelling International—American Youth Hostels, PO Box 37613, Washington, DC 20013, tel. (202) 783-6161. Applications can be downloaded from the web at <http://www.hiayh.org/>. After you have established residency at your study site, you can obtain a Youth Hostel Card from any youth hostel in that country.

INTERNATIONAL DRIVING PERMIT

Although public transportation in other countries is usually very reliable and inexpensive, you may want to rent an automobile. Some countries recognize a US driver's license, many do not and others require a translation. If you expect to drive during your study abroad, you should first check with the nearest embassy or consulate to see if there are any age restrictions or other requirements such as proof of insurance. It is also recommended that you obtain an International Driving Permit. To do so, contact any AAA office. You will need to pay a small fee and present two passport-size photographs and a valid US driver's license.

PHOTOGRAPHS

It is a good idea to get at least 6 photographs prior to your departure. Four of these are required for your passport while you will need one for your International Student Identity Card. The last one may come in handy for purchasing a Youth Hostel Card etc. Generally, all pictures should be the size and quality of your passport photos. If you are a member of Costco, they have sold passport photos for as little as \$2.50 per photo.

PACKING

If in doubt on how to pack, don't hesitate to check the resources available in the International Student Center resource room. In addition, travel books (highly recommended) also provide good advice. Remember, what students wear in California is often not acceptable in other parts of the world. It is important to take clothes that demand little care, since you might not have easy access to washers, dryers and ironing boards.

Lightweight clothing works best. It is important to layer clothing than to bring heavy coats, sweaters etc. Choose clothing so that you can



adapt to the varying temperatures with the smallest amount of clothing. Should you need these items where you are going, they are often times less expensive to purchase abroad than to buy in sunny California. To select your wardrobe, start by laying out all that you think you will need; now reduce this by 1/3.

It is probably better to bring more socks and underwear and fewer other clothes. You will want to bring only those clothes that easily mix and match. Most of your clothes should be casual, not grubby. Dark, conservative colors will wear longer without laundering and permanent press fabrics will eliminate the need for ironing. For outerwear, a hooded raincoat with a zip-in lining is ideal for temperate climates.

Try to be considerate to what is acceptable dress in your host country. If you're not sure—ASK!

Some students ask if bringing bicycles, skateboards, surfboards, musical instruments etc. are acceptable to take on programs. Obviously, the shorter the program the less inclined one should be in bringing such things. Remember, consider the possibility of damage while on route, limited storage space and the additional expense for additional baggage. If you plan to use these items only once or twice, it is probably much better to rent equipment or shop for second-hand items in your host country.

Remember:

Sharp objects such as pocket-knives, scissors, letter openers cannot be brought aboard in hand luggage. Make sure that all container caps are sealed tightly and put in plastic ziplock baggies to prevent leaking. Aerosol cans cannot be placed in checked baggage as they will explode. Luggage straps that fit around the outside of suitcases will save on wear and tear of zippers.

Photographic film: Airport X-ray machines generally will not damage film of AS400 or lower (AS 200, 100 etc). Anything higher should be hand-checked by airport officials.

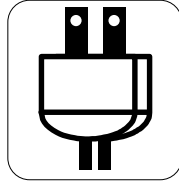
Luggage with sturdy wheels will serve you better in long walks through airport terminals, train terminals and parking lots. Make sure that the suitcases you buy have double stitching, heavy duty wheel wells, strong straps for pulling and carrying.

Do not send trunks as they will arrive at or around the same time you will be returning.

Finally, remember to **PACK LIGHTLY** and **LEAVE VALUABLES AT HOME!**

ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES

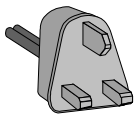
In the United States, we use 110 volts AC (Alternating Current) at 60 cycles. The rest of the world operates largely on 220 volts AC or 100 volts AC and 50 cycles. This means that, when you plug an American appliance into a foreign outlet, the result could be a damaged appliance. In order to use your electrical appliances in most foreign countries, you will need to us converters and adapters.



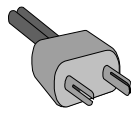
Converters, which plug into the wall outlet, convert 220 volt current into 110 volt American current by cutting in half, the number of volts flowing to your appliance. There are two-types of converters: lightweight (up to 50 watts) for low wattage equipment like radios, calculators, razors etc. and heavy duty (from 50 to 1600 watts) for high wattage appliances such as hair dryers and irons.

Adapters, on the other hand, are simply a means of changing the shape of the prongs which go into the wall outlet. They do NOT convert voltage. There may be three prongs instead of two (the third is ground) and the prongs may take a number of different shapes, sometimes even within the same country.

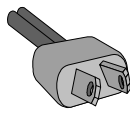
If you are going to travel in a number of countries, you will want to have a number of different adapters.



England
Africa



Europe
South America



Australia
New Zealand

You can purchase these items usually in any hardware store, travel store or order through travel magazines and catalogues.

SENDING ITEMS HOME

As with most people, a sojourn abroad inevitably entails purchases from your travels. This means having to either carry them home in your luggage or shipping them from your host country. Remember that:

- ❑ Gifts worth up to \$100 per person, per day, may be received duty and tax free. Mark the package "UNSOLICITED GIFT" to avoid problems with Customs. If the package contains gifts for more than one person, mark it "UNSOLICITED GIFT" and "CONSOLIDATED GIFT PACKAGE". List the nature and value of the contents. In the case of consolidated packages, also note who receives which gift.
- ❑ Books can usually be mailed home at a special rate if they are packed according to certain specifications. They are exempt from duty regulations.
- ❑ You can ship home personal goods of US origin included used clothing, duty free if you mark them as "AMERICAN GOODS RETURNED". Used clothes does not include items purchased abroad and worn.
- ❑ Liquor cannot be mailed to the US.

WARNING: Do not misrepresent what may be contained in a package. US Customs opens packages regularly and randomly (not just "suspicious-looking" ones), and making a false declaration is a criminal offense.



PRE-DEPARTURE CHECK LIST

Before departure you should have done ALL the following:

A. ADMINISTRATIVE THINGS:

- Copy down all names, phone numbers, postal and e-mail addresses of campus people and offices with which you MIGHT need to have contact during your time away.
- Attend ALL general and program orientation sessions to which you are invited.
- Declare your major, if you have not already done this.
- Arrange for all required course approvals, for major and/or elective credit.
- Clear all registration holds and make sure all outstanding balances are paid.
- Get your International Student Identity Card
- If eligible for aid, complete FINANCIAL AID application materials.
- Sign the Perkins Loan, Stafford Loan or University Loan Promissory Note. If a note is not signed before you leave campus, it will be sent to your home address unless you notify your campus Loan Office differently.
- If you have been declared eligible for receiving financial aid for study abroad, submit the Student Aid Report (SAR) to your campus Financial Aid Office for certification. If SAR is revised either by this office or by you and the revised copy of the SAR has not reached you at home before your departure, alert your parents to forward it to your campus Financial Aid Office without delay.
- Notify Registrar's Office of your re-admittance plans.
- If you are away during spring semester, get a Renewal Financial Aid Application (usually available in February) and submit before deadline (usually by April 15 on most campuses) so as not to jeopardize your chances for aid when you return. Send your campus Financial Aid Office written instructions by the beginning of January if you want your renewal packet sent to a different address. Otherwise, it will be sent to the address which is on the Registrar's data base as home address.
- Terminate all current contracts with residential living, dining service, etc.
- Arrange with your Campus Mail center to have any mail which comes when you are away sent to your home address.
- If you are not a U.S. citizen make sure your visa and other papers are in order.
- Especially if you are seeking an 'internationalized' career, contact the campus career services office to find out what they recommend and to open a reference file.

Make sure your campus has the names and addresses of those persons who should be contacted in the event of an emergency.



B. PROGRAM PREPARATION THINGS:

- Apply for your passport. If you already have a passport, make sure that it is valid well past the date of your anticipated return; if it is not, renew it ASAP.
- Make flight arrangements, on your own or as part of a group flight sponsored by your program.
- Collect documents required for your visa (if the country you are going to requires one for entry). Apply for and obtain the visa.
- Collect any other entry and re-entry documents you are required to take with you (e.g. entry documents, immunization certificates, green card for re-entry into the U.S. if you are not an American citizen)

Discuss any problems with campus staff. Pay all required fees to the sponsoring program.

C. LOGISTICAL AND ECONOMIC THINGS:

- Plan a budget. Bring an emergency fund (minimum: \$250)
- Prepare to bring the recommended amount of money for start-up costs.
- Arrange with your bank to have \$100 in local currency to bring with you.
- Make sure you have the credit cards, bank cards, telephone cards, etc, which you are planning to use.
- Obtain rail passes, hostel cards, etc., as needed.
- If you intend to look for paid work overseas before or after your program, obtain your visa to allow this (note: only selected countries) from CIEE.
- Consider purchasing insurance for personal liability property loss, trip cancellation, etc.
- Arrange for 'power of attorney' for the person handling your financial affairs in your absence (if not parent or guardian).
- Discuss safety and terrorism issues with your family, and emergency contact procedures.
- Arrange for absentee voting in any election which will occur before you return (where you are registered to vote).
- Bring all medication, prescriptions, saline solutions, extra glasses or contacts, etc.
- Make sure you understand how the Health Insurance plan that covers you actually works. Go over the International Student Identity Card coverage. Get additional insurance for additional coverage, as needed. **BRING YOUR INSURANCE CARDS.**
- Bring several extra passport-size photographs (for misc. use)
- Have a physical, dental check, eye examination, etc. Make sure you receive all appropriate inoculations.