Choosing Your Semester/Summer Abroad Program

Preliminary Questions to Consider . . .

Why Study Abroad?

Study abroad is an educational tool that allows for the development of critical thinking, reflective, cross-cultural, and interpersonal skills that are integral to a liberal arts education. Studying and living in another culture can also be an exhilarating challenge that, with the proper outlook and preparation, can open windows to the world and to a self you hardly knew existed.

By participating in a study abroad program, a student can achieve personal growth and a new perspective on the world. The knowledge and skills acquired by studying abroad are also attractive to prospective employers as well as graduate schools. Your opportunities will be enhanced because employers and graduate schools want individuals who are flexible thinkers, adaptable, and comfortable with cultural diversity—studying abroad affords you these skills.

Primary Questions and Considerations for Students to Answer

As you read through the following questions, ask yourself, "Which of these questions make the most difference to me?" Your answers are crucial in helping the Director of International Education to guide your efforts in finding the program best suited to you.

- How long do I want to study abroad?
- What do I want to study?
- How does the study abroad experience fit with your professional and personal goals?
- In what area, country, or city would I like to study?
- How much money do I have to spend?
- How important is it to receive academic credit?
- What is my comfort level with new situations, flexibility, and adaptability?
- Does it matter to me if my experience counts toward the degree I am earning at Emory & Henry?
- Why do I want to go there?
- Is my primary goal to learn a language?
- Is my primary goal to gain experience related to my major or expected career?
- Is my primary goal to earn academic credit toward my Emory & Henry degree?
- Is my primary goal to learn about the world and how other people live?

6 Steps to Study Abroad

Step 1: Visit the Office of International Education

Services We Provide:

- Advising in selection of a program that suits your personal and academic needs
- Guidance or resources for travel, work, and volunteer opportunities
- Advising on differences in educational systems and how to prepare for study abroad
- Providing Emory & Henry forms, handbooks, and orientation materials
- Advising on Emory & Henry College procedures
- Pre-Departure Session and Guide

Services We Do Not Provide:

- Making travel arrangements
- Choosing your program
- Choosing your housing
- Mailing/submitting your application to the program

Step 2: Get Information

Talk to students who have studied abroad. The Office of International Education can provide you with names of students who have studied abroad and would be happy to talk about their experiences.

Basic Things You Should Know Before You Go: [1]

Having knowledge about your host country helps you get into conversations and shows your respect for the culture. We suggest that you go through the following list of questions and try to answer as many as you can. Next, try to find the answers to the rest by reading about the country, browsing the Internet, or by talking to someone here who is from your host country. There are several student organizations and faculty members at E&H who could be a great resource for finding out information about your new home. Take the questions you have remaining with you abroad and utilize the relationships you form with your host country's nationals to help you find the answers. People will most likely be flattered by your interest and will be eager to help you fill in the gaps.

- Who are some of the most prominent people in the affairs of your host country (politics, athletics, religion, the arts, etc.)?
- Who are the country's national heroes and heroines?
- Can you recognize the national anthem?
- Are other languages spoken besides the dominant language? What are the social and political implications of language usage? What is the language of instruction in the schools? At what level are foreign languages introduced?
- What is the predominant religion? Is it a state religion? Have you read any of its sacred writings? How do members of the predominant religion feel about other religions?
- What is the attitude toward drinking? Smoking cigarettes? Gambling?
- Is the price for merchandise fixed or are customers expected to bargain? How is the bargaining conducted?

[1] Adapted from the University of Minnesota's pre-departure handbook

- How do people organize their daily activities? What is the normal meal schedule? Is there a daytime rest period? What is the customary time for visiting friends?
- What foods are most popular and how are they prepared?
- What is the usual dress for women? For men? Are slacks or shorts worn? If so, on what occasions? Do teenagers wear jeans?
- If you are invited to dinner, should you arrive early? On time? Late? If late, how late? Does the same timing hold true in terms of arrival at school? At work?
- On what occasions will you present (or accept) gifts from people in the country? What kind of gifts would you exchange?
- How do people greet one another? Shake hands? Embrace or kiss? How do they leave one another? What does any variation from the usual greeting or leaving signify?
- What kinds of non-verbal behavior (e.g., touching) are acceptable between people of the opposite sex? Between people of the same sex?
- What are U.S. relations like in the past and present with your host country and the surrounding regions? Be able to provide a valid opinion of the U.S.'s actions or positions.
- What are the important holidays? How is each observed?
- What sports are popular? Do they involve gambling? If so, which ones?
- How will your financial position and living conditions compare with those of the majority of people living in this country?
- What things is taboo in this society?
- Is military training compulsory?
- Are the largest circulation newspapers generally friendly in their attitude toward the United States? Give examples.
- Are there special privileges of age, sex, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic status?
- How many people have emigrated from this country to the United States? Other countries? Are many doing so at present?
- What kinds of health services are available? Where are they located? How are the health services funded?
- Where are the important universities of the country? If university education is sought abroad, to what countries and universities do students generally go? What percentage of university students has the opportunity to study abroad?
- What are a few of the country's major literary contributions? Authors?
- What are the differences/similarities between your home and host culture as to public/private institutions such as banks, libraries, post offices, media, schools, day care, hospitals?
- What are the favorite leisure and recreational activities of adults or teenagers?
- Where can medicines be purchased? What are the common local remedies?
- What kinds of local public transportation are available? Do all classes of people use it? Do many people have cars? Who has the right-of-way? Pedestrians? Animals?

Step 3: Choose a Program

Program Questions:

- When is the application deadline?
- Will I be able to contact past participants of the program to get their evaluation of their experience?
- What qualifications does the program or experience require?
- Do I need to have a certain GPA?
- What language ability should I have?

- Are there particular skills or abilities I will need?
- What type of program is it and for what level of student?
- How long is the program?
- What courses are offered? Do they meet my needs? For my major? For graduation?
- Are internships, field projects, or independent study options available?
- What housing options are available?
- Are meals included?
- Are any excursions included?
- What support services are provided?
- What does the program fee include? Tuition only? Tuition Room and Board? What are the additional costs? Is there a refund policy?

Course Questions:

- What teaching style do I want? (Tutorials, seminars, language labs, lectures, etc.)
- Do I want a study program that includes an internship and/or field research experience?
- Do I want to take my classes with students from the host country, other North American students, and/or other international students?
- Do I want to take classes at a study center or a University? Does it matter to me?
- What types (content and/or format) of courses are offered on this program?
- Are the courses offered part of the regular courses at the host university or are they special courses (i.e., for visiting international students only)?
- Who are the faculty who will be teaching me? Are they from the North American university who sponsors the program or are they from the host university?
- What institution awards the credits earned? In what form will the transcript come and how long will it take to get to Emory & Henry after the program ends? (Remember, the final determination of whether or not the program is creditworthy rests with Emory & Henry faculty and registrar--not with the program itself or your Academic Advisor.)
- Are the classes taught in English? In the language of the host university? In another language? Do I have the language ability to handle this?
- If I'm interested in other options, are there opportunities for independent research or field projects?

Cost Questions:

- What financial resources do I need in order to be able to finance this experience?
- Are there additional resources open to me, such as parents, family, friends, extra jobs, scholarships, etc.?
- How much will the total cost be (include tuition, housing, meals, airfare, insurance, fees, money for personal expenses, etc.)?
- What sort of financial aid (loans, grants, scholarships), if any, is available through the program?

Basic Living Questions:

- Do I want to live in on- or off-premise housing?
- Do I want to live with residents of the host country? With other Americans? With international students?
- Do I want to live in a dormitory? Apartment? Rooming house? Or host family?
- Does the program assign housing or do I have to find my own? If I have to find my own housing, does the program provide assistance in finding accommodations? If so, what kind of assistance?

- If my housing placement turns out to be a difficult one, how easy is it to get out of a situation that does not work?
- Is housing near the site of my classes or at least to convenient public transportation?
- To what extent does the program allow and encourage the participants to mix with residents of the host country?
- To what community and/or university activities will I have access?

Step 4: Complete the Applications

There are two application processes for you to complete:

- The Application Study Abroad through the Office for International Education—Due December 1 during the academic year prior to study.
- The programmatic application that your provider requires—these deadlines vary and you are responsible for meeting this deadline.
- In many cases, incomplete or late applications may not be considered. Make sure you comply with the stated deadlines both with the Office of International Education as well as the program provider you have chosen.

Step 5: Obtain Travel Documents

You need to get these documents and have them with you abroad:

- Passport
- Visa
- Airline Ticket
- Train passes
- Calling Cards if desired
- Birth Certificate
- ATM/Debit Card, Credit Card
- Accident and Sickness Insurance Card
- International Student Identity Card (ISIC) - optional
- International Insurance (optional)
- Property and Liability Insurance (optional)
- Trip Cancellation Insurance (optional)

Passport

You will need a valid passport to travel outside the United States. Obtaining a passport is your responsibility. It can take up to twelve weeks to process a passport application, but please be aware that the process may take longer, especially during peak travel times. Many local post offices will accept applications for passports. For more information and to find a location that accepts applications, visit http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html. In the Emory area, you can apply for a passport at the Abingdon post office.

You must have the following documents to apply for a passport:

- Two passport photographs. (You can get these at CVS, Wal-Mart, Walgreens, or other photo shops that advertise this service.)
- Either an expired passport or proof of US citizenship, typically a **certified** Birth Certificate. A certified birth certificate generally has an embossed seal (If you need a certified copy, visit www.cdc.gov/nchs/howto/w2w/w2welcom.htm and choose the state in which you were born.

Depending on the state, copies cost about $15). You can also get this from your hometown courthouse records department.
- Proof of identification with photograph (e.g., driver's license)
- Fee: $135 ($110 + $25 processing fee) for first-time applicants or $110 for renewals.
- For more information, visit http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html

Once you receive your passport, make three photocopies of the information page of your passport.
- First copy: for you to carry separately in case your passport is lost or stolen.
- Second copy: send to Office of International Education for your file.
- Third copy: stays at home with your family.

If your passport is lost or stolen, it is much easier to obtain a replacement with a photocopy of your original. The nearest American embassy or consulate can help you get a replacement.

Entry Visa(s)

A travel visa is an official government document that temporarily authorizes you to be in the country you are visiting. Some countries require a visa to gain entry. The visa usually is in the form of a stamp or sticker placed in the passport and is obtained from the country you are visiting. Your program will let you know if a visa is necessary and how to obtain one. For country-specific information about visas, visit http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_4965.html or contact the embassy or nearest consulate of the country(ies) you plan to visit. ***You will need an acceptance letter from your host institution before you can apply for a visa***. Most countries will not allow visa application more than 3 months before the date of your planned visit.

- Obtaining a visa can be a long and complicated process (weeks to months). You cannot get your visa until you have a passport, so begin the process as soon as possible. You will need an acceptance letter from your host institution before you can apply for a visa.
- You may be required to visit the embassy in person to apply for a visa. Make time for this.
- Important: If you are traveling on a passport other than a U.S. passport, you should check with the nearest consulate of the country to which you are traveling in order to determine whether a visa will be required. Do this as far in advance as possible, and notify the Office of International Education (OIE) of the documentation you will need to apply for your visa. You should check with the local consulate of your home country to determine whether there are any passport or travel regulations of which you need to be aware. You should also investigate whether you will need to apply for a new visa to re-enter the U.S. upon completion of the program.

Note: Some countries require transit visas for people to change planes at their airports -- particularly the Schengen countries in Europe. For more information, see:
http://www.eurovisa.info/SchengenCountries.htm.

Airline Reservations

Airfares depend on city of origin and whether you are traveling in peak or off-peak season. Investigate discount fares for any restrictions. Many companies specialize in discount student airfares and require you to have an International Student Identity Card (ISIC). Your odds of finding low fares increase if you are flexible with your arrival and departure dates. If possible, schedule at least one of your flights outside of peak season (Europe: June 1-August 31; South America: December 31-March 1) to save money. The Office of International Education can provide advice about purchasing airfare but cannot do this for students. Before departing, print at least two copies of your itinerary with the confirmation

number. One copy stays at home, the second copy stays with you.

Travel agents used by E&H:

Shari Swafford	Phone: 727.430.4473
Corporate & Destination Travel Specialist	Email: sharistravel@gmail.com
7801 Tiburon Drive	Web: http://www.partnersintravelsvcs.com
Largo , FL , 33773	

STA Travel	Phone: 202.747.9772
800 21st Street NW Marvin Center	Fax: 202. 747. 9773
Ground Floor	Email: gwu@statravel.com
Washington, DC 20052	Web: www.statravel.com

You can also check these websites:
http://www.studentuniverse.com
http://www.expedia.com
http://www.cheapflights.com (searches over 300 partners)
http://www.kayak.com

Train Passes

A rail pass is a one-time expense providing access to a region's train system. There are many to choose from, and most must be purchased prior to departure. For more information, see www.raileurope.com, www.japanrailpass.net or www.routesinternational.com. Detailed information about Eurail passes can be found here: http://www.ricksteves.com/rail/rail_menu.htm

Calling Cards

Check with your U.S. long distance carrier to obtain an international calling card for calls home. Most of the long-distance companies offer these cards or special calling plans for international calls. Also, check http://www.idt.net or http://www.globalcalling.com/NAFSA.

Make sure you know how to call home once abroad, and tell your family and friends how to make an international call from the US. For dialing instructions and country codes, visit http://www.countrycallingcodes.com/index.php.

Birth Certificate

Bring a photocopy of your birth certificate. This is handy in the event you have to replace a lost or stolen passport.

ATM/Debit Card

Avoid carrying large amounts of money. ATM machines are now available in many countries and are often the most convenient and cheapest way to get cash. Using an ATM card allows you to have someone in the U.S. deposit money in your checking account while you are abroad. Keep the following in mind:

- Before leaving home, be sure to inform your bank that you will be traveling abroad so that activity in a foreign country does not cause them to close your account due to suspected identity theft
- Ask your bank about special procedures such as an international PIN number.

- There may be a limit in the amount that you can withdraw at one time.
- A family member should have access to your account from the U.S. in case of access problems.
- ATM cards should be tied to checking (NOT savings) accounts.
- Bring a duplicate card along with you in case the card gets taken in a teller machine, as can happen anywhere.
- Worldwide MasterCard ATM Locator: http://www.mastercard.com/atmlocator/index.jsp
- Worldwide Visa ATM Locator: http://visa.via.infonow.net/locator/global/jsp/SearchPage.jsp

If your ATM or credit card is lost or stolen, call the company to cancel it immediately. Often, you are only responsible for charges up to $50 if a thief has used your card.

Credit cards can be extremely useful in an emergency. Again, inform your home bank that you will be abroad.

Note: Some countries require transit visas for people to change planes at their airports -- particularly the Schengen countries in Europe. For more information, see: http://www.eurovisa.info/SchengenCountries.htm.

Accident and Sickness Insurance Card

Emory & Henry College contracts with EIIA (Educational & Insurance Administrators), which provides all students and faculty with medical insurance while travelling internationally with college programs. The Office of International Education will provide students with an EIIA insurance card and information regarding the amount of coverage. Keep one of the EIIA insurance cards in your wallet and leave one at home. Students can purchase additional medical insurance if desired.

Your regular insurance may not cover international travel. You should check with your insurance company before you leave the U.S. Your program may include or require the purchase of additional travel insurance.

International Student Identity Card (ISIC) or INEXT card

Students may purchase ISIC iNext student cards that provide discounts while abroad. Your ISIC will provide basic insurance as well as proof of student status required for student discounts around the world. For more information and to purchase your ISIC, visit www.myisic.com or http://www.inext.com

Property and liability insurance

Despite students' best efforts to safeguard their property, it is still possible for it to be lost, stolen or damaged when traveling or living abroad. As Emory & Henry does not insure students' property while they are overseas, all student participants are urged to purchase property insurance for the entire duration of their stay abroad. Students should investigate their parents' homeowner's insurance to verify if all the items to be brought on the trip will be covered by their policy. It is recommended that all valuable items (e.g., laptop computers) be insured.

Trip Cancellation Insurance

Similarly, the Office of International Education recommends that students consider trip cancellation insurance. Trip cancellation insurance is effective in the case of a sudden illness or injury that necessitates canceling or interrupting a trip. Most policies also provide coverage due to a wide variety of unforeseen events. Students may elect to purchase additional insurance travel insurance that would

reimburse them should they be forced to cancel their trip at the last minute. Please read the fine print of these travel cancellation policies. One policy used by E&H students is http://www.imglobal.com/img-insurance/travel-medical-insurance/patriot-travel-medical-insurance.aspx

Step 6: Finalize Your Plans

READ THE PRE-DEPARTURE GUIDE FOR A MORE DETAILED CHECKLIST OF WHAT YOU NEED TO DO RIGHT BEFORE YOU LEAVE!

Make at least *two* copies of the following important documents. Leave one copy with your family and take the others with you. Keep them separate from the original documents.

Checklist of Copies to Bring

Make at least two copies of these important documents. **Leave one copy with your family and take the other with you.** Keep them separate from the original documents.

1. The information page of your passport
2. Any entrance visas you may have
3. Insurance card
4. The numbers from your credit/ATM cards you take with you. Do NOT list the names or expiration dates from these cards.
5. The names of the banks and international toll free numbers for credit/debit card replacement (usually found on the back of the card).
6. A list of the contents of your wallet
7. Prescriptions for medication and eyeglasses, etc.
8. Your flight itinerary

Additionally, you will want to address the following right before your departure:

- Check monetary exchange rates (http://www.xe.net/ucc)
- Re-check travel arrangements (plane ticket, etc.).
- Verify your acceptance, arrival time, and housing arrangements.
- Tell family/friends that you will contact them as soon as it is convenient after your arrival, rather than as soon as you arrive. This will avoid unnecessary worry from those at home.
- Read your Pre-Departure Guide
- Enjoy your Study Abroad Experience!