Office of International Education

EMORY & HENRY COLLEGE

Pre-Departure Guide

Semester/Summer programs

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Before You Go

Why Study Abroad?

Study abroad is an educational tool that allows for the development of skills—critical, reflective, cross-cultural and interpersonal—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. In short, 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. Having spent time in another culture, regardless of the discipline studied, not only helps students in their future careers, but also in understanding the interconnectedness of all peoples of the world.

What to Do and What to Bring

Travel Documents

These documents are mandatory for a semester or travel abroad:

Passport

You will need a valid passport to travel outside the United States. Obtaining a passport is your responsibility. It usually takes 4-6 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

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.

Accident and Sickness Insurance Card

Keep a copy of your medical insurance card in your wallet. If your insurance agency does not provide a card, write down the name and number of your policy and the address of the insurance company. 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.

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. Students can purchase additional medical insurance if desired.

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

Contact with Home

If you plan to use your cell phone while abroad, contact your provider to make sure your phone will work in the location and also to change to an international plan. Make sure you find out about additional fees related to use of your phone abroad including data and text fees. If you are taking your laptop computer with you, Skype is a low-cost (free) way to communicate with family and friends back home. Most likely, your dorm or home stay will provide wifi that will allow for email and Skype use. Some semester and summer programs provide cell phones for their students. Check with site supervisor for your program.

You can also purchase a pre-paid calling card before departure; however, pay phones are often difficult to find and hotel phones sometimes require fees to make outside calls. Most phone companies offer these cards or special calling plans for international calls. If you choose to use a pre-paid card, be sure to obtain the international access code for your carrier. This allows you to dial the access code, the 800 number on the back of your card, and have access to the carrier's system. Please note that some hotels may not have in-room phones and that many phones abroad require phone cards instead of coins. The cards are inserted into a phone slot and debited as you place calls. You can purchase them at train stations, post offices and other locations for a fixed price. You can also rent a phone for your time abroad.

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. To dial out of the U.S. to another country, you must dial 011 before dialing the number. To call the U.S. from most countries, you will dial 001 + (area code) + (local number) or follow the instructions on your pre-paid card.

Photocopies of Passport

You need to take a photocopy of the information page of your passport. This is handy in the event you have to replace a lost or stolen passport. Pack these copies in your carry-on bag or a bag you will not have on your person. You should also leave a photocopy of important documents with your family or other people at home.

It is advised that instead of carrying your passport with you at all times, carry a photocopy of your passport and be certain your official passport is in a safe location. The program site supervisor will have suggestions about where to keep your passport during your time abroad.

ATM/Debit Card or Traveler's Checks

Traveler's checks can be a headache. Most countries have readily available ATM machines where you can access cash via your bankcard (with Visa logo) or credit card. Using the ATM is the easiest and least expensive way to get cash. Avoid carrying large amounts of money. 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:

- The transaction will debit the money from your checking account in the United States at that day's exchange rate. **Know the exchange rate before withdrawing money to stay within your budget.**
- There are usually transaction fees, and the fees vary significantly. Be sure to call your bank and check on the fees charged per each transaction. For larger transaction fees, be sure to withdraw larger amounts each time to avoid multiple fees.
- 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 or backup card along with you in case the card gets taken in a teller machine, as can happen anywhere. For example, you may plan to bring your ATM card, but bring a credit card just in case.
- Finding an ATM machine:
    - 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

- Note: Some European countries are changing to the "chip and PIN" credit card technology. Check with the country where you will study to determine if this is required. Then, check with your bank to find out how to obtain this technology. The chip-and-PIN system is most commonly found in the British Isles, Scandinavia, France, Switzerland, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Most of Western Europe has started using chip-and-PIN cards (and Canada will complete its conversion in 2015).

Credit Card

These can be extremely useful in an emergency. Again, inform your home bank that you will be abroad. When you use a credit card the company makes the exchange rate purchase for you, reflecting the exchange rate on the day your credit card transaction is processed. This amount may be more or less than what you thought you were paying at the time of your purchase. You will be billed in US dollars on your statement, and sometimes you will see the foreign exchange conversion listed as well. You may also be charged an international conversion fee. This fee varies by bank. Visa is often more accepted than other cards. You need to call the issuing bank before departure and tell them you will be traveling outside the country.

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.

For both ATM and credit cards, you should have a copy of the last four digits of your number and the international toll free number for the issuing company (usually found on back of card).

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. (See "Health" for more details)
8. Your flight itinerary

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.

Travel agents used by E&H:

Shari Swafford
Corporate & Destination Travel Specialist
7801 Tiburon Drive
Largo , FL , 33773

Phone: 727.430.4473
Email: sharistravel@gmail.com
Web: http://www.partnersintravelsvcs.com

STA Travel
800 21st Street NW Marvin Center
Ground Floor
Washington, DC 20052

Phone: 202.747.9772
Fax: 202. 747. 9773
Email: gwu@statravel.com
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

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.

Packing and Baggage

Two pieces of packing advice:

"Pack your bags, then take out half of the stuff and put it away. You can live very comfortably with very little."

"If you can't carry everything you're taking up and down a flight of stairs by yourself, you're taking too much."

It is nearly impossible to pack everything you want. The trick is to pack what you need and what you can carry! Remember the airline will limit your checked and carry-on luggage by weight and dimensions. Some students use a backpack as one piece of luggage because it comes in handy on side trips. You might do a lot of traveling with buses, trains and stay at different hotels. Keep in mind that you will always have to carry your luggage to your hotel room (often up several flights of stairs) and in and out of your bus and train.

Take only what you will need. Students often say, "I took too many clothes!" No matter how much clothing you take, pack basic wardrobe items that can be mixed and matched, layered, and worn again. Casual clothes are appropriate for sightseeing, but you may need at least one dressy outfit for special occasions and special visits. Leave room in your bags for items acquired abroad. If you have forgotten one thing to bring, you will always have the possibility to buy something abroad.

You will be walking far more than usual. Bringing a good pair of comfortable shoes is a must! **Your program will instruct you on what type of shoes to bring.** For instance, hiking boots and sandals may be best for the tropics, whereas in Europe, your feet may get cold and dirty and flip-flops make it hard to navigate cobblestone.

Please do not take extremely valuable jewelry or watches with you when you go abroad. These are difficult to keep track of while you are away, and you will have less to worry about if you leave it at home.

Ensure that your luggage has your name and address on both the inside and outside. Never leave your bags unattended!

Luggage locks

The airline may need to search your bags. If you use a standard lock, they will break this to open your luggage. If you need to lock your bags, compatible locks recognized by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) are available from travel stores. You can carry luggage locks in your checked baggage for use when you reach your destination

Carry-on

Be sure to pack your passport, your itinerary, a change of clothes and essential toiletries, snacks, and any medication you may need on the plane or within the first couple of days upon arrival in your carry-on bag! You may be required to show your written prescription at customs. If you wear contact lenses, bring an extra set of contacts, cleaning solutions, your written eye prescription and extra glasses. You will need your documents to clear immigration prior to picking up your checked bags. The other items will be handy if your luggage is temporarily lost. Liquid containers must be 3 oz. or smaller to carry on the plane. You can have larger liquid containers in your checked baggage. Check with your airline to make sure of specific restrictions concerning checked baggage. Knives cannot be carried on the plane.

Electrical appliances

You will need a plug adapter to use your appliances in most countries. Your program will discuss adapters in regard to your particular location. Although most new appliances convert voltage currents, you may also need to bring a voltage converter (or dual voltage appliances, such as certain hair dryers) if the country's voltage differs from that in the US (110V). The voltage current in other countries may be 220-240 volts. Make sure you purchase the correct ones for the countries you will visit. These items can easily be found online or at most hardware stores. Your electrical appliances may work well abroad, but even with an adapter, there is always the risk that they will burn out. Electrical services vary throughout the world. Some appliances will not work even with an adapter and converter, so don't count on having the use of these items.

Laptops

Be aware of the electrical voltage current in your host location. Most dorms, home stays, and hotels will provide wifi. Take special care of your laptop while abroad, being vigilant that it can be stolen.

Weather

Before your trip, check www.weather.com for the weather at your destination. Pack accordingly. An umbrella is a necessity, even if there is no rain in the forecast.

Address book

Family and friends will love getting postcards from you so bring a list of the addresses you plan to use. It is possible that you will arrive home before the cards are received. It may be worth it to pay the hotel attendants to mail your postcards if you cannot locate a mailbox.

TSA Guidelines

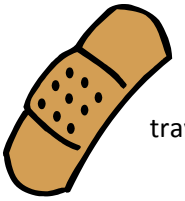
Transportation and Security Administration's Permitted and Prohibited Items
http://www.tsa.gov/traveler-information

The following rules apply to all liquids, gels, and aerosols carried through security checkpoints:

1. **All liquids, gels and aerosols must be in three-ounce or smaller containers.** Larger containers that are half-full or toothpaste tubes rolled up are not allowed.
2. All liquids, gels and aerosols must be placed in a single, quart-size, zip-top, clear plastic bag. Gallon size bags or bags that are not zip-top such as fold-over sandwich bags are not allowed. **Each traveler can use only one, quart-size, zip-top, clear plastic bag.** Cosmetic items must be in the plastic bag.
3. Each traveler must remove their quart-sized plastic, zip-top bag from their carry-on and place it in a bin or on the conveyor belt for X-ray screening. X-raying separately will allow TSA security officers to more easily examine the declared items.

Because TSA guidelines can change unexpectedly, if you have a question about a specific item, go to vhttp://www.tsa.gov/traveler-information for answers.

Health



Visit the Travel website of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/ for health information specific to your destination. Another useful source of current information is http://travel.state.gov, where you can view travel warnings released by the US Department of State.

Medical Expenses

The Emory & Henry College EIIA Insurance provides basic medical coverage while students are abroad www.eiia.org. Students are provided the policy number, contact information, and coverage limitations for EIIA. Also check with your regular insurance company for information about international coverage. Many semester and summer programs also provide medical insurance. Participants are informed of the risks involved with study abroad programs and are required to read and sign the Code of Conduct and Release Waiver.

EIIA travel insurance covers emergency evacuation and repatriation of remain, as well as general medical coverage. If participants wish to purchase additional insurance, STA Travel and the International Student Identity Card (www.myisic.com) or the iNext card are reliable options (www.inext.com). 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

Visit Your Doctor

Please remember that traveling abroad can be both physically and mentally stressful. If you are experiencing any physical or emotional problems, please address them before leaving the U.S. If you haven't felt well, make an appointment with your doctor for a check-up; if you anticipate any dental work, get it done well before departure; it is recommended that you have no tattoos or piercings within the two months prior to departure, as these procedures can lead to infection. If you are experiencing any emotional, eating, or substance abuse problems, seek professional advice and consider deferring you participation in an overseas program until you have the problem well under control. The pressures that lead to eating disorders, emotional, or dependency problems are only exacerbated when you are coping with adjustment to a new culture, language, and way of life. Leaving the country will not make your problems go away—if anything, it will make them worse.

For your safety and well being, it is vital that you inform OIE and your on-site director of any physical, emotional, or psychological difficulties or special needs you may have. On the other hand, if you are simply nervous about experiencing a different culture, do not worry. You are not alone. Stop by or call our office to talk about your concerns.

Immunizations

Depending on your program, you may need immunizations. Your program will tell you what is required. Some immunizations must be given in a specific sequence, so do not delay in getting them. Immunizations are available from your doctor or local health department.

Obtain Copies of Your Prescriptions

You should be sure to bring copies of prescriptions for any medications you may need and for glasses or contact lenses. Make sure the physician indicates the **generic name of the medicine.** This will also help you avoid problems with Customs. Since medications tend to be expensive overseas and because it can be difficult to get the appropriate equivalent medication, we recommend that you bring an adequate supply of whatever you may need while abroad. Any medications you bring should be in the original, properly

labeled containers. If you wear glasses or contacts, bring an extra pair in case you damage or lose your original pair.

Because you will be abroad for an extended period of time, you need to make sure your pharmacy and insurance company will provide you with enough medication for the duration of your stay. Check with your insurance company and you may need to ask your physician to write a long-term prescription. Some countries prohibit mailing and receiving medications, so make sure you are aware of the limitations of your location.

If you are diabetic or have another medical condition in which a syringe is needed to administer medication, bring a supply of disposable syringes. These are not available in all countries, and are essential to protect against HIV, hepatitis, and other communicable illnesses. Even if you do not routinely inject medication, it is a good idea to bring a few disposable syringes if you will be traveling in a country where they are not available. Some countries, however, restrict the import of syringes - as well as certain medications and contraceptives. Before departure, find out if this applies to your destination.

For certain conditions such as diabetes, asthma, mild epilepsy, or allergy to penicillin, it would be wise to wear a tag or a bracelet or carry a card to identify the condition so that you can be treated properly.

Medications MUST be packed in your carry-on luggage.

For medical emergencies:

- Learn the emergency telephone numbers in your host country: http://www.sccfd.org/travel.html
- If possible, avoid blood transfusions in developing countries; some countries do not screen blood for HIV, hepatitis, or other diseases.
- If you are sexually active, always use a latex condom. Bring these with you, as quality cannot be assured in certain locations.
- Many countries re-use syringes. If you cannot avoid an injection, make sure the syringe comes from a new package or is sterilized.

Diet

The food available in your destination will likely differ from the food you are used to at home. Be open to new foods, as this is an important part of a country's culture. Research common foods and national dishes in your destination, and let your program know if you are vegetarian or have any other dietary restrictions.

Family Emergencies

You should discuss with your family what to do in the event of a family emergency, illness or death. It is much easier to have these conversations around the kitchen table prior to departure than in an intercontinental phone call in the midst of a crisis.

Lodging

Lodging varies by program and range from a local household to traditional dorm. Given that standards of living vary from country to country, you should expect certain fundamental differences with respect to comfort. Electrical systems, heating systems, even the water pressure may be different from what you are accustomed to at home or on campus. Storage room, including closet space, is usually at a premium wherever you stay, so keep packed luggage to a minimum. Keep in mind that the lodging is not the reason you have decided to take this trip.

Bathrooms and Toilets

Restrooms in many countries do not provide toilet paper, so it is a good idea to carry a pocket pack of tissues with you. Toilets can vary widely, from a hole in the ground to a typical American toilet. Since running water and soap may not be provided for hand washing, many students like to bring a small bottle of hand sanitizer. You may also be

expected to pay a small fee for public restrooms, so always carry change. Take advantage of free restrooms when you are a paying customer in restaurants and museums. Some countries may not allow flushing of toilet paper.

Right before you go

- Check monetary exchange rates at www.xe.com
- 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.
- Re-read your Pre-Departure Guide
- Enjoy your Study Abroad Experience!

EMERGENCY CONTACTS:

- If an emergency has occurred, first call the 911 equivalent in your host country. Then, contact the host institution program director. Each program will explain its emergency protocol.

- To contact E&H, **call Security at 001-276-944-6222**. There is always a Security Officer on duty and he or she will be able to get in touch with our International Education Crisis Management Team. If there is not an emergency, but you have concerns and would like to talk to someone, please contact Dr. Celeste Gaia, Director of International Education at the numbers below.

- Also, Emory & College students, faculty, and staff are covered by FrontierMEDEX through EIIA while abroad. FrontierMEDEX can offer assistance for any kind of travel emergency from a lost passport to a security evacuation. If you require immediate assistance, please call the FrontierMEDEX Emergency Response Center collect at 1-410-453-6330.

Name	Phone Numbers
Director of International Education Dr. Celeste Gaia	**Home** 276-944-4961 **Office** 276-944-6917 **Mobile** 276-698-4689 **E-mail** cgaia@ehc.edu
Dean of Faculty Dr. Dave Haney	**Office** 276-944-6168
Dean of Students Ms. Pamela Gourley	**Office** 276-944-6122
Student Health Center Ms. Susan Stanley, R.N.	**Office** 276-944-6538
Powell Resource Center—Counseling Services Jill Smeltzer	**Office** 276-944-6923
Office of Spiritual Life/Chaplain Mary K. Briggs, Chplain	**Office** 276-944-6836 **Mobile** 276-243-6686 **Email** mkbriggs@ehc.edu

Information for Students and Parents

Orientation information, both printed and electronic, contains information for students about health and safety issues related to International travel. Adherence to this information, along with appropriate behavior, caution, and common sense, can prevent many crisis situations. Decisions regarding programs are made based on information from the U.S. State Department and on-site coordinators. The OIE is prepared to make changes on short notice should a situation arise in-country that causes serious concern. The OIE will not allow students to begin a program at a site that is designated by the U.S. State Department as existing under a travel warning.

Helpful Links

In the Online Resources section of The Office of International Education's website http://www.ehc.edu/academics/study-abroad/resources/online you will find useful websites with information on topics including the following:

- Travel Resources
- Health and Safety
- Money and Exchange
- Governmental Information

In the Air

Jet lag

What causes jet lag? The most important factor in jet lag is how many time zones you cross, and traveling east seems to be worst for most people. Jet lag occurs when you cross over a number of time zones and disrupt the normal Circadian rhythms that help you wake up in the morning and go to sleep at night - your body clock. If you have a rigid routine, it is likely that you might suffer more than someone who adapts easily to change.

The symptoms of jet lag can include fatigue or exhaustion, a feeling of disorientation or fuzziness, and the inability to sleep. You may also feel dehydrated from being stuck in an air-conditioned cabin for hours, which in turn can cause headaches, make your skin dry and make you more susceptible to colds or viruses. **Everybody has his/her own method of trying to combat jet lag, find here some helpful ways to counteract jet lag:**

- Change your watch as soon as you get on the flight; the quicker you adapt to the time zone the lower level of jet lag is likely to be.
- When you arrive in the new time zone spend some time outside during daylight hours. Natural light can help cue your body clock.
- The impact of alcohol on the body can be two to three times more potent when your are flying, so one glass of wine in-flight has the effect of two to three glasses on the ground. Avoid feeling even worse with a hangover by reducing alcohol intake before and during your flight.
- Get as much exercise as you can. Walking up and down the aisle, rotating your ankles and doing gentle stretching exercises in your seat can help to reduce discomfort, and allow you to have a more relaxed flight
- When you arrive at your destination try to stay awake until it is time to go to sleep in the context of the destination time, not your home time.
- Eat meals that match the destination daily cycle, not your home cycle.

While You're There

You've arrived at your destination! You are probably attempting to recover from jetlag while adjusting to your new environment.

Coping with Culture Shock

There's no doubt you've heard of culture shock, and you may be thinking, "I know enough about the country so the cultural differences won't present a problem for me." It's true the more you know about your host country, including the language, the easier it will be to adjust. Expecting the differences is helpful, but keep in mind that it's the actual cultural confrontation that brings about the physical and emotional reactions. In most cases, culture shock is caused less by one single incident and more by a gradual accumulation of anxiety, frustration, and confusion from living in an unfamiliar environment. Some prefer the terms "culture fatigue" or "culture bumps." And while not everyone experiences some kind of "shock," everyone does go through some adjustment to the new environment.

You will likely stay busy with planned activities, which will help you adjust. While it may be somewhat painful, culture shock can be a very valuable learning experience that will leave you with broader perspectives, deeper insight into yourself, and a wider tolerance for other people.

Cultural Differences

We all share certain living habits. When living at home, you take for granted that everyone follows similar cultural norms; but when you go abroad, the local cultural norms may be unfamiliar. Encountering cultural differences is part of the excitement of going abroad, but it also poses a challenge. Upon arrival in a foreign country, you may experience an immediate sense of euphoria as everything that is new seems intriguing and exciting. Inevitably, however, the newness wears off. You may feel frustrated or isolated; what was once an inviting cultural difference may become annoying. When the idiosyncrasies of a culture begin to frustrate you, you may notice that at the same time you are wrestling with a bout of homesickness or slight depression. You may blame these problems on the cultural differences to which you are adapting. However, more than likely the root of your problem is something other than adapting to cultural particularities. It is important to discover the source of your troubles and not succumb to the temptation to blame and disparage the new culture you are experiencing. Keep your sense of humor!

Understanding local customs will help you to feel as a part of the new culture and avoid potentially embarrassing situations. Especially if someone is not fluent in the local language, body language is often our first form of expression. Saying hello or goodbye via a simple hand gesture is, for example, done quite differently from place to place. When to shake hands or kiss is signaled between people in different ways from country to country. How close to sit or stand when talking also varies greatly. These are just a few of the many simple habits for your group to learn and then follow in order not to give unintended offense.

Take an Active Role

Prepare to learn from your experience:

- Clarify why you are going on the program
- Find out what you will be doing
- Identify what you might learn
- Set goals for yourself
- Learn on-site during your program
- Note how you feel about the experience
- Identify the skills you are developing
- Reflect on what you have learned
- Compare what you had expected with what you actually did
- Identify your impressions of your international experience

- Consider how your semester abroad can lead to other opportunities
- Keep a travel journal

Stages of Adjustment

- Stage 1: Cultural Euphoria
  At the start of your study abroad there is an initial excitement about being in a new culture. This is often called the "honeymoon stage." Everything is new and wonderful, and you are eager to explore it all.
- Stage 2: Cultural Confrontation
  In the next stage (typically one third to one half the way through an experience), the initial excitement you felt when you arrived diminishes and the process of cultural adjustment begins. This stage is typically characterized by confusion and frustration and, as such, is the most difficult stage. Your feelings can shift from very positive to very negative.
- Stage 3: Cultural Adjustment
  This stage represents the transition out of culture shock into significant cultural adjustment. You feel increasingly comfortable and competent in the culture, and these feelings prevail over the times you have felt frustrated or out of place.
- Stage 4: Cultural Adaptation
  In this stage, you have reached a point at which you have a great deal of confidence in your ability to communicate and interact effectively. You have a deeper understanding of the influence culture has in peoples' lives. You have acquired considerable cultural knowledge, but you also recognize that there is much you still don't know or understand.

Dealing with Stereotypes and Generalizations

Stereotypes

The unfair, often inaccurate, prediction that a person will be, act, look, feel, or believe a certain way based on one's often incomplete or uncontextualized observations about the person's culture, nationality, race, gender, age, socio-economic status, etc.

Consider carefully whether your assumptions about your host country are based on fact or on stereotypes. Stereotypes, both positive and negative ones, are harmful and can impair your ability to get the most from your study abroad/away experience.

What's the alternative? A generalization. This means using initial ideas about a group to form hypotheses. For example, you've been watching British television and note the dry sense of humor that forms the basis for several sitcoms. Then you meet several Brits who also have a dry sense of humor. You begin to form a hypothesis about British humor. Generalizing recognizes there may be a tendency for people within a culture group to share certain values, beliefs, and behaviors.

Becoming Familiar with Culture: The Iceberg Analogy

The tip of the iceberg represents the pieces of culture that we can see. The area below the water represents deeper cultural meaning. The iceberg analogy has some key points for learning about a culture:

- The things we observe almost always have deeper meaning; that is, they represent a more fundamental cultural value. Although the iceberg separates culture into visible and invisible elements, these are almost always interrelated.
- What we think we see is not always what is going on. Even trickier is how a visible aspect of culture, something as seemingly obvious as laughing, can have very different meanings in different cultures. For example, laughing can mean "that's funny" or "I'm embarrassed."
- We interpret what we see in the host culture as we would in our own, but the actual meaning may be quite different.

Travel Journaling
Consider changing the structure of your journal from a daily "diary" to a "travel journal", like the one developed by Nancy Taylor Nicodemus, which divides your journal into four different sections: Impressions, Descriptive, Narrative, and Expressive:

- The Impressions Section is for jotting down the places, people, events, concepts, ideas, smells, signs, and other things you remember. You write words, phrases, or sentences that will spark your memory.
- In the Descriptive Section you will not elaborate on what you think about what you are writing. Instead, you will use your descriptive abilities to create a vivid picture of what you experienced.
- The Narrative Section is to satisfy the storyteller in you. There's no doubt you will come home with stories - good, bad, funny, and otherwise. Write about them in this section before you forget.
- In the Expressive Section you get to vent, debate, praise, hypothesize, and evaluate. Where you may have described an event in one of your descriptive sections, you may then make an entry in this section to record what you thought and felt about that event.

Establishing Personal Goals and Expectations

What Are Your Goals? It is important that you identify goals and objectives before leaving in order to make the most of your experience. The following questions may help you with this self-evaluation.

Establish Academic Goals
What about coursework abroad? When should this be taken care of?
Students should know, as early as possible in the application process, how their coursework abroad can be incorporated into their overall academic program. Therefore, it is important to discuss your program with you academic advisor.

Questions to Ask About the Academic Environment

- Why am I going: to practice a foreign language, to learn about foreign countries and cultures, to fulfill academic requirements, to explore new areas of study? How does this semester fit into my academic plans? What courses have I already taken to prepare me for the program? Can I use this semester to research directed study or senior paper topics?
- Can I use this experience in the future? Will I go to graduate school or straight into a career?
- What should I expect once I get there?
- Will a Study Abroad experience require more work?
- You will be expected to be highly motivated in your studies. Intense "academic pressure" is not as common in other pedagogical systems as it is in the U.S.; there will probably be less supervision of your academic work than you are used to here. You have to be independent, well-organized, and self-disciplined in order to do well.

Confirm Your Academic Plans
To help with academic planning, make an appointment to meet with your academic advisor. Provide your advisor with full information concerning course offerings on your program. Confirm which courses you may take to fulfill major, minor and departmental requirements, and which courses you may take for an elective credit. Use this advising session to review course pre-approvals you have obtained for those courses you will take abroad. Plan with your advisor the courses you will need to take upon your return. Remember, credit earned at institutions via exchange programs and through programs sponsored by other institutions or agencies is treated as transfer credit.

Expectations of Studies Abroad
Often, courses abroad are different from courses here—more specialized and few, if any, "survey" courses. Perhaps there will be no quizzes, mid-terms or term papers with success in the courses depending on the final exam (oral or written). In a foreign university, you may be in a lecture hall with 50 to 1,000 other students. In many U.S. college-sponsored programs, courses will be much like those here.

Establish Personal Goals

Personal Values

- What are my personal beliefs and attitudes?
- What does it mean to be an American?
- What are our cultural beliefs and customs?
- How do I plan to learn about the cultures, customs, behaviors, and values of the country where I am studying?
- What am I willing to consider?
- Will I be open to doing things differently? Will I take risks?

Expectations of Campus Life Abroad

In the U.S. we generally take students out of society for four years and isolate them in a little utopia that we call a campus. Often, everything you need is available on campus, and there is not much reason to ever leave it. Abroad, students are an integral part of society. In foreign universities, there is little of what we call "campus life." The university buildings are usually in the heart of the city, but scattered over a considerable area and separated from each other by residences, stores, and factories. You may live in one part of the city, attend classes in another part, work in the library somewhere else, and eat your meals in the student restaurant on the opposite side of the city. You will thus participate in the "hassle" of everyday city life: mass transportation, strikes, impersonal attitudes, tourists, etc. So, expect much less "student life," fewer clubs, fewer social affairs, and fewer organized sports than in America.

Expectations of Foreign Students

Because students you encounter abroad are products of a more specialized system of education, you will probably find them older and better prepared to meet the academic demands of the university situation. Most likely they will have begun studying their major earlier than their American counterparts, so expect them to have a much more extensive knowledge of the subject. You may also find them serious and tending to act, even among their peers, with great formality and reserve. (You could conceivably sit next to a local student in class for a year without ever striking up a conversation.) You will be surprised at how politically knowledgeable the overseas student is-it's a good idea to bone up on your knowledge of history and politics of the U.S. and of the host country before you go, and don't forget your sense of humor.

Expectations of Friendly Relationships

Contacts in many societies, particularly in Europe, are not as facile as American social acceptance. For example, the concept of a "friend" is distinct from the concept of an "acquaintance." It takes many months to make a "friend," but once friendship is formed, it will last a lifetime. If you are "living with a family," don't expect to be immediately welcomed to the bosom of the family like another son or daughter. It does happen, but it is the exception. More typically, your relationship will start off as that between boarder and landlord/landlady. Therein lies the challenge: to make the relationship grow into something more than the formal, distant relationship it will initially be.

Expectations of Adjusting to Life Abroad

Be prepared to undergo a fairly typical adjustment cycle during the first few weeks (or months) of your stay. It could be compared to a roller coaster ride. It will have its ups and downs. You'll start out with a great deal of excitement and euphoria; wherever you are studying will be the most fantastic place on earth. You'll be riding high with enthusiasm. After a while, the novelty will wear off, and you may feel lonely, frustrated, disappointed, depressed, homesick, and irritable. You'll complain about everything and everyone; you'll probably wish you hadn't gone there and long to be back in Emory. Early feelings of insecurity will tend to disappear and you'll finally figure out who you are, where you are, and why you are there. As you complete the adjustment cycle, you'll come to accept and then to enjoy everything, including the academics, food, drinks, habits, and customs of the host country. At the end, you won't want to leave. You'll try to figure out a way to stay or get back there very soon.

Communication
Email is available almost anywhere in the world. If you choose to set up a web-based email account such Gmail, be sure to give this address to your advisors and to continue checking your E&H email while abroad. Your E&H email is the easiest way for advisors and college staff to contact you regarding registration for the coming semester and other important information.

Voting
If you will be abroad on Election Day but would like to vote, be sure to request an Absentee Ballot from your local voter registration.

Income Taxes
If you will need to file income taxes while you are abroad, you can request an extension. Talk about your plans with the person who will be handling your finances while you are abroad.

Conduct and Safety

American Consuls
Your program or E&H will register your group with the nearest embassy or consulate so you can be contacted in case of an emergency. Your family will also be able to reach you in an emergency by calling the Office of Overseas Citizens Services: From within the U.S. **1-888-407-4747;** From outside the U.S. **1-202-501-4444.**

Student Conduct
While overseas, you are subject to not only the Emory & Henry Code of Conduct and Honor Code, but also to the local laws and sanctions of the particular country in which you are studying. In many countries, the punishment for possession and/or distribution of controlled substances and for driving while under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances is much more severe that in the United States. You should be aware that if arrested for a crime overseas, there is little Emory & Henry College or the local U.S. Consular authorities can do to intercede on your behalf.

Your program also has the authority to establish rules of conduct necessary for the operation of the program and to reserve the right to require a student to withdraw from the program. In such cases, students are responsible for the expense of their travel home and will receive a failing grade for the course.

General Safety in Public Places
You will soon be entering cities and cultures that are probably foreign to you. Because of this, you may miss some of the danger signals that a local person would automatically take into consideration. You should also realize that many cultures may exist within one country. Please be aware of, and sensitive to, the majority culture, as well as the minority cultures in your host country.

Many people's impressions of Americans come from what they see on television shows such as "Friends" and "Frasier." Americans are portrayed as wealthy, particularly in developing countries, and in many locations you really will be better off than the local population. The following "American" traits will clearly tell the local residents that you are from the United States:

- Dressing differently from the local residents
- Speaking loudly in groups in the unmistakable American accent
- Carrying backpacks everywhere
- Wearing tennis shoes
- Wearing U.S. college or university insignia clothing or heavily patriotic American clothing
- Wearing baseball caps

By following the suggestions below, you can minimize your exposure to unsafe situations:

- NEVER go anywhere alone. You should always be with at least one other student or faculty member. Use the buddy system (or in the evening, a small group). Walking with someone helps to deflect approaches by would-be harassers.
- Do not leave bag(s) or belongings unattended at anytime. Security staffs in airports or train stations are instructed to remove or destroy any unattended bag(s). Do not agree to carry or look after packages or suitcases for anyone, under any circumstances. Make sure no one puts anything in your luggage.
- When traveling, use a waist pouch to carry your passport, credit cards, and traveler's checks. Wear the pouch under your clothes. Keep a separate record of your traveler's checks in another part of your belongings so that you will have a record if the checks are lost or stolen. Also, make photocopies of all essential documents and leave them with someone at home.
- Be as inconspicuous in dress and demeanor as possible. Downplay those elements of your appearance and manner that broadcast your nationality.
- If possible, try to speak the local language in public, even with other Americans. Even if you have a heavy accent, you will not attract as much attention, particularly if you take a cue from the locals and speak quietly.
- Be careful how late you come home at night. Try to get home while public transportation is still running or plan to take a taxi. Do not accept rides from individuals not in your group.
- Be careful to observe traffic lights. Stay on sidewalks away from the curb, and walk facing oncoming traffic whenever possible. Drivers in large cities can be aggressive, and often erratic. Never assume a car will stop for you or steer out of your way. For those of you in countries where drivers drive on the left-hand side of the road, you will have to make an extra effort to check before crossing the street.

Use Common Sense

Use common sense and be as cautious as you would be in any large city in the United States. Be aware of your surroundings. If you want to visit a new neighborhood, try to go during the day first. Look at a map before you leave, and note the nearest metro stops and bus/trolley routes. Walk at your own pace, but look alert and purposeful. If you find yourself in uncomfortable surroundings, act like you know what you are doing and where you are going, and move to a place where you are comfortable.

Money

Determine your Budget for Your Time Abroad

You (and your family) will find it helpful if you put together an estimated budget for your semester abroad. Depending on the program, in which you are enrolled, fees may include tuition, housing, airfare, board, and/or excursions. You should plan to bring additional money to cover personal expenses, textbooks, and course materials, and any other costs not included in your program fee. Also, remember to factor in the possibility of exchange rate fluctuations.

To get the most from your money, follow these tips[1]:

- Make both weekly & daily budgets and stick to them!
- Expect to spend more money in your first week in a foreign country than during any other week there. Budget for this.
- Learn the value of the local currency in relation to US dollars quickly. Carry a pocket calculator for quick conversions!
- Look for student rates or discounts.
- Take advantage of less expensive alternatives - cook for yourself when possible. Eat in the student cafeterias rather than restaurants.
- Look for free, inexpensive or discounted entertainment events such as outdoor concerts and festivals.
- Buy transportation passes that offer discounts on multiple-day bus or train travel.

[1] from the Maryville College Study Abroad Handbook

- Travel overnight and sleep on the train to avoid accommodation charges.

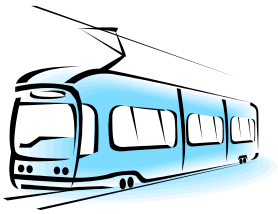
Advice on handling money abroad:

- Keep your cash and other valuables (traveler's checks, passport and visa, airline ticket) in a locked suitcase in your room.
- Avoid putting things in the back pocket of your pants or backpack. Wear your backpack in front of you in crowded places. It is highly recommended that you bring a money belt to wear concealed around your waist under your clothes.
- Do not handle or display large quantities of money (dollars or local currency) on the street.
- Only bring as much money with you as you need for the day or night.
- Always keep an eye, and/or hands, on your purse/bag/wallet, especially in crowded public areas (public transportation, crowded sidewalks, markets, and metro stations).
- Be particularly vigilant in areas where there have been numerous reports of pick pocketing and purse snatching, especially tourist areas. Be aware that thieves on mopeds snatch purses, so have your bag face away from the street.
- If you suddenly find yourself being "crowded" in a market, move away from the crowd. Thieves may be slicing open your purse or backpack with a razor.

Local Transportation and Travel

- If you see an unattended package in any crowded public place (i.e. airports, train stations, "the tube" in London or on a bus or other public transportation), notify the driver or other authority and get away from it as quickly as possible.
- Most of you will be using public transportation on a regular basis. You may see other passengers who do not appear to be paying for buses or other public transportation. Be careful not to copy them. Many of them have passes that are shown only when asked by an inspector. If you are caught without a bus ticket or pass, you can be pulled off the bus or tram and taken to the police station.

General Travel during Weekend and Breaks



- Do not travel alone. Always try to travel with at least one other person.
- Be careful whom you allow to join your group. Make sure that anyone who joins your group is well known by someone you know. Terrorists and thieves have used unsuspecting travelers as a cover when traveling.
- Update yourself on your destination and consider postponing a visit to a place if there have been problems there recently. It is better to be safe than sorry. Check for U.S. Consulates near you (commonly found in most large cities), stop and get their safety information bulletins about the country in which you are planning to visit. Knowledge of current events is important. Read the paper and watch some TV to stay informed.

Lodging

A guidebook designed for the student or budget traveler is essential for finding safe, clean, and inexpensive lodging. Try the Let's Go and Lonely Planet series. The best lodging choices are private boarding houses/pensions, YWCAs/YMCAs (an international directory is available at www.ymca.int), and youth hostels such as those run by Hostelling International (http://www.hihostels.com/).

Political Conflict

- When in large cities and other popular tourist destinations, avoid or spend as little time as possible in potential target areas for terrorist activities. These especially include places frequented by Americans: bars, discos, and U.S. fast food restaurants; branches of American banks; American churches; and American consulates and embassies.

- Keep away from areas known to have large concentrations of residents with interests unfriendly to the U.S. and its allies.
- Keep away from political demonstrations, which can easily result in clashes between demonstrators and authorities, particularly those authorities seen as aligned with the U.S. If you see a situation developing, resist the temptation to satisfy your curiosity and investigate what is happening. Walk the other way.
- Do not agree to newspaper or other media interviews regarding political conflicts or controversial issues. It is important to remain as inconspicuous as possible. Do not refer to your program group. In such cases, always say "no comment" and hang up or walk the other way.

Alcohol and Drugs

It is important to keep the following in mind so that you do not find yourself in a situation that could lead to violation of the Emory & Henry Code of Conduct:

- Avoid consuming large quantities of alcohol in public (e.g., in cafes, bars, and parties), particularly with people you do not know well. Be careful and constantly aware in public places where alcohol might be consumed, and remember you are in another country with different social customs. You should err on the cautious side.
- If you consume alcohol, please remember that your ability to make sound judgments is impaired, and therefore you may be putting yourself in danger.
- Many drugs are available in other countries over-the-counter that would not normally be available in the U.S. Be certain when purchasing medication that you know the ingredients and understand their effects, especially if you are taking other medications.
- Do not consume alcohol while taking any medication.

Sexual Harassment and Assault

- Be aware of how you carry yourself and dress. Even things as seemingly insignificant as smiling and your stride will mark you as a foreigner. Avoid looking like a stereotypical American; dressing conservatively can possibly help deflect potential harassers. In some countries, particularly Islamic ones, normal American female dress could be viewed as that of a prostitute.
- Try to avoid making eye contact with men in public places. In many parts of the world, meeting a man's gaze is widely viewed as sexually provocative. You may be followed, verbally harassed and, as a result, touched.
- Usually the best response to unwanted stares, comments, or touches is to ignore the harasser and to remove yourself from the situation quickly and calmly. Although verbal responses often work, cursing your harasser in the local language or English may result in violence. Avoidance is the safest tactic.
- If you continue to be followed, spoken to, or touched after repeated attempts to get away, try to remove yourself to a very public place. Tell your harasser firmly and calmly to leave you alone. Sometimes threatening to go to the police is effective, but sometimes the police are less than supportive.
- Do not judge the physical appearance locals by American standards. You may be inclined to trust someone because he or she is nicely or fashionably dressed, well groomed, self-confident and outgoing. Sometimes, however, the most fashionable people are those who are the most skilled con artists, or who make a mission of befriending Americans in order to gain money, goods, passports, or sex from them. Be wary of smooth operators!

Advice Especially for Women

What may be appropriate or friendly behavior in the U.S. may bring you unwanted, even dangerous, attention in another culture. Try not to take offense at whistles and other gestures, regardless of whether they are compliments, invitations, or insults. Realize these gestures are as much a part of the culture as its food, history, and language, but if your intuition tells you a situation is dangerous, then act as if it is. Be extra careful with giving your trust. This applies generally, but is especially important when traveling alone.

An Essential Study Abroad Checklist

Studying and living abroad – how thrilling! You're signing up for one of the most interesting adventures of your life. That's for sure.

But in order to fully enjoy your experience, you'll do well by heeding a few (well, maybe more than a few) tips. Some are essential – you won't even get on the airplane without tending to them. Others are strongly recommended suggestions.

And the sooner you start to plan, the better. Making sure items on your study abroad to-do list don't pile up ensures a smooth transition from here to there. Our manageable time line removes the need to fret over being swamped with one thing after another. Crossing one item off at a time, you'll be hopping along to your destination in no time.

With our study abroad checklist as your guide, you can sit back and concentrate on what's really on your mind: the world you're about to meet!

9 - 12 Months Before:

- ❏ Talk to professors, family, and friends about your plans.
- ❏ Contact the Office of International Education to collect information on individual programs. Look at programs on the E&H website http://www.ehc.edu/academics/international-education
- ❏ Speak to your academic advisor about credit transfer requirements for overseas coursework.
- ❏ Once you know which program you are interested in, consider the costs and the listed application requirements. It's also a good idea to start delving a little deeper into the country, doing your own research. Don't be shy to ask for contact information of former study abroad students. They'll give you invaluable advice.
- ❏ If you are on financial aid and/or scholarships, schedule a meeting with your financial aid advisor to discuss the costs and whether financial aid will cover them. (In most cases, it will, depending on your eligibility.) If you are not on financial aid but foresee the need for additional income, apply for financial aid and scholarships.
- ❏ Ask for recommendation letters (if needed).
- ❏ Gather your transcripts.
- ❏ Apply to E&H for study abroad.

6 to 9 Months Before:

- ❏ Apply for your passport and visa(s), if needed.
- ❏ Apply for an International Student Identity Card (ISIC). You'll be surprised at how many discounted rates you are eligible for, from museum and movie tickets, to rail passes. And speaking of rail passes, get a student Eurail Pass, Japan Rail Pass, or whatever popular mode of transportation applies to your location.
- ❏ Join Hostelling International, a network of hostel options – a must for students traveling from one location to another during weekends and school breaks. Like ISIC, membership also offers you many discounts on a wide range of venues.
- ❏ Familiarize yourself with your host country's language and culture. Soak up on culture books and guides, films, music, food, websites, and anything else related to your soon-to-be host country.
- ❏ Learn about "culture shock."

3 to 6 Months Before:

- ❏ Apply for a credit card that can be used the world over (such as American Express, Visa, or Mastercard).
- ❏ Watch your grades. Maintain a healthy G.P.A. amid daydreaming about your amazing adventures ahead.
- ❏ Try to find the host country's version of what you are interested in. If you like soccer, research soccer clubs and teams there; if you're into films, find out about film clubs; if you love alternative indie music, try to scope out their scene online. This is a good way to make friends abroad. The world is increasingly connected; you'll find that

many people, no matter where they are from, share your tastes.

1 to 3 Months Before:

- ❏ Sign up for a comprehensive physical; get vaccinations and immunizations, if needed. You might have to include your medical record with your study abroad package. In any case, keep it with you.
- ❏ Book your flight after some research. Your Student Identity Card (ISIC) may come in handy now, offering you a sweet discount. Ask the Office of International Education about the travel agent they use.
- ❏ Notify everyone that depends on you about your departure. Make sure you give plenty of notice to employers, landlords, etc.

A few weeks before:

- ❏ Stock up on any prescription drugs you take. Have your doctor's note authorizing their use (and refills). But make sure that any over-the-counter drugs you carry are considered legal in the host country. (Ask your program coordinator)
- ❏ Stock up on contact lenses if needed. It would also be helpful to take along a copy of your eye prescription in case you lose contacts or eye glasses and need to get replacements.
- ❏ Buy medical insurance for your time abroad. It's often included in program fees, but it's still best to check.
- ❏ Purchase travel insurance to cover replacement costs of lost or stolen items.
- ❏ Fill out a change-of-address form and have it forwarded to your permanent address while you're away.
- ❏ Schedule a meeting with your academic advisor to address final concerns about your plans and coursework.
- ❏ Consider giving Power of Attorney to your parents or guardian for financial and legal matters.
- ❏ Plan how you will register for your first semester back – you might be able to do it online, but you want to make sure. Don't forget housing!
- ❏ See to it that all financial-aid documents (scholarship applications, loans, and FAFSA renewals) are up to date. Know your disbursements dates, amounts, etc.

1 Week Before:

- ❏ Bring a gift for your host family if you are staying with one. If you are staying in a dorm, it still wouldn't hurt to bring a small token for someone local who may end up helping you out a lot.
- ❏ Get an international cell phone or international phone card.
- ❏ Make multiple copies of all important documents -- leave one set with your parents, another with the study abroad coordinator, and keep one for yourself. This usually includes at least:
  - First pages of passport, as well as any page with country specific visas
  - Credit cards
  - Traveler's checks
  - Student ID, and/or driver's license
- ❏ Make sure you have everyone's phone numbers and addresses – email and otherwise. That means everyone you might need to contact here and there. (Your program coordinators should be on the top of your list.) In addition, leave that same info with your parents or guardian/close friend.
- ❏ Get traveler's checks or exchange currency for local cash ($200 worth should do it). Ask for small notes in addition to larger ones. Call your bank to make sure your ATM card will work in your host country. In most cases you can start making withdrawals in the airport after getting off the plane.
- ❏ Confirm your flight.
- ❏ Buy at least one power adapter/voltage converter (find out which kind you'll need). Depending on your host country you may need both a plug adapter as well as a voltage converter if you want to take things like an electric toothbrush, hair dryer, or electric razor, etc.
- ❏ Start packing. That is, put everything together and then take each and every thing that is just sentimental/non-essential out. See if you can carry it all easily on your own; if you can't, it's a sign to let go of more items. By now you should have a good idea about where you're going: the culture, the climate, the customs.

- ❏ Print out a copy of this study abroad checklist to take with you and refer back to. Reviewing it frequently will help you feel more prepared and relaxed.

The Night Before:

- ❏ Re-confirm your flight.
- ❏ Pack your carry-on bag. Include the standard: passport, airline ticket/e-ticket confirmation, emergency contact information, address and numbers of destination contacts, one change of clothes, toothpaste and brush, wallet with traveler's checks, cash and credit card(s), documents and valuables. Note: Keep liquids and toiletries of no more than 3 oz inside small zip-lock bags.

The Day of Departure:

- ❏ Arrive at the airport well ahead of time. That means 3 hours or so before your departure time.
- ❏ If the plane is delayed and someone is going to pick you up, let them know about it! (Common courtesy)
- ❏ If no one is picking you up at the airport, know which cab company to take, bus to catch, etc. Arriving in an unknown city and taking the first cab offer that comes your way can cost you.

Upon Arrival at Host Country:

- ❏ Call your parents or guardian/best friend to say you've arrived safely.
- ❏ Attend orientation meetings, excursions, lunches, and other events offered by your program. That way you'll also start getting to know your classmates and coordinators – people you'll be seeing on a daily basis.
- ❏ Be aware of your surroundings, watch your safety (and wallet) and if you need assistance, ask for it. No need for paranoia though. Flashing your wallet and paying with large notes at a kiosk is not too smart. Neither is assuming everyone is out to rob you.
- ❏ Avoid making disparaging comparisons. Comments like "How can people live without a garbage disposal? Yuck! America is way more civilized" are not exactly going to endear you to the locals.
- ❏ Drop in at your embassy – it might prove useful down the road.
- ❏ Vive la différence! (That's French for Long Live the Difference!) Yes, it's different, but that's why you're there, right?

Getting Ready to Return:

- ❏ Check to see about your transcripts.
- ❏ Take cash back with you - for the layover and your final destination. That could mean more than one currency. (If your layover is in Europe, you'd want some Euros for buying food and other essentials. Many places only accept credit cards for above-specified amounts)
- ❏ Bring small gifts back for your family and friends. They'll appreciate it.
- ❏ Ready yourself for the transition of going back home. Make sure you tie all the loose knots, such as arranging the details of where and with whom you'll be living once you return.
- ❏ Say thank you to everyone who has contributed to your experience. Try not to forget your goodbyes – you never know when (or if) you'll be saying hello again.

Upon Your Return:

- ❏ Contact your host family and/or a close local friend to say you've arrived back safely.
- ❏ Share your experiences with others. It's now your turn to offer invaluable, real-world advice.

So you're all set! Having followed our essential study abroad checklist, you can now exhale. Feel free to daydream – you've earned it.

Source: Studyabroad360.com

I've read the guide and taken all the advice, now what?
Take a Quiz!

This quiz will help you to prepare for your study abroad program. It is not a comprehensive checklist or to-do list, but might give you some ideas for making your own list. Have Fun!

Circle "YES" if a statement is true, "NO" if it is not ... yet. Then count your "yes" responses.

Is This True of You?

1. I have a passport and have made copies to leave at home and take with me. YES NO
2. I know how to say "thank you" in my host country language. YES NO
3. I know the entry requirements to my host country for persons of my nationality. YES NO
4. I have spoken with a native of my host country. YES NO
5. I know what electrical current is standard in my host country. YES NO
6. I have read a magazine, newspaper or book from my host country in the last 3-6 months. YES NO
7. I can locate my host country and study site on the map. YES NO
8. I have had a physical, dental and eye checkups in preparation for going abroad. YES NO
9. I have gotten written prescriptions to take with me for glasses and any medications I take regularly, and plan to take a supply for my entire stay. YES NO
10. I have searched the web, viewed broadcasts, and/or listened to the radio from my host country in the last 3 months. YES NO
11. By visiting www.cdc.gov I have familiarized myself with any pre-departure health recommendations for the region I will visit. YES NO
12. I know the type of government in my host country. YES NO
13. I have checked the exchange rate for my host country in the past month and have practiced converting amounts in my head. YES NO
14. I know how I'm going to take money overseas, and know how I will get emergency funds if necessary. YES NO
15. I can sing the national anthem of my host country. YES NO
16. I have copied all credit cards and other important documents to leave at home in case of loss or theft. YES NO
17. I know the predominant religion of my host country. YES NO
18. I can draw freehand a reasonable map of my host country and surrounding countries. YES NO
19. I know the time difference between my hometown and my study site. YES NO
20. I know how to call the US from my host country. YES NO
21. I know the name of the head of government of my host country. YES NO
22. I know how much a meal will cost in my host country. YES NO
23. I am receiving financial aid and I have seen the Director of Financial Aid to make sure arrangements are in place. YES NO
24. All my payments and forms for study abroad are in and up to date. YES NO

HOW MANY "YES" RESPONSES DID YOU GET?

20 or more: You're a regular Marco Polo! Have a great adventure studying abroad!

15-19: Almost ready! You just need to polish a few globes before you go.

10-14: You have more than just packing to do before departure ...

Less than 10: Are you sure you know where you are going? Use the time before you go wisely!