

Pre-Departure Guide

Please review the four parts of the Pre-Departure Guide prior to leaving for your program. The Guide is intended for use by students whose programs take place abroad, but students on domestic programs may also find many aspects of the Guide helpful. All students participating in programs off-campus are encouraged to review the Pre-Departure Guide.

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Choose to Study Abroad

Why Study Abroad?

Study abroad is an educational tool that allows for the development of skills—critical, reflective, cross-cultural and intrapersonal—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.

Primary Questions and Considerations for Students to Answer:

Note: 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?
- 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?
- How much do I hope to earn?
- What is my comfort level with new situations, flexibility and adaptability?
- Does it matter to 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 your major or expected career?
- Is my primary goal to earn academic credit toward your Emory & Henry degree?
- Is my primary goal to learn about the world and how other people live?

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?

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?
- 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 that sponsors the program or are they from the host university?
- Who 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--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?

6 Steps to Study Abroad

Step 1: Visit the Office of International Education (McGlothlin-Street Hall 120)

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 Guide

Services We Do Not Provide:

- Making travel arrangements
- Choosing your program
- 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.
- Use the Internet. Check out the information on the Emory & Henry College website. In addition to using search engines like <http://www.google.com/> or <http://www.yahoo.com/>, you might want to try these sites: <http://www.studyabroad.com/>, <http://www.goabroad.com/>, and <http://www.iiepassport.org/>.

Step 3: Choose a Program

- 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?
- 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?

Step 4: Complete Applications

There are two application processes for you to complete:

- The Application to Study Abroad, through the Office for International Education
- The programmatic application that your provider requires

- 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 travel documents and have them with you abroad:

Passport: When studying on an overseas program, you will need a valid passport. 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, or other photo shops that advertise this service.)
- Either an expired passport or proof of US citizenship, typically a **certified** Birth Certificate (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.)
- Proof of identification (usually a driver's license)
- Fee: \$97 for first-time applicants or \$67 for renewals
- For more information, visit http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html

Once you receive your passport, make 3 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 our office 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.

Visa(s): A visa is written permission to visit a country granted by the government of that country. Your program will let you know if a visa is necessary and how to obtain one. For country-specific information about about visas, visit http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html or contact the embassy or nearest consulate of the country(ies) you plan to visit. 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>.

- Obtaining a visa can be a long and complicated process (up to 3-4 months). You cannot get your visa until you have a passport, so begin the process as soon as possible.
- 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 our office 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.

Accident and Sickness Insurance Card & Claim Form: 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. Bring copies of your insurance claim forms.

International Student Identity Card (ISIC): While this card may not be required by your program, it can be very useful. 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

Airline Ticket: 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. For low airfares, check with the companies listed under the “Helpful Resources” section of this guide.

Before departing, make 2 copies of your ticket(s). You may not realize how valuable your airline ticket is—and what a hassle it is to attempt to replace a lost or stolen ticket. It is best to copy the final control page of each ticket, as it contains all the information you need in case your ticket is lost or stolen. One copy stays at home, the second copy stays with you packed separately from your original ticket. If you have an e-ticket, make sure to get a printout of your itinerary and keep track of your confirmation number.

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.

Traveler's Checks/ATM Card: Avoid carrying large amounts of money. Use traveler's checks and an ATM card. Although you must bring some money in Traveler's Checks for emergencies, 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 your card has been used by a thief.

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

Step 6: Finalize Your Plans

These are a few things to do before you leave:

- Make at least 2 copies of your important documents. Leave one copy with your family and take the others with you. Keep them separate from the original documents.

Documents to copy:

- 1. The information page of your passport (plus one copy for the Office of International Education)**
- 2. Any entrance visas you may have for the program**
- 3. Certified copy of your birth certificate**
- 4. Traveler's check numbers**
- 5. International Student ID card**
- 6. Insurance policies**

- 7. Your airline ticket, driver's license and any credit cards you take with you**
- 8. Contents of your wallet**
- 9. Prescription medications**
- 10. Rail passes**
- 11. Toll free numbers for credit card replacement**

Additionally, bring multiple passport-sized photographs, which are often required for registration and other procedures in your host country.

- Check monetary exchange rates (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!

Helpful Links

In the Online Resources section of The Office of International Education's website, you will find useful websites with information on topics including the following:

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

Before You Go

Have You Decided to Study Abroad?

The Office of International Education has created this Pre-Departure Guide for your use. This Pre-Departure Guide can be a very useful tool and should be read before you leave for your program abroad. You will also find the contents of the Pre-Departure Guide organized on the Office of International Education webpage.

International Insurance

Students participating in faculty-led international education programs, E&H exchange programs, and study abroad programs through CIEE, CAPA, and other providers must purchase insurance from HTH Worldwide (<http://www.hthstudents.com/>) in addition to any other insurance provided by the program. The cost of this insurance is included in the fee you pay to Emory & Henry to participate in the program. This plan provides adequate coverage for accident, illness, hospitalization, accidental death and dismemberment, emergency medical evacuation, and repatriation while outside the United States. HTH handles claims in various languages and from medical providers around the world.

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. Some reputable companies that offer this type of insurance are: AccessAmerica (<http://www.accessamerica.com/>), HTH Worldwide (<http://www.hthworldwide.com/>), and Travel Insured (<http://www.travelinsured.com/>).

Cultural Learning

Basic Things You Should Know Before You Go:

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?
- 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 are 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?

(Adapted from the University of Minnesota's pre-departure handbook)

Stereotypes & Generalizations:

Stereotype: 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.

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.

Personal

- 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?

Academic

- 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.

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.

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 inadaptation 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.

Your Academic Plan

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.

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.

What to Bring

For information on how to obtain these documents, see "Obtain travel documents" in the "Six Steps to Study Abroad" section of this guide.

- **Passport**
- **Visa(s)**
- **Calling Card**
- **Copy of Birth Certificate**
- **Insurance Card**

- **Airline Ticket**
- **Train Passes**
- **ATM Card/Traveler's Checks/Credit Card**
- **International Student Identity Card**

Luggage and Packing Information

Selecting your luggage: Take only bags that are light, easy to carry, and sturdy. If you are buying luggage for this journey, choose bags that are soft-sided and made of heavy-grade nylon or similar material. Do not invest in expensive luggage; sturdy, mid-priced bags are good enough. If your luggage does not have wheels, you might want to buy a small luggage carrier. Also, divide your load. Remember, you can carry some things over your shoulder or on your back, which leaves one hand free for doors, etc. The best set of luggage might include one large suitcase, one smaller bag or backpack, and one shoulder-type bag.

Packing: Remember that you will be carrying these bags around with you when you get off the plane and you will be carrying them if you travel after the program. You will likely be walking at least a block and up stairs or escalators with your bags, as well as carrying them on public transportation. Keep in mind that storage space is limited, so keep packed luggage to a minimum. Do not pack valuables (cameras, money, jewelry, items of sentimental value, etc.) in checked baggage. It is helpful to pack a complete change of clothes inside your carry-on luggage. This is helpful in the event that your checked luggage is lost or delayed or if you have long layovers or extremely long flights. You may also want to bring some sort of snacks and small toiletry items.

Luggage Restrictions: All airlines have restrictions on the size, weight, and number of luggage items that you can take without incurring any additional, and significant, expenses. Airlines outside of North America are especially strict. Most airlines allow two checked pieces of luggage and one small carry-on piece, which will be placed under the seat or in the overhead locker. Check with your airline for specific information on luggage restrictions.

Housing and Money

Housing

Housing opportunities vary by program and range from a local household or an apartment to an international dorm or kibbutz. 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 in the program housing, so keep packed luggage to a minimum. If you are planning to bring electronic equipment, make sure to pack the proper adapters for the system overseas. You can check a travel guide to that country to find out what you'll need. Keep in mind that housing is not the reason you have decided to go abroad.

Determine your Budget for the Semester

You (and your parents) 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 from the Maryville College Study Abroad Handbook:

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

Financial Aid Forms

If you will not be at E&H at the time the application for financial assistance is due for the coming academic year, make arrangements in advance to obtain the forms you need or request the financial aid office to forward the forms to your family for action.

Health

Visit the Travel website of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <http://www.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

Should you incur medical expenses abroad, you and your family may have to meet some of these expenses up front. Be sure to pack several copies of your insurance company's claim forms. Having the necessary claim forms on hand will speed up processing in the event that you have to make a claim, and therefore helps speed reimbursement.

Visit Your Doctor

Please remember that study 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 before departure; if you are experiencing any emotional, eating, or substance abuse problems, seek professional advice and consider deferring your participation in an overseas program until you have the problem well under control. The pressures which 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. It is important to note that the range of counseling services available to students at E&H and other college campuses will not be available overseas.

For your safety and well being, it is vital that you inform us 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. Check to see 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. 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.

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 host country, and let your program know if you are vegetarian or have any other dietary restrictions. Know that it can be difficult to be a vegetarian abroad. You may want to ask your doctor about taking supplements.

Miscellaneous

Communication

Email is available almost anywhere in the world. If you choose to set up a web-based email account such as hotmail or gmail, be sure to give this address to your advisors and to *continue checking your E&H email while abroad*. Your E&H email 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.

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

While You're There

You've arrived at your program site! You are probably attempting to recover from jet-lag while adjusting to your new environment. This part of the study abroad experience can be very challenging and may take you by surprise. Remember to give yourself the time and attention you need in order to make a successful transition between studying at Emory & Henry and studying in your new setting.

Cultural Differences

Coping with Culture Shock

Experiencing a period of adjustment to a new place and culture is normal. Do not react passively. Try to keep busy taking advantage of the cultural and historic resources around you. Make plans to go somewhere (e.g. local café, or market, a museum, the theater). Set goals for yourself: explore a new part of the city each week; learn ten new foreign phrases a day. Remember that your feelings of confusion will not last forever. 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

Americans 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. Gradually, though, you will adjust to the foreign culture and become comfortable living in it. As your familiarity with the local language and customs increases, you may become so comfortable in your new environment that upon returning to the U.S. you experience "reverse culture shock". There are peaks and valleys in the process of cultural adjustment. Just when you are feeling positive about your adjustment to the new culture, you may suddenly feel uncomfortable again and vice versa. Ultimately, you will adjust. 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. You may be lonely, missing family gatherings at homes, or having unusual academic difficulties in your new setting. 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.

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 (see pg. 13 for more information)

Cultural Learning In-Country

Stages of Adjustment

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 their environment. Many people who have been abroad discuss their experience in terms of stages:

- **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.

Homestay Expectations

It is a good idea to take some time to think about the homestay in terms of your own expectations, particularly before you meet your host family. Rank from 1 to 5 the following expectations for the homestay, taking into account what you hope to gain from your homestay:

- ___ Get support in adjusting to the culture
- ___ Improve my language skills
- ___ Make new friends
- ___ Participate in family life and learn the culture
- ___ Other

What will be your responsibilities as part of the homestay?

Conduct and Safety

American Consuls

Visit <http://usembassy.state.gov/> to find the location of the nearest American embassy or consulate while you are abroad. These offices can replace lost or stolen passports (make sure you have copies of your passport's information page), help you get in touch with family in the US in case of an emergency, help you get emergency medical attention, and arrange legal representation. If you register with the nearest embassy or consulate at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>, you can be contacted in case of an emergency. Your family will also be able to reach you by calling the Office of Overseas Citizens Services at 202-647-5225.

Student Conduct

While overseas, you are subject not only to 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 than 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.

The Office of International Education 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.

General Safety in Public Places

You will soon be entering a city and culture that is 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 more well-off than the local population. The following "American" traits will clearly tell the local residents that you are from the United States:

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

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

- 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.
- 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.
- Use the buddy system (or in the evening, a small group), especially in the first few weeks of your stay. Walking with someone helps to deflect approaches by would-be harassers.
- 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. If you visit friends alone in the evening, ask them to escort you to the nearest metro station, or even to escort you home. Do be extremely cautious when accepting rides.
- 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. Find out from local people which areas of the city are unsafe. 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. Always give someone your itinerary when you are traveling, even if you are just leaving for a weekend. They will know when to expect you back and will be the first to know if you are missing.

Emergency Action Plan

To be prepared for an emergency, you need to know the following information:

- If applicable, the name of the contact person at your host institution responsible for coordinating emergency activities
- The location and contact information of the local police and other local support services. For local emergency telephone numbers, visit <http://www.sccfd.org/travel.html>
- The emergency contact number for Emory & Henry
- Names, email addresses and telephone numbers for other program participants currently at the same institution
- Contact information for your travel providers (eg. airline, bus company, etc.) as well as information regarding changing/obtaining tickets in the host country
- Address, telephone and fax numbers of the US (or your country of citizenship) Embassy or the alternate agency, in your host country, if an Embassy is not available. To learn more about the US Embassy in your host country please visit <http://usembassy.state.gov/>. For other countries' embassies visit www.embassyworld.com/embassy/directory.htm for the Worldwide Embassy Locator.
- The location of a bank that will provide cash advances on credit or debit cards
- How to obtain Exit Visas (if required)
- Local contacts for support (friends, other program participants)
- Possible itinerary for departing host country (leave copies with local and family contacts)
- Emergency contact information for family and friends at home
- Alternative contact to family in case of emergency
- Emergency meeting point

(adapted from the Queen's University Emergency Support Program)

Money

- Keep your cash and other valuables (traveler's checks, passport and visa, airline ticket) in a locked suitcase in your room or a safe in the program's headquarters, if available.
- Do not take jewelry that has sentimental value. It could be lost or stolen. Be aware that it is common in some cities for thieves on motorcycles to pull gold chains off the necks of women. Students have lost jewelry in hotels and dorm rooms. Leave valuables at home.
- 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 working at an internship, do not leave purses or backpacks unattended.
- 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.

Travel

Local Transportation and Travel

- If a package is left unattended near you by someone 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.
- Be careful about who you accept car rides from. Some countries are less adamant about drinking and driving; therefore, driving under the influence of alcohol is more common.
- 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. Consider a monthly pass if you will have to take the bus or subway every day. In the long run, it is cheaper than fines that can be 50 times the original cost of the ticket.

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 <http://ymca.net/international/InterDir/intdir.htm>), and youth hostels such as those run by Hostelling International (<http://www.hihostels.com/>).

Relationships

Entering a relationship overseas should be approached with the same precautions as at home. It is tempting to be charmed by the idea of a once-in-a-lifetime foreign romance, but you should consider any relationship carefully, particularly when you are overseas. There are different cultural values and rules regarding dating and relationships. Proceed cautiously, realizing that you are only in that country for a short period of time. Evaluate your reasons for entering into a relationship. Are you attracted to the individual or are you struggling with homesickness?

Political Conflict

- Keep informed of the current political situation by listening to the television, radio, or reading the newspaper daily. In case of an emergency, advisories may be made to the general public through the media. It's a good idea to register with the nearest American Consulate, and to contact the on-site staff should an emergency arise.
- 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. Always consult with the on-site director(s) before traveling to neighboring cities or popular tourist destinations.
- 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. Go home and watch it on the news.
- 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. Until you are familiar with these 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.

Health

- 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.

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.
- An effective way to avoid stares while on the subway is to read.
- 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 being struck. 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 of your local friends 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.

A Thoughtful Return

Since time upon re-entry may be scarce, we encourage you to record in your journal your thoughts on these questions to prepare you for returning home: In what ways have I changed? In what ways might my family and friends have changed? How would I like my family and friends to treat me when I return home? What am I looking forward to the most? What are the lessons I have learned that I never want to forget? What are some skills I have learned? Many say the re-entry shock is more challenging than initial culture shock. What are some things I might do to make the transition easier? What have been the important things about this study abroad experience that I want to share with family and friends? What do I want to do with the experiences I've had (e.g., continue studying the language)?

After You Return

You've been focused on the journey, but returning home is often an equally challenging experience. To make the most of your international education, learn what to expect after your travels.

Re-Entry Challenges

Ten Immediate Re-Entry Challenges

The following is a list of suggestions for students upon returning home. The list was compiled by Dr. Bruce La Brock from the University of the Pacific.

1. Boredom

After all the newness and stimulation of your time abroad, a return to family, friends, and old routines (however nice and comforting) can seem very dull. It is natural to miss the excitement and challenges that characterize study in a foreign country, but it is up to you to find ways to overcome such negative reactions.

2. “No One Wants to Hear”

One thing you can count on upon your return: no one will be as interested in hearing about your adventures and triumphs as you will be in sharing those experiences. This is not a rejection of you or your achievements, but simply the fact that once they have heard the highlights, further interest on your audience's part is probably unlikely. Be realistic in your expectations of how fascinating your journey is going to be for everyone else.

3. You Can't Explain

Even when given a chance to explain all the sights you saw and feelings you had while studying abroad, you will likely be unable to relay them coherently. It is very difficult to convey this kind of experience to people who do not have similar frames of reference or travel backgrounds, no matter how sympathetic they are as listeners. You can tell people about your trip, but you may fail to make them understand exactly how or why you felt a particular way.

4. Reverse “Homesickness”

Just as you probably missed home for a time after going abroad, it is just as natural to experience some “reverse” homesickness for the people, places, and things that you grew accustomed to as a student overseas. To an extent it can be reduced by writing letters, telephoning, and generally keeping in contact, but feelings of loss are an integral part of international sojourns and must be anticipated and accepted as a natural result of study abroad.

5. Relationships Have Changed

It is inevitable that when you return you will notice that some relationships with friends and family have changed. Just as you have altered some of your ideas and attitudes while abroad, the people at home are likely to have experienced some changes. These changes may be positive or

negative, but expectation that no change will have occurred is unrealistic. The best preparation is flexibility, openness, minimal preconceptions, and tempered optimism.

6. People See the “Wrong” Changes

Sometimes people may concentrate on small alterations in your behavior or ideas and seem threatened or upset by them. Others may ascribe any “bad” traits to the influence of your time abroad. The incidents may be motivated by jealousy, fear, or feelings of superiority or inferiority. To avoid or minimize them it is necessary to monitor yourself and be aware of the reactions of those around you, especially in the first few weeks following your return. This phase normally passes quickly if you do nothing to confirm their stereotypes.

7. People Misunderstand

A few people will misinterpret your words or actions in such a way that communication is difficult. For example, what you may have come to think of as humor (particularly sarcasm, banter, etc.) and ways to show affection or establish conversation may not be seen as wit, but aggression or “showing off.” Offers of help in the kitchen can be seen as criticism of food preparation, new clothing styles as provocative or inappropriate, references to your host country or use of a foreign language as boasting. Be aware of how you may look to others and how your behavior is likely to be interpreted.

8. Feelings of Alienation/Critical Eyes

Sometimes the reality of being back “home” is not as natural or enjoyable as the place you had constructed as your mental image. When real daily life is less enjoyable or more demanding than you had remembered, it is natural to feel some alienation, see faults in the society you never noticed before or even become quite critical of everyone and everything for a time. This is no different than when you first left home. Mental comparisons are fine, but keep them to yourself until you regain both your cultural balance and a balanced perspective.

9. Inability to Apply New Knowledge and Skills

Many returnees are frustrated by the lack of opportunity to apply newly gained social, linguistic, and practical coping skills that appear to be unnecessary or irrelevant. To avoid ongoing annoyance, adjust to reality as necessary, change what is possible, be creative, be patient, and above all use all the cross-cultural adjustment skills you acquired abroad to assist your own re-entry.

10. Loss/Compartmentalization of Experience

Returnees often worry that somehow they will “lose” the experience after returning home to the pressures of job, family, and friends; it may seem that the experience will somehow become compartmentalized, like souvenirs or photo albums kept in a box and only occasionally taken out and looked at. You do not have to let that happen. Maintain your contacts. Talk to people who have experiences similar to yours. Practice your skills. Remember and honor both your hard work and the fun you had while abroad.

Reacting to the Changes

Returning to one's home environment isn't easy for a number of reasons, including how much you have changed, how much you understand these changes, and how much your friends and family accept these changes. It's important to take time to consider what the particular frustrations are for you. Record your reactions to these questions and statements:

- I know that I've changed as a result of my experience because...
- My friends do seem to understand _____ about me, but they don't understand...
- My reentry experience would be better if...
- Now that I am home, I worry most about...
- The one thing I have learned about myself is...
- I wish I could explain to my family and friends that...

10 Tips for Returning Home

The following is a list of "tips" for students preparing to return home. The list was compiled by Dr. Bruce La Brock from the University of the Pacific.

1. Prepare for the Adjustment Process

The more you consider your alternative, think about what is to come, and know about how returning home is both similar to and different from going abroad, the easier the transition will be. Anticipating is useful.

2. Allow Yourself Time

Re-entry is a process that will take time, just like adjusting to a new foreign culture. Give yourself time to relax and reflect upon what is going on around you, how you are reacting to it, and what you might like to change. Give yourself permission to ease into the transition.

3. Understand That the Familiar Will Seem Different

You will have changed, home has changed, and you will be seeing familiar people, places, and behaviors from new perspectives. Some things will seem strange, perhaps even unsettling. Expect to have some new emotional and psychological reactions to being home. Everyone does.

4. There Will Be Much "Cultural Catching-up" To Do

Some linguistic, social, political, economic, entertainment and current event topics will be unfamiliar to you as new programs, slang and even governmental forms may have emerged since you left. You may have some learning to do about your own culture. (Note: most returnees report that major insights into themselves and their home countries occur during reentry.)

5. Reserve Judgments

Just as you had to keep an open mind when first encountering the culture of a new foreign country, try to resist the natural impulse to make snap decisions and judgments about people and behaviors once back home. Mood swings are common at first and your most valuable and valid analysis of events is likely to take place after allowing some time for thorough reflection.

6. Respond Thoughtfully and Slowly

Quick answers and impulsive reactions often characterize returnees. Frustration, disorientation, and boredom in the returnee can lead to behavior which is incomprehensible to family and friends. Take some time to rehearse what you want to say and how you will respond to predictable questions and situations: prepare to greet those which are less predictable with a calm, thoughtful approach.

7. Cultivate Sensitivity

Showing an interest in what others have been doing while you have been on your adventure overseas is the surest way to reestablish rapport. Much frustration in returnees stems from what is perceived as disinterest by others in their experience and lack of opportunity to express their feelings and tell their stories. Being as good a listener as a talker is a key ingredient in mutual sharing.

8. Beware of Comparisons

Making comparisons between cultures and nations is natural, particularly after residence abroad; however, a person must be careful not to be seen as too critical of home or too lavish in praise of things foreign. A balance of good and bad features is probably more accurate and certainly less threatening to others.

9. Remain Flexible

Keeping as many options open as possible is an essential aspect of a successful return home. Attempting to re-socialize totally into old patterns and networks can be difficult, but remaining aloof is isolating and counterproductive. What you want to achieve is a balance between maintaining earlier patterns and enhancing your social and intellectual life with new friends and interests.

10. Seek Support Networks

There are lots of people back home who have gone through their own re-entry and understand a returnee's concerns. You might consider talking to: faculty, exchange students, international development staff, diplomatic corps, military personnel, church officials, and/or business people about the concerns you have as a returnee. University study abroad and foreign student offices are just a few of the places where returnees can seek others who can offer support and country-specific advice.

Useful Resources

Passports and Visas

- **Getting a U.S. Passport** http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html
- **Visa information for US Citizens traveling abroad** http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html (Be aware that there are usually different entry requirements for students vs. visitors)
- **ISEP Country Handbooks** often have information on visas and resident permits: <http://www.isep.org/handbooks/index.html>

Health Insurance for Travel Abroad

Emory & Henry College has instituted a policy that all students participating on a college-related travel abroad program must purchase the travel health insurance policy provided by HTH Worldwide (<http://www.hthstudents.com/>). For more health information, see: U.S. State Department -- Medical Information for Americans Traveling Abroad, http://travel.state.gov/travel/abroad_health.html

Site-Specific Country Information & Safety Related Sites

- **US Department of State Travel Website** <http://travel.state.gov/>
Essential help from the US government, for everything from travel safety advisories to crisis assistance for US citizens abroad, as well as contact information for all US embassies and consulates abroad. Also lists foreign embassies and consulates in the US. Frequently-consulted parts of this very comprehensive web site include the following.
 - **Travel Warnings and Information**, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html
 - **Consular Information Sheets**, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html
 - **Tips for Traveling Abroad**, http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html
 - **Tips for Studying Abroad**, http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/studying/studying_1238.html
 - **Online US Embassies, Consulates, and other Missions**, <http://usembassy.state.gov/>
 - **Important Telephone Numbers** (for crises involving US citizens abroad, the number to call is 202-647-5225), http://travel.state.gov/travel/about/how/how_1246.html
 - **Passport Services**, http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html
 - **Safety Abroad**, http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1180.html
 - **Travel Warning on Drugs Abroad**, http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/drugs/drugs_1237.html
- **Emergency telephone numbers around the world:** <http://www.sccfd.org/travel.html>
- **CIA World Factbook**, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html> provides detailed information on geography, people, government, economy, communications, transportation, military and transnational issues.
- **Martindale's Reference Desk** <http://www.martindalecenter.com/> provides an extensive dictionary of links including over 200 official country web sites, world reports on weather, transport, culture, etc.
- **SAFETI Clearinghouse** <http://www.globaled.us/safeti/>
- **Association for Safe International Road Travel** <http://www.asirt.org/>
- **Article on India's Unsafe Railway** http://danger-ahead.railfan.net/features/india_safety/india_safety.html
- **ISTM News Service - Travel Advisories and Current News Items Regarding Travel Medicine From The International Society Of Travel Medicine.** <http://www.istm.org/>

- **Passport to Death**--an Aussie site on what your chances are to come home in a box, rating planes trains and automobiles <http://www.monolith.com.au/passport/>
- **What's Up with Culture?** <http://www3.uop.edu/sis/culture/index.htm>
- **Sara's Wish Foundation for Safety in International Travel for Students**, <http://www.saraswish.org/index.html>

General Travel Resources

- **Currency Converter** -- Universal (Xenon), www.xe.net/ucc
- **Travel Document Services**, www.traveldocs.com
- **Lonely Planet guidebooks** <http://www.lonelyplanet.com> (Good "Getting There And Around" sections for countries and Subway section.)
- **Tourism Offices Worldwide Directory** <http://www.towd.com/>
- **US Customs Office, Traveler Information**, www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/travel/
- **Travlang's Travel Resources**, <http://www.travlang.com/trav/>
- **Rail Europe**, www.raileurope.com/us -Web site of a major US provider of Eurail passes has information about point-to-point tickets and rail schedules, in addition to information about Eurail and regional or country railpasses.
- **Routes International**, www.routesinternational.com -Site provides links worldwide for all modes of transportation.

Sustainable Travel and Study Abroad

http://www.transitionsabroad.com/publications/studyabroadmagazine/2006Fall/sustainable_travel_and_study_abroad.shtml

Resources for Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay Travelers

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

Women Abroad

<http://www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/travel/women/index.shtml/>

Budget Travel Guidebooks & Travel Information

- **Frommers Budget Travel Online**, www.frommers.com
- **Let's Go guidebooks**, www.letsgo.com
- **Lonely Planet guidebooks**, www.lonelyplanet.com
- **Rick Steves' Europe Through The Back Door guidebooks**, www.ricksteves.com
- **Rough Guides guidebooks**, www.travel.roughguides.com
- **South American Explorers Club**, <http://www.saexplorers.org/club/home>
- **Tourism Offices Worldwide Directory**, www.towd.com
- **Transitions Abroad magazine**, www.transitionsabroad.com

Travelers with Special Needs (Disability, etc.)

- **Mobility International**, <http://www.miusa.org/>
- **Moss Rehab Resource Net** (Info for Travellers with Disabilities—trains, buses, etc.) <http://www.mossresourcenet.org/travel.htm>
- **University of Minnesota Access Abroad** <http://www.umabroad.umn.edu/access/>

Cheap Travel Sites

- **STA Travel**, www.statravel.com STA Travel is a large student travel agency (the largest, according to STA), with branches worldwide, specializing in student-rate airfares, railpasses, and other products for student travelers.
- www.easyjet.com (cheap flights from the UK to other parts of the UK and Europe)
- www.ryanair.com (same as above)
- www.lastminutetravel.com
- <http://www.cheaptravelnetwork.com/>
- www.eurorail.com/home.htm
- **AESU Travel**, www.aesu.com AESU Travel is a student travel agency which specializes in student-rate airfares, railpasses, and other products for student travelers, particularly for European destinations.
- **Expedia**, www.expedia.com Website sponsored by Microsoft assists in finding the cheapest airfare. Note that (possibly lower) special-status fares offered by student travel agencies may not be indicated by this site. Site also provides general information country-by-country. May not work with Netscape browsers.
- **Orbitz**, www.orbitz.com Website sponsored by several major airlines, assists in finding the cheapest airfare. Note that (possibly lower) special-status fares offered by student travel agencies may not be indicated by this site.
- **Student Universe**, www.studentuniverse.com Online student travel agent with cheap tickets.
- **Travelocity**, www.travelocity.com Website sponsored by the Sabre Company, which provides the databases used by travel agents--assists in finding the cheapest airfare. Note that (possibly lower) special-status fares offered by student travel agencies may not be indicated by this site.
- **Mobissimo**, www.mobissimo.com Website that searches many other search engines.
- **Cheap Tickets**, www.cheaptickets.com
- **Priceline**, www.priceline.com Website that will let you search for discount fares, but also has an option where you can name your own price and see if the provider will accept it. May not be able to choose flight times.
- **Side Step**, <http://www.sidestep.com/air/>

U.S. Airlines (International Flights):

- **United Airlines**, www.ual.com
- **American Airlines**, www.aa.com
- **US Airways**, www.usairways.com
- **Continental Airlines**, www.continental.com
- **Delta Airlines**, www.delta.com
- **Northwest Airlines**, www.nwa.com

Connectivity -- Phones & Internet

- **Country & city dialing codes (AT&T)**, www.usa.att.com/traveler/services/codes/index.jsp
- **Netcafeguide**, www.world66.com/netcafeguide Online locator of cybercafes worldwide
- **Roadnews**, www.roadnews.com Hardware & software tips for internet connectivity and power for your laptop while traveling.
- **Zaptel**, www.zaptel.com/ Purchase phone cards for international calling.

(Resource information adapted from the Maryville College Study Abroad Handbook)

This guide was adapted with permission from the Rhodes College Pre-Departure Guide

