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CHECKLIST

- Turn in your supplementary application materials to your MU study abroad adviser.
- Apply for a passport or check to see that your current passport will be valid for six months beyond your program end date. Passport applications are available at the International Center or online at travel.state.gov/passports.
- If you are a senior, obtain a final 30-hour residency requirement waiver (if applicable).
- Meet with a financial aid adviser to make arrangements to use any grants, loans or scholarships toward study abroad.
- Complete your Course Proposal for Study Abroad. Submit the completed form to your study abroad adviser, and be sure to keep a copy for your records.
- Make your flight arrangements.
- Make copies of your passport — carry one with you separately from the original, leave one with a friend or family member and email one to yourself.
- Be sure that any credit or debit cards don’t expire while you’re abroad.
- Make arrangements to take care of your bills while abroad, as well as your income taxes and FAFSA (if applicable).
- Change your mailing address to your permanent address in myZou in order to receive all important mail from MU while you are gone.
- Obtain cash in the currency of your host country (if applicable).

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

As a study abroad participant, you are met with a myriad of cultural and behavioral differences from the moment you step off the plane. This constant exposure to foreign experiences makes study abroad an exercise in cultural immersion and adaptation. Learning to deal with, adapt to and accept the difference between your home culture and host culture is one of the purposes of going abroad to study, and one of the main goals you should try to achieve while abroad. The information in this handbook is intended to help you make preparations for your study abroad experience. While it is as comprehensive as possible, undoubtedly, some details have been missed. You should seek as much information as possible from a variety of resources to prepare for your adventure: program- or country-specific orientation materials, travel guidebooks, historical and fictional works about your host country, etc. In addition to reading materials, you should talk to people who are knowledgeable about your program or host country: your study abroad adviser, former program participants, host country natives, MU faculty or staff, and friends and family. These people will be great sources of information and advice. In the end, though, it won’t be possible to prepare yourself completely. There will be situations you will not have anticipated and your flexibility will go a long way toward making your time abroad a positive one. Have a safe journey and we look forward to hearing about your adventure abroad.
BEFORE YOU GO

CONTACT INFORMATION

MU International Center
N52 Memorial Union
Columbia, MO 65211
international.missouri.edu
phone: +1-573-882-6007
fax: +1-573-882-3223
24-hour emergency phone: +1-573-882-7201
eemail: studyabroad@missouri.edu

PROGRAM TYPES

MU programs are administered by the International Center or another MU academic unit and may be faculty-led, exchange, direct-enroll or internship programs. The exchange and direct-enroll options often require a high level of independence, while faculty-led programs are more structured and provide a higher level of support. In most cases, institutional, state and federal aid is applicable toward program costs.

Affiliated programs are administered by universities or organizations with which MU has a cooperative agreement. Costs are generally higher than for MU programs, but these programs offer a higher level of in-country support. In most cases, institutional, state and federal financial aid is applicable toward program costs, and many affiliated programs offer special scholarships for MU students.

Non-MU programs are administered by other U.S. universities or organizations not affiliated with MU. There are no guarantees that any financial aid will apply.

Independently arranged international activities are for students who initiate and make arrangements to earn MU credit abroad individually and independently. These activities may include internships, independent study, practicums, clinicals or research, and are generally arranged through a students’ academic department.
TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

APPLY FOR A PASSPORT
If you haven’t already applied for a passport, you should do so immediately. Passport applications can take up to eight weeks to process. Make sure that your passport is valid for at least six months beyond the end date of your program. Don’t forget to provide your social security number on the application — if you don’t, the IRS may impose a $500 penalty. For more information, go to international.missouri.edu/passport.

VISA INFORMATION
A visa is your official permission to enter a specific country and is granted by that country’s government. Determine if a visa is required for your study abroad program — ask your adviser or go to travel.state.gov. For specific information, go to the consular or embassy website for your host country. Applying for a visa can take several weeks, so start the process early. If you plan to travel outside of your host country while you are abroad, be sure to check the entry regulations for any country you plan to visit. Some countries will require that you obtain a visa just to enter the country, regardless of the purpose or length of your visit.

HEALTH INSURANCE
Print off your insurance cards from HTH Worldwide and UnitedHealthcare Global before you leave. Carry copies of these cards with you at all times.

HTH WORLDWIDE
This policy provides comprehensive sickness and accident insurance and emergency travel medical insurance, including coverage for medical evacuation and repatriation of remains, which is generally not provided by domestic insurance companies. HTH has also identified a network of doctors worldwide who will provide treatment and file claims on your behalf without requiring payment at the time of treatment. Prior to departure for study abroad, HTH assists students in establishing treatment for ongoing medical conditions while abroad (including doctor visits and continuing medications). For more information about the features and benefits of this policy, please see the brochure in your myStudyAbroad account.

Students participating on all MU programs and some affiliated programs will be automatically enrolled by the International Center in the HTH Worldwide plan, and all charges will be billed to your MU student account. After you have been enrolled and have received your insurance card, you should go to hthstudents.com. Using the certificate number on the front of your card, sign into the site to obtain comprehensive information related to this plan, including a doctor locater, city health profiles and translations of medical terms and phrases.

Your family can access the same information by logging in to hthparents.com using your insurance ID number and your email address.

international.missouri.edu/studyabroad
UNITEDHEALTHCARE GLOBAL

UnitedHealthcare Global insurance includes political and security evacuation services, transportation after evacuation and real time security intelligence. More information about the UnitedHealthcare Global policy and a copy of your student ID card can be found in your myStudyAbroad account.

MU PROGRAMS

Students participating on MU programs administered by the International Center or another academic unit on campus will be automatically enrolled in the HTH Worldwide and UnitedHealthcare Global policies. The cost of insurance will be billed to your student account.

AFFILIATED PROGRAMS

The comprehensive health insurance coverage policies provided by the affiliated programs listed below have been evaluated by the UM Office of Risk Management and meet its insurance requirements. Students participating in these programs are not required to enroll in additional health insurance. MU will still provide UnitedHealthcare Global insurance for these students.

- Alliance
- Arcadia
- CIEE
- IFSA-Butler
- IES
- ISA
- Missouri State University
- SAI
- University of Arizona
- University of Wisconsin-Platteville

The affiliated programs listed below either do not provide health insurance or the coverage they do provide is not sufficient to meet the MU requirements. The International Center will automatically enroll students participating on these programs in the HTH Worldwide plan, along with UnitedHealthcare Global coverage.

- CAPA
- CIMBA
- DIS
- GVSU
- University of Kansas
- University of Tennessee-Knoxville

NON-MU PROGRAMS

The International Center cannot independently verify insurance coverage provided by non-MU programs. If you are participating on one of these programs, you will be asked to verify your enrollment in a comprehensive health insurance policy that meets or exceeds the coverage provided by the HTH Worldwide policy. You should contact the non-MU program provider with any questions regarding its insurance coverage. If you find that the insurance provided does not meet the coverage provided by HTH Worldwide, you should purchase HTH insurance by enrolling online using the procedure outlined on the International Center website.

INDEPENDENTLY ARRANGED INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Students participating in independently arranged international activities are required to purchase HTH Worldwide insurance. Instructions for purchasing HTH insurance can be found on the International Center website. Once HTH insurance is purchased, proof of insurance must be sent to the International Center.
PRE-DEPARTURE HEALTH CARE

You should have physical, dental and eye exams to ensure you are healthy before you leave.

IMMUNIZATIONS

You should make sure all your routine immunizations are up to date. Locate your childhood and adult immunization records and take them with you to your pre-travel physical exam. You can make a travel appointment at the MU Student Health Center to have your immunization record reviewed and receive any immunizations you may need. During this appointment, the health care practitioner will discuss other vaccinations, medications or precautions specific to your destination, including issues like traveler’s diarrhea, malaria, food and water precautions, and insect precautions, as well as your personal medical history. Some immunizations require multiple injections over a period of time, so don’t wait to schedule an appointment. You can make an appointment at the Student Health Center by calling 573-882-4661.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

If you will be taking prescription medications while abroad, you should consult with your physician prior to departure regarding any need for monitoring while abroad. You should plan to bring enough of any prescription medication to last for the duration of your program if possible. It is not legal to mail prescription medications overseas, so it is important to bring a sufficient supply for your stay. All medications should be in their original containers and clearly labeled; do not put them in pill boxes or organizers. This way, customs officials will be able to easily determine that your medications are not illegal substances. You should also bring a letter from your physician that lists the generic name of your medication so a local physician will be able to more quickly identify the local equivalent medication if you need to obtain more during your program. You should also verify that your medication is legal and available in your host country. To find out if the medication you are taking is available abroad, go to the translation guide at hthstudents.com. Some prescription medications that are legal in the U.S., primarily those for treating ADHD, are not legal in some other countries. Students who have questions about changing medications should consult a health care professional.
REGISTRATION AND CREDITS

REGISTERING FOR STUDY ABROAD
You must complete the UM System Assumption of Risk and Release and the Program Confirmation and Conditions of Participation forms in your myStudyAbroad account in order to be registered for an MU, affiliated or non-MU study abroad program. These forms must be completed by the deadline set by your study abroad adviser. Upon receipt of these forms, you will be registered for the appropriate study abroad credit by the International Center.

UNDERSTANDING THE CREDIT TRANSFER PROCESS
Prior to studying abroad, you must complete a course proposal form.

Faculty-led programs
You will be enrolled in actual MU courses while you are abroad. Your grades will appear on your MU transcript and be factored into your MU GPA.

Exchange, direct-enroll, affiliated and non-MU programs
You will be enrolled in a study abroad placeholder course while you are abroad. In most cases, the grades you earn will be listed as satisfactory/unsatisfactory on your MU transcript and will not be factored into your MU GPA. You will not earn credit for any courses you fail abroad or that are listed on your host university or organization transcript as incomplete. When your program is completed, your official transcript from the host university or organization will be sent to International Admissions for processing. If you decide to take a course abroad that was not pre-approved on your course proposal, contact your academic adviser and International Admissions immediately.

BILLING AND FINANCIAL AID
Study abroad program costs charged to your MU account will follow the MU Office of Cashiers’ billing cycle. For information about billing and due dates, go to cashiers.missouri.edu/payments/billing.html. For additional information about billing and payment options, go to cashiers.missouri.edu/students.html.

USING FINANCIAL AID
If you plan to apply financial aid to the costs of your study abroad program, work with your study abroad adviser to complete a Financial Planning Worksheet. You will then submit this signed form and meet with an adviser in the Office of Student Financial Aid. Complete all required forms by the specified deadlines in order to ensure that you will continue to receive financial aid while you are abroad. If you begin this process early enough, it may be possible for the Office of Student Financial Aid to re-evaluate your needs and make you eligible for additional loans or grants based on your cost of attendance abroad.
INTERNATIONAL CENTER PROGRAM BILLING

MU exchange programs
- Study abroad administrative fee ($1,000 per fall/spring semester, $500 for summer)
- MU tuition (15 credits per fall/spring semester, six credits for summer)
- Non-resident tuition fees (if applicable)
- Health insurance
- Information technology, recreation facility, student activity and health center fees

MU direct-enroll programs
- Study abroad administrative fee ($500 per fall/spring semester, $350 for summer)
- MU tuition (13 credits per fall/spring semester, three–six credits for summer)
- Non-resident tuition fees (if applicable)
- Health insurance
- Information technology fee
- Other fees associated with the program, including host university fees and housing

Affiliated programs
- Study abroad administrative fee ($500 per fall/spring semester, $350 for summer)
- MU tuition (13 credits per fall/spring semester, three–six credits for summer)
  > Tuition fees (resident and non-resident) are paid directly to MU, which will then forward the resident tuition to the affiliated program on your behalf. Any non-resident tuition fees will be retained by MU. You must pay any costs above the cost of tuition directly to the affiliated program sponsor.
- Non-resident tuition fees (if applicable)
- Health insurance (if applicable)
- Information technology fee

MU faculty-led programs
- Study abroad administrative fee ($350)
- MU tuition (number of credits varies by program)
- Non-resident tuition fees (if applicable)
- MU course fees (if applicable)
- Health insurance
- Information technology fee
- Other program fees
MONEY MATTERS

NOTIFY YOUR BANK
Contact your bank and credit card company to inform them of your upcoming travel dates and destination(s). Failure to notify your financial institutions could result in your account being frozen or your card shut off to protect you from what they see as potentially fraudulent charges.

MANAGING YOUR MONEY ABROAD
Before you go, figure out how much money you will need for incidentals not included in your program fee. Research your host country’s and city’s costs of living and exchange rate. You can check daily exchange rates for your host country online at oanda.com or xe.com. Determine how you’ll be spending money abroad — consider cost of entertainment, restaurants and regional travel. Proper planning will ensure you’ll be better prepared for expenses while traveling.

CURRENCY
It is a good idea to take a small amount of host country currency with you when you travel abroad. Most U.S. banks will exchange currency for a small service charge, but you will need to give them advance notice of two or more weeks. Some banks in Columbia will order international currency.

Currency can also be exchanged in most international airports, as well as at most major banks and railroad stations abroad. Avoid exchanging currency at hotels, restaurants or retail shops — the exchange rate tends to be less favorable in these places. Expect to pay a commission every time you exchange currency; in some countries, the commission is based on a percentage of the amount you exchange, while in others there is a flat fee regardless of the amount. Remember you will need your passport as identification each time you exchange money.

Whenever you travel with cash, be sure to keep the money either on your person or in the carry-on that you will store under your seat on the plane. Money and valuables can be easily stolen out of bags that are stored in overhead compartments.

OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT ABROAD
For students going abroad for a semester or longer, it may make sense to open a bank account in your host country. Research your options and talk to your study abroad adviser. For students going on short-term programs (e.g., summer or winter break programs), it is not recommended that you open an account in a foreign bank.
DEBIT/ATM CARDS

Most students find that using a debit/ATM card to withdraw money while abroad is the most convenient way to access their money. You can use either a dedicated ATM card or a debit card to withdraw money from an ATM abroad. Although your money is in U.S. dollars, the ATM in your host country will give you the local currency. Please remember that exchange rates fluctuate, and the rate applies on the date a purchase or withdrawal clears your bank, not on the date you made the transaction. It is helpful to translate your dollars into the foreign currency in a separate bank book or spreadsheet, and then track all of your withdrawals and purchases in that currency. That way you can estimate how much money you will have left in your account, and you can get the exact amounts when you receive your bank statement or look at it online.

You may want to have a parent or guardian added to your bank account so they can help solve any problems with the account while you are abroad. Additionally, you should consider enrolling in online banking if your bank offers it so you can access your account and check balances from abroad.

You should ensure your particular account is accessible in your host country and how it will function abroad before you leave so you can plan accordingly. Be sure to ask about any fees that may be associated with foreign transactions and that you have a four-digit PIN that functions internationally. Be warned though, not all ATMs in your host country will accept your card. You should have some other way to access money in case the machine doesn’t take your card. Some banks also have a daily withdrawal limit set on debit/ATM cards to prevent excessive fraudulent withdrawals. It may be possible to increase or decrease this limit depending on your needs — generally, you will want a limit of $350–$500.

Several large banks participate in the Global ATM Alliance, which allows you to use ATMs without paying additional fees. You should check with your bank to find out if and where you might be able to use such ATMs. Some debit cards offer ATM usage abroad with no ATM or conversion fees, or will reimburse your checking account for charges applied by the bank that owns the ATM. Keep in mind that not all merchants abroad accept all brands of debit cards. Generally, students have the most success with Visa, MasterCard and American Express. Also, you are likely to run into merchants who don’t accept debit or credit cards at all — you may want to buy gifts or souvenirs from small shops and bazaars that do not accept them, so it’s a good idea to keep a little cash on hand.

CREDIT CARDS

Credit cards can make foreign transactions easy, and they are invaluable in a financial emergency. Take a credit card with you, but use it wisely — it’s easy to overspend. Service fees and interest charges can be costly, and the loss or theft of a credit card can inconvenience you, especially while traveling. You should ensure that your particular card will be accepted in your host country and know how it will function abroad before you leave so you can plan accordingly.

You and your parent or guardian may be interested to know that, at a cardholder’s request, most major lenders will issue an additional card in the name of another person authorized to use the account. If you plan to use someone else’s credit card account, be sure that they request the additional card in time to receive it before you leave and that it uses your name as it appears on your passport. If you choose this method, the line of credit is the same amount as on the cardholder’s account. The monthly bill will still be presented to the cardholder. Additionally, most lenders will issue credit cards to students with a parent or guardian as co-signer, but be aware that these cards often carry a very limited line of credit.

IF YOUR CARD IS LOST OR STOLEN

Be sure to record your card numbers and the 24/7 phone numbers for all cards you are taking abroad and store them in a safe location. Please note that toll-free numbers are generally not accessible from overseas. This way, you will be able to contact your bank or credit card company to have your card deactivated if it is lost or stolen. You may also want to leave this information with a trusted family member or friend in the U.S. so they could assist if necessary.
BEFORE YOU GO

TRAVEL PREPARATION

INFORMATION ABOUT FLYING
If this is your first international flight or you haven’t traveled in a while, check tsa.gov for current baggage guidelines and check your individual airline’s website for baggage restrictions and fees. It is also important to remember that for international flights you should plan to arrive at the airport at least two to three hours in advance of your boarding time. Check your specific airport’s recommendations. For more tips on flying, go to wikitravel.org/en/Tips_for_flying.

REGISTER YOUR TRAVEL WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
If you are a U.S. citizen, you should register your trip with the U.S. Department of State. Travel registration with the Department of State makes it possible for you to be contacted in case of an emergency in the U.S. or in your host country. You can register online at step.state.gov/step. Through this free service, your family can pass an emergency message to you through the Office of Overseas Citizens Services by calling 888-407-4747 (from the U.S.) or +1-202-501-4444 (from abroad). In accordance with the Privacy Act, the Department of State cannot release your information without your express consent. Go to usembassy.gov to locate the nearest embassy or consulate.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IDENTIFICATION CARD
ISIC is an internationally-accepted student ID card and proof of current student status. The card also offers discounts at more than 33,000 locations in 103 countries, cell phone and calling card packages and an emergency help line. You are not required to obtain this card for your study abroad program, but it may come in handy while traveling. Cards cost $22 and you must present proof of full-time student status at the time of purchase. Interested students can purchase an ISIC online at myisic.com.
**TAKE CASH WITH YOU**

Plan to have the currency of your host country on hand when you step off the plane. It is good to have cash with you in case your debit or credit card doesn’t work or you don’t have access to an ATM right away.

**COMMUNICATE YOUR ARRIVAL**

Before you leave the U.S., establish a communication plan and let your family know that you will contact them within the first 48 hours of your arrival in your host country. It is important to let them know that you might not be able to contact them immediately because you will need time to settle into your accommodations and determine where you can use the phone or Internet. Once you have the opportunity, call or email your family and friends with a short message saying you have arrived and are safe. If you forget or wait too long, you may cause unnecessary stress and worry.

**MAKE FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS**

You are responsible for arranging and purchasing your own airfare once you have been accepted into your study abroad program. If you are going on an affiliated program, check with your program provider as they may have a group flight option that you can take advantage of.

Schedule your initial flight to arrive in the morning or early afternoon in your host country. Remember that arrival procedures, including customs, can take time. By arriving earlier in the day, you will give yourself enough time to find food and accommodations or to get to your final destination before it gets dark and shops close for the day. A couple of websites that can be useful when booking flights for study abroad are statravel.com and studentuniverse.com. STA Travel has a “book now, pay later” option that allows you to secure a plane ticket for $49–$300. If you have difficulty paying for your flight due to the timing of the disbursement of your financial aid, contact an adviser in the MU Office of Student Financial Aid.

**PACKING**

Figuring out what to pack for study abroad can be a challenge. It will help to know the customary dress of your host country. What is appropriate for men and women to wear? Are pants or shorts worn? On what occasions? Do people wear jeans? You should also prepare for the weather of your host country. Will it rain often? Does it snow? It can also be nice to bring a few small mementos from home, such as photos or favorite music, for moments of homesickness and to share with your new friends or host family.

Don’t forget to pack lightly. At the end of your adventure you will need to bring everything back with you, plus all the things you’ve collected while abroad. Resist the temptation to buy lots of new clothes before you leave; save your money to try out some new styles in your host country — you may feel more comfortable if you are able to blend in with the locals a little. You should also remember that you will be responsible for carrying your luggage through the airport, on trains and buses, etc. Some sort of backpack suitcase will make it much easier to get around than trying to lug a cumbersome duffle bag or rolling suitcase. Keep things simple to save yourself stress later.

Attach a luggage tag with your contact information to each of your bags — both checked and carry-on — in case you lose them. Be sure your contact information is covered as someone may see your name on a luggage tag and take advantage of the situation. You should also include your contact information inside each bag in case your luggage tag is lost or damaged.
Suggested packing list

Carry-on luggage

- Passport and state driver’s license or ID
- Airline ticket(s) and itinerary
- U.S. and foreign currency (preferably in a money pouch or belt)
- Credit and debit/ATM cards
- Copies of important travel documents and emergency contact information. Always carry an emergency card containing important emergency phone numbers, including the number of the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate and your insurance cards.
- Prescription medications in their original containers
- Camera, memory cards/film
- Laptop and any small electronic devices
- Chargers or extra batteries
- Extra change of clothes and undergarments
- Wash cloth and soap in a travel case or travel wipes
- Toothbrush and tooth paste
- Deodorant
- Contact lenses and solution, glasses
- Earplugs
- Books/magazines
- Snacks, gum or mints
- Watch

Checked luggage

- Extra copies of important travel documents and emergency contact information
- Seasonally and culturally appropriate clothes that can be mixed and matched and layered
- Undergarments, shoes and accessories
- Jacket or coat appropriate for host country climate
- Flip flops for the shower
- Swimsuit, beach towel and sunscreen
- Toiletries
- First-aid kit (including over-the-counter pain reliever and motion sickness and anti-diarrheal medications)
- Extra pair of prescription glasses or contact lenses
- Small umbrella, poncho or rain jacket
- Battery operated alarm clock
- Contraceptives (if applicable)
- Music/photographs
- Hand sanitizer
- Small bag for weekend travel
- Power converter/adapter
- Sunglasses
- Combination or key locks (to secure luggage in accommodations, if necessary)
- Travel guides and language phrase book
- Diary or journal
- Small flashlight

VOTING WHILE ABROAD

You have the right to vote while abroad via absentee ballot. You must complete and send the federal post card to your local election office prior to traveling abroad. For more information, go to studentsabroad.state.gov/voting.php.
WHILE YOU’RE ABROAD

CHECKLIST

☐ If you are on an exchange or direct-enroll program, update your international contact information in your myStudyAbroad account.

☐ Contact your MU academic adviser and International Admissions about any changes to your courses for approval.

☐ Take photos to enter in the annual Study Abroad Photo Contest (cash prizes!).

☐ Keep in contact with the MU study abroad staff — and not just about problems, share your successes as well.

☐ Register for the semester you return to MU on myZou.

☐ Verify with your host university/organization that your transcript will be sent to the International Center when your grades have been processed (not applicable for students participating in faculty-led programs).

☐ Have a positive attitude and keep an open mind so you can have the best study abroad experience.

CULTURAL ADAPTATION

INTENSITY FACTORS

It is important to consider cultural differences between your home culture and new host culture. Dr. R. Michael Paige’s “10 intensity factors” lists the contrasting cultural circumstances that can have significant psychological impact on your study abroad experience. Paige named these circumstances intensity factors because they have the ability to affect your stress levels while adjusting to your host country’s culture, thus affecting the intensity of your experience abroad. For example, if you are in a country where the native language is not English, the language barrier may have an impact on the intensity of the adjustments you have to make to assimilate to the new culture. The greater the contrast in cultural circumstances, the greater the cultural intensity you will feel. Consider how these factors may impact your time abroad:

1. Cultural difference
2. Ethnocentrism
3. Language
4. Power and control
5. Cultural immersion
6. Cultural isolation
7. Prior intellectual experience
8. Expectations
9. Visibility and invisibility
10. Status
CULTURE SHOCK

The W-curve of culture shock

Traveling abroad can be one of the most exhilarating learning experiences of your life. Or, it can turn out to be a series of bewildering and frustrating incidents that leave you longing for home. By thinking about and preparing for the process of cultural adjustment, you can enhance your study abroad experience.

What causes culture shock?
The difference between your expectations and what you actually experience is where you may begin to find problems in adjusting abroad. In spite of the fact that you may have already visited your host country, you will find it different to actually live there. It is easy to become frustrated by the differences in daily life. The easily-accessible facilities taken for granted in the U.S. may not always be available, and this can prove upsetting and stressful. Take this as an opportunity to find out one of the reasons why most students find study abroad so rewarding — it forces you to learn about your personal limits and strengths.

Stages of culture shock
- The “honeymoon” period — initial euphoria; you are fascinated with all the new things you are experiencing.
- Irritability and hostility as you reject the foreign culture and people to focus on problems and differences — leads to culture shock.
- Learning to decipher foreign behavior and customs.
- Adaptation/biculturalism — acceptance and enjoyment of the foreign culture.

Everything is new, interesting and exciting.

You see your host country as your new home.

You may feel homesick, depressed or helpless.

You work your way through culture shock and begin to adapt to your host culture.

You may feel frustrated, angry or lonely because friends and family don’t understand what you experienced and how you changed.

You are excited about returning home.

You readjust to life at home.

You integrate what you learned and experienced abroad into your new life.

based on Oberg (1960) and Gallahorn & Gallahorn (1963)
ADAPTING TO THE HOST CULTURE

- Maintain flexibility and be open-minded.
- Keep your sense of humor.
- Stay busy and set concrete goals. Resist withdrawing into yourself or surrounding yourself with other Americans.
- Be friendly and outgoing. Try to make a friend in the host culture.
- Instead of looking for an extended vacation, discover the satisfaction of immersing yourself in a different way of life. Be more than just a tourist.
- Remember that you are a visitor to this country. Do not expect special privileges.
- Get involved with aspects of the host culture that you can’t easily do at home, such as participating in or observing a special ceremony or ritual.
- Respect the customs and opinions of the people you meet abroad.
- Engage in familiar sports and activities to keep from feeling overwhelmed by a completely foreign situation.
- Keep in touch with family and friends at home (but don’t spend too much time online).
- Take care of yourself by getting enough sleep, exercising and eating healthy meals.
- Acknowledge that culture shock is normal and will pass. If these feelings increase in severity, seek help from your overseas contact person. If you are not receiving the help you need, contact your study abroad adviser right away.

Stereotypes

Studying abroad includes dealing with your host culture’s stereotypes about you, and also involves coming to grips with your own stereotypes about your host culture. It is necessary to recognize that not everyone in your host country is going to behave like a fictional character. Keep in mind these stereotypes of “typical” Americans:

- Outgoing and friendly
- Informal
- Loud, rude, boastful
- Immature
- Hard working
- Extravagant and wasteful
- Racially prejudiced
- Ignorant of other countries
- Wealthy
- Generous
- Promiscuous
- Always in a hurry
Prejudice
Some stereotypes are openly hostile and can lead to active prejudice against a group or nationality. Some students may encounter active hostility toward Americans while they are abroad. This hostility can take many forms. Verbal insults are usually the most common and least dangerous. Students who find themselves in such situations need to simply walk away. The following are some unflattering questions and generalizations about the U.S. that you may hear in another country. If these or similar questions are posed to you while abroad, try not to become defensive. Instead, try to address them by being patient, open-minded and gracious. Remember that you are abroad to learn about another culture, not to promote and become entrenched in your own.

- We’ve heard so much about how easy your schools are. How can such a great nation have such a poor education system?
- Why do you put your old people in homes? Don’t you care about the elderly?
- How can such a rich country have so many poor people?
- Why are Americans so ignorant of the world?
- How can you talk so much about human rights when you have racial problems in the U.S.?
- America is well-known to us from TV and films. With all the sex and drugs going on, you must be immoral.
- Why are you always trying to force your form of government on everyone else?
- Do you own a gun?
Personal space
In every culture, there is a conception of what is considered appropriate personal space. Learn the etiquette of personal space in your host culture by observing other people. Don’t be offended if someone invades your space by accident. Remember that in some cultures the American norm of wide personal space translates to aloofness and standoffish behavior. Your habits in regard to personal space could be telling other people something about you that isn’t really true.

Polite behavior
Every culture has an idea of what is considered polite, what is informal and what is rude. These fine shades of social behavior take years to learn, even for natives; don’t be discouraged if it takes you a while to adjust to these norms. Remember that some people, even in their own cultures, never quite get the hang of these distinctions. Some things Americans typically do that may be considered rude in other cultures include pointing, smiling at strangers, asking personal questions, teasing each other, shouting and calling people by their first names.

Topics of conversation
Many cultures have taboo subjects that may or may not make any sense to you. Try to find out what can be safely spoken about in polite conversation and what might be considered offensive or rude. Political discussions can become especially heated. If you are not sure where you stand on an issue or aren’t willing to discuss it, simply back out of the conversation. The last thing most people want is to hear an ill-informed American talking loudly about an issue in local politics on which you have absolutely no idea.

Humor
Senses of humor differ drastically from culture to culture. What may be funny to you is not always going to be funny to an Australian, for example. Conversely, what an Australian considers hilarious, you may find rude and offensive. Be careful about what you joke about overseas and observe the joking behaviors of your friends. Learn from other people’s mistakes. It’s best to err on the side of caution when it comes to humor.
Food and eating
If you are observant, you will notice that people in other countries eat differently from Americans. In some countries, it is impolite to keep your hands under the table and improper to put your knife and fork down to change hands after cutting a piece of food. You may also encounter a few food surprises. Words used in the U.S. may mean something different abroad. For example, spaghetti in Italy is a first course, and French fries might be served with mayonnaise rather than ketchup.

Menus may state whether a tip or taxes are included in the bill. Check the customs of the country you are visiting, as tipping practices vary. Take time to explore local restaurants and eateries. You can learn a lot about countries by their cuisine and the clientele they serve. At the same time, be aware of food and water safety precautions. Also, watch out for extras. In some places, you may pay extra for a napkin or a glass of tap water. Food is available on most high speed trains, but more expensive. Plan ahead and bring something with you. In big cities, restaurants inside and around the train station are generally more expensive. Trekking a bit down a few side streets may lead you to something a little more special and in your price range. Travel guidebooks often contain good information about restaurants.

If may be wise to bring any special dietary supplements or food items you are accustomed to, but keep in mind it is illegal to carry perishables or plants across country borders.

HEALTH ABROAD
MENTAL HEALTH
Be sure to read the information in this handbook on culture shock. Be familiar with the symptoms of depression so you can identify problem signs and seek help if needed. Speaking another language all the time and adjusting to cultural differences can be tiring. Take care of yourself and be patient and flexible. Sometimes students find that the stress of adjusting to another country can make it difficult to manage a mental health problem that they were managing well in the U.S. (e.g., eating disorder, depression). Other students may experience the onset of a mental health issue for the first time while abroad. If you find that you have a problem that is becoming more severe rather than getting better, ask for help immediately.
STUDENT WITH DISABILITIES
MU strives to provide accessible study abroad programs that meet your academic and personal needs. To enable your full participation in the study abroad experience, you may need some accommodations. It is important to be aware of the cultural differences about disability and accommodation in order to have a successful and safe experience abroad. The International Center will work with you and the MU Disability Center to help arrange for accommodations abroad and prepare you for your international experience.

Resources for students with disabilities
- MU Disability Center: disabilitycenter.missouri.edu
- Mobility International USA: miusa.org
- University of Minnesota: Access Abroad: umabroad.umn.edu/students/identity/disabilities

SEXUAL HEALTH
Although sex is not necessarily planned, safe sex should be, and you should always be prepared. Therefore, even if you are not planning to be intimate with anyone while abroad, you may want to bring a supply of condoms with you just in case. American-made condoms are generally safer and more reliable than many of those that can be purchased abroad. Do not be afraid of being perceived as promiscuous if you carry condoms, and do not expect a partner to always have their own. Most importantly, understand that this is not a joking matter. Even one apparently-insignificant episode could ruin or shorten the rest of your life — or someone else’s.

In addition, remember that HIV and several STDs, including herpes and genital warts, can be transmitted during oral sex. While only abstinence is 100 percent effective, a dental dam can significantly reduce the risk of coming in contact with a sexually transmitted disease.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS
Attitudes toward alcohol and drug use vary considerably from culture to culture. Remember, you are subject to the laws of your host country; be sure to understand the laws surrounding drugs and alcohol. Although some countries have more liberal laws concerning drugs and alcohol, in many countries the laws and penalties are more severe. You are an ambassador of MU and the United States. You will be held to the MU Standards of Conduct Code, which you agreed to by signing the UM System Assumption of Risk and Release.

If you are of legal age to drink alcohol in your host country, do so responsibly. Serving sizes and alcohol content vary by country, which, when coupled with your new environment, may cause alcohol to affect you differently than you are used to. Be cautious and don’t over indulge. Never let your beverage out of your sight — drugging drinks happens throughout the world.

Possession and use of illegal drugs will result in your immediate dismissal from your study abroad program. Drugs account for one-third of Americans arrested overseas, and penalties can be severe. Remember, never agree to carry a suitcase or package for someone else — you do not want to become an unknowing drug smuggler.
WATER AND FOOD PRECAUTIONS
In countries where the tap water is not safe to drink, do not drink the water, avoid ice cubs and use boiled or bottled water to brush your teeth. Review the food and water safety guidelines specific to your destination in your program- or country-specific handbook. In countries where the tap water is safe to drink, the slight difference in mineral content might be enough to upset your system. Be patient. Don’t panic if the change in diet or environment affects your health adversely when you first arrive in a new country.

BLOOD- AND FLUID-BORNE DISEASES
Given the potentially fatal consequences, blood- and fluid-borne diseases warrant special attention. To be safe in dealing with blood or other bodily fluids, follow this rule of thumb: If it’s wet and it’s not yours, don’t touch it.

TATTOOS AND BODY PIERCINGS
Before you decide to obtain a tattoo or piercing abroad, it is vital that you consider the potential health risks posed anytime a needle punctures your skin. The most serious risk is that of blood-borne diseases. If the equipment used to create your tattoo or piercing is contaminated with the blood of an infected person, you can contract a number of serious blood-borne diseases, including hepatitis C, hepatitis B, tetanus, tuberculosis and HIV. For more information, see the Mayo Clinic website at mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/adult-health/in-depth/HLV-20049421.

OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATIONS AND FIRST-AID KIT
It’s a good idea to take a small first-aid kit and over-the-counter medications that you use regularly. Products and availability differ by country. The MU Student Health Center recommends you consider taking these items:

- Pseudoephedrine for a decongestant
- Benadryl for allergic reactions and motion sickness
- Topical antibiotic cream and bandages for cuts and scrapes
- Imodium or Pepto-Bismol for diarrhea
- Acetaminophen or ibuprofen for aches, pains and fever
- Feminine hygiene products (may differ or be hard to find in some parts of the world)
SAFETY ABROAD

THE LAW ABROAD

While you are in another country, you are subject to its laws. Legal protections and rights that are taken for granted in the U.S. are left behind when you depart. American embassies and consulates are very limited in the assistance they can provide. They can provide the names of attorneys and doctors, but they can’t provide financial assistance in paying for legal or medical services, nor can they intervene on your behalf in the administration of justice in the host country. Bail provisions as you know them in the U.S. are rare in other countries. Pretrial detention without bail is quite common in other countries. Prison conditions are often deplorable in comparison to conditions in the United States, and the principle of “innocent until proven guilty” is not necessarily a tenet of the legal system abroad.

It is your responsibility to become familiar with and obey the host country laws. At every MU and affiliated program site, there is a primary contact person who is responsible for MU students (e.g., resident director, host university contact person or faculty program director). This person should be your main resource in providing information about how host country laws may differ from U.S. laws. In addition, U.S. Department of State country-specific information sheets can provide information about host country laws.

ARREST OR DETENTION OF A U.S. CITIZEN ABROAD

Although the arrest of an MU student studying abroad would be unprecedented, it is important to be prepared for all eventualities. While you are abroad, always remember that you are subject to the laws of your host country. Nearly all countries where MU students study have signed the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, which provides U.S. citizens who are arrested or detained abroad with the right to speak to a consular officer from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate without delay. More than 170 countries are party to the VCCR. Many, but not all, of the 20 countries that are not party to the VCCR have some other bilateral agreement with the U.S. that addresses consular access.

Adhere to the following procedures if you are arrested or detained abroad:

- Do not make any statements to the host country police prior to contacting a U.S. embassy or consulate (or your home country embassy, if you are not a U.S. citizen) and do not make any statements without your lawyer present. Contact the nearest embassy or consulate immediately, tell them you have been arrested and request assistance. The embassy will almost always consider the arrest of a U.S. citizen to be an emergency and will send a consular official within 24 hours. In addition, the U.S. embassy maintains a list of attorneys, but does not verify the quality of the professionals who ask to be included on the list. Contact your UnitedHealthcare Global insurance emergency number for additional legal assistance.

- Call your on-site contact person and the MU 24/7 emergency number as soon as possible. The International Center will work with MU campus experts to assist you to the greatest degree possible.

It is important to understand that neither the U.S. government nor MU can get you out of jail if you are arrested abroad. It is vitally important that you understand and obey the laws of your host country and any countries you plan to visit while you are abroad.
STAYING SAFE
For your general well-being, it is advantageous to become familiar with your program site as quickly as possible. You should also familiarize yourself with cities you will be visiting before you begin to explore them. You may want to purchase travel guides before leaving the U.S.; they may be more expensive or unavailable in your host country.

Cities in other countries, just like American cities, have their safe and unsafe neighborhoods. You can find out what areas to avoid by asking at an information booth in a train station or airport when you arrive, or by asking your on-site primary contact person. Use your common sense and do not take risks.

Be cautious when meeting new people. Don’t give out your address and phone number to strangers or divulge too much personal information.

When withdrawing money from an ATM, go with a friend who will help you stay alert to your surroundings. Pick your ATM locations for safety, not just convenience.

Do not attract attention to yourself by speaking English loudly in public places or wearing expensive-looking jewelry. These mannerisms will likely attract thieves, or worse. If someone does try to rob or mug you, remember that your life is always more important than any of your possessions. Let them go and run away if necessary.

Taxis are not safe everywhere, especially late at night. In some places, women do not ride in taxis by themselves. Anyone can be robbed or assaulted by taxi drivers. In many cities, taxis have become so dangerous that people go out of their way to call for and identify reputable taxis. It is hard to resist the temptation of just flagging down a taxi on the street, but the wait is worth it. When you call a taxi, make sure to get the identification number or other information so you can be sure to pick the right one.

In general, do not frequent well-known American hangouts (e.g., restaurants, bars, clubs and associations, consulates and embassies). You should especially avoid these places if there is a terrorist threat, the U.S. has just participated in a military action or there is a warning about an impending terrorist threat. During times of international crisis, many U.S. embassies and consulates are picketed and threatened.

Do not hitchhike. Many people may tell you that it is perfectly safe — it is not.

Do not be afraid to be assertive when confronted with unwanted situations. Do not let anyone push you into taking risks. If you feel unsafe, you probably are, so listen to your instincts.

Some factors that increase risk are being:
- Intoxicated
- Alone at night, especially after midnight
- Alone in an isolated or high-crime area
- Asleep in an unlocked place
- Out after a local curfew
- New to the country
- Unable to speak the local language
- In a new place and making new friends
Virtual kidnapping
Virtual kidnapping is the practice of extorting funds from unsuspecting family members without an actual abduction. Social media sites allow would-be extortionists to extract personal information about upcoming trips, as well as names and contact information of prospective victims. Virtual kidnappers often wait until a victim is in a location with limited or nonexistent cell phone communication. The virtual kidnapper then makes a phone call to a family member in the U.S., claiming to have abducted the student and demanding funds be transferred to a non-traceable account in exchange for the victim’s safe return. Recently, there has been an increase in calls of this type made to the grandparents of students studying abroad. The requests are usually urgent and time sensitive; for example, claiming the student will be killed within an hour if payment is not made. Because the family often has no easy way to determine the truth of the claim, payment is usually made. For information about how to avoid being a victim of this scam and what to do if a friend or family member is contacted by a virtual kidnapper, go to international.missouri.edu/safety-guidelines.

Swimming
Many drownings on beaches abroad are due to the fact that foreign swimmers are unaware of what the local population knows about undertows or particular dangers on the local beach. Do not count on lifeguards; there likely won’t be any in most of the places you visit. Swimming in early morning, at night or under the influence of alcohol or other drugs increases your risk of drowning. In addition, in some countries, fresh water may be contaminated by parasites that carry diseases. Avoid standing water and non-chlorinated pools. Know before you dive in.

Fire safety
Fire safety codes differ from country to country. The U.S. is a relatively young country with a modern infrastructure and strict fire safety codes. This is not the case in other countries, even in modern cities such as Paris. Take time to familiarize yourself with your new environment and know where the exits are. If you would like to have a fire safety kit sent to your international address, go to firesafetyfoundation.org.
Driving and road safety abroad
MU strongly recommends that you do not drive while abroad. Differences in local laws and driving behavior put you at high risk. Trauma resulting from traffic accidents is the number one cause of death for U.S. citizens abroad. For road safety information for 150 countries, go to asirt.org.

U.S. EMBASSY AND CONSULATE SERVICES
Should you encounter serious legal, political, health or economic problems, the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate can offer limited assistance. They can provide you with a list of local attorneys or physicians, contact next of kin in the event of an emergency or serious illness, contact friends or relatives on your behalf to request funds or guidance, provide assistance during civil unrest or natural disaster, and replace a lost or stolen passport. Please understand that they are the primary contact for information on where to obtain advice; however, neither an embassy nor consulate can give advice directly.
IDENTITY ABROAD
The International Center believes all students should have the opportunity to study abroad because it can be one of the most profound ways to grow academically, professionally and personally during your time in college. The center understands all students have diverse interests, needs and challenges when it comes to studying outside the U.S., and it offers a broad array of high-quality programs to make study abroad accessible for MU students. The center’s goal to support you by providing resources that will empower you to take your different backgrounds, talents and experiences to a new community abroad; to bring new knowledge and skills gained abroad back to MU; and to become a successful global leader.

WOMEN ABROAD
At the risk of sounding alarmist or perpetuating unfair stereotypes, women should be more careful about where you go, when you go and with whom you go than you may be accustomed to at home. This is not to say that you shouldn’t go out and establish relationships of various kinds. It is to warn you about casual encounters, possible misreading of non-verbal cues, potential real misunderstandings owing to language difficulties and inaccurate notions about American women in the minds of people abroad.

In some areas abroad, Americans’ generally outgoing manner, especially on the part of young women, can be grossly misinterpreted: a friendly smile and warm “hello” on the streets of Rome could be easily interpreted as something more than mere friendliness. Therefore, it is wise to be more formal and restrained in your social contacts. Uncomfortable situations can often be avoided by taking simple precautions. Dress more conservatively than you may do at home. Although shorter skirts and tank tops may be comfortable, they may also encourage unwanted attention.

In many countries, if you are out alone — even during the day visiting a museum — your solitude may be construed as an invitation for company. In some countries, being alone in a room with a person of the opposite gender can be misinterpreted as an invitation to be intimate. Take cues from the local women on behavior. Talk to people about what to do in certain situations before they arise. Asking older women for their help is often recommended as an effective tactic. Avoid walking alone at night or in questionable neighborhoods. You should also be wary of going to unfamiliar places, like beaches and parks, with people whom you do not know well. Rape, especially date rape, is as much a reality abroad as it is in the United States.

Do not carry mace with you unless you are absolutely certain it is necessary and that carrying it is not in violation of the laws of your host country.

MEN ABROAD
Men should prepare themselves for different gender norms. For example, in Scandinavian countries, women typically are more assertive and there is greater gender equality. In some cultures, there may be different norms for the treatment of women, and you may witness behavior that would be considered harassment and gender discrimination by American standards. Some cultures may have customs for friendship between members of the same or opposite sex that differ from what you are used to. Behave conservatively at first until you figure things out.
LGBTQ STUDENTS
Acceptance of the LGBTQ community varies by country; some countries are more open and progressive than the U.S., while in other countries it is illegal to be homosexual. Take time to research your host country and consider the following:
- Host country’s cultural norms and laws related to the LGBTQ community.
- Deciding how and when you will express your sexual orientation and the potential impact(s) of sharing or not.
- Health resources abroad.
- Housing options and living with a host family.
- Challenges of gender presentation and potential challenges when showing travel documents, such as passports.

Resources for LGBTQ students
- MU LGBTQ Center: lgbtq.missouri.edu
- NAFSA Rainbow special interest group: rainbowsiq.org
- International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association: ilga.org
- National Center for Transgender Equality: transequality.org/Issues/travel.html
- Transportation Security Administration: tsa.gov/traveler-information/transgender-travelers

STUDENTS OF COLOR
While study abroad can be rewarding, it can also be challenging for students of color and it is important to be familiar with prevailing attitudes and stereotypes toward Americans, as well as Americans of different racial and ethnic populations that exist in your host country. For example, you may be part of the racial/ethnic majority, but locals may still consider you to be an outsider because you are American. Your identity may also be assumed to be different than what you claim because of preconceived notions of race and ethnicity. Or there may be different stereotypes than those that exist in the U.S. that you find frustrating. However, having experiences in the U.S. of stereotypes and preconceived notions may assist in your adaptability as compared to students of dominant groups who are not accustomed to this experience. You may also find that your identity as a person of color can facilitate conversations and attract people from the host culture who might not have interacted with someone who looks like you; this could bring positive and negative feelings depending on your experience.

All students experience study abroad differently, and while you may or may not encounter discrimination of some sort, you should try to plan ahead for how you might reach out to your existing support networks if you need them. MU has resources that you can still access while abroad, and you will also have new networks in your host country that can help you understand the local culture. The most important thing is to make sure that you talk to someone if you are struggling — you may gain new insight into your host culture that helps you learn how to respond to future challenges.

Resources for students of color
- MU Multicultural Center: multiculturalcenter.missouri.edu
- Gaines/Oldham Black Culture Center: bcc.missouri.edu
- Mizzou Diversity: diversity.missouri.edu
- Diversity Abroad: diversityabroad.com/minority-study-abroad
- The PLATO Project: allabroad.us
- Access International Education (University of Pittsburgh): www.usic.pitt.edu/aie/students
COMMUNICATION

IN-COUNTRY COMMUNICATION
While having a cell phone is not required by the International Center, some affiliated or non-MU programs may require you to purchase a cell phone on-site and many MU students decide to use or purchase cell phones abroad. If you are planning to take your cell phone with you abroad, contact your current provider to see what options are available. In addition, it may be possible to unlock your American phone, or you can rent or purchase a phone once you arrive in your host country. In most countries, if you unlock your phone or rent/purchase one abroad, you will need to buy a pre-paid SIM card that allows you to purchase minutes as you need them. Most offer free incoming calls and minutes can be purchased in varying increments. If you are on an exchange or direct-enroll program, you should update your international contact information in your myStudyAbroad account.

COMMUNICATING WITH LOVED ONES IN THE U.S.
Technology is a great tool to keep in touch with loved ones back home while you’re abroad. However, be careful not to spend so much time communicating with loved ones back home that you are missing out on great experiences in your host country.

Blogging
A blog is a great way to share your experience with a large number of people at once. It can also serve as a reflection tool and online journal for you to remember your experience when you return. Students on International Center-administered programs are encouraged to submit posts to the MU Study Abroad Blog: international.missouri.edu/blog-submit.

Social media
Social media sites are an easy way to stay connected with your loved ones. Be careful not to spend too much time on social media, as it limits your opportunity to connect with your host culture and may increase homesickness.

Web and smartphone apps
Apps such as Google Hangout, Skype and Facetime make it easy to video chat with friends and family in the U.S. for free. Google Hangouts can also be used to make voice calls over data or Wi-Fi connections (for free in some cases); you can purchase minutes through Skype to make international voice calls from a computer at a reasonable cost. Other apps such as WhatsApp and Viber are also popular choices among students.
CHECKLIST
☐ Review the resources for returning students on the International Center website.
☐ Update your contact information in myZou.
☐ Complete the online program evaluation.
☐ Participate in International Center activities for study abroad returnees.
☐ Submit your photos for the Study Abroad Photo Contest.
☐ Attend a Lessons from Abroad Missouri statewide re-entry conference.

REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK
As you arrive back in the U.S., you are likely to experience reverse culture shock as you readjust to life back home. Just as your host country seemed difficult and unmanageable to you a little while ago, home may seem that way to you now. Return shock is a perfectly normal reaction suffered by many who have been abroad. It could range from annoyance at not finding the food and products to which you have become accustomed to difficulty re-establishing ties with family and friends. Initially, you may feel that you no longer fit in. The truth is you have changed culturally.
WHEN YOU RETURN

EASING YOUR TRANSITION BACK TO THE U.S.

- Find a more receptive audience (like the International Center staff).
- Take advantage of opportunities to meet other study abroad alumni.
- Participate in study abroad recruitment events.
- Get involved with an international organization on campus.
- Request an international roommate if you live on campus, or try to form your own “language house” to keep up your language skills.
- Continue your foreign language studies.
- Stay in touch with people you met abroad.
- Subscribe to newspapers or magazines from your host country.

Remember that return shock is temporary and you will be able to readjust to your home culture. Be patient, flexible and understanding of the events and people around you, and you will soon be reintegrated into the culture you have always known.

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS ENHANCED BY LIVING IN OTHER CULTURES

- Awareness of international issues and needs
- Open mindedness
- Independence
- Tolerance of different viewpoints
- Competence in another language
- Sensitivity to differences in people and greater acceptance of diversity
- Complex self-awareness that will help when making decisions
- Creativity
- Appreciation of cultural relativity

PROGRAM EVALUATION

All study abroad participants are asked to share their experiences by completing an evaluation upon returning home. Please take a moment to share your experience — both the good and the bad — so the International Center can better advise future study abroad students.
RESOURCES

**Government websites**
Department of State travel information for students | [studentsabroad.state.gov](http://studentsabroad.state.gov)
Department of State travel registration | [step.state.gov/step](http://step.state.gov/step)
Passport services and information | [travel.state.gov/content/passports/english.html](http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english.html)
Foreign embassies in the U.S. | [state.gov/s/cpr/rls/fco](http://state.gov/s/cpr/rls/fco)
Foreign entry requirements | [travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country.html](http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country.html)
Department of State travel warnings | [travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html](http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html)
Overseas Security Advisory Council | [osac.gov](http://osac.gov)
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)

**Culture and travel websites**
What’s up with culture? | [www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture](http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture)
Lonely Planet | [lonelyplanet.com](http://lonelyplanet.com)
Exchange rate information | [oanda.com](http://oanda.com), [xe.com](http://xe.com)
Electrical outlets abroad | [electricaloutlet.org](http://electricaloutlet.org)
Student Universe | [studentuniverse.org](http://studentuniverse.org)
STA Travel | [statravel.com](http://statravel.com)
Worldwide hostel listings | [hostels.com](http://hostels.com)
Hostelling International | [hihostels.com](http://hihostels.com)