



Student Life

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Student Life

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Obtain or renew a passport

- ▶ **Apply for a passport immediately if you do not already have one. Often there are early visa or admission documents that require a current passport.**
- The **US Department of State** website contains passport information and application or renewal forms for US citizens. Additional information is available from the **National Passport Information Center** (NPIC) at (877) 487-2778 or via TDD/TTY at (888) 874-7793.
- Your passport must be valid for the duration of your stay. Depending on your program, your passport should be valid at least 3 to 18 months beyond the end date of your stay. If the passport will expire before that time, you will need to renew it before departure.
- Check with the embassy or consulate of your host country about passport duration and country-specific entry requirements.
- If you are planning to travel before, during, or after UCEAP, check the visa requirements of your host country and the other countries you plan to visit.
- In rare cases, it may be possible to legally get a second US passport for use while your original passport remains with the consulate for visa processing. UCEAP cannot assist you with this process. If you are interested in a second passport, check with the US Passport Agency for details.
- Immediately upon receipt: sign your passport, make copies of the first two pages, and leave one copy with an emergency contact at home. If possible, scan your passport and visa so they are accessible electronically while abroad.
- Update **MyEAP** with your passport information. Make sure your name matches the spelling on your passport, including initials, middle names, etc.

Follow UCEAP instructions to apply for a student visa

A visa (or entry clearance or resident permit) is an endorsement; it may be an actual stamp or sticker placed in your passport by the immigration authorities of the host country, or it may be issued to you electronically. The visa grants permission to enter and reside in the host country for the purpose stated and for a certain period of time. Find specific visa and entry requirement information in your UCEAP **Pre-Departure Checklist**. If you are not a US citizen, you are responsible for researching the host country's entry requirements.

Each country has different student visa requirements. If your host country requires a student visa prior to arrival, do not enter the host country without one—even though you may be able to enter as a tourist. Once abroad, it can be difficult, even impossible, to obtain the necessary student visa.

A visa is a privilege, not a right. The government of the host country either issues or denies a visa. A host country, via its consulates or embassies, reserves the right to reject a visa application and sets strict rules for obtaining student visas; UCEAP cannot help you if your application is denied or delayed. It is your responsibility to obtain a student visa. Refer to your program-specific visa information for further details. If you do not obtain the proper visa by the deadline, you may not be able to participate in the program.

- ▶ **International travel prior to the Official Start Date may be restricted due to visa processing and issuance.**



Submit all required predeparture documents by the deadlines

YOUR UCEAP PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

UCEAP will email you the link to your Pre-Departure Checklist, It is crucial that you review all the tabs on this page; they are titled **Travel Requirements, Money Matters, Insurance, Calendars, Policies,** and **Petitions**. Most items will only be available online for you to download, complete, and submit. Review the instructions as soon as you receive them—do not wait until the last minute. Return all forms and accompanying documents by the designated deadlines. Failure to submit documents by specified deadlines is cause for dismissal from UCEAP.

Purchase an airline ticket with a changeable return date

- Do not use a standby ticket to travel to your program site. We strongly recommend purchasing fully refundable and changeable fares, which will allow you to make changes to your return flight for a fee. Carefully research airfare rules before purchasing a flight.
- Check your Program Calendar in the Calendars tab of the Pre-Departure Checklist, as well as your Arrival instructions, before finalizing a flight reservation.
- If you are on financial aid, you will need to purchase a plane ticket before you receive a financial aid disbursement. Plan for this expense. Neither UCEAP nor the Financial Aid office will reserve or pay for your ticket.

Documents for non-US citizens

- ▶ **If applicable, be sure any reentry documents are valid.**

Without the proper visa, you will not be able to participate in UCEAP. Do not apply for US citizenship directly before or during your participation in UCEAP. As a non-US citizen, you must immediately contact the consulate of the country in which you intend to study to determine your specific requirements, which will vary depending on your country of citizenship.

You will likely need to obtain a visa in order to enter and study in the host country. The visa process can take several months, so initiate it as soon as you are accepted for participation in UCEAP. Non-US citizens applying for visas must generally have a valid passport from their country of citizenship plus proof of permission to reenter the US, such as a proof of permanent residency status (Green Card), or a readmittance stamp in their passport. If you do not have a US Reentry Permit but have a valid passport, you will likely be denied a visa. You can apply for a US Reentry Permit at a local immigration office. If you already have the permit, make sure it will remain valid throughout your entire stay abroad.

Being out of the US may jeopardize your permanent residence status in the US. If you are considering extension of your program participation from a single term to a full year, take the necessary steps before departure to ensure your legal return to the US.

Important Note:

Undocumented students who qualify as AB540 students should consult with an immigration attorney before applying to UCEAP to evaluate any risks of potentially being unable to re-enter the United States upon completion of the program and any impact that participation in UCEAP might have on any deferred action applications that the student may be pursuing.



APPLYING UCEAP POLICIES

Arrival and orientation instructions you must follow

You must arrive at the predetermined site in the host country by the specified time on the UCEAP Official Start Date. After arrival, you must attend the mandatory UCEAP orientation. You are required to attend *all* orientation activities. If you arrive late or do not participate in all or part of the required orientation, you may be withdrawn from the program (Student Agreement, Section 10).

Understand UCEAP policies and host country laws concerning conduct

Take responsibility for your own actions or inactions. **UCEAP policies** are based on the principle that students are adults and guests in the host countries.

As a participant of an official University of California academic program, you are expected to respect the rights and dignity of other students, staff, faculty, members of the host institution, and local citizens. Learn about local cultural values, beliefs, and perceptions. UCEAP is committed to maintaining an environment that encourages personal and intellectual growth. It is a community with high standards and expectations for those who choose to become a part of it, and thus establishes rules of conduct intended to foster behaviors that are consistent with a civil and educational setting.

Complying with the UCEAP **Student Conduct and Discipline Policy** along with all of UCEAP's policies will ensure your well-being and a safe, fair, and successful experience for all students. Ignorance of the policies is not an acceptable excuse for policy violation.

Misconduct abroad refers to actions that, in the judgment of UCEAP, jeopardize student welfare or that of the program. Such actions include, but are not limited to:

- Threats or the use of physical and/or verbal violence
- Violating the laws of the host country or institution
- Openly abusing the customs and culture of the community
- Damage to or destruction of other people's property
- Alcohol or substance abuse
- Harassment of any kind
- Eviction from your lodging
- Obstruction or disruption of teaching or other Program activities
- Unauthorized absence from classes or from the Study Center
- Exceeding the number of unexcused absences from class allowed for the Program
- Failure to submit a completed MyEAP Study List by the deadline set by UCEAP
- Academic misconduct (cheating, fabrication, forgery, plagiarism, or facilitating academic dishonesty)

It is your responsibility to read and comply with all policies. Inappropriate conduct abroad is a direct violation of the UCEAP Student Agreement, your signed contract with UCEAP, and can result in dismissal from the Program.

Illegal drugs

- ▶ **You are expected to read and comply with the UCEAP Substance Abuse Policy.**

Violation of the UCEAP Substance Abuse Policy will bring disciplinary action, including dismissal. Specific sanctions from the host country for alcohol-related legal violations may also occur; the student's UC campus will be notified of all sanctions.



Mailing Illicit or Controlled Substances Is Illegal

Receiving illegal substances (such as drugs or drug paraphernalia) through the mail will subject you to UC and host country regulations. Mail is often opened by host country customs officials before delivery to the recipient abroad. If you are found in possession of illegal substances, you will be dismissed from UCEAP and you may be placed under immediate arrest, face a local trial and jail term, be expelled from the country, or worse, depending on the local laws. The sender is liable to USPS and US federal laws and regulations, and punishments may include imprisonment and hefty fines.

Communicate regularly with on-site staff

On-site support may include either a UCEAP Study Center or Liaison Office. The office itself may be a UC-only office, it may be a professor's office, or it may be a host institution office used by all international students. On-site administrators may be UC or local faculty supported by local staff. Take advantage of services at your host institution, such as the International Office, Student Health, or Housing Office.

While abroad, the Study Center or Liaison Office will be your first point of contact for all matters. Among other things, the administrator or on-site staff provide support with academic matters, program logistics, personal issues, cultural activities, and on-site emergencies. Contact information for your Study Center or Liaison Office is provided in your Program Guide.

Enter all travel plans and absences in MyEAP

Click on the "Travel Signout" link in MyEAP under Participation. In the event of an emergency, UCEAP will need this information to contact you.

CULTURAL IMMERSION

Prepare for culture shock; it happens to everyone in varying degrees

Learn as much as possible about the countries where you will be traveling. To adapt successfully to a new culture, it helps to know what to expect from both the foreign environment and yourself. For details on this topic, review "**Cross-Cultural Adjustment**" by Dan K. Smith, former Associate Director of the International Students and Scholars Office at UCSB and **What's Up with Culture**, a self-paced and self-guided resource developed to support and enhance your ability to make successful cultural adjustments both before and after studying abroad. The online resource was produced primarily for traditional-aged, undergraduate American university students. For predeparture preparation, the first seven sections will be useful. The focus is generally on the concept of culture and how it impacts one's ability to understand and function in a new and unfamiliar environment. It concentrates on the skills, attitudes, and behaviors, which all study abroad students, regardless of their specific destination, will find useful.

Read about your country and keep up with the latest news

As soon as possible, research and learn about your new host country, institution, and city (where to travel, transportation expenses, how to shop in a market, what the weather is like, how to meet locals, health and safety risks, etc.).

Learn about the local culture and the academic culture. Host country newspapers and periodicals are good resources for country information.

UCEAP returnees are an excellent source of information about practical details such as the locations of ATMs abroad or the exact size of linens to pack. The UC campus study abroad office can provide you with the contact information of returnees who have indicated they are willing to advise departing students.



Prepare for reverse culture shock

After returning from the program, the UC campus study abroad office will send you information about cultural reentry and activities (usually scheduled for the fall), which include gatherings and volunteering opportunities to recruit or advise future UCEAP students. You are encouraged to participate in these activities. If you do not receive the information, contact your UCEAP advisor on campus for an update.

For returned students, the final four sections of [What's Up with Culture](#) will be useful.

GENDER ISSUES

Be aware of potential gender issues and report any incidents to UCEAP

One of the most rewarding aspects of study abroad is making friends with people who have grown up in a different culture. In order to have a successful and safe experience, it is important to be aware of the cultural differences affecting gender roles.

Women studying abroad outnumber men by about 2 to 1; therefore, while some men may be harassed, there are higher instances of women experiencing sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Learn about different gender role expectations and cultural norms regarding relationship roles and dating, and practice strategies for dealing with unwanted attention. In a cross-cultural context, communication, like everything else, may become more complicated. The culture of the host country or language barriers may cause people to interpret your words, gestures, and body language differently than you intend (and vice versa). The direct way of saying certain things may strike some listeners as too harsh. Communication problems, especially misunderstanding and misinterpretation, are common frustrations that you may experience.

Your own sense of personal boundaries (personal space) can have a different interpretation from culture to culture. Do not assume you know customs and personal boundaries in a new culture. For your safety, observe the locals and be aware of cultural cues; you may notice that host country people stand closer to, or farther apart from, each other than what's common for Americans.

Harassing behavior is annoying at best and threatening and dangerous at worst. It is important to be aware that in many instances, the intentions of the accused may be regarded as irrelevant in determining whether her/his behaviors constitute sexual harassment; it is the effect of the behavior on the recipient that may define a hostile environment. Eye contact between strangers or a smile at someone passing in the street, which may be common in the States, may result in totally unexpected invitations.

Although cultural differences may account for some discomfort, never endure verbal or physical abuse. If you feel threatened, remove yourself quickly from the situation or ask someone and/or local authorities for help. Trust your intuition and instincts sending you warning signals. Decline offers that trigger anxiety and avoid situations that make you nervous. Only you can determine how best to handle a situation.

Preparation and research about gender relations before departure will help you deal with unexpected situations. For example, many campuses and communities offer free or low cost self-defense and assertiveness classes. Such classes are good preparation for dealing with unwanted attention or abuse.



DIVERSITY

Sexual orientation within the context of a foreign culture

Before departure, reflect on the culturally based ideas and definitions of sexual identity. For example, does the right to be LGBT in the US conflict with the host country's religious or cultural values and traditions? How will you reconcile personal human rights with the cultural values of the host society? Consider how your identity as an LGBT person may affect relationships with host nationals, cultural adjustment, and the overall education abroad experience.

In preparing to study abroad, consider the following:

- Refer to the UCEAP web page for the **LGBTIQ community** and other resources listed in the UCEAP website. Explore and research the cultural, legal, and social issues relevant to the country where you plan to study. For other travel destinations, refer to the **US Department of State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices** for 2015.
- Behavioral signals may mean one thing in the US and something completely different in the foreign culture. Depending on the situation, the consequences can be serious. Physical harassment, assault, and rape are threats that both women and men have to consider when interacting across cultures because of the chance of misinterpretations of behavior.
- You will find that attitudes and tolerance toward gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered individuals vary from country to country, and even within the US. Some countries are more welcoming and legally protective than the US, while others may be less accepting and more restrictive. For example, in many parts of the world, being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered is not seen as a right, but rather as a behavior forbidden by law. If necessary, are you willing to hide your sexual orientation? After learning the laws of the host country, would you reconsider your options? You are likely to encounter a significant range of attitudes regarding LGBT issues while abroad.
- While your UC study abroad office may be inclusive of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered perspectives, the in-country staff and faculty may represent another office and culture with a different climate. Depending on this climate, you may need to look outside the office for support related to sexual identity issues or LGBT community information.
- Reflect on what it means to leave behind a support system of friends and family. Being LGBT abroad has been described by some as a second coming out. How will you reestablish your identity abroad?
- Before you leave the US, learn about the culture-specific norms of friendship and dating for relationships between people of any sexual orientation. Doing this research will allow you to understand the cultural codes and avoid potentially difficult situations.
- Inform yourself of important safe sex practices. You might consider purchasing the most current edition of one of the various gay and lesbian international reference guides before departing from the US.

Whatever your own sexual orientation, keep in mind that there may be LGBT students in the UCEAP group and other groups in the host country. Some will be 'out,' some not, and some may just be coming to terms with their sexual identity. Sensitivity to this diversity within your own group and the diversity of the host culture will further enrich your overall UCEAP experience.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Sexual and Gender Diversity, UCEAP**
- **The International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA)**



Racial or Ethnic Bias

The extent to which you may encounter prejudice in other countries you visit on study abroad depends on a wide range of factors, including the current socio-economic and political situation of your host country. Understanding another country's people, their communication styles, their protocol and etiquette can take years to learn. Within all societies, cultures, and religions people will differ, and being aware of that fact can help put your experiences in a more balanced context.

In an international context, the prejudice you encounter may have less to do with race and more to do with nationality. This comes as a surprise to many US students. Specifically, not everyone has the ethnic and racial diversity we enjoy in some parts of California, and the locals you encounter abroad will likely have their own perceptions of Americans. In addition, the topic of race may not be discussed as openly in your host country as it is in the US.

What can you do to prepare?

- Take some time to research your host country to understand the cultural nuances ahead of time. Travel guidebooks can give you some basic guidelines. The **Kwintessential** website is business-focused but it has free international etiquette and cultural guides that you may find useful.
- Be aware of your own self-image and expectations. You may have your own biases to acknowledge and address.
- Before coming to any definitive conclusions about a particular encounter, keep in mind that other people's reactions may have more to do with being curious than judgmental.

That said, if a troubling incident occurs, speak with your local UCEAP representatives or your local contact at the host institution as soon as possible. It may be a misunderstanding that is easily cleared up, and if not, you'll have the support you need to decipher the situation.

Get involved in extracurricular activities when possible

Join sports teams, music groups, or any student clubs that interest you; this is the best way to enjoy your time abroad and learn about the host culture.

Don't allow obstacles to stop you from studying abroad

Decide before you go that you will give the program a chance and that you will not immediately withdraw at the first obstacle. At some point, you will face challenges and obstacles, but overcoming them is possible. Discuss concerns with UCEAP staff to determine solutions to potential problems before they become unmanageable.