# Student Life

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IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

UCEAP Pre-Departure Checklist

Submit all required predeparture documents by the deadlines.

UCEAP will email you the link to your Pre-Departure Checklist; review all tabs on this page. Tabs are titled Travel Requirements, Money Matters, Insurance, Calendars, Policies, and Petitions. Review the instructions when you receive them. Failure to submit documents by specified deadlines may lead to your dismissal from UCEAP.

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). 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.

- It may be possible to get a second US passport to use while your visa is being processed. Second passports are issued at the discretion of the State Department and not for the convenience of the traveler. Second passports are the exception to the rule. UCEAP cannot assist you with this process. If you are interested in a second passport, check with the US Passport Agency for details.

- Upon receipt of your passport, sign it, make copies of the first two pages, and leave one copy with an emergency contact at home. Make sure your passport and visa are also 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.

Student Visa

Follow UCEAP instructions to apply for a student visa. A visa (or temporary permission to enter and stay in a country) is a sticker, stamp, or electronic endorsement placed in your passport by host country officials. The visa grants permission to enter and reside in the host country for a specified time period. 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.

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 may be 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. Host country consulates or embassies reserve the right to reject a visa application and set 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. International travel prior to the Official Start Date may be restricted due to visa processing and issuance.

Some countries require residence permits instead of, or in addition to, a visa. For countries where residence permits are required instead of a visa, you need to apply for it prior to entering that country. Instructions will be provided in your UCEAP Pre-Departure Checklist.
Airline Tickets

- Purchase an airline ticket with a changeable return date.
- Before purchasing a ticket, check the current program calendar in the UCEAP Pre-Departure Checklist, as well as your Arrival Instructions. Do not book your flight based on calendars from previous years, as arrival dates change from year to year.
- We strongly recommend purchasing fully refundable and changeable fares, which will allow you to make changes to your return flight for a fee. Do not use a standby ticket to travel to your program site.
- If you are on financial aid, you will need to purchase a plane ticket before you receive a disbursement. Plan for this expense. UCEAP or the Financial Aid Office cannot reserve or pay for your ticket.

Non-US Citizens

» Be sure your re-entry documents are valid.

As a non-US citizen, you must immediately contact the consulate of the country in which you intend to study to determine your specific visa requirements, which will vary depending on your country of citizenship.

The visa process can take several months, so initiate it as soon as you are accepted by UCEAP. Non-US citizens applying for visas must generally have a valid passport from their country of citizenship plus proof of permission to re-enter the US, such as a valid and unexpired proof of permanent residency status (Green Card), or a re-admittance stamp in their passport. If you do not have a US Re-entry Permit but have a valid passport, you will likely be denied a visa. You can apply for a US Re-entry 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.

UNDocumented STUDENTS AND DACA STUDENTS

Consult with an immigration attorney free of charge on your campus to determine if study abroad is right for you.

If you are currently enrolled as a student at UC Berkeley, contact the Undocumented Student Program.

If you are currently enrolled as a student at UC Davis, UC Irvine, UCLA, UC Merced, UC Riverside, UC San Diego, UC San Francisco, UC Santa Barbara, or UC Santa Cruz, contact the UC Undocumented Legal Services Center.

APPLYING UCEAP POLICIES

Arrival and Orientation Instructions

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 and host university orientations and all orientation activities. If you arrive late or do not participate in all or part of the required orientation, you may be dismissed from the program (Student Agreement, Section 10).

Conduct Abroad

You are responsible 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 UCEAP participant, you are expected to respect the rights and dignity of other students, staff, faculty, members of the host institution, and local citizens.
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.

Inappropriate conduct abroad is a direct violation of the UCEAP Student Agreement, your signed contract with UCEAP, and can result in dismissal.

**Illegal Drugs**

» Read and comply with the UCEAP Substance Abuse Policy.

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

Receiving illicit or controlled substances (such as drugs or drug paraphernalia) through the mail is illegal and will subject you to US 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.

**Communication with On-Site Staff**

On-site support may include either a UCEAP study center, international office, 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.

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.

**Travel Sign-Out**

Click on the “Travel Sign-out” link in MyEAP. In the event of an emergency, UCEAP will need this information to contact you. Some UCEAP locations will have another sign out process. Please use the assigned process for your location.

**CULTURAL IMMERSION**

**Understanding Culture Shock**

Culture shock happens to everyone in varying degrees. Reflect on your own cultural values and how they may influence your behavior locally. 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. Review Adjusting to a New Culture and What’s Up with Culture, a resource to support and enhance your ability to make successful cultural adjustments both before and after studying abroad.

After returning from the program, the UC campus study abroad office will send you information about cultural re-entry and activities (usually scheduled for the fall), which include gatherings and volunteering opportunities to recruit or advise future UCEAP students. Contact your UCEAP advisor on campus for more information. Read the final four sections of What’s Up with Culture to prepare for reverse culture shock.

**Research your Host Country**

Research and learn about your new host country, institution, and the 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.). Host country newspapers and periodicals are good resources for country information. Adapt to your new host culture rather than imposing your culture on the host country.
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.

GENDER NORMS

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. Preparation and research about gender relations before departure will help you deal with unexpected situations.

Learn about different gender role expectations and cultural norms regarding relationship roles and dating, and practice strategies for dealing with unwanted attention. 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).

Your own sense of personal boundaries and personal space can have a different interpretation from culture to culture. Do not assume you know customs and personal boundaries in a new culture. Observe the locals and be aware of cultural cues.

Harassing behavior is annoying at best and dangerous at worst. The intentions of the accused may be regarded as irrelevant in determining whether their 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 US, may result in unexpected and unwanted invitations elsewhere.

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. Report any incidents to UCEAP.

DIVERSITY

Sexual Orientation

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:

- Attitudes and tolerance toward gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered individuals vary from country to country. Refer to resources on the UCEAP LGBTIQ community page. 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.
- Behavioral signals that mean one thing in the US may mean something very different in the host culture. Research the culture-specific norms of friendship and dating for relationships between people of any sexual orientation in order to understand cultural codes and avoid misinterpretations.
- 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?
- Refer to gay and lesbian international reference guides for safe sex practices.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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

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 or ethnicity and more to do with nationality. 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. The topic of race may not be discussed as openly in your host country as it is in the US.

HOW TO PREPARE

• Research your host country cultural nuances ahead of time. The Kwintessential has free international etiquette and cultural guides.

• Assess your own self-image, expectations, and potential biases.

• Before coming to any definitive conclusions about a particular encounter, note that other people’s reactions may come from curiosity rather than judgment.

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 will have the support you need to decipher the situation.