



UNIVERSITY
of NICOSIA

Global
Semesters

Pre-Departure Guide
for
Study Abroad Programs

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Pre-Departure

Congratulations on your decision to study abroad! While you may think the adventure starts when your plane lands in a foreign country, there are actually many things to be taken care of before you leave. It is important to take the time at home to plan ahead for life abroad. This section outlines some of the preparations you should make before leaving in order to avoid unwanted hassles and to make your experience more enjoyable.

Passports

U.S. citizens generally need a passport to travel outside the United States. If you do not have a passport that is valid for three months after the end of the program, you should apply as soon as possible to avoid any delays. Passports costs depend on the type of processing service selected. Information about applying for a U.S. passport can be found on the U.S. State Department's website: (http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/forms_847.html).

Always keep a photocopy of your passport ID pages in a safe place at home with family and keep a copy in a secure place with you abroad, including in your checked luggage. If your passport is lost or stolen, it is easier to replace if you have the photocopy accessible.

It is important to remember that your passport is your most crucial legal document while you are outside the U.S. Treat it with special attention.

Phone Service

Global Semesters will provide you with local cellphones while you are enrolled in our programs. These phones will work within your host country and, in some cases, beyond your host country if you are traveling during the program. The phones are provided for safety purposes, but can also be used to make and receive personal calls and SMS. You will be responsible for all telephone charges on these phones and for returning the handset at the end of the semester. If you have friends and family in the U.S. that you expect will call you often, they should look into finding a good international rate plan from their long distance carrier in the U.S. This will allow them to call you at a moderate cost.

Internet

All student housing is equipped with wireless internet.

Travel Arrangements

You are responsible for making your own travel arrangements to and from your host country at the beginning and end of the program. Students should arrive on the program start date. Your enrollment advisor will advise you as to the suggested arrival times so that you can take advantage of our complimentary airport transfer to the student housing. Students arriving outside of the suggested arrival times for certain locations will incur an additional cost for transportation to student housing.

Packing

It is nearly impossible to pack everything you want. The trick is to pack what you need and what you can carry! Here are a few tips that may come in handy while you are deciding what you should pack.

1) You will over pack

Everyone always over packs. Take the time to carefully lay out what you are planning to pack and be very selective about what you really need to bring with you. Remember that this is not a permanent move, so stick with the essentials.

2) Clothing

It is important to understand the climate of your host country to know if you will need clothing for cold or hot weather, rain, snow, etc. Although as a student you will have more flexibility in dressing casually, it is a fact that in some locations like Europe, college students dress more formally than most U.S. students. Thus, you will likely want to bring more than just casual student clothing. At least one "business dress" outfit is necessary for special occasions.

In an effort to blend in with locals, most students find they are not comfortable wearing clothing that identifies them as an "American." However, many students do appreciate having a T-shirt with their home school name/logo to take pictures identifying their home school at favorite sites abroad.

3) Important documents

Passports and other documents should be carried with you, securely, yet readily accessible at Immigration. The same goes for money and credit and debit cards. Consider purchasing a small travel pouch that can be worn underneath your clothing.

4) Medications and Contact Lenses

Take extra prescription medication, such as allergy medicines, asthma inhalers, birth control pills, etc. The amount should last you throughout your stay if possible. Medication sent from the U.S. may not get through Customs. Pharmacies may not be able to fill prescriptions from U.S. doctors, and getting a new prescription will necessitate a visit to a doctor. Also, some medications available by prescription in the U.S. are considered illegal in other countries, so you should consult with your doctor or healthcare professional specializing in travel medicine in advance to determine your options. If you wear contact lenses, bring enough extra sets of contacts, cleaning solutions, your written eye prescription and extra glasses.

5) Luggage

Once you book your flights, consult your airline's carry-on and checked luggage policies to understand your weight and baggage allowances. Excess baggage fees could apply to bags above a certain weight, or to extra bags above the allowance. Please make sure you check with your airline regarding their rules and regulations.

6) Electronics and Cameras

You will need to have electrical adaptors (which change the shape of the plug) for your host country, so it is important to know what electrical plugs are appropriate for your host country. Furthermore, if you will be traveling in several different countries, it is recommended that you purchase a multi-country adaptor set. Remember that electronics that are not dual-voltage need a transformer appropriate for the country or countries in which you will travel. Most major electronics such as laptop computers have dual-voltage chargers. Small appliances tend not to, in which case they would require transformers as well as adaptors. It may also be cheaper to purchase small appliances (such as curling irons or hair straighteners) in the host country.

Living Arrangements

Global Semesters students will stay in housing provided by Global Semesters. All rooms are fully furnished and the standard is double occupancy (two students to a bedroom). The type of accommodation varies by host location and could include dormitories or off-campus apartments. You do not need to arrange your own housing for our programs.

Voting

We recommend that students obtain the pertinent paperwork to apply for an absentee voter ballot before going abroad. The following websites may be helpful in registering to vote and/or obtaining an absentee ballot before or while abroad.

Federal Voting Assistance Program:

<https://www.fvap.gov>

Insurance for Personal Belongings

Check with your insurance carrier if your personal or parents' homeowner's insurance covers your items abroad. You might need to purchase a "rider" or "personal articles floater" itemizing any high value items with which you are traveling (i.e. laptops, jewelry, etc.). This extra coverage is inexpensive and should be purchased to cover the replacement cost of the item, not just the depreciated value.

It is recommended that you do NOT bring precious articles abroad. Leave valuable jewelry and irreplaceable items at home.

At Home

- (1) Turn in "Change of Address Request" at the Post office to ensure your campus mail is forwarded to your permanent address or to a trusted location. Mail can only be forwarded to a U.S. address.
- (2) Mail cannot be forwarded overseas. Designate someone to inform you of important letters.
- (3) Inform Housing (fraternity, sorority, residential services, landlord) that you will be studying abroad and make whatever arrangements are necessary.
- (4) Make arrangements to cancel, suspend or make payments for paying ongoing services in the U.S. (e.g. utilities, cell phone, etc.).
- (5) Enroll in electronic statements or bill-paying services that will allow you to check account balances or pay credit card bills online.

Healthcare Issues

Before You Leave

Before you travel abroad, it is worthwhile to take a close look at the many factors that contribute to your physical and emotional well-being. A trip abroad will almost certainly affect your health, because so many factors of your daily health have to do with lifestyle and environment. Conversely, the state of your health will have a significant impact on the success and enjoyment of your trip.

1) Assess your health & health-related practices

Going abroad is not a magic "geographic cure" for concerns and problems at home. Both physical and emotional health issues will follow you wherever you go. In particular, if you are concerned about your use of alcohol and other controlled drugs or if you have an emotional health concern, you should address it honestly before making plans to travel. Contrary to many people's expectations, travel does not minimize these problems; in fact, it often exacerbates them to a crisis stage while you are away from home.

2) Identify your health needs

Be clear about your health needs. In your Global Semesters account, in the Online Enrollment Forms section of the Enrollment Checklist, you will find a Medical Information tab. Please use this sheet to thoroughly describe allergies, disabilities, psychological treatments, dietary requirements, and medical needs that you feel we should be aware of. This information will be kept confidential but could prove helpful in case of a medical situation. Some of our programs require substantial travel and not all travel locations will have the same accommodations, particularly related to accessibility, that are available on your home campus. If you have any concerns, please speak to us beforehand.

3) See your health practitioners

A visit to your family physician, gynecologist, and dentist will ensure that you are in good health before you leave and might prevent emergencies abroad. Update your health records, including eyeglass prescriptions and regular medications. If you are on prescription medication, try to carry a sufficient supply with you to last you through the length of your program. If you self-inject prescribed medication, you may need to carry needles and syringes with you. You will need a physician's prescription for medication and medical supplies you carry with you in order to pass through foreign customs.

Take copies of all medical records, prescriptions in generic form, and pertinent information and carry them with you in a safe place.

If you expect to need regular medical care abroad, take a letter of introduction from your physician at home, providing details of your medical conditions, care, and specific needs. Try to identify medical resources before you leave home.

4) Immunizations

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has detailed information about health and travel. Their Internet address is www.cdc.gov/travel/

If your program requires immunizations, you will receive supplemental information. In all cases, it is best to visit with your physician and review your immunizations in the context of your planned study abroad experience.

5) Pack a Medical Kit

Traveling with a medical kit may be a helpful tool. Useful items to pack include: band-aids, sunscreen, anti-diarrhea medication, Pepto Bismol tablets, antibacterial ointment, and pain reliever. Also be sure to pack regular medications, contraceptives if you may need them, and any other routine health and medical products you think you may need or brands that you like. Check the expiration dates of all medications before you leave. Make sure to bring all prescription medicine with you as you may encounter trouble with customs if you try to have medicines sent once you are abroad.

6) Medical Insurance

All Global Semesters students will be automatically enrolled in emergency insurance coverage (medical, evacuation, repatriation). A summary of the benefits and levels of coverage is provided at the following link: <https://www.globalsemesters.com/insurance>.

If you will be traveling independently before and/or after the program, be sure to understand your insurance coverage options.

When You Arrive

Once you arrive to a new country, you will soon discover that many elements in the environment may affect or alter your health. Most likely, you will be eating different foods, living in a different climate, and reacting emotionally in some way to this new experience.

1) Jet Lag

You may experience jet lag or traveler's stress. Some helpful ways to counteract jet lag include: getting plenty of rest before your trip, eating healthy food, drinking plenty of fluids (particularly juices and water), getting some moderate exercise and wearing loose, comfortable clothing.

2) Culture Shock and Stress

Culture shock is a typical phenomenon that happens to most travelers who venture to a new culture

and country for an extended period of time. There are many emotional effects of facing new values, habits, and lifestyles. You may experience confusing emotional highs and lows during your time abroad. You may also feel impatient, bewildered and depressed at times. These are all initial symptoms of culture shock, and may easily be overcome. See the Cultural Adjustment section of this guide for more information.

Be aware that a moderate amount of anxiety and stress is a natural part of intercultural transitions. A new language, exotic foods, registration, beginning classes, and even changes in the weather can affect your stress level. This stress is nothing to be afraid of and can easily be dealt with by having a positive attitude and taking good care of yourself emotionally and physically.

3) Available resources and medical needs

We will provide a detailed orientation session at the beginning of the program that will highlight key available medical resources.

Other Health Issues

(1) AIDS and STDs

You are undoubtedly aware of AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Your risk of infection depends almost entirely on your own behavior. You should take the same sexual health precautions abroad that you take in the United States. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

(2) Drugs

The use of illegal drugs is treated very seriously by Global Semesters and the local authorities. If you are convicted on drug charges, you will almost certainly be charged with fines and face jail time. If you are arrested on drug charges, there is nothing we can do with respect to the legal process.

Any student consuming or possessing illegal drugs while on a Global Semesters program will be expelled from the program!

(3) Alcohol

The use of alcohol for adults over the age of 18 is legal in all of our program host countries. That said, most students in other countries are taught from an early age to take a moderate and considered approach to alcohol. Heavy / binge drinking and drunkenness are far less common than in the U.S, and considered immature and unacceptable behavior.

The negative social and physical effects of the use of alcohol are well documented. Use of alcohol may cause: blackouts, poisoning and overdose; physical and psychological dependence; damage to vital organs; inability to learn and remember information; and psychological problems including depression, psychosis and severe anxiety. Impaired judgment and coordination resulting from the use of alcohol and drugs is associated with acquaintance assault and rape; DUI/DWI arrests; hazing; falls, drowning and other injuries; contracting sexually - transmitted diseases including AIDS; and unwanted or unplanned sexual experiences and pregnancy.

In the context of this trip, we would like to remind you that you will be in unfamiliar settings. Alcohol can lead you to make poor and unsafe judgments. Your safest decision is not to drink alcoholic beverages. If your behavior proves disruptive to the group, we will ask you to leave the group.

If you choose to drink, follow sensible drinking habits, including:

- not drinking on an empty stomach
- not drinking if you are feeling tired or ill
- alternating alcohol drinks with nonalcoholic drinks like water or juice
- limiting yourself to 2-3 drinks in a night at most
- having a friend with you in case you have difficulties
- not drinking during periods when we are traveling vigorously

Do not under any circumstances drink and drive or accept a ride from anyone else that has been drinking! We will inform you of local taxi services that will be available if you need them.

If you feel you have a problem with alcohol, we encourage you to reach out to your local program coordinator. For more information on the impact of alcohol, please refer to Appendix C.

Safety and Legal Matters

You might find some of the locations we travel to be very different from your home campus. You may not even be on a university campus, and it is very easy to perceive that your new environment is much more dangerous. This perception is heightened by international media coverage of violent incidents, which, fortunately, occur infrequently in most countries that we will be visiting. On the other hand, you may become naive to the true security nature of your new environment; traveling may give you a new sense of freedom and a false sense of security. It is very important to be aware of the environment and take necessary measures to ensure your safety.

Security

No matter how safe your campus and community appears to be, you should acquaint yourself with your new environment by attending our onsite orientation. Orientation is MANDATORY. Explore your new neighborhood and campus during the day and become familiar with areas around you. Ask fellow students or staff members about areas you should avoid at night. Always carry the address and telephone number of your new home with you until you have memorized them. Become familiar with the common laws and customs of the host country.

1) Be cautious

Exercise the same precautions you would in any U.S. city. Do not walk alone at night. It is better to call a taxi or walk with a friend. Never carry large amounts of cash! Use concealed money belts or a concealed purse for your passport, visa (if needed), money, credit cards and other documents.

2) Stay informed

Stay well-informed about local and regional news and conditions. Read newspapers with international coverage of local issues. In some countries, anti-Americanism requires that U.S. students be extra prudent and cautious. Check the U.S. State Department Travel Advisories regularly: <http://travel.state.gov/>

3) Keep in contact with home

Your parents and friends will have concerns while you are away. Please keep in contact with them on a regular basis and let them know how you are. Also if you plan to travel during your stay, leave your itinerary with your on-site program coordinator and with your family.

4) Take precautions

Take the same precautions you would at home. Do not give out your name or address to unknown

people. Know where the nearest police station and hospital is, and keep emergency numbers handy. Do not go into unsafe or unknown areas alone after dark.

(5) Read Appendix E

Appendix E contains the best practice recommendations for Health and Safety for students, parents and program providers. We encourage all to read it.

Women's Issues

“Despite our personal beliefs about what women should have the right to do around the world, we need to reach a balance of maintaining our identity and respecting the culture we are visiting. Women face unique challenges as we travel abroad. While we are excited to meet new people, we also have to think about our personal safety. Understanding cultural differences in the areas of sex roles, verbal and non-verbal communication and the reputation of foreign women can empower us as we go abroad.”

- *American Women Abroad* by Holly Wilkinson Ray

1) Challenges for Women Abroad

Many American women traveling abroad are adventuresome, independent and eager to meet people. Making the most of their time overseas and becoming involved in a variety of activities. In the U.S., women are used to being active: talking with people they don't know, making friends quickly, and going out at night.

Yet, in some parts of the world the role of women is to stay at home. Friends are made through family ties, not at night in a bar. And there are often strong differences between how women are expected to act in public and in private. Dress, behavior, activity, eye contact, and topics of conversation are shaped by spoken and unspoken cultural norms.

2) Tips for Women Travelers

Here are a few tips for improving your cultural sensitivity as a woman traveling abroad:

Research the country. Find out what the dress code is for women, which locations and situations are best to avoid as a woman, what message nonverbal communication such as eye contact sends, etc. Begin gathering this information by talking to women who are either from that part of the world or have traveled there.

Get to know the women of the country. Begin by reading books by and about women from the country. Take advantage of your new home, learn from other women that you are living with (if you are living with locals), ask questions, and take the time to get to know how they interact with their native culture.

Observe. Women can learn a lot about roles, attitudes and customs by watching. How do women carry themselves in public? What is the role of women in the host culture? What is the reputation of foreign women?

Honor the customs. Women travel to other countries to learn, so women need to make the effort it takes to show them respect.

Be aware of different cultures. If you have lived in Germany for a year and feel comfortable with male/female relationships, do not assume your expectations hold true in other countries. As you cross borders, take on the challenge of learning about each culture you encounter.

Learn the language. Whether you are in a country for a few days or a year, you will make a stronger connection with people by trying to talk to people in their language.

Avoid generalizations. You might have a bad experience interacting with one Briton; that does not mean that all British men and the whole country are unlikable. Focus on what you can learn about yourself and your own culture from each experience.

Listen to and trust your instincts. While women need to make efforts to adapt to a new culture, they also need to pay attention to what feels comfortable. When women are in a situation that makes them feel uncomfortable, they need to follow their instincts and leave.

Express yourself and the difficulties you experience to someone who can understand or in a journal. We all need an outlet.

Use common sense. Be constantly aware of your environment, take the usual precautions with strangers, and never walk alone after dark. Learn about the safest way to return to your home. While we take our nationality and gender with us abroad, one of the best tools women can also take along is cultural sensitivity. With this type of knowledge backing us up, women have a big world out there to explore.

Racial and Ethnic Concerns

“No two students studying abroad ever have quite the same experience, even in the same program and country. This same variety is true for students of color and those from U.S. minority ethnic or racial backgrounds. Reports from past participants vary from those who felt exhilarated by being free of the American context of race relations, to those who experienced different degrees of 'innocent' curiosity about their ethnicity, to those who felt they met both familiar and new types of ostracism and prejudice and had to learn new coping strategies. Very few minority students conclude that racial or ethnic problems which can be encountered in other countries represent sufficient reasons for not going. On the other hand, they advise knowing what you are getting into and preparing yourself for it. Try to find others on your campus who have studied abroad and who can provide you with some counsel.”

- *Studyabroad.com*

LGBTQI Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Intersex.

The U.S. Department of State maintains information pertaining to LGBTQI travel
<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/go/lgbt.html>

The National Association for Study Abroad has a Special Interest Group dedicated to LGBTQI and study abroad
Rainbow Special Interest Group (NAFSA): <http://www.rainbowsig.org>

Legal Matters

There are a number of common legal matters you should be aware of. Some of them are much more serious than others, so please read each carefully so that you are aware of the liability involved.

1) Arriving at the Airport

Upon arrival in your host country, you will first go through passport control in the airport. This may occur before or after you collect your luggage. The Immigration Officer will ask for your passport and may ask you some questions regarding your travel to the host country, such as, WHY you are entering the country, HOW LONG you will be in the country, and WHERE you will be staying while in the country. Be prepared to answer these questions.

After you collect your luggage in the airport, you may pass through a customs inspection before you exit the baggage claim area. Customs procedures are different in every country, but the purpose is the same, to check if you are bringing any illegal items into the country, or items that should be taxed. Some countries require that you fill out a Customs Declaration form that will need to a Customs Officer. In some cases, your luggage will be subject to actual inspections, and in other cases, other times you just pass through the Customs area on your own and speak with a Customs Officer only if you have something to declare.

2) Local Laws

It is critical to remember that you will be a guest in your host country and you are subject to all of their laws. Ignorance of the local laws will not excuse you from local prosecution and/or fines.

3) Working abroad and work permits

In most countries, foreign students are not allowed to work for pay. Despite rumors, do not accept the advice of fellow students about working in your host country. If you have questions about your eligibility for a work permit in your host country, ask your onsite program coordinator about the laws in your host country.

4) Illegal drugs

This is worth repeating. NEVER, NEVER travel with marijuana or any other contraband drugs. The United States government can assume no responsibility if you are apprehended for drug use. Even in places where the use of drugs by local citizens is either ignored or treated very lightly, when American students are apprehended indulging in or in possession of contraband, they can

be dealt with in a very harsh manner. You will jeopardize your experience abroad by taking such a risk.

If approached by someone selling drugs, walk away. Do not even talk to that person, because a conversation with a suspected narcotics pusher is seen as an act of intent to purchase by some countries. Penalties can be much more severe than in the U.S. Conditions of imprisonment in a foreign jail are not something you want to check out. Remember that being a citizen of the United States does not matter. You are subject to the law of the country you are in, so the U.S. Consulate cannot negotiate your release if you are arrested. They can only help notify family and arrange for legal representation.

5) U.S. Customs

Upon returning home you will have to go through U.S. Customs. Returning residents and citizens are allowed to bring a certain value of foreign purchases back with them. Duty will be assessed for any items exceeding this value. Under no circumstances will you be allowed to bring back fresh fruits, vegetables or meats of any type. For specific details, please consult the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol website: <http://www.cbp.gov> (travel section).

6) U.S. Consular Offices Abroad

The U.S. State Department and Bureau of Consular Affairs offer several helpful resources for American travelers. See their web site at: <http://travel.state.gov>

What U.S. Consulates CAN do in case of legal trouble:

- Visit the U.S. citizen as soon as possible after the foreign government has notified U.S. embassy or consulate of the arrest.
- Provide the detainee with a list of local attorneys from which to select defense counsel.
- Contact family and or friends for financial or medical aid and food, if requested to do so by the detainee.

What U.S. Consulates CANNOT do in case of legal trouble:

- Demand the release of a U.S. citizen.
- Represent the detainee at trial, give legal counsel, or pay legal fees or other related expenses with U.S. Government funds.
- Intervene in a foreign country's court system or judicial process to obtain special treatment.

Managing Your Money

Ways to Carry Your Money

Overall, we believe the combination of an ATM/debit card and/or a credit card is the most convenient way to carry money abroad. Visa, Mastercard, and, to a much lesser degree, American Express and others are accepted throughout the world.

In most cases, there is no need to obtain foreign currency before you arrive in your host country. You will typically be able to exchange currency at the airport and/or use your debit/ATM card at the airport.

Additional details about the different types of financial instruments you can use are below:

1) Traveler's Checks

Traveler's checks are a convenient and safe way to carry money, however they are not accepted in most countries as direct payment for goods. You would need to have them cashed at a local bank, showing your passport. One benefit though of traveler's checks is that if the checks are lost or stolen, the company that issued them will replace their full value, as long as you have a record of the serial numbers. Keep the receipt of the check numbers separate from your checks. Traveler's checks can be purchased at just about any bank in the U.S.

2) Credit Cards

Credit cards are convenient for most purchases, emergencies and cash advances, although there are usually higher interest charges for cash advances. Most major credit cards are honored abroad (MasterCard and Visa), but there are exceptions! When you use a credit card the company makes the exchange rate purchase for you, reflecting the exchange rate on the day your credit card transaction is processed. This amount may be more or less than what you thought you were paying at the time of your purchase. You will be billed in dollars on your statement, and sometimes you will see the foreign exchange conversion listed as well. The interest charged on an outstanding balance adds up quickly so you will need to leave someone you trust in charge of paying your monthly credit card purchases, or make sure you are able to do this through online banking.

3) ATM/Debit Cards and ATM Machines

ATM machines are available in most cities across the globe and are a fast way to obtain foreign currency. An ATM/debit is excellent for international travel because it allows you to withdraw money from your bank account in the U.S. in the currency of the host country. Debit cards with

Visa, MasterCard, Cirrus or Plus signs are the most widely accepted cards. Note that some ATMs abroad may not work with the system of your ATM card. Check the back of your debit card to know which system your card belongs to. The ATM machine will give you a menu choice of different languages and will ask you how much money you want in the currency of the country where you are traveling. The transaction will debit the money from your checking account in the U.S. at that day's exchange rate. There are usually transaction fees, and the fees vary significantly. Be sure to call your bank and check on the fees charged per each transaction. If your bank charges higher transaction fees, be sure to withdraw larger amounts each time to avoid multiple fees.

If you have an alphanumeric password, convert it to a numeric password because not all ATMs abroad will have a U.S. character set. Be sure that you (and someone back home) know your PIN number for ATM or credit cards. It is also good for someone at home to have a copy of the emergency number for your card so that you can report a lost or stolen card. It may be wise to carry travelers' checks as back up cash in case your bank card becomes demagnetized.

4) Advances/ Check Cashing

Any bank that honors your type of credit card will help you draw funds in foreign currency as a cash advance. These advances are often considered a loan and you can get an advance only up to your line of credit. When requesting an advance, remember that banks always require proper identification. A high interest is charged if this is not paid back within the month. If you are cash advancing a large sum of money, you should consider a wire transfer instead. American Express offers check-cashing privileges to its clients. Any American Express office will cash personal checks from a U.S. account at no charge.

5) Wire Transfers

Wire transfers are not typically necessary unless you are relying on using only ATM/debit cards and/or credit cards for getting cash or making purchases, and they are either lost or stolen while abroad. In these cases, you can have money sent through a Wire Transfer system such as Western Union to receive as cash.

Power Of Attorney

It might be advisable to designate an individual, usually a parent, to take care of legal or financial matters on your behalf while you are abroad. Find out what the proper procedure is and make those arrangements before you depart.

What it Means to be "American"

Are you Swedish-American, Mexican-American, German-American, or just American? How do you identify yourself? Whoever you are, however you define yourself, you will bring with you some amount of "cultural baggage" wherever you go. Cultural baggage can be defined as the assumptions you have about yourself, your family, friends and the world based on your own experience. Cultural baggage can weigh you down at times, but it can also be used as a resource to help you through uncomfortable situations. To understand your own cultural baggage will help you in the quest to understand someone else's.

Recognize Your "Americanism"

As you meet peoples of the world, you are excited and eager for the experience to energize you. This makes it a shock to meet with confrontation because you are who you are. It will be difficult to be confronted with seemingly unexpected and challenging questions. When faced with confrontations, it may feel as though you are being attacked personally and criticized as an American. Furthermore, as you spend more and more time in your host country, you will begin to recognize several different cultural patterns that are quite different from your own.

These cultural patterns include differences in style, assumptions, values, cultural norms, perception, motivation, forms of achievement, methods of confrontation, personalization, and more. These differences are just the tip of the iceberg and will be addressed more in-depth in the next section. However, it is important to recognize your own "American" patterns and what they mean to you.

American Cultural Patterns

Dr. L Robert Kohls, Director of International Programs at San Francisco State University, is a renowned literary contributor to the research on cultural patterns. He has developed a list of 13 commonly held values which help explain to first-time visitors to the United States why Americans act as they do. He is careful, and cautions to avoid labeling these values positive or negative. As an American, do you recognize these traits in yourself? Whether one agrees with Kohls or not or is willing to accept as valid any generalizations about Americans his observations are thought-provoking.

1) Personal Control over Environment

Americans do not necessarily ascribe to the power of fate, and they look at people who do as being backward, primitive, or naive. In the American context, to be "fatalistic" is to be superstitious, and affected by their environment.

The problems of one's life are not seen as having resulted from bad luck as much as having come from one's laziness and unwillingness to take responsibility in pursuing a better life.

2) Change Seen as Natural and Positive

In the American mind, change is seen as indisputably good, leading to development, improvement, and progress. Many older, more traditional cultures consider change disruptive and destructive; they value stability, continuity, tradition, and a rich and ancient heritage none of which are considered very important in the United States.

3) Time and Its Control

Time is of utmost importance to most Americans. It is something to be on, kept, filled, saved, used, spent, wasted, lost, gained, planned, given, even killed. Americans are more concerned with getting things accomplished on time than they are with developing interpersonal relations. Their lives seem controlled by the little machines they wear on their wrists, cutting their discussions off abruptly to make their next appointment on time. This philosophy has enabled Americans to be extremely productive, and productivity is highly valued in their country.

4) Equality/Fairness

Equality is so cherished in the U.S. that it is seen as having a religious basis. Americans believe that all people are "created equal" and that all should have an equal opportunity to succeed. This concept of equality is strange to seven-eighths of the world, which views status and authority as desirable, even if they happen to be near the bottom of the social order. Since Americans like to treat foreigners "just like anybody else," newcomers to the U.S. should realize that no insult or personal indignity is intended if they are treated in a less-than-deferential manner by waiters in restaurants, clerks in stores and hotels, taxi drivers, and other service personnel.

5) Individualism/Independence

Americans view themselves as highly individualistic in their thoughts and actions. They resist being thought of as representatives of any homogeneous group. When they do join groups, they believe they are special, just a little different from other members of the same group. In the U.S., you will find people freely expressing a variety of opinions anywhere and anytime. Yet, in spite of this "independence," almost all Americans end up voting for one of their two major political parties. Individualism leads to privacy, which Americans see as desirable. The word "privacy" does not exist in many non-Western languages. If it does, it is likely to have a negative connotation, suggesting loneliness or forced isolation. It is not uncommon for Americans to say and almost to believe: "If I don't have half an hour a day to myself, I go stark-raving mad!"

6) Self- Help/ Initiative

Americans take credit only for what they accomplish as individuals. They get no credit for having been born into a rich family but pride themselves in having climbed the ladder of success, to whatever level, all by themselves. The equivalent of these words cannot be found in most other languages. It's an indicator of how highly Americans regard the "self-made" man or woman.

7) Competition

Americans believe that competition brings out the best in any individual in any system. Value is reflected in the economic system of "free enterprise" and it is applied in the U.S. in all areas - medicine, the arts, education, and sports.

8) Future Orientation

Americans value the future and the improvements the future will surely bring. They devalue the past and are, to a large extent, unconscious of the present. Even a happy present goes largely unnoticed because Americans are hopeful that the future will bring even greater happiness. Since Americans believe that humans, not fate, can and should control the environment, they are good at planning short-term projects. This ability has caused Americans to be invited to all corners of the Earth to plan, and often achieve, the miracles which their goal-setting methods can produce.

9) Action/ Work Orientation

"Don't just stand there," says a typical bit of American advice, "do something!" This expression, though normally used in a crisis situation, in a sense describes most Americans' waking life, where action – any action – is seen as superior to inaction. Americans routinely schedule an extremely active day. Any relaxation must be limited in time and aimed at "recreating" so that they can work harder once their "recreation" is over. Such a "no-nonsense" attitude toward life has created a class of people known as "workaholics" people addicted to, and often wholly identified with, their profession. The first question people often ask when they meet each other in the U.S. is related to work: "What do you do?" "Where do you work?" or "Who (what company) are you with?" The United States may be one of the few countries in the world where people speak about the "dignity of human labor," meaning hard physical labor. Even presidents of large corporations will engage in physical labor from time to time and, in doing so, gain rather than lose respect from others.

10) Informality

Americans are even more informal and casual than their close relatives – the Western Europeans. For example, American bosses often urge their employees to call them by their first names and feel uncomfortable with the title "Mr." or "Mrs." Dress is another area where American informality is most noticeable, perhaps even shocking. For example, one

can go to a symphony performance in any large American city and find people dressed in blue jeans. Informality is also apparent in Americans' greetings. The more formal "How are you?" has largely been replaced with an informal "Hi!" This greeting is likely used with one's superior or one's best friend.

11) Directness/ Openness/ Honesty

Many other countries have developed subtle, sometimes highly ritualistic ways of informing others of unpleasant information. Americans prefer the direct approach. They are likely to be completely honest in delivering their negative evaluations, and to consider anything other than the most direct and open approach to be "dishonest" and "insincere."

If you come from a country where saving face is important, be assured that Americans are not trying to make you lose face with their directness.

12) Practicality/ Efficiency

Americans have a reputation for being realistic, practical, and efficient. The practical consideration is likely to be given highest priority in making any important decision. Americans pride themselves in not being very philosophically or theoretically oriented. If Americans would even admit to having a philosophy, it would probably be that of pragmatism. Will it make money? What is the "bottom line?" What can I gain from this activity? These are the kinds of questions Americans are likely to ask, rather than: Is it aesthetically pleasing? Will it be enjoyable? Will it advance the cause of knowledge? This pragmatic orientation has caused Americans to contribute more inventions to the world than any other country in human history. The love of "practicality" has also caused Americans to view some professions more favorably than others. Management and economics are much more popular in the United States than philosophy or anthropology, and law and medicine more valued than the arts. Americans belittle "emotional" and "subjective" evaluations in favor of "rational" and "objective" assessments. Americans try to avoid being "too sentimental" in making their decisions. They judge every situation "on its own merits."

13) Materialism/ Acquisitiveness

Foreigners consider Americans more materialistic than they are likely to consider themselves. Americans would like to think that their material objects are just the "natural benefits" that result from hard work and serious intent – a reward, which all people could enjoy were they as industrious and hard working as Americans. But by any standard, Americans are materialistic. They give a higher priority to obtaining, maintaining, and protecting material objects than they do in developing and enjoying relationships with other people. Since Americans value newness and innovation, they sell or throw away possessions frequently and replace them with newer ones. A car may be kept for only two or three years, a house for five or six before buying a new one.

How to Handle Anti-American Criticism

As expressed previously, you probably consider yourself to be a good person, or at least someone with good intentions. But as you meet people outside of the United States, you will begin to discover that others don't always think that way. In fact, you must be prepared for confrontation based on what and who you are, to be judged not for yourself at times, but rather as a collective body of people who live south of Canada and north of Mexico.

The forms of confrontation may vary; sometimes you will be expected to answer questions about American politics, geography, values, and other issues as if you were the #1 expert on the subject. At other times, criticism will simply be words yelled in your face. (Only in the rarest instances would you expect to ever be confronted with actual physical risk). A list has been compiled by former study abroad students of commonly asked questions which include:

- Why are Americans so materialistic? Why are they so wasteful of natural resources?
- Why are Americans so racist? How can you justify forcing the Native Americans onto reservations when the whole country belongs to them?
- Why are Americans so ignorant of other countries?
- Why does America give so much foreign aid to countries that abuse human rights?
- Why are there so many homeless people in "the richest country in the world?"
- Why teachers are so poorly paid in a country that claims to have one of the best educational systems?

Strategies for Responding to Anti-American Criticism

There is no one right or wrong way to respond to attacks made against the United States or yourself for being American. You will have your own method for dealing with confrontation based on your experiences, your way of dealing with conflict, and your opinions. You may choose to take an active role, and respond to the questions or accusations, or you may choose to take a passive role and not say anything in response. As you begin to respond to any criticism; keep the following strategies in mind.

1) Try to understand the critic's motives

Americans are fond of saying "don't judge a book by its cover." Outward appearances are not always enough to go on in a situation where you are being confronted with anti-American sentiment. Try and talk to your "accuser" and ask questions that may elicit this person's beliefs about the United States and why s/he might hold them. Does this person get ideas from the media? Is this something being taught in school? Has this person experienced some sort of harassment from an American? If you understand the critic's motive(s), or where his or her information comes from, perhaps you can find some common ground and a more tolerant way to respond.

2) Draw upon personal experiences and observations

When someone asks you a question like, "Why are Americans so wasteful of natural resources?" your first response might be to say: "Oh, not me." Whether or not the question is based on fact, one way to respond might be to draw on your own experiences and observations. In this case, you can say that while you cannot speak for the rest of the American population, you have your own personal practices, such as recycling, water conservation or use of public transportation.

3) Avoid becoming defensive in their presence

You sometimes can't help becoming defensive – you are, after all, an American. Try avoiding getting defensive as much as possible. Keep an open mind, and remember to try and understand your critic's motives.

4) Become more familiar with common U.S. facts and policies

"Americans are uneducated." That is a common belief overseas. How can you dispel that stereotype? "Why don't you know who the Secretary of State is?" People in other countries will probably ask you a lot of questions about the United States, on such varied topics as geography, politics, pop culture, etc. They may be questions from, "Who decides whether a person is guilty of a crime?" to, "Does every American wear cowboy boots and ride a horse?" However, it is not uncommon to find that people overseas know a great deal about U.S. politics and policies. You should familiarize yourself with basic U.S. facts and policies because you do not want to be uneducated or ignorant of basic facts. Some areas to review could include:

- U.S. geography (e.g., differences in regions)
- U.S. political system (e.g., how does Congress differ from the Senate)
- U.S. judicial system (e.g., how does the jury system work in theory)
- U.S. foreign policy (especially how it applies to your host country)

Cultural Adjustment

When you first walk off the plane, you might look around and see signs in a different language, hear people communicating in a foreign language.

A panic sets in, your first thought might be to turn around and hop back on the plane that has just brought you to this strange land. For others, you may feel a sense of great excitement, of eagerness to "begin," whatever that might mean to you. And for a handful of you returning to a place where you've been before, stepping off the plane might bring a sense of homecoming. As time goes by and you settle into your routine, register for classes, begin the process of making friends and explore the area you now call home, you will be going through many emotional, psychological, and possibly, physical changes. This is what is known as "cultural adjustment" or "cultural adaptation." You cannot avoid these changes, but as long as you recognize them when they occur, you will be better prepared to deal with their consequences.

The Importance of Defining "Culture"

It is difficult to begin a discussion on cultural adjustment without first defining the word "culture" and what makes culture.

According to American Heritage Dictionary, culture is defined as "the arts, beliefs, customs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought created by a people or group at a particular time." If you were to ask several different people what they thought culture meant, you might get a list like L. Robert Kohls did when he wrote *Survival Kit for Overseas Living*:

- manners and customs
- beliefs and ideas
- ceremonies and rituals
- laws (written & unwritten)
- ideas and thought patterns
- language
- arts and artifacts
- social institutions
- religious beliefs
- myths & legends
- knowledge
- values and morals
- concept of self
- accepted ways of behaving

Kohls found that people were describing the total way of life of any group of people. And to

complicate matters, everyone has their own personal culture. Yours may be your preference for cowboy boots over sneakers, or rap music over classical. In short, there is no one correct list of components of culture but at least you can get a sense of what makes up culture.

Implications of Cultural Adjustment

As described in the beginning, cultural adjustment is a continuous, ongoing process. It never stops, and it varies from one individual to another and from one culture to another. Your own situation may require you to confront not only differences in your new culture but it may also force you to take a good look at your own cultural values and practices. The concept of adjustment implies change. In your case, you will be moving from your "American" culture to one overseas. The nature of your adjustment depends on the nature of the differences between your original culture and the new one and on the objectives you seek to complete in the new culture. The concept of adjustment assumes that you already have well-established sets of behaviors for "operating" in your own culture. As you enter into new cultures, those patterns of behavior may no longer satisfy your needs. In developing new patterns of coping with your new environment, you may experience varying degrees of disorientation and discomfort. This is called "culture shock."

1) Culture Shock

Culture shock is not quite as shocking or as sudden as most people expect. It is part of the process of learning a new culture that, as you have learned already, is called "cultural adaptation." One definition of culture shock is:

"The feeling of frustration and anxiety which arises when familiar cultural cues are suddenly removed and replaced by new and seemingly bizarre behavior."

- Lewis and Jugman, *On Being Foreign*

You may experience some discomfort before you are able to function well in a new setting. This discomfort is the "culture shock" stage of the adaptation process. The main thing to remember is that this is a very normal process that nearly everyone goes through.

Just as you will bring with you overseas clothes and other personal items, you will also carry invisible "cultural baggage" when you travel, as was discussed in the previous chapter. That baggage is not as obvious as the items in your suitcases, but it will play a major role in your adaptation abroad. Cultural baggage contains the values that are important to you and the patterns of behavior that are customary in your culture. The more you know about your personal values and how they are derived from your culture, the better prepared you will be to see and understand the cultural differences you will encounter abroad.

2) Know What to Expect

Anticipating future events and possibilities makes it easier to deal with them when they happen. For example, it helps to anticipate your initial departure and plan ways to maintain relationships with people at home while you are away, i.e. family, roommates, professors. Be sure to allow ample time to say goodbye to all the people who are important to you, and plan how to keep in touch. This assures people that you will continue to care about them.

Planning to stay in touch does not require a promise to write or telephone on a strict schedule, but it does help to establish a realistic interval between communications. You will be extremely busy getting settled and learning about your new environment, so it is essential that long periods between communications not alarm your family and friends at home.

Some surprises always await you when you arrive in a new place. People may walk and talk more quickly, traffic patterns may be confusing, and buildings may look different than expected. Such differences are easy to see and quickly learned. The housing arrangements at your university or college, the manner in which classes are taught, registration for courses, and other procedures may seem strange or very confusing.

Studying abroad, however, means making big changes in your daily life. Generations of students have found that they go through a predictable series of stages as they adjust to living abroad. At first, although the new situation is a bit confusing, most students also find it to be exhilarating, a time of new experiences, sights, sounds, and activities. With so much to learn and absorb in the new culture, the initial period of settling in often seems like an adventure. During this time, you will tend to look for and identify similarities between your home culture and your host culture. You will find that people really are friendly and helpful. The procedures are different, but there are patterns, things that you can learn and depend on. You may classify other aspects of the culture that seem unusual or even unattractive as curious, interesting, or "quaint". There will be many opportunities to meet people in your community; such opportunities can be rewarding, but they also present an expanded array of cultural puzzles.

3) Emerging Differences

Gradually, as you become more involved in activities and get to know the people around you, differences rather than similarities will become increasingly apparent to you. Those differences may begin to seem more irritating than interesting or quaint. Small incidents and difficulties may make you anxious and concerned about how best to carry on with academic social life. As these differences emerge, they can be troubling and sometimes shocking. But culture shock does not happen all at once. It is a feeling that grows little by little as you interact with other students, faculty, and people within the community.

Common symptoms of culture shock are:

- Extreme homesickness
- Desire to avoid social settings which seem threatening or unpleasant
- Physical complaints and sleep disturbances
- Depression and feelings of helplessness
- Difficulty with coursework and concentration

- Loss of your sense of humor
- Hostility towards the host culture

Students are sometimes unaware of the fact that they are experiencing culture shock when these symptoms occur. There are ways to deal with this period of culture shock, so it helps to recognize that culture shock may lie behind physical symptoms and irritability.

4) Coping with Culture Shock

The most effective way to combat culture shock is to step back from a given event that has bothered you, assess it, and search for an appropriate explanation and response. Try the following:

- Observe how others are acting in the same situation.
- Describe the situation, what it means to you, and your response to it.
- Ask a local resident or someone with extensive experience how they would have handled the situation and what it means in the host culture.
- Plan how you might act in this or similar situations in the future.
- Test the new behavior and evaluate how well it works.
- Decide how you can apply what you have learned the next time you find yourself in a similar situation.
- Be open-minded and flexible.

Throughout the period of cultural adaptation, take good care of yourself. Read a book or watch a movie in your home language, take a short trip if possible, exercise and get plenty of rest, write a letter or telephone home, eat good food, and do things you enjoy with friends. Take special notice of things you enjoy about living in the host culture.

Although it can be disconcerting and a little scary, the "shock" gradually eases as you begin to understand the new culture. It is useful to realize that often the reactions and perceptions of others toward you – and you toward them are not personal evaluations but are based on a clash of cultural values. The more skilled you become in recognizing how and when cultural values and behaviors are likely to come in conflict, the easier it becomes to make adjustments that can help you avoid serious difficulties.

BE OPEN-MINDED AND FLEXIBLE!

5) Intercultural Communication

Perhaps the major contributor to discomfort in a foreign environment is the increased difficulty of communicating what one wishes to communicate and of receiving the information one wishes to receive. You will bring your own communication habits, both verbal and nonverbal, that sometimes do not transcend cultural limits. Studies of intercultural communication have shown that the amount of time and energy needed for simple communication increases dramatically as cultural differences increase. Your own gestures and other nonverbal cues can act, unbeknownst to you, as hindrances to communication. Your perceptions of any given person or situation can be quite different from the other person's perception.

Recognize that other cultures may use different verbal and nonverbal communication methods. Body language, the use of "personal space" when talking and other nonverbal communication can be very different from what you are used to in the United States. Likewise, some cultures are not nearly as frank, sarcastic or confrontational when discussing certain topics. Sometimes things are implied in conversation but not overt. It is important to remember that differences in communication styles are just that – different.

6) Imposition of Personal Values

The tendency of people to impose their own values and assumptions onto others in a new culture usually inhibits cross-cultural understanding. While in a new situation you should avoid making judgments that come from your own cultural perspective. For example, don't jump to the conclusion that someone in a new culture is "cheating" or "lying," when that person's behavior may be the result of other motives. Be open-minded, receptive to different ideas, concepts and behaviors. A certain amount of "cultural self-analysis" might reveal much about your own motivations and value system; such knowledge can contribute to increased communication skills, increased acceptance and understanding of others, and more productive interaction. Until you have acquired enough self-knowledge to realize the true extent to which your outward personality is shaped by cultural habits and values, you will not be completely capable of comprehending or learning from the cultural habits and values of a different society.

7) Influence of Time within a New Culture

Cross-cultural adaptation is a continuing process, with continuous evolution of insights, knowledge, physical skills and emotional skills. Of course, it is possible to live for years in a new culture and never be affected by it; but those involved in cross-cultural adjustment never cease to learn from the experience. It is important that you to be flexible with newfound knowledge, to be prepared to discover that any single piece of information might not have universal applicability in the culture. Language learning provides an example: you will often learn new words or tenses then, until you learn more, you may use that new vocabulary in inappropriate situations.

8) Will I lose my own Culture?

Sometimes students worry about "losing their culture" if they become too well-adapted to their new environment.

Learning about a new culture often increases your appreciation for and understanding of your own culture. Don't resist the opportunity to become bicultural, able to function in two cultural environments.

Just as culture shock derives from the accumulation of cultural clashes, accumulation of small successes can lead to more effective interactions within the new culture. As you increase your abilities to manage and understand the new social system, practices that recently seemed so strange will become less puzzling. Eventually you will adapt sufficiently to do your best in your studies and social life and to relax and fully enjoy the experience. And you will recover your sense of humor!

A more positive reaction is to assume or take on many of the new culture's norms, especially those involved in expressing yourself to others both in image and language. As the length of time in the new culture grows, your ability to learn from your experiences should increase, as should your awareness of your own culture influence assumptions and of your personal motivations and value systems.

Planning Your Return Home

You are preparing to go overseas, but it is not too early to begin thinking about the day you will return home. Questions such as "Why did I choose an overseas program?" and "What do I want to accomplish during my time here" can help you clarify how you are going to integrate your overseas experience into your academic, professional and personal goals for the future. Preparing for the surprises that often greet travelers after an extended period abroad will enable you to turn what is often a very awkward time into a productive one. (And your photo album will hopefully reflect it all.)

Preparing for Reverse Culture Shock

The cycle of overseas adjustment begins at the time you plan to study abroad. You may think that adjustment ends when you have successfully assimilated into the life of your host country, but, in fact, the cycle of cultural adjustment continues through your return to the United States. Culture shock and re-entry shock (more commonly known as "reverse culture shock") are not isolated events but rather part of the total adjustment process that stretches from pre-departure to reintegration at home. The rest of this chapter is designed to prepare you to leave your host country. It is important to read this section now, as well as when you are about to return home.

1) Change and Adaptation

You have just had the opportunity to live, study and travel overseas. During your stay you have probably assimilated some of the host country's culture, learned new ways of doing things and gained some new views and opinions about certain topics. In short, you have changed. As one returnee explains, "Living abroad has a deep, broadening effect on a person an effect that I didn't realize until my return." For some people, living overseas and having those changes occur outside of the United States can magnify those experiences, thus causing the return home to be a bit unsettling. In addition, some of the experiences are specific to being overseas and could not have occurred in the United States. While overseas you may have experienced a greater amount of independence both academically and personally, than you previously experienced in the United States. This independence can help make you more confident in your abilities to achieve your goals. You may have become increasingly more sure of yourself and possibly have gained a more mature or focused attitude about your future. You may even be a bit more serious and directed. Some of these new views and attitudes may be in conflict with the views and attitudes of family and friends. They may question your new way of thinking and doing things or even pressure you to "reform." These differences may often be unsettling and uncomfortable at first.

2) New Skills

Studying abroad is an opportunity to learn new skills, or refine and enhance existing ones. These may include discovering a new way to do an old task, a different perspective on your field of study, or increasing your foreign language skills. And, for those of you studying in an English speaking country, the English language will acquire a new meaning through idioms, lingo, and phrases that are specific to the host country.

These new skills will now become a part of your daily life. Increasing facility with your foreign language will probably have one of the greatest impacts. If you have learned to become dependent on these skills to communicate from day to day, then it may feel strange for you to revert back to your native language. The degree of strangeness is directly connected to the amount of culture from the host country that you have assimilated and will definitely influence your readjustment. You may feel frustrated and depressed if you cannot communicate your new ideas, skills or opinions, and this can be distressing. Again, patience, flexibility, and time will be required as it was at the beginning of your sojourn.

3) Loss of status

In your host country you may have been seen as an informal ambassador from the United States. This gave you a certain status of being "special." When you return home, you are just like everyone else and the loss of feeling a bit "special" can be a factor that you must deal with in your readjustment. One returnee describes it this way: "Being in a foreign country as a foreign visitor, you are to a certain extent a 'special person'; your new views, accent and lifestyle are all interesting to your hosts. As such, you will receive a lot of attention, make friends and, generally, be popular. However, when returning 'home', you become again a 'normal person'. I found it very difficult to make that transition."

4) Friendships

Now that you have studied abroad, you obviously have a new circle of friends. You most likely saw some or all of these people on a daily basis and they probably became an important part of your life. Leaving your new friends can be, for many, the most difficult part of reentry. Having to abandon intense friendships, girl/boyfriends, and/or cultural supports, frequently brings disturbing feelings characteristic of those associated in a grieving process. Though you may seem to make a good surface adjustment once home, that adjustment may, at times, cover many contained feelings of uncertainty, alienation, anger and disappointment.

Upon your return, friends at home will ask about your experiences and appear to be interested. They will often show a slight fascination for your adventures but this may quickly fade. They will whip through pictures and stories once, but because they have not shared the experience, you should be prepared for them to only have a cursory interest. After a while you may find that your friends are more eager to talk about what has gone on in their lives as opposed to hearing more about your life overseas. If many of your friends have never lived abroad you may also have to deal with feelings of envy or jealousy. When you talk "too much" about your experience, people may accuse you of being elitist even though that may not be your intention.

People are often threatened by new and unusual points of view if they have not had a similar

experience. As much as you need to talk about your recent time away from home, it is advisable to be sensitive to the attitudes and feelings of others. (Refer to the section on coping strategies, which discusses other options for support).

As with your family relationships, your relationships with your friends can alter because of the changes that have occurred in your life and the lives of your friends. Former friends may even have found new friendships and have priorities which are now different from yours. Be patient. If the friendship is worth maintaining, adjustment can and will be made. If not, developing new friendships can be as exhilarating as traveling.

5) Family Relationships

These changes – your new independence, new views and new attitudes, your role as informal ambassador, newly acquired skills and your new friends all have contributed to making you who you are now. The "changed you" will have to readjust to life in the United States, and, for some, this can be difficult. Initially, you may even have to live at home. It can be a surprise to learn that you are not the only one affected by reentry.

After all, you are the one who has been away and had so many new experiences. Everyone and everything at home should have stayed fairly stable. However, the home that you remember is not always going to be exactly the same as it was when you left.

This feeling of "dislocation" occurs for two reasons.

- 1 One, because you are now looking at what was once familiar through a new set of perceptions. Therefore, you will see everything a bit differently. The new experiences and perspectives gained abroad may mean that home is never the same again.
- 2 Secondly, like it or not, life at home did carry on while you were away. Things have happened to your family and friends and events have occurred in their lives. These events may have caused changes in their feelings, perceptions, opinions, and attitudes. Granted, these changes may not have affected your life as intensely. However, to the specific individuals their experiences are as important as your experiences are to you. Remember, and be aware, that people at home change too, so expect things to be different.

It is normal for you to desire to hold onto the person who you have become. Your overseas experience and life will now be a part of you and reflect who you are right now. The "new" you cannot be discarded or forgotten for the "old" you. However, you and your family must come to terms with that "new" you and continue to build upon your existing relationship from this point forward. It will require commitment to work toward mutual respect and understanding of each other's views. You may find that you have a totally different relationship with your family.

6) University/ College Life

For those of you who eventually return to a university setting, you may feel you have re-adjusted during the few months at home. However, if you go directly to your home institution without time at home (or limited time at home) you may face a new set of readjustment issues

upon return to academic life. If you have become very accustomed to a different type of academic system while overseas, you will have to deal with readjusting to your home institution's way of handling things. For example, some students, while overseas, experience a greater amount of academic independence than they had previously experienced. If you have found that academic freedom is particularly gratifying and challenging then the readjustment to a system that is a bit more structured can be difficult. Returning to university life you may also feel a bit "removed" from your major and department. Stop by the office, get re-acquainted.

Levels of Readjustment

As stated earlier, no readjustment experience is the same for everyone. You may go through re-entry much differently than someone else. Research on readjustment to the United States after a prolonged stay abroad suggests that there are several variables that may affect the degree of difficulty faced by individuals during reentry. Some of these variables include:

1) Age and academic level

Older students or professionals who were well established in their field before their trip sometimes experience a less troubled reentry than younger students do. Those who left home as teenagers, ready to discover new attitudes and explore new ways of living, may adopt the "host culture's way," rather than selectively integrate it with their own cultural or personal beliefs. Once home they may constantly compare home country traditions and practices unfavorably with their host country experience, increasing the feelings of alienation.

2) Previous cross-cultural experiences

Students who have previously been away from the United States have less trouble adjusting. A student who expects to experience some difficulties on return is better able to manage re-acculturation problems. The longer a student stays in the host country and the greater the degree of interaction and empathy with the host culture he or she experiences, the more difficult reentry into the home culture environment may be. Some observers have noted that students who are able to afford vacation visits home during their study sojourn seem to experience fewer problems upon returning home for good. It is thought that exposure to the home environment during visits results in more realistic expectations.

3) Readiness to return home

It has been hypothesized that students who strongly desire to return home at the end of their study abroad term are most likely to return home with a high motivation to 're-socialize,' while those who strongly desire to stay on in the host country will seem 'alienated' upon reentry. Those who are moderately looking forward to returning home are expected to have the healthiest reentry.

4) Degree of similarity between the home and host culture

The greater the differences between the host culture and the home culture the greater the re-acculturation difficulty for the student. An Australian or British student returning home from the United States might expect an easier transition than a Thai or Saudi Arabian student. However, the less a returnee expects to experience reverse culture shock, the more likely it is that adjustment difficulties will cause alarm.

5) Changes (or lack of) in the home environment

This variable can work in several ways. A returnee may expect everything to be the same at home as it was when he or she left. During the student's absence, there may have been subtle or dramatic changes in political, economic, environmental, or social factors on a national scale. Family relationships or the standard of living may have altered in ways not anticipated. These changes may be stressful psychologically and may make it difficult for the student to realize his or her plans. Conversely, a student may return home to find nothing seems to have changed. This can intensify the student's feeling that there is no one there who can understand what he or she is going through.

6) Availability (or lack) of a support group

Being able to share concerns and coping strategies with other recent or more established returnees can help reduce the panic, depression, frustration, and sense of helplessness that can accompany reentry. Students who return to places where few people have studied abroad can feel very alone since there is no one with whom they can discuss their concerns. It helps to locate even one other person who has shared this experience and to see that one can successfully overcome reverse culture shock.

Length of Readjustment Period

The length of time that the readjustment phase lasts will, of course, vary from person to person, but it will also depend on how intense your study abroad experience was. If you experience a very high level of intensity your adjustment will most likely take longer than if you experience a very low level of intensity. One returning student said: "I have been back 4 months and I still find it very hard to communicate about my experiences and often I feel I must hide many of the new attitudes or knowledge I may have gained that seems at odds with my old life." In addition, the length of time the readjustment lasts depends on you and how you cope with the situations that occur.

The good news is this phase of readjustment to life in the United States does not last forever! Here are some suggestions of ways to make this phase a bit easier on you and your family/friends.

1) Acknowledge your adjustment

First, and foremost, acknowledge the reentry phase as part of the overseas experience. Just as you had to give yourself time while going through the culture shock phase (if you did experience culture shock) you must also give yourself time to go through the reentry phase. Acknowledging that reverse cultural adjustment is real will help you avoid feelings of guilt that might occur if you

are feeling depressed or unhappy about being home. As one returnee stated in the survey, "Don't blame yourself, give yourself time. I'd have felt less guilty and peculiar if I'd realized it was a common phenomenon."

2) Share your adjustment

Educate your family and friends about this phase of adjustment. Many people have never heard of reverse cultural adjustment and are not aware of its existence. If the people around you know a little about what you are experiencing, then, hopefully, they will be a bit more patient and understanding towards you and help you to readjust. If you have difficulty communicating your feelings, then share this manual with your family and possibly your friends. Remind those around you that you cannot unlearn what you have learned, but that you need time to re-integrate those often conflicting components within yourself.

3) Stay in contact with your host culture

Keep in contact through letters (and, if possible, through telephone calls and email) with the friends you made in your host country. It will help you feel that what you experienced was real and not one big dream. Some returnees have the feeling of never having been overseas after their return to the home country. Also, if some of your friends are returning to the United States they will possibly be experiencing similar adjustment problems. You are an obvious support system for each other because you each know how the other is feeling and what the other is missing.

4) Seek others and get involved

If possible seek out other returnees that live nearby. You should not have a problem finding other returnees who have been overseas where you lived or studied. The fact that they have gone through (or are going through) reentry and can offer support and advice about how to cope will be helpful. Other returnees often want to hear of the overseas adventures because they have a multicultural and international perspective. Becoming active in events sponsored by your study abroad office offers you an outlet to share your concerns and also your experiences. If you want to keep using your foreign language skills there are a couple of things you can do.

- take an advanced level course in the foreign language that interests you
- organize a reunion for students returning from study abroad in your host country to exchange photos and converse in the language
- start a "language table," where a group of students interested in improving foreign language skills in a specific language, can meet 1-3 times a week during either lunch or dinner and only speak that specific language
- seek out other "captive" audiences who would have a natural interest in your overseas experience. Part of readjusting is being able to tell your story and describe the experiences that you have lived through. Such audiences include cultural organizations (you may want to consider becoming a member) or civic groups that have an interest in the part of the world where you lived, school groups studying the part of the world where you lived and prospective study abroad students.

5) Set goals for your future

Now is the time for you to look towards your future. You have finished one phase of your life and are ready to move ahead. Think about your next challenge or goal. Begin to make plans and put those plans into action. Even when you return to your home campus to finish a year or two of a degree, you can develop goals for that period of time so that you will feel you are moving ahead rather than regressing. It is common for students who do return to university to feel they have gone "10 steps forward (their overseas experience), and now are going 11 steps backward (the return to university)." It is up to you to get the most out of that time by giving yourself new goals and challenges. Take the influence of your overseas experience and use it positively to help plan this next phase of your life.

Here is some advice from other returnees:

"I think one of the best steps to take is to give yourself and your friends and family time. It was good to visit with people and catch up on their news and listen to them. Listening is important."

"Try and reflect on the positive aspects of your stay away and the positive aspects of your here and now and how they compare and contrast."

"Don't be surprised – it will take time to readjust, but you'll feel at home again in time. Don't expect to view/see people or things as you did when you left. Try to look for the positive things in returning home, not the negative."

"Realize it is very natural to experience such feelings. Secondly, try not to take yourself too seriously (if possible). Keep up your ties with your friends in the 'foreign' country by letters and phone calls and email."

"Be patient with yourself and your mood swings. Keep in touch with friends you've met, but don't forget to build new bridges at home."

APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Know Your Host Country

1. How many people can you name who are prominent in the affairs (politics, athletics, religion, the arts, etc.) of your host country?
2. Who are the country's national heroes and heroines? Can you recognize the national anthem?
3. Are other languages spoken besides the dominant language?
4. What are the social and political implications of language usage?
5. What is the predominant religion? Is it a state religion? Have you read any of its sacred writings?
6. What are the most important religious observances and ceremonies? How regularly do people participate in them?
7. How do members of the predominant religion feel about other religions?
8. What are the most common forms of marriage ceremonies and celebrations?
9. What is the attitude toward divorce? Extramarital relations? Plural marriage?
10. What is the attitude toward gambling?
11. What is the attitude toward drinking?
12. Is the price asked for merchandise fixed or are customers expected to bargain?
13. If, as a customer, you touch or handle merchandise for sale, will the storekeeper think you are knowledgeable, inconsiderate, within your rights, completely outside your rights? Other?
14. How do people organize their daily activities? What is the normal meal schedule? Is there a daytime rest period? What is the customary time for visiting friends?
15. What foods are most popular and how are they prepared? – What things are taboo in this society?
16. What is the usual dress for women? For men? Are slacks or shorts worn? If so, on what occasions?
17. Do hairdressers use techniques similar to those used by hairdressers in United States? How much time do you need to allow for an appointment at the hairdresser?
18. What are the special privileges of age and/or sex?
19. If you are invited to dinner, should you arrive early? On time? Late? If late, how late?
20. What occasions would you present (or accept) gifts from people in the country?
21. What kind of gifts would you exchange?
22. Do some flowers have a particular significance?
23. How do people greet one another? Shake hands? Embrace or kiss? How do they leave one another?
24. What does any variation from the usual greeting or leave-taking signify?
25. What are the important holidays and how is each observed?
26. What are the favorite leisure and recreational activities of adults, teenagers?
27. What sports are popular?
28. What kinds of television programs are shown? What social purposes do they serve?

29. What is the normal work schedule? How does it accommodate environmental or other conditions?
30. How will your financial position and living conditions compare with those of the majority of people living in this country?
31. What games do children play? Where do children congregate?
32. How are children disciplined at home? Are children usually present at social occasions? At ceremonial occasions? If they are not present, how are they cared for in the absence of their parents?
33. How does this society observe a child's "coming of age"?
34. What kind of local public transportation is available? Do all classes of people use it?
35. Who has the right of way in traffic: vehicles, animals, pedestrians?
36. Is military training compulsory?
37. Are the largest circulation newspapers generally friendly in their attitude toward the United States?
38. What is the history of the relationships between this country and the United States?
39. How many people have emigrated from this country to the United States? Other countries?
40. Are there many American expatriates living in this country?
41. What kinds of options do foreigners have in choosing a place to live?
42. What kind of health services are available? Where are they located?
43. What are the common home remedies for minor ailments? Where can medicines be purchased?
44. Is education free? Is it compulsory?
45. In schools, are children segregated by race? by caste? or class? by sex? What kinds of schools are considered best: public, private, parochial?
46. In schools, how important is learning by rote?
47. How are children disciplined in school?
48. Are bathroom facilities different than in the U.S.?

Appendix B:

Adjustment Cycle

- Taken from: *Bring Home the World* (Walker & Co., 1986) by Stephen Rhinesmith

As people move from one society to another and deal with cultural differences, experience has shown that there are some specific stages, which they encounter in their adjustment process. Indeed, it would be amazing if people could leave their communities, their families, and their homes and go abroad for a period of time without feeling some anxiety. The severity and length of adjustment and the number of adjustment phases that a person will go through depend upon the length of time that a person will be away from home and the support that s/he has.

Application Anxiety

When waiting for an opportunity to go abroad, people experience anxiety over their chance of selection and their ability to handle their new opportunity. During this time many anticipate cultural differences, but have only a superficial awareness of potential adjustment problems.

Selection/Arrival Fascination

When a person hears that s/he will be going abroad, s/he experiences a tremendous amount of elation. This excitement continues (with some small exceptions before departure, when anxiety may crop up again) until sometime after the individual arrives in his/ her foreign country. During this stage, expectations for the visit are high and pre-departure proceedings, as well as arrival introductions, are overwhelming and blissful in their newness. Especially on arrival the visitor tends to be the focus of attention and action. He or she is shown respect and concern, which may seldom be received in the home community.

Initial Culture Shock

The initial culture fascination, along with the rounds of introductions and parties will soon fade for a visitor who is remaining in a community over a period of time, especially a period as long as six months or a year. The novelty of a foreign culture wears off after a few weeks and most people enter a decline known as initial culture shock. Characteristics of his/her period are possible changes in sleeping habits, disorientation about how to work with and relate to others, frustrations with the language and mental fatigue from adjusting to so many differences.

Surface Adjustment

After this initial "down" which may last a few days or a few weeks, an adjustment takes place and the visitor settles into the new situation around him/her. Communication with locals increases, and s/he learns how to navigate within a small group of friends and associates.

Appendix C:

Alcohol Use Abroad

- Adapted from "Dealing with Alcohol" module, Pre-Service Health Training for Volunteer Binder, Peace Corps Office of Medical Services

Background

Alcohol (ethanol) is a psychoactive drug that causes depression of the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord). It is a legal drug, readily available, and its use is generally accepted throughout the world. Alcohol, when consumed responsibly (e.g., with meals, moderately at social gatherings, celebrations, and in religious ceremonies), is generally not harmful for healthy people. However, the potential for abuse of alcohol is quite great, and it is extremely difficult to alter a pattern of alcohol abuse once it has been established. While seeming to relieve stress, alcohol has the potential of becoming psychologically and physically addictive. It is important that students realize that they are at risk for alcohol abuse.

Alcohol and Culture

The use of alcohol is encouraged in some societies and prohibited in others. Many cultures teach young people to drink moderately and responsibly in the home, and thus do not experience the reactionary or "rebellious" alcohol abuse that some American students expose themselves to. In most cultures there are also methods for controlling alcohol abuse, but these vary and may not be obvious to a person unfamiliar with a particular culture.

Why Students are at Risk

When American students go abroad there is often more access to alcohol:

- many countries have lower drinking ages than in the U.S.
- many locations serve alcohol more readily than nonalcoholic beverages
- local culture may utilize alcohol more frequently
- the alcohol content is often stronger in other countries

Excessive or inappropriate use of alcohol is often associated with stress. An individual may begin or increase drinking after a loss, disappointment, changes in environment, or because of loneliness. These stressors are common among students. Inevitably, transition adjustment in another country, unfamiliarity with local customs, and/or a lower drinking age may lead to

irresponsible alcohol use while students are studying abroad. Students are at particular risk for increasing alcohol use or developing an abusive pattern for a variety of reasons. Among them are:

- Stress of adjustment
- Depression
- Desire to please others
- Boredom
- Easy availability and low cost of alcohol in host country
- Peer pressure
- Student may be a "novice drinker"

Effects of Alcohol

Behavioral effects can include:

- Irritability
- Anxieties
- Loss of judgment
- Moodiness
- Violent behavior
- Impulsiveness
- Inability to cope

Physical effects can include:

- Gastrointestinal irritation and ulcers
- Liver damage
- Sexual dysfunction and impotence
- Heart disease
- Cancer of the mouth, esophagus, or stomach
- Malnutrition
- Altered muscle coordination, tremors and convulsive disorders

Symptoms of Alcohol Abuse

The essential feature of alcohol abuse is a maladaptive pattern of use manifested by recurrent and significant adverse consequences related to the repeated use of alcohol. Symptoms of abuse may include:

- Daily use of alcohol (particularly if required to function normally).
- Inability to reduce intake, despite efforts to do so.
- Increasing alcohol consumption.

- Neglectful appearance.
- Blackouts (loss of memory of events which occurred when intoxicated).
- Continued drinking despite having serious physical disorder aggravated by alcohol
- Violence or aggression when intoxicated.
- Unexplained injuries.
- Binge drinking (episodes of remaining intoxicated for days at a time).
- Drinking alone.
- Legal difficulties (e.g., DUI).
- Failure to meet obligations to family, friends, or at work.
- Erratic or compulsive behavior.
- Deterioration of physical or psychological functioning.

Resisting Social Pressures to Drink

Some personal strategies, which may help, include:

- Understanding why you are choosing to use alcohol
- Making rules for oneself to guide drinking
- Setting personal limit for drinking, sticking to it, or drinking less
- Providing more nonalcoholic than alcoholic beverages for oneself, friends and guests
- Maintaining daily physical activity
- Drinking only with meals
- Making oneself aware of the impact one's drinking has on oneself and others

Who Has a Drinking Problem?

Positive responses to any of the following may indicate that a drinking problem exists:

- Can you drink more than other people without showing it?
- Do you have a drink at about the same time every day?
- Have you ever spoiled a party or outing by getting drunk?
- Has your family or friends talked to you about your drinking?
- Have you ever lost time from work because of your drinking?
- Do you need a drink in the morning?
- Do you ever wake up unable to remember what happened that night before?
- Do you take a drink before going to a party where drinks will be served?
- Do you ever drink enough to get high when you are alone?
- Has drinking become the most important and pleasurable of your activities?

Getting Help

A student's use of alcohol can become such a part of daily life, that it may not be recognized as a problem. Denial is a common defense which can also interfere with seeking help. However, few

people struggling with alcohol can overcome that problem alone. Administrators should support treatment of alcohol abuse as both a medical and social/personal problem to be addressed. Students should be made aware of whether a discussion will be confidential.

Appendix D:

Pre-Departure Resources

Destinations

www.lonelyplanet.com

www.fodors.com

www.frommers.com

EU Websites

<https://europa.eu/>

Passport and Visa Information

<http://travel.state.gov/passport>

Health and Safety

Immunization Recommendations:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/travel>

World Health Organization

<http://www.who.int>

U.S. State Department:

<http://travel.state.gov/>

Weather

www.weather.com

Language

www.fodors.com

Currency Converter

www.oanda.com

Appendix E:

Health and Safety Approach and Practices

We believe the best practices highlighted below reflect a sensible approach to health and safety. We encourage students and parents to read these practices carefully.

I. Responsibilities of Program Sponsors

Program Sponsors should:

- A. Conduct periodic assessments of health and safety conditions for their programs, and develop and maintain emergency preparedness processes and a crisis response plan.
- B. Provide health and safety information for prospective participants so that they and their parents/ guardians/families can make informed decisions concerning preparation, participation and behavior while on the program .
- C. Provide information concerning aspects of home campus services and conditions that cannot be replicated at overseas locations.
- D. Provide orientation to participants prior to the program and as needed on site, which includes information on safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in the host country. In addition to dealing with health and safety issues, the orientation should address potential health and safety risks, and appropriate emergency response measures.
- E. Consider health and safety issues in evaluating the appropriateness of an individual's participation in a study abroad program.
- F. Determining criteria for an individual's removal from an overseas program taking into account participant behavior, health, and safety factors.
- G. Require that participants be insured. Either provide health and travel accident (emergency evacuation, repatriation) insurance to participants, or provide information about how to obtain such coverage.
- H. Conduct inquiries regarding the potential health, safety and security risks of the local environment of the program, including program-sponsored accommodation, events, excursions and other activities, prior to the program. Monitor possible changes in country conditions. Provide information about changes and advise participants and their parents/guardians/families as needed.
- I. Hire vendors and contractors (e.g. travel and tour agents) that have provided reputable services in the country in which the program takes place. Advise such vendors and contractors of the program sponsor's expectations with respect to their role in the health

and safety of participants.

- J. Conduct appropriate inquiry regarding available medical and professional services. Provide information about these services for participants and their parents/guardians/families, and help participants obtain the services they may need.
- K. Develop and provide health and safety training for program directors and staff, including guidelines with respect to intervention and referral that take into account the nature and location of the study abroad program.
- L. Develop codes of conduct for their programs; communicate codes of conduct and the consequences of noncompliance to participants. Take appropriate action when aware that participants are in violation.
- M. In cases of serious health problems, injury, or other significant health and safety circumstances, maintain good communication among all program sponsors and others who need to know.
- N. Provide information for participants and their parents/guardians/families regarding when and where the sponsor's responsibility ends and the range of aspects of participants' overseas experiences that are beyond the sponsor's control.

In particular, program sponsors generally:

- Cannot guarantee or assure the safety and/or security of participants or eliminate all risks from the study abroad environments.
- Cannot monitor or control all of the daily personal decisions, choices, and activities of participants.
- Cannot prevent participants from engaging in illegal, dangerous or unwise activities.
- Cannot assure that U.S. standards of due process apply in overseas legal proceedings or provide or pay for legal representation for participants.
- Cannot assume responsibility for actions or for events that are not part of the program, nor for those that are beyond the control of the sponsor and its subcontractors, or for situations that may arise due to the failure of a participant to disclose pertinent information.
- Cannot assure that home country cultural values and norms will apply in the host country.

II. Responsibilities of Participants

In study abroad, as in other settings, participants can have a major impact on their own health and safety through the decisions they make before and during their program and by their day-to-day choices and behaviors.

Participants should:

- A. Assume responsibility for all the elements necessary for their personal preparation

- for the program and participate fully in orientations.
- B. Read and carefully consider all materials issued by the sponsor that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in the host country(ies).
 - C. Conduct their own research on the country(ies) they plan to visit with particular emphasis on health and safety concerns, as well as the social, cultural, and political situations.
 - D. Consider their physical and mental health, and other personal circumstances when accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary in planning for a safe and healthy study abroad experience.
 - E. Obtain and maintain appropriate insurance coverage and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers.
 - F. Inform parents/guardians/families and any others who may need to know about their participation in the study abroad program, provide them with emergency contact information, and keep them informed of their whereabouts and activities.
 - G. Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct, and emergency procedures of the program.
 - H. Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to the program staff or other appropriate individuals before and/or during the program.
 - I. Accept responsibility for their own decisions and actions.
 - J. Obey host country laws.
 - K. Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well-being of others, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
 - L. Avoid illegal drugs and excessive or irresponsible consumption of alcohol.
 - M. Follow the program policies for keeping program staff informed of their whereabouts and well-being.
 - N. Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining emergency health and legal system services in the host country.

III. Recommendations to Parents/Guardians/Families

In study abroad, as in other settings, parents, guardians, and families can play an important role in the health and safety of participants by helping them make decisions and by influencing their behavior overseas.

Parents/guardians/families should:

- A. Be informed about and involved in the decision of the participant to enroll in a particular program.
- B. Obtain and carefully evaluate participant program materials, as well as related health, safety and security information.
- C. Discuss with the participant any of his/her travel plans and activities that may be independent of the study abroad program.
- D. Engage the participant in a thorough discussion of safety and behavior issues, insurance needs, and emergency procedures related to living abroad.
- E. Be responsive to requests from the program sponsor for information regarding the participant.
- F. Keep in touch with the participant.
- G. Be aware that the participant rather than the program may most appropriately provide some information.

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