Congratulations on your decision to study abroad!

International Academic Programs (IAP) and the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS) International Education and Study Abroad are excited to work with you to help make your experience as culturally enriching and academically meaningful as possible. We believe that study abroad is an integral part of the UW-Madison learning experience. Our staff considers advising a collaborative process, and ultimately, you – the student – are responsible for being an active and educated participant in your study abroad experience.

This handbook contains important information that will assist you as you study abroad. When looking for specific information, be sure to utilize the table of contents – it will ease the process of searching for certain topics.

We look forward to working with you throughout your study abroad experience!
# Table of Contents

## Expectations
- Academic Advisor Meeting .......................................................... 5
- Academic Residency Rules .............................................................. 5
- CALS Graduation Policy ................................................................. 6
- Students in the College of Engineering ......................................... 6
- Language Courses ........................................................................ 7
- Music Courses ............................................................................ 7
- Physical Activity or Sports Classes .............................................. 8
- General Education Requirements (GER) .................................... 8
- Honors Credits ........................................................................... 9
- UW-Madison Registration and Credit Load ................................. 9
- Taking an Online Class ............................................................... 10
- Course Equivalents .................................................................... 10
- Course Equivalent Request (CER) Process ................................ 10
- Pass/Fail Guidelines ................................................................. 11
- Auditing a course ....................................................................... 12
- Dropping a course .................................................................... 12
- Credit and Grade Conversion .................................................... 12
- Grade Processing & Transcripting ............................................. 12
- Graduating Abroad .................................................................... 13

## Academic Overview & Policies
- Academic Advisor Meeting .......................................................... 6
- Academic Residency Rules .............................................................. 6
- CALS Graduation Policy ................................................................. 7
- Students in the College of Engineering ......................................... 7
- Language Courses ........................................................................ 8
- Music Courses ............................................................................ 8
- Physical Activity or Sports Classes .............................................. 8
- General Education Requirements (GER) .................................... 8
- Honors Credits ........................................................................... 9
- UW-Madison Registration and Credit Load ................................. 9
- Taking an Online Class ............................................................... 10
- Course Equivalents .................................................................... 10
- Course Equivalent Request (CER) Process ................................ 10
- Pass/Fail Guidelines ................................................................. 11
- Auditing a course ....................................................................... 12
- Dropping a course .................................................................... 12
- Credit and Grade Conversion .................................................... 12
- Grade Processing & Transcripting ............................................. 12
- Graduating Abroad .................................................................... 13

## Logistics
- Passport .......................................................................................... 14
- Visa ............................................................................................... 14
- Pre-departure Orientation ............................................................. 15
- International Students Who Study Abroad ................................ 15
- Air Travel and Arrangements ...................................................... 15
- Packing .......................................................................................... 16
- Electronics ..................................................................................... 16
- Power of Attorney ....................................................................... 16

Updated September 2017
# Table of Contents

## Financial Information 20
- Program Costs .................................................................................................................. 20
- Program Fee Payments ...................................................................................................... 20
- Financial Aid ...................................................................................................................... 21
- Scholarships ...................................................................................................................... 22

## Preparing to Live in Another Culture 23
- Students with Disabilities ............................................................................................... 24
- Multicultural Students ...................................................................................................... 24
- LGBT Students .................................................................................................................. 24
- Cultural Adjustment .......................................................................................................... 25
- Coping with Cultural Adjustment ..................................................................................... 26

## Health 27
- Medical Examination and Immunizations ...................................................................... 27
- Health and Wellness Information ..................................................................................... 27
- International Health Insurance ......................................................................................... 28
- Protect Your Health Abroad ............................................................................................. 29

## Safety 32
- U.S. Department of State Resources ................................................................................. 32
- Basic Precautions .............................................................................................................. 33
- Precautions for Times of Political/Social Unrest or Conflict ........................................... 33
- For Women Travelers ........................................................................................................ 34
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

For LGBT Travelers...............................................................................................................35  
Alcohol & Drugs....................................................................................................................35  
Sexual Assault........................................................................................................................36  
Transportation.......................................................................................................................37  
In an Emergency....................................................................................................................37  

## WHILE YOU ARE ABROAD  

- Program Leader................................................................................................................38  
- Telephone............................................................................................................................38  
- Mail and Shipping...............................................................................................................39  
- Photography.......................................................................................................................39  
- Traveling..............................................................................................................................40  
- Absentee Voting................................................................................................................41  
- Income Tax Returns.........................................................................................................41  
- Accessing UW-Madison Libraries....................................................................................41  
- Changing The Length Of Program..................................................................................41  
- Lengthening Your Stay....................................................................................................41  
- Shortening Your Stay.......................................................................................................42  

## WHEN YOU RETURN  

- Those Final Few Weeks......................................................................................................43  
- Understanding Cultural ReAdjustment.......................................................................43  
- A Process of Reflection and Articulation.......................................................................44  
- Getting Involved After Study Abroad...........................................................................44  

## APPENDIX  

- Study Abroad Policies.......................................................................................................45  

Updated September 2017
Our study abroad office staff serves as a resource through the entire study abroad process, from pre-departure to return.

**You can expect study abroad staff members to:**

- Encourage you to define your study abroad goals (personal, professional, and academic) and provide resources and tools to assist you in identifying a program that meets those goals.
- Be knowledgeable about program options and refer you to colleagues or resources to obtain additional details.
- Discuss openly any questions you have about your program or about studying abroad in general.
- Prepare you with tools and resources to plan your study abroad experience into your UW-Madison degree plan and encourage you to discuss your plans with your academic advisor on campus.
- Provide you with information and resources during the entire process (pre-departure, on-site, and after you return) to aid you in having a successful study abroad experience.

**Study abroad staff expects you to:**

- Take a proactive role in your experience. Learn about your program and the country in which you will be studying, and be an active participant in your preparation for study abroad.
- Review all information provided to you by study abroad staff and any other university/organization affiliated with your program.
- Ask questions if you are unclear on what is expected of you.
- Inform your parents/guardians, family members and friends of your decisions. Share any information you think they would find useful, including the program cost sheet, and have them ask questions about the program directly to you.
- Speak with your Resident Director, Program Leader, or on-site staff if you are experiencing difficulties with your classes during your study abroad program. If you have additional concerns about the academic component of your study abroad program, be sure to stay in communication with the study abroad staff at UW-Madison as well.

All students that are accepted to a UW-Madison study abroad program receive a MyStudyAbroad (MySA) account. Matters concerning acceptance and participation on a study abroad program will be managed through this account, including:

- access to acceptance forms;
- important program information and updates;
- submitting Course Equivalent Requests (CERs);
- financial details including program cost sheet and scholarship awards;
- travel, visa, and health insurance information; and
- pre-departure information.

Throughout this handbook your MySA account will be referenced as a place to complete certain tasks, obtain relevant information, and in general stay informed about your program.

We will communicate with you through your MySA account. You are required to check this account on a regular basis to keep informed about program details.
You will receive UW-Madison residence credit for all course work completed on an IAP or CALS study abroad program. UW-Madison departmental course numbers and titles (course equivalents) will be recorded on your official UW-Madison transcript, and grades earned will be calculated in your UW-Madison cumulative grade point average. You will want to work closely with study abroad staff, your Academic Advisor(s), and on-site staff (if applicable for your program) to identify study abroad courses that will meet your degree requirements. All courses taken abroad will appear on your UW-Madison transcript.

Academic Advisor Meeting
Once you have been accepted, you will need to speak with your Academic Advisor(s) to discuss your progress towards your major(s). Before meeting with your Academic Advisor, review your DARS report in conjunction with your study abroad program information and course equivalent list to determine what type of courses you might want to take abroad. Pay attention to your degree requirements and credit rules. The Guide is a great place to begin checking your requirements for your degree and major(s).

Bring the following items to the meeting with your Academic Advisor:
- Study abroad handbooks and academic information relevant to your program
- Course equivalent list for your program
- Course descriptions of classes you are interested in taking abroad
- A current copy of your DARS report
- A list of questions and concerns you want to discuss, including the types of courses you should take abroad and what courses you should take (and register for) when you return to campus

Remember, it is also a good idea to stay in contact with your Academic Advisor especially when you are choosing courses for your next semester while abroad. If you have not done so already, you are encouraged to officially declare your major prior to leaving for your study abroad program.

Academic Residency Rules
As stated earlier, you will receive UW-Madison in-residence credit for course work completed while abroad. However, each school, college, and some departments have their own residency requirements. For this reason, it is essential that you review your school/college residency credit rules with your Academic Advisor(s) before you go abroad.

In order to receive a degree, all students must earn a minimum of degree credits (30) in residence at the University of Wisconsin-Madison as they near completion of their degrees. Credit is “in residence” if it is earned for UW-Madison course work, including courses taken on study abroad programs administered by UW-Madison. Courses that do not count as “in residence” include: UW-Extension and other transfer courses, AP credit, credit by examination, and retroactive credits. All students in L&S must complete a minimum of 15 credits on the UW-Madison campus, at any level, in their major or major department. These credits may...
CALS Graduation Policy
CALS students are graduated with a bachelor’s degree when they have met all the university, college, degree program, and major requirements; have earned 120 credits; and have a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or higher on all courses carried for a grade at UW-Madison. In other words, students who complete all of their CALS degree requirements (regardless of whether they have completed their certificates or an additional L&S major) will be graduated.

Rationale: CALS is not auditing a student’s certificate or additional L&S major, so if the student has completed his or her CALS degree requirements, the student has earned a degree and is required to graduate. Certificates and additional L&S majors are only awarded if the student has completed all of the certificate or L&S major degree requirements upon completion of their CALS degree requirements. Students are expected to plan their coursework, study abroad program, experiential learning, research, internships, etc., carefully in order to align with this policy.

Click here for more information, including the appeal process for extenuating circumstances.

Students in the College of Engineering
If you are a student enrolled in the College of Engineering and plan to take any of your last 24 credits abroad on an IAP or CALS program, you must request special permission to do so and complete a 24 credit waiver form prior to confirming your participation. Approval is granted on a case-by-case basis. With this permission, you can study abroad your second to last semester, however you cannot graduate abroad, and must return to UW to complete at least one full time semester before finishing your degree. Approval is granted or denied on a case-by-case basis.

The Certificate in International Engineering
The Certificate in International Engineering demonstrates your knowledge of a specific country or region outside of the United States. This credential appears on your transcript, strengthens your resume, and testifies to your preparation for work in today’s global society.

Undergraduate students in the College of Engineering or the Department of Biological Systems Engineering (in CALS) can earn the Certificate in International Engineering by completing 16 credits of coursework with a primary focus on the language, culture, history, geography, society or institutions of a particular country or region of the world. The requirements are:

1. **Language courses (0-9 credits)**
   Although not required, language courses can comprise up to 9 credits of this certificate. Language courses beyond the first 8 credits count towards this requirement. AP, Retro and transfer credits count.

2. **‘Area Studies’ courses (6-15 credits)**
   These courses have a major emphasis on the culture, history, geography, society, etc. of the selected country or region. Courses must be from at least two different departments. AP, Retro and transfer credits count.

3. **International Experience**
   An overseas experience of at least five weeks in the same selected country or region. Study abroad (on IESP, IAP, non-UW, etc.) programs count, as do international engineering internships, co-ops or volunteer experiences.

4. **International Engineering Course (1 credit)**
   Successful completion of InterEGR 413 “Current Issues in International Engineering”.

In order to apply, students must have a 2.75 cumulative GPA and must be admitted into their specific engineering department. More details and the application form can be found here.

Questions? Please contact Amanda Hammatt.

"Studying abroad has allowed me to prove to myself that even in challenging learning environments I can succeed."
-Aimee Balistreri, Ecuador
Language Courses
For most programs with a language component, you will receive credit for the next course(s) in the UW-Madison language sequence. These UW-Madison language equivalents will be listed on your program’s course equivalent list.

You cannot take foreign language courses abroad in languages other than the host country’s official language(s) unless you have received approval from the appropriate foreign language department at UW-Madison prior to departure. This approval must be verified in writing or email to the study abroad office. For example, students who wish to study Spanish while in Ireland need the permission of the Department of Spanish & Portuguese at UW-Madison prior to going abroad.

In cases where a language is not taught at UW-Madison and is not the country’s official language, you may take a course in the language only with approval of the study abroad office prior to taking the class (e.g. student who would like to take Berber while studying on a program in France). You will need to submit a course syllabus to your Study Abroad Advisor prior to your program start. Your Study Abroad Advisor will work with you to have the course evaluated for UW-Madison credit in a related department (e.g., African Languages and Literature for Xhosa). If a departmental equivalent cannot be given, an equivalent in the Study Abroad Department (SAB) will be requested.

Students who are taking language courses to fulfill the UW-Madison foreign language requirement cannot take the courses pass/fail.

Music Courses
In many universities outside of the U.S., music performance classes are not taught at the university. Universities might offer courses in music theory, whereas conservatories or music schools offer performance classes and sometimes also theoretical/general music classes. In addition, most music courses taken abroad are at the elementary level. You should not plan to receive intermediate or advanced credit.

The School of Music determines credit and course equivalents for music performance and lesson courses taken abroad. If you take a band/choir/orchestra performance course abroad, you will not receive more than 1 credit per semester course. If you take an instrument lesson course, you will receive 1-2 credits.

If you are a UW-Madison music major, you must check with your Academic Advisor prior to going abroad. Upon return, UW-Madison music majors who took performance courses abroad are required to meet with the School of Music to determine appropriate course equivalents and credit.

Physical Activity or Sports Courses
Some universities outside of the U.S. may offer physical activity or sport courses for credit (e.g., Badminton, Soccer, Diving, Yoga). These types of physical activity classes are not taught at UW; therefore, you will receive a course equivalent from the Study Abroad Department (SAB).

General Education Requirements (GER)
Ethnic Studies (‘e’)
The ethnic studies requirement is intended to increase understanding of the culture and contributions of persistently marginalized racial or ethnic groups in the United States. Few courses taken abroad will meet this requirement. We cannot guarantee that the few ethnic studies (‘e’ designated) equivalents that you will find in your program’s course equivalent list will still be in effect for the term that you plan to take classes abroad. To verify the status of the ethnic studies designation, please contact your Academic Advisor(s). For a list of currently approved campus ethnic studies courses, please refer to the ‘General Education Requirements’ website.

Communications B
To receive a UW-Madison equivalent with the Communications B (Comm B) designation (‘b’), the course taken abroad must contain the same literacy proficiency component as Communications B courses offered at UW-Madison. Few courses taken abroad will meet this requirement. While an intermediate or advanced English writing course might equate to a similar Comm B course taught on campus,
very few courses in other disciplines will have the required emphasis on writing and speaking to qualify for acceptance as Comm B. Contact your Academic Advisor(s) if you have questions pertaining to the Comm B designation.

Honors Credits
Students participating in the Netherlands, Utrecht Honors program and the Ecuador, Ceiba Tropical Conservation Semester Program should consult their program handbook to learn about the amount of honors credit they will receive.

Students in the Honors in the Liberal Arts Program (HLA) in the College of Letters & Science may have one course (up to 4 credits) per semester taken abroad counted towards honors requirements. Through a petition process, a course taken abroad may be counted for automatic honors, honors breadth and/or general honors credits in the HLA requirements. You should plan to apply for the honors credit after you return from your program and your courses are posted on your official UW-Madison transcript. To be eligible to count towards honors requirements, the courses must transfer as L&S credit (C credit), and you must earn a B or better in the class. The Honors Program will not count courses taken pass/fail towards honors requirements. While abroad, you should be sure to keep copies of your syllabus and coursework for all of your classes in order to complete the petition. Students in the HLA program should meet with an L&S Honors Advisor to learn more about the petition process. For more information, please visit the HLA study abroad page.

Students completing Honors in the Major (HM) in the College of Letters & Science should talk to their Major Academic Advisor about whether any of their abroad coursework can be counted towards HM requirements.

Students in other schools and colleges at the UW-Madison should contact their Academic Advisor(s) about honors credit.

UW-Madison Registration and Credit Load
You will be registered for a “Study Abroad Course.” This “Study Abroad Course” acts as a placeholder. This is a temporary registration, which will be converted into graded, UW-Madison credit after the completion of your program.

If you are participating on a program for the fall, spring, academic year or calendar year, you should not enroll for classes on campus. The study abroad course will account for your entire registration for that term. If you intend to take a UW-Madison on-line course during your time abroad, you should contact your Enrollment Specialist Advisor who will advise you on the steps to take.

If you are participating on a winter intersession, summer, or spring break program, the study abroad course registration will account for your registration specific to your program. If you plan to take additional UW-Madison courses for any of those terms, you should follow regular campus registration steps. For instance, if you study abroad in the summer and if you also plan to take summer courses at UW-Madison, then you will need to follow regular registration steps to enroll for those campus courses. Also, registration for a winter term study abroad shows on the spring semester so you would follow normal steps for your spring course registration at UW-Madison.

Undergraduate students participating on a study abroad program for a semester or year in general must carry the equivalent of a minimum of 12 UW-Madison credits each semester and a maximum of 18 UW-Madison credits. All participants should consult the academic information in your program specific handbook or academic notes for the exact credit load requirements for your program and credit conversion scales. You can find these documents in your MySA account.

Programs that require or offer pre-semester courses – typically language courses – will have the pre-semester credits count towards the overall semester credit total. That is, credits completed during the pre-semester course will count towards the minimum 12 and maximum 18 UW Madison credits. Study Abroad will not delay graduation with planning. Consider how many credits you should take each year and ensure your term abroad meets your credit needs. This may

Updated September 2017
include taking 15-16 credits per semester abroad, or enrolling in summer courses.

For degree-seeking UW-Madison students: Because you are still registered at UW-Madison, you will follow the same registration procedures that you would on campus to enroll for future semesters at UW-Madison upon your return.

**Taking an Online Course**

If you plan to take a UW-Madison or UW-System online course during the same term as your study abroad program please note the following:

- You should notify your Enrollment Specialist Advisor of your plans to do so;
- You must enroll for that on-line course, which is separate than your enrollment for your study abroad program;
- You may be charged UW-Madison tuition for the on-line course. You should consult with the Office of the Registrar to determine your potential tuition charges;
- You should account for your on-line course in the maximum allowed credits per term allowed for UW-Madison students; i.e. your on-line course should be included in the number of credits you plan to take while abroad and that maximum should not exceed campus guidelines. Please refer to the UW Guide for guidelines on allowable maximum credit by term.

**Course Equivalents**

Each course you take abroad will be assigned a UW-Madison “equivalent” course in order for your grades and credits to be recorded on your UW-Madison transcript. You will request one UW-Madison equivalent course for each course you take on your program. These equivalents are the courses that will appear on your UW-Madison transcript.

To establish UW-Madison course equivalents for your program courses, you will submit Course Equivalent Requests (CER) through your MySA account. **You have access to submit requests upon your acceptance to your program.** All students must establish UW-Madison course equivalents, including Special Students (non-UW-Madison students) who may receive a different set of course equivalents once they transfer their courses to their home institution.

**Course Equivalent Request (CER) Process**

You will have two options to submit a CER in your MySA account.

1. **Submit a CER for a pre-approved UW-Madison equivalent:**

   Some program courses already have pre-approved UW-Madison course equivalents. You can view a list of these pre-approved equivalents in this option in your MySA account OR on the program specific webpage under the Academics tab.

   There may be multiple pre-approved equivalents listed for the same program course. You should choose the equivalent that is most appropriate for your major and degree requirements. If you have any questions about which equivalent you should choose, consult your UW-Madison Academic Advisor(s).

   If you wish to request a different equivalent for a course that is already pre-approved, submit a new CER (process below).

2. **Submit a CER requesting a new UW-Madison equivalent course:**

   If your program course(s) are not listed on the pre-approved list OR you wish to have another equivalent evaluated for a program course, you will need to submit a new CER requesting a UW-Madison course that best matches the program course.

   Check the [UW-Madison Course Guide](#) to find a UW-Madison course that may match the program course you are taking on your program. Your Program Leader, program on-site staff, Enrollment Specialist Advisor or UW-Madison Academic Advisor(s), may have suggestions. After you have found a UW-Madison course equivalent that you would like to request, enter the new course request in your MySA account.

   Be careful that you are not requesting a course that you have already taken at UW-Madison as this will be considered a “Refresher Course”.

Because you are requesting a new equivalent, you must include a course description, syllabus (in English unless you are requesting credit in a foreign language department), and reading list so that your course can be evaluated for an appropriate UW-Madison equivalent. If your course does not have a syllabus, you will be prompted to enter information and details

---

*Updated September 2017*
regarding your course. Without this information, your equivalent process will be delayed.

Final approval of a new equivalent request comes from the respective UW-Madison academic department.

**CER Processing Time**
Once you submit your CERs, study abroad staff reviews the requests and forwards them to the relevant UW-Madison academic department for evaluation. Processing time varies by department so you are encouraged to submit your course requests as soon as possible.

**Pass/Fail Guidelines**
If you wish to declare a program course pass/fail, adhere to the pass/fail policies described below as well as any policies established for your study abroad program. Refer to your program handbook or academic notes for detailed information. The rules governing pass/fail eligibility are complex, so read the information below carefully. These rules apply to all students participating in a study abroad program:

- Students must be in good academic standing according to their school/college in order to be eligible to request the pass/fail grading option. Undergraduates may carry one course on a pass/fail basis per term and a maximum of 16 credits during their undergrad career. The summer sessions collectively count as a single term. Students contemplating graduate or professional school should take as few pass/fail courses as possible. Pre-med students are advised to take only graded courses.

- Only elective work may be taken on a pass/fail basis
  - Student can take coursework in their major or major department on a pass/fail basis if the coursework is not being used to fulfill major requirements. **Any coursework taken in the major or major department on a pass/fail basis will not count toward fulfilling any major requirements.** Thus, students should consult with the major advisor before declaring pass/fail in the major or major department.

- Courses required for a major but offered by another department (e.g., chemistry for the zoology major) **may not** be taken on a pass/fail basis.

- You may not take a foreign language course pass/fail until you have completed the BA or BS foreign language requirement.

- Pass/fail courses do not count toward the following requirements:
  - Breadth (humanities, literature, social science, science)
  - Foreign language
  - Ethnic Studies
  - Math
  - General Education (Comm A, Comm B, QR A, QR B)

- Directed Studies courses may not be taken pass/fail.

- A maximum of sixteen (16) pass/fail credits may count toward graduation.

- Instructors are not informed which students have registered for pass/fail and will assign a regular letter grade to all students in the class.

- Pass/fail courses have no effect on probation status.

- Pass/fail courses may affect Dean’s List eligibility. You must earn a minimum of 12 graded degree credits in a semester to be eligible for the Dean’s List.

- A student may not change, nor request, a pass/fail at any time after the pass/fail deadline.

- A study abroad course taken as pass/fail still requires a UW-Madison course equivalent.

- There are no exceptions to these rules.

If your host institution or program provider has a pass/fail deadline, you are to adhere to that deadline. In addition, you must complete the pass/fail request process available in your MySA account by the deadline posted. After submitting a pass/fail request, a pass/fail confirmation will appear in your approved course list in your MySA account.

For classes you declare as pass/fail, if you receive a grade of C or better, the letter grade S (satisfactory) will be posted on your transcript. If you receive a grade of D or F, the letter grade U (unsatisfactory) will be posted on your transcript, resulting in no degree credit for the class.
**Summer program considerations:** Only one course for the summer term may be taken pass/fail. All summer courses, including those abroad, on-campus, and online, are part of the same summer term.

**Winter Intersession and Spring Break program considerations:** Courses taken during the Winter Intersession and Spring Break are recorded as part of your Spring semester. Only one class in the Spring term, comprising of the Spring semester on-campus or online, Winter Intersession, and Spring Break programs, may be taken pass/fail.

**Auditing a Course**
An auditor is considered a passive learner and may not recite in class or take examinations but is expected to attend classes regularly. Students may audit a course only if the instructor for the course they are taking on their study abroad program consents. Students must also follow any program sponsor, e.g. foreign institution, study abroad provider organization, procedures and policies for auditing a course. Audited courses will not be posted to your UW-Madison record nor will they count towards the minimum number of credits for participation as a full-time student on the program.

**Dropping a Course**
Always check with your program staff and notify them if you plan to drop a course. Complete any paperwork that is required to formally drop the course. Failure to follow all program steps and requirements for dropping a course may mean that the course will appear on your program transcript. If the course is reported, and a failing grade is assigned, you will receive an F on your UW-Madison transcript. If an “Incomplete” appears on the program transcript because you did not officially drop the course, this “Incomplete” will lapse to an F if you are unable to complete the work for the course.

**Credit and Grade Conversion**

**Credit Conversion**
Programs have their own credit conversion scales. Check your Program Handbook or Academic Notes in MySA to see the scale. In general, one class hour per week for a 15-week semester equals approximately one credit; two laboratory, discussion, or tutorial hours per week for the semester equals approximately one credit. There are exceptions to this formula in determining credits for work completed.

**Grade Conversion**
In some programs you will receive numerical grades; in others, you will receive letter grades on the A-F scale. If your program reports grades on an A to F scale, using pluses and minuses, those grades will be converted to the UW-Madison grades as indicated in the table below. If you took a class for pass/fail, you will receive S or U grades. If you receive an incomplete on your transcript at the end of the term, you will have one semester to remove the incomplete. If the incomplete has not been removed by this deadline, the incomplete will lapse into a failure (F).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If Grades from Abroad are Reported as:</th>
<th>UW-Madison Equivalent Grade:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+ / A</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A- / B+</td>
<td>AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B- / C+</td>
<td>BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C / C-</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+ / D / D-</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Deans List:**
If you earn a GPA that makes you Dean’s List eligible a notation will be added to your UW student record.

**Grade Processing & Transcripting**
After study abroad staff have received your transcript from your study abroad program, your grades can be processed. To do so, all of your course equivalents need to be approved and you need to have completed the online program evaluation.

Study abroad staff will confirm that you have submitted all required CERs by matching the requests to the courses recorded on your program transcript. If you are missing CER(s), you will be sent a notification requesting that you complete them within 2 weeks. If you fail to submit the CER by the 2-week deadline, a hold will be placed on your UW-Madison account. This hold will prevent you from any subsequent registration for courses at UW-Madison. To clear a hold, all CERs from your program must be submitted.
When all required CERs are on your record, you will receive an email asking you to review your Program Grade Report through your MySA account.

If there are no errors in your grades, credits, or equivalents, confirm the Program Grade Report in MySA within 14 days following the date of notification. The sooner you confirm, the sooner your grades will be posted to your transcript. After you confirm your Program Grade Report, please allow 14 days for the grades to be posted on your transcript. Please consult your MyUW to confirm your study abroad coursework has posted.

For academic year and calendar year participants, your first semester grades will not appear on your UW-Madison transcript until your grades for both semesters have been received.

If you feel there is a discrepancy in your Program Grade Report, do not confirm your Program Grade Report. Contact study abroad staff regarding the problem(s) within 14 days of receipt. If you do not confirm your Program Grade Report within 14 days of receipt your grade and course equivalent information will be sent to the Office of the Registrar for posting on your UW-Madison transcript. Once posted to your UW-Madison transcript, grades and equivalents cannot be changed.

Graduating Abroad
You can find complete details regarding the graduation process, including a tutorial, online. Before your departure, UW-Madison participants should request a degree audit (DARS) and meet with your Academic Advisor(s) to ensure you are on track to graduate.

In addition, you must declare your intent to graduate including graduation term and year. Students graduating declare their intent through MyUW and should be able to do so for the current and two future terms. Update your current mailing address in MyUW so that your diploma is sent to the correct address.

Your degree will be final after the following have been completed:
  • All of your course equivalents and grades from your program have been processed and posted to your UW-Madison transcript.
  • The Office of the Registrar confirms that you fulfilled all your degree requirements through your Degree Audit.

You will receive an email from the Office of the Registrar at the beginning of the term you selected for graduation with additional information regarding Degree Audits and deadlines.

Your official graduation date will coincide with the UW-Madison semester in which you completed your degree requirements. However, your official graduation date may not appear on your transcript until a later date, due to the delay in receiving grades from your program and processing course equivalents. Please consult your Enrollment Specialist Advisor if you have questions or concerns regarding graduating while abroad.

If you wish to attend a graduation ceremony but cannot be at UW-Madison for the ceremony in the term in which you graduate, you may attend a later ceremony. You should note your preferred graduation ceremony date when you apply to graduate through MyUW. Commencement ceremonies are organized by the Office of the Secretary of the Faculty. Detailed information regarding commencement ceremonies and attire can be found on the commencement website.
Passport
A valid passport is required for international travel. Passports should have at least six months of validity when traveling internationally. Most countries will not permit a traveler to enter their country unless the passport is set to expire at least six months after the final day of travel. If you do not already have a passport, please apply for one immediately. Passport application/renewal information is available online.

If local laws allow, only carry a photocopy of your passport with you each day abroad and leave the original in a secure place at your housing. Also, place an electronic copy of your passport's personal information pages in a file you can access to expedite replacement if your original is lost/stolen.

Visa
A visa is an endorsement on a passport indicating that the holder is allowed to enter, leave, or stay for a specified period of time in a country. It typically comes in the form of a sticker or stamp placed in your passport. To review entry requirements for U.S. citizens visit the State Department's website.

Visas are required for some study abroad programs. Please consult your MySA account to determine if you need a visa. It is your responsibility to keep up-to-date about student visa requirements for your host country, and if required, to apply for and receive a visa from your host country’s consulate or embassy. Visa requirements change frequently and without notice. Your MySA account will contain guidance on visa requirements, but remember:

1. If you receive information about visas from your host institution that is different from what you received from study abroad staff, contact your Study Abroad Advisor immediately.

2. Prior to sending in your visa application, check the website of the Consulate or Embassy of your host country to confirm that no changes to visa requirements have been made.

The visa process can be lengthy and time consuming, so it is important to apply as soon as possible. Some Consulates require students to appear in person, others require federal criminal background checks, and others have certain medical requirements that must be met prior to the visa being issued. All visa applications require a valid passport. The granting of a visa is completely at the discretion of the Consulate or Embassy, as a branch of the government they are representing. They can choose to issue the visa ONLY for the dates of study, or they can refuse to issue a visa if your dates of study are shorter than the required time for a visa, even if you wish to extend your time with personal travel. They are free to deny any visa application without any explanation whatsoever. The U.S. government reserves this same right with any foreign nationals requesting a U.S. visa.

Consulates may have limited business hours, are often short-staffed, and deal with many issues in addition to student visas. Be sure that you are always pleasant and polite when dealing with consular officers, whether via e-mail, on the phone or in person. Allow several days for a response from a Consulate or Embassy.
Keep in mind that you may be denied entry into, or deported from, a country where you do not have the appropriate visa documentation. Study abroad staff and UW-Madison are not responsible for obtaining student visas, nor are they in any way responsible for visa or entry denial. Be aware that if you are denied a Visa and then re-apply using a Visa expeditor, that you will be responsible for any additional fees for obtaining a Rush visa as well as for any airline change fees in the event that you have to modify your travel reservation due to a delayed Visa.

If you plan to travel to other countries while you are abroad, you should verify entry and exit requirements for each country. Many countries do not require visas for tourists visiting for less than three months, but it is your responsibility to confirm this prior to travel.

Pre-departure Orientation
Pre-departure orientation provides you with valuable information regarding studying abroad. All students are expected to complete the Preparing to Go Abroad Online Orientation. All students are also expected to attend an in-person Health & Safety workshop. Program providers or host universities may also provide information including pre-departure emails, handbooks, newsletters, presentations, etc. Study abroad staff expect you to be an active participant in preparing yourself for your program.

International Students Who Study Abroad
International students should:

1) Contact International Student Services (ISS) at UW-Madison (or the office at their home institution which works with international students) regarding your study abroad program. Begin working with ISS soon after acceptance to make sure all visa stipulations will be met and to complete appropriate paperwork.

2) Email SHIP and let them know you will be studying abroad. Make sure you include your full name and program dates in the email.

3) Consult the appropriate Consulate or Embassy on entry requirements for non-U.S. citizens.

Air Travel and Arrangements
Check your MySA account for departure dates for your study abroad program. For most study abroad programs, students are responsible for making their own travel arrangements, which allows flexibility to find the lowest fare and plan your travel itinerary. After purchasing your flight, complete the flight itinerary form in your MySA account.

You can search individual airline websites for flight information or use a travel agent to make your flight arrangements. When booking a flight it is important to know the stipulations placed on the ticket. Consider the following:

• Can the ticket be purchased for the time period you desire? Return dates for airline tickets cannot be purchased if the return date is over a certain number of days in the future. Passengers must purchase a round-trip ticket with an earlier return date and then change the return date or purchase 2 one-way tickets.

• Can you change the ticket?

• What costs will be incurred if you make changes to the ticket?

A few study abroad programs arrange group flights. If this is the case for your program, it will be communicated in your MySA account.

Flight security has become more stringent and regulations about what can and cannot be carried on to an aircraft continually change. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) website provides up to date information regarding air travel. Knowledge of travel regulations will prepare you for the increased security checks at the airport, so check this website regularly. Questions about luggage regulations or airport security can be addressed to your specific airline carrier.

Bring the correct adaptors, pack lightly, and prepare to see the most beautiful places you will ever see in your life.”

-Houa Vang, Croatia
All electronic devices are screened by security officers. During the security examination, officers may also ask that you power up some devices, including cell phones. Powerless devices will not be permitted onboard the aircraft. The traveler may also undergo additional screening.

Students traveling internationally are required to pass through customs and immigration in their host country and upon return to the U.S. Immigration officials will check your passport and visa (if required), so carry these items with you on the plane. After passing through immigration, customs officials will monitor what goods and services you are bringing into the country and may check your luggage to ensure that you are following the import/export regulations for the country.

Packing
Packing sensibly and lightly is important for all study abroad students. In addition to the essential items (clothing, toiletries, etc.), it is important to remember the following:

- Airlines restrict the amount and weight of luggage that passengers are allowed to bring with them. Consult your airline to determine what the limits are for your flights and what fees will be charged for baggage.

- Important documents (passport, emergency contact information, insurance card, housing information, program details, money, etc.) should be in your carry-on luggage.

- Take enough prescription medication to last the duration of the program. Keep prescription medication in its original packaging and carry a letter/prescription from your doctor explaining your condition and use of medication. Prescriptions should be packed in your carry-on luggage.

- Take an extra pair of eye glasses and/or contact lenses, along with a copy of your eye prescription.

- Valuable items, expensive jewelry, and items that cannot be replaced should be left at home.

Electronics
Electrical currents are different from country to country. If you intend to bring any electrical appliances (laptop, phone charger, etc.), you may need to take a voltage converter and a set of adapter plugs. Converters/adapters can be purchased at electronic stores in the U.S.; however, it might be easier to buy small electrical appliances, such as hairdryers, once you have arrived in your host country.

If you are traveling with a laptop, obtain all necessary conversion information from a professional prior to departure. In some countries, digital snooping is commonplace, leaving your sensitive information vulnerable to theft. Prepare your device for travel by backing up your sensitive data and removing all information not needed for the duration of your program, updating security protections, and familiarizing yourself with local laws and security.

Power of Attorney
Assigning power of attorney is a legal process that involves the drafting of a document which assigns another person to act as your legal representative in specific situations. For more information about Power of Attorney in the state of Wisconsin, please visit the web site of the Department of Health Services. If you reside outside of Wisconsin, simply search the Internet for the necessary policies and forms in your state.

Personal Property Insurance
Study abroad staff recommends that you have insurance to cover damage or theft to your personal property abroad. Insurance company policies vary widely on the circumstances and amount of coverage. In some instances, your parents’ homeowners’ policy or your own renter’s insurance policy is enough to provide limited coverage. In other cases, a special policy must be purchased. Check with your insurance company or contact any insurance company that provides home or renter’s insurance to learn more about the extent of coverage possible for personal property that you take with you abroad.

Subletting Resources
When planning to study abroad, securing a lease arrangement for housing that closely matches your time in Madison is ideal. To explore on-campus housing options, contact University Housing. You can also search the Campus Area Housing website for semester and/or other shorter-term lease options near campus.
If you are unable to secure a shorter-term arrangement, subletting can be a helpful alternative to consider. Subletting is an arrangement between a current tenant, a “substitute” tenant (sublessee), and the property owner. The arrangement permits the sublessee to reside in a tenant’s apartment, assuming the tenant’s share of or all of the rent. Things to consider include:

- Before signing a lease, find out whether or not the property owner/manager permits subletting. For those who do, ask about and follow their subletting process.
- If you have roommates, be sure you have their support. Your roommates should feel comfortable with the new sublessee; they can also be one of your best marketing strategies.
- Advertise your rental early and often and make sure it is competitively priced. Please note that there are more sublets available in the downtown/campus area than there are interested renters and only about half of advertised sublets are filled. Remember that taking on a small ‘loss’ each month may be better than paying 100% of your rent when you’re abroad.
- Ways to promote a sublet:
  → Advertise with Campus Area Housing (http://www.campusareahousing.wisc.edu) at a cost of $15 for up to 5 months.
  → Spread the word via social networking, other advertising websites, and/or e-mail
  → Post flyers on/near campus (be sure to ask for approval when using bulletin boards in campus buildings)
  → Be on alert for scams when advertising your vacancy, especially with social networking and advertising websites. For more information, view the Sublet Scam Alert on the Campus Area Housing website.
- If you find a sublessee, you and any co-signors on the original lease may still be responsible for timely rent payments and any damages. Damages incurred by a sublessee can be taken from your original security deposit.
- As the current tenant, you may ask for and hold a deposit from your sublessee. Please note that you are required to return their deposit in a timely manner at the conclusion of their stay.
- Complete a written sublet agreement with your sublessee. If your property owner does not provide one, an example can be found on the Tenant Resource Center’s website (http://www.tenantresourcecenter.org).

Handling Money Abroad

**How much money should I take?**

Your personal spending habits, the cost of living in your host country/city, and fluctuating exchange rates should all be taken into consideration when figuring out your study abroad budget. The Financials tab in your MySA account provides you with your program cost sheet that will help you estimate the amount of money you will need to finance your study abroad program. Budget extra money for emergencies and consult past program participants about the out of pocket costs they incurred while abroad.

**How do I exchange money?**

Familiarize yourself with the current exchange rate of your host country prior to departure. Current exchange rates can be found online. Cash can be exchanged abroad at a variety of locations: airports, banks, hotel lobbies, currency exchange centers, etc. Your passport is often needed for identification when exchanging money and there will be a commission fee assessed to the transaction that is based on the amount of money being exchanged. Some countries restrict the bills that they are able to exchange to those that have been recently printed.

**How do I keep my money safe?**

Use the same precautions with money abroad that you would when traveling in any large city in the U.S. Be aware of pickpockets in crowded areas and on public transportation. Carry your money and other documents in a money pouch worn inside your clothing. Use the same precautions you take at home when using an ATM; keep your PIN separate from your ATM/debit card and use machines inside banks or other buildings. Maintain a copy of all credit card numbers, traveler check numbers, and any PINs in a safe place, and do not carry these with you at any time. Leave a copy of these documents with someone you trust at home who you designate as your financial representative.

**ATM/Debit Cards**

With an ATM/debit card, you will be able to withdraw cash (in the host country currency) from an ATM and
have it debited (in U.S. dollars) to your U.S. account. ATM/debit cards are now easy to use in destinations all around the world. ATM/debit withdrawals use a fairly favorable exchange rate and do not entail the additional charges that could be imposed for processing checks, although your U.S. bank may impose a service fee for an international withdrawal. Your U.S. bank establishes the upper limit on the amount that can be withdrawn at any one time and on any one day. Check with your U.S. bank on all rules before departing and ask for a duplicate card in case one is damaged or lost in a machine while you are abroad.

Arrange with your U.S. bank for an internationally accepted ATM/debit card and PIN number before you leave the U.S. Since ATM/debit cards are linked to banking accounts, you can monitor your expenses, especially with online banking services. Inform your financial institution of your expected time abroad so they do not stop processing any of your ATM/debit card transactions due to belief that your card has been stolen. Keep your pin number in a secure location and do not carry it on you. Two resources that may help find ATMs abroad are the Visa ATM Locator and the MasterCard ATM Locator.

**Credit Cards**

Credit cards are widely accepted throughout the world. Consider obtaining a credit card in your own name before studying abroad to assist in emergency situations. Be sure to inform your credit card company of your expected time abroad. MasterCard and Visa are the most widely accepted cards worldwide. Both of these cards can be used to obtain cash advances at most banks and many ATMs. You must request an international four-digit PIN number from your issuing bank or card company. Record your credit card number and emergency card numbers in a separate place in case your card is stolen or lost. Also, find out what fees your credit card company charges for a cash advance as well as the maximum daily withdrawal amount. Typically, the amount charged to your credit card bill is based on the exchange rate on the day that your bank or credit card company processed the transaction. Credit card companies often have a 2-3% charge for using your credit card outside of the U.S but you can find cards with 0% foreign transaction fees.

Although credit cards are widely accepted, not all merchants accept them, so you will want to be prepared with cash on hand. Some past participants have found it difficult using a Discover Card or American Express as they are not as widely accepted as Visa or MasterCard.

**Cash**

It is advisable to obtain a reasonable amount of cash in the local currency prior to departure to pay for incidental and/or transportation costs upon arrival. While in the U.S., some foreign currencies can be purchased at banks or at currency exchange centers in international airports. Avoid carrying large amounts of cash at any time.

**Bank Account Abroad**

If you are studying for a semester or longer, opening a bank account may be an option. If you plan to open an account, make your initial deposit with traveler’s checks or direct deposit. Personal checks are very hard to cash overseas due to the long amount of time it takes a bank abroad to clear the check. In most cases, you will receive an ATM/debit card for your bank account abroad.

**What if I run out of money abroad?**

Monitor your money while abroad carefully and try to avoid running out. In the event that you do need money transferred to you, consider the following options:

- **ATM:** If you have an ATM card, have a family member or friend deposit funds into your U.S. bank account.

- **WESTERN UNION and MONEYGRAM:** These are immediate cash transfer stations used to transfer money worldwide. Both charge a fee for this service based on the amount of money sent.

> Although the flight is long, your journey starts right away so be prepared to take it all in.”

-Natalie Baus, China
• WIRING FUNDS: If you have opened a bank account abroad, money can be wired directly to it from the U.S. This can take 2-10 working days and there is a fee payable at the U.S. end of the transaction. You must provide the U.S. bank with the overseas account details: number, address of the branch, and also the bank's sort code or credit union routing number.

MyUW Account & Email
Update your contact information on your MyUW account before you go abroad. Study abroad staff and UW-Madison will continue to communicate with you through your UW-Madison email account and your MySA account. Not all study abroad programs will have computer labs or online access. However, in most countries there are cyber cafes which allow students to purchase online computer access for various blocks of time.

Student ID
UW-Madison Wisc ID cards have an expiration date - 5 years from the issue date. You will be sent a reminder if your card will expire at least 60 days before the actual date, but that could happen while you're abroad. Check your card now and make sure it is valid for the entire time period you will be abroad. If it will expire, you can get a new card before you go or can replace it upon your return to campus.
Program Costs
Students studying abroad are charged program fees to recover the actual costs of the program. Within the Financial tab of MySA, you will find your program cost sheet explains what is included in the total program fee, any other specific program costs, and billing procedures.

On the program cost sheet, you will notice that the program fee and the estimated additional expenses comprise the total cost of attendance for the program. Be sure you understand what the program fee covers and does not cover. International airfare, housing, and meals are sometimes included; sometimes they are not. Please note any specific billing procedures for your program. These might be based on type of program such as exchange programs, or other costs included in your program fee such as housing add-ons, additional course fees, etc. Expenses not included in your program fee are listed as estimated additional expenses on your program cost sheet and are based on information from past participants, on-site staff, and/or partner organizations and universities. These estimated expenses are to help you plan and prepare for the program. Student expenditures in-country depends greatly on personal spending habits, post-or during-program travel, and available funds. These amounts are also subject to change depending on international economic factors.

Upon acceptance, you paid an Acceptance Deposit to confirm your participation on your program. The Acceptance Deposit will be credited to the total program fee. Additional fees which need to be paid directly to a partner or institution on behalf of your program are also listed on your program cost sheet.

Review your program cost sheet carefully and share this information with the person(s) responsible for your program payments. If you have any questions about your program cost sheet, contact your Financial Specialist.

Program Fee Payments
The UW-Madison Bursar's Office will send you an electronic eBill for each term you are studying abroad to your wisc.edu email account. If you want another individual to receive your eBill, you can set them up as an “Authorized Payer” in MyUW.

Your eBill will be sent approximately four weeks in advance of the target due date listed on your program cost sheet. Typically, summer term eBills are due mid-May, fall term eBills are due mid-August, and spring term eBills are due mid-January or mid-March. The eBill shows the program fee and any payments or credits (deposits, scholarship credits, etc.) at the time the eBill was generated. You may incur additional charges during
or after your study abroad program (i.e.: single room charge, additional course fee) for which you will be billed. At any time, you can view your current account balance and financial aid awards in your MyUW. Payments must be paid by the due date on your eBill. Payments received after the due date listed on your eBill will be charged a $100 late fee. IAP reserves the right to cancel a student’s participation and/or to place a hold on the student’s UW record for failure to pay.

Due to the unique processes associated with study abroad, the study abroad office needs to bill students earlier than the normal campus process. Depending on when you receive the eBill, your anticipated aid may or may not be on the eBill. Anticipated aid can be any form of scholarships, grants, or loans awarded or approved by the Office of Student Financial Aid (OSFA) as stated in your award letter or alternative loan approval.

eBills are not reduced by the amount of your anticipated financial aid, but are automatically deferred by the amount of anticipated aid. If the amount of anticipated aid is less than the amount due, you need only pay the difference that financial aid does not cover by the due date. If the amount of anticipated aid is equal to or more than the amount due, you do not need to make a payment. As eBills are run multiple times during a term, students with anticipated aid may receive consecutive bills before their financial aid has paid balances.

If you have a scholarship that is not listed in your anticipated aid, even though it may show on your Award Report in MyUW, contact your Financial Specialist to receive a deferment for the amount of the scholarship and prevent late fees.

If you are due a refund, you can either sign up for eRefunds or receive a check with the Bursar’s Office. Information on payment methods and delivery, late fees, and financial aid disbursement and refunds can be found on the Bursar’s Office website.

Financial Aid
UW-Madison student may be able to utilize financial aid on UW-Madison study abroad programs. Guidelines on the usage can be found on the Office of Student Financial Aid (OSFA) webpage.

If you have not received aid in the past, you may still be eligible for financial aid to help with your study abroad expenses. Students interested in receiving financial aid (loans, grants, scholarships) should complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). It is possible to apply for aid anytime during the academic year. However, it can often take in excess of 4 weeks to complete the processing of your application with OSFA; therefore, it is best to apply as early as possible.

If you already receive aid, you may qualify for additional funding to offset the extra costs sometimes associated with study abroad. Additional aid often comes in the form of loans, although there are some need-based study abroad grants available annually through OSFA. Likewise, if anticipated study abroad costs are less than on-campus costs; aid packages can be reduced. The study abroad office provides OSFA with program cost information for each of our study abroad participants.

According to OSFA, if you accept your financial aid award before you leave the U.S. and complete and return promissory notes for loans (if appropriate), financial aid funds will be credited to your UW account no sooner than 10 days prior to the start date on campus for the applicable fall or spring semester (5 days prior for summer abroad programs.) If your program start date is after the start date on campus, financial aid funds will be disbursed 10 days prior to the later start date. OSFA cannot legally disburse funds sooner than that. Therefore, it is important that you apply for financial aid long before you leave on your program (at least by March 1 for a summer program; by June 1 for an academic year or fall program; and by October 1 for a winter intersession or spring abroad program).

Your financial aid funds will be credited to your program fee. If you have more than enough aid to cover the program cost(s), you will receive a refund (either electronically or paper check by mail depending on what you have set-up with the Bursar’s Office).

A Funding Study Abroad information session is available online.
Questions about financial aid and funding your study abroad program should be addressed to:

Heidi Johnson  
OSFA Financial Aid Advisor  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Tel: 608-262-3060  
heidi.johnson@finaid.wisc.edu  
www.finaid.wisc.edu

Scholarships
As a study abroad participant, you are encouraged to apply for scholarships and grants. Visit the study abroad office’s Scholarship Information website that has detailed information regarding study abroad scholarships, creative fundraising ideas, and other helpful financial tips.

Private scholarships received from agencies or companies outside the university may or may not allow students to use the scholarship for off-campus study abroad programs. Students should consult with the scholarship grantor if this is not clarified in the scholarship award letter.

If you are a recipient of any of the following scholarships, inform your Financial Specialist so that they may assist you with this award:

• Chancellors Scholar  
• Powers Knapp  
• UW Athletic scholarships

Italy

Updated September 2017
PREPARING TO LIVE IN ANOTHER CULTURE

As you prepare for your time abroad, you should consider cultural differences between yourself and your host culture. There are numerous aspects to consider. Culture includes shared beliefs, ideas, values, customs, behaviors, technology, and artifacts acquired through learning from others. As a study abroad student, you are granted the unique opportunity to engage with the culture of your host country and begin to understand the varying dimensions of your host culture. Some aspects of culture are more easily observed, like art, dress, literature, dance, music, etc. Other aspects of culture are not as immediately visible, such as roles related to age, gender, class, occupation, kinship, courtship, decision making, etc. During your time abroad, you will be confronted with various cultural interactions that may cause embarrassment and frustration. Don’t be overly concerned about this, as miscommunication is common when interacting across cultures. That said, it is wise to prepare yourself ahead of time for your host country’s culture.

Educate yourself about your host country, and avoid waiting to do so until you have arrived for your studies. Don’t forget that cultures are dynamic and grow and change over time, especially given our increasingly connected world. Take this into consideration as you look for sources of information. The more informed you are about the history, politics, culture, food, religion, languages, customs, etc., the better prepared you will be for living in the host country. If you have a solid base of knowledge to begin with, your learning and experiences in-country will be more meaningful. Some ways to begin preparing yourself include the following:

- Read articles and blogs (such as the Study Abroad Correspondents, among others) about your host country on the Internet.
- Read books from and about your host country.
- Find movies and music from and about your host country.
- Listen to radio/podcasts or watch TV shows that focus on international news and events.
- Talk to people who are from your host country.
- Meet international students from your host country who are already here on campus.
- Contact returned study abroad students to learn about their experiences in your host country. The Returned Student Network contains names of students who are willing to share their experiences.

Consider the following when preparing to enter another culture:

- Does your host culture prefer a direct or indirect communication style?
- Is your host culture more individualistic or collectivistic?
• Does your host culture tend towards a greater or lesser degree of formality in comparison with the United States?
• How are eye contact and gestures used differently?
• How does the host country view time? Are locals early, late or on time for meetings? Are they past or future oriented?
• What role does the family play in the host culture? What role will you play in your home stay (if you are placed in a home stay)? How are gender roles different from back at home?
• How is privacy viewed? How close should you stand or sit when talking with someone you know only slightly, or know well, or to a stranger? Are there topics which are inappropriate to discuss with acquaintances, or inappropriate to discuss at all?
• What role do elders play in society?
• How might alcohol be thought about in a different way?
• Does your host culture have different practices when it comes to cleanliness?
• What is a dating relationship like in your host country?
• What is the power structure and politics of your host country? Educational structure?

While it is important for you to understand the culture you are entering, it is also important that you understand yourself. When you enter another country, you enter with a unique set of personal experiences, abilities, challenges, and preconceptions. It is helpful to begin exploring how the experience of being in a different culture, with its different norms and expectations, will impact the various parts of yourself.

Your own identity will impact your experience in a variety of ways, and will grow and change. Self-reflection may be particularly important for students whose gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or ability may influence access to parts of the new culture. Studying and traveling abroad may mean leaving behind supports -- physical, social, legal, emotional, psychological – some of which may not exist in your host country. On the other hand, some study abroad locations may feel much more comfortable and accepting than the U.S. To learn more about identity and study abroad, as well as questions to ask yourself to prepare for your program, review the information on Student Identity.

Students with Disabilities
Different cultures vary in the degree of access and disability services available. If you are a McBurney student, contact your Study Abroad Advisor so that we can initiate efforts to provide reasonable accommodations for you while you are abroad. You can read more online in our Student Identity section.

Multicultural Students
Race and ethnic relations differ across the world. The behaviors and attitudes you encounter may be different than those you are used to at home. If you are traveling to a country where you physically look like the majority of the people, the cultural expectations for the majority may be applied to you, regardless of your language ability. If you are in the minority during your time abroad, you may be treated differently than you are typically treated at home. You can find more multicultural resources online in our Student Identity section.

LGBT Students
Living in another culture tends to be a time of self-reflection, and you may find that you are questioning your sexual or gender identity for the first time. If you already identify as a gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender student, you may find yourself negotiating your identity in an unknown culture with a different social climate, legal system, and way of meeting others. In either case, keep in mind that many of the ideas (and even vocabulary!) held in the U.S. about sexual and gender identity are culturally-based and may not translate easily into the culture you are entering. In some cultures, Western understandings of ‘gay’ and ‘lesbian’ simply do not exist, and people who engage in same-sex relationships may not see this behavior as an identity around which to organize. Similarly, some cultures may have unique views on gender identity that do not exist in mainstream U.S. culture. In other places, there are active communities and visible social movements for LGBT rights. Some locations even have much greater social and legal support for LGBT individuals than in the U.S. We have worked with the UW-Madison LGBT Campus Center to create an online Student Identity resource with more details.
PREPARING TO LIVE IN ANOTHER CULTURE

Cultural Adjustment
Much about culture is learned while in the host country. Adapting to a different culture can be exciting, frustrating, and challenging. No two students adapt at the same pace or in the same manner; however, there are several phases of cultural adaptation that are commonly seen in people living in another culture for an extended period of time. Below is a diagram that illustrates the process of cultural adjustment as well as a description of the phases.

Phase 1: Leaving Home – Pre-departure
General Attitude: Anticipation, eager, nervousness
Events: planning, packing, processing, celebrating, attending orientation, good-bye parties
Emotional response: Excitement, enthusiasm, concern about leaving family and familiar environment, desire to escape problems
Behavioral response: Anticipation, loss of interest in current responsibilities
Physical Response: Tiredness, generally normal health
Verbal Response: “I just can’t wait to…”

Phase 2: Arriving in Host Country – Initial Euphoria
General Attitude: Exhilaration, excitement
Events: Welcome reception, new living arrangements, new classes and teachers, exploration of sights and shops
Emotional Response: Tourist enthusiasm, sense of adventure
Behavioral Response: Outward curiosity about country avoiding negative stereotypes, enthusiasm for studies and site, passive observer of culture
Physical Response: Intestinal disturbances, minor insomnia
Verbal Response: “Awesome! This place and these people are a lot like home!”

Phase 3: Increasing Participation
General Attitude: Bewilderment, disenchantment, restlessness, impatience
Events: Classes, everyday life, responsibilities in living arrangements, unfamiliar food, language, customs
Emotional Response: Frustration, uncertainty, irritability, loss of enthusiasm, skepticism
Behavioral Response: Search for security in familiar activities (i.e. reading books in English), increased alcohol and/or food consumption, withdrawal
Physical Response: Colds, headaches, tiredness
Verbal Response: “Why do they have to do it like that? Why can’t they just…”

Phase 4: Culture Shock
General Attitude: Impatience, irritation, aggression, hostility
Events: Uneven work performance, confrontation with difference
Emotional Response: Discouragement, lethargy, depression, suspicion, boredom, homesickness, anger, extreme sensitivity and irritability, loneliness, comparing everything to home
Behavioral Response: Withdrawal, avoiding contact with host

Much about culture is learned while in the host country. Adapting to a different culture can be exciting, frustrating, and challenging. No two students adapt at the same pace or in the same manner; however, there are several phases of cultural adaptation that are commonly seen in people living in another culture for an extended period of time. Below is a diagram that illustrates the process of cultural adjustment as well as a description of the phases.

Phase 1: Leaving Home – Pre-departure
General Attitude: Anticipation, eager, nervousness
Events: planning, packing, processing, celebrating, attending orientation, good-bye parties
Emotional response: Excitement, enthusiasm, concern about leaving family and familiar environment, desire to escape problems
Behavioral response: Anticipation, loss of interest in current responsibilities
Physical Response: Tiredness, generally normal health
Verbal Response: “I just can’t wait to…”

Phase 2: Arriving in Host Country – Initial Euphoria
General Attitude: Exhilaration, excitement
Events: Welcome reception, new living arrangements, new classes and teachers, exploration of sights and shops
Emotional Response: Tourist enthusiasm, sense of adventure
Behavioral Response: Outward curiosity about country avoiding negative stereotypes, enthusiasm for studies and site, passive observer of culture
Physical Response: Intestinal disturbances, minor insomnia
Verbal Response: “Awesome! This place and these people are a lot like home!”

Phase 3: Increasing Participation
General Attitude: Bewilderment, disenchantment, restlessness, impatience
Events: Classes, everyday life, responsibilities in living arrangements, unfamiliar food, language, customs
Emotional Response: Frustration, uncertainty, irritability, loss of enthusiasm, skepticism
Behavioral Response: Search for security in familiar activities (i.e. reading books in English), increased alcohol and/or food consumption, withdrawal
Physical Response: Colds, headaches, tiredness
Verbal Response: “Why do they have to do it like that? Why can’t they just…”

Phase 4: Culture Shock
General Attitude: Impatience, irritation, aggression, hostility
Events: Uneven work performance, confrontation with difference
Emotional Response: Discouragement, lethargy, depression, suspicion, boredom, homesickness, anger, extreme sensitivity and irritability, loneliness, comparing everything to home
Behavioral Response: Withdrawal, avoiding contact with host

Updated September 2017
Immersing yourself in a foreign culture teaches you so much about not only this new culture but your own as well.”

-Cassidy Sandoval, France
Medical Examination and Immunizations

It is strongly recommended that you have a medical examination before you leave especially if you are taking prescription medication or are in regular treatment for a pre-existing condition. Some countries may even require you obtain certifications of health and/or immunizations in order to enter the country. Regardless of where you are going, below are some recommended steps to help prepare you for international travel:

1. Educate yourself about health and safety in your travel destination. Consult the Center for Disease Control (CDC) website to learn about possible health issues, recommended and/or required immunizations, or precautions in the countries in which you will be studying or traveling. The World Health Organization also provides relevant health information.
2. Consult with your personal medical and/or mental health provider for pre-travel planning, especially if you have any ongoing conditions. Work with your provider to develop plans in the event any conditions worsen. Make arrangements for any prescription medications, medical supplies, and medical care you will need.
3. Visit a specialized travel medicine provider and receive required or recommended preventive immunizations and medications (such as malaria prophylaxis or for traveler’s diarrhea) for your area of travel. Some immunizations require a series or spacing for protection (as long as three months for a series of shots), so allow as much time as possible for immunizations. To maximize the effectiveness of your appointment, take a copy of your program information as well as a printout of the Center for Disease Control requirements for your program location and visiting countries.
4. Have an eye and dental check-up and address any potential problems.

University Health Services (UHS) has a travel clinic that provides health services for patients who are planning foreign travel, including vaccines and immunizations. Information about the travel clinic and how to make an appointment can be found here.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your routine immunizations are up-to-date and to ask if there are recommended and/or required immunizations or medications for the country/countries you will visit.

Health and Wellness Information

You are required to submit your Health and Wellness Information in your MySA account. Sharing this information is designed to: 1) provide you with information about steps you can take to prepare for
international travel, and 2) help study abroad staff be of maximum assistance during an emergency situation. Mild physical or psychological conditions may become more serious under the stresses of life while abroad. It is important to disclose any pre-existing conditions, past or current treatment or medications, in your Health and Wellness Information. The ability of study abroad staff and UW-Madison to assist you in case of an emergency may be compromised if you do not report a medical or mental health condition during the planning process.

Your Health & Wellness information is considered confidential information, will be shared only with appropriate persons, and does not affect your admission into a study abroad program.

Whether you are currently being treated for mental health concerns or if you see them as something in your past, you should know that preparing for and participating in this new experience can bring about a return or increase in symptoms. Disclosing mental health information helps you plan with others so that the necessary support will be in place when you go abroad.

If you have any on-going health conditions, you should consult with your personal health care provider prior to departure regarding your health and safety abroad. University Health Services is a resource for students who would like to discuss any health issues and planned travel as well.

If you are in recovery or think you may have a problem, discuss your plans to study abroad with your sponsor or healthcare provider before you leave. Disclose any helpful information on your Health and Wellness Information. Alcoholic Anonymous meetings are held in many cities abroad. Information about Alcoholics Anonymous international services can be found online.

If you have any concerns about the specific health and safety risks you may encounter while abroad, contact your Study Abroad Advisor as soon as possible. Your Study Abroad Advisor will direct you to more specific sources of information about which local support services you can reasonably expect to find while out of the country. Some study abroad sites may not be able to accommodate all reported individual needs or circumstances. While it is important the program is aware of any medical or emotional conditions, past or current, which might affect you during your travel, the University is not responsible for assuring your medical well-being and safety while abroad. It is ultimately your responsibility to meet your medical needs during your travels abroad.

Even though it took a lot of planning, studying abroad was well worth it.”
-Dylan Braun, Germany

International Health Insurance
International health insurance is included in your program fee and is provided by Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI). Detailed coverage information and policy descriptions defining the coverage terms is available online and in your MySA. Your CISI coverage will be in effect for the duration of your program and will also apply if you travel to other countries.

Your CISI coverage includes, at no additional cost, a comprehensive on-line Portal of tools and information as well as access to 24/7 medical, personal, travel and security support. Through this customized site, you can:

- View/print/email your ID card, coverage brochure, consulate letter and claim form
- Purchase an extra month of insurance for a period of personal travel
- View/update your online account profile information
- Obtain contact information for emergencies and benefit/claim questions
- Search for hospitals and clinics overseas

You can also find valuable travel-related information, such as:

- Contact information for English-speaking doctors overseas
- Short-term travel alerts and travel warnings issued
by the U.S. Department of State

- Country-specific information and profiles for every country of the world
- Links to overseas U.S. Embassy web sites
- Health and vaccination recommendations compiled by the Center for Disease Control (CDC)

Once you are officially enrolled in your CISI coverage, you will receive an email from CISI with a link and log-in instructions. Print out your ID card and carry it with you at all times when you are abroad.

As part of your CISI coverage, you will have a worldwide, 24-hour emergency telephone assistance service. Multilingual help and advice may be furnished for you in the event of any emergency during the term of coverage. In order to be able to access your CISI coverage when needed, remember to print your ID card and carry this card with you while you are on your study abroad program.

You should check with your current health insurance provider to see if you are covered internationally. You are encouraged to arrange for continuation of your regular health insurance coverage while you are studying abroad. If you need a full-time enrollment letter in order to maintain your current health insurance coverage, contact your Study Abroad Advisor.

Some countries require that foreign students participating in study abroad programs purchase local health insurance in that country. You are responsible for purchasing this insurance if it is a requirement for the country where you will be studying. Students participating on these programs are still required to have the CISI coverage as well.

Doctors and hospitals outside of the U.S. often expect immediate cash payment for health services. You may need to pay up front for medical expenses and send a CISI insurance claim form along with the original receipt to CISI for reimbursement. CISI insurance claim forms can be found in the CISI coverage details online and in MySA.

SPECIAL NOTE: Students who are participating on programs run in conjunction with IFSA-Butler and the University of Minnesota are enrolled in CISI directly by their program organizer. In these cases, you will not be able to access CISI through your MySA account. The program organizer or university will provide policy information and on-line portal details.

Protect Your Health Abroad

Missing out on a unique cultural experience because you’re stuck in bed with a travel-related illness or injury is probably not part of your plan for a great study abroad experience. Prepare for a safe and healthy study abroad experience by following the Center for Disease Control (CDC) travel health tips. Health tips are available by destination or topic at the CDC website.

PRESCRIPTIONS & TRAVEL HEALTH SUPPLIES

Think carefully about any medications and/or travel health supplies that you may want to bring with you. Some countries may limit the amount of a particular drug that you can transport into and out of the country. Some medications that are prescribed in the U.S. may be considered illegal substances in other countries. Check with the country’s Embassy about any such restrictions.

If you take prescription medications regularly or expect to take some while abroad, make sure to bring a sufficient supply with you for the duration of your program. Ask your doctor about the availability abroad of any prescription medications you take regularly. Even if your prescription is available, it may be simpler to take an adequate supply with you for the period you are abroad (provided it is not perishable). If your insurance company asks for a letter certifying that you will be studying abroad, contact your Study Abroad Advisor.

Review potential side effects of your medications with your provider, as your body may react differently because of adjustment to new sleep habits, time zones, activities, and diet. Maintain your usual dosage and pattern of taking your medication while you are abroad. Consult with your healthcare provider about any necessary adjustments to your dosage due to significant changes in time zones.

Do not plan on sending medications abroad since it will require customs paperwork and may be delayed in delivery. It is recommended to carry your prescriptions with you in your carry-on luggage. For
some medications, you may need to carry a letter from your physician stating why you need the prescription medication. Bring along copies of your medical prescriptions as well, including the name of the active ingredient(s).

If you have a medical condition that is not easily identified (diabetes, epilepsy, severe allergies), you should wear a medic alert bracelet while you are abroad and consider having it translated into the local language. Be sure to develop a plan with your healthcare professional before you leave home. Individuals living with diabetes are encouraged to bring a sufficient supply of needles and syringes with a prescription or doctor’s authorization.

JET LAG
Jet lag can be a problem for travelers who are crossing several time zones. Although it is not a serious condition, jet lag can make it hard for you to enjoy your first few days in country. Here are a few tips you can take to minimize the effects of jet lag:

• Drink plenty of water before, during, and after your flight. The air on planes is extremely dry and it is easy to become dehydrated when not drinking enough fluids.
• Avoid large meals, alcohol, and caffeine during your travel.
• On long flights, get up and walk around periodically to stretch your muscles.
• Sleep on the plane, if you can.
• After arrival, stay awake until the local bed time. If you are sleepy during the day, take short naps (20–30 minutes) so you can still sleep at night. Begin to eat meals at the local time.

FOOD, WATER & DIETARY CONDITIONS
Unclean food and water can cause traveler’s diarrhea and other diseases. Travelers to developing countries are especially at risk. Reduce your risk by sticking to safe food and water habits, some of which include:

• Avoid uncooked food from street vendors.
• Avoid dairy products that are not refrigerated or pasteurized.
• Eat fruits and vegetables you have washed in clean water or peeled by you.

• Do not drink water unless you know that it is safe for drinking; bottled water is recommended.
• Avoid ice cubes in soft drinks unless you know that the ice was made from water safe for drinking.
• Do not leave drinks unattended or drink anything opened out of your sight.
• Wash your hands with soap and clean water or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner before you eat.

Vegetarians or students on special diets should be aware that their dietary needs might not be easily met in some countries. Discuss your needs with your healthcare provider and your Study Abroad Advisor as necessary. You should list any special dietary needs in your Health and Wellness Information, as well as any homestay or other program-specific forms.

ENGAGE IN HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS
The “rules” of dating vary from culture to culture. It is important that you consider your behavior and inform yourself as best as possible about how dating and relationships generally function in the host culture. As in the U.S., students traveling abroad should take appropriate precautions to avoid exposure to sexually transmitted diseases (STD). Some places in the world have a higher rate of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV and hepatitis, than the U.S. To protect yourself, do not have unprotected sex. Use a latex condom correctly every time you have sex. Bring condoms from the U.S., since those in other countries may not be up to U.S. standards or be regularly available. Overall, you are encouraged to be cautious about sexual activity while abroad.

You may want to talk with your healthcare provider or the UHS Sexual Health Clinic before going abroad for additional information.

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR HEALTH WHILE ABROAD
While abroad, be conscious of ways you can reduce your chances of getting sick or injured. The CDC provides various recommendations, some of which include:

• Eat well, exercise regularly, and get enough sleep. An important part of maintaining your health while abroad is eating and drinking properly to stay hydrated.
• Try not to take risks with your health and safety. Respect your host country and its people by following local laws and customs.
• Do not use drugs and use good judgment if you consume alcohol. Drugs are illegal in most countries in the world, with very severe penalties. Alcohol may be legal in your host country, but it is important to consume it safely.
• Do not share needles for tattoos, body piercing, or injections, to avoid infections such as HIV and viral hepatitis.
• Use sunscreen, with both UVA and UVB protection, and take precautions to prevent mosquito and other bug bites.
• Avoid animal bites by not handling or petting animals, especially dogs and cats. If you are bitten or scratched, wash the wound immediately with soap and water and seek medical attention to determine if medication or anti-rabies vaccine is needed.
Because the health and safety of study abroad participants is one of the top priorities, the following information has been developed to provide useful practical guidance to study abroad participants. Although no set of guidelines can guarantee the safety needs of each individual involved in a study abroad program, these guidelines address issues that merit attention and thoughtful judgment. Read and carefully consider all materials issued for your program that relate to health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in the host country. At any time, feel free to direct questions to your Study Abroad Advisor.

U.S. Department of State Resources
The U.S. government provides accurate and timely information online for overseas travelers, including specific country information, visas, passports, living abroad, and other topics. Some of their most commonly referred to documents include:

**Country Specific Information:** Information on every country in the world, including the location of the U.S. embassy and any consular offices; whether you need a visa; crime and security information; health and medical conditions; drug penalties; and localized hot spots. This is a great place to start learning about where you are going.

**Travel Alerts:** These are a means to disseminate information about short-term conditions, either transnational or within a particular country, that pose significant risks to the security of U.S. citizens. Natural disasters, terrorist attacks, coups, anniversaries of terrorist events, election-related demonstrations or violence, and high-profile events such as international conferences or regional sports events are examples of conditions that might generate a Travel Alert. Should a Travel Alert be issued during your study abroad program, we will notify you by email and discuss appropriate steps.

**Travel Warnings:** These are issued when long-term, protracted conditions that make a country dangerous or unstable lead the State Department to recommend that Americans avoid or consider the risk of travel to that country. A Travel Warning is also issued when the U.S. Government’s ability to assist American citizens is constrained due to the closure of an embassy or consulate or because of a drawdown of its staff. You were notified during the acceptance process if your country is under a Travel Warning. Should a Travel Warning be issued before or during your study abroad program for your country, you will be notified to discuss appropriate steps.

If you are a U.S. citizen, you are required to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). This is a free service provided by the U.S. government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the U.S. Department of State can better assist you in an emergency. STEP also allows Americans residing abroad to get routine information from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate, as well as updates on demonstration, emergency messages, and other breaking events. Register online before your departure. Your MySA account also has a link to this registration page.
If you are not a U.S. citizen, you should subscribe to the U.S. Department of State updates, emergency messages, and information on other breaking events. You can register for these alerts [here](#). Non-US citizens are also encouraged to check with their home country’s embassy for comparable citizen services.

**Basic Precautions**

Make yourself familiar with the safety conditions of your host country and any other countries you plan to visit. Most large cities as well as remote areas, in the U.S. and abroad, suffer from common crimes. Students should use the same precautions abroad that they would in any large metropolitan area. The Travel Safety Information for Students Abroad prepared by the U.S. Department of State has resources which you might also find useful.

General tips for all study abroad students include:

1. If you choose to use alcohol, use it responsibly and know your limits. Being under the influence of alcohol impairs judgment and increases your chances of being the victim of crime.
2. Do not leave your bags or belongings unattended at any time.
3. Avoid traveling in poorly maintained vehicles. When taking a taxi, sit in the back.
4. Leave expensive or expensive-looking jewelry and other valuables at home. Avoid flaunting wallets, purses, cell phones, or cameras. Be discrete in displaying your passport.
5. Never keep all of your documents and money in one place or one bag/suitcase.
6. Do not travel alone. Do not walk alone at night. Do not take a taxi alone and especially not at night. Stick to well-traveled streets and walk in groups at night. Exercise good judgment about what places to frequent during the day and at night, and avoid being on the street at late hours more than necessary.
7. If you find yourself in uncomfortable surroundings, try to act like you know what you are doing and where you are going.
8. Let your on-site staff, your host family, or your roommates know of any traveling that you plan to do.
9. Have sufficient funds or a credit card on hand to purchase emergency items such as an airline ticket. Keep track of your credit limits on your credit card.
10. Be aware of your surroundings and the people with whom you have contact. Be cautious when you meet new people, and do not give out your address or phone number. Be careful with information about other students or group events. Report any unusual people or activities to on-site staff immediately.
11. Obey the local laws of the country you are visiting. An arrest or accident while abroad can result in a difficult legal situation. Your U.S. citizenship does not make you exempt from full prosecution under another country's criminal justice system, and the U.S. government cannot bail you out. Many countries impose harsh penalties for violations that would be considered minor in the U.S., and unlike the U.S., you may be considered guilty until proven innocent.
12. Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining emergency health and law enforcement services in the host country.
13. Examine your housing accommodations for safety measures (e.g. locks on doors, safe lighting, access to exits, fire hazards and safety preventions).
14. Review and understand your CISI insurance plan and all exclusions to your coverage. NOTE: Injuries sustained while taking part in certain activities (including bungee jumping, parasailing, racing by motorcycle, etc.) are NOT covered by CISI insurance.

**Precautions for Times of Political/Social Unrest or Conflict**

During times of political or social unrest in your host country or region, or when the U.S. becomes a party to a political conflict anywhere in the world, additional precautions are advisable as follows:

1. Keep away from and avoid participating in demonstrations and other political activities. Americans enjoy many liberties, however political activities in other countries can result in detention and/or deportation by officials. Even demonstrations that are intended to be peaceful can sometimes turn violent, and you do not want to be caught in the middle. If you see a situation developing, resist the temptation to investigate and walk the other way.
2. Keep informed about the current political situations. In case of an emergency, advisories may be made to the general public through the media. Remain in close contact with the on-site staff.

3. Verify your registration with STEP through the U.S. Department of State.

4. Keep away from areas known to have large concentrations of residents aligned with interests unfriendly to the U.S. and its allies. Always consult with the on-site staff before undertaking travel to neighboring cities or popular tourist destinations.

5. When in large cities and other popular tourist destinations, avoid places frequented by North Americans such as bars, discos, U.S. fast food restaurants, U.S. banks/churches/businesses, U.S. consulates or embassies.

6. Be as inconspicuous in dress and demeanor as possible. Wear moderate colors and conservative clothing. Avoid American logos on your belongings and clothing. Avoid large and/or loud groups.

7. Do not agree to newspaper or other media interviews regarding political conflicts. It is important to remain as inconspicuous as possible. Do not make reference to your program group. In such cases, always say “no comment” and hang up or walk the other way.

For Women Travelers

Many women travel safely each year without incident. However, when it comes to health and security, women travelers are more likely to be affected by religious and cultural beliefs of the foreign countries they visit. The truth is that women face greater obstacles, especially when travelling alone. While it is impossible to generalize about the experience of women traveling in all places in the world, you may experience some gender-specific challenges when you live or travel abroad. This is not to say that it is more dangerous to be a woman elsewhere in the world. In fact, the incidence of violent crime against women is higher in the U.S. than in many other countries. However, language and cultural differences might mean what you consider appropriate behavior for a woman in the U.S. will be interpreted much differently by the men-- and women--of your host country. For instance, a smile, eye contact, certain clothing, or the way you carry yourself can mean different things in different cultures. This is further compounded by the fact that the people in other countries may have distorted or stereotyped notions about U.S. women based on images acquired through U.S. films, TV, and advertising. The very characteristics of U.S. women, such as independence and strength, may be perceived differently in other countries.

Traveling through foreign lands gives you a unique opportunity to observe a rich tapestry of cultures and customs. Be attentive to local laws and customs which can be quite different from the U.S. Understand the social culture and norms for behavior and dress of the country you are visiting. Current guide books can provide useful information specifically for women travelers. Talk to women who have been to your host country. The more familiar you are with the customs and traditions of your host country, the more understanding you will have for why they exist and the safer you will feel while abroad.

In addition to the safety precautions listed above, returned female study abroad participants have recommended the following:

- Follow the example of women from your host country in terms of culturally appropriate dress and demeanor.
- Lock hotel rooms when traveling. Do not stay in hotels without adequate locks. The money you would save is not worth putting yourself at risk.
- Walk with purpose and avoid eye contact with strangers.
- Firmly say “no” to any invitation you do not want and turn away. Ignore persistent overtures.
- Do not drink alcohol in excess. Women who are publicly drunk may be looked at differently abroad than in the U.S. In many countries, a woman who is publicly drunk is looked upon as “loose”, “unladylike”, or inviting advances from men.
- Trust your instincts. If you do not feel safe in a situation or someone’s behavior is making you uncomfortable, leave.

The U.S. Department of State offers resources for women travelers here.
For LGBT Travelers
Attitudes and tolerance toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons vary from country to country, just as they vary among U.S. cities and states. Some countries offer many legal protections to those who are LGBT, while other countries criminalize same-sex sexual activity or outward expressions of LGBT identity.

Educate yourself about the social culture, the laws, and support resources before you go. Review the LGBT Travel Information prepared by the U.S. Department of State at as well as the Special Circumstances section of the Country Specific Information for the countries you plan to study in and/or visit. This will help you protect yourself.

Consensual same-sex sexual activity remains illegal in about 70 countries in the world. Punishments in these countries vary from a minimum penalty to long-term imprisonment or even a death sentence. The annual Human Rights Report which the U.S. Department of State publishes also includes a section specifically regarding sexual orientation and gender identity in each country. Remember, civil and human rights are only as protected as the local laws allow.

The U.S. Department of State advises travelers of the following safety precautions:

- If you experience difficulties, don’t be afraid to contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. There are consular officers available 24/7 at every embassy who provide emergency assistance to Americans. They won’t pass judgment on you, and will protect your privacy.
- Thoroughly investigate the country to which you are traveling. LGBT travel guides provide country by country advice. It’s also worth checking for local gay newspapers or websites to obtain more information. No one understands the local attitudes better than those who live there.
- Use discretion. As an American, you may already stand out. Outside gay neighborhoods or resorts, public displays of affection may draw even more attention.
- Check for LGBT or “gay friendly” hotels and lodging. Some hotels won’t accept bookings from same sex couples – others actively seek LGBT bookings.
- Be alert and try to avoid potentially unsafe environments. The general openness of LGBT settings can sometimes be taken advantage of by criminals. Look out for yourself and your friends, especially late at night.

If you do not feel comfortable discussing an issue related to LGBT identity with on-site staff, do not hesitate to contact your Study Abroad Advisor.

Alcohol & Drugs
While abroad, you are responsible for obeying local laws and the UW-Madison Code of Conduct. Illegal, irresponsible drinking and/or misbehaving while drinking are violations of the University’s policy. You are held to the expectations outlined in UW’s Chapter 17 which states that you need to be the legal drinking age in the US, 21 years old, to consume alcohol. This applies to your time abroad.

UW-Madison has a no tolerance approach to drug use while abroad. Students using drugs abroad may immediately be removed from the program at their own cost. It is also important to remember the following:

- Know and Obey the Laws of the Country
  Most countries do not have a legal drinking age, although frequently one must be 18 to purchase liquor, and it is not uncommon for young adults to have beer or wine with a meal. Alcohol is strictly prohibited in most Muslim-majority countries and in some parts of India. U.S. citizens have been detained for possessing alcohol in their luggage upon arrival in some Muslim countries. Laws in many countries are more severe than in the U.S.

  Existing legislation in most foreign countries regarding the use or possession of marijuana, cocaine, and other illegal drugs imposes severe penalties including include jail terms, hard labor, and even the death penalty. Association with illegal drug users or possessors is considered the same as personal use or possession by authorities in some countries. If arrested, you are subject to the host country’s laws and neither the UW-Madison nor the U.S. Embassy can protect you from the local legal consequences.

- If You Choose to Consume, Do in Moderation
  Avoid underage and excessive alcohol consumption. Wine, beer, and liquor may have a higher
alcohol content than is customary in the U.S. This could lead to overconfidence in judging the number and volume of drinks. Overindulging in alcohol can lead to blackouts, injury, assault, abuse, reckless behavior, impaired judgment and decision-making, long-term health consequences, and death. Your consumption of alcohol or another drug, and/or your behavior while under the influence, may be considered criminal activities by local authorities as well as violate University conduct policies.

Cultural gastronomic traditions may involve multiple shots of high percent alcohol that a local may have become accustomed to, but a visitor may not. In these, and other drinking customs, you may want to keep pace with your hosts, who have likely practiced their national traditions for years. This level of inebriation can lead to cultural misunderstandings, ruined friendships or, worse, an increase in exposure to criminality.

- **Don’t Let Your Drink Out of Your Sight**
  Drinks/food can be spiked with a knock-out agent, often called a date rape drug, like scopolamine. The date rape drug is commonly used to assist in sexual assaults. It works quickly and causes you to become weak and confused. Always keep your drink/food within your sight.

Drinking alcohol can seem deceptively harmless, especially when you travel to countries where attitudes, customs, and the drinking age may be different from the U.S. Nevertheless, excessive alcohol consumption impairs your judgment and can lead to disruptive behavior and risk of harm to yourself and to others, in addition to poor academic performance. You should never feel pressured to drink if you do not want to or feel embarrassed to order non-alcoholic beverages.

You are representing yourself but also your program, the U.S., and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Your actions will reflect either positively or negatively on many people. Talk with your Study Abroad Advisor if you have any questions. In addition, review the Dean of Students information for Students on Alcohol Use at UW-Madison and the UHS Alcohol and Other Drugs site.

### Sexual Assault

UW-Madison supports healthy, mutually respectful relationships free from violence, including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking.

Sexual assault is any sexual contact made without consent. Consent must be freely given with overt words or actions that clearly communicate an individual’s desire to engage in sexual activities. Consent is a clear yes, not the absence of a no. Consent cannot legally be obtained if an individual is incapacitated due to alcohol or other drugs, is unconscious or asleep, or has limited mental capacity. Though sexual assault can be perpetrated by a stranger, it is more commonly committed by someone the victim knows, such as a friend, boyfriend, girlfriend, partner, or acquaintance.

Sexual assault is always the fault of the perpetrator and not the fault of the victim. Whether or not the victim has been drinking is irrelevant. The victim’s previous sexual activities, behaviors, actions, and/or dress is irrelevant. No one deserves to be the victim of sexual assault.

In the event you, or someone you care about, experience relationship or sexual harassment/violence while abroad, you are strongly encouraged to seek the support of resources in country. Seek safety first; then talk to your on-site staff and/or your Study Abroad Advisor. Study abroad staff and UW-Madison are available to assist you. University Health Services has a variety of online resources and a brochure.

UW-Madison takes sexual harassment and sexual assault very seriously. If you experience behavior that feels threatening or uncomfortable, notify on-site staff and/or IAP staff immediately. If you are the victim of sexual harassment or sexual assault, seek safety first and tell on-site staff and/or IAP staff so we can help you understand your options and support available. Study abroad staff and UW-Madison are available to assist you. University Health Services has a variety of online resources.

UW-Madison study abroad staff and Program Leaders are not confidential resources. In compliance with State and Federal law, UW-Madison study abroad staff
SAFETY

and Program Leaders notified of sexual assault or harassment incidents will work with UW-Madison’s Title IX Coordinator to ensure appropriate resources and information is provided.

Bystander Intervention
Bystander Intervention is the idea that we all have a role to play in the prevention of violence in our community. A bystander is someone who witnesses a dangerous or harmful event and has the ability to help. Through training and practice, students can become empowered to interrupt and challenge harmful behaviors and attitudes that may lead to sexual and relationship violence. Sexual assault on college campuses is a community issue. As a member of this community, we all have a responsibility to step up and intervene. Not only do Badgers get consent, but Badgers take care of one another. What happens to one of us affects all of us. Here is additional information on Bystander Intervention.

Transportation
Driving conditions, customs, and etiquette vary from country to country. Traffic related accidents are the leading cause of student injuries and deaths while abroad. As most countries have safe and reliable modes of public transportation, you are strongly discouraged from driving abroad during your study abroad program and your personal travels.

Be familiar with your country/countries driving rules and pedestrian rights. Heed the advice of the on-site staff and obey all local pedestrian laws. Refer to following resources for additional information:

• Association for Safe International Road Travel (ASIRT)
• U.S. State Department information on Road Safety
• U.S. State Department Country Specific Information

Only use taxis from a company recommended by a trusted local expert or a government agency such as the bureau of tourism; avoid the use of public transit systems whenever possible.

In An Emergency
An emergency card is available for you in your MySA. This emergency card contains study abroad office and program specific emergency contact information. Print the card and carry with you throughout the duration of your program.

If you find yourself in an emergency while abroad, you are instructed to contact appropriate on-site staff immediately. As they are nearest to you and know the local resources, these individuals are best equipped to assist you in a timely manner. All on-site staff have IAP’s contact information and will follow-up appropriately.

For emergency assistance:
• During business hours (8:00-4:30, Central Time), call the Study Abroad Resource Center at +1-608-265-6329.
• During non-business hours, call the emergency phone at +1-608-516-9440. This phone is for emergencies only and will be answered by a study abroad staff member who can assist you.

We are committed to providing prompt, appropriate, and thorough care to students. When you make contact, provide as much of the following information as possible:

• Your name
• Country and program name
• Date, time, and description of occurrence/condition
• Action taken thus far
• Return contact information

If there is a tragic event or catastrophe in your host-country while you are abroad, contact someone at UW-Madison as soon as possible. In such circumstances, the study abroad office will be in close contact with you, the on-site staff and/or U.S. program contact for the study abroad program. Typically, on-site staff will seek advice from local authorities and the U.S. consulate or embassy nearest the program location. Assistance will be managed in coordination with CISI (our medical and security insurance provider). Parents, friends, and family are asked to communicate directly with IAP to allow on-site staff to focus on working with students and local officials.
On-Site Assistance

While you are abroad, there will be staff on-site that are available to assist you with questions related to academic, personal, and health & safety problems that come up during your time abroad. In many cases, this person (or persons) is an employee of your host institution or program provider. It is important that you establish good communication with your on-site staff and that you contact them if you encounter any difficulties and/or problems that you are unable to handle on your own. Pay attention during your on-site orientation to details regarding who can assist you, how to contact them, when they are available, and where their office can be found.

In some cases, study abroad programs will have a Program Leader (PL). The PL serves as the liaison between UW-Madison and the host institution or program provider, and is responsible for all academic and administrative matters concerning program participants. The PL attends classes, field trips, and excursions, and is available to help students find appropriate solutions to personal, health, and academic problems during the program. The PL often teaches a course for the program and may be responsible for the grading of student coursework in the host country. If you are experiencing difficulties with the program or with your adjustment to the culture, your PL is a good person to seek out for assistance and support. Be sure to keep your PL informed of your travel plans when you are away from the program.

Telephone

All students who travel abroad are asked to have a working international cellular phone. You can do this by adding an international capability to your current cellular plan, purchasing a temporary phone (either in the U.S. or at your destination) or by adding an international sim card to your phone that is programmed for your destination. Your cell phone number and your on-site housing address should be entered into MyStudyAbroad.

Dialing Basics: When making calls, keep in mind time zone differences. To make an international call to the U.S., dial the access code for the country from which you are calling, plus the U.S. country code (always “1”) followed by the appropriate U.S. area code and local number. Country and city access codes can be found online.

Landline Phones: If you are living in an apartment, residence hall, or homestay, you may have a landline installed for your usage. Discuss landline phone use etiquette with your home stay or roommates, since charges can vary based on location. Making calls from
hotel phones can incur high surcharges even when using a calling card.

**Pay Phones and International Phone Cards:** Many pay phones abroad require phone cards instead of coins. The phone cards are inserted into the phone and are debited as you make calls. These phone cards can be purchased at places such as airports, post offices, newspaper stands, etc. Depending on the phone card you purchase, it can be an inexpensive option to make local and international calls.

**Internet Phone and Video:** Most study abroad students keep in touch with family and friends using various internet phone/messaging programs and apps. Past participants have used Skype, Google Voice, and Whatsapp, though there are many other options. Look into how each of these services works and make your plans for staying in contact with others before your departure to your program.

**Mail and Shipping**
Sending mail internationally will take longer than mail within the U.S. Using a mailing service such as DHL, FedEx, or UPS will generally improve transport time and can allow your mailed item to be traced. Check with your local embassy, mailing service vendor, or local post office for special customs regulations for shipping/mailing items.

**Photography**
As social media and photo sharing become more and more prevalent, it is essential to recognize the power photos can have and to learn how to create and share images ethically.

As studying abroad comes with opportunities to be in community with the host culture, an important aspect is to be considerate when photographing sites, experiences, and people, taking into account the local cultural context. When you are abroad you will be informal ambassadors of the U.S., UW-Madison, and your study abroad office, and your actions will often be interpreted in this framework. It is your responsibility, therefore, to evaluate your images for cultural appropriateness and sensitivity so as to avoid images that:
- stereotype
- exploit
- disrespect
- make false generalizations
- lead to inaccuracy or misrepresentations of the host country, people, or setting.

Take some time to define your own code of ethics when taking photographs abroad. As general rules you should:
- be aware of locations where photography is not permitted and be respectful of the rule.
- ask permission before photographing people. By default, this can be a great way to meet people. A tip from University Communications is that it is invaluable to make and travel with a few small flash cards with simple phrases (e.g., “May I take a photograph of you?” “Photo?” “Yes/No”, “Thank You”) that are translated into both English and the common language of the area.

Another tip from University Communications is to consider taking candid shots of people actually doing things and depicting elements that communicate something about the surrounding locale rather than just the group shots in front of an iconic symbol of the country. Think less like a tourist and more like a local who is communicating what it is like to be in an area and participate in the day-to-day events and activities.

We welcome the submission of photographs by study abroad students, alumni, and UW-Madison faculty and staff willing to share their photos. Photos must strive to be an honest representation of the education abroad experience and the culture in which a program takes place. In turn, we will be thoughtful and purposeful about the photos we use in order to reach students and represent study abroad.

**RESOURCES:**
- Point and Shoot: Ethical Photography Abroad
- Ethics and Photography in Developing Countries
- National Press Photographers Association Code of Ethics
• BBC News: Taking Photographs of People

Traveling
Depending on your program, you may have opportunities to travel in the country and/or region you will be studying. Make yourself the most informed traveler possible by doing research before you travel. Search the internet, talk to past participants, consult travel books, and talk to on-site staff about their travel experiences.

Whether traveling on a study abroad program or independently, you need to take personal responsibility for your own health and safety. Study abroad participants are to maintain the following travel expectations:

• Travel plans should not interfere with the timely completion of coursework, assignments, and exams for your academic program.
• You are expected to remain at the program site for the duration of the academic term and to attend the classes in which you are registered.
• The PL/on-site staff should be informed of your travel plans away from your local city, including emergency contact information.
• If you are unavoidably delayed in returning to the program site, call the on-site staff.
• Keep your family back home updated on your travel plans as they may need to reach you on short notice. Inform them of how they can reach you easily or arrange a system for contacting them at regular intervals.

You are strongly discouraged to travel to areas that the U.S. State Department has designated as hazardous or has advised against travel. Check the U.S. State Department website for Travel Advisories and Consular Information Sheets for any country you are considering traveling to or through before you make any travel plans. It’s recommended that you check with the U.S. Embassy or Consulate nearest you as well.

If you consider using Airbnb, Vacation Rentals by Owner (VRBO), couchsurfing.com or any similar commercial or social applications to find lodging while abroad, do so only with the highest caution for your safety and security. Although rare, there have been incidents of violent crime associated with their use. The fact that you may be in an unfamiliar city and culture can put you at greater risk. When searching for temporary lodging options, please follow these guidelines:

• Before you meet a host identified through Airbnb or another application, look carefully at their posted reviews and references. We recommend that you do NOT stay at a place that has fewer than about ten recent positive reviews.
• Once you are given an address, take a close look at the neighborhood and surrounding community on the internet. Ask others in the community about the area; call a tourist bureau or similar agency; and seek any further resources for the same information. If you have doubts about the location or concerns about the host’s reliability, trust your instincts and look for another alternative.
• Let others know exactly where you’ll be staying—including the address and the host’s name and contact information. Tell someone that you’ll check in with them about an hour after the scheduled meeting time to report that you’re safe and satisfied with circumstances.
• Make sure if you agree to meet the host or whenever you go to the apartment or lodging, that you have a charged cell phone and know or have programmed in your phone the emergency telephone number for local law enforcement response.
• If you schedule a meeting with the host, agree only to do so in a public place during daylight and if possible, take a friend with you to the initial meeting.
• Never arrive at the lodging initially late at night.
• Once you have arrived at the apartment or lodging, take a look around with safety and security in mind. Look in the closets and adjoining rooms. Make a quick mental note of how you might exit if there is a need. Be sure there is an internal lock on your bedroom door that cannot be opened with a key from the outside (e.g., it has a chain or bolt lock).
• If you are not satisfied with the circumstances you find or something just doesn’t feel right—leave right away and find other lodging. Any extra money spent is worth in the investment in your safety!
• If you have a poor experience, post a review to help others.
WHILE YOU ARE ABROAD

- Monitor your credit card bill for any unexpected/unapproved charges. Make sure to get a receipt for any services—especially if paying in cash.

In relation to ride sharing companies, use only the most recognized rideshare companies in a specific region—many nations are making attempts to regulate rideshare services for users’ safety and security. You are highly recommended to avoid using ridesharing or taxi services when alone.

Absentee Voting
Elections may happen while you are abroad. You are still able to vote while you are abroad through absentee ballot. You can go to https://vote.wisc.edu to learn how to do so in Wisconsin, as well as get links to information for absentee voting in your home state. Please note all deadlines so that you can get your absentee ballot submitted in time.

Income Tax Returns
Income tax filers should either request an extension or make necessary arrangements to file on time (this is applicable if you are out of the country during the spring semester).

Accessing UW-Madison Libraries
Distance Library Services are offered to members of the UW-Madison community living outside Dane County (including study abroad students). To use these services, go to the Distance Library Services.

The libraries provide internet access to library catalogs, journal databases, encyclopedias, e-books, e-journals, and subject guides. You will need your UW-Madison NetID (or 11-digit UW-Madison identification number) and internet access. To locate books, search MadCat (the library’s catalog) or WorldCat (a worldwide library catalog) on the library’s website. You can also search the journal databases to locate articles, many of which are available online. The libraries will also deliver articles and book chapters electronically to you directly via the internet, which is called Interlibrary Loan.

If you have questions regarding distance library access, e-mail the library directly.

Changing The Length Of Program
During your program, you may feel that you need a longer study abroad experience and might consider turning your semester program into an academic year program. Or conversely, you may decide to shorten your stay. Sometimes students have to return to the U.S. earlier than expected due to uncontrollable circumstances. Regardless of your circumstance, you should notify your Study Abroad Advisor or Enrollment Specialist Advisor in writing (email) of your intention to lengthen or shorten your stay and state the reasons for your decision. Study abroad staff will work closely with you to determine the implications of your decision to either extend or shorten your program, as well as discuss which opportunities are available to you. Here are some things to consider when making your decision:

Lengthening Your Stay
Note: Extensions are possible on a space-available basis and priority is given to students who have been wait-listed for programs. Please note that in some countries it is not possible to extend a student visa.

Financial
You will be responsible for paying any additional fees, as well as meeting the payment schedule for your new duration. Students who have not paid the original fees in full will not be allowed to extend their stay. If you receive financial aid, contact the Office of Student Financial Aid (OSFA) to inform them of your change in plans. OSFA can re-assess your award based on the costs of a longer study abroad program.

Academic
Consult your Academic Advisor to see how lengthening your stay will fit into your degree program(s). Consider

“I think you may be shocked at what you are capable of and, in the end, thankful and proud of your experience.”

-Shelby Knuth, Italy
while abroad, and how they may count toward your degree program(s).

**Visa & Travel**
Consider the visa and/or residency permits required for the new length of time. In some countries, you might need to leave the country and re-enter in order to extend your visa. Consult your travel agent or airline for rules regarding your purchased flight. There may be additional fees/penalties for changing your return date.

**Shortening Your Stay**

**Financial**
By having accepted a place in the program, you are committed to a schedule of payments, and the study abroad office has made monetary commitments to others on your behalf. You will continue to be responsible for these payments even if you choose to withdraw from the program. If you shorten your stay abroad, only recoverable living costs may be refunded. This process will take time and we cannot always immediately inform you how much money, if any, you will be refunded. Contact your Financial Specialist and/or the OFSA for further assistance in relation to finances.

**Academic**
If you shorten your stay, you may or may not receive credit for work that you have completed up to that point. The structure of the local program will determine if partial credit is possible. If you extended your stay to travel or dropped out for a term on the UW campus, it might be necessary for you to re-apply for admission to the university. Contact your Study Abroad Advisor to assist you with any questions you may have about academic implications.

**Travel**
Consult your travel agent or airline for rules regarding your purchased flight. Most airfares carry a penalty for change of travel date. Some fares are valid only on the dates for which you originally purchased the ticket, which could mean that you have to purchase a new ticket.
Those Final Few Weeks
You left for your study abroad program with a suitcase full of possessions and now you’re preparing to return, carrying with you your experiences and memories. In the final few weeks before you depart your study abroad program, think back to the goals you set for yourself. Did you accomplish any of them? Did you rewrite or create new goals? Think of things that you said you would do; see if you can fit in a few more things before you depart. Don’t forget the daily life experiences! Photograph or write about your walk to class, your housing or homestay experience, your favorite stops along your daily walks, and of course, your friends. The monuments, cities, and landscapes stand out in postcards and photos, but it’s most-likely your day-to-day experiences that you’ll remember and talk about the most.

Understanding Cultural ReAdjustment
A good deal of time is spent encouraging you to prepare for your study abroad experience and the adjustment to a new culture. It’s important to realize virtually everyone experiences a readjustment period (or reentry or reverse culture shock). Sometimes, coming home can be just as or even more unsettling than going abroad.

Returning to your home culture probably feels much like when you arrived to your host country. You may find that you have changed, and that home might feel “foreign,” or no longer feel familiar and natural.

Emotions you might experience when returning from study abroad may include:
- Excitement of being home with family and friends (like the “honeymoon stage” of initial culture shock)
- Boredom
- Difficulty expressing your feelings about your experiences
- Changed understanding of relationships
- Trouble in understanding your culture (norms, values, negative views, etc.)
- Difficulty applying knowledge or using new skills (foreign language, etc.)
- Need to learn new cultural aspects (slang, cultural references, etc.)

Your experience is your own and there is no prescribed way to readjust. While there are common emotions you may have after returning from abroad, everyone reacts differently to coming home. Realize that these feelings are a normal and on-going part of your cross-cultural experience.

You changed when you were abroad and now you’re in an environment where you can see those changes.
Cultural readjustment doesn’t mean you have to return to your pre-study abroad self; it means you’re rebuilding relationships and negotiating this new you with people who remember the old you.

Visit IAP’s Returned Student Resources section for strategies for cultural readjustment.

We encourage you to be aware of how you’re feeling. The challenges of life after study abroad can often lead to symptoms typical of depression - sadness, lack of energy, irritability, loneliness, changes in eating and sleeping patterns, and frustration with friends, family, and campus culture. It is important to note that everyone reacts differently to cultural readjustment. All of these feelings are normal and are an on-going part of your cross-cultural experience. It might just be a short period of time before you feel adjusted. If your reverse culture shock seems to last for a longer period of time, you may want to consider seeing a professional. Keep in mind the professional services and assistance available to you through University Health Services.

The ups and downs of reentry are to be expected and usually pass in time. Part of your readjustment is taking the time to consider what your study abroad experience means for your future.

A Process of Reflection and Articulation

With the capabilities of today’s communication and social media, it’s likely that you’ve shared a lot of your experience thus far online through blogs, status updates, tweets, snapchats, and photos. Your cool, crazy, happy, sad, frustrating, and memorable moments have been summed up, perhaps in fewer than 140 characters, but what do they mean to you now?

Conveying your study abroad experience to family, friends, and future employers can be a struggle. However, on your end you can’t talk about it if you haven’t thought about it. It’s important to take time to reflect upon the way you want to convey your study abroad experience. This helps maximize the impact so you can pull out the connections you’ve made between countries, cultures, and cross-cultural skills. Knowing what made your experience unique will set a foundation for sharing your stories.

Getting Involved After Study Abroad

Don’t let what happened abroad stay abroad. Continue on the journey you started and build upon your study abroad experience to help catapult you to your next adventure. Whether that’s back to university, on to a job prospect, or even returning abroad, your future experiences are now shaped by your past. Your study abroad program has ended, but don’t let your experiences fade -- use them! The challenges you overcame, the goals you accomplished, and the people and places you encountered along the way all have relevance to your future study, career, and life experiences. Consider how you can use what you learned abroad in your academic studies or career.

Your study abroad experience is just a new beginning. Where will it take you next?

Visit IAP’s website for more detailed information on further enriching your study abroad experience by getting involved after study abroad.
Policies set forth by the UW-System Administration, UW-Madison, and International Academic Programs (IAP) guide the administration, planning, and program development of all our study abroad programs. These policies and guidelines were established primarily for the protection and safety of study abroad participants. For these reasons, it is expected that you read, understand, and adhere to these policies and those for your study abroad program.

Student Rights and Responsibilities
A student’s rights and responsibilities begin when s/he enrolls in a UW System school and continue throughout his/her academic career; some of the conduct rules apply even during school vacations and off-campus or away from Madison. Study abroad students are expected to abide by the student conduct rules of the University as found in three chapters of the University of Wisconsin System Administrative Code commonly referred to as UWS 14 (academic conduct), UWS 17 (non-academic conduct) and UWS 18 (conduct on university lands).

All students need to continue to meet the eligibility criteria for their programs prior to departure. This includes remaining in good academic and disciplinary standing. If you are placed on probation, or do not meet other eligibility criteria you may be canceled from the program. Talk with your Enrollment Specialist Advisor if you have concerns about your eligibility.

Policy Limitations on the Safety and Welfare of Participants
Study abroad staff will provide extensive information for program participants; participants are expected to read all program information provided to them. However, International Academic Programs (IAP) and CALS International Programs:

- Cannot guarantee or assure the safety of participants or eliminate all risks from the study abroad environment.
- Cannot monitor or control all of the daily personal decisions, choices, and activities of individual participants.
- 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 the actions of persons not employed or otherwise engaged by the program sponsor for events that are not part of the program or that are beyond the control of the sponsor, 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.

Financial Policies
Your program cost sheet, found within your MySA account, contains detailed information regarding the financial policies related to studying abroad on your program. Specifically, the Cancellation & Refund Policy can be found on this document, as well as any program specific financial policies of which you should be aware. Your payment schedule and details can also be found on this document. Read this document carefully and share with the person(s) responsible for your program payments. If you have any questions about these policies and guidelines, please contact your Financial Specialist.

Statement of Responsibility, Release of Liability, Authorization and Acknowledgement of Risks to participate in Study Abroad and Exchange Programs
You electronically sign a Statement of Responsibility, Release of Liability, Authorization and Acknowledgement of Risks to participate in Study Abroad and Exchange Programs. A copy of this signed waiver can be found in your MySA account.

International Travel Advisory: Assumption of Risk and Release
If your program is taking place in a country where the U.S. Department of State (or other official U.S. government agency) has issued a Travel Warning, you electronically sign an International Travel Advisory: Assumption of Risk and Release. A copy of this signed waiver can be found in your MySA account.

Eligibility
All students need to continue to meet the eligibility criteria for their programs prior to departure. This includes remaining in good academic and disciplinary standing. If you are placed on probation, or do not meet other eligibility criteria you may be canceled from the program. Talk with your Enrollment Specialist Advisor if you have concerns about your eligibility.
PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

☐ Read this handbook, your Program Handbook or Academic Notes, and all acceptance materials.

☐ Access your MySA account regularly for updates and communications regarding your program.

☐ Apply for your passport immediately and a student visa, if required.

☐ Non-U.S. citizens should consult International Student Services at UW-Madison to make sure your visa and other papers are in order.

☐ Complete the IAP on-line orientation and prepare questions you may have for your program.

☐ Make travel arrangements and provide IAP your flight itinerary through MySA.

☐ Register on-line with the STEP program through the U.S. Embassy (non U.S. citizens should register at your home country’s embassy).

☐ Meet with your healthcare provider and/or travel nurse to discuss your travel plans. Get needed immunizations.

☐ Obtain copies of your current prescriptions and coordinate bringing all necessary prescription medications with you abroad.

☐ Meet with your Academic Advisor to discuss how your program fits in with your degree program.

☐ Consult with a Financial Aid Advisor in the Office of Student Financial Aid if you plan to use financial aid while abroad.

☐ Print your emergency card from your MySA account.

☐ Pay all required fees and clear all registration holds.

☐ Know how you plan to handle money while abroad, how much to take, and how to get emergency funds if necessary.

☐ Read information about the history, culture, and economy of your host country.

☐ Consider how the various parts of your identity (ex. gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, status) may impact your experience while abroad.

☐ Make photocopies of important documents (passport, visa, insurance card, prescriptions, credit cards, etc.) to bring with you and to leave at home.

☐ Discuss safety issues and emergency contact procedures with your family and friends.

☐ Obtain Power of Attorney.

☐ Arrange for continuation of your regular health insurance coverage while you are studying abroad.

☐ Review the CISI insurance dates of coverage and the terms to determine if you need to extend your coverage dates while abroad.

☐ Update your contact information through your MyUW account.

☐ Meet with a Career Advisor to discuss how an international experience can make you stand out in your future career goals, and what you can do to develop and capitalize on your strengths and skills gained from studying abroad.

☐ Remind yourself to have a positive attitude, be flexible, and have an open mind.