Congratulations on your decision to study abroad!

International Academic Programs (IAP) is excited to work with you to help make your experience as culturally enriching and academically meaningful as possible. At IAP, 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!
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At IAP, our team serves as a resource through the entire study abroad process experience, from pre-departure to return.

You can expect IAP 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 IAP 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.

IAP expects you to:

- Take a proactive role in your experience. Learn about your program and the country in which you will be studying.
- Read all information provided to you by IAP and any other university/organization affiliated with your program. Save all correspondence to refer back to as needed.
- 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 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 IAP 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.

IAP may be communicating 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 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 IAP staff, your Academic Advisor(s), and on-site staff to identify study abroad courses that will meet your degree requirements. All courses taken abroad will appear on your UW-Madison transcript.

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, IAP encourages you to officially declare your major prior to leaving for your study abroad program.

Academic Advisor Meeting
Once you have been accepted, you will need to speak with your Academic Advisor(s) to go over 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 Undergraduate Catalogue 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
- An up-to-date copy of your DARS report

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, IAP encourages you 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 from the College of Letters & Science, 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, at any
level, in their major or major department, in courses taken on the UW-Madison campus. These credits may not include retroactive credit or credit earned by department examination. For official L&S rules, refer to the UW-Madison Undergraduate Catalog and consult with your Academic Advisor(s).

**Department of Engineering Courses**

If you are a student enrolled in the College of Engineering and plan to take any of your last 30 credits abroad on an IAP program, you must request special permission to do so and complete a 30 credit waiver form prior to confirming your participation. While doing so may be possible, additional planning and steps will be required and approval is granted or denied on a case-by-case basis. See your Academic Advisor(s) for more information about this process.

**Language Courses**

For most IAP 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 IAP. 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 IAP prior to taking the class (i.e.: student who would like to take Berber while studying on a program in France). You will need to submit a course syllabus to your IAP Study Abroad Advisor prior to your program start. Your IAP Study Abroad Advisor will work with you to have the course evaluated for UW-Madison credit in a related department (i.e. African Languages and Literature for Xhosa). If a departmental equivalent can be given, an equivalent in the Study Abroad Department (SAB) will be requested. SAB credits are L&S ‘electives’ which count towards the 120 degree credits required for the BA or BS degree.

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/choral/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.

"Studying abroad has allowed me to prove to myself that even in challenging learning environments I can succeed."

-Aimee Balistreri, Ecuador
General Education Requirements (GER)

Ethnic Studies (‘e’)

UW-Madison ethnic studies courses consider ethnic and racial minorities that have been marginalized or discriminated against in the U.S. **Few courses taken abroad will meet this requirement.** IAP cannot guarantee that the few ethnic studies (‘e’ designated) equivalents that you will find in your program’s IAP 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.

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

IAP will register you for a “Study Abroad Course” for the term(s) you will be studying abroad; therefore, you should not register for UW-Madison courses for the term(s) you are abroad. This “Study Abroad Course” will act as a placeholder so that you maintain your status as a full-time UW-Madison student while you are abroad. This is a temporary registration, which will be converted into graded, UW-Madison credit after the completion of your program.
Undergraduate students participating on an IAP 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 are advised to 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 the Academics section of 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. Consult your MySA account for more detailed credit information relevant for your program.

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.

Course Equivalents

Each course you take abroad must 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 foreign course making sure to best match UW-Madison course content with foreign course content. These equivalents are the courses that will appear on your UW-Madison transcript for your time abroad.

To establish UW-Madison course equivalents for your foreign courses, you will submit Course Equivalent Requests (CER) through your MySA account. You will receive an email alert from IAP when you have access to submit your CERs. All students on IAP programs 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

The due date for submitting your Course Equivalent Requests (CER) can be found in the Academics tab of your MySA account. You will be updated on approvals through your account.

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 foreign 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 IAP webpage under the Academics tab.

There may be multiple pre-approved equivalents listed for the same foreign 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 you can't find your foreign course on the pre-approved list or do not wish to receive the equivalent already attached to the foreign course, you will need to submit a new CER requesting a UW-Madison course that best matches the foreign course.

Check the UW-Madison Course Guide to find a UW-Madison course that may match the course you are taking abroad. Your Resident Director, on-site staff, or UW-Madison Academic Advisor(s), or IAP Advisors 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 class does not have a syllabus, you will be prompted to enter information and details 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, IAP 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 thorough course requests as soon as possible. IAP will work diligently to process your requests in a timely manner.

Pass/Fail Guidelines
If you wish to declare a course pass/fail, adhere to the pass/fail policies described below as well as any policies established for your study abroad program. Please note that some IAP study abroad programs do not have a pass/fail option. Refer to your program handbook or academic notes for detailed information.

The rules governing pass/fail eligibility are complex, so read the information given below very carefully. These rules apply to all students participating in an IAP study abroad program:

• Continuing UW-Madison students must have at least a 2.5 cumulative GPA.
• First-semester freshmen and transfer students may take a pass/fail course(s).
• Freshmen, sophomores and juniors may carry one pass/fail course per term. Seniors (at least 86 degree credits) may carry two pass/fail courses per 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.
• You may not carry any course in your major department on a pass/fail basis, whether required for the major or not, even if you have already finished your major.

• 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.
• Courses cross-listed with your major department may not be carried 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:
  o Breadth (humanities, literature, social science, science)
  o Foreign language
  o Ethnic Studies
  o Math
  o General Education (Comm A, Comm B, QR A, QR B)
• A maximum of ten (10) pass/fail courses may count toward graduation.
• Directed Studies courses may not be taken pass/fail.
• 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, complete the IAP pass/fail process available in your MySA account. If your semester-long program does not have a deadline date for declaring pass/fail,
you must complete the IAP pass/fail request in your MySA account by the end of the fourth week of classes (this does not include pre-sessions). For short-term programs, refer to your program handbook or academic notes for detailed information.

After submitting an IAP pass/fail request, a pass/fail confirmation will appear in your approved course list in your MySA account.

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.

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 at their study abroad site consents. Students must also follow the host institutions 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 on-site program staff and notify them if you plan to drop a course. Complete any paperwork with them that is required to formally drop the course. If you fail to notify the host institution that you are dropping a course, or you drop it after the host institution’s deadline, the course will likely appear on your host institution transcript. If a failing grade is assigned by the host institution, you will receive an F on your UW-Madison transcript for the course. If an “Incomplete” appears on the host institution 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).

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Grade Processing & Transcripting
After IAP has received your transcript from your study abroad program, IAP is able to process your grades. To do so, all of your course equivalents need to be approved and you need to have completed the online program evaluation.

IAP will confirm that you have submitted all required CERs by matching the requests to the courses recorded on your foreign transcript. If you are missing CER(s), you will be sent a notification by IAP 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. For IAP 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 from IAP asking you to review your Grade Report through your MySA account.

If there are no errors in your grades, credits, or equivalents, confirm the Grade Report in MySA within one month following the date of notification. The sooner you confirm, the sooner your grades will be posted to your transcript. After you confirm your 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 before ordering a transcript.

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

If you feel there is a discrepancy in your Grade Report, do not confirm your Grade Report. Contact IAP regarding the problem(s) within 30 days of receipt. If you do not confirm your Grade Report within 30 days of receipt, IAP will forward your grade and course equivalent information 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.

IAP cannot order or forward official UW-Madison transcripts on a student’s behalf. The Office of the Registrar’s website has detailed information about how to obtain a transcript. The typical time for processing a transcript request is 1–3 days. A Student Record (unofficial transcript) is available through MyUW.

For non-UW-Madison students who would like to have UW-Madison send your transcript to your home institution, you will need to make a request to the UW-Madison Office of the Registrar following the steps outlined on their website. Please make sure that your grades have posted before ordering your transcript. You may check your grades through your MyUW account.

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 an intent to graduate and 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 abroad 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 abroad and processing course equivalents. Please consult your IAP Study Abroad Advisor if you have concerns regarding the timing of your transcripts.

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 your MyUW. Commencement ceremonies are organized by the Office of the Secretary of the Faculty. Detailed information regarding commencement ceremonies and attire can be found online.
Passport
You will need to travel to your study abroad country with a current U.S. passport valid six months past the end date of your program. If you are a U.S. citizen and do not already have a passport, you should apply for one immediately. Passport application/renewal information is available online.

Visa
A visa is written permission to visit a country granted by the government of the host country. It typically comes in the form of a sticker or stamp placed in your passport. Foreign entry requirements for U.S. citizens are available online.

Student visas are required for some IAP study abroad programs. Please consult the Travel & Visa tab in your MySA account to determine if you need to obtain 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 IAP Study Abroad Advisor will endeavor to give you the most accurate information, through your MySA account, but it is crucial that:

1) If you receive information about visas from your host institution that is different from what you received from IAP, 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 make sure no changes have been made since you received your visa materials.

The visa process can be lengthy and time consuming, so it is important to apply as soon as you have all the relevant paperwork. 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 when applying. 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. IAP and UW-Madison are not responsible for obtaining student visas, nor are they in any way responsible for visa or entry denial.

Many countries do not require visas for tourist visits.
of less than three months, but you need to know before you go! If you plan to travel to other countries while you are abroad, you should verify entry and exit requirements for each country.

Pre-departure Orientation
IAP pre-departure orientation provides you with valuable information regarding studying abroad, without heavily repeating information that you will receive from other sources. Program providers or host universities may provide information including pre-departure emails, handbooks, newsletters, presentations, etc. IAP expects you to be an active participant in preparing yourself for your program.

All IAP program participants will receive a pre-departure orientation. The structure of this orientation will vary depending on your program type. See your MySA pre-departure tab for more information on your orientation resources.

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) Contact SHIP and let them know you will be studying abroad

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. You are responsible for making your own travel arrangements, which allows you the 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?

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 airport, so check this website regularly up to the date of your departure. Questions about luggage regulations or airport security can be addressed to your specific airline carrier.

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

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

-Houa Vang, Croatia
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.
- Pack a small, battery operated alarm clock.
- 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, radio, 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 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 website 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
IAP 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 (http://www.housing.wisc.edu). You can also search the Campus Area Housing website (http://www.campusareahousing.wisc.edu) 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 a portion or all of the rent. Things to consider are:

- Before signing a lease, find out whether or not the
LOGISTICS

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 as well as a budget worksheet 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. If you plan to take cash to exchange while abroad, request bills that were printed in 2006 or later from the bank.

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. IAP advises you to obtain 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.

Although credit cards are widely accepted, not all merchants accept them. 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 incidentals 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. 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.

- **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.

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

-Natalie Baus, China
**MyUW Account & Email**
Update your contact information on your MyUW account before you go abroad.

IAP 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 around 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, be sure to get a new card before you go.
FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Program Costs
Students studying abroad on IAP programs are exempt from paying UW-Madison tuition and academic fees. Instead, you are assessed an IAP program fee which recovers the actual costs of the program. Within the Financial tab of MySA, you will find your program cost sheet which includes program cost details, payment schedule information, and financial policies.

On the program cost sheet, you will notice that the IAP program fee and the estimated additional expenses comprise the total cost of attendance for the program. Be sure you understand what the IAP program fee covers and does not cover. International airfare, housing, and meals are sometimes included; sometimes they are not. Expenses not included in your IAP 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 depend 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 IAP Acceptance Deposit to confirm your participation on your program. The IAP Acceptance Deposit will be credited to the total IAP 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 IAP Financial Specialist.

IAP 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 IAP 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, IAP 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 IAP 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. IAP 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 abroad 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 IAP program cost(s). 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 IAP'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 IAP Financial Specialist so that they may assist you with this award:
- Chancellors Scholar
- National Security Education Program (NSEP)
- Powers Knapp
- UW Athletic scholarships
PREPARING TO LIVE IN ANOTHER CULTURE

What is Culture?

Culture is a complex concept to understand. One definition describes culture as a system of shared beliefs, ideas, values, customs, behaviors, technology, and artifacts that the members of society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning.\(^1\)\(^2\) As a study abroad student, you are granted the unique opportunity to immerse yourself in the culture of your host country and begin to understand the varying dimensions of the 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, sex, 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. 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 base of knowledge to work off, 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 IAP Study Abroad Correspondents, among others) about your host country on the Internet.
- Read newspapers from and books about your host country.
- Watch films from and about your host country.
- Listen to radio stations or watch TV shows that focus on international news coverage.
- Consult the travel books in the IAP Study Abroad Resource Center (106 Red Gym).
- Talk to people who are from your host country.
- Meet international students 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 have said they’re willing to share their experiences.

Consider the following when preparing to enter another culture:

- How does the host country view time? Are locals

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\(^1\) Bates, Plog Cultural Anthropology. 1990
\(^2\) Heine, Steven J. Cultural Psychology. 2008
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)? What are gender roles?

• 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?

• How are elders viewed?

• What role does alcohol play in the society?

• What is considered dating in the host country? A relationship?

• What is the power structure of the host country? Educational structure?

Self Reflection: 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.

You may start to think of your identity as an American in different ways and experience things differently. Self-exploration 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 in the U.S. To learn more about identity and study abroad, as well as questions to ask yourself to prepare for your program, review IAP’s website section on Student Identity.

Students with Disabilities
Different cultures vary in the degree of access and disability services available. If you are a McBurney student and need special arrangements, contact IAP so that we can initiate efforts to provide reasonable accommodations for you while you are abroad. You can read more online.

Multicultural Students
Race and ethnic relations differ across the world. You may be treated differently abroad because of your race or ethnicity. 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. If you are in the minority during your time abroad, you may be treated differently than you are typically treated at home. IAP has some resources for you online.

LGBT Students
Living in another culture tends to be a time of self-exploration and you may find that you are questioning your sexual identity for the first time. You may also already identify yourself as a gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender student and find yourself negotiating your sexuality in an unknown culture with a different social climate, law 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 sexuality and sexual orientation 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. In other places, there are active communities and visible social movements for LGBT rights. Some locations may 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 resource for you.

If you have concerns about any of these issues, don’t hesitate to contact your IAP Study Abroad Advisor. More information about LGBT student health and safety can be found in the “Safety” section later in this handbook.

Updated July 2014
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 people living in another culture for an extended period of time may experience. 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
Coping with Cultural Adjustment

It is important to remember that cultural adjustment can be challenging and that you will likely be affected one way or another during your time abroad. Knowing that challenges related to cultural adjustment will not last forever is comforting but it is important to have certain things in place to minimize their impact:

• Keep busy by getting involved in campus groups. Find something that is familiar to you in the host culture and participate.
• Talk to on-site staff or your IAP Study Abroad Advisor about your feelings.
• Keep a journal or blog. Writing about your daily experiences provides you with a detailed record of your experience and may also help you cope with your cultural adjustment.
• Plan a daily activity that involves getting out and interacting with people aside from going to class. You must make an effort to meet people as locals will not necessarily come and find you.
• Know that process of cultural adjustment is different for everyone and other participants in the program may not have the same feelings you do. Try not to complain with others who are experiencing challenges related to cultural adjustment at the same time as you since negativity can snowball. At the same time, be supportive of others with you who are having adjustment difficulties.
• Avoid being judgmental. When you find yourself feeling like the U.S. is superior in some aspects, try to understand what needs your host culture is meeting by their different ways of doing things.
• Continue practicing the local language.
• Educate yourself about U.S. politics and foreign policy and understand that there may be criticism of the U.S. in your host country.
• Remember your motives for studying abroad.
• Try not to focus on the bad things. Instead, look for the humor in difficult situations. Things that go wrong often make the best stories when you return.
• Do not be offended by characteristics of the culture which are not polite or appropriate in the U.S. Try to understand the host country’s mannerisms, habits, and accepted norms so you can avoid taking offense at things you are not used to abroad.
• Do not immediately call/write/e-mail your family/friends to tell them how miserable you are. The next day your feelings may have changed and you feel fine, but your family/friends are left thinking the worst. One tactic is to write the letter or e-mail to release your frustrations, but to not send it (or at least not right away). If you feel better the next day, throw away the letter or delete the e-mail. If you are still upset, share your feelings with your family or friends.

- Adapted from The Ohio State University Study Abroad Handbook

PREPARING TO LIVE IN ANOTHER CULTURE

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

IAP strongly recommends 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, here are the 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 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.

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.

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 online.

Health and Wellness Information

All IAP participants are required to submit their Health and Wellness Information within 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 IAP 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 IAP 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. 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.

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 increases 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 IAP Study Abroad Advisor as soon as possible. Your IAP 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. 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 IAP 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, IAP will provide you with a link and log-in portal 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. IAP encourages you 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 while overseas, contact your IAP 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: Some IAP students are enrolled in CISI directly by their program organizer or university as listed below. 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.

• Argentina, Buenos Aires (IFSA-Butler)
• Kenya, Nairobi (University of Minnesota)
• Morocco, Fez (University of Minnesota)
• Spain, Toledo (University of Minnesota)
• Venezuela, Merida (University of Minnesota)

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

You will want to think carefully about any medicines and travel health kit supplies you want to bring with you. Some countries may limit the amount of a particular drug that you can transport into and out of the host 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 IAP 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

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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. Plan to take enough, in original bottles, for your full program duration. 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 translation. 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 IAP 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 for IAP, 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 related to health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in the host country. At any time, feel free to ask questions to your IAP 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, IAP 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. IAP notified you 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, IAP will notify you and 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. The Travel & Visa Tab in 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 during a trip abroad can result in a difficult legal and expensive 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.

**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 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
U.S. citizens traveling abroad should research safety and local customs, but women should be especially attentive in order to stay safe. 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.

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. Most LGBT travelers encounter no problems when overseas, but it helps to prepare before you go.

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 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 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 you’re traveling to. 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 IAP 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.

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.
When choosing to drink or use other drugs in a foreign country:

- Know and obey the laws and regulations of the country you are visiting. Many countries laws are more severe than in the U.S.
- Your consumption of alcohol or another drug, and/or your behavior while under the influence, might lead to a violation of local laws in addition to program and University conduct policies.
- Certain types of alcoholic beverages may be stronger than what you are used to in the U.S.
- Existing legislation in most foreign countries regarding the use or possession of marijuana, cocaine, and other illegal drugs imposes very severe penalties including 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 or the U.S. Embassy can protect you from the local legal consequences.
- 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.

Drinking alcohol can seem deceptively harmless, especially when you travel to countries where attitudes, customs, and 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. Educate yourself about the customs, etiquette, and laws of your host country. Talk with your IAP 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**

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, UW-Madison Resident Director, and/or IAP.

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. 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.

IAP staff and UW-Madison are available to assist you. University Health Services has a variety of online resources and a brochure.

**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, IAP strongly discourages you 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

**In an Emergency**

IAP will provide you with an emergency card which you can find within your MySA. This emergency card contains IAP 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.

If it is necessary to contact IAP, do so by calling:

- During business hours (8:00-4:30, Central Time), call the IAP office at +1-608-265-6329.
- During non-business hours, call the IAP emergency phone at +1-608-516-9440. This phone is for emergencies only and will be answered by an IAP staff member who can assist with the emergency situations.

IAP is committed to providing prompt, appropriate, and thorough care to students. When you contact IAP, 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

In the event of a political, social, or natural emergency, IAP will be in close contact with 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.
Resident Director
In some cases, IAP programs will have a Resident Director (RD). The RD serves as the liaison between IAP and the host institution and is responsible for all academic and administrative matters concerning program participants. The RD 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 RD often teaches a course for the program and may be responsible for the actual grading of student coursework in the host country.

Establish good communication with your RD. If you are experiencing difficulties with the program or with your adjustment to the culture, your RD is a good person to seek out for assistance and support. Be sure to keep your RD informed of your travel plans when you are away from the program.

If your program does not have an RD, these responsibilities will be assumed by an employee of the host institution or program provider. It is important that you establish good communication with the on-site staff and that you contact them if you encounter any difficulties and/or problems.

Telephone
The easiest and most economical way to phone others in-country or back home will vary by country.

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 or a residence hall, you may have a landline installed for your usage. If you are living in a home stay, you may have a landline phone which you can use. 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
WHILE YOU ARE ABROAD

local and international calls.

**Calling Cards from U.S. Phone Companies:** You may want to consider purchasing an international calling card. These can be in the form of a pre-paid international calling card or international calling credit card. Make sure you are clear on the appropriate dialing instructions for your calling card before you go abroad. Friends and family in the U.S. may also want to consider purchasing a calling card to make international calls to you abroad from the U.S. Compare prices to see which company provides the best rates per minute.

**Cell Phones:** Many students choose to purchase a cell phone while abroad. Most foreign cell phone companies do not require contracts as companies often do in the U.S. Instead, foreign cell phone companies most often function with SIM cards which are pre-paid calling cards that insert into the phone. Shop around and find out the respective costs to make and receive calls with your foreign cell phone (both in-country and internationally). Sometimes because of the high cost of making or receiving calls with a foreign cell phone, students will use the more affordable option of text messaging. Some U.S. cell phones can be used abroad, so research this carefully with your cell phone provider before departure.

**Voice Over Internet:** It is also possible to make international calls over the internet. Past participants have recommended using Skype, an internet phone software. Skype allows you to place free calls to anyone else who also has the service as well as low-cost rates to regular phones. To use Skype, you will need to download and install Skype software to your computer. Google Voice also has low-cost international rates available.

**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**

Photography is a useful tool to use to speak to an audience with images that intend to capture an experience or record memories. With the potential of digital cameras and smartphones, and the social media experience in sharing photos, it becomes important to recognize the power photos can have and to learn how to create and share photographs ethically.

While there is not one ethical standard for taking photographs, there are numerous resources on the subject. 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 specific cultural considerations. When you are abroad you will be a global citizen and become informational ambassadors of the U.S., UW-Madison, and International Academic Programs (IAP), and your actions will often be interpreted in this framework. It is your responsibility, as a global citizen, to evaluate your images for cultural appropriateness and sensitivity so as to avoid images that:

- stereotype,
- exploit,
- disrespect,
- make false generalizations,
- or 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...
WHILE YOU ARE ABROAD

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.

IAP welcomes the submission of photographs by study abroad students, alumni, and UW-Madison faculty and staff willing to share their photos. Photos used by IAP shall strive to be an honest representation of the education abroad experiences and the culture in which a program takes place. It is in our experience that students relate to seeing peers enjoying an active and experiential setting. Therefore, IAP will be thoughtful and purposeful about the photos our office uses in order in order to reach students, but will attempt to maintain awareness for cultural considerations as well.

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. Surf the internet, talk to past participants, consult travel books, and 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:

• 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.

Absentee Voting
If you will be in your host country during a U.S. election and would like to vote absentee, you need to make preparations at least two months in advance. The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) and instructions are available online.

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 website.

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.

Updated July 2014
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 they had expected due to uncontrollable circumstances. Regardless of your circumstance, you should notify your IAP 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. IAP 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 what courses you will be able to take while abroad and how they may count toward your degree program(s).

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.

Shortening Your Stay

Financial
By having accepted a place in the program, you are committed to a schedule of payments, and IAP 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 IAP cannot always immediately inform you how much money, if any, you will receive. Contact the IAP Financial Specialist and/or the OSFA 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 IAP 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.

“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
When You Return

Those Final Few Weeks
You left for your study abroad 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 as you lived experiences? Think of things that you said you would do; see if you can fit in a few more things before you go. 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, but it’s most-likely your day-to-day experiences that you’ll remember and talk about the most.

Understanding Cultural Re-Adjustment
A good deal of time is spent encouraging study abroad students to prepare for their experience and the adjustment to a new culture. However, study abroad research has shown that for some students, coming home can be just as, or even more unsettling than going abroad. The combination of excitement and exhaustion in arriving home probably feels much like when you arrived to your host country. You may find that you have changed a great deal and that it can be difficult to find people who truly seem to understand your new perspective. Home may no longer feel familiar and natural. These feelings that you may have when you return home are part of a cultural re-adjustment process, or “reverse culture shock.”

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 re-adjustment. Some just want to be left alone, needing time to sort things out. Others want to share their feelings with those who will understand them, while other individuals need to tell everyone about everything that happened. Some returned students are unable to find anything good about being back in the U.S., yet others feel completely comfortable. 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 prolong for a longer period of time, it may be necessary to seek out professional mental health intervention. Keep in mind the professional services and assistance you have available to you on campus.
If your friends and/or family have noticed a change in you, it is because you have changed. You’re now in an environment where you can see those changes. Cultural re-adjustment doesn’t mean you have to return to your pre-study abroad self, it means you’re rebuilding relationships, negotiating and integrating this new you with the people that remember the old you.

Here are some strategies that may ease your re-adjustment to life after study abroad:

- You will have changed, home has changed, and you will be seeing familiar people, places, and behaviors from new perspectives. Give some thought to the types of changes you have undergone as a result of your time abroad. What did you learn about yourself? What is now important to you?

- Talk with other fellow returned students to share your experiences and find someone else who can relate to what you may be feeling. Bring your international perspectives into your class discussions and coursework.

- Meet with your IAP Study Abroad Advisor to talk about your time abroad. They’re always eager to hear about student experiences and can talk through strategies in re-adjusting to life after study abroad.

- Participate in the Returned Student events and opportunities provided by IAP and seek out the provided resources and ideas for how you can integrate your international experience back at UW-Madison. These are great ways for you to connect with fellow returnees to build a network, as well as show your support for study abroad. Check out the IAP Returned Student website for details.

- Be patient with your friends and family. They are trying to understand your recent experiences even as you are listening and trying to understand their experiences while you were gone. Being as good a listener as a talker is a key ingredient in mutual sharing and is a sure way to reestablish rapport.

- See if you can find here in the U.S. what you loved about your life abroad. Seek out food (State Street is a great start), film (The Marquee, festivals, libraries, online) and friends (both U.S. and international)!

- You’ve learned things about your host country, and most likely learned things about your home country from a different perspective. Negative feelings about your “home” culture can be expected. Making comparisons between cultures and nations is natural; however, a person must be careful not to be seen as too critical of home or too lavish in praise of things foreign. Remember that there are positive and negative aspects of all cultures. Connect with family and friends as you do some “cultural catching up,” perhaps with linguistic, social, political, economic, entertainment, and current event topics as they may be unfamiliar to you since you have been away.

- Visit IAP’s website section for Returned Students for more re-adjustment strategies.

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, posts, tweets, and photos. Your cool, crazy, and memorable moments have been summed up, perhaps in fewer than 140 characters, but what do they mean to you now? Conveying the experience in person to family, friends, and future employers can be a struggle if they don’t have a similar frame of reference. However, on your end, you can’t talk about it if you haven’t thought about it. It’s important to take time to process your experiences and reflect upon the way that you want to convey your study abroad experience moving forward. Reflecting on your experiences helps to maximize the impact so you can pull out the connections you’ve made between countries, cultures, knowledge, and with cross-cultural skills. Knowing what made your experience unique will set a foundation for sharing your stories with family and friends, and show future employers the value in you as a potential employee in making connections to your skill set and international experiences.

Similar to culture shock, ups and downs of re-entry and reverse culture shock are expected and will pass in time. The same skills you used to cope then may come in handy now. Continue to reflect on what you learned from your time abroad. Explore home with your new perspective. Share your experiences. Re-entry and the adjustment of returning to your life in the U.S. is an important part of your study abroad experience. Connecting with other students who have studied abroad, talking about your experiences and sharing your experience with others all help guide one through
the adjustment back home. And don’t forget to keep in touch with IAP! Once the initial re-adjustment feelings subside, it’s time to take the next step and consider what your study abroad experience means for your future.

**Continuing the Journey You Started**
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; instead, 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. 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.
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, IAP expects you to 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. While studying abroad on one of UW-Madison’s sponsored study abroad programs, 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).

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

- 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 studying abroad on your program. Specifically, the IAP Cancellation & Refund Policy can be found on this document, as well as any program specific financial policies you should be aware of. 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 IAP Financial Specialist.

Statement of Responsibility, Release of Liability, Authorization and Acknowledgement of Risks to participate in Study Abroad and Exchange Programs
IAP study abroad participants 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, Waiver, and Release
IAP study abroad participants whose program is located in a country where the U.S. Department of State (or other official U.S. government agency) has issued a Travel Warning electronically sign an International Travel Advisory, Assumption of Risk, Waiver, and Release. A copy of this signed waiver can be found in your MySA account.

Waiver for Study Abroad in Japan
IAP study abroad participants attending a program in Japan electronically sign a Waiver for Study Abroad in Japan. A copy of this signed waiver can be found in your MyStudyAbroad account.
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.

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.