Global Health: Otavalo, Ecuador – Summer 2015
IAP Program Handbook

The Global Health program in Otavalo, Ecuador is offered by International Academic Programs (IAP) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. This IAP Program Handbook supplements the IAP Study Abroad Handbook and provides you with the most up-to-date information and advice available at the time of printing. Changes may occur before your departure or while you are abroad.

Questions about your program abroad (housing options, facilities abroad) should be directed towards your Program Leaders. Questions relating to academics (e.g. course credit and equivalents, registration deadlines) should be directed to International Academic Programs at UW-Madison.

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![Map of Ecuador and Colombia](image_url)
Contact Information

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Emergency Contact Information

In case of an emergency, call the main IAP number (608) 265-6329 between 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday; after-hours or on weekends call the IAP staff on call at (608) 516-9440.

Embassy Registration

All program participants who are U.S. citizens must register at the U.S. Embassy before departure as this will help in case of a lost passport or other mishap. You can register on-line at https://travelregistration.state.gov. If you are not a U.S. citizen, register at your home country’s embassy or consulate.

U.S. Embassy in Quito, Ecuador
Ave. Avigiras E12-170 y Ave. Eloy Alfaro (next to SOLCA)
Tel: 02-398-5000
E-mail: contacto.usembuio@state.gov
Web: http://ecuador.usembassy.gov/
After-hours emergencies: 256-1749
Program Dates

Tentative Summer 2015
Student Arrival in Quito May 23
Program End and Departure June 20

Please note dates are tentative. When confirmed, they will be posted in your MyStudyAbroad.

A full course syllabus will be provided by the Program Leader.

Preparation before Leaving

Refer to the Pre-Departure Checklist in the IAP Study Abroad Handbook for essential information.

Immigration Documents

Passport
A passport is needed to travel to Ecuador. Apply immediately for a passport if you do not already have one. Passport information and application forms can be found on the U.S. State Department website (http://travel.state.gov). If you already have your passport, make sure it will be valid for at least 6 months beyond the length of your stay abroad.

Visa
No visa is required for participants who are U.S. citizens who enter Ecuador for less than 90 days.

Handling Money Abroad

Ecuador has adopted the US dollar as its official currency. Past students have recommended that you take as many $1 and $5 bills or $1 coins as possible. Past students have said that about $200 in $1 and $5 bills is sufficient. It is often difficult to get change for larger bills. While banks and Casas de Cambio should be safe places to get money, there are increasing accounts of people receiving counterfeit bills from these sources. If you receive counterfeit bills, within 24 hours you must report it to the authorities in the bank or Casa de Cambio where you received the bills. Count and review your bills before leaving the premises as $1 coins can also be counterfeited. Make sure to inspect before accepting change. Often banks have ATMs that will work with your debit card. Notify your bank prior to departure that you are planning to use your debit/credit cards in Ecuador.

Traveler's checks can be changed into cash at banks, malls, hotels and Casas de Cambio. In most cases, you will need to have your passport to cash traveler’s checks. Be aware that there is at least a 2% fee (can be up to 10%! ) to change traveler’s checks into cash.

Packing

The nights in Ecuador will most likely be cold and homes, offices, and classrooms do not have central heating, so it is especially important to bring warm clothing. During the program, you will need clothes that would be suitable for the springtime in the Midwest. Past participants have said you should be prepared for four seasons in one day and advise dressing in layers.

The items below were suggested by past participants:

Hiking Boots
Walking shoes
Water shoes/ sandals
Sleeping Bag
Towel
Flashlight/ Headlamp
Light robe (nice for shared bathroom situations)
Quick dry hiking shirt and pants (highly recommended by past students)
Fleece/ Jacket (highly recommended by past students)
Rain gear- umbrella and jacket (highly recommended by past students)
Camera
Personal Toiletries (especially contact solution!)
Clothes to wear around town (every day clothes)
Warm clothes
Water bottle
Spanish dictionary and a Spanish verb book and Travel book
Backpack
Personal medications (ibuprofen, Pepto Bismol, cold medication, altitude sickness medication, malaria medication, etc)
Insect repellent
Course materials
Notepad/ pen (highly recommended by past students)
Small gift for host family (may have multiple host families, so plan accordingly)
Hand Sanitizer
Baseball Hat (or other hat for blocking sun)
Warm Winter-type hat
Clothesline
Swimsuit

Electronics
The voltage in Ecuador is the same as in the United States: 110 volts, 60 cycles AC, but some electrical sockets are too small to accommodate the larger prong on appliances. You can, however, buy an adapter in Quito. You may experience electrical rationing during your stay in Ecuador. Past participants have suggested bringing a camera and perhaps an MP3 player. Some students felt a laptop was a good idea, as they preferred this to Internet cafes for writing the papers. The increased availability of Wi-Fi in public gathering places has diminished the number and quality of internet cafes in Otavalo.

Travel and Arrival Information
Participants will need to make their own travel arrangements for arriving in Ecuador by the course start date. Students wishing to be picked up by the Resident Director (RD) or program staff will need to arrive during timeframe given by the RD. Specific times will be suggested mid-semester. Students arriving outside of the arrival window will be responsible for securing their own transportation to the hotel in Quito.

The Academic Program
Students participate in two concurrent academic activities throughout the program. Students will study Spanish at a language institute in Otavalo and the Amazon while simultaneously engaging in lecture, discussion and field activities focused on cultural and health-related course content.

Participants will be awarded four UW-Madison credits upon successful completion of the program:

- 2 credits for Population Health Science 645: Global Health Field Course
- 2 credits of Spanish. Spanish course will depend on previous Spanish taken.

Students earn the next Spanish class in sequence

In this interdisciplinary setting, students will think critically about connections between cultural variables and human and animal health and disease, will gain firsthand experience with cultural and medical issues in a developing country, and will develop an understanding of the theoretical and empirical foundations of medical anthropology. The health-related course is designed so students will develop cross-cultural skills that will ideally grow into personal and professional assets for future health care practice.

On most days, students will study Spanish in the morning and will have 2-3 hours of additional class in the afternoon. Afternoon sessions will consist of faculty- and student-led discussions on a variety of topic areas. Throughout the course, the class will consider how biological/scientific approaches to health can intersect or conflict with more culturally based approaches.
Equivalents and Course Equivalent Request (CER)
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. In order to establish UW-Madison course equivalents for your study abroad courses, you will submit a Course Equivalent Requests through your MyStudyAbroad account. Detailed information on the UW course equivalent process that you will use through your MyStudyAbroad account is available in the IAP Study Abroad Handbook.

Grading
Your PHS course will be graded A-F. Only the Spanish course may be taken as Pass/Fail credit. However, students, especially undergraduate students, should carefully review the policies related to pass/fail in their IAP Study Abroad Handbook. **Students must complete and submit to IAP the Pass/Fail request through MyStudyAbroad before classes start.** Please refer to the IAP Study Abroad Handbook for additional academic policies.

Living Abroad
Educate yourself about your host country. Read the Preparing to Live in Another Culture section of the IAP Study Abroad Handbook. Consult the websites in this handbook as well as travel books in the IAP Resource Center.

Geography of Ecuador
Ecuador is bounded by Colombia to the north, Peru to the east and south and the Pacific Ocean to the west. It is the second smallest republic in South America. The majority of its people are mestizos, or Spanish colonial decent, 40% are indigenous, 10% are European and the remainder are African-Ecuadorian or Asian. The Andes form a mountainous backbone to the country. There are two main ranges - the Eastern Cordillera and the Western Cordillera, which are separated by a 400-km-long central valley. The valley is itself divided into basins, which vary in altitude and are drained by rivers that cut through to the Pacific and the Amazon. Clusters of dense populations dot these basins. Above them and around the rims of the valley are the cones of more than thirty volcanoes. Several of them have long been extinct, but at least eight are still active. All but two of the main peaks are climbed fairly regularly. The whole mountain area is called the Sierra. East of the Sierra is the lowland Oriente, which is covered with jungle, and trough which the tributaries of the Amazon meander. West of the Sierra are the Costa, the Pacific Ocean, and the Galapagos islands. Altitude can be a problem as Quito is at 9350 ft and Otavalo is 8440 ft with small communities residing well over 10,000 ft in elevation.

Climate
Geographically, Ecuador lies in a hot zone, but due to the snow-capped mountains of the Andes and the cold currents running through the Pacific near the coast, considerable variations occur. Nevertheless, there are three distinct climactic regions: the hot coast and jungle areas, the warm semi-tropical regions, and the cool highlands, which are moderately warm in the dry season.

Economy
In the early 1970’s, Ecuador underwent a transformation from an essentially agricultural economy to one predominantly dependent on petroleum. Since 1972, when substantial domestic oil output began, economic growth has largely followed the fortunes of the oil market. Agriculture employs a third of the labor force; the major export crops are bananas, coffee and cocoa, which are grown on the coast. Fishing is also a growing industry. The inflation rate in Ecuador is very high, often 30% - 50% a year, but has come down to 20% in 2001 since the adoption of the US dollar as legal currency.

Starting January 1, 1992, Ecuador, as well as all the other Andean Pact Countries (Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia), entered a new common market agreement that reduces or eliminates most custom tariffs, thus facilitating trade among these five countries.

In the late 1990's, Ecuador’s economic situation began to change dramatically. Inflation rates have skyrocketed, reaching up to 70% during the 12 months of 1999. In early 2000, the President took drastic economic measures
to curb inflation. The measure attracting the most attention was the dollarization of the economy, resulting in the official currency being the US dollar.

Otavalo
Otavalo is a largely indigenous town in Imbabura Province, Ecuador. The town, located in a valley, is surrounded by the peaks of Imbabura, Cotacachi, and Mojanda volcanoes.

The Otavalo Indians are famous for the weaving of textiles, a practice which they have had for 400 years. Although its primary market day is Saturday, there are wares available for tourists throughout the week in the Plaza del Poncho.

Otavalo was traditionally an area made up principally of farming communities, but with the growth of tourism the town has begun to focus more on the making of handicrafts which have made the Saturday market a popular stop with visitors to Ecuador. Tourism had become the town's main industry and as a result many hotels have been set up in colonial buildings along with a number of restaurants.

As Otavalo is famous for its textiles, many of the nearby villages and towns are famous for their own particular crafts. Cotacachi, the center of Ecuador's leather industry, is known for its polished calf skins. In San Antonio, where the local specialty is wood carving, the main street prominently displays carved statues, picture frames, and furniture.

Otavalo is also known for its Inca-influenced traditional music and musicians. There are many musical groups currently traveling around the world promoting Inca music (sometimes known as Andean New Age). This style of music has had notable commercial success worldwide.

Housing
Housing is included for the duration of the program. Students live with host families in Otavalo and during service learning community visits. During orientation in Quito students will stay in a local hotel. During the Amazon portion of the course, students will stay in a lodge and have language and medical anthropology classes there as well. Dietary preferences of students usually can be accommodated if made clear in advance.

Transportation
The main mode of transportation while in Otavalo is walking. Students should bring adequate walking shoes. Students will be transported in vans or small busses for the various excursions. Travel to the lodge in the Amazon is by air and motorized canoe. Taxis in both Quito and Otavalo will vary in cost from about $1-$6 depending on the number of students and the distance.

Safety
Although most past participants report feeling very safe in Otavalo, petty theft is a problem in many cities. Please exercise caution, as pick-pocketing has been on the rise in recent years due to Ecuador’s precarious economic situation. Carry your wallet or purse in buses and trolleys with extreme caution and never carry important documents, such as your passport, unless you are going to use them for a specific purpose (carry a copy of your passport instead.) The exception to this is the Amazon trip, where you should bring your original passport. Men are advised to carry wallets in their front pants pockets. Shirts with button-down pockets may be useful for carrying money or documents safely. Women should guard against the common practice of purse slitting (cutting open a purse with a razor blade or knife) on buses by using purses of hard-to-slit material and by being vigilant. Never wear watches or flashy jewelry on crowded buses or in congested markets. Be especially careful in train and bus stations and at outdoor markets, which are notorious for thievery. Try to become constantly aware of the possibility of theft; as a gringo (Caucasian or American person) you are an obvious target. It is not advisable to walk alone in Quito at night, particularly in the tourist zone known as the Mariscal. It is also advisable to walk in groups during the day when in areas where there are few people on the streets or sidewalks.
Health
It is very important that you consult with a healthcare provider well-versed in travel medicine or travel clinic to plan for your time abroad. University Health Services (UHS) has a travel clinic that provides health services for those planning foreign travel, including vaccines and immunizations. Information about the travel clinic and how to make an appointment can be found online at http://www.uhs.wisc.edu/services/medical/travel-clinic/. The UHS travel clinic does book out in advance (sometimes as much as six weeks), and some immunizations must be done at particular times. Please make an appointment as soon as possible with the UHS travel clinic. Some countries require particular vaccines to enter.

If you are not covered by UHS care, please consult with your insurance company to see what clinics or healthcare providers with travel medicine specialties are covered. There are a number of travel clinics in Madison including: Dean http://www.deancare.com/medical-services/travel-medicine/ and UW Health http://www.uwhealth.org/travel-vaccinations/locations-and-maps/10381.

To learn more about travelers’ health, please visit the CDC website: http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx. You can view vaccine recommendations from the same page, scrolling down to the vaccinations link. On the top of the Vaccinations page, there is a link for specific country recommendations.

Be aware that changes in food, water, and environment can cause stomachaches, diarrhea, and/or vomiting. If discomfort persists, please consult a doctor in Ecuador concerning any such symptoms.

Communication
When making calls, keep in mind time zone differences (www.timeanddate.com/worldclock). To make an international call to the United States, dial the access code for the country from which you are calling plus the United States country code (always “1”) followed by the appropriate U.S. area code and local number. To call internationally from the United States, dial “011”, the country code, city access code (if necessary) and the phone number. Country and city codes can be found online: www.howtocallabroad.com. Some of above steps can vary if you are using a calling card. Some of above steps can vary if you are using a calling card. Ecuador does not use daylight savings time, so it's the same time as the Central time zone during the summer.

There are a number of internet cafes that students can use to communicate via email and net-to-phone. Past students have recommended this as an effective means of communication. Skype is also readily available in most internet cafes.

Student Testimonials
The testimonials below are from past participants; they reflect various students’ experiences and are included to provide different perspectives. IAP does not endorse any specific view expressed in this section.

Preparations Before Leaving
Bring outdoorsy clothes, but also bring some every day clothes.
Bring warm clothes! (mostly for Otavalo, Quito is mostly warm)
Invest in luggage locks for checked bags.
An alarm clock is a really nice item to have - you can't necessarily rely on your phone to function as one.

Travel and Arrival Information
Don’t buy an open-ended ticket- pay the change fee to have it changed, if you decide to stay longer.
Leave space in your luggage to bring things home!
Bring an extra duffel in one of your bags - be aware of luggage restrictions for your flights however!
**Academic Program**
Don’t stress out about the courses. If you do the readings and are ready to discuss the topics, you will be fine.

The Spanish classes are small and full of grammar.

Make sure to speak up if you feel like you're not in the correct level of Spanish class.

I would highly recommend this course or one similar to it for any veterinary student interested in public health. Veterinary medicine is a growing field that has an increasing importance and impact in public health and the One Health theory. This course does a great job of giving enough attention to the sometimes over-looked field of vet med while balancing it in the overall big picture with all the other equally important health fields... Be prepared to be busy. It's fun but also work; there are readings, discussions, presentations and papers. I also recommend having even an introductory Spanish course before going as much of the tours and informational sessions (but not the discussions) were conducted in Spanish, which provides a more full experience that does not get lost in translation. You won't regret going but you might regret thinking, "What if...!"

It was wonderful to get the opportunity to explore the concepts of culture and healthcare within a developing nation and to interact directly with populations who are the subjects of health disparities.

The intensive language study was a useful tool to create a bond with and facilitate communication with the people with whom we interacted and learned from. The teachers were friendly and able to teach us about Ecuadorian culture as well as Spanish in general, and provided emotional support as needed.

**Living Abroad**
Otavalo is cute and feels safe.

All of the home-stays were very nice, our professor was always within reach, the food was delicious.

The sun is up at 6 am and it's dark by 6:30 pm (there's little twilight), so it's unlike Madison summers!

If you drop off laundry at a lavanderia, count and record the items you give them. Socks, etc. can disappear just like at home.

Withdraw money in Otavalo, they are reputable and have cheap rates! The best ATMs are off the Poncho plaza, there are four of the good ones in a row.

Do not eat expensive meals every night, (expensive being more than $5) because you can get full meals for $2 and it starts to add up.

If you go out to a bar or club in Quito, the group will usually get a group bar tab ticket
1) Don't lose this! It could cost you $50 - $150 to replace
2) If club promoters hand out free drink cards, make sure you ask the bartender specifically which drinks are included. Read the fine print if it exists. Don't assume it applies to just anything.
If you think you'll take a lot of photos, bring a large USB flash drive (>1 GB) and/or CDs or extra memory cards to back up your photos. In Quito, a 1 GB USB was $12-20 in internet cafes.

**Websites of Interest**

- U.S. State Department Students Abroad [http://www.studentsabroad.state.gov/](http://www.studentsabroad.state.gov/)
- U.S. State Department [http://travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov)
- Current exchange rates [http://www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com)
- Lonely Planet [http://www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)
- Journey Woman [http://www.journeywoman.com](http://www.journeywoman.com)