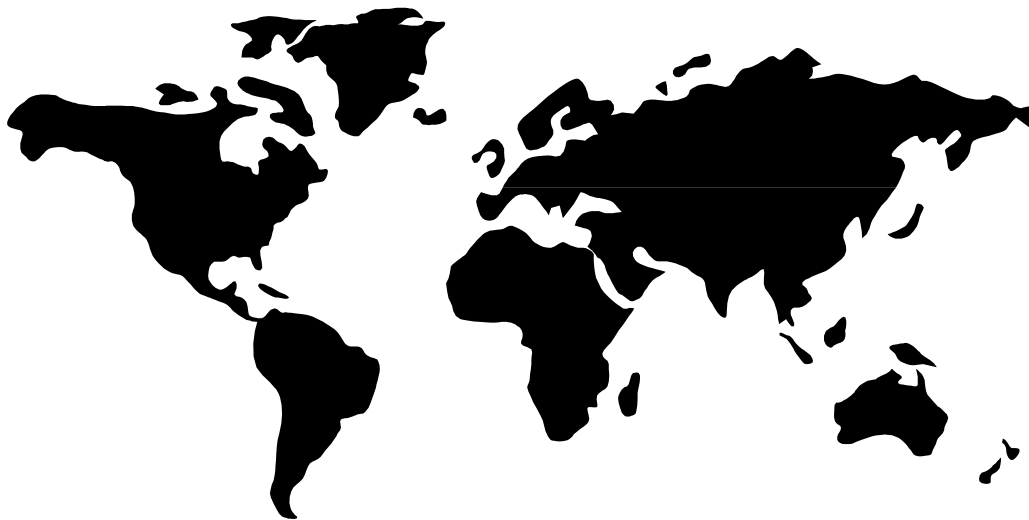


# **Global Business Exchange Program Handbook**



**Center for Global Business  
Robert H. Smith School of Business**



**University of Maryland  
Updated 17 April 2003**

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# Introduction

Congratulations on your decision to study abroad! This will almost inevitably prove to be one of the most educational and memorable experiences of your life. Before you finalize your plans, however, we would like to take this opportunity to raise a few issues that require serious thought and reflection.

Study abroad presents various challenges, both academic and personal. You should be prepared to be flexible, adventurous, and cautious at the same time. You should also be willing to adapt to new situations and to expect differences in all things. The way courses will be taught, and consequently the way you study, will be different. In almost all cases you will have to take much more responsibility for staying on track. Housing and living standards will also be different. You cannot assume or even expect the environment or living arrangements to be the same as they are at the University of Maryland or in the United States. You should be even more vigilant about taking care of your health than at home, as sometimes it is more tempting to take unwise risks while away.

This Handbook will assist you in preparing for study abroad and serve as a reference tool. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the contents of the handbook. Share the contents with your family before you leave home and take your handbook with you abroad!

We hope that as you study, live, travel, and meet new people in your host country, you will experience the same rewards that earlier study abroad students have gained from immersion in another culture. Best wishes from the Center for Global Business staff for a productive and fulfilling experience!

The Center for Global Business

## **SECTION 1**

### **Preparing to go**

# Preparing to Go Check List

- ❑ Arrange for course work approval.
  - Complete a *Permission to Study Abroad* form (enclosed). If the form is not included in this packet, please meet with your advisor to complete the form.
- ❑ .
- ❑ Apply for or renew your passport.
  - It is necessary to have a valid passport in order to enter any foreign country. Thus, you must have your passport prior to leaving the United States. (It is never too early to get a passport.) If the country you will be studying in requires you to have a student visa, you must have your passport prior to the visa application deadline. If you already have a passport, be sure that it is valid for the duration of your program (including any post-program travel you plan to do). If it will expire during your stay, you need to have it renewed before leaving.

You may apply for a passport at the following locations:

Hyattsville Main Post Office  
4325 Gallatin St.  
Phone: (301) 209-8900  
Monday – Friday: 10:00 a.m - 4:00 p.m.

Silver Spring Main Post Office  
2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Phone: (301) 754-1700

Bowie Main Post Office  
6710 Laurel-Bowie Road  
Phone: (301) 464-0707

Passport Agency  
1111 19<sup>th</sup> St. N.W.  
Phone: (202) 647-0518  
Call for an appointment

- First time applicants must appear in person and submit the following documents. You should allow at least six to eight weeks for your passport to be processed.
  - The completed application.
  - Proof of U.S. citizenship. Certified birth certificate, naturalization certificate, or certificate of citizenship.
  - Present Proof of Identity. Current, valid driver's license, Government ID (city, state or federal) military ID, or previous U.S. passport.
  - Two photographs. Taken within the last 6 months, 2 x 2 inches.
  - \$75 for application fee in form of credit card (Visa, Mastercard), check, money order, or cash. (\$60 for application, \$15 for first time applicants).

- Passport renewals can be obtained by mail only if the previous passport was issued after your 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. Check with a passport office for details.
- Get an International Student Identification card
  - The International Student Identification Card (ISIC) is recommended for purposes of identification and because it offers discounts and other benefits to students traveling abroad. It is the mostly widely accepted student ID card.
  - You will need: Application form, proof of your enrollment in degree program at the University of Maryland, a 1" x 1.5" photograph to go on the card, and the application fee of \$22
  - The card provides cardholders with a toll-free help line staffed by multilingual representatives who are prepared to help travelers in case of medical, financial, or legal emergencies abroad.
  - The ISIC card is valid for a calendar year and therefore is good until December 31<sup>st</sup> of the year of your application, meaning if you apply in September, your card is only valid till December of the same year. For more details, call Center on International Educational Exchange at 1-800-2COUNCIL or on the web at:
    - <http://www.counciltravel.com/idcards/default.asp>
  - Each ISIC card (which *must* be purchased in the U.S.) provides basic sickness and accident insurance when traveling outside the U.S., including emergency evacuation coverage and a 24-hour, toll-free Help Line. All holders of the U.S.-purchased cards are covered regardless of citizenship.
- Make a copy of your birth certificate and driver's license to keep with you.
- Students register and pay tuition at the University of Maryland (according to their residency status) during their study abroad program.
- If eligible for aid, complete FINANCIAL AID application materials.
  - If you are a recipient of either need-based financial aid or merit scholarships, you need to contact the Office of Student Financial Aid to discuss the transferability of your loans and/or scholarships for Study Abroad. Students who follow university procedures and are enrolled for a full program of study while outside of the U.S. are eligible to apply for Federal Loans and Pell Grants. Students who participate on a University of Maryland study abroad program may receive the same financial aid package as they would if enrolled at the University of Maryland as long as they are enrolled as full-time students. All other questions should be directed to:

Office of Student Financial Aid  
1135 Lee Building  
Phone: (301) 314-9000  
Fax: 9301) 314-9587  
Email: [umfinaid@osfa.umd.edu](mailto:umfinaid@osfa.umd.edu)

- ❑ Sign the Perkins Loan, Stafford Loan, or University Loan Promissory Note. If a note is not signed before you leave campus, it will be sent to your home address unless you otherwise notify your campus Loan Office.
- ❑ If you have been declared eligible for receiving financial aid for study abroad, submit the Student Aid Report (SAR) to your campus Financial Aid Office for certification. If the SAR is revised either by this office or by you and the revised copy of the SAR has not reached you at home before your departure, alert your parents to forward it to your campus Financial Aid Office without delay.
- ❑ If you are away during spring semester, get a Renewal Financial Aid Application (usually available in February) and submit before deadline (usually by April 15 on most campuses) so as not to jeopardize your chances for aid when you return. Send your campus Financial Aid Office written instructions by the beginning of January if you want your renewal packet sent to a different address. Otherwise, it will be sent to the address that is listed in the Registrar's database as home address.
- ❑ Be sure therefore that you have adequate cash resources, (i.e. traveler's checks, credit card. Prepare to spend in your first month abroad about twice what you normally would in one month. Your first month abroad is when you are most vulnerable financially. Unexpected fees can crop up, or costs and exchange rates can rise between now and your arrival. It takes time to find bargain shops and restaurants and to adapt to the lifestyle of a local student.
- ❑ Alert your credit card companies that you will be abroad. Ask about a PIN for cash advances.
- ❑ If you will be using traveler's checks, record checks serial numbers, denomination, and the date and location of the issuing bank or agency
- ❑ Call your bank to check in which cities you may use your ATM card. You should also check to see if a fee is charged for using your card outside of the United States.
- ❑ Leave Irreplaceable Items at Home
- ❑ Arrange for a "power of attorney" for the person handling your financial affairs in your absence if not parent or guardian.

#### **SAMPLE POWER OF ATTORNEY**

Know All Men by These Present, that I, **FULL NAME** of **full address** have made, constituted and appointed and by these present do make, constitute and appoint **FULL NAME OF PERSON GAINING POWER OF ATTORNEY** my true and lawful attorney for me and in my name, place and stead until the **ending date of power, spelled out**, to fully and completely perform all financial and educational matters involving the University of Maryland, including the registration of classes for the **Fall/Spring** semester of **appropriate year, spelled out** and payment and collection of all monies, loan and financial aid checks involved with the University of Maryland, and confirm all that my said attorney may do.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set hand and seal this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2001.

- Terminate all current contracts with residential living, dining service, etc. (You must submit the Resident Life form before you return – this form will be sent to your permanent address. Make sure you designate a parent or guardian residing at your permanent address to handle this. If you are interested in the International House, the application is due while you are away.)
- Clear all registration holds and make sure all outstanding balances are paid.
- Arrange with your Campus Mail center to have any incoming routed to your home address in your absence.
- Post Office forward your mail to an international address; in many cases this is not permissible by Post Office and other regulations.
- Apply for a student visa. Study visas are required in some countries for a stay of more than 90 days. A visa is an endorsement or stamp placed by officials of a foreign country on a passport that allows the bearer to visit that foreign country. Many countries require a student visa for stays longer than three months. In most cases, you need a passport, proof of acceptance to an overseas university, and documentation of adequate funding for the duration of your program. If a visa is required, obtain it from the appropriate foreign consular representative before proceeding abroad. Allow sufficient time for processing your visa application, especially if you are applying by mail. It is the responsibility of the traveler to obtain visas, where required, from the appropriate embassy or nearest consulate of the country you are planning to visit.
- If you plan to visit other countries while abroad, find out whether tourist visas are required for those countries.
- If you are not a U.S. citizen, consult with a foreign student adviser to make sure your visa and other papers are in order.
- Contact the International Travel Clinic at (301) 314-8114 to determine if immunizations are needed for the country in which you are studying or visiting while abroad. The clinic is located at the University Health Center. You should be current on your immunizations, as they are required prior to matriculating at UMD. Some countries have additional requirements. You can check online at the CDC site <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>

- ❑ Some immunizations, such as yellow fever, are required to have been given several days prior to entry to the country. You should be aware that immunizations should not be left until the last minute.
- ❑ Complete the Health/Insurance Information (yellow) Forms.
- ❑ The Center for Global Business does not require students to have a physical exam before going abroad. However, it may be required for certain countries/visas. We do recommend that participants schedule a visit with their medical provider to discuss any concern; mild physical or psychological disorders can become serious under the stresses of life while studying abroad. We also recommend dental check-ups and complete any necessary dental work before you go abroad.
  - If you currently have health issues that may affect you while abroad, it is a very good idea to have a letter from your doctor detailing those conditions and any medications you may be taking. Give this information to an appropriate person at your host university, and of course to anyone else with whom you feel comfortable and who may need to be in a position to help you.
- ❑ We urge participants to consult with their physician, the CDC website, or a travel clinic about any inoculations they should have before leaving for the countries in which they will be studying or visiting. It is ultimately the participant's responsibility to have all necessary shots. Inoculations should be recorded and certified in the yellow "International Certificate of Vaccination" pamphlet. These pamphlets are available from the Post Office or from physicians.
- ❑ It is best to have a full supply of any prescriptions before you leave. It is sometimes difficult to acquire prescriptions abroad; sometimes the names change, it is difficult to have the vocabulary to discuss medical issues. Be sure to keep all prescription medications in their original bottles to facilitate clearance through customs. In many countries, participants will also need to carry a letter from their physician, stating why they need the prescription medication. Other countries may require prior authorization for carrying medications into the country. Participants should also be sure to carry a copy of all current prescriptions, including that for eyeglasses. All prescription medicines should be packed in carry-on luggage in case the checked baggage is lost or delayed.
- ❑ Make two photocopies of important documents. These should include passport, visa (if required), airline tickets, International Student ID Card, insurance card or form, eyeglass/contact or other prescriptions. Leave one copy at home and carry the other copy abroad.
- ❑ Get a long distance calling card.
- ❑ Arrange for absentee voting, if applicable.
- ❑ Ensure all arrangements regarding your housing upon return are in place.

- ❑ Begin educating yourself about culture shock (information is in section 2 and 3)
- ❑ Start learning about the country and culture in which you will live.

### **Travel Guidebooks**

*Rough Guides*

*Let's Go Guides*

*Lonely Planet Guides*

*Culture Shock! Series*

*Do's and Taboos Around the World: A Guide to International Behavior*

- ❑ If you will be studying in Europe, we recommend purchasing a Eurail pass. This must be purchased in the United States. Eurail passes can be purchased from many travel agents, who will send Eurail passes in the mail, i.e. CIEE. Call 1-800-272-3299 for more information. Rail Europe, Inc. 1(800) 438-7245
- ❑ Understand that airline travel takes longer than it used to, and prepare to get to the airport three hours in advance of you flight. As you probably know, do not attempt to carry any sharp objects on board the aircraft. You will need to show picture ID several times before boarding the plane.

## **Preparing for Another Culture**

### *1. Nationality*

Sometimes, American students have found that people have made assumptions about them and their attitudes simply because they are American. This, of course, happens in reverse as well. Students should be prepared to encounter criticism of American foreign policy and/or culture and should consider in advance what their response will be.

Americans are stereotyped abroad as being: outgoing and friendly, informal, loud and rude, immature, hard-working, extravagant and wasteful, know-it-all, lacking in class consciousness and disrespectful of authority, racially prejudiced, ignorant of other countries, wealthy, generous, promiscuous, and always in a hurry. (from *Study Abroad: A Parents Guide*, William W. Hoffa)

### *2. Gender*

Both men and women entering another culture will become aware of different gender relations from what they are accustomed to. Modes of clothing, touching, even friendships or going out to dinner may be quite different, or may be subtly different so that you only begin to notice them right before you return home.

In order to gain respect for the differences, or at least be able to tolerate them, it will be helpful to try to research gender differences ahead of time. Unfortunately, while there are some books written on the subject, there is not likely to be much information available. Thinking about these divergences will help you to better understand reasons behind behaviors toward you. Students can feel free to discuss gender conflicts with the Center for Global Business staff.

### 3. *Sexual Identity*

Time spent living in another culture tends to be a time of self-exploration in general. Students who have already identified themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual will find differences in manifesting their sexuality in a different social and legal climate, with different acceptable ways of meeting others. Keep in mind that many of the ideas 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, a tolerance of homosexuality simply does not exist. In other places, there are active communities and visible social movements to promote understanding. If you have questions or concerns about these issues, contact a staff member in our office, and we will try to assist you. In addition, there are books available on the subject.

### 4. *Race and Ethnicity Adjustment*

Race and ethnic relations of course differ across the world, and study abroad participants may be treated differently than at home because of their race or ethnicity. Clearly, when traveling to a country where you look physically like the majority of the people, the cultural expectations for majority people may be applied to you. Students who are in the minority during the time abroad may be treated differently than at home. There are many countries that have seen a resurgence of racism. We encourage you to consult relevant materials to help prepare you for the specific situation found in the host country. Students with concerns about these issues can contact a staff member in our office.

### 5. *Disabilities*

Study abroad is available to all Smith School students who meet the academic and maturity qualifications required. If a person requires special accommodations due to a physical or learning disability, the sooner our office knows about these needs, the more time we will have to see that the proper and reasonable accommodations are made. If you will need special accommodations while studying abroad, please make an appointment to see us. Several books have been written about this subject that will help prepare you.

## **Internet Resources**

[www.backpackeurope.com](http://www.backpackeurope.com)

Backpacking and hostelling information, tips, and links for student and budget travelers planning a trip to Europe.

[www.cnn.com/travel](http://www.cnn.com/travel)

Travel news, destination information, booking information.

[www.budgettravel.com](http://www.budgettravel.com)

Geographically indexed contact information for travelers on a budget.

[www.oanda.com/converter/travel](http://www.oanda.com/converter/travel)

This site features a program that will do conversions for almost 200 different countries. A cut-out pocket “cheat sheet” is featured.

[www.hostels.com](http://www.hostels.com)

Information on International Youth Hostels.

<http://travel.yahoo.com>

General travel services

[www.eurorail.com](http://www.eurorail.com)

Europe travel at discount prices.

[www.mbnet.mb.ca/lucas/travel](http://www.mbnet.mb.ca/lucas/travel)

Tourism Offices Worldwide Directory.

[www.studyabroad.com](http://www.studyabroad.com)

Guide for students preparing to study abroad.

[www.cie.uci.edu/worldwide/index.html](http://www.cie.uci.edu/worldwide/index.html)

Online handbook provides essential information to help you prepare for your experience abroad.

[www.travelzoo.com](http://www.travelzoo.com)

Guide to travel services and discounts.

[http://travel.state.gov/passport\\_services.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport_services.html)

Everything about obtaining passports

## **Embassy locations and contact information**

### **Embassy of Australia**

1601 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 797-3145 or 3161  
[www.austemb.org](http://www.austemb.org)

### **Royal Danish Embassy**

3200 Whitehaven St., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20008  
(202) 234-4300  
[www.denmarkemb.org](http://www.denmarkemb.org)

### **Consulate General of France**

4101 Reservoir Rd., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20007  
(202) 944-6200  
[www.france.consulate.org](http://www.france.consulate.org)

### **Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany**

4645 Reservoir Rd., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20007  
(202) 298-8140  
[www.germany-info.org](http://www.germany-info.org)

### **Hong Kong Economic & Trade Office**

1520 18<sup>th</sup> St. N.W.  
Washington, DC 20009

(202) 331-8947  
[www.hongkong.org](http://www.hongkong.org)

### **Embassy of Italy**

3000 Whitehaven St., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20008  
(202) 612-4400  
[www.italyemb.org](http://www.italyemb.org)

### **Embassy of Mexico's Consular Section**

2827 16<sup>th</sup> St., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20009  
(202) 736-1000  
[www.embassyofmexico.org](http://www.embassyofmexico.org)

### **Embassy of Spain**

2375 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20037  
(202) 452-0100  
[www.spain@spainemb.org](mailto:www.spain@spainemb.org)

### **Consular Section of the British Embassy**

19 Observatory Circle, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20008  
(202) 588-7800  
[www.britain-info.org](http://www.britain-info.org)

## Health Insurance and Study Abroad

Invest a few minutes now to consider what kind of insurance coverage will protect you while abroad. You should have insurance to protect your health and financial well-being.

- Consider the amount of insurance coverage that you need.
- The University of Maryland requires that students attending its study abroad programs have health insurance, including insurance with Medical Evacuation coverage. Students are strongly encouraged to consider purchasing the International Student Identity Card (ISIC). Basic health insurance coverage is provided as a benefit to cardholders including \$25,000 of Medical Evacuation insurance. However, ISIC covers only a small portion of expenses for major accidents or illnesses and should be viewed as supplemental and not primary insurance coverage. The University of Maryland strongly recommends that you have additional insurance with higher levels of coverage. Your primary insurance might be insurance you or your parents currently have or we can provide you with information on various health insurance policies for students studying abroad. The ISIC card can be purchased through the Study Abroad Office for \$22.
- If you are insured through your parents, spouse, or another insurance source, talk with your insurance agent to find out exactly what the coverage includes during your time abroad and how the company would handle payments if you were hospitalized overseas or would need to see a doctor or purchase medicines abroad.
- While health insurance plans vary, it is important that the plan you choose includes hospitalization and medical fees. You should also ask about medical evacuation and repatriation if you want even more insurance for these items than is provided by the International Student Identity Card.
- Check into whether or not the health insurance plan(s) you are considering provide continuous coverage before and after you go abroad.
- The ISIC card and many other insurance policies cover you only while you are abroad. You will need separate coverage prior to departure and when you return. If you begin a new insurance plan when you return, pre-existing conditions (accidents, sickness from or prior to your time abroad) will most likely not be covered.
- Consider the above information and choose the plan or plans that fit you best.

NOTE: Regardless of whether or not your health insurance covers you while outside of the U.S., it is important to maintain coverage to avoid difficulties in re-enrollment upon your return to the U.S. (i.e. pre-existing condition clauses).

## Suggested Insurance Questions

### For your current plan or plans you are considering:

- Does the plan include hospitalization coverage for accidents and illnesses while abroad?
- What is the maximum amount of coverage that is provided?
- Are there deductibles? If so, what are they?
- Will the plan include emergency room expenses?
- What is the coverage for medical evacuation?
- What do you do under the plan if you have to pay cash up front and have no money?
- Does the plan cover visits to the doctor or medication prescribed while abroad?
- What are the procedures for filing a claim, and how long does it take to get reimbursed abroad? In what language(s) must the claim be filed?
- When does the plan begin and end?
- Does the plan assume it is the primary or secondary carrier? If it is the secondary carrier, when does coverage begin?
- Is there a booklet explaining the coverage in detail?
- In the event of death, what is the coverage for repatriation?

### For the plan or plans you select:

- What is the process for enrolling in the plan?
- If you find it necessary to use your insurance, what do you show as proof of world-wide coverage?
- If you obtain medical assistance while you're abroad, when and how should you inform the agency?
- What documentation of expenses is required? Does the bill need to be in English and the amount of the charge in U.S. dollars?

## Health Insurance Companies

If your insurance doesn't provide enough coverage, a list is provided of companies which specialize in health insurance for those going abroad for educational purposes, and which sell plans to individuals. Because these plans usually do not cover medical treatment in the United States (i.e. have a "home country exclusion) *having other health insurance valid in the United States is essential.*

**Council Travel International ID Card Insurance** (this very basic insurance is automatically included with international ID cards issued by Council Travel - *but it should not be your only health insurance!*),

[www.counciltravel.com/idcards/insure/asp](http://www.counciltravel.com/idcards/insure/asp) or 1(800)2COUNCIL

**Hinchcliff International**, [www.higsinc.com](http://www.higsinc.com) or 1(800) 242-4178

**International SOS** (a medical evacuation service), [www.internationalsos.com](http://www.internationalsos.com)

**Medex International** (a medical evacuation service), [www.medexassist.com](http://www.medexassist.com) or 1(888) MEDEX00

**OMA Limited/Boston Mutual International Student Voluntary Plan**, 1(800) 767-0169

**Seabury & Smith**, 1(800) 282-4495

**Wallach & Company, Inc.**, [www.wallach.com](http://www.wallach.com) or 1 (800) 237-6615

For more listings, see: **U.S. State Department - Medical Information for Americans Traveling Abroad**, <http://travel.state.gov/medical.html>

## Packing

Packing is an important aspect of your planning. You will be traveling thousands of miles, and packing lightly and efficiently is very important. You will have to carry your luggage when you are jet lagged and tired, you may have to cope with crowded commuter trains. Remember that you'll certainly buy things to bring home, and you need to have room for these items. If you are going abroad in the spring you'll have to pack the winter clothes you wore on your outward journey when you return; if you are faced with too much to take back, your choice will be between giving or throwing things away, or using the mail, which is costly and inconvenient.

Methods of economical packing include:

- Rolling: Put items that can be worn together on top of one another and roll them up. You can see your clothing at a glance.
- Layering: Discourages wrinkling, bulkier than the roll method.
- Probability: For example, if it's going to be chilly, pack a sweater on top, etc. Liquids should be carried in plastic containers with rubber seal caps. Use plastic bags to separate wet/dry, dirty/clean clothes. It's also a good idea to keep a checklist of what you have packed.

Whether you are traveling with a group or by yourself, you must be able to carry your luggage by yourself. Remember, no one has ever complained about taking too little luggage.

Some of the best additional wardrobe hints we can give include:

- You do not need much clothing, but make sure that what you take is new and/or sturdy. Washers and dryers in many other parts of the world are hard on clothing because of higher water temperatures, etc.
- Choose your clothing fabric with care. Natural fabrics breathe and are both the coolest and warmest types of fabrics. Stick with cotton or cotton/polyester combinations and with fabrics that are easy to wash and dry. You'll probably be doing more hand washing than you realize. Many other countries have washing machines that are "mini" in comparison with American models.

- Leave behind anything that needs special care or dry cleaning, since this is often not available or very expensive.
- Most cultures dress far more simply than we do, and tend to buy fewer clothes and wear them more frequently. You may even seem peculiar if you have a great many clothes. Closet space will probably not be as generous as what you are used to, so realize that even if you can get it there, you won't necessarily have a place to put it.
- Layer clothing. This is the most efficient way to pack, not to mention the best way to stay warm.
- Pack classic styles of clothing. These are easier to "dress up" or "dress down" when necessary. Also, loose clothing will be more comfortable and warmer/cooler than tight clothing.
- Carefully consider colors. Stay with neutrals that easily mix and match for variety. Dark colors show less dirt than light ones and repetitive wearing are less obvious. Dark clothes can also double for all occasions.
- Most cultures do not wear jeans as frequently as we do, and wear dressier shoes rather than sneakers.
- Especially if you are going to a developing or non-western country, make sure that your choice of clothing is modest as well as practical. In some cultures, it is not appropriate to wear shorts, short skirts (above the knees) or sleeveless blouses/shirts, and bras are a "must" for women. It would also be wise to research the "neatness" factor of your host culture.

### **Essentials**

Remember that electric currents abroad are different cycles than the United States, which is sixty cycles. Even with adapters sets, this difference eventually "fries" electrical appliances made for the U.S. market. We recommend that, if you need to bring electrical things like razors and hair dryers, purchase products that can be changed back and forth between 110 and 220/240 volts or, better yet, buy those products in your host country. You may be able to sell them before you return to the States. Battery driven appliances are also fine. Remember, appliances add weight.

### **Other Essentials**

- Address Book to keep the names and addresses of old friends and new acquaintances
- Alarm Clock (non-electric)
- Camera and film (if not digital)
- Converter/adapter set
- Dictionary. If you're on an academic program in a country where a foreign language is spoken, you'll want to have an English language dictionary to use when writing essays and term papers.
- Journal
- Pictures of family and friends

- Small sewing kit
- Sunglasses
- Watch
- Washcloth, if you must have one (these are not common in most countries)
- Personal Supplies
- Deodorant
- Razor and extra blades (not electric)
- Sunscreen
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Woolite, a couple of travel packets
- Laundry Soap, a few travel packets
- Rain poncho or umbrella (a Tiny Totes one is easy to pack).

# **SECTION 2**

## **While Abroad**

# While Abroad

## Upon Arrival

Notify the Center for Global Business of your arrival by mail, fax or e-mail, at 301.405.9575 (tel), 301.314.9726 (fax) or [lbarnard@rhsmith.umd.edu](mailto:lbarnard@rhsmith.umd.edu). Remember to provide your overseas mailing address if unavailable prior to departure. Ask your host University if you should register with the Embassy.

## Host country orientation

Most programs will have a planned orientation for exchange and foreign students. You should attend all of these events, and must of course attend all those required. The orientation will cover very valuable information such as emergency resources, maps, academic policies, illness procedures, etc.

## General Conduct

Remember that while you are studying abroad you are a representative of the University of Maryland and of the United States. You are held to the student conduct code to the same degree as you are while here. In addition, you are required to follow the rules, regulations and cultural expectations of your host university. If you wish to review the conduct code, see <http://www.inform.umd.edu/CampusInfo/Departments/JPO/SC/sccode.html>

### **Be Aware of Local Laws**

You should be familiar with both customs and local laws of the country to which you are going. Remember that you are subject to the laws of your host country and that U.S. laws while abroad do not protect you.

## Registration at University of Maryland

Contact your advisor to discuss the best class selection and schedule upon your return. Registration is through Testudo and should therefore be no different than if you were at home.

## Housing

Be sure to arrange for housing prior to your return. If you wish to live in the International House, note that the application is due prior to your return.

**Keep ALL documents relating to the courses you take at the host institution.** Keep all syllabi, reading lists, papers, returned examinations, evaluations, projects, portfolios, and notes from each course. *This is very important to ensure you receive credit for your courses!*

In order to obtain on-campus housing following study abroad you must submit the Resident Life form before you return. This form will be sent to your permanent address. Make sure you designate a parent or guardian residing at your permanent address to handle this. If you are

interested in the International House, the application is due while your are away. (Study Abroad Procedure Form)

Contact the records office at your host institution and make sure that an official transcript is forwarded to the Center for Global Business.

## **Maintaining your safety while abroad**

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 following are some general safety precautions:

- Know where you are going. Do your homework before traveling: read guidebooks, look at maps, check with local staff, etc.
- Leave expensive or expensive-looking jewelry at home.
- Do not carry valuables, even in a backpack or locked luggage. If you must carry cameras, radios, etc. don't leave them unattended.
- Do not flaunt wallets, purses, cell phones or cameras. Wear a money belt, concealed under your clothing.
- Put valuables in the hotel safe or ask your local contact about storing valuables while at the program site.
- Avoid unlit places and walking alone. Stick to well-traveled streets and walk in groups at night. Be especially cautious when you are new to a city and know little about what parts of town may be less safe.

### **Personal safety for female study abroad participants**

Female students may or may not have thought about what it might mean to live as a woman in the country in which she will be studying abroad, but we encourage them to do so. While it is impossible to generalize about the experience of women traveling in all places in the world, they may experience some gender-specific challenges when living or traveling abroad. This is not to say that it is more dangerous to be a woman in countries other than the US. In fact, the incidence of violent crime against women is higher in the U.S. than in many other countries. Language and cultural differences however might mean that what a woman considers appropriate behavior in the U.S. will be interpreted much differently by the men-- and women--of her host country. This is further compounded by the fact that the people in some other countries may have distorted or stereotyped notions about American women, based on images acquired through American films and advertising. The very characteristics of U.S. women such as independence and strength may be perceived differently in other countries.

A smile, eye contact, certain clothing, or the way a woman carries herself can connote different things in different cultures. You should read travel guides or articles and talk to women who have been to the host country. The more familiar you are with the customs and traditions of the host country, the more understanding you will have for why they exist and the safer you will feel while abroad.

Some safety suggestions women on past programs have made include:

- Take a self-defense class before leaving the U.S., to increase your confidence and teach you important skills.
- Follow the example of women from your host country, in terms of culturally appropriate dress and demeanor.
- Trust your instincts. If you do not feel safe in a situation or someone's behavior is making you uncomfortable, get out of the situation immediately.
- Travel in groups of at least two, especially when you are unfamiliar with a city or town.
- Lock hotel rooms when traveling. Do not stay in hotels without adequate locks. It is not worth the savings to put 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.

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

In times of political or social unrest in the host country or region, or when the United States becomes a party to a political conflict anywhere in the world, additional precautions are advisable.

- Keep in touch with the current political situations by listening daily to the television or radio if available. If this is not possible, ask friends, host family, and colleagues to share with you any relevant information they learn. In case of an emergency, advisories may be made to the general public through the media. In case of an emergency, remain in contact with the on-site staff.
- Register with the closest American Embassy or Consulate.
- When in large cities and other popular tourist destinations, avoid places frequented by North Americans: bars, discos, and fast food restaurants associated with the US., branches of US banks, American churches, US businesses and offices, US Consulates or Embassies.
- Keep away from areas known to have large concentrations of residents aligned with interests unfriendly to the United States and its allies. Always consult with the on-site officials before undertaking travel to neighboring cities or popular tourist destinations.
- 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, loud groups.
- Keep away from political demonstrations, particularly those directed toward the United States. If you see a situation developing, resist the temptation to satisfy your curiosity and investigate what is happening. Walk the other way.
- 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.

Please refer to your sponsoring institution for more detailed information on health and safety issues as they pertain to your particular program and destination.

## **Safeguarding Your Luggage and Belongings**

- Lock your luggage and label each piece with your name and address on both the inside and outside.
- Make sure you receive a claim check for each item you check.
- Never leave luggage unattended. Never let strangers watch your luggage while you go to the bathroom or make purchases.
- Never agree to carry a package for anyone.

## **Pickpockets**

Beware of pickpockets and con artists. They exist everywhere, especially in crowds and in areas where tourists gather. The most common sites for purse and camera snatching are central train stations or crowded shopping areas. Thieves often strike when people are distracted, such as making a phone call or checking a train schedule while a bag is casually at your feet. If you carry a handbag, it should have a secure zipper closing, and you should carry it on the side away from the street. Walking on the inside of a sidewalk is also a precaution against handbag theft.

By following basic safety precautions, you will maximize the chances of your money remaining safe and sound. However, no matter how careful you are, theft is still a possibility. To help lessen the impact of a loss, we strongly recommend that you go through the following checklist:

- Write down the toll-free phone numbers for credit cards and traveler's checks before you take your trip and put them someplace apart from your credit cards and checks.
- Record the serial numbers on your traveler's checks and the account numbers on your credit cards. This will be essential if you have to file a claim.
- Leave copies of all those numbers with a responsible person at home who will accept a collect call from you in case you lose the numbers.
- Get the phone number of the bank that issued your credit card and the central phone number of the bankcard group (VISA, MasterCard, American Express, etc.) There are no rules as to which number is better to call for quick replacement.
- Find out in advance how to replace your traveler's checks. You may have to go to a bank or some other institution to get emergency help. Key questions to ask the travelers check issuer before you go abroad:
  - How will you help me if I get robbed on a Friday at 5:30 p.m.?
  - Will you send me the replacement checks right away, or will I have to wait?
  - Where will I pick them up?

If your traveler's checks get stolen while abroad, find out if you need to file a police report to get your travelers checks replaced. Call the local institution that is actually going to reissue your checks. A local bank may require that you show a police report, even if the traveler's check issuer says that it's not necessary.

Register your valuables (cameras, watches, Walkmans, etc.) before you leave the United States to insure you won't have to pay customs on these items when you return. It is necessary to have

the equipment with you when you register it and to be able to clearly show the serial numbers to the registering official. This can be done at the nearest customs office.

If anything is lost or stolen, report it to the local police. Keep a copy of the police report for insurance purposes, or in case you need to replace your passport or student visa. It is also necessary to report the loss of:

- Traveler's checks to the nearest issuing office.
- Passport to both the local police and to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate to apply for a new one.
- Airline tickets to airline and travel agent.

### **Use Common Sense**

No matter how safe your new campus and community appears to be, acquaint yourself with your new environment by reading the safety information your host institution should give you.

**Exercise the same caution abroad that you would in any U.S. city.**

Begin orienting yourself by taking the following steps.

- Familiarize yourself with your neighborhood and campus by walking around in daylight. Ask fellow students or staff members about areas you should avoid. Don't use short cuts, narrow alleys or poorly lit streets. Try not to be out on the street alone at night.
- Note the address and telephone number of the closest consulate or embassy (every U.S. Consulate or Embassy has a duty officer on call around the clock to assist with emergencies).
- Locate the nearest fire-alarm box and know how to activate it.
- Locate the police station that serves your neighborhood.
- Keep emergency numbers near at hand.
- Be cautious, not fearful.
- Stay informed about local and regional news and *conditions*. Read newspapers with good international coverage and analysis of local problems and issues. Don't allow yourself to be vulnerable. Don't frequent places that may make you vulnerable by association. Some restaurants and clubs have reputations for being "American" hangouts avoid them if possible. Walk away from trouble and take a passive approach to any potentially volatile situations.

These suggestions are not meant to alarm you or your family. Most students never experience these kinds of problems. But we encourage you to be well prepared, use common sense, and be aware of potential risks while abroad.

## **Maintaining your health while abroad**

It is important to take some simple precautions to ensure you remain healthy while abroad. The following outlines some basic steps you can take: it is not an exhaustive list, and each person will have particulars that cannot be addressed here. In general, it is wise to see a doctor before travel.

*Preexisting conditions:* Give your letter from your doctor about any conditions, allergies or medications to an appropriate person at your host university, and of course to anyone else with whom you feel comfortable and who may need to be in a position to help you.

*Prescriptions:* Protect your supply of prescriptions by storing them as recommended.

*AIDS and STD's:* As in the U.S., students traveling abroad should take appropriate precautions to avoid exposure to the HIV virus and other sexually transmitted diseases. For more information, contact the CDC National AIDS Hotline at 1-800-342-AIDS, or the World Health Organization at 1-202-974-3000.

*Illness:* If you do become ill while studying abroad, report your symptoms to your local host coordinator or roommate. You should not hesitate to ask for help – illness while living abroad can be quite difficult and exacerbated by the stress of living abroad.

Notify your insurance company, or ask someone to do it for you. If you have MEDEX, they can give you referrals and help you in many ways. They will notify your parents only at your request.

Be sure to keep any receipts; you may be able to get reimbursement from your insurance company once back home. \

*Alcohol:* As with many customs, cross-cultural differences exist in the consumption of alcohol. Depending on the host country, students may find the availability and public consumption of alcohol greatly increased or decreased. Often, rules about the acceptability of alcohol use in certain situations or contexts are very different than at home.

In addition to making themselves ill, many students fall victim to crime and other hazards while under the influence of alcohol and drugs. Students under the influence of alcohol may not exercise the same “good judgment” as they might normally, and can find themselves in compromising situations. Remember that the alcoholic content of beverages is often much higher outside the United States. An individual under the influence is an easy target for a pickpocket, a rapist, or a con artist and is also more inclined to behave in a disruptive, violent, or culturally insensitive manner. Be aware of the “cultural norms” in your host country and abide by all local laws and customs.

It is a well-researched fact that people are prone to alcoholism or just drinking too much in general while on assignments abroad. The stress of living abroad, culture shock and feelings of separateness and loneliness all contribute to this significant problem. Further, the lower drinking age in most other countries certainly can contribute to this health and social problem. Please be aware of this risk, and take care of yourself while away from your familiar environment.

If students are in recovery, or think they may have a problem, we encourage them to contact a staff member, so that we can pursue finding support contacts at the program site. Also, please be aware that there are Alcoholic Anonymous meetings internationally which are held in many cities abroad.

*Alcohol Use for Women Abroad:* Please be aware that the over consumption of alcohol can especially put women in unsafe circumstances. 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" or "unladylike" or inviting advances from men.

*Illegal Drug Use:* Illegal drug use and possession are serious crimes. While drugs in some countries may seem easily available, this does not mean they are legal. Penalties for use or possession of illegal drugs can include jail terms, hard labor, and even the death penalty. If a student is arrested, he or she is subject to the host country's laws and neither the Smith School of Business, the Study Abroad Office, nor the U.S. Embassy can protect the student from the local legal consequences. In some places, even association with people possessing or using illegal drugs is considered the same as personal use or possession. While on a Smith School study abroad program, participants are responsible for obeying all local laws.

**If THE CENTER FOR GLOBAL BUSINESS hears reports that participants on its programs are using drugs or breaking other local laws, they will be confronted with the issue and may be asked to leave the program.**

*Food:* You will of course want to try all the new foods and beverages in your new home. It is advisable to go slow with the really different foods – you will have plenty of time to experiment, and your system may thank you for going slowly. Many people do experience traveler's diarrhea as they adjust to new foods and bacteria. Many over-the-counter remedies that we have here are unavailable abroad, so you may want to take something with you.

Although in many countries food safety is not an issue, there are several countries in which one needs to exercise caution. There are some basic rules of thumb that should help your student stay healthy.

- Avoid uncooked food purchased from street vendors
- Be careful with dairy products that are not refrigerated or pasteurized
- 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 water is safe for drinking
- Boil it, cook it, peel it, or don't eat it

These are all precautionary measures that students should use upon arrival. Once they are more comfortable with the country's culture and food, they may decide to be more liberal in approaches to food.

*Dietary Needs for Vegetarians, Kosher, and others:* Vegetarians or students on a special diet need to be aware that their dietary needs might not be easily met in some countries. Be sure to discuss this with your medical provider. Students may also wish to consult the guidebooks, which include information for vegetarians.

Students keeping kosher may want to contact the host university to ask about accommodations.

*Eating Disorders:* There are many cross-cultural differences in the meanings of food and in standards of beauty. Students with eating disorders may find these differences create additional challenges for them. A well-meaning host may insist on serving more food than you care to eat or someone may intend to compliment you by saying that you have put on weight. If you are upset about any of these issues, it is essential to remind yourself that this is simply a reflection of the speaker's cultural beliefs and values.

Students with eating disorders should be sure to discuss their plans to study abroad with health care providers before leaving. We also encourage students to contact a staff member in our office, with whom they feel comfortable, so that we can pursue finding support networks at the program site.

Students should not be afraid to be honest about what they need. Stating needs before arriving may be easier than having to explain them in person. In most other housing situations (dormitories, apartments), students have more control about when and what they eat.

*Health Resources Abroad:* For more information about emergency health procedures and precautions abroad, please visit the World Health Organization website: <http://www.who.int> and the Center for Disease Control website <http://www.cdc.gov/>.

## **Travel during your time abroad**

One of the many exciting possibilities of your time abroad is the chance to travel around the country you are staying in, and to nearby countries as well. We recommend taking advantage of every opportunity you have; you will learn more, and likely have few regrets. Do be sure that if you have a visa, it permits you multiple entries. Also ensure that your insurance will cover you in these situations. Also, it will probably be helpful if you can get information about the airport you will be flying into – this will only reduce your stress and help you have a good time.

### **U.S. Department of State - Consular Information Program**

There are two categories of information from the U.S. Department of State: Travel Warnings and Consular Information Sheets. Travel Warnings are issued when the State Department decides to either recommend caution or even to avoid travel to a certain country or place within a country. An example is a posting to exercise caution in Florence, Italy due to protesters at an anti-globalization rally.

Consular Information Sheets are available for every country of the world. They include information on the location of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate, unusual immigration practices, health conditions, minor political disturbances, unusual currency and entry regulations, crime and security information, and drug penalties. These do not normally include advice, but are simply available to provide factual information.

Public announcements concerning travel are used to disseminate information quickly about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term and/or trans-national conditions posing significant risks or disruptions to Americans.

This information is also available at <http://travel.state.gov>.

## Financial Matters while Abroad

Keep your information about traveler's checks in a safe and separate place so if you lose your traveler's checks you can quickly get replacements. It is highly recommended that you take both cash and traveler's checks with you. You can purchase small amounts of foreign currency to use for buses, taxis, phone calls, tips, and other incidentals when you first arrive. Most airports have exchange banks; however, change only what is absolutely necessary as you may not get the best rate there. Bringing some local currency with you is a good idea. Most U.S. banks can get foreign money for you with a few days notice. Note: As a service to its members, AAA sells traveler's checks and foreign currency (change packs) with no commission fee. They sell traveler's checks in foreign currencies as well.

Ruesch International in Washington, D.C. can open a bank account with a foreign bank draft and has a service where parents can send foreign currency checks to their children overseas. They can also issue foreign currency traveler's checks. For more information call 1 (800) 424-2923.

Capital Foreign Exchange in Washington, D.C., is a full service foreign exchange corporation that buys and sells foreign currencies and traveler's checks. Foreign exchange currency orders can be taken by phone, fax, or mail. This company will send the cash or traveler's checks to you via insured express mail. For more information, call toll-free 800-842-0880. Address: 825 14th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20005.

*Currency Exchange Rates*: To find the current exchange rates, consult newspapers such as the *International Herald Tribune*, *Washington Post*, and *The New York Times*. Oanda.com is a great web site. It allows the user to find currency values and does the conversion. (<http://www.oanda.com>)

*Transferring Money From Home*: If you run short of cash while abroad, money can be sent from home in a variety of ways:

The quickest way, although the most expensive, is by cable transfer from your U.S. bank to a bank abroad. It is wise to investigate this before you leave. Your hometown bank may have to process cable transfers through an internationally recognized U.S. bank, which will in turn have to deal with a comparable internationally recognized bank overseas.

American Express money orders are relatively fast. Transactions must be initiated at an American Express office in the United States and completed at one of their branch offices abroad, either of which could prove inconvenient, depending on their location. American Express can cable money to one of their overseas offices, where it can be picked up, with appropriate identification. Since not all American Express offices can prepare money orders or cable money, it is wise to find this out in advance.

It is also possible to obtain from a U.S. bank a foreign currency draft drawn against a recognized bank in the foreign country (e.g. a check in Spanish pesetas drawn against the Banco Hispano-

Americano in Madrid for a student in Salamanca). This draft can then be sent to you (by registered or certified mail) for cashing abroad.

Should you prefer receiving a bank draft in U.S. dollars, a cashier's check drawn against a major U.S. Bank (e.g. Chase Manhattan), can probably be obtained from your hometown bank and forwarded to you abroad (use registered or certified mail). However this may prove to be a relatively slow way of obtaining the money you need, since you still have to wait for the foreign bank to confirm the check's validity.

Needless to say, personal checks drawn against your local hometown bank will be virtually worthless because of the long amount of time it takes each bank to clear the check.

*Credit Cards:* Credit cards make foreign currency transactions easy and are invaluable in a financial emergency. Take a credit card along, if you can. But use it wisely; overspending is easy to do and fees and interest charges can be costly. Also, the loss or theft of a card abroad can be an inconvenience when you are traveling. ***Be sure to write down the numbers to call should this happen (located on the back of your credit card) and keep these numbers separate from your card.***

Possession of an American Express card, Visa card, or MasterCard will be helpful should you need to acquire emergency funds while awaiting money from home. You can go to an American Express office and cash a personal check for up to \$1000 (only the first \$50 will be provided in cash, the balance in traveler's checks).

With a Visa card you can usually obtain a cash advance against your account from a foreign bank. The bank will take your passport number and your credit card number and phone them both into a central computer to prevent you from exceeding the established limit.

Not all merchants abroad accept credit cards, regardless of the name brand. Many of your gifts and/or souvenirs will be obtained at small shops and bazaars that do not provide charge services. The amount charged to your credit card bill is based on the exchange rate on the day that your bank or credit card company processes the transaction.

In the case of all financial transactions abroad, be sure to have adequate identification with you (e.g. your passport).

*VAT Refunds:* VAT (Value Added Tax) is refundable upon most of your purchases in Europe and Canada. All western European countries, except Switzerland, have VAT built into the price of most goods and services. The VAT refund system varies between countries, but most foreign visitors are eligible for a full refund on VAT paid on goods. To receive a refund, you must show your passport and get a tax refund form filled out by the merchant at the store where you made the purchase. When you leave the country, you must present your purchases along with your paperwork to a customs official who will validate the forms. Mail the validated forms back to the store(s) where you made the purchase(s) and you should receive a refund (though it may not be in a timely fashion). Refund payments vary from a check to an international money order. Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, and Sweden have joined the European Tax-Free Shopping Network. This network offers

three refund options: cash at the airport, credit posted directly to your credit card, or a check by mail.

## **Culture Shock: Adjusting to a New Culture**

Living in another country for an extended period of time will give you an opportunity to develop an in-depth understanding of another culture, confront different customs and ways of thinking, and adapt to a new daily routine. While this experience is extremely exciting and rewarding, it can also be disorienting and challenging to be far away from your family, friends and cultural norms. For most people, the study abroad experience consists of a series of emotional highs and lows, known as culture shock.

When you first arrive in the host country, everything around you will probably be new, different, and exciting. You may enjoy the distinct character of the sights, sounds, gestures, and other aspects of culture that can flood your senses. You will expect everything around you to be different during the first few weeks in your new environment. The initial period is called the honeymoon stage of culture shock, and it is characterized by feelings of fascination, excitement, and a desire to learn more about the culture.

After several weeks, when you have settled into a daily routine, you may become aware of some of the subtle differences in gestures, manners, clothing, tone and rhythm of voices, banking, telephones, etc. These cultural differences may be a source of frustration or make you feel out of place or miss everything about home. You may even feel disappointed in yourself if it is difficult to communicate, fit in, feel friendship and enjoy every moment of your time abroad.

As you learn more about your host country, develop friendships, and establish a life for yourself abroad, you will probably begin to feel more comfortable in your new environment. Some of the cultural differences that were frustrating or annoying may become a part of life that you accept or learn to tolerate. By the end of your stay, you probably won't want to leave your new home. After returning from abroad, you will likely experience some degree of re-entry stress or "reverse culture shock."

These suggestions can help you deal with culture shock and get the most out of your study abroad experience.

- Remember that the symptoms associated with culture shock are natural and common reactions related to cultural differences and the adjustment process. If you fail to admit that you are experiencing culture shock, adjusting to your new environment will probably be a longer process.
- Make the effort to meet local people. It is easy to befriend other study abroad students because you share a common language, culture and situation. It usually requires more thought, effort and creativity to meet locals, but interacting with people from your host country will enable you to learn more about the culture, practice your language skills, and develop lasting ties. The easiest way to meet people is to join a group or take a class that will allow you to pursue an interest or hobby and interact socially. Participating in musical groups, sports, and volunteer projects are great ideas.

- Become familiar with the area and frequent local establishments. Take some time to walk around and carefully observe your surroundings, the people, buildings, stores, etc. Find interesting places and frequent particular cafés, newsstand, and stores. You may get to know the waiters, proprietors, and other regular customers. You will also feel more comfortable in your new home.
- Read and speak the local language and try to learn as much as possible about local viewpoints and customs. Read newspapers and popular magazines, and watch local TV programs and movies. Ask questions and don't be afraid to make mistakes. It is generally true that people respond very favorably to questions and interest in local food and cooking methods. These efforts will help you integrate into the culture.
- Keep a journal. Record your experiences, thoughts, and observations. Writing in your journal can be a time to reflect and assess your progress in understanding and adjusting to your host country. You will be glad to have a written account of your experiences to look back on when you come home.
- Take lots of pictures.
- Check your urge to call or email home very frequently; use this energy to connect to your host culture instead.

# **Section 3**

# **Returning**

# Returning

## Re-entry From Study Abroad

Part of the preparation for returning home includes staying in contact with your family and friends, working with your study abroad office for any academic or school-related matters and, to some extent, keeping up with political, economic, and social developments at home. For some students, these changes will be minute; for others, they may be very significant.

### **Making travel arrangements**

If you already have a return plane ticket you should contact the airline and reconfirm your seat at least 72 hours in advance. Airlines notoriously overbook flights back to the United States. You may decide to travel before leaving the country or have your family and friends join you. Depending upon your ticket restrictions, this may be possible for a fee. If you want to change the return date, contact the airline directly or visit a travel agency. They can tell you what, if any, restrictions there are.

### **Preparing for reverse culture shock: Re-entry to your own culture**

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

### **Change and adaptation**

You have just had the opportunity to live, study, and travel overseas. During your stay you have probably assimilated some of the host country's culture, you have learned new ways of doing things and, perhaps, gained some new views and opinions about certain topics. In short, you have changed. As one returnee explains, "Living abroad has a deep, broadening effect on a person - an effect that I didn't realize until my return." For some people living overseas and having those changes occur outside of the United States can magnify those experiences, thus causing the return home to be a bit unsettling. In addition, some of the experiences are specific to being overseas and could not have occurred in the United States.

While overseas you may have experienced a greater amount of independence, both academically and personally, than you previously experienced in the United States. This independence can help make you more confident in your abilities to achieve your goals. You may have gained a more mature or focused attitude about your future. You may even be a bit more serious and

directed. Some of these new views and attitudes may be in conflict with the views and attitudes of family and friends. They may question your new way of thinking and doing things or even pressure you to change back. These differences may often be unsettling and uncomfortable at first, but this is part of your growth as a person and challenge as an adult. Think in advance about how you might deal with these oppositions, and about the benefits of success not only abroad but also in improving how people interact with you at home; your new confidence will carry you through to many beneficial things.

Articulate for yourself now the benefits and challenges you encountered during your time abroad; this will help you later when you interview, and help you in discussing your experience with friends and family. What was the “big picture” of your time away? It will be very valuable to write down your thoughts for later reference.

Some ideas to start with:

During students' undergraduate careers, they have the unique opportunity to explore the world. You have done this in an interesting way. Were you able to successfully navigate a new environment? What was the impact of time away from friends?

Study abroad at its best is a zestful combination of academic and experiential learning – what did you find? Were there classes at the host university that were unavailable at the Smith School? Even classes that appear to have the same content will provide for the American student a perspective that will conflict with or compliment that of the Smith School, thereby encouraging thought and learning. Did you take classes outside your normal realm of interest? Volunteer, or engage in other independent study while abroad?

Many companies look for leaders with proven flexibility and ability to work with diversity. While these characteristics are difficult for employers to assess, any student who can talk about successfully living abroad and functioning outside of comfortable environments can indicate that he or she possesses those qualities. The distinction of having studied in a foreign country for a session, semester, or year can be a great asset; how can you talk about your successes?

Time abroad leads to an understanding of the U.S. role in world politics and policies, of the intricacies of cross-cultural understanding and respect, and of how one's own culture might translate to another culture's sensibilities. You probably better understand the international linkages among companies and organizations, global labor markets, competitive advantages that arise from location, etc. How can you articulate this?

Did you learn or improve another language? If so, how did you go about doing so.

How did you begin to feel more independent? Opportunities to take weekend trips to different cities, traveling before or after the program, and even life on a daily basis offered learning experiences.

Did you find yourself changing long-held beliefs? If so, how can you best articulate that?

Thinking about the big picture now will also help when faced with questions such as "How was your time in xxxx?" a student often can only answer "Great!" before conversation moves on to another subject. If you are prepared, you can offer more specific discussions, like "What were the best things about living abroad? The most difficult? What places did you visit? Are people's daily lives the same as in the United States? Do you have any pictures? Etc., etc." Have a party where you can show off food, customs and souvenirs from your travels. Not only will such questions and activities remind you of your experience and help you to readjust, it will help others in your community learn more about the world.

Please remember to bring things back, both for yourself, friends and family, but also for future students going abroad to your host university. Pictures of housing will be especially helpful, as will be pictures of campus, favorite hangouts, and anything else special about the place. Maps will also be appreciated by future students.

Upon your return you will receive an evaluation form designed to apprise us as to your overall impression of your experience, specific details about your classes, estimates of how expensive living in your host area is, and other information about campus facilities and activities. Please fill out the forms promptly; they are invaluable to us and to your colleagues, and they give you a means to talk about various aspects of your experience.

# **SECTION 4**

# **CONTACT INFORMATION**

## Contact Information

### **R.H. Smith School of Business**

Van Munching Hall 2410

Phone: 301-405-2189

Fax: 301-314-9120

### **Center for Global Business**

Victor Betancourt, Assistant Director

Email: [vbetanco@rhsmith.umd.edu](mailto:vbetanco@rhsmith.umd.edu)

Phone (301) 405-7009

Fax (301) 314-9526

Mobile (240) 353-7377

Lisa Barnard

Email: [lbarnard@rhsmith.umd.edu](mailto:lbarnard@rhsmith.umd.edu)

Phone (301) 405-9575

### **Undergraduate Studies Office**

1300 Van Munching Hall

Phone: 301-405-2286

Fax: 301-314-1990

Dr. Pat Cleveland, Assistant Dean

Email: [pceleva@rhsmith.umd.edu](mailto:pceleva@rhsmith.umd.edu)

Brian Horick, Associate Director

Email: [bhorick@rhsmith.umd.edu](mailto:bhorick@rhsmith.umd.edu)

Lisa McAllister, Assistant Director

Email: [lmcallister@rhsmith.umd.edu](mailto:lmcallister@rhsmith.umd.edu)

Roberta Smit

Email: [rsmit@deans.umd.edu](mailto:rsmit@deans.umd.edu)

Phone: (301) 405-0012

Gretchen Buddenhagen

Email: [gbuddenh@rhsmith.umd.edu](mailto:gbuddenh@rhsmith.umd.edu)

Phone: (301) 405-2294

Gilda Anroman

Email: [ganroman@rhsmith.umd.edu](mailto:ganroman@rhsmith.umd.edu)

Phone: (301) 405-2286

### **Undergraduate Business Career Center**

Van Munching Hall 2407

Phone: 301-405-7103

Lavern Chapman, Associate Director

Email: [chapman@rhsmith.umd.edu](mailto:chapman@rhsmith.umd.edu)

Phone: (301) 405-7103

Jean McLaughlin, Advisor

Email: [jmclaugh@rhsmith.umd.edu](mailto:jmclaugh@rhsmith.umd.edu)

Phone: (301) 405 - 2213

Gary Flinchum, Recruiting Coordinator

Email: [gflinchu@rhsmith.umd.edu](mailto:gflinchu@rhsmith.umd.edu)

Phone: (301) 405 - 8652

### **QUEST Program**

Tami Rosenberg, Assistant Director

Email: [trosenberg@rhsmith.umd.edu](mailto:trosenberg@rhsmith.umd.edu)

Phone: 301-405-2427 (0292)

Fax: (301) 314-5506

### **Academic Departments**

#### **Accounting**

Van Munching Hall

Phone: 301-405-2138

Fax: (301) 405-0359

#### **Decision and Information Technologies**

Van Munching Hall

Phone: (301) 405-8654

Fax: (301) 405-8655

#### **Entrepreneurship**

Van Munching Hall

Phone: (301) 403-4290

Fax: (301) 403-4292

#### **Finance**

Van Munching Hall

Phone: 301-405-2333

Fax: (301) 405-0359

#### **Marketing**

Van Munching Hall

Phone: (301) 405-8149  
Fax: (301) 405-0146

### **Logistics, Business & Public Policy**

Van Munching Hall  
Phone: (301) 405-2190  
Fax: (301) 405-0146

### **Management & Organization**

Van Munching Hall  
Phone: (301) 405-2320  
Fax: (301) 314-8787

### **University of Maryland**

#### **Office of Study Abroad**

Mitchell Building  
Phone: 301 314-7746  
Fax: (301) 314-9347  
Email: [studyabr@deans.umd.edu](mailto:studyabr@deans.umd.edu)

#### **Resident Life**

Annapolis Hall  
Email:  
Phone: (301) 314-2100  
Fax: (301) 314-9750

#### **Registrar's Office**

Mitchell Building  
Email:  
Phone: (301) 314-8240  
Fax: (301) 314-7445

#### **Student Accounts**

Lee Building  
Email: [billtalk@accmail.umd.edu](mailto:billtalk@accmail.umd.edu)  
Phone: 1(888) 313-2404  
Fax: none

#### **Office of Student Financial Aid**

1135 Lee Building  
Phone: 301-314-9000  
Fax: 301-314-9587  
E-mail: [umfinaid@umdacc.urnd.edu](mailto:umfinaid@umdacc.urnd.edu)

#### **Legal Aid Office**

**Student Government Association**  
Suite 1219, Stamp Student Union

Phone: 301-314-7756  
Fax: (301) 314-7757

### **Overseas Universities**

#### **RMIT University**

Sue Acroyd, Education Abroad Advisor  
449 Swanston Street, Level 6  
Melbourne VIC 3000 AUSTRALIA  
Phone: 011 61 3 9925 1020  
Fax: 011 61 3 9925 5235

Paul Cerotti

Address:  
Email:  
Phone:  
Fax:

#### **Copenhagen Business School**

Niels Henrik Larsen, Coordinator  
Address:  
Email:  
Phone:  
Email:

#### **Università Commerciale L. Bocconi**

Alessandra Mazzoleni, Coordinator  
Via Sarfatti, 25, 20136 Milano (Italy)  
Phone: 011 39-025836.2230  
Fax: 011 39-025836.2204  
Email: [Alessandra.Mazzoleni@uni-bocconi.it](mailto:Alessandra.Mazzoleni@uni-bocconi.it)

#### **ESC Grenoble**

Name  
Address  
Email  
Phone  
Fax

