
Study Abroad Handbook

Bryant
UNIVERSITY



Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Pre-Departure Planning | 1 |
| Travel Documents | 2 |
| Other Business | 2 |
| Financing Education Abroad | 3 |
| Ways to Carry Cash | 4 |
| Obtaining Money Abroad | 4 |
| Methods of Communication Abroad | 6 |
| Packing | 7 |
| Luggage Guidelines | 7 |
| The Packing List | 8 |
| Donations..... | 10 |
| Expectations of Living Abroad | 11 |
| Medical Care and Insurance | 12 |
| The Healthy Way to Fly | 12 |
| Medications & Over-the-Counter Meds | 13 |
| Medical Care | 14 |
| Insurance | 14 |
| Basic Health and Safety | 15 |
| Safety and Health Websites | 17 |
| Risk Factors and Strategies to Reduce Risk | 18 |
| Special Issues | 20 |
| Foreign Laws | 22 |
| Crisis Management | 23 |
| Before a Crisis Occurs | 23 |
| Who Can Help?..... | 23 |
| Student’s Guide to Studying Abroad | 24 |
| Living in a Foreign Country Tips..... | 24 |
| Traveling Tips | 24 |
| Adjustments and Culture Shock | 27 |
| Duties and Customs | 30 |
| Reverse Culture Shock | 31 |
| Appendix | 32 |
| If You Are Going Abroad Soon | 32 |
| What Do You Need to Know and Do Before You Go? | 34 |



Bryant University Study Abroad

Because education should have no boundaries

Pre-Departure Planning

Travel Documents

Proper documentation and identification is required for entry into your destination country and for re-entry into the United States. Each country has its own special requirements for entry based on your citizenship, purpose of visit and length of stay. Find out which requirements pertain to your situation, and plan in advance; obtaining documents from embassies or consulates can take from one hour up to three months. Getting a new passport may take up to six weeks.



- **Passport:** A passport is a document from your home country that confirms your citizenship. You need a current passport that is valid 6 months beyond the time your program ends. To purchase or renew your passport, go to the website: <http://travel.state.gov/passport>.
- **Visa:** A visa is a document, provided by the country to which you will be traveling, which confirms your legitimate status as a foreign student. A visa is generally attached to a passport, so having a passport is necessary before you can apply for a visa. Some visas are free and easy to acquire, while others may cost over \$100 and require a lot of documentation and planning ahead. Check with the U.S. State Department - or the embassy or consulate of the country to which you will be traveling - to determine if you will need a visa, and for information on how to apply for a visa if you do need one. Your program provider can also help provide information on obtaining a visa. Foreign officials may require you to have a letter of acceptance, proof of insurance, and proof of sufficient funds before they will issue you a visa. A letter from your program provider confirming all of the above may be sufficient in some cases.
- **Tickets:** As most students will fly to their destination, your plane ticket will serve as your primary travel document. For others, a train or bus ticket may suffice. Some countries will require you to show that you have a return or ongoing flight scheduled within the allotted time for your visa. Student visas can last from one month to one year depending on the country where you will be studying or traveling. If you plan to stay longer, you will need to extend your visa.
- **Proof of Sufficient Funds:** Your destination country may also require proof of self-sufficiency while abroad. You may be asked to provide a bank statement with your current balance to show that you have enough money to pay for your needs while abroad without having to ask the country to provide you with monetary assistance.
- **Letter of Acceptance:** You may be required to show an official letter of acceptance or invitation to study abroad.
- **Proof of Insurance:** You should have an insurance card or other document verifying that you have travel and health insurance to cover you for the entire time you will be abroad. Your program provider will supply you with supplemental health insurance for your time abroad.
- **Prescriptions:** If you require prescription medications while abroad, you will very likely need to verify this requirement with a doctor's note. You may need a specially notarized prescription if the pharmacy you go to does not recognize U.S. prescriptions. You may also need to have your prescription translated into the language of your destination country in order to have it filled properly. Let your doctor know that you



intend to travel abroad so that he/she can provide the appropriate documentation you will need to fill the prescription while away from home. Also, tell your program provider about your medical needs so that they can give you more detailed information on the documents you will need while abroad.

- **Confirmation of Good Health:** Foreign officials, or your program administrators, may require that a health form or letter of good health (confirmation that you are free from certain diseases, etc.) be provided to obtain a visa.
- **Confirmation of Vaccination:** You may also be asked to show proof of having received certain vaccinations to travel in regions with endemic diseases, like cholera, yellow fever, etc.
- **Copies of Travel Documents:** Along with your originals, bring a copy of all travel documents and leave copies of your travel documents with a contact in the United States and abroad. Remember to keep copies in a safe place, separate from where you keep your original documents.
- **International Student ID Card:** Most of the Program Providers have included an ISIC card in the cost of your program fees. If one is not provided for you, then you should consider purchasing an International Student ID Card (ISIC) as this can provide discounts, helps verify your travel purposes, and includes a limited amount of insurance and 24-hour assistance. More information available at www.isic.org.



Other Business

- **Voting:** You may want to register to vote in U.S. elections while you are abroad. You can obtain absentee ballots abroad through your consulate or embassy. Go to the secretary of the state website for the state you live in, which will allow you to print out an application for an absentee ballot.
- **Power of Attorney:** Getting "power of attorney" allows you to designate a person who would control your assets and other personal information in the event you become unable to do so. Power of attorney makes the person you designate able to withdraw your money, deposit money for you, and write your checks; His or her signature counts as your signature. You and your designated person will need to go to your bank(s) in order to set up this type of power of attorney. A notary public can also set up power of attorney for you so that the individual you designate can control not only your assets, but also other paperwork requiring your signature.
- **Paying Bills:** There are several ways to pay your outstanding U.S. bills while abroad. Credit card bills, cell phone bills, and some debt payments can be paid on-line through a personal Internet account. Check to see whether or not your credit card company or cell phone carrier offers this billing option. If you can't pay your bills on-line, consider paying them in advance before you go abroad. You could also leave payments with a trusted, close friend or family member if he or she is willing to send in your payments for you.



Financing Education Abroad

How much money do you need for your time abroad? It is very difficult to make guidelines - you will spend as much as you take, and your spending habits may be very different from other students going overseas. You will need to bring funds to cover all other expenses including meals, books, local transportation, personal items, snacks, travel and any other incidental expenses. The amount you will need for incidental expenses will depend on your lifestyle as well as local costs. Take a close look at your expenses and prepare a budget for yourself based on the estimated expenses. Be prepared to revise that budget, especially after the first month overseas.

Being aware of the foreign exchange rate is extremely important while budgeting your finances. Helpful websites for currency conversion are

- www.oanda.com
- www.xe.com

Budgeting

While abroad, one of the most important tasks you should be mindful of is to **budget your money and expenses**. Studying Abroad is an incredible opportunity to experience all the world has to offer and sometimes money can become an issue. The following are tips to help you control your finances while abroad:

- Keep a daily expense account the first couple of weeks to be able to plan a budget for your entire stay.
- You will spend more money upon arrival than at any other point. **Be prepared**. You don't know where to find the best bargains yet, and the exchange rate will take some getting used to.
- **Focus on what is important to you**. If you know that you are going to extensively travel while abroad, make sure that you budget enough money for transportation, lodging, food, etc, for each time that you travel. It would be wise to plan trips in advance and allocate a portion of your funds just for traveling. Travel, food, and entertainment are going to be your three largest expenses, so spend wisely and experience as much as possible.
- Below is a sample of a budget worksheet for you to estimate your costs while abroad. Make sure that you over-estimate, rather than under-estimate, your projected costs while abroad.

| Daily Needs | Estimated Cost Abroad |
|--|-----------------------|
| Meals, Snacks, Beverages | \$ |
| Laundry | \$ |
| Souvenirs | \$ |
| Entertainment | \$ |
| Emergency money for illness/hospital | \$ |
| | |
| Personal Travel | |
| Train/Air Tickets to/from countries | \$ |
| Hostel/Hotel Reservations for each country | \$ |
| Public Transportation | \$ |



Ways to Carry Cash

Please Note: Avoid bringing large amounts of hard currency

- **Debit Cards:** A debit card, also known as a check card, is excellent for international travel because it allows you to withdraw money from your bank account in the United States in the currency of the host country. If you have a Visa or MasterCard symbol on your card you may be able to withdraw from any ATM that supports Visa or MasterCard. The transaction debits money from your checking account in that day's exchange rate. Check with your bank regarding transaction fees and make sure your debit card is not just an ATM card. You should also **inform your bank that you will be using your debit/credit card overseas**, so that they know you're card hasn't been stolen when international withdrawals appear on your account. Another good idea is to allow your parent/guardian(s) access to your account, so that they can easily transfer money, if needed.
- **Credit Cards:** Credit cards are great for emergencies, hotels, restaurants, shops, airline tickets, and car rental agencies. However, beware of higher interest charges on outstanding balances because it is easy to get into debt. It is wise to have someone you trust at home responsible for paying your monthly balance because companies will not send bills to international addresses. Also note that the exchange rate of your purchase will be the exchange rate on the day the transaction is processed. This may be more or less than the rate on the day of purchase.

It is wise to make copies of your credit card and debit card numbers along with the phone number to call in case of theft (1-800 numbers do not work overseas). Also, you should leave this information with a family member at home.

- **Traveler's Checks:** This form of cash is becoming less common, so consider this option only if necessary. Accepted around the world and usually treated as cash, traveler's checks are another way to carry money. Have a record and receipt of the serial numbers separate from your checks and the company that issued them will replace their full value if stolen. Any bank will have them, usually at one percent over the value of the checks. Remember, when exchanging overseas, passport identification may be required and there may be a charge per transaction.

Obtaining Money while Abroad

- **Opening a Bank Account:** It is wise to open a bank account in your host country for convenience. It avoids unnecessary charges and can help to budget your money. Your site director should give you advice about banking during orientation and you should be able to open either a savings or checking account. Before choosing a particular bank, compare in regards to convenient locations, location of ATM's, and charges to maintain an account.
- **Wire Transfers/Bank Drafts:** When opening an account abroad, you may need bank transfers or a bank draft to receive your initial funds. Check with your U.S. bank to get a list of corresponding banks in your host city and what person is authorized to initiate cable transfers. When abroad, contact your U.S. bank by phone or telegram and you will receive money approximately within 48 hrs. You will probably incur both cabling charges and an additional commission charge by the host bank. Money can also be cabled through American Express or Western Union within 2-5 days and charges will vary. Alternatively, a bank draft in your name can be mailed.



Bryant University Study Abroad

Because education should have no boundaries

- **Advances and Check Cashing:** Any bank sponsoring your credit card will allow you to draw funds in foreign currency as a cash advance, often considered a loan, and you may be limited up to your line of credit. Proper identification is required and be aware that a high interest rate is charged if the loan is not paid off within a month. For larger sums of money a wire transfer may be more appropriate. Any American Express office will cash personal checks from an U.S. account at no charge.
- **Financial Responsibilities:** Also, there are a number of financial responsibilities that you have to keep in mind. Since you are paying Bryant University Tuition, you are still responsible for paying your fees on time for the Fall and Spring semesters. If Bryant bills you, you are responsible for adhering to its payment schedule. If you cancel or withdraw late from a program you will most likely be responsible for partial payment or be assessed a cancellation fee. Keep copies of all documents pertaining to your financial obligations in case there is any question about what you are required to pay. Also, save copies of forms you sign, such as contracts and statements of financial responsibilities.



Bryant University Study Abroad

Because education should have no boundaries

Methods of Communication Abroad

In this section, you will learn how to communicate better with a program's administration, family and friends while you are abroad. When looking at a program, see if it has a 24-hour communication contact person both abroad and in the U.S. With the advent of the “information age,” there now exists more than just one way to communicate internationally.

Telephone

It is important to know the telephone numbers for the program administration abroad and in the United States both during business hours and in case of an emergency. There may be a separate contact number for program housing. It is important to know if a regular telephone number will be provided to you while abroad, and if that number will be assigned to you before leaving the United States.

International Calling Cards

The most reasonable way to communicate between the country where you will be studying and the United States may be through the use of an international calling card, available through various companies/providers. You should purchase calling cards while abroad—it is the best deal. Purchasing calling cards abroad in your host country will get you the most minutes for your money.

Cellular Phones

Cellular phones have become more common and less expensive around the world. Although local calls may be inexpensive, international calls may have a high cost. Some multi-band phones that can be used in the United States can also be used while abroad. If you don't own a multi-band cell phone, but would like to have a cell phone while studying abroad, you can purchase your own cell phone for anywhere from \$40 to \$300 (prices may change depending on the time of your study abroad program and location of program). Most cellular companies abroad also provide “Pay-As-You-Go” cards, which is ideal for students in short-term programs.

Skype

Skype allows users to make telephone calls over the internet to other Skype users free of charge. With Skype's free software, which works seamlessly with your internet connection, you can chat with free Skype-to-Skype calls and never worry about cost, time or distance. www.skype.com.

E-Mail

E-mail is a quick and inexpensive way to keep in touch with family in friends while abroad, but keep in mind internet access may not be as readily available in overseas residency. Internet access is almost always available at the host university or at internet cafes.



Packing

Here are some basic guidelines/considerations to follow when starting to pack:

1. **Economy:** Keep in mind you probably *won't* need your three favorite pairs of jeans. *We've never heard of any student who has complained about taking too little.* You are likely to accumulate additional possessions while abroad so pack light!
2. **Weather:** Keep in mind the climate of your location when packing – we suggest you visit www.weather.com for more information.
3. **Travel:** How much traveling will you be doing while abroad? Do you really want to lug around several suitcases? (Probably not!)

Luggage Guidelines

Airline limitations and restrictions regarding carry-on luggage will vary from country to country and airline to airline. U.S. Airlines allows for 1 carry-on bag and 1 personal item such as a purse however the UK does not allow a personal item, they only allow 1 carry-on per person. Also, liquids and sharp metal objects are also restricted from your carry-on bag. Liquids are limited to 3 oz containers or less in 1 quart-sized Ziplock bag. The size and weight of your carry-on also may become an issue when connecting flights or traveling from country to country so be aware of all the restrictions you may encounter. It would be wise to check www.tsa.gov before you pack.

Checked luggage is also limited to certain weight restrictions that will vary from place to place. Restrictions regarding the number of bags you have checked and the weight of those bags can be different according to airline and country. The weight limitations can range from 50-70 lbs. and this may become an issue if you connect from an international flight to a domestic flight. A fee is applied according to how many lbs or kilos over the specified weight. Please check all of your airline regulations before you go so you will not have to throw away any of the items in your bag.

When packing, keep in mind that you will have to carry your own luggage: **Do not pack more than you can carry and fit in the trunk of a SMALL taxi!** Check with the airline you have chosen for luggage allowances. Remember that you may have to get from the airport to public transportation by yourself.

Carry-on Luggage

In general, there are some very important items you will NOT want to pack in your checked baggage; rather, you will want to have them handy at all times and packed in your carry-on bag:

- Passport
- Visa
- Tickets
- Prescription medicine
- Money (For taxi rides to and from airports, phone calls, emergencies, etc...)
- Other official documentation

You may also want to have a few personal items in your carry-on in order to make your trip more comfortable and enjoyable. Consider including items like a book, a toothbrush/toothpaste and a change of clothes and underwear in case of flight delay/cancellation.



Checked Baggage

Less is more. Although just about everyone will caution you to pack light, packing can be a very personal process. Packing can be especially challenging if you plan to stay abroad for a relatively long time. You want to have as many comforts abroad as you have at home, yet you know you can't bring everything with you. Also, part of the reason you are going abroad is to get out of your comfort zone and away from home; therefore, you will have to prepare to make do with fewer things.



Not only does your airline have a baggage limit, but also you will have a space limit at your residence abroad. When you travel, you probably won't want to lug around, or pay to store, all the stuff you've brought with you. You are most likely going to acquire things while traveling, including souvenirs, clothes, gifts, etc... You will need some extra packing space in order to fit in these newly acquired items.

Don't be a packing procrastinator. Packing for a semester abroad a couple of hours before your flight just isn't a smart idea. Packing takes planning, and you will most likely pack and re-pack a number of times before you're satisfied (and before you can cram everything into your bags so they shut properly!)

Backpacks

Often, students want to do independent traveling on weekends or holidays. We recommend daypacks for these adventures – a bag big enough for a change of clothes and a few necessities, but small enough that you don't mind toting it around all day. For longer trips, e.g. 1-2 weeks, consider purchasing a larger backpack, as it will be much easier to carry around than a suitcase.

Make sure that your bag is **STURDY!** The best option is a hiking backpack with an internal metal frame for support. You wouldn't want to spill your belonging in the middle of a crowded intersection. (Often good manufactures offer lifetime warranties on their equipment.) Finally, make sure you purchase **combination locks** to secure the many compartments on your backpack.

The Packing List

Clothing (the bare minimum)

- 1 light, water-repellent jacket (or raincoat)
- 1 lounge outfit/sweat pants
- 1 bathing suit
- 1 pair of long-underwear (e.g. silk)
- 2 pairs of pajamas (summer & winter)
- 1 pair of jeans
- 1 pair of khakis
- 1 or 2 skirts (men substitute another pair of pants)
- 1 or 2 dresses (men substitute a suit and tie)
- 1 cotton sweater
- 1 dark cardigan sweater/sports coat
- 2 blouses/shirts
- 2 pairs of shorts
- several t-shirts/summer shirts
- 1 weeks worth of socks (also pack hosiery and dress socks)
- 1 weeks worth of underwear



- 1 or 2 belts
- Additional professional clothes for students participating in an internship

Shoes

- 1 pair of dress shoes
- 1 pair of VERY comfortable and broken-in walking/hiking shoes (waterproof preferred)
- 1 pair of casual shoes/loafers
- 1 pair of flip flops/sandals and/or slippers

Bath & Toiletries

- 1 towel
- Deodorant
- Glasses/contacts & contact solution
- 1 toothbrush and toothpaste
- 1 hair brush
- 1 travel size manicure set
- 1 shaver
- Cosmetics
- 1 month of feminine hygiene products
- Small travel size toiletries (optional)

You can purchase most toiletries abroad, but you may not be able to find the same brands you use at home. If you favor a certain brand of toilet article essential to your well-being, take a supply with you. For electrical appliances (hair dryer, iron, etc.), it is best to purchase these items in country, since electrical specifications vary.

Accessories

Accessories help round out a seemingly sparse wardrobe. A belt or scarf adds a lot to an outfit and packs easily. However, do **NOT** pack expensive jewelry or clothes as these will mark you as "wealthy" – an invitation to crooks – and may get lost in your travels.

Prescriptions

Please consult your country-specific program guide for recommendations and warnings about taking prescribed drugs into your host country. Don't forget to pack copies of your prescriptions for medication or glasses/contacts.

Miscellaneous

- Sunglasses
- Journal (even if you don't currently keep one, we highly recommend taking one)
- Discman/walkman/MP3 player and a sample of your favorite music
- Language dictionary, phrase book, currency converter
- A list of family/friends addresses and a small supply or airmail stationery
- Copies of contact information for academic advisor, credit card companies, hometown banks (for emergency situations)
- Travel alarm clock (battery operated)
- Small flashlight
- Camera
- Film or memory card (much more expensive abroad)
- Batteries
- Plug converter kit for your country



- Travel guide(s)
- A small sewing kit
- A few packets of Woolite or similar detergent
- A few photos of family and friends
- A few of your favorite recipes (to make for friends or your host family)
- Small gift for your host family

Overnight Trip Packing List

- A sturdy backpack
- 1 neck pouch/money belt (not a fanny pack)
- International Student Identity Card/International Youth Hostel Association Card/Eurorail pass (all are optional)
- Guidebook
- Electronic translator/Phrase book
- Prescriptions, Glasses, Contact Solution
- Camera, film and batteries (buy before you leave the U.S. as they will be much more expensive abroad)
- Discman/Walkman/MP3 player
- Travel Alarm clock (battery operated)
- Small Compass
- Small first aid kit (you can make it yourself in-country)
- Small sewing kit
- Laundry musts: small tube of soap (e.g. *Shout*), cord for laundry line (bungee or can use dental floss), and a flat rubber drain-stop for doing your laundry in a sink
- A door-stop for extra security in hostels
- Travel journal
- Sleep Sheet – you can purchase one or sew together two sheets sleeping bag-style. Most hostels require you to have one.
- Towel
- Small flashlight and batteries – great for finding your way around poorly lit villages or the way to a hostel bathroom.
- Flip flops
- Walking shoes/boots
- 2 complete outfits
- A few safety pins (just in case)
- Bug repellent and sunscreen
- Sunglasses

Coming Home: What to Leave Behind or Donate

There are people in need everywhere in the world. Donation is an excellent way to get rid of items you don't need anymore and ones that won't fit in your suitcase, reduce the costs of having to ship items home, or having to pay for excess baggage. It's easy to find out where to donate your items - ask your program administrator, residence hall/dorm advisor, the local hospital staff or a local resident of the community.

Possible donation items include books and school supplies, clothes and shoes, sheets, blankets, towels, umbrellas, kitchenware, and food.



Bryant University Study Abroad

Because education should have no boundaries

Expectations of Living Abroad

Living abroad will be different, and it's crucial for you to start expecting this. Simply anticipating some of the differences ahead of time can help better prepare you for life abroad. The single most important thing to remember is to be flexible. You will no doubt have to adapt to new things you encounter while on your program.

You should learn to **expect the unexpected**. Accept the fact that everything will not be same as it here in the United States. The following are some very general and basic things to which you are probably accustomed in the United States, but that may be very different overseas:

- **Routines and Schedules:** Your routine will change once you get to your destination. Not only might you be dealing with a time difference upon arrival, but the locals may have a unique work schedule such as the tradition of taking an afternoon siesta in Spain and Mexico. You may eat lunch and dinner later or earlier than you are accustomed to doing. Shops and stores may be closed earlier than you expect, so you will have to work your routine around those business hours. You will also have to adapt your routine to bus and metro schedules and to your roommates' schedules.
- **Facilities:** Facilities may be modern or rundown, working or out of order, clean or dirty. Basically, you take what you get and deal with it. You have to be your own judge of when facilities like hospitals, restaurants, beaches, public transportation, apartments, or even phone booths are in safe, working condition. In many cases, especially in poorer areas of the country, you may have to lower your standards a bit and accept what's available to you. Facilities do not have to be new to be useful or safe.
- **Modern Conveniences:** In foreign supermarkets, you probably will not be able to find certain favorite food items you always eat in the United States. Just because you can't find something you're looking for doesn't mean you can't find an appropriate substitute. In fact, it might be an opportunity for you to try a new food you wouldn't have access to in the U.S. You should not expect to find the same foods in restaurants or supermarkets, the same fast food chains or name brand items, the same style or sizes of clothing and shoes, etc. Other modern conveniences like ATM machines, hair dryers, cell-phone reception, Internet hook-ups and microwaves may not be available. In short, if you can't have or find everything you want, you will have to compromise.
- **Bathrooms and Toilets:** You may very likely find things are different even in British bathrooms. The idea of a western toilet with a porcelain bowl and a seat is not universal. Bathroom facilities abroad can literally be holes in the floor, outhouses, or non-existent. Bidets are common, especially in Europe. Toilet paper is often not available, or not commonly used. You may always want to carry a pocket pack of tissues with you just in case. Sinks and running water for you to wash your face and hands or brush your teeth may or may not be an option. If sink water is an option, be sure to ask if you can drink it or brush your teeth with it. Showers may also be different as some cultures prefer to bathe in a tub or other water source instead. Hand-held water sprayers may replace U.S. style fixed showerheads.
- **Co-ed Living:** If you are not comfortable with living with the opposite sex, make sure to make your wishes known before you are assigned housing, or before you place an ad for a roommate. Otherwise, you may be assigned to live in a co-ed dorm, or find that your roommates are of the opposite sex.



Medical Care and Insurance

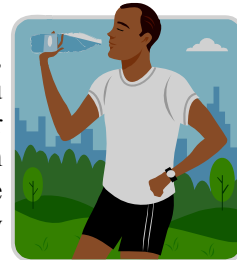
As insurance is critical in obtaining medical assistance while abroad, we will mention some different types of insurance that are available. For international study and travel, there are various types of insurance which you should consider purchasing prior to leaving the U.S. These include major medical, emergency evacuation, repatriation of remains, 24 hour emergency help line, legal assistance, baggage, accidental death and dismemberment/life, motor vehicle, and kidnapping and terrorism insurance. Also, don't forget that your program provider will be supplying you with supplemental health insurance for your time abroad.

If you are concerned about any health related issues, please see Donna Tawse in Health Services before you leave. 401-232-6220 or dtawse@brvant.edu.

The Healthy Way to Fly

In-Flight Hydration and Nutrition

The recirculated air on a plane is filtered with hospital-grade HEPA filters, leaving it bone-dry. The more dehydrated you become, the more likely you are to contract a viral or bacterial infection due to lack of moisture in your membranes. "At minimum you should be drinking eight ounces of water an hour," advises Amy Joy Lanou, M.D., senior nutrition scientist for the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine. "Take along an empty Nalgene and ask a flight attendant to fill it."



Also, skip the peanuts, pretzels, and chips. To combat muscle soreness and boost hydration, pack a plastic container with fruit and vegetables that are crunchy, and high in potassium, such as cucumbers, cherry tomatoes, and oranges (be sure to eat these before you arrive in-country, as most fresh fruits and vegetables are not allowed through customs). For flight across time zones, eat every hour or two in flight, even if it's just a snack. Your stomach is used to eating three meals a day and will be confused as you travel across time zones. This is the best way to keep your tummy from getting too confused.

In-Flight Fitness

"Sitting for a long time is not something the body likes to do," says New York City-based gym owner David Barton. Barton's in-flight workout, which requires an easily packed, two foot-long resistance band, focuses on muscles close to your core—the ones least mobile on a long flight. To work the seat-locked lower body, start with the glute extension: Put your heel in the middle of the band, sit up straight with your arms at your sides, and grip the band's handles. Slowly lift your leg toward your torso, bending at the knee, and then push straight down. "This creates circulation from your hips to your feet," Barton says.



For upper back tightness, try the seated row: Place both feet on the middle of the band and grip the handles. Lean forward 45 degrees from the hip and keep your back straight. Without breaking form, slowly draw back your elbows along you sides while squeezing your shoulder blades together. This contracts muscles around the spine, which get stressed when you are seated for extended periods. On flights longer than five hours, Barton recommends doing ten reps of each exercise at least twice.



Bryant University Study Abroad

Because education should have no boundaries

Health Conditions and Flying

- Upper respiratory infections: have it treated before flying because it can cause greater health problems if it goes untreated (e.g. severe ear infections). **If you currently have a cold, or develop one in the near future, please see Donna in Health Services.**
- Urinary Tract Infections: (for women on their period) do not use a tampon because you will be sitting for a long time and the tampon can drastically increase your chances of getting a bladder infection.
 - Cipro: good for those prone to bladder infections. It is a 3 day prescription that Donna in Health Services can give you a prescription for.
- Eye Problems
 - Eye infections: there is no over-the-counter meds for eye infections. Make sure to go to the doctor immediately if this happens. Below are some preventative measures for eye infections.
 - Eye drops: Lower quality of air filtration in plane can dry your eyes and makes you more susceptible to eye infections. Keep your eyes moist with eye drops.
 - Contacts: if you wear these, it is better to wear your glasses if you are on a flight longer than 6 hours.
 - Makeup: it can hold onto bacteria (e.g. mascara, liquid eyeliner). Make sure not to rub your eyes, or put your fingers near your eyes, if you are wearing makeup.
- Dry nose: saline spray is great for a dry nose on a long flight
- Stretching
 - Keep moving and stretching your legs and toes *every hour*.
 - If you are on birth control, stretching is especially important. Staying seated too long can cause deep vein thrombosis, which is a compression of the veins that leads to blood clots. These blood clots will result in serious leg pain.

Medications and Over-the Counter Meds

- **Over the counter drugs:** most over-the-counter drugs in the U.S. are *not* readily available overseas without a prescription. *Everyone should pack something that will help with pain (i.e. Aspirin, Advil, Tylenol, or Excedrin).* If you are prone to certain health issues, some things that you should consider taking with you, could include the following:
 - *Allergies:* Benedryl, or an EpiPen for those who have serious, life threatening illness to insects or food allergies (EpiPens are not easily found overseas and this is something that you would need right away if you had an allergic reaction).
 - *Yeast Infections:* Monistat 3-day
 - *Insect bite relief:* After Bite (might be good for those going to Australia/New Zealand).
 - *Athletes Foot:* Lotrimin AF (especially good if you will be traveling in a warm, humid location).
 - *Asthma:* Inhaler (for those who currently have asthma **or who have had it in the past**). Keep in mind that living in a completely different area of the world can leave you more exposed, and possibly susceptible, to a recurrence of asthma.
 - *Easily upset stomach/Acid Indigestion:* Imodium AD (this is very difficult to find overseas)/Malox. Change in food and diet overseas can make you more susceptible to these issues.
 - *Sprains/Strains:* ACE wrap. Good idea to pack for those wearing high heels on cobblestones and hiking enthusiasts.



- **Prescription Medications:** Bring a large enough supply to last you the entire time you are overseas.
 - Check with your insurance provider to see if you can get coverage for the entire semester. Make sure to mention to the insurance company that this is a “Necessary Medication.” Getting coverage can be a lengthy process, so look into it as soon as possible. Also, Donna will write letters to the insurance company to help you get the coverage for your medication in advance.
- **Tropical Locations:** Wounds do not heal as quickly in these areas. If you have a wound that has not healed by the time you leave the U.S., clean it only with soap and water. Then use ointment and dress. Don’t use peroxide because it will kill new cell growth.

Medical Care

- **Reviewing Your Medical History and Needs Before Going Abroad:** It is a good idea to have a checkup to know your current medical condition. Your doctor or nurse can also advise you on what special precautions to take based on your medical history and where you are studying abroad. You may need to go to a special travel health clinic to get clear advice on medical care abroad and what challenges you may face.
- **Special Needs:** If you have any special needs, check with the study abroad administrator to determine how he/she can best help you. Regulations for accessibility may not be as updated in other countries as they are in the U.S. Check to determine if accommodations like wheelchair ramps are provided in all modes of transportation, and to determine if the housing facilities are equipped to serve people with special needs.
- **Availability of Medical Care:** The type of medical care available will vary from country to country. In some countries it will seem similar to the type of care you find in the U.S. In others, finding an English speaking doctor or appropriate medical facility might be difficult.
- **Support Services for Medical Care:** Ask your program staff about their capability to provide you with medical care assistance. Does this staff speak both the local language and English? Do they have a list of the best available local medical facilities? Also, find out if someone in the staff or administration is trained to handle emergency situations.



Insurance

- **What Insurance Covers:** Know exactly what is and is not covered by your insurance plan. For example, high-risk sports injuries, dental care, and optical care are sometimes not covered by basic medical insurance. Also, if certain pre-existing conditions are excluded, check on the exact definition of "pre-existing."
- **Insurance Provided By Program Sponsor:** Your program providers have included supplemental insurance as part of their program fee and have pre-planned insurance arrangements for their participants. Be sure to read it thoroughly to see what is covered under the insurance. Some items to look for might include pre-existing conditions, high risk activities, continuing coverage in the U.S., advance payment vs. reimbursement, 24 hour emergency assistance/help line, family emergencies, airline/program bankruptcy.



Basic Health and Safety

The process of wellness starts before you go abroad with a visit to your doctor. You may need to get inoculations to protect yourself from infectious diseases endemic in the countries you will visit. You will also learn some tips to ensure you drink clean water and eat uncontaminated food.

- **What to Know about Your Country:** Learn all you can about the health and safety issues of the countries you plan to visit. This includes reading about the cultural and political climate of those countries, as well as learning about how others view people from your country, race, ethnic group, religion, gender and sexual orientation. (See pg. 17, Consular Info Sheet)
- **Infectious Diseases and Inoculations:** Find out about the infectious diseases endemic in countries to which you will be traveling, and get the appropriate shots and pills, and take the appropriate medications with you if your doctor thinks it's necessary. Find out about any potential side-effects of shots and pills that you may take. (See pg. 17, CDC)
- **Physicals and Check-ups:** Get a complete physical, eye exam and dental check-up before going abroad. The quality of dental and medical care may be different in your country and/or more expensive than similar care would be in the United States.
- **Can You Drink the Water?:** Find out if water is safe to drink in the countries to which you will be traveling. Purify unsafe water before you drink it. Make sure water bottles come sealed when you buy them. *Remember that ice can also be unsafe, as well as the water you use to brush your teeth.*
- **Food Safety:** Poor refrigeration, undercooked meat, and roadside/outdoor vendors could pose problems related to food contamination. If you get diarrhea or food poisoning, remember to drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated. As with any illness, consider seeing a doctor if your condition worsens. Give your body time to adjust to new types of foods you will be eating.
- **Laws and Codes of Conduct:** Make yourself aware of both the rules and regulations of the study abroad program sponsor, and the local laws and customs of the countries which you will be visiting. Understand that you will not only have to conform to the legal system of the country you will be visiting, but also obey the codes of conduct required of program participants.
- **Mental and Physical Health:** Consider your own mental and physical health issues when applying for a study abroad program, and make all your necessary health information available to the program's administrators so they can assist you with any special needs, or advise you on the risks you might face.
- **Prescriptions:** Get a doctor's signed prescription for any medication you have to bring abroad. Some prescriptions may need to be translated if you wish to fill them abroad. Include your glasses or contact lens prescription. Bring an extra pair of glasses.
- **First-Aid Kit:** Consider a well-stocked first-aid kit as a first line of defense. Some items to include are: sunscreen, bandages, flashlight, sterile pads, insect repellent, adhesive tape, aspirin, antacid, anti-diarrhea tablets, anti-malarial medication, extra bottled water, feminine protection, condoms, rubber gloves, etc.



- **Fitness and Exercise:** Try to get fit in the time you have before departing overseas. A healthy body can help you to fight off illness and recover faster if you do get sick. Also, try to stay fit while abroad, even though it may be harder to follow a structured workout routine.
- **Walking:** Get a good pair of comfortable walking shoes. Without access to a car or public transportation abroad, you may have to do quite a bit of walking. Break in your shoes before you go.
- **Emergency Contacts:** Keep the program staff and an emergency contact at home well informed of your whereabouts and activities and provide these people with copies of your important travel documents (i.e. passport, visa, plane tickets, traveler's checks, and prescriptions).
- **Transportation:** Accidents involving in-country travel, whether by air, bus, train, taxi, car, etc., are a major cause of injury to students abroad. It is important to understand what the safe modes of travel are abroad.
 - **Bus:** Since it is the cheapest way to travel (though rather tedious), travel by bus is often a very popular choice for students and travelers. However, since it is so slow, you may prefer to take the train. Often, if you can't find service to a particular location on national or regional buslines, local service should be able to take you to your desired destination.
 - **Train/Metro:** Travel by train is usually much faster than by bus, and can be a better option if you want to see more places in a short amount of time. You may want to avoid traveling by train alone at night, particularly in more urban areas. In major cities especially, you will find the metro system (where available) to be the most convenient form of transportation to move about the city, although beware of pickpockets.
 - **Air:** Air travel can be a good value compared to a long bus ride. If you know of discount airfare websites, you can find tickets for less than a train ride would be. Especially if road travel is unsafe due to poor road conditions, and if train travel is too slow for your needs, then air travel can be a safe and pleasant option.
- **Alcohol and Drugs:** Use and abuse of alcohol and drugs abroad can increase the risk of accident and injury. Many study abroad accidents and injury are related to the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs abroad. Violating drug laws abroad may result in very serious consequences. In some countries, being found guilty of violating drug laws can result in consequences as serious as death. If behavior warrants university prosecution, then you will be subject to university policy upon your return.
- **Setting an Example:** Set a good example. Remember you are like an ambassador for your U.S. college or university. Behave in a way that is respectful of others' rights and well-being and encourage others to do the same.



Helpful Safety and Health Websites

IMPORTANT: Students studying abroad for an extended period must **register on-line with the U.S. consulate** at <https://travelregistration.state.gov>. If you need a VISA for study, then register yourself as a STUDENT. If you DO NOT need a VISA for study, then register yourself as a VISITOR.

Consular Information Sheet is a document put out by the State Department for every country of the world with information on such matters as the health conditions, crime, unusual currency or entry requirements, any areas of instability, and the location of the nearest embassy or consulate in the subject country. Information is available on-line at http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/warnings_consular.html.

Worldwide Caution is a Public Announcement issued by the State Department to disseminate information quickly about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term conditions that pose significant risks or disruptions to Americans. This announcement can be viewed on-line at <http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/wwc1.html>.

Travelers' Health, provided by the CDC, is on-line at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/destinat.htm>. This website will link you to regional health information about the area of the world that you will be traveling to.

Travel Tips for Students was prepared by the Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs to provide students, who are planning to travel or study abroad, with a few reminders about safety. Although most trips abroad are trouble free, being prepared will go a long way to avoiding the possibility of serious trouble. Become familiar with the basic laws and customs of the country you plan to visit before you travel. Remember: Reckless behavior while in another country can do more than ruin your vacation; it can land you in a foreign jail or worse! To have a safe trip, avoid risky behavior and plan ahead. To view more on this subject, go to http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/student_tips_brochure.html.

Travel Warnings on Drugs Abroad provides valuable information on the issues pertaining to drugs that you should be aware of before traveling abroad. View this information at http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/livingabroad_drugs.html.

U.S. Consuls Help Americans Abroad is a pamphlet that highlights ways in which consular officers can assist you while you are traveling or residing abroad. This pamphlet can be viewed on-line at http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/consuls_help.html.

Crisis Abroad: What the State Department Does: What can the State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs do for Americans caught in a disaster or a crisis abroad? To learn more about this, go on-line to http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/crisis_abroad.html.

Medical Information for Americans Traveling Abroad: If an American citizen becomes seriously ill or injured abroad, a U. S. consular officer can assist in locating appropriate medical services and informing family or friends. More information, as well as a list of emergency service companies, is available at http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/abroad_health.html.

Bryant Student Handbook (including student code of conduct) can be viewed in its entirety on-line at <http://www.bryant.edu/bryant/students/overview/handbook.jsp>.



Risk Factors and Strategies to Reduce Risk

In this section, you will find information on how to avoid being a target of crime. There are helpful tips on how non-verbal communication - like gestures or manner of dress - can help keep you safer. You will also learn how to become more aware of your surroundings.

Based on anecdotal information, most of the incidents resulting in injury or death of students while participating in study abroad involve:

- travel/traffic accidents
- use and abuse of drugs or alcohol
- sexual harassment and assault
- crime/petty theft
- mental health issues/stress
- diseases and illnesses that exist in the host country



Precautions

When Accepting Food and Drink: Be cautious about accepting drinks (alcoholic or non-alcoholic) from a stranger. Use the same caution you would have about accepting a drink from a stranger in the United States while you are overseas. Also be cautious about accepting food from a stranger.

Risk Upon Arrival

Travelers, especially those having just arrived abroad, are often targets of crime and at higher risk of harm, because they:

- Are unfamiliar with their surroundings
- Might not speak the local language well
- Are clearly recognizable as foreigners
- Have not yet learned the social norms or unwritten rules of conduct
- Are eager to get to know new people and the local culture
- Are naive to the intentions of people around them
- Are carrying all their valuables with them when they first step off the plane, train, or boat

Keeping In Control

In addition to the circumstances involved with being new in a foreign country, which are often beyond one's immediate control, there are many situations that students *can* control. Some controllable factors that place students at greatest risk include:

- Being out after midnight
- Being alone at night in an isolated area
- Being in a known high crime area
- Sleeping in an unlocked place
- Being out after a local curfew
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Verbal and Non-verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication (like body language and hand gestures) considered harmless in the U.S. may be offensive to people in other countries. The list of gestures and phrases considered rude in other countries are not necessarily obvious.



Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Keep yourself free from sexually transmitted diseases by using protection (like condoms or abstinence). Also, remember that “no” may not always be interpreted as “no” in other countries. Inform yourself about the types of diseases prevalent in the area in which you are traveling.



International Sources of Information

Inform yourself as much as possible about your new environment, making use of as many different sources as possible - online, in the library, on television and radio news programs, and in the paper. Don't limit yourself to U.S. sources. Instead, contrast the U.S. information with that provided by other countries.

Understanding Locals

Beyond tuning into yourself, make it a point to try to understand what locals are communicating to you, how they feel about you and about U.S. citizens in general, how you are fitting with their values, and how well you understand them. Obviously a stronger grasp of the native language will help you with these things, but even knowing a few essential phrases can be immensely beneficial.

How to Dress

It is often best to dress conservatively - by local standards, so you can't be identified on sight as a tourist or a U.S. citizen.

Jewelry and Other Valuables

Be cautious with how you display valuables (does it look like you're flaunting wealth?). Leave your good jewelry at home, and keep money in a safe place like a money belt or hidden pouch under your clothes.

Becoming Aware of Your Surroundings

You should be aware of your surroundings, remembering to:

- Pay attention to what people around you are saying
- Find out which areas of the city are less safe than others
- Know which hours of night are considered more dangerous
- Stay and walk only in well-lit areas
- Avoid being alone in unfamiliar neighborhoods
- Know where to get help (police station, fire station, phones, stores, etc.)
- Do not touch suspicious items like letters or packages mailed to you from someone you don't know
- Know what is "normal" and "not normal" to see on a daily basis in the areas you frequent
- Do not respond to explosions or gunfire by going to a window; seek cover away from windows and exterior walls

Political Rallies

Avoid political rallies, which can increase tensions and emotions or breed angry mobs for which a U.S. citizen may serve as a scapegoat.

Political Conversations

Try not to engage in conversations about contentious political issues with locals and avoid retaliating against hostile or bigoted remarks about Americans. Know that locals tend to be more aware and outspoken about politics than Americans.



Special Issues

Women

Unwanted attention can range from a mild nuisance to a serious threat of danger. Acceptable treatment of women in your host country may be very different from the kind of treatment acceptable in the United States. Also, the way women interact with men in the United States may not be as socially acceptable in other countries. What's considered "being friendly" in the United States can be considered flirting or a sexual invitation in other countries. Even reacting (positively or negatively) to unwanted attention can serve to egg-on the other person. Personal space and boundaries may also be different in other countries, so make sure to clearly establish behavior that shows you're not interested.



In television and movies, the media tends to portray U.S. women as promiscuous. Simply smiling or saying hello to the opposite sex may be all that is needed to confirm this unflattering stereotype in their minds. To avoid trouble and unwanted attention, ask local women you meet and your program's administrators about what is considered "appropriate" behavior and dress for women. Dressing conservatively and traveling in groups are always safe bets. Although it is important to learn to adapt to a foreign culture, that doesn't mean you should have to compromise your own sense of security and dignity. If you feel you can't adapt to your host country's sexual culture, you may have to be more selective about the location of your program.

Minorities (Ethnic and Religious)

You may not be considered an ethnic, or religious majority in the United States, but by going abroad you become, in a sense, a minority. There might not be a lot of U.S. students studying in the area you will be, so, in that sense, you are a novelty—someone new and different who stands out from the locals. In some cases, your outward appearance can also make you stand out, especially if the country's population is very homogeneous. Sometimes the locals' curiosity, interest, ignorance or misunderstanding of you can be unpleasant. If a comment offends you, try to be tactful with your response, or if you are very upset, leave the room. **Remember that cultural and ethnic sensitivity is not as strong abroad as it is in the United States**, and some comments are simply made out of ignorance, not malice.

Political turmoil or lack of tolerance can make some ethnic and religious groups a target for mistreatment or even violence in many countries. Political rallies and certain dates like anniversaries of historic events also often spur ethnic and religious conflicts in many countries. Certain hate crimes may not even be considered crimes in your host country. With regard to religion, the risk or censure you attract depends on your level of religious involvement abroad. If others where you will be studying have been attacked for practicing the religion you practice, any signs of your religious affiliation may put you at risk as well.

Ethnic or religious issues shouldn't be a negative factor of your study abroad experience. That's why it's important to do a little research ahead of time to survey the national sentiment and current events of your host country.

Non-heterosexuals

In some countries, even modern ones, homosexual sex itself can result in severe state-sanctioned punishment up to and including the death penalty. It is usually not homosexuality that brings about such punishments, but rather the sex act. You might want to consider how a possible threat



of punishment might affect your activities in your host country. Acceptance and tolerance of non-heterosexuals is increasing, but some countries and individuals remain intolerant. Make sure to research the prevailing sentiment toward non-heterosexuals abroad, and laws related to it. If you don't want to compromise on your lifestyle, you may have to be selective in where you travel.

Disabled

The disabled abroad can also be the victims of prejudice and stereotyping. The disabled report being stared at, ignored, un-assisted, and/ or talked down to more frequently abroad than they tend to be in the United States. In many countries, there are no standards or requirements for providing access for the disabled. Wheelchair ramps, handicapped parking spaces, braille signs, and other aides may be non-existent in parts of the host country, especially rural areas. In addition to a lack of services provided to the physically disabled, there may also be a lack of services provided to those with a learning disability, those with a psychological or emotional need, or those who are mentally challenged. If you need to make special arrangements abroad, it is a good idea to inquire far in advance. Your program's staff abroad may require some time in order to facilitate your needs. Even though you request that your special needs be met, it may be impossible for your program's staff abroad to assist you.

Americans

The foreign policy of the United States does not always sit well with citizens of foreign countries. In some cases, Americans living abroad can be targets of the frustrations of these individuals. Consider the nature of the political climate and relations between the United States and your destination, as well as the other countries you plan to visit. There are some steps you can take to avoid being targeted for politically motivated crime or anti-U.S. crime in general. **Try to assimilate your style of dress and mannerisms as much as possible into the local norms.** "Dressing like a U.S. citizen" (or any way conspicuously different from the local look) makes it easier to identify you as "the other" or an "outsider" and can make you a target. Some **common stereotypes** about Americans portray Americans as: loud, inconsiderate, ignorant, rude, rich, arrogant, cheap, greedy, lazy, promiscuous, overweight, English-only speakers, etc. To avoid reinforcing such stereotypes, remember you are like an ambassador of the United States and its culture; as an ambassador abroad, it is your job to respect others and to act responsibly.



Foreign Laws—How They Apply to You

The U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad is limited in what it can do to assist you if you should get into legal trouble abroad. As a foreigner in a foreign land, you are obligated to act in accordance with foreign law. Just because something is legal in the United States doesn't mean it is legal in the country where you will be studying.

If you break local laws while abroad, the U.S. government can do very little to help you. The U.S. and foreign governments encourage all visitors to their countries to become familiar with local laws before they visit.

Remember, most students who study abroad wind up breaking the law unintentionally, and alcohol consumption has been associated with law-breaking in most cases.

For more complete information on foreign laws and the legal system of the country to which you will be traveling, visit <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/>.

Know the Relevant Laws

Make sure you know the relevant laws for each country to which you plan to travel. Foreign laws apply to visitors, regardless of the visitor's country of citizenship.

Travel Warnings and Consular Information Sheets

Read the Travel Warning and State Department Consular sheets for information on the legal systems in the countries to which you will be traveling.

Embassy or Consulate Assistance

If you find yourself in legal trouble abroad (for example, arrested), the U.S. Embassy or Consulate (or that of the country where you are a citizen) may only be able to assist you in the following ways:

- Visit you in jail after your arrest
- Give you a list of local attorneys
- Notify your family and friends and relay request for money and other aid
- Intercede with local authorities to help ensure your proper treatment under the law and in accordance with internationally recognized standards
- Protest mistreatment

Constitutional Rights

You cease to be protected by U.S. law and Constitutional rights once you leave the country.

Unfair Imprisonment

If you feel you have been unfairly imprisoned by another country's government, the U.S. State Department can provide some assistance. It may be necessary to hire a local attorney as well.

Kidnapping/Terrorism Situations

If you are kidnapped or taken hostage by a terrorist organization, the U.S. State Department may help negotiate for your release. Check with your insurance provider to see if you can purchase additional hostage, terrorist, or emergency assistance insurance.



Crisis Management

In this section, you will find information on how to better cope during a crisis. Being able to deal well with a crisis situation includes understanding your emotions, keeping yourself as safe as possible, and communicating with your emergency contacts. In an unfamiliar environment with communication and cultural barriers, a minor crisis may be more difficult to handle. The first place to start getting information about your program's support strategies is in your study abroad advisor's office in the U.S. and your program director's office abroad.

Minor and Major Emergencies

While most students experience a safe and healthy time abroad, some are forced to deal with minor emergencies. Some of the more common minor emergencies that students may face abroad include: pick-pocketing, petty theft, illness, injury, and the consequences of alcohol use.

In addition to minor emergencies, some students may also face larger emergencies abroad. Frequently, these major emergencies tend to be events out of a student's control. Some unpredictable, major emergencies that could occur abroad include: natural disasters like earthquakes and hurricanes, acts of terrorism, and serious medical problems.

Things To Do Before a Crisis Occurs

Emergency Action Plan

The first step in crisis management is being prepared before a crisis occurs. In the event of an emergency, you should have a list of people to call in case you are hurt, along with copies of your insurance papers, passport, and names of any medications to which you are allergic.

Make sure that you **and your parents** have a copy of the following information in case of an emergency:

- Your primary abroad emergency contact
- Housing coordinator abroad/home-stay family member(s)
- Friends or family abroad (both in your host country and in other neighboring countries you may visit)
- Your abroad campus/institution's department(s), which maintains emergency contact information for study abroad students, where applicable
- Your study abroad program resident director/coordinator in the host country

Registration with the Embassy

When you arrive in your host country, register with the U.S. Consulate or Embassy (if you are not a U.S. citizen, register with the embassy/consulate of your home country). This will make it easier for them to contact you in case of an emergency and to assist you in case you lose your passport, etc. (See pg. 17)

Who Can Help If a Crisis Occurs?

Your first point of contact is your on-site director for your study abroad program.

If a student needs anything University related, then he/she can contact the study abroad office at Bryant University at saoffice@bryant.edu or +1(401)232-6209 or DPS 24/7 at +1(401)232-6001.



A Student's Guide to Studying Abroad

Don't be afraid to go alone

Don't be afraid to step outside your comfort zone—going abroad is an experience that is going to change your life and in the end it is going to be individually rewarding. Also, keep in mind that it's easy to meet new people because many students studying abroad are outgoing and have some sense of ambition/adventure to experience life in a foreign country.

Expect differences in the classroom

Oftentimes, education outside the U.S. can be more independent which takes self-discipline and patience during the transition phase.

Take classes about your chosen host country

This will help you learn about the country in which you are living and gain a better understanding of the culture.

Utilize study abroad staff

They are available through the institution that you applied to and are more than willing to help!

Avoid stereotypes and be open-minded as there are different customs throughout the world

Living in a Foreign Country Tips

- Leave photocopies at home of your passport, license, credit/debit cards, etc.
- Make sure your Health Plan covers you while living abroad
- Try local food/drink—especially since home comforts may not be there
- Tipping—usually not necessary
- Research the weather to know what clothes to bring
- Bring pictures of family and friends
- Avoid bringing expensive/irreplaceable items
- Bring a battery powered alarm clock
- Buy an adapter to allow you to plug your Bryant laptops into different outlets
- Buy a voltage converter to plug in all other devices, e.g. a digital camera or an iPod
- Write in a journal
- Keep brochures/receipts/ticket stubs
- Take lots of pictures
- More tips at www.travel.state.gov/travel/living/studying/studying_1238.html

Traveling Tips

- Safety—1st concern—leave an itinerary with a friend/staff in-country.
- Check out travel warnings and advisories at www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html
- Be aware of public holidays when shops/museums may be closed and traveling will be more expensive
- Be aware of time changes
- When traveling in a foreign country where they do not speak English as their national language, write down directions to where you need to go in order to avoid miscommunications



Bryant University Study Abroad

Because education should have no boundaries

- Be aware that if you have a map, you'll be identified as a tourist and may be more susceptible to pick pocketing
- **Have a plan:** Knowing a bit about the destination that you are traveling to is helpful. Guidebooks can give a closer look at one city or an overview of every city, as well as helpful hints!
 - Trip Overviews: www.wisenomad.com/backpackingtrip/
 - Rick Steve's: The Best of Europe: www.ricksteves.com
 - Lonely Planet: www.lonelyplanet.com
 - Let's Go!: www.letsgo.com
 - Frommer's Guidebooks
 - www.travelpunk.com
 - www.backpacker.com/links/
 - www.whichbudget.com
- **Ask for directions:** many people throughout the world speak English, although it is important to remember that their English skills may be basic. Be patient/respectful to those who may not speak English well, just as you hope they will be kind to you if you decide to attempt to speak their language. If you are in a foreign speaking local, it is beneficial to know some common phrases & have a map.
- **Hop-on Hop-off bus tours:** A good, inexpensive way to see the major sites. Having a tour guide can be restrictive and hop-on hop-off allows you to choose what you want to do.
- **Public transportation in each city:** A great way to get around. Subways/underground systems = the cheapest. Taxis are pricey but crucial when you're traveling late at night. Be aware of the rates you are charged!
- **Get lost:** As long as you remain safe, this is a way to see the city in a different light. When you go to the main sites, you will see what everyone else who travels there sees. However, if you 'get lost' you can experience a special perspective (more so of everyday life in that culture). One of the best places to experience this is Venice, Italy (an island). Get lost all you want and as long as you don't leave the island, you'll eventually find your way back.
- **Enjoy the time:** Study abroad is a once in a lifetime opportunity! You will never be this age again! Take a nap in front of St. Peter's Basilica. Read a book in Hyde Park. Watch the sunrise from atop a mountain in Switzerland or watch the sunset from any Australian beach. And finally, people watch—as it is the best way to understand life in each foreign country.
- **Know the currency:** You may get ripped off. This is especially true in cities such as Amsterdam and Prague. While getting out of a taxi, count your change as it is given to you to avoid situations where the taxi may drive off before you have a chance to realize you weren't given back the amount you were owed!
- **International Student Identification Card (ISIC)** gives you discounts (at museums, hotels, restaurants, hop-on-hop-off bus tours, and other tourist destinations) so use it!
- **Accessing the internet:** Can be found at most hostels/hotels and used for very cheap. Also, Internet Cafes are everywhere! They allow you to write emails home (documenting your travels) or send pictures on email (to free up room on your memory card)!
- **Stay in hostels:** Especially if you are on a budget! Hostels give accommodation that is affordable with all of the amenities you will need. Most hostels have private rooms (for 2-4 people) and communal rooms (for 8-12 people, or sometimes more). It is something you get accustomed to when traveling. Keep in mind that you won't want to spend much time in



your room anyways! The point of traveling is to spend as much time as possible seeing the world! If traveling in Europe, look at ratings of your hostel and read comments on their safety, cleanliness, central location, or lack thereof (www.hostelworld.com)! Also, hostelworld lists cheap hotels (sometimes cheaper than hostels) that may be more desirable for privacy and having a room that you can lock your things up in. Hotels can be found at a number of websites (www.hotels.com).

- **Flying:** The quickest way to travel! Use e-tickets for short notice flights. Getting tickets through mail may take a longer period of time. You will receive internet confirmation and can print your e-ticket (including confirmation number) directly from your email. Then, all you need at the airport is to present your confirmation number and passport! Cheap tickets can be booked through any of the following websites:
 - www.easyjet.com
 - www.ryanair.com
 - www.expedia.com or www.expedia.co.uk (England)
 - www.travelocity.com
 - www.cheaptickets.com

- **Trains:** Take them as much as you can! They allow you to see the countryside which you might not normally see. In Europe, there is a Eurail Pass which you can pay for online (at www.eurail.com) and then while traveling you just pick up a ticket at each location and pay a small fee each time. Eurail passes tend to be expensive so we suggest that you also look into other travel options.
 - www.eurostar.com
 - www.raileurope.com
 - www.trenitalia.com

- **Phone calls:** Calling cards should be purchased/used for phone calls over 10 minutes—cell phones can be purchased/activated for a relatively inexpensive price and are convenient to have—if backpacking through Europe with friends, cell phones become a necessity to find/keep track of one another.



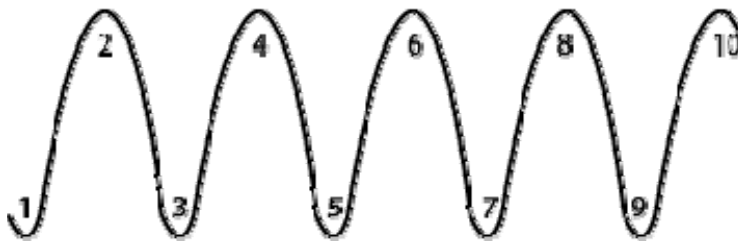
Adjustments and Culture Shock

Experiencing new cultures, and obtaining a better understanding of your own culture, can result in some of the most positive, life-altering experiences students have while studying abroad. When going abroad, students will experience differences in manners, beliefs, customs, laws, language, art, religion, values, concept of self, family organization, social organization, government, behavior, etc. All of these elements combine to form your host country's rich and unique culture.

While the introduction to new and foreign cultures greatly benefits students, it can also be overwhelming. The new cultural elements a student encounters abroad may be so different that they seem "shocking" in comparison to cultural norms they are used to at home. As Bruce La Brack writes in his article "The Missing Linkage: The Process of Integrating Orientation and Reentry":

"Just as you can't really describe the taste of a hot fudge sundae to someone who has never experienced one, it is difficult to actually convey just how disorienting entering another culture can be to a student without any cross-cultural experience."

Rhinesmith's Ten Stages of Adjustment



Source: Returning Home, Canadian Bureau for International Education, 1984, p. 7.

Culture shock and its effects can occur in a number of stages, though it is not an exact step-by-step process; every student doesn't experience culture shock the same way or at the same time. The following 10 steps of cultural adjustment outlined by Steven Rhinesmith show how culture shock can be like a roller coaster ride of emotions:

1. initial anxiety
2. initial elation
3. initial culture shock
4. superficial adjustment
5. depression-frustration
6. acceptance of host culture
7. return anxiety
8. return elation
9. re-entry shock
10. reintegration

Riding the roller coaster of culture shock, a student actually follows a natural pattern of hitting peaks and valleys. The high points of excitement and interest are succeeded by lower points of depression, disorientation, or frustration. Each student will experience these ups and downs in different degrees of intensity and for different lengths of time. The process is necessary in order to make the transition from one culture to another; it helps a student or traveler to balance out and adjust.



Bryant University Study Abroad

Because education should have no boundaries

Stages 1 through 5: Exposure to a new culture

Prior to going abroad, students may be excited about new adventures to come. A student arrives in the host country and perhaps begins to develop increasing independence as he/she starts to experience the local culture or another country's culture. At first, a student's expectations may be too high. He or she may see things almost as a tourist would during the first few weeks in a new country.

A student may be heavily comparing and contrasting his/her home culture with the culture abroad. It is common for students to focus on what they see as weaknesses in foreign cultures. Students tend to point out what a foreign culture lacks; this often leads to feelings of frustration over what is "missing" or what can't be obtained abroad in the same ways it can be at home. Students may be challenged on a regular basis by different ways of living abroad (banking, eating, relationships, etc.). Negative feelings and frustrations may reach a level where you begin to recognize you are going through "culture shock".

Stage 6: Acceptance of a new culture

As a student gets used to the host country's ways, things that seemed like a "crisis" may now simply be seen as different ways of doing things. Most students gradually adjust their lifestyles to be balanced with a country's own cultural norms. The cultural traits that once annoyed or bothered a student generally come to be accepted as normal. Students usually begin to understand and appreciate the cultural differences between the United States and the host country. However, if significant problems arise, a student may briefly return to the "frustration" stage of culture shock. As a student begins to adapt more and more, he/she may have a new set of friends, may be traveling more, and may even be dreaming in another language. The "other way" may now become the "normal" way of living.

Stages 7 through 10: Leaving a new culture behind

As a student becomes integrated to the ways of the host country's culture, the more difficult it may be to re-adapt to the United States upon return home. The United States just won't look the same way it did before leaving to study abroad; a student may see home with new eyes and may also be more critical of U.S. cultural traditions once thought to be "normal". This is called reverse culture shock. Fear of experiencing reverse culture shock should not deter students from trying to integrate as fully as possible while abroad. No matter how integrated a student becomes while abroad, he or she will probably still be "shocked" by differences noted at home after so much time spent abroad and the other countries to which you will be traveling. However, over time, a student will learn to re-adapt and reintegrate into his or her home culture.

Homesickness

Homesickness is one of the most common adjustment problems related to culture shock and loneliness.

The following are a few tips to help you cope with feelings of homesickness:

- Don't wait for homesickness to go away by itself. Confront your feelings by talking to someone (a counselor, family member, roommate, or another student, etc.) about your homesickness. Chances are that the other students in your program may be feeling the same way you are.
- Bring some of home along with you.
- Make friends with locals and invite them to spend time with you. Creating such a support network can really help to alleviate homesickness while creating lasting friendships.



- Be patient with yourself as you adjust to the unexpected realities of being abroad, and how abroad is not like home.
- Get involved by seeking out opportunities that keep you busy and occupied so that you won't think about home. Try to work, intern, volunteer, or travel.

Stress

Stress has many definitions. Stress affects everyone differently. The additional/new kinds of stress you may encounter while abroad may lead to anxiety/panic disorders, depression, paranoia, eating disorders, and other phobias. Any mental health challenges you have prior to going abroad may become more severe once you experience the effects of culture shock. Even mental fatigue from constant language immersion and time change may cause the symptoms of culture shock to seem overwhelming.

Worldwide Concern

The symptoms of cultural adjustment a student experiences may be more intense due to the events of September 11th and other worldwide threats. Students, parents and administrators may have additional anxiety; they may also take studying abroad and safety abroad more seriously than they did prior to September 11th. Any added feelings of panic or fear related to the international war against terrorism can directly affect how well a student deals with culture shock. If you feel worldwide concerns are adding to your culture shock, seek out family, friends, or program staff/counselors with whom you feel comfortable discussing your concerns.



Duties and Customs

No matter the country from which you are departing or entering, it is important to understand airport and airline safety and security, remembering to cooperate with airport, airline and customs officials.

Customs control regulations may affect what you can and cannot bring in and out of your host country. Following the events of September 1, 2001, US airport and customs security has become much stricter, leading to long waits prior to boarding your plane, body searches, a necessary early arrival time and questions from officials in both countries. Remember to be patient and be honest when answering all officials' questions. The following information from the U.S. Department of State discusses border issues in more depth. For more complete information on border issues, please visit the [U.S. Customs and Border Protections Agency](#).

- **Clearing Customs:** Follow the directions given to you by flight attendants and your program for the process of clearing customs.
- **Declaration Forms:** In most cases, you will be given a card to fill out that will require your passport information, items you have purchased while abroad and are bringing back into the country, and the cost of these items.
- **Receipt of Purchase:** Retain all receipts, or make an itemized list of purchases, prior to customs inspection.
- **Taxes:** If the total cost of your purchases exceeds a certain amount, you will be asked to pay a tax on all items over the allotted amount.
- **Items You Cannot Bring Into the United States:** The following is a general list of items that cannot be brought into the United States:
 1. Plants, animals (especially those on lists of endangered species), and all live birds, unless you have a valid certificate or license from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
 2. Drugs - even if a drug was legal in your host country or other countries, it may not be legal to bring it back to the United States. If you are carrying prescription drugs, it is important to have your prescription with you for proof.
 3. Firearms, knives, explosives, and gas canisters.
- **Items You Can Bring Into the United States:** There are limits on bringing in substances that are not illegal, such as alcohol or tobacco. Check with customs for updates on these legal quantities. **Even if a minor can purchase alcohol and tobacco in your host country or other countries, he or she cannot bring these substances back into the United States.**
- **Smuggling:** What may be legal abroad may not be legal in the United States, and vice versa. Smuggling can be a federal offense leading to fines or imprisonment.



Reverse Culture Shock

One of the biggest challenges for students who participate in study abroad can be the difficulty in re-adapting to the realities in the United States (otherwise known as "re-entry"). Many students who studied abroad went through many changes, re-examining their priorities, their values, and what they think of themselves and the United States. The "reverse culture shock" may be more difficult than the "culture shock" you felt while abroad.

Defining Reverse Culture Shock

There are usually two elements that characterize a study abroad student's re-entry:

1. An idealized view of home
2. The expectation of total familiarity (that nothing at home has changed while you have been away)

Often students expect to be able to pick up exactly where they left off. A problem arises when reality doesn't meet these expectations. Home may fall short of what you had envisioned, and things may have changed at home: your friends and family have their own lives, and things have happened since you've been gone.

The inconsistency between expectations and reality, plus the lack of interest on the part of family and friends (nobody seems to really care about all of your "when I was abroad" stories) may result in: frustration, feelings of alienation, and mutual misunderstandings between study abroad students and their friends and family. In general, the better integrated you have become to your host country's culture and lifestyle, the harder it is to readjust during re-entry. This is where reverse culture shock comes in to play.

Stages of Reverse Culture Shock

Reverse culture shock is usually described in four stages:

1. Disengagement
2. Initial euphoria
3. Irritability and hostility
4. Readjustment and adaptation

Stage 1 begins before you leave your host country. You begin thinking about re-entry and making your preparations for your return home. You also begin to realize that it's time to say good-bye to your friends abroad and to the place you've come to call home, which can intensify your feelings of sadness and frustration.

Stage 2 usually begins shortly before departure, and it is characterized by feelings of excitement and anticipation - even euphoria - about returning home to see your family and friends again. This stage ends with the realization that family and friends will not want to hear *ALL* your stories, and often are ready to move on to the next topic of conversation.

Stage 3 You may experience feelings of frustration, anger, alienation, loneliness, disorientation, and helplessness and not understand exactly why. You might quickly become irritated or critical of others and of U.S. culture. You may also feel less independent than you were while abroad.

Stage 4 is a gradual readjustment to life at home. Things will start to seem a little more normal again, and you will probably fall back into some old routines. You have most likely developed new attitudes, beliefs, habits, and you will see things differently now. The important thing is to try to incorporate the positive aspects of your international experience while abroad with the positive aspects of your life at home in the United States.



Appendix

If You Are Going Abroad Soon...

Write your own personal responses to the questions below. Be as honest as you can be. Your responses should reflect how you feel right now, before going abroad. We believe taking this exercise seriously will eventually assist you to better gauge how the process of overseas adaptation has played out for you personally. It will also facilitate your understanding about how expectations, realistic and unrealistic, play a role in how well you adapt and how you feel about it in retrospect.

Your answers will be put in a safe, confidential place and returned to you at the re-entry meeting.

1. What are the five things that you are *most looking forward to* about studying abroad?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

2. What are the five things that currently worry you *most* about going overseas?

- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____
- 10) _____

3. What are the five things you believe you will miss *most* from home when you are abroad?

- 11) _____
- 12) _____
- 13) _____
- 14) _____
- 15) _____



4. What are the five things (people, places, activities, etc.) you believe you will miss *least* from home when you are abroad?

16) _____

17) _____

18) _____

19) _____

20) _____

5. My greatest single challenge overseas will be:



Bryant University Study Abroad

Because education should have no boundaries

What DO You Need to Know and Do Before You Go?

This exercise is intended to spur you to think about all of the things that you need to do to prepare yourself for this study abroad program. It is not a comprehensive or to-do list, but it might give you some ideas for making your own list.

Check YES if the Statement is true, NO if it is not...yet. Count up your yes responses.

- 20 or more You are a regular Marco Polo! Have a great adventure studying abroad!
- 15-19 Almost ready! You just need to polish a few globes before you go.
- 10-14 You have more than just packing to do before departure...
- less than 10 Are you sure you know where you are going? Use the time before you go wisely!

| Is this true of you? | YES, of course! | Uh...NO, not yet |
|--|-----------------|------------------|
| I have a passport and I have made copies to leave at home and take with me. | | |
| I know how to say "Thank you" and "Please" in my host country language. | | |
| I know the entry requirements to my host country for persons of my nationality. | | |
| I have spoken with a native of my host country. | | |
| I know what electrical current is standard in my host country. | | |
| I have seen a movie, read a magazine, newspaper, or book from my host country in the last 3 to 6 months. | | |
| I can locate my host country and study site on the map. | | |
| I have had physical, dental, and eye checkups in preparation for going abroad. | | |
| I have gotten written prescriptions to take with me for glasses and any medications I take regularly, and plan to take a supply for my entire stay. | | |
| I have searched the web, viewed television, or listened to a radio broadcast from my host country in the last 3 months. | | |
| I am familiar with any predeparture health recommendations for the region I will visit. | | |
| I know the type of government in my host country. | | |
| I have checked the exchange rate for my host country in the past month, have practiced converting amounts in my head, and I know the correct denomination. | | |
| I know I'm going to take money overseas, and know how I will get emergency funds if necessary. | | |
| I can recognize the national anthem of my host country when I hear it. | | |
| I have copied all credit cards and other important documents to leave at home in case of loss or theft. | | |
| I know the predominant religion of my host country. | | |
| I can draw freehand a reasonable map of my host country and surrounding countries. | | |
| I know the time difference between my home town and my study site. | | |
| I know the country telephone codes for the US that I will need to call home from overseas. | | |
| I know the name of the head of government of my host country. | | |
| I know how much a meal will cost in my host country. | | |
| I am receiving financial aid and I have seen a financial advisor to make sure arrangements are in place. | | |
| All my payments and forms for study abroad are in and up to date. | | |
| I have checked the Airline weight limits for my luggage and will pack accordingly. | | |
| I can name at least two major holidays of my host country. | | |

