

Study Abroad Handbook



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Ten Rules of Travel

1. Do not expect to find things precisely as they are at home...for you left home to find things differently.
2. Do not take things too seriously...for a carefree mind is the basis for a good experience.
3. Do not let other students get on your nerves...for you are paying good money to learn.
4. Do not worry...he that worries has little joy...and few things are fatal.
5. Do not judge all people of a country by one person with whom you had a problem.
6. Do in Rome somewhat as the Romans do.
7. Do carry your passport (or a photocopy) at all times...for a person without a passport is a person without a country.
8. Lucky is one who can say “Thank you” in any language...for it is worth more than gold.
9. Lucky is one who can make change in any currency, for you will not be cheated.
10. You are welcome in every land...treat your host with respect and you will be an honored guest.

-Author Unknown

Congratulations on your upcoming study abroad program. There are probably lots of questions running through your mind at this time, like what do I do now? What should I pack? Do I need a visa? The purpose of this handbook is to help answer your questions and to help prepare you for this exciting adventure. We urge you to read this handbook carefully.

General Study Abroad Resource: US Department of State Students Abroad
<http://studentsabroad.state.gov/>

Much of the information shared in this handbook comes from the US Department of State Students Abroad website. Visit the link above for more specific information and resources on the following topics and more.

I. TRAVEL DOCS

Before you can even step foot out of the U.S., you need the right paperwork – a passport and, depending on where you are headed, a visa. These documents are literally your permits to travel the world and they are the most important pieces of ID you will carry while abroad. Having the right documentation is critical for getting in and out of the country you visit. Make sure you do your homework on what you need, **BEFORE YOU GO**.

Passport: http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/get_4855.html

A passport is an internationally recognized travel document that verifies your identity and nationality. A valid U.S. passport is required to enter and leave most foreign countries, as well as to return to the United States. Only the U.S. Department of State has the authority to grant, issue, or verify U.S. passports.

Give yourself several months before your planned trip to apply for a passport; during peak application season it can take up to 10 weeks to receive the final document in the mail. Take into account the time of year you are applying – demand for passports goes up during the spring and summer.

Whether you are applying for the first time or you are renewing your passport, you will find detailed instructions at the locations mentioned above. You must provide specific supporting documents and pay an application fee. Read and follow all the application instructions carefully to avoid delays.

Make three copies of the passport page that has your name and picture on it. Leave one copy with a family member or trusted friend in the US, uploaded to your WU Bods Abroad Portal and take the other copy with you when you go abroad. Keep the copy in a different place than your passport. Should you lose your passport, having this copy will make it easier to obtain a new passport.

Visas: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages.html>

Depending on which country you are planning to visit, you may also need to a visa. A Visa is an official document issued by a foreign country, formally allowing you to visit. Visas are attached to your passport and allow you to enter a foreign nation.

Look through the State Department’s Country Specific Information to find information about your destination. You can research the entry and exit requirements, get more details about necessary documentation, and find out how to apply. You may be able to apply online, at that country’s U.S. embassy or even at the airport in the country itself once you get there.

In most cases U.S. citizens participating in short term programs will not need to apply for a visa. Semester-long programs will generally require U.S. citizens to apply for a visa.

If you are not a U.S. citizen, you are responsible for contacting the Embassy of the country where you will study to determine its entry and visa requirements for citizens of your country. You are also responsible for arranging to remain in compliance with U.S. immigration regulations regarding an extended stay abroad.

General Considerations

If you plan to travel to another country before, during or after your program, you should consult their Embassy about visa requirements before you leave the US. It may be possible to obtain a visa for a third country when you are abroad, but it is advisable to secure it before you leave.

When you are abroad, you should register with the U.S. Embassy or the nearest Consulate, so that they can assist you in case of an emergency.

Some countries require proof of any or all of the following for entry into the country:

1. A required amount of funds to cover expenses while abroad
2. Admission to one of the country's institutions of higher learning
3. A place of residence in the host country
4. A return plane ticket

Check with the host country’s Embassy or Consulate before leaving for your program to determine such requirements.



“While we did go to Costa Rica eager to learn, serve, and help our new friends, we all came back with much more than what we brought... we learned from the people of Costa Rica: the newfound urgency to love others and serve them accordingly in and out of the healthcare setting every day.”

Elsa Cozine, Health Care Perspectives in Central America: Costa Rica

II. HEALTH

Staying Healthy Eat, Drink and be Wary:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/your-health-abroad.html>

Checking out other countries doesn't mean ignoring the health habits you practice at home. In fact, you'll need to pay even closer attention to what you are doing, eating, drinking or even just walking down the street.

Do your research on which local foods and drinks to avoid.

- Stay away from raw foods.
- Choose your local restaurants carefully. If it looks dirty in the dining room, it could be worse in the kitchen.
- Local water supplies could also be a breeding ground for bacteria. Always use bottled water (even to brush your teeth) and beware of fake bottled water – tap water sold as bottled. Be aware that ice may also be made from local tap water.
- Practicing healthy habits, like washing your hands regularly, will help ensure that you stay healthy and enjoy your entire trip.

WU AIG WorldRisk Insurance & Travel Guard Global Assistance Services:

[WU AIG WorldRisk Insurance | Washburn University](#)

Maybe it's not the first thing that comes to mind when planning your trip, but uninsured travelers who encounter medical emergencies overseas often face extreme difficulties. Most U.S. medical insurance plans do not include coverage outside of the United States. Getting medical treatment and hospital care abroad can be very expensive, and if you need it, a medical evacuation back to the U.S. can cost more than \$50,000!

All WU approved programs include emergency medical insurance for international travel provided by AIG. You do not need to complete any paperwork to be enrolled in the policy. You may print a copy of the insurance brochure and insurance card at the link above. The plan includes **reimbursable** Health Coverage (meaning you pay for the health costs upfront, submit a claim form, and then are refunded if the claim is approved).

The plan also includes Emergency Medical Evacuation and Repatriation Insurance.

Emergency Medical Evacuation

- a) The Insured Person's medical condition warrants immediate transportation from the place where the Insured Person is injured or becomes ill to the nearest hospital where appropriate medical treatment can be obtained; or b) after treated at a local hospital; the Insured Person's medical condition warrants transportation to the United States to obtain medical treatment or to recover.

Repatriation

The company will pay the reasonable covered expenses to return the insured person's body home, if he or she dies. In addition, the company will pay the airfare and lodging expenses for a family member or designated person to accompany the body to the insured's home country.

Please note that this is **NOT Health Insurance**. It is important that you check with your insurance carrier to make sure your health insurance coverage will apply while in another country. Expenses incurred upon return to the territorial limits of the insured person's country of domicile or home country of residence are not covered by this policy. Also note it is **NOT Trip**

Cancellation Insurance. If you require trip cancellation coverage it can be purchased through online services or a travel agent.

Note: Many foreign universities require proof of health insurance coverage.

Medical Assistance in Other Countries

Included in the WU Study Abroad Insurance Plan is access to the 24-hour Worldwide Assistance network for emergency travel and medical assistance anywhere in the world. Simply call the assistance center toll-free or collect. The telephone numbers from around the world are included on your card I.D. card. The multilingual staff will answer your call in English and immediately provide reliable, professional and thorough assistance.

The US Department of State also provides Country Specific Information for each country in the world. Among many other things, these documents contain information about medical facilities and health issues in the host country.

Prescription Medications

While you're abroad is not the time to suddenly realize you ran out of your prescription! If you have a condition that requires regular medication, bring an extra quantity with you and pack it in your carry-on, just in case your checked luggage gets lost. Just remember to keep it in its **original** container and **clearly** labeled — you don't want to create the impression you're carrying drugs which haven't been prescribed to you. In fact, you should check with the local embassy to make sure that your medication is acceptable to carry into the country: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages.html> Some countries may consider your prescription medication to be **illegal**. Bring a letter from your doctor listing your medications and explaining why you need them. Doing your research and having a letter can help prevent any misunderstandings along the way.

Make arrangements with your family doctor and insurance company so that you will have the necessary supply of your medication. Check with the airline and your host country's Embassy or Consulate for specific restrictions about bringing medications into the country.

Vaccinations for Foreign Travel

How important is it to do your research about vaccinations? It might just save your life! Make yourself aware of the different types of vaccinations and which ones you may need to travel to your destination. Schedule an appointment with your doctor at least four to six weeks before you travel to ensure you receive all important vaccinations including routine, recommended and required.

The following are sources of information about whether or not you need any vaccinations or preventive medications to enter your host country:

* The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention maintains a list of recommended vaccinations for other countries: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list.htm>

* your family doctor

* Washburn University Student Health Services

* the host country's Embassy or Consulate in the U.S.

No vaccinations are required to return to the U.S., but after returning, you might want to consult your family doctor for a general examination.

Disabilities: <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/go/disabilities.html>

Traveling through foreign lands gives you a unique opportunity to observe a rich variety of cultures and customs. This is true for those living with or without a disability. Living with a disability in no way prevents you from experiencing international travel. With advanced planning and plenty of vigilance, your trip abroad can be safe and enjoyable. For guidance tips on inclusion and accommodations, financial aid sources, and networking opportunities visit The National Clearing House on Disability and Exchange (NCDE) at: <http://www.miusa.org/ncde>. This is a comprehensive, one stop resource on advising and tools for people with disabilities. WU offers reasonable accommodations for study abroad: [Student Accessibility Services | Washburn University](#)



“ I was one of two Americans in our class so the majority of my classmates were from other countries with different cultures and norms. Working with my classmates allowed me to learn more about different cultures and learn to collaborate better.”

Cole Benzmiller, ESC Rennes School of Business, France

III. SMART TRAVEL

Research Your Destination

Research — it's not just for your term papers anymore. **Before you go**, it's always a good practice to investigate the local conditions, laws, political landscape, and culture of the country you're visiting. The Department of State has a wide range of research resources available for your use. <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go.html>

Travel warnings are issued when the State Department recommends that Americans avoid a certain country. <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings.html>

Travel alerts are issued by the State Department to distribute information quickly about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term conditions that pose significant risks or disruptions to Americans.

The State Department also provides country specific information for every country of the world about various issues, including the health conditions, crime, unusual currency or entry requirements, any areas of instability, and the location of the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate in that country. <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html>

Contact the Office of Overseas Citizen Services at studentsabroad@state.gov or Toll free in the U.S. or Canada 1-888-407-4747

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP): <https://step.state.gov/step/>

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency. STEP also allows Americans residing abroad to get routine information from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

IV. MANAGING YOUR MONEY

How to Access Your Money While Abroad

1. Cirrus or Plus credit/debit card with a 4-digit PIN permits you to withdraw money directly from your US checking account. This option is fast, convenient and offers the best rate of exchange. If your card is new, use it at least once before you leave the U.S. Contact your bank to notify them that you will be using your card abroad. Tell them your destination and dates of travel. If you do not, you risk having your account inactivated after using your card in another country. You may also inquire about their fees for using another country's ATMs. ATMs are plentiful in most areas of the world, but students going to non-traditional study abroad destinations should check a reliable source for more information. If the debit card is also a credit card, you may use it to make purchases in your host country at most retailers.

2. Major credit card and a 4-digit PIN permits a cash advance on your credit card. This is a fast and simple option for obtaining cash, but it involves a fee and interest in charged. You may also use your credit card to make purchases. VISA, MasterCard, and American Express are widely recognized throughout the world, but some regions favor one over others. Check an up-to-date source to find out which card is most recognized in your host country. Contact your credit card company to notify them that you will be using your card abroad. Tell them your destination and dates of travel. If you do not, you risk having your account inactivated after using your card in another country.

3. AAA Visa Travel Card. A pre-paid, reloadable card that can be used worldwide anywhere Visa credit cards are accepted. Use it at ATMs to withdraw local currency. Reload (1,500 max) it up to 4 times on the internet. Visit the local AAA Travel Store or this website for more information <https://aaaprepaidcards.com/>

4. Cash. It is risky to carry large amounts of cash when you travel. You might consider taking a small supply of US dollars. If you can't immediately locate an ATM after arriving in your host country, you can exchange the dollars for local currency in the airport. You might consider working with your bank several weeks before departure to secure a small supply of the host country's currency. You may also exchange dollars in the host country airport before departing. Note that the exchange rate in airports are high.



“My heart had led me along this wondrous adventure... each place held a unique quality that captivated my senses of adventure, insight, and romance. I followed my heart and I

fell in love..."

Catelyn Kostbar, Student Law School Consortium, England.

Considerations before Leaving the US

Become familiar with the currency of the country you will visit; try to think of the value of the local currency in its own terms and avoid converting it into dollars each time you buy something. Otherwise, it might seem like "play" money and you may spend it more quickly.

If you will be abroad for a semester or academic year you may want to give a family member power of attorney at home, so that somebody would be able to assist with financial problems in your absence by having access to your bank account and permission to see your Washburn account. Discuss this with your family, your bank, and with the Financial Aid Office.

Changing U.S. Currency in the Host Country

Take your passport with you when you want to change money. Exchange rates can differ from place to place, so it is worthwhile to compare the rate first at banks, hotels, airports, train stations, etc. Usually banks have better rates than hotels and airports or train stations. Exchange rates can change each day.

Financial Aid for Students Studying Abroad: <http://www.washburn.edu/admissions/paying-for-college/financial-aid/index.html>

Loans, grants and scholarships are available for students who are eligible. Please read the eligibility requirements listed below:

1. If you are enrolled in a program that is administered by Washburn University (i.e. receiving academic credit at WU), you will automatically have access to your financial aid, as long as you are registered for at least 6 WU credits during that term. If you plan to participate in a program that is administered by another university or institution, you must work with International Programs and the Financial Aid Office to have access to your financial aid.
2. You must meet the same eligibility requirements designed for students receiving financial aid for traditional on-campus programs.

If you have completed all required paperwork and you have registered for the appropriate course number, your funds should be available to you before your program begins. Contact the WU Financial Aid Office for more information.



"Whenever I review my program pictures, mist always comes to my eyes with a smile on my face... Times like these are memories to hold deep down inside of you..."

Jingjing Wu, ESC Rennes School of Business, France.

V. ACADEMICS

Study is the first word in “study abroad”. Be sure to attend to your academic requirements before, during, and after you return.

The Washburn Transformation Experience (WTE), International Education:

<http://www.washburn.edu/academics/wte/international-education/index.html>

To identify an appropriate experience to fulfill the optional WTE program students work with a faculty member or the Study Abroad Office. Students **Declare** their program and submit an **Activity Plan**. Students write a **Pre-trip Background Research Paper** on a relevant topic prior to their international experience to help prepare for the program abroad. Upon return, students submit a survey rating the transformational aspects of the program. Students also prepare a **Public Presentation** about their experience.

Credit Transfer Form: [Study Abroad Credit Transfer Form](#)

It is important that you complete this form BEFORE you leave campus. Complete the top portion of the form and then take it to THE RELEVANT Department Chair and your major Academic Advisor along with course descriptions for the classes you plan to take. The Department Chair and your Advisor will complete the credit section by filling in the approved number of credits and the “Washburn Equivalent”.

Note: A letter grade will only be posted if the course is required for the student’s major or minor. All other course work is posted as credit.

General Education Transfer:

Evaluation of study abroad courses as potential general education transfer courses is a two-step process supervised by the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (VPAA). Course content acceptability is determined prior to the study abroad. After returning from the study abroad experience, the student must submit a general education transfer course petition for approval by the VPAA demonstrating how a minimum of three of the nine general education skills were enhanced by the study abroad course.

If you plan to take courses outside your major department and you would like upper-level credit, general education credit, or a specific course number (for instance, you plan to earn credit for the second semester of a language), you must take the Credit Transfer form and the course description(s) to the appropriate department. It is at the discretion of each department to approve your credit request.

If you plan to take courses outside your major department and want only elective credit at the 100-level, you only need to meet with your major advisor. Your credit will be marked with the 1XX course number. For example, if you take a History of England class, you will earn HI 1XX credit and it will be listed with the foreign course title.

After you have completed the form and both the department chairperson and your advisor have signed it (and you have received the approval from other departments, if necessary), return the form to the Study Abroad Office. The original copy will be kept in your file, and keep a copy for your records. You should also keep all course materials from your program in case questions about the credit arise as the Study Abroad Office processes your credit transfer.

If you participate in a program for which you register for a specific pre-determined Washburn course number, you do not need to complete the Credit Transfer form.

Enrollment at Washburn and Abroad:

The Study Abroad Office will process your enrollment in a WU Study Abroad holding course. **If you participate in a summer program, you will be registered for 3-6 credits. Students in a semester-long program will be registered for 12-15 credits.** Upon completion of the program and receipt of your transcript, International Programs will consult the Credit Transfer form in your file and then notify the Registrar, who will update your record to reflect the actual courses that you took. It is your responsibility to follow the host's registration procedure and to meet their deadlines.

Credit **cannot** be posted on your Washburn University transcript without an **official transcript/certificate** from the host institution. If this transcript is given directly to you upon completion of the program, you must bring the original document to the Study Abroad Office. If possible, you should request that all official transcripts are sent directly to the Study Abroad Office:

Washburn University
Study Abroad Office
Attn: Director of Study Abroad
Plass Learning Resources Center rm. 217
1700 SW College Ave.
Topeka, KS 66621
USA

Grading

You are required to successfully complete all course work that you attempt abroad. You are required to take and successfully pass all exams. If a Washburn professor is the instructor for your program, he/she will evaluate your work and assign your grades. If professors at a host university instruct your courses, they will evaluate your work and assign your grades, which will be reported on the host university's transcript. The Study Abroad Office will consult with your major department and the Registrar as necessary to convert the foreign grades and credit hours into the Washburn system.

Tuition and Fees

Participants in Washburn Exchange programs pay tuition and fees to Washburn University, just as you do while studying on the Washburn campus. You will pay for housing and meals while abroad, these fees are not collected by Washburn.

Participants in Faculty-led short-term programs led by Washburn professors register for a WU course, and pay the appropriate tuition and fees to Washburn. Additional fees cover airfare, transportation, sightseeing fees, lodging, etc. are applied to the WU student account.

If you participate in an external program that is not administered by Washburn, you will pay all your tuition and fees directly to that institution or program provider.

Withdrawal from or Extension of Program

Follow these procedures to withdraw from or extend your program:

1. Contact the Study Abroad Office first to discuss your request.
2. Communicate with your major department to explain the situation. If your department approves, they must notify the Study Abroad Office of their decision.
3. Meet with the coordinator of the program at the host university to explain the reason for your withdrawal or extension. If the host university approves, they must notify the Study Abroad Office of their decision.
4. If you're withdrawing from the program you must finalize all business in the host country before leaving. It is your responsibility to negotiate with your instructors to complete coursework. Please note that some instructors may not accommodate your request to complete the course, and it is their right to assign a failing grade. You must pay all outstanding bills (housing, tuition, etc) before leaving. **Neither Washburn nor the host institution will be responsible for any financial or other matters that you leave unresolved.**
5. If you're extending your program, it is your responsibility to secure housing, entry requirements, and to register for courses.



“My study abroad experience has profoundly impacted my personal growth, global awareness, and appreciation for diversity. Living in a different country allowed me to immerse myself in a new culture, which broadened my perspective and helped me develop a deeper understanding of global issues.”

Stephanie Arreola Garcia, University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain

VI. GENERAL INFORMATION: WHAT'S IT LIKE LIVING ABROAD?

Campus Life Abroad

In many foreign universities, there is little of what we call campus life, and rarely do you find a residential campus. Usually the university buildings are in the heart of the city, and they might be scattered over a considerable area, separated from each other by residences, stores, and factories. You may live in one part of the city, attend classes in another part, and eat your meals in the student restaurant elsewhere. You will thus participate in everyday city life which may include: mass transportation, strikes, impersonal attitudes, tourists, pollution, etc.

Accommodations Abroad

Hotels, hostels, and homestays, oh my! Choices abound when deciding what type of accommodation to choose! Regardless of where you decide to stay, one thing is for sure—you want to be safe.

There are many types of accommodations you can choose from, but every country, city, neighborhood, and lodging establishment is different. Hotels are what many American students are accustomed to, but abroad, hotels may look quite different. Beds may be smaller, bathrooms may be shared, and amenities like a pool or a gym, may be non-existent. Hotels are usually the most expensive accommodation option. Pensions and Bed and Breakfasts are usually small, family-run hotels. They usually offer similar accommodations to American B&Bs. Prices and quality may vary greatly.

If you are traveling as a part of a study abroad program at a foreign university, it may be a good idea to live on campus or in official university housing. Being in an environment with your fellow students may ease the transition of adjusting to a new country, and the costs may already be covered in the program fees.

A homestay is just what it sounds like: it's a stay in someone's home. There are many agencies available that screen potential hosts and homestay candidates. This option is great for students who want to live in more of a family environment. However, you must be comfortable with the idea of staying in someone else's home and immersed in the culture of that family.

A hostel is a low-cost, dormitory-style accommodation. Most living spaces, including bathrooms, are shared, and they tend to be very student-centric.

Hotel Safety Tips

- Keep your hotel door locked at all times. Meet visitors in the lobby.
- Do not leave money and other valuables in your hotel room while you are out. Use the hotel safe.
- If you are out late at night, let someone know when you expect to return.
- Read the fire safety instructions in your hotel room. Know how to report a fire, and be sure you know where the nearest fire exits and alternate exits are located. (Count the doors between your room and the nearest exit; this could be a lifesaver if you have to crawl through a smoke-filled corridor.)
- Know the identity of any visitors before opening the door of your hotel room. Don't invite strangers to your hotel room, or to remote locations.

VII. LOCAL LAWS

Look, we don't mean to nag. But if there was ever anything worth nagging you about, it would be this: Obey the local laws of the country you're visiting. An arrest or accident during a trip abroad can result in a difficult legal — and expensive — situation. Your U.S. citizenship does not make you exempt from full prosecution under another country's criminal justice system, and the U.S. government cannot bail you out. Many countries impose harsh penalties for violations that would be considered minor in the United States, and unlike the U.S., you may be considered guilty until proven innocent. Ignorance of the law is no excuse, so be informed.

If you find yourself in a legal jam, contact the closest U.S. embassy or consulate for assistance. Keep in mind, U.S. Consular employees cannot arrange for local officials to release detained American citizens.

Drinking & Drugs

Let's be serious about this. When traveling overseas, it's important to obey the laws and regulations of the country you're visiting, especially those pertaining to drug and alcohol use. Every year, many American students are arrested abroad on drug charges or because of their behavior under the influence. Ignorance of the law is no excuse, so be informed.

Avoid underage and excessive alcohol consumption. Many arrests, accidents, rape, and other violent crimes have occurred because of alcohol abuse. While abroad, driving under the influence and drinking on the street or on public transportation may be considered criminal activities by local authorities, as they would be in many places in the United States.

Don't import, purchase, use, or have drugs in your possession. Drug charges can carry severe consequences, including imprisonment without bail for up to a year before a case is tried, physical abuse, and sentences ranging from fines and jail time, to years of hard labor. Some crimes even carry the penalty of death. Contraband or paraphernalia associated with illegal drug use can also get you in trouble.

The WU Student Code of Conduct is in effect during your time abroad.

VIII. CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Never assume that the same comforts that are prevalent in the U.S. will be available in other countries. Some of our everyday habits are considered wasteful by many cultures outside the U.S. (e.g. long showers, overuse of electricity, "throw away" items like paper and plastic, etc.)

Remember to observe the foreign lifestyle and respect the host country's culture!

Stages of Adjustment

Be prepared to experience an adjustment cycle during your stay. Expect some ups and downs. You'll start out with a great deal of excitement; wherever you are studying will be the most fantastic place on earth. You'll be riding high with enthusiasm, and then after a while, the novelty will wear off. You may feel lonely, frustrated, disappointed, depressed, homesick, or irritable. You'll complain about many things and many people, you'll probably wish you'd never left home, and long to be back in Kansas- if you can imagine that!

Culture Shock - These feelings of culture shock are perfectly normal and will pass with time as you develop friendships and make progress in the language and feel more familiar with the culture. It is important at this point **not to give up** but instead to hang in there and keep going. This stage will pass - remember that your family and friends and all of us in the Office of the

Study Abroad Office believes in you and what you are doing. Bit by bit things will get better, the petty frustrations will disappear, and you'll finally figure out who you are, where you are, and why you are there. As you complete your adjustment cycle, you'll come to accept and then enjoy most things, including the customs and culture of the host country. And when you complete your experience, you may not want to leave when it is time to go home.

Signs of Culture Shock

Some signs of culture shock might include: disorientation, depression, homesickness, excessive sleeping, withdrawing from others or irritability. It is important to note that this is very common and is a normal part of the adjustment process. Most students go through some form of culture shock. For most, the difficult part of culture shock will last from two to four weeks. If you show any of these signs for more than a month, some outside counseling might be helpful. Most of the institutions abroad have counseling centers with qualified staff to help students through difficult times.

There are some things you can do to help alleviate culture shock. Keep a journal of your experiences and make yourself write in it every day. Connect with your family and friends. Make yourself go out with friends or join a club or student group, even if you don't feel like it at the time. Finally, don't keep your feelings to yourself. A good coping strategy is to discuss your feelings with fellow study abroad students, who most likely are experiencing similar feelings.

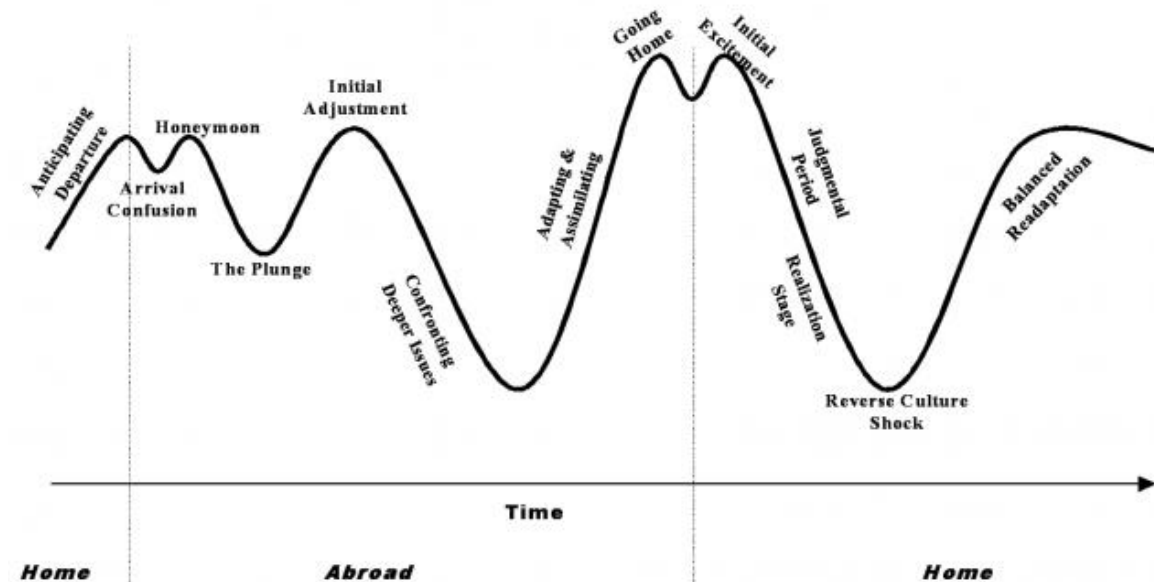
Re-Entry Shock

When you return home, you will find that you have changed and gained a whole new world of knowledge whereas your friends and family back home might not have changed as much. There is a good chance that you will find it difficult to re-enter your home environment, society, and country. You may discover that re-entry is as difficult as the initial culture shock you experienced when you first arrived abroad. For many students this can be a real time of crisis. The experience abroad was profound for most participants, especially for those who became actively involved in their host country. Many students reexamine their lives, values, and attitudes. It prompts others to change their whole lifestyle and to seek new ways of personal growth. As a human being, you are no longer an inhabitant or resident of a country, but a citizen of the world.

Here is a list of some signs of re-entry shock, and they are similar to the signs of culture shock.

1. Disorientation: The tasks and decisions that used to be simple and second nature might feel overwhelming.
2. Re-evaluation: Goals that were supposedly set in stone before you studied abroad might have changed.
3. Alienation: You might have experienced so many new things while abroad that you now feel like a foreigner in your own country.
4. Nostalgia: You might look back on the past few months and wish you were still overseas.

Roller Coaster of Study Abroad Emotions



A Plan for Addressing Culture and Reentry Shock

Before you go

1. Be aware that some of the culture shock you experience when you go abroad will be duplicated when you return home.
2. Begin thinking about how you can incorporate your study abroad experience into your future goals.

During

1. Communicate with your friends and family with letters, emails, newsletters, or newspaper clippings from your hometown.
2. Keep up with other students' study abroad experiences so you won't feel like you're doing this on your own.
3. Immerse yourself in your culture, remember that you are where you've worked so hard to be. Remind yourself to live in the present and give yourself grace when that's difficult.

After

1. Visit your faculty advisor and program coordinator. You can talk about your experience with a friendly and knowledgeable person. Ask about graduate scholarships and how to incorporate study abroad into careers or future studies.
2. Make the most of the experience when you return by telling others about your adventure. You can do this by talking to small groups, giving presentations, helping with study abroad fairs and staffing information tables around campus.
3. Enter the **Study Abroad Photo Essay Contest**. You could win \$100! Contest rules and entry forms are available in the International House or visit: [Study Abroad Photo Essay Gallery | Washburn University](#)



“Living and studying in Ireland pushed me to embrace new challenges and adapt to different cultural and academic practices, fostering a resilience and independence I hadn’t fully realized before...”

Elaina Pan, Maynooth University, Ireland

IX. TRAVELING WHILE ABROAD

Public Transportation

Unlike many American cities, most cities abroad have extensive public transportation. These include buses, subways, and trains. These forms of transportation are relatively quick and inexpensive, and you can get just about anywhere you want to go. Time schedules are posted at the stations. Most countries use a 24-hour clock for these schedules, for example, 13:00 for 1:00 p.m., or 22:00 for 10:00 p.m. It is to your advantage to be familiar with these times, so you do not end up missing your train or the last bus home. You can usually purchase a pass for a cheaper price rather than paying for individual tickets every time you ride. It is also possible to buy train and bus passes at discount student prices.

Rail Travel Information

Trains, especially those in Western Europe, are clean and moderately priced. They run on time in most countries and offer a great way to see the countryside. Most countries offer railway passes for unlimited travel within their borders. You can often buy tickets at student rates. Rail travel and buses are the most prominent methods of transportation in many countries.

Road Safety Abroad

Road safety may not be something that WU students think about when planning their Global Education experience, but it should be. According to [Association for Safe International Road Travel](#) (ASIRT) traffic accidents are a leading cause of death of Americans abroad, particularly among college students. While many travelers may be tempted to rent cars, mopeds, or motorbikes during their time abroad, they often do so without regard to the risks of driving in a country whose rules of the road are unfamiliar. Although it may seem fun or convenient to travel this way, **Washburn University strongly recommends against driving any kind of motorized vehicle abroad.** Travelers should consider the following information:

- Select the safest form of transportation in the travel area
- Avoid late-night road travel in countries with poor safety records and/or mountainous terrain
- Understand how seasonal hazards affect road conditions
- Know the dates of local holidays (when road accident rates rise)
- Be aware of traffic patterns in the travel area (they may be very different from those in the U.S.)
- Be especially alert at intersections
- Do not walk where pedestrians cannot easily be seen

Get more information about Road Safety Abroad at these links:

U.S. Department of State [Driving and Transportation Safety Abroad | Travel.State.gov](http://travel.state.gov)

AAA (American Automobile Association) <http://www.aaa.com/vacation/idpf.html>

National Automobile Club <https://www.nacroadservice.com/>

1-800-622-2136 or 1-800-294-7000 – from website, roadside 1-833-622-7377. Are the other two from a club contact?



“Something I cannot explain what happened to my homesick heart. It broke in two and there’s one part that never really left Maynooth . . .”

Tess Wilson, National University of Ireland Maynooth, Academic Year Exchange Program, Ireland.

X. PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

Required:

- **Bods Abroad:** Complete all requirements inside the Bods Abroad portal.
- **Passport/Visa:** Obtain your Passport or any required Visas as soon as possible. For more information, visit: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/apply-renew-passport/how-to-apply.html> U.S. citizens who participate in a summer program generally do not need a visa. U.S. citizens who participate in a semester-long program usually need a visa—check with the Study Abroad Office or the sponsoring department. Non-U.S. citizens are responsible for contacting the host country’s Embassy or Consulate to inquire about entry and visa requirements.
- **Tuition & Fees:** You must pay your WU tuition and fees before departure. If you are participating in another institution’s program, you must follow all their payment deadlines.
- **Financial Aid:** If you receive any scholarships, loans or grants, you must make arrangements with the Financial Aid Office so that you can receive these funds to use for program costs.
- **Enrollment:** The Study Abroad Office will process your enrollment in WU Study Abroad Courses. Students will work directly with the Host University to complete enrollment.

- **Vaccinations:** Find out if it is required or recommended to get any vaccinations, immunizations, shots, or medicines at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/your-health-abroad.html> Some vaccinations require follow-up inoculations or medicines; plan accordingly.
- **Orientation:** Complete the Study Abroad Pre-Departure Orientation.

Strongly Recommended:

- **Copies of Documents:** Leave copies of important documents with family and/or a trustworthy friend at home:
 - Passport identification page (Upload a copy to your WU Study Abroad Portal & keep a copy with you in a place separate from the original)
 - Visa page (if required)
 - Airline tickets
 - Driver's license
 - Credit cards
 - Your contact information abroad (addresses and phone numbers)
 - Emergency contact information abroad
 - Insurance information
- **Baggage:** Familiarize yourself with the current TSA baggage guidelines for air travel at www.tsa.gov and find out how much luggage your airline will allow and what baggage fees apply.
- **Baggage Tags:** Make sure your *covered* luggage tags are labeled with your name, address, and telephone numbers. Also, place your contact information *inside* each piece of luggage.
- **Register:** Register your trip at <https://step.state.gov/step/> so officials can contact you in case of an emergency.
- **Travel Warnings:** Check out any appropriate Travel Warnings, Consular Information Sheets, and Public Announcements available at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings.html>
- **Research:** Investigate the local conditions, language, laws, legal system, political landscape, weather, and culture of the country you're visiting.
- **Prescriptions:** Find out whether your prescriptions are considered illegal narcotics in the country you're visiting. Get a letter from your doctor listing your medications and explaining why you need them. Carry instructions for treating any allergies or other unique medical conditions you might have.
- **Money:** Consider taking a combination of cash, an ATM card, a credit card, and information on receiving emergency funds while overseas. (**Do not** carry around excessive amounts of cash!). Know the credit limits on all your cards as well as how to contact those companies from abroad.
- **Money Belt:** A money belt or neck pouch allows you to carry and conceal your passport, credit cards and cash.

- **Arrangements for Receiving Emergency Funds:** To prepare for an unexpected lack of funds or an unforeseen expense, talk with a family member about the possibility of providing you with emergency funds.
- **US Embassy Consulate:** Know the location and how to contact the closest embassy or consulate of all your destinations by visiting <https://www.usembassy.gov/>
- **Calling Home:** Plan for multiple ways to contact home: WhatsApp, FaceTime, WeChat, Facebook Messenger, Social Media DMs, International text messaging, International phone calls, shared google drive photo albums, etc. Find out whether or not your wireless mobile devices will work abroad: [ekit | JT International](#)
- **Packing List:** Create an itemized list of all that you've packed in your luggage for insurance purposes. Pack essential items in your carry on incase your check luggage is lost. This includes prescription medication, and an extra change of clothes.
- **Plan for Arrival:** Arrange transportation to and from your airport(s). Even though you might have been told that someone will meet you at the airport for your particular program, it's good to have a "Plan B" in mind in case this does not happen. Have your program's contact information so you can make arrangements for reaching your housing or your program's office if necessary.
- **Useful Apps:** You should look into apps that can guide you through the city you're visiting before you leave the US. Consider the following apps that are available for both iOS and Android.
 - **Google Maps**
 - **Citymapper**
 - **Moovit**
 - **Transit**
 - **Waze**

Consider:

- **International Student ID Card:** <https://www.isic.org>. The International Student ID Card (ISIC) provides access to a broad network of discounts and benefits for students while you're abroad.
- **Vote:** Register to vote absentee if you'll be abroad during any state or national elections by visiting www.fvap.gov.
- **Rail Pass:** Check with country specific providers to learn more about rail passes and other discounted in-country transportation options.
- **Youth Hostel Card:** These cards can give you access to discounted hostel rates. Check with country specific providers about youth hostel cards.
- **Arrangements for receiving mail:** Provide the post office with a forwarding address to your permanent location in the US and ask a family member or trusted friend to sort through it for you. If necessary, they can forward important mail to you.

Prep & Pack Tips:

Getting ready for your trip abroad is much more than buying new flip-flops and stuffing your backpack with clean socks. Do you have an electrical converter for your blow-dryer? Check. Have you made copies of all your important documents? Check. Use checklists to **prep** and **pack** for your trip: <https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/students-abroad/pdfs/Preplist.pdf>

Pack light! Do not take your entire wardrobe with you. You have to carry everything yourself through airports, train stations, and subways. And you will have to bring back anything you buy there, too.



“My time in China was filled with learning experiences ... Getting to connect with others of my age, but on the other side of the world was amazing. I learned so much of their culture, values, and perspectives.”

**Happy Travels! Bon voyage! Buen viaje! Ciao!
Gute Reise! Yi lu shun feng! 一路順風 Hauskaa
matkaa!**

Home Institution Study Abroad Coordinator Contact Information

Fill out the following information before you depart.

 WU Study Abroad Office

 Department
 785-670-2095

 Phone/Fax
 studyabroad@washburn.edu

 Email

 WU Academic Advisor

 Department

 Phone/Fax

 Email

On- Site Coordinator or Office: Fill out the following information when you arrive on site.

 Name

 Department/ Office

 Phone/Fax

 Email

 Name

 Department/ Office

 Phone/ Fax

 Email

Other Useful Information: Local info, housing/landlord, friends etc.

 Name

 Name

 Name

 Contact Information

 Contact Information

 Contact Information

Emergency Wallet Card:

<p>Student Study Abroad Emergency Contacts</p> <p>My Residence phone: _____ Address: _____ _____ Insurance Provider and number _____ Blood type _____ Allergies _____ Medical Conditions _____ Passport Number _____</p> <p>WU Contacts: Washburn University (785) 670-1010 Study Abroad Office: (785) 670-2088 Tina Williams, Study Abroad Director: (785) 670-2095</p>	<p>On Site Emergency Addresses & Tel: #'s</p> <p>_____ Emergency Contact Name and Phone _____ Onsite Coordinator Name and Phone _____ U.S. Embassy Address and Phone Number U.S. State Dept. (202) 647-5225 _____ To report your Credit Card lost or stolen _____ To report your Debit Card lost or stolen</p>
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