

A Family's Guide to Study Abroad

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Congratulations!

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Student Responsibility	2	By now, your student has met with and discussed their program with a Purdue Study Abroad Advisor, completed and returned the Host University or program application and other requisite forms, received the <i>Savvy Student's Guide to Study Abroad</i> , and is beginning or has already completed the mandatory Orientation Program. The online portion covers various topics including pre-departure information, travel documents, cultural adjustment, course approvals, Purdue registration procedures, academic expectations, and health and safety. The Intercultural Awareness Presentations address cross-cultural issues students encounter overseas. A Pre-departure Workshop offers advice on a variety of useful topics, and finally, a Regional Pre-departure Meeting has been scheduled for later this semester. At this regional orientation, Purdue students who studied abroad last year, as well as international exchange students studying at Purdue this semester, will lead a panel discussion at which time your student can raise questions and concerns with others who "have been there, done that."
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-Purdue Study Abroad Staff

Types of Programs

Co-Sponsored Programs Purdue students are eligible to participate in a number of study abroad programs that are organized by agencies specializing in international education (Arcadia, CIEE, IES, IFSA, DIS, etc.).

Direct Enroll Programs are similar to Exchange Programs in duration, independence and academics; the main differences are that Direct Enroll programs tend to cost more and do not bring overseas students to Purdue.

Exchange Programs are based on agreements that Purdue maintains with academic institutions around the world. Participants will be enrolled as regular students at the partner university but will pay their regular level of tuition to Purdue.

Purdue-Administered Programs are designed and administered by the Study Abroad Office and typically take place over the summer. Usually a Purdue professor leads the program and teaches one course. Participants typically earn six credit hours, depending on the length of the program.

Learn more about Types of Programs at www.studyabroad.purdue.edu/programs

Benefits of Study Abroad

In today's global society, an international experience has become an essential component of higher education.

Studying abroad enriches students' academic experience. They get to live in interesting places, have many opportunities to visit historically and culturally significant sites, examine artifacts they've only read about or seen on TV, and interact with local students and faculty. Many will become students at prestigious universities where they have to adjust and learn to thrive in an academic system that usually demands quite a bit of independence and initiative. It is common for returned students to tell us that they came home to Purdue after their term abroad more focused, more excited about completing their degree program, and with a better idea of what they would like to do after graduation.

The challenges that come with living in another culture force students to hone their interpersonal and communication skills, increase their sensitivity to other cultures, and become more adaptable, assertive, and independent. We are constantly impressed with the air of confidence and self-assurance that returned students possess after their term abroad.

Finally, students' overseas experience can enhance their professional credentials. Returned students report that interviewers always discuss their international experience with them during job interviews. The personal characteristics and new perspectives that students developed while overseas are valued by more and more companies, organizations, and employers who seek staff members who can thrive outside their comfort zone, speak a foreign language, and/or live and work more comfortably in a multi-cultural environment.

Your student's decision to spend a semester overseas is a worthy investment indeed!

Student Responsibility

Your student has a Study Abroad Advisor at Purdue. This advisor assisted him or her in completing the host university or program application and has already briefed your student about program features, accommodation options, academics, visa information, program costs, the course approval process, insurance, and other matters. While the Study Abroad Advisor is available to answer questions and offer assistance, your student should assume the primary responsibility of planning for their time abroad.

We expect your student to:

- Complete all Purdue Study Abroad requirements
- Return host university or program forms in a timely manner
- Obtain course approvals
- Secure required travel documents
- Make travel plans
- Review pre-departure resources
- Participate in all orientation programming
- Contact their study abroad advisor with questions/ concerns

Students should also make necessary preparations for life overseas, such as familiarizing himself or herself with the host country, getting information about the academic program, talking with returned and incoming exchange students, setting up a communication plan with family and friends, and attending to financial matters.

Upon acceptance to the Host University or program, your student will receive a packet of information or be given access to a program website. These materials may include an official letter of acceptance, housing information, pre-registration form, visa application information, arrival instructions, and information about the onsite orientation program and university. We instruct our participants to go through these documents carefully, follow instructions, and share the information with family and significant others. Frequently, acceptance materials include time-sensitive materials that have to be returned to the host university or program organizer in order to confirm participation.

We encourage students to keep you informed about his or her program or to refer you to the appropriate websites and resources for additional information. The federal law known as the Family Education Reform and Privacy Act (FERPA) prevents us from releasing information that concerns students even to immediate family members. If you have questions, your first point of contact should be your student who will most likely have the information.

Academics FAQ

How many courses do students take while studying abroad?

Purdue requires students to take the equivalent of at least 12 (semester) or 6 (summer) Purdue credits. Typically, that is 4 or 2 courses respectively. Exceptions may be made ahead of time with approval by the Study Abroad Office and the Study Abroad Liaison.

If students take less than 12 or 6 credits, they can lose their financial aid and insurance coverage.

At the same time, students must abide by the host institution’s minimum credit requirement which in many cases is more than just 12 credits. For example, universities in Europe typically have a 30 ECTS minimum requirement which is equivalent to 15 Purdue credits.

What is a Study Abroad Academic Liaison?

Study Abroad Academic Liaisons are professors or academic advisors who have the authority to designate and approve the appropriate Purdue equivalents of the courses students take overseas.

Can a student take less than the required minimum credits?

Generally no. Purdue requires all Study Abroad Students to take the equivalent of at least 12 Purdue credits every semester or 6 for the summer so they can make progress on their degree program while abroad.

How do students know which courses to take while abroad?

Students must consult their Academic Advisor and the appropriate Study Abroad Liaison to determine (a) which courses to take while overseas and (b) how many credits will be assigned to each course.

Does a student receive grades for courses taken abroad?

Students receive Purdue credits and grades for courses within approved academic areas. If a program hasn’t been approved by a specific academic area students receive P/N credit for their coursework abroad.

Can a student take courses for Pass/No Pass?

A Purdue student accepted into a Purdue-approved program may choose the P/N option for courses approved for direct credit that are completed overseas. If a student chooses to take one or more courses P/N, s/he must first discuss the matter and secure approval from her/his Academic Advisor. The procedures for this are found on the students *My Study Abroad* Page. The deadline for submitting the P/N form is no later than the eighth week of the study abroad semester or, for shorter programs, prior to 50% of the program’s duration.

Once the P/N form is submitted, a P/N grade will be recorded on the Purdue transcript for the applicable coursework. This is not reversible.

Why do students have to get course approval?

Students should continue progress toward their degree requirements while studying abroad. In fact, what gets recorded on their academic record are the designated Purdue equivalents of the courses taken overseas. Securing course approval ensures that students are going to take the appropriate courses and that they and their academic advisor know what degree requirements they are satisfying while abroad.

What if a student is unable to complete a Course Approval Form before leaving the U.S.?

It is very important to secure approval for all courses to be taken abroad. If the student is unable to secure approvals before departure, or would like to get additional approvals, it is possible to get them approved while abroad. The student should email his or her Academic Advisor, the appropriate Study Abroad Liaison, and Study Abroad Advisor to make the request. He or she must provide the syllabus for each course.

What if the student decides to take a course that has not been approved?

If a student takes a course that has not been pre-approved, there is no guarantee that the course is an acceptable replacement for one of his or her degree requirements. The student should, however, work with their Study Abroad Liaison, Academic Advisor, and Study Abroad Advisor during their time overseas to gain the appropriate course approval. Students are asked to upload their overseas course enrollment form to confirm their final course registration during their time abroad.

My child is a year ahead and is studying abroad just for fun. Is securing course approval still necessary?

Yes.

Encourage your student to balance work and play while studying abroad.



Program Costs

If your student is participating in an Exchange program expect to pay the regular Purdue semester or summer tuition and fees, plus the cost of international health and medical insurance for the duration of the student's program. You'll receive the Purdue invoice at the regular time from the Office of the Bursar.

Please note that tuition fee remission applies to Study Abroad Exchange programs. Payment of the Purdue Bursar bill (tuition, fees, and insurance) must be made by the requested deadline(s). Failure to pay on time will result in the cancellation of registration at Purdue University. Reinstatement results after paying the late registration fee.

If your student is participating in a Co-Sponsored program your student will *not* pay Purdue tuition. Instead, the student pays a comprehensive program fee to the program provider directly and a Study Abroad fee to Purdue University. Expect an invoice from the program provider (CIEE, IES, DIS, etc.). Remit payment to the provider according to the organization's payment schedule. The Study Abroad fee is \$914 for the semester and \$305 per module in the summer. If suitable insurance coverage is not included in your student's program fee, then he or she will be enrolled in the Purdue insurance and the cost is added to your bill. The Purdue Bursar will send fee statements for applicable fees at the regular time.



Financial Aid & Scholarships

Purdue Moves Scholarships are available to assist undergraduate students with financial need with costs associated with study abroad.

In order to be considered students must meet the following criteria:

- Must be Purdue West Lafayette undergraduate degree seeking student.
- Must be participating in a credit bearing approved study abroad program through Purdue University.
- Applicants must meet the requirements as outlined at www.studyabroad.purdue.edu.
- Students are only eligible for one Purdue Moves semester-long and one short-term scholarship during their Purdue career.
- Students must enroll for an approved program.
- Students do not need to be in accepted status to apply.

Students participating in semester long programs should also consider applying for the Study Abroad Intercultural Learning Scholarship for an additional \$1500.

If your student is a scholarship recipient at Purdue, please confirm with the appropriate scholarship agency or administrative office that those benefits will apply if the student studies abroad.

Learn more about Financial Aid & Resources at www.studyabroad.purdue.edu/financialaid

Health & Safety

When the Chinese use the expression “May you live in interesting times,” they mean it as a curse. As evident from current events, we are indeed living in interesting times. While the Purdue Study Abroad Office believes that students are in no more danger by studying abroad than by staying in the United States, we take safety concerns very seriously.

Our approach to safety includes careful monitoring of U.S. Department of State travel warnings and advisories, regular consultations with colleagues around the country who are involved in the administration of study abroad programs, with onsite resident directors, with responsible officials of host universities, with contacts in the U.S. Department of State and other agencies, and with other experts who are well informed on international issues and

events. We have also implemented an emergency preparedness and crisis response plan for our overseas programs by providing key individuals (onsite faculty and host institution administrators) with guidelines to follow under a variety of circumstances. The response plan calls for working with overseas contacts as well as the Dean of International Programs, the Dean of Students' Office, and ultimately the Provost and President of Purdue University. For more information concerning the safety and health of your student, please see the Health and Safety page on our website.

We cannot, however, guarantee the absolute safety of each participant or ensure that risk will not at times be greater than at home. Similarly, we also cannot monitor the daily personal decisions, choices,

and activities of individual participants any more than is the case on our home campus.

We address health & safety issues thoroughly in the *Savvy Student's Guide*, during the mandatory orientation, and pre-departure meeting. We encourage you to review the safety tips listed in the study abroad handbook and discuss them with your student.

Students should be mindful of the laws in their host country.

Staying Healthy Abroad

To be ill in another country, where Mom's chicken soup won't come to the rescue, is not going to be fun. Of more importance, a healthy person has a sunny outlook and can experience challenges overseas in a more positive light.

Before departure, your student should have a general physical, eye, and dental exam. If your student has a chronic ailment, make sure s/he packs a complete medical record and typed copy of any prescription medication. Encourage the student to practice healthy lifestyle while abroad and to know the conditions at the host country. Is the water safe to drink? Will the student need vaccinations? Check the Centers for Disease Control website for information. Stress can be a factor overseas and the student should be prepared with tried and tested coping mechanisms.

Health & Safety Resources

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention www.cdc.gov

U.S. Department of State www.travel.state.gov

Learn more about Health & Safety abroad at www.studyabroad.purdue.edu/safety

Medical & Dietary Needs

If your student has special medical or dietary needs, we suggest the following:

- Have your physician indicate the generic name of the medication. The brand name of your student's medication could go by another name in the host country.
- Research how the student's condition is typically treated in the host country, or how pharmacies dispense prescription medication.
- Know how the medical condition is commonly known in the host country so he or she can make the condition known without delay if medical attention is needed. For example, mononucleosis is called “glandular fever” in the United Kingdom.
- Inform the Study Abroad Office if the student needs special accommodations. We need time to work out arrangements with Purdue Disability Resources and our overseas partners.
- Inform the overseas staff of the student's needs and get set-up with a specialist or general practitioner as soon as possible.
- Talk with your insurance company and pharmacy so the student can bring enough medication with him or her.

Health & Safety (cont'd)

Insurance

Purdue University mandates that all students studying abroad have sufficient international emergency medical insurance. Most students are therefore enrolled in Purdue's International Travel Health Insurance.

Purdue insurance provides a comprehensive package of medical benefits and emergency services specifically addressing the risks associated with studying abroad.

Students do not need to file an application or complete an enrollment form — the Study Abroad Office takes care of the paperwork.

The coverage is valid for the dates of the program. The 30-day premium rate is \$32 and the charge for a semester or summer's worth of premiums is included in the Purdue Bursar invoice you receive before the start of your student's overseas study term. Prior to departure, your student receives access to an insurance card.

Individuals file claims directly to the insurance company. For routine medical services while overseas, the student should pay the physician, clinic, or hospital directly and then file for reimbursement later. Fortunately, health services in many parts of the world are not as exorbitant as they

are in the United States, so paying for services directly should not present undue hardship to the student. Students should be sure to save the physician or clinic invoice for filing a claim at a later date. If your student requires more serious or extensive medical services, they need to contact the insurance company.

If your student plans to do some traveling either before the official start date of the program or after the program ends, you may opt to extend his or her coverage up to one month before and after the official program dates. You will pay the extended coverage premium directly to the insurance company.

We are aware that some countries (ex: Japan, Australia) require the purchase of in-country insurance in order to secure an international student visa. In this case, your student will still need the Purdue Study Abroad insurance, even if he or she purchases the host country's insurance. Coverage for travel outside the host country or benefits for medical, political, or security evacuation and repatriation are not provided by the in-country insurance.

The study abroad insurance is for health and medical services only.

Coverage does not cover theft or loss of valuables. We ask students not to bring valuable items overseas, but it's up to you if you choose to purchase insurance for your student's computer and other gadgets. You might also want to check if your homeowners insurance extends to loss of property while overseas.

Learn more about Purdue's International Travel Health Insurance Provider at

www.studyabroad.purdue.edu/safety/insurance

If your student has special needs encourage them to let the Study Abroad Office know as soon as possible so we can begin to make plans for a successful term abroad.

Emergencies Abroad

In an emergency, the student must contact the onsite staff and local authorities first. There is little anyone in the U.S. can do if the person needs immediate assistance. Only after the matter has been attended to should the student call home.

For emergencies that occur after hours, the student should contact the Purdue University Police Department at +1 765-494-8221. This number is active 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. If the police department determines that the call requires the attention of Purdue personnel, Study Abroad staff members will be contacted. This number should be used for emergencies only, such as serious accident or illness. Non-emergency calls may be made to the Study Abroad Office at +1 765-494-2383 during normal business hours, 8am – 5pm EST

We strongly recommend doing some contingency planning before the student leaves for their program site. Should an emergency occur, decide now what steps should be taken. Will the student fly home? If not, consider ways to lend emotional support while s/he remains overseas. Who will relay information about the emergency to the extended family?

You might also consider getting a passport now in case you have to go overseas to attend to an emergency involving your student.

Culture Shock

Adjusting to the new environment and culture is perhaps one of the most important facets of a student’s experience abroad. Not only does the cross-cultural adjustment help in his or her learning and development in a new country, it makes the experience more rewarding and interesting. While nearly everyone goes through a period of adjustment, i.e., when going off to college, beginning a new job, or moving to a new city, starting life in a foreign country is relatively more challenging.

‘Culture shock’ is the term given to the collection of feelings that sometimes arise when travelers are overwhelmed by cultural differences. The symptoms can include feeling lonely, homesick, overwhelmed, fearful, angry, confused, or judgmental. The onset, severity, and length of time with which culture shock affects any one student varies. More experienced travelers may snap out of it rather quickly, while others might have to work a bit harder to get past the feelings of distress. The thing to always keep in mind is: *culture shock is a common and a natural part of the study abroad experience.*

When students first arrive in their host country, they feel happy and excited. Everything is new and interesting, and they want to explore it all. An open air market

appears picturesque, the vendors seem lively, the food items on sale fragrant and exotic. This is the honeymoon stage when students fall in love with the host country and nothing could possibly get in the way of a fabulous experience. A few days, weeks, or months later, the student starts feeling somewhat disillusioned and while things in the environment have remained the same, they now regard everything negatively. The same open air market seems to have become run down and chaotic, the vendors seem aggressive or obnoxious, the food has become gross. This is the next stage of culture shock and the time when some students are apt to feel that they’ve made a mistake and would like to return home. The student is finally able to discern cultural differences and feel like interlopers in their new culture. They’re also exhausted from constantly making behavioral adjustments and frustrated because the usual emotional support system of family and friends are not there. Fortunately, with effort and time, this stage usually passes and the students achieve a state of balance or equilibrium with the environment. This is the stage when the students become more integrated into the host culture, aware of cultural expectations, and cognizant of the behaviors and attitudes of people from that country. The anger and disappointment fade as the student realizes that they can

function effectively outside their home culture. It is clear that the open air market is different from the supermarket at home, but it has its appeal and advantages. The vendors are different from the grocery clerks at home, but they all get the job done. The food is indeed different from food at home, and the student feels proud at having tried so many new dishes.

If there is one sure thing about culture shock — it is that it has an ephemeral nature. It will end — but it will not disappear magically.

We hope you do not become distressed or alarmed if your student starts complaining about his or her situation. In all likelihood, s/he is going through the second stage of culture shock. Empathize but remind him or her of all the things that could be gained from this experience. Applaud the student’s efforts to become immersed in the host culture. Encourage him or her to continue initiating interactions with fellow students or the host family, participating in local or university activities, and learning from mistakes. In a few weeks, the student is likely to look back at these seemingly dark days and be incredulous that s/he even considered returning home! Thanks to you, the student did not have to miss out on this great experience!

Before your student leaves the U.S., make sure they know what to expect for the first few days in the new environment. If someone is tired and jet-lagged upon arrival, small things that go awry may be unnecessarily upsetting and they may get an exaggerated sense of the real significance.



The Supportive Family

Studying abroad is a defining period in your student's educational experience. It is a personal journey that will likely transform him or her into a global citizen with new ideas and perspectives about the world and its people. Studying abroad is also an experience that distinguishes your student from peers and enables him or her to stand out in the eyes of prospective employers or post-graduate interviewers.

Just the same, we understand there are conflicting feelings about the upcoming experience. You and your student are excited at the opportunities that lie ahead but at the same time, there may be some trepidation about being several thousand miles apart.

Fortunately, there are things you can do before, during, and after the study abroad period to support and maximize the learning experience of your student. Your support is very important and how you handle the time away goes a long way toward enabling your student to thrive and learn from their overseas experience.

Encourage your student to be in charge of pre-departure preparations. Yes, it is a delicate balance: ensuring your student is prepared for their time abroad while letting him or her take the lead at the beginning of this new experience. As tempting as it may be to relieve your student of some of the responsibilities, s/he will be in a much better position to cope with next semester's challenges if the student attends to pre-departure preparations personally. Next semester, the reliable support network of family and friends will not be as readily available. If the student has had very few opportunities to handle challenges at home, imagine how daunting it could be to have to do so in another culture. So stand back and let your student handle this responsibility. There is no better time to start flexing those muscles to stand on one's feet than now!

Stay in touch but maintain a level of distance. One way to reduce the feeling of homesickness is for you and your student

to stay in touch regularly. There is a close correlation between morale overseas and messages from home. Stay informed about current events in the country and region where your student is studying. Many friends and family find reading about the overseas location to be both interesting and a good way to feel more in touch with the experiences of their student.

While you'll be eager to know everything about your student's novel experiences, it is usually not a good idea to encourage your student to call home or text you constantly. If the student is always communicating with family and friends back home, the incentive to integrate with the community abroad is much decreased. If the student is participating in a language program, he or she will better improve second language proficiency by immersion in that language rather than communicating extensively in English.

You can support your student's efforts to become more immersed in the host culture by reassuring him or her that you do not expect frequent long email messages, a daily phone call, or text messages several times a day. By doing this, you are giving your student permission to spread his or her wings and fly — and in all likelihood, they will!

There is also a phenomenon that's referred to as 'Destructive dialing.' This is a situation in which a student gets upset about something and calls home; the parent gets upset and calls back later, making the student more upset—and so on until the situation reaches a crisis point. You'll want to avoid that, and regular, limited calling can help do so. Make it clear to your overseas scholar that you expect him or her to be resilient and resourceful enough to overcome minor road bumps along the way.

Time your visits to minimize disruption. If you are planning to visit your student, try not to do so when the term is just getting started. At this early stage, the

student is still getting accustomed to the norms of the culture, to the academic system, to the city and how to get around. Instead, give him or her time to adjust to the new environment, acquire mastery of the local language, and develop new expertise, skills, and knowledge to show off when you do visit. If you save your visit until later in the term, your student has already made the transition to life in his or her host city. Your student will relish showing you around and you get the benefit of having a knowledgeable guide to introduce you to the city and country. You will be proudly introduced to his or her new friends, taken to the group's favorite local hangouts, and given an informative walking tour of the city. It will be a very positive experience for you and your student.

If you do visit, try not to undermine the student's academic commitment by pulling them from class for vacation jaunts. Instead, get a copy of the student's academic calendar and schedule your trip during program vacations.

We strongly discourage parents from accompanying the student to the program's location. This can be disruptive to the program staff and other participants and may prevent your student from getting off to a good start. The presence of a parent may quell whatever feeling of confidence the student has mustered. Again, make yourself scarce and believe in your overseas scholar's ability to get along fine without you.

Culture shock can and will happen — but it passes. Still, it is true that it won't always be easy, and your student may encounter some challenging situations while overseas. He or she might have to adjust to a new academic system, find university procedures bewildering, dislike the more modest accommodations, or have trouble communicating in the local language. The onsite resident or host university staff are

The Supportive Family (cont'd)

there to assist students and issues are usually resolved after direct intervention, usually after a student has had time to settle down in the new environment.

Remember too that complaints usually occur during the student's first few weeks overseas. Many of the situations that cause students to feel anxious are simply new situations to which they will eventually adapt. Thus, resist the temptation to solve the problem yourself or intervene with host university or program staff on behalf of the student.

For example, many returned students have reported being initially overwhelmed by the academic system at their host university. They had to get used to not having detailed syllabi, homework, reading assignments, pop quizzes, and attendance checks like at Purdue, yet they were expected to integrate an entire semester's course materials in one final paper or exam at the end of the term that determines their course grade. In time however, they adjusted, developed new study skills, modified their expectations and classroom behavior, and made a concerted effort to balance studies and fun activities. Many former study abroad students ended up thriving in these less structured academic environments.

Though you might feel anxious or alarmed to hear your student complaining, there is really little that you or the Purdue Study Abroad Office staff can do from here. Instead, provide a sympathetic ear but encourage him or her to show some patience, learn to go with the flow, have a sense of humor, engage the people in the

host culture, find reasons for perceived cultural differences, and not to despair if assistance is not immediately forthcoming. Urge the student to work on being more independent, figure out possible solutions to problematic situations, request assistance from program or university staff if the task seems too daunting, seek out local students who know the ropes and can provide invaluable suggestions, or discuss the problem with the host family to get tips on how to handle the problem. Express confidence at the student's ability to handle the problem himself or herself.

However, if you feel your student is facing an unsafe or perilous situation, please contact the Purdue Study Abroad Office. We will follow up with the host institution on your behalf.

Prepare for the transformation. Your student will return home changed by the experience. He or she may dress a bit differently, like new foods, speak differently, express new political perspectives, or even speak somewhat disparagingly of the United States. This is not so unusual. Your daily routine probably changed very little during the time the student was abroad. On the other hand, your student's life was anything but routine! He or she was exposed to a plethora of new ideas, practices, and philosophies. So do expect some changes and be patient. It takes time before your student sorts through his or her experiences to determine which traits and personal lessons learned abroad are worth keeping.

Be prepared also for reverse culture shock. After the excitement of being back

and regaling friends and family with tales of their adventures, many students find themselves moping and feeling sad because they miss their new friends, the novel experiences that happened almost daily, the exciting activities, or their favorite food. Your student might express boredom, assert that his or her life has become quite ordinary, and suggest that he or she spend time abroad again.

Again, your support, interest, and understanding is crucial. Discussing these feelings and changes in your student's outlook is an excellent way of sharing his or her international experience. Encourage him or her to stay in touch with overseas friends but to find local avenues in which the knowledge and skills gained from their time abroad can be useful. In time, your student will fully readjust to being back home though most likely changed by his or her time overseas.

Encourage your student to continue their study abroad experience!

- Volunteer to share your story with other Purdue students
- Become a Study Abroad Ambassador
- Join PASSPORT and other internationally-focused students organizations
- Continue your foreign language training



Logistics

Travel Documents

All students must have a passport for overseas study. New passports take six weeks to process. If your student already has a passport, make sure it is valid for *at least* six months after his or her return date to the United States. More Info: travel.state.gov.

A visa is an entry/residence permit granted by the authorities of the country (via its Embassy or Consulate in the U.S.). A visa is usually stamped or stapled to the passport. The Study Abroad Office will inform your student if a visa is needed. If your student is participating in a Co-Sponsored program, the program will likely work with your student to prepare his or her visa application. In many cases, the student's original passport must be sent along with other required documentation, but visa requirements vary by country and by consulate/jurisdiction.

Students and families can become preoccupied with what to pack and forget to consider the items and information that should be left behind.

Data File

Gather all of the information and documents you and your student might need while s/he is away, including:

- Contact information for:
 - Your student (street address and cell phone number)
 - Home office of program provider/ host university Study Abroad Office
 - U.S. Department of State Office of Overseas Citizen Services
 - Citizen assistance section of the nearest embassy or consulate
- Insurance policy number and how to submit claims
- Emergency and communication plans
- Student's bank account, credit card numbers, and contact info in case of loss
- Copy of student's passport
- Program calendar
- Name of local physician—if your student requires medical supervision
- Make sure at least one parent is in possession of a current passport in case of emergency

Packing

There are strict airline and government regulations about luggage weight and what can be packed in a carry-on bag. Please check with the airline about weight limits and the Department of State website about items that can be brought on board the airplane.

Here's a test to see if your student has over-packed: have him or her walk around the block a few times and go up and down a flight of stairs with the entire luggage (checked bags, carry-on with a laptop, and purse). If the activity becomes very trying after only a few minutes, take out a few items. Remember, students are responsible for carrying their own luggage.

No student has ever complained of not having packed enough. On the contrary, every single returned student advises outbound students to not bring too many clothes and shoes. What's fashionable could be different at the host country so students will most likely buy new things.

What to bring? Pack clothes that can be easily washed and dried. Today's modern fabrics- micro-fiber, fleece, jersey knits, are great for travel. Leave the bulky and heavy Purdue sweatshirt at home. Layering and mixing-and-matching are key. Most things that are available in the U.S. are generally available overseas. Thus, hairdryers, toiletries, linens, eating utensils, and other everyday items are best purchased onsite.

Also, research the electrical specifications in your student's host country before s/he packs items that need to be plugged in to the wall.

Your student might also consider bringing his or her overseas advisor, host parents, exchange student coordinator, or resident director a small souvenir from Purdue. The present doesn't have to be extravagant: a Purdue keychain, T-shirt, pen, calendar, or other similar items are quite appropriate. A gift is a small token of appreciation and a gracious gesture that establishes goodwill between the student and his or her hosts.

Logistics (cont'd)

Travel Plans

The majority of students make travel plans on their own.

You can start researching travel costs and available flights, but please hold off booking the flight until the student has been accepted to his or her study program.

The student should have received arrival instructions from the host university or study abroad program. Check with your student that s/he has read this information. We recommend that students plan to arrive on a weekday and during office hours. In an emergency, they can call the onsite program office or coordinating office at the host university and more than likely reach someone who is in a position to help. It is also a good idea to make travel plans with other students participating in the same program. Two heads are better than one, and two or more students traveling together can watch out for and help each other during tricky situations. Finally, we encouraged students to have contingency plans in place in case something goes awry with their arrival plans. Follow-up with your student that alternate plans are in place.

If available, the student might want to bring \$50-150 in foreign currency for food and drinks during a layover or to take a taxi immediately after arrival. If none of your local banks sell foreign currency, it's OK. The student can simply use his or her ATM card to withdraw money from a machine in the local airport. Bring U.S. currency also. In a pinch, this money can be exchanged for local currency.

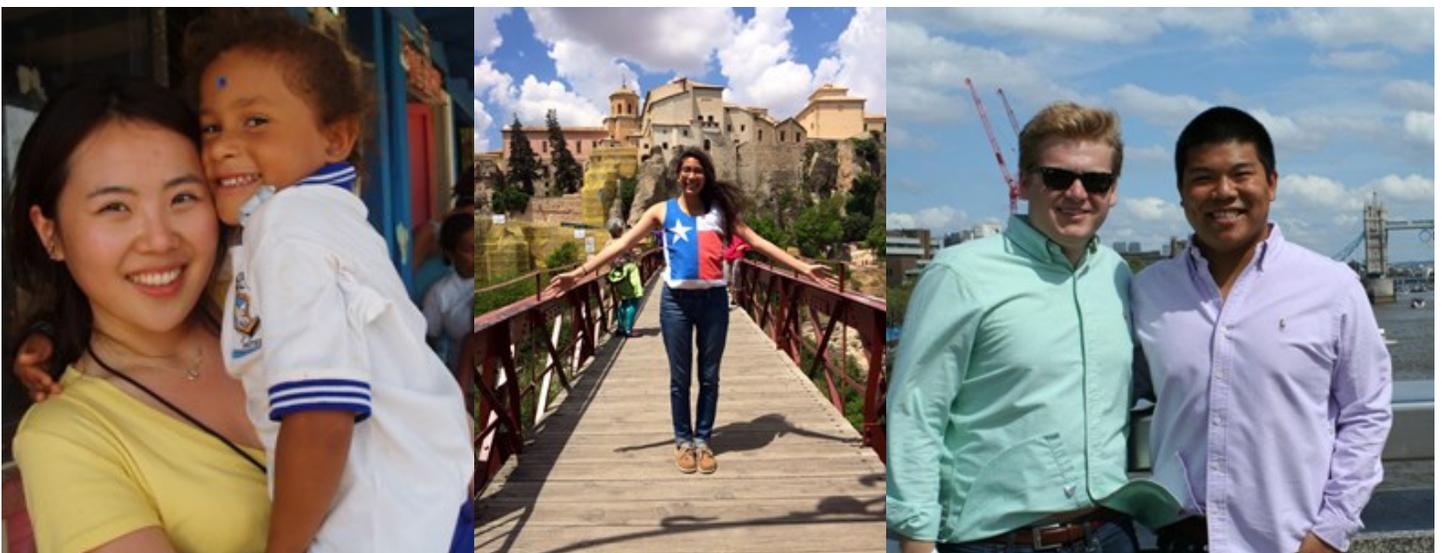
Know Before You Go

The Host University/ program should have provided arrival information to your student. However, you might want to review arrival plans with your student as the departure date nears.

The first day in the host country is very important, and we hope your student gets off to a good start. Specifically, we've asked students to make sure they have the following information:

- What to expect at the airport (layout, immigration and customs procedure, location of ATMs, ground transportation, etc.).
- Directions to your apartment, residence hall, program office, or the university's Study Abroad Office.
- What form of transportation to take from the airport and where to get it.
- Who to contact or where to go in case of emergency.
- How to say a few key expressions and questions in the host country's language
- Contingency plans in case 'Plan A' goes awry.

Family members and friends frequently ask students to call home immediately after arrival. We understand your concern, but please be aware that it may not always be possible. On some programs, students may need to catch a shuttle immediately after retrieving their luggage and going through Customs and Immigration. Other times, the student may be swept into a program bus, through formalities, and into their accommodations where they are not immediately in a position to make special arrangements to call you. Some may arrive late at night or after having traveled for a day to reach their destination be too exhausted to even think about calling home. Give them at least a day or two to get settled and do not panic.



Logistics (cont'd)

Communication

Before deciding on a course of action, make sure your student has contacted their cellular carrier to learn about options/ associated expenses. Many carriers have international plans, but these often tend to be more expensive than other options.

Many students simply swap out the SIM card in their mobile device. This is an affordable option if your student will be making a lot of calls. Other students opt to purchase an affordable local phone that they can use for calls and texting, similar to a 'Pay as you go' phone.

Students often rely on Skype, Facetime, WhatsApp, or Google Hang Out to keep in touch with friends and family back home. Both WhatsApp & Viber provide easy ways for students to keep in touch through free text and voice messaging.

Returned students have shared that having a laptop computer made writing papers and downloading photos more convenient. Today, the AC adapter of most laptops and U.S. cell phones are dual voltage and can be used anywhere in the world with a simple plug adaptor.

Handling Money

Decide with your student how to access money for both everyday financial needs and emergencies.

For the most part, students secure cash by withdrawing money from an ATM using the debit card they already use and by paying for large purchases with a credit card in their name. Using these two methods are not only convenient, they also offer the best exchange rate.

To withdraw cash using an ATM or debit card, the student needs his or her PIN number. Know the numeric code as foreign ATMs typically do not have the alphabet code in the number keys. While the student will be able to get money in the local currency, the amount will be debited from his or her account in U.S. currency. Avoid sticker shock — be sure to know the current exchange rate!

Make sure to inform your bank that your student will be using his or her credit and ATM card abroad to avoid deactivation of the cards for irregular use. Check with the bank to determine the daily limit of funds received. Many U.S. banks also charge a transaction fee every time the card is used on a non-bank ATM. You might want to inquire if this fee can be waived when your student is studying abroad. While each transaction may only cost a couple of dollars, if your student withdraws money a couple of times a week, the charges will add up by end of the term. Withdraw more, just less frequently! Be aware that most banks assess a one percent or more fee every time a credit card is used for purchases. If the student uses his or her card for every purchase these fees can add up!

For some students, opening a bank account while studying abroad has proven to be quite convenient. They did not have to pay any ATM transaction fees within the host country, thus saving themselves a few hundred dollars in fees. Having a local bank account also make it easier to make housing and other local payments. If your student decides on this route, the onsite staff should be able to assist your student in selecting a bank and completing the required procedure. For the initial deposit, the student can withdraw money from an ATM. If you are financing the student's semester abroad, you can add funds to the account by international wire transfer. If you choose to do a wire transfer, we suggest large transfers occasionally rather than transferring smaller amounts more frequently.

And one last thing – if you are financing the student's time abroad, don't forget to deposit funds in the student's bank account!



The Frugal Student

With careful and realistic planning, studying abroad need not tax your family's budget, even if the dollar has taken quite a hit against some currencies. You and your student should sit down and discuss how he or she can allot funds to the expenditures associated with studying abroad.

Here are some ways students can stretch their dollars.

Be frugal during the first few months. It is better to have a bit left over than to run out of money before your program ends. Purchase only necessary items during the first few weeks. Try not to immediately start shopping for souvenirs for family and friends. In a few months, the student will know which items are worth getting.

Eat out only occasionally. We applaud students who are enthusiastic about the local cuisine, however, rather than eating meals at restaurants all the time, buy supplies at a local grocery and prepare meals in the apartment or residence hall. Except in Asia, where food stalls and street food cuisine are popular and affordable, eating out is more costly abroad because people don't do it on a regular basis. Dining at a restaurant is a treat or reserved for special occasions. To stretch one's budget, students should ask a new friend or a host family member for instructions on making a local dish. As an added bonus, students can prepare a special meal for their friends and family after they return to the U.S. If cooking is not possible, or desired, then buying prepared foods at a grocery store is typically cheaper than eating at a restaurant for every meal.

On a trip, pack sandwiches and fruit. Consult a travel guide for good meals at affordable places. Avoid restaurants that cater to tourists as the prices here are likely going to be higher. Seek out where the locals eat!

Explore the host city and country. Some students are compelled to visit as many countries as possible that they hardly spend a free weekend 'at home.' Yet, there is much to discover and learn about the host city and country. Your student's semester abroad will be more meaningful when he or she starts feeling like a local. This won't happen if the student is always travelling to another country or city every weekend. In the end, it's not the number of places visited, but the friendships made that will make for a truly memorable time abroad.

Plan journeys with care. Of course the student may visit other countries particularly if he or she can do so easily – there are many regional low cost carriers all over the world. Nevertheless, once your student is sure of their program and class schedule, you can encourage your student to plan these trips in advance. They should not be tempted to travel long distances at the spur of the moment. Students get better fares for tickets purchased in advance.

Also consider exploring the roads less traveled. There are many lovely smaller cities all around the world that are worth visiting and affordable: Cardiff, Tallinn, Budapest, Krakow, Macau, Vientiane, or Hanoi. Neighborhoods and suburbs also offer a glimpse of daily life abroad.

Investigate free entertainment. Visit local parks, the city center plaza, or the city's free museums. Attend open-air concerts, street festivals, and local fairs. In Italy, the locals come out every evening for their nightly *passaggiata* (evening stroll). At 6:00 p.m., it seems like the entire country is out for a walk. Nothing fancy, no special events, nothing planned, just strolling about leisurely, smiling, and greeting others with a friendly "buona sera." These events are not only culturally enlightening; they're fun and free of cost!

Contact Details

Programs for Study Abroad

Young Hall, Room 105

155 S. Grant Street

West Lafayette, IN 47907

Phone: 765-494-2383

Email: sa@purdue.edu

Learn more about Purdue Study Abroad at www.studyabroad.purdue.edu