Savvy Student’s Guide 2016

How to Make the Most of Your Study Abroad Experience
So you are going to study abroad! Well, fasten your seatbelt — you are in for an exciting ride.

Your study abroad experience will be one of the highlights of your years as a Purdue student and its influence will likely stay with you long after you leave the university. Our hope is for you to really make the most of your time abroad. You have invested quite a bit of time, effort, and money into this endeavor; you might as well make the experience a worthwhile investment. To do so however would mean being conscientious with your pre-departure preparations, taking advantage of opportunities that come your way while you are overseas, anticipating challenges and developing effective coping mechanisms, and then reaping the rewards of cross-cultural learning, traveling, and making friends with people from all over the world.

There will be, of course, the inevitable bumps and bruises along the way. But don't lose heart (and your sense of humor)! Being in a new and strange environment is always a little disconcerting but we are confident you have what it takes to overcome seemingly daunting situations. Just approach each one with an open mind. Go with the flow. Realize that frustrations are part and parcel of the journey. Learn from each mistake or embarrassing moment. Celebrate the novel and diverse perspectives you'll discover along the way. After all, why bother even studying abroad if you are unwilling to expand your cultural horizons and learn more about the world and its people. As Dr. Seuss stated so wittily:

You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes.  
You can steer yourself any direction you choose.  
You're on your own and you know what you know.  
You are the guy who'll decide where to go. ...  
Out there things can happen and frequently do  
To people as brainy and footsy as you!  

- From "Oh the Places You’ll Go!"

This handbook was written to help you prepare for your time overseas. It explains the academic policy governing the study abroad program at Purdue, and provides information about securing travel documents, packing efficiently, staying healthy and safe, handling finances, taking photographs, keeping a journal, and everything you need to know (well, almost) before boarding that plane. We hope you will find it useful.

Happy travels! Take care! Stay in touch! And make Purdue proud!

- The Study Abroad staff
USEFUL ADDRESSES

Office of Programs for Study Abroad
155 S. Grant St. Study Abroad Phone / Voice Mail: (765) 494-2383
Young Hall 105 Study Abroad Fax: (765) 496-1989
Purdue University Study Abroad Email: studyabroad@purdue.edu
West Lafayette, IN 47907 Study Abroad Web Site: www.studyabroad.purdue.edu
Study Abroad Emergency Number: (765) 494-8221
(Purdue Police Department Number)

Financial Aid Information
Division of Financial Aid General Phone: (765) 494-5050
1102 Schleman Hall Favors Automated System: (765) 494-0680
Room 305 Direct Phone Counseling Line: (765) 494-0998
West Lafayette, IN 47907-1102 Fax: (765) 494-6707
Webpage: http://www.purdue.edu/dfa/

Passport applications forms and submission at:
U.S. Post Office (State Road 26 branch in Lafayette)
http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html

ISIC (International Student Identity Cards)
http://www.isic.org/
NOTE: ISIC card entitle students to benefits like supplemental insurance and discounts on airfare, museum fees, communication, accommodations, and restaurants in over 100 counties. For about $20, the card can easily pay for itself after only a few uses. However, the ISIC will not have the same benefits in all countries so check if the card is really going to be useful for you before purchasing.

Recommended Student Travel Site:
http://www.statravel.com
http://www.studentuniverse.com

U.S. State Department Smart Traveler Enrolment Program:
https://step.state.gov/step/

Language Tutorial:
http://www.studyabroad.purdue.edu/students/WorldLanguage.cfm
Travel Sites (for comparing fares and booking travel while you are overseas):

http://www.trivago.com/
http://www.kayak.com/flights
http://www.attitudetravel.com/
http://www.momondo.com/
http://www.easyjet.com/en/ (Europe)
http://www.ryanair.com/ (Europe)
http://www.clickair.com/ (Spain and Continental Europe)
http://www.tigerairways.com (Asia and Australia)
http://www.airasia.com (Asia)

Other useful travel websites:

World travel guides:
http://www.wordtravels.com/
http://www.worldtravelguide.net/
http://www.timeout.com/

Hostels:
http://www.hostelworld.com/
http://www.hihostels.com/

Travel in Asia:
http://www.thingsasian.com/tahome.html

Europe city cards:
http://www.europeancitycards.com/

Trip Tools:
http://www.amadeus.net/home/triptools/index_gb.html
http://www.azworldairports.com/

Country calling codes:
http://www.countrycallingcodes.com/index.php

World time zones:
http://www.timeanddate.com/
The “Study” in Study Abroad

Studying abroad involves attending to academic matters before you leave for your overseas destination and for the duration of the program. While we certainly want you to have a wonderful time, we also would like you to do well in your studies and make progress toward your degree.

By default, students who study abroad will receive direct Purdue credits (credits and grades) for courses in an academic area approved for that study program. Consequently, it is important to choose (a) a study abroad program that has approval in the academic area in which you wish to receive credits and grades, and (b) to choose courses that are equivalent to the courses specified on your Purdue plan of study. You also need to know the “rules of the game,” i.e., maintaining full-time status, securing course approvals, working with a study abroad liaison, and others.

This section discusses study abroad academic matters, including a summary of your most common concerns. Many of the topics have been already covered in the first briefing session, online orientation, intercultural presentation, and meetings with your study abroad advisor. If you have additional questions not covered in this handbook, feel free to email your study abroad advisor.

Academic Policies and Regulations

Study Abroad participants are subject to the same academic regulations and policies in place at Purdue’s West Lafayette campus. Before you leave, make sure you have read the Academic Integrity Guide and are familiar with your college’s study abroad academic policy and your academic unit’s degree requirements.

In addition, students are also expected to comply with regulations governing study abroad participation. Make sure you understand what these are and the consequences that will result if you fail to adhere to them. Below is a summary of Purdue policy governing your participation in the Study Abroad program.

- **Participation Form and Deposit.** Students accepted to the study abroad program must complete and return the Participation Form and remit a study abroad deposit to hold their spot in the program. A student’s offer of acceptance could be withdrawn unless both are turned in by the deadline stated on the official Study Abroad acceptance letter.

- **“Statement of Responsibility” Form.** Before departure, all participating students must sign a document indicating that they accept the conditions under which they will participate in their Study Abroad program. The agreement is a contract for the period of the program, carrying with it legal, financial, and other obligations. You should read this agreement carefully and understand its terms. Students whose parents claim them as a dependent on their tax forms must have their parents sign the agreement as well.

- **Full-time Student Status.** Students on a Purdue study abroad program must maintain full-time student status. You will forfeit your financial aid, scholarship and international health insurance if you take fewer than 6 credits for the summer, 12 credits for the semester, or 24 for the academic year.

  **ALERT:** It is Purdue policy to abide by the host institution’s minimum credit policy which is some cases exceeds Purdue’s minimum requirement.

- **Student Conduct.** Students remain enrolled at Purdue University while studying abroad and therefore are subject to the university’s rules and regulations. Realize also that the host university or program organizer has primary responsibility for discipline in connection with violations of any rules and regulations in place at the host institution. Generally, misconduct abroad may be defined as any situation in which participants have compromised academic integrity, jeopardized their own welfare, that of their fellow participants or the program, or have willfully violated the host university regulations or the host country’s laws.

- **Probation.** Students cannot be on academic or disciplinary probation the term before they go overseas. If a student lands on probation, his or her participation in the program will be cancelled, no matter if the student has already completed all requirements and logistical arrangements with the study abroad host institution.

- **Course Approval.** Study abroad participants must seek approval and/or obtain course equivalency for ALL courses they wish to take. The steps involved in securing course approval are discussed later in this guide.
... continued Purdue Academic Policy

- **Direct Credits.** By default, credits and grades earned abroad in fields that have been approved by specific academic departments at Purdue count as direct Purdue University credits (credits with grades) and calculated into the student’s G.P.A. Study Abroad coursework is evaluated according to the criteria of the host university or study abroad program. Overseas grades will be converted to Purdue’s letter grade system according to a standard international grade conversion scale.

- **Grade Adjustments.** There shall be no grade adjustments for courses earned abroad unless the host university or study abroad program acknowledges that a student was given an incorrect grade and a revised transcript sent.

- **Transfer Credits.** Students will receive transfer credits (no grades) if they take a course in a field that has not been approved for direct credits for that program. It will be up to the student’s academic department to decide how the credits will be used to satisfy graduation requirements.

- **Pass / Not Pass Option.** A Purdue student accepted into a Purdue-approved study abroad program may choose the P/N option for courses approved for direct credit for that program. The P/N option for courses completed abroad follows the Purdue University regulations for P/N grading option for courses completed on the Purdue campus. This option is consistent with the description of the Pass/Not-Pass Option, Grade and Grade Reports, Student Regulations.

- **Withdrawal from a Program.** Students are expected to remain at the host institution until the last day of the program and all coursework and examinations are completed.

Withdrawal from a Purdue Study Abroad program should be considered only after consultation with the program coordinator, who, in concert with responsible parties at Purdue, will design a proper course of action. Withdrawal may mean not only financial loss but also the loss of a semester’s or full year’s credit. Students who decide to withdraw from a program must inform the host institution, the Purdue Office of the Dean of Students, and the Study Abroad Office in writing (e-mail is acceptable) immediately.

### Registering for Study Abroad at Purdue

You will remain enrolled at Purdue for the duration of the time you are studying abroad. This ensures that you will receive Purdue credits for courses you take at your host institution, eligible to apply for a Study Abroad scholarship, and that you can apply financial aid for your overseas studies. Thus, it is imperative that you know the procedure for registration if you are a study abroad participant.

Study abroad registration involves the following:

**First.** before your time ticket schedule, get your PIN from your academic advisor.

**Second.** at the designated time when you are eligible to register, go to “My Purdue.” Choose “Study Abroad” from the Subject drop-down menu. Under “Course Number,” type the SA number of your study abroad program. Note the CRN number. If there are multiple listings under the SA number for your program, check each listing’s program dates.

Choose the one that corresponds to the program you are doing. Proceed with the rest of the registration procedure.

**Third.** confirm your registration. After registering, you will receive a fee statement from the Purdue Bursar. Don’t let your Purdue registration get cancelled! Make sure you pay your balance in full and confirm your registration through MyPurdue.

If your registration is cancelled, you will need to pay a late fee before you can be reinstated.

The SA course number will remain on your Purdue academic record for the duration of your time abroad. This holding number will be replaced by specific Purdue course equivalents, credits, and grades after the Study Abroad Office receives your official transcript from the host institution and the grade transfer process is initiated.

**NOTE:** This section describes Purdue's registration system only. Your host university or study program will have its own registration procedure. You will receive registration instructions in the acceptance materials from the host institution. Pay attention and make sure you are registered at both Purdue and at your overseas program.

**NOTE 2:** You are registering for a HOLDING NUMBER only! The SA number will remain on your Purdue academic record until we receive the transcript from your host institution and Study Abroad can start the grade and credit transfer process. Once this process starts, the SA number will be replaced by specific course numbers, course titles, credits and grades.

**Missed your time ticket schedule?**

Don’t worry. You can always try for the “Open Registration” period. Because there is no enrollment limit for SA courses, you cannot be closed out of a study abroad course.
Assessments and Grades

Each student on a study abroad program is required to take all examinations as scheduled by overseas faculty. Under no circumstances may students shorten the length of their program by making special arrangements with overseas professors or program coordinators. Only illness, with accompanying evidence of a health official, is considered a legitimate excuse for missing a final examination.

No incompletes (INC) are permitted for overseas courses. You must make every effort to fulfill all course requirements before you return to the United States.

Students participating in an official Purdue University study abroad program will receive direct credits (credits and grades). The good news: everything will count and you should make appropriate progress on your degree program. The “bad” news: You will have to work, and in all likelihood, work harder in order to maintain your desired GPA. There is no grade inflation abroad. Furthermore, courses are structured differently. Frequently, there are no quizzes, homework or attendance checks but the course grade will rest on one comprehensive final exam. Students find that they have to put forth more effort if they hope to get good marks.

There will be no grade adjustments! Grades you receive for your overseas program transfer to Purdue according to an internationally recognized standard grade conversion scale. So know what to aim for and check out the grade conversion scale for university study at your host country using these scales:

http://www.wes.org/wes_tools/index.asp
http://www.foreigncredits.com/resources/grade-conversion/

Choosing the courses you will take overseas

By the time you apply and are accepted to a study abroad program, you should have a pretty good idea of the courses that will be offered at your host institution, the courses you will, can, or want to take, and the degree requirements these courses will fulfill (major, minor, elective, general education). If you have yet to work out a plan of study for your time overseas, then you’d better get going!

Ideally, the first step is to discuss your study abroad plans with your academic advisor. With your advisor, you can go over your Purdue degree requirements to determine specific courses or categories of courses you need, you could go online to your program’s website for the course listings. Get the course descriptions of the courses you think correspond to the Purdue courses on your list or courses in the area in which you wish to study. By all means, ask your academic advisor if he or she is willing to offer guidance in helping you develop a tentative study plan.

While you should confer with your academic advisor about your plans to study abroad and work out a tentative study plan, he or she is not authorized to designate the Purdue course equivalent of an overseas course. For official course approval, you will have to consult the appropriate Study Abroad liaison.

Study Abroad Liaisons are faculty members or academic advisors who will designate the Purdue equivalents of the courses you wish to take abroad. They will also help you finalize your study plan by recommending courses that are suitable replacements for your Purdue degree requirements. When you meet with a liaison, be ready to discuss your study abroad program, the Purdue requirements you hope to complete, and the courses offered by your study abroad program. If you bring your computer to the meeting, be ready to pull up the program website or bring copies of the course descriptions for the courses that interest you.

The list of Study Abroad Liaisons can be found here:

http://www.studyabroad.purdue.edu/students/liaisons.cfm

NOTE: In some cases, your academic advisor is also the study abroad academic liaison for the area in which you want to take courses.
Examples of study plans:

Proposed study plan for a Management major who plans to take major courses and complete a Spanish minor while participating in the CIEE-Seville Business and Society Program in Seville, Spain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purdue University Courses/Requirements</th>
<th>CIEE-Seville Business and Society Program courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPAN elective</td>
<td>Intensive SPAN for Students of Bus and Econ (required of all participants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPAN 302</td>
<td>SPAN 3002 Advanced Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPAN 241</td>
<td>LITT 3501 Short Stories in Spain and Latin America, or LITT 3104 Cervantes and El Quijote, or LITT 3103 Women Writers in 20th Century Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPAN minor electives (300-level and up): take any 2</td>
<td>HISP 3001 Flamenco in Andalusia: Culture, Language, Music, and Dance, or CINE 3101 Contemporary Spanish Film, or HIST 3101 20th-Century Span Political History, or SPAN 4002 Art and Fiesta: Andalusia and her Popular Traditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBHR requirement</td>
<td>ECON 3008 Euro Corporate Org, or BUSI 3104 Managing Multinational Workforces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Marketing requirement</td>
<td>BUSI 3101 International Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics requirement</td>
<td>ECON 3002 European Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management elective (open)</td>
<td>BUSI 3106 Leadership and Power in the International Business Environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proposed study plan for a Communications major, who plans to spend the spring term at Uppsala University, Sweden.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purdue University Courses/Requirements</th>
<th>University of Uppsala (Sweden) courses for spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global Perspectives</td>
<td>Conflicts: Regional Contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(SOC 342: Sociology of Peace and War?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New History of Central and Eastern Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(HIST 327: Central Europe 1500-2000?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History Requirement</td>
<td>Nordic History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Swedish History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The History of Empire…1500-2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences</td>
<td>Structure and Evolution of Stars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Phys 220: General Physics?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Ethics</td>
<td>Political Philosophy and Christian Social Ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Com 324: Intro to Organizational Com</td>
<td>Organizational Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Com 352: Mass Communication Law</td>
<td>Regulating Media and Communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These examples demonstrate why it is crucial to secure course approval / course equivalencies. The student will know which Purdue requirements can be satisfied by courses he or she takes abroad.
Securing Course Approval / Course Equivalency

Sample of a completed Course Approval Form

ALL courses students take abroad will be accounted for. NO EXCEPTIONS! If a course is listed on your host institution transcript—that course will be posted on your Purdue academic record.

This is why it is crucial for all students who study abroad to obtain approvals for ALL courses they plan to take, whether they take the courses for direct credits, transfer credits, or Pass/Not Pass. Why? First, because it is crucial to choose courses that will enable you to make progress toward your Purdue degree. Second, because the Study Abroad Office needs to know how the courses should be posted, i.e., the specific course numbers and titles, on your academic record. Third, because many host institution application forms ask for a tentative list of courses at the time of application.

To ensure that these objectives are met and so that you do not have to extend your time at Purdue needlessly, you should have your study plan pegged down as early as possible.

If you have not yet done so, below are the steps you need to follow. NOTE: We will assume that you know what kind of academic program you are getting yourself into, have examined the courses that are offered at your program site, and have determined that those courses could meet your academic needs.

Step 1: Discuss your study abroad plans with your academic advisor. Make a list of specific courses (SPAN 214 Spanish Literature or MGMT 200 Accounting) or categories of courses (gender studies, technical electives, Aesthetic awareness) that you can or should “take” abroad.

Questions to ask your academic advisor:
- What degree requirements do I have left to complete?
- Are there particular requirements you recommend I take abroad?
- Do I have major/minor courses that I should not complete overseas?
- I am participating in a study abroad program which will not offer courses in my major (show course list), what elective or GenEd requirements do I have left on my plan of study?
- Will I need letter grades for all the courses on my list? Are there courses I can take for Pass/Not Pass

Step 2: Research the course offerings for your study abroad program. Go to the program website or consult course catalogs in the SA Office and obtain course descriptions. Better yet, try to get the syllabi for the courses you wish to take. Check the availability and suitability of courses as appropriate substitutes for your Purdue requirements.

Step 3: On your own or with your academic advisor, make a preliminary selection of overseas courses that seem to match your Purdue requirements.

Step 4: Schedule an appointment with the appropriate study abroad academic liaisons to discuss your course selection and obtain approval. Bring your laptop and pull up the course listing page on your study abroad program website. Be prepared to discuss your degree requirements, your study abroad program and what courses are available. Bring the Course Approval Form which can be printed from your “My Study Abroad” page.

Step 5: Have the study abroad liaison complete and sign the Course Approval Form. Return to the Study Abroad Office. Don’t forget to keep a personal copy!

If you and/or your advisor have questions about the course approval process, call the Study Abroad Office at 765 494 2383.

NOTE: The academic liaisons will not simply tell you what classes you can take. You are expected to be an active participant in the course approval process.

If you and your academic advisor can come up with a tentative list of courses that will satisfy a list of degree requirements, the liaison will recommend which of those choices will fulfill your needs.

On the other hand, if you are ready with the list of courses you want or need to take, then the liaison will simply designate the equivalent Purdue courses. Whatever the case, you must be ready to discuss your academic plan with the liaison and to present descriptions/syllabi of the overseas courses.
The Importance of Securing Course Approval / Equivalency

There are several reasons why you need to secure course approval / obtain course equivalency for courses you plan to take abroad.

- The courses you take abroad are supposed to replace required courses on your degree program. Naturally, you would want to know which requirements are being met by each study abroad course.
- If you do not secure course approval / obtain the equivalency BEFORE enrolling in the course, there is no guarantee that the equivalency assigned later are suitable substitutes for your degree requirements.
- ALL the courses you take abroad—major, minor, electives, general education requirements, courses taken for fun, and even courses that will not count toward any requirement on your degree program — will be posted on your Purdue academic record. Thus, we need to know the course equivalency—the actual Purdue course number and title designated for each study abroad course — before we can post your credits and grades.
- No delay in posting grades. We can get going on the grade and credit transfer procedure as soon as the Study Abroad Office receives your transcript. But if there is a course or two for which you did not secure approval / equivalency, then everything stops and your grades will remain unposted until the approval comes through.

Obtaining Course Approval While Abroad

Occasionally, you will arrive at your destination with only a partial list of approved courses (as is the case with students participating in the Purdue Spain or Freiburg programs). More commonly, students arrive abroad to discover that a few of their courses have been cancelled or that there are more interesting course that they would like to take instead.

What should you do if you find yourself in this situation? Can you obtain course approval even though you are already abroad?

OF COURSE! Here’s what you need to do:

- Contact your study abroad and academic advisor and seek course approval from the appropriate study abroad liaison. First, consult your academic advisor if the replacement course will work for you. Second, send an email requesting approval for the new course to the appropriate study abroad liaison. Make sure you copy your academic advisor and study abroad advisor on the message so everyone is in the loop.
- In your email, be sure to include the title of the course and the course description. It will be even better if you can provide a syllabus. The response from the liaison may not be immediate so be patient.
- Finally, make sure you save the syllabus and course materials for additional review in case the study abroad liaison requests another course review.

BOTTOMLINE: You can always obtain course approval while you are abroad. Be ready with the information the liaisons need, i.e., course descriptions or syllabi. Be patient in case the liaison can’t get back to you immediately.

What to do if Course Approval was Never Obtained?

What if you just never sought approval for a course or courses at all?

If a course has not been approved, there is no guarantee that the Purdue equivalent that will be eventually assigned to it later will satisfy one of your degree requirements.

You should avoid this situation as much as possible. However, if you didn’t or couldn’t secure course approval for whatever reason prior to departure or while you are abroad, here’s what you can do:

- Make sure you bring back the course syllabus/syllabi and other evidence of coursework.
- Make an appointment with the appropriate study abroad liaison(s) and discuss the non-approved courses. Bring the necessary documentation to the meeting.

This extra step almost always leads to additional delays in posting the grades and credit to your Purdue record. Academic liaisons might not be too accommodating if you are seeking their assistance for a task you should have completed weeks or months ago. You will just have to be patient and hope for the best.

To avoid grief—get approval for all courses you take abroad either before you leave or while abroad!
The Pass / Not Pass Option

By default, students will receive letter grades for courses in a subject area approved for direct credit for that program. Just the same, a Purdue student accepted into a Purdue-approved study abroad program may choose the P/N option for courses approved for direct credit in that subject. In other words, these are the courses for which a student normally would have received a grade.

A study abroad student may take as many courses for Pass/Not Pass as long as the following conditions are satisfied:

- The student must first discuss the matter with and seek permission from his or her academic advisor.
- If the advisor grants the student permission to take a class or classes for P/NP, the advisor must complete, sign and date, and return the Pass/Not-Pass Form to the Study Abroad Office. Only signed and dated forms will be honored — permission granted by email will be denied!
- The signed and dated form must be submitted (hard copy or via email) to the Study Abroad Office as soon as possible. Ideally, the form must be filed in the student's Study Abroad folder before the end of the semester prior to departure for his or her overseas study site.
- While it is preferable that this decision be made prior to departure, P/NP approval can be granted while the student is already abroad. The signed and dated P/N form must arrive at the Study Abroad Office no later than eight weeks after the official start date of the study abroad semester program as listed in the Purdue registration system. NOTE: the official start date is often different from Purdue's official term start date. Thus, the 8-week deadline is not eight weeks after the start of that Purdue semester but the program's.

- SUMMER PROGRAMS: For programs with a duration of less than one semester, the Pass/Not-Pass Form must be signed and dated before 50% of the program has been completed, based on the official start and end dates of the program as listed in the Purdue registration system.
- If the student's academic advisor does not grant permission, the student must take the course for a letter grade.
- Once the P/NP Form is submitted, the decision cannot be reversed!
- It is up to the student's academic department to decide how the courses taken as Pass / Not Pass will be used to satisfy the student's degree requirements.
- It is up to the student to inquire from the academic advisor how the courses taken as P/NP will affect his or her academic progress.
- Pass/No Pass permission is not necessary if the student takes a course that has not been approved for direct credits for that program. In this case, the student will automatically receive transfer credits only.
- Students need to be aware that for courses taken P/N, they must earn at least the equivalent of a C- in order to receive the grade P. If students earn less than C-, the grade N (Not Pass) will be posted to the students' Purdue academic record.
- Once the official transcript from the host institution or program arrives at Purdue, the Study Abroad grade transfer coordinator will post the credits and grades according to what is listed on the student's course approval form and the P/NP form.

Taking a Course Not Approved for Direct Credit

All study abroad program courses are approved for direct credits (credits and grades) by one or more colleges at Purdue. So for example, the University of Bath in the U.K. has been approved for direct credits by the College of Science and College of Liberal Arts. Thus, any course within these disciplines (Math, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Literature, Psychology, Sociology, History) will come back to Purdue for credits and grades. However, Bath is a comprehensive university that also offers Engineering or Management courses. If a Purdue student takes these types of courses at Bath, he or she will receive TRANSFER CREDITS only (no grade).

Students do not need to submit a Pass/Not-Pass Form if the course or courses in question are in subjects that have not been approved for direct credit. Students need to consult the web page for the study abroad program or consult with their study abroad advisor to confirm which courses at the host program are approved for direct credits and which are not. If the course is not approved, the credit earned is transfer credit (credits only no grade).

Just the same, students need to get course approval for these courses because the Study Abroad Office needs to know how the course will be posted on the student's academic record.

It will be up to the student's academic department to decide how and if those credits can be applied toward degree requirements.

Bottom line: If you are not very flexible and need to graduate on time, do not take a course in an unapproved area unless you have explicit agreement from your academic advisor that those credits will count toward degree requirements.

Note: Some overseas universities offer the option of auditing courses, as does Purdue. If you choose to audit a course or courses while studying abroad, be aware that they will not appear on your Purdue transcript. Therefore, any audited courses should be in addition to the minimum required courses in a given term.
Course Changes in a Student’s Study Plan

If there are any changes in your academic program — no matter how trivial — inform the Study Abroad Office, your academic advisor, and the study abroad liaison.

Delays in posting the grades can occur if the course listed on the course approval form does not match the course title on the transcript from the host university.

So let us know if the following happens:

- You decide to take a course that has not received prior approval (i.e., not listed on your Course Approval Form).
- If an approved course has a course title change at the host institution.
- If an approved course has a course number change at the host institution.
- If an approved course has a schedule change, i.e., contact hours increased or decreased.

BOTTOM LINE: You must report any changes to your study plan no matter how seemingly minor. Purdue takes your overseas coursework very seriously.

Posting Grades and Grade Equivalents

When will your grades be posted? After your overseas studies, your host university or study program (CIEE, DIS, IES, SFS, or IFSA) will send a copy of the transcript to the Study Abroad Office. The timetable for various institutions will vary and we cannot demand a date when transcripts must be received. Sometimes, it takes time for our overseas partners to send us your transcript.

When we receive your transcript, the SA credits and grade coordinator consults your course Approval Form and all pertinent academic correspondence. Sometimes, a study abroad academic liaison may request a review of your overseas coursework. The coordinator completes the Grade Equivalency Form and sends the form to the Purdue Registrar.

The Purdue Registrar considers posting study abroad grades as a “Change of Grade” procedure. Thus, posting your grades from abroad will not be immediate. Furthermore, the Registrar’s Office manually posts each course taken overseas by each Study Abroad student. These factors could prolong the process.

If you need your grades posted sooner, for graduation, employment, or graduate school purposes, please inform the SA Office staff as early as possible and the overseas program director before you return to the United States.

How would you know the Purdue equivalents of grades you earn abroad? The grades on the transcript of students on U.S.-based co-sponsored programs will already be on the U.S. letter grade system. Students who will be attending regular university exchange programs can consult the World Educational Services website for an approximation of how their overseas grades will transfer to Purdue:

http://www.wes.org/gradeconversionguide/
http://www.foreigncredits.com/resources/grade-conversion

Settle all academic issues before you leave your host institution.

Complete all course requirements and know your grades before leaving your program site.

Contesting grades will be difficult to do once you are back at Purdue.

From Course Approval — Posting Grades

Completed course approval form: this must be completed before you leave Purdue.

Transcript from study abroad program: Your host institution will send your transcript to the SA Office. The courses listed here will be checked against the courses on your course approval form.

Course Equivalency Form: this is the form sent to the Purdue Registrar. Listed are the designated Purdue equivalents of your overseas course with credits and grades. Yes, your GPA will be affected unless you opted to take a course or two for P/NP.
Will I receive grades for courses taken abroad?

Yes. By default, students will receive direct credits for participating in a Purdue study abroad program. The credits and grades will be recorded on your Purdue transcript and will be factored into your GPA.

NOTE: There are 2 exceptions to the rule: (a) if a student was able to secure permission to take courses for Pass/No Pass and (b) if a student takes a course in an area that has not been approved for direct credits.

What courses can I take abroad?

So you can make progress on your degree program while abroad, you should try to choose courses that are suitable substitutes for some of your Purdue degree requirements.

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.

How many courses should I take while studying abroad?

Purdue requires all students to take the equivalent of at least 12 (per semester) or 6 (per summer) Purdue credits. Typically, that will be about 4 or 2 courses respectively. Just the same, Purdue defers to the host institution’s academic regulations. So, if your program requires you to take more than Purdue’s minimum credit requirement—you have to do so.

Can I take less than the required minimum credits?

No. Purdue requires all study abroad participants to take the equivalent of at least 12 Purdue credits every semester or 6 for the summer. If students take less than 12 or 6 credits, they could lose their financial aid, study abroad scholarship, and insurance coverage.

My program’s minimum requirement is 16 credits / 30 ECTS. Should I comply?

Yes, absolutely!

It is Purdue policy to abide by our partner’s regulations. Thus, if the program’s minimum credit requirement exceeds Purdue’s, you’ll have to comply with the host institution’s policy.

I discovered a couple on interesting courses after I arrived. May I take these courses instead of the ones that had been pre-approved for me?

No reason why you can’t. However, you will still need to get approval for those new courses.

You can always obtain approval for additional courses after arriving at your study site. If you find yourself in this situation, immediately consult the study abroad liaison and your academic advisor at Purdue. Provide as much information as you can about the new course and hope that it is a suitable replacement for one of your Purdue requirements.

I am a year ahead and studying abroad just for fun. Can I be exempt from securing course approval and getting direct credits?

Nope. All courses listed on your host university transcript will be posted on your Purdue academic record. The Study Abroad Office needs to know how the courses will be posted, i.e., the course titles for each course, hence the course approval.

I’m only taking courses for electives and GenEds, do I still need to get course approval?!

YES. All courses you take abroad, whether for grade, transfer, or P/NP, whether to satisfy degree requirements or just for fun, will be recorded on your Purdue academic record.

I’m only taking courses for fun - nothing will count toward my degree requirements. Do I still need to get course approval?!

Yup. See above.

I need to return home earlier than the program’s end date. Can I ask permission to take my exams early?

No. Students are expected to stay for the duration of the program and are prohibited from requesting early exams or special accommodations — unless it is the host institution’s policy to do for students who need to return to their home universities in time to start the next semester.

I’m working way harder than my classmates. They seem to be having more fun since they’re working for credits only. It’s not fair!

Tough! What Purdue says, goes. Look at the bright side instead — you studied abroad and still made progress on your degree to graduate on time.

What if, despite working just as hard if not harder than I worked at Purdue, I still just received a “C” for a class I took abroad Will Study Abroad bump up my grades and give me an A — a grade I probably would have received if I took the class at Purdue?

Nope. We do not make grade adjustments. You will just have to redouble your efforts and give every class your best shot.

Can I take all my courses for audit?

You can take as many courses for P/NP as you like; however, you must secure permission from your academic advisor and the P/NP Form submitted. It will be your responsibility to know how those credits will count toward your degree requirements. (See p. 2)

Can I take all my courses for Pass/No Pass?

Sure—as long as you have permission from your academic department. Review the conditions for taking courses for P/NP discussed elsewhere in this chapter.

Can I request that grades be optional?

No. All courses you take abroad and their corresponding grade will be posted on your academic record. However, if you were granted permission to take a course or two for P/NP, then you will earn credits only. The grade will not be posted. Ditto if you take a course in a subject area not approved for direct credit for that program.

Can I request that the grades I earn overseas not count toward my GPA?

If you have to take courses for direct credits, then those will count toward your GPA. If you took a course in an area not approved for direct credits or were granted permission to take as P/NP courses approved for direct credits, and YOU PASS THE COURSE, then the grades will not be posted and your overall GPA will not be affected.

My classmates from other universities are taking courses for credits only. Can I do the same?

Yes, but you must secure permission from your academic advisor, and the completed, dated and signed Pass / Not Pass Form must be submitted before the deadline (see Page 2-3)
Academic Success while Studying Abroad

The academic system overseas could be radically or just a tad bit different from what you are used to at Purdue. Every single returned student has said that courses are not necessarily harder at his or her host university, just different. For example, you may have to get used to not having detailed syllabi, homework, pop quizzes, and attendance checks. Similarly, you may have to assume primary responsibility for integrating an entire semester’s course materials for a final paper or exam at the end of the term that will determine your course grade. In all likelihood, you will have to develop new study skills, modify expectations and classroom behavior, and make a concerted effort to balance work and play.

While you should certainly make the most of your time abroad, you must also make sure you do not neglect your studies. Goofing off can be tempting, especially since many university systems overseas are less structured than what Purdue students are used to.

You need to pay attention to your class performance because (1) your grades will come back to Purdue, (2) if you want to brag to a recruiter that you studied abroad, you certainly want to show evidence that you actually did, (3) you are making a hefty investment by participating in this program so you might as well have something to show for it, and (4) you have to live up to people’s expectations that students from a renowned academic institution like Purdue are exceptional. Make Purdue proud!

What should you do to ensure you will do well academically?

• Prepare before departure. Purdue Study Abroad has an extensive pre-departure orientation program to get students as ready as possible for their term abroad. Take advantage of the sessions, particularly the pre-departure meetings which will give you an opportunity to meet Purdue students who have participated in the same program in the past semesters. They will serve as excellent resources for what you can do to gain academic success.

• Attend class regularly. The academic support that exists at Purdue will probably not be available abroad, so make it a policy to attend every class. Miss class and you could miss vital information. How will you catch up if there is no syllabus, no taped lectures, no readings reserved in the library, and no classmates from whom to borrow notes. This is especially important for students participating in a language program. It is a given that you will miss things simply because the class is conducted in another language. Don’t make the situation worse by missing class.

• Strive for balance. There is less hand-holding in universities overseas. If you are studying abroad, chances are, you will not be able to rely as easily on external checks — detailed syllabi, reading assignments, or homework — to determine how well you are doing in class, or to prod you to keep up. It’ll be up to good ol’ you to see to it that you stay on top of things while still living it up!

• Know what it would take to succeed in class. Ask professors and classmates what you need to do to be successful in class. In Europe, classes are less structured but the students know what is expected of them and are used to studying with less guidance. In Asia on the other hand, classes are quite structured and students can be quite competitive. Perhaps your professors will be more inclined to consider your work more carefully if they are aware that grades are important at your home institution.

• Get to know local students. Rather than asking other exchange or new study abroad students like yourself, get the scoop from veterans. Local university students or even academic year students will likely know the ropes, shortcuts, and easiest and best way to do something. In the process, you could even gain a new friend!

• Work hard. There is no grade inflation overseas. Don’t expect your usual As and Bs unless you put forth more effort into your schoolwork. If your classmates seem to be content to simply pass a course, don’t be lulled by their lackadaisical attitude. If your classmates take their studies very seriously, you will have to do the same to hold your own in class.

Many former study abroad participants have thrived while studying abroad in an academic environment very different from Purdue’s. We certainly hope you will be one of them.
A good study abroad experience begins at home!

This means that the amount and type of preparation you do before leaving the United States can contribute to a productive and enjoyable time while you are overseas. You are not really going to be gone for long, and thus do not have too much time to spare “getting the hang of things.” What you want is to hit the ground running by being ready at the outset to meet the opportunities and challenges that come your way. You must arrive at your destination already knowing the important facts, cultural norms, historical events, and current political, social, and economic situation of your host country and city. You do not have the luxury of spending a few weeks or months learning these things! On a practical level, you cannot afford to waste precious time like shopping for a comfortable pair of shoes because you decided to bring your cute designer sandals rather than a comfortable and sturdy pair of walking shoes for your host city’s cobblestone streets. It would be inconsiderate to hold up your class field trip while you scour the streets for a bank to exchange traveler’s checks when using your ATM card would have done the trick.

So before you pack your bags and go, we hope you will prepare thoroughly and conscientiously. This section focuses on the logistical matters, as well as the mental and emotional preparations involved in studying abroad.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Protect your Passport

While traveling, the most important thing is to keep your passport secure at all times! Before you leave for your destination, scan or photocopy the main information page of your passport so that if you should lose it, you will have a back-up copy to speed up the process of securing a replacement. Do not keep the photocopy with your passport. Instead, put it in another bag, take a photo of it with your phone, scan and save it on a flash drive or send it to yourself by email, or simply give a copy to your traveling companion.

Don’t just tuck your passport in an outside compartment of your bag or slip it in your pocket. Besides being extremely important to you, a passport (especially a U.S. passport) is a valuable commodity to foreigners. It can be sold for hundreds, even thousands of dollars, on the black market.

Getting your passport stolen is not your only concern. If you lose your passport while traveling and then cannot prove your citizenship, you may run into problems or delays.

During school days, you should leave your passport safely hidden in your room. When traveling to another city within or outside your host country, carry your passport with you but don’t take it out until requested. Don’t give your passport to anyone. You may be approached by people claiming to be “officials” who need to verify your identification. Before you surrender your passport – do the verifying yourself! These people may not be who they claim to be.
Many governments require a student visa if foreign nationals wish to study in their country. A visa is an official/legal permission to enter a country for a stated purpose and specified period of time and is granted by the government of that country. Visa requirements differ from country to country. Your study abroad advisor will let you know if you need to apply for a student visa and what the entry requirements are.

Students participating in study abroad programs in countries that do not require a visa will receive a letter from the Study Abroad Office for foreign entry purposes stating that the bearer of the letter is participating in an official Purdue study abroad program. (Be sure to keep either the original or a copy of this letter with your passport.) Even if the country requires no student visa, the student must be ready to present certain documents when going through Passport Controls at the point of entry. These could include: the official acceptance letter from the host institution, residence hall contract, proof of financial certification, and others. In many cases, non-visa students will have to secure a resident permit. The staff at the overseas site will help students secure official student or resident status.

**WARNING 1:** Argentina, Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, Russia and Spain are among the countries that require U.S. students to obtain a visa to enter the country. Applying for visas to these countries is a lengthy process and must be done carefully. If you arrive without a visa, you will not be allowed to board your connecting flight or you may even be deported immediately upon arrival if you don’t have the appropriate visa.

**It is important to begin the visa application process as soon as possible,** i.e., as soon as you receive the acceptance letter from the host institution. Some consulates require one or two personal visits to the appropriate consular office to submit the required application materials and the other to retrieve the visa. The entire process could also take from several weeks to a couple of months.

If you need a student or entry visa, contact the consular or embassy of the host country directly, or consult the list of countries and the visa requirements for U.S. citizens at this site:

http://travel.state.gov/visa/americans/americans_1252.html

If you are not a U.S. citizen, you should contact the appropriate consulate or embassy immediately for instructions, as visa requirements can be more complicated and can take considerably longer to process. To obtain the phone number for embassies or consulates in the United States, please refer to the “Foreign Consular Offices in the U.S.” website at:

http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/index.htm

**WARNING 2:** Visa requirements change often and may even differ from consulate to consulate (e.g. the French consulate in Chicago may have different requirements than the French consulate in San Francisco). Therefore be careful when accepting advice from other students! This advice may be inaccurate or outdated.

**Applying for a Visa**

If you have to apply for a visa, know that you cannot do so without first receiving official documents from your host university or study program. Nevertheless, you could get started on some preliminary tasks:

- **Determine if you need to procure a student visa based on where you will be studying abroad.**

- **Determine which consulate to work with.** Depending on your host country, you may need to submit your application to the visa-issuing office according to your state of permanent residence or the state where you are attending a university.

  - Complete the visa application which you obtained from the appropriate consulate or downloaded from the consulate’s website.

  - Compile the required information and submit all the documents to the consulate for processing. If you are asked to submit additional information or documentation, do so immediately.

  - You will most likely be required to send your passport with your visa application; therefore you should send it by express or certified mail. In addition make a copy of your passport and any accompanying information, in case these materials are lost.

  - If you plan on traveling in and out of your host country, you may need to request a “multiple-entry” student visa.

  - You may be required to obtain a tourist visa for the country or countries you wish to visit while traveling. It is a good idea to research the entry requirements of these countries before you leave the United States or your home country in the case of international students. In many cases you cannot apply for a visa outside the U.S.
FINANCIAL ISSUES

Studying abroad will always involve an expenditure of money. The most salient of course will be the actual cost of participating in an exchange program, direct-enroll, Purdue-administered, or co-sponsored program.

In addition to actual program costs, you will also be expected to shoulder travel and miscellaneous expenses. Your immediate concern will probably be how to set up your funds now for easy access while you are overseas.

With exceptions, the overall cost of living abroad can be higher than at home. Because you are in an unfamiliar environment, with costs stated in the local currency you may not be able to translate immediately into dollars. You may get sticker shock later after you realize the dollar equivalent of that pint of beer or a box of pizza. You may also be confronted with an almost endless array of entertainment possibilities and attractions. A cautious approach to buying makes the most sense. There is nothing more dismaying than to run out of funds overseas, with no easy or quick means of replenishment. In general, students’ spending habits vary depending upon the funds available, personal spending allowance, and the amount devoted to eating out, shopping, and travel. You will probably spend more during the first month or so, but as you become more accustomed to life in your host city, you should be able to do more with less.

In this section, you will get a rundown on the financial issues associated with studying abroad, as well as tips on handling funds and stretching your dollars. By managing your funds wisely, you should be able to study abroad without much financial setback.

Study Abroad Deposit and Program Cost

All Purdue study abroad participants are required to complete and return a Participation Form and remit a non-refundable Study Abroad deposit to secure a place in the program. This deposit will be applied toward the student’s tuition (those on exchange programs) or study abroad fee (those on co-sponsored or direct-enroll programs). The student will not be nominated to the host institution or his or her application endorsed, unless the participation form is turned in and the deposit remitted.

This deposit is nonrefundable meaning that if a student voluntarily withdraws from the study abroad program — i.e., the student reconsiders his or her study abroad plans, accepts an offer of employment, withdraws because of a personal reason, or decides that studying abroad will hinder him or her from making degree progress — the deposit will not be returned or credited to the student’s Purdue account. The only time a deposit is returned is if the student’s application is denied by the host institution, the student’s visa application is denied, or the student becomes ineligible to study abroad if placed on academic or disciplinary probation.

Students participating in exchange programs will be billed their regular level of Purdue tuition and fees (resident, non-resident, differential fees, special fees) plus a fee for mandatory overseas health insurance. The fee must be paid by the date determined by the Purdue Bursar’s Office. Please note that installment plans are not available for the period students are participating in a study abroad exchange program.

Students participating in co-sponsored, direct-enroll, or Purdue-administered programs will be billed a Study Abroad Fee plus a fee for overseas health insurance, except on programs in which insurance is already included in the program provider’s study abroad fee.

Students on co-sponsored programs will pay the sponsor (CIEE, IES, DIS, Arcadia, etc.) directly for the cost of the program. Consult your study abroad advisor if you have questions about the billing process for a co-sponsored program.

If a student is receiving financial aid, U.S.-based co-sponsored programs will typically have a payment deferral plan. Ask your study abroad advisor if your program has this option.

Many non-Purdue based scholarships and tuition remission plans do not apply to co-sponsored programs; therefore students receiving these benefits need to discuss payment of fees for co-sponsored programs with the appropriate agency or administrative office. Please note that installment and deferred payment plans are not available at Purdue for the period students study abroad, but some cosponsored programs may offer installment plans for their fees.

Payment of the bursar fee statement (full tuition or the study abroad fee) must be made in full by the requested deadline; failure to pay on time will result in the cancellation of a student’s registration at Purdue University. Reinstatement involves paying a late registration fee.

When a student is approved to participate in Purdue’s study abroad program, a study abroad deposit is requested to hold the person’s spot in the program. This deposit is nonrefundable if the student voluntarily withdraws from participation in his or her study abroad program.
Paying for Accommodations

If students are participating in a co-sponsored, departmental or direct-enroll program, the fee for guaranteed accommodations is typically included in the comprehensive program fee. Depending on program, students could live in flats, university residence halls, or with a host family. The latter is typical for language programs where staying with a family of native speakers provides even more opportunities for the student to hone his or her language skills.

With a few exceptions, students participating in exchange programs have guaranteed housing at the host university. Accommodation fees for exchange programs will be paid directly to the university housing office, the residence hall management, or landlord, not to Purdue University.

Exchange program accommodations are usually at an on-campus residence hall or off-campus flats, residencias, or kollegiums. In only a very few cases can homestays be arranged.

Payment of Fees at Overseas Site

In addition to housing costs that exchange students must pay to the host university, some institutions also charge a mandatory student services fee which will be remitted by a bank transfer from the United States or onsite at registration with a credit card.

Moreover, any outstanding accounts will be brought to the attention of the Study Abroad Office and we will be obligated to place an encumbrance on your Purdue account until the balance is paid. An encumbrance will block your registration for the upcoming semester and access to your academic records. Moreover, your study abroad academic credits and grades will not be posted until the debt is resolved.

In several exchange programs in Asia, the students have to pay their semester housing in full prior to the start of the semester. Consult your program’s cost sheet or ask your advisor if you have questions about housing charges.

A few exchange host universities in Spain, Ireland and France have no halls of residence. Students must look for their own accommodations with some assistance from the host institutions.

Scholarships and Financial Aid

Financial Aid: Financial aid can be applied to study abroad. However, these awards are processed no earlier than 10 days prior to the start of a student’s overseas program. If you are a financial aid recipient, you need to be prepared to shoulder initial expenses like program deposits, travel arrangements, and others which must be done months before your program start date.

If you are participating in a U.S.-based co-sponsored program and will use financial aid to cover your fees, notify the program provider immediately! You may be granted a grace period to pay your fees at a later date. You will most likely have to complete a form that must be signed by a Purdue financial aid counselor. This form alerts the program provider that you will remit the balance of your payment after you receive your financial aid, which is usually just before your program’s start date.

Scholarships. Purdue students who study abroad are eligible to receive the Purdue Big Move Study Abroad Scholarship of $3000-for the semester or $1000-$2000 for short-term programs. Students apply through a link on their My Study Abroad page. Big Move scholarships are issued midway through the semester assuming the students complete and return the Early Disbursement Form, sent as an attachment on their scholarship email notification.

Establish a personal study abroad fund! Be frugal prior to departure. Pass up on a spring break trip. Prepare your meals in your apartment rather than dine out. It is always better to have money left over than not to have enough.

If students require additional financial assistance, they should look into scholarship opportunities as early as possible. The Purdue Study Abroad website has a list of national and local scholarships. These non-Purdue scholarships are always competitive so work on the application early and be tenacious and persistent in putting together an impressive application. Be mindful of application deadlines and service requirements associated with a scholarship.

If you are receiving financial aid or expect a Purdue study abroad scholarship, we recommend that you have a direct deposit arrangement with the Purdue Bursar. You can authorize the Bursar’s Office to deposit the refunds directly into your personal bank account.
Accessing Your Funds from Overseas

How much do you need? The estimated expenses listed on the cost sheet your study abroad advisor gave you earlier this semester should give you an idea of the costs you will incur for the semester, year, or summer that you spend overseas and allow you to set a budget. Whatever your budget will allow, the most basic thing is to determine the form this money will be available to you.

ATM/Debit Cards. Past participants tended to use a combination of credit and ATM/debit cards for handling money. The easiest and most economical way to have cash for daily expenses is to have an ATM card and its 4-digit Personal Identification Number (PIN). With this card, you can withdraw local currency directly from your US bank account at more favorable exchange rates. Be sure to leave your bank account number with your family so funds can be deposited or transferred into your US account on a regular basis.

The biggest advantage of exchanging money with your ATM card is that all cash withdrawals, regardless of size, are exchanged based on the wholesale exchange rate which is usually reserved only for very large interbank exchanges. This rate is often 2-5% better than what you can get from exchanging traveler’s checks at a local exchange counter.

Inform your bank that you will be making ATM withdrawals abroad and consider increasing your maximum withdrawal amount. Check that your PIN will work abroad. Many ATMs abroad, particularly in Europe, do not accept PINs that are longer than four digits. If your PIN is longer, you can go to your local bank and have it changed. European keypads also do not have letters, so know your 4-digit PIN numerically. Also, you should ask your bank about any charges that may be imposed for withdrawing money overseas. Make an attempt to negotiate to have this fee reduced or waived. Ensure that you have the phone number of your local bank for any emergencies.

TIP: Note that there is often a limit on how much you can withdraw from your account each day and a transaction fee every time you withdraw cash. Inquire at your bank to see if the bank could waive the transaction fee for the duration of your stay abroad. The fee could be as much as $3 per transaction and over time, this could add up. If the fee cannot be waived, consider requesting an increase in your daily limit so you could make fewer but larger withdrawals. Another thing you can do is to consider opening an account with a bank like Chase or HBS that have branches overseas and will not charge a fee if you use your ATM card.

Traveler’s Checks. Another safe way to carry money when traveling is to have traveler’s checks. Fees to cash traveler’s checks however are typically quite high so avoid using them for everyday spending. Reserve these for emergencies only! Thomas Cook and American Express are the most widely recognized. Leave a copy of your check numbers at home and keep check receipts in a separate place overseas. Record the cash number when you cash traveler’s checks. In the event they are lost or stolen, traveler’s checks can be replaced if you have the check numbers.

Credit Cards. We recommend that all study abroad participants carry a major credit card in their name. Visa and MasterCard are accepted in most places in the world (not Discover cards).

WARNING: The United States is the only developed country still primarily using credit and debit cards with magnetic strips. The rest of the industrialized world has already switched, or is transitioning, to the chip-based cards. Your credit card may not work abroad. Ask if your bank offers smart chip technology for its credit cards. Chase Visa/MC offers this option for US travelers.

A process of payment for credit card bills should be established before your departure from the U.S. Before you leave the United States, notify your credit card company that you will be using the card abroad. You should also obtain your credit card company emergency phone number to use while overseas. If your card is lost or stolen, you will be able to call toll-free to have an immediate stop put on its use.

Visa, American Express, MasterCard, and Diner’s Club credit cards are accepted for purchases and services, and can also be used to obtain cash advances, but at a much higher rate than using an ATM card. Avoid using your credit card to obtain cash.

Debit cards, or check cards, which deduct the cash on items you charge directly from your checking account, work pretty much the same way as a regular credit card. They can be used internationally to access cash and will give you the same wholesale exchange rate. HOWEVER: beware when using a debit card to pay for large purchases! Because the money is immediately deducted from your account, you won’t have time to review transactions and could have a harder time disputing questionable charges made to your card.

Opening a local bank account. Of late, we’ve been getting reports that more and more students are opting to open a bank account overseas for these reasons: (1) students get a local debit card that can be used all over the region with no transaction fee, (2) local payments, either by cash or bank transfer is easier, (3) no transaction fees need to be paid to the U.S. bank. The study abroad staff at your host institution should be able to assist you to open a bank account. If you plan to do this, be sure to set up the fund transfer procedure before departure and bring all required documentation with you when you go to the local bank to open your account.

Cash. Although cash, once lost and stolen cannot be replaced, it is easy to use and always accepted. You should always have a cash reserve on you for small purchases or emergency expenses. The importance then is how to carry your money and ATM and credit cards safely and conveniently. Chapter IV has a Safety Tips section with suggestions for carrying your money while abroad.
The Frugal Student

Sigh! Unfortunately, the dollar is not the strong currency it once was – especially against the Euro or the British pound. Some years ago, a €100 hotel costs $110. Now, it’s about $135. And the general feeling is: it’ll get worse, not better. What you need to do is to sharpen your budget skills and spend your hard-earned money more carefully. For the most part, this is simply common sense and dispelling the notion that you must spend a lot in order to have a terrific study abroad experience. Studying abroad need not involve a lot of money. You can be frugal and still have an enjoyable, productive, and absolutely memorable experience.

Here are some suggestions from travel guru Rick Steves.

www.ricksteves.com/travel-tips

- Seek out free entertainment. City parks, town squares, pedestrian districts, and downtowns offer interesting sights and sounds. Visit churches. Know which museums are free to the public (British Museum in the UK)! Mingle with the locals!
- Walk as often as you can and save your fare money for something else. Most Americans think of walking as an exercise rather than something to get them somewhere. People in many parts of the world think nothing of walking a few miles to work or school everyday. In London, don’t use the Tube if you are traveling fewer than 4 stations.
- Yes, it is tempting to eat out often, but preparing your own meals is probably more nutritious and certainly cheaper. Can’t cook? Write down the recipes of your favorite dishes on note cards and take with you or learn to prepare a few simple local dishes. Be prepared to improvise.
- If you do eat out, avoid touristy restaurants with “We speak English” signs. Go where the locals eat. You get better food for less money.
- Be a cultural chameleon. Drink tea in England, beer in Prague, red wine in France. Eat fish in Portugal and reindeer in Norway. Going with the local specialties gets you the best quality for the best price.
- Picnics also save money. Buy a loaf of freshly baked bread (from a local bakery), a hunk of cheese, a bottle of wine, and voila – an elegant lunch in a city park!
- Minimize paying ATM transaction fees by making fewer but larger withdrawals.
- Do your shopping in cheaper countries where gifts are more interesting and your shopping dollar stretches the farthest. Don’t be afraid to haggle! In many parts of the world, this is expected.
- Look up friends, relatives, and contacts. Enjoy local hospitality with gusto. Works better if you are also interesting and charming.
- Know what local passes are available. Eurail or Britrail passes can only be purchased in the US and are often pricier than passes available to the locals.
- Know your travel options. Eurail passes can offer big savings – but only if you are traveling a lot over several days. For short tips, point-to-point tickets are cheaper. Sometimes, Europe’s highly competitive no frills can get you from one city to another faster and cheaper than the train.
- Always ask for a student discount. You never know – it could be available!
- Buses, while slower, are cheaper than trains. Train fare from London to Edinburgh costs about $150 but only $50 by bus. Weigh the pros and cons of cost versus speed.
- Wear a money belt. You’ll save money by not losing it.
- Always take a moment to review any transaction. Assume you’ll be short-changed. Always ask how much. Don’t let a cashier rush you. Smile but be savvy.
- Travel with a buddy to share and save.
- Take the roads less traveled. The more popular the city, the more expensive it is. Thus, choose Lyon over Paris, Bruges over Brussels, Glasgow over London.
- Throughout Europe, meals are cheaper at the bar than at a table. Get a table if you want to linger and enjoy the atmosphere. If you only want a quick bite, just go to the bar. A caveat: you could be eating standing up!
- Requiring some precautions, staying at a youth hostel rather than a hotel can save you money.
- Stay healthy and be mindful of your safety at all times. You don’t want to be saddled with medical bills.

How simple and frugal a thing is happiness: a glass of wine, a roast chestnut, a wretched little brazier, the sound of the sea... All that is required to feel that here and now is happiness is a simple, frugal heart.

Nikos Kazantzakis
COMMUNICATING AND SHARING YOUR OVERSEAS EXPERIENCE

Regular communication with friends and family is a way of sharing your study abroad experience and allowing the important people in your life to vicariously live the study abroad experience.

Study Abroad participants are thus eager to get information on cell phones and emailing opportunities while they are overseas. This next section should give you a good handle on how you can preserve your memories and share your adventures with the folks back home.

Cell Phones, Computers, and Email

To really take advantage of a cell phone overseas, you will want to purchase your own unlocked GSM cell phone and a local prepaid SIM card. This is a much more affordable option if you'll be making lots of calls, since it gives you 24/7 access to cheap European rates (rather than having to pay pricey international roaming fees). Although remarkably cheap, this option does require a willingness to do a bit of shopping around for the right phone and card. Savvy travelers who routinely buy separate SIM cards swear by this tactic. You can also just buy a basic cell phone in most countries for $40—$50, which typically includes some call time. This is usually the best option for students studying overseas. Unlike typical cell phones in the US, GSM world cell phones do not come with phone numbers programmed into them and the actual service is not even tied to the phone itself. Instead customers activate their mobile phones by popping in SIM cards, little thumbnail sized devices that determine your cell phone number and any additional services like voicemail.

A pre-paid SIM card for each country you visit gives you a local phone number and local calling rates are usually a low 25 cents/minute. It is easy, convenient, and relatively inexpensive for you to call other people in the country you're visiting, and easy and normal for them to call to you on your local number, too. Best of all, incoming calls are FREE regardless of where they originate. You can replenish your airtime on the SIM card by purchasing an airtime voucher in one of the local currency denominations. They are available at most newsstands, kiosks and convenience stores. The airtime vouchers are scratch cards that have a pin code which you simply key into your phone for immediate credit.

In summary, with a prepaid cell phone you have a cost effective way of staying in touch with no bills, no roaming charges and no hassles.

Know the country calling codes! Be sure your family and friends know how to dial from the United States to call you overseas. At the same time, know how you can make overseas calls from your host country. Check if your long-distance phone company (AT&T, MCI, or Sprint) has a special rate between the United States and country where you will be studying.

Calling over the Internet: A few things that seem too good to be true...really are true. And making totally free voice and video calls over the Internet is one of those things. Taking advantage of this option can help you stay in better touch, and spend far less. All you need is a smartphone, tablet, or laptop; a strong Wi-Fi signal; and an account with one of the major Internet calling providers: Skype, FaceTime (preloaded on most Apple devices), or Google+ Hangouts. To get started, visit the service’s website or download its free app, and register. Once you’re signed up, you can talk online via your computer to a
buddy with a device running the same program — just look for them on your list of contacts, and click “Voice Call” or “Video Call.” If both of you have cameras, you can see each other while you chat. You can even show off the perfect piazza view out your hotel-room window. NOTE: Beware of hackers hijacking your Skype account. There are reports of keystroke hackers and users end up saddled with large amounts on their bill.

Many Internet calling programs also work for making calls from your computer to telephones worldwide. Most services charge a very reasonable fee — generally just a few cents per minute (you’ll have to prebuy some credit). For example, many students use Skype to make computer-to-telephone calls to home.

**Email.** E-mail is by far the cheapest form of communication and having a laptop computer made this quite easy, what with free WiFi available in many institutions and cities overseas. In addition, having a computer also makes writing papers and downloading photos more convenient. The AC adapter of most laptops today are dual voltage and can be used anywhere in the world with a plug adaptor.

If you prefer not to bring a computer, you should have computer access at your host university or program office. Internet cafes are also plentiful and cheap in many cities around the world. Try creating a mass email list so you can update a group of people in less time. If you do have to send mass email updates, ask your family to save the messages for you. When you return home and are ready to assemble your photo album, your email updates can provide the narratives for the photos you took or the mementos you collected.

This may strike you as a strange suggestion, but try not to email or call home too often because that can really slow down the adjustment process. Set up a communication schedule: a specific time of the week when family and friends can call you. Many returned students suggest a phone call at regular intervals, planned in advance — and we think that’s an excellent solution. Sometimes a situation can arise which we call “destructive dialing”: 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.

We also tend to discourage constant email correspondence, though it’s extremely useful for trouble-shooting. The problem is that if you are able to log-on and chat electronically at will, the incentive to integrate with the community abroad is much decreased. Instead of exploring your host country or making friends with the locals, you are spending valuable time emailing people. If you are participating in a language program, it’s obviously better if you are not communicating extensively in English by email when you’re trying to improve your fluency by immersion in a foreign language. So send email updates occasionally, but don’t feel compelled to chat with family and friends.

### Cameras and Photo-sharing sites

Digital cameras are invaluable for ease of use, and for the speed with which students can share photos with family and friends. Definitely don’t leave home without one.

Showing your photos to family and friends is one way they can share your experience. Years from now, you will be able to relive your wonderful semester abroad! Just the same, know when to draw the line and just let the experience happen. If your experience is being hindered by the constant need to take photographs, you may want to reconsider. Don’t sacrifice your journey so you will have some photos to look at later. Over-use of the camera can take away from your travel experience by removing some of the spontaneity while you look for the perfect shot.

Consider opening an account with an online photo site like [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com), [www.picasa.com](http://www.picasa.com), [www.shutterfly.com](http://www.shutterfly.com), or [www.snapfish.com](http://www.snapfish.com). This way, all you have to do is download your photos on the web and your family and friends from back home can view them at their leisure.

However, don’t just indiscriminately download hundreds of photos and then expect your family and friends to appreciate them all. Either edit the photos from your digital camera before downloading them on the photo sites, or just download a few photos at a time. Above all, don’t forget to include descriptions! A sentence or two about a photograph is what will make it come alive to the simple viewer. There’s a difference between a photo of you atop an elephant and the same photo with the sentence, “This beast’s trunk started slapping my hand for a banana treat the minute the trek started. By the time we reached Chiang Mai, my banana bunch was gone!” Some study abroad students invite friends to view all 50 photos at a time, and many are simply duplicate shots! (Of course, if you follow the tips listed in the next section, you won’t end up with a lot of ho-hum photographs.)
Taking Great Shots

By all means, take photos! Lots of them! And while you’re at it, try to take the best shots that you can. Renowned photographers from the National Geographic magazine share the following tips for taking unforgettable photographs:

- Keep your images simple, clean, and focused. Make them graphically strong and uncluttered. Identify your subject or center of interest (around which everything else will be peripheral) and then compose the background. -Steve McCurry
- Photograph what you can relate to, a mood that’s familiar to you. Great photography does not come from being in Madrid, or Sydney, or London. It’s the photo’s focal point that will make it memorable. Including people in your photos, even if they are not the primary subjects, creates a “moment.” People add scale, vitality, and sensibility. -David Alan Harvey
- Getting close to people is the best way to get close to the culture. The camera is a great tool for meeting people. Be friendly and polite, listen to people, and take your cues from how they are acting. Sit down with people and you’ll get great pictures. Always ask permission before taking photos of people. Photos of nature and landscapes are boring. There is no sense of scale, and no sense of “you are there.” When you include people in your photos, have them do something like walk, talk or climb – anything but just standing there. Every photo should be capturing a moment in time. -Catherine Karnow
- Cloudy days can be fine for portraits of people and close-ups, but nothing beats that early-morning or late-evening light. For some reason, the evening light always lasts longer and can sometimes be best after the sun has set. Keep your equipment light and simple. You’ll only shoot great pictures if you have a camera on you. -John Kernick

Keeping a Journal

You will visit many places and see many wonderful things, but most certainly, the greatest journey takes place inside of you. It is for this reason we strongly suggest that you keep a journal, either in book or electronic form.

You might think you have a good memory, but many of the things that you will experience abroad will only be kept in short-term memory storage (in your brain, that is). A few weeks after the event – you will forget many of the details unless you jot down a sentence or two in a journal, on a mass email you write to friends and family, on a blog, or alternatively, in the photos you take.

Writing is thinking. Keeping a journal gives a record of events, activities, and thoughts. It engages you in your personal overseas experience through thinking, interpreting, and analyzing cross-cultural situations.

Making regular entries will certainly take some time and energy. Whether you make daily entries or write only when the urge hits you will be up to you – but get into the journaling habit! It is one of the best things you can do to enrich your study abroad experience.

While many students agree that keeping a journal while studying abroad is a good idea, many end up getting bogged down with the recording and writing task and give up. The thing is: almost everyone regrets not keeping a journal!

One of the main reasons people give up on writing a journal is that they find the process of writing down every detail of their experience overwhelming and sometimes quite boring. Many journal entries go something like this: “First we went … and then we saw … and then we went … and then ….” This type of writing stifles your creative juices and does not encourage good writing technique. Plus, it’s too laborious – it will take a while to regurgitate your entire day on paper.

We suggest keeping a journal in which the emphasis is less on the chronological details and more on your impressions, feelings, vivid descriptions, and ideas. Certainly, jot down names and places, and include narratives as much as you can. However, if you don’t have time, even short descriptions and keywords will ensure that you will have some way of remembering the amazing and unforgettable people, places, and events that you will encounter during your time overseas.

One thing you can do is purchase a sturdy but portable notebook, diary or journal with heavy pages and use the pages to “record” daily events: paste or tape mementos from your time abroad (tickets, menus, maps, candy wrappers, postcards, newspaper clippings), doodle or draw interesting objects you observed or jot down names, phones numbers, addresses, impressions, ideas.

You can also go the electronic route by setting up an account with blog sites like www.facebook.com, www.wordpress.com, www.blogger.com. While you may be writing for the people following your blog, eventually, you will realize that your blog has successfully captured and tracked your personal journey while studying abroad. Reviewing your writings later, you would read about your early impressions about your new environment, the people you meet, your classes, where you are living and how these impressions changed over time. You will most likely be astonished and impressed at your transformation from a bewildered new student to a confident person by the time you have to return home.
How to Write a Blog You Want to Read!

An online blog while you are studying abroad will be valuable for many people. For you, the blog will serve as a record of your thoughts, impressions, memorable experiences, and unique insights of your life abroad. For your family and friends, your regular posts will be their way of vicariously experiencing your adventures. For outbound students, your entries will be useful information from students who’ve “been there, done that..” And for prospective students at Purdue, reading about your escapades and living to tell the tale, so to speak, might entice them to study abroad too. After all, if you can do it, then perhaps so can they!

As a blog writer, you probably want to attract and maintain regular readership. It will be more satisfying to write if you know there are readers waiting with baited breaths for your new entries. It will be disappointing if by the time your study term ends, that only your parents and siblings are still reading your posts. Below are some tips for how you can maintain, and hey, perhaps even increase your followers.

1. Decide on a topic, point of view, or your niche.
   The most essential element of your blog is content -- and what you should strive for is original content, written in a style and with a point of view that makes the blog unique (even when there are hundreds of other blogs with the same or similar topic). Do not use the blog to simply feature a blow-by-blow account of your daily study abroad experiences. Most new blogs are just a list of events connected with adjectives. Come up with a thesis statement for each post and let the contents revolve around that point.

2. You should be writing a blog that has personality, and that personality should be your own.
   Your blog needs to be capable of reflecting who you are, and your own personality. If it reads like a bunch of dull news, then it is highly unlikely that visitors will want to return. So, if you love your subject then let your readers know, share your enthusiasm, make it contagious.

3. Write with the reader in mind.
   What is in it for your readers? Readers want to find fresh, valuable, entertaining remarkable information. Make an effort to deliver more than just facts. Make it about them too, not you.

4. Brevity is a virtue.
   A long post is easier to forget and harder to get into. A short post is the opposite. Give the maximum amount of information with the least amount of words. Keep things short and simple, because most people simply skim and scan over material. So unless you have a really good reason to post lengthy entries in your blog, do not burden your readers with too much information.

5. Make headlines snappy.
   Entice people to read your entries with an intriguing or provocative headline -- but don’t mislead them.

6. Write in the same way that you talk.
   It is okay to use common expressions and to write conversationally. Let your blog be fluid, conversational and friendly, and your readers will keep coming back for more.

7. Tell people about your blog.
   It is not true that “if you write it, they will come.” Every blogger has to promote his or her blog. Let people know your blog is out there and be clear about what it has to offer.

8. Edit your post.
   Good writing is in the editing. Before you hit the submit button, re-read your post and cut out the stuff that you don’t need. Look for typos and for grammatical errors. Don’t publish spelling mistakes. Polish your content to show that you respect your readers.
The key to packing for your time abroad is economy. Since you will be carrying your own luggage during the trip, often for long stretches in airports, bus and train stations, and from the station to your residence hall or apartment, you must pack sensibly. Do not bring items that will distract you from the multitude of interesting experiences awaiting you. No student has ever complained about packing too little. But, oh, do we hear groans from almost everyone who packed too much!

Here’s what we suggest. Pack what you plan to take, then walk around the block two or three times and go up and down stairs. If you can’t make it, you’ve over packed! The lighter your bags, the better! Besides, you should expect to purchase a few items while overseas. Fashion at your host city could be different and you will probably want to get the latest duds. Europe and Asia are probably a year or two ahead of the United States style-wise. You’ll also probably purchase a souvenir or two (or more!). So here are some general suggestions that apply to travel anywhere in the world.

**Checked Luggage and Carry-on Bags**

You will be packing your whole semester in 2 suitcases so invest in rugged, well-made, versatile, lightweight luggage. Here are a few other things to remember:

- Label your luggage on both the outside and the inside with your name, address, and destination. If you do not know your overseas address, give the program or university address.
- With the heightened security these days, passengers are not able to lock their suitcases anymore since bags could be searched by TSA agents anytime. You can “lock” your bags with twist ties or locks that are TSA-approved. Just the same, be sure to take a lock with you so you can lock your bags when you arrive at your destination. If you’re taking most of your belongings in a duffel bag or backpack, have at least one small suitcase that locks so you can use it for your valuables.
- Luggage can occasionally go astray. Don’t pack valuables, medication, or your passport in checked suitcases.
- In your carry-on bag, pack only your essentials (such as prescriptions, personal hygiene items, passport and a change of clothes) and valuable items (tickets, passport, computer, jewelry, camera, important documents). Put everything else in your checked bags.
- Attach a bright tag or ribbon to your luggage handle so it will be easy to distinguish from all other black bags on the airport conveyer belt. Better yet, get a more colorful, conspicuous bag.
- If you plan to do a lot of traveling (vacation, overnight, or weekend trips), avoid hand-held suitcases or bags and opt for a backpack for hands-free travel. Your backpack should be light, durable, and comfortable. Get one made of tough fabrics like pack-cloth or Cordura. Go with a reputable name brand to ensure quality.
- When you purchase your backpack, try it on and adjust the straps, pads, and internal frame. Make sure the pack fits your body contours. Check out the quality of the suspension system. The suspension system of most modern packs is designed to transfer most of the weight to your hips reducing back strain. Play with the adjustments to fine-tune the fit. If a pack does not feel right now, it won’t feel right after several hours of walking around.
- Take a day-pack with you. You can either buy a separate one or just buy a travel backpack that has a detachable daypack that zips onto the outside. You can use your daypack for daily outings while you leave the large pack at the hostel or the local train station.
Packing the Essentials

Pack your travel documents in your carry-on bag. These should not be in your checked luggage. In addition to tickets and passport, you should also have important documents like acceptance letters, financial statements, and others.

While you may want to exchange a small dollar amount for the currency at your host country through your local bank, you do not have to exchange a very large amount. You need only to have enough for emergencies and to tide you over for a day or two until you can get to a local ATM. Chances are, you can immediately find one at your arrival airport. Below are a few more pointers:

- Pack your medication in your carry-on luggage.
- Purchase a money belt or neck pouch for cash, plane tickets, and passport. Wear this inside your clothing when traveling. If you have to take out money, do so in private.
- Make copies of the information page of your passport, airline tickets, rail pass, ISIC card, hostel card, and traveler’s checks. Keep copies somewhere in your luggage and give one set of copies to a trusted person for safekeeping in the event that these items are lost or stolen. Another option is to scan these documents and store them in a memory stick, take photos with your phone, or send them to yourself as email attachments.
- Clean out your wallet before you leave. You don’t need your BoilerExpress card while studying abroad. Leave all unnecessary items at home.
- Remember to pack a change of clothing in your carry-on to get you through at least a day. Airlines do lose luggage.
- Board the plane with water and snacks for emergencies. You never know if the plane will sit for hours on the runway.
- For travel expenses while en route to your destination (meals, taxis, overnight accommodations if necessary), change a small amount of money into foreign currency. Ask your local banks if they provide this service.

Updated Travel Guide

Don’t leave home without purchasing the latest issue of a travel guide: Let’s Go, Lonely Planet, Rough Guide, Insight Guide, or other travel guides that appeal to you. These books give lots of practical information, useful phrases, even a brief history of your host country, plus some customs and traditions you need to be aware of.

Make sure your travel guide is as current as possible. The world is changing very fast! A guide book that is only a year old may already contain plenty of incorrect and outdated information (phone and fax numbers, opening/closing hours, website, room rates, transportation availability, and others). Spend the money on a current edition and save yourself the headaches. A travel guide will pay for itself after a couple of weekend travels.

Consider how many regions your travel guide covers. Some guides include many countries yet you may only be going to one or two of them. If you will be traveling in only one country, purchase a guide that focuses on that country alone. You will find much more detailed information relevant to you. If you are traveling to several countries, purchase a multi-country guide but rip out the pages of the countries that you won’t be going to. This may seem excessive, but every pound counts when carried on your back.

If you know other students who are participating in the same program, you may want to collaborate with them so that each person purchases a different travel guide. This way, you will have more resources to use when you are planning vacation or weekend travels while you are abroad.

Travel Guides cater to specific types of travelers so purchase the type that meets your needs. For example, Let’s Go are written for college students on a budget so don’t expect high-end hotels on the accommodations list. If you want listings of more unusual places to visit, you might want to purchase a Rough Guide or Moon Guide books.

If you’d rather not carry books, you can also download audio Travel Guides on your phone and iPod (check the iTunes store for choices), or electronic versions of travel guides on your e-reader, tablet, or laptop computer.

Of course, you may be wondering why we still recommend a travel guide in book form. That’s because it is more convenient to be able to flip pages when you are in a hurry, mark or make notes on the written page, or slip the book inside your backpack helter-skelter without worrying about doing damage to an expensive electronic device.
Clothing, Footwear, and other Personal Items

Going black is always a good idea.

- You DO NOT have to pack a term’s worth of clothes. Pack 2 week’s worth then then do laundry the rest of the time. Chances are you will also go shopping for new clothes. Sure, jeans are universal, but there will be enough fashion differences between the US and other countries that you will probably feel compelled to dress like young people from your host country.

- Consider packing clothes in spacebags to reduce the bulk. Fleece pullovers and winter coats can take up a lot of space. Note however that only volume will be reduced, not the mass.

- If you are going to a cold place, the key to staying warm is to layer your clothing. Rather than packing bulky or heavy items, simply take a few lighter and thinner pieces that can be worn together.

- If you plan to do some vacation travel while overseas, consider investing in a Pak Towel. These special towels are super-absorbent, very lightweight, and dry in an instant.

- Leave expensive and dearly loved items at home. For heaven’s sake, don’t take the family jewelry or items that have great sentimental value. Leave them at home where you will be sure they will not be lost or stolen. In fact, you shouldn’t pack anything you can’t afford to lose.

- In all likelihood, you are going to destinations where most things are available. You do not have to bring everything! Some items (bed linens, towels, hair dryers, toiletries) are best purchased overseas!

- For women: if you can’t do without your make-up bag, pare down your grooming routine to the basics. The last thing you need is a ton of cosmetics and grooming products weighing you down as you board planes, trains, and buses.

- Invest in good footwear. It is important to buy high quality shoes that are going to last you a while so you don’t get stuck paying double for a new pair in another country. Shoes may be the cheapest thing you can buy in the US.

- Bring only broken-in, comfortable pairs of shoes! You will do a lot of walking on campus, within your host city, or while traveling. Do not bring new and unworn shoes no matter how cute they are. Aching, blistered feet will be absolute hell when you’re abroad!

- If you are traveling to a warmer climate, there is nothing more comfortable than a good pair of sandals. They let your feet breathe, and if they are of good quality, provide your feet with enough support for most activities. Teva, Keens, or Chaco sandals are a few brands to consider.

- Place your shoes in plastic shopping bags so that when they are packed with clothes, dirt from the soles don’t touch your clean clothes. When packing, place your shoes at the bottom and fill in any gaps using socks and underwear.

- Create an immediate positive first impression by offering your overseas academic advisor, host parents, exchange student coordinator, or resident director with a little souvenir from Purdue or your hometown on arrival. The present doesn’t have to be extravagant: a Purdue keychain, T-shirt, pen, calendar, and other small items are quite appropriate. A gift is a small token of your appreciation to the hosts for accepting you to the school or their home. It’s a very gracious gesture that will establish goodwill between you and the other person. An added bonus: these people are also more likely to remember who you are!
## Gear and Gadgets

Electrical systems are different around the world. In some countries you need a converter to use U.S. appliances due to voltage differences. Even with a converter, however, U.S. appliances still might not work properly.

- American appliances and gadgets run on 110 volts, while most of the world is on **220 volts**. Newer travel accessories and electronic gadgets are “dual voltage,” which means they work on both American and world current. If you see a range of voltages printed on the item or its plug (such as “110–220”), you’re OK. If not, you will need a bulky converter, but frankly, it’s not worth it. Get a new dual-voltage gadget, buy one at your host university, or just do without.

- A small adapter allows American-style plugs (two flat prongs) to fit into other countries’ outlets. Secure your adapter to your device’s plug with electrical or duct tape; otherwise it can easily get left behind in the outlet.

- Many students find that it is easiest to buy hair dryers and other appliances at the program site. If you take battery-operated gadgets, be aware that batteries are more expensive abroad!

- If you find you must take valuable items such as laptop computers or video recorders, consider insuring them before you leave. Check with your insurance agent company to see how to insure it against damage or theft overseas, and check with the manufacturer for instructions about using a converter to deal with the voltage or cycle differences.

- Register imported items, such as tape recorders, cameras, watches, etc. with U.S. customs before leaving the States. Foreign-made items are subject to duty charges when you reenter the U.S. unless you can prove you purchased them here (such as by showing the receipt). Take the items to Customs at the airport and fill in a registration slip. When you reenter the U.S., show the Customs officials the slips.

- Bring a travel alarm if you don’t own a smartphone. Even better, just use a wristwatch with a built-in alarm.

- There is no guarantee you can carry musical instruments in the cabin of the plane. If you intend to take one on your flight, be prepared to ship it in the hold. Insure it and have your name and address on the case.

- You can usually buy or rent bikes, skis, or other large items at your program site. If you insist on taking your own, be sure they are properly packed and insured for the trip. Check with your airline regarding fees and packing restrictions.

- Avoid surprises at the airport. If you are planning to bring items such as bicycles or skis you must contact the airline in advance. Be prepared to either pay an excess luggage charge or to substitute one of your pieces of luggage for the extra item.

- If you are planning to stay in hostels, you should buy or make a sleep sack. You can make one simply by sewing two flat sheets together or you can buy one at a travel store. Hostels will sometimes charge for renting sheets and you can save by bringing your own. Your sleep sack will also protect you from “suspicious” sleeping surfaces.

- If you’d like to see what handy travel gadgets are out there, check out these sites: [www.travelsmith.com](http://www.travelsmith.com), [www.ibean.com](http://www.ibean.com), [www.eddiebauer.com](http://www.eddiebauer.com), [www.campnor.com](http://www.campnor.com), and [www.magellans.com](http://www.magellans.com)

## Bringing a digital camera?

Do consider paying more for image stabilization, or “anti-shake” technology. Many new cameras now feature image stabilization (look for the letters “IS” or “AS” in the name) that compensate for shaky hands or long lenses. You’ll pay a bit more for the feature, but it’s worth it for travelers who are frequently shooting in low-light conditions, like a cathedral or museum interior.

Do choose a camera that accepts a common battery format. Avoid cameras with “proprietary” batteries that will be hard to find while traveling. Pick a camera that uses common "AA" batteries that can be found in any drugstore or airport.

Do buy rechargeable batteries and a charger. Rechargeable cameras cost more to start but you can charge those hundreds of times. If you’re getting ready for a lengthy trip abroad, go to Radio Shack and buy a set of plug adapters for foreign AC converters (you don’t need a voltage adapter for most chargers, just the plug adapter kit: [www.radioshack.com](http://www.radioshack.com), model #273-1405, $19.95).

Don’t skimp when it comes to buying extra memory cards. The price of the two most popular formats of memory cards (CF and SD) is cheap, really cheap, so buy more than you think you’ll need. If you run out, you’ll stop shooting or be forced to erase other pictures. So don’t run out.

Don’t get the biggest unless you really need it. Size, weight, and bulk are serious issues when buying a camera. If you’re someone who hates hauling a load through airports and in and out of hotels, don’t get a big camera. There is a lot to be said for the less-is-more theory. Remember that you’ll probably want to take your camera out to dinner sometimes, and you’ll be carrying it with you on those day-long field trips, so don’t buy what you don’t feel good about carrying.
Packing List

This list is designed to be a general guide and is not intended for a particular country. As such, the list would be altered depending on your destination, time of year, amount of money you will have, and the length of time you will be away.

BEFORE YOU GO:
___ Passport
___ Visa
___ Appt. with Dr/DDS
___ Insurance information
___ Credit Cards with PIN numbers
___ Traveler's checks
___ Currency of host country (about $100)
___ U.S. cash (dollar bills come in handy)
___ Plane tickets
___ Health Documentation
___ Extra ID
___ International Student ID card (ISIC)
___ Course materials and books
___ Emergency information
___ Update your MyPurdue information

IMPORTANT BASICS:
___ Luggage
___ Travel pack or Daypack
___ Fanny pack, money belt or neck pouch
___ Sewing kit
___ Good padlock/keys
___ Luggage Tags
___ Toiletries and cosmetics
___ Camera and accessories
___ Pens, pads, notebooks—can be expensive if purchased abroad.
___ English-Host Country Dictionary
___ Alarm clock (battery operated)
___ Watch
___ Pictures from home
___ Small gifts for host family and new friends
___ Diary or journal
___ Travel Guides

PAPERWORK:
___ Copy of your Course Approval Form
___ Name, email, phone number of your advisor
___ This study abroad handbook
___ Your program handbook and other materials
___ Travel documents
___ Important documents (prescriptions, medical information, insurance card and policy statement, acceptance letter)

HEALTH CARE NEEDS:
___ Prescription medication/Contraceptives
___ First Aid Kit
___ Band Aids
___ Moleskin (for blisters)
___ Antiseptic cream
___ Sunscreen
___ Tweezers
___ Scissors
___ Painkillers and decongestants
___ Antacid
___ Diarrhea Medicine
___ Malaria Pills (where needed)

CLOTHING:
___ Drip dry, no iron, minimum care clothes
___ Layerable clothes for weather changes
___ Waterproof jacket (preferably Gore-Tex)
___ Comfortable shoes
___ Flip-flops for communal showers
___ Socks-thin cotton, thermal, wool
___ Hat or visor
___ Gloves/scarf
___ Skirt
___ Pants
___ Tops
___ Swimsuit
___ Underwear
___ One nice outfit (for social or cultural events)

MISCELLANEOUS:
___ Cards, games
___ Duct tape (wrap around a pen)
___ Towel & washcloth (for travel)
___ Leisure reading in English
___ Umbrella
___ Sunglasses and sunscreen
___ Plastic zip-lock bags
___ Spare set of glasses or contact lenses
___ Small pocketknife (pack in checked luggage)
___ Maps
___ A sack or garbage bag for dirty cloths
___ Lots of patience, a good attitude, and a sense of humor
Information at your Fingertips

Gather all of the information and documents you might need while you are overseas. When possible, also leave a copy home for your family and friends.

- Contact information for:
  - You (street address and cell phone number)
  - On-site resident director
  - Home office of program provider or host university study abroad office
  - U.S. State Department Office of Overseas Citizen Services
  - Citizen assistance section of the U.S. embassy or consulate nearest your student’s program site
  - Insurance policy number and how to submit claims (Purdue insurance or insurance from the program provider)
  - Emergency and communication plan
  - Your U.S. bank account, and credit card numbers and contact info in case of loss
  - Your passport number
  - Duplicate lost passport kit containing:
    - two passport photos
  - Official copy of your birth certificate
  - Copy of your passport information and visa pages
  - Program calendar
  - Name of local physician—if you require medical supervision while overseas
  - Personal Emergency Action Plan—see Appendix at the end of the Health and Safety

Students and their families can get preoccupied with what to take that they forget to consider the things and information that should be left behind.

Gather all of the information and documents you might need while you are overseas. When possible, also leave a copy home for your family and friends.

Planning your Departure: The Strategy

___ Research travel information and determine travel documents you need.
___ Compare airfares and make airline reservations.
___ **PURCHASE ROUND-TRIP AIRFARE!** You may not be allowed to board a plane, or worse, denied entry at your destination if you only have a one-way ticket!
___ Purchase an International Student ID card if desired or required for flight.
___ Attend to all registration, financial aid, and academic matters at Purdue.
___ Determine how you will handle your finances and make arrangements accordingly.
___ Attend to healthcare issues (take prescriptions with you, get dental and eye exams, and others).
___ Know some basic arrival information (useful phrases, airport transportation, etc).
___ Use various resources to get as much information as you can about your host country.
___ Purchase a good travel guide (Don’t leave home without one!).
___ Plan what items you will pack.
___ Do a “dress rehearsal” with your bags. Carry them around the block like you would in an airport or train station. Unload items you can do without. Repack bag.
___ Repeat above as often as necessary. Remember – you must remain mobile!
___ Know what to expect the first three days of orientation at your overseas site.
___ Begin the mental shift, for you won’t be in Indiana (or Kansas, or Illinois ...) anymore!
Planning Your Itinerary

Planning your itinerary to your host city is the first big trip you have to plan. Some programs offer an optional group flight. If this is the case for your program, you will receive group flight information from the program provider after you have been accepted. If you choose to take the group flight, then voila – you’re done.

Many students, however, choose or have to make their own arrangements to get to the program site. If this is the case for you, then it would make sense to comparison shop as fares can differ significantly from one airline or one company to another. If you have purchased an International Student Identity Card (ISIC), you will be entitled to a discounted student fare, if available. In any case, be sure to mention that you are a student; sometimes lower student fares are available without the card. To compare prices, check out various internet travel sites (Orbitz, Travelocity, Expedia, and in particular student travel sites like Student Universe [http://www.studentuniverse.com] and STA Travel [http://www.sta.com]). There are websites like [http://www.kayak.com], [http://www.siestep.com], or [http://www.momondo.com] that allow you to compare fares will come in handy too. Check the resource page at the beginning of this handbook for additional web resources.

When arranging your flight, MAKE SURE TO PURCHASE ROUND-TRIP AIRFARE even if you are not sure when you want to return to the U.S. or if you have travel plans after your program. You may not be allowed to board your plane for overseas or worse, denied entry into your host country if you are only holding a one-way ticket. If you book a flight through STA Travel or Student Universe.com, the change fee for changing your return flight is pretty reasonable.

In addition, don’t focus solely on the cheapest airfare. Pay attention also to layover time between connecting flights, how many connections you have to make, and especially your arrival time at your final destination. Choose flights with reasonable layover times to avoid missing connecting flights should there be a delay. Traveling overseas can be exhausting and bewildering. The fewer connections you have to make, the better off you are. If a nonstop flight costs just a little bit more than another that has several connections, opt for the former. The additional price will be worth it.

When purchasing your tickets, make sure the ticket is under the exact name that appears on your passport. You may have been using “Miley Cyrus” rather than your full name “Destiny Hope Cyrus” on many documents all your life, but you will be denied boarding if there is a discrepancy between the name on your passport and the name on the airline ticket.

Double-check that you have the foreign document requirements you need to enter the country (passport and student visa, acceptance letter from host institution, proof of financial means, residence permit, and others). Keep these safe and secure!

It is also better to arrive at your destination on a weekday and during work hours. In an emergency, you can call the onsite program office or study abroad office at your host university and more than likely reach someone who is in a position to help you.

If traveling on your own, you are expected to be at your program site before the program begins or in time to participate in an orientation. If you are arriving before the recommended arrival date, be sure to inquire in advance if accommodations will be available when you arrive.

Finally, inform the Study Abroad Office of your travel plans by returning the Travel Itinerary form.
Before Your Overseas Flight

If you have not flown in the past year or so, you may not remember some of the basic things that you need to do. You may also be unfamiliar with the security changes that were put in place to increase the level of security for airline passengers.

Identification. When you check-in, you will be asked by the counter and gate agents to present your passport and your ticket or boarding pass. Do not forget your passport – you cannot leave the United States without it.

Airport Code. Know the 3-letter airport code for your destination and make sure your bags are tagged properly. This will help ensure your bags are going on the same flight as you!

Security checkpoints. Depending on the security procedure in place, the security agents at the checkpoints near the gates may insist on searching every carry-on luggage or bags you bring on board. Many airports even insist that all passengers remove their shoes. In Amsterdam, every passenger gets a personal interview from a security officer. Just relax, answer truthfully, and you’ll soon be on your way.

You cannot take bottled water and liquid or cream (like toothpaste or hand lotion) in containers over 3 oz. Toiletries have to be packed in plastic quart-size ziplock bags. These security precautions can take time, so be sure you arrive at the airport at least two hours before your scheduled departure.

Baggage. These days, passengers are asked not to lock their bags in case they are randomly or deliberately chosen for inspection by TSA agents. Use a twist-tie or a sturdy piece of electrical wire to “lock” your checked luggage zippers. Do not leave your baggage unattended on the curb or in the terminal because it may be considered a suspicious package and confiscated by airport security. Also, if you are taking presents to friends or your host family, leave the gifts unwrapped so that security personnel can inspect the contents.

Also keep in mind that you are limited in the amount of carry-on and checked baggage you are allowed. Paying for oversized or overweight baggage can be expensive. The amount can be up to $100 per pound over the maximum allowed weight. Travel light. Do not stuff your carry-on bag. Remember that anything you bring, you will have to carry. Also, a very heavy carry-on bag may fall out of the overhead bin and cause severe injuries to you or another passenger. Find out what the limits are for carry-on and checked baggage for your airline and plan accordingly.

During the Flight

No one enjoys long flights, but there are a few things you can do to make yourself more comfortable. If you plan ahead, you won’t have to spend a whole day recovering from jet lag.

Clothes. Make sure you dress appropriately. Being uncomfortable can make a long trip seem even longer. Wear stylish (look presentable and make a good impression when you present yourself at Passport Control at your destination) but non-binding clothing as you will experience some swelling during the flight. Wear layers so you can remain comfortable even if the temperature varies during the flight. Your shoes should also be loose fitting because your feet swell even more than the rest of your body. Bring along a heavy pair of socks or slipper socks so you can take off your shoes during the flight and still be able to keep your feet warm and clean.

Diet Eat a light meal on the day of your flight. Flying on a full stomach could cause some physical distress. Fruit and granola bars are good snacks. Flying causes dehydration so make sure you drink plenty of fluids but stay away from coffee and alcohol. Bottled water is the best choice. Consume around 8 ounces for each hour of flight time. Adequate water consumption also helps reduce jet lag.

Medication If you have a tendency toward motion sickness, Dramamine could help this condition. Sinus medication may also be needed as the air pressure can be difficult to adjust to when going from lower to higher altitudes and vice versa. Relieve any pressure in your ears by simulating a yawn or chewing gum. You may also want to have good moisturizer and eye drops. Try not to wear your contact lenses for the flight. Use moisturizer liberally every few hours to prevent dry skin.
... continued

Passing the time. Exercise throughout the flight to prevent the condition known as deep vein thrombosis (DVT) caused by prolonged immobility that could occur during long journeys by air. When someone is sitting down for a long time their blood tends to pool in their lower leg veins causing swelling and increasing the chance that the blood will clot. While the condition is rare and risk to you is small, do some basic stretches in your seat and walk the length of the plane when possible. The longer the flight, the more you should make an effort to move about.

Buy a new book, get the latest issue of your favorite magazine, or better yet, read literature about your host country. This is the best time to read that travel guide you just purchased. Another distraction is the onboard movie. Even if it isn’t a great cinematic gem, it will pass two hours or more in no time.

If at all possible, try to nap for a couple of hours. You will feel more refreshed on arrival if you can sleep. You may want to buy an inflatable travel pillow that hooks around the neck. An eye mask will also help block out the sun or cabin lights. Do not bring a cumbersome pillow from home!

There are no signposts in the sky to show a man has passed that way before. There are no channels marked. The flier breaks each second into new uncharted seas.
- Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Arrival Strategies: How to hit your stride A.S.A.P.

The Host University / program organizer should have provided arrival information in the acceptance materials sent to you. Know what you need to do so you can swing into action after passing Customs and Immigration at your terminal destination.

Yes, you have come a long way, but resist the urge to spend the rest of the day napping. Instead, try to get into the swing of things immediately! Get out and get as much sun exposure as you can. Exposure to sunlight helps your body adjust to the new time zone in your host country. Take a walk. Investigate your new surroundings and discover where some crucial places are. Introduce yourself to other students. Go to bed at the normal time, or try to stay up until at least 8:00 p.m. You will wake up the next day feeling refreshed and ready to go!

Arrival Scenarios: Have Plans B...C...D...

The first day at the host country is very important and we would like you to get off to a good start. Thus, make sure you know the following:

- 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 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

Have a plan in place in case your flight is delayed and you don’t arrive at your destination until very late at night.

Family members and friends may ask you to call home immediately after arrival. Their concern is understandable, but please be aware that it may not be always possible to have access to a phone or computer immediately after arrival. You may need to catch an airport shuttle immediately after retrieving your luggage and going through Customs and Immigration. Other times, you may have to board a program bus, go through formalities, and into your accommodations where you may become pre-occupied meeting other students, or are not immediately in a position to make special arrangements to call home. Or, you may be arriving late at night or after having traveled for a day to reach your destination are too exhausted to even think about calling home. Ask your family to give you at least a day to call and to not panic if they don’t hear from you immediately.

If possible, plan to arrive at your destination on a weekday and during office hours. If you need assistance, there is a greater likelihood you will reach someone at your host university or program office.

How not to pack! This student may have a cart now—but what happens after she exits the airport and has to take a train to her residence hall?
Studying abroad gives you many opportunities to travel. Your program will have sufficient breaks to enable you to visit neighboring countries or travel all over your host country.

**Mode of Transportation.**

**By train.** In Europe, traveling by train is the best way to travel. Unfortunately, Americans who are accustomed to relying on cars and planes and leery of Amtrak’s troubled long-distance networks here remain reluctant rail travelers, even abroad. Reportedly, only 10 percent of US visitors to Europe take a train. What a shame! Traveling by train is so much fun! In most countries, trains are punctual, clean, comfortable, inexpensive, and they go nearly everywhere. Trains also travel directly between city centers and sometimes could actually be faster than going by air. Eurostar, for instance, has a high-speed Chunnel rail route which links London, Paris, and Brussels. In Spain, the AVE can travel between Madrid and Seville in two hours.

Trains also travel on the schedules of many countries, such as in Ireland, Spain, Australia and New Zealand, traveling by bus is the way to go as the bus system is more extensive than the train system. Remember though to compare the money you will be saving and the state you will be in when you arrive at your destination. If you arrive exhausted and have saved less than fifty dollars, take the more expensive but faster route to get to your destination.

**By air.** As enjoyable as it is to travel by train or bus, it does take time. If you are traveling between countries or between distant cities (i.e., London and Glasgow in the U.K.), consider air travel. Flying saves time, especially if you only have a long weekend to complete your trip. Commercial air travel is becoming more common for travel between countries because several low-cost airlines like EasyJet, Ryanair, Tiger, and AirAsia are gaining ground. In Europe, check out fares offered by Ryanair ([www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com)) and easyJet ([www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com)). You can also book internal flights in Europe at [www.airninja.com](http://www.airninja.com), [www.openjet.com](http://www.openjet.com), or [www.vueling.com](http://www.vueling.com/).

These websites sort through fares on seven of the eight major low-cost carriers. There are also student charters to numerous destinations (especially at break times) at bargain prices. Visit travel agencies at your host city to learn about available student deals. You can also sign up to be on the mailing list of airlines so you can get announcements for special deals. Deals sometimes pop up only for an hour - if you find tickets for 5 euro they won’t be there for very long so buy them and find someone to go with you later.

**By (rental) car.** Another option for travel is to rent a car, but keep in mind that unless several of you are sharing the car, renting can be expensive and gasoline in many countries costs more than in the U.S. Parking could be a nightmare too. If you need to rent a car for more than 4 days, it’s usually cheaper to rent for the entire week. It is also not enough to get a rate quote since that bears little resemblance to your final bill. To avoid being hit by surprise charges, quiz the reservation agent about every conceivable add-ons: taxes, surcharge, mandatory insurance, fees for additional drivers, mileage, and others. Finally, always inspect a car before you drive it away from the rental lot. When you return it, ask a manager to look over the vehicle and to note on the receipt that it is in satisfactory condition.

If you think you may do some driving while abroad, look into age and insurance requirements and the appropriate documents you need to be permitted to drive. Also acquaint yourself with that country’s traffic rules and regulations. Unlike in the United States where driving is deemed a God-given right, driving is considered a privilege in many countries abroad so the minimum skill level that drivers are expected to possess is much higher than the level expected of a US driver. Driving violations are also punished more severely in many countries than here. Before you drive, make sure you can meet that country’s expectations of what it takes to get behind the wheel of a vehicle.

**Accommodations.** OK, so you can get from Point A to B. Where will you stay? Are you OK with cheap but no-frills accommodations, or can you afford to pay more for slightly more luxurious digs? Students usually consider cost first so staying at a youth hostel is a way...
to be frugal. Hostels provide clean, inexpensive, albeit spartan accommodations in many places around the world. Information may be obtained from www.hostels.com or www.hostelworld.com. The travel guide Let’s Go, written by students for students and in existence for the last 50 years, lists inexpensive but well-run establishments in its accommodations section. You can also try living with locals who open their home to travels on such websites like Air B&B or Couch Surfing. In many cases, you will stay in an extra room in the house apartment. Sometimes, all you will have is a couch or mattress. Use your judgment when it comes to accommodations. If you value privacy and it will only take a few dollars more to book a room in a budget hotel, then don’t even bother with youth hostels. On the other hand, if you want to meet other young travelers and backpackers, don’t mind staying in dorm-type accommodations, and really want to save money, then youth hostels are a very good option. If you want to meet friendly locals who are often willing to introduce you to the local culture, the home sharing option might be ideal for you. Be sure to check website reviews however especially if you are traveling by yourself.

**Destinations.** Sure, see the great sights — Eiffel Tower, Big Ben, Venetian Grand Canal, Parthenon, Pantheon — but try to be more adventurous and travel to up-and-coming destinations like Budapest (Hungary), Tallinn (Estonia), Dubrovnik (Croatia) Ljubljana (Slovenia), Angkor Wat (Cambodia), or Koh Phangan (Thailand). These places are cheaper, less crowded, friendlier, and you’ll be able to brag about being there before the place becomes overrun with tourists in a few years.

**Foreign Travel Etiquette.** Read up on your destination and know the host country’s customs, especially on how to be a polite visitor. Be aware of nonverbal communication and gestures that might be considered rude in the local culture. When traveling in countries where English is not the first language, learn how to say five expressions in the local tongue: hello, goodbye, thank you, please, and pardon me. It’s amazing how far these words will get you when spoken in a person’s language, even if he or she knows the English equivalent.

**Asking for Directions.** Ask more than one person for directions. In certain cultures, particularly Asia, it is impolite for locals to say “I don’t know.” It can be a cause of embarrassment to a local if he or she can’t give you an answer. So the end result is this person saying something, anything, even if it isn’t correct. Many cities and towns, particularly in Europe have a Visitor Information Center. If you are studying abroad in Europe, make this your first stop for maps, information about the city and recommendations for places to see, eat, or stay.

**Shopping Savvy.** Buy items that the area or city is noted for. In Oaxaca, Mexico, purchase handmade pottery; in Hong Kong, buy custom-tailored clothing; in Florence, bargain for leather goods. Compare prices in several locations and avoid shops near train stations and heavy tourist areas.

**Waterborne bugs on tap.** There’s no end to the trouble that a little dirty water can cause you. You don’t always have to buy water bottled, but be cautious. Check the bottle cap to see that it hasn’t been opened at all. And reconsider that request for ice – ice from bad water can carry bacteria too. Steamed vegetables are safer than raw veggies and salads.

**Attend to your health needs.** If you plan to do much traveling and you have a chronic condition, make sure you bring your medication and other necessary accoutrements. You do not want to have an emergency in a strange place. Be mindful also of the environment of where you are going. For example, American students with allergies or asthma sometimes find that even if they are able to easily control their condition with medication in the U.S., they are not always able to do so in Asian cities like Beijing (severe pollution) or Singapore (high humidity).
Ten Commandments of Travel

- Thou shalt not expect to find things as thou hast at home, for thou hast left home to find things different.
- Thou shalt not take anything too seriously, for a carefree mind is the start of a good trip.
- Thou shalt not let the other travellers get on thy nerves, for thou hast paid good money to enjoy thyself.
- Remember to take half as many clothes as thou thinkest and twice the money.
- Knoweth at all times where thy passport is, for a person without a passport is a a person without a country.
- Remember that if we had been expected to stay in one place we would have been created with roots.
- Thou shalt not worry, for he or she that worrieth hath no pleasure and few things are THAT fatal.
- When in Rome be prepared to do somewhat as the Romans do.
- Thou shalt not judge the people of the country by the person who hath given thee trouble.
- Remember thou are a guest in other lands, and the one who treats a host with respect shall be honoured.
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 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.

You can be assured that the social and political climate in the area in which you will be traveling is conducive to studying. 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 program directors, with responsible officials of foreign 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 (on-site 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 Programs for Study Abroad, the Dean of International Programs, the Dean of Students’ Office, and ultimately the Provost and President of Purdue University. For more information concerning your safety and health, please see the Health and Safety page on our website.

We cannot, however, guarantee the absolute safety of each study abroad 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 the home campus. We can only hope that you will use common sense when going about your daily life abroad.

To offset safety concerns, we encourage you to go through the safety tips listed in this study abroad handbook and discuss them with your family, study abroad advisor, and program leader on arrival at your overseas site.

Always be mindful of the laws of your host country. If you run into legal trouble, there is nothing the United States government can do except provide a lawyer and check on your well-being.

**What this section is about:**

Attending to one’s safety and health and well-being will ensure that illness or mishaps will not negatively impact one’s enjoyment of the study abroad experience.

This section offers suggestions for how you can stay healthy and safe while overseas, and what to keep an eye out for when you’re up and about to stay out of harm’s way.
Insurance Coverage

The medical insurance that covers your family is not always valid outside the United States. U.S. Medicare and Medicaid programs also do not cover medical services outside this country. Purdue University has therefore mandated that all study abroad participants have insurance coverage.

What is the Purdue Study Abroad Insurance?
The Purdue insurance is provided by Gallagher Insurance and underwritten by Combined Insurance Company of America. The coverage is designed for Purdue University study abroad participants and provides a comprehensive package of medical benefits and emergency services specifically addressing the risks associated with study abroad. The coverage is primary.

How do students get the insurance?

Students on exchange, Purdue-administered, some co-sponsored, and direct enroll programs will be included in the Gallagher group policy coverage for Purdue University. Students do not need to file an application or complete an enrollment form — the Study Abroad Office will do all the necessary paperwork.

Coverage duration varies by program location and term, but will generally start a day or two before the official program date and terminate within a week of the program’s conclusion. The 32-day premium rate is approximately $35 and the charge for a semester or summer’s worth of premiums will be included in the Purdue Bursar invoice you will receive before the start of your overseas study term.

How does the insurance work? The Gallagher insurance is set up for Purdue University. Study Abroad students who are under its blanket coverage file claims directly with the insurance claims administrator. For routine medical services while overseas, students are expected to pay the physician, clinic, or hospital directly and then file a claim with Health Smart Benefits Solutions later. Doctors and hospitals overseas often expect immediate cash payments for medical services. 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. Be sure to save the physician or clinic invoice for filing an itemized claim at a later date. If you will require more serious or extensive medical services, please contact Gallagher’s Travel Assistance Program provider at the number given below. The company will work with your family and the overseas medical facility on your behalf.

We are aware that some countries (ex: Italy, Singapore, France, Japan, Australia) require the purchase of country insurance in order to secure an international student visa. In this case, you will still need the Purdue insurance, even if you have already purchased the host country’s insurance. Coverage for travel outside the host country or benefits for medical evacuation or repatriation are not provided by country insurance.

Purdue’s insurance only covers health and medical matters. Coverage will not cover theft or loss of valuables. We ask students not to bring valuable items overseas, but if you do, it’s up to you to purchase insurance for your computer and other expensive gadgets. You might also want to check if your family’s homeowners insurance extends to loss of property while overseas.

Personal liability insurance is coverage to protect yourself against claims alleging your negligence or inappropriate action resulted in bodily injury or property damage to another person.

Your home family insurance most likely has a personal liability clause. Typically, umbrella liability coverage extends to a policyholder’s spouse, children and any relatives living in the household, under the policyholder’s care or under the care of a relative living with the policyholder. BUT – make sure to ask your insurance company if you will be covered as a study abroad student.

If your home insurance’s umbrella coverage includes you while studying abroad, bring a statement from your family insurance that you are covered by a liability insurance. If not, then ask if you can get special coverage while you are overseas.

Is this insurance ever waived?

No, unless you are participating in a co-sponsored program like IES, CIEE, UMN, DIS and other programs in which the program fee includes insurance.

Contact Information—Purdue International Health Insurance Program

On the web:  https://www.gallagherkoster.com/students/ (choose “Purdue University - International Travel)


Questions about coverage, accessing benefits or enrollment concerns:

Gallagher Koster
500 Victory Road, Quincy MA 02171
Phone: 617 769 6056 or toll-free at 877 240 8766
Email: Purdue@Gallagherstudent.com

Questions about a specific claim or claims payment:

Health Special Risk, Inc., HSR Plaza II
4100 Medical Parkway, Carrollton, Texas 75007
1-866-345-0973

For emergencies, medical referrals, evacuation, repatriation or other services:

ACE Travel Assistance Program
1 855 327 1414 (Toll-free)
1 630 694 9764 (Direct Dial)
medassist-usa@axa-assistance.us
www.acetravelassistance.net (register your name using username medassist-usa@axa-assistance.us and PW acea&h)
Emergencies Abroad

In an emergency, always contact the authorities and study abroad staff at your overseas site first! Do not call your family or the Study Abroad Office and expect us to come to your aid! We are thousands of miles away – we cannot do anything to recover your stolen money, bring you to the hospital, or contact the local authorities.

Instead, be prepared for emergencies and plan ahead on how you will handle them. Have your local emergency contact information handy at all times, especially the country’s emergency number (the equivalent of our 911). The local police and overseas staff will be in a much better position to come to your assistance.

Once the furor has died down and the matter has been attended to, then contact your family and if necessary, Purdue University. You can contact the Study Abroad Office. Non-emergency calls may be made to the Study Abroad Office at 1+765-494-2383 during normal working hours, 8am – 5pm Eastern Standard Time.

If the emergency occurs during off-hours and you need to reach the Study Abroad staff, please contact the Purdue University Police Department at 1+765-494-8221. This number is active seven 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 accidents or illnesses.

We strongly recommend doing some contingency planning before you leave your home. Should a family emergency occur, decide now what steps should be taken. If you have to return home, do you need to notify onsite? If the matter does not require your immediate departure, consider ways to lend emotional support while you remain overseas. Who will relay information about the emergency to the extended family? Your parents might also consider getting a passport in case they have to attend to you in an emergency.

At the end of this section is a worksheet for a Personal Emergency Action Plan (PEAP). It would be a good idea to complete that worksheet with your family so everyone is briefed on the procedure for dealing with emergencies that may happen at your overseas site.

The telephone number 112 is the international emergency telephone number for GSM mobile phone networks. In all European Union countries it is also the emergency telephone number for both mobile and fixed-line telephones. The GSM mobile phone standard includes 112 as an emergency number, and in countries where 112 is not the standard emergency telephone number, GSM telephone users who make calls to 112 generally have their calls redirected to the local emergency telephone number, if it exists. This is valuable for foreign travelers, who may not know the local emergency number. Most GSM mobile phones can dial 112 calls even when the phone keyboard is locked, the phone is without a SIM card, or instead of the PIN. Using 112 instead of another emergency number on a GSM phone may be advantageous, since 112 is recognized by all GSM phones as an emergency number. A phone dialing a different emergency service’s number may refuse to roam onto another network, leading to trouble if there is no access to the home network. Dialing 112 forces the phone to make the call on any network possible.

Students With Special Needs

An effort will be made by the Study Abroad Office and the Office of Disability Resource Services to reasonably accommodate students with special needs while abroad.

Before going abroad, students who require some kind of accommodations (wheelchair access, extra test time, assistive listening devices, note-taker, and others) should contact their Study Abroad advisor or the appropriate Study Abroad assistant director, or a Program Specialist in the Disability Resource Center (within the office of the Dean of Students) to discuss what accommodations may be needed while abroad.

http://www.purdue.edu/odos/drc/

Special needs may include disabilities (physical or learning), significant medical conditions, temporary disabilities (i.e., broken arm in a cast) or other conditions that may impact an overseas experience. The accommodation may include simply bringing a helpful gadget to help the student. More frequently, the Study Abroad Office may have to coordinate efforts with the host institution. Many institutions overseas are equipped to accommodate students with special needs. In cases where the host institution could not do so, the Purdue DRC is willing to step in if resources are available. If the student could not get the assistance he or she requires despite the DRC’s best efforts, the student may have to choose a program that could.

NOTE: If you have special needs, let the Study Abroad Office know as early as possible so that we will have time to work out matters with the overseas partner. We may have to come up with a contingency if the host institution will not have the means to assist you.
Staying Healthy: Taking Care of Yourself!

We are sure you want to remain hale and hearty while overseas. 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, if you are in the pink of health, you could maintain a sunny disposition and would be able to consistently regard your overseas experience in a more positive light. You are likely to be energetic, optimistic, and happy, rarely troubled by fatigue, stress, or apprehension.

Taking care of yourself starts by eating right, exercising, getting plenty of rest, and keeping drug and alcohol use to a minimum – regardless of the host country’s laws. So plan to live a healthy lifestyle while you are abroad. Eat nutritious food while abroad to keep up your energy and help boost your immune system. If you have any dietary restrictions, learn how to describe them in the local language.

If you have a recurring or chronic medical condition, do your research and determine the local term for your condition and how it is typically treated in your host country. Get set-up with a local physician before departure or as soon as you arrive. Bring a copy of your medical records, translated into the local language if possible. In the event you suffer a relapse or an attack, the local medical staff would know how to deal with your condition.

Studying abroad will drastically change your daily routine. As a result, your physical or mental health can be affected. You may experience jet lag, culture shock, emotional reactions to changes in diet or lack of exercise, homesickness or loneliness. Prepare yourself for the potential of these emotions and determine how best to handle them if they do arise. See also the information on Culture Shock in the “A Successful Study Abroad Experience” section of this handbook.

Common Causes of Ailments

The most common health problems for newcomers abroad are related to the different bacteria found in food and drinking water, often leading to short-term diarrhea and digestive problems. Infections from insect bites, small cuts, and wounds are also quite common. It is best to treat such small injuries with much more care than you would at home.

Another health risk for newcomers comes from a number of diseases we are unfamiliar with in developed countries with temperate climates. Many of these are insect-borne (and sometimes borne by other animals) and often occur in urban areas with poor sanitation and poor public health services. Your best tool of prevention is information. Learn about how to avoid exposing yourself to animal-borne diseases. Epidemics are often brought on by favorable weather conditions, such as frequent rain, which provides ample breeding grounds for mosquitoes. You will find the locals to be highly informed about insect-borne diseases. Their advice will be extremely valuable.

When abroad, consider food safe to eat if it is served steaming hot and is thoroughly cooked (not cooked, cooled, and moderately reheated). Other things considered safe include that which you can peel (oranges, avocados, etc.); processed beverages which you pop open (bottled water, carbonated soda, beer, etc.); piping hot coffee and tea. Exercise your judgment on other foods: those sitting at room temperature, and/or uncovered foods requiring refrigeration, or foods sitting out in the open sun (such as items in an open air market).

Open air food stalls in Asia are very popular with locals and tourists alike. Yes, the food will look delectable (if not strange at times). Fortunately, they should be safe to eat if you follow simple guidelines. Eat only food that appear to have been thoroughly cooked in an open flame. Go to the stalls where there is a line; there is high turn-over and food does not sit out too long. Choose food you can eat on a stick—avoid silverware and plates. Drink bottled water, no matter how refreshing the juices might look. Avoid ice in your drinks. Barbecued scorpions and chicken feet, anyone?
Physical Exams and Immunizations

We recommend you have a dental, eye, and physical checkup before going abroad, particularly if you will be studying for a semester or an academic year. The first few weeks overseas are stressful enough without you having to deal with an ailment or illness. So make sure you are in tip-top shape. Ask your physician for recommendations to pack in your emergency medical kit and if he or she may be inclined to pack you off with emergency antibiotics like Cipro or a Z-pack before you go, particularly if your destination is a developing country.

If a physical and X-ray exams are required for your visa, this may be done by your healthcare provider or at PUSH for a fee.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advises travelers of any required or recommended immunizations for the countries they will visit.


If you wear glasses or contact lenses, take the lens prescription with you as well as an extra pair of glasses or lenses. The same contact lens solution you use is probably going to be available overseas so you do not need to bring a large supply with you. However, you have to be prepared for the possibility that the cost may be quite prohibitive or the brand is not available in the country where you are studying so you should take a good supply with you until you know the situation.

Immunizations are available at PUSH or your local health clinic for a fee. Appointments should be made at least two months before departure.

Prescription Medication and Others

If you take prescription medication, consult your physician and insurance company about bringing a year or semester’s supply with you. This is the most convenient measure since the medication you are taking may not be readily available abroad, or the overseas pharmacy may insist that it can only fill a prescription issued by a local doctor.

Bring with you any necessary medications and keep them in their original, labeled containers in your carry-on luggage, not in your check-in bags. Because of strict laws on narcotics in most countries, it is advised that you carry a letter from your physician explaining your need for any prescription drugs in your possession. It is also advisable to carry a readable (preferably typewritten) copy of the prescription.

If possible, ask the physician to write a prescription for the generic name of the drug, not the brand name. For example, Prilosec (generic name: omeprazole) is known as Losec in the U.K.

Walgreens will write prescriptions in 14 different languages.

http://www.walgreens.com/pharmacy/services/

Since it may be illegal to bring in large quantities of medication into a country, you may have to declare prescription medication on your customs form. This medication is for personal use, is essential to your health and well-being, and not intended to be sold or shared with other people, so bring a physician’s letter with you.

If you have a serious ailment, consider bringing your medical record with you. This way, an overseas physician will know how to care for you in the event you become too incapacitated to talk.

If you take over the counter (OTC) medications with you, be sure to keep them in their original containers with the contents clearly marked. High import duties are often charged on any prescription drug or pharmacy item mailed into most countries, so do not plan to have medicines shipped to you.

If you will be sexually active ...

We find that students who study abroad are often emboldened by the experience. Every victory — traveling to another city speaking only the native language, doing well in a challenging academic system, foiling a pick-pocketing attempt, scoring a fabulous bargain after 30 minutes of haggling — increases their self-confidence and encourages them to venture farther away from their comfort zone. Sometimes this leads to a desire for intimacy with the opposite sex from that country. If you are going to be sexually active when you are overseas, or think you could be, please be prepared and exercise the same amount of caution as you would when you’re at Purdue. Know who you are going to be with. Be safe. Restrain yourself from imbibing too much alcohol or you could get yourself caught in a potentially compromising or harmful situation. Protect yourself from STDs or unplanned pregnancies by packing contraceptives or prophylactics in your emergency medical kit or purchasing them onsite.

Come back home with lovely souvenirs — photographs and fond memories — from your study abroad term and not an STD.
Alcohol

Cultures view alcohol and consuming alcohol in differing ways. Depending upon the culture in question, alcohol may be seen as a complement to a meal, a privileged drink, an element of a sacred rite, a socially-acceptable way of unwinding, or in various other ways or combinations.

The legal drinking age abroad is frequently lower than it is in the United States. Nevertheless, while the drinking age may be lower, the drinking laws more lenient (i.e., no open container laws), or the cost of alcohol cheaper in your host country than in the U.S., it is important to remember the risks involved. Even in countries where social drinking is the norm on a daily basis, it is never safe or acceptable to “binge” drink. In some countries, people who become drunk are considered uncouth and are looked upon with disdain. Please do not give other American students a bad name because of your raucous behavior.

Of more importance, remember that your inhibitions and defenses are down when you have been drinking. Alcohol belongs to that class of drugs known as sedatives, which can impair judgment and cause a loss of inhibition, judgment and fine motor control skills even in small doses. This could lead to you to perform some acts that would be considered absolutely mortifying had you been sober. Finally, don’t forget that you are representing Purdue while you are abroad. We certainly hope that all students we send abroad will do the university proud. In all matters concerning alcohol, please keep in mind the following points:

- You do not have to drink. Period. If people compel you to do so in the name of camaraderie and regard you with contempt when you don’t imbibe, you are in the wrong crowd.
- It is culturally appropriate to decline the offer of an alcoholic beverage, particularly if you do so in a gracious manner. You should never feel culturally pressured to do anything that makes you feel uncomfortable. Have a coke or sparkling water instead.
- If you do choose to consume alcohol, please consume it responsibly and safely.
- You do not have to drink like there’s no tomorrow because there will be. You are legal so you can go to the bars or purchase alcohol legally.
- Do not drink and drive – the laws governing drunk driving in many foreign countries are far, far harsher than the mere “slap on the wrist” DUI laws in the United States.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment can be defined as any unwanted sexual advances from anyone with power over any aspect of your stay overseas, including your living arrangements and your educational or work environment. Sometimes it is difficult to evaluate whether or not you are being harassed or if it is a matter of cultural differences. For example, Americans sometimes react with discomfort to the normal conversational distance between people in a particular country, and you should be aware of your own feeling within that context. Female students who studied in Spain, Italy, and Latin American countries have also reported receiving catcalls from males in the streets (priopos). While they are, for the most part, harmless and should be regarded as a demonstration of appreciation from supposed red-hot male lovers, they can be disconcerting to the uninitiated. However, no one, male or female, studying abroad should have to suffer from unwelcome sexual pressure.

Should you be the object of unwanted overt sexual advances, say “NO!” firmly. Should the situation persist, inform the appropriate officials, university or onsite program staff, and contact Purdue’s Study Abroad Office. If the situation involves a homestay, immediately request a change of families. Even if you think that you have handled a homestay problem adequately on your own, please tell us about it.

We do not want to suggest that sexual harassment is the norm in homestay arrangements, for it is not. You should not interpret every offer of shared activity in the negative, but rather accept most invitations as a show of hospitality and an effort to acquaint you with a new culture.

However, if you find that you are the target of what are clearly repeated sexual advances, then you should go to the appropriate person to report it. If a student experiences any form of harassment she/he should contact the Office of Programs for Study Abroad.
Illegal Drugs and Crime

Each year, 2,500 Americans are arrested overseas. One third of these arrests are on drug-related charges. Many of those arrested assumed mistakenly that as U.S. citizens, they could not be arrested. From Asia to Africa, Europe to South America, U.S. citizens are finding out the hard way that drug possession or trafficking equals jail in foreign countries. If you choose to use illegal drugs abroad, there is very little that anyone can do to help you if you are caught. You are operating under the laws of the host country and the regulations of the local institution. Neither the U.S. government nor Purdue University will be able to secure your release should you be detained/arrested.

It is your responsibility to know the drug laws of a foreign country before you go, because “I didn’t know it was illegal” will not get you out of jail. Some laws may be applied more strictly to foreigners than to local citizens. Don’t assume that just because local people are using drugs, it’s acceptable for you to use them.

U.S. citizens have been arrested abroad on drug charges for possession of an ounce or less of marijuana. The risk of being put in jail for one marijuana cigarette, or for other illegal substances, is not worth it. If you’re arrested for violating a country’s drug laws, the American consular officer CANNOT get you out! You may say “it couldn’t happen to me” but the fact is that it could happen to you if you find yourself saying one of the following:

“I am an American citizen and no foreign government can put me in their jail.”

“If I only buy or carry a small amount, it won’t be a problem.”

If you are arrested on a drug charge it is important that you know what your government CAN and CANNOT do for you.

The U.S. Consular Office CAN:

- visit you in jail after being notified of your arrest
- give you a list of local attorneys (The U.S. Government cannot assume responsibility for the professional ability or integrity of these individual or recommend a particular attorney.)
- notify your family and/or friends and relay requests for money or other aid - but only with your authorization
- intercede with local authorities to make sure that your rights under local laws are fully observed and that you are treated humanely, according to internationally accepted standards. Protest mistreatment or abuse to the appropriate authorities

The U.S. Consular Office CANNOT:

- demand your immediate release or get you out of jail or the country
- represent you at trial or give legal counsel
- pay legal fees and/or fines with U.S. government funds

And if that’s not enough to scare the living daylights out of you . . .

Once you leave the United States U.S. laws and constitutional rights do not cover you. Instead, you will be subject to the laws of your host country, or the country where you are having legal trouble.

- Bail is not granted in many countries when drugs are involved.

- The burden of proof in many countries is on the accused to prove his/her innocence.

- In some countries, evidence obtained illegally by local authorities may be admissible in court.

- Few countries offer drug offenders jury trials or even require the prisoner’s presence at his/her trial.

- Many countries have mandatory prison sentences of seven years to life without the possibility of parole for drug violations.

- Prisoners in many countries may not be treated well. The experience could very well be a mental, emotional and physical ordeal for a prisoner.

- The police and customs officials have a right to search your luggage for drugs. If they find drugs in your suitcase, YOU will suffer the consequences.

- You could go to jail for years with no possibility of parole, early release, or transfer back to the United States.

-Adapted from the U.S. Department of State's Travel Warning on Drugs Abroad

You have been forewarned! Do not do anything stupid that could land you in the slammer!

Don’t make a jail sentence part of your study abroad experience!
When you travel abroad, the odds are in your favor that you will have a safe and incident-free trip. However, crimes do take place overseas, and you should always be prepared for unexpected events. You will probably be doing a lot more traveling than you would normally do at home. This means, by definition, more public transportation such as trains, buses, metros, taxis and planes. Most provide convenient and inexpensive transportation for you as a student. However, there are a number of safety issues you should keep in mind, especially in urban settings. "Better safe than sorry," goes the old saying. As a foreign student, you can be an easy target for thieves because you stand out in a crowd, are unused to the surroundings, and are generally perceived to be carrying money, credit cards and valuables like cameras. So be cautious but not fearful. You must learn to walk the fine line between safety and paranoia! Exercise the same precautions that you would in any U.S. city; in unfamiliar surroundings where you may not know the real concerns. You can reduce your risk of being mugged or robbed by taking a few simple precautions outlined below.

**STAYING SAFE ABROAD**

Safety in the Streets

- Use the same common sense traveling overseas that you would at home. Be especially cautious in or avoid areas where you are likely to be victimized. These include crowded subways, train stations, elevators, tourist sites, market places, festivals and marginal areas of cities.
- Don't use short cuts, narrow alleys or poorly lit streets. Try not to travel alone at night.
- Use ATMs during the day, when there are people around. No matter how safe it may seem, do not withdraw money from an ATM located in a deserted area at night alone.
- Put your money in a money belt or neck pouch BUT ... put some money in your front pocket too! If you do get approached by a mugger, surrender the money in your front pocket and then plead poverty. Having easy access to money also will prevent you from having to pull out your money belt in public.
- If you do need to get cash from your money belt – do it in private. Never remove anything from a concealed money belt while you are in public. Someone could be tracking your movements.
- Avoid public demonstrations and other civil disturbances.
- Keep a low profile and avoid loud conversations or arguments. Do not discuss travel plans or other personal matters with strangers.
- Try to seem purposeful when you move about. Even if you are lost, act as if you know where you are going. When possible, ask directions only from individuals in authority.
- Make a note of emergency telephone numbers you may need: police, fire, your host family, the program's resident director, and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.
- Beware of pickpockets, especially in train stations, churches, and town squares where there are throngs of people. Always keep your hands free. Always keep straps of shoulder bags close to body. In restaurants and bars, loop straps around chair or table legs. Motorbike snatchers in Italy have broken a few tourists' arms.
- If you are using a zip-on daypack while wearing your full-size backpack, do not keep anything valuable in your daypack if it is zipped onto the back. Thieves can easily remove your daypack without you even noticing. Keep your valuables inside your full-size backpack or put your daypack inside the backpack if space permits.
- Wear the shoulder strap of your bag across your chest and walk with the bag away from the curb to avoid drive-by purse snatchers. Do not put your wallet in an outside pocket of your backpack. If feeling particularly vulnerable, wear your money belt somewhere other than around your waist. Thieves know all about money belts too. Consider carrying a 'dummy' wallet holding a small amount of cash. If a mugger directly confronts you, you can hand over the dummy wallet and avoid further distress.
- If you are confronted, don’t fight back. Give up your valuables. Your money and passport can be replaced, but you cannot.
Safety During Weekend and Holiday Travels

- If possible, choose accommodation that has unmarked ‘swipe cards’ rather than numbered keys for each room. If you lose your swipe card or if it is stolen, a thief won't know which room to rob.
- Keep your hotel door locked at all times. Do not leave money and other valuables in your hotel room while you are out. Use the hotel safe.
- Your money and passport should never leave your body if you are staying at a hostel. When you sleep, wear your money belt or slip it inside your sleep sack. When you shower, hang the money belt or neck pouch in the shower (slip in a plastic waterproof Ziploc bag).
- If you leave your luggage in the hostel, lock your bags and take anything valuable with you.
- Let someone know when you expect to return if you are out late at night.
- If you are alone, do not get on an elevator alone, or if there is a person or people inside who look threatening to you. Follow your gut feeling.
- Read the fire safety instructions in your hotel room. Know how to report a fire. 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 life saver if you have to crawl through a smoke-filled corridor.
- If you get lost, duck into a café, sit down, and consult your map without looking like you are lost. This way, you avoid being a target for pickpockets.
- If you see your way being blocked by a stranger and another person is very close to you from behind, move away. The people may have intentions of robbing or assaulting you.

Safety while on Public or Private Transportation

- Only take taxis clearly identified with official markings. Beware of unmarked cabs.
- Know the safest way of securing taxis. For example, in India, it is not safe to flag a passing cab. It is better for the hotel to call for a cab from a reputable firm. If you have to, make it known that you are expected at your destination.
- Where possible, lock your train compartment. If it cannot be locked securely, take turns sleeping in shifts with your traveling companions. If that is not possible, stay awake. If you must sleep unprotected, tie down your luggage, strap your valuables to you and sleep on top of them as much as possible.
- Do not accept food or drink from strangers. Criminals have been known to drug food or drink offered to passengers.
- Thinking of using Uber? Don’t do it if you are by yourself! Uber drivers are hardly monitored and a stranger in a strange land is a tempting target.
- If available, choose a car with universal door locks and power windows, features that give the driver better control of access to the car. An air conditioner, when available, is also a safety feature, allowing you to drive with windows closed. Thieves can and do snatch purses through open windows of moving cars.
- Don't leave valuables in the car. If you must bring valuable items with you, keep them out of sight locked in the trunk. Make sure you stow these things in the trunk in private. It won’t do to do this in public and let people know there are some desirable items in the trunk.
- Don't get out of the car if there are suspicious looking individuals nearby. Drive away.
- At the airport, watch for your suitcase as it appears on the carousel. Don't hang back and wait for the crowds to disperse - you might find that someone else has already taken your bag in the meantime.
Safety for Female Travelers

While all travelers should plan carefully to ensure their health and safety, women have extra concerns.

- Don’t travel alone if at all possible! A woman traveling alone is often an attractive target.
- Take a doorstop in your luggage and jam it under your closed hotel room door.
- Avoid ground level hotel rooms. Concierge floors often offer extra security.
- Keep a business card from your hotel in your purse, in case you get lost.
- Don’t leave your drink unattended in a restaurant or bar.
- When registering, use only your last name and first initial, if possible.
- Many countries have different ideas about how women should dress and behave. People will make assumptions about you based on what you are wearing. If you’re traveling in segregated areas, such as orthodox religious neighborhoods, take cues from the women around you and try to blend in. Even if you don’t agree with particular customs, it will make your trip more enjoyable if you respect local expectations. If you don’t, you may have to endure unpleasant attention.

Beware of These Common Scams!

The odds of becoming a victim of a terrorist attack are small (1 in 9.7 million). You stand a far better chance of becoming a victim of a street crime. Increased threat of terrorism has meant there’s more police presence in airports, train stations, bus terminals – but fewer outside. Indeed, airport crime has gone down in many places.

Street crime, on the other hand, is alive and well. The good news is: violent crime is rare because guns are banned in many countries of the world. The bad news is: pick-pockets, particularly in Europe, are creative, have guile, and are very, very skilled! They can lift your wallet without you noticing until much, much later. Here are a few scams to which you need to be alert:

- Splash or splat: one thief squirts, spills, or throws something at you. An accomplice distracts you by helping to clean off, causing enough of a commotion for a third to grab your belongings.
- Rigged ATM: a machine is rigged so that your card gets stuck inside. A kind observer offers to help and gets close enough to actually see you enter your pin or asks for your PIN to “fix” the machine. Your card remains stuck and you give up. As soon as you are out of sight, the thief extracts your card. The person enters your PIN and withdraws a sizeable amount. If your card gets stuck, enter false PIN 3 times. If ATM has not been tampered with, it will retain your card and you can notify the bank later. If the machine has been rigged, scam artist won’t have your correct PIN.
- Mock street fight: a group of boys make a show of beating up each other. You become distracted. An accomplice snatches your bag or picks your pockets.
- Sympathy scam: a crying child approaches you for money to go home. Ignore the kid! Many street kids have been trained to be pickpockets. Keep your wallets stashed away. Keep small bills in various pockets so you never have to take out your wallet in public.
- Baby toss: a woman hands you a baby or tosses you a doll with the intention of startling you so you drop your bag. The accomplice snatches your bag and runs away.
- Whirlwind: a group of women and kids rush in, bustling and fussing, and in all the commotion, someone swipes your wallet without you noticing. If the people leave the train or bus before it starts, someone, hopefully not you, may have lost money already.
- Photo-op gone wrong: someone volunteers to take your photo and then won’t return your camera until you’ve paid a ransom. Yell “POLICE!” in the local language if this happens. Or make a commotion.
- Pretend bump: someone accidentally bumps into you, slaps your derriere, or may sidle up next to you. Beware! They are probably interested in your wallet.

BOTTOMLINE: Be aware of your surroundings at all times. A distracted person makes for an easy shoplifting victim.
Purdue Policy on Safety and Security for Study Abroad

Purdue University is committed to developing a wide variety of international study, research, and work opportunities for its students. At the same time we recognize that there are times and places where personal security issues may outweigh the advantages of exposure to international experiences. We therefore have developed a very careful and considered approach to the safety of our students.

At a minimum the following always applies:

1) Purdue University's Office of International Programs will not send students to any country for which a U.S. Department of State "travel warning" has been issued. Further, the Office of International Programs will not send students to any region of a country for which a U.S. Department of State "public announcement" concerning security has been issued.

2) The Office of International Programs and Programs for Study Abroad also reserve the right to cancel any program when we believe that the security of our students may be threatened, even if the United States Department of State has not yet issued a travel warning or a public announcement.

3) The following information is provided to participants and their parents regarding the range of aspects of participants’ overseas experiences that are beyond Purdue’s control.

Purdue University:

a) Cannot guarantee or assure the safety of participants or eliminate all risks from the study abroad environments.

b) Cannot monitor or control all of the daily personal decisions, choices, and activities of individual participants.

c) Cannot prevent participants from engaging in illegal, dangerous, or unwise activities.

d) Cannot assure that U.S. standards of due process apply in overseas legal proceedings or provide or pay for legal representation for participants.

e) Cannot assume responsibility for the actions of persons not employed or otherwise engaged by Purdue, for events that are not part of the program, or that are beyond the control of Purdue and its subcontractors, or for situations that may arise due to the failure of a participant to disclose pertinent information.

f) Cannot assure that home-country cultural values and norms will apply in the host country.

http://www.studyabroad.purdue.edu/safety/saf_purdue_policy.cfm

The United States Department of State has developed a set of reports designed to inform travelers of potential risks.

Travel Warnings are issued when long-term, protracted conditions that make a country dangerous or unstable lead the State Department to recommend that Americans avoid or consider the risk of travel to that country. A Travel Warning is also issued when the U.S. Government's ability to assist American citizens is constrained due to the closure of an embassy or consulate or because of a drawdown of its staff.

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html

Travel Alerts are issued to disseminate information about short-term conditions, either transnational or within a particular country, that pose significant risks to the security of U.S. citizens. Natural disasters, terrorist attacks, coups, anniversaries of terrorist events, election-related demonstrations or violence, and high-profile events such as international conferences or regional sports events are examples of conditions that might generate a Travel Alert.


Consular Information Sheets are available for every country of the world. They include such information as location of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in the subject country, unusual immigration practices, health conditions, minor political disturbances, unusual currency and entry regulations, crime and security information, and drug penalties. If an unstable condition exists in a country that is not severe enough to warrant a Travel Warning, a description of the condition(s) may be included under an optional section entitled "Areas of Instability."
Carpe Diem! Seize the day! After the first few weeks abroad, many of you are probably still doing fine, but some may already be reeling from the very different environment, or from university protocol that’s very different from how we do things at Purdue.

But that’s OK! Yes, you will feel homesick. Yes, there will be many frustrating experiences. Yes, you might decide that you are miserable. But look at how far you’ve come! Think of all the enriching, unique, exciting challenging moments that you have already gone through and you’re still standing. From here on out, things should get easier.

So take things one day at a time. You do not need to get everything done in a day. Take your time. Be mindful of the here and now. Before you know it, the chips will fall into place as you become more familiar with how tasks and activities are done at your host country and university. Sometimes, doing nothing — for the time being — may solve the problem. One thing for sure — be open to doing things in a different way.

As you begin your daily life, relish your new experiences. Welcome change. Be open to other perspectives. See the world as a psychedelic mix of various colors rather than one that is painted in black and white only. Appreciate your host culture. Be humble. Hang on to your sense of humor. Make it your goal to return to the US with more knowledge about the world and some of the fascinating people that inhabit it. Supercharge your study abroad experience and enhance your professional credentials. Come back as a person who can live and work comfortably in a society that is increasingly becoming very multicultural. You’ll be glad you did.

Managing on Your Own

One thing that you will quickly realize when you get to your overseas site — especially if you are on an exchange program — is that the staff at Purdue are all very helpful. Really! How many times have you had a bad experience with an unhelpful, grouchy, indifferent Purdue staff member? Probably hardly ever.

So be prepared — it could be different at your overseas university where the university staff’s responsibilities focus on administrative responsibilities and therefore do not consider it their job to assist clueless students. Thus, you should not expect immediate assistance for things like academic advising, grade disputes, housing issues, or directions for where and whom to go for what. University staff overseas will treat you as an adult and a mature person does not usually wring his or her hands in despair if help is not forthcoming. Learn to fend for yourself and work on being more independent. Make an effort to figure out possible solutions to problematic situations. Be resourceful. If you have to ask university staff for instructions, be prepared to do the task yourself. Talk to the local students and ask what they do. You certainly do not want people to regard you as a helpless American. Use this chance as an opportunity to cultivate resilience and assertiveness. You are on your own — get used to it.
But if Nothing Works ... Ask for Help!

At the same time, while we encourage you to be as self-sufficient as possible and to avoid running to the International Programs staff at the host university at the drop of a hat, we also urge you to seek help if you are unable to solve a problem by yourself. You must recognize when you can’t go at it alone and seek the assistance of people who can help.

A suggestion about requesting help from others: Do not behave as if you are entitled to assistance. Even if you are, the right approach is crucial. A student who spent a term in France said that a sure-fire way to get people to help her was to assume a very respectful tone and say something like: "I beg your pardon, I was wondering if you could ..." or "I am sorry for bothering you, but I ..." And once she received assistance, she was always profuse in her thanks. Not a bad idea — if you are requesting assistance from others, the more apologetic and grateful you sound for taking up people's valuable time, the more likely people are willing to come to your aid. People want to feel important and by helping you, they become a hero in your eyes.

Of course, sometimes, there really are problems that will require onsite staff intervention. This is especially true if you are trying to deal with a medical, emotional, psychological, or academic difficulties. If you are not getting anywhere — then please seek assistance from the people at your overseas site. They have some responsibility to ensure your well-being and the knowledge for dealing with emergencies and other pressing matters. Do not call or email your family or the Purdue Study Abroad office to ask for instructions. We cannot help with your emergencies unless we are on-site, and we are not.

Feeling Right at Home

Make a genuine effort to learn as much as possible about the host country and its people, preferably before you leave for your study abroad destination. This way, your host culture will already feel familiar when you arrive. Of more importance, the more information you possess, the easier you can engage your hosts in conversation. If you are in Barcelona and you just read that Barcelona FC is battling England’s Chelsea for the Champions Cup, your hosts will be genuinely delighted that you share their enthusiasm for futbol!

Your expectations should be realistic — remember that you are only going to be in this new culture for a pre-determined amount of time. Ask yourself what you can accomplish, given the amount of time you have in the host country.

It may be helpful to reflect on how you deal with everyday and occasional stress even before you depart for your program. Being aware of how you handle anxiety and pressure, and knowing that you can use those same methods overseas, will further help you deal with the physiological and psychological effects of transition stress. Take care of yourself. Engage in a daily exercise regimen, eat healthy, get enough sleep, take long walks. Be adaptable! Go out of your way to meet people. Don't wait for them to seek you out; make the first move yourself. Don't worry about not speaking the language perfectly — the fact that you are making a genuine effort to communicate with people in their own language is always appreciated, and you make friends quicker this way. Value the people you will meet in the first two weeks — they could introduce you to others and before you know it, your circle of new friends has grown larger!

A study abroad experience is mostly going to be what you make of it, so do what you can to become engaged and immersed in your new environment.

Focus on Making New Friends

For some students, studying abroad means doing as much international travel in the time they have. If you have the same idea, then we hope you will reconsider. While traveling to see places you've always wanted to see is a commendable objective, getting to know your host country and forming friendships with locals and other international students will be priceless. We certainly hope your memory of Madrid/Florence/London/, etc. will not consist of knowing the train station or airport intimately. Julie Casper, a former study abroad participant, wrote that "Life is truly the people you encounter and your experiences with them."

A great study abroad experience is not merely seeing the Eiffel Tower or the Great Wall of China in person. The interaction you have with people while seeing the tower or the wall is what will make the experience even more memorable. Make people the focal point of your adventures. Long after the memory of the places you visited has faded, what you will remember are the meaningful interactions you had with classmates, flat mates or host family, the grocer, bartender or pastor. We guarantee, you will have fonder memories of your host city if you associate the place with people who have become dear to you!
Incorporate Quiet Moments into your Experience

We’ve known some students who seldom injected their time abroad with quiet moments for contemplation. They’re always doing something with other people: traveling and sightseeing, partying, or hanging out with other Americans or new friends. While these are certainly worthy endeavors, quiet moments by yourself are useful too. As much as you may like being on the go all the time, also take some time to sit back and reflect on events you experienced or witnessed, comments made by people you met, or unusual actions you observed.

So for you, we hope you will complement active learning with reflection. Regard these quiet moments as a time to recharge and rejuvenate. Assess how much you have learned thus far and what other things you can do to make your time abroad even more memorable and productive. Look back on lessons learned, the small victories, the leaps of faith you took and rewards that often came with them. Think of the future and how you can enhance career prospects with enriching overseas activities. And hey, people watching is really a lot of fun! So take the time to sit at a café or in a park, go to a museum by yourself, explore a small town on your own, eat at a restaurant patronized by locals, ride your bike around the city. Much can be gained from these solitary activities.

Brace Yourself: Culture Shock Will Happen

Leaving home and traveling to study in a new country can be a stressful experience. Even though it may be something you have planned and prepared for, the extent of the change and the effects studying abroad can have on you may take you by surprise.

“Culture shock” is a term that refers to the emotional and physical reaction to a new environment aggravated by the lack of the usual support system. In most cases, it is caused less by one single incident and more by the gradual accumulation of anxiety, frustration, and confusion from living in an unfamiliar environment.

The effects result from not knowing enough of the society’s norms and unwritten social rules, meeting lots of new people, learning the language and being unfamiliar with the basics of daily living. Culture shock also can come from the ordeal of being separated from your friends, family, colleagues, and other people you would normally talk to in times of uncertainty. When familiar sights, sounds, taste, and smells are suddenly no longer there, you may find yourself missing them very much and feeling miserable in your new surroundings.

The good news is: as far as culture shock is concerned, you really can act yourself into new ways of thinking and feeling. If you feel it setting in, take prompt action! Make an effort to do something productive like redoubling your efforts to get to know other students in your residence hall, joining an intercambio, befriending your host parents or a classmate, becoming a patron at a local café, chatting with a neighbor, participating in a traditional ceremony, whatever you can do to get out of your funk! No matter how bad the situation you are in may seem, never ever give in to the negative feeling! Keep your chin up! Be prepared to laugh at yourself. Accept all of your cultural faux pas with grace and humor. Surely, you must have witnessed an international student committing an embarrassing cultural or social error at Purdue. No? Can’t remember? Precisely!! If the same thing happens to you, remember that before long, no one will remember what you did — even if you were so totally mortified at the time.

You should inform your family and friends about culture shock. They need to know that this is a common consequence of a study abroad experience, but one that gets resolved with time and effort. Assure them that it is a natural reaction and that they should not be alarmed if you start whining or badmouthing your host country. Insist that they not go into a panic if you sound distraught and hysterical on the phone or on Skype. Tell them in no uncertain terms that if you start crying and making plans to return home, that they should tell you calmly to reassess the situation, to ask if the feeling may be due to culture shock, to remind you of how far you have come, and to advise you hang in there and to deal with the situation by countering the negative feeling with positive action. Your family and friends will be doing you a big favor by being supportive and encouraging you to keep your chin up and to soldier on. We promise, this feeling of utter despair will pass and before you know it, you have gotten used to the ways of your new environment and are happily chugging along.

Culture Shock is an interesting ephemeral phenomenon. If it happens to you, your countermeasures will determine how quickly you get over the negative feeling. Even if it feels like the whole world is collapsing around you — keep your chin up! Be determined to stick it out and do something productive rather than wallow in self-pity or frustration.
Strategize: You can get over the Culture Shock hump

“Culture shock” describes the impact of moving from a familiar culture to one which is unfamiliar. It is an experience familiar to anyone who has traveled abroad to live, work, or study. It can even affect people who are just overseas on a brief holiday.

Getting over culture shock, thankfully, is not as daunting as you might think. It will pass eventually as you become more comfortable in your new environment. The best way to beat culture shock blues? Take action! Be proactive in acclimating yourself to your new environment. Anticipate and then develop coping strategies that will help you deal with and overcome the negative thoughts and feelings. Some examples:

Daunting situation 1:
You’re extremely aggravated. The university system is so unlike Purdue! It’s chaotic. Disorganized. You don’t know how things work. Nobody seems willing to help. You’ve feeling very frustrated, annoyed, angry...

Coping Strategy:
Stay away from other clueless new international students. They won’t know anymore than you. They’re probably whining as well and while you could vent, the situation isn’t going to get any better.

Instead, befriend a local student. Locals know the ropes. Think positive and assume your new friend would be happy to show you how the system works. A bonus: you also would be initiating the first contact with students from the host culture who, for all you know, are eager to be friends but do not know how best to approach you.

Daunting situation 2:
Your classmates don’t seem to like you. They don’t talk to you in class or include you when they study together.

Coping strategy:
Hang on a minute! Have you ever done the same to a foreign student in your classes at Purdue? Did you go out of your way to talk to this person? It’s not that your classmates abroad don’t like you. Chances are, they simply aren't sure if or how they should approach you. So consider making the first move. If you talk to your classmates first, they’ll most likely start ac-

Daunting situation 3:
You're losing your self-confidence. You can’t understand anybody. They speak so fast. Your foreign language skills are so inadequate.

Coping strategy:
Relax! Give your auditory system time to get used to the foreign language. In the meantime, you can seek a language partner with whom you can practice your expressive skills, sit at a café or park or watch local TV and get used to hearing the language. Read out loud the local paper. Smile and be approachable. The local people will most likely give you a wide berth as you hone your language skills.

Try to anticipate other potentially challenging or problematic situations and develop a coping strategy for each. You'll quickly realize that if you have a plan of action in place for alleviating the problem rather than succumbing to the frustration, you'll not only feel happier and empowered, you also would have learned something about your host culture.

Play nice: Your actions abroad will have an effect on those who will come after you!

We have been very fortunate and extremely pleased that all of the students we have sent abroad have demonstrated exemplary behavior. We hope you will continue the trend. At a time when the image and reputation of the United States is taking a beating, every positive interaction between you and your overseas host is a brownie point not only for you personally, but for university you represent, and for the country in which you are a citizen. You will be an ambassador while you are abroad.

On a more basic level, your actions will always have an impact on the Purdue students who will come after you. Remember that our relationship with exchange partners like UNSW, Yonsei, CBS, the University of Bath, Tec de Monterrey, and others, or program partners like DIS, IFSA, SACI, IES, and CIEE will continue long after you return to Purdue.

What we would like is to get messages from our partners describing an excellent group of Purdue students, lauding their participation in the program, and assuring them we are looking forward to the next group.

We would be very disappointed to hear from partners complaining that our students misbehaved, disregarded policy, or got in trouble with local authorities. We certainly would be worried if partners started accepting Purdue students only reluctantly, or worse, not accepting our students at all because of something you did during the semester you studied abroad.

So please be gracious, polite, personable, reasonable, and engaging when you are abroad. Your exemplary behavior while studying abroad will help determine the extent to which subsequent groups of Purdue students will be perceived in a positive light.

Your actions overseas will have consequences for Purdue students who will come after you!

Always act with dignity and honor. The impression you make will go a long way toward maintaining our good relationship with our program partners.
Supercharging Your Study Abroad Experience

Interviewers will often ask about the study abroad experience you listed on your resume. Don’t miss the opportunity to showcase yourself as a valuable, internationally-informed job prospect. You made an investment in your future by studying abroad - but trumpeting this fact is not enough. Instead, you must plan how to best highlight relevant aspects of your study abroad experience on your resume and during the job interview.

Patricia Garrott, former associate director of Purdue’s Center for Career Opportunities (CCO), observed that quite a few returned study abroad students who later interview for jobs are not as prepared as they should be. They don’t seem to be aware how to seize the opportunity to demonstrate to prospective employers that they are highly desirable because of their international experience. Rather than simply regaling the interviewer with their overseas travel adventures, the interviewee should be prepared to expand the conversation while subtly ensuring that he or she can mention or describe the unique skills learned in and out of class, cite examples of how they successfully dealt with challenges during their time living in another country, demonstrate how they adapted to different cultural norms, succeeded under a different academic system, or interacted with people who spoke a different language.

The following suggestions will go a long way toward enhancing your professional credentials and making sure you stand out during your job search:

First, before leaving for your overseas site, plan on completing a few extracurricular tasks or projects that can enhance the “International Education” or “International Experience” section of your resume. Again, it is not enough to simply list that you have studied abroad on the resume. You have to have something concrete to market to prospective employers. So months or weeks prior to departure, investigate educational, work, volunteer, cultural, and social opportunities at your destination. Look into volunteer organizations, research work, internship options, companies in your field, experts in your major area, student academic groups, university and local events, and a host of other opportunities at your host city in which you could be involved. Isolate a few that are interesting, feasible and can be accomplished within a reasonable time frame.

Then commit to completing whatever task or tasks you set out to do.

Second, keep a list of notable accomplishments during your time abroad. Since there will be many memorable experiences and significant victories during a student’s time abroad, it is not surprising that some outcomes, experiences or situations, especially those that happen early on, could be forgotten. And what if it’s one that could prove really impressive for one particular employer. This is why it is advisable to keep a list or diary of what you’ve done and other notable facts and refer to them when planning your interview strategy and revising your resume. The latter should list the relevant courses you took abroad, the assignments you completed or the job-specific knowledge you gained. Include any organizations you joined, the local events or volunteer groups in which you participated, or the special projects you initiated. In short: make explicit how your overseas study experience was more than just taking courses.

Finally, tie in your study abroad experience with common interview questions. Common interview questions include asking the interviewee to describe how he or she is able to:

- solve problems creatively
- accept responsibility
- communicate across cultures
- appreciate diversity
- take risks
- learn quickly
- achieve goals despite obstacles
- handle difficulties and stress
- manage, organize, and multi-task
- adapt to new environments and negotiate transitions
- learn through listening, observing, and making mistakes

Before the interview, anticipate likely job-related interview questions, then rehearse and be ready with specific examples and anecdotes to showcase the skills and personal attributes you honed while you were studying abroad. At the interview, don’t leave it to the interviewer to make the connections between what you listed on your resume and why you should be considered for the position. Describe the skills or expertise you used or learned. Illuminate how these relate to the job for which you are applying. Emphasize the intercultural nature of these experiences and how your cross-cultural competence will be an asset to the company. Enumerate the specific contributions you can make to the company. In short, portray yourself as a highly coveted job prospect.

So Bon Voyage! We look forward to meeting you after your term abroad and hearing about the exciting, educational, and culturally-enriching experiences that either came your way serendipitously or intentionally after reading this inspiring guidebook :).
You’re b-a-a-c-k!! The good news is: you’ve arrived home to the warm embrace of family and friends. The bad news is: you will most likely deal with conflicting feelings of being happy to be home, yet longing for your host country, the friends you made, and the sense of adventure you felt while studying abroad. You may even feel like you are on a roller coaster— one minute excited to be home and proud to share all you’ve learned, and the next bored or frustrated and feeling out of sync with those people who have always been closest to you. Having ups and downs is common, and whether you see your glass as half-full or half-empty may depend on whether you are having a good day or a bad day. Relax – this feeling too will pass and in no time, what you will focus on will be to build on your study abroad experience and use it to speak out and encourage other Purdue students to study abroad, to use the new knowledge and unique experience you’ve had to liven up your remaining classes at the university, and enhance your career potential by further honing the interpersonal and communication skills you learned overseas.

Re-entry Challenges

Upon returning home, you will probably experience stress similar to how you felt during your first days or weeks overseas. "Reverse culture shock" is most pronounced in those who expect everything at home to have stayed the same. You must realize that some time has passed since you left, and that standards of living, the political climate, and even family relationships may have changed. You have grown during your time overseas and your family and friends have grown too. You may feel uncomfortable with what once were familiar circumstances, and may experience subtle forms of rejection if family and friends show less interest in your adventures than you had hoped. In general, you may go through some or all of the following situations:

There Are Not Enough Words to Describe You Whole Study Abroad Experience

When given a chance to explain the sights you saw and feelings you had while abroad, it may be a bit frustrating to relay them coherently. It is difficult to convey this kind of experience to people who do not have similar frames of reference or travel backgrounds, no matter how sympathetic they are as listeners. You can tell people about your trip, but you may fail to make them understand exactly how or why you felt a particular way. It’s okay – regard your experience as your special memory and for all you know, you may encourage others to go overseas too since your excitement is palpable.

Boredom

After all the newness and stimulation of your time abroad, a return to family, friends, and old routines (however nice and comforting) can seem very dull. It is natural to miss the excitement and challenges that characterize study in a foreign country, but it is up to you to find ways to overcome such negative reactions.

“No One Wants To Hear About It”

One thing you can count on upon your return: no one will be as interested in hearing about your adventures and triumphs as you will be in sharing those experiences. This is not a rejection of you or your achievements, but simply the fact that once others have heard the highlights, they won’t be as interested in the details. Be realistic in your expectations of how fascinating your journey is going to be for everyone else. And if they ask for details, remember that not everything must be shared at once — ration out your juicy tidbits.

Reverse Homesickness

Just as you probably missed home for awhile after going abroad, you may miss the people, places, and things that you grew accustomed to in your host country. While writing letters or telephoning can reduce reverse homesickness, feelings of loss are an integral part of international sojourns and must be anticipated and accepted as a natural result.

Relationships Have Changed

It is inevitable that when you return, you will notice that some relationships with friends and family will have changed. Just as you have altered some of your ideas and attitudes while abroad, the people at home are likely to have experienced changes themselves. These changes may be positive or negative but expecting that no change will have occurred is unrealistic. The best preparation is flexibility, openness, minimal preconceptions, and tempered optimism.

People See the “Wrong” Changes

Sometimes people may concentrate on small alterations in your behavior or ideas, and seem threatened or upset by them. Others may ascribe any unfamiliar traits to the influence of your time abroad. These incidents may be motivated by complex emotions: jealousy, fear, or feel-
... continued Re-entry Challenges

ings of superiority or inferiority. To minimize these incidents, it is necessary to monitor yourself and be aware of the reactions of those around you, especially in the first few weeks following your return. This phase usually passes quickly if you do nothing to confirm their stereotypes.

Feelings of Alienation / Seeing Home with Critical Eyes

Sometimes the reality of being home is not exactly what you had anticipated. It is natural to feel some alienation when daily life is less enjoyable than you remember. You may also see faults you never noticed before, or even become critical of everything. These feelings are a result of learning. Not only have you learned firsthand about other countries and customs, but you may have even grown used to them. Sometimes it’s hard to go home. These mental comparisons are fine, but keep them to yourself until you regain both your cultural balance and perspective.

Inability to Apply New Knowledge and Skills

Returnees are often frustrated by the lack of opportunities to apply their new social, linguistic and practical skills. While adjusting back to your old surroundings, join an international awareness group, follow current events from your host country or continue studying your favorite foreign language. You must be creative in finding outlets for your new interests and talents.

Loss of Experiences

Returned students often worry that they will lose the memories of their unique international experience. The easiest way to keep your memories vivid is to stay involved. Maintain your contacts. Talk to people who have had similar experiences. Practice your skills. Remember and honor both your hard work and the fun you had while abroad!

If you find yourself going through the situations described above, then take action! Find other returned students with whom to share concerns and memories, and become involved with Purdue’s international community. Let awareness be your ally: if you anticipate the strains of re-entry, you will minimize its impact and severity. The next section offers more suggestions on what you can do to avoid “reverse culture shock” and to keep your study abroad experience relevant.

Continuing your Study Abroad Experience

Now that you have returned to the U.S. and Purdue, there are many opportunities to share the interests and skills you gained while abroad! The Study Abroad Office organizes callouts, information tables, orientation meetings, and others for prospective Study Abroad participants. Be creative in applying what you learned overseas so your growth can continue.

Email studyabroad@purdue.edu with questions about the following opportunities:

- Volunteer to share your story with prospective SA students at the annual fall or spring Study Abroad Fair or various info sessions.
- Apply to become a Study Abroad Ambassador and serve as liaison between Programs for Study Abroad and students and faculty in your academic unit.
- Join PASSPORT: a social organization for returned Purdue study abroad students and exchange students spending the academic year or semester at Purdue.
- Pass it on! Encourage your friends to study abroad. Wouldn’t it be great if your BFF will “get you” even more since he or she also will have the same exhilarating experience of spreading their wings and soaring?!?
- Talk with students from your program or others who have studied abroad.
- Create a website about your experiences.
- Get involved with International Awareness and International Education Weeks.
- Talk about your experience to clubs and groups, including adults and children.
- Work with international student group activities on campus.
- Volunteer at the annual West Lafayette Global Fest celebration during Labor Day weekend.
- Join international organizations and clubs like the Purdue International Student Alliance (PISA) and other multicultural groups on campus.
- Continue your foreign language training or take courses with an international focus.
- Write about your experiences for the Purdue Exponent.
- Continue studying your host country by taking related courses, reading international papers, viewing films and videos, writing research papers, etc.
- Volunteer to work in the community or on campus. Help organizations that support community service and development. Look for groups working with immigrants, refugees, or the aged that can use your skills of listening, patience and empathy.
- Start thinking about when and how you’ll return to your host country. Some students have applied for Fulbright Scholarships to study and conduct research in the host country, have found employment possibil-
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- Serve as a buddy for an international exchange student. Each semester, the Study Abroad Office welcomes several students from our institutional partners. You must remember what it was like the first week at your host university, and how great it would have been if you had somebody who can show you the ropes. Here’s your chance to be that somebody for a new student. Contact your Purdue Study Abroad advisor for information.

- The Office of International Students and Scholars (ISS) also has an International Friendship Program. Contact ISS for more information.

- Seek the support of fellow returned students. Each semester the Study Abroad Office hosts a reception for returned students. The reception offers returned students like you the chance to talk about your experiences with like-minded peers. You can chat with other students about how you felt before you left, what kind of changes you experienced while abroad, how you feel now, and your future plans. An invitation for this fun event will be emailed to you in early January and early August.

- Recruit other Purdue students to study abroad! Hey, after a few months, your friends and family won’t want to hear about your Seville, Sydney, Singapore, or Sussex stories anymore. So seek out fresh ears! You never know – you may be directly responsible for another student having the experience of a lifetime!

Your study abroad experience does not have to stop when you board that plane for the flight home. There’s much you can do right here at Purdue to put into words and action everything you learned when you spent a term abroad.

Handling the “How was Study Abroad?” Question

Study abroad consumed four months to a year of your life. You may have made a completely new set of friends, lived with a new family, traveled on weekends, survived communicating in a new language, tried foods you hadn’t known existed, and grown in ways you hadn’t expected. And now everybody—your uncle, an old professor, a high school Facebook friend you haven’t talked to in person for at least three years—wants to know, simply, “How was study abroad?” Looking for a response that can squeeze the complexity of your experience into a short small-talk point can be tricky. Try these approaches instead:

1. Be honest. Explain that your time studying abroad was a lot like your life at home—you had good days, bad days, exciting days, and stressful days. It wasn’t a vacation, and it would be impossible to sum it up as if it were.

2. Get specific. Ask the inquirer to narrow down his or her question. Say something like, “I was there for four months [or a year]. There were so many different aspects of my experience. Is there anything in particular that you’re curious about?”

3. Set up another time to talk. Talking about your experience can be a great way to deal with reverse culture shock and re-kindle the friendships you left at home while you were abroad. Try to schedule a coffee or lunch date with a friend to catch up. You’ll have enough time to explain your experience, and he or she can better understand how your time abroad may have affected you.

4. Settle for the spiel. Sometimes you just can’t do your experience justice. It helps to have a spiel prepared for the many questions you’ll get about study abroad, but that doesn’t mean you have to settle for an “it was great.” Try mentioning a few of your major activities abroad. Was there something you learned that was surprising? How does it feel to be back? People ask about study abroad because they think it’s interesting. Don’t disappoint them. Even if you can only mention a point or two, your friends, family—and yes, even your Facebook friends—can still learn from your time abroad if you’re willing to share.

Sarah Kessler
Abroad View Magazine
Office of Programs for Study Abroad

155 S. Grant Street
Young Hall Room 105
West Lafayette, IN 47907
U.S.A.

Phone: (765) 494-2383
Fax: (765) 496-1989
E-mail: studyabroad@purdue.edu

We travel initially to lose ourselves; and we travel next to find ourselves. We travel to open our hearts and eyes and learn more about the world than our newspapers will accommodate. We travel to bring what little we can, in our ignorance and knowledge, to those parts of the globe where riches are differently dispersed. And we travel, in essence, to become young fools again – to slow time down and get taken in, and to fall in love once more.”

~ Pico Iyer, Why we Travel

Savvy Student’s Guide
Revised Edition
September 2015

The contents of this handbook are current to the best of our knowledge. Any information to the contrary is inadvertent and should be brought to the attention of the Study Abroad staff.

We welcome your contributions! Please send corrections, comments, updates, or content suggestions to studyabroad@purdue.edu.

www.studyabroad.purdue.edu