

# Savvy Student's Guide

2022-2023



**PURDUE**  
UNIVERSITY®

Study Abroad

# Foreword

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Congratulations on being accepted to your study abroad program! You are part of a community of students who have decided to expand their academic experience beyond Purdue's campus. 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. Over the course of this experience, you will be challenged to make adjustments and adapt to diverse surroundings. You are encouraged to learn from taking a different look at your environment, at other students, and most importantly, at yourself.

We understand that taking on such an endeavor can be daunting, but don't worry, because we have designed a series of pre-departure tasks to guide you in the right direction. This Savvy Guide, in addition to your orientation sessions will set you well on your way down the right path to preparing for your experience.

A diverse, inclusive community is an integral part of the Purdue experience, and Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Whether you are studying on the West Lafayette campus or on a study abroad program thousands of miles away, you are a valued part of this community and a key contributor to its success. Information, resources, and support are available to ensure that all Purdue students can pursue their study abroad goals, so don't be afraid to contact your study abroad advisor or program leader if you have questions or concerns. We are more than happy to help.

On behalf of the Purdue Study Abroad Office, we wish you well on your international and intercultural journey. We are excited for you to discover where Purdue will take you!



*In the photo: Olivia Owczarzak in Australia*



# CONTACT INFORMATION

## PROGRAMS FOR STUDY ABROAD

155 S. Grant St. Phone / Voice Mail: (765) 494-2383  
Young Hall 105 Fax: (765) 496-1989  
Purdue University Email: [studyabroad@purdue.edu](mailto:studyabroad@purdue.edu)  
West Lafayette, IN 47907 Website: [www.studyabroad.purdue.edu](http://www.studyabroad.purdue.edu)  
**Study Abroad Emergency Number (Purdue Police) :** (765) 494-8221

## FINANCIAL AID

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

## PASSPORT APPLICATIONS & INFORMATION

Closest Application Center: U.S. Post Office, State Road 26, Lafayette, IN

Passport application requirements, printable application and other information: <https://www.travel.state.gov/passport>

## ISIC (International Student Identity Cards)

<http://www.isic.org/>

NOTE: will not have the same benefits in all countries so check if the card is really going to be useful for you before purchasing.

## STUDENT TRAVEL WEBSITES

<http://www.studentuniverse.com>

<https://www.omio.com/>

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE RESOURCES

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

Country-specific alerts and information: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/>

# USEFUL INFORMATION

## TIME ZONE CONVERTER

<https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html>

## EXCHANGE RATES

<https://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>

<https://www.xe.com>

## COUNTRY CALLING CODES

<http://www.countrycallingcodes.com/index/php>

## HOSTELS

<http://hostelworld.com/>

<http://www.hihostels.com/>

## PHONE APPS

Mobile Passport

Whatsapp

Groupme

Skype

Google Translate

Google Maps

Citymapper

# Academic Matters

## The “Study” in Study Abroad

While we know you may be more focused right now on practical matters involved with studying abroad, it is important not to forget you will be studying too and that you can't forget about academic matters. While we certainly want you to have a wonderful time, we also want you to do well in your studies and make progress towards your degree. It is possible to do both, but you will need to take some steps to ensure that everything goes smoothly. 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 so you don't overlook any crucial academic tasks.

This section discusses study abroad academic matters, including a summary of your most common concerns. Many of the topics will also be covered in your advising session, online orientation, and your country pre-departure meeting. If you have additional questions not covered in this handbook, feel free to email your study abroad advisor.

## Academic Policies and Regulations

It is important to note that by default you will receive direct Purdue credits and letter grades for courses you take abroad, as long as your courses were approved by the appropriate academic area. For these reasons you hopefully selected a program that (a) has approvals in the academic areas in which you wish to receive credits and grades, and (b) has a selection of courses that will work for your plan of study. There are also academic policies you need to be aware of, so that there are no surprises when it comes to academics. These will be covered during your meeting with your advisor and in orientation sessions, but it is also important to read them now to make sure you understand.

- **Academic Integrity:** While abroad, you are subject to the academic regulations of both Purdue and the host university or program provider. Any acts of academic misconduct (cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, interference, violation of course rules, academic dishonesty) will be handled by the academic officials at the overseas site and will also be reported to the Purdue University Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities.
- **Full-time Status:** Students are required to maintain the equivalent of Purdue full-time status while studying overseas. Students studying for a semester must take the equivalent of at least 12 credit hours, while summer students must take the equivalent of six credit hours. In addition, if the host university or program defines full-time status above the minimum requirement of Purdue, students are required to meet the program's definition of full-time status as well.
- **Grading:** Grades and credits for all courses that appear on the host university or program provider's transcript will be posted to your Purdue academic record regardless of whether the course is needed to meet your degree requirements. Grades earned overseas are translated to Purdue letter grades using nationally-recognized scales provided by WES (World Education Services). These scales are not a mere adaptation to the U.S. grading system but are designed to match the spirit of the host country grading system in comparison to the U.S. system. The same variation that occurs between the differing demands of professors at Purdue is likely to occur with professor abroad. Purdue Study Abroad does not make adjustments to grades from overseas transcripts.
- **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 is sent to Purdue Study Abroad.
- **Grades for Courses Not Approved for Direct Credits.** Students will receive Pass/Not Pass for courses in an academic area 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.

## ... continued Purdue Academic Policy

- **Pass/Not Pass Option:** A Purdue student accepted into a Purdue-approved exchange, co-sponsored or direct-enroll study abroad program may choose the P/N option for courses approved for direct credit that are completed overseas. If a student chooses to take one or more courses P/N then s/he must first discuss the matter and secure approval from her/his academic advisor. The procedures for this are found on your My Study Abroad Page. The deadline for making the decision to take a course P/N is no later than the 8<sup>th</sup> week of the study abroad semester or, for shorter programs, prior to 50% of the program's duration. Once the Pass/Not-Pass Approval Form is signed and submitted to the study abroad office, a P/N grade will be recorded on the Purdue transcript for the academic coursework, and the decision cannot be reversed. More information about this option can be found on Page 12 of this handbook.
- **Academic Probation:** Students on academic probation are not eligible to study abroad. Your probation status was checked before you were accepted to the program. It is important to note that if you find yourself on academic probation between acceptance and departure for your program, that your acceptance will be revoked and you will be responsible for any non-refundable fees owed to your study abroad program.
- **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.
- **Remote Coursework:** Students studying abroad for a full semester must take in-person classes while abroad. If a necessary class for the plan of study is not offered in person, but is available remotely, students may take ONE fully remote/online course (worth no more than 3 –4 credits) via Purdue or the host while studying abroad. In addition, if the one remote course is only available through Purdue, and not through the host program, students must still meet the minimum on-site enrollment of the host university or program. Students studying abroad during the summer or winter terms cannot take online classes that overlap with their study abroad program dates.

## 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, will be eligible to apply for a Study Abroad scholarship, and will be able to apply financial aid to your overseas studies. Thus, it is imperative that you know the procedure for registration if you are a study abroad participant. Study abroad registration takes place during the **Open Registration Period** and involves the following:

1. **Consent for the Study Abroad Office to register for you:** After acceptance, you will find when you login to your My Study Abroad page a consent form will appear. By giving your consent you agree to allow the study abroad office to register for you and to remove your registration should you withdraw or be removed from the program. You also agree to confirm your registration and pay all fees due to the university.
2. **Register:** Once you have consented and during the open registration period, the Study Abroad Office will register you for the appropriate SA course number. This may be well into the open registration period, but do not worry!
3. **Confirm your registration.** Don't let your Purdue registration get cancelled, or you will have to pay a late fee before you can be reinstated. You are not able to do this immediately following registration, but if you forget to do it the Bursar will send a reminder before they cancel your registration.
4. **Make sure you pay your balance in full.** The financial tab on your My Purdue page will show the amount you owe Purdue. This will appear only after you are registered as that tells the system what to charge you. The fees may take a little while to appear after we register you.

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 at the end of your overseas program 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. Eventually, the SA number will be replaced by specific course numbers, course titles, credits and grades.



## Assessments and Grades

Students participating in an official Purdue University study abroad program will receive direct credits (credits and grades) unless arrangements for Pass/Not Pass have been made (see page 13).

**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 sometimes work harder in order to maintain your desired GPA. Courses are structured differently and there may be no quizzes, homework or attendance checks. It is possible for a course grade to be based on one comprehensive final exam. Students find that they have to put forth more effort if they hope to get good marks. Even if your program uses the U.S. grade scale, your courses can still be structured differently.

**Exams:** 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 and even then, students must arrange with the professor for an alternate exam time.

**No grade adjustments** There are 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 know the grading system at your host university. Your study abroad advisor will share with you the conversion scale for your intended destination, make sure to save this so you know what to expect on your transcript.

You should know also that in many cases, receiving an “A” from an overseas university is going to be difficult. For example, students who earn a 65 at a university in the UK will earn an A on their Purdue academic record once the conversion to the U.S. scale is completed. However, do not be lulled into thinking that earning a 65 in a UK university will require the same effort to get a 65 in a course at Purdue or you will be in for a shock. The grading standard is much more stringent in the UK than it is at Purdue.

Be prepared and aware of these policies so that there are no surprises for you upon your return.

## Choosing the courses you will take overseas

By now, you should have a general idea of the courses the courses you want or need 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 now is the time to start!

The first step is to discuss your study abroad plans with your **academic advisor**. Together, you can go over your Purdue degree requirements to determine specific courses or categories of courses you should take overseas. Your advisor can also inform you of department policy governing studying abroad. For example, some departments do not permit students to take core or upper-division major courses overseas. Make sure you are aware of departmental restrictions.

Next, consult your host institution or study program’s course listings. You will be able to find the course descriptions of the courses you think correspond to the Purdue courses on your list. 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 equivalents of overseas courses. For official course approval, you will have to consult the appropriate Study Abroad liaison(s).

Study Abroad Liaisons are faculty members or academic advisors who can designate the Purdue equivalents of the courses you wish to take abroad within their academic area. You may have to meet with more than one liaison. Even if you are a Management major, if you wish to take a Math course, you will have to consult the study abroad liaison for Math.

When you meet with a liaison, be ready to discuss the Purdue requirements you hope to complete, and the courses offered by your study abroad program. Be ready to pull up the program website or bring copies of the course descriptions for the courses that interest you. Some liaisons may ask you to send them the course information in advance, so they can review it before you meet.

**NOTE:** In some cases, your academic advisor is also the study abroad academic liaison for the area in which you wish to take courses, but not all academic advisors are also liaisons.

## 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.**

Purdue University Courses/Requirements	CIEE-Seville Business and Society Program courses
SPAN elective	Intensive SPAN for Students of Bus and Econ (required of all participants)
SPAN 302	SPAN 3002 Advanced Spanish
SPAN 241	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
SPAN minor electives (300-level and up): take any 2	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
OBHR requirement	ECON 3008 Euro Corporate Org, or BUSI 3104 Managing Multinational Workforces
International Marketing requirement	BUSI 3101 International Marketing
Economics requirement	ECON 3002 European Economy
Management elective (open)	BUSI 3106 Leadership and Power in the International Business Environment

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

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

In these examples, the student has identified possible courses offered by the program which may meet requirements. This list is now ready to be taken to a study abroad liaison for confirmation that these courses will work for the listed requirements.

**THESE EXAMPLES MAY NOT REFLECT CURRENT COURSE OFFERINGS at these programs.**



## Securing Course Approval

It is crucial for all students to obtain course approvals as early as possible, whether or not the courses they are taking will count towards their degree. The course approval process is how we translate overseas courses into Purdue course numbers and titles that will appear on your Purdue transcript when you return. Students who take this process seriously and obtain course approvals will have no surprises on their transcript when they return and will know exactly how their courses abroad will work into their plan of study. Ideally, you will choose courses that enable you to make progress on your degree, and obtaining course approvals early will help you decide which courses to take in order to do this.

**ALL courses taken abroad must appear on your Purdue transcript**, even if you are just taking it for fun. Therefore, a course approval must be obtained for every course and not just the ones you know will count towards your major. There are no exceptions to this rule, so make sure to get all courses approved.

## How to fill out the Course Equivalency Form

**First things first** – we assume you know what kind of academic program you are getting yourself into and have a general idea of the courses that are offered. You may have already completed some of the steps during the application process, but if not, you should get started now.

**STEP 1:** Discuss your study abroad plans with your academic advisor. Make a list of specific courses (SPAN 214, MGMT 200) or categories of courses (technical electives, gender studies, aesthetic awareness) that you can or should take abroad and discuss what types of classes may meet these requirements.

**STEP 2:** Research the course offerings for your program. Go to the program's website to find information about the courses you want to take and check the semester availability and suitability of courses as appropriate substitutes for your Purdue requirements. You may not be able to find upcoming course lists, and may need to work from the current or past semester's list.

**STEP 3:** On your own or with your academic advisor's help, make a list of courses you think will match your requirements or that you know you want to take. Make sure you include alternate courses on this list as well.

**STEP 4:** Contact the appropriate study abroad liaison to set up an appointment to discuss your list of courses and obtain approvals for them. Be prepared for your meeting by bringing your list of courses, course descriptions or syllabi for each, and being prepared to discuss the degree requirements you are hoping the course will meet.

**It is a good idea to ask questions during this meeting to make sure you fully understand what the courses are being approved for – never assume anything!**

**NOTE:** Study Abroad Liaisons can only approve courses in their academic area. If you are taking courses across multiple areas, you may need to speak to multiple liaisons. For example, a student wanting to take a language course, a history course, an economics course and a business course will need to obtain approvals from the College of Liberal Arts for the language and history courses and from Krannert for the economics and business courses.

**STEP 5:** Have the study abroad liaison sign the course approval form, and also have your academic advisor sign it as well. Once both signatures have been obtained, upload the form to your My Study Abroad page or turn it into the study abroad office. **The form is not complete until the study abroad office has received the signed form.**



**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.

## Sample of Course Equivalency Form



### PROGRAMS FOR STUDY ABROAD COURSE APPROVAL FORM

Name: John Purdue PUID: 001111111 Email: jpurdue@purdue.edu  
 Study Abroad Program: IES London Location: London, UK Term Abroad: Spring 2019

STUDY ABROAD COURSE (subject abbrev./number/title)	EQUIVALENT PURDUE COURSE (subject abbrev./number/title)	PURDUE CREDITS	REQUIREMENT FILLED
MC 4376 Regulating Media and Communication (EXAMPLE ONLY)	Com 35200: Mass Communication Law (EXAMPLE ONLY)	3	<input type="checkbox"/> major <input type="checkbox"/> elective <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> minor <input type="checkbox"/> other
CM 325 Censored! What the British Could Not See	COM 49100 Censorship in British Media		<input type="checkbox"/> major <input type="checkbox"/> elective <input type="checkbox"/> minor <input type="checkbox"/> other
HS 336 The History of London	HIST 30200 History of London		<input type="checkbox"/> major <input type="checkbox"/> elective <input type="checkbox"/> minor <input type="checkbox"/> other
DR 315 Theater in London: An Introduction	THTR 29000 Theater in London		<input type="checkbox"/> major <input type="checkbox"/> elective <input type="checkbox"/> minor <input type="checkbox"/> other
CM/PO 350 Media and UK Politics	COM 49100 Media & UK Politics		<input type="checkbox"/> major <input type="checkbox"/> elective <input type="checkbox"/> minor <input type="checkbox"/> other
SO 352 British Youth Culture From 1950 to Present	SOC 39100 British Youth Culture		<input type="checkbox"/> major <input type="checkbox"/> elective <input type="checkbox"/> minor <input type="checkbox"/> other
			<input type="checkbox"/> major <input type="checkbox"/> elective <input type="checkbox"/> minor <input type="checkbox"/> other
			<input type="checkbox"/> major <input type="checkbox"/> elective <input type="checkbox"/> minor <input type="checkbox"/> other
			<input type="checkbox"/> major <input type="checkbox"/> elective <input type="checkbox"/> minor <input type="checkbox"/> other

*I acknowledge that I have examined the course content of the overseas course(s) the student wishes to take abroad and have approved the appropriate Purdue course equivalent(s) listed above.*

Elizabeth Anderson

Study Abroad Liaison (Name in Print) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Study Abroad Liaison (Signature) \_\_\_\_\_

*I acknowledge that my advisee will take the above courses abroad (subject to availability).*

Jane Smith

Academic Advisor (Name in Print) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Academic Advisor (Signature) \_\_\_\_\_

#### Notes to Study Abroad Office:

THIS FORM IS A SAMPLE ONLY AND MAY NOT REFLECT CURRENT COURSE OFFERINGS. THIS SAMPLE MAY NOT BE USED AS YOUR OWN COURSE APPROVAL FORM.

Revised 7.28.17

## A note on taking Krannert courses

It's important to note that Krannert has a slightly different process for course approvals. While you should still follow the steps on the previous page, it is not required to meet with the liaison in person. Instead, they have an online system where you submit requests and the liaison reviews them. If a course has already been requested by another student, you can simply add it to your own form. If it hasn't been approved yet, you can request an approval. Instructions and access to the online form can be found here: [krannert.purdue.edu/global/course-equivalency.php](http://krannert.purdue.edu/global/course-equivalency.php)

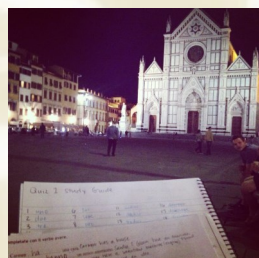
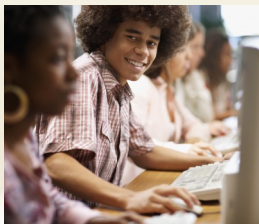
Please note when filling out the online form, it asks you to identify the Purdue course you want to receive credit for. If you enter an inappropriate course number, your request for approval may be denied and while you are welcome to submit again using a different number, it's usually best to consult with your academic advisor before submitting to ensure what you are requesting is realistic. For example, if you want a course to count for Macroeconomics but it doesn't cover anything the Purdue course covers, Purdue will not be able to approve it for Macroeconomics. If you'd like to take a course abroad, but do not see a similar Purdue course, you can try requesting MGMT 390 or MGMT 490, as these are variable title courses and can be used for courses that Purdue does not offer.

At the end you'll be able to print a form that looks similar (although a bit different) to the form above, which will already have the liaison's signature on it. You'll then need to get your academic advisor's signature and turn it in to the study abroad office.

## The Importance of Securing Course Approval / Equivalency

There are several reasons why you need to secure course approval and equivalencies for courses you plan to take abroad:

- The courses you take abroad will appear on your Purdue transcript and may replace requirements in your Plan of Study. Therefore, you'll need to know what requirement they will meet and how they will appear on your transcript in order to stay on track. If you do not obtain approval for courses BEFORE enrolling in the course, there is no guarantee it will fulfill a certain degree requirement.
- ALL the courses you take abroad—regardless of whether you need them to graduate or not—must appear on your Purdue transcript upon return. Therefore, the study abroad office needs to know the designated Purdue course number and title for each course.
- Obtaining proper course approval means there will be no delay in posting your grades and no surprises on your transcript when you come back.



### Don't say we didn't warn you!

If you did not seek prior approval for your courses, there is no guarantee the courses can be applied to your degree requirements.



## Obtaining Course Approval While Abroad

You may arrive at your destination with only a partial list of approved courses (as in the case for students participating on programs where final registration occurs after arrival). More commonly, students may arrive and find a course they wanted to take was canceled or is full, or you may find a course you had not seen before you would now like to take. If you find yourself in this situation, contact your study abroad advisor, academic advisor, and the appropriate study abroad liaison. You'll want to determine if the replacement course will work for your plan of study, and what Purdue course number can be assigned to it. In your email, be sure to include the full course name, description and the syllabus if you have access to it. Be patient in case the liaison can't get back to you immediately, and be ready to provide additional information if requested.

You can ALWAYS obtain course approval after arrival if there are changes to your course schedule, but you must let us know about changes in order to get them approved. We cannot read your mind, and if you wait until you've finished the course to tell us you may not end up with what you thought you would on your transcript.

## What to do if Course Approval was Never Obtained?

What if you just don't get an approval for a course? Then there is no guarantee that the Purdue equivalent assigned to it later will satisfy one of your degree requirements or that it will be what you wanted.

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.



## 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. However, a student accepted into a Purdue-approved study abroad program may choose the P/NP option for courses **approved for direct credit** in that subject. In other words, a student can choose to receive P/NP grades instead of a letter grade for courses that would normally translate back to Purdue in the letter-graded mode. Credits for these courses will appear on the student's transcript, but P and NP results will not affect GPA.

A study abroad student may take unlimited 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 — **a simple email will not do.**
- The signed and dated form must be submitted to the Study Abroad Office or uploaded to the student's My Study Abroad page no later than the deadline listed on that page, which is based on the program official start date.

**NOTE:** the official start date is often different from Purdue's official term start date as listed in the Purdue registration system. Please note this date may include orientation, so does not always reflect the first day you attend class. Forms submitted beyond the deadline will not be accepted.

- 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 for P/NP 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.
- If a Purdue Pass/Not Pass form is on file students do not also need to obtain permission to take a course P/N from their host university or program.
- Students need to be aware that for courses taken P/N, they must earn at least the equivalent of a C- on Purdue's scale 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. You should know what grade scale your program uses and how it compares to Purdue's.

- 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.

**It is YOUR responsibility to know how the courses you took for P/NP will be used to satisfy your degree requirements.** Ideally, you should make progress toward your degree even if the courses were taken for P / NP. It will be awful if the credits count as undistributed credits only or elective credits you don't need and you end up spending an extra semester to take the required courses for letter grades.

**While your peers from other universities may simply be working for credits, you have your grades to consider so strive to balance work and play.**

## Taking a Course Not Approved for Direct Credit

All study abroad programs are approved for direct credits (credits and grades) by one or more colleges at Purdue. For example, the University of Bath in the U.K. is a comprehensive University that offers degree programs in the Sciences, Engineering, Liberal Arts and Management. At Purdue however, the U of Bath has been approved for direct credits by the Colleges of Science and Liberal Arts only. Course within these disciplines (Math, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Literature, Sociology, History) will come back to Purdue with credits and grades. Since the Purdue College of Engineering and the Krannert School of Management have not approved the U of Bath for direct credits, a Purdue student who takes courses in these academic areas will earn credits only and P/NP grades.

Students need to be aware of the Purdue approvals granted to their study abroad program and the consequences of taking a course in an unapproved area. It will be up to the student's academic department to decide how and if those credits can be applied toward degree requirements.

Students do not need to submit a P/NP form if the course or courses in question are in subject areas that have not been approved for direct credit.

Just the same, students need to get course approval/course equivalencies even for courses in subject areas not approved for direct credits. The Study Abroad Office needs to know how the courses will be posted on the student's academic record.

**Bottom line:** If your plan of study is not very flexible and you need to graduate on time, do not take a course in an unapproved area unless you have a firm statement 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.

## Understanding direct, transfer and pass/not pass credit

It is important to understand the difference in the terms **direct credit**, **transfer credit** or **pass/not pass credit** as the type of credit you receive can affect how the courses fit into your plan of study. We know this can be a bit confusing, so we have broken it down for you below:

**Direct credit:** Credits that come back just like you took them here at Purdue, you receive credits, a letter grade, and they can be used for applicable requirements in your plan of study. This is the default option for study abroad programs, but there are some exceptions. Direct credit occurs when you take courses within an academic area that has approved the program you participate on. For example, taking a liberal arts course at a university that has College of Liberal Arts approval.

**Transfer credit:** This type of credit is NOT awarded for approved study abroad programs, though people commonly use the term “transferred” when referring to how credits come back. Transfer credit counts differently in your plan of study, and will not be the type of credit you are awarded for any of your classes abroad. You would have this kind of credit if you transferred classes to Purdue from another institution or if you had dual-credit classes in high school, but will not get true transfer credit for studying abroad.

**Pass/Not Pass credit:** You receive this type of credit when you take a course on your program that has not been approved by the appropriate Purdue college or when you request Pass/Not Pass for one or more courses. For example, say your program has been approved by the College of Engineering and the College of Liberal Arts. You take two engineering courses, one liberal arts course, and a math course. Since your program wasn’t approved by the College of Science you will automatically receive pass/no pass credit for the math course only, and letter grades for the rest of your courses. Pass/Not Pass credit appears similar to direct credit on your transcript in that it is translated to a Purdue course number and title—however the difference is that instead of a letter grade you can only receive a Pass or Not Pass for this course and it does not calculate into your GPA. This difference is important because courses taken for Pass/Not Pass might not count towards degree requirements. Use extreme caution and do your research before taking any courses this way.

We’ve created a handy chart on the next page to help you decide what type of credit is right for you. When in doubt be sure to consult with your academic advisor and the study abroad office for help.

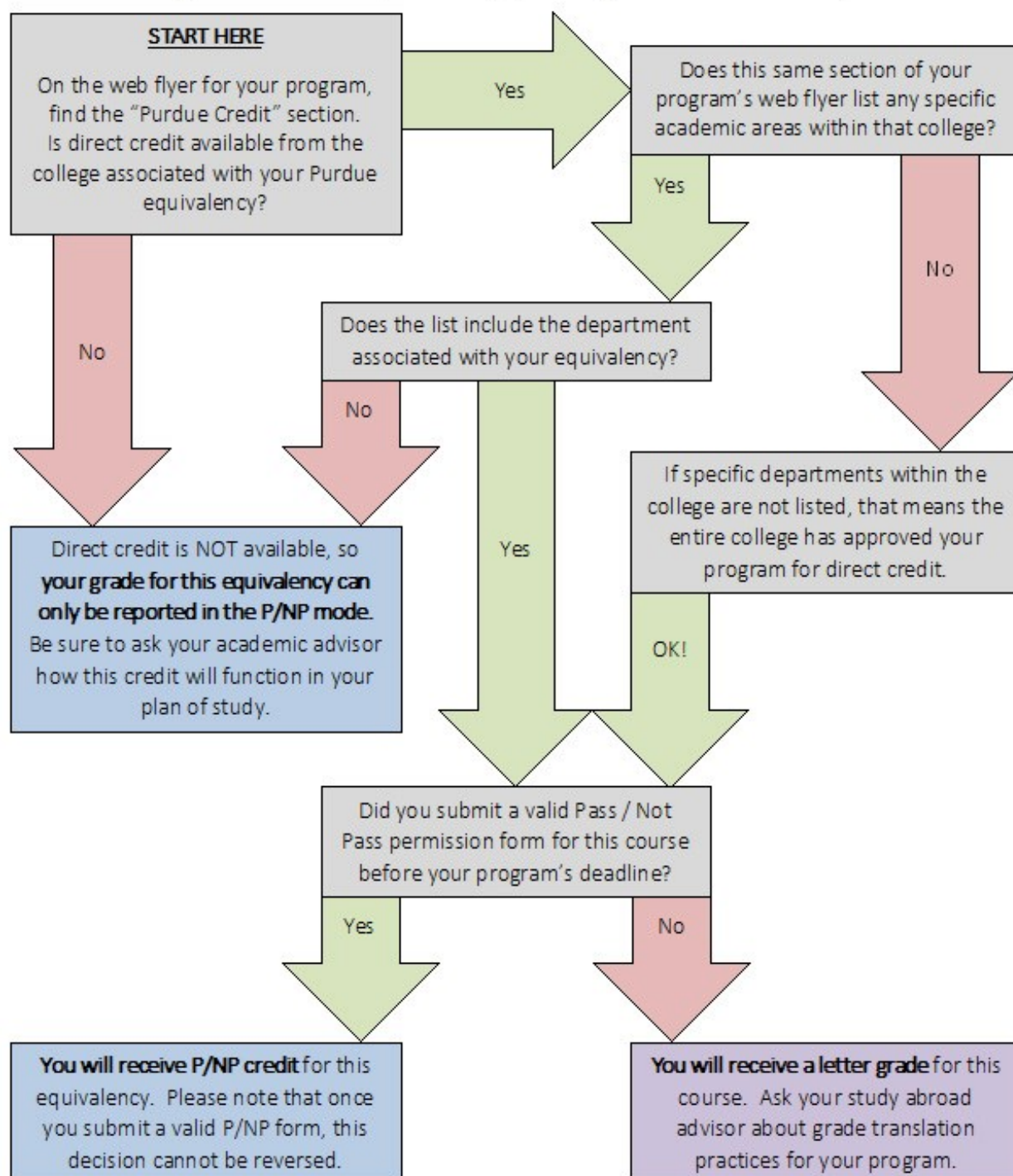
**BOTTOM LINE:** If you need courses to count for degree requirements and want to graduate on time, do not take courses unapproved for direct credit unless you have a written statement from your academic advisor that the course(s) will still count towards requirements. Never assume!

**Still confused?** Ask your academic advisor and study abroad advisor for clarification before making decisions on taking courses unapproved for direct credit or before deciding to opt for pass/not pass for any courses.



"Will I get PASS/NO PASS or LETTER-GRADED credit at Purdue for this course I'm taking abroad?"

Use this flow chart to find out! You will need access to your program's web flyer, which is available on the Purdue Study Abroad website. You will also need to know which Purdue college is providing your equivalency for the course you are taking abroad. For example, if you receive a SPAN 302 Purdue equivalency for a Spanish language course taken abroad, the college providing your equivalency will be Purdue's College of Liberal Arts. If you have any questions, please contact the Study Abroad Office.





## 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 had a course title change at the host institution.
- If an approved course had a course number change at the host institution
- If an approved course had 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.

### Some Advice

**Settle all academic issues before you leave your host institution.**

**Complete all course requirements before leaving your program site and find out your grades, if possible.**

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

## Posting Grades and Grade Equivalents

**When will your grades be posted?** After your overseas studies, your host university or study program 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 Study Abroad Office consults your course approval form and all pertinent academic correspondence. Sometimes, a study abroad academic liaison may request additional review of your overseas coursework. When everything is settled the SA office sends the information to the Registrar's office so they can record your credits and grades on your Purdue transcript.

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. Once they have processed your grades, the SA course number you registered for will disappear and the credits and grades you received will take its place.

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. Rush transcripts cannot be guaranteed, so please keep this in mind.

### **What if I need my grades to be posted quickly?**

Purdue Study Abroad cannot guarantee an exact date when grades will be posted. If you think you will need grades posted quickly because you are a graduation candidate or for another reason, alert your study abroad advisor before you leave. They will be able to give you a general timeline of how long it takes to post grades for your program so you can plan accordingly. International students may need to take special consideration of timelines when studying in their last semester at Purdue.

### **I am back from studying abroad, but my Purdue Plan still shows the Study Abroad course number with "SI" for a grade, should I be concerned?**

This simply means that your grades haven't posted yet, and the SA course number and grade of SI will disappear once grades do post. They'll be replaced with the course numbers, credits and grades that you did earn. If it's been quite some time since you got back, there may be a course approval missing or you may owe fees to your study abroad program before they release your transcript.

### **How do I know when my grades post?**

In general, the Purdue Registrar does not send a notification of posting grades but you can log into your MyPurdue account to check. Your My Study Abroad page will also show the date Purdue received your transcript, but this is simply the day it arrived at Purdue and not the day it was posted as there is some processing time. When in doubt, you can contact the study abroad office for an update.

## FAQ Courses and Grades

### Will I receive grades for courses taken abroad?

Yes. By default, students will receive grades if taking a course in a subject area approved for direct credit for that 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 credits for the semester. Typically, that will be between 4-6 courses classes. At the same time, 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. If students take less than 12 credits, they could lose their financial aid, study abroad scholarship and insurance coverage.

### What about students on summer programs?

Credits and number of courses will depend on the program. HOWEVER, if a summer student is receiving financial aid then he or she must be taking 6 credits for the summer.

### My program's minimum requirement is higher than 12 Purdue credits. 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 of interesting courses after I arrived. May I take these courses instead of the ones that had been pre-approved for me?

Yes. Just don't forget to get approval for those new courses as soon as you can. Contact the study abroad liaison and 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. Do not forget to copy your academic and study abroad advisors on the email.

### I've had to make changes to my study plan and am now taking a course that has not been approved. Can I still get course approval?

Absolutely! See answer to last question.

### 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, no exceptions. Therefore, a course approval is required for all courses.

### 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.

### 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 a course or two for audit if you

like, but these will not count towards your minimum credit requirement and should be taken only in addition to classes that do count towards your credit minimum.

### Can I take at least half of my courses for Pass/No Pass?

You can take as many courses for P/NP as you like. However, you must secure permission from your academic advisor and submit the P/NP Form by the deadline. It will be your responsibility to know how those credits will count toward your degree requirements.

### 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?

Grades must be posted as earned unless a Pass/No Pass Approval form has been completed for a course or courses. Then, only courses with this approval will be posted as P or N instead of a traditional letter grade.

### 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)

### How will I know what Purdue grade I will get for my study abroad courses?

Ask your study abroad advisor for the grade equivalency scale used for your program. Also see Page 3 Assessment and Grades.

It is your responsibility to know how your courses and grades are coming back to Purdue. When in doubt, seek information directly from the study abroad office to make sure you are getting the right answer.

## 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, or 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 job interviewer 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.

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 country 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

Make sure you are familiar with the academic system at your host institution. Ask former study abroad participants their advice for how you can find success in the classroom.

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 as readily 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 program in which instruction is given in the local language. 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 the secrets to academic success.** 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. Several of your classes may include a reading list. Read the materials on the list—it is not optional like it is at Purdue.

**Be prepared for the final exam.** Final exams

are typically weighted much more heavily in universities abroad than at Purdue where there are several assessment methods to determine your final course grade. In many universities, the final is worth much more, sometimes accounting for 100% of your final grade. So know what final exams are like for each course. What are the typical questions asked? What does the professor expect? Are there old or practice exams you can obtain?

**Get to know local students.** Rather than asking other exchange or new study abroad students who may be as clueless as you, get the scoop from degree-seeking students at the host university. They 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 or bell curves overseas. Don't expect your usual grades of A and B 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. There's no reason why the same thing won't happen for you. Make Purdue proud!



If you will receive letter grades for courses you take abroad, make sure you know what the academic system is like at your host institution. Do not assume the grading system will be the same or that you can put in the same effort you did at Purdue to earn and still earn As and Bs. In many universities overseas, only a truly exceptional student earns top marks.



# Practical Considerations



Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity.

Seneca  
Roman dramatist,  
philosopher, & politician

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 away 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.

## What this section is about:

- What documents do you need for your overseas journey?
- How should you handle your finances and access your funds?
- What items do you need to pack?
- How should you preserve your memories?
- How will you stay in touch with family and friends?

## TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

### Protect your Passport



While traveling, the most important thing is to keep your passport

secure at all times! Before you leave, scan or photocopy the main information page so that if you lose it, you have a back-up copy to speed up the replacement process. Save the scanned copy on a flash drive or email it to yourself and keep it separate from your passport.

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 is a valuable commodity that can be sold 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 or outside your host country, carry your passport 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.

## Student Visa / Residence Permit / Entry Clearance



Many governments require a student visa if foreign nationals

wish to study in their country. A visa is 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 general entry requirements are.

Students participating in study abroad programs that do not require a visa may receive a letter from their program for entry purposes stating that they are participating in an official 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, housing contract, proof of finances, and others. In many cases, no-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:** For countries that require U.S. students to obtain a visa to enter the country: Applying for visas to some 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.

**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.

**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.

If you need a student or entry visa, contact the consulate or embassy of the host country directly, or consult the [Americans Traveling Abroad](#) website for a list of countries and the visa requirements for U.S. citizens.

**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. Also, you may need permission from the U.S. authorities to exit and re-enter the United States. Check with ISS for assistance.

## 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 secure a student visa based on where you will be studying abroad.
- Determine the foreign consulate or embassy that has jurisdiction over your state of permanent residence or studies (Indiana).
- 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 many cases you cannot apply for a visa outside the U.S.

## FINANCIAL ISSUES



Studying abroad will always involve an expenditure of money.

In addition to stated 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. You will be in an unfamiliar

environment, with costs stated in the local currency you may not fully understand. You may be surprised the next day to find out how much that pizza or pint of beer actually cost.

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 frustrating 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

Students on all study abroad programs are required to complete and return a Participation Form to the study abroad office. This form will indicate if you need to pay a deposit to Purdue or if you will pay a deposit directly to your overseas program. Read your form carefully, and if a deposit is required be sure to note that it is non-refundable. The student will not be nominated to the host institution or program until the participation form is turned in and the deposit paid (if required).

This deposit is nonrefundable meaning that if a student voluntarily withdraws from the program — i.e., the student reconsiders his or her study abroad plans, accepts an offer of employment, withdraws because of a personal reason, is removed from the program due to academic or disciplinary probation, does not apply for their visa in time, 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 re-

turned is if the student's application is denied by the host program.

Students participating in exchange programs will be billed their regular 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 or direct-enroll programs will be billed a *Study Abroad Fee* by Purdue plus a fee for overseas health insurance, except on programs in which insurance is already included in the program's fee. The remainder of fees (tuition, etc) will be paid to the sponsor (host university or program) directly for the cost of the program. Consult your study abroad advisor if you have questions about the billing process for a co-sponsored pro-

gram.

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 study abroad, but some cosponsored programs may offer installment plans.

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.



## Paying for Accommodations

If students are participating in a co-sponsored, Purdue-administered, or departmental program, the fee for guaranteed accommodations is typically included in the program fee. Students could live in apartments, residence halls, or with a host family.

With a few exceptions, students participating in exchange or direct enroll programs can apply for housing at the host university or off-campus housing

suggested by the 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 apartments. In only a very few cases can homestays be arranged.

A few programs are unable to provide accommodations. Students in these programs must look for a place to live on their own, sometimes with assistance from the host institutions.

Some programs will require the students to pay their semester housing in full prior to the start of the semester. Ask your advisor if you have questions about housing charges.

## Payment of Fees at Overseas Site

In addition to housing costs that some students must pay to the host university, some institutions also charge a mandatory student services fee, national health plan premiums, or a social programs fee which will be remitted by a bank transfer from the United States or paid onsite during registration.

Study Abroad participants are ex-

pected to settle all debts overseas before returning to the United States. If a student has an outstanding financial obligation overseas, the transcript will not be released by the host institution.

Any outstanding accounts will be brought to the attention of the Study Abroad Office and we will place an encumbrance on your Purdue account until the balance is paid. This will block

your registration for the upcoming semester and access to your academic records. In addition, your study abroad academic credits and grades will not be posted until the debt is resolved.

## Scholarships and Financial Aid

Financial aid can usually be applied to study abroad. However, students will not receive their funds until about a week 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 plan to 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 prove you are receiving financial aid and can print proof from your MyPurdue page. You may be required to fill out a form to alert the program provider that you will pay the balance of your payment after you receive your financial aid, which is usually just before your program's start date.



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.

## Understanding Study Abroad Costs & Financial Aid

It is **very** important to understand the following points:

- There are many different fee structures and billing arrangements among Purdue's 300+ study abroad programs
- Each student has different financial aid eligibility and options
- Each student is responsible for learning whether the aid he/she has while on campus can be used for study abroad

Furthermore, **please note**:

- If you already received financial aid for your education costs while studying at Purdue West Lafayette, you'll need to work with the Division of Financial Aid (DFA) to determine the costs you must pay for your program and which aid opportunities are open to you.
- Budget sheet for spring semester study abroad programs are sent to DFA around October 15th and for summer, fall and academic year programs around March 15th. You cannot determine your final aid package until after those dates.
- Students not receiving aid currently may be able to get loans from DFA for their overseas program, though filling out the FAFSA is required for this.
- Study abroad advisors are not experts on financial aid and they will refer you to DFA for definitive information about how your aid will cover your overseas study costs
- It is not wise to accept information about financial aid from friends or previous program participants
- When meeting with a study abroad advisor to discuss your program, you will be given a preliminary budget for your program. These budgets list the education costs of the program and estimated additional costs you will need to budget for.
- Installment and deferred payment plans are NOT available at Purdue for the period students study abroad, though some co-sponsored programs may offer installment plans for their fees.

Students participating in Purdue-approved programs are eligible for aid through the [Purdue Division of Financial Aid](#). DFA has prepared guidelines concerning the financial aid process for study abroad; these are available on their website. If you cannot find answers to your questions call the DFA at (765) 494-5050 or visit their office in 305 Schleman Hall. To receive accurate information about your aid for a study abroad program, you must have an estimated budget sheet for that program on hand. This budget will be given to you at a study abroad advising session after you've been approved to study overseas.

**Costs Depend on Program Type:** The three basic program types and how aid may be applied to them are explained on our website and can be found here: <https://www.studyabroad.purdue.edu/FinancialAid/>. If you are unsure of your program type, please ask your study abroad advisor for clarification.

## Scholarships

Scholarships available through the Purdue Study Abroad office and their eligibility requirements can be found here: <https://www.studyabroad.purdue.edu/programs/aid/>. Please refer to this link for the most up-to-date information, and do not hesitate to ask your study abroad advisor if you have questions.

If you are on a co-sponsored or direct-enroll program **and** receiving private scholarships or under a tuition remission plan, you should confirm with the appropriate agency or administrative office that those benefits apply if you study abroad. 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.

## Accessing Your Funds from Overseas



**How much do you need?** The estimated expenses listed on the cost sheet your study abroad advisor

gave you 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 how you will access money.

**ATM /Debit Cards.** The easiest and most economical way to have cash for daily expenses is to have a debit/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 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 if needed.

The biggest advantage of exchanging money with your debit card is that transactions are based on the wholesale exchange rate. This rate is often 2-5% better than what you can get from exchanging cash 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. Key pads also may not have letters, so know your 4-digit PIN numerically.

**TIP:** Note that there may be a daily limit on how much you can withdraw from your account and a transaction fee every time you withdraw cash. Ask your bank about charges for withdrawing

money or using your card overseas. The fee could be as much as \$5 per transaction and over time, this could add up. Make an attempt to negotiate to have this fee reduced or waived.

**TIP:** 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.

**TIP:** Avoid using debit cards for everyday purchases, and instead use cash you withdrew at the ATM. The more you swipe a card, the more chances someone can hack it and this can be quite inconvenient if your debit card (which is connected directly to your bank account) is compromised.

**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 (note that Discover and American Express are not widely accepted).

**TIP:** If your credit and debit cards still have magnetic strips, consider switching to a chip-based card. Almost all countries have set-ups for smart chip technology cards and you may encounter some inconveniences if you still have the old-fashioned ones. Ask your bank if such cards are available to you.

A process of payment for credit card bills should be established before your departure from the U.S and you should 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.

**TIP:** 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. Avoid using your credit card to obtain cash. The exchange rate will not be as favorable as using your debit card and you could end up paying interest.

**Opening a local bank account.** Some students opt 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. Please note this process may be more difficult in some locations than others and is not usually worth it if you are staying less than one semester.

**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. Refer to the safety section for suggestions on carrying your money while abroad.

**Traveler's Checks.** While common in the past, these are no longer widely accepted and you should not plan on using them.



## The Frugal Student

Of late, the US dollar is faring rather well against other currencies. Just the same, no matter how strong the dollar is these days, it pays to be money savvy so you don't end up spending more than you have to. What you need to do is hone your budget skills and spend your hard-earned money more carefully. **For the most part, this is simply common sense thus 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 [money saving tips](#) from travel guru Rick Steves.

- 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. Mingle with the locals!
- Walk as often as you can. 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. You don't need to pay to take public transport a few blocks when you can easily walk.
- 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, some fruit and voila – an elegant lunch in a city park!
  - 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 who you may be able to stay with or share a meal.
  - 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 trips, point-to-point tickets are cheaper. Sometimes, a basic bus ticket can get you somewhere faster and cheaper than a train.
  - Always ask for a student discount
- and carry your student ID to receive it. You never know – it could be available!
- Buses, while slower, are cheaper than trains. Weigh the pros and cons of cost versus speed.
  - Wear a money belt or safely store your money. 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.
  - Stay in touch cheaply by using wifi. There are many free video calling, text or voice options. If you don't have access to wifi, look into calling cards you can purchase there which are typically cheaper than buying something ahead of time in the US.

## 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 staying connected 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 & Staying Connected

**Cell phones.** Europe and much of the world adopted a common cell phone standard called Global Service for Mobiles (GSM). This explains why the same cell phone that works in London also works in Johannesburg, Beijing and Sydney. Many countries, but not the US, have adopted the GSM wireless technology and if you plan on studying overseas and want the convenience of carrying a cellular phone, then you're going to need a GSM cell phone.

As a rule of thumb, most phones purchased through AT&T and T-Mobile (which use the same technology as Europe) work fine abroad, while only some phones from Verizon or Sprint do — check your operating manual (look for “tri-band,” “quad-band,” or “GSM”). If you're not sure, ask your service provider. Though you will be accessible on your US number while overseas, the “international roaming” charges can be high.

You might want to purchase your own unlocked GSM quad band with dual SIM mobile phone before you leave. Amazon carries several brands. Use one US-SIM card and reserve the other for a local SIM. 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 that determine the 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 rate. It is easy, convenient, and relatively inexpensive for you to call other people in the country you're visiting, and easy for them to call to you on your local number, too. Best of all, incoming calls are FREE. 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 vouchers 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. Just know how you can make overseas calls from your host country.

Know the country calling codes! Be sure your family and friends know how to dial from the United States to call you overseas. 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:** 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 app for making [free internet phone calls](#) (Zoom, WeChat, Skype, Viber, WhatsApp, etc...). Many Internet calling programs also work for making calls from your computer to telephones worldwide for just a few cents per minute if the person you are calling isn't tech-savvy. Many students use Skype to make computer-to-telephone calls home.

**Email.** E-mail is by far the cheapest form of communication and having a tablet, smartphone, or laptop make this quite easy.

Want to update a lot of people without being in contact with each? Try creating a mass email list or blog so you can update a group of people in less time.

## ... continued Cell Phones & Staying Connected

This may strike you as a strange suggestion, *but try not to contact 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, or texting or communicating constantly through your favorite app. 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 decreased. Instead of exploring your host country or making friends with the locals, you are

spending valuable time online. If you are participating in a language program, it's obviously better if you are not communicating extensively in English when you're trying to improve your fluency by immersion in a foreign language. So send email updates or post online occasionally, but don't feel compelled to chat with family and friends all day, everyday.

**Apps for smartphones and tablets.** Apps for smartphones and tablets can be useful both before you leave and while you're traveling. Most devices are preloaded with apps that can come in handy on a trip (such as an alarm clock, compass, calculator, weather, and so on). But you can greatly extend your device's usefulness by downloading [apps](#), such as restaurant reviews, translators, and transportation apps. These apparently are the [best iPhone apps for studying abroad](#), most have Android counterparts.

While it's convenient to be able to access this type of information, there is a catch: For many mobile apps, you need to be

online to download the latest information. With the prevalence of Wi-Fi in most corners of the world, this is generally not a problem — just find a hotspot and browse away. But

if you have a smartphone or tablet with mobile data capabilities, you can incur outrageously high data roaming fees if you try to access these apps while not logged in to a hotspot. There are many online resources you can use for tips on how you can text, make calls, and access the Internet without breaking the bank, such as the one [HERE](#) for Europe.

**Caution:** Apps make it a bit too easy to stay in constant contact with those back home, pay attention to how much you are communicating and if it's helping or harming you.



## Cameras and Photo-sharing sites

Digital cameras and now, your phone cameras are invaluable for ease of use, and for the speed with which students can share photos with family and friends.

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.

Don't get caught up in "doing it for the gram" or online attention, remember that you should enjoy the experience in the present.

These will be your memories to look back on later, so take photos of what you want to remember, not just what will get the most likes.

Consider opening an account with an online photo site or social network of your choice. 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. Also, 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 without any caption and a strong caption that makes the reader feel like they were there! Don't expect your Uncle Bob to know what that famous monument is behind you—tell people where you are and describe a bit of your day!



## 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:



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

- 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

- 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 will only be kept in short-term memory storage. 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 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 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.

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. 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 encountered.

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.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com) or [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com). Post photos of your experiences and escapades including mementos like the ones listed above. 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 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, mem-

orable 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 blogfollowers.

### 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

A blog is a personal diary. A daily pulpit. A collaborative space. A political soapbox. A breaking-news outlet. A collection of links. Your own private thoughts. Memos to the world.

## PACKING POINTERS

The key to packing for your time abroad is to pack light.



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

Airlines will allow passengers up to 2 suitcases for international travel. The fee for bringing an extra bag is hefty. Plus, you won't be able to manage 3 pieces of luggage by yourself anyway, so invest in rugged, well-made, versatile, lightweight luggage that will hold all your stuff for the time you are studying abroad. 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.
- 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 conveyor belt. Better yet, get a more colorful, conspicuous bag.
- 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'll be 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.
- If you plan to do a lot of traveling (vacation, overnight, or weekend trips), make your carry-on bag a backpack. that you will also use for your weekend travels. Budget carriers like EasyJet or RyanAir will allow passengers to bring only a small bag onboard and a checked bag can be very expensive.
- 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.
- If purchasing a larger 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 sys-

tem 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 small but durable and **secure** bag with you for your weekend travels. You can use this daypack, sling bag, or cross-body bag for daily outings while you leave the large backpack at the hostel or the local train station. Make sure this bag is secured with zippers or flaps. Tote bags with an open top are no-nos! Pickpockets are prevalent in many major cities. You don't want to lose your money, passport, tablet or camera—so bring a travel bag that will make it hard for pickpockets to simply dip their hand inside your bag and run off with your valuables.





## Packing the Essentials in your Carry-On



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. If these are prescription or

heavily regulated medication, bring a doctor's note or your medical records as well.

- 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.
- Scan and store as pdf files or 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.
- Clean out your wallet before you leave. You don't need your BoilerExpress card or Discover credit card (not valid overseas) while studying abroad. Leave all unnecessary items at home.

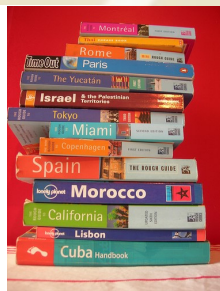
- Remember to pack a change of clothing in your carry-on to get you through at least a day. Airlines do lose luggage.
- Board the plane with water and snacks for emergencies. You never know if the plane will sit for hours on the runway.
- Bring a small pillow or eye mask if you have a long flight ahead. **DO NOT BRING A BIG PILLOW** and test out any travel pillow for comfort before lugging them around.
- Remember the 3-1-1 rule for how much liquid travelers can take on an airplane in their carry-on bags: 3.4 oz or less inside one clear quart-size plastic bag. A second bag is not allowed.
- Since there's no weight limit on carry-on bags, use compression bags when packing extra clothes to make more room for other items.

## Updated Travel Guide

Don't leave home without purchasing the latest issue of a travel guide in print or an electronic version: 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 or electronic versions of travel guides on your e-reader, tablet, or laptop computer.

**Isn't a travel guide in book form terribly old-fashioned?** 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

With only 2 suitcases and a whole semester ahead, deciding which clothes and shoes to bring overseas is big decision. Our suggestions:



- Choose clothing that will allow a minimum amount of items to be carried. This is done by selecting items that can be mixed and matched together, based on color and styles, to create a variety of outfits. Remember that accessories (scarves, pins, belts) can also change your look.
- Bring clothes that are easy to care for. In some countries, laundromats may not be as available. In many countries, clothes dryers are not common and hang drying is normal. Be prepared to do laundry by hand if needed. Don't bring clothes that need to be dry-cleaned or ironed.
- Some countries may be humid and clothes will take longer to dry. Clothes made with tencel, microfiber, jersey knit, microfleece, microsuede, or other modern fabrics are great for traveling. They are light, easy to care for, and non-bulky. Heavy cotton sweatshirts and denim jeans are heavy, take up space in your bags, dry slowly, and do not wick sweat away from your body.
- Pack dark-colored pants or bottoms so dirt won't show easily. 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 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 people from your host country.
- Consider packing clothes in space or

compression bags to reduce the bulk. Fleece pull-overs and winter coats can take up a lot of space. Note however that only volume will be reduced, not the mass.

- Rolling clothes rather than folding is the preferred way to pack. This trick not only saves space, it prevents clothes from wrinkling.
- 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!
- If you can't do without your hair products or 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 your worst nightmare 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 key-chain, 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 “110–240”), 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 in your host city, or just do without.
- A small adapter allows American-style plugs (two flat prongs) to fit into other countries’ outlets. Make sure not to leave adapters behind in outlets!
- 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 DSLR cameras, 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 expensive 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 slip.
- Bring a travel alarm if you don’t own a smartphone. Even better, just use a wrist-watch 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, you can find great suggestions and information with a quick Google search. You don’t have to pay an arm and a leg for good travel gear—you can often find affordable versions at Target, TJMaxx, and many online stores!

## 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 or don't forget to pack the charger.** If your camera has a special battery, you may want to pack an extra in case something happens to it and you cannot find a replacement abroad (or it is much more expensive).

**Make sure you have an adapter so you can plug it in to charge** You just need a plug adapter, not a voltage converter. You can buy these pretty much anywhere electronics are sold. Make sure you get one that works for the country you are going to, or you can buy a set of adapters that will work in multiple countries.

**Don't skimp when it comes to buying extra memory cards.** The price of memory cards has gone down considerably in recent years, 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.

**Sticking to your cell phone as a camera?** Pay attention to how much storage space you have for photos and consider paying a bit extra for more cloud storage just in case. Oftentimes, this is as little as \$0.99 a month.



## 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
- ☐ Currency of host country (to tide you over for a day or two)
- ☐ 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

### ELECTRONICS:

- ☐ Laptop or tablet
- ☐ Kindle or E-book reader
- ☐ Unlocked, GSM, dual sim quad band mobile phone
- ☐ Camera and accessories
- ☐ Adaptors
- ☐ Chargers and USB connectors

### IMPORTANT BASICS:

- ☐ Luggage
- ☐ Travel pack or Daypack
- ☐ Fanny pack, money belt or neck pouch
- ☐ Sewing kit

- ☐ Good padlock/keys
- ☐ Luggage Tags
- ☐ Toiletries and cosmetics
- ☐ Pens, pads, notebooks
- ☐ English-Host Country Dictionary
- ☐ Alarm clock (if no cell phone)
- ☐ Watch
- ☐ Pictures from home
- ☐ Small gifts for host family and new friends
- ☐ Diary or journal
- ☐ Travel Guides

### PAPERWORK:

- ☐ Name, email, phone number of your advisor
- ☐ 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 with band aids
- ☐ Moleskin (for blisters)
- ☐ Antiseptic cream
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Tweezers and a small pair of scissors (pack in checked luggage)
- ☐ Painkillers and decongestants
- ☐ Antacid
- ☐ Diarrhea Medicine
- ☐ Malaria Pills (where needed)
- ☐ Other OTC medication you take
- ☐ Spare set of glasses or contact lenses

### CLOTHING:

- ☐ Minimum care clothes
- ☐ Layerable clothes for weather changes
- ☐ Waterproof jacket
- ☐ Comfortable shoes
- ☐ Flip-flops for communal showers
- ☐ Socks
- ☐ Hat or visor
- ☐ Gloves/scarf
- ☐ Pants
- ☐ Tops
- ☐ Swimsuit
- ☐ Underwear
- ☐ At least one nice outfit (for social or cultural events)

### MISCELLANEOUS:

- ☐ Duct tape (wrap around a pen)
- ☐ Towel & washcloth (for travel)
- ☐ Leisure reading in English
- ☐ Umbrella
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Plastic zip-lock bags (various sizes)
- ☐ Small pocketknife (pack in checked luggage)
- ☐ Maps
- ☐ A sack, garbage bag or pillowcase for dirty clothes
- ☐ 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 (in case your passport is lost or stolen) 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—plan what you will do in case of an emergency!

*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.*

## 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.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 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.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 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!

# Travel Tips

## What this section is about:

**Planning your study abroad travels — flying to your host city, various weekend jaunts, in-semester vacation travel, and perhaps even a more extensive backpacking trip at the end of the semester — will be a significant part of your study abroad experience. It is important therefore to have the resources to plan sensibly, get more bang for your buck, stay healthy and safe, and have a fabulous time!**



**There's more to travel planning than finding the cheapest airfare. Pay attention to layover time between flights, the number of connections you have to make, and your arrival time.**

## Planning Your Itinerary

Planning your itinerary to your host city is an important first step on your journey. While some programs offer a group flight, most students are responsible for purchasing their own airfare.

If this is the case for you, then it makes sense to comparison shop as fares can vary from one airline to another. If you have purchased an International Student Identity Card (ISIC), you may 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 [www.kayak.com](http://www.kayak.com), Google Flights or [www.momondo.com](http://www.momondo.com) that allow you to compare fares as well. ***Pay attention to the terms when you purchase your ticket***, many of the sites that offer cheaper airfare have limited customer service, no refunds, and it can be hard to make changes to your ticket.

When arranging your flight, it'll be cheaper and safer 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 could be 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. Some airlines may also have open returns especially for students who will be gone for the year.

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 if there is a delay. A good rule of thumb is to avoid layovers of less than two hours. Traveling overseas can be exhausting and bewildering, so the fewer connections you have to make, the better off you are. If a non-stop 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 prefer to go by your middle name or a nickname and have used this 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.

Unless directed otherwise, it is better to arrive at your destination on a weekday and during work hours. In an emergency, you can call the onsite program or study abroad office at your host institution 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 completing the Travel Itinerary form on your My Study Abroad page.



## 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

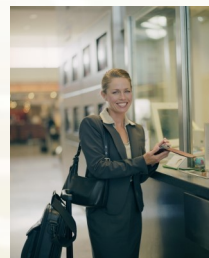
insist on searching every carry-on luggage or bags you bring on board. Many airports even insist that all passengers remove their shoes. In Amsterdam, every passenger gets a personal interview from a security officer. Just relax, answer truthfully, and you'll soon be on your way.

Know the 3-1-1 rule for carry-on liquids (including creams and pastes) and pack your bag accordingly. 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 to the point you cannot lift it. 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.



Arrive early! In some airports, the security lines can be a nightmare!

Make travel plans with the other students who are on your program! A long flight is more fun with a travel buddy. Plus, navigating customs, airport security, and public transportation at your destination is less daunting if there are at least two of you. Two, or three, heads are better than one!

## 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.

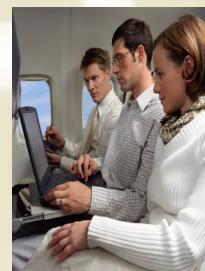
**Clothes.** Make sure you dress appropriately. Being uncomfortable can make a long trip seem even longer. Wear stylish but non-binding clothing as you will experience some swelling during the flight. Wear layers so you can remain comfortable even if the temperature varies during the flight. Comfortable shoes are

a must for navigating airports. 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 avoid alcohol or coffee if possible. 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.



It'll be a long flight for some students—so be prepared!

## ... 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.

Entertain yourself with games, or movies on your phone, tablet or computer. Get a few new books for your Kindle. Read literature about your host country or browse your guidebook. 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. But don't assume there will be in-flight entertainment, and have your own for back-up.

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 a travel pillow, that hooks around the neck but give it a test run to make sure it's comfortable before you lug it around. An eye mask will also help block out the sun or cabin lights. Do not bring a cumbersome pillow from home!

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

The Host University or 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!



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?

## 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 preoccu-

pied 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.

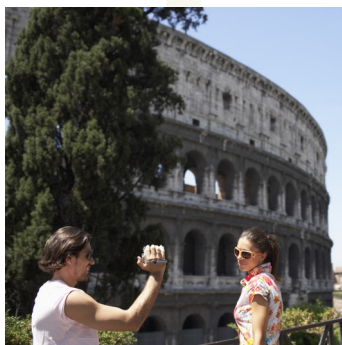
## Vacation Travel During Weekends and School Holidays

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. To check out fares and schedules, log on to: <http://www.raileurope.com>.

**A caveat** Rail passes are convenient but weigh the pros and cons before investing in one. A rail pass does give you the freedom to roam as you wish without having to spend time at the ticket window. On the other hand, these passes are not cheap and you have to use them within a specific time frame. Determine the kind of traveling that you will do to determine if getting a rail pass makes sense. A rail pass only makes sense if you will be doing several long trips within a brief time window. You may find that purchasing round-trip tickets for individual trips is a better option especially if you will only travel on weekends during your time abroad. If you do purchase a rail pass, consider the policy on what will happen if it is lost or stolen. Many vacations have been ruined because of a lost



railpass.

**By coach.** If time is not an issue, consider taking coach (bus) trips especially if the distance between cities is not that great, or if the difference between taking a train and taking the coach is only an hour or so. Traveling by bus is even cheaper than taking the train. In some countries, like 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 and EasyJet. Specific regions may have other national or regional airlines as well.

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.

**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](http://www.hostels.com) or [www.hostelworld.com](http://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 travelers on such websites like [Air B&B](http://AirBnB.com) or [Couch Surfing](http://CouchSurfing.com). 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. These places also have authentic souvenirs for much lower prices than the ones you can buy at major cities.

**Language Barrier.** You will most likely travel



## ... continued School Vacation and Weekend Travel

to other countries where English is not spoken by many people. And so what? There's much you can do with simple words, gestures and even photos. Make it a point to speak slowly, clearly and with carefully chosen words. Avoid slang terms and idiomatic expressions which can be baffling even to some people from your home country. Keep your messages grunt-simple. For instance, rather than asking if someone could please take your photo, just hold up your camera and ask "photo?" See if the locals are more familiar with a certain English word over another. For example, saying you're on "vacation" will baffle many Europeans. The term they are familiar with is "holiday" because this is what British tourists used to and still say and the Brits have been holidaying in Europe before the Yanks. Be creative and dramatic to the point of being goofy. Need an airmail stamp? Mime a flying plane. Need a room? Do the sleeping gesture. If you have a smartphone, get a translation app such as Google Translate or show pictures of what you want. Have written directions or have someone write translations of common statements — just make sure it's not someone who will pull a Monty Python's Hungarian Phrasebook on you or try to trick you!

**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 or mean something different in the local culture. For example, Greeks may tilt their head back to mean "no", when it looks like a nod of "yes" to you! 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. Before you leave, do an online search for travel etiquette to your country of destination. If traveling to another country on the weekend, learn this information for each country.

**Asking for Directions.** Ask more than one person for directions. In certain cultures, particularly Asia and some parts of Latin America, 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. You may end up going in circles! All cities and even the smallest of 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. That said, you may think it's easier to just look it up online—there is still value in asking a local. They may share bits of advice and information you never would have found out otherwise! Some of your best memories may end up being when you ask a local for directions somewhere, and they

tell you that you really need to go to this other restaurant or place that isn't on the normal tourist route.

**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. Look up in advance how to spot fakes and what to look for in the city you are going to. You can purchase great souvenirs that you'll cherish for a lifetime!

**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. When in doubt, steamed vegetables are safer than raw veggies and cooked food safer than 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 and Hong Kong (high humidity).

That said, even if you don't have a chronic condition there are many ways you can go wrong with your health while traveling on the weekends. Stay hydrated, especially in hot weather, or you may find all you remember from Rome is that it was really hot and miserable the whole time. Even not in hot weather, staying properly hydrated can ward off headaches and a host of other inconveniences. Get some sleep, you can't make sound travel decisions if you are exhausted. If you're going to drink, do so sparingly.



## 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 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.

## Your Safety is our Concern

When Chinese speakers 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 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 alerts 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 [Safety and Security](#) 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.

### **In this section:**

**Attending to one's safety, 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 out and about to stay out of harm's way.**



## Insurance Coverage

Per Purdue University policy, all study abroad participants will have insurance coverage. **Your exact plan depends on your program type. The FAQ below applies to the Purdue insurance coverage and information may be different if your program has different 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 the country.

**What is the Purdue Study Abroad Insurance?** The Purdue insurance is provided by Gallagher Insurance and underwritten by ACE American Insurance Company. 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, departmental, 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. If getting insurance coverage through a co-sponsored program, the co-sponsor will give instructions.

**When does my coverage start and end?** Coverage duration varies by program location and term, but will generally start a day or two before the official program orientation or arrival date and terminate within a week of the program's conclusion.

**How much does it cost?** The 35-day premium rate is approximately \$32 and the fee for a semester or summer's worth of premiums will be included in the Purdue Bursar invoice.

### **How does the Purdue insurance work?**

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** within 30 days of treatment. 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 found at the link below. The company will work with your family and the overseas medical facility on your behalf.

We are aware that some countries require the student to buy into the country's national health plan. 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, CAPA, CIEE, UMN or other programs in which the program fee includes insurance that meets or exceeds Purdue's requirements.

**Can I get additional coverage?** If you have plans to stay overseas past your program dates or you would like to insure an expensive equipment, you contact [Gallagher](#) about special student insurance coverage.

## International Health Insurance Program

Full program information, including contact information and instructions for filing a claim:  
<https://www.gallagherstudent.com/students/view-brochure.php?idField=1103>

## 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, the appropriate Study Abroad staff will be contacted. This number should be used for emergencies only, such as serious accidents or illnesses.

**Special Contingency Planning.** 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, who do you need to notify on-site? 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.

### **Know Local Emergency Numbers.**

While 911 works in the US, the local emergency number might be different. For example, 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. 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. Similar to 911 in the US, most phones can still call the emergency number even if the screen is locked or the phone is out of minutes.

**Make sure to look up and put local emergency numbers in your cell phone so you will have quick and easy access to them.**

In addition to the main emergency number, it is also good to know a non-emergency police number and the contact information for your local program staff or representative who you should call in an emergency.

## 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 a Program Specialist in the Disability Resource Center to discuss what accommodations may be need-



ed 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. Occasionally, despite our best efforts a accommodation may not be possible in a specific program and the student may have to choose a program that can accommodate them. The study abroad office will make every effort to find a suitable location that can offer appropriate accommodations.

**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 healthy while overseas. To get sick in another country where you don't know very many people and Mom's chicken soup and won't come to the rescue, is not going to be fun.

Of more importance, if you are in good health, you can maintain a sunny disposition and are able to regard your overseas experience in a 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, staying hydrated, 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.

Sleep is also important—many students get colds simply because they are wearing themselves out.

**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, anxiety, 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.

The next few pages will detail common ailments and more specific information about food restrictions, allergies, chronic medical conditions and mental health abroad.

*An apple a day keeps the doctor away! In the excitement of trying new things and seeing new places, you might neglect the healthy lifestyle you practiced at home.*

*Try not to tax yourself too much, take the time to stop and smell the roses, and to leave time for quiet reflection. A balanced diet and adequate sleep can help you stay healthy.*

*To fully appreciate the study abroad experience, you need time to absorb and ponder on your new experiences.*

## 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 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 insect-borne diseases which may be prevalent in your new environment. Your best tool of prevention is information. Learn about how to avoid exposing yourself to insects. You will find the locals to be highly informed about insect-borne

diseases. Their advice will be extremely valuable, be sure to follow it.

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). Food poisoning can happen anywhere, so when

in doubt opt for something else.

Another common cause of ailments is exhaustion—students who stay up late every night and spend each weekend on whirlwind adventures will find themselves more susceptible to the common cold or flu-like symptoms. Adequate rest and good hydration can help avoid this.



Open air food stalls in many countries 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 turnover 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., we recommend each student check out their website for country-specific information to be aware of.

If you wear glasses or contact lenses, take the lens prescription with you as well as an extra pair of glasses and enough contacts to last for your program duration. 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 you prefer 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., if needed. Appointments should be made at least two months before departure.

## Prescription and OTC Medications

If you take prescription medication, consult your physician and insurance company about bringing a year or semester's supply with you. Start this process early as it may take some paperwork and time to get sorted. 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. If you are unable to get a full supply to take with you, make sure you have a plan in place on how to get refills—it may require seeing a doctor upon arrival and getting a local version of your prescription. You should not just assume it will be readily available.



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. It is advised that you carry a letter from your physician explaining your need for any prescription drugs in your possession, especially if the drugs are narcotics. It is also advisable to carry a readable (preferably typed) copy of the prescription. If possible, ask the physician to write a prescription for the generic name of the drug, not the brand name as it may be called something different abroad. Walgreens will write prescriptions in 14 different languages, if needed.

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 to avoid issues at customs.

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 or this may even be illegal, so **do not plan to have medicines shipped to you.**

## If you will be sexually active ...

If you are going to be sexually active when you are overseas, or think you could be, it is important to be prepared. Take responsibility for your own health and use preventative measures to prevent yourself from sexually transmitted illnesses and unplanned pregnancy. Be sure to account for ways in which your host country may differ from your home country. This can include anything from STI rates and the availability of preventative or emergency contraceptives to behavioral practices and cultural attitudes toward sexuality and gender identity. Do your research ahead of time so you have a plan for managing your sexual health, and feel free to speak frankly with your study abroad advisor or program leader if you have questions.

Above all, remember that respect and communication are key in any culture. No sexual activity should take place in the absence of clear, active, and mutual consent. Consent can be withdrawn at any point. Incidents of sexual misconduct, harassment, and violence are never the victim's fault, and resources are available to support any study abroad student affected by these events.

## Dietary Restrictions & Food Allergies

If you have significant dietary restrictions or food allergies please make sure to discuss these with your study abroad advisor before departure. Most programs are happy to accommodate dietary restrictions and food allergies, but you must be upfront about what you cannot eat. It is also important that you do some research on how your restrictions are viewed in your host country, and how you might be able to successfully navigate your restrictions in a new culture. Though dietary restrictions such as gluten intolerance and allergies are becoming more widely known around the world, in some areas you may find local knowledge can be somewhat limited. Therefore, you need to know a variety of ways to explain what you cannot eat.

Especially if you do not speak the local language well, investing in an allergy card that clearly states your allergy or restriction and the severity of it in the local language can be very helpful—you will be able to show it at a restaurant or to other food vendors to ensure they understand what you are saying. If you are planning to travel to multiple countries where you do not know the language, a set of multiple cards in different languages is essential. These are available online, sometimes for a fee, and are well worth the cost. When in doubt, you may need to opt to cook for yourself or pack your own lunch or snacks for outings. If your allergies are severe make sure to have an EpiPen and research where the nearest medical center is. Research this information even for cities you plan to visit on the weekend. Ensure those you are traveling with are aware of your allergy and give them instructions on what to do in case of a severe allergic reaction.

**Vegetarians and vegans** may face challenges as well, and need to also research information on how readily available vegetarian or vegan options will be or if they'll need to do a lot of their own cooking. Be wary of cultural considerations around food, for example in Spain someone may say it is vegetarian because it contains no meat, but it may have been cooked in pork fat.

Students with dietary restrictions and allergies can and have had wonderful semesters abroad, but you will need to be proactive and do your research. Study abroad advisors are happy to help you research or to answer any questions you have.

## Managing Medical Conditions Abroad

If you have a medical condition, you've likely developed ways to manage and/or treat your symptoms. However, sometimes students find that when studying abroad a new environment may affect their condition differently than what they are used to. For these reasons, it is important to identify a plan to continue any current care as well as to anticipate how you will continue to manage your symptoms while abroad. Many students have successfully navigated studying abroad with a chronic medical condition, but it is important to practice self-care and to let others know when you might need help.

You will need your current physician to fill out our Physician's Report as part of your medical form, but do not simply just have them fill out the form. Have a conversation with them about accessing any medication you may need, and ask for suggestions on how to manage your condition in an unfamiliar environment. Work with your physician to get enough medication to take with you to last for your entire program, and if this is not possible, have them help you develop a plan to access it while abroad. In addition, bring a copy of your medical records with you, translated into the local language if needed. In the event you suffer a relapse or an attack, the local medical staff will know how to deal with your condition.

If you will need to see a doctor, counselor or other health-care provider in person during your time abroad, alert the study abroad office who can put you in touch with contacts abroad to help you find a suitable health care provider before you leave. That way, you can arrive knowing that you already have a care plan in place and will not have any interruption in your care. Think about all health conditions that could affect you while abroad, including seasonal allergies, recurring migraines, mental health concerns, or anything else that will have you at less than your best without medication or treatment.

**If you find yourself struggling to manage any kind of medical condition, do not be afraid to seek out help.** Local study abroad staff can help you find a doctor, counselor, pharmacist or other appropriate contact to get you back on your feet.

## Mental Health Abroad

Attending to your mental wellness abroad is just as important as looking after your physical health. As with your physical health, you may find that the increased stress, disruption of usual self-care routines, and separation from familiar places and people make it more challenging to maintain your mental wellness while abroad. Fortunately, there are proactive steps you can take to promote your mental health during your program.

Making friends, especially with other students and your neighbors or host family, will help you develop a local support system and give you a feeling of belonging. Participate in community events when you can, and consider getting involved with a club or a team. Additionally, try identifying a few local places to visit often, like a favorite park, library, or coffee shop. This can help foster a sense of place, and you might even get to know some of the other “regulars.”

Unfortunately, with physical and mental health alike, not all problems can be avoided with a preventative approach. As mentioned in your orientations, culture stress and the adjustment process are normal and can be constructive for study abroad students. However, it is also important to recognize the difference between this productive stress and more acute or persistent problems. If this describes anything you or a friend are experiencing while abroad, don't hesitate to reach out for support.

While the types of assistance available at your study abroad site may differ from what is available at Purdue, the Study Abroad Office and our international partners will work to connect you with resources that can help. If you have any questions or concerns about mental health abroad before departing for your program, be sure to speak with your study abroad advisor or program leader.

For students who already experience anxiety, depression or any other mental health conditions, it is important to identify strategies for self-care while abroad and to seek to continue any existing therapies, medications, or strategies that work well for you. If you currently see a healthcare provider on a regular basis, make sure to set up a plan for continuing this. Sometimes, your current provider can continue to speak with you over phone or video chat, but if this is not possible the study abroad office can put you in touch with people in your host country that can help you find a local health care provider.

For some students, mental health conditions may present themselves while abroad when you did not have any reason for concern at home. If you find yourself struggling more than what you feel is normal or are concerned, please do not hesitate to reach out for help. The study abroad staff both at Purdue and at your program site can help you find resources or simply be someone to listen to you and help you determine what steps to take next.

## Well Track

Did you know that while abroad you still have access to many of the resources available to on-campus students? This includes access to Well Track. WellTrack is an online software tool to help all Purdue students address struggles and challenges faced while in college. There are ways that students can use the program without being connected to CAPS and ways that therapists can incorporate this tool into their current treatment plans with students at CAPS.

For more about WellTrack, click [here](#).

**Bottom Line: Do not be afraid or ashamed to seek out help when you need it!**



## 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, 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. 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 or 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.
- 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.
- Do not drink and drive – the laws governing drunk driving in many foreign countries are far, far harsher than DUI laws in the United States.
- Use the buddy or group system—keep an eye on yourself and those you are with and have them keep an eye on you too.
- If you go out drinking, go with a group and agree to watch out for each other.
- Avoid walking home alone or taking public transportation alone while intoxicated.

## 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 (*piropos*). While they are, for the most part, harmless, 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 on-site program staff, and contact Purdue's Study Abroad Office.

If the situation involves a homestay or someone who shares your living arrangements, immediately report it to the person in charge of housing assignments so different arrangements can be made, if necessary.

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 on-site program staff and the Office of Programs for Study Abroad.

Remember that respect and communication are key in any culture. No sexual activity of any kind should ever take place in the absence of clear, active and mutual consent. Consent can be withdrawn at any point. Incidents of sexual misconduct, harassment, and violence are never the victim's fault, and resources are available to support any student affected by these events. Do not be afraid to report harassment, assault or concerns to study abroad staff or local authorities. Even if you are afraid you will be in trouble because the situation occurred somewhere you weren't supposed to be or you were participating in activities you probably should not have been, you do not need to suffer alone.

## Illegal Drugs and Crime

Each year 2,500 Americans are arrested overseas. One third of the 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 day-lights 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.
- ◆ You could be KILLED in a country like the Philippines where the president has given citizens the freedom to kill a suspected drug user or pusher.

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

## Staying Safe Abroad

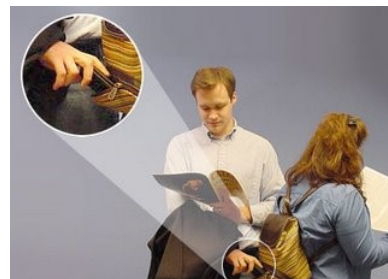
When you travel abroad, the odds are in your favor that you will have a safe and incident-free trip. However, crimes do take place overseas, and you should always be prepared for unexpected events. You will probably be doing a lot more traveling than you would normally do at home. This means, by definition, 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.

## Safety in the Streets

- Use the same common sense traveling overseas that you would at home. Be especially cautious in areas where you are likely to be in busy areas in which you are in close contact with other people. These include crowded subways, train stations, elevators, tourist sites, market places, or festivals.
- 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 by yourself.
- 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. Keep straps of shoulder bags close to body. In restaurants and bars, loop straps around chair or table legs.

- 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. Motorbike snatchers can operate in any city.
- Do not put your wallet in an outside pocket of your backpack, your back pocket or in a bag that does not close securely. 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 not you. Students have been injured trying to resist.





## Safety During Weekend and Holiday Travels

- Before booking a hostel or an AirBnB, read the reviews and pay attention to the location.
- Keep track of your hostel/hotel/AirBnB keys, especially if they clearly display a room number or hotel name—if you lose it thieves can easily see which room to rob.
- Keep your hotel door locked at all times (as well as balcony or patio doors). 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. Pack a padlock so you can easily lock your items up. Some hostels provide lockers, but no lock.
- 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 someone inside who looks 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.
- Pay attention to your surroundings and what is going on around you at all times.
- Do not leave belongings unattended for any reason. It may be a hassle to lug everything into the restroom with you, but it is better than it being gone when you return.

## 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. In some places it is not safe to flag a passing cab. It is better for the hotel or restaurant to call for a cab from a reputable firm. If you have to, make it known that you are expected at your destination.
- Do not accept food or drink from strangers. Criminals have been known to drug food or drink offered to passengers.
- Pay attention to your surroundings—crowded public transport is a prime location for pickpockets. Pull backpacks to the front of your body and keep bags close.
- If you rent a car, choose a type commonly available locally instead of something flashy. Make certain you understand local driving laws and that the car is in good condition before driving. You cannot afford to have the car break down in a strange place. When in doubt of your or your companion's driving abilities, opt for public transportation.
- Thinking of using Uber or Lyft? 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. Taxis are typically more regulated than Uber or Lyft.
- Don't leave valuables unattended. If you must bring valuable items with you, keep them out of sight.
- Don't get out of the car or bus if there are suspicious looking individuals nearby. Drive away, or stay on the bus until the next stop.
- 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.
- Avoid sleeping on public transport. If you must sleep unprotected, tie down your luggage, strap your valuables to you and sleep on top of them as much as possible. Take turns sleeping if you are traveling with others.
- Avoid being absorbed in your phone or listening to loud music with headphones, you'll make yourself a more attractive target to thieves. Listen to music at a volume where you can still hear what is going on around you.

## Safety for Female Travelers

While all travelers should plan carefully to ensure their health and safety, women have extra concerns. While these tips are also useful for males, females should especially take note:

- Be cautious traveling alone! A woman traveling alone is often an attractive target. Do not tell others you are alone.
- If you have to travel alone, sit with other female passengers or join other female students traveling to the same destination.
- 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.
- Walk with purpose as if you know where you are going, even if you don't.
- Be cautious of who you ask for directions if you become lost.

Instead of just anyone on the street, look for someone in authority, duck into a café to consult a map, or go into a hotel or local business to ask for directions.

- 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. 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.
- In many areas, you may receive catcalls. It is best not to engage or call out the person (no matter how much you may want to).

## 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 unlike in the United States, guns are banned in many countries of the world. The bad news is: pick-pockets are creative, 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, the 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 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.
- **Free gift:** someone offers you a small item, such as a bracelet or flower for “free” but then tries to demand payment. Their aim is to confuse and upset you while an accomplice pickpockets you. Say no and walk away, it is ok to be rude.

**BOTTOMLINE:** Be aware of your surroundings at all times. A distracted person makes for an easy pickpocketing 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** location for which a U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory of "Level 2—Exercise Increased Caution—Contains Areas with Higher Security Risk" or higher has been issued, unless approved in conjunction with the Purdue Risk and Assessment Committee.
- 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.

It is important to note that 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.

To read more about how Purdue uses Government Advice:

<https://www.purdue.edu/IPPU/SA/HealthSafety/purdueSecurity.html>

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

**Country Specific Information** is available for every country of the world. This includes such information as the location of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in the host country, unusual immigration practices, health conditions, minor political disturbance, unusual currency and entry regulations, crime and security information, and drug penalties. [Country Information documents](#) generally do not include specific advice but present information in a factual manner so the traveler can make his or her own decisions concerning travel to a particular country.

**Travel Advisories** from the U.S. Department are available for all countries using seven (7) differentiations of four levels. See [seven \(7\) differentiations](#) on world map.

**Level 1 - Exercise Normal Precautions:** This is the lowest advisory level for safety and security risk. There is some risk in any international travel. Conditions in other countries may differ from those in the United States and may change at any time.

**Level 1 - Exercise increased Caution - Contains Areas with Higher Security Risk.**

**Level 2 -Exercise Increased Caution:** Be aware of heightened risks to safety and security. The Departments of State provides additional advice for travelers in these areas in the Travel Advisory. Conditions in any country may change at any time. Also, note that individual Level-3 locations/regions sometimes exist within Level-2 countries which are referenced as containing areas with higher security risk.

**Level 2 - Exercise Increased Caution - Contains Areas with Higher Security Risk:** This level of Travel Advisor is not considered by Purdue-WL as "2" but "2+" for purposes of reference. Students may travel to locations on this level or higher levels with approval of the Purdue Risk and Assessment Committee.

*NOTE: Purdue-WL students are permitted to travel to "level 1 and (mere) 2 locations without additional approval processes, providing that students sign the Statement of Responsibility (form RM-55) which references related expectations to follow advice of all Travel Advisories.*



# A Successful Experience

## What this section is about:

**You are studying abroad and will be gone for several weeks or months. Make your time overseas as memorable as you can make it. Take advantage of the opportunities and challenges that come your way. Do not pass up the chance to learn about the people and culture of your host country. All the things you gain now will come in handy as you make your way through life. As noted French biologist Louis Pasteur asserted: "Chance favors only the prepared mind." Dumb luck is rare. Good things are more likely to happen if you are receptive to change and new ways of thinking and doing.**

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 could only get easier.

So take things one day at a



time. You do not need to get everything done in a day. 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 to establish new routines, relish your new ex-

periences. 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 has become 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 — 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.

While you are not entirely on your own, getting used to figuring things out for yourself will be a big part of your study abroad experience.

## 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 some-

thing 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 medical, emotional, psychological, or academic difficulties. If you are not getting anywhere – then please seek assistance from the people in charge of your program. 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 first 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 a bit familiar when you arrive. 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 League 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 transitional 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

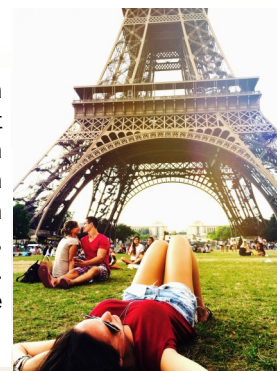
what will make the experience even more memorable. Make people the focal point of your adventures. Long after the memory of the places you visited has faded, what you will remember are the meaningful interactions you had with classmates, flat mates or host family, the grocer, bartender or pastor. We 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.



Quiet times in the park or in a café, observing, reflecting, contemplating will enable you to gain valuable insight about your host country and your experiences abroad. Really, you don't need to be on the go all the time.

## 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, and 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 counteracting 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 phenomenon. If it happens to you, your counter-measures 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're feeling very frustrated, annoyed, angry ...

### Coping Strategy:

Stay away from other clueless new international students. They won't know any more 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 who knows 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. People are usually receptive to overtures of friendship from a new student. If you talk to your classmates first, they'll realize that you are an OK person and most likely start acknowledging your presence in class.

### 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 succumb 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 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 the university you represent. 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 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 us they 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 commendable 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 candidate. Sure, 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.

A 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 know 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 by subtly mentioning or describing the unique skills learned in and out of class, citing examples of how they successfully dealt with challenges during their time living in another country, demonstrating how they adapted to different cultural norms, i.e., academic success despite a different academic system or social interactions 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. As stated previously, it is not enough to simply list that you have studied abroad on your 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 op-

**Though impressive, it is not enough to simply list that you have studied abroad on your resume. You've got to know how to make yourself stand out even more.**

portunities 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 we encourage you 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 a new task
- 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.

**Take advantage of this terrific opportunity to impress an interviewer!**

## There and back again

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 the country in which you lived for a semester or a year, 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 Your 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 sending emails, texting, or communi-

cating via social media 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 feelings 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.



## ... continued Re-entry Challenges

### *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](mailto:studyabroad@purdue.edu) with questions about the following opportunities:

- Volunteer to share your story with prospective SA students at the annual Study Abroad Fair or various information 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.

### Other Ideas:

- 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-

## ...continued

ities during program, have joined the U.S. Peace Corps, or have just returned to visit their host family and friends.

- 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) at Purdue organizes various activities that involve both domestic and international students. 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 (fall study abroad participants) and early August (year, spring and summer returnees).

- 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 some-

thing 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*



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### **Savvy Student's Guide Revised Edition August 2022**

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](mailto:studyabroad@purdue.edu).

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