



University of Georgia Office of
International Education

STUDY ABROAD PRE-DEPARTURE HANDBOOK



OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

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PREPARATIONS FOR DEPARTURE

Congratulations on making the decision to study abroad! While you may think the adventure starts when your plane lands, there are actually many things to take care of before you leave. It is important to take time before you go to plan ahead for life abroad. This section outlines some of the preparations you should make before leaving in order to avoid unwanted hassles and to make your experience more enjoyable.

PASSPORTS

A passport is an official government document that certifies your identity and citizenship. U.S. citizens need passports to enter most countries. You will need to apply for a new passport if you have never had one before, if your passport was issued before your 16th birthday, or if your passport is more than 15 years old. Passports cost \$135 for a new passport and \$110 to renew. This is a considerable amount of money, but your passport will last for ten years if you get one after you turn 18 years old. Allow 4-6 weeks for processing. Passport applications are available on-line at: http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html or they may be picked up from the Post Office on 575 Olympic Drive or Print and Copy Services in Tate 375.

STUDENT IDENTITY CARD

Some students may wish to purchase the International Student Identity Card (ISIC) available through STA Travel. ISICs will entitle you to some insurance coverage while traveling, reduced airfares, and entrance tickets to cultural events and museums, as well as numerous travel benefits. It can also be used as a pre-paid telephone card. The ISIC can be purchased on the ISIC website or through STA Travel. The ISIC costs \$25 and is valid up to one year. For more information visit

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

<http://www.statravel.com/discount-cards.htm>

HOSTELLING INTERNATIONAL

Another useful card is the Youth Hostel or Hostelling International (HI) card. It is good for discounts on hostels throughout the world and can also be obtained from STA Travel.

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

STUDENT VISAS

A visa is an official government authorization appended to your passport that permits entry into and travel within a particular country for a designated period of time. Almost all countries require that you have a visa if you are planning to study there for longer than three months. Discuss with your program director how to obtain a visa for entrance into the country where you will be studying. Some programs do the work for you; other programs require you to obtain a visa on your own. Each country has its own regulations, so if your program sponsor does not provide the necessary information, contact the embassy or nearest consulate office of the country you are planning to enter. Make sure you have secured a visa before you buy a non-refundable plane ticket. There is almost always a fee attached to the visa application and the process can take several weeks, so don't wait until the last minute! Delays in obtaining a visa may cause you to miss your flight.



KEEPING IN TOUCH

CALLING CARDS AND SIM CARDS

In most countries you can now buy pre-paid phone cards to use when making a call. They are usually purchased with cash and you have to buy a new one when the time runs out.

SIM Cards can be purchased from cell phone companies in the foreign country. The SIM card will come with a new number, and you can purchase the amount of texts, minutes, and data gigabytes that you need. Before you leave, make sure your phone is SIM card compatible, as most iPhones are not.

BUYING A NEW PHONE

Depending on the length of your stay overseas, if your phone is not compatible with SIM Cards, you might also consider purchasing or renting a cell phone. In some countries this is more convenient and less expensive than making traditional international calls on your American phone.

Tip: Have people in the U.S. call you back to save money.



SKYPE

Skype is a free software you can download to your computer or cell phone that allows you to call and instant message others. Have friends and family download it as well because Skype-to-Skype calls are free. Skype is an easy and cost-efficient way to stay in touch with family and friends while you're abroad. For more information, visit www.skype.com.

STAYING IN TOUCH WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

We encourage you to keep in touch with friends and family while abroad and share your experiences with them, but part of the growing experience of studying abroad is being away from friends and family. Spending too much time communicating with people at home will take away from time better spent exploring your new destination and meeting people. It's a good idea to write a blog to share your experiences with multiple friends without needing to send out individual messages. Spend time exploring your host culture so you have more to share with family and friends upon your return.

MAIL

Your study abroad program will likely have an address for you to give to others so that you can receive mail. Check with your program to get this information. In case you don't have an address abroad where you can receive mail, it is important to know that some banks and international credit card companies will accept and hold mail for you at their overseas office. American Express offers customers a mail holding service: mail can be sent to you in care of the appropriate office. You can also have your letters sent to the US Embassy.

Shipping gifts home may be expensive, but will save your arms and back while you travel. Always read the fine print.

WHAT TO BRING

PACKING

Here are a few tips that may come in handy while you are deciding what you should take with you overseas.

Remember that you will probably want to make purchases abroad, so leave room or bring an extra bag for bringing things home.

Keep a list of what is in each bag and carry the list with your other documents. If your luggage is lost, this will aid you in making an insurance claim. It will also help you remember what you brought with you when it's time to go home.

Due to increased airline security measures, be sure to put anything sharp and all liquids into your checked luggage. For more information on airline security, visit www.tsa.gov.

Keep in mind that it may be easier for you to carry two smaller bags than one large suitcase. Make sure you put your name and address on a luggage tag and also inside your suitcase, in case the suitcase breaks or is lost during your travels.

CLOTHING

Take interchangeable clothing that can be layered. In many cases, people in other countries dress up more than most Americans, even to go shopping, so take something nice, as well as a sturdy pair of jeans. Depending on how long you will be abroad, you may be there through more than one season - plan ahead and take some clothes for changing weather. You will be walking far more than usual. Taking a good pair of comfortable shoes is a must! .

It's important to spend some time learning about how people dress in the part of the world you are traveling to. Wearing clothing with logos, English writing and Greek letters will make you stand out as an American. Try to leave baseball caps, jewelry, and brightly colored clothes at home.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Passports and other documents should be carried with you, not packed in your checked luggage. These items should be secured yet readily accessible at customs.

Make a few photocopies of your passport and any necessary visas and put them in safe places apart from your passport. Always carry a photocopy of your passport with you but separate from the passport. If your passport is lost or stolen, report it to local police; get written confirmation of the police report and take the copies you have to the nearest U.S. Consulate to apply for a new passport.

MEDICATIONS

Take along extra prescription medication, such as allergy medicines, asthma inhalers, birth control pills, etc. The amount should last you throughout your stay if possible. Medication sent from the US may not get through customs. Pharmacies in other countries will be able to fill most prescriptions, but the medication may be slightly different and cause abnormal side effects. Getting a new prescription will also necessitate a visit to the doctor. If you wear contact lenses, take an extra set of contacts, cleaning solutions, your written eye prescription and extra glasses.

ELECTRICITY

In the U.S., we use 110-volt alternating current; however, most European countries use a 220-volt direct current. . Verify the type of current and the voltage of the outlets in the country you will be visiting.

To use an American appliance in different voltage/current/shaped outlets, you will need a transformer and a plug converter. For more thorough information on electrical issues abroad, visit <http://kropla.com/electric2.htm>. Keep in mind that it may be simpler to buy one or two small appliances overseas.

ACADEMICS ISSUES

CREDIT APPROVAL

UGA Study Abroad Programs

One of the advantages of studying on a UGA Program is that you earn UGA resident credit and grades for the courses you take. Make sure you know how to register for the courses you are taking while abroad.

Non-UGA Programs and UGA Exchange Programs

Approval to study abroad on a non-UGA program does not indicate that courses taken on a program are guaranteed to transfer. Credit must still be evaluated according to university policies. If you want courses to count towards major, minor or general education requirements, you must submit a completed Transfer Credit Approval Form (TCAF) at least 30 days prior to departure. Keep a copy of the TCAF for your records. You must make arrangements for your program to send the academic transcript to UGA upon your completion of the program.

Please request that your final study abroad transcripts be sent to the Office of International Education at the end of your program. Your transcript may be sent to Study Abroad Transcripts, UGA Office of International Education, International Education Building, 1324 S. Lumpkin Street, Athens, GA 30602.

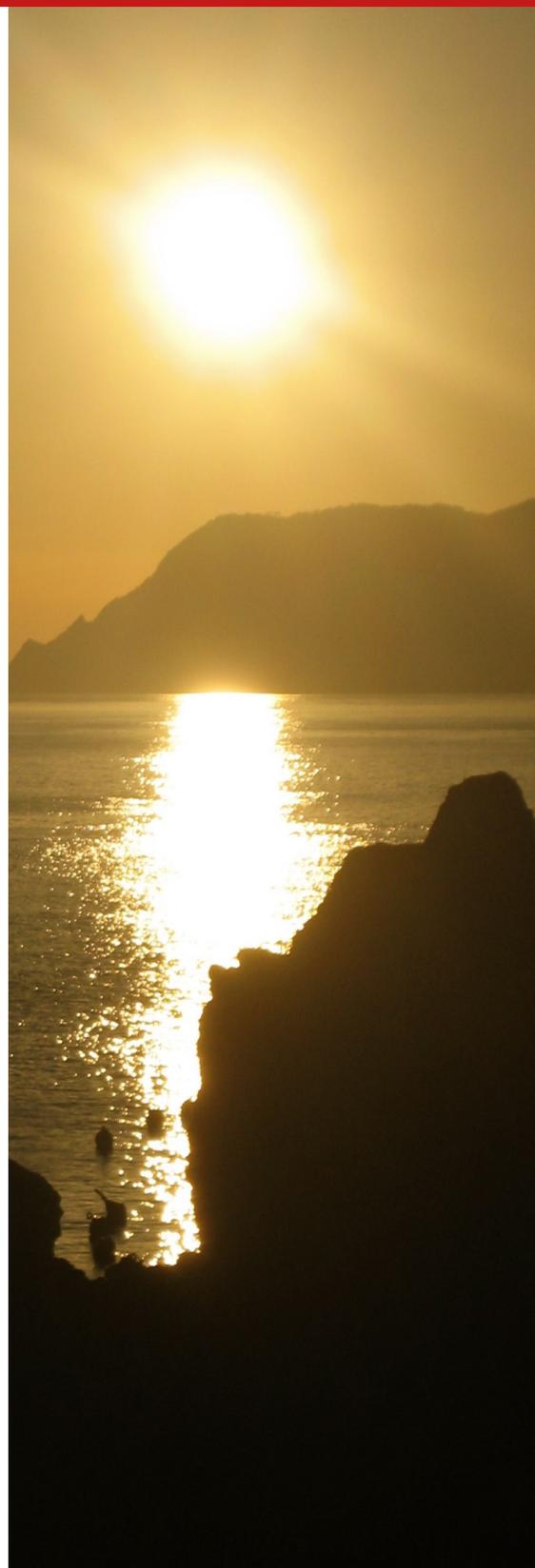
UGA will evaluate the credit that you earn on study abroad programs in accordance with the policies that govern the transfer of credit (See the UGA Bulletin). Courses must be of a quality and have a workload similar to a course at UGA, and a grade of "D" (1.0) or higher must be earned.

REGISTERING FROM ABROAD

Make arrangements to register for your next semester's courses before you go. Speak with your academic advisor to get clearance. Maintain a copy of all names, phone numbers, postal, and e-mail addresses of campus people and offices that you MIGHT need to contact during your time away.

Declare your major, if you have not already done so. Clear all registration flags and make sure all outstanding balances are paid. During the appropriate phase of registration, you can access Athena from abroad and register for your next semester's courses by going to <https://athena.uga.edu/>

Remember, if you are studying abroad on a UGA Exchange or non-UGA sponsored program, you will need a Study Abroad Credit Approval Form on file for the semester you are abroad to maintain eligibility to access registration for next semester.



FINANCIAL AID

NON-UGA PROGRAMS

If you are enrolled in a non-UGA Program you can utilize the following financial aid: federal financial aid, state financial aid and most scholarships, including the HOPE Scholarship. You must submit a Credit Approval Form to the OIE in order to use your aid for study abroad.

STUDY ABROAD SCHOLARSHIPS

There are some scholarships available for study abroad. Information about these scholarships can be found in the OIE's Website at: <http://goabroad.uga.edu>

UPDATING YOUR FINANCIAL AID PACKAGE

Your financial aid package, in particular need-based financial aid such as loans, grants, etc., is based on the Cost of Attendance to take classes at the UGA campus. Study Abroad students may update their individual Cost of Attendance with the actual expenses of their study abroad program, to include tuition/fees, program fees, airfare, etc. As the study abroad program costs can often be higher than if remaining at UGA, some financial aid packages can be adjusted. Of course, not all increases in the Cost of Attendance changes the financial aid package, but it may be worth a look for study abroad participants.

The Office of Student Financial Aid has an online "Study Abroad Form" for students who wish their financial aid package to be reviewed for their study abroad program.

<http://osfa.uga.edu/index.html>

MORE INFORMATION

If you have questions or haven't yet made arrangements to use your aid for study abroad, you should make an appointment with a Financial Aid Counselor to discuss your individual financial aid needs for study abroad. Financial Aid Counselors can be reached at: Office of Student Financial Aid, UGA, 220 Holmes/Hunter Academic Building, 706-542-6147, <http://osfa.uga.edu/index.html>

If you have questions about study abroad scholarships, you should make an appointment to meet with a study abroad advisor in the Office of International Education, UGA, International Education Building, 1324 S. Lumpkin Street.



HEALTH ISSUES ABROAD

STUDY ABROAD HEALTH INFORMATION

Before you travel abroad, it is worthwhile to take a close look at the many factors that contribute to your physical and emotional well-being. A trip abroad will almost certainly affect your health, because so many factors of your daily health are related to your lifestyle and environment. Conversely, the state of your health will have a significant impact on the success and enjoyment of your trip.

HEALTH PRACTICES

Going abroad is not a magical "geographic cure" for concerns and problems at home. Both physical and emotional health issues will follow you wherever you go. In particular, if you are concerned about your use of alcohol and other controlled drugs or if you have an emotional health concern, you should address it before making plans to travel.

IDENTIFY YOUR HEALTH NEEDS

Be clear about your health needs when applying for a program and when making housing arrangements. Thoroughly describe allergies, disabilities, psychological treatments, dietary requirements, and medical needs so that adequate arrangements can be made. In addition, resources and services for people with disabilities vary widely by country and region - if you have a disability or special need, identify it and understand ahead of time exactly what accommodations can and cannot be made.

VISIT HEALTH PRACTITIONER

UGA recommends that all students get a thorough physical examination before participating in study abroad. Discuss with your physician your intent to study abroad and get advice for managing your physical and emotional health while in another country.

If you are taking a prescription medication, check to be sure it is available in your host country as prescribed or, if not, carry a supply with you. If you self-inject prescribed medication, you may need to carry needles and syringes with you. You'll need a physician's prescription for medication and medical supplies you carry with you in order to pass through foreign customs.

Questions To Ask:

What illnesses are endemic to the region?

What medications should you take to prevent these illnesses?

What is the quality of water?

Do you need to take special precautions for any existing medical conditions?

Will you have the necessary access to English speaking doctors abroad?

What precautions are recommended for sexual or health practices?

What are the customs, beliefs and laws in the host country concerning sexual behavior and the use of alcohol and drugs?

What are the laws governing the importation of medications, medical supplies and contraceptives?

IMMUNIZATIONS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has an International Traveler's Hotline (404-332-4559) where, by punching in the country code of your host country, you can get recorded information on vaccinations, food and water, and current health problems. Their website can also be a valuable resource: <http://www.cdc.gov>

THE UGA TRAVEL CLINIC

They provide personalized international travel consultations. Information is provided on general health risks of travel, risks of contracting diseases related to international travel and methods of prevention, including vaccinations. The clinic also provides vaccinations against common diseases such as MMR (measles/mumps/rubella), influenza and Hepatitis B. This is a fee-per-visit service. Total charges will vary based on the number of vaccines needed. Appointments are necessary, and students are asked to schedule at least 6 weeks prior to departure. Call 706- 542-5575 for appointments and fee information or visit http://www.uhs.uga.edu/services/travel_clinic.html

HEALTH ISSUES ABROAD

MENTAL HEALTH

Not all countries have mental health support services similar to what we are accustomed to in the U.S. Thus, students may not have access to mental health services in some countries. Whether students have utilized mental health services in the past or not, it is important for students to know if, what, and where those services are available in their host country.

Students who are currently, or have utilized mental health services in the past, should contact the UGA Mental Health Clinic or Counseling and Testing before going abroad. The UGA Mental Health Clinic should be advised as to your needs in case a telephone consultation is required while abroad.

AIDS AND STDS

As The World Health Organization states: The AIDS virus is primarily transmitted through blood or semen. It is not airborne and not easily transmitted through daily interactions.

Since AIDS knows no geographic boundaries, to avoid infection, you should employ appropriate preventive measures. If at all possible, avoid injections, dental procedures or skin-piercing procedures when in developing countries. If injected medications are necessary, insist that all needles, syringes, and IVs are of the individually wrapped, disposable variety. If you have a known medical condition that requires injections (for example, diabetes), you should bring along your own supply of needles and syringes. To prevent confiscation in customs, be sure to bring along a letter from your doctor stating your medical need.

Sexual contact: Due to the HIV/AIDS threat, the best advice is abstinence from any sexual activity (homosexual or heterosexual). If you do engage in sexual contact, it is imperative that you use latex condoms, although this does not entirely eliminate the risk of HIV/AIDS transmission, nor of other sexually transmitted diseases, and is only 80-90% effective in preventing pregnancy when used alone.

DIABETES

If you have diabetes, you should discuss with your physician any adjustments of insulin doses and timing that may be necessary.

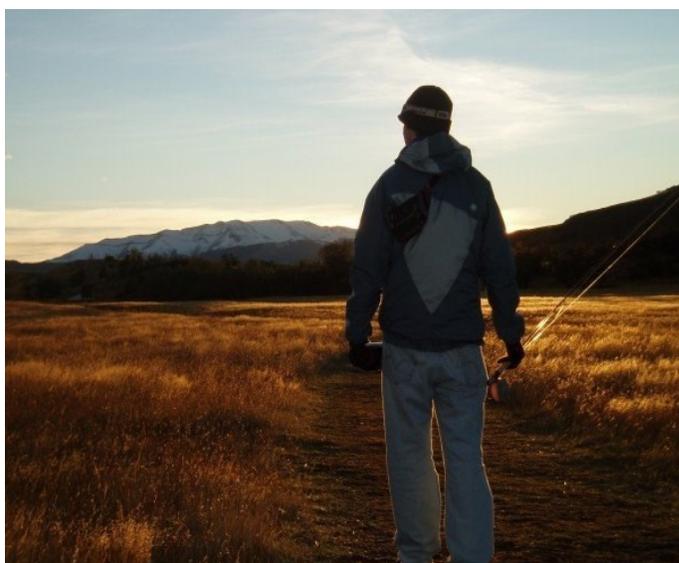
The best way to transport insulin on international trips is to carry it with you in a specially designed insulin insulator pack, which is sold at most pharmacies. For travel to hot climates, an accompanying cooler pack is also available. Once you arrive at your destination, promptly refrigerate your insulin.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Use and abuse of alcohol and drugs abroad increases the risk of accident and injury. Violating drug laws abroad may result in very serious consequences. In some countries, being found guilty of violating drug laws can result in consequences as serious as death. Making poor choices can put your personal well-being at risk.

Many study abroad students will be leaving the U.S. where they may not be of legal drinking age and entering societies where they will be of legal age to consume beverage alcohol. Unfortunately, many of these students feel pressured to consume alcohol to fit in with the culture of the host country. It is important to note that there are other ways of assimilating into a culture without having to consume alcohol.

Remember that many cultures do not use and abuse alcohol in the way Americans do. Also remember that you are like an ambassador for your U.S. college or university. Set a positive example. Behave in a way that is respectful of you, others' rights and well-being and encourage others to do the same.



HEALTH ISSUES ABROAD

PACKING MEDICAL SUPPLIES

Keep medications in their original containers and bring along a copy of your prescription. To prevent problems if your luggage is lost or misrouted, pack medications in carry-on luggage. If you will not be able to bring a supply of medication to last the entire trip, bring a prescription with the generic or scientific name of the drug, as brand names are different in foreign countries.

Always carry a wallet card or wear a necklace stating any conditions you have (like diabetes).

You should also make sure that your program director is aware of any special condition that you have that could manifest itself while you are abroad.

If you are leaving children behind, be sure to have a signed emergency treatment consent form on file with your hospital.

Sometimes the onset of an illness picked up during international travel does not occur until weeks or even months after returning home. Keep this in mind after you return.

DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

For those traveling closer to the equator, bring sunscreen and put it on before going into the sun. If you are in an area with serious insect-borne diseases, such as malaria or dengue fever, wear clothing that exposes as little skin as possible and apply insect repellent containing DEET (concentration 30 to 35%).

Be careful about drinking the water in developing countries, especially in rural areas. If your program director advises you not to drink the water, you should not use it to brush your teeth, use ice, or eat vegetables washed in water but not cooked, like salads. Order sparkling water or soda water to be safe.

Diarrhea is a common affliction that usually strikes a couple of days after arrival in a new area of the world and seldom lasts longer than about five days. The most important way of coping with this disorder is to maintain adequate fluid intake to prevent dehydration. If diarrhea or other stomach upset continues, see a doctor.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Medical facilities and services will not be the same in every country. It is important to understand as much as possible about the facilities and services in your host country before you need them.

CISI Student Insurance

The University System of Georgia (USG) has entered into an agreement with Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI) to provide a robust and encompassing primary insurance plan for all USG students studying abroad. All UGA students studying abroad are required to enroll in CISI insurance. If you are studying on a UGA Faculty-Led or Residential Center Program, you will be automatically enrolled. If you are studying on a Non-UGA or Exchange program, you will be required to self-enroll. Students who will be traveling outside of the official program dates may extend their coverage

DISABILITIES

Students interested in accommodation for their disability during a study abroad program should contact the Disability Resource Center and/or the host country Program Director before going abroad. The earlier the request is made, the more measures UGA can take to arrange accommodations in the host country. Please note: "reasonable accommodations" provided on the UGA campus may differ or may not be available in the host country.

If you have not already registered with UGA's Disability Resource Center, contact a representative at 706-542-8719. Or, contact a representative from the Academic Resource Center at 706-542-7575. Set up an appointment to discuss services you might need while studying abroad and how to proceed.

SAFETY AND LEGAL MATTERS

PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES

It is important to prepare for emergencies abroad. Find out the foreign equivalent of 911 or other emergency numbers at your destination before departure or shortly after arrival. Certain countries may have different emergency numbers for the police, fire department and ambulance. Ask your program director for details or research online.

It is also important to know how to contact your program director in the event of an emergency. If this information is not included in your orientation materials, be sure to ask. Also, make sure your program director has emergency contact information for you in the U.S.

REDUCING RISK

Try not to make yourself conspicuous by dress (tennis shoes, T-shirts, baseball caps), speech, or behavior, in ways that might identify you as a target. Do not draw attention to yourself either through expensive dress or personal accessories (cameras, radios, sunglasses, etc.). When walking around cities, look self-assured, as if you know where you are going. Consult maps before leaving or slip into a store to look at one. When you go out, make sure you carry the name and address of the place where you are staying.

During orientation, ask your program director to identify the parts of town that should be avoided.

Do not hitchhike or walk alone at night. Use common sense. Do not carry much cash, and do not pull out large quantities of money in public. Do not leave cash or valuables in your hotel room. Use good quality locks on your luggage. Keep luggage in hotel rooms, and especially in youth hostels, locked.

Don't carry your wallet in your back pocket or in a backpack. If you carry a wallet, put a rubber band around it - that will make it harder for it to be pick-pocketed. Put nothing valuable in the back of a backpack.

Use a money belt or neck pouch to carry your money, passport, credit cards, etc. Keep only the money you will need easily accessible in the front pocket of your pants or in a zippered jacket pocket. If you carry a purse, put it over your head and shoulder.

Beware of con artists. Anything that distracts you - someone asking you for something, someone dropping something in front of you, large groups of small children that come up to you - could be part of an attempt to pickpocket you or take your purse or wallet.

Limit alcohol intake - it breaks down your defenses and good judgment. Do not use drugs in a foreign country or

cross international borders with drugs. Be aware that you can be dismissed from your program with no refund for drug use. Be aware that students on UGA programs are still under the UGA Student Code of Conduct Regulations at: http://conduct.uga.edu/code_of_conduct/index.html while abroad. The Code of Conduct applies to transient as well as regular degree seeking students.

Make sure the resident director, host family, or foreign university official who is assigned the responsibility for your welfare always know where and how to contact you in an emergency and your schedule and itinerary if you are traveling, even if only overnight.

You can refer to <http://travel.state.gov/> to find the address for the U.S. consulates in each country. Once you know your address, phone, etc. abroad, you should update your contact information and duration of stay details online via the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at: <https://step.state.gov/step/>

Your enrollment in STEP will help the US Embassy or Consulate to be in contact with you in the event of an emergency.

KNOWING THE LAWS

Once you leave the United States, you are not covered by U.S. laws and constitutional rights. It is your responsibility to know the laws of your destination before you go. "I didn't know it was illegal" will not get you out of jail.

The local laws and legal processes in your host country can vary a great deal from the U.S. legal system. For example, in some countries, bail is not granted when drugs are involved. Few countries offer drug offenders jury trials or even require the prisoner's presence at his/her trial. Some countries also have mandatory prison sentences of seven years or more without parole for drug violations. The burden of proof in many countries is on the accused to prove his/her innocence. In some countries, evidence obtained illegally by authorities may be admissible in court.

If you are arrested abroad, it is one of the functions of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate to assist you in obtaining legal representation and to monitor your treatment abroad. More information on these services can be found at the U.S. Department of State website at: http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1212.html

and

<http://studentsabroad.state.gov/smarttravel/locallaws.php>

SAFETY AND LEGAL MATTERS

SECURITY

No matter how safe your campus and community appears to be, you should acquaint yourself with your new environment by reading information that UGA provides or that your host institution provides once you arrive on-site. Explore your new neighborhood and campus during the day and become familiar with areas around you. Ask fellow students or staff members about areas you should avoid at night. Always carry the address and telephone number of your new home with you until you have memorized them.

STAY INFORMED

Within the last several years, there have been some serious security issues for study abroad participants, especially within countries that are facing internal strife. Also, in many European countries, there have been a series of train delays and strikes. Stay well informed about local and regional news and conditions. Read newspapers with good international coverage and analysis of local issues. Ask your Program Director for the names of newspapers that you can access on-line to better prepare yourself for your trip.

Avoid potentially volatile situations, such as political demonstrations. It is unwise and often illegal to participate in political activities while abroad. While you may see this as an interesting cultural event, protests with large crowds can be very unpredictable and often attract others who wish to make trouble.

KEEP IN CONTACT WITH HOME

Your parents and friends will have concerns while you are away. Please keep in contact with them on a regular basis and let them know you are safe. Also, if you plan to travel during your stay, leave your itinerary with the host coordinator.

BE ALERT

Be aware of your surroundings, including unknown individuals "hanging out" in your building or any strange activity nearby. Be suspicious of unexpected packages, letters with no return addresses and/or excessive postage and especially letters that appear to contain more than just paper. Be careful of who you give access to your room or apartment while abroad.

TAKE PRECAUTIONS

Do not give out your name or address to unknown people. Know where the nearest police station and hospital is and keep emergency numbers handy. Do not go into unsafe or unknown areas alone after dark.

EMERGENCY PROTOCOL

The majority of students participating in study abroad never experience an emergency while abroad. However, any emergency is less traumatic when you are prepared to deal with it effectively and efficiently. It will make you feel more comfortable if you take the time to prepare an emergency protocol when you arrive at your host location.

CONTACTING THE OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

If you are abroad and you need to contact the Office of International Education staff during regular business hours (M-F, 8-5), please call (706) 425-3274. If you need to reach a study abroad staff member outside of office hours, please call Public Safety at one of the following numbers:

UGA Public Safety Emergency Number:
(706) 542-2200

Actions:

- Carry some form of identification with you at all times
- Carry emergency numbers and contacts with you
- Know where the local hospitals are located and how to get there

Get Registered – Register in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)

Register with the US Embassy in your host country on-line at:

<https://travelregistration.state.gov>

SAFETY AND LEGAL MATTERS

GENDER RELATIONS

Before going abroad, be sure to ask your program director about cultural differences regarding male/female relations. In some cultures, even looking at a person of the opposite sex in the eye would imply special interest. Certain types of clothing (such as short skirts or shorts) might be unadvisable as they will attract unpleasant attention or cause people in the host culture to make unflattering assumptions about you.

Do not assume that because someone is well-dressed, appears nice or speaks nicely that he or she is harmless. Do not invite any person whom you do not know (or have recently met) into your home, hotel or dorm room. Do not get into a car with or go to the home or hotel room of a person that you do not know (or have recently met).

WOMEN'S ISSUES

Some female students, in certain overseas locations have a hard time adjusting to attitudes they encounter abroad, in both public and private interactions between men and women. Some men in such countries openly demonstrate their appraisal of women in ways that many American women find offensive. This attention may become annoying, and potentially even angering. Indigenous women, who often get the same sort of treatment, have been taught how to ignore this attention. Many American students find this hard to do. Eye contact between strangers or smiling at someone passing on the street, which is common in the States, may result in totally unexpected invitations.

Women can provide support for each other and discuss what works and what doesn't for dealing with unwanted attention. American women are seen as "liberated" in many ways, and sometimes the cultural misunderstandings that come out of this image can lead to difficult and unpleasant experiences.

This surprising status may make male-female relationships more difficult to develop. Be aware in all situations, and above all, try to maintain the perspective that these challenging experiences are part of the growth of cultural understanding which is one of the important reasons you are studying abroad. Prepare yourself by trying to understand in advance the gender roles and assumptions which may prevail elsewhere.

For more information visit: <http://studentsabroad.state.gov/smarttravel/forwomentravelers.php>

RACIAL AND ETHNIC CONCERNS

No two students studying abroad ever have quite the same experience, even in the same program and country. This same variety is true for students of color and those from U.S. minority ethnic or racial backgrounds. Reports from past participants vary from those who felt exhilarated by being free of the American context of race relations, to those who experienced different degrees of 'innocent' curiosity about their ethnicity, to those who felt they met both familiar and new types of ostracism and prejudice and had to learn new coping strategies. Very few minority students conclude that racial or ethnic problems encountered in other countries represent sufficient reasons for not going. On the other hand, they advise knowing what you are getting into and preparing yourself for it. Try to find others who have studied abroad and who can provide you with some counsel.

For more information and resources visit:

<http://allabroad.us/>

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

LGBT ISSUES ABROAD

Attitudes and tolerance toward gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (GLBT) persons vary from country to country, just as they vary among U.S. cities and states. <http://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en/smart-travel/for-lgbt-travelers.html>

It is important to be aware of the laws pertaining to homosexuality in your host country, as well as the general attitudes of the populace toward gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered members of their community. The countries you visit may be more, or may be less 'liberated' (on a general U.S. scale of values) in these regards, but will in all cases be at least somewhat unique. Moreover, whatever the general rule, there will always be pockets of difference and personal idiosyncrasies. Country-specific information is often available from campus offices, personnel and student groups. You should certainly talk with other students who have been where you will be.

For a comprehensive list of resources, including travel guides, web links, and other types of information for LGBT students, see

<http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/student.htm>

SAFETY AND LEGAL MATTERS



LEGAL MATTERS

There are a number of common legal matters you should be aware of regardless of your host country. Some of them are much more serious than others, so please read each carefully so that you are aware of the liability involved.

UGA CONDUCT REGULATIONS

Students on UGA study abroad programs, whether they are regularly enrolled, degree-seeking students or transient or transfer students for a semester or summer are under the UGA Conduct Regulations as established by the UGA Office of Student Conduct. The UGA Conduct Regulations are listed on the web page of the Office of Student Conduct <http://www.conduct.uga.edu>.

SEXUAL HARRASSMENT POLICY

Students on UGA study abroad programs, whether they are regularly enrolled, degree-seeking students or transient or transfer students for a semester or summer are under the UGA Sexual Harassment Policy as established by the UGA Office of Legal Affairs. The UGA Sexual Harassment Policy can be found at <http://www.uga.edu/eoo/pdfs/NDAH.pdf>.

ILLEGAL DRUGS

DO NOT use or travel with marijuana or any other contraband drugs. The US government can assume no responsibility if you are apprehended for drug use. Even in places where the use of drugs by local citizens is either ignored or treated very lightly, American students apprehended indulging in or in possession of contraband can be

dealt with in a very harsh manner. You may also be dismissed from your study abroad program should you be caught using drugs. A conversation with a suspected narcotics pusher is seen as an act of intent to purchase in some countries, so walk away from suspected drug dealers. Penalties can be much more severe than in the U.S. Conditions of imprisonment in a foreign jail are not something you want to experience.

INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMS

Please be aware of what you can take into the country you are visiting. Some prescriptions legal in the U.S. are not legal worldwide. Check with the Embassy/Consulate of your host country for more information.

When you re-enter the U.S., you must declare all articles in your possession that you bought or acquired overseas. Flight attendants usually hand out customs forms for passengers to fill out before landing.

LEGAL RIGHTS ABROAD

- Once travelers leave U.S. jurisdiction, U.S. laws or U.S. Constitutional Rights do not cover them abroad.
- Few foreign countries provide trial by jury.
- Pretrial detention may involve months of confinement in primitive prison conditions.
- Trials frequently involve lengthy delays or postponements and are conducted in the language of the foreign country.

DRUG ARRESTS ABROAD

- Sentences for possession or trafficking of drugs can range from 2 to 25 years and possible heavy fines.
- In some countries - like Turkey, Egypt, Malaysia and Thailand -conviction may lead to a life sentence or even the death penalty.
- Several countries, including the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico have stiffened their penalties for drug violations to include harsh prison sentences, even for small amounts of marijuana.

U.S. CONSULATES CANNOT:

- Demand the release of a U.S. citizen.
- Represent the detainee at trial, give legal counsel, or pay legal fees or other related expenses with U.S. government funds.
- Intervene in a foreign country's court system or judicial process to obtain special treatment.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

THE IMPLICATIONS OF CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Cultural adjustment is a continuous, on-going process. It never stops, and it varies from one individual to another and from one culture to another. Your own situation may require you to confront not only differences in your new culture but it may also force you to take a good look at your own cultural values and practices.

CULTURE SHOCK

Many travelers go through an initial period of euphoria and excitement, overwhelmed by the thrill of being in a totally new and unusual environment. As this initial sense of "adventure" wears off, they gradually become aware of the fact that old habits and routine ways of doing things no longer suffice. Students abroad might no longer feel comfortable in their new environment. If this happens to you, as it is likely to, you may feel like an outsider, and you may find yourself growing somewhat depressed. You may feel an anxiety that results from losing all your familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse; a kind of psychological disorientation. You will indeed be experiencing what has come to be referred to as Culture Shock. Don't be too hard on yourself if you find this happening to you – This means you are paying attention to differences! Again, such feelings are perfectly normal, and you will soon find yourself making adjustments that will enable you to adapt to your new cultural environment.

KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT

Prepare yourself for culture shock before you go abroad by reading books about the culture, travel guide books, local magazines or newspapers, and meeting people from your intended host country. Try to learn the language and find out about differences in body language, personal space, manners, etc. Don't be afraid to ask questions of people in the country.

Some surprises always await you when you arrive in a new place. The housing arrangements at your university or college, the manner in which classes are taught, registration for courses, and other procedures may seem strange or very confusing. Studying abroad means making big changes in your daily life.

EMERGING DIFFERENCES

Gradually, as you become more involved in activities and get to know the people around you, differences - rather than similarities - will become increasingly apparent to you. Those differences may begin to seem more irritating than interesting or quaint. Small incidents and difficulties may make you anxious and concerned about how best to carry on with academic social life.

Common symptoms of culture shock are:

- Extreme homesickness
- Desire to avoid social settings which seem threatening or unpleasant
- Physical complaints and sleep disturbances
- Depression and feelings of helplessness
- Difficulty with coursework and concentration
- Loss of your sense of humor
- Boredom or fatigue
- Hostility towards the host culture

COPING WITH CULTURE SHOCK

Students are sometimes unaware of the fact that they are experiencing culture shock when these symptoms occur. There are ways to deal with this period of culture shock, so it helps to recognize that culture shock may lie behind physical symptoms and irritability.

The most effective way to combat culture shock is to step back from an event that bothered you, assess it and search for an appropriate explanation and response.

Throughout the period of cultural adaptation, take good care of yourself. Read a book or rent a video in your home language, take a short trip if possible, exercise and get plenty of rest, write a letter or telephone home, eat good food, and do things you enjoy with friends. Take special notice of things you enjoy about living in the host culture.

Although it can be disconcerting and a little scary, the "shock" gradually eases as you begin to understand the new culture. It is useful to realize that often the reactions and perceptions of others toward you - and you toward them - are not personal evaluations but are based on a clash of cultural values. The more skilled you become in recognizing how and when cultural values and behaviors are likely to come in conflict, the easier it becomes to make adjustments that can help you avoid serious difficulties.

RETURNING HOME

CONFIRM TRAVEL

If you already have a return ticket you should check on your flight at least 72 hours in advance. Airlines notoriously overbook flights back to the United States. If you want to change the return date, contact the airline directly or visit a travel agency. They can tell you what restrictions there are. If you do not have a return ticket, you should book a flight at least 60 days in advance, especially if you are returning in the summer when it is high travel season.

TRANSCRIPTS

Make sure you check with your Program Director about how and when you will be getting your transcript sent back to the United States. Allow ample time for the processing of your transcript and grades. If you think you might apply to graduate school in the future, get information on how to order a transcript directly in the future since graduate schools will not accept copies.

If you are studying abroad for more than one semester, have your academic transcript sent after each semester. All transcripts should be sent to: UGA Office of International Education, International Education Building, 1324 S. Lumpkin Street, Athens, GA 30602.

REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

Re-entry shock (more commonly known as "reverse culture shock") is part of the total adjustment process that involves reintegration at home. Reverse Culture Shock may at times, include many feelings of uncertainty, alienation, anger and disappointment.

FRIENDSHIPS

If many of your friends have never lived abroad, you may deal with feelings of envy or jealousy. When you talk "too much" about your experience, people may accuse you of being elitist even though that may not be your intention. As much as you need to talk about your recent time away from home, it is advisable to be sensitive to the attitudes and feelings of others.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

The home that you remember is not always going to be exactly the same as it was when you left. This feeling of "dislocation" occurs for two reasons. One, because you are now looking at what was once familiar through a new set of perceptions. Therefore, you will see everything a bit differently. Secondly, things have happened to your family and friends and events have occurred in their lives while you were away. These events may have caused changes in

their feelings, perceptions, opinions, and attitudes. To the specific individuals, their experiences are as important as your experiences are to you. Remember, and be aware, that people at home change too, so expect things to be different and build upon your existing relationship from this point forward.

UNIVERSITY LIFE

If you have become very accustomed to a different type of academic system while overseas, you will have to deal with readjusting to UGA's way of handling things. Remember that every institution has its own feel and unique atmosphere; you can appreciate both your study abroad institution and UGA without making comparisons. Value each of them for their strengths. Returning to university life you may also feel a bit "removed" from your major and department. Stop by those offices and get re-acquainted with the staff and faculty.

ADJUSTMENT PERIOD

The length of time that the re-adjustment phase lasts will vary from person to person. Length of time the re-adjustment lasts depends on you and how you cope with the situations that occur. Be patient with yourself during the adjustment period.

Being an Education Abroad Ambassador in the OIE is a great way to adjust. You are the perfect person to be an advocate for study abroad. The EA Ambassadors need returnees who are willing to help other students interested in studying abroad, and you get to reminisce and discuss your experience with like-minded people.



APPENDIX

The staff of the Office of International Education at The University of Georgia compiled the “UGA Study Abroad Passport”. The information contained within was taken and adapted from a variety of study abroad resources, including guides, books and the Internet. It has been adapted and modified to meet the needs of The University of Georgia. The following is a list of resources used to develop the “UGA Study Abroad Passport”.

Althen, Gary. (1988). American Ways: A Guide for Foreigners in the United States. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Althen, Gary (Ed.). (1994). Learning Across Cultures. Washington, DC: NAFSA.

Center for International Programs Abroad at Emory University. Emory Study Abroad Handbook.

Hoffa, William W. (1998). Study Abroad: A Parent's Guide. Washington, DC: NAFSA.

Hoffa, William W.. (2000). Studyabroad.com Handbook: A Guide to Going Abroad. Chester, PA: Educational Directories Unlimited, Inc.

Hoffa, William W. and John Pearson (Eds.). (1997). NAFSA's Guide to Education Abroad for Advisers and Administrators. (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: NAFSA.

Kepets, Dawn. (1995). Back in the USA: Reflecting on Your Study Abroad Experience and Putting It to Work. Washington, DC: NAFSA.

Kohls, L. Robert (Ed.). (1996). Survival Kit for Overseas Living: For Americans Planning to Live and Work Abroad. (3rd ed.). Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Lewis, Tom and Robert Jungman (Eds.). (1986). On Being Foreign: Culture Shock in Short Fiction. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

NAFSA: Association of International Educators Lesbigan Special Interest Group. Website located at <http://overseas.iu.edu/lesbigay/>

Stewart, Edward C. and Milton J. Bennett. (1997). American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

Storti, Craig. (1990). The Art of Crossing Cultures. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

USC Center for Global Education. Safety Abroad Handbook. Website located at <http://www.studentsabroad.com>

USC SAFETI (Safety Abroad First - Educational Travel Information) Clearinghouse. Website located at <http://www.globaled.us/rfsa/health&safety.html> and <http://www.studentsabroad.com/>

U.S Department of State Resources

Students Abroad <http://studentsabroad.state.gov/>

International Travel Information <http://travel.state.gov/>