



UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK

Congratulations on being accepted into an international academic program! There is much to prepare between now and the start of your international academic term(s). Read through everything carefully, take one item at a time, do not be afraid to ask questions, and do not procrastinate. The better you prepare, the better your transition to your host country and culture. The items in this handbook have been selected to prepare you for the time pre-departure and immediately after your arrival. Please use the Pre-Departure checklist to help you finalize your trip before you go, and take the Post-Arrival Checklist with you and use it after your arrival to make sure you have not missed any of the requirements.

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Money, Fees and Credit hour issues

Tuition and Fees

Exchange —tuition and fees are charged at your current UW rate. You will be charged for 12 credit hours plus mandatory fees for each semester that you are abroad.

Faculty-Led Courses —tuition and mandatory fees charged for the credit load of the course. Each program will also have additional program costs.

Study Abroad — costs vary depending on program choice. If the study abroad is done through a program provider, costs are generally inclusive of tuition, fees, room and board, excursions, and international insurance. If the study abroad is through direct enrollment at a host university, tuition and fees will be paid directly to that university. Students participating in a study abroad program will not be charged UW tuition/fees but can still use most financial aid resources.

Room and Board

- ◆ Exchange—room and board costs are paid in the host country, (or to the IPO office at the current UW rate for an unlimited meal plan and double occupancy room for ISEP programs). Living expenses vary by country.
- ◆ Faculty-Led Courses — program fees for each program will include room and board costs. Please visit individual faculty of note for more information.
- ◆ Study Abroad — if the study abroad is done through a program provider, room and board costs are generally included in the price. If the study abroad is through direct enrollment at a host university, living expenses are paid in that country and may vary widely.

Credit Hours

12 credit hours is the full-time minimum per semester for undergraduates. Students must transfer back a minimum of 12 credit hours but can transfer back as many as 18 credit hours of approved courses.

Each undergraduate student going abroad must register for at least 12 credit hours during a semester and 9 in the summer. On WyoWeb, study abroad credit hours are listed under the subject UWYO. If you are participating in a study abroad, you must register for UWYO 4000. If you are participating in an exchange you must register for UWYO 4001. If you do not, you will not maintain your UW student status. This means that your financial aid and scholarships will not be released, and your email account will be closed.

This is a CLOSED ENROLLMENT course, so you will not be able to register for UWYO 4000/4001 until the Int'l Programs Office has verified your participation in an int'l education program with the Registrar's office. This usually happens after you attend the pre-departure orientation session.

The UWYO 4000/4001 class holds your place as a UW student at 12 credit hours.

- ◆ If you are participating in an exchange, your student account will be charged for 12 credit hours at your normal tuition/fee rate per semester.
 - You will be eligible to receive 12 credit hours of scholarships and financial aid.
 - This does not mean that you will receive 12 credit hours for your international exchange. The total number of credit hours depends on the number of classes you take, the credit value approved by UW faculty for each class, and how many classes you pass.

- ◆ If you are participating in a study abroad, you will be eligible to receive 12 credit hours of scholarships and financial aid.
 - Total transfer credit post-program depends on the number of classes taken, the credit value approved by UW faculty for each class, and the number of classes you pass.
- ◆ Each student must visit with Financial Aid before leaving the UW campus to verify funds for the international academic program;
- ◆ The UW Financial Aid office will not transfer funds to another UW office (like International Programs, for example) or a study abroad organization to pay for fees on your behalf.
 - Any monies awarded to you will be used to clear unpaid UW debts before being sent to you through your HigherOne account.
 - The fastest and easiest way to receive your funds is to have them direct deposited into your bank account. This can be set up on your HigherOne account online.

If you are participating in an Exchange:

- ◆ UW will charge you for 12 credit hours plus mandatory fees for each semester.
 - The payment process will take place in the same manner as if you were on campus. For example, if you have a scholarship that covers your tuition/fees each semester on campus, the same scholarship will cover your tuition/fees during your exchange.
 - If you usually owe money to the University, you can pay your balance on WyoWeb. Semester due dates for the University of Wyoming are posted on the UW website.
- ◆ You will be charged for International Travel Insurance, as well as a Study Abroad Fee.
 - However, students traveling to Australia, Austria, France, Germany, Iceland, Singapore, New Zealand, and The Netherlands will be required to purchase insurance from that country. These students will not necessarily be enrolled in UW Student Travel Insurance.
 - **Proof of insurance must be provided to the UW Study Abroad Office.**
- ◆ If you are participating in an ISEP Exchange, Room and Board fees will not be taken out of the UW regular tuition/fees payment. Payment for ISEP Room (double occupancy) and Board (full-meal plan) will be billed separately from the International Programs Office.
- ◆ If you are participating in an institutional exchange, Room and Board charges will be paid in your host country per host campus/housing regulations.
- ◆ Each student must verify scholarships and financial aid disbursement regulations and deadlines with the UW Financial Aid office.
- ◆ Financial Aid and scholarship funds will be distributed only to you.
 - It is important that you have your HigherOne account set up in a way that you can access your funds easily. If you have a check sent to your permanent address, you must provide a trusted individual with a Power of Attorney so that he or she can deposit or access the funds on your behalf.
 - The fastest and easiest way to receive your funds is to have them direct deposited into your bank account. This can be set up on your HigherOne account online.

If you are participating in a non-exchange Study Abroad program:

- ◆ You will not be charged UW tuition and fees. All costs will be paid to your host program or school.

- ◆ You will be charged a Study Abroad Fee, and may, depending on your program, be charged for International Travel Insurance.
 - Students traveling to Australia, Austria, France, Germany, Iceland, Singapore, New Zealand, and The Netherlands, for example, will be required to purchase insurance from that country. These students will not be enrolled in UW Student Travel Insurance.
 - Proof of insurance must be provided to the UW Study Abroad Office.
- ◆ Each student must verify scholarships and financial aid disbursements with the UW Financial Aid office
- ◆ Financial Aid and scholarship funds will be distributed only to you.
 - It is important that you have your HigherOne account set up in a way that you can access your funds easily.
 - If you have a check sent to your permanent address, you must provide a trusted individual with a Power of Attorney so that he or she can deposit or access the funds on your behalf so that program costs can be paid to the host program or school.
 - The fastest and easiest way to receive your funds is to have them direct deposited into your bank account. This can be set up on your HigherOne account online.

Grades & Reporting

London Semester students: these are UW courses taken in London instead of Laramie. You will receive grades for all London Semester courses and each course will be listed on your transcript. Grades earned during the London Semester will affect your UW institutional GPA.

UW faculty-led summer course students: these are UW courses for which a grade is given.

All other national, international exchanges, study abroad, and consortium students:

- ◆ It is the responsibility of each student to supply course information to a Degree Analyst in the Office of the Registrar, to facilitate the evaluation and transfer of course credit.
- ◆ Your UW GPA is not affected by classes taken at foreign institutions.
 - The exception to this rule is classes taken during the London Semester. UW credit is given for these classes.
- ◆ If you pass the course, you will receive credit.
- ◆ Your official UW transcript will show that you received transfer credit from a foreign institution. The courses for which you received approval will appear on your official UW transcript.
 - If possible, you should request one or more official transcripts from your host university. That way, you will have them on hand in case they are needed later.
- ◆ The hours you transfer back to UW do not count toward your 30 hour residency requirement.

Notes for students on transfer worth

Most European universities use the ECTS (European Common Transfer System) to determine credit values for courses:

1 ECTS = .533333333 US credits or 7.5 ECTS = 4.0 US credits

When you finalize your class schedule, you will need to know the number of ECTS for each of your courses to make sure you meet the full-time minimum of 12 credit hours US.

For example, many courses in France are worth 3 ECTS. This equals around 1.5 US credits. To meet the full-time minimum of 12 US credit hours, you would need to register in 8 courses. You are welcome to take more than 8 courses and would then be eligible to transfer back more credit hours.

The British system uses modules.

- A 20 point module course will be worth 4 UW credits. If your 20 point module course is given a UW equivalent, say ENGL 2312, for example, you will receive 4 UW credits for the course:
- 3 for the specific UW course as listed in the General Bulletin and 1 additional lower division general credit hour to round out a total of 4 credit hours.
- A 10 module point course is worth 3 UW credit hours.

Costs You Can Count On

US Passport

Valid for 10 years (<http://travel.state.gov/passport>)

\$165.00 for first time applicants (as of 2014)

\$140.00 for renewals

\$15.00 for passport photos

UW IPO Administrative Fees

\$175.00 for semester or academic year programs

\$100.00 for faculty led programs

UW International Travel Insurance

\$25.00 for 2 weeks

\$50.00 for 1 month

\$150 per semester

Visa or Residence Permit

Most countries require a visa or residency permit for longer stays.

- ◆ Costs associated with visas/residency permits vary widely. Once you have chosen a country, your study abroad advisor can give you informational resources concerning visas.
- ◆ Visa requirements vary country by country and by the length and purpose of your stay.
- ◆ Some countries require that students present applications in person at the nearest consulate. Your study abroad advisor can provide more information on visa requirements.

You can also visit <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/general/americans-traveling-abroad.html> for general information and links to embassies and consular offices in the United States.

Do your research and plan ahead! There may be additional time and expenses involved in securing a visa.

Immunizations

Immunization needs depend greatly on the host country you have chosen. Information on recommended immunizations can be found at:

- ◆ Centers for Disease Control (<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>)
- ◆ Albany County Public Health: (307) 721-2561

International Airfare

Airfare rates fluctuate widely. Students are eligible for student discounts. Some study abroad programs include airfare in their total costs, but this expense should generally be included in your budget.

International Health Insurance

Most study abroad program providers include insurance in their total program costs. Students participating in exchanges will be enrolled in the UW Student Travel Insurance. To print a UW Student Travel Insurance card, go to <http://www.uwyo.edu/studyabroad/insurance/>.

- ◆ In some cases, countries require students to purchase their national insurance coverage.
- ◆ Examples of this include Australia, Austria, France, Germany, Iceland, Singapore, and The Netherlands.
- ◆ The price of this insurance varies by country.
- ◆ It is also recommended that you purchase Travel Guard on your plane ticket.

Books and Supplies

Book costs abroad tend to be minimal, but vary by country. Students should budget for supplies in their personal spending money budget.

Personal Spending Money

The amount to bring depends on your own personal spending habits and if you have chosen a study abroad program that includes most daily living costs. Many countries require that you provide proof that you have access for the minimum amount of money per month. Do your research to find out what this minimum amount is. Try doing an internet search on “student living expenses (country),” or check your host university’s web page.

Communications Before Departure

Your Study Abroad Advisor will receive from all travelers (including faculty leading UW students abroad) prior to departure:

- ◆ Itinerary information, including international and in-country travel details; housing, hotels, and hostels; and program details;
- ◆ Emergency contact information in the US for the student/faculty member in the US (parent, sibling, spouse, etc.) for contact in case anything happens to the traveler and UW personnel need to notify them of the traveler's status;
- ◆ Emergency contact information for while they are traveling for the student/faculty member (their email, cell phone, or the number of their host) for UW personnel to call in case of man-made or natural disasters in the country or region of travel;
- ◆ Passport number for all UW travelers;
- ◆ All insurance coverage information;
- ◆ Waiver of liability form, and
- ◆ Medical release form.

In addition, all travelers should register with the U.S. Embassy in their country of travel.

Emergency Communications While Abroad

If an adverse event occurs in the country or region of travel, as soon as possible all travelers must contact designated UW personnel (see below), and look for inquiries from UW personnel through email or phone contact, or other methods as arranged prior to departure (via social network sites, for example). In the case of a class, it is sufficient for the lead instructor to make the contact, provided that person has accurate information about everyone traveling in association with the class.

Whom to contact:

- ◆ In all cases, contact the host organization and/or program provider you are working with, if applicable.
- ◆ In case of dire situation, or if the lead contact person or students need more guidance, contact the U.S. Embassy in that country, or the nearest U.S. Consulate.

At UW:

- ◆ First point of contact: Ruth Shepherd, International Exchange and Study Abroad Coordinator or emergency designee (From abroad: 001-307-766-6681 from 8:00 a.m. - 5 p.m. MST or MDT; after hours or for most holidays, from abroad: 001-307-742-4330)
- ◆ Alternate first point of contact: Anne Alexander, Director for IPO (from abroad: 001-307-399-3253 or 001-307-399-3773)
- ◆ Secondary points of contact - Dean of Students (001-307-766-3296 from 8:00 a.m. - 5 p.m. MST or MDT, 001-307-760-4454 outside of business hours); or Vice President for Student Affairs (001-307-766-5123 from 8:00 a.m. - 5 p.m. MST or MDT, or 001-307-760-2370 outside of business hours)
- ◆ Urgent point of contact - UW Police Dispatch (from abroad: 001-307-766-5179) Urgent point of contact – UW Police Dispatch (from abroad: 001-307-766-5179)

Please keep this information with you for contacting the office when you are abroad.

Create an emergency file. Take 2 sets with you and leave one at home:

- ◆ Blood type and Rh factor;
- ◆ Eyeglass and any medication prescriptions;
- ◆ Name of doctor and dentist;
- ◆ Copy of the picture page of your passport and your visa/residence permit if you had to obtain one to enter your host country;
- ◆ Obtaining and taking a notarized color copy of your passport can be a good idea as well. The International Programs Office can make a color copy for you. Notary Publics are located across the campus. Having a notarized copy of your passport can sometimes save you from always carrying your official passport with you during the day. You will need to carry your passport on travel days!
- ◆ Phone numbers for your debit/credit card companies;
- ◆ Driver's license;
- ◆ Airline ticket or e-ticket itinerary, and
- ◆ Supplemental insurance policy information.

Before You Travel

- ◆ Most airlines restrict passengers to 2 bags, max weight of 70 pounds, and charge high fees for bags that exceed the allowance.
 - Check with your airline to find out their baggage restrictions.
- ◆ Consider packing a little "overnight kit" to take with you on the airplane. If your luggage is delayed, you will be more prepared.
 - Carry all necessary medications, in their original packaging, in your carry-on bag.
- ◆ At least 72 hours prior to departure, call the airline or go online to reconfirm your flight(s). Verify whether there have been any flight or schedule changes.
- ◆ If bad weather is forecast between your home and your city of departure, consider leaving a day early. Plan ahead and be safe!
- ◆ Know your flight options... Assume the worst will happen to your schedule, so delays or cancellations won't be stressful. Have an alternate plan ready in case your flight is delayed or cancelled.
 - In case of a cancellation or delay, it may be faster to change your reservation over the phone rather than by standing in line at a ticket counter. Try calling the airline while standing in line at the ticket counter!
- ◆ Budgetary: Set aside some extra cash or credit in case of a flight delay or cancellation which requires you to stay in a hotel overnight.
 - If your flight is cancelled or delayed, be sure to ask the airline for a hotel and/or meal voucher. These are rarely offered, but may be available.
- ◆ Bring along something to do: A favorite book, tablet, iPod, foreign destination guide books, etc.
- ◆ Check the weather at your destination city and any connecting cities along the way. You can't do anything about weather, but you can be prepared for it. Surprises can be stressful.
- ◆ Pack lightly and smartly: Pack special medicines, a change of underwear and socks in your carry-on just in case your luggage does not arrive with you.
- ◆ Know your ground options: The best laid plans for ground transportation can be ruined when planes are late or diverted. Plan alternate options so you can make last minute changes.
 - Foreign bus and train travel usually require a reservation.
 - Check departure and arrival schedules online, and use route maps to familiarize yourself with stations and stops.
- ◆ Do your research! Use an online resources such as Google Maps Street View to familiarize yourself with your new home. Do several "virtual walks" around the area so that when you arrive, you will know exactly where you are and how to find your way around.

On the Travel Day

- ◆ Go online to check your flight. Is it on schedule or delayed?
- ◆ Check in at the airport at least two hours early for international flights; one hour early for domestic connections.
 - You should receive a boarding pass and seat assignment for each flight.
 - Verify information with airline personnel.
- ◆ Carry your flight itineraries and documents with you at all times.
 - Have a blue or black pen in your carry-on luggage. You will need it to fill out arrival/customs/and immigration forms before you arrive.
 - These forms will be given to you by flight staff, so pay attention!
 - Have your passport, with visa if applicable, airline boarding passes, and the address where you will be staying (or the address of your host university/program) handy for completing this form.
- ◆ Theft: Thieves frequent airports, bus, and train stations. Be on guard.
- ◆ Funds: Most international airports have ATM machines.
 - Using one of these machines to withdrawal money will be the most convenient.
 - There will be a small fee, but you will receive local currency at the most recent exchange rate.
 - You may also be able to purchase foreign currency from a bank at home, before you leave. Check with your bank ahead of time; they may need to order foreign currency.
- ◆ Sense of humor: Pack yours and keep it with you. Don't expect any from security personnel, immigration, etc.
 - Always watch what you say, and take airport security seriously.
- ◆ Patience: Relax, and enjoy the trip. You're almost there!
- ◆ On board: Talk to the flight crew and fellow travelers.
 - Ask about relative costs, distances, tipping, ground transportation, what to expect on arrival, cultural differences, etc.
- ◆ Delays: In case you're delayed unexpectedly, consider spending the first night on arrival at a local hotel.
 - You may not be able to check into your room or apartment if it is late in the evening or very early in the morning. Be sure to find out about check-in times before you leave.

On Arrival

- ◆ When you arrive in your destination country, you will go through Immigration and Passport Control first.
 - Be sure that you are in the correct line for non-citizens.
- ◆ Make sure that you have all necessary document in hand upon arrival.
 - This will include your passport and may include letter(s) of acceptance; financial statements showing that you have the minimum amount of funds required to support you during your stay in that country (a letter from your bank or your UW financial aid award statement, for example).
 - You may not be asked for these but in case you are, you will need to have them with you.
- ◆ In most cases, the use of cell phones is strictly prohibited in this area!
- ◆ Be very polite and answer any and all questions honestly.
 - You will be asked the purpose of your visit. Make sure you know the correct answer!
- ◆ After you pass through Immigration and Passport Control, you will retrieve your checked luggage and carry it through Customs.
 - If you are asked to open your luggage, do so without complaint or comment.
 - Follow all instructions given to you.
- ◆ If you are continuing by plane to another city in that country, you will be able to re-check your luggage just after passing through Customs. You can then proceed to your connecting flight.
 - If you have arrived in your destination city, you can proceed to ground transportation after passing through Customs.
- ◆ The process when you return to the U.S. will be very similar.
 - Are you carrying anything you should declare?
 - Read the State Department consular notes to find out! Be aware that any seeds, flowers, plants, fresh fruit/vegetables, dirt and sand are considered agricultural products and are restricted items. You will probably have to throw them away and it is better to declare them than to hope you don't get caught with them. What about endangered animal parts? This one is pretty easy - if you are silly enough to buy a severed tiger paw in Tibet and try to bring it back to the states, no one will have much sympathy when you are jailed and fined.
 - Please be aware however, that some medicinal products from Asian countries contain restricted animal products.
- ◆ Airport cabs: If in doubt, always use the official airport transport (vans/cabs).
- ◆ Ground transportation: Most cities have several stations, so make sure you get to the right one if you're making intercity connections.
 - Remember, you may have to wait for the next available bus or train due to volume of travelers, advanced reservations, etc.
 - Many airports have ground transportation information listed on their web sites.
 - Do your research so that you know how to get from the airport to the train station.
- ◆ Send a text home to let your family know that you have arrived safely. But, remind them that due to travel times, it may be a while before they hear from you.

- ◆ Problems: If you have problems with an airline, review your options calmly with airline personnel and if an acceptable solution cannot be reached, speak with a supervisor.
 - Take the phone numbers of your airline with you;
 - Generally, airlines will not take responsibility for mechanical or weather related delays, but they must provide alternate flights, and
 - If the delay is their fault (as in over booked flights) they must provide lodging and meal vouchers, as well as booking on an alternate flight. These are not always offered, so you should ask.
- ◆ Lost/damaged luggage: If luggage is lost or damaged, a claim must be filed at the airport.
 - Keep your luggage claim tags.
 - Airlines should pay on the spot for immediate needed items (usually \$25-\$50 for toothbrush, socks, etc., that which you need within 1-2 days) while your bags are located. Have lost luggage forwarded to your overseas address.
- ◆ Reservations: Sometimes computers lose names. Be sure to check-in prior to your flight.
 - It's a good idea to keep documentation such as your flight confirmation numbers, so that your record can be reconstructed and problems solved.
 - Be firm and polite and get a solution that is reasonable, acceptable, and easy for you. Remember that yelling at airline personnel will get you nowhere!

Rules for Securing Valuables While Traveling

- ◆ Don't carry everything in one place! Divide originals/copies.
- ◆ Secure luggage zippers; this doesn't need to be expensive.
 - Luggage locks can be purchased for this purpose.
 - Be sure the lock is airline approved; otherwise, if your luggage must be checked, airport security will simply cut the lock.
- ◆ Never pack essential documents, medications, or ANYTHING you can't do without in your checked luggage.
 - Put these items in your carry-on and keep them with you. DO NOT put your essential documents/money in your carry on!
 - Keep essential documents and money on you, preferable in a money belt. Watch your carry-on carefully. If you are alone, take it with you everywhere.
 - Be careful when using door hooks on the back of bathroom stall doors in airports. Don't place your carry-on on the bathroom floor in the stall. It is easy for someone to reach in and grab your bag.
- ◆ Take only the credit cards you plan to use.
 - Keep a separate list of card copies, contact phone numbers, and replacement procedures.
 - Consider leaving another set of copies with parents/guardians.
- ◆ Mark all luggage, inside and out, with your name and address. If you have a flight itinerary, place a copy in each bag. Keep a short list of each bag's contents and keep this list with your important documents. Mark your luggage in some easily distinguishable way so that: a) no one will mistakenly take your sleek, black Samsonite bag for theirs, b) if your bag is lost, it will be easily identified.
- ◆ ALWAYS ACCOUNT FOR YOUR LUGGAGE BEFORE YOU MOVE!
- ◆ Consult your doctor about availability of your medications abroad before you leave. Keep all medications in original bottles with copies of doctor's prescription and signature.
- ◆ An American passport is a valuable commodity. Carry 2 extra passport photos, and color copies of the photo ID page of your passport. Keep all of these separate from your passport. If your passport is lost or stolen, report to the local police, get written confirmation of the report, and take it with your document copies to the nearest U.S. consulate.
- ◆ Make a copy of your tickets and/or ticket numbers, name and address of issuing agency. Keep copies separate from your originals, but also consider leaving copies with parents/guardians.

The international exchange advisor will make copies of all of the above documents for you if you bring them into the office.

Finances and Managing your Money while Abroad

Local Currency:

Each student should check the value of the U.S. dollar compared to their host country currency using a site like

- ◆ Oanda (<http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>) or
- ◆ XE Currency Converter (<http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>)

Knowing the value of the USD in your host country will help you budget.

- ◆ Do your research to find out how much you should expect living expenses to be in your host country.
- ◆ Check your host university's website or do an internet search on "student living expenses" for the country in which you will live.

Exchanging Money:

This is generally the most expensive and least desirable way to go.

- ◆ Exchanging money is very expensive, as you will receive a retail exchange rate, and you will also be charged fees.
- ◆ Pulling cash from an ATM machine is less expensive.

ATM Cards:

- ◆ Your bank ATM card is a good way to get foreign currency at favorable exchange rates.
 - You will be charged a fee to use a non-network ATM machine, so be sure to ask your bank how much it will be.
 - Though the fees are not generally more than a few dollars, they can add up quickly!
- ◆ By using an ATM card to obtain foreign currency you benefit from the wholesale rates available to banks.
 - These are better than the rates offered by change bureaus, hotels and businesses that will accept foreign money.
- ◆ Most countries have ATM machines widely available for foreign travelers.
- ◆ Before going overseas, notify your bank that you will be using your card in another country.
 - That way, your account can be flagged for valid travel.
 - If you do not do this, your bank may suspect fraud and shut down access to your ATM card.
- ◆ Most ATMs outside the U.S. do not allow transactions with multiple accounts. This means your transaction will be routed to your primary account.
- ◆ Be sure to follow safety protocols when using ATM machines abroad.
 - Whenever possible, be sure to use an ATM inside a bank vestibule or one in a safe, well-lit area.
 - Avoid using an ATM when you are alone at night, and always be aware of your surroundings.

Credit Cards:

Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted worldwide. It is best to avoid carrying Discover and American Express, as they are less commonly accepted.

- ◆ It is a good idea to lower your credit limit while abroad.
 - For example, if you have \$6000 credit limit, lower it to \$1000. That way, if your card is lost or stolen, the amount of damage someone can do is limited.

Most credit cards in Europe are now equipped with PIN and Chip technology. This means that a security chip is embedded in the credit card, and looks like this:



Security is higher with this system, as the card cannot be used unless a PIN is entered.

- ◆ Though credit card companies in the United States are beginning to adopt this technology, your cards may not yet have it.
- ◆ Unfortunately, this means that it is becoming more difficult to use U.S. issued credit cards in Europe.
- ◆ If your credit cards have this technology, make sure you have the associated PINs.
- ◆ If your credit cards do not have the embedded chip, you will not be able to use them widely and should be prepared to pay with cash, if needed.

Leave the card number and contact information with your contact person in the U.S. in case the card is lost or stolen.

Transferring Money:

In some cases, it may be preferable for you to open a bank account in your host country, rather than use a U.S.-issued ATM card regularly.

- ◆ Some international banks will allow students to set up accounts, Barclay's, for example, in the U.K.
- ◆ The benefit of this is that you will have an ATM/debit card issued from that bank.
- ◆ This will allow you to use ATMs without additional fees, and the debit card will work in that region.
- ◆ This is not an option in all countries, but may be worth checking out.

If you do set up a bank account, you can have funds wired from a U.S. bank account into your account abroad.

- ◆ This process generally takes a couple of days, and there are fees associated with wire transfers.

Communication While Abroad

Maintaining communication with family and friends back home, as well as new friends in your host country, is an important part of living abroad. Thanks to modern technology, it is easier (and cheaper!) than ever to stay in touch.

Calling home:

- ◆ Skype – Through Skype, you can make calls home using a wifi connection. You will need to have wifi access at the call's origination point, but you can call both cell and land lines (except 800-numbers) back in the States for only pennies per minute. Simply set up and deposit money to a Skype account. You can do this online from home or abroad. You can also make video calls from your smart phone, tablet, or computer.
- ◆ Viber – This app is great for texting and making video calls from a smart phone. Both are free, as long as both parties have the Viber app. Both parties must also have access to wifi.
- ◆ WhatsApp – Can be used for free messaging for all smart phones. Wifi access is required.
- ◆ Email – This is still a great way to keep in contact with friends and family. Be sure to check your UW email account regularly. If the Study Abroad Office needs to reach you, we will contact you via email. If we write to check in with you, please be sure to write back!

Calling within your host country:

- ◆ Many students choose to purchase a local phone and SIM card in their host country. Most SIM cards are pay-by-the-minute, so you will purchase a set amount, and recharge as needed. In many cases, making an actual call, even to a local number, is quite expensive. For this reason, many locals choose to use their smart phones for texting, rather than speaking.
- ◆ Remember that local and long distance calls will be billed at two different per-minute rates.
- ◆ It is possible to purchase an international SIM card for your U.S. phone, but these can be quite expensive. You will also need to have your cell phone provider unlock your phone so that the new SIM card can be activated.
- ◆ Some cellular providers also offer international calling plans. Unfortunately, these too can be quite expensive. It is best to check the prices on multiple options.
- ◆ In most cases, it is easiest to set your smart phone on airplane mode, and allow it to receive wifi. That way, you won't be able to receive expensive incoming phone calls.

Receiving Packages from Home

- ◆ Receiving packages abroad can be complicated by customs and varying postal services from country to country. Many students report that receiving packages abroad is not worth the effort it might take to collect them. Be aware also that in some countries, if you receive a package, you will be required to pay customs fees and taxes before you can pick it up.

Safety

- ◆ Find out the safe and dangerous neighborhoods or parts in the city or country you're staying in, and adhere to them.
 - The State Department Consular Notes have this information.
 - Once you are on site ask your new friends, your host family, your study abroad advisor, and/or your professors.
- ◆ Do NOT set your bags down anywhere unattended, even if you think you have an eye on it. Thieves are very quick and make no mistakes.
- ◆ In case you are robbed or mugged, always have copies of your passport, and 800 numbers for your credit cards so you can call and explain the situation.
 - If you have a copy of your passport, the U.S. consulate in the city you're staying in can issue you a new one MUCH FASTER if you have copies of your original.
- ◆ Hostels rarely have safes to keep valuables in. Have your passport and "extras" with you at ALL times LOCKED in a safe place in your bag or backpack.
 - There are miniature locks you can buy for pennies at Wal-Mart. Lock your extras in your bag and place the key in TWO separate places you'll remember.
 - This way, if a situation would arise (an emergency, whatever it may be), you don't have to hike back to your hotel and you have all your necessities on you.
 - In many countries you do not have to show your passport if a police officer demands it of you, but in some countries this is the custom.
 - Wouldn't you rather be prepared than have to try and explain why you don't have it on you?
 - Another idea while traveling abroad is to carry TWO wallets. Carry one with NO identification in it, but a small amount of money (the equivalent of \$10 in the foreign country's currency) and then your other wallet with the rest of your money and identification.
 - If you are confronted and robbed, you can always take out the "less important" wallet. The thieves will not suspect anything, take the meager \$10 and run.
- ◆ If you prefer, carrying a money belt (hidden under your clothes) is a good way to stay safe and keep our money secure.
 - These are relatively slim and non-obtrusive, so no one will know that you have it on you.
 - Never access your money belt in public!
- ◆ Beware of pickpockets. They will usually work in groups and there are MANY methods.
 - Some will come by on a motor scooter and grab your bag while you are waiting at a bus stop.
 - Some will have a bunch of children distract you, poking at you, or asking for money while an adult grabs your purse.
 - Some will work in pairs while one asks for directions and the other grabs your purse. Be aware at all times.
 - Crowds around street performers are particularly popular for pickpockets.
 - Any time you are distracted, you are at risk!
- ◆ Do NOT get in a car (or any other means of transportation) with someone you don't know! If you would not do this in the U.S., do not do it abroad.

- Many study abroad students report making choices abroad that they would not make at home.
- ◆ Use only official taxis. Quietly take a photo of the taxi license or registry number. That way, if there is a problem, you will have documentation of which taxi you rode it.
- ◆ Do NOT meet acquaintances in your hotel room - meet them in the hotel lobby or preferably, at a neutral location. Make sure you know the closest exit in case of fire. Keep your hotel room locked.
- ◆ Carry yourself like you would in New York City or Los Angeles. It will not be looked on as odd in a country if you don't make eye contact or smile at people as you walk down the street.
 - Do NOT stop to talk to anyone except people you have been formally introduced to and know.
 - Many locals are curious about you and mean no harm when they ask where you're from, but again, you would probably not strike up a conversation with total strangers in Denver so carry yourself the same way until you know the people around you.
 - In some countries making eye contact with the opposite sex can be misinterpreted and viewed as a come-on.
- ◆ If you are ever in a dangerous situation - this goes for men or women - do NOT hesitate to make a scene. If you fear that you will be assaulted physically or sexually, make as much noise as you can. Run out in the street screaming and waving your arms.
 - Even if you aren't fluent in the language, this will usually alert people that there is something wrong. Many times the aggressor will run away. Remember, aggressors want SILENT victims. Do as much as you can to alert others to the dangers you're in.
 - Try screaming at an attacker in English. Use bad words in English, like "F*** you, get away from me, you pig!" Say it like you mean it. Frown, flail your arms around, and use all the threatening gestures you can.
 - American female travelers are often astounded and offended by behaviors that we would consider harassment. Catcalls, whistles and pinches can be quite common in some countries. Ask female host nationals about what is "common" and what is considered dangerous.
- ◆ Do NOT dress like an "American" overseas. While you may roll out of bed, run a brush through your hair, and hobble to class in your pajamas on your home campus, this is not acceptable overseas.
 - Avoid wearing sweatpants, t-shirts, gym shoes, or any type of athletic wear in public. This includes sweatshirts, t-shirts, or baseball caps with university or sport team names. This automatically signals you as an American.
 - Fashion is important in European and Asian countries. This is not to say you have to go buy a new Armani wardrobe, but DO be fashion-conscious. Wear lots of subdued colors (black, brown, dark green, gray) and take many things that can be easily interchanged. For example, black pants can be worn with most anything and most any color.
 - If you are in another country that is more conservative (for example, the Middle East), try to adhere to the style of women in that country. Dress in a shawl that covers your head, neck, shoulders, and arms and/or in long skirts.

- Do your research so that you know what is considered acceptable and unacceptable dress in your host country.
- ◆ Do NOT take anything that identifies you with the U.S. government or military.
- ◆ Make sure you check in with the US consulate within your host country. They will have valuable information in case of a national emergency.
- ◆ Avoid any local civil disobedience rallies, disturbances, or riots. Though they may be interesting to see, these gatherings are not safe for you to be a part of. Leave these areas immediately!
- ◆ Remember you do not need to defend "America" on all political or other issues.
 - Sometimes getting to know where another person is coming from - what their source of reference is - can help in understanding issues with which they may confront you.
 - Being able to discuss our political system objectively without becoming an advocate for one party or another can be most helpful - Many overseas citizens are much more knowledgeable about our system of government and world geography than we are. Do your research before you go!

Crisis Management

- ◆ If you are physically (beaten up) or sexually assaulted overseas, go immediately to a hospital or police department (whichever is closer).
 - If you are not fluent in the language, request a translator. Many foreign nations have people on hand who speak English, because it is an international language.
 - If they do not have a translator, call the American Consulate to get a representative to translate.
- ◆ Know your insurance policy! Read over it before you go. Ask your chosen agency insurance questions before you go.
 - Carry any insurance cards, contact numbers, and instructions with you at all times.
- ◆ Contact your local US embassy or consulate immediately. Contact your resident study abroad program of office. Contact the UW International Programs Office.
 - Every student is REQUIRED to register in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at <http://travel.state.gov>.
- ◆ If you are on a sanctioned UW program, you have health insurance.
 - You can print an insurance card for UW International Travel Insurance at <http://www.uwyo.edu/studyabroad/insurance/>.
 - Most health-related expenses will have to be paid out-of-pocket. You can then submit receipts to the insurance company for reimbursement.
 - Carry extra cash or have a bank account available for emergency funds so you are able to withdraw in an emergency.
- ◆ Another good idea is to carry 2 or 3 photocopies of your passport and 2 passport photos.
 - If you are mugged and your passport is stolen, you will be able to replace it much easier and faster at the American Consulate if you have these things on-hand.
- ◆ Always carry extra copies of important phone numbers (the police or emergency phone number of the country you're in), your parents or trusted relative or friend's phone number and any other phone numbers that are important while abroad (such as the American Consulate in the country you're staying in).

Health

- ◆ If you need to go to a doctor in another country, always take enough money (\$50-\$100) in local currency.
- ◆ Each student must be familiar with the terms and usage of their own insurance policies. You should read over your international insurance policies before you leave.
- ◆ If you need any medication, take enough cash to buy it at the hospital or at the pharmacy. Obtain details about your diagnosis and treatment.
 - For example, on the form the doctor fills out (you might need to translate for the insurance company), be sure to write down the diagnosis (e.g. torn cartilage in the fibular) as well as any medication prescribed, (e.g. amoxicillin for ear infection.) This makes it easier for the insurance company to determine your reimbursement.
- ◆ Drugs (even common ones in the States, such as "Sudafed") may be difficult to obtain overseas. If you do manage to get a prescription, it can be expensive.
 - If possible, try to find a prescription that works for you for a possible serious infection, and ask your doctor to give you a prescription (7 days, for instance) to tide you over while you search for a doctor overseas.
 - If your doctor refuses to prescribe anything, go to the pharmacy and load up on over-the-counter drugs that work for you. For example, if Sudafed works really well as decongestant for you, buy 3-4 packs of that and take it with you overseas.
 - Be sure to take all your medication in the original containers. DO NOT empty them into an unmarked plastic bottle or baggie, because customs will detain you as they work to figure out the type of drug. Even if you are proven innocent, this is not a travel experience you want to have.
 - If you are taking prescription medications, carry enough for the entire time you will be there. It is hard to obtain these in other countries and even harder to explain in a foreign language.
 - It may also be illegal for these medication to be mailed to you from home.
 - Make certain that none of your prescription medications are illegal in the countries to which you will travel. Do your research!
- ◆ If you wear glasses or contacts, try to carry an extra set of each AS WELL AS a copy of your prescription. This makes it easier to fill it overseas.
- ◆ **ILLEGAL DRUGS: DO NOT USE OR CARRY THEM.** The U.S. is enforcing stronger and more stringent drug policies, but overseas, it is even stricter.
 - As an American, if you carry illegal drugs you will be detained and probably jailed. The U.S. government cannot obtain a release for you if you are thrown into jail (please see the section on assistance to U.S. citizens arrested abroad).
 - Do NOT carry anything for anyone in your luggage or on your person while traveling on any sort of transportation.

Miscellaneous

- ◆ If you are staying in a homestay, be sure to warn your host family before you arrive with any health concerns or dietary restrictions. Be patient if your host family does not fully understand what this means. For example, many Russians do not really believe the vegetarians do not actually eat any meat or meat products.

- ◆ Customs: Read the US Consular Notes concerning Customs restrictions. For most students, the limitations on actual cash or valuables will not apply. Most people have problems when they buy food products that are unsealed and try to bring them across borders.
 - If you collect sand or dirt as a memento of your adventure, you are bringing "agricultural products" across borders and MUST declare what you have.
 - Americans can also get into trouble when they buy items containing endangered "parts." For example, the ivory chopsticks from China might be beautiful but U.S. Customs will confiscate them if you are caught during your re-entry into the United States.
- ◆ Again, on your return flight, your first "port of entry" city in the U.S. will require you to get off the plane and go through customs before you continue the remaining leg(s) of your U.S. flight. This frequently involves picking up your luggage, clearing customs and immigration, going back through security, and dropping your luggage back off to be x-rayed and placed on your connecting flight. Your bags and you should be checked through to your final destination. If you are unsure, ask ground personnel once you land and exit the plane.
- ◆ Read up on the country you're traveling to or studying in!

Culture Shock: Occupational Hazard of Overseas Living

In preparing for the big move, you've probably had - or will soon have - all the vaccinations required. These will keep you safe from the diseases that can still be found in some parts of the world.

There is no vaccination, however, for one malady you are likely to encounter - culture shock. In all probability, the doctor who gave you your shots wouldn't even have been able to talk to you about it.

"Culture Shock" is the term used to describe the more pronounced reactions to the psychological disorientation most people experience when they move for an extended period of time into a culture markedly different from their own. It can cause intense discomfort, often accompanied by hyperirritability, bitterness, resentment, homesickness, and depression. In some cases distinct physical symptoms of psychosomatic illness occur.

For some, culture shock is brief and hardly noticeable. These are usually people whose personalities provide them with a kind of natural immunity. For most of us, however, culture shock is something we'll have to deal with over a period of at least several months, possibly a year or more.

In a sense, culture shock is an occupational hazard of overseas living. One has to be willing to work through it in order to have the pleasures of experiencing other countries and cultures in depth.

All of us have known frustration at one time or another. Although related, and similar in emotional content, culture shock is different from frustration. Frustration is always traceable to a specific action or cause and goes away when the situation is remedied or the cause is removed.

Some of the common causes of frustration are:

- ◆ the ambiguity of a particular situation;
- ◆ the actual situation does not match preconceived ideas of what it would be like;
- ◆ unrealistic goals;
- ◆ not being able to see results;
 - because of the enormity of the need
 - because of the nature of the work
 - because of the shortness of time of one's involvement, and
- ◆ using the wrong methods to achieve objectives (i.e., methods which are inappropriate to the new culture)

Frustration may be uncomfortable, but it is generally short-lived as compared to culture shock.

Culture shock has two distinctive features:

1. It does not result from a specific event or series of events. It comes instead from the experience of encountering ways of doing, organizing, perceiving or valuing things which are different from yours and which threaten your basic unconscious belief that your enculturated customs, assumptions, values and behaviors are "right."
2. It does not strike suddenly or have a single principle cause. Instead it is cumulative. It builds up slowly, from a series of small events, which are difficult to identify.

Culture shock comes from:

- ◆ Being cut off from the cultural cues and known patterns with which you are familiar - especially the subtle, indirect ways you normally have of expressing feelings. All the nuances and shades of meaning that you understand instinctively and use to make your life comprehensible are suddenly taken from you.
- ◆ Living and/or working over an extended period of time in a situation that is ambiguous.
- ◆ Having your own values (which you had heretofore considered as absolutes) brought into question - which yanks your moral urge out from under you.
- ◆ Being continually put into positions in which you are expected to function with maximum skill and speed but where the rules have not been adequately explained.

Regarding being cut off from your own cultural cues, Kalvero Oberg, the man who first diagnosed culture shock, said:

"The signs and cues include the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life: when to shake hands and what to say when we meet people, when and how to give tips, and how to give orders to servants, how to make purchases, when to accept and when to refuse invitations, when to take statements seriously and when not..."

These are just a few examples, but they show how pervasive is the disorientation out of which culture shock emerges.

The Progressive Stages of Culture Shock

As indicated above, culture shock progresses slowly. One's first reaction to different ways of doing things may be "How quaint!" When it becomes clear that the differences are not simply quaint, an effort is frequently made to dismiss them by pointing out the fundamental sameness of human nature. After all, people are really basically the same under the skin, aren't they?

Eventually, the focus shifts to the differences themselves, sometimes to such an extent that they seem to be overwhelming. The final stage comes when the differences are narrowed down to a few of the most troubling and then are blown up out of all proportion. (For Americans, standards of cleanliness and attitudes toward personal habits tend to loom large).

By now the sojourner is in an acute state of distress. The host culture has become the scapegoat for the natural difficulties inherent in the cross-cultural encounter. Culture shock has set in.

Below is a list of some the symptoms that may be observed in relatively severe cases of culture shock:

- ◆ Homesickness;
- ◆ Boredom;
- ◆ Withdrawal (e.g., spending excessive amounts of time reading; only seeing other Americans avoiding contact with host nationals);
- ◆ Need for excessive amounts of sleep;
- ◆ Compulsive eating;
- ◆ Compulsive drinking;
- ◆ Irritability;
- ◆ Exaggerated cleanliness;

- ◆ Marital stress in families;
- ◆ Family tension and conflict;
- ◆ Chauvinistic excesses;
- ◆ Stereotyping of host nationals;
- ◆ Hostility toward host nationals;
- ◆ Loss of ability to work effectively;
- ◆ Unexplainable fits of weeping, and
- ◆ Physical ailments (psychosomatic illnesses).

Not everyone will experience this severe a case of culture shock, nor will all the symptoms be observed. Many people ride through culture shock with some ease, only now and again experiencing the more serious reactions. But many others don't. For them it is important to know:

1. That the above responses can occur,
2. That culture shock is to some degree inevitable, and
3. That their reactions are emotional and not easily subject to rational management.

This knowledge should give you a better understanding of what is happening to you and buttress your resolve to work at hastening your recovery.

Before we examine what you can do to counteract culture shock, let's spend a few minutes finding where it fits into the whole overseas experience.

Some time ago people began to recognize that there were distinctive stages of personal adjustment which virtually everyone who lived abroad went through (no matter where they came from or what country they were living in).

These stages are:

1. Initial euphoria - the "Honeymoon Phase"
2. Irritability and hostility
3. Gradual adjustment
4. Adaptation or biculturalism

1. Initial euphoria - the Honeymoon Phase

Most people begin their new assignment with great expectations and positive mind-set. If anything, they come with expectations which are too high and attitudes that are too positive toward the host country and toward their own prospective experiences in it. At this point, anything new is intriguing and exciting. However, for the most part, it is the similarities which stand out. The recent arrival is usually impressed with how people everywhere are really very much alike.

This period of euphoria may last from a week or two to a month, but the letdown is inevitable. You've reached the end of the first stage.

2. Irritation and hostility

Gradually, your focus turns from the similarities to the differences. And these differences, which suddenly seem to be everywhere, are troubling. You blow up little, seemingly insignificant difficulties into unworkable catastrophes. This is the stage generally identified as "culture shock," and you may

experience any of the symptoms listed above. "Withdrawal" generally colors one's perception; the home environment suddenly assumes a tremendous importance, everything becomes irrationally glorified. All home difficulties and problems are forgotten and only the good things are remembered. It usually takes a trip home to bring one back to reality. The tendency to repeat stereotypes is heightened during this stage of culture shock. Any hostility you may feel during this stage will be picked up not only by others in your group but also by host natives. The result may be a heightened sensation that everyone is mean and hates you when they are more likely than not reacting to your negativity and hostility. If you are traveling with a partner or close knit group, you might be doing fine, but hostility and culture shock of those with you 24 hours a day may "drag you down." Partner or travel group culture shock hostility can be even more difficult to dissect and separate yourself from.

3. Gradual adjustment

The crisis is over and you are on your way to recovery. This step may come to so gradually that, at first, you will be unaware it's even happening. Once you begin to orient yourself and are able to interpret some of the subtle cultural clues and cues, which passed by unnoticed earlier, the culture seems more familiar. You become more comfortable in it and feel less isolated from it.

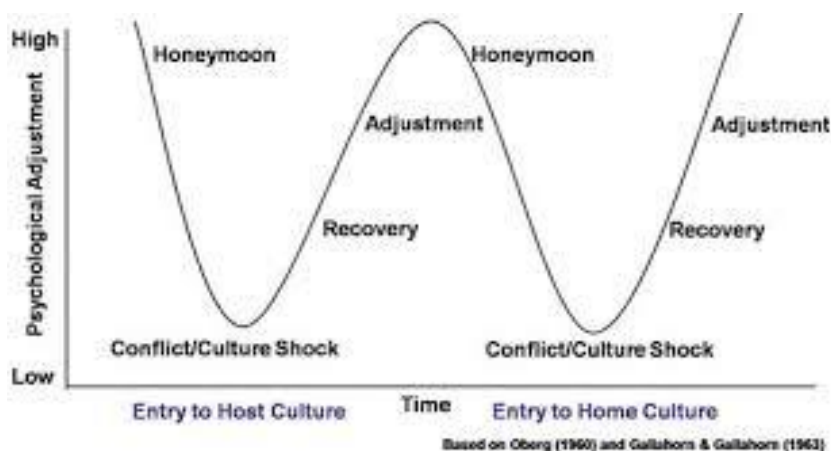
Gradually, too, your sense of humor returns, and you realize the situation is not hopeless after all.

4. Adaptation and biculturalism

Full recovery will result in an ability to function in two cultures with confidence. You will even find a great many customs, ways of doing and saying things, and personal attitudes which you enjoy - indeed, to which you have in some degree acculturated - and which you will definitely miss when you pack up and return home. In fact, you can expect to experience "reverse culture shock" upon your return to the U.S. In some cases, particularly where a person has adjusted exceptionally well to the host country, reverse culture shock may cause greater distress than the original culture shock.

The interesting thing about culture shock is that there are routinely not one but two low points and, even more interestingly, they will accommodate themselves to the amount of time you intend to spend in the host country! That is, they will spread themselves out if you're going to stay for a longer period or contract if your initial assignment is for a shorter time. You can't say that's not accommodating!

A graphic illustration of the "adjustment curve" can look something like this:



How long will culture shock last?

As we have suggested, that varies based on how long you are away. But it also depends to some extent on you and your resiliency. You can expect a let-up after the first dip, but be prepared for the second downturn which will probably be somewhat more severe.

Stop a moment and consider what you can do on your own to combat and alleviate the effects of culture shock.

Prescription for Culture Shock

Granted that culture shock is virtually inevitable to some degree and that there are no easy remedies in the medicine cabinet, there are, nevertheless, things you can do. There are positive steps you can take to minimize the impact, and the sooner you take them, the better.

A Prescription for Action:

1. Review and know your own "lenses" - how does who you are (your gender, your race, your socio-economic status, your education, your parents' education, your upbringing, your religion, etc. etc.) affect how you process information? How might your enculturated filtering lenses affect your attitudes to peoples, places, and ideas around you?
2. One of the best antidotes to culture shock - though when you're in the midst of it this may not make sense - is knowing as much as possible about where you are.
3. Begin to (if you haven't been doing so already) consciously looking for logical reasons behind everything in the host culture which seems strange, difficult, confusing, or threatening. Even if your "reason" is wrong, it will reinforce the positive attitude that in fact there is a logical explanation behind the things you observe in the host culture. Take every aspect of your experience and look at it from the perspective of your hosts. Find patterns and interrelationships. All the pieces fit together once you discover where they go. Relax your grip on your own culture a little in the process. There's no way you can lose it (any more than you could forget how to speak English), but letting go a bit may open up some unexpected avenues of understanding.
4. Don't succumb to the temptation to disparage the host culture. Resist making jokes and comments ("Well, what else would you expect from these people?") which are intended to illustrate the stupidity of the "natives." Don't hang around the Americans who do make these comments; they will only reinforce your unhappiness. Every post or American enclave has a number of people who have not been able to adjust to the country and who sit around waiting for the next boatload of American greenhorns to arrive so they can indoctrinate them on the "stupidity of the native." You see, they have high stakes in your discontent for, if they can get you to parrot back their gripes, it proves them right. Avoid these people like the plague! The sickness they are attempting to spread is far worse than any culture shock you will ever experience.
5. Identify a host national (a neighbor, someone at work, a friendly acquaintance) who is sympathetic and understanding, and talk with that person about specific situations and about your feelings related to them. Talking with Americans can be helpful but only to a limited extent (and not at all under certain circumstances - see the previous item on this list). Your problem lies in your relationship to the host culture.

6. Above all, have faith - in yourself, in the essential good will of your hosts, and in the positive outcome of the experience.
7. Journal even if you are not a "journal" person.

Cross-Cultural Expectations of American Students Studying Abroad

The expectations or preconceptions of American students may differ somewhat according to the country in which they plan to study, but nevertheless many Americans who study abroad arrive with similar attitudes.

Students who arrive in Europe or elsewhere with conscious or unconscious preconceptions are susceptible to disappointment, frustration and anger. Such reactions stand in the way of easy or satisfactory adjustment to the new culture and make it harder for the students to grow and mature in positive ways.

Through no fault of their own, many students do not realize that a Study Abroad experience will be very different from life at home, as well as from life at their college or university. Students who go to an English- speaking country seem particularly susceptible to this thinking.

Please note: Although this article focuses on Europe, the following points will hold true regardless of your study abroad destination.

1. Educational Systems:
 - a. The onus to ascertain what you need to do for the class is on YOU, the student;
 - b. The student must be a self-starter and independent worker: Professors will not tell you what needs to be done, and you will be left to develop your own course of action and inquiry;
 - c. The professor may or may not provide a syllabus or course information in the same way that American professors do;
 - d. Professors abroad are not as compelled as US professors to present materials in an "interesting" manner, and
 - e. The distance between professors and students can be more formal.
2. Food: perceptions of food and nutrition,
3. Housing: housing expectations;
 - a. This can include expectations about the relationship between you and your host family (if you have one).

American students abroad have to deal with major differences, especially in the following 6 categories:

1. Educational Systems
2. University Teaching Styles
3. Food
4. Housing
5. Language
6. Personal Matters

1. Educational Systems

The European university is not as overtly welcoming or protective as the American university system. Students in Europe are treated as adults - and therefore are considered independent and responsible for their own welfare, both personal and academic. They are expected to handle their own emotional and academic problems without any official advocate at the university to help them. The university structure in Europe generally does not include the equivalent position of an American Dean of Students.

For example, American students do not understand why, at some European universities, the academic calendar is not set for the year by the time classes begin in October. Spring vacation dates may not be announced until Christmas. They do not understand why course offerings and class timetables are not confirmed further in advance.

The American reaction is to become annoyed, critical, and indignant. "Why are they so disorganized over here?" "Why are they so inefficient?" As the student becomes more dissatisfied with or skeptical of the different way of doing things, he/she may become more chauvinistic and may convince themselves that the American way is the best way. On go the cultural blinders.

As it turns out, the timetable, the class schedule, and the academic calendar do get resolved and clarified in time for the academic machinery to run smoothly. However, Americans are accustomed to receiving information sooner, and they become uneasy and impatient when information is not readily available. We are in a nation that prides itself on service, and we expect service from others. We feel we should get what we paid for, and that once we have paid, we are entitled to immediate access to everything we need. Patience is a virtue many Americans need to develop.

Digressing for a moment from the theme of educational systems, we should talk about a wider topic - that of coping in general with life in a foreign country.

For a series of articles in the International Herald Tribune, reporter Sherry Buchanan wrote about growing problem of Expatriate Stress - in particular, stress among American executives assigned overseas. Ms. Buchanan referred to a study by the Wharton Business School at the University of Pennsylvania in which American executives and their families were compared with their European and Japanese counterparts living and working abroad. According to the study, less than 5% of Japanese executives return home before finishing their assignment, less than 10% of European executives leave early, but up to 30% of American executives do not finish their assignment abroad. Factors that are rated as most important in helping or hindering adjustment are ability to adapt to a foreign environment, attitude to other ethnic groups, patience, and interpersonal skills. These traits affect the adjustment of American student as much as the adjustment of American executives.

Now, to return to the main categories, second on the list is:

2. University Teaching Styles

Teaching styles in Europe may be different from American teaching styles. In large European universities, many professors do not take such a personal interest in each individual student. They often do not know their students by name. In class, more emphasis is placed on lecturing rather than group discussions or seminars. Large and overcrowded lecture halls are a new experience for many American

students. They are surprised if a professor's approach to teaching is to read them from lecture notes or even a textbook. Such stereotypes may be rare but they do exist!

The European professor does not always feel that the class should be fascinating or fun. The American professor tends to work hard to enable the students to enjoy the class. He/she often wants the student to consider him/her a friend. This concept is foreign to many European teachers and is not expected by European students.

When European professors hand out a recommended reading list at the beginning of the semester, they probably do not say "Read all these books." They certainly do not say "Read chapter so and so in this book and chapter such and such in that book."

Vital information from some or all of these books is likely to turn up on the final exam. Professors assume that students realize what they should read. They assume students will be self-motivated and self-disciplined. Because some American students are used to being told to read from page 110 to page 250 by next Tuesday's class, they often misunderstand what is expected of them. As a result, they are often shocked or dismayed when they get their final grades. In many final evaluations, students complain that the courses were too easy, not challenging enough. Frequently the students who made these types of comments ended up with a much lower grades than they expected because they interpreted the lack of structure as a license not to work so hard.

The fact that there are fewer tests and quizzes during the term further complicates the problem because students are often not aware of how they stand as the term progresses and are not prepared for the stress of having the whole term's work depend on one final exam or final paper.

3. Food

Unfortunately, it seems that many Americans are not very adaptable or adventuresome when it comes to trying the cuisine of another country. There are two contradictory extremes. On the one hand, American students are often much more knowledgeable about nutrition - or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that they are more aware of nutrition than other students are. They complain about too much starch, too much grease, too much red meat, not enough vegetables, not enough roughage, and so on. On the other hand, many of them regularly spend their spare cash at the local McDonald's or Burger King, consuming fast foods, ice cream, and Coca-Cola.

Again, some Americans tend to be rather suspicious when they are served food they do not recognize or have never tried. In a family homestay, the mother who is proud of her cooking can easily take offence at such an attitude. Being apprehensive about the food, or dissatisfied with it, tends to have a negative effect on many students.

4. Housing

In many ways, housing is the most crucial category of all. Basically, if students are happy with their housing, they enjoy their stay overall. If they are unhappy with their housing, it casts a dark cloud over everything else, including the academic program. Creature comforts are a very high priority for many Americans.

If students live with a family rather than a residence hall, the culture shock works both ways. The Americans complain that there is not enough hot water, or that the hot water supply is not available 24

hours a day. Their host family complains that the Americans stand in the shower for 20 minutes when 5 minutes should suffice, or that there is no need for anyone to wash their hair every day. Rejection of the food, as stated earlier, also irritates the host family.

Depending on the country, some students are greatly disappointed when they discover the family homestay is not as cozy as they had anticipated. Taking in boarders is a tradition that is not widespread in the United States; however, European families have taken in paying guests for many years. Although some families welcome their American guest into their home and daily life, other families consider it strictly a commercial arrangement and do not allow the student to eat with them or use any room except their bedroom and the bathroom.

Because taking in a foreign student is still a novelty in the U.S., American families generally enjoy the opportunity to shower hospitality on their guest and do not expect to be paid to be a good host. Thus, American students arrive in Europe with false expectations, because they assume that they too are a novelty in a European home, and that they will be treated the same way a European student is treated in an American home. This is not often the case.

A variation of the housing problem is the problem of adjusting from an American-style campus to a university without a traditional campus. For many European universities, the city is their campus. For an American, the word "campus" conjures up acres of grass and trees, excellent athletic and cultural facilities, an attractive cafeteria and a well-stocked library. Some European universities are a disappointment to American students when they realize they no longer have the upscale facilities that were available on their home university campuses.

The fifth problem area, for want of a better word, is:

5. Language

Most students expect to have difficulty communicating in the foreign language, especially when they first arrive. Yet, it is at the very beginning that they are keyed-up, receptive, and most eager to make an effort to learn. To their chagrin, they soon discover that, rather than being forced to speak the foreign language, it is hard to avoid speaking English most of the time. Except for the Advanced or Honor students, most students take courses in a program for foreigners, or are on a program arranged by their own university for them and their fellow students. Therefore, they have limited contact with students from the host country. They discover that it is very hard to develop friendships with the local students. The local students may not be terribly eager to get to know every American who is studying in their country for one or two semesters. To be frustrated in their attempts to communicate, linguistically and personally, is very disappointing. Students need to know before departure that their goals may be very idealistic, and may be very difficult to realize.

The last category is:

6. Personal Matters

Some students seem to think that by going to a foreign country they can leave at home all their "emotional baggage." They assume, or hope, that family problems or personal problems will not travel with them. More often than not, they are wrong. After the euphoria of the first few weeks, some students come crashing down, and have great difficulty coping with the reality that their problems are

still with them. Homesickness sets in once routine is established. At that point all students feel vulnerable and some become less positive about the experience. There are several issues that must be recognized and dealt with.

For one thing, study abroad is not necessarily good for everyone. If a student is struggling with deep personal problems or major decisions, the stress, insecurity, and unfamiliarity of the foreign environment will not help to resolve these problems. Losing the support systems usually relied on might provoke a greater crisis.

Second, all students should be made aware before departure that going abroad does not mean they have free license to "opt out" of their usual pattern of behavior or code of conduct. Some students use the semester abroad as a "last fling" before settling down to complete their major or to enter the job market. They consider it a chance to "sow their wild oats," acting as though they are not accountable for their behavior - not to their family, their friends, or their university. They feel that since no one knows them here it is a chance to do things they would not or could not do at home.

As a result of this behavior, the Ugly American syndrome appears on every foreign campus during every semester - albeit a minority of students. Repeated drunkenness, damage to furniture in homes, residence halls or hotels, chronic absence from class in order to travel far and wide- these are the temptations that some students are unable to resist.

Studying abroad is a time for personal and intellectual growth. It is a unique opportunity from which each individual can gain rich insights into, and appreciation for, another culture, another language, and people with different traditions and points of view. It is also an opportunity to learn about oneself.

Factors Important to Successful Intercultural Adjustments

1. Open Mindedness... The ability to keep one's opinions flexible and receptive to new stimuli seems to be important to intercultural adjustment.
2. Sense of Humor... A sense of humor is important because in another culture there are many things that lead one to weep, get angry, and become annoyed, embarrassed, or discouraged. The ability to laugh things off will help guard against despair.
3. Ability to Cope with Failure... The ability to tolerate failure is critical because everyone fails at something overseas. Persons who go overseas are often those who have been the most successful in their home environments and have rarely experienced failure, thus, may have never developed ways of coping with failure.
4. Communicativeness... The ability and willingness to communicate one's feelings and thoughts to others, verbally or non-verbally, has been suggested as an important skill for successful intercultural communicators.
5. Flexibility and Adaptability... The ability to respond to or tolerate the ambiguity of new situations is very important to intercultural success. Keeping options open and judgmental behavior to a minimum describes an adaptable or flexible person.
6. Curiosity... Curiosity is the demonstrated desire to know about other people, places, ideas, etc. This skill or personality trait is important for intercultural travelers because they need to learn many things in order to adapt to their new environment.

7. Positive and Realistic Expectations... It has been shown frequently that there are strong correlations between positive expectations for an intercultural experience and successful adjustment overseas.
8. Tolerance for Differences and Ambiguities... A sympathetic understanding for beliefs or practices differing from one's own is important to successful intercultural adjustment.
9. Positive Regard for Others... The ability to express warmth, empathy, respect, and positive regard for other persons has been suggested as an important component of effective intercultural relations.
10. A Strong Sense of Self... A clear, secure feeling about oneself results in individuals who are neither weak nor overbearing in their relations with others. Persons with a strong sense of themselves stand up for what they believe but do not cling to those beliefs regardless of new information, perspectives, or understandings which they may encounter.

Remember!

- ◆ People have a way of accepting their culture as both the best and the only way of doing things. This is perfectly normal and understandable. To this attitude we give the name ethnocentrism, a belief that not only the culture but the majority race and nation form the center of the world.
- ◆ Individuals identify themselves with their own group and its ways to the extent that any critical comment is taken as an affront to the individual, as well as to the group. If you criticize my country, you are criticizing me. If you criticize me, you are criticizing my country.
- ◆ Along with this attitude goes the tendency to attribute all individual peculiarities as national characteristics. For instance, if an American does something odd or antisocial in a foreign country, which back home would be considered a purely individual act, it is now considered a national trait.
- ◆ Instead of being censured as an individual, their country is censured. It is best to recognize that ethnocentrism is a characteristic of national groups. If a national criticizes some aspect of his own culture, the foreigner should listen but not enter into the criticism.

Re-Entry Shock

From an article by Thea Miller, a freelance writer

Some participants returning from extended international study find no one willing to relive those fascinating, cultural memories. Family and friends are waiting to greet you open arms, but not always with open eyes. Facing the unbelievable "newness" of home and the unwillingness of friends to listen leaves returning participants feeling more like strangers in their own country.

According to Judith Martin, an associate professor of intercultural communication at the University of Minnesota, it is more difficult to come home. When you go abroad, she says, "you expect it to be different; when you come home, no one expects you to have changed."

The University of Wyoming IPO staff offer to sponsor students to attend a "Returnee Conference" in Colorado to help students make sense out of their experiences abroad and recognize the impact it has on them. The differences between cultures and the changes you undergo will affect you the rest of your life, your future academic work, and your career.

Integrating the study-abroad experience into your life is the most important step to overcoming the reverse-culture shock. You sought international study to broaden your understanding of the world - now use it to help others achieve that understanding.

If you feel a need to work through some re-entry shock, or just want to share your foreign experiences with others, here are a few suggestions:

- ◆ Ask high school and university foreign language instructors if you can give short guest lectures, illustrated with photographs, slides, or videos.
- ◆ Many local civic and children's organizations enjoy speakers who share their foreign travel anecdotes. Audience members often add their own stories to the conversation.
- ◆ Kiwanis, Rotary clubs, Girl and Boy Scout troops may be able to utilize your experiences through presentations.
- ◆ Talk about your experiences with others who have recently traveled abroad and who may be experiencing the same feelings you're having. They may be able to share some tips with you on how they learned to deal with their feelings. Solutions to re-entry shock are numerous and unique to each individual. Most important, remember that the time, energy and expanse spent studying abroad was well spent.
- ◆ Find very helpful suggestions for Participating in Returnee Events at UW:
<http://www.uwyo.edu/studyabroad/returning>

Drug and Alcohol Use

Authorities in most countries consider illegal drug use an extremely serious matter, and penalties can be severe.

- ◆ Some countries have elaborate drug laws that involve guilt by association, and you could find yourself imprisoned for a seemingly minor offense.
- ◆ Be aware of the laws of the countries you visit and respect local customs.

Alcohol

Drinking alcohol while socializing is common in many parts of the world. The attitude in some countries toward alcohol may be much different than in the United States.

- ◆ Drinking in some countries is part of the social experience, but not the focus of it.
- ◆ Excessive drinking or drunken behavior is not acceptable.
- ◆ Public drunkenness is illegal in most areas.
- ◆ If you choose to drink, you should be responsible and DRINK IN MODERATION.
- ◆ Keep in mind that various factors can influence your level of intoxication such as altitude, dehydration, stress from being in an unfamiliar environment, and the actual alcohol content of the beverage.
- ◆ Be wary of homemade liquors. If they are not prepared correctly, they can be fatal.
- ◆ The legal drinking age varies in different countries.

Drunk Driving

Penalties for drunk driving vary greatly and can include years in prison with hefty fines or sentences that include hard labor.

- ◆ Alcohol mixed with different driving laws and styles, and unfamiliar streets can be a deadly combination.

Illegal Drugs

DO NOT TAKE ANY ILLEGAL DRUGS, DO NOT TRAVEL WITH ILLEGAL DRUGS, AND DO NOT HAVE ILLEGAL DRUGS IN YOUR POSSESSION AT ANY TIME.

- ◆ The University of Wyoming assumes no responsibility for any student violating laws and student conduct codes. Laws concerning drugs may be much more severe in other countries.
- ◆ Penalties for drug possession, use and sale of can range from the death penalty to physical punishment to long prison terms. You are subject to the laws of the host country you are visiting.
- ◆ If you are arrested on a drug charge, the U.S. Consular Officer cannot demand your release, get you out of jail or out of the country, cannot represent you at trial or give you legal counsel, and cannot pay your legal fees or fines.

Please see the section on Assistance to U.S. Citizens Arrested Abroad.

Prescription/Legal Drugs

If you must take any type of drugs that are legal in the U.S. with you, keep them in the original containers.

- ◆ Do not try to save space by mixing different medications by putting them all in one container.

- ◆ If you are carrying prescription drugs, keep them in the original container and carry a note from your doctor describing the drug and its use.

Travel Safe: AIDS and International Travel

The HIV Virus Can Be Transmitted in Four General Ways:

1. Through intimate sexual contact - the virus can be transmitted from any infected person to his or her sexual partner, when semen, blood or vaginal fluids are exchanged.
2. Through infected blood and blood products. This includes blood transfusions in which the blood donated either is not screened or is improperly screened for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) antibodies.
3. Through contaminated needles or any other HIV-contaminated skin piercing instrument.
4. From an infected mother to her infant before or during delivery, or possibly while breastfeeding.

The HIV virus is not transmitted through casual contact

The World Health Organization states: "AIDS is not spread by daily routine activities such as sitting next to someone or shaking hands, or working with people. Nor is it spread by insects or insect bites. And AIDS is not spread by swimming pools, public transportation, food, cups, glasses, plates, toilets, water, air, touching or hugging, coughing or sneezing."

Why Special Concern for the Traveler?

When traveling abroad, be aware that some countries may require HIV antibody tests, a test for antibodies to HIV that causes AIDS.

- ◆ Travelers should also know that some countries may not have the resources to adequately screen blood or provide sterile needles.
- ◆ Living overseas may present greater risks to those who test positive for HIV.
- ◆ Many overseas locations have limited medical facilities that cannot monitor the progress of such infections.
 - If you believe you may be infected, knowing your HIV status will help in planning your trip.

HIV Antibody Testing

Some countries now require incoming foreigners, including students, to take the HIV antibody test before a visa will be issued. Usually this is required for long-term stays.

- ◆ If you are studying abroad, check with your institution or program to see if that country requires testing. You may need a "doctor's certificate" showing the results of an HIV antibody test.
- ◆ Your local consulate will carry information as well.

If the country you are going to requires testing:

Learn about the HIV antibody test and its ramifications. Talk to a trained counselor who can give you more information and address your questions and concerns.

- ◆ If you decide you want to be tested, do so only at a center that offers pre-and post-test counseling. There are many institutions whose primary focus is AIDS counseling.

- ◆ Allow yourself two weeks for the testing process.
- ◆ Consider getting test twice - first anonymously, (which allows you the privacy to decide what you want to do if the result is positive), then again for a doctor's certificate, if needed.

Overseas Blood Transfusions and Blood Products

While many countries, including the U.S. and parts of Europe, have mandatory screening of donated blood for the AIDS virus, not all do.

Travelers should inquire at the local Red Cross office or Western embassies about safe sources of blood overseas. In some locales, ascertaining the availability of HIV-screened blood and blood products may be difficult.

Because of obvious uncertainties, consider these precautions:

- ◆ People traveling together can form a "walking blood bank" in which members know each other's blood type and agree to be possible donors for each other. This, of course, presumes that all of those participating are HIV negative.
- ◆ If you are injured or ill while abroad, avoid or postpone any blood transfusion unless it is absolutely necessary. If you do need blood, try to ensure that screened blood is used. If you need a doctor's attention overseas, ask for a "western style" hospital in order to receive adequate care.
- ◆ Regardless of the blood screening practices abroad, always try to reduce the risk of serious injury, which may require blood transfusions by taking everyday precautions:
- ◆ If driving, wear a seatbelt and drive carefully.
- ◆ Take good care of yourself while traveling. Don't wear yourself down, watch out for excessive exposure to heat, and drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration, and get plenty of sleep.

Overseas Injections

Here in the U.S., we may take for granted disposable equipment such as needles and syringes. Be advised that some foreign countries will reuse even disposable equipment.

- ◆ In some countries, if injection is required, you can buy needles and syringes and bring them to the hospital for your own use.
- ◆ Avoid injections unless absolutely necessary. If injections are required, make sure needles and syringes come straight from a package or have been sterilized with chemicals or by boiling for twenty minutes.
- ◆ When in doubt, ask to see how the equipment has been sterilized.
- ◆ Caution regarding instrument sterilization applies to all instruments that pierce the skin, including tattooing, acupuncture, body piercing, and dental work.
- ◆ The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that "Diabetics or other persons who require routine or frequent injections should carry a supply of syringes and needles sufficient to last their stay abroad."
- ◆ It is not uncommon to bring needles for your own use; however, be aware that carrying needles and syringes without a prescription may be illegal in some countries.
 - Take a note from your doctor if you do need to carry needles and syringes. Some countries do have needles and syringes for sale.

Condoms

Condoms are not always as easily available in many countries as they are in the U.S. - some countries may not have them available at all or the storing of such items may be questionable.

- ◆ Product quality may also be a concern.
- ◆ If there is a chance you will be sexually active, take a supply of condoms with you.
- ◆ Abstinence is the safest alternative. If you do choose to be sexually active, always use a condom!

If You Are HIV Positive:

For those travelling abroad who are HIV positive, contact the consulate or the embassy of the country or countries you plan to visit.

- ◆ Each country may have specific entry requirement, or requirements regarding carrying medicine, that you should know about before you leave.

For additional information, contact the following resources:

CDC National HIV/AIDS Hotline: 1-800-342-AIDS

In Spanish: 1-800-344-7432

For the Hearing Impaired: 1-800-243-7889

CDC National Clearing House: 1-800-458-5231

World Health Organization: 1-202-861-3200

This information is adapted from material made available to Council/Council Travel by Juan Carlos Garcia and Alejandro M. Martinez, Ph.D., Cowell Student Health Center, Stanford University. Special thanks to Mr. Joe Fera, Director of Education, San Francisco AIDS Foundation.

Women Abroad

From Transitions Abroad International Resource Guide No. 43

American women are taught to be adventuresome, independent, and eager to meet people. We are accustomed to being active, talking with people who we do not know, making friends quickly, and going out at night. We want to make the most of our time overseas and become involved in a variety of activities. Yet, in many parts of the world the role of women is to stay at home.

- ◆ Friends are often made through family ties, not at school or work, and definitely not in a bar at night.
- ◆ There are often strong differences between how women are expected to act in public and in private.
- ◆ Dress, behavior, activity, eye contact, and topics of conversations are shaped by unspoken cultural norms.
- ◆ Media images of American women portrayed as sexual objects have created powerful, lingering stereotypes of American women. As we jog in the streets of Cairo, wear shorts in Turkey, and smile at men we do not know in Mexico, we may be unintentionally reinforcing these stereotypes.

Surviving Sexual Harassment Abroad

Most women travelers experience some degree of sexual harassment, be it in verbal form, gestures, pinches, or other physical encounters.

- ◆ This is not to say that such occurrences do not take place in the U.S., but that being a foreign traveler is often enough to mark a woman as an appealing target;
- ◆ Learning to cope with the problem and still maintain a positive cross-cultural experience can be difficult, and
- ◆ It can be quite easy to condemn an entire culture based on a few unpleasant encounters.

Barbara Baker, a teacher of cross-cultural counseling at the School for International training in Battleboro, Vermont, says sexual harassment abroad may be particularly frustrating to American women because of their own ingrained cultural expectations, "In America, cultural emphasis is placed on individual rights, freedoms, and choices. American women grow up with the expectation that they can make choices and be responsible for themselves."

- ◆ Not all cultures share this concept of individualism;
- ◆ A woman abroad is not necessarily viewed as an individual, but as a representative of a large group;
- ◆ Often these representations are associated with stereotypes, such as the 'easy' or 'loose' American woman looking for a good time;
- ◆ Someone who has never really known an American woman may rely on these stereotypes for definition, and
- ◆ Stereotypes of American women as sex objects are influenced by a myriad of factors: movies, advertisements, and popular culture.

"Media is very powerful," Baker explains. "It may be a shock to [an American woman to] be perceived as something other than what she is. She becomes a representative of a mythical culture."

Maria Hope, a study abroad advisor at the University of Iowa, cautions students who are going abroad that certain stereotypes will precede them. "American women have a reputation for getting involved in sexual relationships. Physical intimacy is more overtly accepted in North America culture, so an [American] female student is seen as 'easy prey.'"

Women are strongly advised to have a constant awareness of their surroundings when traveling.

- ◆ Be alert, look confident, travel with a companion;
- ◆ Do not smile or make eye contact at foreign men (this is seen in many countries as a come-on or invitation);
- ◆ Do not smoke or chew gum in public until you find out if this is customary behavior for women;
- ◆ Do not get in any type of private vehicle with someone you don't know;
- ◆ Do not sit in the front seat of a taxi;
- ◆ Call and arrange taxi pick-ups with an official from the agency rather than hailing a cab from the street;
- ◆ Take no unnecessary risks (walking alone at night, etc.);
- ◆ Ignoring harassment and remaining aloof carries many women through some situations, but assertive behavior is called for at times;
- ◆ A firm "NO" or loud "LEAVE ME ALONE" in any language is often enough to deter a potential harasser;
- ◆ DO NOT BE AFRAID TO MAKE A SCENE AND ATTRACT ATTENTION IF NEEDED, and
- ◆ Every woman must decide for herself what responses she is comfortable with and which methods of coping work best for her.

For information and travel tips from women who study and/or travel abroad Visit the Journeywoman Online Magazine at: www.journeywoman.com

Respecting the Culture you are Visiting

Despite your personal beliefs about what women should have the right to do around the world, you need to reach a balance between maintaining your identity and respecting the culture you are visiting. You might want to slow down and consider what could be gained by packing away your jeans and wearing a sari in India; staying at home with the family instead of going to a club in Tokyo, or taking time to talk with the grandmother selling flowers at the local market.

While the most obvious things you take with you abroad are your nationality and your gender, one of the best tools you can carry is cultural sensitivity and awareness. With this type of knowledge backing you up, you may be able to break some stereotypes as you travel. Here are a few tips for gaining cultural sensitivity as a woman traveling abroad:

- ◆ Research the country. Find out what the dress code is for women, which locations and situations are best for women to avoid, what messages non-verbal communication, such as making eye contact sends.
 - Start gathering this information by talking to women who are either from that part of the world or have traveled there.
- ◆ Get to know the women of the country. Begin by reading books by and about women from that area of the world.

- ◆ Observe. You can learn a lot of roles, attitudes, and customs by watching. How do women carry themselves in public? What are the roles of women in the culture? What is the reputation of foreign women?
- ◆ Honor the customs. You travel to other countries to learn, so you need to make the effort it takes to show respect.
- ◆ Be aware of cultural differences. If you have lived in one country for a year and feel comfortable with male/female relationships, do not assume that your expectation will hold true in other countries or with the opposite sex of those countries.
 - As you cross borders, accept the challenge of learning about each culture you encounter.
- ◆ Learn the language. Whether you are in a new country for a few days or a year, you will make a stronger connection with people by at least trying to communicate with them in their own language.
- ◆ Avoid generalizations. You might have a bad experience with one man from a country, but that does not mean all the men from that country are unlikable.
 - Try to focus on what you can learn about yourself and your own culture from each experience.
- ◆ Listen to and trust your instincts. While you need to make efforts to adapt to a new culture, you also need to pay attention to what feels uncomfortable.
 - When you are in a situation that makes you feel uncomfortable, you need to trust your instincts and leave.

Assistance to U.S. Citizens Arrested Abroad

Disclaimer: The following is a summary of services provided to U.S. citizens arrested abroad. Since conditions vary from country to country, the precise nature of services offered by U.S. Embassies and Consulates to its citizens may likewise vary, depending on individual circumstances in a particular case.

Summary: One of the most essential tasks of the Department of State (DOS) and of U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad is to provide assistance to U.S. citizens incarcerated abroad. The State Department is committed to ensuring fair and humane treatment for American citizens imprisoned overseas. “We stand ready to assist incarcerated citizens and their families within the limits of our authority, in accordance with international law. We can and do monitor conditions in foreign prisons and immediately protest allegations of abuse against American prisoners. We work with prison officials to ensure treatment consistent with internationally recognized standards of human rights and to ensure that Americans are afforded due process under local laws.”

Background: While in a foreign country, a U.S. citizen is subject to the country’s laws and regulations, which often differ significantly from those in the United States, and may not afford the protections available to the individual under U.S. law. As the DOS Consular Information Sheets explain, penalties for breaking the law can be more severe than in the United States for similar offenses.

Persons violating the law, even unknowingly, may be expelled, fined, arrested, or imprisoned. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking illegal drugs are strict, and convicted offenders can expect jail sentences and fines. If arrested abroad, a citizen must go through the foreign legal process for being charged or indicted, prosecuted, possibly convicted and sentenced, as well as for any appeals process.

Within this framework, U.S. consular officers provide a wide variety of services to U.S. citizens arrested abroad and to their families.

Consular Access to Prisoners: Article 36(a) of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 1963, 21 UST 77, TIAS 6820, 596 UNST 261, a multilateral treaty to which many, but not all countries are party, provides that consular officers shall be free to communicate with their nationals and to have access to them. However, Article 36(b) provides that the foreign authorities shall inform the consular officer of the arrest of a national —without delay (no time frame specified), if the national requests such notification.

Bilateral Consular Conventions between the United States and individual countries are more specific, requiring notification, regardless of whether the arrested person requests it, and generally specifying the time period to which such notification is to be made. When there is no treaty in force, notification and access are based on comity and largely dependent on whether the two countries have diplomatic relations.

Consular Services: Consular officers abroad provide a wide variety of services to U.S. citizens incarcerated abroad. Specific services vary depending on local laws and regulations, the level of local services available in the country in question, and the circumstances of the individual prisoner. The frequency of U.S. Consular visits to citizens arrested abroad may otherwise vary, depending upon circumstances.

Consular Services include the following upon initial notification of arrest:

- ◆ Visiting the prisoner as soon as possible after notification of arrest;
- ◆ Providing a list of local attorneys to assist the prisoner in obtaining legal representation;
- ◆ Providing information about judicial procedures in the foreign country;
- ◆ Notifying family and/or friends, if authorized by the prisoner;
- ◆ Obtaining Privacy Act Consent, and
- ◆ Relaying requests to family and/or friends for money or other aid.

On-Going Support to Incarcerated Americans:

- ◆ Providing regular consular visits to the prisoner and reporting on those visits to the Department of State;
- ◆ Providing loans to qualified destitute prisoners through the Emergency Medical/Dietary Assistance (EMDA) program;
- ◆ Arranging dietary supplements (i.e. vitamins and minerals) to qualified prisoners;
- ◆ Arranging for medical and dental care if not provided by the prison, to be paid for from prisoner's funds, funds provided by family, or funds loaned to the prisoner by the U.S. Government under the EMDA program for destitute Americans incarcerated abroad under the conditions specified in 22 CFR 71.10;
- ◆ Arranging for examinations by an independent physician if needed;
- ◆ Arranging special family visits, subject to local law;
- ◆ Protesting mistreatment or abuse to the appropriate authorities;
- ◆ Attending the trial, if the embassy/consulate believes that discrimination on the basis of U.S. nationality might occur or if specifically requested by the prisoner or family, if possible, and

- ◆ Providing information about procedures to applications for pardons or prisoner transfer treaties, if applicable.

Discretionary Support Provided as Needed:

- ◆ Providing reading materials subject to local laws and regulations;
- ◆ Arranging with American community to provide holiday meals and visits;
- ◆ Providing personal amenities such as stamps, toiletries, stationary, if permitted by prison authorities, from prisoner's or family's private funds;
- ◆ Assisting in finding ways to expedite prisoner's mail;
- ◆ Inquiring about the possibility of prison employment, and
- ◆ Assisting in arranging correspondence courses.

A Consular Officer Cannot:

- ◆ Demand the immediate release of a U.S. citizen arrested abroad or otherwise cause the citizen to be released, OR
- ◆ Represent a U.S. citizen at trial, give legal advice or pay legal fees and/or fines with U.S. Government funds.

Additional Information: Lists of foreign attorneys and country-specific information sheets regarding arrests abroad are available from the Department of State, Office of American Citizens Services or directly from U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad. General information about retaining a foreign attorney and prisoner transfer treaties is also available via their automated fax service which can be accessed by dialing (202) 647-3000. Or accessing the homepage on the internet available at <http://travel.state.gov>, which is linked to the home pages of U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad.

Questions: Additional questions regarding services to Americans incarcerated abroad and prisoner transfer treaties may be addressed to:

Office of American Citizens Services Department of State

Room 4817 N.S.

2201 C Street N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20520

(202) 647-5225 or (202) 647-5226

Student Travel Insurance Coverage and Resources

UW requires all students going abroad on UW sanctioned programs to have student travel insurance, or to show proof of insurance through one of the authorized program providers or UW's foreign partner institutions. This insurance coverage is mandatory and will not be waived.

As of Fall 2014 UW Student Travel Insurance is provided by AIG.

Please note that the Affordable Care Act requires all U.S. citizens to have health insurance coverage unless they will reside outside of the United States for more than 330 days.

Students traveling on a UW study abroad/exchange program will automatically be enrolled in student travel insurance. Exceptions are stated above for providing proof of insurance. However, Medical Evacuation and Repatriation of Remains must be included in the provider or partner university's coverage.

Several countries require incoming international students to buy into the host country national health care plan, or you will not be granted a student visa for long-term study in their country. Meet with your Study Abroad Advisor to discuss insurance options.

The cost for the insurance will be billed directly to the student's WyoWeb account.

Print Foreign Travel Insurance Card and Information at <http://www.uwyo.edu/studyabroad/insurance/>.

Cost of Insurance

- ◆ Short-term programs of 2 weeks or less: \$25.00
- ◆ Short-term programs of more than 2 weeks: \$50.00/month
- ◆ One Semester: \$150.00
- ◆ One Academic Year: \$300.00

If you have family members or friends who plan to join you overseas, especially for extended travel after you finish your academic studies, you might direct them to the following links. They, too, should consider international travel insurance. Although these resources are not comprehensive of the options that are available on the market, UW friends and families have used them in the past.

- ◆ HTH Worldwide (<https://htthtravelinsurance.com/>)
- ◆ International SOS (<https://www.internationalsos.com/en/>)
- ◆ International Student Identity Card (<http://www.isic.org/>) provides additional medical insurance.

Questions regarding student travel insurance can be directed to the Office of Risk Management, (307)766-5767 or risk@uwyo.edu.

Financial Aid Information

Things you need to know about your Financial Aid:

You need to make an appointment with the Financial Aid Office to understand how your financial aid applies to exchange/study abroad programs (scholarships, loans, grants, etc.).

Laurie R. Jaskolski,
Assistant Director Financial Aid
University of Wyoming
Dept. 3335, 1000 E. University
Laramie, WY 82071
(307) 766-6727
lreh@uwyo.edu

If you need more money for your program, check to see if you qualify for additional funding. With a revised budget for your costs abroad, you may be able to request a budget adjustment.*

Budget Adjustments include:

- ◆ Tuition and Fees
- ◆ Room and Board
- ◆ Book and Supplies
- ◆ Travel Expenses (bus transportation and/or airfare costs)
- ◆ International Travel Insurance

Check to see how you will receive your Financial Aid (i.e., Cowboy One Card, direct deposit into your checking account, or credit balance check disbursed to you as the student).

Student Academic Progress (SAP) - How will this affect my financial aid while I am away? What am I required to do?

- ◆ Student must have transcripts sent to UW's Office of the Registrar directly following exchange or he/she will be placed on SAP Review.
- ◆ This can cause a hold of all federal aid, as well as State scholarships for upcoming terms, until transcripts have arrived at the Office of the Registrar.
- ◆ All students will be sent a SAP letter as a reminder to get transcripts in. Please check with the Office of the Registrar to see that they have been received.

Suggestions for students who need their money early:

- ◆ See if you qualify for a bridge loan with the Office of Student Financial Operations (307) 766-3214. Some fees and interest are charged on bridge loans.
 - What is a bridge loan? It is a loan that allows you to borrow against your financial aid for an upcoming term if you need to pay fees prior to financial aid dispersal at the beginning of each semester.
- ◆ See if the other school will wait until your financial aid comes in for payment.

Important!

- ◆ Make sure you are aware of deadlines for the upcoming academic year for scholarships and FAFSA applications.
- ◆ Give someone you trust a limited power of attorney to make financial decisions for you while you will be gone if necessary (deposit checks, sign award letters on your behalf, pay bills, etc.)
- ◆ Make sure you have contact names and numbers to help you resolve problems while you are away.

*Only changed if total cost of going abroad is more expensive than the cost of attending UW.

Tips to make it Memorable

- ◆ Begin a travel journal or blog. Record the memorable moments and the lonely times. Pin down the essence of a place - its colors, smells, sounds, the native costumes, the food you eat, the people you meet. Jot down particularly useful words and phrases. Collect addresses and keep track of expenses. You won't believe how precious this journal can be until five or ten years after your trip.
- ◆ Keep a journal just of interesting people you meet. Ask if you can take their picture to make the memory keeper more complete.
- ◆ Consider your hobbies and career goals and make attempts to meet people with similar interests while abroad. Take career/hobby mementos to share or exchange abroad. Set career/hobby projects to pursue abroad. Business or hobby cards can also be used as conversation openers. Meet the people!
- ◆ Take photos of the "famous" sites but don't forget the view out your window, the morning sun on that corner where you buy your coffee every morning, or the walk to school. These photos will often mean more to you after your return.

Study Abroad Check-List

- ☐ Host Institution acceptance received
- ☐ Passport obtained
- ☐ Visa obtained (if you need one)
- ☐ Discuss your planned coursework with your UW academic advisor. Discuss return to UW registration plans as well. Make sure that your advisor will be willing to email advising with you for the next semester.
- ☐ Financial Aid finalized. For Academic Year students, FAFSA can be filled out starting January 1st of every year at <http://fafsa.ed.gov>.
- ☐ Limited Power of Attorney granted. Make sure that this is given only to someone you trust fully! Be cautious about giving Power of Attorney to a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- ☐ For ISEP, and all Study Abroad programs through providers, payment schedule finalized.
- ☐ For any study abroad program, acceptance package completed and sent. Remember, the International Coordinator can send everything for you – you do not have to worry about mailing or costs.
- ☐ PERC for the upcoming semester received from your academic advisor. Decision on whether to keep or waive your UW student health insurance. You must make this decision via WyoWeb.
- ☐ ISIC obtained (optional). You might choose to purchase the card for either its discounts or because it provides “additional insurance coverage” for any international travel.
- ☐ Travel arrangements finalized.
- ☐ Pre-departure orientation attended.
- ☐ Required Paperwork turned in:
 - ◆ Agreement & Release
 - ◆ Passport copy
 - ◆ Verification of State Department/CDC handouts
 - ◆ Medical Clearance
 - ◆ Personal Information
 - ◆ Transfer Credit Info Sheet
- ☐ If you are currently in student housing, contract release papers signed. You must follow the contracts limits with Residence Life and Dining – Apartments or Dormitories.
- ☐ Enrollment in at least 12 hours of UWYO 4001 for undergraduate exchange students or UWYO 4000 for study abroad undergraduate students (9 hours for graduate students).

Semester and Academic Year Post Arrival Check List

- ☐ Register with US Embassy's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program:

<https://step.state.gov/step/>. Refer to Consular Notes or your Emergency card that you print from the website for information.

- ☐ Confirm arrival and new address with UW International Coordinator at studyabd@uwyo.edu.

- ☐ Be sure to have your transcripts sent to:

University of Wyoming
Office of the Registrar
Dept. 3964, 1000 E. University Avenue
Laramie, WY 82071 USA

- ☐ Check your e-mail while you are abroad! The UW study abroad advisor will use this e-mail address to send registration notices, State Department information or just updates from UW.

Packing List

- ◆ Darker solids are good because you can mix and match and they hide stains.
- ◆ Lightweight, drip-dry, wrinkle-proof clothing will save you time.
- ◆ A nice pair of jeans is very fashionable in most countries but denim takes a long time to air dry.
- ◆ Buildings are often colder than we are accustomed to - layering helps keep you warm.

Clothing

- ☐ 2 pairs of pants
- ☐ 1 nice outfit (women, know cultural norms of your host country to help you decide proper dress attire)
- ☐ 4 tops/shirts
- ☐ 1 raincoat/outerwear - layer if you have the gear
- ☐ Headgear, warmth/sun protection
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ 1 sweater
- ☐ 5 pair of socks/underwear
- ☐ 1 pair sandals/athletic shoes/walking shoes
- ☐ 1 pair comfortable dress shoes
- ☐ 1 swimsuit
- ☐ 1 pair shower shoes/flip-flops
- ☐ 1 sleepwear

First Aid

- ☐ Adhesive bandages (Band-Aids) and dressings
- ☐ Blister pads
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Tweezers
- ☐ Fingernail clippers
- ☐ Antibiotic cream
- ☐ Alcohol wipes
- ☐ Latex gloves
- ☐ Temporary stitches like butterfly stitches and steri-strips

- ☐ Tensor bandages, triangular bandages and a splint (if you intend to go hiking, climbing, skiing, etc.)
- ☐ Safety pins (also great for securing zippers and pants pockets against theft)

Medication

- ☐ Pain relievers like acetaminophen and anti-inflammatories like ibuprofen
- ☐ Antihistamine/allergy medication
- ☐ Anti-diarrheal medication
- ☐ Antacid
- ☐ Anti-itch cream, sunburn lotion, medicated first aid spray or aloe vera gel for sunburns and bug bites
- ☐ Decongestant/cold medication and lozenges
- ☐ Motion sickness medication to prevent nausea and vomiting
- ☐ Vaccinations and your vaccination certificate (based on where you are traveling, some vaccinations to consider are typhus, typhoid, polio, tetanus, yellow fever, cholera, hepatitis, plague and meningitis)
Check the CDC, www.cdc.gov/
- ☐ Any prescriptions that you are taking, especially if they are life-preserving or you are traveling to a less developed country where it may be difficult to obtain medication.
- ☐ ANY extra medication MUST be in original bottles and accompanied by prescription copies signed by a doctor, especially if medication contains narcotics!

Safety

- ☐ Money belt
- ☐ Hand sanitizer
- ☐ Insect repellent (repellents with DEET are the most effective against mosquitoes)
- ☐ Rubber door-wedge (very handy at night for doors that do not lock)
- ☐ Small flashlight (some even come with a built-in personal safety alarm)
- ☐ Copies of your documentation such as your passport, credit cards, ATM cards and contact numbers for each agency in case of theft (Tip: Scan these important documents and e-mail them to yourself. In the event your documents are stolen, you can download a copy of them with their important numbers from any internet connection)

Other

- ☐ Smaller backpack for short trips
- ☐ Travel alarm clock
- ☐ Umbrella (if appropriate)

- ☐ Swiss Army knife/good utility knife – Pack this in your checked luggage!
- ☐ Sewing kit
- ☐ Duct tape for fixing luggage and making waterproof patches
- ☐ Toilet paper or tissue
- ☐ Sealable plastic bags (such as Ziploc bags) for bottles with liquids and dirty or soggy clothes
- ☐ Wall socket adapter if you are bringing any electronic devices or appliances
- ☐ Extra glasses/contacts & prescription copies
- ☐ Extra batteries
- ☐ Pocket phrase book
- ☐ Gifts - Picture books of home, locally made products (please be sure the products are actually made in the US!)
- ☐ Guide Books - Guide Books like "Lonely Planet" are excellent ways to not only help you get around but also provide social, historical, political information in an entertaining, easy to read format

Electronics

Electricity in most countries runs on 220/240 volts, while U.S. runs on 110/120 volts.

Every year, students have problems with converters and electrical appliances purchased in the States. We advise against bringing any appliances. For example, you will need both a converter for the voltage and an adapter to fit British sockets, both of which are different from those in Europe.

Buy an inexpensive hairdryer your host country – the money you spend will save you lots of blown fuses and fried converters. If you do choose to take an appliance from the US, make sure the converter (transformer) is suitable for the appliance – computers require a higher capacity than other appliances. If you plan to take your laptop, contact your manufacturer and ask for recommendations. Most Apple products, smart phones, and many newer electronic devices are dual-voltage. Check the charger or look for an imprint on the item. If the product is dual-voltage, it will be marked with something like “110/220 volts.” If a product is not marked with this, do not plug it into an outlet in your host country without a power converter!

Be aware that sockets vary from country to country. For information specific to your destination go to www.magellans.com. Use their "Shop By Destination" pull down menu.

Additional Resources

AFRICA:

The Poisonwood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver

All Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe

AUSTRALIA:

A Fair Go For All: Australian and American Interactions - Renwick et. al., 1991

Still Bleating About the Bush by Mary Mahood.

From a Sunburnt Country by Bill Bryson.

FRANCE:

Evidences Invisibles (Cultural Misunderstandings, translated version) by Raymonde Carroll

French or Foe: Getting the Most out of Visiting, Living and Working in France by Polly Platt

Au Contraire! Figuring out the French by Gilles Asselin and Ruth Mastron

Paris to the Moon by Adam Gopnik

Le Divorce (a novel, in English) by Diane Johnson

Sixty Million Frenchman Can't be Wrong by Jean-Benoit Nadeau, Julie Barlow

Entre Nous: A Woman's Guide to Finding Her Inner French Girl by Debra Ollivier

Unraveling an Enigma by Greg Nees

Understanding Cultural Differences: Germans, French, and Americans by Edward T & Mildred Reed Hall

Old World/New World: Bridging Cultural Differences - Britain, France, Germany and the U.S. by Craig Storti.

GERMANY:

Unraveling an Enigma by Greg Nees

Understanding Cultural Differences: Germans, French, and Americans by Edward T & Mildred Reed Hall

Old World/New World: Bridging Cultural Differences - Britain, France, Germany and the U.S. by Craig Storti.

Studying Abroad/Learning Abroad: An Abridged Edition of the Whole World Guide to Culture Learning by Daniel Hess.

The Business Culture in Germany by Collin Randlesome

Contemporary German Cultural Studies edited by Alison Phipps.

ITALY:

Ciao! America by Beppe Severgnini

JAPAN:

Learning to Bow: Inside the Heart of Japan by Bruce S. Feiler

36 Views of Mount Fuji: On Finding Myself in Japan by Cathy N. Davidson

From Bonsai to Levis: When West Meets East; An Insider's Surprising Account of How the Japanese Live by George Fields

Enlightenment Guaranteed (English title for a DVD German movie, a good description of modern Japan. It also gives a great culture shock and cultural adaptation from German going to Japan point of view).

Comparing Cultures by Merry White and Sylvan Barnet

KOREA:

American/Korean Contrasts by Susan Oak and Virginia Martin

LATIN AMERICA:

The Spanish-speaking South Americans: Bridging Hemispheres by Skye Stephenson

MEXICO:

Good Neighbors: Communicating with the Mexicans by John Condon

SPAIN:

Spanish Lessons by Derek Lambert

The New Spaniards by John Hooper

UNITED KINGDOM:

Brit-think, Ameri-think by Jane Walmsley

Coping with America by Peter Trudgill

White Teeth by Zadie Smith

The English by Jeremy Paxman

Notes from a Small Island; I'm a Stranger Here Myself; Mother Tongue; and Notes from a Big Country, all by Bill Bryson

Over Here by Raymond Seitz

Old World/New World: Bridging Cultural Differences - Britain, France, Germany and the U.S. by Craig Storti.

ANTHOLOGIES/MULTIPLE CULTURES/BOOK SERIES:

Understanding Global Cultures: Metaphorical Journeys Through 17 Countries by Martin J. Gannon

Europe from a Backpack: Real Stories from Young Travelers Abroad edited by Mark Pearson

Tales of a Female Nomad by Rita Golden Gelman

Understanding Global Cultures by martin J. Gannon

Understanding Cultural Differences by E.T. Hall

Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands by Terri Morrison

OTHER RESOURCES:

What's Up with Culture (<http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/>) is a resource guide for study abroad and consists of materials collected and developed over 30 years of offering cross-cultural training courses at the University of the Pacific. The site also includes materials adapted from the Peace Corps Workbook.