



## Study Abroad Handbook 2013-2014



*"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."*

*By Mark Twain*

Studying abroad for a summer, semester, or year may be the defining moment in your educational career that will change your life forever and influence how you live your life in the future. Studying abroad allows you to explore another culture, learn another language, try new foods, experience new sports, get inspired towards a new career path, impress potential employers, make new friends, and go on an amazing adventure!

The Office of International Programs (OIP) would like to congratulate you on being accepted to a study abroad program. We look forward to helping you make the most of your overseas experience. This study abroad handbook will answer many of the questions you may have about preparing for departure, living and studying in another country, and returning to Florida Atlantic University. Students should read this handbook carefully, attend one of the pre-departure orientation sessions, attend your program-specific orientation, and be sure to keep an open mind while abroad. Taking these steps will ensure that you obtain the greatest return on this investment for your future. So, take this chance to explore, dream, and discover what the world holds for you.

## STUDY ABROAD STAFF

Catherine Meschievitz, Director, Office of International Programs, [cmeschie@fau.edu](mailto:cmeschie@fau.edu)

Tania Tucker, Senior Coordinator of Academic Programs, [ttucker@fau.edu](mailto:ttucker@fau.edu)

Amanda Frederick, Coordinator of Academic Programs, [afrede11@fau.edu](mailto:afrede11@fau.edu)

Maria Gregware, Coordinator of Academic Support Services, [mgregwar@fau.edu](mailto:mgregwar@fau.edu)

Melody DeSanto, Student Assistant, [mdesanto2013@fau.edu](mailto:mdesanto2013@fau.edu)

## **Contents**

### **Before you Depart**

- A. Pre-departure Checklist
- B. Registering While Abroad
- C. Faculty Leader

### **Health**

- A. Jet Lag
- B. Get a Physical
- C. Sharing Information
- D. Prescriptions and Prescription Letters
- E. Primary Medical Insurance and Supplemental Medication Insurance
- F. Medical Emergencies
- G. Emergency Contact
- H. Other Emergencies
- I. Traveler's Diarrhea

### **Money**

- A. How to Exchange Money
- B. Safety with Money
- C. Cash
- D. Credit Cards
- E. ATM/ Debit Cards
- F. Opening a Bank Account Overseas
- G. How Much Money to Take
- H. Running Out of Money Overseas

### **What to Take with You**

- A. Packing for Study Abroad
- B. Copies

### **Communication**

- A. Changing your Mailing Address with FAU
- B. E-Mail Communication
- C. Communication with the OIP
- D. Telephoning from Overseas

### **Cultural Adjustment**

- A. Expectations
- B. Cross-Cultural Adjustment
- C. The Four H's of Cross-Cultural Adaptation
- D. When you get there
- E. Cultural Adjustment Resources on the Web
- F. "The Ugly American"
- G. Gender
- H. A Note to Women
- I. Racial Diversity
- J. Sexual Identity
- K. Students with Disabilities

**Safety**

- A. Study Abroad and Safety
- B. U.S. Embassy Registration
- C. In-Country Travel
- D. Safety Guidelines
- E. Student Conduct
- F. Alcohol
- G. Drugs
- H. HIV/AIDS
- I. Safe Road Travel
- J. Politics
- K. State Department Advisories

**Returning Home**

- A. Study Abroad Program Evaluation
- B. Processing your Study Abroad Credit
- C. Where to Live at FAU
- D. Re-entry and Ways to Stay Involved Internationally

**Useful Websites****Notes****Before you Depart****A. Pre-Departure Checklist**

- ☐ Read this Handbook
- ☐ Turn in any missing paperwork to the Office of International Programs. Failure to turn in all paperwork could result in your dismissal from the program without a refund.
- ☐ Pay any outstanding tuition fees.
- ☐ Read information about the history, economy, and culture of where you are going. To learn more about the country where you will study abroad, please visit: <http://www.travel.state.gov/travel>.
- ☐ Make copies of important documents (passport, visa, insurance card, prescriptions, credit cards, etc.) to bring with you and to leave copies at home.
- ☐ Know how to handle money while abroad, how much to take, and how to get emergency funds if necessary.
- ☐ Register yourself with the U.S. Embassy in your host country by logging on to the U.S. Department of State "Travel Registration" homepage at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>.
- ☐ If you are on any medication(s), make sure you have enough to last the duration of your trip.
- ☐ Discuss safety concerns and emergency contact procedures with your parents.

## B. Registering While Abroad

The OIP is not authorized to register students for classes following their return from study abroad; therefore, you are responsible for registering yourself for the first semester upon return from studying abroad. There are several ways to register while abroad:

1. You can access your account by logging in to MyFAU at <http://myfau.fau.edu>. Once you log in, utilize FAU Self-Service in order to browse the current Departmental Course Schedule, check course availability, view your class schedule, register for classes, and pay your bill. The dates you can register are available online at <http://www.fau.edu/registrar/schedule/> under advance registration.
2. Contact your academic advisor to register directly through him or her. It is important to clear this procedure with your advisor **BEFORE** you leave the country to make sure he or she can help. In the past, students have called, e-mailed, or sent a letter to their advisor to facilitate their registration while overseas and were unable to do so.
3. Ask a parent or trusted friend to register you for your classes; this will involve some conversation/e-mail communication between you and the person in the U.S. who will be helping you.
4. Wait until you return to the U.S. to register for classes. Note that many classes may fill up if you wait.

**IMPORTANT:** Be sure that all holds are off of your FAU account (parking tickets, library fines, health insurance, etc.) prior to leaving for your study abroad program or you **WILL NOT** be able to register while you are overseas.

## C. Faculty Leader

### ***1. Students going on Florida Atlantic University faculty- led programs:***

Students participating in a Florida Atlantic University faculty-led program will have a faculty leader. The faculty leader's role is to oversee the academic component of the program as well as in-country administrative details. The faculty leader conducts classes, attends field trips and excursions, and when appropriate, assists in emergency and non-emergency situations. The faculty leader ensures that students regularly attend classes and other required program activities. The faculty leader is responsible for the actual grading of student coursework in-country. The faculty leader will also be available to help you find appropriate solutions to personal, health, and academic problems during the program. The faculty leader serves as the liaison between the OIP and the host institution where applicable.

Establish good communication with your faculty leader. If you are experiencing difficulties with the program or with your adjustment to the culture, your faculty leader is a good person to seek out for assistance and support. The faculty leader can help you interpret and understand cultural differences and host institution rules and regulations.

### ***2. Students going on non-Florida Atlantic University programs or international exchange programs:***

If you are going on a non-Florida Atlantic University or an international exchange program, you will not have a Florida Atlantic University faculty leader. Instead, your study abroad coordinator or co-sponsor institution will provide you with the name of a key contact at the host institution who serves as the liaison with Florida Atlantic University. It is important that you establish good communication with the liaison and that you contact the liaison if you encounter any difficulties and/or problems.

## **HEALTH**

It is important to take care of yourself when studying overseas. Changes in climate and the fast pace of travel may cause health problems abroad. Colds, sore throats, coughs, and gastrointestinal disorders associated with different foods and water are to be expected. It is important to be aware of the things that can affect your health, so that you can enjoy your time abroad more fully.

### **A. Jet Lag**

#### **WHAT IS IT?**

Jet lag is a syndrome of fatigue and disequilibrium experienced by travelers crossing three or more time zones; it can persist for several days to two weeks while the biological clock slowly resets itself. Jet lag is generally more severe in persons traveling west to east than vice versa, primarily because it is easier to stay awake when traveling east to west than to go to sleep earlier when traveling in the opposite direction. Flying north or south may make you tired, but does not create significant jet lag. Jet lag, before or during travel, may be avoided by modification of diet, sleep cycles and exposure to daylight. All of these methods work to control the timing of biological functions or circadian rhythms. As a rule of thumb, it makes sense to consider jet lag management strategies when you are flying 4 or more zones west or three or more zones east.

#### **VARIABLES**

Age, fitness and general health affect jet lag. Young people are usually able to adjust more easily to new time zones. People who are fit and in general good health will also have an easier time adjusting. Overeating and eating foods that are not part of your normal diet are likely to make jet lag worse, as will ill-timed consumption of alcohol, excessive caffeine intake and the use of drugs. Comfortable, quiet accommodations with effective light blocking drapes will naturally help you adjust to new time zones more quickly than accommodations that are crowded, noisy, too hot or cold, with poor air quality, etc.

#### **RESETTING THE BODY'S INTERNAL CLOCK**

A traveler's usual sleeping hours can be adjusted to conform to those of the travel destination by gradually changing bedtimes during the week before travel. Persons traveling from east to west should retire an hour or two earlier each night; those traveling west to east should stay awake an extra hour or two each night.

If you reset your biological clock to a new time zone, you will have to take the time and effort to set it back again when you return home. Sometimes, especially for trips of very short duration, it may be better to keep your biological clock on home time. If your visit to a new time zone is only for one or two days and you have some control over your schedule, then it is probably better not to try to readjust your internal clock to the new time zone. If you plan to stay on home time, it is even more important than usual to schedule flights during daylight hours in your home time zone.

#### **FLIGHT SELECTION**

Select flights that least disrupt your normal sleep time and, if possible, allow you to go to bed on arrival. While flight choices may be limited, there is a big advantage to using daytime flights and avoiding the red-eye experience of trying to get a night of sleep on the plane. When time permits, it is also usually better to break up long trips into smaller legs. A trip from Baltimore to Hong Kong will be more comfortable if the traveler has time for a stopover in Hawaii.

## DIET

Use common sense in diet and keep well hydrated with water or non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated beverages (fruit juices, sodas, etc.). The combination of low humidity in the plane and drinking alcohol can dehydrate your body and worsen jet lag effects. Do not consume alcohol or caffeinated beverages, or eat large or heavy meals at bedtime.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Be careful to plan for accommodations that are supportive of your jet lag program; this is especially true when you decide not to shift to the local time zone. Select a hotel which has 24-hour room service and quiet rooms where you can work, sleep or eat on your home time zone schedule<sup>1</sup>.

## B. Get a physical

It is a good idea to review your health concerns before you depart and familiarize yourself with special health and medical needs for the country you are visiting. The OIP encourages all study abroad participants to schedule a physical at the Florida Atlantic University's Student Health Center or with your primary care physician prior to departure. Be sure to inquire as to whether or not you have any limitations and seek their advice on remaining healthy while overseas.

To schedule an appointment with Florida Atlantic University's Student Health Center call 561-297-2276 for an appointment on the Boca Raton campus and 561-799-8678 for an appointment on the Jupiter campus.

In addition to your physical, you may also want to gather health information about your host country from the Center for Disease Control website at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>.

## C. Sharing Information

The OIP requests that you inform your study abroad coordinator and faculty leader of any allergies, physical, and/or mental health conditions that may impact your study abroad experience. It is critical to share this information as some conditions can be triggered or exacerbated by traveling abroad. Information that you share with your faculty leader and coordinator will be treated confidentially, will not jeopardize your participation in the study abroad program, and will assist the OIP in helping you receive proper services and care while abroad.

## D. Prescriptions and Prescription Letters

It is important to take with you an adequate supply of the medication(s) you regularly use. The OIP can provide you with a letter confirming enrollment in a study abroad program, which you can take to your pharmacy or physician, so you can request to receive a supply of medication for the duration of your program. Please ask for this letter from your study abroad coordinator **well in advance of your trip**.

When traveling with your medications, it is vital to keep your medications in the original, labeled containers. Be sure the information on the container has your name, your physician's name, and the name of the medication. If the required medication is habit-forming or a narcotic drug, we recommend that you take a doctor's letter certifying your need for this particular medication.

---

<sup>1</sup> Information compiled and summarized from Passport Health: <http://www.passporthealth.com>

## E. Primary Medical Insurance and Supplemental Medical Insurance

While participating in a FAU study abroad program, you are required to maintain your primary insurance coverage. As a participant on a FAU study abroad program, you will need to purchase CISI supplemental medical insurance. The policy provides basic emergency medical, repatriation, and evacuation insurance. Students will receive a copy of the insurance policy with their card electronically and are encouraged to visit the website, <http://culturalinsurance.com/>, for additional information. In case of emergency please contact CISI's emergency assistance provider

**Policy Number:** 13 GLM N04983336 (**Start dates** 01/01/2013 to 12/31/2013 )

**Emergency Assistance Provider: EUROPASSIST**

Phone: (877) 577-9504 (calling toll-free from within the US)

+1 (240) 330-1520 (calling from outside of the US, collect calls accepted)

**Email:** OPS@EUROPASSISTANCE-USA.COM

EUROPASSIST. There contact information is:

If you have questions about your insurance coverage, call CISI at 1-800-303-8120, ext. 5130 (calling toll-free from within the US) or 203-399-5130 (calling from outside the US, collect calls accepted). The policy is only applicable while you are overseas and does not cover you domestically.

## F. Medical Emergencies

How do I file a claim?

The coverage provided with each card is based on a reimbursement system. You can submit a claim anytime and do not need to wait until your return from your study abroad program. Please follow the directions below for processing a claim. Claim forms and the FAU policy are available online at <http://www.fau.edu/goabroad/Health%20Insurance.php>.

### Instructions

- Complete and sign the medical claim form, indicating whether the doctor/Hospital has been paid.
- Attach original itemized bills for all amounts being claimed. No reimbursement will be considered for medical expenses not accompanied by original bills. When reimbursement of an expense is approved, it will be made to the provider of the service unless the bill is noted as having been paid by you. Payment will be in U.S. dollars unless otherwise requested.
- If payment is to be made to the provider of the service, the provider's name, address, telephone number and taxpayer identification number (if the provider is in the U.S.) must be included on the bill. If payment is to you, it will be mailed to your U.S. address unless otherwise requested.
- **Submit form and attachments to Cultural Insurance Services International, River Plaza, 9 West Broad Street, Stamford, CT 06902-3788. For claim submission questions, call (203) 399-5130 or e-mail [cisiwebadmin@culturalinsurance.com](mailto:cisiwebadmin@culturalinsurance.com).**

## G. Emergency Contact

The OIP provides the 24-hour FAU Police Department phone number (561-297-3500) to all study abroad students. Upon calling, students should identify themselves as FAU students traveling on a study abroad program. They should provide the Police Department with their name, which program they are on, where they are, the nature of the emergency, and a number where they can be reached.



## H. Other Emergencies

Non-medical emergencies are situations which **do not** involve injury, illness, or urgent medical attention. Nevertheless, such circumstances can be upsetting and stressful and need to be promptly resolved. In the event of a non-medical emergency, follow the emergency contact guidelines above. In some cases, it may be necessary to file a police report with local authorities, particularly if you are assaulted or robbed. If your passport is lost or stolen, you will need to report it to the U.S. consulate in your host country **as soon as possible**. If your credit/debit cards are lost or stolen, you should contact the bank or financial institution that issued the cards **immediately**.

## I. Traveler's Diarrhea

### WHAT IS IT?

Traveler's diarrhea is defined as the passage of at least three unformed stools in a 24-hour period. Other symptoms of disease include abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, bloating, or fever. On average, untreated traveler's diarrhea lasts one to two days. Passage of fewer than three unformed stools per day is considered mild illness. Both mild illness and traveler's diarrhea respond to antibiotics.

### RISK FACTORS

Epidemiologic studies have shown that travelers from developed countries visiting developing nations are at highest risk. Travelers to rural areas and tropical climates may be at higher risk compared with persons traveling to cooler climates and urban settings. The major source of infection appears to be food; cultures of food obtained in some developing countries have the same level of bacterial contamination as that of stool. Epidemiologic studies have shown an increased risk of traveler's diarrhea in persons who have eaten fruits and vegetables that cannot be peeled raw, undercooked meat or seafood, and food from street vendors.

Water may be a source of traveler's diarrhea caused by a virus or parasites. Although ice can be a source of contaminated water, a recent study showed that freezing decreases levels of bacteria in water. Alcoholic beverages made with contaminated ice have lower levels of bacteria, compared with non-alcoholic cold drinks. However, alcoholic drinks made with ice should still be considered risky. Heating water to the boiling point for one minute effectively removes more bacterial, viral and parasitic pathogens; boiling for five minutes is generally recommended to guarantee killing of all pathogens.

### PROPHYLAXIS (Prevention)

Antibiotics are not recommended for prevention of traveler's diarrhea. The decision is based on 1) concern that prophylaxis of traveler's diarrhea may cause emergence of resistant organisms in developing countries, 2) the number of side effects associated with antibiotics, and 3) prolonged or excessive use of antibiotics could in itself lead to other gastrointestinal symptoms, which include diarrhea. However, those at high risk or those planning a once-in-a-lifetime brief vacation or important business trip may want to take an antibiotic (Bactrim, Cipro) while traveling.

### TREATMENT

Replacement of fluids and electrolytes is the hallmark of therapy for diarrhea. Replace stool losses with enough oral liquid to maintain adequate urination. Beverages such as tea, broth, carbonated beverages (without caffeine), and fruit juices can replace lost fluid. Avoid milk or milk products during the active phase of diarrhea, ingestion of these products may result in additional stool losses due to lactase deficiency and lead to an osmotic diarrhea. Simple carbohydrates and liquids are recommended for the first day or so after illness, followed by addition of protein and finally fats for the diet.

**Antibiotics like Cipro, Bactrim or Septra are very effective for treatment of traveler's diarrhea.** An anti-motility agent such as Imodium may be taken initially with an antibiotic to treat symptoms until the antibiotic has a chance to attack the organism. Early treatment often can control symptoms of traveler's diarrhea within 24 hours. Anti-motility agents should not be used alone as they do not kill the offending organism and slow intestinal motility, possibly allowing organisms to invade the lining and prolong diarrhea.

Epidemiologic studies have shown that traveler's diarrhea occurs early in the course of travel and that the incidence decreases over time. These findings imply that immunity to at least some common agents eventually develops. Travelers lose this immunity a few months after returning to a developed country<sup>2</sup>.

## **MONEY**

Access to money overseas is a topic of great concern to most study abroad participants. The OIP offers the following general guidelines for study abroad students when dealing with money overseas.

### **A. How to Exchange Money**

You can exchange cash and traveler's checks overseas at banks, airports, railroad stations, large hotels, some tourist information centers, and travel agencies. Every time you exchange money, you can expect to pay a commission or fee, which varies. In some places, the commission is based on a percentage of the amount you exchange, while in others there is a flat fee regardless of the amount of the transaction. As exchange rates fluctuate daily, try to keep up with current rates to get the most for your money and always ask what the fee is to exchange money at a particular location. Unfortunately, it is not possible to exchange coins. Also, remember to bring your passport as your personal identification every time you exchange money overseas.

### **B. Safety with Money**

No matter what type of money you take with you overseas, be careful! Use caution while using public transportation, or in crowded areas where pick pocketing may be prevalent. A money belt worn inside your clothing or a money pouch around your neck is recommended for safekeeping your passport, insurance and emergency cards, health information, credit cards, and traveler's checks, and cash. Another suggestion is to carry half of your money in one pocket and the rest in another pocket.

### **C. Cash**

The OIP recommends that you carry only a small amount of U.S. cash, in case it is lost or stolen. It can be extremely helpful to obtain a small amount of foreign currency before departure to use for buses, taxis, telephone calls, and tips upon arrival. Check with local banks to see if you can obtain foreign currency before you leave. Depending on which currency you are seeking, it may take up to two weeks before the bank can obtain the foreign currency, so consult with your bank ahead of time! Foreign currency is also available at the Miami International Airport (MIA) at its foreign currency exchange booths. Most international airports will have foreign currency exchange booths as well.

### **D. Credit Cards**

Most major U.S. credit cards can be used worldwide and are extremely valuable in a financial emergency. It is highly advisable to obtain a major credit card before studying abroad. The most commonly accepted credit cards

---

<sup>2</sup> Information compiled and summarized from Passport Health, <http://www.passporthealth.com>

are Visa and MasterCard. Credit cards you use overseas must be in your own name as given on your passport. Be sure to record your credit card number and emergency card numbers in a separate place in case your card is lost or stolen. You can get a cash advance at a bank using a credit card, but you will be charged interest continually until you pay back the advance. Therefore, it is important to arrange for someone to pay your credit card bills while you are gone. Typically, the amount charged to your credit card bill is based on the exchange rate on the day that your bank or credit card company processed the transaction. Be aware that some banks and/or credit card companies may charge an extra fee for international transactions. Not all overseas merchants accept credit cards, regardless of the name brand. Finally, be sure to let your credit card company know that you will be overseas so they do not freeze your account for unusual activity. It is best to let them know that you will be studying abroad from X month to X month, so they can make a note on your account. Please note that some U.S. credit cards do not have the chips that Europe vendors permit.

### **E. ATM / Debit Cards**

ATM cards with a Cirrus or Plus designation can often be used to obtain foreign currency from an ATM (Automated Teller Machine) overseas. ATM cards are a popular option for obtaining money overseas for study abroad students because overseas ATMs are typically available 24 hours a day. ATM cards are advantageous because you can get a low bank exchange rate, you do not pay a commission on the exchange, and the card withdraws money directly from your checking account at home. However, some banks and/or card companies may charge an extra fee for international transactions. Before you go abroad, check with your local bank to see if it is possible to use your ATM card in your host country, if there are any added fees for withdrawing money overseas, and if your PIN (Personal Identification Number) will work abroad. Most ATMs only accept a four-digit numerical PIN. Sometimes ATM cards do not work overseas or are “eaten” by an ATM, so make sure you have other ways of obtaining money. ATM cards can also be difficult to replace if lost or stolen. In some countries, ATMs are linked only to local banks and are not part of an international network. You should also be aware that when withdrawing money from an ATM, you may not know the exchange rate you are receiving for your transaction. If you are planning to take an ATM/debit card overseas with you, it is advisable to leave a bank account deposit slip at home with a family member who can deposit money into your account in case of an emergency. Finally, be sure to let your card company know that you will be overseas so they do not freeze your account for unusual activity. It is best to let them know that you will be studying abroad from X month to X month, so they can make a note on your account.

For information on ATMs worldwide, visit:

<http://www.visa.com>..... (Visa/Plus card members)

<http://www.mastercard.com>..... (MasterCard/Cirrus members)

### **F. Opening a Bank Account Overseas**

If you plan to be overseas for a semester or longer, you may wish to open a local bank account in the host country, which you will need to do in person once you arrive. Many banks overseas will have their own bank cards, allowing you to make withdrawals from their ATMs. If you plan to open a bank account overseas, you should make your deposit with traveler's checks. A personal check or money order can take weeks and even months to clear and will delay the ability to open a bank account quickly.

### **G. How Much Money to Take**

The amount of money you take depends on your study abroad program, the cost of living in your host country, and your personal spending habits. Talk to former participants and your study abroad coordinator for advice on how much money to take. Calculate how much you will need and then add some for a cushion and emergency situations.

## H. Running Out of Money Overseas

Plan to bring enough resources along with you so that you will not be caught short. In the event that you do run out and need emergency funds, you may have money sent to you through these means:

- 1) Western Union: If you have a major credit card, you may telephone Western Union at (800) 325-6000 or online at <http://www.westernunion.com> to receive information on how Western Union transfers money worldwide. Western Union charges a fee for this service based on the amount of money sent.
- 2) Visit their website at <http://www.moneygram.com/> to learn about their worldwide money transfer services and to find the nearest participating office from which money can be sent. Online money transfer provides you with the power to send money online anytime, from anywhere within the U.S., when the internet can be accessed. Fees vary according to the amount of money sent.
- 3) If you have an ATM card, have a family member or trusted friend deposit funds into your account.

## WHAT TO TAKE WITH YOU

### A. Packing for Study Abroad

One of the most frequently asked questions by students, is "What do I pack?" The answer to that question will depend on the location and duration of your study abroad program. A yearlong program in Russia will require a different type of clothing than a six-week program in Costa Rica. Keep in mind that while overseas it is perfectly acceptable to wear the same outfit a few times in one week. Select clothes that you can mix and match. Also, weather can vary throughout the day and from town to town, so take clothes that can be layered.

Remember you are going to have to carry whatever you pack, so pack sensibly and lightly. It is a good idea to practice walking around with your bags to see if you need to make any adjustments. Be sure to check with your airline company to learn the luggage limits for your flight. Your carry-on bag should contain all the necessities to live for one or two days in the event your luggage is delayed or lost. Be sure to check the weight limits for baggage with your airline carrier(s).

Here are some suggestions for all study abroad students:

- Do not take jewelry or other items of value. It is advisable to take an inexpensive watch.
- Take comfortable walking shoes. You will be walking a lot!
- Take bedroom/house slippers. In many cultures it is unacceptable to walk barefoot in the house.
- Take an extra pair of eyeglasses and/or contacts.
- Take enough contact solution to last for the duration of the program.
- Take enough prescription medication to last the duration of the program.
- Keep prescriptions in their original, labeled containers.
- Take your own towel and washcloth. Some programs may require you to bring bed linens as well.
- Take a small, battery-operated alarm clock.
- Take photos of family and friends to share with the new friends you will make abroad.
- Take small items from your hometown or FAU to give as gifts.
- Take personal hygiene products
- Electrical service is different throughout the world. If you are bringing electrical appliances (i.e. hair dryer, radio, etc.) you will need to take a voltage converter and a set of adaptor plugs.

Students ask whether or not they should bring their laptop with them. You can take your laptop if you have the right converters to adapt to the local electrical currency. If you are thinking of bringing your laptop, consider the following things:

- Have your laptop insured, as laptops are high-risk theft items.
- Carry your computer with you on the plane as a carry-on; do not pack it in checked luggage.
- You might not be able to find anyone that can help you if you run into computer problems.
- Does your laptop have its own multi-voltage transformer/converter? Inexpensive transformers will not work for computers and can damage your computer.

Pack light! Experienced travelers suggest that you bring half as much luggage as you think you need. Check with your airline for specifics on baggage allowance. Remember to leave space in your suitcase for items that you will inevitably purchase overseas. Do not forget that you are in some cases sharing a room with other students. Be considerate of your roommates and limit your luggage, be sure to bring a backpack for daytrips. Make sure you do not pack your passport in your suitcase! This should be kept on you at all times during travel for safety and easy access. Past participants have recommended purchasing a money belt or other similar device to keep money, passport, etc. close to the body and secure during travel. Make photocopies of the opening page of your passport and all of your credit cards and carry them separately from the passport and credit cards. Carry essentials onboard—occasionally luggage gets misplaced.

## **B. Copies**

Before you leave your home country, it is important that you make copies of the following items:

- Picture and signature pages of your passport
- Visa
- Any special immigration papers
- Airplane ticket and train tickets (if any)
- Credit/debit card information
- Housing information
- Acceptance Letter
- Anything else which seems important for you to have copies of

Carry your copies with you in a separate place from the originals. Store the copies in a safe place, separate from the originals – such as, in your room or hotel safe. You should also leave a set of the copies at home with your family. The Office of International Programs will have a copy of your passport on file as well.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **A. Changing Your Mailing Address with FAU**

Before leaving for your study abroad program, be sure to change your local address with FAU to ensure that any mail sent by the university will go to a U.S. address where a parent or responsible friend will take care of your affairs. You can change your address through MyFAU.

## **B. E-Mail Communication**

Be sure to check your FAU e-mail and the e-mail address you provided on your application on a regular basis, if possible, and keep your account cleared of any unnecessary e-mail. If you do not clear your e-mail account, from time to time, you will exceed your space quota and new messages will not be accepted by your account. You can access your FAU e-mail through MyFAU. FAU will communicate with you through your FAU e-mail account and provide you with important information, such as your registration information. Many host institutions or overseas residence halls will provide computer facilities with internet access for study abroad students. In addition, you can access the internet for a fee at a local cyber café. If you decide to open a web accessible e-mail account with an internet provider, such as [www.hotmail.com](http://www.hotmail.com) or [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com), you will need to forward your FAU e-mail to your new e-mail address. Be sure to inform your OIP study abroad coordinator of any e-mail address changes; the OIP is not responsible for mail that is undeliverable.

## **C. Communication with the OIP**

The OIP looks forward to hearing from you while you are studying abroad. One of the first things we need is your address and phone number while abroad, which you can simply e-mail to your coordinator. We also appreciate letters or postcards, which include information on your latest adventures and accomplishments. If your program has a faculty leader, he/she will be in regular contact with the OIP. If you have questions or concerns about the program, please ask your faculty leader or host country contact, or contact your study abroad coordinator directly at:

Office of International Programs  
777 Glades Road, GS 212Q  
Boca Raton, FL 33431-0991  
Tel: (561) 297-1208  
Fax: (561) 297-2850  
E-mail: [goabroad@fau.edu](mailto:goabroad@fau.edu)

## **D. Telephoning from Overseas**

When you make your first call overseas, you will need to learn a new telephone system, which will vary from country to country. Below are some options for phoning while overseas.

### ***1. Purchase a phone card for the host country phone system.***

While some countries may still have coin-operated telephones, most have telephones that operate with phone cards. You can buy a country-specific phone card for a certain amount of time at airports, train stations, newsstands, and some hotels. These phone cards are used as debit cards. When you insert the phone card into the telephone, you will get a dial tone and will be able to see how many units you have left to use on that particular card. Just direct dial the phone number you wish to call. The phone card will automatically deduct the cost of your call from the card. When making a local call, you may only use a few units on a phone call. Phone calls to the U.S. will use up larger number of units depending on the length of the call. In the center of some cities, you might find phone stations. These stations are public phone rooms, which provide phones to use for a small fee.

### ***2) Use an international calling card from a U.S. phone service company (e.g., MCI, AT&T).***

This may not always be the most convenient or inexpensive option for some countries, but if you choose this option, shop around to see which U.S. phone company provides the best rates for calls from overseas destinations to the U.S. The phone company you choose to use will send you an international calling card, billing instructions, and a

list of country toll-free numbers for your particular phone service. Make sure to obtain the toll-free numbers for all of the countries you plan to visit before leaving for your trip.

When you are overseas, dial the country toll-free number for your phone company (in some countries when using pay phones, you need a country phone card to get a dial tone). You will be connected with an English-speaking operator for your U.S. phone service. Tell the operator the phone number you are trying to reach in the U.S. and your calling card number. Your call should then be put directly through to the number you are trying to reach.

### ***3) Have family or friends call you overseas using a U.S. calling plan.***

Typically, phone rates for calls originating overseas are usually more expensive than the cost of overseas calls originating in the U.S. Many U.S. long distance providers now have discounted or special international calling card rates for calls originating from the U.S. So, if you have access to a phone where you can receive incoming calls, it may be cheaper to have people call you directly.

### ***4) Get a cell phone.***

You can rent or buy a cell phone in the host country you are visiting for the duration of your stay, or purchase a cell phone in the U.S. that provides international coverage. You should research cell phone options and rates on the web. Past FAU study abroad students have purchased international calling plans through PicCell Wireless (<https://www.piccellwireless.com/latest/index.php>). Please contact the OIP directly for information regarding the special discount PicCell Wireless provides to FAU students.

### ***5) Unlock phone and purchase a SIM card.***

Check with your cell phone carrier to see if your phone has the ability to be unlocked for use overseas. If this is possible, you may then purchase an international SIM card prior to departure or upon arrival at your country of destination.

## **CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT**

### **A. Expectations**

For many students, studying abroad will be their first time in another country and an extraordinary opportunity to learn about another part of the world firsthand. Cultural immersion—interacting and living with people in other cultures—is an important part of the study abroad experience. Studying overseas is at-once a stimulating and distracting experience. For some students, experiential education is cause for anxiety and apprehension; for others, it is a challenge to be met and an experience that will be valued and cherished for a lifetime.

As a study abroad student, you should know beforehand what to expect from your study abroad program as well as what is expected from you in the classroom, particularly in regard to academic objectives. Educating yourself before your departure is one of the best ways to prepare for what to expect overseas. The OIP pre-departure orientation will help you understand specific program goals and direct you to resources and websites about your host country. You should become familiar with the academic policies of your host institution and the day-to-day academic routine you can expect. You should discuss any concerns or questions you have about the academic program with your study abroad coordinator.

While abroad, you are expected to participate fully and enthusiastically in your study abroad program, to attend all classes and participate in all program activities including in-country program field trips, excursions, and other group activities. Many FAU-sponsored programs involve extensive travel and field study excursions. Students should be prepared to be flexible in the event that an unpredicted change in an itinerary or a health problem arises. An unforeseen emergency can be disruptive. Being able to “go with the flow” and adapt to change is part of the study abroad experience.

## **B. Cross-Cultural Adjustment**

Living in a new culture can be exhilarating, rewarding, and stimulating; it can also be frustrating. It is one thing to tour a country, but it is quite another to live and function according to different, often mysterious, norms. When students spend a significant amount of time living and studying abroad, they are often faced with many new ideas, customs, cultural norms, and modes of interaction. While these types of things may initially result in a feeling of “culture shock,” they are exactly why we live, travel, and study overseas—to experience something different and learn from it! But knowing how to prepare yourself before you leave and how to deal with your new environment while abroad can help reduce this anxiety and make your stay exciting, fun, and enjoyable. People experience many emotions while adapting to a foreign culture, from excitement and interest in the new culture to depression and fear of the unknown. The following are some tips to help you prepare for your new adventure.

- Read pertinent foreign newspapers and periodicals at university libraries.
- Read the *BBC*, *Miami Herald*, *New York Times* and other newspapers or magazines with extensive international coverage.
- Listen to radio stations that provide international news coverage, such as National Public Radio.
- Visit area bookstores or your local library to explore their international travel sections.
- Meet former participants from your study abroad program. Ask your coordinator for names of former participants.
- Talk with people who are originally from that country or have lived there for an extended period of time. There are roughly 900 international students at FAU, some of whom may be from the country you are going to visit.
- Review the most recent Consular Information Sheet and/or current Travel Warnings and Public Announcements issued by the U.S. State Department on your host country; this information can be viewed at <http://travel.state.gov>.

## **C. The Four H's of Cross-Cultural Adaptation**

Your time abroad may go something like this:

**Stage 1: Honeymoon.** When you first arrive in your host country, everything will seem new and exciting. You are in a new place and everything seems great! Perhaps you are involved in orientations and getting settled, getting hosted around the town or city. The sights, sounds, and tastes are all a new adventure. And, at first, you may even see more of the similarities between your host country and the U.S. than the differences.

**Stage 2: Hostility.** After you have been in the host country for a short while, though, you realize that things are not the same and problems may arise; maybe you are tired of the food or struggling with the language; maybe the university seems incomprehensible and bureaucratic. Your patterns of behavior may be slightly, or extremely, different from that of those around you. You may begin to get frustrated with these differences and the mistakes you make in communicating. Your initial enthusiasm has drifted away and you may feel like you don't really belong; you may even begin to feel homesick at this point. Living in a new culture can be exhilarating, rewarding, and stimulating; it can also be frustrating.

**Stage 3: Humor.** However, almost always the feelings of irritability and hostility dissipate with time, and once you have lived in your host country a while longer, you start to better understand the local culture and customs. Things that once appeared strange now seem commonplace to you. Chances are your ability to communicate in a second



language has improved tremendously. Now, you are able to deal with new and challenging situations with humor rather than frustration.

Stage 4: Home. At this point you have “settled in” to your new surroundings and it feels much like home. You may have begun to adopt some of the cultural norms of the host country (like taking a siesta after the noon meal in Spain or Mexico!), but still have managed to retain your own cultural identity. You understand yourself and others better. Culture shock has worn off.

#### **D. When you get there**

Ask questions! This is the easiest way to find out more about your host culture and learn how to maneuver within it. Don't be afraid to ask questions of your host family or roommates. As long as your questions are not hurtful or inappropriate, no one will mind answering. Observe your surroundings. Notice how the people around you dress, eat, greet each other, and carry themselves; this will help you better understand your surroundings and adapt more easily.

Expect to feel frustrated sometimes. You are bound to have communication problems when you are not using your native language or dialect. Moreover, people will do things differently in your new home, and you will not always think their way is as good as yours. Try to stay away from these ethnocentric attitudes—the belief that one's own way of life is superior to others. Rather, try to adopt a sense of cultural relativism—learn to accept your new culture for what it is, and live by its standards.

Expect to feel depressed sometimes. Feeling homesick is natural, especially if you have never been away from home. Remember that your family and friends would not have encouraged you to go if they did not want you to gain the most from this experience. Don't let thoughts of home occupy you to the point that you are incapable of enjoying the exciting new culture that surrounds you. Think of all you will share with your family and friends when you return home.

Expect to hear criticism of the United States. If you educate yourself on U.S. politics and foreign policies, you will be more prepared to handle these discussions as they occur. Remember that such criticism of U.S. policies is not personal. Most foreign nationals are very interested in the U.S. and may know more about U.S. politics than you do.

Do not expect local people to come and find you. When was the last time you approached a lonely-looking foreign student with an offer of friendship? Things are not necessarily any different where you are going. If you are not meeting people through your classes, make other efforts to meet them. Take advantage of the university structure and join clubs, participate in sports, and attend other university-sponsored functions.

Write a journal. One of the best ways to deal with cultural adjustments and to reflect thoughtfully on the differences between U.S. and the other cultures is to regularly write in a journal. As you write, you'll think your way out of the negative reactions that may result from your unfamiliarity with language and cultural behavior. Journaling will force you to make meaningful comparisons between your own culture and the host country. When you return home you'll have more than just memories, souvenirs, and photos of your time abroad; you'll have a written record of your changing attitudes and process of learning about the foreign culture.

Try to have a tolerance for ambiguity. You may not understand what's going on around you sometimes, especially if you are in a non-English-speaking country. That's okay. Remaining open, patient, accepting, and relaxed can help you maneuver through new situations and help ensure that you have a positive experience abroad.

Talk to someone if you have a serious problem. The staff of the international office at your host institution or your faculty leader is available to counsel students with problems. Share smaller problems with other international students since they are going through the same process and can provide day-to-day support.

Have an open mind. Understand, ahead of time, that almost everything will be different from what you know in the U.S.—and don't expect it to be the same. Just because they speak English in England does not mean that Britons believe or act the same way you do. Having specific expectations will leave you frustrated and disappointed. However, going into this experience with an open mind will help you have a positive and enjoyable time.

### E. Cultural Adjustment Resources on the Web

Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition. Strategies for language and culture learning and use. <http://www.carla.umn.edu/maxsa/guides.html>

Country Studies. Learn about your host culture before you leave. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html#toc>

Tips for handling homesickness.

<http://www.studyabroad.com/student-guide/making-the-most-study-abroad-home-sick.aspx>

International News Index. Links to newspapers, TV and radio stations worldwide. <http://newslink.org>

Transitions Abroad. Resources for studying and living abroad. <http://www.transitionsabroad.com/>

### F. “The Ugly American”

This term comes from the title of a book published in the early 1970s. The term “ugly American” has stuck and can be applied to you, if you are not careful. You can avoid being identified as an “ugly American” by:

- Avoiding temptations to tell people that Americans do things better
- Being a person who shares and is inclusive in relationships
- Being genuinely interested in your host country and its people
- Not talking a lot about your possessions or your family and friends
- Not demanding special treatment because you are an American
- Not drinking to excess
- Not telling your host country's citizens how much they are behind the United States
- Not being obvious or loud about your patriotism/nationalism
- Not throwing your money around<sup>3</sup>

### G. Gender

You will find that gender politics in the United States are unique and much different from countries around the world. It is extremely important to research your host culture's gender roles and assumptions before you leave. Perhaps the greatest challenge to U.S. women abroad stems from their tendency to be independent and to hold the belief that women may go where men go and do what men do. Unfortunately, these beliefs do not hold true in many other countries. In order to stay safe and enjoy your time abroad, women must educate themselves on the **unwritten rules** of the host culture to which they will travel. Be aware that women's behavior may have different meanings in the host culture than in the U.S. The belief that U.S. women are wealthy and “easy” is reinforced by movies, popular

---

<sup>3</sup> Information compiled and summarized from Australian Education Office's pre-departure guide.

television shows viewed around the world, magazines, etc. Making eye contact with or smiling at a stranger in the street may be interpreted as an "invitation" abroad, though it may be completely acceptable and innocuous behavior in the United States. In certain areas of the world (e.g., Latin American, parts of Europe, the Middle East, and Africa) men may openly and publicly express their appraisal of women in ways that are offensive by U.S. standards. For some, the honking horns, catcalls, and other such attention may be flattering; however, most find it annoying and even demeaning. Though difficult, it is important to learn to ignore this behavior and conduct oneself in a manner in which the attention is not further encouraged. Study abroad students, both men and women, should understand that relationships between the sexes may differ significantly from what is familiar to them in the U.S. What may be considered normal relations with people of the opposite sex in the U.S. could be interpreted very differently by the host culture. Be aware that sexual behavior considered normal in the U.S. might invite trouble in the host country. Men and women alike should take the time to talk to host culture counterparts to better understand local customs as they pertain to such details as acceptable dress and other prevailing social mores. A website of interest is [www.journeywoman.com](http://www.journeywoman.com), which provides travel tips for women.

## **H. A Note to Women**

You may find that stereotypes about American women abound overseas. The stereotypes, as you can imagine, are not always flattering. Rather, they tend to suggest that U.S. women are very sexually active, most likely using TV and movies as examples. Words of wisdom from women travelers:

- Be careful of talking about sex, it may equate as a come on.
- Be careful in asking men to dance in clubs.
- Be aware of going to clubs alone, this may be interpreted as an "open invitation".
- Do not hitchhike.
- Do not respond to the catcalls you may receive, just walk on.
- Kissing a male friend hello or goodbye may be misinterpreted.
- Be firm and assertive when saying NO. Be clear and direct to be certain that your intention and the words are understood.
- Be aware that things which may appear normal to you, such as getting drunk or asking someone to walk you home, may be misconstrued as an indication of poor character and place you in uncomfortable situations.

Violence against women is a growing concern all over the world. Sometimes when women are out of their familiar environment, they let their guard down. Always be alert and use the same safety precautions as you would in Miami or New York, no matter where you are going. If something negative should happen to you, go to someone related to your program for assistance. Unfortunately, in many countries the issue of female harassment is handled quite lightly and you may be treated accordingly. On the same note, women are subject to the same kinds of dangers abroad as they are in the United States, including the danger of rape. The occurrence of rape is often accompanied by the use of date-rape drugs, such as roofies and GHB (also known as Liquid Ecstasy, it produces a state similar to that of being drunk). Again, use the same precautions abroad that you would in the U.S., and think about these three simple common sense measures that could prevent you from being drugged:

- Do not leave your drink unattended or exchange drinks with anyone else.
- Do not accept a drink from anyone, no matter how nice they seem.
- Avoid drinking from a large open container (no bathtub gin!)

## **I. Racial Diversity**

Cultural and racial diversity are significant factors for students in choosing a study abroad program. Students who live in racially diverse communities or who have attended racially diverse schools are generally aware of the issues that racial differences can produce. However, for many students traveling to a foreign country,

especially one in which the racial mix is different from their own, can be challenging. Attitudes toward race differ widely across the globe. Reactions to racial differences can range from tolerance to intolerance and acceptance to discrimination.

For some students, traveling abroad may be the first time they have to deal with their own feelings toward people whose racial backgrounds are different from their own. It can also be the first time they realize that others perceive them to be racially different. Stereotypes about race exist in all cultures and sometimes can lead to prejudice, discrimination, or harassment.

#### **What should you do if you experience prejudice while abroad?**

- Know that it happens. Being intellectually prepared for it may help you cope with it.
- Don't take it personally. Racism is not directed at you personally, but to a generalized perception or stereotype about the group to which you belong.
- Understand that racism is an irrational reaction. Once people get to know you, their prejudice may disappear.
- Take the initiative to educate others about your own ethnic background. Acknowledging racial differences need not be an occasion for strife but an opportunity to help others understand these differences.

If you encounter race issues or find yourself in racially tense situations while traveling abroad, feel free to talk with your faculty leader, in-country contact, or another member of your group.

#### **J. Sexual Identity**

Living in another culture provides an opportunity for self-exploration and individual growth. As a study abroad student, you may have already identified yourself as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, or you may question your sexual identity for the first time while you are abroad. In either case, it is important to know what the attitude of the host country will be in regards to sexual orientation. Research your country's attitudes and resources for GLBT students prior to your departure.

#### **Some of the things you can do are:**

- Talk to your study abroad coordinator about their knowledge of the country and past participant information.
- Discuss your feelings and concerns with your faculty leader or campus liaison.
- Contact Lambda United, the Gay/Straight Alliance at FAU for resources and information (561) 297-0434 or visit their website at <http://fau.collegiatelink.net/organization/lambda-united-gay-straight-alliance>
- Search the web for in-country resources, support groups, attitudes, etc.

Try the following site:

[www.iglta.org](http://www.iglta.org) (International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association)

Whatever your sexual orientation, please remember that there may be gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender students on your study abroad program or in the host country. Some may be "out", some may not, and others might just be coming to terms with their sexual identity. Being sensitive to this diversity is extremely important and can further enrich your study abroad experience.

#### **K. Students with Disabilities**

As cultures differ from country to country, so does the perception of disability and accommodations. Some countries may have a wide range of services for students with disabilities, others may rely on peer or family support, and some may have limited disability accommodations available. The most important quality for any study abroad participant is flexibility and an open mind. As a study abroad student, you are going overseas to experience a

different way of life, which may also include a different way of dealing with your disability. It will be important to communicate your needs to the OIP and your host institution, as well as consider alternative ways to meet those needs. Your study abroad coordinator and an Office of Disability Services counselor can assist you in determining the type of accommodations possible for your program and what other considerations you ought to think about before studying overseas. The Office of Students with Disabilities is in the Student Services Building (SU), room 133 and can be reached at (561) 297-3880.

## **SAFETY**

### **A. Study Abroad and Safety**

Student safety and well-being are very important to the OIP and FAU. The following policies have been adopted with your safety in mind:

- All students are **required** to register themselves with the U.S. Department of State for the period of time they are out of the U.S. The website is <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui>.
- OIP coordinators maintain regular e-mail and telephone contact with FAU faculty leaders.
- All students must enroll in basic emergency medical, repatriation, and evacuation insurance through CISI.
- The OIP provides the 24-hour FAU Police Department phone number (561-297-3500) to all study abroad students. Upon calling, students should identify themselves as FAU students traveling on a study abroad program. They should provide their name, which program they are on, where they are, the nature of the emergency, and a number where they can be reached.
- Through the FAU Police Department, OIP staff members are available after business hours to assist with emergency situations.

The OIP monitors U.S. government travel advisories issued by the State Department and United States embassies. We encourage potential and current study abroad students to regularly visit the U.S. State Department website (<http://www.travel.state.gov>) for security updates and related information for U.S. citizens who are overseas. It is currently the policy of FAU not to send students to an overseas country where a travel warning exists.

### **B. U.S. Embassy Registration**

Students who are U.S. citizens are required to register with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate through the U.S. State Department's travel registration website at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui>. Registration will make your presence and whereabouts known in case it is necessary to contact you in an emergency. In accordance with the Privacy Act, information on your welfare and whereabouts may not be released without your expressed authorization. Millions of Americans travel abroad every year and encounter no difficulties, however, U.S. embassies and consulates can provide both emergency and non-emergency services to American citizens who encounter problems while abroad. Registration is voluntary, costs nothing and should be a part of your travel planning and security.

FAU faculty leaders leading an FAU program provide contact information and the location of the nearest U.S. consulate(s) in your host country in the event that a situation arises that necessitates consular assistance. This information can be found on the contingency plan that you will receive at orientation. The following situations may warrant your need to contact the U.S. Consulate include reporting and replacing a lost or stolen passport, locating a medical facility, or even seeking legal assistance. If you encounter a problem during your program, you should first contact your faculty leader or your host institution coordinator to assist you.

International students cannot register through the U.S. Department of State travel website. If you are an international student participating in an FAU study abroad program, you are encouraged to check the website of your home country embassy to find out if you can register your overseas travel.

### **C. In-Country Travel**

Depending upon your study abroad program, you may have opportunities to travel in the country/region you will be studying. Doing research on the country will help you to decide what extra activities to do while you are there. Make yourself an informed traveler. It is also a good idea to invest in a good travel guide for the country or region you are visiting. Travel guides give you specific information about the country and culture, even down to which side of the bus offers the best view. They also give price guides that are more in line with a student traveler's budget. Examples of popular travel guides include Lonely Planet (<http://www.lonelyplanet.com>), Let's Go (<http://www.letsgo.com>), and Rough Guides (<http://www.roughguides.com>). Students from the country you will be going to and/or students who went previously on your program can be a great source of information about the must-see things to do while on your program. A safe traveler is an informed traveler.

### **D. Safety Guidelines**

These safety guidelines have been developed to provide useful practical information for students studying abroad as health and safety of study abroad participants is one of our primary concerns. Although no set of guidelines can guarantee the health and safety of each individual going on a study abroad program, these guidelines address issues that merit attention and thoughtful judgment. As a study abroad student, you should exercise the same, and even more, personal safety precautions overseas as you would at home. Be aware that you will stand out overseas, therefore, possibly making you an easy target. At times, the people you meet may see you with stereotypical eyes. Americans tend to carry backpacks, dress differently, speak loudly, and have distinct accents. Meeting people and making new friends is an important part of studying abroad, but be mindful, it is possible an occasion may arise when someone may want to become a friend with you in order to take your money or your passport. It is important to use common sense at all times.

#### ***Protect Yourself:***

- Know the basic help phrases in the native language.
- Always report your travel plans to the faculty leader.
- If you think someone is making bad decisions about safety issues, share your concerns with the person, the campus liaison or your faculty leader.
- Do not give your home phone number or address to someone you have just met.
- Do not hitchhike.

#### ***Protect Your Possessions:***

- Wear a concealed money belt or neck pouch.
- Keep your money in two places. If you are robbed or lose some money, you will have a backup.
- Do not leave luggage unattended or accept packages from strangers.
- Leave copies of all important documents in more than one place (e.g., at home in the U.S. and in your bags or room in country).
- Leave your passport and other valuables in your room or in a hotel safe. You do not need to carry your passport on a daily basis, unless you are going to cash traveler's checks.

#### ***Be Vigilant:***

- Do not stand out as a group or individual. Try to blend with your surroundings the best you can.
- Adopt an attitude of watchfulness and notice the people in your proximity. If someone seems to be following you, vary your route; go to a store or a populated place or flag down a taxi.

- Do not go out alone with someone you have just met; try to meet in a public place.
- Know the local laws. Laws and systems of justice are not universal. You are subject to the laws of the host country while abroad.

#### ***Situations to Avoid:***

- Avoid crowds, protest groups, or other potentially volatile situations.
- When using public transportation, avoid deserted trains, buses, and metros. Move to where other people are sitting.
- Avoid deserted streets and exercise caution in unfamiliar neighborhoods.
- Watch your alcohol consumption. Excessive drinking is neither appropriate nor safe in another culture and in unfamiliar surroundings. If you drink, know your limit.
- If you are sexually active, take proper precautions to avoid AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, or unwanted pregnancies.
- Resisting robbers' demands can lead to unpleasant outcomes. Items are replaceable, you are not!

#### ***Especially for Women:***

- Educate yourself beforehand about gender roles in the country you will be visiting.
- Dress conservatively. Clothing that is acceptable in the U.S. may be perceived as provocative in another country or disrespectful in a specific context (e.g., visiting a religious site).
- Do not overreact to stares, whistles, or other forms of attention as they may be intended to be compliments rather than harassment.
- If you feel uncomfortable in a situation, walk away or go to a safe spot or public place.

### **E. Sexual Harassment**

Study abroad participants, both women and men, should be aware that FAU is committed to providing a living and study environment free from sexual harassment. The university encourages study abroad participants to report concerns and complaints to their faculty leader or OIP coordinator so that prompt corrective measures can be taken to stop sexual harassment whenever it occurs. To view FAU's sexual harassment policy, please visit: [http://www.fau.edu/eop/files/5.010\\_Anti-Discrimination\\_and\\_Anti-Harassment.pdf](http://www.fau.edu/eop/files/5.010_Anti-Discrimination_and_Anti-Harassment.pdf)

#### **What should you do if you experience sexual harassment while studying abroad?**

- Be assertive and let the individual concerned know that his or her conduct is unwelcome and offensive to you.
- Document what has happened in writing.
- Report the situation to your faculty leader, in-country contact, or your study abroad coordinator. FAU is committed to taking prompt and appropriate action in cases of sexual harassment. If appropriate, an investigation will be conducted, and the appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. You will be kept informed of the outcome of your complaint.

### **F. Student Conduct**

As a FAU study abroad participant, you are expected to attend all classes and to participate in all program activities, including in-country program field trips, excursions, and other group activities. As a representative of FAU you are expected to conduct yourself in an appropriate manner. You have important rights and responsibilities, which are outlined in the university's Code of Student Conduct. The code applies not only to on-campus conduct of students, but also to the off-campus conduct of students participating on study abroad programs. FAU's Student Code of Conduct can be found at <http://www.fau.edu/studentconduct/Student%20Conduct%202012.pdf>. The Student Code of Conduct identifies prohibited types of conduct that will subject a student to university discipline. These include, but are not limited to, violence or physical attack of any other person, violation of the honor code, possession or use of illegal substances, etc. Inappropriate behavior abroad that is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct can result in your dismissal from a study abroad program. As part of the application process, you completed and



signed the Discipline Policy Form that outlined acceptable behavior and the possible consequences for the violation of those policies.

Don't forget that while you are studying abroad, you are subject to the local and national laws of the host country. Once you leave the United States, you are not protected by U.S. laws and constitutional rights. Therefore, it is important to be informed of the laws of the countries you will be visiting and abide by them. FAU cannot help you with legal issues that arise abroad.

## **G. Alcohol**

Drinking alcohol can seem deceptively harmless, especially when you travel to countries where attitudes, customs, and drinking age may be different from the U.S. Nevertheless, excessive alcohol consumption impairs your judgment and can lead to disruptive behavior and risk of harm to yourself and to others, in addition to poor academic performance.

## **H. Drugs**

Do not under any circumstances carry, use, buy, or sell illegal or controlled substances. It is also advisable that you do not associate with anyone engaged in such activities. If you are detained or caught with illegal substances overseas, you are subject to local, not U.S. laws. Being ignorant about drug laws of a country that you are visiting is not a defense. A drug that may be legal in one country may not be legal in a neighboring nation. Penalties for possession or trafficking of illegal drugs are often severe. In the event that a FAU program participant is detained or arrested by foreign officials for possession of an illegal substance, there is little that FAU, the U.S. Embassy, or Consulate can do to help you. Many countries do not accept bail, and pre-trial detention—often in solitary confinement—may last for months. Prisons lack even minimal comforts. Physical abuse, confiscation of personal property, degrading or inhumane treatment, and extortion are not unknown. Trials can be lengthy, and few countries provide jury trials or require the presence of the accused at his or her trial. The bottom line – DON'T DO IT.

## **I. HIV / AIDS**

HIV (Human Immuno-deficiency Virus), the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is becoming an increasingly prevalent health problem worldwide. Although the risk of contracting HIV is more likely in certain countries, no country is completely risk-free. Contaminated blood and unprotected sexual contact remain the primary means by which HIV is transmitted. Acting responsibly and refraining from unprotected sex and high-risk activities can significantly reduce the possibility of AIDS. There is no foolproof list of guidelines which will protect you from the AIDS virus. However, while you travel and study abroad, there are things you can do to significantly decrease the risk of infection. Keep the following suggestions in mind:

1. Act responsibly.
2. Some countries may not have the resources to adequately screen blood for HIV/AIDS or provide sterile needles. Avoid injections, IVs, or medical or dental treatments unless you are certain that needles and instruments are sterile.
3. If you have a health condition that requires injections (e.g., diabetes), you should take along an adequate supply of syringes and needles. You will also need to take a note or prescription from your doctor if you carry syringes or needles with you.
4. Avoid blood transfusions, if at all possible. If you require a blood transfusion due to an injury, then you, your resident director, or treating physician should call your primary physician for advice before giving your consent.
5. Refrain from high-risk activities, which involve the use of needles or syringes such as skin piercing, tattooing, acupuncture, or intravenous drug use.
6. If you are sexually active, use latex condoms.



Some countries may require foreign visitors (usually those staying more than three months) to take an HIV test, a test for antibodies to HIV that causes AIDS. A few countries will accept medical documentation certifying that an individual is HIV negative. Before traveling abroad, you should check with the embassy of the host country to learn about entry requirements and, specifically, whether HIV testing is a requirement. You can do this by looking at the U.S. State Department consular information sheets online at <http://travel.state.gov>.

#### **For more information about HIV and AIDS:**

FAU has an HIV/AIDS counselor available to all members of the University community (students, faculty and staff) to counsel with regard to all aspects of HIV/AIDS. The HIV/AIDS counselor can be reached by calling (561) 297-1120.

On-Campus HIV testing for students is available. Today & Beyond Wellness offers confidential HIV testing to FAU students. To schedule an appointment, call (561) 297-1120. Today & Beyond Wellness is located in the Student Services Building (SS8), Room 222 (above the Breezeway Food Court).

Students may choose from four testing options:

- Orasure® – This HIV test required the collection of an oral fluid specimen. Results are provided in three weeks and the test is FREE.
- OraQuick® Rapid HIV test – This HIV test is performed using an oral swab; no blood. Results are available in 30 minutes. This test is offered by appointment only and is available only to students.
- Blood test – This HIV test requires the collection of a blood specimen. Students may choose to receive results in three weeks at NO CHARGE or receive results in one week at the cost of \$22.00.
- 
- OraQuick Advance® - This rapid HIV test requires the collection of an oral fluid specimen and results are provided in approximately 30 minutes. The test is free and is offered two or three Thursdays each month (excluding holidays). Testing is conducted by Care Resource and offered in Today & Beyond Wellness. Testing is done on a first come, first served basis and is offered to students, faculty and staff. Call (561) 297-1120 to ask about upcoming testing dates.

#### **J. Safe Road Travel**

Driving customs and etiquette vary from one country to the next. For example, driving on the left side of the road is the law in many countries especially in the UK, Australia, and many countries in Africa and Asia. Unusual traffic patterns, traffic roundabouts, and laws regarding passing or right-of-way can seem confusing and disorienting for someone unfamiliar with the traffic laws and practices of the host country. Statistics indicate that road accidents are the single greatest cause of serious injury and death to U.S. citizens traveling abroad. Also, pedestrian rights vary widely from country to country and unfamiliarity with traffic patterns has occasionally resulted in accidents and serious injuries. As such, we strongly recommend taking advantage of the great public transportation available overseas and discourage students from renting cars or motor vehicles while overseas.

#### **K. Politics**

You should educate yourself about current political and social issues of your host country as well as the political and economic relationships between your host country and the U.S. You will discover that people in other countries are often very knowledgeable about U.S. issues and they may approach you to ask questions or discuss opinions. It is possible that the political situation will be unstable in some countries you visit during your study abroad experience. It is extremely unwise to become involved in any sort of political demonstration or activity while you are

abroad—whether leftist, rightist, or anything in between—no matter how strongly you may feel about the issue. Also while overseas, you may encounter political demonstrations, which are specifically anti-American. Try not to take the criticism of U.S. politics personally. You do not have to agree with the critics, but trying to listen to their point of view may be a great learning experience. Even if you agree with the demonstrators, you must remember that you are in another country and should refrain from any action that may jeopardize your safety in your host country. Above all, know and obey the laws of the host country because no matter what your country of citizenship is, you are subject to the laws of your host country.

#### **L. State Department Advisories**

The U.S. government monitors political conditions in every country of the world. Students and parents with concerns about crime and security threats in a given country are urged to take advantage of the State Department travel advisories. These come in three forms and are available to the public free of charge:

- **Travel Warnings** are issued when the State Department decides, based on all relevant information, to recommend that Americans avoid travel to a certain country.
- **Public Announcements** offer information about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term or transactional conditions posing significant risk to the security of U.S. travelers.
- **Consular Information** Sheets are available for every country of the world. These include information such as immigration practices, health conditions, minor political disturbances, unusual currency and entry regulations, crime and security information, and drug policies. If an unstable situation exists that is not severe enough to warrant a travel warning, this is duly noted.

For current information, travel advisories, or warnings, you can contact the U.S. Department of State Office of Overseas Citizens by phone at 1-888-407-4747, 1-202-501-4444 (overseas), or visit their website at <http://travel.state.gov>.

### **RETURNING HOME**

Returning home is sometimes just as challenging as leaving. This section contains important information for returning study abroad students.

#### **A. Study Abroad Program Evaluation**

The OIP is extremely interested in hearing about your experience abroad and learning how we can better prepare future participants. Therefore, the OIP asks each study abroad participant to complete an evaluation of their study abroad program. You will receive an email containing the evaluation upon your return from abroad. Please give the evaluation careful consideration. We want to hear your suggestions, criticisms, and what to do/not do next year. The evaluation form is a valuable tool, which we will use to improve our study abroad programs, so your input is essential. We thank you in advance for your cooperation in completing the evaluation form.

#### **B. Processing your Study Abroad Credit**

If you are participating on a FAU Summer Study Abroad Program, your grades will be posted by your professor(s) at the end of the semester in which you are enrolled. If you are doing an exchange program, affiliate program, or an outside program provider or university, your grades will be posted upon receipt of your final transcript. In some cases, due to calendar differences, grades will be due to the Registrar's Office before your transcript is received. In that case, you will receive an incomplete for your courses until your final transcript arrives. Note that

transcripts are not sent automatically. Students must request that their final transcript be sent to their study abroad coordinator at the address below:

Florida Atlantic University  
Office of International Programs  
777 Glades Road, GS 212Q  
Boca Raton, FL 33431-0991 USA

Note that processing and delivery of transcripts may be delayed. If you are expecting to graduate when you return from your study abroad program, it is important that your transcripts from abroad are received, processed, and entered into the computer system shortly after the published deadlines for graduation. For a few schools abroad, the delay in receiving transcripts can sometimes be a problem; this doesn't affect many students, but you should be forewarned that there is a risk that transcripts abroad may not arrive in time to meet crucial deadlines for graduation. If your transcript is late and cannot be processed, you will officially graduate the following semester. You can walk through ceremonies, if you are back in time, provided you've made the appropriate arrangements. This may be a concern for you, however, it is important to note that you will still be able to obtain employment, attend graduate school, etc. after your grades are processed from study abroad. Check with the Advising Office within your College or Department to see if they can provide you with documentation stating that you have met requirements for graduation as this may be sufficient for pursuing your future plans.

### **C. Where to Live at FAU**

You will need a place to live after you return from your study abroad program. The OIP recommends that you make housing arrangements well in advance of your return to the U.S. If you wish to live in a FAU residence hall when you return, then you should contact the FAU Housing Office before you leave for your study abroad program at:

#### **FAU Department of Housing and Residential Life**

777 Glades Road  
Boca Raton, FL 33431-0991  
(561) 297-2880  
(561) 297-2881 Fax  
<http://www.fau.edu/housing/>

### **D. Re-Entry and Ways to Stay Involved Internationally**

When you return home, you will be entering the re-entry phase. For some people, re-entry may be challenging. Study abroad students often find that they have grown and changed a great deal. For many people, the process of re-entry is greatly eased by sharing the overseas experience with others. Seek out other students who have returned from studying abroad and international students from the country you have just returned from. Your study abroad experience has provided you with new skills, which will assist you both personally and professionally.

#### **Here is a list of strategies, which may ease your re-adjustment to life after study abroad:**

1. Give some thought to the types of changes you have undergone as a result of your time abroad. How have you changed? What is now important to you?
2. Be patient with your friends and family—they are trying to understand your recent experience even as you are listening and trying to understand what they went through while you were gone.

3. Expect some negative feelings about your home culture. You may be viewing your culture from a completely different perspective. Remember that there are positive and negative aspects of all cultures.
4. Find ways to keep the international aspect in your life:
  - a) Participate in orientations for students going to your country. The OIP coordinators are always interested in having past participants share their experiences and photos at orientations, information sessions, in the residence halls, or helping out with our study abroad fairs.
  - b) Get involved with foreign students/faculty on campus.
  - c) Take internationally-focused courses or consider adding a major or minor with an international studies background. FAU offers an Ethnic Studies Certificate, International Business Certificate, Peace Studies Certificate, among others. Please visit your advisor to inquire about these opportunities.
  - d) Participate in the English Speaking Partners Program, where you can help a non-native speaker practice their English Language skills. Visit [http://www.fau.edu/goabroad/Keep\\_Involved\\_Internationally.php](http://www.fau.edu/goabroad/Keep_Involved_Internationally.php) for more information on how to keep involved internationally.
  - e) Subscribe to a newspaper from your host country
  - f) Visit the OIP website at [www.fau.edu/goabroad](http://www.fau.edu/goabroad) for upcoming international events at FAU.
5. Consider how you can use what you learned abroad in your academic studies or career. The OIP, Student Career Services, and your academic advisor can explore options available to you.
6. If you are eligible for Federal Work Study, consider working at the OIP. Interested students should contact the OIP at [goabroad@fau.edu](mailto:goabroad@fau.edu) or by phone at (561) 297-1208.
7. Start planning how you might go abroad again either on a study abroad program, work/volunteer abroad, or through personal travel.

### **USEFUL WEBSITES**

#### **Accommodations, etc.**

Hotels, B&Bs, Apts.....	<a href="http://www.venere.com">http://www.venere.com</a>
American Youth Hostel.....	<a href="http://www.hiayh.org">http://www.hiayh.org</a>
Routes International.....	<a href="http://routesinternational.com">http://routesinternational.com</a>
Hostels.....	<a href="http://hihostels.com">http://hihostels.com</a>
Hostels.....	<a href="http://hostels.com">http://hostels.com</a>
Hostels.....	<a href="http://www.hostelseurope.com">http://www.hostelseurope.com</a>
Hostels.....	<a href="http://www.hostelworld.com">http://www.hostelworld.com</a>
Hostels.....	<a href="http://www.hostelz.com">http://www.hostelz.com</a>
Virtual Tourist.....	<a href="http://www.virtualtourist.com">http://www.virtualtourist.com</a>

#### **European Rail Travel**

Eurail Pass.....	<a href="http://www.eurail.com">http://www.eurail.com</a>
Eurostar.....	<a href="http://www.eurostar.com">http://www.eurostar.com</a>
Rail Europe.....	<a href="http://www.raileurope.com">http://www.raileurope.com</a>
Railpass Information.....	<a href="http://www.railpass.com">http://www.railpass.com</a>
Railpass & hostels.....	<a href="http://www.eurotrip.com">http://www.eurotrip.com</a>
Rick Steves' Europe.....	<a href="http://www.ricksteves.com/rail">http://www.ricksteves.com/rail</a>
Virgin Trains.....	<a href="http://www.virgintrains.co.uk">http://www.virgintrains.co.uk</a>

#### **Miscellaneous Travel Information**

Internet Cafés.....<http://www.world66.com/netcafeguide>  
 Currency Exchange Rates.....<http://www.xe.com/ucc>  
 Currency Exchange Rates.....<http://www.oanda.com>  
 ISIC (Student ID Card).....<http://www.isic.org>  
 Time Zones.....<http://www.timeticker.com>  
 Worldwide Metric Conversion...<http://www.worldwidemetric.com/metcal.htm>  
 Maps of Europe.....  
<http://www.viamichelin.com/viamichelin/int/tpl/hme/MaHomePage.htm>  
 Global Phone Plan.....<http://www.piccellwireless.com/rent>

### **Travel Guides**

Fodor's Travel Guide Online.....<http://www.fodors.com>  
 Let's Go Travel Guide Online.....<http://www.letsgo.com>  
 Rough Guides Travel Online.....<http://www.roughguides.com>  
 Rick Steves' Europe.....<http://www.ricksteves.com>

### **Special Interest Groups**

GLBT.....<http://www.bluway.com>  
 Multicultural Students.....  
<http://studyabroad.msu.edu/people/studentsofcolor/articles.html>  
 Mobility International.....<http://www.miusa.org>

### **News Links**

BBC.....<http://www.bbc.co.uk>  
 CNN.....<http://www.cnn.com>  
 International (English) Newspapers.....<http://www.einnews.com>  
 Weather.....<http://www.weather.org>  
 Weather.....<http://www.wunderground.com>  
 Weather History.....<http://www.wunderground.com/history>

### **Government Services**

Center for Disease Control.....<http://www.cdc.gov/travel>  
 Passport Information.....<http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/>  
 Embassy & Consulate Information.....<http://www.embassyworld.com>  
 Embassy & Consulate Information.....<http://www.embassy.org>  
 Travel Warnings.....[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/tw/tw\\_1764.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html)  
 Absentee Voting.....<http://www.fvap.gov>  
 U.S. Consulates.....<http://usembassy.state.gov>  
 U.S. State Department.....<http://state.gov>

### **Travel Services**

Student Universe.....<http://www.studentuniverse.com>  
 STA Travel.....<http://www.statravel.com>  
 Uniglobe.....<http://uniglobe.com>  
 Orbitz.....<http://www.orbitz.com>  
 Expedia.....<http://www.expedia.com>  
 Travelocity.....<http://www.travelocity.com>

\*\*\* Check the web pages for individual airlines.

This list is neither exclusive nor comprehensive in scope.

FAU Study Abroad Handbook Signature Page

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby acknowledge that I have read and understand my roles and responsibilities as outlined in the Florida Atlantic University Handbook for Study Abroad.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Printed Name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**