

Semester Abroad Handbook



COLUMBUS STATE
UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR
GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

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CSU Campus Police
706-507-8911

In case of emergencies, immediately contact emergency services in your host country and notify your onsite coordinator/advisor. In the event the onsite contact is unable to assist you, please notify CGE immediately.

Introduction

Congratulations on your decision to add an international dimension to your education! You are about to embark on a memorable learning experience that will allow you to grow and develop new competencies that cannot be gained in a traditional classroom setting. You will acquire or sharpen a series of skills including decision-making, problem solving, intercultural communication, flexibility and tolerance.

Once you have been accepted into a study abroad program, you must then pay serious attention to the details of preparing to go abroad. Just as you did when you chose what to study and where, give yourself plenty of time to make all of the many necessary pre-departure arrangements.

The better prepared you are for your study abroad experience (the more you know about what to expect and what is expected of you) the more meaningful your experience will be. It should go without saying that you should try to learn as much as you can about your host country-its language, history and culture as well as its current social and political conditions. There are many ways to do this: take courses, read books and blogs, research online or watch videos, talk with people from your host country or those who've been there, etc. As Socrates said, "The innocent eye sees nothing."

Students participating in study abroad should be able to achieve the following learning outcomes: (a) Prepare adequately and appropriately for their study abroad experience (b) Articulate and implement the value and development of intercultural competence, including cultural adjustment and self-awareness of their own cultural identity (c) Articulate how to access reliable resources and tools to better their cultural awareness about the host country of study (d) Articulate how the international experience will enhance their academic, professional & personal goals.

Program Information

Fees & Tuition Payment

It is important to understand the fee structure of your study abroad program, which may differ from program to program. Tuition and fees for semester abroad programs are billed and paid prior to departure. Depending on the program, housing and meal plans may also be paid in full prior to departure. All tuition & fees paid directly to CSU are due by the fee assessment deadline set by the Bursar Office and listed on the CSU Academic Calendar. *You must pay all outstanding fees due to Columbus State prior to your departure, even if that is prior to the Bursar's deadline.*

It is *your responsibility* to determine which fees are to be paid to CSU, which are to be paid to the sponsoring host institution, and which are to be paid on your own. Refer to the following chart to determine which costs are paid to which entity. Note that mandatory campus fees are NOT waived during semester abroad programs. POYO = Purchase on Your Own

	CNU	HUFS	PKNU	NUI Galway	Kansai Gaidai	FUA	Heilbronn	Chichester
Tuition & Fees	CSU	CSU	CSU	CSU	CSU	CSU	CSU	CSU
Room	Host	Host	Host	Host	Host	\$250/week shared for 10+ weeks	Host	Host
Meal Plan	Host	Host	Host	Host	Host	Host	Host	Host
Flat fee	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$400 per credit, 12 to be full-time	n/a	n/a

	Oxford	Edge Hill	Bangor	Kingston	Waterford	GMIT	Waikato
Tuition & Fees	CSU	CSU	CSU	CSU	CSU	CSU	CSU
Room	CSU	CSU	CSU	POYO	POYO	POYO	Host
Meal Plan	CSU, POYO	CSU	POYO	POYO	POYO	POYO	Host
Flat fee (in lieu of CSU tuition)	n/a	Fee is set by EH	Tuition only £9270/Year £4635/Term	Tuition only £9450/Year £4725/Term	n/a	n/a	Approx. \$6,800 USD/Term

Be sure you know exactly what is covered and what is not covered in these fees so that you are prepared to cover all other expenses. It is a good idea to make a weekly or monthly budget and then live by it so you don't run out of money and have no way to replace it since you're typically unable to work while doing a semester abroad. When planning your budget, you should consider some of the following, which are typically not included in tuition & fees:

- Airfare
- Other independent travel (flights, train/bus passes, etc...)
- Visa Fees
- Meals not included in fees
- Insurance (purchased through CGE - \$1.25/day)
- Cell Phone, WiFi, Data
- Books and supplies for your courses
- Personal spending money / incidentals
- Emergency Funds

Course Registration & Grades

All students participating in a semester or academic year program abroad must remain registered at Columbus State University. All students will be registered for a "placeholder" class which will appear on your CSU student schedule as CIED 4116 (variable credits 12 - 15).

If you have not been formally accepted by your host university, you should register for classes at CSU as a backup plan.

Registration is completed on a semester basis. If you are studying abroad for one year, CGE will register you during your second term abroad during the CSU open registration period. If you are studying abroad for one semester, you will need to make plans to register for CSU classes online by virtually meeting with your advisor while you are abroad.

You will receive a letter grade for all courses taken at the host institution. Grades for all courses taken at the host institution will be included on student's CSU academic transcripts and in CSU GPA calculations. You should familiarize yourself with the grading scale of your host institution, which may be different than that of the CSU grading scale. The Center for Global Engagement utilizes the conversion scales provided by World Education Services (WES).

The host institution should send your transcripts directly to the Center for Global Engagement for processing. The timeframe for when transcripts are issued varies, so be sure to ask your host institution and follow-up with them prior to your return home. CGE will remove your course placeholder, and then input your courses and grades based on your approved Course Equivalency Form, Enrollment Verification form, and the transcript from the host institution.

If you will graduate at the end of the semester of your study abroad program, then you should notify the Registrar's Office of your participation in a semester abroad program. You will also need to submit the Final Semester Semester Abroad Waiver to the CGE. Your grades may not be received by CGE in time to meet the typical grade submission deadline followed by Columbus State. The Registrar may allow a one month grace period to receive your grades from your semester abroad without delaying your graduation.

Course Equivalency & Enrollment Verification

Work closely with the CGE, the host university, relevant CSU departments, and academic advisor in selecting courses. Some courses may be an academic year-long, and others may not be appropriate for you as an exchange student. Some universities will encourage students to take courses in many disciplines, and others will request that you stay within one discipline. Take some time to work through these issues to ensure that you identify a list of courses that are appropriate for you. Realize that the "course credits" listed for overseas classes will be different than the U.S. course credit hour system. Make sure that you register for a full load of courses (12 credits at CSU).

It is *extremely* important that you complete a course equivalency form by the recommended deadlines. See Appendix A. Both Financial Aid and the Registrar's Office will review what you plan to take prior to departure along with the CGE.

How to complete the Equivalency form:

- List the courses you plan to take abroad under the far left column. Include at least 3 alternate courses in case your requested courses are not available for whatever reason.
- Print/acquire all course descriptions or syllabi that are available to show the relevant department chair.
- Work with the relevant department chair for each course (based on the courses' discipline) to find CSU equivalencies. The dept. chair should list the equivalent

CSU course number in the middle column & sign their approval in the far right column.

- It is your responsibility to obtain all relevant signatures on this form.
- CGE must receive this completed form prior to departure.

Upon arrival in host-country you must complete the Enrollment Verification Form and submit to the CGE for processing. This is done in case you must add/delete courses upon your arrival to your host institution from what was originally approved on your Course Equivalency Form. CGE strongly advises that you save a record of all your semester abroad course syllabi and completed coursework in case a department requires more documentation to determine the CSU equivalent upon your return. Some departments may wish to know the credentials of your course instructor or the accreditation of the host university. You are responsible for asking the department chair what information they will require prior to your departure.

This Enrollment Verification form is the document that CGE will use to input your courses and grades when you return to campus and we have received a copy of your transcript from the host university. Please realize that if you take classes abroad that are not listed on this form, it is possible that they will not be accepted to transfer back to CSU and this could negatively impact your financial aid and degree requirements. CGE will not process transcripts unless accurate and updated Enrollment Verification forms are on file.

How to complete the Enrollment Verification form (completed within 2 weeks of arrival):

- List the courses you are registered to take abroad under the far left column.
- Submit the form to be reviewed by the host institution's education abroad office for approval. The appropriate contact will then send the form back to the CGE for processing.
- It is your responsibility to obtain all relevant signatures on this form.
- CGE must receive this completed form in order to do grade conversions. This information will also be shared with the Registrar and Financial Aid.

Program Rules

All students are expected to abide by all policies in CSU Student Handbook during their study abroad program. Additionally, students must adhere to the rules and policies of their host institution. Any violations of these rules or the CSU student handbook will be subject to penalty. All violations will be reported to the Center for Global Engagement, and may require a Create Care report and/or study abroad emergency protocols. A disciplinary hearing with the Dean of Students office may be called for offenses as deemed necessary by the Dean of Students, program coordinators and Center for Global Engagement staff. Remember, you are representing Columbus State University, Georgia, and the United States during the entirety of your participation in a study abroad program.

The Center for Global Engagement (as well as CSU) will use your CSU email account to send you official correspondence. Therefore, you are responsible for maintaining and checking your CSU mail account. Make sure to continue checking it or have the mail forwarded so that you receive any updates from CSU or CGE.

Before You Go

Passport

A valid passport is required for you to enter and leave your home and host countries. If you already have one, make sure it will not expire until 6 months after the end date of your program—in some cases this is an immigration requirement. If you do not have a passport, apply for one immediately and request the fastest service possible. U.S. passport applications generally take 4-6 weeks to process, but it may take longer due to various circumstances. Additional fees are required to expedite your passport application within 2-3 weeks. U.S. citizens should visit the US State Dept (travel.state.gov) website for information on how to apply for a passport.

CGE requires that you submit one photocopy of your passport to our office. Keep a record of your passport number and make two photocopies of the identification page along with other essential ID cards or documents: carry one set abroad and leave one set securely at home. Having this information will expedite the replacement of your passport in case it gets lost or stolen. Saving the image as an electronic Google Drive file is also suggested.

Visa/Residence Permit

Nearly every country in the world requires that foreign visitors obtain a visa before entering the country. A visa is a permit that allows you to enter a specific country under specific conditions (limited period of time, often associated with strict rules) and is issued by the government of the country that you wish to enter. A visa is often a stamp on a passport page that signifies an agreement on conditions of entry. In some cases, stays of more than 3 months require that you obtain a residence permit upon arrival in-country.

As a student, it is *your responsibility* to find out what documents you are required to submit to the embassy or consulate and to follow all necessary steps to obtain the appropriate visa or residence permit. Often, countries require to show proof of funds to ensure you can support yourself during the entire duration of your program. Allow adequate time to obtain a visa to travel abroad. Depending on your country of citizenship, you may need to allow a number of weeks or even months for your host embassy or consulate to process all the required documents. If you delay in submitting the necessary materials, CSU can do little to assist in obtaining these documents. Therefore, please begin the process as soon as you know your acceptance has been confirmed by the host institution.

Be sure you understand the type of visa you are receiving. The visa may require you to leave the country after a specified period of time, to maintain a full-time student status, or to enter the country under specific conditions. It may also deny you permission to work for money. If you violate the terms of the visa, you may be subject to legal action or deportation.

Visa and residence permit requirements vary widely among countries. For current and specific requirements, you should contact your host country's embassy or consulate or view their website. US students should note that many foreign consulates in the United States have regional locations and require you to apply to a specific consulate in your jurisdiction. An in-person interview or application submission or biometrics may be required. Check with your host institution for additional guidance as much can be found on their websites. They may need to provide special letters or documents that must accompany your visa application. You may also need passport-sized photos. It's a good idea to have extra copies of these photos for this purpose and other situations.

Customs Regulations

Before you leave, become familiar with your home and host country's customs regulations. For students entering the United States, visit the travel section of the US Customs and Border Protection website at www.cbp.gov.

Prior to entering a foreign country, customs declaration forms are distributed on planes and should be prepared before you land for presentation to the immigration and customs inspectors. Regardless of whether you have anything to declare, you must at least fill out the identification section of the form.

Upon entering a foreign country, you must show your passport, turn in your customs declaration form, and pass through a baggage check. Customs regulations and procedures—as well as the purpose, nature, and thoroughness of the customs check—vary by country. If you are traveling with unusual items or large quantities of any kind of goods, check with the appropriate embassy before departure to find out if such articles are prohibited.

Preparing for your Absence

POWER OF ATTORNEY: Depending on the laws in your home country, it may be necessary to designate an individual, usually a parent, to take care of banking or financial aid matters on your behalf while you are abroad. Find out what the proper procedures are and make these arrangements before you depart.

TAXES IN YOUR HOME COUNTRY: You may need to arrange to have tax forms sent to you or have taxes paid for you while you are abroad. Be sure to know what your tax responsibilities are and how to comply while you are away.

VOTING: If there are important elections scheduled while you will be abroad, find out if you can vote by absentee ballot and make the proper arrangements to do so.

Travel & Packing

Group travel is not arranged by your host institution, although they may offer an airport pickup service or networking group to connect with other students. Students are responsible for securing travel to the host institution; this most likely includes airfare and in-country bus, train, or taxi transportation. Be sure that you have a well-established plan for your arrival to ensure you arrive before any orientations or start of classes. Contact your host institution

coordinator for details and inform CGE of your travel plans. Bring directions, a map, addresses, and local currency for in-country transportation costs.

INTERNATIONAL DRIVING PERMIT: Although driving in another country can be extremely hazardous, if you choose to do so, check with the nearest embassy or consular office to see if there are any restrictions or requirements for obtaining an International Driving Permit.

EXTRA PHOTOGRAPHS: You should carry additional passport-sized photographs with you to use for identity cards, visa applications, or university registration. In some places, such as Europe, it is easy to obtain these from photo vending machines in airports or train stations.

USING ELECTRICITY: Electricity outlets and voltage currents vary when traveling internationally. Be sure to check the type of plug used for electricity outlets and voltage for your destination. Purchase adapters and converters that will allow you to use your appliances abroad. Many expensive appliances, laptops, will have built in voltage converters—but check to be sure. Appliances without converters may not work as well, such as hair dryers, and can even over-heat. Be cautious when using appliances. Remember you can typically purchase these low cost appliances in country, then donate them before your return home.

<https://world-power-plugs.com/>

PACKING: Check current airline regulations for weight and security restrictions. Keep in mind that you must carry your luggage through airports and on buses and trains, so don't bring more than is necessary. Remember that you can buy most things such as clothes and toiletries in other countries. Also, you will have access to laundry facilities. However, you will want to bring a few unique items with you from your university, state, or country as gifts for new friends. There are numerous resources online for smart packing—investigate a few of them for advice and packing lists.

Life While Abroad

Your Arrival

After departing the airplane with your ticket and passport, proceed to immigration. At the immigration counter for non-citizens, an official will ask the purpose of your visit. Tell him you are a student in study abroad program for {insert length} of time. You may be asked to present your visa (if required) and supplemental documents such as proof of sufficient funds for the duration of your stay, host university acceptance letter, or the address of your accommodations. The official may ask if you have a return airline ticket. (Due to this possibility, please note that you should not purchase a one-way only ticket, as many countries require proof of a return ticket before you are permitted to enter.) This is all normal procedure with which you should be prepared for and comply with.

Reclaim your luggage. If your luggage doesn't arrive, seek assistance from airline luggage personnel. Fill out the necessary paperwork, and, if necessary, have them send your bag to your accommodations. Obtain the airline's telephone number so you can check on your bags later. Take your bags through customs following the signs indicating you have nothing to declare for custom duties.

Before your arrival, you should make arrangements for your transportation to your host institution. Most institutions send an incoming student arrival packet to provide details on

how to travel to the location, when accommodations open, as well as other arrival tips (arrive during business hours, etc.). Make sure you know your arrival arrangements in your host country before finalizing your flight reservations. Your host institution may offer an airport pickup service, which CGE recommends that you take advantage of for your own convenience. Either way, you should check-in with your host coordinator to confirm your arrival in country. Please also notify someone at home and CGE of your safe arrival.

Housing

Semester study abroad programs typically offer several housing options. You might live in a dorm with students from the host country. Or, you might live in a homestay with a family. Alternately, you may live in an apartment with other students who are studying there. Finally, some programs arrange for you to spend part of the semester in one type of housing and the rest of the semester in another type.

Whatever the housing arrangements on your program, remember that housing standards in other countries may be different than what you're used to here. Specifically, rooms may tend to be smaller; buildings may be older; windows might be more drafty, limited AC/heating, or plumbing more fragile. So it's especially important to be flexible with your expectations. Also, be aware that published housing arrangements may change prior to your arrival on the program. You may be expected to pay a security deposit that may be refundable if no damages are incurred.

While your housing abroad may sometimes serve as a refreshing retreat from your new surroundings, remember that it is not an oasis of American life. You're still a guest in the country, even when you're in your own living space. Be respectful of your neighbors and of your landlord or host family.

Residence Halls: Programs that offer residence halls will often afford you the opportunity to live near or with students from your host country. This is a great opportunity to get to know them. In-room TVs and speedy internet connections are not as common overseas, so don't be surprised to find fewer such luxuries. Just as in the CSU dorms, remember that there are rules that you must follow when living in such close proximity to others (e.g. quiet hours). When you break the rules in the CSU dorms, you're a lousy roommate or hallmate and are subject to disciplinary action. When you break the rules abroad, in addition to being a lousy roommate/hallmate, you're an "Ugly American," and you're still subject to CSU disciplinary action, including being removed from the program and sent home.

Homestays: Homestays are a great way to get an intimate view of life in your host country, including practicing the language. Homestays are more common (and arguably more effective) in some countries than in others. Spain and Italy, for example, have a social structure that makes homestays quite feasible. Even there, homestays sometimes are more like a boarding arrangement, and you may see your host family regularly, but may not have extensive contact with them other than passing greetings. Students often fear that homestays will be too limiting, in terms of not being able to come and go as they please. It is true that homestays require a high degree of cultural sensitivity--indeed, that's precisely why they are an effective way to learn about your host country. This will require you to be respectful of when your host family eats meals and goes to bed. Moreover, you'll need to be sensitive to issues of food tastes, use of utilities and water, standards of timeliness, and financial issues. For example, if

your host family is traveling to visit a historic site, be sure that it won't inconvenience them before inviting yourself along.

Apartments: Apartments afford you a great deal of freedom while you're abroad, but they can also serve to isolate you from the people and the culture of your host country, especially if you're sharing an apartment with other U.S. students. Some programs arrange an apartment for you, which will be ready upon your arrival. Other programs require you to find your own apartment once you arrive in the country: this is a challenging exercise in finding your way in your new environments.

You may find that preparing your own meals in your apartment is a good way to budget your money (it costs less than eating out all the time). At the same time, you should challenge yourself to get out and meet the people of your host country, and to see the sites.

In any case, you should be prepared to pay a security deposit upon move-in. If you damage the apartment (or residence hall, or homestay) at all during your stay, be prepared to pay for those damages with your security deposit (and with additional payments, if necessary). If you leave your place of residence undamaged, your deposit will likely be refunded to you. Realize that in many countries (especially in Europe), apartment buildings may be many decades old, and plumbing may be even older. Take special care, as these facilities may be easily damaged.

Hotels, Hostels and Other Lodging: Most students spend part of the semester abroad staying in hotels and other lodging during travels. Many programs will house you temporarily in a hotel or hostel upon your arrival while you find permanent housing. Notice that the hotel industry may be far less developed and less regulated in your host country than it is in the U.S. The disadvantage is that you may find yourself in substandard accommodations if you're not careful (no elevators, less than pristine sanitary conditions, and thin walls are a few common pitfalls). The good news is that you may find lodging far more affordable than it is here in the U.S. For example, while you may not be able to find a room here for less than \$35, you might be able to rent a decent room abroad for \$20, or even less in some countries. Youth hostels are a great example of affordable housing for college students, and a good way to meet other travelers.

Guests and visitors: If you intend to have family members visit with you throughout the duration of the program, contact your host coordinator for possible resources. You are reminded that the University cannot provide any administrative support (transportation, housing, childcare, etc) or assume any responsibility for accompanying non-participants.

Accompanying non-participants are not part of the program and therefore cannot attend classes, field trips, or any other activities formally associated with the program. If such individuals become disruptive to the program, it may be grounds for your dismissal. These same policies apply to family or friends who may visit you for brief periods. Such visitors cannot stay in program arranged housing.

Meals

Few study abroad programs offer full meal plans. Your university or program may have a dining hall (as is often the case in Australian residential colleges, for instance) or—more

commonly—a variety of on-campus eateries like in Italy. However, in many cases, you'll have a greater degree of independence and flexibility in planning your meals. You may be able to choose from a number of local restaurants. This can be a great way to try out the local cuisine, but it can also be a very expensive way to feed yourself, depending on the cost of living and the caliber of the restaurant. Also, pay attention to the sanitary conditions wherever you eat. For example, the food stalls at the local farmer's market might be very cost-effective and culturally authentic, but they might also serve up a sure recipe for traveler's diarrhea.

In many cases, your best bet will be to prepare your own meals. This is usually the most affordable option, and a good way to stay within your budget. It may sound intimidating but most students find cooking and food shopping an exciting aspect of overseas living. Your program staff can give you advice about the best places to buy groceries, and your housing will often include kitchen facilities. Particularly if you're staying with other students, it makes sense to share meals and take turns cooking. Preparing your own meals allows you to regulate the sanitary conditions of your food preparation. So, for example, you can avoid raw vegetables if you're not confident about the quality of the water used to wash them. And while you might be able to find boil-and-serve comfort foods such as macaroni and cheese, you can experiment with local delicacies, too.

If you're living in a homestay, your host family will typically provide at least one meal per day. This, of course, is a wonderful way to sample some home cooking typical of your host country. Sometimes it can also present awkward dilemmas which require you to balance sensitivity against dietary requirements. It's important to be clear up front about any special dietary limitations you may have. That way, if you're a vegetarian, your host mother will know not to put chicken in your soup. Also, your program staff will usually provide the host families with guidelines for food preparation, since foods that seem ordinary to them might present gastronomical challenges for someone newly arrived in the country.

The food may be different from what you are accustomed to but try to expand your comfort zone and try something new. If you have any dietary restrictions or food allergies please make the host coordinator aware of this before you leave for the program, particularly if a meal plan is provided. Be aware that consuming different foods can irritate your stomach and cause traveler's diarrhea. Bring over the counter medicine for an upset stomach, just in case.

Living in another culture often entails a change in diet and changes in daily eating routines and assumptions. Diets in other countries can be significantly more or less nutritious than diets in America. It is important to be aware of what you are eating. Traveling will bring your body into contact with new and different bacteria than you are used to. These bacteria are not necessarily harmful in themselves, but the change can unsettle your stomach or cause health problems.

Food should be selected with care. Any raw food could be contaminated, particularly in areas of poor sanitation. Foods of particular concern include salads, uncooked vegetables and fruit, raw meat, and shellfish. If you peel fruit yourself, it is generally safe. Food that has been cooked and is still hot is generally safe. In addition, water, including ice cubes, unpasteurized milk, and milk products, could upset your digestive system until your body adjusts to new surroundings.

Many travelers experience some form of diarrhea while adjusting to local food and water. In many cases, it is mild but you may want to ask your doctor to recommend an anti-diarrhea medication so you can take it with you. If you are going to a country in a tropical region where there may be bacterial, fungal and parasitic diseases, be sure you get some anti-malarial medication. Your doctor may recommend that you start taking it before you leave the United States. One can also contract hepatitis or cholera in countries where the drinking water is untreated. Students must take preventative measures and receive treatment if necessary.

If you are a vegetarian or have other dietary restrictions, you may find it particularly challenging to maintain a healthy diet in certain countries. You may want to research the foods offered in your host country. You may want to bring protein powder, vitamins, and other dietary supplements with you to provide good nutrition while abroad. Researching online blogs or talking with others with similar restrictions who have lived abroad may be helpful, as well.

Adjusting to Your Host Culture

The term culture refers to the values, beliefs, customs, and other forms of behavior shared by members of a social group over a period of time. Culture acts as a sort of filter through which we perceive reality. The way we communicate is conditioned by our culture. Understanding your culture and the way it affects your attitudes and behavior will help you get along with people abroad and allow you to appreciate their culture.

It will be helpful to prepare yourself for the questions you are likely to get about your home country by reading up on current issues, domestic affairs, international policies, and important public figures. You may also want to know what ideas about your home country are common in your host country. Additionally, learn as much as possible about the culture and social, economic, and political situation in your host country before you depart. When you get there, try to understand how the local culture influences the way people act.

Below are some helpful approaches that anthropologists use when they observe another culture.

- Observe, listen, and describe rather than try to prove your preconceived notions.
- Try to be objective, but recognize that the filter of your own culture will always affect what you see.
- Be persistent in asking questions and learn to ask the kinds of questions that elicit answers. Listen actively to the answers you get. Ask for feedback if you are not sure you understand.
- Try to maintain a certain detachment. Practice being a participant and an observer at the same time, taking part in an activity while you stand back from it to observe others and your own reactions.

Culture shock is not caused by a single event or series of events. It is caused by repeated, constant and continuing exposure to behavior, thoughts, values and customs that challenge or contradict a person's cultural assumptions. Usually, culture shock isn't sudden. It is cumulative and builds up from experiences that challenge a person's preconceived ways of thinking or doing things. It is caused by the constant challenge of dealing with differences and by being forced to become children again and re-learn things we already know and take for granted.

Some symptoms of culture shock may include:

- a. Extreme homesickness
- b. Withdrawal from activities, excessive sleeping, excessive tiredness
- c. Isolating oneself from having to confront the host culture
- d. Negativity and irritability (Everything in the host culture is bad and over-reaction to minor problems or frustrations.)
- e. Stereotyping and rejecting host nationals
- f. Physical and psychological illnesses

Discrimination Issues Abroad

It is important to keep in mind that racial, sexual, and religious prejudice does exist in many countries. When dealing with such issues, keep your own cultural assumptions in mind before jumping to conclusions. It is possible that actions or questions that upset you may simply reflect people's curiosity about you. Also, remember that you have choices in how to deal with these issues. Should extreme incidents arise, speak to your host coordinator. If this does not resolve the issue, contact the Center for Global Engagement for support and resources.

Coping with Culture Shock

You will experience a range of emotions during and after studying abroad. Keep in mind that initial disorientation is a normal part of adjusting to a new culture. This feeling will soon pass and you will begin to enjoy your new experiences. While it may be disconcerting, culture shock can be a growth process that increases your understanding of your host culture and of yourself. One of the most effective strategies to mitigate culture shock is to prepare yourself. The more you know about what to expect, the more comfortable you will be. Research the local history, politics, cultural norms, etiquette, and education systems. Talk to other students who have been abroad and to international students at your home university before you leave.

There are also many positive steps you can take upon arrival to help overcome potential feelings of loneliness. Here are a few suggestions:

- Start keeping a journal or blog when you settle into your residence.
- Make friends and share feelings with other foreign students or advisors.
- Improve your language skills and learn about your new school and neighborhood.
- Get involved in an enjoyable activity that helps you meet people.
- Plan excursions and participate in sports and recreational activities.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS: Although it is possible that you will be the only student from your CSU in your chosen program of study, remember that you are not alone. Your host coordinator can be an important resource when dealing with any issues that arise during your program. Your host institution may also organize clubs for foreign students or groups where you can meet people dealing with issues similar to your own. If not, build your own support group. Find at least one person—a fellow student, professor, or host parent—to talk to if difficulties arise. CGE is also a resource at home—we have been there before ourselves and can arrange a virtual meeting!

Staying in Touch with Home

Although it's important to devote your time to seek out new experiences and interactions, current technology also makes it easy to stay in touch with family and friends. Here are a few tips for communicating with them while you're abroad:

- Let your family know when you've arrived and inform them of all subsequent travel plans.
- Use affordable methods of online communication that utilize WiFi such as Skype or instant messenger systems.
- Contact your family if you know of an event in your host country that might cause them to worry (i.e., extreme weather conditions).
- Notify your family when problems you have told them about have been resolved.
- Do your best to try to solve problems on your own or with local help, as a minor difficulty may sound like a major crisis to someone at home.

Many of today's students are used to the wonderful convenience of 24/7, instant communications available through cell phones, e-mail, instant messaging, etc. While these forms of instant communication are invaluable, especially in emergency situations, you might consider setting some limits on communication home, making it easier for you to become fully immersed in your host country. We certainly encourage students to touch base with their families after they have arrived at their study abroad destination, to assure them that they have arrived safely and are getting settled. You have the following options in which to maintain contact with your friends and family:

Cell Phones: If you want to use your cell phone abroad, you should check with your wireless provider if your cell phone is capable of international calls/texts and what the rates are. Depending on your wireless provider, you may be able to add international calling plans while traveling. International calls and texting can be very expensive and it is recommended to keep usage to a minimum. It may also be more economical to purchase relatively cheap pay as you go cell phone while abroad with international calling capability. Ask your host institution for guidance on which cell phone providers to use. Alternatively, if your phone is unlocked (check with provider), you might consider purchasing a SIM card to use local data and pay a monthly rate similar to in the US.

Internet: Internet is extremely useful for communication, and is most likely faster and cheaper than other communication options. You will be able to communicate via email, social media, or use video conferencing services, such as Skype. However, there may be the potential for interference with your cultural experience. Be sure to limit your time spent online while abroad by setting a time limit and sticking to it. Don't let your real experience become a virtual study abroad. Although internet cafes and wi-fi spots will be available at most urban locations, some program locations may not have readily available and/or reliable internet access in public or your accommodations. Some students consider purchasing a portable WiFi for a monthly fee to use while abroad.

Mail: Sending letters back and forth can take a long time, usually more than a week for an airmail letter to leave the States, arrive at the host country and then to reach you at the local site. International postage is more expensive than domestic postage; but if you keep it to letters or postcards, it won't cost too much. Mailing packages by surface mail is less expensive than by air mail, but you must allow a lot of time. Your family and friends will love getting postcards from you. And you will be delighted to go to your mailbox to find a letter or package from home. Finally, your letters home make a wonderful collection of memories for you when you return.

Tips for Cultural Immersion

Many study abroad participants see the sites and take photos but leave without a deeper knowledge of their host culture. On a semester program, you have the chance to create a different kind of experience. Here are a few suggestions to enhance the cultural element of your immersion:

- Research the history and current events of your host country and city to better understand your new cultural environment.
- Interact with diverse groups of local people, both young and old, to get a varied perspective on the culture.
- Be prepared to engage with locals on a number of conversation topics, but be aware that certain topics may not be considered appropriate.
- Develop positive, respectful relationships, being mindful of cultural differences and taboos. Remember that you are representing your nation and your university.
- Practice your language skills without being afraid of making mistakes: they can be a great way to learn.
- Take part in university or community groups such as language clubs, sports clubs, book clubs, churches, or cooking classes. Cooking is a great way to share in local traditions. (Consider bringing a recipe from home to share as well.)
- Attend cultural events that are not typically for tourists. Ask your local friends what events are of interest and importance to them.
- Avoid negative comparisons between your host and home countries. Food, religion, thought patterns, and social habits may seem strange, but keep an open mind and allow yourself time to understand them.
- Consider keeping a journal or blog so you can spend time reflecting on your daily encounters. This will help you deepen your understanding of your experiences and host culture.
- Above all, remember that this is the experience of a lifetime! Have fun and enjoy your opportunity to be a participant and not a tourist.

Finances While Abroad

Currency Exchange

While studying abroad, it is very unlikely that you will utilize U.S. currency on a daily basis. Therefore you will need to familiarize yourself with the currency in your host country, as well as the exchange conversion rate. Visit xe.com to find up-to-date currency conversion rates. Account for the conversion when you budget for your costs and spending money. Also, remember that you will incur a “loss” when exchanging money due to commission fees for the exchange so it’s recommended to exchange in larger sums if possible.

Managing Your Money

Access to Money Overseas: It may be wise for you to have some local cash currency (at least \$100 worth) before entering the host country, but remember, money can be exchanged at the airport or can be withdrawn at a cash/ATM machine. You may also request currency from

your local bank back in the U.S. prior to departure. Exchanging cash will usually incur a commission fee. Remember that carrying large amounts of cash is always risky.

Debit Cards/ATM Machines: A debit card is excellent for international travel because it allows you to withdraw money from your bank account in the U.S. in the currency of the host country using an ATM machine. If you decide to get one, be sure to ask the bank for a card that has Visa or MasterCard on it and also for a pin number. The debit card can be used in any cash machine abroad that has a Visa or MasterCard symbol on it. When the debit card is used, it will open with a menu of different language options and will ask how much money you want in the currency of the host country. The transaction will debit the money directly from your checking account in the United States at that day's exchange rate. Although commission is rarely charged with a debit card, check with your bank to see if there are any user transaction fees. Most debit cards can also be used to make purchases abroad just like a credit card. Again, make sure that the debit card is not just an ATM card. Having a debit card is also a good way to help you budget. For example, you can decide on a weekly spending amount that you can withdraw in the currency of the host country at the beginning of the week. This may help you to better understand how much you should be spending vs. what you are actually spending. It is wise for your parent or guardian to keep copies of your credit and debit card numbers in case of loss or theft. You may need their help in this situation as some 1-800 numbers do not work from overseas. However, you may also find an internationally accessible number and can carry this information abroad, separate from the cards.

Note: Remember to call your U.S. bank and credit card companies before leaving to let them know that you will be travelling and living abroad. Without this information, banks sometimes freeze accounts for unusual or suspicious activity.

Credit Cards: Credit cards are valuable for big purchases, emergencies and cash advances, although there are usually higher interest charges for cash advances. Most major credit cards are honored abroad (e.g., MasterCard or Visa). When you use a credit card, the company makes the exchange rate purchase, reflecting the exchange rate on the day the credit card transaction is processed. This amount may be more or less than what you thought you were paying at the time of the purchase. You will be billed in dollars on the credit card statement, and sometimes the foreign exchange conversion is listed as well.

Some countries are cash-based, not card-based, which is something to research before departure. Also, some establishments might not have a card/chip reader so it's always smart to carry some local currency while traveling.

Bank Accounts: You may wish to set up a bank account to help manage your funds while abroad for several months. With increasing partnerships between international banks and easy access to funds via ATM machines and online banking, this may not be necessary. However, if you wish to work while abroad (if legally permitted), you may need to set up an account in order to receive direct deposit payments. If you wish you set up a bank account, discuss your options with your host coordinator. They will likely cover this topic at orientation.

Budgeting for Additional Expenses: Your host institution may provide an estimate for the local cost of living for many of the expenses below; these expenses are typically not covered by your program costs:

- Books and course supplies

- Laboratory or special course fees
- Language courses and optional excursions not covered by benefits
- Meals during the semester break for full-year students
- Refundable housing and utility deposits
- Optional fees for apartment services such as phone or internet
- Housing accessories such as linens and kitchen supplies, if not provided
- Health insurance and health care services (insurance may cover services, but you may have to pay up front and be reimbursed)
- Travel (airfare plus train, bus, or cab fare for arrival and daily travel)
- Fees for passport, visas, and required immunizations
- Personal spending money
- Emergency funds

Health & Safety

Most study abroad students do little planning for health care until a crisis strikes, which is the worst time to explore options. Whether generally healthy or going abroad with a chronic illness or disability, all students should plan and consider health issues prior to going abroad. CGE encourages students to be mature and responsible when managing their personal health and safety abroad. In the event of medical, safety, or crisis issues abroad, your first point of contact should always be your host coordinator. Also, be sure that your legal guardians have contact details for both your home and host coordinators.

Researching the health and safety concerns of your host country is a critical step in planning for a successful stay abroad. In most cases, health risks will be very similar to what you would experience in your own country. There are, however, some countries or regions for which you may require additional immunizations or where you may need to take additional precautions for the handling and consumption of certain foods and/or water. In addition, if you take prescription medication or over the counter medication on a regular basis it is advisable that you research their availability and legality in your host country.

CGE recommends visiting the following organizations' websites for detailed and expert health and safety information.

- Centers for Disease Control: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>
- World Health Organization: <http://www.who.int/en/>

Insurance

You are responsible for ensuring that you have adequate insurance coverage while on your study abroad program. This coverage should also include medical evacuation, repatriation of remains and life insurance. You are required per USG policy purchase health insurance through the Center for Global Engagement that will cover major emergencies overseas. Contact the CGE Administrative Coordinator to be enrolled in health insurance through CSU within a few weeks of departure. This policy will only cover you while abroad. Be aware that most insurance policies require that you pay upfront and file a claim to be reimbursed.

Students placed in certain countries might also be required to enroll in the host government-sponsored health insurance. Additional coverage for medical evacuation and repatriation, as well as benefits while traveling outside of the host country, is recommended.

Please download the CISI Traveler app before departure.

Insurance Providers through the Center for Global Engagement:

Cultural Insurance Services International: <http://www.culturalinsurance.com/>

VISITING A HEALTHCARE FACILITY: If you must go to a health clinic or emergency care center while abroad, contact your host coordinator for guidance. The facility may or may not accept your insurance at the time; however, you may file a claim upon your return with your insurance for reimbursement (as permitted in the policy). Health care practices abroad will likely differ from what you are used to in the United States. Be prepared for treatment that is different than what you are familiar with at home.

Try to get some information about the health-care system in the region to which you're going. If you need medical care, what will the facilities be like? How do you pay for it? What legal right do you have to medical services? How are patients treated in your host country? (In some countries, doctors welcome questions from patients, while in others, patients are merely expected to follow doctors' orders.) If you search through the CISI website or downloadable app, you can search for providers both for physical and mental health concerns.

Health Considerations

While abroad you may be exposed to unfamiliar climates, food, medicine, and health care systems. In many cases, common sense and a healthy respect for your own body (and its limitations) will help you avoid medical problems. A few preliminary precautions outlined in this section can also spare you much unpleasantness.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM: All CSU students are required to complete the Participant Information Form. A certain amount of stress due to culture shock or a change in living conditions is normal. In some cases, however, such stress may aggravate disabilities or illnesses that you have under control at home. This form will guide CSU in making appropriate arrangements for you to receive the care and services that you need. Be sure you keep your Participant Information Form updated if your medical history changes.

TELL YOUR HOST COORDINATOR: We strongly recommend that you entrust your host coordinator with any information relating to your current physical and emotional health. This may include allergies, dietary restrictions, disabilities, psychological treatments, medical needs, oncoming illnesses, pre-existing conditions, etc. Although in some cases these may seem minor, conditions or issues can surface, worsen or become exacerbated while abroad. If your host contact is aware, then they may better assist you in finding care and/or preventative measures. The institution may require a form similar to CGE's Participant Information Form.

MEDICAL AND DENTAL CHECKUPS: Medical and dental checkups prior to your departure are essential. It is also a good idea to review your travel plans with your physician. Remember that only your physician knows your medical history and can advise you if a situation warrants

more preventive guidelines than those outlined here. Frequently, health statements from your doctor are required to obtain a visa to enter your host country.

SHOTS AND INOCULATIONS: Consult the Public Health Service in your area or a medical professional to find out about specific inoculations that you may be required to have before entering your host country or countries in which you wish to travel. You may also consult the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the World Health Organization for this information. Students going to Africa, Asia, and Latin America will likely need to receive several vaccinations before departing. Below are general guidelines on inoculations for all students.

- Polio, tetanus, and diphtheria boosters and a meningococcal vaccine are required for all students, particularly those living in student housing.
- You should be immune to measles, mumps, and rubella through vaccine or physician-diagnosed cases of these diseases.
- The hepatitis A vaccine is recommended.
- Smallpox is considered to be eradicated by the World Health Organization. However, country regulations change frequently, so a vaccination may be needed.

Documentation of all inoculations should be taken abroad and may be required at your host university. Any inoculation should be recorded with the officially approved stamp on the yellow form titled International Certificate of Vaccination as Approved by the World Health Organization. Forms or cards that are not properly stamped are not accepted by health authorities in many countries. Since many inoculations require more than one visit to a clinic or cannot be taken together, you should plan appointments in advance. If you plan to travel outside your host country, check the health requirements for those additional countries. Travel immunizations can be expensive. We recommend asking your current insurance company if they will cover any costs before you make an appointment.

EMOTIONAL HEALTH: We typically think of health as it relates to our physical health, but you should also consider your emotional or mental health while abroad. Your emotional health can change during travel, especially due to the new environment and additional stress. Please contact the CSU Counseling Center before, during, or after your time abroad at (011-1)-706-507-8740.

What to Bring

MEDIC ALERT EMBLEM: If you have a specific medical problem, carry an internationally recognized medic alert emblem with you. For more information, visit www.medicalert.org.

MEDICAL RECORDS: Keep personal medical records with you in a secure and accessible place. Records should include ALL drugs you are taking, any chronic ailments, allergies, your immunization history, blood type, prior surgeries, eyeglass prescription, personal physician, health insurance information, and your religion. Make a photocopy of these records to leave with someone at home in case your copy gets lost.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES: If you take prescription medicine, bring a supply that lasts your entire stay (including contacts and an extra pair of glasses). Be sure to have written copies of your prescriptions in case a refill is needed (preferably a generic drug). Your doctor may also recommend medications to bring if you are susceptible to a recurrence of an illness, infection, or allergy. As noted above, you can't assume that all medications available in your

home country are either available or legal in your host country, so do the research in advance to make sure. If you take a supply of medications with you, you should keep them in their original, labeled containers. You will need a physician's prescription for medication and medical supplies to pass through foreign customs. Have a clear description of your medication ready to show Customs when you enter the country.

NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES: If you have any favorite over-the-counter remedies, you may want to bring a lasting supply. Because medicines sold in other countries are not regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, it is generally not advisable to buy them over the counter in a foreign country, at least not without professional medical advice. For customs purposes, take all medicines in their original containers.

SYRINGES: Because they can be construed as drug paraphernalia, it is recommended that you bring a doctor's note if you need syringes (i.e., if you are diabetic or require medication by injection).

Staying Healthy Abroad

Some basic tips for all students appear below.

- Monitor your health. Don't overwhelm yourself by trying to see everything and sampling all culinary delights. Moderation will pay off.
- Eat a well-balanced diet and watch what you eat when traveling.
- Check on the safety of water, meat, fresh fruit, and vegetables.
- Take measures to prevent exposure to sexually transmitted diseases. Intimate contact can expose you to various bacteria or viruses, including AIDS and hepatitis B.
- Know where to get treatment before a medical problem arises. Ask your host coordinator for the name of a doctor and the locations of campus or community health care facilities.
- Contaminated water is a common source of illness among travelers, so pay close attention to the source of the water you drink, as well as water used in cooking or washing food. Visit the CDC website for further information about preventing water borne illnesses.
- Students should use the CDC website to learn about diseases such as malaria which may be more common in your host countries than at home, as well as inoculations or medicines required for prevention.
- Your host coordinator is also a potential source of information about your specific location's requirements.
- In addition to researching your host country's health environment, you should also research any countries you may be visiting or traveling through while abroad, in case those have additional immunization requirements or health recommendations

DIETARY RESTRICTIONS: Students with dietary restrictions may find it challenging to maintain their diet abroad. Here are some general tips:

- Note any dietary restrictions or if you are a vegetarian on any medical assessment forms provided to your host institution.
- You may wish to bring protein powder, vitamins, and other dietary supplements with you to ensure good nutrition while abroad.
- Ask your host coordinator or study abroad alumni for suggestions on maintaining your diet or research blogs online for recommendations. Googling blogs are another resource to consider.

- Food is an important part of any culture. Consider modifying your usual diet to better integrate into and explore the culture.
- Be prepared to find a tactful way to deal with social situations in which you are offered specially prepared meals that may not fit your diet.

Personal Safety

Few countries have as much street crime and the potential for stranger-upon-stranger violence as the U.S. Even U.S. campuses have their share of robberies, assaults and crime. Actually, many students return from living abroad saying they never felt safer. However, one always needs to be prepared. You should take the same common sense safety precautions abroad that you would at home. Be aware of your surroundings, keep your valuables concealed, be prudent around strangers, and heed safety advice from your host coordinator and local residents.

MONEY AND VALUABLES: Students should take cash, some host country currency (for use before finding somewhere to exchange money), and a debit or a credit card. ATMs are widely available in most large cities. When traveling to more remote areas, take local currency. Some debit and credit cards have an automatic restriction on international transactions. Check with your bank or credit card company before you depart.

- Do not carry large amounts of cash with you; use a debit card and major credit cards instead.
- Inform your bank or credit card company that you will be abroad so they do not block purchases.
- Make photocopies of credit and debit cards along with other essential documents: take one set of copies abroad and leave one set with someone at home.
- Carefully guard your passport, visas, and other documents. Keep the originals secured in your room, and carry the photocopies with you, unless local law requires otherwise.
- When traveling, utilize a money belt that can be worn underneath your clothing. Purses and bags can easily be cut or ripped from your shoulder by thieves, possibly causing injury in the process.

TIPS FOR SAFETY: Below are some general tips for staying safe when traveling or just going out on the town.

- Make sure someone else always knows your itinerary.
- Keep your eyes and hands on your bags at all times, especially when talking on the telephone or reading a sign or train schedule. When you're distracted, you're an easy target for thieves.
- Be mindful when handing your luggage to anyone. Thieves often pose as porters or drivers. Be wary of unexpected packages and stay clear of unattended baggage in airports, train stations and other areas of uncontrolled public access.
- Plan your trip so that you don't arrive at an unknown town late at night without having made prior arrangements for accommodations.
- When you stay at a hotel, make use of the provided safety deposit boxes. Leave your passport and money safely locked away.
- If driving, keep doors locked and suitcases out of sight. Don't leave valuables in cars. Thieves target rental cars and vehicles with foreign license plates.
- Avoid forming large groups of foreigners. But remember that there is added safety in numbers. Smaller groups attract less attention.
- Don't go anywhere with strangers if you are alone.
- Dress to blend in with the local population.

- Find out which parts of town are considered risky by the locals and avoid those areas.
- Be alert to overly friendly encounters. If someone offers unsolicited help, it may be an attempt to exploit or harm you.
- Always stay in well-lit and well-traveled places. Don't take short cuts through alleys or unsafe areas.
- Keep abreast of local news. In the event of disturbances, do not get involved.
- Report to the responsible authorities any suspicious persons loitering around your residence or instructional facilities.
- If you travel to countries beyond your program site and expect to be there for more than a week, register upon arrival at the U.S. consulate or embassy having jurisdiction over the location and notify your host institution and CGE.
- Travelers are sometimes more likely to encounter harassment, but this can be avoided by taking common sense precautions. Dress conservatively. Avoid walking alone at night or in questionable areas. Do not agree to meet a person you do not know in a secluded place. Be aware that some men from other countries tend to mistake the friendliness of Americans for romantic interest.

ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION: Attitudes toward alcohol consumption vary greatly from country to country. Whatever the local rules and customs, use moderation and good judgment; drinking may place you at risk because it reduces your awareness and ability to judge potential dangers. *Excessive drinking has been identified as the single greatest risk factor for study abroad students.*

AVOIDING DANGER IN SOCIAL SITUATIONS:

- Stay alert and trust your intuition when you feel you may be in danger. If you feel you may be getting into an uncomfortable situation, try to get to a safe place as soon as possible.
- Learn the emergency number (911 equivalent) in your host country and use it when needed.
- Don't be afraid to call attention to yourself or ask for assistance if you're in trouble. When calling for help, be specific about what you need.
- Be aware of the effects of alcohol and drugs. These effects include impaired judgment and increased violent behavior.
- Never leave your drink unattended.
- Know your own limits and be supportive of other people's limits - always ask for consent.
- Do not go off alone with someone you don't know well or who makes you feel uncomfortable. Suggest staying with a group or going to a public place. Don't leave friends alone at parties, bars, or clubs.
- Be aware that signals may not be interpreted clearly across cultures. If someone is pressuring you to have physical relations when you don't want to, say NO clearly. Be direct and assertive.

SELF-DEFENSE TIPS:

- Always keep windows and doors locked and not propped open. At night, make sure your drapes, shades, or blinds are closed.
- Don't let strangers into your room or apartment. Never give them your home address on the phone or over the internet. If you observe a suspicious person, notify the police immediately.
- Use a steady, confident pace when walking, and always be aware of your surroundings.

- Wear comfortable shoes. Don't overload yourself with books or bags.
- Make sure you can hear what's happening around you, especially if you are on the phone or wearing headphones.
- Carry your keys in your hand so you can get into your home quickly.

ROAD SAFETY TIPS:

Road safety is not something that you may necessarily think about in planning your study abroad experience, yet the Association for Safe International Road Travel (ASIRT) reports that road crashes will soon become the third greatest global health concern. In fact, death and serious injury from road crashes are among the greatest risk for healthy travelers. And, contrary to popular belief, 85% of such crashes occur in industrialized countries. You can minimize your risk by assessing road culture in your areas and implementing safe precautions.

ASIRT suggests that you:

- select the safest form of transportation in your area
- avoid late night road travel in counties with poor safety records and/or mountainous terrain
- understand how seasonal hazards affect road conditions
- know dates of local holidays (when road accident rates rise)

Pedestrians should:

- be aware of traffic patterns in your area (they may be very different from the US)
- be especially alert at intersections
- wear reflective clothing if jogging at dusk or dawn (especially in locales where jogging may be uncommon)
- do not walk where you cannot be easily seen
- remember most road fatalities are pedestrians
- avoid hitchhiking

Passengers should:

- avoid riding with a driver that appears intoxicated, irrational, or over-tired
- always ride in the back seat of a taxi cab
- wear seat belts whenever possible

Many students are tempted to rent cars, mopeds, or motorbikes, during their time abroad, but often do so without regard to the risks of driving in a country whose rules of the road are unfamiliar. Therefore, while CGE understands that some students choose to rent such vehicles largely for economic reasons, we do not recommend it. In the past, study abroad participants have been injured and even killed while riding in vehicles with drivers unaccustomed to local driving practices and traffic patterns. To prevent such accidents, some countries also limit the minimum age for drivers to rent a motorized vehicle. Also note that most countries will require an international driver's license, and driving without one could result in a severe penalty.

Traveling in some developing countries may pose additional road risks. Public transportation in some areas may consist of overcrowded, overweight and top-heavy minivans or buses. Taxicabs may not appear in good condition; drivers may or may not be licensed. Sidewalks

may or may not be lit, or exist at all. In these cases, follow the advice of the host institution staff. They can teach you how to minimize your risk when selecting various modes of transportation.

For more information about safe international road travel, visit the Association for Safe International Road Travel Web site (<http://www.asirt.org/>).

MORE SAFETY AND TRAVEL TIPS: U.S students can check www.travel.state.gov for more information regarding various regions; planning your trip; how to register at the US Embassy; and tips for travel, health, safety, and living abroad.

Consular Assistance

The consular officers at the embassy or consulate in your host country are there to advise and help you, especially if you are in serious trouble. Duty officers are on-call around the clock. They cannot serve as attorneys or give legal advice, but they can help you find adequate legal representation. You should have the contact information handy for the closest US embassy/consulate in your host country.

- If your passport is lost or stolen, report the loss to the local police and go to your nearest embassy or consulate on the next business day to apply for a new one. If you have a police report, photos, and proof of identification (or someone who can identify you), bring them with you.
- If you need emergency medical care, the consular officer will help you get in touch with a doctor or clinic.
- If you are arrested, ask permission to notify the consular officer at your nearest embassy or consulate. If you are turned down, keep asking politely but persistently. The consular officer will visit you, advise you of your rights according to local laws, and contact your family and friends if you ask them to.
- If you become destitute abroad, the consulate will help you get in touch with your family, friends, or bank so you can arrange to have funds sent to you.

Legal Requirements

When you are in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws. There are no exceptions, so use common sense and do not make assumptions based on U.S. laws. Develop a cultural and political awareness of your area to avoid inadvertent misunderstandings and political difficulties.

When you enter some countries and when you register at hotels, you may be asked to fill out a police information card listing your name, passport number, destination, local address, and reason for traveling. In some countries, you may be asked to leave your passport at the hotel reception desk overnight so it can be checked by the local police officials. These are normal procedures required by local law. In some countries, police officials might randomly ask for your passport/residence card information or ask your purpose of why you're there.

Be aware that many countries have laws under which you can be held "guilty by association." It is wise to avoid others who are in possession of illegal goods of any sort. Below are some useful pointers to avoid legal trouble.

- Deal only with authorized outlets (i.e. banks) when you exchange money. Do not exchange money on the black market or on the streets.
- Avoid areas of unrest and disturbance, such as protests or riots.
- Do not deliver packages for anyone unless you are certain they do not contain drugs or other prohibited items.
- Become familiar with local regulations before you sell personal items such as clothing, cameras, and jewelry.
- Don't assume that what is legal in your home country is also legal in other countries. Adhere to local laws strictly. The penalties you risk are severe.

DRUG ARRESTS: Drug laws vary by country (what is legal in the US isn't always legal in other countries) and may be more severe abroad than in your home country. If you are caught with illicit soft or hard drugs, local laws apply. Often, the penalties in other countries for possession are the same as for trafficking. Below are some other factors to keep in mind.

- Some countries do not accept bail and may not provide a jury trial.
- Pretrial detention, often in solitary confinement, may last for months.
- Prison may lack even minimal comforts (i.e., bed, toilet, washbasin).
- If convicted, you could face a sentence of 2-10 years or death in some countries.

PHOTOGRAPHY: Some countries impose strict requirements about what may not be photographed (i.e., police stations and military posts). Taking a picture of a harbor or government office may seem harmless to you, but it might be construed as a threat to the country's national security. Before you take out your camera, check for any signs prohibiting photographs or ask an official if it's okay.

Crisis Awareness

If a crisis occurs in a country you're visiting, contact your family and CGE to reassure them of your safety. Keep abreast of the situation by monitoring your embassy's website and listening to global news. Contact your embassy or consulate if you need help. In the CISI Traveler app there is a "check-in" feature that you should complete along with sending an email to the CGE and your host institution.

Develop an Emergency Plan: You should discuss your plans for emergency scenarios, including serious illnesses and death or other emergencies with your family/guardians. It is important to have a communication plan in place as it is much easier to have these conversations prior to departure than in the midst of a crisis. Columbus State University has protocols in place in the event of emergencies during study abroad programs.

Finish registering with STEP: You should enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) with the U.S. Department of State. This program registers you with the local US embassy and you can opt to be notified of travel warnings in the region. The CGE will begin this process for you, but you must *complete the invitation within two weeks* of the email being shared with you.

Department of State: The US State Department Bureau of Consular Affairs's website www.travel.state.gov provides important information on crisis awareness and the services provided to US citizens abroad. You may sign up to be notified of travel warnings in your

region and review advisories for specific countries, as well as worldwide cautions. Also, if you download the CISI Traveler app you can review your country-specific information as well.

Civil Disorder or Unrest, or a Campus Strike: In the event of civil disorder or unrest or a campus strike, host coordinators should provide students with accurate information and advise them about what they should and should not do. When applicable, coordinators will inform CGE of the situation.

Major Civil or International Unrest: In the event of major civil or international unrest, US students should stay in touch with the American embassy or nearest consulate in their host country. International students should contact the embassy or consulate of their home country.

State Department Travel Warnings (STEP): The United States Department of State issues travel warnings and advisories for specific countries as well as worldwide cautions. These announcements appear at the State Department website: <http://travel.state.gov/>.

Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC): Columbus State and the University System of Georgia also follow reports and analysis set forth by OSAC regarding safety and security concerns abroad.

Your Return

Perhaps you've been looking forward to study abroad for a long time, or maybe you just decided to study abroad a couple of months ago. Whatever the case, most students who study abroad say that overseas study was one of the highlights of their undergraduate studies. Many find that it changes their lives in profound ways. It may be that you'll finally achieve the level of foreign language fluency for which you've been striving for years. Maybe you'll form relationships that will lead your life in new directions. Maybe you'll discover an academic topic that will become the emphasis of your doctoral dissertation. Or maybe you'll find yourself navigating both physical and emotional geographies that you never thought you could explore on your own.

Right now, you can't be certain what might come of your overseas studies, but you can prepare yourself for this transformative experience. A key part of that preparation is to consider how your studies abroad might affect your career and your life plans. Most jobs and graduate programs require you to function in transnational contexts. You may find employment abroad, or you may be stationed overseas for employment or graduate study. If you remain in the U.S., you'll still find yourself constantly interfacing with colleagues across national boundaries. Your study abroad experience will provide you with relevant preparation for these challenges. Think about how to articulate this on your resume, and as you go overseas; be prepared to make contacts that can help you with your career plans.

Students often return from abroad only to begin scheming how they might get back overseas again as soon as possible. The Fulbright Program and fellowships for graduate studies are two avenues for accomplishing this goal. Other opportunities include the Peace Corps, teaching English to non-native speakers like JET in Japan and other similar international volunteer

programs. Some of these opportunities have early application deadlines, and may require you to begin the process while you're overseas.

In summary, don't wait until you return from overseas to consider how study abroad might impact your future.

Planning Ahead

THE FOLLOWING SEMESTER: Remember to plan ahead for your return by noting the following semester's important dates. You will want to know when registration opens while you're abroad, and then remember to contact your academic advisor to release your advising hold so that you may register for classes while overseas. You will need to complete any financial aid paperwork by their deadlines. You may also need to make arrangements for housing upon your return and for the following semester.

TRANSCRIPTS: Your host institution will send your transcript to CGE, but we recommend that you confirm the timeline with your host institution coordinator. CGE will facilitate the transfer of credits as detailed in the section on courses and grades. If you will need additional transcripts, please order these before your departure.

GRADUATION: If you will graduate following your semester abroad, please complete the Final Semester Abroad Waiver. Also, you will need to apply for graduation and complete all procedures required by the Registrar. CGE recommends that you begin this process prior to your departure, as it may be harder to resolve issues from a distance. Remember our note about the delay in transcripts from the course & grades section.

PROGRAM EVALUATION: It is very important to complete a program evaluation. The evaluation is the only way that your host institution and CSU can learn about your experience in order to review and improve the program for future participants.

Adjusting to Life at Home

As difficult as it is to adapt to an entirely new culture, it can be just as challenging to come back home after being away for any period of time. Upon returning to your home country, you may feel slightly disoriented or out of place; it may be similar to what you felt when you arrived in your host country. This is called *return shock* or *reverse culture shock*. These feelings are temporary and completely normal. But being aware of this phenomenon can help you deal with it proactively. The following are a few strategies to help you cope, along with some additional information on common challenges upon re-entry to your home country.

- Take advantage of the Re-entry Experience for Study Abroad course (ITDS 2205)
- Download music you've been listening to abroad and share it with people at home. Also, try cooking them your favorite dish from your host culture.
- Consider integrating some host culture habits into your routine at home.
- Become a mentor for international students on campus; volunteer or work with CGE (Serve as a Global Ambassador)

- Stay in touch with friends you made abroad. At the same time, it is important to strengthen old relationships and build new ones.
- Submit an entry to the study abroad photo contest to reflect on your experience.
- Remember that the steps you took to adjust to your host culture will be useful for readjusting back to your home environment. Keep busy and set goals. Give yourself time to readjust and keep an open mind.
- Consider ways to use what you've gained abroad by practicing your foreign language skills or planning for an international career.

COMMON RE-ENTRY STAGES

(Summarized from *Back in the USA: Reflecting on Your Study Abroad Experience and Putting It to Good Work* by Dawn Kepets)

Stage One - Disengagement

With your departure date nearing, you begin to concentrate on your return home. It is a feeling of having one foot in your host country and the other foot in your home country. You start thinking about wrapping up your time abroad and making plans for what you'll do when you get home.

Stage Two - Euphoria

In this stage, you get excited about the prospect of going home. You think about seeing your old friends, eating your favorite foods, and speaking your native language. This stage may occur before leaving your host country or just upon arrival home. It may also be quite brief, especially for those who were very well adjusted to their host culture. Students who were unhappy while abroad may not experience return shock beyond this stage.

Stage Three - Dampened Euphoria

This stage occurs after a short time back in your home country and is characterized by feeling like a foreigner in your own country. You may feel frustrated, alienated, and critical of your own culture. Things that were previously completely normal to you now stand out. You feel like no one really wants to hear about your experience and can't relate to it. This is a good time to seek out other study abroad returnees. They can provide support and sympathy as you readjust to life back in your home country.

Stage Four - Gradual Readjustment

Things are no longer so shocking and you are less critical about aspects of your culture that bothered you during the dampened euphoria stage. You begin to analyze what you learned abroad and decide how you will apply it to your life in your home country. You may decide to adopt certain host culture characteristics or habits into your daily life. You may begin to think about how to apply what you've learned both academically and professionally.

HOW TO COPE WITH COMMON RE-ENTRY CHALLENGES

Boredom

After being abroad where a daily task was an exciting challenge and you were meeting so many new people, returning to the comfortable routines of home may seem boring. However, with your new international experience and language ability, you can seek out new outlets to channel your interests—new friends, clubs, activities, etc.

No One Wants to Hear

Upon return, you may want to talk non-stop about your time abroad only to find that people

don't seem that interested. Or you may feel frustrated that people ask "How was it?"—as if there is a simple answer to that question. Frequently, people who haven't had an international experience have a hard time relating to yours and may lose interest once they hear the highlights of your time abroad. You should seek out other study abroad returnees; they will be more receptive to listening to all the details about your time abroad and will have stories to share with you as well. And when discussing your time abroad with less receptive audiences, remember to keep your stories brief and interesting.

It's Hard to Explain

You experienced so much while abroad that it may be difficult to accurately explain all the feelings you had or describe all the sights you saw. You may feel that you can't get people to understand it. But that's okay. Again, this is a good time to talk to other study abroad returnees. Also, journaling for scrap-booking may help you better articulate and express what you went through.

Reverse Homesickness

If you made good friends and grew to love the host culture, it's only natural that you will miss it upon leaving. Luckily, technology makes it easy to keep in touch with your new friends via email, Skype, Facebook, etc. It may help to seek out and befriend people at home who are from your host country.

Relationships Have Changed

Just as you've changed while abroad, people back home have undergone changes while you were away. You may notice that you relate to people differently than before. Whether positive or negative, this is normal. Handle it with patience and without losing sight of why you were close to the person in the first place.

People See "Wrong" Changes or Misunderstand You

Some people may be upset by changes in your behavior or ideas. This negativity is often rooted in feelings of jealousy, inferiority, or superiority. This phase normally passes quickly if you are aware of how people react to you and are willing to explain these changes in a way that isn't boastful or defensive.

Feeling of Alienation or Seeing Home with Critical Eyes

After experiencing a different culture, you may find yourself critical of some aspects of your home culture. Keep these comparisons to yourself and know that you had to go through these same feelings upon arrival in your host culture. In due time, you will gain a more balanced perspective and realize the strengths and weaknesses of both cultures without being so critical.

Inability to Apply New Knowledge and Skills

You might feel like your newly acquired linguistic, cultural, and practical coping skills aren't relevant at home. However, with a little patience and persistence you will find ways to use these skills. Your international office on campus should have resources to help with this.

Loss/Compartmentalization of Experience

After getting back into the routine of life at home, you may feel like your experience is slipping away from you. Don't let this happen. Keep the experience alive by maintaining contact with the friends you made while abroad and sharing your experience with those who can relate to it.

Getting Involved

CGE organizes several programs to help study abroad returnees readjust & utilize their experience:

- The Re-Entry Experience for Study Abroad Students (ITDS 2205-1 credit hour during the first half of the Fall term)
- Global Ambassador Program
- Lessons from Abroad Returnee Conference
- Study Abroad Photo Contest
- Join Phi Beta Delta, the international scholars honor society
- Pursue the International Studies Certificate
- Career Workshops for Study Abroad Students
- Get to know CSU's international student population
- Share your study abroad blog or photo journal
- Write an article for the CGE Newsletter, CSU's Saber or Momentum journal

Study Abroad & Your Future

Your international experience has given you an opportunity for personal development, along with the chance to cultivate your intercultural communication skills. These are valuable qualities for a potential employer. Make sure to include your experience on your résumé by adding the university where you studied to the education section. In the work experience section, incorporate any internship or volunteer experiences. Also, prepare some key stories for your interview to illustrate the intercultural competencies you gained abroad. The Center for Career Development typically offers a workshop for previous study abroad students one to two times per year.

Consider using your study abroad experience in your future classes; for example, to be the inspiration for a topic of research or a paper. Consider pursuing the International Studies Certificate program. Highlight your study abroad in your Personal Statement for graduate school admissions.

Additional Opportunities Abroad

Interested in working, teaching, volunteering or interning abroad? There are tons of resources online for these types of international opportunities. It may take some time and patience to find the right program for you but it's out there! Visit the CGE website for a list of resources that may lead you to the experience you're looking for.

Here are some books that may help you in your search for the perfect career abroad:

- Matherly, Cheryl and Robert Sanborn. *How to get a Job in Europe*, 5th ed.
- Collins, J, S DeZegera and Z Heckscher. *How to Live Your Dream of Volunteering Overseas*
- Lauber, Daniel with Kraig Rice. *International Job Finder: Where the Jobs are Worldwide*
- Hubbs, Clay and Jason Whitmarsh. *Work Abroad: The Complete Guide to Finding a Job Overseas*

Prepare Yourself/Research

Examine Your Host Culture

As a way to prepare yourself for your study abroad experience, learn about the culture of your host country before you leave. Investigating your destination is integral to the learning experience during a study abroad program and can bolster your excitement as you anticipate your departure.

Take a proactive approach to encountering differences in your host country. These questions are designed to help spark your curiosity about the country, to direct your reading and research, and to sharpen your knowledge. How many can you answer? Once you arrive overseas, you might use them to fill a quiet moment with your host family, or to strike up a conversation at a pub.

People:

1. How many people can you name who are prominent in the affairs (politics, athletics, religion, the arts, etc.) of your host country?
2. Who are the country's national heroes and heroines?
3. Are other languages spoken besides the dominant language? What are the social and political implications of language usage?
4. What things are considered taboo in this society? How do people greet one another? Shake hands? Embrace or kiss? How do they leave one another? What does any variation from the usual greeting or leave-taking signify?

Customs:

1. Can you recognize the national anthem?
2. What are the most common forms of marriage ceremonies and celebrations?
3. What is the attitude toward divorce? extra-marital relations? plural marriages?
4. What is the attitude toward gambling?
5. What is the attitude toward drinking?
6. Is the price asked for merchandise fixed or are customers expected to bargain? How is bargaining conducted?
7. If, as a customer, you touch or handle merchandise for sale, will the storekeeper think you are knowledgeable, inconsiderate, within your rights, completely outside your rights? Other?
8. How do people organize their daily activities? What is the normal meal schedule? Is there a daytime rest period? What is the customary time for visiting friends?
9. On what occasions would you present (or accept) gifts from people in the country? What kinds of gifts would you exchange?
10. Do some flowers have a particular significance?
11. What are the important holidays? How is each observed?
12. How are children disciplined at home?

13. Are children usually present at social occasions? At ceremonial occasions? If they are not present, how are they cared for in the absence of their parents?
14. How does society observe children's "coming of age?"

Religion:

1. What is the predominant religion? Is it a state religion?
2. What are the most important religious observances and ceremonies? How regularly do people participate in them?
3. How do members of the predominant religion feel about other religions?

Food and Entertainment:

1. What foods are most popular and how are they prepared?
2. If you are invited to dinner, should you arrive early, on time or late? If late, how late?
3. What is the usual dress for women? For men? Are slacks or shorts worn? If so, on what occasions?
4. What are the favorite leisure and recreational activities?
5. What sports are popular?
6. What kinds of television programs are shown?

Gender Issues:

1. What are the special privileges of age and/or sex?
2. What are the minority groups in your host country? Are you a minority in that country?
3. What are men's, women's, and minorities' roles (social, professional, religious, etc.) in your host country?
4. Do men, women, and minorities have equal opportunity/protection under the law?
5. Do men, women, and minorities have the same educational opportunities? Job opportunities?
6. Do women and minorities serve in the military?
7. Do women work outside the home?
8. What type of leadership roles do women and minorities hold?
9. How do men treat local women? American women or vice versa?
10. How does your host country view minorities within the country and elsewhere?
11. Are pay scales equal for men, women, and minorities?
12. Is there a women's rights or civil rights movements?
13. Are there special concerns/issues that women and minorities should be aware of before they study abroad in your host country?
14. Where do women and minorities fall within the social hierarchy?

Transport:

1. What kind of local public transportation is available? Do all classes of people use it?
2. Who has the right of way in traffic: vehicles, animals or pedestrians?

Politics:

1. Is military training compulsory?
2. Are the largest circulation newspapers generally friendly in their attitude toward the United States?

3. What is the history of the relationships between this country and the U.S.?
4. How many people have emigrated from this country to the United States? Other countries? Are many doing so at present?

Medicine:

1. What kinds of health services are available?
2. What are the common home remedies for minor ailments? Where can medicines be purchased?

Education:

1. Is education free? Compulsory?
2. What kinds of schools are considered best: public, private, parochial?
3. Where are the important universities of the country? If university education is sought abroad, to what countries and universities do students go?

Here are some ways to begin researching:

- Talk to previous participants in the program
- Choose courses that teach you about the history, politics, art, religion, customs, and language of the host country.
- Read foreign newspapers, blogs, and journals and listen to foreign podcasts online. By the time you get there, you should understand the basics of the country's political system and be up to date about important current events and social issues.
- Ask faculty, returned study abroad students and international students to suggest books, articles, films and music from the country. Focus on contemporary history, fictions, and books that deal with contemporary social issues.

As you begin to think globally and gain a rich understanding of your host country, do not neglect to augment your understanding of American history and politics. Often, nationals of other countries know more about American history, current events, and politics than many Americans, so the more you know about these topics the better. In order to have meaningful dialogue with people in your host country and with students from around the world, try to be informed and up-to-date about your own culture.

Additional Resources

Passport, Visa, Government Travel Warnings

www.travel.state.gov

Travel Guides & Resources

Lonely Planet- <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/>

Frommers- <http://www.frommers.com/>

Fodors- www.fodors.com

Rick Steves- <http://www.ricksteves.com/>

Tourism Website of Destination

Student Travel: <http://www.statravel.com/>

Cheap Flights: <http://www.cheapflights.com/>

Hostel Search: www.hostels.com

Euro-Rail: <http://www.eurail.com/>

Ryan-Air: <http://www.ryanair.com/en>
EasyJet <http://www.easyjet.com/us>
German Wings <http://www.germanwings.com/en/index.shtml>
Vayama www.vayama.com

Study Abroad

www.nafsa.org
www.iie.org/students
www.goabroad.com
www.studentsabroad.com
www.columbusstate.edu/studyabroad

Health & Safety

Center for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov
Cultural Insurance (insurance plan) <http://www.culturalinsurance.com/>
SOS International www.internationalsos/en/
World Health Organization www.who.int/ith
MD Travel Health <http://www.mdtravelhealth.com/>
State Dept www.travel.state.gov
Parent Guide <http://www.secussa.nafsa.org/safetyabroad/promote.html>

Additional Travel Info

<http://www.countrycodes.com/> - International Calling Codes
www.xe.com - Currency Exchange Rates

Notice of Non-Discrimination under Title IX Policy Memorandum POLICY MEMORANDUM

Notice of Non-Discrimination under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.

Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs or activities operated by recipients of Federal financial assistance. As recipients of federal assistance, Columbus State University is required to comply with Title IX. As such, the institution does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the education programs and activities it operates including admission and employment. Prohibited sex discrimination includes sexual harassment and sexual violence such as sexual assault, stalking, and domestic and dating violence. Title IX complaint procedures can be found in Columbus State University Sexual Misconduct Policy for complaints against non-students. Questions about this Notice and Title IX application at Columbus State University, contact the Title IX Coordinator and/or the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights Assistant Secretary, as provided below.

CSU Title IX Coordinator

Lauren Jones McKown, J.D.
Director of Center for Accommodation and Access/Title IX Coordinator
Schuster 110
Columbus, GA 31907
(706) 507-8757

Jones__lauren3@columbusstate.edu

Deputy Title IX Coordinator

Dr. Aaron “Chip” Reese
Associate Vice President of Student Affairs
Student Rec Center 242
Columbus, GA 31907
(706) 507-8652
reese_aaron@columbusstate.edu

Deputy Title IX Coordinator

Shanita L. Pettaway, J.D., Ph.D.
Contracts Manager and Policy Coordinator
Richards Hall 206
Columbus, GA 31907
(706) 507-8904
pettaway_shanita@columbusstate.edu

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, (800) 421-3481 or ocr@ed.gov.

If you wish to fill out a complaint form online with the agency, you may do so at:
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html>

Important Contacts for Study Abroad Students

In the event of an emergency, always contact local law enforcement first!

CGE Office
706-507-8545

CSU Counseling Center
706-507-8740

CSU Campus Police
706-507-8911

CSU Student Affairs
706-507-8730

CSU Academic Adviser

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

CSU Department Chair/Dean

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Host University Contact

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

US Embassy in Host Country

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Local Emergency Services in Host Country

Address: _____

Phone: _____