

# CSU Study Abroad Student Handbook



**COLUMBUS STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

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## **I. Contact Information**

### **Center for Global Engagement**

Columbus State University  
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### **Director, Center for Global Engagement**

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### **Study Abroad on Social Media**

Facebook: Study Abroad at Columbus State University  
Twitter: CSUStudyAbroad  
Pinterest: CSUStudyAbroad

### **CSU Campus Police**

706-507-8911

*In case of emergencies, immediately contact emergency services in your host country and notify your program director/faculty. Program directors/faculty will notify CGE. In the event the program director is unable to contact us, please notify CGE immediately.*

## II. Program Information

### a. Fees & Tuition Payment

All study abroad participants must pay all program fees and CSU course tuition & fees in full. Students with any remaining balance will not be allowed to participate in the program. Students must also acquire all required travel documentation, such as a passport and visa (more information in pre-departure section). *If you do not have valid documents by the time of departure, you will not be able to participate in the program and you will forfeit your program fees.*

### b. Course Registration & Grades

All CSU students will be registered in their study abroad courses by the Center for Global Engagement. Students will be registered for courses based on their selection on their program application. All students should check their registration and fee records to confirm they are registered correctly.

Final grades for CSU study abroad courses will be posted on student's academic advising record on CougarNet. Grades for study abroad classes will be included on student's academic transcripts and in GPA calculations.

### c. Academic Requirements

Studying abroad is an academic pursuit, and should not be considered a vacation. Students will be expected to participate in all class meetings and activities, including fieldtrips abroad. *For each missed class or fieldtrip, there will be an automatic deduction of one letter grade for the class.* Students should take special care to arrange any independent travel in order to return well before any class activities. Site directors and instructors are very happy to provide suggestions and advice but *the university will not arrange and is not responsible for any participant who travels independently from the program.*

You will meet previous to your departure and after your return as determined by your program director/faculty. Students are expected to attend and participate in ALL activities related to the study abroad program unless otherwise indicated by the instructor or director. Your instructor will provide a syllabus and a detailed schedule for the program.

## III. Pre-departure Planning

### a. Travel Documentation

#### i. Passport

*Do not forget to bring your passport!* A valid passport is required to travel and/or study in a foreign country. Ensure that your passport is valid for 6 months from the last date of your program, in order to satisfy immigration requirements. Make photocopies of your passport information page. CGE requires that you submit one photocopy of your passport. You should keep one photocopy with you during travel to assist in the case of loss/theft. If you do not already have a passport, you should apply immediately. U.S. passports application 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.

#### ii. Visa

Some countries require U.S. citizens to obtain a visa for travel or study purposes. A visa is a permit to enter a specific country. In most cases, it is stamped onto a blank page of your passport. Check with the embassy/consulate of your host country for up to date visa & other entry requirements. Each country varies widely on the requirements for a visa, and it can be a lengthy process. CGE will advise students in short-term faculty led programs if a visa must be acquired prior to departure. Some countries will allow

U.S. citizens to pay visa/entry fees at immigration services. If you are not a U.S. citizen (this includes permanent residents), then you are responsible for determining whether or not a visa is required for you to enter the host country.

### iii. Flight Information

Round-trip airfare is included in all CSU short-term programs. The group flight itinerary will be given to you at a pre-departure meeting. Most flights will depart from Atlanta or Columbus airports. Travel to Atlanta may or may not be included in your program. If not, it is recommended that students purchase a Groome Transportation fare ([www.groometransporation.com](http://www.groometransporation.com)).

## b. Health and Safety

The health & safety of our students is a priority for the Center for Global Engagement & Columbus State University. Thus, we strongly encourage students to make preparations for their health & safety while abroad. See section V for detailed information.

## c. Packing

Luggage restrictions may vary dependent on the airline provider. Be sure to check the airline's website for information on luggage requirements. Avoid over packing. In any case, you will soon tire of carrying or pulling your heavy bags. Remember you will have to haul that luggage around airports, across streets and possibly up the stairs. Less is much better, especially since you will only be there a short time! Remember to leave space in your luggage for your gifts and souvenirs. Do not to place valuables or fragile items in your check-in bags. If you are using a film camera, keep your film in your carry-on bag to protect it from being ruined by the bag screening machinery.



Carry-on luggage is now much more restricted with most airlines only allowing one small bag and personal item (handbag, laptop, briefcase, etc.). You also cannot carry on liquids or gels except those of less than 3 ounces carried in one quart sized Ziploc bag. Do not pack or carry any weapons, sharp or dangerous objects such as scissors, knives, metal nail files or lighters. The airlines have the right to open your bags as you check them in at the airport so be prepared for this to happen.

When entering the security area, place your hand luggage and metal objects such as keys and coins on the baggage conveyer. If you are going through the magnetic imaging line, you will have to remove ALL objects from your clothing. In U.S. airports you should also remove your shoes and place them on the conveyer. Some passengers are also randomly selected for a search. Follow the instructions of the security personnel at all times.

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, such as iPods, laptops, etc. 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.

Also note that laundry facilities may not be available and if they are, will probably be at your own cost. Students should plan accordingly when packing.

#### **d. Research your destination**

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. Here are a few suggestions on topics to research:

- Weather and climate, particularly during the season you will be there!
- Currency exchange rates
- Time difference between home and your destination
- Local cuisine and popular dishes
- Politics, history & current events
- Common laws and safety procedures
- Social etiquette, including greetings, gestures, mannerisms
- Common phrases in host language

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 and journals and listen to foreign newscasts 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.

#### **IV. Departure & Arrival**

Program directors/faculty will set an arrival time for the group to meet for flight check-in. You should allow extra travel time to ensure you are not late, which could cause further delays, including missing your flight! After check-in, proceed directly to your boarding gate. While waiting for your flight, do not leave the gate area without informing the site director, instructor or program assistant. During the flight drink plenty of non-alcoholic beverages to remain hydrated.

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 a {insert number of days} day program sponsored by Columbus State University. You are NOT traveling to be a student in your host country, which may require a student visa permit. You will be entering the country as a tourist. If asked, provide the hotel or accommodations address. The official may ask if you have a return ticket and sufficient funds for your stay. This is normal procedure.

Reclaim your luggage. If your luggage doesn't arrive, inform the site director/instructor and 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.

The program director will direct everyone to group transportation pick-up for travel to your next destination.

#### **a. Meals**

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 program director aware of this BEFORE you leave for the program. Be aware that consuming different foods can irritate your stomach and cause a case of traveler's diarrhea. Bring over the counter medicine for an upset stomach, just in case.

#### **b. Money Matters**

**Access to Money Overseas:** It may be wise for you to have some local cash currency (approximately \$100) before entering the host country, but remember, money can be exchanged right at the airport or can be withdrawn at a cash machine. You may also request currency from your local bank 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 to 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 1-800 numbers may 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 currency exchange reflects 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.

**Traveler's Checks:** Traveler's checks are a convenient and safe way to carry money, although they are not as commonly used as they were in the past. In addition to being easy to cash, they are widely accepted for payment of goods and services at almost any establishment and are usually treated as cash.

Furthermore, if the checks are lost or stolen, the company that issued them will replace their full value, as long as one has a record of the serial numbers. You should keep the receipt of the check numbers separate from the checks. (It is also a good idea for your parent or guardian to keep a copy of the serial numbers in case you lose the copy.) Traveler's checks can be purchased at just about any bank in the United States, usually at the rate of one percent over the value of the checks you are buying. Traveler's checks can be exchanged at banks and money changing houses overseas, usually with a small transaction fee. You should remember to take your passport for identification.

### **c. Communication**

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 safely arrived and are getting settled. You have the following options in which to maintain contact with your friends and family:

**Telephone:** Telephones may or may not be available in your room. You can purchase cheap international calling plans and international calling cards here in the United States for your long distance calls. If your parents want to make a call overseas directly from the U.S., the usual procedure is:

- Enter the international access code: 011
- Enter the country code, normally 2-3 digit number
- Enter the city code, normally a 1-5 digit number and the local number abroad

**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. Depending on your wireless provider, you may be able to add international calling plans while traveling. International calls from cell phones can be very expensive and it is recommended to keep usage to a minimum. Texting may be a more economical option. If necessary, it will be possible to purchase relatively cheap pay as you go cell phones while abroad with international calling capability.

**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 online calling services or 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. Ask your program director if you will have access to internet. 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.

## **V. 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.

### **Vaccinations & Check-Ups**

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) website ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) keeps up to date information on immunizations and health information for countries worldwide. You should consult medical professionals regarding the CDC recommendations. In the case that vaccinations are required or you need to update your current vaccinations, you should schedule an appointment with your local doctor immediately, as some vaccines must be given

significantly in advance to be effective. Travel immunizations can be expensive. We recommend asking your current insurance company if they will cover any costs before you make an appointment.

We strongly recommend that you complete your routine medical and dental checkups before travel. Nothing could be worse than spending your time abroad in a dental surgery or hospital—not to mention the potential expenses. Contact the CSU Health Services to schedule an appointment at 706-507-8620.

### **Insurance**

In order to ensure that each study abroad participant has appropriate insurance coverage, CSU has included an international health insurance policy with Cultural Insurance Services International in your program. This policy will only cover you while abroad, and it does not replace the health insurance policy you may already have. Coverage begins the date of departure. Students will receive insurance cards and policy information at their orientation. *You should plan to carry the CISI insurance card with you while abroad, as well as an Emergency Contact card.*

If you must go to a health clinic or emergency care center while abroad, immediately contact your program director for assistance. The facility may or may not accept your insurance at the time; however, you may file a claim upon your return with CISI 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.

### **Packing for your Health**

*Students are responsible for ensuring their Participant Information Form on file at CGE, which lists their medical history and emergency contact information is up to date. You should plan to carry the CISI insurance card with you while abroad, as well as an Emergency Contact card.*

Prescriptions & Medication: Bring an extra pair of glasses or contacts and your most recent prescription. If you take prescription medication, you should pack enough of the medication for the duration of your stay abroad. All medicines should be carried in their original, labeled containers. 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. Consult the country's medical laws to make sure that medicines/needles/syringes are not illegal. Not all medicines that are legal in the U.S. are legal elsewhere. 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: take copies of all medical records, prescriptions in generic format, and pertinent information. Check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) and Medline Plus (<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/medlineplus.html>) for information on traveler's health and drug names. Carry a generic prescription(s) in case you have to purchase a prescription abroad. You may also want to pack over the counter medications that may not be available abroad.

Tell Your Program Director: We strongly recommend that you entrust your program director/faculty 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 program directors are aware, then they may better assist you in finding care and/or preventative measures.

Emotional Health: We typically think of health as it relates to our physical health, but you should also consider your emotional health while abroad. Your emotional health can change during travel, especially due to the new

environment and additional stress. You should feel free to contact the CSU Counseling Center before, during or after your time abroad at (011-1)-706-507-8740.

Exercise: During your study abroad program, you will likely walk more frequently and longer distances than you are accustomed to in the United States. You may have walking tours, field trips, and leisurely excursions around town, in which transportation services may not be available or convenient. Begin walking daily several weeks before your program departure to build up your endurance. Be prepared to walk several miles each day, and thus we recommend comfortable, supportive walking shoes. Bonus: It is good for your overall health.

## **Your Safety While Abroad**

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. In regards to terrorism, even in places with very little risk, program directors work with local police, U.S. consular personnel, and local University officials to set up practical security measures. In such places, students will be briefed during orientations and throughout their stay as needed about security measures. Simply being a foreigner makes any traveler a more likely victim of crime or accidents, but there are certain precautions that American students abroad can take to maximize their safety and minimize their risks. You should carry important documents and most of your spending money in a security pouch inside your clothing or around your neck or waist. Carry your wallet in your front pocket not in your back pocket or backpack. Carry purses with the strap over your head and the purse in front of you. Avoid clothing or behavior that draws attention to you, particularly as an American tourist (e.g. U.S. company logos, baseball caps, sweatshirts, etc.). Be alert to overly friendly encounters. If someone offers unsolicited help, it may be an attempt to exploit or harm you.

The following is a list of do's and don'ts we urge upon students:

1. ***Know and follow local laws; do not make assumptions based on U.S. law.***
2. Keep a low profile and try not to identify yourself by dress, speech, or behavior as a targetable individual.
3. Avoid crowds, protest groups, or other potentially volatile situations, as well as restaurants and entertainment places where Americans are known to congregate.
4. Students should always be aware of their surroundings when walking in neighborhoods or in the city.
5. You are strongly encouraged to travel with at least one other person at night.
6. Keep abreast of local news. In the event of disturbances, do not get involved.
7. Be wary of unexpected packages and stay clear of unattended baggage in airports, train stations and other areas of uncontrolled public access.
8. Report to the responsible authorities suspicious persons loitering around your residence or instructional facilities.
9. If you travel to countries beyond your program site and expect to be there more than a week, register upon arrival at the U.S. consulate or embassy having jurisdiction over the location.
10. Make sure the program director/faculty always knows where and how to contact you in an emergency.
11. Use banks to exchange money. Do not exchange money on the street or on the black market.
12. Do not impair your judgment through excessive consumption of alcohol and do not fall under the influence of drugs.
13. Female 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 American women for romantic interest.

**Avoid over-indulging in alcohol.** While abroad, the legal drinking age may differ from the United States legal drinking age of 21. Consumption of alcohol should be in moderation. *If you are over indulging in alcohol, you will be subject to penalties including possible removal from the program.* In addition, do not engage in any illegal activity, including the purchase, sale or consumption of non-prescribed drugs. Remember you are guest in your host country. If you break the law, you are subject to their laws, including imprisonment. In many imprisonment cases, the Embassy can do little, if nothing, to have you released.

*It is highly recommended that you and your parents/guardian have a communication plan in place. It is important to have a contingency plan for emergencies.*

State Department Travel Warnings: 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/>.

Anti-American Sentiment and Political Debate: It is possible that you will encounter anti-American statements while living and traveling abroad. Many people have strong views about America, both positive and negative. While it is highly unlikely that you will face any physical harm or threats, you may experience uncomfortable conversations where people question and challenge your deeply held values and practices. Talking to your parents and faculty mentors about these issues before you go is the first step in preparing to handle these situations. Often, nationals of other countries also know more about American history, current events, and politics than many Americans, so the more you know about these topics the better. While abroad, we encourage you to actively engage in cross cultural debate and discussion by being honest, sensitive and well informed. Think of yourself as a good ambassador for CSU and the United States.

## **VI. Program Rules and Penalties**

All students are expected to abide by all policies in CSU Student Handbook during their study abroad program. Additional rules & policies applicable to all participants in study abroad programs are listed below. Any violations of these rules or the CSU student handbook will be subject to the penalties stipulated. All violations will be reported to the Center for Global Engagement and may require a BART report and/or study abroad emergency protocols. A disciplinary hearing with the Dean of Students office (706-507-8730) may be called for offenses as deemed necessary by the Dean of Students office, program faculty and Center for Global Engagement staff. Remember, you are representing CSU, Georgia and the United States during the entirety of your participation in a study abroad program.

### **a. Rules**

1. Students who travel outside of the host city without faculty members will be required to provide their destination(s), probable time of return, and contact information.
2. Students must participate in classes, class fieldtrips and program excursions. Students who have not reported an illness or injury to the site director or instructor and who fail to attend class or participate in a group activity will *lose one letter grade for each absence.*
3. You should be mindful of your accommodations and adhere to whatever “quiet hours” are posted or seem appropriate. Be considerate to any staff persons at your accommodations. There will be no loud talking, slamming doors, partying, or other disruptions.

4. Students judged by the site director to be drinking excessively will receive an automatic “first offense” warning. Students who are using illegal drugs or misusing prescription drugs will be expelled from the program.
5. Fighting is strictly prohibited; students who get into any fight regardless of the cause or circumstances will receive a “third offense” warning.
6. Theft of property will result in immediate expulsion from the program and a written report to the student’s home institution. Students expelled from the program will not receive refunds of any part of the program costs.

#### **b. Penalties**

The following penalties will be applied for all infractions of the rules for which an automatic penalty is not spelled out:

1. For a first offense, students will meet with the site/program director.
2. For a second offense, students may be confined to a specific location for a specified period of time and will be required to report on a regular basis, at specified intervals, to the site director.
3. For a third offense, the site director will telephone the student’s home institution (and in the case of a minor, the student’s parents) and report to them the events and obtain their assistance in correcting the student’s behavior.
4. For a fourth offense, the student will be expelled from the program with no refund and will not be able to complete any academic work still to be done in the program.

#### **Emergency Protocols**

Columbus State University has protocols in place in the event of emergencies during study abroad programs. Program directors and faculty are trained in how to handle emergencies of various scenarios. All emergencies should be reported immediately to a program director, faculty or assistant, who will then proceed with protocols and contact all relevant persons.

### **VII. Cultural Adjustment**

It is our culture that gives us our identity and the means of making sense out of the rest of the world. From our culture, we absorb the rules of behavior, the values we have, and the means of making generalizations and having expectations. Culture shock is the reaction to the trauma of having to adapt to a different cultural setting. It comes from the anxiety resulting from the loss of familiar surroundings, rules, and behavior.

#### **Culture Shock**

Culture shock is real, not some imaginary thing. It is a psychic dislocation and disorientation that leads to varying degrees of discomfort. It occurs to a lesser or greater degree in most people who have to function in a culture different from the one to which they are accustomed.

The severity and duration of culture shock depends on the individual and the cultural setting to which he or she must adapt. The more flexible the person, the less severe culture shock usually is. The more different the setting from the person's home setting, the more severe the shock is likely to be. The main symptoms 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

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 pre-conceived 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.

Four general stages have been identified that categorize most people's adjustment, though the length of each stage greatly varies. You will most likely go through some form of the following four stages over your time abroad. Here are the four stages of cultural adjustment:

The Honeymoon Stage: Cultural Euphoria: Characterized by exhilaration, anticipation and excitement, the study abroad student is fascinated with everything new. You are embarking on your "dream come true," which is to study in a foreign country and you see everything with rose colored glasses. You are delighted with your new environment as you focus on the exciting tangible and visible elements around you.

The Hostility Stage: Cultural Confrontation and Culture Shock: After your initial euphoria, you may begin to face cultural differences and misunderstandings that will lead you to the second stage of adjustment—culture shock. Characterized by frustration, anger, anxiety, homesickness, and sometimes depression in varying degrees, the rose tinted glasses come off as you deal with bureaucratic matters and cultural differences. You may become upset that it is hard to be understood. Even in an English-speaking country, students will find accents, attitudes, and lifestyles different and foreign to them. It is typical to react to this frustration by rejecting the new environment in which you feel discomfort. The internal reasoning might be, "If I feel bad it's because of them." Some of these hostilities are translated into anger over minor frustrations, fear and mistrust of locals, absenteeism from class, lack of interest, lack of motivation, and, at worst, complete withdrawal.

The Humor Stage: Cultural Adjustment: Cultural adjustment follows culture shock and occurs when you begin to relax in new situations and to laugh at minor mistakes and misunderstandings, which, in the hostility stage, would have caused major headaches. This more relaxed state of mind occurs after you have made some friends and are able to feel comfortable academically in classes. You also begin to feel culturally competent in your new environment.

The Home Stage: Cultural Adaption: This stage occurs when students not only retain allegiance to their home culture, but also "feel at home" in their newly acquired one. You have successfully adjusted and adapted to the norms and standards of the host country and have been able to integrate a whole range of values, customs and behaviors into your life. You are still learning about the culture in which you are living, but you have a basis for how to interpret experiences and behavior and are comfortable with cultural differences.

While it is not possible for most people to avoid culture shock completely, it is possible to diminish its impact. Several strategies help:

1. Expect it. Knowing ahead of time that culture shock may occur and understanding what it is can make it less severe and less traumatic.
2. Prepare. Learning as much as possible about the culture and setting into which one is going BEFORE going helps a lot. The more one knows, the more quickly he or she can adapt.

3. Engage. Avoiding the tendency to withdraw or isolate oneself is essential. People need to be encouraged to get involved, participate in activities, and learn the new culture.

Most people soon learn the new rules and adapt to them. Before long, they can use the money, handle the transport system, deal with the language, and get accustomed to sharing bathrooms and overlooking differences in values and customs. Successes in dealing with the differences—at first few and painful—are cumulative, and before long, coping with the new setting becomes almost automatic.

You can help others through culture shock by

1. Showing sympathy. Let them know that you realize it is real and that it is tough. Share some of the things YOU have trouble with, as well as your determination to meet the challenges.
2. Encouraging them. Remind them that it will get better, that they will learn their way around and soon will be functioning almost as easily as if they were at home.
3. Helping them. If a student is afraid of the public transport system, go somewhere with them and assist them in figuring out the buses and trains. Help them use the new money in an easy, non-threatening purchase on campus or in a small shop.
4. Motivating them. Find out why they came and what they like, and try to help them experience something they are likely to enjoy.
5. Getting Assistance. If someone seems to have severe culture shock, discuss it with the site director or faculty member and ask for their help.

### **VIII. Post Return**

All students will be asked to complete a program evaluation at the end of their program. Evaluations will be distributed via link or paper copies by the program director. A student volunteer should return them to CGE immediately upon return to campus. Evaluations are anonymous. Results are shared with program directors, faculty and CGE staff in order to improve our offerings and services.

One of the most valuable aspects of a study abroad experience is the impact that it has and continues to have on you after you have returned home. We encourage every student to utilize and make the most of this experience by incorporating it into their academic, professional and personal lives. Consider using your study abroad in your classes; for example, to be the inspiration for a topic of research or a paper. Consider pursuing the International Studies Certificate program (Contact Dr. Becker, [becker\\_becky@columbusstate.edu](mailto:becker_becky@columbusstate.edu)). Highlight your study abroad on your resume or in your Personal Statement for graduate school admissions. CGE hopes to help students “unpack” their experience, in addition to the memories and photos. We will host a number of events for students upon return. Here are some examples of ways to get involved:

- Become a Global Ambassador (study abroad peer advisors)
- Attend the Study Abroad Reunion
- Participate in the Study Abroad Photo Contest during IEW
- Join Phi Beta Delta, the international education honor society
- Write an article for the CGE Newsletter
- Volunteer at the Study Abroad Fair, International Education Week (IEW), or information tables
- Give presentations in your classes about your experience

- Participate in career workshops
- Share your blog or photos with CGE
- Get to know CSU's international student population
- Take the Re-Entry Experience (ITDS 2205) course

CGE wants to hear about your experiences, so stay in touch!

## **IX. Program Specific Guidance**

Additional pre-departure meetings may be required by program directors/faculty. During these sessions, program directors may provide additional information specific to your program and destination. Typical information that can be provided by program directors includes:

- Flight itinerary & airline ticket
- Meet-up times for departure
- Day to day itinerary
- Services included in program costs
- Emergency contact information
- Accommodation details and facilities
- Additional required travel documentation or paperwork
- Required immunizations, if any
- General travel, weather, food & packing advice for destination
- Local electricity and voltage, and if adapters/converters are needed
- Budgeting guidance for out of pocket costs (cost of typical meals)
- Travel advice specific to host destination
- Other relevant topics

Note: This additional information may not be provided in a written format.

Students are welcome to contact the Center for Global Engagement or Program Directors/Faculty for additional assistance in preparation for their program.

## **X. Useful Resources**

### **Passport, Visa, Government Travel Warnings**

[www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)

### **Travel Guides & Resources**

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

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

Fodors- [www.fodors.com](http://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](http://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](http://www.vayama.com)

**Study Abroad**

[www.nafsa.org](http://www.nafsa.org)

[www.iie.org/students](http://www.iie.org/students)

[www.goabroad.com](http://www.goabroad.com)

[www.studentsabroad.com](http://www.studentsabroad.com)

[www.columbusstate.edu/studyabroad](http://www.columbusstate.edu/studyabroad)

**Communication**

<http://www.corp.att.com/edu/studyabroad/>

**Health & Safety**

Center for Disease Control: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

Cultural Insurance (insurance plan) <http://www.culturalinsurance.com/>

SOS International [www.internationalsos/en/](http://www.internationalsos/en/)

World Health Organization [www.who.int/ith](http://www.who.int/ith)

MD Travel Health <http://www.mdtravelhealth.com/>

State Dept [www.travel.state.gov](http://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](http://www.xe.com) – Currency Exchange Rates

**NOTES**