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**If you reject the food, ignore the customs, fear the religion and avoid the people, you might better stay at home.**

**--James A. Michener**

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### **About This Manual**

This manual was created in order to give you the essential information you need to know prior to embarking on a study abroad experience. This manual does not and cannot cover every issue in-depth, but will serve as a resource to point you in the right direction. The endeavor to study abroad requires the initiative to do your own research. The success of your study abroad experience depends on you and your willingness to do your homework on the culture, customs, language, and politics of your destination. Further you will need to prepare yourself mentally to be flexible and open-minded and you will have a rewarding experience with less stress! With that in mind, let's begin with your preparations for a great experience!

# Pre-Departure Planning

## Passport

If you do not have a passport apply for one now. If you have a passport check the expiration date. **Your passport must be valid until your anticipated return date plus one year.** If you are going on a summer program your passport must be valid for at least 6 months from the date you enter your destination country. You can obtain an application from the local post office or visit [travel.state.gov/passport\\_services.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport_services.html) and download an application and instructions. You can find answers to frequently asked questions on this site as well. We also recommend that your emergency contact obtain a passport as well. This will simplify and expedite their ability to assist you in case of emergency.

When you receive your passport make 4 copies of the name/information page. Submit 1 page to the Office of Study Abroad, give 1 to your emergency contact person, and keep 1 in your carry-on luggage and 1 in your checked luggage. If your passport is lost or stolen you will need the copy in order to replace it.

**U.S. passports are valuable and subject to theft.** Guard yours closely. Buy a travelers belt with space for your passport or keep it in your front pocket. Do not carry it with you daily if you have a secure apartment/room in which to leave it. **Every year our students have passports stolen from their backpacks and back pockets, causing them to miss out on fieldtrips and classes.** Please exercise caution so you will not be so unlucky.

## Register with American Embassy

American embassies provide emergency services for Americans in case of death disappearance, destitution, detainment, and disaster (natural or manmade). The embassy also provides many general services such as replacement of lost passports. For a complete listing of embassy services visit <http://travel.state.gov/acs.html>. American citizens can pre-register with the American Embassy by fax or e-mail prior to departure. Visit the website of the U.S. embassy in the host country for registration procedures. The following are benefits of registering with the U.S. embassy:

- Expedites and simplifies the issuance of replacement passports;
- Facilitates assistance in serious personal emergencies such as accidents, arrest, or serious injury.
- It can help the Embassy / Consulate assist relatives more effectively and quickly, in the event of family emergencies.

You may also register in person after arrival, however some people prefer not to register in person, as American embassies have been terrorist targets in the past.

## Power of Attorney

While you are away there may be a variety of financial and administrative responsibilities that can be difficult to handle from abroad. Many students leave these responsibilities with a trusted family member or spouse. There is a simple procedure that can assign the power of attorney to this person. Power of attorney allows the specified person the legal power to conduct whatever business you specify on your behalf, including signing or picking up checks, signing contracts, making deposits and withdrawals to/from your bank accounts, etc. You may obtain a sample power of attorney form from the Office of Study Abroad. You can use this as a guide to create your own document to assign power of attorney. This sample form was

obtained from the Internet and its compliance with Arkansas law has not been researched. You can research the law on your own, consult an attorney, or if you receive federal financial aid, you may utilize the services of the free legal clinic on-campus. Then take the document and have it notarized by a notary public. You can find a notary public at your local bank or courthouse. If you have questions about legal limits and liability of power of attorney please contact an attorney.

## **International Student Identity Card (ISIC)**

ISIC cards may be included in your program fee. Please review the program flyer or contact your program leader prior to purchasing the ISIC card.

ISIC cards are internationally recognized identity cards and provide discounts on airline tickets, train tickets, museums, restaurants and more. You will also receive supplemental travel insurance benefits, but you will still need primary medical policy for your time abroad. The ISIC supplementary insurance includes:

- \$5,000 Accident Medical Expense
- \$100/day Sickness/Hospital Benefit
- \$250,000 Emergency Medical Transportation Benefit (pays for your emergency transport to an adequate medical facility)
- \$25,000 Repatriation of Remains (in the event of death, pays for the return of remains to the U.S.)
- \$250 passport replacement Service

See next section entitled Study Abroad Health & Accident Insurance for more information.

### **To apply for the ISIC:**

- ❑ Pick-up an application at the Office of Study Abroad
- ❑ Return completed application to the Office of Study Abroad with
  - Check, cash or money order payable to the U of A for \$22
  - Verification of enrollment at the UA from the registrar's office
  - 1 passport size photo

ISIC applications submitted on Monday thru Thursday will be ready on Friday. ISIC applications submitted on Friday will be ready the following Friday. The ISIC member number can be made available immediately if needed to purchase a discount airline ticket prior to the card being ready for pick-up. If your program costs include the ISIC card your card will be distributed at your last study abroad program meeting. If you need the card early to purchase an airline ticket, notify our office and we will arrange for your card to be ready for pick-up from our office.

## **Study Abroad Health & Accident Insurance**

Securing adequate health insurance for study abroad is the responsibility of every participant. However, international health insurance may be included in the program fee.

Contact your faculty leader or the Office of Study Abroad if you are unsure about your health insurance coverage.

If health insurance is not included in your program it is important that you purchase a health insurance policy that covers you while studying abroad before you leave the U.S. **If you already have insurance,**

**verify that the coverage extends to study abroad. Some policies only offer coverage within the U.S.**

Many insurance policies may reimburse you for medical expenses that accrued abroad but do not cover medical evacuation and repatriation (see definitions below). These two types of coverage are very important to have as they can be the most expensive medical costs accrued abroad. When shopping for insurance please be aware of some crucial benefits necessary for study abroad:

- **Accident coverage**- in case of automobile accident/sports injury etc. \$50,000
- **Health/Illness coverage** if you have a chronic condition be sure to check on coverage for pre-existing conditions. Coverage should be sufficient to cover an extended hospital stay. This coverage should be at least \$150,000.
- **Repatriation** In the event of death, this benefit pays for remains to be transported home. This coverage should be at least \$50,000
- **Medical Evacuation** This benefit pays for you to be airlifted in a medically equipped critical care helicopter or plane to the closest medical facility that is equipped to handle your care. This coverage should be at least \$100,000.

The Office of Study Abroad has contracted with the Lewer Agency to provide comprehensive study abroad insurance coverage to students. The Lewer insurance package includes unlimited medical evacuation and repatriation benefits. The cost is approximately \$46/month and covers you for 30 days prior to the start date of your program and 30 days after the completion of your program allowing you to engage in recreational travel before or after your program without worry of securing additional insurance coverage. Please contact the Office of Study Abroad for specific information on benefits, coverage maximums, and cost.

The ISIC card (see page 4) provides limited study abroad insurance including minimal repatriation and medical evacuation coverage at an affordable cost.

**Understand your insurance policy and know how to use it. Know insurance claim numbers and leave a copy of policy information and contact numbers with your emergency contact person in the United States.**

Most insurance policies reimburse you for basic medical care. Hospitals abroad will not accept your insurance card in lieu of payment. It is important to have additional funds or an emergency credit card to pay for unexpected medical expenses.

## **Paying for your University of Arkansas Program**

### **Using Your Scholarships and Financial Aid for Study Abroad**

The scholarships and financial aid that you have currently to pay for your education may be used for study abroad. Federal financial aid may be applied towards the cost of all University of Arkansas administered study abroad programs.

To use your federal financial aid, institutional scholarships, or additional study abroad scholarships you must follow this procedure:

- **Request a budget from the Office of Study Abroad** be sent to the Scholarship Office if you receive UA scholarships and/or the Office of Financial Aid if you receive federal financial aid (Pell grants/loans etc)
- **If you receive UA scholarships, notify the Scholarship Office** that you will study abroad.  
\*\*Students on scholarship for the academic year may or may not be able to apply those scholarships towards a summer study abroad program. Contact the scholarship office for more details.
- **If you receive other scholarships loans, and/or grants, meet with your Financial Aid counselor.** Be sure to bring a copy of your budget with you to this meeting. You can pick up a copy from the Office of Study Abroad.
- **Contact the administrators of any outside scholarship** awards to determine if they can be applied to your study abroad costs. Usually you are able to use these scholarships if you can prove you will receive credit towards your degree program. Your study abroad advisor can provide verification for the scholarship administrator if necessary.

### **Disbursement Arrangements**

Financial Aid is disbursed 10 days prior to the first day of classes at the UA. Students should expect to have a check ready 3 days prior to the first day of classes at UA for the term that you plan to study abroad. If you have UA tuition and /or a study abroad program fee on your student account, your scholarships and financial aid will be applied directly toward this balance and any funds leftover will be processed as a refund check.

As these funds may not become available until just before you leave for your program, or after you have already departed, you have two options in dealing with this situation.

- Contact the Student Accounts department to make arrangements as to where to send your financial aid/scholarship check. If you have a parent or spouse handling these matters for you make sure that the mailing address is correctly listed with Student Accounts. You may want to consider assigning your family member power of attorney (see page 4) or adding them to your bank account so that they are able to handle your financial matters in your absence.
- Contact Student Accounts and request your check be directly deposited into your bank account. This option is only available if you have a local branch in Fayetteville. You will need to complete a form and submit a deposit slip.

### **Payment of Program Fees**

Be sure keep a copy of your UA payment agreement. This document contains information regarding deposits, payment deadlines, and refund policies. Payments may be sent to the Office of Study Abroad. Checks or money orders should be made payable to the “University of Arkansas”.

### **Refund Policies**

Refunds are awarded on a case-by-case basis consistent with the cancellation policy noted on the UA payment agreement. Refund decisions are based upon a number of factors, including the reason for withdrawal, date of notification of withdrawal, and the amount of recoverable costs. Refunds will not be awarded for dismissal of students due to violation of University policy.

Please remember that if you choose to withdraw from a program, notify the Office of Study Abroad IN WRITING. Any refund will be based upon the date of receipt of your written notification of withdrawal.

## **Withdrawal from Study Abroad**

If you are considering withdrawal or have decided to withdraw from a program for any reason at any time, notify Office of Study Abroad immediately. There is information you may need to be aware of that may impact your decision to withdraw. Also, some problems may be reconciled so that it may become unnecessary to withdraw.

Some things to consider regarding withdrawal from study abroad:

1. Review your payment agreement with the study abroad provider to determine if you are eligible for a refund. Will you lose your deposits, program fees? Have you purchased an airline ticket yet? Can you obtain a refund?
2. Are you currently using federal financial aid to pay for your program? You may have to repay your financial aid award if you withdraw from the program.
3. In the case that you wish to withdraw from the study abroad program after it has started you must be prepared to forfeit the entire cost of the program
4. Have you discussed your decision with your faculty leader, parents, and/or study abroad advisor? Give your decision some time. You may be going through a difficult phase of culture shock. If you are experiencing serious problems with your program, please contact your faculty leader or our office.
5. **If you choose to withdraw from a program for any reason & at any time, notify Office of Study Abroad in writing.**

Send your notification of **withdrawal in writing** at your earliest convenience. **Your refund (if applicable) will be based on the date we receive your written notification of withdrawal. Please refer to your payment agreement for refund policy.**

## **Travel Arrangements**

### **Airfare**

**(If airfare is included as part of your program fee you may skip this section)**

To find the best price on airfare purchase your ticket approximately 60-90 prior to your departure. Prices are highest more than 90 days and less than 60 days from departure as the bargain fares have not yet been determined or have already sold out.

There are a variety of options for shopping for airline tickets, which include, ticket consolidators found on the Internet, travel agencies, airline companies, and student travel companies. There are a lot of great deals on the internet but be sure to read the fine print and know exactly what you are purchasing. Some things to consider:

- Flexibility on return date, what are the charges for changing your return date?
- Can you change the return date?

- Do you want to have an open-ended return?
- What airline carrier are you using? Are they in the midst of bankruptcy proceedings? (This has happened and a student had to purchase a new ticket to get home)
- Is the airline carrier a reputable company?
- If not using a travel agent are there support services from company if your flight is cancelled or you miss your flight?
- Make sure your seat is confirmed! If it is not confirmed and you are late checking in you could get bumped off the flight.
- Bargain fares: look at length of layovers and total travel time. Sometimes excessive travel time is not a bargain.

### Travel Agents

If you are inexperienced in making international travel plans you may want to consider using a travel agent. It will cost about \$30 more but they can minimize layovers and offer assistance if you experience problems during travel. Travel agents are often experienced at finding bargain fares. Be sure to tell them that you are a student participating in study abroad. The University of Arkansas uses the Travel Depot and World Wide Travel agencies (contact info is at the end of this manual). They will work with you to find the best fares available.

### More Tips

- Some study abroad programs offer discount group flight rates for participants. Contact your program administrator for details.
- For student discount tickets you can try STA Travel [www.statravel.com](http://www.statravel.com). In order to receive the student discount you must purchase an ISIC International Student Identity Card. For details on the ISIC see page 3 of this manual.
- Use a credit card to purchase your ticket. Most credit cards offer consumer protection if you have reason to dispute the charge later.
- **When you receive your ticket make sure that you name is spelled EXACTLY as it is on your passport.** If it is incorrect you may not be allowed to board the plane. Some discount tickets do not allow name changes if you notice the error later.
- Always call and confirm your flight 48 hours prior to departure AND your return. Arrive at least 2 hours prior to your scheduled departure.
- For more airline ticket resources please refer to the back of this manual.

### Eurail

If you plan on traveling through Europe at the conclusion of your program you may consider purchasing a Eurail pass. This pass entitles you to unlimited train travel for a specific duration of time at a discounted price. There are many different packages offered to meet your specific needs. If you are unsure of your travel plans you may want to wait until your plans are firm to purchase a pass. Eurail passes can be purchased in Europe, but they cost 10% more than if you purchase them before departure. Visit [www.eurail.com](http://www.eurail.com) for

more information or use keyword “eurail” to do an internet search. If you will be using STA Travel to purchase your airline ticket they can also sell you a Eurail pass or you can inquire with your travel agent.

## **Packing**

Everyone has very different styles about the best way to pack, however everyone agrees on one thing: **Do NOT pack more than you can carry by yourself!** The following are sample packing lists. The way you pack will depend on your personal needs, the type of program, and climate and season of your destination. For example if you are going on a city-a-day tour, pack very lightly as you will have to lug your stuff all the time. If you will be in one place the entire time and have a place to store your belongings while you take mini trips you can pack more stuff. If you will be in one place most of the time and want to travel at the end of the program but don't have anywhere to store your luggage you need to pack lightly. **You MUST be able to haul ALL of your belongings through the airport(s) and to your final destination.** Many seasoned travelers suggest that you lay out everything you will pack then leave half that pile at home. Another tip for packing is to walk one half mile carrying everything you want to bring and see if that helps you decide what to leave at home. Remember: You will acquire more STUFF during your travels.

### **General Guidelines for Packing:**

- Bring quick dry no-wrinkle clothing. Buy an iron when you arrive.
- Bring clothes that mix and match well.
- Budget to buy clothes there: It will help you blend in more. You won't know the styles until you arrive.
- Be prepared to hand wash clothes.
- Bring clothes you can layer for various temperatures.
- Don't bring what you can buy there.
- Don't bring clothing with obvious phrases/names in English or obviously American.
- Bring only things you will use almost every day.
- Leave room in your suitcase for souvenirs and other purchases.
- Bring a backpack for daytrips and weekend travel.
- Check the weather online and pack appropriately.
- Don't take anything you can't afford to lose/have stolen, ex. laptops, expensive jewelry and cameras.
- All electronics may need adapter for different voltage depending on country.

Airlines allow only 2 bags to be checked and 1 small carry-on and 1 personal bag to go on the flight. You can ship things home, but overseas shipping is quite expensive.

## **Suggested Basic Packing List (adjust for your type of program)**

### **Clothing**

- ❑ 4-6 tops-weather specific
- ❑ 2-3 pairs pants/slacks
- ❑ 2 dressy outfits
- ❑ 1 warm top/sweater/windbreaker
- ❑ 7 pairs socks and underwear
- ❑ 1 bathing suit
- ❑ comfortable walking shoes

- ❑ dress shoes
- ❑ Handkerchief

### **In Carry-On Luggage**

- ❑ Passport & copy of passport
- ❑ Airline ticket & copy of ticket and itinerary/receipt
- ❑ Money/ATM card/Credit Card/Traveler's Checks
- ❑ Name and Phone Number of Travel Agent and Airline Co.
- ❑ Name & Address of Program Director if applicable
- ❑ Address Book/Emergency contact information
- ❑ 1 weeks worth of prescription medications and prescriptions
- ❑ 1 pair of underwear, 1 pair socks, toothbrush, deodorant
- ❑ 1 bottle of water
- ❑ guidebook

### **Miscellaneous Other Items (Do not bring all- pick what you will need)**

- ❑ Prescription Medications
- ❑ Condoms and/or birth control pills
- ❑ Gift or U.S. souvenirs for new friends and/or host family
- ❑ Photos of friend, family, and pets (leave frames at home)
- ❑ Journal
- ❑ Pocket notebook & pen
- ❑ Book to read in English
- ❑ Backpack for weekend trips
- ❑ Travel size toiletries (Buy the bigger size when you get there)
- ❑ Pocket knife
- ❑ Playing cards
- ❑ First Aid kit-travel size- 3-4 band aids, aspirin, Imodium, antiseptic wipes
- ❑ Inexpensive camera
- ❑ Film
- ❑ Sun block
- ❑ Warm hat/Mittens
- ❑ Ziploc baggies
- ❑ Shower shoes/flip-flops
- ❑ Battery powered alarm clock
- ❑ Sunglasses/sunhat
- ❑ CD/mp3 player
- ❑ Thin towel that will dry quickly
- ❑ Hiking boots (wear on the plane)

### **Packing Medications**

- Bring all medications labeled in correct containers/packaging
- Bring physician's prescription with GENERIC NAME for all medications
- ALL prescriptions should have **generic** name listed. Brand names vary from country to country

- If you have a chronic condition or medication allergy consider ordering a medic alert bracelet. Contact your pharmacist for ordering information.
- Carry one week's worth medication with you in carry-on luggage for flight.
- If you use birth control pills remember to bring prescription

## Money Matters Abroad

Students often grapple with how much money to bring and what form. Since the amounts and forms will vary from program to program, here we will outline the pros and cons of each form of money and suggest some things to think about when considering how much to bring. It is always better to bring a combination of money forms. Please consult your faculty leader or program administrator for site-specific information.

### U.S. Dollars

- Can be exchanged for local currency anywhere
- Always recognized
- **Cannot be replaced if stolen**
- Mix with other forms of currency
- Sometimes exchange rate not great

### Traveler's Checks

- Can be obtained at local bank
- Often a small service fee to exchange, no problems exchanging
- **Can be replaced if stolen**

### Bank/ATM Cards

- Great exchange rate/ withdraw as local currency
- Reliable/Safe if stolen they must have PIN number
- **Not all cards work overseas, check with your bank**
- Dependent on availability of ATM machines in destination
- Check with bank and/or program administrator for more info

### Credit Cards/Debit Cards

If you will be using a credit card or debit card be sure to notify the bank/credit card company that you will be using your card abroad. Many banks will cancel your card if they notice activity abroad to protect against fraud.

- Great Exchange Rates
- Must have for emergencies
- Not accepted everywhere, **can be problems with debit cards-check with bank**
- Some stores/restaurants require minimum purchase
- Must be used responsibly, **easy to overspend your budget**
- Make sure someone at home is taking care of bill while you are away
- Visa and MasterCard most widely accepted

### Native Currency

- Cash is king!
- Many small businesses, street vendors etc accept cash only

- Can easily be obtained using ATM card, traveler's checks, or U.S. cash

## Euro

The euro is now the legal currency in the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain. The three EU countries that have not adopted the euro are the UK, Sweden and Denmark.

If you are traveling to any of these 12 countries, you will need to use euro currency or euro traveler's cheques.

## Money Safety Tips

If you bring ATM, debit, or credit cards be sure to make a copy of the front and back of your cards. Keep this information stored separately from the cards. If the card is lost or stolen you have your account number, security code, expiration date, and customer service telephone number. Also you should make sure the toll-free customer service telephone number will work overseas. Some credit card companies have a separate telephone number for international callers. **Also never keep your wallet in your back pocket or your backpack as it is likely to be stolen. When at a café or restaurant do not put your purse or backpack under your chair without it being secured to you in some way.**

## Communications

Staying in contact with friends and family is helpful in warding off homesickness and will ease the worries of your family members.

The following are some tips to help you stay in touch with your friends and family.

- **CALL YOUR Parent/Spouse/Significant other as soon as reasonably possible after arriving!** They may be worried until they hear that you have arrived safely. Be sure to let your people know before you leave that it may take up to 48 hours after your arrival for you to get settled in and get access to a phone.
- **Know how to make an international call.** There are differences in how to dial from country to country. When calling other countries you must know the country code, city code, and then the phone number. Visit [www.countrycallingcodes.com](http://www.countrycallingcodes.com) for country codes and instructions for dialing to and from abroad.
- **Cell Phones** Most U.S. cell phones will not work abroad. In Europe, Africa and the Middle East you can buy a cell phone inexpensively. You pre-pay for your minutes in "units" and talk until your money runs out. You won't have to deal with billing or going over budget and your parents will feel better knowing that they can reach you wherever you are.
- **Internet Cafes/Cyber Cafés** They are most everywhere in the world (except the U.S.!) Café's usually charge somewhere between \$1-\$2 to use an online computer for 1 hour. Access to printers may vary. For an online internet café directory visit [cybercaptive.com](http://cybercaptive.com)
- **Public Phones** usually are not coin operated. You can buy pre-paid calling cards at newspaper and candy stands and the cards are inserted directly into the phones.
- **Private phones** can be quite expensive to use for international calls. If you live in someone else's home be sure to have permission before using the phone.
- **Postal Service** Don't forget about snail mail. There is nothing more personal than a handwritten letter with a foreign postmark on it. Send a postcard or two to your home address as a souvenir.

## Health and Safety

Your health and safety abroad is central to having a positive study abroad experience. Your behavior is the most important factor in maintaining your health and safety, and the health and safety of those around you. If you follow these guidelines you can have a happy healthy experience!!

## Health Matters

### Study Abroad Health & Accident Insurance

All students studying abroad need comprehensive study abroad insurance. Your current medical insurance probably does not include the necessary coverage for study abroad. See page 4 for detailed explanation.

### Packing Medications

- Bring all medications labeled in correct containers/packaging
- Bring physician's prescription with **GENERIC NAME** for all medications
- ALL prescriptions should have **generic** name listed. Brand names vary from country to country
- If you have a chronic condition or medication allergy consider ordering a medic alert bracelet. Contact your pharmacist for ordering information.
- Carry one week's worth medication with you in carry-on luggage for flight.
- If you use birth control pills remember to bring prescription

### Immunizations

Some countries require that you have certain vaccinations prior to entry. Other countries may not have mandatory immunizations, but it may be a good idea to have them anyway. For information on immunization, vaccinations, and disease conditions read the following:

- The University Health Center Travel Clinic offers immunizations and information regarding disease/health conditions in the country you will travel.
- Call Jeff Green at 575-7755 at the UA Health Center Travel Clinic at least 6 weeks prior to your departure to inform him of your study abroad location. This allows time to order any vaccines if necessary.
- **It is highly recommended to obtain a Hepatitis A vaccine prior to studying abroad.** Hepatitis A is contracted via contaminated food. Hepatitis A is common throughout the world, including the United States.
- If you cannot visit the travel clinic contact your local doctor or county health department or visit the Center for Disease Control website at [www.cdc.gov/travel/](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/) for information

### Jet-Lag

Most travelers who take long flights to new time zones experience jet-lag. This can cause difficulty adjusting to a new time schedule, fatigue, disorientation, forgetfulness, and loss of concentration. There are some precautions you can take to help minimize the effects of jet-lag.

- Stay hydrated. Drink lots of water on the flight.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine.
- Sleep on the plane. Bring earplugs & eye mask if necessary.

- When you arrive force yourself to stay awake until your normal bedtime. This will help you adjust to local time more quickly.

## Food and Water Safety

In some locations water and/or unwashed food can pose health risks. To read about health risks present in your study abroad location visit the Center for Disease Control at [www.cdc.gov/travel/](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/). The site will offer recommendations for drinking water and washing food and general health and safety issues in the U.S. and abroad.

## Traveler's Diarrhea

Traveler's diarrhea is a common reaction to new bacteria present in the food and/or water. Many travelers bring Imodium, pepto or some other anti-diarrhea medication with them. For information on how to prevent and treat traveler's diarrhea visit [www.cdc.gov/travel/foodwater.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/foodwater.htm).

## Safe Sex

If you are sexually active in the U.S. it is possible that you will be sexually active abroad. Take precautions to avoid sexually transmitted diseases including AIDS. AIDS is prevalent worldwide, including Europe, and in some areas of Europe rates of infection are as high as 1 in 4 people. Take the following precautions to protect yourself against disease and pregnancy (of yourself and the other).

**Bring condoms with you, both men and women** if you are currently sexually active. If you don't need them throw them away at the end of the trip. You are better off having them and not needing them, than needing them and NOT having them!

## Safety Matters

### Crime

Violent crimes in most locations abroad tend to occur much less than in the U.S. The crime most encountered by study abroad students is the ubiquitous pickpocket and petty theft. Every year about ten students report having their purses/wallets pick pocketed. In order to avoid having items stolen follow these tips:

- **Wear your wallet in your FRONT pocket. Back pockets & Backpacks are easy for pickpockets.**
- Realize that anything left unattended is subject to theft. This includes putting your purse/backpack under your chair at a café.
- Do not bring any expensive electronics or other item you cannot afford to lose.
- Wear your purse strap diagonally across your chest. Make sure it is zipped.
- Do not put your wallet or other valuables in your backpack.
- **GUARD your PASSPORT.**
- Keep your door locked.
- Do not flaunt expensive jewelry or flash large amounts of cash in public.
- Use safes in hotels and lockers in hostels.

Violent crime is rare, but possible, just as it is in any major city in the U.S. Exercise the same judgment and caution as you would in a U.S city. Here are a few reminders:

- Do not walk alone after dark
- Walk and/or travel with a friend.
- Know where the unsafe areas of town are and avoid them. Ask a local friend or program director if you don't know.
- Don't let anyone you don't know into your building or apartment
- Don't bring home friends from bars or clubs. Get to know people a few weeks before inviting them to your home if you do not know them through other local people.
- Do not become excessively drunk. You cannot make good judgments when drunk and you will become an easy target for anyone considering committing a crime.
- When traveling let someone know where you are going and when you will return.

## **Terrorism**

Terrorism is a concern for many people, especially since the World Trade Center attacks on 9/11. Although the thought of terrorism is frightening and on our minds, the reality is that terrorism is the least likely risk faced by study abroad students. Automobiles and alcohol abuse actually pose the greatest danger to students abroad. However, there are things you can do to minimize becoming a terrorist target:

- Avoid public demonstrations. Although they it may be tempting to become a part of history, demonstrations can turn violent and an American may be a good scapegoat for frustrations.
- Keep a low profile-Do not dress stereotypically American.
- Alter your daily routine.
- Avoid American or expatriate hang-outs.
- Do not make plans in public that may be overheard.
- Avoid visiting embassies unless you have business there.
- Pre-register with the U.S. embassy by e-mail or fax.

## **Alcohol**

Overseas, beer and wine may be consumed socially with meals and it may be legal to drink at a younger age than in the U.S. Drinking to excess will mark you as an “ugly American” and perpetuate stereotypes about Americans. It will also make it difficult to be accepted by the host culture. Drunk driving is a serious offense and is also extremely dangerous.

Alcohol use can seriously compromise your safety.

### **If you drink, use alcohol moderately:**

- Alcohol impairs your judgment and will make it even more difficult to navigate cultural situations
- Excessive use of alcohol can leave one vulnerable to assault
- Know your limits and stick to them
- Do not drive drunk or get into a car with a drunk driver

If you do not drink alcohol, you may find there is social pressure for you to drink, as social drinking may be expected. In these cases be prepared to either politely decline alcoholic beverages or accept the beverage and do not drink it. Some students have given hosts a medical reason that could not drink and this explanation was respected and accepted. This situation may not be common, but is something to think about in advance.

## **Illicit Drugs**

### **Do not engage in illicit drug use and/or purchase illicit drugs!**

Drug possession and/or use is/are grounds for dismissal from all UA study abroad programs. In some locations although drugs are illegal, casual drug use may be common and tolerated by local officials. However, as an American you may be singled out for arrest for violating the law. America's vocal stance against drugs is resented by some and may cause for you to be singled out. In other countries it may be opportunistic to arrest an American in hopes of getting a large bribe. **Do not use illicit drugs as it opens you up to assault, robbery, and/or arrest.** A majority of Americans in prison abroad are there for drug charges.

### **Know the local laws and follow them! You do not take the constitution with you!**

You will be held accountable for knowing the local laws and following them. If you are arrested your American passport does not work as a "get out of jail" card. Your parents, Office of Study Abroad, or the embassy will not be able to help you. The embassy can give you a list of attorneys and serve as an observer to protest if your human rights are violated, but beyond that there is little they can do. You will be dealt with in the manner prescribed by local law. This means you may not be entitled to a trial or you may have to remain in jail for a long period of time. The severity of the punishment for the crime may be greater than in the U.S.

## **Dating and Socializing Safely**

Socializing, making friends, and possibly dating are all a part of studying abroad. Most of what you learn will be through socializing with local people. But there are a few things to consider when making friends and/or dating in regards to male and female relationships.

In other societies, the role and/or status of women may be different than in the U.S. The way men and women interact may be different than what you are accustomed to. Many of the differences are subtle and may not be obvious until you become familiar with the culture. It can take time before you understand the nuances in these relationships. Due to these factors, it is best to proceed with caution when entering into a platonic, romantic, or sexual relationship with the opposite sex. What you may consider a casual cup of coffee may be a serious commitment to the other person. What you may consider to be a little bit of kissing that can stop anytime you say "no" may be perceived as permission to have sexual intercourse, regardless of what you say later, including "no". For this reason please read the following tips.

### **To avoid misunderstandings consider the following:**

- Learn appropriate behavior for your gender. Ask your friends and watch other men/women.
- Women may consider dressing conservatively. You may see local women dressing very provocatively, but they have the cultural knowledge to deal with the men. You may have a much different experience.
- Be aware of the stereotype that American women are sexually promiscuous.
- In many cultures smiling and direct eye contact is flirting. This can cause misunderstandings for American men and women.
- Women: if you are bothered by an amorous male do not continue smiling, talking with them, or looking them in the eye. You don't have to be rude, but you are entitled to walk away without explanations.
- Always ask your friends if you have questions about what is or is not appropriate.

For more information on student travel safety please visit: [travel.state.gov/spring\\_break.html](http://travel.state.gov/spring_break.html)

## Culture Shock

Culture shock is the stress you face when experiencing a new culture. It is the stress of immersion in a strange new place. You will experience culture shock as you eat different food, learn a new language, experience new social rules, new fashion, new bathrooms (toilets can vary!), and so on. You will find things that you had previously taken for granted may now require a good deal of effort. You may find yourself feeling very childish when you don't know how to perform what would be simple tasks at home. You may also receive a lot of unwanted attention and stand out as a foreigner, or you may be ignored and everyone may seem rude. Have your parents and/or spouse read this section so they can understand what you will be going through. It is possible you may call them soon after arriving demanding to go home or sobbing from homesickness. This usually passes in about a week. Prepare your family members for this so they don't panic when you call during a temporary wave of homesickness.

### Symptom and Reactions to Culture Shock

Not everyone experiences culture shock in the same way, intensity, or at the same time. Every experience is different.

#### Some common symptoms of culture shock include:

- Difficulty sleeping/Sleeping excessively
- Lack of appetite
- Intense homesickness
- Very critical of host country
- Very critical of U.S.
- Increased stress
- Tension/irritability.

#### Here are some common reactions to culture shock:

- Avoiding contact with others. Becoming reclusive and studying all the time. Reading and sleeping a lot. Sending lots of e-mails home. Blaming host country and self for not having a good time
- Always comparing the U.S. to host country. Host country not living up to U.S. in the person's mind. Very negative and eager to share these feelings with others.
- Becoming very pessimistic about everything. The food, weather, people, teachers, and other students all intolerable. Nothing is right
- Becomes a native. Everything American is bad, host country is good. Wants to melt into the crowd and not have any contact with other Americans. Feels tempted to remain in host country forever.

## Preparing Yourself for a New Culture

### Understanding American Culture

In order to understand why you may feel disoriented by another culture it is important to identify some of the traits of American culture. Many people are not aware that there are American cultural traits. Often cultural behavior is regarded as "natural" as you may not be aware that there are other ways of behaving or perceiving the world. Please read the "American Culture" sheet in your packet to better understand some American traits. This will be useful in understanding why people in your host country may make you feel uncomfortable. Often cultural differences may be perceived as personality quirks. You may think that

individuals are just rude, aggressive, stupid, selfish etc, when actually there is a lot of cultural miscommunication occurring. Remember that identical behavior can have many different meanings in different cultures. For example, looking away and not making eye contact may be a sign of respect in some cultures. In American culture this indicates someone is insecure, hiding something, or even dishonest, all of which are negative traits. See where the cultural clashes can occur?

### **Understanding Your Host Culture**

The best way to prepare yourself for a foreign culture is to learn as much as you can about the culture. Here are a few suggestions:

- Buy a guidebook. Lonely Planet, Let's Go, and Rough Guides are all excellent books. They will provide introductory cultural, political, and historical information. They will also have a good bibliography to find other sources.
- Read fiction by a native author. This will often give clues as to how everyday life is lived
- Talk to students from the country you will visit. Get their input. Contact the International Students Organization at [iso@uark.edu](mailto:iso@uark.edu) or International Student Services at [iss@uark.edu](mailto:iss@uark.edu) for contact information for the various cultural organizations and contact information
- Talk to a professor who specializes in the region you will visit. Ask for their recommendations regarding reading.
- Don't stereotype or make assumptions about the people you meet, regardless of what you have read. Imagine if someone read a short book about American culture. Do you think it would prepare them for what type of person you are and how you will behave? Instead use your research as a foundation and a knowledge base with which you can develop questions to learn more about the culture.

See the suggested reading list at the end of this section for more information on crossing cultures.

### **Coping with Culture Shock**

The following are tips to help you deal with culture shock. You may want to talk with a study abroad alumnus before you go to hear about their experience with culture shock and how they dealt with it. The Office of Study Abroad can put you in touch with someone who would be happy to share their story with you.

- Keep a journal, it may help you keep some perspective on your experience
- Do not isolate yourself.
- Set goals for traveling or learning more about the people and culture
- Explore the city, find its' hidden treasures
- Make local and American friends, try not to only socialize with Americans
- Start a new hobby or project while abroad
- Remind yourself that rough and stressful times are part of the learning experience
- Remind yourself that next week will be great, adjustment takes time.
- Talk to friends/program directors when you are having a difficult time.
- Be open-minded and keep your sense of humor. Be prepared to accept whatever comes along.

### **Travel and Culture Resources**

[The Art of Crossing Cultures](#), Craig Storti, Intercultural Press 1990

American Ways. American Ways: A Guide for Foreigners in the United States (Second Edition) Intercultural Press. 2002. Gary Althen

Culture Shock: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette, Sally Taylor

Are You Two....Together?: A Gay and Lesbian Travel Guide to Europe, Lindsey Van Gelder and Pamel Brandt, Random House, 1991

Citizen Diplomacy: Responding to Questions About America, Brigham Young University David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies 1995

Minority Experience of Study Abroad. Brown University Office of International Programs. 1991

Traveler's Tales: A Woman's world. Marybeth Bond, Traveller's Tales, Inc 1995.

A Journey of One's Own: Uncommon Advice for the Independent Woman Traveler  
by Thalia Zepatos

This is just a small portion of what is available. Visit the library or search Amazon.com for more books and resources.

## Coming Home

You may experience reverse culture shock when your return home. You feelings may include disappointment, depression, or feelings of isolation upon your return home. You have had an incredible experience and have grown a lot in the past months. Your friends have remained the same. They may get tired of hearing about your experience, or maybe you are having difficulty explaining the culture or why it was such a great experience. You may find yourself dreaming of returning or always comparing things in the U.S. to your host country. This is a common experience for study abroad alumni. We have some suggestions to help you stay connected with your experience in a positive way.

## Get Involved!

There are several opportunities on the UA campus to help you maintain ties to the world outside the United States.

- **Become A Cross Cultural Mentor for International Student Orientation at the UA.** Guide new international students through orientation and the maze of UA policies and procedures and help them become familiar with campus. For more information contact International Student Services at 479-575-5003 or [iss@uark.edu](mailto:iss@uark.edu).
- **Be a Conversation Partner.** Spring International Language Center (SILC) is a school for teaching English as a second language. The students often request conversation partners to work on “everyday” English. To volunteer contact SILC at 479-575-7600. SILC is located on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of Hotz Hall

- **Join Phi Beta Delta, Honor Society for International Scholars.** If you have a GPA of 3.0 as an undergraduate or 3.5 as a graduate student and have completed an international study experience, you may be eligible to become a member of Phi Beta Delta, a national honor society recognizing excellence in international education. Contact the Office of Study Abroad to request an application.
- **Converse at Foreign Language Tables.** Looking for a way to maintain your new found fluency gained overseas? **Check with the Foreign Language department at (479)575-2951** or with one of your foreign language professors for information on informal foreign language conversation groups.
- **Join the Study Abroad Student Association (SASA).** SASA has two goals: to provide a network of support and shared interest for study abroad students and to assist the Office of Study Abroad. SASA members also help with the study abroad fair and various other projects. There is a monthly meeting that may concern a topic such as how to emphasize international experience on a resume. Join SASA and provide internationally minded leadership on our campus!

## Quick Reference Guide

### **U.S. State Department**

Locate a U.S. embassy anywhere in the world, report a lost or stolen passport, travel warnings and advisories, emergencies abroad, traveling tips, how to register with local consulate, etc.

**travel.state.gov**

### **Embassy Services**

[travel.state.gov/acs.html](http://travel.state.gov/acs.html)

### **Passport Services**

[travel.state.gov/passport\\_services.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport_services.html)

### **Safety Tips**

[travel.state.gov/spring\\_break.html](http://travel.state.gov/spring_break.html)

### **Foreign Embassies**

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

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

### **Center for Disease Control**

Info on diseases, water, and food conditions in specific regions. Also tips for avoiding traveler's sickness.

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

[www.cdc.gov/travel/foodwater.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/foodwater.htm)

**Out of Country Dialing Codes** Instructions for dialing from abroad.

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

### **International Phone Cards**

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

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

### **ISIC Cards/Eurail Passes**

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

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

### **Travel, Language, & Cultural Information**

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

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

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

[www.city.net](http://www.city.net)

### **International News**

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

[www.bbc.co.uk/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/)

### **Internet Café Directory**

<http://cybercaptive.com>

### **Hostels**

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

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

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

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

### **Airline/Rail Tickets**

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

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

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

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

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

**World Wide Travel 479-521-3440**

**Travel Depot 479-444-3366**

# Emergency Contact Information Sheet

Copy this page for your emergency contact person in the U.S.

Local Police Dial \_\_\_\_\_  
Dial police first (not your parents!) if true  
emergency!

Program Director Name:

Address:

Phone number:

Home Phone number:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Your Overseas Address:

Phone number:

Host Family Name:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Health Insurance Phone numbers:

Health Insurance Policy Number

U.S. Embassy phone number:

## Office of Study Abroad

Director: DeDe Long [dslong@uark.edu](mailto:dslong@uark.edu)

479-575-7582 office

479-443-2293 home

Study Abroad Advisor: Rachael Martin

[rmartin@uark.edu](mailto:rmartin@uark.edu)

479-575-7582 office

479-575-8176 home

479-283-8218 cell

## **Credit Card Information**

Name:

Account Number:

Phone number:

Expiration Date:

**Traveler's Checks Serial Numbers:** make  
copies and keep them safe

Travel Agent Phone number:

Airline Carrier Phone Number:

# University of Arkansas Contact Information

## **Office of Study Abroad**

Fulbright Institute

DeDe Long [dslong@uark.edu](mailto:dslong@uark.edu)

Rachael Martin [rmartin@uark.edu](mailto:rmartin@uark.edu)

722 W. Maple St.

Fayetteville, AR 72701 USA

1-479-575-7582

FAX 479-575-7402

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

## **International Student Organization**

[iso@uark.edu](mailto:iso@uark.edu)

## **Office of International Student Services**

479-575-5003

[iss@uark.edu](mailto:iss@uark.edu)

## **Registrar's Office**

479-575-5451

[registra@uark.edu](mailto:registra@uark.edu)

## **Student Accounts**

Kesha Harryman

479-575-5651

FAX 479-575-8667

[kharrym@uark.edu](mailto:kharrym@uark.edu)

## **Financial Aid Office**

479-575-3806

## **Schedule of Classes**

<http://www.uark.edu/classes/>

## **U of A Xpress Mail**

<http://mail.uark.edu>

## Study Abroad Checklists

### **Pre-Departure Checklist**

- Obtain Passport
- Apply for Visa (if required)
- Register with Embassy (optional)
- Assign Power of Attorney (optional)
- Purchase Airline Ticket (if not included in program)
- Purchase insurance if necessary
- Apply for ISIC card (if not included in program)
- Review “Money Matters” and visit bank.
- Buy Supplies
- Research Host Culture
- Make airport pick-up arrangements if applicable
- Complete emergency contact information sheet
- Copy all important documents including passport
- Pack
- Call 48 hours ahead of departure to confirm flight (not necessary for group flights)
  
- Submit copy of passport to Office of Study Abroad
- Meet with Financial Aid and/or Scholarship Office if you receive aid or scholarships (UA students only)
- Notify Student Accounts of current mailing address

### **Before you return home**

- Confirm flight 48 hours prior to departure

\*\*Not necessary for group flights

### **After Return Home**

- Join Study Abroad Student Association
- Share your knowledge with others
- Visit Office of Study Abroad and provide evaluation of program