

Wesleyan University
Office of Study Abroad
STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK

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THE WESLEYAN OFFICE OF STUDY ABROAD
THE CENTER FOR GLOBAL STUDIES

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WELCOME

Study abroad is integral to the Wesleyan liberal arts education. It is also one of the most challenging learning experiences available to undergraduates and, as a consequence, it can be singularly rewarding.

To help students strategize for achieving their goals abroad we might distinguish between distinct modes of approaching the experience. *Tourism* is understood generally as a mode in which we engage less with people and culture and more with what can be captured through the snapshots and souvenirs --good *memories* of transitory moment—we bring home. *Cultural integration*, on the other hand, produces the *skills and knowledge* --new horizons of understanding and new modes of communication, verbal or non-verbal—that can potentially sharpen our perceptions of ourselves and redefine the way we interact with the world. Tourism may be thought of as testimonial; study abroad, in its best sense, as experiential and potential transformative.

Study abroad as we understand it at Wesleyan is founded a unique blend of *academic* and *experiential* learning designed to facilitate your cultural integration and help you achieve greater *intercultural competency* and *language proficiency*. Learning to leverage these two dimensions of your learning in tandem will be the key to your success. It is important to keep in mind that culture and language are *not* learned by osmosis. Simply living in a foreign country is no guarantee at all of success. Your progress toward achieving these goals will match the degree of focus and energy that you are willing to invest. This is why such goal-setting exercises as the *Pre-departure Reflection Exercise* are so important. For you to succeed in what you set out to accomplish, it is important to be clear about your goals, to revisit them frequently, recalibrating as needed, in order to develop clear strategies for achieving them. It is also important to be reasonable about what you can in fact achieve given your time and resources. We strongly urge you to discuss your goals and strategies with friends and family and, especially, with your faculty and study abroad advisors, on campus before you leave and while abroad. We also urge you to keep a journal of your experience, a strategy that has proven to be highly effective in such circumstances.

Wesleyan students commonly identify their study abroad experience as among the most meaningful of their Wesleyan career, and they speak with enthusiasm as to how the experience enhances their learning after returning to campus. They also routinely report on the strategies they found useful for meeting challenges and reaching their goals. We have gleaned the most common suggestions from a broad range of student evaluations hoping that you will find them to be a useful point of departure reflecting on your own approach to your personal experience.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

- **Continue studying and practicing your target language skills** up until the time of departure.
- **Educate yourself regarding your host culture before you leave**, through formal resources (books and especially online newspapers and magazines) and by talking with international students, returnees, and peer advisors. This may provide you with important insights, contacts and resources for assimilating more quickly once you are abroad.

WHILE ABROAD

- **Be self-critical regarding your own cultural attitudes.** In any cultural context the logics of social behavior and discourse are defined locally, not globally. You are guaranteed to encounter unfamiliar situations that will make you uncomfortable. Your ability to question your own assumptions and efforts aimed at understanding the world from a different cultural perspective might lead you to discover in yourself a previously hidden internal reservoir of patience, perseverance, and self-assurance.
- **Try to become an integral participant of diverse social networks**, especially by cultivating extracurricular interests through organized activities and groups (music, art, sports, volunteer projects). Avoid taking

refuge from your host culture through excessive interaction with folks from home, either in person (the phenomenon of the “American ghetto”) or via your electronic devices (Skype, email, texting). This will hinder your learning and growth. Identify what you might have to share or to give as a way of establishing social ties.

- **Expand your field of interest.** Determine what is important to your host family or community and learn to engage in conversations about those topics. Explore aspects of culture –art and archeology, traditional and classical music, global politics, the environment, societal tensions and conflicts-- that would not have interested you before.
- **Learn to take risks and to laugh at yourself.** Missteps in either verbal or non-verbal communication are as inevitable as is the progress you will make by plowing ahead. People around the world tend to look on tourist with indifference. They deeply value those who seek deeper levels of assimilation and understanding in their countries.

Congratulations for taking this important step, and for the rich and exciting world of discovery and personal growth that awaits you! We hope that this handbook will serve as an important reference tool before you depart and while you are abroad, and that it will contribute to the success of your experience. **This handbook is designed to serve the needs of all students going abroad, without regard to their program of choice. For more information about Wesleyan’s own study abroad programs in Bologna (Italy), Madrid (Spain), and Paris (France),** and for host country-specific orientation, please consult:

ECCo: Eastern College Consortium in Bologna (Italy)	http://www.eccoprogram.it/
VWM: Vassar-Wesleyan Program in Madrid (Spain)	http://vwmadrid.org/
VWP: Vassar-Wesleyan Program in Paris (France)	http://en.vwpp.org/

CULTURE

A reading by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. explains to us how important it is to learn about different cultures, encouraging us to experience the adventures of studying abroad:

"I've often thought there ought to be a manual to hand to little kids, telling them what kind of planet they're on, why they don't fall off it, how much time they've got here, how to avoid poison ivy, and so on...And one thing I would really like to tell them about is cultural relativity. I didn't learn until I was in college about all the other cultures, and I should have learned that in the first grade. A first grader should understand that his or her culture isn't a rational convention; that there are thousands of other cultures and they all work pretty well; that all cultures function on faith rather than truth; that there are lots of alternatives to our own society. Cultural relativity is defensible and attractive. It's a source of hope. It means we don't have to continue this way if we don't like it."

L. Robert Kohls defines "culture" as "an integrated system of learned behavior patterns that are characteristic of the members of any given society." Culture is learned and transmitted from generation to generation. However, there are individual differences in cultures that define a group so that it is nearly impossible to completely define a culture in its entirety. In short, there is no one correct description or list of traits of a particular culture.

Further, there are no intrinsically right or wrong ways of living. For practical purposes, there are only different solutions that have been learned in culture to provide for its basic needs. In order to understand different values and behaviors, it is useful to approach them non-judgmentally and seek to understand that which is logically inherent in every culture rather than automatically condemning or accepting the different culture.

Living in another country for an extended period of time will give you an opportunity to develop an in-depth understanding of another culture, confront different customs and ways of thinking, and adapt to a new daily routine. An individual's adjustment to a new culture is a continuous, on-going, natural process. It never stops, and the adjustment styles and techniques vary from one individual to another, from one culture to another. The end process nearly always results in both changes in the individual and the setting. You may be seeing and asked to participate in activities that will challenge your beliefs, your values, your sense of self, and your nationality.

Just as you will bring with you clothes and other personal items overseas, you will also carry an invisible "cultural baggage" when you travel. Cultural baggage is not as obvious as the items in your suitcase, but it will play a major role in your adaptation abroad. Cultural baggage contains the values that are important to you and the patterns of behavior that are customary in your culture. The more you know about your personal values and how they are derived from your culture, the better prepared you will be to see and understand the cultural differences you will encounter abroad.

The concept of adjustment implies change. In cross-cultural adjustment one is concerned with those mental or behavioral changes required when moving from one cultural environment to another. The nature of the adjustment depends on the nature of the differences between your original culture and the new one and on your personal objectives and expectations upon entering the new culture. The concept of adjustment assumes that you already have a well-established set of values and behavior for operating in your own culture. As you enter into new cultures, those patterns of behavior may no longer satisfy your needs. In developing new patterns of coping with your new environment, you may experience varying degrees of discomfort and lead you to the beginning stages of culture shock.

CULTURE SHOCK

Culture shock is psychological disorientation similar to feelings of frustration. However, when you feel frustrated you can usually trace the causes and begin to "attack" them. Culture shock is different from frustration because the causes are difficult if not impossible to trace. It is a feeling that grows little by little as you interact with other

students, faculty, and people in the new culture. The feelings may also be the result of a combination of many elements within the new environment or the lack of elements from the old. While living in another culture is extremely exciting and rewarding, it can also be disorienting and challenging to be far away from your family, friends, support systems and cultural norms. For most people, the study abroad experience consists of a series of emotional highs and lows. However, the more you know what to expect in the host country, the closer your expectations will match reality and the less shocking your experience will be.

Venturing overseas to live in another country is like riding an emotional roller coaster from exhilaration to disillusionment, from discouragement to fulfillment, from one extreme to another. At almost every moment you will need every bit of patience, flexibility, and adaptability that you can muster.

Culture shock is not a result of a specific event, but it is derived from the experience of encountering new ways of doing things that challenge the basic, ethnocentric belief that your way of doing things is the “correct” way. Culture shock will most likely affect a person gradually. It builds up from a series of strange events in your host country that you may find difficult getting used to. For instance, you may encounter an ambiguous living or working situation at which you are expected to perform with maximum skill despite inadequate direction or explanation. You may also have your values questioned at times, which can deepen the anxiety of living in a foreign environment.

When you first arrive in the host country, everything around you will probably be new, different and exciting. You may enjoy the distinct character of sights, sounds, gestures and other aspects of the culture that flood your senses. And you may look ahead to your assignment with great expectations and a positive mindset. This initial reaction is common to the period of culture shock called the honeymoon stage. It is characterized by feelings of fascination, exhilaration and a desire to learn more about the culture.

After several weeks, when you have settled into a daily routine, some of the subtle differences in gestures, manners, and tone and rhythm of voices will become more evident. It is possible that these cultural differences will make you feel out of place and miss everything about home. You may even feel disappointed in yourself if it is difficult to communicate at first. However, you should be aware that this is a natural and common reaction to the cultural adjustment process and it will surpass with time if you anticipate and prepare for its existence.

You may experience a wide range of withdrawal symptoms and aggressive symptoms when culture shock strikes. Some of these symptoms will include homesickness, hyper-irritability, bitterness or resentment towards your host country, depression, psychosomatic illness, loss of interest, social anxiety. Students are sometimes unaware of the fact that they are experiencing culture shock when these symptoms occur. However, there are indeed some ways to overcome it. First of all, it is necessary to acknowledge that culture shock may lie behind the physical symptoms and irritability of cultural adjustment as well.

HOW TO RESPOND TO CULTURE SHOCK

First of all, unless you are blessed with a personality that provides you with a natural immunity to overcome cross-cultural adjustment, most people cannot escape culture shock. In one form or another you will experience it, and you will gradually come to find out the lesson that it offers.

You will feel more liberated after having experienced culture shock because you have learned new approaches to doing things in your host country that have been adopted as part of daily life. By getting to know your host country and looking for the logic that lies behind their style of living, you will foster more effective interaction within the new culture and increase your abilities to manage and understand the new social system.

To ease the stress of culture shock from its beginning stages, however, there are several solutions that can help you overcome it more quickly.

When you first arrive, observe your foreign surroundings so that you may trace any odd interactions you see to their underlying values. Once you have identified some of your host country's values, share some of your observations with a native person with whom you trust. You will find that it is a bountiful experience to develop deeper, more intimate relationships with a few selected host nationals so that you may converse non-judgmentally about issues impacted by cross-cultural beliefs.

Do not fear losing your home values or personal values. To partake in the customs of your host country will not make you lose your current cultural identity. It will only enlighten your mind and spirit and allow you to be more at ease in your new environment. It will open doors to understanding.

It is very important to maintain a good sense of humor. You may feel foolish at times when you have difficulty expressing yourself in another language, for example, but learn to laugh it off. Many people will enjoy conversing with you and commend you for your efforts.

Keep your mind occupied and be active. Activities such as reading, exercising, and socializing will keep you in healthy spirits. If you are feeling down in the dumps, do something to alleviate your depression such as taking a scenic trip to a nearby region or country.

If you take time to inform others of your home country by presentation of scrapbooks, photo albums, or other types of visuals, you will build closer relationships that will allow your hosts to get to know a part of you that isn't so apparent in your daily living situation.

Above all, have faith that your study abroad experience will be positive. As you acquire more knowledge about your host country and you begin to develop new friendships, you will discover the innumerable rewards of studying abroad.

LEARN THE LOCAL LANGUAGE

To speak the language of your host country will demonstrate your initiative to learn and, at the very least, will be a courtesy to your hosts. Attempting to use the local language is a good basis on which to build new relationships with local people because it shows that you respect the people and their culture and expresses your desire to learn. People will be delighted by your eagerness.

After you arrive, look for various means to ameliorate your language skills. Practicing the language is very important. You must discipline yourself to speak your host country's language at all times, even with your American contemporaries. Don't try too hard to avoid grammatical mistakes, however. This will change your normal communication style and inhibit relaxed relations with other people. Remember that anything you learn will be of value. Words, phrases, sentence fragments—understood or spoken—will be appreciated. You will also experience a great sense of self-gratification once you begin to learn more and more about the language.

You should try to recognize that other cultures may use different verbal and non-verbal communication methods. Body language, the use of personal space when conversing, and other non-verbal communication can be very different than what you are used to in the United States. Likewise, some cultures are not nearly as frank, sarcastic or confrontational when discussing certain topics as Americans are. Sometimes things are implied in conversation but not voiced. It is important to remember that differences in communication styles are just that -- different. You should avoid making judgments about a person's mannerisms until you understand how verbal and non-verbal communication styles work in your host culture. You will be studied and possibly judged by your own communication style as well.

BE OPEN-MINDED

It is important to target culture in a way that makes it easier to see how behavior fits together, both logically and systematically. The tendency of people to impose their own values and assumptions onto people in a new culture

usually inhibits cross-cultural understanding. Moreover, if you attempt to do something based on your own assumption of efficiency, you will be frustrated and feel that people are deliberately making things hard for you. Try to be open-minded rather than resort to becoming defensive and fitting to your preconceived stereotype. Stereotypes will only prevent you from getting to the richer reality that lies beyond them. They may also evoke hostile relations between in-group and out-group members and prevent a person from being receptive to other people's ideas. The goal here is to empathize with the bearer of the other culture. William F. Marquardt, a polyglot professional of English linguistics, describes empathy as "the habit of trying in time of conflict to see things the other person's way, as the most relevant magic in our day."

RECOMMENDED READING

For more information about culture's influence on behavior and communication, anthropologist Edward T. Hall has written several highly regarded books:

- *The Silent Language*, 1973
- *The Hidden Dimension*, 1990
- *Beyond Culture*, 1977
- Dr. L. Robert Kohls's *Survival Kit for Overseas Living*, 1996, provides sound guidance in preparing for a rewarding experience abroad.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS & ID PAPERS

IDENTIFICATION

Most foreign police officers require that all persons carry an I.D. or (photocopies), along with their home address and telephone number in their host country at all times. They do have the authority to ask for identification, and students without it run the risk of being detained. It is also wise to carry the address and phone number of the on-site Resident Director. It is not necessary to carry your passport with you. In fact, you are strongly advised to leave it at your domicile, however, **you should always have a copy of your passport with you.**

PASSPORTS

U.S. citizens need a valid passport to travel abroad. You should apply for a passport well in advance to avoid any conflict that may delay your departure. Make sure it is valid through at least six months beyond the end of the program. Expedited service is also available. Passport applications can be obtainable at most post offices.

Applications can be downloaded from the State Department's Web site at:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports.html>

VISAS

A visa is a stamp or attachment in your passport that allows you to enter a specific country for a certain period of time. It may be necessary to obtain a visa to study abroad depending on the country and the proposed length of stay. You can find out visa requirements by visiting www.embassy.org.

You will be issued either a multiple entry visa or a single entry visa. A multiple entry visa allows you to leave and enter a specific country as many times as you wish during your stay, whereas a single entry visa allows you to enter a country during a certain period of time and then return to the US. If you have a single entry visa, consult your Resident Director or program staff if you are considering traveling outside your host country.

There is almost always a fee attached to the visa application. In most cases, the process can take up to a month or so. In some cases, it takes longer. Your program will advise you. Visa application fees are not included in the cost of the program. Please do not wait until the last minute to obtain a visa. You will not be able to board your plane unless the visa is in your hands.

*Send the application by a postal method that can be tracked in case your passport is lost in the mail.

Among standard items required for a visa application may include:

1. A current, valid passport 180 days beyond the end of the program date
2. Visa application form
3. Passport photographs
4. A visa application fee
5. A letter of acceptance from the host institution or program sponsor
6. Evidence of financial support during the period of time you will be studying abroad
7. Proof of medical insurance

MOBILE PHONES

Students often find that the easiest option for mobile phone service abroad is to get their U.S. phones unlocked and purchase local SIM cards, which can be obtained fairly inexpensively. Alternatively, some students choose to purchase a local, prepaid mobile phone for calling and texting. Your program will let you know what the best option is for your location. Some programs require that you have a phone with a local, non-U.S. number.

PHONE CARD

The major long distance companies offer several phone card options. You may also find international calling cards that offer good rates once you arrive in your host country. If you have enrolled in a program where you will be staying in a homestay, you will most likely not be able to make long distance calls from your host's phone. In these cases, having a phone card is highly recommended. NOTE: These are not the same as "prepaid" phone cards that you purchase at convenience stores in the U.S. These will not work abroad.

RAIL PASSES (EURAIL YOUTHPASS & FLEXIPASS)

Many students take advantage of low-cost airlines for traveling while abroad. For those interested, Rail Passes are available to anyone under 26 years of age and may be purchased at almost any travel agency. The Eurail Youthpass entitles you to one or two months of unlimited second-class travel in 16 European countries (Britain is a notable exception. Visit www.britrail.com for information.). This pass is restricted to persons living outside Europe or North Africa. First-class passes are also available at higher prices with no age restriction.

The first time you use a regular Eurail pass, have an official at the train station stamp in the date. Do this BEFORE you board the train. Many students find that by using the pass over a long vacation (Winter or Spring break) and then two or three weekends following that, the pass more than pays for itself in travel and convenience. Even more convenient is the Eurail Flexipass, which gives students 15 or 30 nonconsecutive days of travel in a three-month period. These passes can be purchased through many travel agencies in the U.S. and select locations abroad, however, note that the prices will be higher if you buy your rail pass overseas. Please visit www.eurail.com for information.

NOTE: Eurail Passes must be used within six months of their date of purchase. Students cannot purchase a card in September that is valid for travel the following spring. Prices usually increase at the beginning of January. PLEASE REMEMBER that certain trains in Europe charge a supplement that is NOT covered by your Eurail Pass; check BEFORE you get on the train. Ignorance will not relieve you of the obligation to pay the supplement in route.

HOSTELING CARD

Memberships are available from Hostel International that enable you to stay in member hostels for reduced rates. Visit their web site at <https://www.hihostels.com/>. Most of these hostels are clean, offer kitchen facilities and one or more meals a day, and a great opportunity to meet fellow travelers. Hostels vary greatly and may close completely for several hours each day.

LEGAL MATTERS

Students abroad are subject to the laws of the country in which they study and the rules of the institution in which they are enrolled, as well as those of Wesleyan University. Students who violate the law may have to face legal proceedings in the local judicial system, which may not provide the same safeguards for those accused of crime as the U.S. system. If convicted of a crime, a student will face punishment according to local practices. Many countries have stricter laws than the United States does regarding the use and distribution of illegal drugs, with more severe penalties for violating these laws. For their own protection, **all students are cautioned to obey the laws of the country in which they study**. In particular, any student who expects to use illegal drugs should seriously reconsider the decision to study abroad.

While abroad, students are subject to the disciplinary regulations of their host university or program and bear responsibility, as well, to the Wesleyan University Code of Conduct. In general, disciplinary action under the Campus Code of Conduct may be taken for one year after the alleged misconduct occurs. Records of any disciplinary actions overseas become a part of a student's file at Wesleyan University and are communicated to the Wesleyan University Judicial Board.

All students are expected to respect national and local ordinances, even though these may sometimes be very different from those in the U.S. Wesleyan University does not tolerate abuse of alcohol, use of illegal drugs, or other behaviors disruptive to the wellbeing of others. **Students who do not adhere to appropriate standards of conduct will be dismissed by Wesleyan University. No fees will be refunded under such circumstances.**

Students studying abroad are guests of a foreign government. They can be (and some have been) expelled from the country as undesirable, even when no legal proof exists that they have broken a law. Students who are jailed will receive the following assistance from the Office of Study Abroad and/or the United States Government:

1. Your family will be advised of your situation.
2. You will be assisted in getting a lawyer at your own or your family's expense.

We cannot get you out of jail or provide you with bail money. You must avoid illegal activity at all times.

MONEY MATTERS

The range of expenses can vary depending on the time of overseas study, institutional policy, and program selection. Once a program is selected, there are things you can do to limit additional costs and maintain a realistic overseas budget.

Overseas costs can be estimated by keeping track of the U.S. dollar against foreign currencies. Verify what expenses are included in your program fee and then determine the amount of funds you will need to cover all other expenses. The amount of money you will bring overseas is also determinant upon your frugal, or perhaps, lavish lifestyle. Consider these costs when planning your budget for study abroad:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transportation• Meals• Communication• Entertainment• Additional Fees for Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal Expenses• Gifts and Souvenirs• Books• Miscellaneous Daily Expenses
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Managing your finances responsibly is an important and challenging aspect of a successful and enjoyable academic experience abroad. Be wise and always keep a list of your expenses.

ATM/DEBIT CARDS

You can access money in your bank account in the US by using a bank card that is on systems such as *Cirrus* or *Plus*. Local currency is withdrawn from your US account. Before you leave, visit or call your bank to make sure your card and PIN number can be used to withdraw money abroad. **Tell your bank the dates you will be overseas and where you will be**, as some banks have been known to cancel a card when overseas withdrawals have been made. ATM machines can be found in almost every country. If your program is in Europe, most train stations have ATM machines, and they are almost always open. Most banks charge a fee per withdrawal, but you can get a good exchange rate and you do not have to pay commission. If you happen to run out of money, it is easy for someone to put more in your account in the U.S. It is important to keep track of what you're spending. If your card is lost or stolen, you may have to apply for a new one by contacting your bank at home. Also, there may be some quirks when you first try to use an ATM card, depending on your situation. Know your PIN # by the number itself and not alphabetically. You may find that other countries do not put the alphabet on their keypads. You should also determine from your bank whether the funds that you withdraw overseas will be taken from your checking or your savings account. Be sure to have other means of obtaining cash available.

CREDIT CARDS

Even if you don't plan on using them, you may want to consider having one in case of an emergency.

Call your credit card issuer(s) to apprise them of your travel plans, and find out what transaction fees will apply. Compare these fees, as not all cards charge the same.

Make sure you have copies of the fronts and backs of your credit and debit cards, and phone numbers that can be reached from abroad (most "800"/toll-free numbers cannot be called from abroad). Keep the copies and numbers in a separate location from your cards, in case your cards are lost or stolen.

TRANSFER OF MONEY

The transfer of money from a domestic account to an affiliate bank abroad can be a time consuming and costly tactic. Try to budget your money accurately. If you are staying overseas for an entire academic year, you may consider opening a local bank account. You can obtain a list of correspondent banks in your host city from your on-site director.

Many banks also have options for sending money to and from abroad. Check with your bank if you have questions about access to money while abroad.

Parents or friends may also send you an International Postal Money Order, which may be cashed at American Express and is available in most U.S. post offices.

GUARDING YOUR VALUABLES

Foreigners are especially vulnerable to theft as their attention is diverted elsewhere by exploring temptations. Money belts and ID holders are recommended to safeguard any valuables you carry during travel. Many travel stores can offer you nifty devices that combine safekeeping and carrying convenience. Again, in case of loss or theft, make sure to have your account numbers and phone numbers recorded in an accessible place to make any emergency calls.

POWER OF ATTORNEY

When you give someone the authority to act on your behalf, you are granting power of attorney. If you have business matters in the U.S. that need to be handled while you are abroad, it is highly advisable to designate an individual, usually a parent, to take care of these matters on your behalf. You do not have to choose a lawyer to be your agent, but it is important to select someone you trust. You need to choose someone who won't abuse the powers you grant to them and will look out for your best interests.

INCOME TAXES

If for some reason you are not able to file your U.S. income taxes online, you may need to arrange to have tax forms sent to you (they are also usually available at a U.S. consulate or embassy). Or have taxes paid for you by your power of attorney while you are out of the country. It is also possible to ask for an extension. Be sure to know what your tax responsibilities are and how to comply before you leave. The IRS web site may be a helpful resource. You can reach this web site at www.irs.com.

HEALTH

Living and learning in a different physical and social environment places additional demands on one's mind and body. The emotional effects of confronting a new lifestyle can arouse anxiousness, bewilderment, and discouragement. As a result, you may experience a fluster of mood swings that can be very stressful. If you take proper care of yourself through rest, relaxation, and activities such as reading and exercise, you will be more capable of healthily adjusting to your surroundings.

Be clear about your health status when applying for a study abroad program and particular housing arrangements. Describe allergies, disabilities, psychological treatments, dietary requirements, and medical needs so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you have a medical condition that is not easily identified (diabetes, epilepsy), you are advised to wear a medic alert bracelet while you are abroad. You should also inform the study abroad program staff and travel companions so that they can be prepared in case of an emergency. If you have a medical problem that could be aggravated by conditions abroad (e.g. asthma in dusty Cairo), consider carefully how you will deal with the problem overseas and discuss it with your doctor.

Make appointments for medical examinations well in advance to ensure that you are in good health before you leave and to complete all necessary immunizations. Request copies of important records, x-rays, and prescriptions in generic form to go with you. Update your health records as well, including eyeglass prescriptions and regular medications. You may want to take an extra pair of glasses with you.

If you expect to need regular medical care abroad, take an informant letter from your physician at home, providing details of your medical conditions, care, and specific needs. If you self-inject prescribed medication, you may need to carry needles and syringes with you. You'll need a physician's prescription for medication and medical supplies to pass through customs. It is also important to keep medications in their original containers.

There are no required immunizations for most of Western Europe, Japan, Australia, Canada, and Mexico. Make sure your tetanus shot is current, and you should seriously consider a vaccination for Hepatitis A, a serious illness usually contracted through improper hygiene. If you are very concerned about possible health problems, contact the Center for Disease Control (CDC). They have an International Traveler's Hotline (404) 332-4559 where, by punching in the country code of your host country, you can get recorded information on vaccinations, food and water and current health problems. Their website is www.cdc.gov/travel/travel.htm.

PRESCRIPTIONS

If you have a prescription that you take regularly, make sure you take enough with you for your entire stay abroad. Your insurance company might not usually cover prescriptions in this amount, but if you explain that you are studying abroad, they may waive this restriction. Also, make sure that your prescription medication is legal in the country where you are going. The CDC website is a good resource for checking this, or you can talk to your prescribing physician.

MEDICAL KIT

It is important to bring a medical kit so that you have access to supplies that you may need suddenly. Your favorites might not be available in the same form abroad. Here is a list of items you should include in your kit:

- Band-Aids, antiseptic
- Constipation remedy (natural bran or bran tablets)
- Cold/cough/allergy symptom relief (such as antihistamines, lozenges)
- Diarrhea treatment
- Motion sickness medication
- Pain/fever relief (aspirin, acetaminophen, ibuprofen)
- Pepto Bismol tablets

- Sunscreen

MEDICAL CARE ABROAD

At some point during your time abroad, you may become ill. It will probably be something simple due to changes in food and water, insufficient sleep, or stress of travel. At any rate, it is essential that you give yourself time to adapt. Jet lag, a new language, exotic foods, registration, beginning classes, and even changes in the weather can take their toll. Use the same stress-relief techniques you use at home—exercise, meditation, reading, etc. Prolonged periods of stress can be quite harmful and hinder your adjustment and health.

Learn how to get medical help, whether routine or emergency, before the need arises. The on-site coordinator will help students contact an appropriate physician or other services when attention is required.

Further, it is wise to inquire immediately about personal security issues when you go abroad. Lifestyles may be very different from home. This is true even in cultures that seem relatively similar to the United States. Ask about safety issues such as local transportation, traffic patterns, swimming practices at regional beaches, and use of electrical appliances. Ask about security issues such as neighborhood or building security, personal security during evenings or other outings, and culture-specific behavior or security concerns related to gender.

You cannot assume that the experiences and practices you took for granted at home will be accepted in your host country. If you are not sure about something, whether it is a simple question about where a service can be found, or a more complex matter, such as expectations about friendship and dating, ask someone you trust.

HEALTH ISSUES ABROAD

AIDS AND OTHER STD'S

The AIDS epidemic is a case of its own and merits special treatment because its reach is worldwide. Sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) such as gonorrhea, syphilis, and herpes also continue to pose health risks for travelers in any country. Knowing this and taking precautions, such as refraining from unprotected sex and other practices that carry the risk of infection, is the only way to ensure protection.

The World Health Organization states:

AIDS is not spread by daily and routine activities such as sitting next to someone or shaking hands or working with people. Nor is it spread by insects or insect bites. AIDS is not spread by swimming pools, public transportation, food, cups, glasses, plates, toilets, water, air, touching or hugging, coughing or sneezing. This is true abroad as it is at home.

SANITATION

If you will be living in a rural area, where sanitation systems are less developed, some caution is advised. Avoid untreated water, fruits that are not peeled, raw vegetables and dairy products. If mosquito-borne illnesses are an issue in your host country, take the appropriate preventive medication or apply bug repellent regularly.

MEDICAL ATTENTION

PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING

If you are currently using professional help to deal with emotional or mental health problems, talk over your plans for study abroad carefully with a psychologist or psychiatrist before making the final decision to go. The challenges of adjusting to a new environment coupled with the absence of a familiar support system may exacerbate extant problems. Going to another country will not solve personal problems and may make them worse. Above all, if you think you are in trouble, let your family, friends, Resident Director and Office of Study Abroad know.

Should you need professional services abroad, contact your program staff for a referral. With your authorization, a licensed psychologist abroad can request in writing any records that may be on file at your college or university. In case of an emergency, records can be requested email (contact Jennifer D'Andrea at Wesleyan's Counseling & Psychological Services), but the therapist must follow up with a letter.

DOCTORS AND CLINICS

Selected doctors will provide bilingual medical care in your particular host country. They offer full medical checkups, complete laboratory service and house calls, and will make arrangements for hospitalization if necessary.

PHARMACIES

If possible, try to bring an adequate supply of any prescribed drug you will need during your stay, as not all medicines will be available. Bring prescription drugs in their original containers. It may also be helpful to bring along an additional prescription written in the host country's native language should you lose your medicine and need to replace it. It is simplest to bring your own emergency medicines for headaches, colds, coughs, stomach aches, hay fever, diarrhea, and so on. You will find pharmacies open at various hours for your convenience.

DENTAL CARE

Your program staff can recommend good English-speaking dentists. Your health insurance may not cover

A FEW ADDITIONAL NOTES

In cases of sexual assault or harassment, pregnancy, venereal disease or other delicate issues, please remember that your program staff is prepared to deal with these situations and will offer you the appropriate care.

INSURANCE

Health insurance is required for all students studying abroad. Students will be covered by their program's health insurance or by Wesleyan's study abroad insurance, but students may have additional insurance through their parent or personal policy.

If you are covered by a policy other than Wesleyan University student health insurance, find out the terms of the coverage, as it may not provide comprehensive coverage abroad, as well as the procedures for reimbursement.

Please note that your program insurance or Wesleyan's study abroad insurance will only cover you for the dates of your program, including orientation. For coverage before and after your program, you are strongly advised to use your existing insurance, if coverage is adequate, or purchase additional insurance.

PREPARING FOR YOUR EXPERIENCE ABROAD

HOW AND WHAT TO PACK

BAGGAGE AND WEIGHT ALLOWANCE

Since policies vary, contact your airline to find out what specific regulations apply to you. As a general rule of thumb, suitcases should not weigh more than 50 lbs. Airlines usually allow at least one free checked bag and one carry-on for international flights. **Check the specifications of your airline for further detail.** Label your bags clearly with your name and address, and be sure to put this information somewhere inside your bag as well.

DO NOT BRING EXCESSIVE AMOUNTS OF LUGGAGE! Remember that you will have to carry your luggage yourself, and the heavier your luggage, the more stairs you'll be likely to climb (Murphy's Law of Traveling). Many countries outside of the U.S. have fewer buildings with elevators. Porters are usually not available in railway stations and help is usually not offered on the public transportation system. If you have not yet bought a suitcase, it is suggested that you buy one with wheels. Also, keep in mind that you will be returning home with a souvenir or two so you should save some extra space. It may be a good idea to pack an empty piece of luggage so that you may bring home any new belongings.

It is wise to bring anything valuable with you in your own carry-on baggage. Cameras, phones, laptops, jewelry, etc. should be registered with the Customs Office before departure from the U.S. Duty may be assessed on unregistered items by American authorities when you return home. To find out more, visit <https://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/kbyg/customs-duty-info>

ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES

Bring as few electrical items as possible. The electrical system may be different from the US system in your host country. If you want to use a hair dryer or an iron, for example, you will need a very powerful transformer as well as an adapter for several foreign plugs. Many transformers bought in the US will not work overseas. It is cheaper in the long run to buy the devices you will need in-country or bring battery-operated devices. Note that in some countries, electricity is very expensive, and extensive use can cause problems with host-families. For information on electrical systems in various countries, refer to this website: <http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets/>

A GOOD PRINCIPLE TO FOLLOW: Never take anything with you overseas that would be hard to get along without if it is lost, stolen, or damaged.

DRESS

In some parts of the world, you may not feel comfortable in articles of clothing such as shorts or revealing tops. You may also not be allowed to enter some public buildings or tourist attractions wearing certain garments. It is wise to expect the unexpected in regards to the weather. Bring rainwear and warm clothes even if you do not expect such weather in the country you'll be studying in. Closet space will most likely be limited in your accommodation, so the fewer articles of clothing, the better. In regards to more formal wear, wrinkle-resistant and permanent press clothing is ideal, as dry cleaning can be very expensive. Do your research—find out about your host country's "style" before you go. Your program staff will have more, country-specific information for you on what to pack in terms of dress, and what is appropriate to wear in your host country.

TRAVEL ACCESSORIES

If you plan on traveling at all within the host country or neighboring countries, guidebooks like LET'S GO, BERKELEY'S, or the ROUGH GUIDES are valuable resources. You might want to purchase a money belt or hidden pocket for money and important documents. The best bet for extensive travel is a sturdy, quality backpack.

Internal frames for backpacks are good. Make sure to buy the size you'll need and the size you can carry, but no larger.

BRING GIFTS

If you are staying in a homestay, it is thoughtful to bring a small gift for your host family. You may also choose to bring small things for the friends you'll make. Suggested gifts would include something representative of you, your school, or state.

KEEP A JOURNAL OR BLOG

This is something to seriously consider. Writing down your thoughts and feelings about this exciting time will prove invaluable to you later as you look back upon how much you have grown and changed. Try to move beyond just writing about what you did and saw, and describe how you were impacted or impressed by what you experienced. Try to write in your journal on a daily basis so that you may identify with your feelings regularly. It's a good idea to make notations in your journal of what pictures you took while overseas. This will provide for a most memorable experience. If you are keeping a blog, be sure to share the link with the OSA!

THE PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

PREPARATION FOR TRANSIT & ARRIVAL ABROAD

- PASSPORT:** Is my passport valid for the extent of my stay abroad plus six months? Do I know how to replace it if it's lost or stolen?
- VISA:** Have I verified visa requirements for any countries I'll be visiting?
- REGISTER:** Have I registered at <https://step.state.gov/step/> to be contacted in case of emergency?
- PHOTOCOPIES:** Have I made 2 photocopies of the following documents, one to leave at home, the other to keep in a secure place abroad?
 - Passport identification page
 - Airline tickets
 - Driver's license
 - Credit and ATM/bank cards
 - Contact information abroad (addresses, emails, and phone numbers)
 - Emergency contact information abroad
 - Insurance information
 - Itemized packing list
 - Medical instructions & prescriptions
- LUGGAGE:** Have I limited my luggage to what I can carry myself? Have I verified the airline baggage allowance and the excess baggage fees? Have I labeled luggage inside and out with my contact information both in the US and abroad? Have I included a change of clothes in my carry-on?
- ARRIVAL:** Do I know how I'm getting to my homestay? Have I included crucial contact information for arrival in my carry-on? Do I have a contingency plan if something goes wrong?
- MONEY:** Do I know the exchange rate and understand how to get local currency upon arrival? Do I know how to get money and how long it takes to get it? Have I contacted my bank and credit card companies to let them know that I'll be living in my host country, and to ask about waiving ATM and credit-card fees?
- IDs:** Do I have any other ID cards, rail passes, hostel cards, or documents that I need to get before leaving the US?
- CULTURE:** Do I have useful readings that will help me assimilate abroad?

GENERAL CONCERNS ABROAD

- HOUSING:** Do I have the family's name, address and phone number with my ticket and passport, or know how to reach the home? Have I brought a small gift for my host family?

- MEDICAL:** Do I understand how my medical insurance applies abroad and what to do if I need to submit receipts for medical expenses? Do I know what illnesses/conditions are prevalent in the host country? Do I know my weight in kg and my height in cm? Do I have whatever health and/or medical supplies I think might be difficult to find abroad? Have I consulted with a physician regarding immunizations I might need where I am traveling?
- TRAVEL:** Have I reviewed Travel Warnings, Consular Information Sheets, Public Announcements, and related documents on my host country at <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings.html>
- BUDGET:** Have I devised a budget for my stay abroad? Have I set aside emergency funds?

ADMINISTRATIVE & ACADEMIC CONCERNS

- FINANCIAL AID:** Have I reviewed with an advisor: (1) how my Financial Aid package applies to my study abroad and (2) what forms I might need to submit before I return to campus?
- COURSES:** Have I discussed my academic goals for study abroad and beyond with my advisor? Do I understand how I will register for the classes that I'll take at Wesleyan following my time abroad? Have I reviewed the OSA Academic Regulations page regarding credits, grades, and how to process potential changes in my course selection abroad?
- EVALUATION:** Do I understand how I'll be graded and what I need to bring back (syllabi, papers, finals, etc.) in order for courses to count for my major?
- CALENDAR:** Have I shared the program calendar with my family, alerting them to: course registration period, first and last day of classes, exam period and holidays?
- DICTIONARY:** Do I have a good bilingual pocket dictionary?
- REENTRY:** Do I know how I will sign up for housing and register for courses for my first semester back on campus?

THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

It is crucial that you review once again and, while abroad, continue to consult the [Academic Regulations](#) page that you read prior to your first advising session in the OSA. Information included below is meant to supplement regulations stipulated clearly on that page.

CLASSES

The essence of study abroad is an extensive education within and out of the classroom. Formal classes should take precedence during your overseas experience. Though the classroom is a structured setting, the methods of teaching and ideas presented in a foreign system can be valuable educational tools. Generally speaking, overseas curriculums entail more student initiative than those in the US. Homework may be limited; therefore, you must keep up with the material covered by the professor. Your grades do transfer and will figure into your cumulative GPA.

Depending on the program that you attend, classes will differ with respect to grammar and non-grammar courses. On a program where English is not the primary language, such as in Paris or Madrid, classes will typically be taught in the native language. Placement into language classes is usually determined by a pretest.

COURSE LOAD

A normal class load is 15-16 semester hours, for which you will receive four Wesleyan credits. Wesleyan's Office of Study Abroad must approve overloads. For more on this, please see the Academic Regulations page on the OSA website.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

You must follow the policies of your program on class attendance. Going to class should be a priority for you when you are on your study abroad program, even if attendance is not taken or required.

CULTURAL PROGRAM

The cultural program constitutes an essential part of each student's learning experience. Wesleyan University students should take advantage of any activities or trips that are offered as part of the program fee. Note that excursions vary by program and the semester of enrollment.

TEACHING & LEARNING STYLES IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

Wesleyan students set high standards for themselves with regard to cultural immersion, and such immersion often involves direct enrollment in university courses taught by local faculty for native students. In such circumstances, Wesleyan students quickly discover that differences in teaching and learning styles are as essential as any other differences (language, behavior, food) that set cultures apart. Reconciling yourself to this basic truth and cultivating your own adaptability will enable you to profit from your study abroad to the hilt, and it will help you to succeed academically.

Very generally speaking, educational differences between the United States and many other areas of the world might be summarized in terms of these tendencies. Your program should give you specific information about academic differences in your host country, but the following hold true for many programs:

American students tend to:	Host-country students tend to:
Base their expectations for the classroom on previous academic experiences in the US	Base their expectations for the classroom on previous academic experiences in your host country
Expect the instructor to welcome and value student questions and opinions, even when these challenge what the instructor is saying	Expect the instructor to stand at the front of the classroom and lecture, considering it their job as

	students to connect the lectures to the readings on their own
Assume that the instructor will define the main course themes, connect out-of-class readings to the themes, and provide detailed syllabi and visual aids (e.g., PowerPoint presentations, overhead projections, handouts)	EITHER assume they will have to figure out for themselves what the instructor expects, and that it is best to take copious notes, read every assignment, and memorize everything OR skip class and ignore readings until the last two weeks of class. (This is most common in countries where grades have no relevance to the job search process; avoid this trap!)
Thrive when the instructor provides clear, precise guidelines on assignments and expectations, and encourages them to do their best	Regard the instructor as the authority, and never consider challenging the instructor's point of view, especially not in the classroom
Assume grading criteria will be spelled out clearly so that students who apply themselves and follow those criteria will be assured a good grade	Understand that it is their job to keep themselves motivated and on task. If they are good students, they will know what needs to be done and do it independently
Expect to be tested and evaluated regularly so that they can monitor their performance throughout the semester	Know there will be 1-2 exam(s)/project(s) that will cover everything, and that they probably won't have a real idea of how well they did until grades are final.
Blame (or share blame with) the instructor if the student does not earn an excellent grade	Would never fault the instructor if the entire student body failed the course

HOW TO ADJUST TO FOREIGN TEACHING & LEARNING STYLES

Adjusting to unfamiliar teaching styles is like learning a new language. Ask yourself: "What are the rules? Can I translate what I am experiencing into something I can understand?"

Be independent in your learning. If the lecture doesn't match the readings, ask yourself why. Make a connection, think about it on your own, or talk about it with your local peers or program staff. If you need more input in order to understand the material, take the initiative: go to the library – in itself a valuable cross-cultural experience.

Do not be judgmental about academic practices that do not meet your Wesleyan or U.S. standards. Do not expect a detailed syllabus. On the other hand, some syllabi include long bibliographies that are relevant to the discipline. You will need to exercise initiative and prudence in deciding how much to read.

Don't be afraid to ask questions; just be diplomatic. Socratic teaching is not the norm abroad, so instructors won't automatically steer the class back to a point or thread. They may follow student questions graciously wherever they lead and not understand why you get upset when the class doesn't stay on point.

Be prepared to memorize a lot more than you're used to doing – not a bad skill to pick up. Yes, the concept is critical, but even in the US you sometimes have to be able to rattle off the facts!

Try, for just this semester or year, to focus more on learning than on your GPA. This is not to trivialize the importance of your grades to your future, but rather to encourage you to trust yourself, your hard work, and your intellect. If you accept that you won't be able to keep a running tally of your grade throughout the term, and instead focus on the subject matter and the experience, you probably will be happier and do better in the long run. Students who work hard, do the readings and homework, and consistently attend class nearly always do

well. Remember also that some grades (not all!) earned abroad are converted before being recorded on the Wesleyan transcript, so the grade you think you have earned may not be what finally appears on your transcript after you return.

Your program staff is available to help you with the transition and 'translation' process. They are both your support and your advocates, but they can help only if you let them know what's going on. The Office of Study Abroad is also available and happy to help you with any number of different issues you might be experiencing.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

All Wesleyan programs and most programs approved for Wesleyan students include lodging, which may consist of home-stays, living in apartments, independent housing or residence halls. Some programs include a certain number of meals per day if the student lives with a host family. Other programs are “self-catered.”

HOMESTAYS

A very large part of the adventure upon which you are about to embark is your stay with a host family. Living and building a relationship with your host family is an important part of your study abroad experience. Hosts may be a family, a widow, or a couple. Though some families may take in students as a means of augmenting their income, they are all experienced in receiving international students and are expected to provide a good environment for students to enjoy and profit from their stay. They provide you with an opportunity to see daily life close up and increase your language skills through daily conversations.

Your host family’s apartment or house may be very different than what you are accustomed to in the U.S. For instance, the home may have only one bathroom shared by all family members, rooms may be smaller and fewer, and hot water may be carefully rationed. Try not to form preconceived notions about what to expect and be open to the situation in which you are placed.

The Wesleyan programs and programs approved for Wesleyan students will do their best to place students in host families. Generally, the hosts are situated in various locations in the host city and provide for a relatively comfortable standard of living. You may be taken in as part of the family or regarded as a paying guest. In either case, however, you will have to respect your host’s rules and be courteous to their requests. You may not live luxuriously, but your host families will provide you with adequate accommodations for students, including a bedroom with study facilities, heating, bed linens, and meals where appropriate.

Most students are paying guests, sharing some or all meals with their host family. No refunds can be given for meals not taken or while traveling. Details of the number of meals included in a homestay are included in the program description.

Try to reach an early understanding with your hosts regarding the rules and customs of their home, especially in regards to such things as the use of hot water, helping with meals, and inviting guests. It is important to be conscious of the culture gap that exists. A gracious attitude toward your hosts will go a long way in overcoming the cultural misunderstandings that inevitably arise. Having thoughtfulness, tact, and grace will help make your homestay a positive experience and will enhance your academic work and leisure time. A little gift at the beginning of your stay is a kind way to ease any awkwardness. Pictures of your American family and school life are also good icebreakers and help your hosts to know you better.

It is impossible to generalize about homestays as each situation is quite unique, not only in terms of the composition of the family, its personality, and the physical aspects of the household, but also in the response of each student to the new environment. Others have probably been there before you and left their impressions, both good and bad.

In the unlikely, but possible situation where your health and safety are threatened in your homestay, remove yourself from the situation immediately. Contact the resident director and/or Wesleyan University immediately regardless of the time of day or night. You will be removed from the situation as quickly as possible and placed in a different setting.

HOST FAMILY HINTS

TELEPHONES

Phone service can be very expensive outside of the United States, thus international and local telephone calls may not be made from the home without the prior permission of the host each and every time a call is made. Inquire whether you may receive phone calls at your residence. Hours are often limited, and calls between 10:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. are seldom allowed. PLEASE REMEMBER that there is most likely a time difference between your country and the U.S.

WATER AND ELECTRICITY

Water and electricity are also extremely expensive abroad; therefore, people in other countries tend to use much less than do people in the U.S. Your homestay may make considerate efforts to conserve energy by limiting showers or baths to a specific time period. Be aware of what may be excessive usage to your hosts to keep good relations.

FOOD

Students with particular eating habits (for example, vegetarian or kosher) may prefer a housing option with independent cooking arrangements, although some families may offer an appropriate meal situation. The Wesleyan University or program staff will, with sufficient notice, try to accommodate such students in the homestay situation they prefer, though such placements are not guaranteed.

ABSENCES (OVERNIGHT OR MEALTIME)

Courtesy requires that you notify your host, program staff, and your family in the U.S. if you plan to be absent from your place of residence for a lengthy period of time. Tell your host in advance if you are not planning to be at the evening meal.

KEY DEPOSIT

Some students will be required to pay a key deposit to their landlord. This deposit is, of course, refunded when you turn in your keys at the end of your stay. Many apartments use special security locks that cost as much as \$250 to replace. Students are responsible for keys issued to them until they have been returned to their landlord.

OTHER TYPES OF HOUSING

APARTMENTS

The same basic standards of courtesy apply in a foreign country as they do in the U.S. You are renting from a local landlord, and thus, are expected to abide by the apartment complex rules. If you choose this housing option, you will be responsible for the preparation of meals and a supplemental fee.

INDEPENDENT HOUSING

Some students choose to provide their own housing while overseas, usually because they already have relatives or friends living in their host country. If you plan to do so, you must notify the Wesleyan's Office of Study Abroad of your intentions no later than 1 month before your scheduled program starts so that no housing contract will be made on your behalf. Please remember that making these arrangements is very difficult and expensive, and that last-minute switches to program housing can be complicated.

RESIDENCE HALLS

Depending on the program, students may have the options of living in catered or self-catered residence halls. This allows ample opportunity for students to interact with the natives of the host country and also may be a more practical living arrangement, as you will be living closer to campus.

STUDENT HOUSING AGREEMENT

All study abroad participants must accept responsibility for any damage or debts they may incur during their stay. Students must make an effort to adjust to the customs of the host family and agree to try to cooperatively

resolve any conflicts that may arise on their own. Wesleyan University and the on-site director will not accept responsibility for personal matters that may arise between the student and the host with whom he or she is placed. Disregarding any of these conditions may result in dismissal from the program.

Under certain circumstances, students may be able to change their housing if the program staff agree that it is necessary for the student's well-being or participation in the program. These requests are not guaranteed and will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

TRAVELING

Traveling is encouraged and has proved to be an essential part of a student's time spent overseas, particularly when it is designed to enhance your assimilation into your host culture. Wesleyan students are strongly urged to plan their travels in light of their stipulated goals, for intercultural competency and linguistic proficiency.

You may frequently be using public transportation such as buses, trains, metros, and taxis, all of which are rather practical and inexpensive modes of traveling. Keep in mind, however, that there are various safety issues that you should be aware of.

First of all, be careful not to display money, jewelry, or other valuable items while traveling. It is wise to wear a money belt if you are carrying a wallet or purse, and keep it close where you can see it at all times in order to avoid pickpockets.

During travel, choose a train or metro car in which others are riding. Locate the emergency equipment, and if someone is bothering you, inform the train operator. Try to stay awake and alert during your travels so you do not miss your destination and avoid unwanted attention and confrontations.

Be sure to notify the Resident Director and your host family when you will be traveling and when you will be returning. You may also want to inform your family at home to avoid any unwanted worries. To make the best of your time abroad (and to avoid problems with your professors), restrict long traveling to the vacation periods. You will make some weekend trips, but if you do this too frequently you will never have the chance to get to know your host city or to make close friends among the many people you will meet. You have to be in the host city to join the social clubs or to become involved in those activities that lead to real contacts with the natives.

INDEPENDENT TRAVEL

Travel on weekends should not interfere with regular attendance of classes. It is recommended that you focus your travel during the term/semester to nearby locations. Save your more distant sightseeing trips for before or after the program or during vacations. This is also a much better time to travel with visiting family and friends.

HOLIDAY TRAVEL

Take special care to consult the official calendar of holidays and vacations when planning your travels while abroad. In some countries, monuments and places of interest are closed on holidays such as Easter and Christmas, and local holidays may cause a significant decrease in availability of transit and lodging.

HITCHHIKING

Hitchhiking is strongly discouraged. If you do hitch, take precautions and use common sense. NEVER hitch alone. Real tragedies have taken place involving hitchhiking students.

STORAGE OF BELONGINGS

Because of very limited space and problems in the past, most programs cannot be responsible for the storage of luggage for students arriving early nor for students who are traveling after the program ends. Housing provided by programs generally begins on the first day of the student's period of enrollment and ends on the student's last day of enrollment precisely. You may find places for storage at various train stations if you plan to travel outside of the program dates.

CAR RENTALS

A leading cause of death among students studying abroad is auto accidents. You are strongly discouraged to operate any motor vehicle while abroad. Should you choose to drive, you must check with your program staff as to the legality and safety of doing so, and follow their advice.

COMMUNICATIONS

MAIL

When you arrive in your host country, one of your first missions will probably be locating the post office. Inquire about the kind of stamps you will need and the associated costs involved in order to send mail to the United States. International mail may be painfully slow, so allow extra time for any mail you may send home.

TELEPHONES

Phone service and telephone access is not always as reliable or common as many American students might expect. As not all residence halls will have telephones and many host families restrict phone access, again, it is essential that you have a phone card or cell phone to make any calls to home.

In emergencies, it will always be possible to contact any student through the program office or at the home of the host family. Specific instructions for making calls should be provided by the program of your in-country orientation.

SAFETY ISSUES

EMERGENCIES

In an emergency, first contact the Resident Director or program staff. You can then decide from there if you feel that Wesleyan should be contacted (remember the time differences; however, in a true emergency know that you may call at any hour). For instance, if your wallet gets stolen, you should IMMEDIATELY cancel your credit cards and file a report with the local police if possible. Then work on getting your documents replaced. For medical situations, you will have been informed of local clinics and doctors during orientation. You may also ask your host family for any suggestions as they may have dealt with a similar situation with a previous student.

Wesleyan University remains available to you in an emergency 24 hours a day. We can be reached by calling Public Safety at +1 860 685 2345. The on-call Dean will be notified to contact you.

PRACTICAL ADVICE

As a foreigner, you should be aware of certain precautions that you can take to maximize your safety and minimize risks while overseas. No matter how safe you feel and how trusting you would like to be, you must always stay mentally alert so that you make wise decisions.

CALL HOME REGULARLY

For the sake of your own and your family's personal welfare, let someone know where you will be at all times to prevent people from worrying needlessly. You should leave an itinerary with your host family if you plan to be gone for long periods of holiday travel. Please keep in contact with your family in the U.S. on a regular basis and let them know how you are doing.

KEEP UP WITH THE NEWS

Check the local news and stay informed of any political unrest that may take place in your neighborhood. It is wise to be familiar with the laws of your host city. You may want to research local and national laws and practices online before you depart. Also try to stay informed on international news; if something that happens in your host country is on the international news, your family and friends will worry

POLITICAL UNREST

There may be an increased risk of anti-American activity during periods of political conflict that involves the U.S. and other nations. You can minimize risks and avoid obvious dangers by keeping a low profile, and not identifying yourself by dress, speech, or behavior. Avoid large groups of other Americans, staying away from demonstrations and generally keeping out of harm's way. Stay clear of large crowds and American hangouts that may draw unwanted attention.

Students should stay away from all demonstrations and protests, no matter your feelings on the issue at hand. Large crowds can be unpredictable, especially when cultural differences mean that people may act differently from how you expect them to. Students have been arrested for being at protests abroad.

DATA SECURITY

If you're going to be toting a smartphone, tablet, or laptop around the world, protecting your data really matters. It doesn't take a huge effort or cost to keep yourself safe — but if you don't, you're at serious risk of losing all of your trip photos, having your identity stolen, and getting your accounts hacked. Public computers are not secure; do not use for secure transactions or to log into important accounts. Public Wi-Fi causes a similar situation...it's not secure and you should take caution about what you use Wi-Fi for. VPN software can increase the security of your connection. Ensure that you back up all photos and important information on a regular basis. Check out the [No-Nonsense Guide to Data Security](#) for more in-depth information on maintaining data security while traveling.

STAY ALERT

Be aware of your surroundings, including unknown individuals hanging around your building or any strange activity nearby. Be suspicious of unexpected packages, letters with no return addresses and/or excessive postage, and especially letters that appear to contain more than just paper. Be careful of who has access to your room or apartment. Visitors should be screened and delivery persons should be asked for identification and not be left unsupervised. Make sure to always lock your doors.

TAKE PRECAUTIONS

Take the same precautions you would at home. Do not give out your name or address or share program information with strangers. Know where the nearest police stations and hospitals are, and keep emergency numbers handy. Do not go into unsafe or unknown areas alone after dark or with people you do not know.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment occurs in all countries. How it is dealt with varies from culture to culture. Be aware that sexual harassment laws are not the same in every country. If you receive unwanted sexual attention, you should immediately distance yourself from the individual or situation, speak up in a clear and firm manner, and most importantly, report the incident immediately to your program staff and to the Office of Study Abroad or other appropriate Wesleyan staff. Avoid walking alone at night. Be aware that some people from other countries tend to confuse friendliness for romantic interest. Dress in a culturally appropriate manner.

REGISTERING

Some countries require students to register with the local police department. Your site director will advise you if you need to do this. The OSA also advises registering with STEP, the U.S. State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program. [See the STEP website to register.](#)

AVOID ILLEGAL DRUGS

Wesleyan University can assume no responsibility for you if you are confined for drug use. Avoid all involvement with marijuana or any other contraband drugs. Laws vary from country to country, and in some cases, they can be very severe. Students should not wrongly assume that buying or carrying even small amounts of drugs cannot result in arrest. You will also risk jeopardizing your welfare, other students' safety, and the future of the program. Even in places where the use of drugs by local citizens is either ignored or treated very lightly, American students have been jailed abroad and treated in a very harsh manner.

If approached by someone selling drugs, walk away. Do not even talk to that person, because a conversation with a suspected narcotics pusher is seen as an act of "intent to purchase" by some countries. Laws concerning drugs are much more stringent, and penalties, more severe, in Latin America, Asia and Europe than in the U.S. Conditions of imprisonment in a foreign jail are not desirable. Remember that being a citizen of the United States does not matter. **You are subject to the laws of the country you are in, so the U.S. Consulate cannot get you released if you are arrested.** They can only help notify family and arrange for legal representation.

ALCOHOL

Though many other countries do not have an age limit for the consumption of alcohol, it is wise not to take that fact for granted. You be regarded with little respect and face serious consequences if you choose to abuse alcohol, including dismissal from the program. Moreover, many cultures consider drunkenness as socially unacceptable; therefore, you should always keep in mind the Aristotelian golden rule: do everything in moderation. This includes drinking.

SOME FACTS ABOUT AMERICANS ARRESTED ABROAD

Excerpts from Gist, *The Drug Problem: Americans Arrested Abroad and Legal rights abroad:*

- Once travelers leave U.S. jurisdiction, they are not covered by U.S. laws and have no U.S. Constitutional rights abroad
- Few foreign countries provide trial by jury

- Pretrial detention may involve months of confinement in primitive prison conditions
- Trials frequently involve lengthy delays or postponements and are conducted in the language of the foreign country

WHAT U.S. CONSULAR OFFICERS ABROAD CAN DO:

- Ensure insofar as possible that the detainee's rights under local law are fully observed and that humane treatment is accorded under internationally accepted standards
- Visit the U.S. citizen as soon as possible after the foreign government has notified the U.S. embassy or consulate of the arrest
- Provide the detainee with a list of local attorneys from which to select defense counsel
- Contact family and or friends for financial or medical aid and food, if requested to do so by the detainee

WHAT U.S. CONSULAR OFFICERS ABROAD CANNOT DO:

- Demand a U.S. citizen's release
- Represent the detainee at trial, give legal counsel, or pay legal fees or other related expenses with U.S. Government funds
- Intervene in a foreign country's court system or judicial process to obtain special treatment

WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY GENERALLY:

- **Cannot** guarantee or assure the safety of participants or eliminate all risks from the study abroad environments
- **Cannot** monitor or control all of the daily personal decisions, choices, and activities of individual participants
- **Cannot** prevent participants from engaging in illegal, dangerous or unwise activities
- **Cannot** assure that U.S. standards of due process apply in overseas legal proceedings or provide or pay for legal representation for participants
- **Cannot** assume responsibility for the actions of persons unemployed or engaged by the program sponsor, nor for events that are not part of the program or that are beyond the control of the sponsor and its subcontractors. Wesleyan University is not responsible for situations that may arise due to the failure of a participant to disclose pertinent information
- **Cannot** assure that home-country cultural values and norms will apply in the host country

NAFSA: Association of International Educators *recommends the following to students and their parents when considering enrollment in a study abroad program. Because the health and safety of study abroad participants are primary concerns, these guidelines have been developed to provide useful practical guidance to institutions, participants, and parents/guardians/families. Although no set of guidelines can guarantee the health and safety needs of each individual involved in a study abroad program, these guidelines address issues that merit attention and thoughtful judgment. Therefore, as specific situations arise, those involved must rely upon their collective experience and judgment while considering the unique circumstances of each situation.*

Check out [this article about the University of Virginia college student](#) arrested in North Korea in early 2016 for the act of trying to steal a banner from a hotel, and [this one about how privilege does not travel abroad with you.](#)

SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS & GUIDELINES

In study abroad, as in other settings, participants can have a major impact on their own health and safety abroad through the decisions they make before and during the program and by their day-to day choices and behaviors.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO PARTICIPANTS:

- Read and carefully consider all materials issued by the sponsor that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in host countries.

- Consider their health and other personal circumstances when applying for or accepting a place in a program.
- Make available to the sponsor accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary in planning for a safe and healthy study abroad experience.
- Assume responsibility for all the elements necessary for their personal preparation for the program and participate fully in orientations.
- Obtain and maintain appropriate insurance coverage and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers.
- Inform parents/guardians/families, and any others who may need to know, about their participation in the study abroad program, provide them with emergency contact information, and keep them informed on an ongoing basis.
- Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct, and emergency procedures of the program, and obey host-country laws.
- Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to the program staff or other appropriate individuals.
- Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well-being of others, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
- Accept responsibility for your own decisions and actions.
- Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining emergency health and law enforcement services in the host country.
- Follow the program policies for keeping program staff informed of their whereabouts and wellbeing.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS/FAMILIES

In study abroad programs, as in other settings, parents, guardians, and families can play an important role in the health and safety of participants by helping them make decisions and by influencing their behavior overseas.

When appropriate, parents/guardians/ families should:

- Obtain and carefully evaluate health and safety information related to the program, as provided by the sponsor and other sources.
- Be involved in the decision of the participant to enroll in a particular program.
- Engage the participant in a thorough discussion of safety and behavior issues, insurance needs, and emergency procedures related to living abroad.
- Be responsive to requests from the program sponsor for information regarding the participant.
- Keep in touch with the participant.

SAFETY GUIDELINES WHILE IN TRANSIT & ABROAD:

- Keep emergency contact information on you at all times: important contact numbers (host family, program staff) and Wesleyan's 24/7 Public Safety number (+1 860 685 2345).
- Keep your eye on your personal belongings at any time.
- Wear a vest or jacket that allows you to keep your valuables in interior pockets that zip close; **do not carry open purses** and be aware that backpacks are easy target for pick-pockets.
- In public, make an effort to follow cultural norms. Avoid being the stereotypical "obnoxious foreigner".
- Learn your safety protocols from locals: how not to behave and where and when not to tread.
- Keep the on-site program staff apprised of your whereabouts at all times.
- Always leave contact information with your host family, friends, and the program staff.
- Keep cash and credit/ATM card in a safe place for emergencies.
- Treat your own personal data as extremely confidential.
- Report unusual activity near your home or school to the program director.

- Do not hitchhike.
- Practice healthy habits. Get plenty of rest and exercise. Substance abuse is your passport to tragedy: to be avoided at all costs.

In times of political conflict involving the United States or the host country, take these additional precautions:

- Maintain regular contact with your on-site program staff and with your family. Establish a contingency plan for communicating should an emergency arise. Familiarize yourself with your program's emergency protocols.
- Make sure you are registered at the nearest US Embassy or Consulate. If you are not a US citizen, register with your own consulate.
- Stay apprised of the current political situation and any potential unrest.
- Avoid political demonstrations. Avoid public interviews regarding political conflicts.
- Avoid potential targets for terrorist activities, especially locations associated with the American companies or commonly frequented by Americans living abroad.
- Avoid locations associated with anti-American groups or interests.

RETURNING HOME

PLANNING FOR YOUR TRIP HOME

PRE-TRANSITION JITTERS

Before re-entry into your home country, think about all the farewells you must make. Victor Hunter wrote, “Good byes are important; without a meaningful good bye, an effective close, there cannot be a creative hello, a hopeful commencement.” Also, think about all of the last minute travels you would like to embark on before your final departure. Planning for the trip home takes much forethought and organization. Therefore, you should prepare for transition without haste because if you don’t, you may regret it in the long run. It is a good idea to keep in touch with home right from the beginning so that re-entry back to the U.S is less stressful on you.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

If you already have a return plane ticket you should contact the airline and reconfirm your seat at least 72 hours in advance. If you want to travel a bit before leaving the country, verify with your airline if you are able to change the return date of your ticket. Depending upon ticket restrictions, this may be done for possible for a fee.

SHIPPING THINGS HOME

If you find at the end of your stay that you have acquired too many souvenirs for your luggage, a trunk, suitcase or package can be sent from abroad. Also, an extra suitcase can always be taken home with you on your flight. The rate for excess luggage varies by airline. It may be cheaper than shipping.

COMPLETION OF COURSES

You are responsible for completing any courses in which you are enrolled and are expected to take the exams scheduled for your courses if you wish to receive credit for them. Failure to do so will adversely affect your grades, as in any university course in the U.S. Final exam dates will be announced early in the term and cannot be modified under any circumstances. If your exams are scheduled for after your return home, you must arrange to either take them early or take them with a proctor in the U.S. You are responsible for making these arrangements. The staff in the Office of Study Abroad may be available to proctor, but you must arrange this with us well in advance.

HOUSING EXTENSIONS

If you wish to remain in your living situation for an extended stay, arrangements should be made on an individual basis. Consult the Resident Director or program staff well in advance.

U.S. CUSTOMS

Upon returning home, you must declare all articles acquired overseas to the officials of U.S Customs. Make sure to save receipts for any major purchases you made overseas and intend to take home. Failure to do so may result in having to pay extra duties. In some cases, purchases may be tax refundable, and therefore, reimbursed to you at the airport of departure. For more details, check the [U.S. Customs and Border Patrol website](#).

REENTRY INTO YOUR OWN CULTURE

*Some of the information on this topic comes from the book, *The Art of Coming Home* by Craig Storti and the *Global Campus Study Abroad Re-entry Guide*.

Re-entry is not as simple as some people may expect it to be. Readjusting to your home country will hit you just as it did with culture shock upon arrival into your host country. You will notice that it is very difficult to pick up where you left off, especially when you realize the magnitude of changes that have taken place all around you.

CHANGE AND ADAPTATION

Personal growth, new insights into your own culture, connections with people overseas, a new understanding of the issues facing your changing world, and new language skills are just a few of the changes you may have noted after returning from your study abroad experience. You may unconsciously accept again the conveniences you missed while abroad, and at the same time, you may be sharply critical of practices that you once took for granted in your home country. You may find their being at home again can match nothing of which you have just experienced overseas. Surprisingly, you may even feel awkward speaking English again if you developed other language skills overseas. As a result, you may feel lonely, restless, and perhaps resentful towards your home country.

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

You have just returned from a unique social experience. Just as it was difficult adapting to a different way of life overseas, you may now find it difficult fitting in the way you used to with your friends and family. As you recognize the gap that exists, you may feel as if you lost everything you once had in common with those closest to you, and you may lack the support system of which you are in need. You will want to share endless stories and newfound knowledge with them to which they may not always be responsive, simply because they haven't partaken in the same experience as you have. The people that knew you before the study abroad experience may also be unprepared for the changes in your values and lifestyles. Remember that your family and friends have also had new experiences while you have been gone. A break up in a relationship, for example, may seem small when compared to seeing famous art, architecture, etc., but it was probably a significant event in the person's life. Take the time to listen to their stories as well.

Friends and family can help students by showing interest, by not making you feel defensive, giving them freedom to adjust at their own pace, encouraging them to share photographs, and discussing their feelings as they readjust to your home environment. Above all, it is important for family, friends, and returnees to be patient with the readjustment process.

LOSS OF STATUS

In your host country you may have been seen as an informal ambassador of the United States. And as a foreigner, you may have been especially intriguing to others, which probably lured much attention to you. When you return home, you may become frustrated to realize that you are just like everyone else and that your status is generally lower than it had been overseas.

UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE LIFE

The experience of learning within a different education system and cultural environment has a liberating and confidence-building effect. The academic independence that you build overseas will give you more motivation to increase your standard level of achievements as well as help you to appreciate new perspectives on particular subjects. For those study abroad participants who return directly to your university upon return from overseas, you may find life on campus restrictive and unexciting at first. However, you will be able to add new dimensions to the classroom by sharing your study abroad experience-- the rewards from this can be quite gratifying.

INTENSITY OF READJUSTMENT

The reentry process is different for every individual. There are many factors that will determine the intensity of readjustment a student may go through upon return to their home country.

If the student voluntarily desires to return home, he or she will have more motivation to re-integrate. Likewise, if a student is expecting the reentry in advance and can mentally prepare for the return, he or she will more easily cope during the transition. Students will find it less difficult to manage the move back home if they have had any previous reentry experience.

The degree of interaction with the overseas culture will have a tremendous effect on the level of readjustment to the home environment. The more involved you become in the local culture, the harder it may be to leave it

behind. If you stay in touch with your home culture as much as possible while overseas in order to familiarize yourself with the various changes that take place in the U.S, reentry will be less stressful on you because you will have more realistic expectations upon return. Above all, the more familiar and supportive the reentry involvement, the better the student will be capable of handling a healthy re-entry.

The length of the re-adjustment phase will vary from person to person, but it will also depend on the level of intensive reaction that you experience from this phase. If you experience a very high level of intensity, your adjustment will most likely take longer than if you experience a very low level of intensity. In addition, the length of time the re-adjustment period lasts will depend on you and how you easily you learn to cope.

Most individuals will encounter reverse culture shock. The returnee should make an effort to fathom the feelings of re-acclimation. Ideally, the student should be calm and capable of focusing on what he or she can do to ease the transition process, look for ways to assimilate the host cultural experience, and translate it so that family and colleagues can understand and share the benefits as well.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO COPE

Re-integration to life in the United States does not last forever. Here are some suggestions of ways to make this phase a bit easier on you and your family and friends.

The best thing you can do to adjust more quickly is to alter any negative attitudes or expectations you may hold about your home country. Don't act superior to your compatriots. Rather, seek out a sympathetic ear with whom you can share your feelings and who will genuinely listen to you without accusing you of bragging. Ask them questions about what is going on in their life as well.

ATTEND A RE-ENTRY EVENT AT WESLEYAN

Being able to share common concerns and coping strategies with other recent or more established returnees may help reduce the frustration, and sense of helplessness that can accompany re-entry. Students who return to places where few people have studied abroad may feel very alone since there is no one with whom they can share their experience, but at Wesleyan, there is a whole cohort of 100-200 students returning from study abroad in any given semester. The OSA holds re-entry events that include photo sharing, story-telling, and an environment of people who are all sharing the experience of returning to Wesleyan after what is often a transformative semester abroad.

READ ABOUT RE-ADJUSTMENT

Acknowledge the re-entry phase as part of the overseas experience. This will help you avoid feelings of guilt that might occur if you are feeling depressed or unhappy about being home. Remind yourself that readjustment is a natural psychological process when confronted with change and cannot be denied.

SHARE YOUR FEELINGS

Educate your family and friends about this phase of adjustment. Many people have never heard of reverse cultural adjustment. If the people around you are informed of what you are experiencing, more than likely, they will be a bit more patient and understanding. If you have difficulty communicating your feelings, it may a good idea to share this section of the handbook with your family and friends.

STAY IN CONTACT WITH YOUR HOST CULTURE

Keep in contact through letters (and, if possible through telephone calls or e-mail) with the friends you made in your host country. It will help you feel that what you experienced was real and not one big dream. Some returnees have the feeling of never having been overseas after their return to the home country.

CONTINUE TO KEEP A JOURNAL OR BLOG

Continuing to write about your experience overseas can be a healthy source self-therapy upon return. It is important to reflect on your memories and one of the best ways to do this is to put your feelings on paper. Share

your writing with the Office of Study Abroad if you'd like us to link to your blog or share your writing with a larger audience!

CONTINUE TO PRACTICE A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Another coping strategy is to take an advanced course in the foreign language that interests you. Think about starting a language table, whereby a group of students interested in improving foreign language skills in a specific language can meet one to three times a week during either lunch or dinner. This will foster common interests in a specific language and/or a specific region of the world.

GET INVOLVED

Contact the OSA if you'd like to get involved with volunteering at study abroad events, working at the study abroad fair, or applying for a job at the OSA. We love to keep in contact with returnees, and sharing your story with students who have not yet gone abroad is very powerful! There are also opportunities to join the Center for Global Studies Student Advisory Board and [Diversity Peer Advising!](#)

BUILDING UPON THE EXPERIENCE

Seek out captive audiences by becoming part of an international club that would have a natural interest in your overseas experience. A big part of readjusting is being able to tell your personal story and to assimilate your adventures. Such audiences include cultural organizations (you may want to consider becoming a member), civic groups that have an interest in the part of the world where you lived, and school groups. You can get involved with international outreach activities through speakers bureaus, international symposia, or even photo sharing events. Volunteering some time at your study abroad office can also help you affirm the importance of your overseas experiences while helping students learn about opportunities abroad. You are the perfect person (if you had a positive overseas experience) to be an advocate for the office and the program. You may also volunteer to be a host for international students on campus or perhaps a tutor for those who are having a hard time adapting to the academic life in the U.S.

CAREER PLANNING

As you have completed one important phase of your life and are pondering about ways to put your next plan into action, allow the influence of your overseas experience to guide you in a positive direction. It is important to develop goals for yourself which allow you to make progress rather than to regress. It is common for students to feel as if they have gone 10 steps forward during their overseas experience, and now are going 11 steps backward once they return to college. Continue to challenge yourself in order to ensure a fulfilling future.

Your abroad experience doesn't have to end when you return from studying abroad. In fact, for many, studying abroad as an undergraduate is just the beginning!

The Center for Global Studies Associate Director of Fellowships, Internships and Exchanges, Kate Smith, can give you lots of information about international fellowships, scholarships, and other opportunities that allow undergraduates and graduate students to work, study, or live abroad! [Visit the Fellowships, Internships, and Exchanges website](#) within the Center for Global studies to learn more about how to go abroad again.

There are many routes you can take to put to use your cross-cultural adaptation skills and language proficiency that you have acquired overseas. Look into international companies that have subsidiary offices located abroad. Perhaps they may do some recruiting on campus. If you participated in an internship overseas or encountered any professionals that will be valuable to your job search, make sure to keep in contact with them so that you may use them as successful networking sources. If you are adamant about returning overseas, you may want to check into taking the TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) exam which would grant you ample opportunities to teach abroad and learn about different cultures.

If you plan to enter directly into graduate school after your 4-year degree, there are many international programs available that may permit you to study abroad or conduct research part-time. Depending on your field, you may even want to consider an entire graduate degree program abroad. Check with your faculty advisor as to what programs would be suitable for your academic and career goals.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

You will be exposed to a myriad of new and unpredictable situations. And the ability to cope will be the key to your success. Qualities such as responsibility, enthusiasm, sensitivity, flexibility, independence, openness to new ideas, and a sense of humor are indispensable. Knowing and establishing realistic expectations and goals will greatly increase your chances of having a successful study abroad experience and reduce both culture shock and reverse culture shock.

GOALS

We want the following for our students who study abroad:

1. The best experience possible, both inside and outside the classroom
2. The chance for you to observe, learn, and explore everything about your host culture and find your place in it
3. An opportunity for you to live sensitively and to realize that you are fortunate to be able to participate in the life of another culture, and show this to your hosts
4. We encourage you to open your mind to other ways of dealing with life, sift through the information, and develop a new self-awareness and cultural awareness. Some of the strong convictions you currently hold may be exploded and you will have to redefine your own thoughts and self-concept. This is what defines a liberal arts education. Aldous Huxley wrote the following about his first trip around the world:

“So the journey is over and I am back again, richer by much experience and poorer by my exploded convictions, many perished certainties. For convictions and certainties are too often concomitants of ignorance.”

We hope you will become a "world citizen" with an intense interest in preserving the world and its cultures rather than sitting idly by while they are destroyed. It is always the responsibility of the student to make things happen in his/her experience. The opportunities for growth are there. It is your responsibility to find them and make use of them. Above all, it is imperative that you ask questions. BE AN ACTIVE RATHER THAN A PASSIVE PARTICIPANT.

MENTAL PREPARATION

Most information sent to you deals with necessary physical preparations. We tend to bypass the mental preparation because it is not something tangible. Nonetheless, it is equally important for you to prepare mentally. Books on cross-cultural communication will help you prepare mentally. A book by *Edward T. Hall, The Hidden Dimension*, will give you an interesting view of other cultures as well as your own. For those of you who are U.S. Americans, we suggest reading *The Ugly American* by *William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick*, for a view of what we hope you are not.

In order to understand the ways of others, you must first UNDERSTAND YOURSELF AND YOUR CULTURE. We are all culturally encapsulated. A good exercise for you is to answer the following questions about yourself. These would be excellent discussion questions. Perhaps you could discuss these with your friends or parents and you may gain interesting insights about yourself.

1. What makes me unique? What are my background, habits, feelings, values, and beliefs?
2. What do I know about the host culture? What makes the host culture unique? How do people in the host culture view people of your own cultural identity?
3. Why am I going overseas? What expectations do I have? Am I flexible? Do I expect everything to be accomplished in the way I am comfortable with?

4. How much am I willing to risk? What changes am I willing to make in myself? In what ways can I develop sensitivities to the culture I will be living in? How will I know what is expected of me? From which cultural perspective will I make judgements?

Being sensitive to the culture in which you will be living cannot be overemphasized. You cannot always know what is expected of you, or exactly what you are communicating. It is not to your benefit to make judgments concerning others or to assume their actions mean the same as in your culture. You will have to discover a middle ground from which to operate. This is the intriguing challenge. A positive attitude and considerate behavior towards the people of your host country from the very beginning will facilitate a cordial, pleasant, and memorable stay. Verbal and gestural appreciation of everything is highly recommended. Watch the natives and follow their cues to determine what proper behavior is. Helping to furnish a climate with mutual respect and courtesy will always prevail.

RESOURCES

BOOKS

[Study Abroad: A Parent's Guide](#), Hoffa, William. Washington, NAFSA, 1998.

[Work Abroad: The Complete Guide to Finding a Job Overseas](#), Hubbs and Whitmarsh, 1997

[Survival Kit For Overseas Living: For Americans planning to live and work abroad](#), Kohls, L. Robert, 1996.

[The Art of Coming Home](#), Storti, Craig. Intercultural Press, 1997.

[The Silent Language](#), Edward T. Hall, 1973

[The Hidden Dimension](#) (PDF), Edward T. Hall, 1990

[Beyond Culture](#) (PDF), Edward T. Hall, 1977

[Survival Kit for Overseas Living](#) (PDF), Dr. L. Robert Kohls, 1996

[The Ugly American](#), William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick, 1999

ARTICLES

[Safety in Study Abroad: How Much More Can Programs Do to Protect Students?](#) Rubin, Kyna. NAFSA Newsletter 49, 3 (February/March 1998)

[The No-Nonsense Guide to Data Security for Travelers:](#) Critical information about maintaining security online while traveling

WEBSITES

[Passport Info](#): Find out to apply for or renew a U.S. passport

[Embassy.org](#): Gives information about obtaining visas for overseas study and travel

[Hostelling International](#): Membership available. Use HI to book hostels all over the world

[Plug & Socket Types](#): Find out about outlets, voltage, and frequency used in your host country

[U.S. Department of State Travel Warnings](#): Travel warnings and alerts world-wide

[Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#): Register your travels with the Department of State

[U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#): Learn about items to declare when you travel

[Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#): Contains information on health, inoculations, and current conditions in countries throughout the world.