

ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK
FOR STUDENTS

Fall 2009

Arkansas State University
International Programs
P.O. Box 2230
State University, AR 72467
870-972-2329
clindquist@astate.edu
International Connections
Room 104 Administration Building

Arkansas State University

Study Abroad Handbook for Students

Preface

One of the most positively transformational experiences for many young men and women is to engage fully in academic activities outside of their home countries. In recognition of this theme, Arkansas State University (ASU) is committed to establishing and improving conditions that encourage its students to engage in academic pursuits in other countries and to do so in a way that controls risks (to the greatest extent possible), and otherwise optimizes the overall experience. International travel is inherently complex and challenging, even for experienced international travelers. This reality is compounded for ASU students as they frequently have little or no international travel experience, limited funds, academic obligations, and the inherent naïveté that accompanies youth.

Accordingly, the University has formulated and implemented a number of strategies to help students prepare well for international travel (in general) and for country-specific international travel that includes an academic aspect. Both ASU students and faculty leaders receive group and individualized advice and counsel as to their respective duties and obligations while on University sponsored international travel; an array of useful information and insights about related safety, health, and other risk management issues; and practical recommendations for optimizing the educational experience for all. These strategies include, but is not limited to, counseling by members of the Office of International Programs at ASU, lectures and seminars by seasoned ASU faculty members with extensive and relevant international travel experiences, recommended independent study activities, and the development and provision of this Study Abroad Handbook for Students (as a free resource for all ASU students interested in pursuing one or more academic experiences outside of the US).

This Handbook, along with a parallel Handbook for Faculty-Led International Educational Programs was developed by Mr. Carl Lindquist, Academic Advisor in the Office of International Programs at ASU. He simply did a masterful job creating these extraordinary resources for ASU students contemplating or committing to engage in academic pursuits in another country and for faculty leading these academic programs. This Handbook includes a wide array of both necessary and helpful information and guidance along with references to other relevant information sources. Students who read, understand, and follow the wisdom contained within the pages of this Handbook will benefit from and enjoy more fully the positively transformative experience of international travel and associated academic programs. On behalf of the entire University community, it is my honor and special privilege to express heartfelt appreciation to Mr. Carl Lindquist for his singular and positively noteworthy efforts to create this that will benefit many students in the future.

G. Daniel Howard, PhD
Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

Table Of Contents

- Contact Information
- PART ONE: WELCOME!
 - An Overview of the Study Abroad Experience
 - A Word for Guest Students
- PART TWO: POLICIES AND PROCESSES
 - A Note on Study Policies
 - Enrollment Processes
 - Enrollment Procedures for Approved ASU Programs
 - Approved Arkansas State University Programs
 - Applying to Non-ASU Programs and Coordinating Independent Study
 - Procedures for Enrolling in Non-ASU Programs
 - Enrollment Procedures for Faculty-Guided Independent Study
 - Deadlines
 - Grades and Credit
- PART THREE: Before You Leave...
 - On Campus
 - Advisor Forms
 - Housing
 - Financial Aid

- [See Your Advisor](#)
- [Travel Documents and I.D. Papers](#)
 - [Passports](#)
 - [Visas](#)
 - [Identification](#)
 - [International Student Identification Card \(ISIC\)](#)
 - [Airline Tickets](#)
 - [GSM Global Phones](#)
 - [Phone Card](#)
 - [Rail Passes \(Eurail Youthpass and Flexipass\)](#)
 - [Hostelling Card](#)
- [PART FOUR: LEGAL MATTERS](#)
- [PART FIVE: MONEY MATTERS](#)
 - [Traveler's Checks](#)
 - [ATM Cards](#)
 - [Credit Cards](#)
 - [Transfer of Money](#)
 - [Guarding Your Valuables](#)
 - [Power of Attorney](#)
- [PART SIX: HEALTH](#)

- [Medical Kit](#)
- [Medical Care Abroad](#)
- [Health Issues Abroad](#)
- [Psychological Counseling](#)
- [Doctors and Clinics](#)
- [Pharmacies](#)
- [Dental Care](#)
- [Health Insurance](#)
- [PART SEVEN: HOW AND WHAT TO PACK](#)
 - [Baggage and Weight Allowance](#)
 - [Electrical Appliances](#)
 - [Dress](#)
 - [Travel Accessories](#)
 - [Keep a Journal](#)
 - [The Pre-Departure Checklist](#)
- [PART EIGHT: WHAT IS CULTURE?](#)
 - [Introduction](#)
 - [Culture Shock](#)
 - [How to Respond to Culture Shock](#)
- [PART NINE: THE EXPERIENCE](#)

- Classes
 - Course Load
- Traveling
 - Independent Travel
 - Holiday Travel
 - Hitchhiking
 - Storage of Belongings
 - Car Rentals
- Communications
 - Telephones
 - Email and Voice-Based Internet Programs
 - Emergencies
- PART TEN: STUDY ABROAD FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

PART ONE: WELCOME!

An Overview of the Study Abroad Experience

I am pleased to welcome you to the **Arkansas State University (ASU)** Study Abroad Program. The experience of living abroad for several months in a foreign country is transformative and will be of tremendous value to you from every point of view. Culturally, linguistically, personally, and intellectually, you will grow. You will have the chance to go beyond sightseeing, and to become acquainted with another country, and to be exposed to a different culture and to other fascinating people with different perspectives and viewpoints.

For detailed information and advising for study abroad, please see Carl Lindquist at the ASU Study Abroad Office, located in room 104 of the Arkansas State University Administration Building. He may be contacted by telephone at 870-972-3259, and by email at clindquist@astate.edu. Further information can be found on the World Wide Web at <http://www.astate.edu/international>. Additional information regarding study abroad can be found in the Study Abroad Library, located in International Connections, Room 104E of the Administration Building.

Once you are abroad, you will be a foreigner, and thus a minority, perhaps for the first time in your life. As such, you will have to deal with that condition and all the challenges it entails. Your experience will be more enriching if you are well prepared before encountering your new host country. All of your previous experience and academic preparation will be invested into your time spent studying abroad. The more knowledge you gain of a particular country's language and culture, through formal study or otherwise, the easier it will be to fit in and fathom your new surroundings. Books, newspapers, magazines, web sites, television, and videos are all resources that will help you prepare for your journey overseas and invite you into your host country's unique social realm. The best way to get candid information about your host country is to talk with people who are from or familiar with the country. Most people love to share their experiences, and they will be delighted to talk with you. Faculty, staff, and students who have lived or worked in the host country, as well as local residents from that nation, are all excellent resources for information and advice.

With perseverance and motivation, you will make a new set of friends while studying abroad. It usually requires more thought, effort, and creativity to meet locals, but interacting with people from your host country will enable you to learn more about the culture, to practice your language skills, and to develop lasting ties. Some of your friends will be other Americans, of course—but be careful not to seclude yourself in an

American ghetto. Interacting with natives is the best way to become immersed in a new culture. Some friends will be other “foreigners” who have much in common with you. They may feel a little lost at first, too, and are fascinated by the same “strange” things that fascinate you. Above all, do not take the easy way out and just sit around at your residence or limit yourself to sightseeing only. The simplest way to meet people is to join a group or take a class that will allow you to pursue an interest or hobby and interact socially. Participating in musical groups, sports, and volunteer projects are some good ways to be socially active and to gradually interweave into the new culture.

You may never again have the opportunity to live outside the U.S. for an extended period of time. Whether you are pushing your way through crowds at a large art exposition, or you become suddenly tongue-tied for fear of making mistakes in your host country’s language, remember that you are lucky to be experiencing something new and unusual. Do not dwell on the days during which cultural differences seem insurmountable and the rewards insignificant. Misfortunes may arise no matter where your destination. Rather, cherish those days and times when you encounter a new friend, someone you would never have a chance to meet at home, or when the rich history and culture of the city overwhelm you and you find yourself gazing at magnificent landscapes that you never dreamed existed.

While abroad, you will have your long-held values and beliefs questioned frequently. You may be amazed to discover, however, an intrinsic strength and self-confidence that you never knew existed once you are confronted with certain questions posed by foreigners--questions that will make you reflect upon long-held beliefs and convictions. Nonetheless, you will return to the U.S. with a stronger sense of purpose, with a clearer idea of what it means to be an "American", and with new perceptions of your self and the world.

We hope that this manual will help you adapt more quickly to the life of an American abroad, and to assist you as a study abroad student. These pages are full of details, some of which you will need to know at the outset, and others we hope you will use to enrich your experience in your particular host country. Once you arrive, you will have many questions. We may not have all the answers, but we assure you that we will do all possible to help you find them. Meanwhile, this Handbook should serve as a personal reference tool during your stay.

A Word for Guest Students

If you are a guest student—that is, a person who is enrolling from an institution other than **Arkansas State University**, you are strongly encouraged to participate in a study abroad orientation at your own campus prior to departure, if you are unable to attend a

scheduled orientation at ASU. Contact your study abroad office to see if it is possible for you to do this. Although most programs provide an on-site orientation upon arrival in the host country, helpful tips on packing, cultural adjustment, and safety are better learned in advance of departure. If you have any suggestions regarding these issues, please contact us.

PART TWO: POLICIES AND PROCESSES

A Note on Study Policies

These policies apply to off-campus study programs for individual students throughout the academic year and the summer for Arkansas State University students. These policies do not refer to summer faculty-led programs conducted for student groups. Guest students should consult with the designated officials on their campus to determine appropriate procedures.

Enrollment Processes

Off-campus study opportunities fall into three categories: 1) Individual study at an ASU partner institution (which can be for a summer, a semester or an academic year); 2) ASU faculty-led programs (the policies and procedures for which will vary by program. For details on a particular program, contact the designated faculty member and the Study Abroad Advisor); 3) and independently initiated study, meaning an academic

experience through an institution or program provider not affiliated with ASU. Each category has different application requirements, and individual guidance for each can be gained by consulting with the Study Abroad Advisor.

Enrollment Procedures for Approved ASU Programs

- A. Apply through the Office of International Programs' Study Abroad Office for a summer, semester or year of overseas studies.
 - a. Complete and submit a General Interest form (available on the ASU Study Abroad website and in the Study Abroad Office), available in the Study Abroad Office. This may also be downloaded from the website.
 - b. For a list of countries and exchange programs with ASU partner institutions, stop by the Study Abroad Office, located in room 104 of the Administration Building. This list may also be downloaded from the website; and
 - c. Complete and submit an application for the school you have chosen.
- B. Meet with your academic advisor in order to determine courses you might take at the host institution.
 - a. Use the *Academic Planning Form* (available on the ASU Study Abroad website and in the Study Abroad Office) on file in the Study Abroad Office. This may also be downloaded from the website.

- b. Courses taken at partner institutions will normally transfer as elective credit. The *Academic Planning Form* should be used for classes you intend to transfer back for major, minor, or core requirement credit.
- C. Determine two academic references (preferably ASU faculty) who will recommend you as a participant in the study abroad program. Ask your referees to utilize the *Faculty Recommendation Form* (available on the ASU Study Abroad website and in the Study Abroad Office).
- D. Meet with your financial aid advisor to determine specifics of aid and scholarship eligibility. The ASU Study Abroad Advisor also will have advice and resources that you will find helpful, including a list of a few funding sources especially useful for study abroad.

Approved Arkansas State University Programs

Arkansas State University entered into membership with the International Student Exchange Program (ISEP) in April 2009. ISEP membership allows ASU students to choose from approximately 160 institutions around the world. Summer, semester, and year-long academic exchanges are possible. For more information, contact Carl Lindquist, Coordinator for Study Abroad and ISEP, and visit <http://www.isep.org>.

In addition to ISEP institutions, Arkansas State University (ASU) has developed relationships with universities in the countries below which allow ASU students to attend their institution for ASU tuition.

1. Austria

- Salzburg University of Applied Sciences;
- Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences (Magellan Exchange); and
- Wiener Neustadt University of Applied Sciences.

2. Belgium

- Liege-Hautes Etudes Commerciales (Magellan Exchange); and
- Limburg-Provinciale Hogeschool (Magellan Exchange).

3. Belize

- Galen University.

4. China

- Shandong University of Finance; and
- Zhejiang University.

5. England/U.K

- Canterbury Christ Church University;
- Coventry University (Magellan Exchange); and
- Middlesex University.

6. Finland

- Rovaniemi Polytechnic(Magellan Exchange);
- Satakunta Polytechnic(Magellan Exchange); and
- South Carelia Polytechnic.

7. France

- Caen-University of lower Normandy;
- Cergy-Pontoise University;
- Rennes International School of Business (Magellan Exchange); and
- Toulon Graduate School of Business and Technology.

8. Germany

- Aachen –University of Applied Sciences (Magellan Exchange);
- Dusseldorf-University of Applied Sciences; and
- Duisburg-Essen University.

9. Iceland

- Bifrost School of Business.

10. Jordan

- University of Jordan.

11. Korea

- Sungkyunkwan University.

12. Mexico

- Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana;
- University of Monterrey (Magellan Exchange).

13. Morocco

- Al Akhawayn University.

14. Netherlands

- Zuyd University Maastricht Heerlen Sittard (Magellan Exchange),

15. New Zealand

- University of Otago.

16. Spain

- Huelva University;
- Valencia Polytechnic University (Magellan Exchange).

17. Sweden

- Kristianstad University.

18. Thailand

- Kasem Bundit University.

Applying to Non-ASU Programs and Coordinating Independent Study

Most off-campus study inquiries can be met through the approved programs at Arkansas State University. In some circumstances, however, Arkansas State University

students have arranged independent study initiatives. These fall into two categories: programs administrated by other institutions or program providers, and programs arranged for individual students under the guidance of ASU faculty members.

Projects guided and directed by ASU faculty members are coordinated in the same manner as any other independent study project conducted on campus: credit, grades, and work required are determined by a faculty member with the approval of the appropriate chair. The faculty member submits grades directly to the Office of the Registrar. The student pays Arkansas State University tuition and fees as well as any additional fees related to the off-campus study project.

Procedures for Enrolling in Non-ASU Programs

- A. Review all approved programs with the ASU Study Abroad Advisor to determine if needs can be met through an approved Arkansas State University program. Work with the ASU Study Abroad Advisor to identify a program that will meet your goals.
- B. Clearly articulate in writing your goals for off-campus study.
- C. Apply and be accepted to the Arkansas State University Study Abroad program.
- D. Seek approval by appropriate department Chair regarding major, minor, and distributive credit.

- E. Apply to the selected program within the specified deadline. Process all necessary paperwork through the Study Abroad Office.
- F. Meet with the Financial Aid Office to determine the specifications of aid and scholarship eligibility.

Enrollment Procedures for Faculty-Guided Independent Study

A student who wishes to arrange independent study must first contact a faculty member or members who would be willing to sponsor independent study credit for work conducted off campus. As with other independent studies, the student must have a request for independent study approved by the supervising faculty member and the appropriate chair prior to the beginning of off-campus study.

Deadlines

The deadlines for submission of study abroad applications for Arkansas State University study abroad programs will vary from partner university to partner university. Students interested in study abroad should consult the Study Abroad Advisor as early as possible.

Grades and Credit

Grades for approved off-campus programs are recorded on the Arkansas State University transcript as ASU grades and credits. The grades are computed into any major, minor, or program GPA, as well as the overall GPA. Pass/Fail grades are

permitted only in accordance with the regulations published in the Arkansas State University Catalog.

PART THREE: BEFORE YOU LEAVE...

The following sections are of urgent importance. Review this information carefully and consult with the Study Abroad Advisor and your Academic Advisor in order to make certain that you have properly coordinated the following prior to departure. Start these processes early, since many involve lengthy processes. Use the *Student Exchange Checklist Form* (available on the ASU Study Abroad website and in the Study Abroad Office) to help you keep track of your arrangements prior to leaving.

On Campus

1. Adviser Forms

Adviser forms are available on the website. Use this form in consultation with your Academic Advisor in planning a course of study for your period abroad.

2. Housing

Contact Residence Life and coordinate your housing arrangements for your return from studies abroad.

3. Financial Aid

Contact the Financial Aid Office to determine your total charges for the program of studies overseas. If you have loans, you may need to complete a form in order to transfer temporary power of attorney to a parent or guardian so your loan forms can be signed in your absence. If you receive a scholarship, make certain that the administrator for that scholarship is aware of your plans to study abroad, and have that person help determine if this funding is eligible for study abroad. Many ASU institutional scholarships can be used for study at partner institutions if the requisite number of hours are met.

4. Meet with Your Advisor

Make sure your Academic Advisor understands that you will be studying abroad. Give him/her a list of the classes for which you wish to enroll when you return. Make sure to exchange addresses (including email) with your advisor prior to your departure. You should contact him/her about half way through the semester to arrange for your submission of course requests for the following semester.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS AND I.D. PAPERS

Passports

U.S. citizens need a valid passport to travel abroad. The ASU Study Abroad Office recommends that all students have a valid passport, regardless of whether they have immediate plans to study overseas. International study and career opportunities are

increasingly common, and the student who has a valid passport is prepared to take advantage of opportunities. A visa to study in a country may also be required and it may be necessary to acquire this visa before leaving the United States.

In any event, 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. Passport applications can be obtained from the Arkansas State University Post Office, located in the Student Union. They can also be downloaded from the State Department's Web site at http://travel.state.gov/passport_services.html.

Return the passport application to your nearest county clerk's office or post office as soon as possible. If you choose to apply through a passport agency, you will find their locations at the State Department website above. In addition to the application, you will need to provide proof of citizenship (e.g., a certified copy of your birth certificate or an expired passport), proof of identity (e.g., valid driver's license) and two (2) passport-ready (2 x 2 inches) photos taken within six months of submitting your application.

Keeping your passport safe

When traveling, make certain that your passport is always safe.

- If you are traveling in a group, do not allow one person to carry all the passports. In fact, you should never relinquish your passport at any time except when you are applying for a visa, or momentarily when you are checking into a hotel.
- Never lay your passport down on a counter or desk—there is a possibility of forgetting it or having it stolen.
- Keep the passport in a dedicated pocket. Do not carry it in a purse or pouch—if the bag is stolen, so is the passport.
- Do not pack your passport in checked luggage. It is a good practice to copy all pages in your passport and place this in your checked luggage.

In case the worst happens and you lose your passport, you must stop by the local U.S. Embassy or Consulate in order to complete a DS-64, which is a Statement Regarding a Lost or Stolen Passport, the first step in getting a new passport. Once the old passport has been reported as stolen, it can no longer be used for travel by the original owner or by anyone else.

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. In applying for a visa, you will be required to mail

your passport to the embassy or consulate of the country in which you intend to study. It is sometimes surprising for students to learn that they have to turn their passports over to a third party, but this is a routing process for traveling abroad.

The visa requirements differ from country to country, and some nations may not require U.S. students to have a visa. However, most countries do. In order to begin the visa process, you may start by asking the Study Abroad Advisor for advice. You will need to visit the website of the embassy of the country you will be studying in order to learn about the current visa application requirements. The embassy will be located in Washington, D.C.; however, the embassy website may direct you to a Consulate that serves the state of Arkansas—for example, your country of study may have a Consulate in Houston or New Orleans that serves Arkansas, in which case you will be mailing your passport and visa application to that location.

Each country has particular requirements for application materials and visa processing. You can obtain visa applications for the majority of countries online. You can also find visa requirements by visiting www.embassy.org. This web site has a list of all foreign embassies in the U.S.A. The application process for a visa can be lengthy, and sometimes involves a Consulate visit—meaning that you have travel to the regional

Consulate within the United States (this may be Atlanta, Houston, or other regional major city depending on the country for which you are applying for a visa).

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 U.S.

There is almost always a fee attached to the visa application, and the process can take several weeks. 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 usually required in the visa application are the following:

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; and
 5. A letter of acceptance from the host institution or program sponsor
- *Sometimes you may also be required to provide evidence of financial support during the period of time you will be studying abroad and proof of medical insurance.

Visa applications can sometimes be complicated. Do not let this process discourage you—it is sometimes the most complicated aspect of studying abroad, and there is a great feeling of satisfaction when you have completed the formalities of a visa application.

Although it is rare, in some instances a person needs outside support in obtaining a visa. Remember that you may consult the Study Abroad Office for general guidance and support. Outside support can also be obtained through visa support companies. These are private companies that provide visa services for a fee. Charges for services are reasonable, and may be worth the cost in cases where there is little time left to secure a visa, or when the application process is especially difficult.

Identification

Most foreign police officers require that all persons carry identification (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 host coordinator. It is not necessary to carry your passport with you. However, you should always have a copy of your passport with you.

International Student Identification Card (ISIC)

The International Student ID Card is sufficient for identification purposes to obtain admission into museums, theaters, cinemas, expositions, and many other attractions. The ISIC is included in the cost of all pre-approved Arkansas State University programs. Students may use this card to obtain discounts on airfare, trains, and ships as well as a document providing for very basic medical insurance coverage. The ISIC, with its many advantages, is included in the Arkansas State University Study Abroad Program. The ISIC will be sent with pre-departure materials approximately one month before the program begins.

Airline Tickets

Airfare is not included in the study abroad program charges. You will need to purchase your own plane ticket in order to arrive on the date designated by Arkansas State University. The beginning and ending dates listed in the brochure for your program are the dates your housing will become available. Any expenses you incur because of early arrival are your own responsibility.

GSM Global Phones

An international cell phone is classified as a GSM cell phone that operates on the GSM 900 and GSM 1800 frequency. An international cell phone with the appropriate SIM card, will provide coverage in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Pacific Rim (including Australia). A world cell phone with the GSM 1900 frequency will expand coverage to include the United States, Canada, and a growing part of South America. All GSM cell phones listed on this site are sim unlocked and will work with any sim card from any carrier in the world. Sim cards may be purchased online for a growing number of select international destinations. A GSM 900/1800 international cell phone is perfect if you only plan on using the cell phone overseas. Each GSM cell phone includes: a wall charger, English manual, battery and one or more electrical adapters.

Prepaid SIM cards can be purchased for a nominal fee, and they typically include free incoming calls originating from anywhere in the world. With international roaming rates, from Nextel and other domestic carriers, a prepaid SIM card is a very attractive alternative. Phones are available at Identity Abroad (www.identityabroad.com/students).

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 arranged through the study abroad program, you are not able to make long distance calls from your host's phone. Having a phone card is highly recommended. NOTE: These are not the same as "prepaid" phone cards that you purchase at convenience stores. These will not work abroad.

Rail Passes (Eurail Youthpass and Flexipass)

Rail Passes can be purchased at almost any travel agency and are available to anyone under 26 years of age. 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 (Christmas or Easter) 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.

Hostelling Card

Year-long memberships are available from Hostelling International that enable you to stay in member hostels for reduced rates. Visit their web site at www.iyhf.org. Most of these hostels are clean, offer kitchen facilities and one or more meals a day, and a great opportunity to meet fellow travelers. However, please be aware that hostels vary greatly, and usually close completely for several hours each day. If you choose, you can purchase these cards upon arrival at many hostels.

PART FOUR: 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 Arkansas State 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 in the U.S. system. If convicted of a crime, a student will face punishment according to local practices. Many countries have laws regarding the use and distribution of illegal drugs, which are more severe than in the U.S. and may carry a death sentence. For their own protection, all students are cautioned to obey the laws of the country in which they

study and to avoid the possession, use, or sale of drugs. 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 Arkansas State 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 will become a part of a student's file at Arkansas State University and are communicated to the Arkansas State University Judicial Administrator.

All students are expected to respect national and local ordinances, even though these may sometimes be very different from those in the U.S. The program 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 Arkansas State 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 Program Director and 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, and
- ASU cannot get you out of jail or provide you with bail money. **You need to avoid illegal activity at all times.**

PART FIVE: MONEY MATTERS

Building a Budget

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. The *Budget Worksheet* (available on the ASU Study Abroad website and in the Study Abroad Office) will be helpful in creating your budget. You may want to meet with the Study Abroad Advisor to get advice on building your 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:

*Transportation;

*Personal Expenses;

*Meals;

*Gifts and Souvenirs;

*Communications;

*Books;

*Entertainment;

*Miscellaneous Daily Expenses;

*Additional Fees for Accommodation; and

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.

In building a budget, keep in mind that there are two ways you can direct your money: you can purchase material things, or you can do things. In the long run, material things may be much less important—cultural experiences are something that will last forever and they will help you personally and professionally throughout your life.

- The amount of money a student needs for studying abroad varies with each program and each student. Allocate your funds to take the best advantage of the opportunities the trip offers you. Keep these variables in mind as you build your personal budget: Start with the necessary ASU tuition and fees for each semester you are abroad;
- Figure travel costs that include roundtrip airfare, transportation to and from the airport, and recreational travel within the country;
- Housing and food are substantial budget items. You will receive some assistance from the host institution regarding information on local accommodation. You may need to make further inquiries on your own to obtain sufficient information to make budget decisions;
- Books and school supplies are separate from your tuition,
- When estimating costs, be sure to consider the cost of living in the country(ies) you will be in. Some have a high cost of living, such as Germany, Britain, Australia, and France. Others are rather reasonable and some are inexpensive. Do research on your country of choice to determine estimates of monthly expenses,
- Currency exchange rates can fluctuate sharply. This affects the buying power of the U.S. dollar at your study abroad site. Be aware of the approximate value of the dollar to the local currency and consider this factor in the budgeting process,

- Some foreign locations allow the study abroad student to work part-time, others do not. You are not encouraged by ASU International Programs to work while abroad because of the strain it will put on you as a full-time student. If you are considering taking a job while abroad, be sure of the regulations governing this area. Illegal employment is grounds for dismissal and deportation in many countries,
- Before you go, keep a short record of your expenses here. You may be surprised to find how much you spend on items such as shampoo, detergent, and other personal items, and
- Think about the gifts and souvenirs, postcards and international postage, film and photo processing you will buy while abroad.
- You certainly want to take advantage of the local sites. Figure in extra costs for short and longer trips.

Forms of Money

Traveler's Checks

Obtaining Traveler's Checks is the safest way to carry your money, as they are reimbursable if lost or stolen, and can be cashed in any bank or currency exchange. They are available in a variety of denominations from most banks. A good rule of thumb is to buy US \$50 and/or US \$100. You probably will not want to exchange amounts less than that because of transaction fees and commissions.

ATM Cards

You can access money in your savings 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 your bank to make sure your card and PIN number can be used to withdraw money abroad. You might want to tell your bank the dates you will be overseas. (Smaller 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 US \$1-2 fee per withdrawal, but you can get a good exchange 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 are 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 number 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, it's nice to have one in case of an emergency. Many places will require you to pay for medical expenses (doctor, hospitalization, etc.) with a credit card and you are responsible for getting reimbursement from your insurance company. Credit cards are convenient for larger transactions and purchases but they do require that you have someone at home pay your monthly bill. Some credit cards can be used as a good way to receive cash advances from home. These advances are often considered a loan and you can get the advance only up to your line of credit. There will also be a higher interest rate involved. The card must be in your name (not your parents) and the advance will be in local currency, not dollars.

Transfer of Money

The transfer of money from a domestic account to an affiliated bank abroad is a time consuming and costly tactic. Try to budget your money accurately so that you will have sufficient funds for the duration of your time abroad without the need to go through the process of trying to arrange additional funds while overseas, which can be time consuming, costly, and difficult. If you are staying overseas for an entire academic year, you may consider opening a bank account. You can obtain a list of correspondent banks in your host city from your on-site director. Give the bank, of which you are a member,

the names of those authorized to send wire transfers to you, and make sure that you obtain and follow all wire transfer instructions.

American Express offices will cash personal checks from a U.S. account at no charge. Money can also be cabled from home through American Express or Western Union; this type of transfer will take two to five days and the charge varies according to how much money is sent. Another relatively easy way to receive money from home is through the American Express Money Order, which American Express offices will cash at your disposition. Alternatively, you can notify your home bank and request that a bank draft in your name be mailed to you, via registered mail. 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. In the 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. A good idea is to leave a copy of all such items with friends

or family and keep a copy with you in your carry-on and checked baggage. (Note: Arkansas State University's study abroad program insurance is medical only, so losses of money, tickets and other valuables are not covered).

Power of Attorney

When you give someone the authority to act on your behalf, you are granting Power of Attorney. It is highly advisable to designate an individual, usually a parent, to take care of legal or financial matters on your behalf while you are abroad. 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 will not abuse the powers you grant to them and will look out for your best interests.

A Power of Attorney may be granted for a fixed term, or it can be left open-ended. To grant a Power of Attorney, the principal must be at least 19 years of age, of sound mind, and must grant the power voluntarily. A general Power of Attorney is very broad and provides extensive powers to the person or organization you appoint as your agent.

Powers that affect students studying abroad may include:

- Handling banking transactions;
- Entering into contracts;

- Entering safety deposit boxes;
- Exercising stock rights;
- Handling transactions involving U.S. securities;
- Filing tax returns;
- Settling Claims; and
- Handling matters involving government benefits;

You may also have the option to grant additional power to your agent such as making gifts or making transfers to revocable (“living”) trusts. Whether a Power of Attorney is durable or not, you have the right to terminate or revoke it at any time as long as you are still competent. The person who holds your power of attorney must be told of your decision to terminate the Power of Attorney. You can do this orally, but as with most things of legal significance, it’s best to put it in writing.

Taxes

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.

PART SIX: HEALTH

Living and learning in a different physical and social environment places additional demands on the 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 will 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 Internet address is www.cdc.gov/travel/travel.htm.

Medical Kit

It is important to bring a medical kit so that you have access to supplies that you may need suddenly. 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 (Imodium A-D);
- Motion sickness medication;
- Pain/fever relief (aspirin, acetaminophen);
- Pepto Bismol tablets; and
- Sunscreen.

Medical Care Abroad

At some point during your time abroad, you may become ill. It will probably be something simple, without complications and 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 STDs

The AIDS epidemic is a case of its own and merits special treatment because its reach is world wide. Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) 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 preventative medication and/or apply bug repellent regularly.

Psychological Counseling

The overwhelming majority of **Arkansas State University** students find study abroad a period of tremendous personal growth in such areas as self-esteem and independence. Very few experience serious personal problems beyond the usual cultural adjustment and some homesickness. Occasionally, one or two students experience serious difficulties when engaged in study abroad programs. These are usually, but not always, students who have brought ongoing emotional or mental health issues with them, from home.

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 by fax at 870-972-3288, but the therapist must follow up with a letter.

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, and Study Abroad Office know.

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. You will receive a list of doctors from the on-site director at orientation.

Pharmacies

If you need to purchase a prescription, pharmacies are abundant and easily accessible. 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. However, it is often simpler and more effective to bring your own emergency medicines for headaches, colds, coughs, stomachaches, hay fever, diarrhea, and so on. You will find pharmacies open at various hours for your convenience.

The following points are a few things to consider in regard to prescription medications

- Is your prescription medication legal in the country you are traveling in? Is it available there with your U.S. prescription?
 - Check with the embassy or consulate of your host country.
- Make certain you are carrying enough of your prescription medication if it is not available.
 - Confer with your doctor in order to determine the amount you should carry.
- Bring duplicate prescriptions for your medication.
 - Your prescription should have the brand name and the generic name listed.
- If you take prescription medications, be sure to remember time zones. Take your medications according to the time of your home destination. (A useful website for calculating time differences is <http://www.timeanddate.org>).
- If you wear corrective lenses, take along a copy of the lens prescription in case you need to get them replaced. You may also want to carry along a spare set of glasses.

Dental Care

Your host coordinator can recommend good English-speaking dentists. Your personal dentist in the United States may be able to provide additional advice regarding international dentists and practices. Further, your dentist may be able to equip you with dental-related travel supplies, such as temporary fillings in case a tooth is broken or a filling lost while overseas.

Insurance

All Arkansas State University programs provide limited health insurance coverage through United States Fire Insurance Company, Morristown, New Jersey. All study abroad program participants are required to obtain insurance from this provider through Arkansas State University. Information on insurance can be obtained at the study abroad office. Students can apply for insurance at the Study Abroad Office by submitting payment and completing the required forms. Be sure to retain the attached identification card and bring it overseas with you.

If you are covered by a policy other than Arkansas State University's student health insurance, find out the terms of the coverage as well as the procedures for reimbursement.

Health and Safety Resources

As you learn more about safety and security issues concerning your host country, you may want to utilize the *Country Safety Checklist* (available on the ASU Study Abroad website and in the Study Abroad Office) to help you organize this information.

Online Resources

In addition to the resources mentioned within this list, International Programs will be able to identify and recommend other resources specific to countries and regions of travel.

The Air Carrier Access Act

<http://www.air-transport.org>

This site provides information regarding airline travel for individuals with special needs.

CIA World Factbook

<https://www.cia.gov>

This site provides detailed country profiles, including matters pertaining to health, safety, and travel.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<http://www.cdc.gov/travel>

The CDC provides information on health protection and disease prevention.

The United Nations

<http://www.un.org>

The website of the United Nations is a useful resource for information on health, security, and current world events.

World Health Organization

<http://www.who.int/en>

The website of the World Health Organization provides information on current disease risks and outbreaks, as well as specific health conditions around the world.

Telephone Resources

U.S. Department of State Office of Overseas Citizen Services (OCS)

The OCS provides general information to the public regarding health, safety, and travel. The center takes calls from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time Monday through Friday. The center operates 24 hours a day during crisis situations.

Hotline: 202-647-5225

American Citizen Services: 888-407-4747

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

The CDC provides information on health protection and disease prevention.

877-394-8747

Disability and Special Needs Resources

<http://www.miusa.org>

PART SEVEN: HOW AND WHAT TO PACK

Baggage and Weight Allowance

Since policies vary, contact your airline to find out what specific regulations apply to you. Most airlines operate on the cubic measurement system and not on the weight system, but as a general rule of thumb, suitcases should not weigh more than 50 lbs. A luggage's square measurement is determined by length + width + height. Airlines usually allow two checked bags and one carry-on for international flights. If you try to leave or return with more than this, you will be charged accordingly. Label your bags clearly with your name and address, and be sure to put this information somewhere

inside your bag as well. REFER TO YOUR TRAVEL AGENT/AIRLINE REGARDING UPDATED LUGGAGE REQUIREMENTS.

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 will be likely to climb (Murphy's Law of Traveling). 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 really expensive with you in your own carry on baggage. Valuable cameras, radios, watches, tape recorders, jewelry, etc. should be registered with the Customs Office before departure as the U.S. Duty may be assessed on unregistered items by American authorities when you return home. Students wishing advance information can obtain it by writing or calling for the government pamphlet *Know Before You Go* at U.S. Customs Service, Department of Treasury, and Washington, DC 20229 or by contacting the web site at www.customs.ustreas.gov.

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 and it is nearly impossible to find one in a foreign country. It is cheaper in the long run to buy a small blow dryer and to bring a radio or CD player that runs on batteries. Dual-voltage blow dryers are available at reasonable prices in many discount stores in the U.S., but it can be difficult to find an adapter for the plug. Bring a battery-powered or windup alarm clock, not an electric one. Electricity is very expensive, and extensive use can cause problems with host-families. For information on electrical systems in various countries, refer to the web site www.go-global.com.

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. Check with your computer manufacturer's customer service department to obtain a transformer of quality. Do not rely on discount electronic shops for expert advice. Remember, your host family may not want you to use your computer for long periods because of the cost of electricity. As an alternative, cyber cafes are very common in Europe, and often make an interesting

environment in which to send email. For more information on traveling with electronics, please go to www.identityabroad.com/electronics.

Dress

Go for comfort. No matter how hard we try to “fit in,” most of us will still stick out as foreigners. You might as well be comfortable. Dress for the climate, but do not be too audacious. Often times it is a matter of HOW you wear your clothes, not necessarily WHAT you wear. In some parts of the world you will 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. You should bring an umbrella or raincoat and some clothes that you can layer for warmth. This way, you can easily remove or add clothing when the temperature changes during the day. Remember that Europeans do not change their clothes as often as Americans do and the weather varies less from season to season than in most parts of the U.S. Also, closet space is limited, so the fewer articles of clothing, the better. In regard 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.

You will find that many students dress informally for classes; their attire is much the same as that found on American campuses. Blue jeans are very popular for both men and women, and sweaters are indispensable. It is a good idea to bring one dressy outfit for special occasions such as going to the theater, ballet, or fine restaurants. Bring versatile outfits, especially in muted colors. A blazer will always come in handy. If you are participating in the Internship Program, bring business like clothing that you can mix or match to add versatility.

Scarves, gloves, and hats are essential, and they are easy to carry along for dealing with variations in the weather. Shoes should, most of all, be comfortable. You have probably never in your life walked as much as you will walk while overseas. A bathrobe is a must, especially since bathrooms are not always located in each person's room. Slippers can be purchased overseas rather inexpensively. Depending on the program, bed sheets, pillowcases, blankets, and hand towels may be furnished for you. However, if you plan to travel, bring a small towel to take with you.

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 (www.identityabroad.com/books). You might want to purchase a money belt

or hidden pocket for money and important documents. The best bet for extensive travel is a backpack. Do not skimp or you will regret it when it rips or breaks later. Internal frames for backpacks are good. Make sure to buy the size you'll need and the size you can carry, but no larger (www.identityabroad.com/gear). If you plan on camping your way around Europe, you will obviously need a larger bag than someone who will stay in hostels.

Keep a Journal

This is something to consider seriously. 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 is a good idea to make notations in your journal of what pictures you took while overseas. This will provide for a most memorable experience.

The Predeparture Checklist

- Passport
- Visa
- Obtain signatures on transfer pre-approval forms

- Speak with Financial Aid regarding application of a stipend package for the program overseas and possibly obtaining forms for next year (if necessary) while overseas
- Pay housing deposit in Residence Life for next term after your return
- Make arrangements with advisor to register for classes for the next term (guest students should check with home school)
- Purchase Eurail or country pass if desired
- Obtain money belt or something of the like
- Gifts for host family
- Give parents and friends your address overseas
- Write to your host family to introduce yourself
- Provide Study Abroad Office with your flight information
- If you will be away for your final winter semester, inform the Registrar if you will be attending commencement
- Visit a physician for physical and immunization advice

PART EIGHT: WHAT IS CULTURE?

Introduction

A reading passage by famed American writer Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. explains why it is important to learn about other cultures, and encourages students to embark on the adventures involved in study and travel overseas:

"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 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 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 from 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. The second stage is a period of **rejection**. You may feel animosity towards the host country, things are challenging, unpleasant, different. You seek people, books, and movies from your country to remind you of home. However, you should be aware that this is a natural and common reaction to the cultural adjustment process and it will pass with time if you anticipate and prepare for its existence. The third stage is one of **adjustment**. In this stage you will begin to understand how the new culture works and find your place in it. You will find yourself making changes to adapt to the new culture and find yourself judging less. In the **adaptation** stage you may feel a sense of belonging and a sense of self within the new culture and an understanding that cultures are different and that you have the

flexibility to live in more than one culture. The final stage is **the reverse/return culture shock** where you go through the same phases after returning home. When you come back, family and friends may not expect you to be different. Finding opportunities to share your experiences after your trip may be helpful.

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 toward your host country, depression, psychosomatic illness, loss of sense of humor and lack of concentration, and in some cases, 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 can not 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 less of an American. 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, 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 is not 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 awards of studying abroad.

Learn the Local Language: To speak the foreign 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 improve your language skills. Practicing the foreign language is very important. You must discipline yourself to speak your host country's language at all times, even with your American contemporaries; however, do not try too hard to avoid grammatical mistakes. 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 and 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. 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 which 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. Marquarat, 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.

Stay Active: Getting out of your room will help you learn to adjust to your new environment faster. If you have hobbies, find ways to practice them where you are. Every time that you get out into the culture you will be a step closer to learning how to live within it.

Write it down: Keep a journal or write letters or e-mail. Writing your thoughts is a great way to settle your mind even if you decide not to send every letter you write; the act of writing will help you progress.

PART NINE: THE EXPERIENCE

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 per se is 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. 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. Information on all courses may be found in the course description sheet provided by the host university and the ASU Study Abroad Office.

Course Load

A normal class load is about 12-15 semester credits. In language programs, six or nine of these credits are usually made up of language courses, with the remainder being semester courses (literature, art, etc). Many students planning to spend the year overseas prefer to take a slightly reduced load their first semester in order to leave more time for adaptation to their surroundings. Students contemplating taking less than a full load should consider the implications for any financial aid they may be using. Students receiving an ASU's Honors Scholarship or Chancellor's Scholarship will need to be

enrolled for at least 15 credit hours. Talk with the ASU Study Abroad Adviser and the administrator of your scholarship in order to determine your enrollment requirements.

Traveling

Traveling is encouraged and has proved to be an essential part of a student's time spent overseas. You will 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 of which you should be aware.

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 Host Coordinator 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 in Europe (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. When travelling to faraway destinations, the majority of your time is spent on the train and searching for lodging with little time left to see the sights. 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

Be careful when planning vacations over holidays. Check the countries' holiday calendar from a tourist agency if at all possible. Most, if not all, monuments and places of interest are closed on holidays such as Easter and Christmas.

Hitchhiking

Hitchhiking is most 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, the program cannot be responsible for the storage of luggage for those students arriving early nor for those students who are traveling after the program ends. Housing provided by the program 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

The highest cause of death among students studying abroad is caused by auto accidents. You are strongly discouraged to operate a motor vehicle while abroad. In general, many places stipulate a 23 year old age limit or higher for car rental. In any case, car or van rentals are very expensive and you will need a major credit card. Check the telephone book in your host country or contact the train station or airport for a large listing of car rental companies.

Communications

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 ASU Study Abroad office or at the home of the host family. Emergency numbers for each specific program are on the front page of this handbook.

Specific instructions for making calls should be provided by the program of your in-country orientation. The following are direct access numbers to place calls through a U.S. operator through the three major U.S. long distance companies.

From ATT and Sprint MCI

USA Direct Sprint Express Call USA

Australia 0014-881-001 0014-881-877 0014-881-100

Austria 022-903-011 022-903-014 022-903-012

Bolivia 0-800-1112 0-800-3333 800-10-2222

Ecuador 999-119 999-171 999-170

France 19*-0011 19*-0087 19*-0019

Germany 0130-0010 0130-0013 0130-0012

Italy 172-1011 172-1877 172-1022

New Zealand 000-911 0800-422-926 000-912

Peru 0-800-50000 Not Available 0-800-50010

Spain 900-99-0011 900-99-0013 900-99-0014

UK 0800-89-0011 800-899-0877 088-89-0222

Email and voice-based Internet Programs

Voice-based email programs, such as Skype, allow students to talk free of charge with friends and families overseas by establishing computer-to-computer connections. Using such programs allows students to stay in frequent contact with home while minimizing costs.

Emergencies

The best advice for emergencies is to use your best judgment. In an emergency, you will first want to contact the Host Coordinator, then decide from there if you feel that the ASU Study Abroad Office 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.

PART TEN: STUDY ABROAD FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Study abroad opportunities at Arkansas State University are open to all students.

Disability Services and the Office of International Programs encourage students with disabilities to participate in the study abroad program at ASU.

Disability services can be helpful in the following ways:

- Liaison/advocacy with faculty and administrators at the receiving schools
- Textbooks in alternate formats as needed (books must be in disability service one month before departure)
- Equipment loans
- A plan for computer accessibility

You will find more information on study abroad at ASU by visiting http://international.astate.edu/Study_Abroad.htm.

Please feel free to contact our office in the International Student Center Room 200 to set up an appointment and begin planning your studies abroad.

Selecting a program

Several of the primary factors in selecting the right program include the subject you will study, the language in which you will be taught, and the academic credit available for the course. The next set of factors will probably be location, timing, and duration. Some of the questions to which you will need to know the answers are the following:

- What do you want or need to study?
- Where do you want to go? Why?
- Do you need to earn credit while abroad, or would a work abroad program not for credit be possible?
- Are you fluent enough in a foreign language to take classes in it, or will be necessary for you to take some or all of your coursework in English?
- How much time can you afford to spend abroad, in terms of academic time and economic resources?
- How can the host university accommodate students with disabilities? The ASU Study Abroad Advisor can assist in finding an answer to this question.

Planning ahead

A successful study abroad experience takes time, planning, and commitment. Students with disabilities are encouraged to begin the planning process one year before the study abroad term. Disability Services, the Office of International Programs, and your Academic Advisor will collaborate to identify the most suitable academic program and to determine the necessary accommodations. Disability Services is available to intervene with the partner institution as needed.

During the planning process, student tasks should include the following:

- Meetings with Study Abroad Advisor;
- Meeting with the Academic Advisor;
- Consultation with a physician and specialist;
- Meetings with financial aid counselor; and
- Meetings with a disability service program assistant or counselor.

The following is a useful link on the various steps involved for a study abroad

program: <http://www.miusa.org/ncde/intlopportunities/survivalsteps/index.html>

Funding study abroad:

The current financial aid package for most students will apply to courses that transfer back to ASU.

Resources for financial aid may include the following:

- Current ASU scholarships and financial aid
 - Information regarding institutional and privately-funded scholarships can be found online at <http://www2.astate.edu/finaid/>

- Assistance from Arkansas Rehabilitation Services
 - <http://www.arsinfo.org/>

- Family, community, and church support

- Gilman International Scholarship:
 - <http://www.iie.org//programs/gilman/index.html>

- Mobility International USA:
 - <http://www.miusa.org>
 - <http://www.miusa.org/ncde/financialaid/fundraising>

- Rotary international:
 - <http://www.rotary.org> (ambassadorial scholarship)

- Study and work abroad for people with disabilities:
 - <http://www.independentliving.se/studyworkabroad>

- Outside scholarships and loans:
 - The Office of International Programs maintains a listing of study abroad scholarships. Another good online source for academic funding is <http://www.iie.org>

- Links to additional resources:

http://international.astate.edu/Financial_Aid.htm

Students with disabilities

- Make ASU staff aware of your accommodation needs;
- Practice communicating disability and accommodation needs in the host country;
- Discuss potential disability and medical conditions;
- Medical support;

- Identify and contact disability organizations in host country; and
- Be flexible and enjoy the ride.

Sources:

NAFSA Study Abroad Handbook

Safe Overseas Travel: Maximize Your Enjoyment by Minimizing Risk, by Brian R. Johnson, Ph.D., and Brian F. Kingshott, Ph.D.