



IUPUI

STUDY ABROAD



Pre-Departure Handbook

for IUPUI Students on Study Abroad Programs

IUPUI Study Abroad Office

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BEFORE YOU GO ABROAD

PASSPORT

Your passport is your most important legal document while traveling overseas. If you already have a passport, make sure that it is still valid at least 6 months beyond your dates of international travel as some countries will not allow you to enter if your passport will expire within 6 months. You should renew your passport before you depart if your passport is going to expire within 6 months after returning to the U.S. You can apply for a U.S. passport at certain post offices. To search for a location nearest you, visit: iafdb.travel.state.gov.

The cost of a new U.S. passport book is \$145. To renew a U.S. passport book is \$110.

Obtaining your passport may take 6-8 weeks, so do not wait until the last minute. Once you have your passport, make two copies of the photograph page and any pages with current visas. Leave one copy with your family in the U.S. and take the other one with you. Keep your copy in a separate place from your original passport. The photocopy will make it much easier to replace a lost or stolen passport.

For more information on how to apply for a U.S. passport, please see the U.S. Department of State's website: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports.html>

Non-U.S. citizens should contact their country's embassy to learn how to renew their passport if it's nearing expiration.

**Be sure one of your parents or designated emergency contacts has a passport so they can go abroad in the event of an emergency.*

**Confirm that your passport will be valid at least 6 months after your intended return to the U.S. Some countries will not allow you to enter if your passport is not valid 6 months after leaving their country.*

VISA

To visit certain countries you will need a visa. A visa is a stamp or sticker placed in your passport by a foreign government that permits you to visit that country for a specific purpose and for a limited time. To understand the foreign entry requirements, contact the embassy of the country you're traveling to.

**If you plan to travel to other countries before or after your program, be sure you are aware of those countries' entry requirements (you may need another visa!).*

REGISTERING WITH THE EMBASSY

The Study Abroad Office requires study abroad participants who are U.S. Citizens to register their travel information with the U.S. Embassy in the country(ies) they are visiting before they leave. In the event of an emergency or an overseas disaster, the U.S. Embassy will be able to contact you and provide assistance.

Most IUPUI programs include a Travel Registration e-form in the iAbroad Pre-Departure process. U.S. Citizens register their travel using the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). To learn more about STEP, go here: <https://step.state.gov/step/>. Non-U.S. citizens are encouraged to register their travel information with the embassy of their home country in the country(ies) they're visiting.

ABSENTEE VOTING

If you will be out of the country during an election, don't forget to make arrangements to vote absentee. The following website describes the process to do this: www.in.gov/sos/elections/2402.htm. If you are a resident of Marion County, the office that can help you with this is:

Marion County Circuit Court Clerk
317-327-5100
200 East Washington, W122
Indianapolis, IN 46204

If you are a legal resident of another state, contact your state's election board to determine the procedure for voting while you are out of the country.

POWER OF ATTORNEY

You may want to consider giving a family member or trusted friend power of attorney while you are abroad. Power of attorney gives that designated person the power to act on your behalf in case a legal document requires your signature while you are away. Also, you might want to consider giving this person your permission to pay any bills that may be sent to you while you are away. Check with the student legal services office on your campus to obtain this document. You can also give someone power of attorney by simply writing what duties that person will be allowed to perform on your behalf and having the paper notarized.

FERPA

FERPA (Family Educational Right to Privacy Act) is a federal act that keeps student information from schools and universities private from *everyone* except the individual. If you would like to have someone help you manage your IUPUI account while you are abroad, you may authorize a third-party to have access to your account. This can be done through One.IU. Additionally, if you would like for the Study Abroad Office to share information with your family while you are gone, you may fill out the appropriate form granting this permission on IUPUI's Registrar page: registrar.iupui.edu/third-party/

COMMUNICATION

Internet calling/messaging: Generally, this is the easiest and least expensive way to communicate with people at home and onsite while you are abroad. There are many different applications you can use on a smartphone, tablet, laptop, or computer. The one drawback is that this will depend on your access to a strong, consistent high-speed internet or Wi-Fi connection. If you do have such access, consider using the following apps:

Skype – www.skype.com

Google Hangouts – <http://hangouts.google.com/>

WhatsApp – www.whatsapp.com

Viber – www.viber.com

Smartphones/cell phones: Taking your current cell phone abroad is the most convenient way to communicate, but international calling, messaging, and data plans may be expensive. Verify with your cell phone provider that your phone will work abroad and ask about the cost of international plans. If you don't have an international data plan, keep your smartphone in airplane mode or Wi-Fi only mode to avoid extreme overseas data charges.

A cheaper alternative could be to replace your SIM card and purchase a pay-as-you-go plan once you arrive abroad. Foreign SIM cards will only work in "unlocked" phones – many newer phones can be bought unlocked, and older phones can be unlocked by your cell phone provider – check with your provider for details. If you replace your SIM card abroad, don't lose your original SIM card!

Another option is to buy an affordable local cell phone at your destination with a pay-as-you-go plan – just remember to recycle the phone properly when you're done using it.

UITS STONGLY recommends stopping by their office before you leave to get a **DUO TOKEN** set up to your university account. This will allow you to access the IU platform while abroad. You can stop by UITS walk-in support locations on campus with our photo ID to obtain a token.

HEALTH INFORMATION

Insurance: Health insurance, including medical evacuation and repatriation, is mandatory for any person that wishes to go abroad on an IUPUI study abroad program, regardless of length. Students on programs administered by Indiana University (including IUPUI) will purchase the plan arranged by the Office of Overseas Study at IUB through GeoBlue. The cost is about \$33.00 per month. In most cases, the Study Abroad Office will purchase the plan on your behalf and provide you with an insurance card.

Remember, you must pay the physician or hospital at the time of treatment. After you have paid your medical bill you may submit a claim for reimbursement from GeoBlue. It is therefore extremely important that you have emergency funds to temporarily cover these medical bills until you are reimbursed by GeoBlue.

GeoBlue provides an app that may assist you with the process of seeking medical care abroad. Once you receive the insurance card from the Study Abroad Office, you can register your account with GeoBlue and download the app to your smartphone. The app allows you to check availability of different medications in your destination, search for a doctor or facility, translate documents, and file your claim online.

If you are not participating in an IUPUI Study Abroad Program you will not be able to purchase insurance through the IUPUI Study Abroad Office. To learn what to look for in your existing health insurance plan, and to shop additional coverage, visit: <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/go/health/insurance-providers.html>

Medical and Dental Check-Ups: Before you leave for your experience abroad, it is recommended that you have a thorough medical and dental exam. Make sure your medical and dental records are up-to-date and bring a copy of them with you abroad.

Medications: It is recommended that you take a supply of over-the-counter medications that you normally use in case of headaches, allergies, or colds. It can be difficult to select medication labeled in a foreign language and you

may not find the brands you are used to using. KEEP ALL MEDICATIONS IN THEIR ORIGINAL CONTAINERS. If you are taking medications that require a prescription, it is recommended that you carry a copy of that prescription, written with the generic drug name, with you along with a doctor's note explaining the purpose of the medication to pass through customs. AGAIN, KEEP ALL MEDICATIONS IN THEIR ORIGINAL CONTAINERS. Make sure you bring a large enough supply of medication for the amount of time you will spend abroad.

Note that in some countries, drugs which are considered controlled substances are illegal or difficult to obtain. If you plan to take such medications (e.g. pain pills, ADHD medication, etc) abroad with you, check the legality of these medications with the International Narcotics Control Board and/or the Embassy of your destination country(ies). You can access many countries' regulations here: <http://www.incb.org/incb/en/travellers/country-regulations.html>

Immunizations: Before you leave the country, it is a good idea to check that you are up-to-date with all of your regular vaccinations. Ideally you will want to get all of your vaccinations at least four weeks before departure as some immunizations require a series of inoculations spanned over a few weeks' time period. Certain destinations require specific immunizations. You may have to provide proof of immunizations upon arrival. Contact the embassy of the country you're planning to travel to for information on whether or not there are any vaccinations required to enter the country. If you are planning to travel to other countries before, during, or after your program, you should be aware of these countries' immunization requirements as well. Even if the country you are traveling to does not require immunizations, there might be some vaccinations that are recommended by the Center for Disease Control (<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list>).

You can receive immunizations at Student Health Services in Coleman Hall 101, 317-274-8214. Also, you can call the Medical Diagnostics Center at University Hospital, 317-274-8660, to make an appointment. For a list of travel clinics throughout Indiana, visit: www.in.gov/isdh/17199.htm.

In order to keep track of your immunizations you may purchase an International Certificate of Vaccination. You may be able to obtain one at the clinic that provides the immunizations. To purchase an international certificate of vaccination, see the US government bookstore at bookstore.gpo.gov.

Sexual Health Abroad: If you are sexually active, use a condom. Take a supply with you. It may take time to develop the language skills and confidence to purchase condoms in a new culture and in some countries the manufacture and storage of condoms cannot be trusted. Condoms can reduce the risk of acquiring the HIV virus/STDs, but they DO NOT eliminate that risk.

Laws, cultural norms, risks, and access to reproductive health services vary country to country. Norms surrounding consent may also vary. You should exercise a greater degree of caution if you choose to be sexually active while abroad.

Medical Care Abroad: If you need medical care overseas, ask your program administration for recommended physicians, hospitals, and dentists. Make clear that you expect high standards of hygiene. If you are traveling independently, the embassy or consulates in the country in which you are traveling may be able to provide information on medical providers.

Blood Transfusions and Injections: Many countries such as the U.S. and parts of Europe have mandatory screening of donated blood for the HIV virus, but not all do. Therefore, it is recommended that you avoid blood transfusions unless they are absolutely necessary.

*Visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention website (www.cdc.gov) for health information specific to the country(ies) you will be traveling to.

PACKING TIPS

CARRY-ON LUGGAGE

- Remember not to pack any sharp metal objects in your carry-on bag.
- Keep all your official documents and medication in your handbag or carry-on.
- Pack a change of clothing and toiletry essentials in your carry-on in case your flight is delayed or your checked luggage does not arrive with your flight.
- For information on regulations regarding the maximum weight and size of a carry-on, check on your carrier's website for the latest restrictions.
- For detailed information of what you can and can't carry-on, visit the TSA website: www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm

GENERAL

- Pack light. You will be amazed how much you really don't need when you are traveling. Remember, you are the one who will be carrying everything. Pack your bags and carry them around the block and up and down stairs. If it proves to be too difficult, lighten your load! Also, keep in mind that, for most international flights, you are allowed to check only two pieces of luggage. Airlines have restrictions for the weight of each piece of luggage so it is a good idea to check before you pack.
- Many airlines charge passengers a fee for both their first and second checked bags. For more information about these fees visit: www.gsa.gov/portal/content/103882
- If you are taking more than one piece of luggage, try to divide what you are taking into the two bags in case one piece gets lost or stolen.
- Keep copies of your passport and visa pages in several locations. Having a copy will greatly facilitate getting a replacement if it is lost or stolen.
- Keep a list of ALL documents you take with you, including their numbers, such as credit cards, health insurance documents, travelers checks, driver's license, etc. (See Important Documents Numbers List inside this booklet.)
- Be aware of the Customs regulations in your host country as well as in the U.S. See the U.S. Department of State website for more information: <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/go/customs.html>
- Make sure that all of your luggage has your name and phone number on it and that it is easily identifiable (tie on a colored ribbon or tag). Doing this will make it easier to find it at baggage claim and for the customer service in case a piece is lost or stolen. Put your name and phone number on the INSIDE and OUTSIDE.
- BRING COPIES OF ALL PRESCRIPTIONS IN GENERIC FORM, including glasses or contacts and medications.
- BRING PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS IN THEIR ORIGINAL CONTAINERS AND GENERIC FORM – bring enough to last for your stay if possible. However, many U.S. prescription plans won't allow you to easily purchase medications for multiple months. Also, some countries only allow you to bring in a certain

amount of prescription medication without requiring a doctor's note. You should check on this as soon as possible.

- Be aware of the local weather and pack accordingly. Visit www.weather.com to get an idea of what the weather is like in the area you are traveling.
- Take clothing that can be easily layered and combined with different garments and does not wrinkle easily.
- Consider packing clothing which you can leave behind. This will allow you to free up space in your bag and give to local organization or someone in need.
- Make sure the clothing you pack is culturally acceptable in your destination(s).
- Think of all the potential situations you will be in during your time abroad and pack clothing appropriate for each setting – informal, formal, business casual, sport, etc.
- Consider taking an empty duffel or backpack; for longer programs, these can be handy for short weekend trips.
- If you are staying with a host family, it's a good idea to bring a small gift as a token of appreciation, such as a souvenir representing the US/your home country, Indiana/your home state, or IUPUI.

The following is a list of packing suggestions. You may not need every item listed, depending on your destination and the activities included in your program.

Clothing:

- Dressy jacket
- Shirts/blouses/tops
- Trousers/skirts/shorts
- Swimsuit and coverup
- Sweater or cardigan
- Rainwear (umbrella, jacket, boots)
- Jacket or coat
- Socks
- Undergarments
- Long underwear
- Scarf, hairband, bandanna
- Gloves or mittens
- Sun hat or visor
- Dressy shoes
- Walking shoes/boots
- Flip-flops, sandals, slippers
- Belt

Bags/luggage:

- Medium-sized shoulder bag
- Small bag/purse
- Lightweight duffel bag/laundry bag
- Luggage locks (TSA-approved)
- Ziploc bags
- Trash bags

Cleaning/Laundry Supplies:

- Sink stopper
- Detergent/spot remover
- Clothesline
- Inflatable hangers (to dry clothes)

Hygiene/Health:

- Toilet paper, antibacterial wipes
- Water purifier
- Pain reliever, diarrhea treatment, infection treatment
- Insect repellent, mosquito net
- Sunscreen, lip balm
- Bandages
- Menstrual supplies
- Contraceptives and prophylactics
- Vitamins, medications
- Collapsible water bottle/cup

- Glasses, sunglasses, contact lenses/solution
- Ear plugs, eye mask (for sleeping)

Toiletries

- Toothbrush, toothpaste, floss
- Razor, blades, shaving cream/oil
- Comb, hairbrush

- Shampoo, conditioner
- Soap/body wash
- Deodorant
- Nail clippers
- Plastic mirror
- Washcloth/towel
- Hair dryer

- Cell phone, charger
- Laptop/tablet, charger
- Alarm clock
- Batteries
- Camera

Miscellaneous:

Documents:

- Passports, visas
- Vaccination certificates
- Health insurance card
- Travel tickets
- ATM & credit cards
- Prescription & doctor's note
- Copies of all-important documents

- Pens, pencils, small notebook
- Maps, guidebooks, phrasebooks
- Books/reading material
- Scissors
- Spoon, fork, spork, chopsticks, plate/bowl
- Compass, whistle
- Travel pillow (inflatable)
- Hostel sheet bag/sleeping bag
- Safety pins, rubber bands, cord
- Sewing kit
- Duct tape

Electronics:

- Plug/power cord adapters

MONEY MATTERS

Cash Flow: Determining the amount of money you will need during your stay abroad can be difficult, especially if you are a first-time traveler. Different countries have different standards of living based on their economies. First, try to find out the cost of living expenses in the country that you are visiting, such as transportation fares, rent, products, etc. *Ask for advice from your program director* and from students who have been through the same program or been in the same country. Finally, it is recommended that you take **20% more** than what you think you will need as it will help you in unexpected situations such as lost or stolen money or items. **While the IUPUI Study Abroad Office seeks to minimize any such impact on students, program participants should be prepared to cover unanticipated expenses that may come up during travel due to such incidents as canceled flights, missed flights connections, itinerary changes, etc.**

Currency Exchange: You should avoid carrying large amounts of cash with you. It is a good idea to exchange \$100 - \$200 dollars of the foreign currency before you leave so you have some on hand upon arrival. You can exchange U.S. currency at most international airports, Bureau de Change kiosks usually offer the worst rates and banks tend to offer the best rates. To view current exchange rates visit, www.xe.com/ucc.

Debit Card: In many countries today, you can use your debit ATM card at banks and withdraw cash in the local currency. Make sure that you have a PIN number before you leave home. Usually you will get a good exchange rate. You will be limited in the amount that can be withdrawn per day. Students going to nontraditional locations should consult a travel guide or their bank for specific information about access to your account in the host country. You should also inform your bank that you will be traveling. Banks may become alarmed when they notice foreign activity on your account and may freeze your funds until they can ensure that it is you who is withdrawing the money.

Credit Cards: Most major credit cards are accepted abroad. Check with your credit card company to see if they charge a conversion fee for each purchase (usually 1-3% of the purchase price). More importantly, they serve as a

safety net in case of unexpected financial needs. You should inform your credit card company that you will be traveling. Credit card companies may become alarmed when they notice foreign activity on your account and may freeze your card until they can ensure that it is you who is withdrawing the money. Students going to nontraditional locations should consult a travel guide or your credit card company for specific information about your credit card and your destination. MasterCard and Visa provide ATM locators online so that you can determine if this will be a convenient option for you.

- MasterCard – <https://www.mastercard.us/en-us/consumers/get-support/find-nearest-atm.html>
- Visa - www.visa.com/atmlocator

Chip and PIN: Many countries now use a chip and PIN system for the credit and debit cards issued in their countries. It is a new, more secure way of paying with credit or debit cards. Instead of using your signature to verify payments, you will be asked to enter a four-digit Personal Identification Number (PIN) known only to you.

Many US banks and credit card companies have started issuing debit and credit cards with chips. Note that your PIN to use these won't be set up automatically – you have to set up the PIN. To do so, contact your bank or credit card company. In many cases, these cards will not work abroad without the PIN set up.

Wiring Money: Western Union provides international service and allows you to receive money at a foreign bank or post office directly from your family in only a couple of days. MoneyGram is another way of wiring money. You can visit a MoneyGram agent location (such as some Wal-Marts) and send money to banks all over the world. You can also send money online.

TRAVEL AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Anytime we jump into a plane, car or train carbon is being used to move us around. There is increasing attention around the world on the impact humans are having on the environment. A sample carbon calculator is available here to see how much carbon is being used for your flight out of the country www.chooseclimate.org/flying/mf.html. While we want you to go overseas and we think that the carbon cost of getting you out of the country is worth it, we encourage you to consider the responsibility that comes with this opportunity.

Study abroad students have a special opportunity to explore how people live in other countries. When you live in another country you will encounter many differences in how people go about their daily lives. If you are thoughtful in your exploration of these differences you may discover that many of them have a lower environmental impact. For instance, in many places public transportation is used by the majority of the population. In other places, the majority of food consumed by the population is produced locally using organic methods. The use of disposable items varies considerably in other countries. You can explore all of these and more while you are abroad

Some of what you see would be difficult to incorporate in your life once you return home but we encourage you to see what changes you could make yourself and community. Some returned study abroad students have said that they were so moved by the more sustainable lifestyle they witnessed in their host country that they made significant changes to how they lived at home, so much so that the carbon savings from their new habits more than made up for the carbon invested to get them abroad.

CHECKLIST: TO DO BEFORE GOING ABROAD



Ensure that you have submitted all of the pre-departure forms in your iAbroad account, including any hard-copy forms to the Study Abroad Office.



Provide your overseas contact information to a family member or friend who may need to contact you in case of an emergency.



Confirm that you have a passport that will be valid for at least 6 months after your intended return to the US.



Check to see if a visa is required for entry into your destination country(ies). Acquire any necessary visas.



Check the U.S. Department of State's Students Abroad website for country specific information sheets, travel alerts, and travel warnings for the country(ies) to which you will be traveling:

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



Check the Centers for Disease Control recommendations for travel to your destination(s).



If there are recommended vaccinations or medications for your destination(s), visit a travel clinic to explore vaccination options.

- IUPUI Travel Clinic in Coleman Hall <https://studentaffairs.iupui.edu/health/medical/location-hours.html>
- Travel clinics in Indiana: <http://www.in.gov/isdh/17199.htm>



Find out whether your prescriptions are considered illegal in the country(ies) you will be traveling. Get a letter from your doctor listing your medications and explaining why you need them. Carry instructions for treating any allergies or other unique medical conditions you might have.



Ensure that you have adequate insurance coverage for your time abroad. If you are participating in an IUPUI program, you will be required to purchase GeoBlue insurance. Insurance costs are paid by the individual traveler but may be included in your program fee. It's imperative that if you are not getting GeoBlue insurance through our office, your medical insurance covers the following:

Medical Evacuation – This insurance will cover expenses related to transferring you to a facility for medical care should you become sick or injured.

Repatriation – This insurance will cover expenses related to returning your remains to your home country should you die while abroad.

Trip Interruption or Cancellation Insurance – This insurance will cover expenses related to changes in your travel plans. A website that provides more information on this type of insurance is:

www.ricksteves.com/plan/tips/insurance.htm The business of travel insurance may experience changes in the coming years due to the financial losses during the COVID-19 outbreak. Please evaluate your comfort level for potential financial loss when determining which insurance plan to purchase.

If you need to purchase additional health insurance there are many more options. Visit the U.S. Department of State’s website for an overview of insurance providers:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/go/health/insurance-providers.html>



Have a health and dental checkup before you travel.



Inform your bank and credit card companies that you will be traveling abroad if you intend to use your ATM/Debit or credit cards abroad. Know the credit limits on all your credit cards as well as how to contact those companies from abroad.



Make sure that you will have access to funds in case you should need to make unexpected purchases (ex. cancelled flights, extra meals, etc.).



Make copies of the ID page of your passport and relevant visa pages. Leave a copy with a family member or friend in the US and take a copy with you, separate from your passport.



Investigate the local conditions, laws, legal system, political landscape, weather, and culture of the country you’re visiting.



Make sure your *covered* luggage tags are labeled with your information. Also, place your contact information *inside* each piece of luggage.



Familiarize yourself with the current TSA luggage guidelines for air travel at www.tsa.gov and find out how much luggage your airline will allow.



Confirm your flights with your airline and reserve seats.



Arrange for your bills to be paid while you are traveling.



Make arrangements for your mail delivery during your absence.

RECOMMENDED TRAVEL WEBSITES

AIRFARE, TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION

- www.farecompare.com (when you're looking for a cheap international flight)
- www.ryanair.com (European low cost airline)
- www.easyjet.com (European low cost airline)
- www.studentuniverse.com (the largest online student travel agency)
- www.travelcuts.com (cheap flights and accommodation)
- www.statravel.com (student travel agency)
- www.kayak.com (when you're looking for a flight or place to stay)
- www.hostels.com
- www.hotels.com (when you're looking for a place to stay)

RECOMMENDED READING

WEBSITES

- World News: www.wn.com
- CNN: www.cnn.com/WORLD/
- BBC: news.bbc.co.uk

AFTER YOU ARRIVE

JET LAG

Jet lag is caused by a combination of different factors, the biggest being a change in time zones. It can affect you physically, mentally, and emotionally. A physical symptom is swollen feet, a mental example would be disorientation, and an emotional symptom is anxiety. Drinking plenty of water while on board can help to alleviate physical and mental symptoms of jet lag. Other strategies for coping include: adjusting your bedtime to the new, local timetable as soon as possible, spending some time every day outdoors, setting your watch to local time, and eating on local time. Some travelers find that taking [Melatonin](#) can help speed your time adjustment. Check with your doctor first to see if Melatonin might be a good option during your travels.

ARRIVAL PROCEDURE

Upon arrival, you will have to go through Immigration before you can retrieve your luggage. You will have to show the Immigration Officer your passport, your visa and proof of immunization if required. The Immigration Officer

might ask you additional questions regarding your stay. This can be quite intimidating but if you remain polite, serious and honest, you should not have any problems.

After your passport is stamped, you will be able to collect your luggage. You will then have to take it through the Customs checkpoint. If you properly fill out the Customs declaration form handed to you on the plane, you should not have any problems. However, Customs Officers can still ask you questions regarding the content of your luggage or proceed to a more thorough inspection. Respect the Customs regulations to avoid any problems. Searching of bags is quite common, so be prepared for this.

CROSS CULTURAL ISSUES

“Culture shock” is the term used to describe the disorientation that many students experience to some degree when spending an extended period of time in a new culture. It is a natural part of cultural adjustment. It usually sets in after the period of excitement from the newness of your host country is over. You may feel homesick and if you do, this is quite normal. If you feel this way for several weeks or feel depressed, you should consider talking to your program coordinator or someone who can help you work through the issues you are experiencing. Once you pass through culture shock, you may find you have a new appreciation for your host country. You will probably not accept everything, but you will feel more comfortable with yourself and the cultural differences you see around you.

12 STEP PROGRAM FOR DEALING WITH CROSS-CULTURAL TENSIONS, ANNOYANCES, AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS WHILE TRAVELING OR LIVING ABROAD

(Or how to process behaviors and beliefs that annoy or distress you in your host country – without lapsing into stereotypes or mischaracterizations.)

1. **Keep an open perspective.** Don't immediately condemn the action. Start from the premise that diversity is interesting, we grow when we learn about other ways of life, and most behaviors and beliefs make sense when examined in context. Open up to learning about things that take you into new cultural worlds.
2. **Develop a contextual (relativistic) understanding.** Attempt to see the behavior/belief within its context by learning about the political and economic frameworks (both local and global) that have shaped it, the meaning and impact it has for the people who do it or believe in it, and whether or not things might be changing.
3. **Engage in self-reflection.** Consider how your own position, national background, and beliefs are shaping the way you view the situation. Of equal importance, consider how your own actions or those of your nation have played into the situation you are trying to understand.
4. **Assess the degree of harm.** Ask yourself whether this belief/behavior really harms anyone; in other words whether it distresses you simply because it is different from what you know or because it is actually harmful on a serious level.
5. **Avoid assumptions of cultural superiority.** Ask yourself if there are any behaviors/beliefs from your own country that might similarly shock or annoy people from another country.
6. **Avoid overgeneralization.** Do not generalize from the actions of one or two people to an entire society. Be careful to distinguish groups, social classes, and individuals within a society, recognizing that not everyone does

the same thing. Do not let one or two negative traits lead you to condemn a society as a whole. Do not let the acts of a single individual stand for the whole community.

7. **Learn from your hosts.** Interact with the people of the country on a personal level, come to see life through their eyes, and hear their explanations. Ask questions and listen carefully to the answers. Learn the language, participate in local events, and let the bonds of friendship lead you to a deeper understanding. Recognize that wisdom comes in many shapes and from many sources.

8. **Try it, maybe you'll like it.** If you no longer view the behavior or belief as harmful, consider trying it yourself. Not only will you understand it better, you might actually enjoy it.

9. **Give things time.** Understanding another way of life is a multi-stage process. What is distressing at first may become second-nature to you later. Let the passage of time do its work.

10. **Recognize when you are stressed.** Consider how your own homesickness, loneliness, or travel fatigue may be aggravating the situation. Take a break from stress by pulling back for a while, listening to your favorite music, taking a walk, etc. Come back to the situation refreshed and ready to view it in a new light.

11. **DECIDE WHAT ACTION TO TAKE IF THE BEHAVIOR/BELIEF IS TRULY NEGATIVE.** If, after all of the above, you decide the behavior/belief is truly harmful or beyond what you can accept, rationally decide what you will do. Consider the options of avoidance, reporting, confronting, and negotiating. In serious situations, work with members of the host community who have responsibility for dealing with such situations or who are working to change the behavior/belief.

12. **Focus on the positive.** When all is said and done, even if there are some behaviors/beliefs you do not like, identify those you admire or enjoy and move these to the forefront of your experience. Make sure you give yourself every opportunity to enjoy where you are, to appreciate the strengths and assets of the host community, to form lasting relationships, and to grow from diversity.

*Created by Dr. Susan Sutton

The following information was taken from Middlebury College's Pre-Departure Handbook and used with Middlebury's permission:

Robert Kohls, a renowned author of intercultural literature, defines culture as "an integrated system of learned behavior patterns that are characteristic of the members of any given society ... the total way of life of particular groups of people. It includes everything that a group of people thinks, says, does, and makes, its customs, language, material artifacts and shared systems of attitudes and feelings. Culture is learned and transmitted from generation to generation." It is important to recognize your own "cultural baggage" when you go abroad.

ETHICS OF PHOTOGRAPHY

As a global citizen, it is your responsibility to consider whether your photo is respectful to its subject(s). Before you take a photo, think about the following:

- **Does your photo feature children?** If so, did you get consent from the child's parent or guardian to take, share, and/or post the photo online? Think about how you would feel if a stranger from abroad was taking and sharing photos of your child without your knowledge or consent.
- **Have you considered the legality of photographing children?** (In some countries, posting photos of children online is illegal.)
- **If applicable, did the person/people in your photo give consent to be photographed?** Are they aware that you may be posting the photo online?
- **Is the photo respectful to the host country?**
- **Did you reflect on how others would view and interpret your photo?** Would anyone find the photo offensive in any way?

Please avoid posting photos that stereotype, exploit, disrespect, or make false generalizations about the host country, its people, and/or its culture.

PERSONAL INVENTORY

Study, travel or work abroad is a whole-person experience. The parts of your identity that make you unique inevitably become part of your experience abroad. Time abroad often facilitates personal reflection and teaches people as much about themselves as it does about other people. Before you go, you will want to consider how your identity might affect, or be affected by, your experience abroad. See the list below and resources it directs you to.

GENDER

Gender is a characteristic that can affect your experience abroad. Both women and men are often particularly aware of gender-based treatment in a foreign culture that differs from their home culture. It's good to talk with someone who has spent time in your host country about these differences before you go. For women who have concerns about sexual harassment, safety, or social expectations, there are a number of books devoted to these issues such as *A Journey of One's Own: Uncommon Advice for the Independent Woman Traveler* (by Thalia Zepatos, 1996); *Travelers' Tales: Gutsy Women, Travel Tips, and Wisdom for the Road* (by Marybeth Bond, 1996); *Gutsy Women: More Travel Tips and Wisdom from the Road* (by Marybeth Bond, 2001); and *Safety and Security for Women Who Travel* (Travelers' Tales Guides; by Sheila Swan and Peter Laufer, 1998).

For more information and resources consult <https://overseas.iu.edu/planning/expectations/index.html>

Race, Ethnicity, Minority or Majority Status

Because of your race or ethnicity, you may be accorded different privileges or experience different barriers abroad than those you experience at home. Different cultures define "race" and "ethnicity" differently, create different categories, and expect different things of people within these categories. Consult <http://abroad.iupui.edu/before-apply/what-to-expect.html> for more information.

CLASS

Overseas you may experience class issues differently than you do at home. In certain contexts, working class Americans may be considered rich. In other contexts, upper-middle class Americans may be considered poor. Certain cultures have more rigidly defined or more openly articulated ideas about class than those in the United States. Think about who you will be meeting as a student engaged in higher learning in your host country. Think about who you would like to meet during your semester or year abroad.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Depending on your sexual orientation you may be granted different privileges or encounter different challenges abroad than at home. At the same time, while overseas, people often examine, or reexamine, questions of sexual identity because of increased personal freedom or increased time for personal reflection. Since many ideas we have about sexual orientation and sexuality are culturally-based, students need to be aware of how this will affect their relationships with host nationals, cultural adjustment and reentry, and the overall study abroad experience. Please feel free to talk with the staff of International Programs and Off-Campus Study about this issue and/or consult <http://abroad.iupui.edu/before-apply/what-to-expect.html>

RELIGION

People around the world have different ideas and expectations regarding religion. To be respectful of others, it is important to learn as much as possible about the religious beliefs, practices and norms of the area to which you are traveling. You may also want to research whether or not people of your faith meet and practice in the place you are going.

DISABILITY

Travel is always a challenge to a person's problem-solving abilities; this is no different for a person with a disability. People with disabilities not only meet these challenges, but some people have written about their experiences, making it easier for the travelers who follow them. While overseas, people with disabilities will likely find some things inaccessible, but preparation and persistence can help. Mobility International USA (phone/TTY: 541-343-1284; www.miusa.org) is an excellent resource on travel for people with physical disabilities.

LEARNING STYLE

You will probably find that the teaching styles and the learning expectations at higher education institutions in your host country are different from those at U.S. institutions. Classes in many other countries are often more formal, consisting almost entirely of lecture with little interaction between students and professors. Research the system of education in your host country before your departure. Be prepared to be an active participant in your learning. Talk with students who have studied abroad in your host country about these issues.

DIETARY CONCERNS

In the United States, we live in a society which offers a wide range of food choice. When traveling abroad, it is sometimes difficult to maintain a particular diet (for example, a vegetarian or medically-restricted diet). Vegetarianism can mean a variety of things to different people. Think carefully about how your food choices might

affect your friends who invite you to dinner, your homestay family, or students with whom you cook in the residence halls. Prepare yourself for societies in which ingredients are rarely listed on packaging.

HEALTH

Because an experience abroad can be physically, mentally and emotionally demanding, think carefully about your health. A certain amount of stress due to culture shock and a change in living conditions is a normal part of an experience abroad. In some cases, such stress may aggravate an illness you have under control at home. You may also have concerns about health care facilities and insurance.

Discuss any physical or mental health concerns with your doctor or counselor and your program leader. Work with them to make a plan for how you will manage your health abroad.

SMOKING

While there is currently a strong movement in the United States against smoking in public places, the situation in many other countries is quite different. While abroad, you may encounter more second-hand smoke than you are used to, with smokers showing little concern about whether or not it bothers you (for example, in restaurants or on trains).

BEING AN AMERICAN ABROAD

As with any of the previously mentioned identity issues, there are many stereotypes that exist, and Americans are not excluded from this. Frequently, the stereotype of the American is not at all flattering, and can include characteristics such as:

- arrogant patriotism (the "ugly American" who expects everyone to speak English and thinks that every country should pattern itself after the United States)
- loud and overly friendly behavior
- drunkenness
- immature behavior
- obsessed with being hard working
- wealthy
- ignorant of other countries
- promiscuous
- always in a hurry



It is up to you to behave in a way that will show the people in your host country that these are in many ways unjustified stereotypes that cannot be applied arbitrarily, at least to you.

It is important, however, to recognize your "Americanness" and to think about what cultural baggage you will be carrying abroad. To help you think about this, Kohls has developed a list of 13 commonly held American values. See if you recognize yourself in any of these values, and think about the fact that some cultures have values that are diametrically opposite to these American values.

Personal control over the environment - Americans do not generally believe in the power of fate; they see this as superstitious and reflective of an unwillingness to take initiative. Life's problems tend to be viewed as coming from one's laziness or unwillingness to take responsibility, rather than from bad luck.

Change - Americans tend to see change as good, leading to development, improvement, and progress. More traditional cultures see change as destructive; they value stability and tradition.

Time - Time is of utmost importance to Americans. Time is something to be on, kept, filled, saved, lost, wasted, and even killed. Americans tend to be more concerned with getting things done on time than they are with interpersonal relationships. Americans stop discussions abruptly in order to make appointments on time and to be productive.

Equality and fairness - Equality is so valued in American culture that it is seen as having a religious basis. At least in theory, Americans believe that all people are created equal and that everyone should have equal opportunities.

Individualism and interdependence - Americans tend to view themselves as highly individualistic and resist being thought of as part of any homogenous group. Individualism leads to privacy, which most Americans highly value. It is interesting to note that the word for "privacy" does not even exist in many non-Western languages.

Self-help and initiative - Americans tend to take credit for accomplishments as individuals, and they tend to value the "self-made" man or woman.

Competition - Americans tend to believe that competition brings out the best in people, and "free enterprise" is valued in many areas of life.

Future orientation - Americans tend to value the future, devalue the past, and to an extent, are unaware of the present. Many Americans work so hard and think so much about their future that a perfectly happy present often goes unnoticed.

Action/work orientation - Americans tend to see any action as superior to inaction. Americans tend to schedule an active life and schedule in time for relaxation. Often the first question people ask each other when meeting is, "What do you do?" meaning what is their profession.

Informality - Americans are more informal than many other cultures. For example, many Americans call their bosses by their first names, dress is more casual attire, even at formal events, and even greetings are casual (e.g., "Hi" rather than, "Hello, how are you?").

Directness, openness, and honesty - Americans tend to prefer the direct approach to delivering information, no matter how unpleasant. Americans tend to see honesty as most important, and anyone who uses an intermediary to deliver unpleasant information is seen as manipulative and untrustworthy.

Practicality and efficiency - The reputation of Americans is practical and efficient. They tend to value rational and objective decisions over emotional and subjective ones, and the pragmatic approach is the overwhelming philosophy.

Materialism and acquisitiveness - Foreigners tend to consider Americans to be very materialistic. Americans tend to give high priority to obtaining, maintaining, and protecting material objects, and they value newness and innovation.

DEALING WITH ANTI-AMERICAN SENTIMENT

There may be times when you feel as though you are being attacked personally for being an American. Sometimes you will be expected to answer questions about American foreign policy and to justify the actions of your government with which you may or may not agree. There is no right or wrong way to deal with anti-American slurs or suggestions, and you will certainly develop your own strategy for addressing these issues. However, some suggestions are not to reinforce the negative American stereotypes with your own behavior, and to try to understand the motives of the person criticizing you and your country. Ask more questions to try to understand why the person believes what s/he does. Most importantly, remain tolerant and avoid becoming defensive; keep an open mind and use the experience to learn about yourself and about cultural differences.

Particularly in the post-9/11 environment, students are encouraged to prepare themselves for conversations about U.S. foreign policies and the reasons behind them by brushing up on American political and cultural history. It is also critical to understand the current U.S. foreign policy towards the country you will be studying in, as well as that country's current political climate. A well-informed student will be better able to engage himself/herself thoughtfully in conversations with host country nationals rather than taking criticism of U.S. policy as a personal attack or insult.

BEING AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IN THE U.S. AND THEN GOING ABROAD

Studying abroad affords you advantages over your U.S. counterparts. Having left your home country to study abroad in the U.S., you've already learned how to adjust to a new culture, educational system, and language. Your skills and experience may help you to enjoy a relatively smooth transition into your new host culture and university setting. However, please keep in mind that you may still experience culture shock, feelings of isolation, or adjustment difficulties.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Because of the cultural differences you will encounter, as well as the cultural baggage that you will inevitably take with you abroad, you will certainly encounter some adjustment issues. This is nothing to fear, and indeed it is a normal and common part of the process. It should help you to know a little bit about what you may experience.

Upon arrival in the host country, many students go through an initial phase of euphoria and excitement, sometimes known as the "honeymoon phase." You will probably be very excited by the newness of your surroundings and things that appear unusual will be interesting. Sometimes students in this first stage have a false sense of security, so it is especially important to keep safety precautions in mind. After this initial period wears off, it is common to feel that your usual ways of dealing with things and your habits and routines do not work in your host country. There are endless subtle cultural differences, and the most minor tasks may seem major. For example, you may encounter difficulties with language, housing, money, transportation, food, recreation, and even health. You may begin to feel like an outsider, things may seem confusing and frustrating, and you may even start to feel a little depressed. This psychological disorientation is what is often referred to as "culture shock."



Based on Oberg (1960) and Gallahorn & Gallahorn (1963)

There is no right or wrong way to deal with culture shock, but the most important thing is to be aware that this is a very normal phenomenon, so recognizing and accepting its existence is an important first step. It is suggested that you avoid seeking out other disgruntled or unhappy people, and do not isolate yourself. Do not sit around criticizing the culture and being negative; this will just prolong your gloom. Keep busy, set goals for yourself, and try not to be judgmental. Be aware that the problems probably are not so much with your surroundings, but with your own adjustment to it. In time, the negative symptoms of culture shock will disappear, and you will certainly adjust. Kohls states that, "Culture shock is in some degree inevitable . . . and is the occupational hazard of overseas living through which one has to be willing to go in order to enjoy the pleasures of experiencing other countries and cultures in depth."

How to Cope With Culture Shock

Be aware that it does exist.

Remember that the problem isn't with "them," but with you.

Don't think that you are "strange" or "abnormal."

While sometimes difficult, remember that culture shock can leave you with broader perspectives, deeper insights, and wider tolerance.

Don't sit around being negative and critical—go out and do something.

Look for the best, not the worst.

Before you go abroad, learn as much as you can about your host country.

Keep an open mind.

Practice laughing at yourself.

SAFETY ABROAD

As a foreigner, you can feel very vulnerable in your new environment. The more prepared you are for unexpected situations, the better you will be able to cope with them. *Use your own judgment but stay aware.*

The IUPUI Study Abroad Office recommends that students follow these suggestions:

COMMUNICATION:

- Try not to travel alone and notify others when you do
- Memorize the local emergency numbers
- Carry a fully-charged cell phone at all times

- Learn a few phrases in the local language (e.g. “help!” “May I please use your phone?”)
- Carry emergency card with you

IN-COUNTRY BEHAVIOR:

- Read and behave in accordance with any safety and/or emergency protocols set out by IU policy and the policies of your program director. For IU policy information see this link: <https://overseas.iu.edu/policies/index.html>
- Don't wear expensive jewelry while traveling. Leave irreplaceable items at home.
- Carry a copy of the photograph page of your passport with you.
- Travel light. You can move more quickly and are less likely to set your luggage down, leaving it unattended.
- Avoid crowds or moving about the city in large groups of readily identifiable Americans.
- Maintain a low profile while in the host country; including adopting more regionally appropriate dress standards, speech patterns and behavior.
- Avoid locations known to be common gathering points for US citizens (including bars, restaurants, nightclubs, etc.).
- Avoid discussing politics or government/regulatory policies.
- Avoid public demonstrations and other civil disturbances.
- Don't use shortcuts, narrow alleys or poorly-lit streets. Try not to travel alone at night.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash and withdraw money only as you need currency. Carry small bills in different places on your body. Use a pouch that can be hidden under your clothes.
- Carry the following phone numbers and email addresses at all times:
 - Family at home and work
 - Study abroad program resident director, IUPUI International Office emergency contact numbers, or, if applicable, contact numbers for the foreign university international student office.
 - U.S. Embassy and/or local Consulate in any country you visit
 - Local police and fire service
 - Medical facilities
 - Your hotel, host family, residence hall

BE INFORMED:

- Know the local laws. When you are in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws.
- Monitor and assess safety issues in the region and country in which you are studying by
 - periodically checking the US Department of State consular information sheets and travel advisories (<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings.html>)
 - reading local newspapers and guidebooks
 - reading the provided pre-departure materials
- Develop a personal Emergency Action Plan
 - In preparation for your experience abroad every traveler is encouraged to develop a Personal Emergency Action Plan in case something unexpected occurs while you are traveling.

The Center for Global Education has produced a comprehensive on-line safety handbook that may be a good resource for you. It is available at: www.studentsabroad.com.

WATER SAFETY ABROAD

- Exercise caution when walking near the water's edge.
- NEVER swim after consuming alcohol or food.
- Never swim alone.
- Swim within your depth and parallel to the shore.
- Always swim, or surf, in areas patrolled by lifeguards.
- Swim in the designated swimming area when bathing in the sea.
- Obey all the usual safety rules that apply in any properly run pool e.g. no running, no running dives, no horseplay etc.
- Ensure that you do not dive into shallow water.

RETURNING HOME

U.S. CUSTOMS

When you come back to the United States, you must pass through U.S. Customs. You will be asked to declare the value of the items that you purchased abroad and are bringing back to the US. Certain items are illegal to bring into the United States, and some require that you pay an import tax or duty. For additional information on U.S.

Customs requirements, please see the following website:

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

REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

When you return to the U.S., you may experience “reverse culture shock” as you try to re-adapt to your own culture. Many students thoroughly prepare for entering the new culture but leave little time in preparing themselves for their return home. No one experiences this process in exactly the same way. It is helpful to talk with friends and family about your feelings, to keep in contact with those far away, and give yourself time to make the adjustments. The following tips should help you deal with your culture shock:

- ❖ *Talk with others who can relate to you about your experience:* Not everyone you talk to will understand the depth of your cultural experience which can be both frustrating and discouraging. Talking with people who have spent time abroad are more likely to understand and relate to the feelings you may be experiencing. Feel free to stop in the Study Abroad Office to talk about anything. Everyone in the office has spent time abroad and would be more than willing to listen.
- ❖ *Keep in touch with overseas peers:* Sometimes the only people you feel can really understand you are the peers who you studied abroad with. Give them a call or write a letter about what you are going through. Odds are they are experiencing similar feelings.
- ❖ *Write about your international experience:* Putting your thoughts and feelings down on paper can be both therapeutic and help you process your thoughts by giving you times to reflect on your experience.
- ❖ *Stay internationally stimulated:* There are many international activities happening on campus and around Indianapolis at any given time.
 - A great way to mix with individuals from different cultures is to live in the IUPUI International House. To find out more, please visit the following link:
<http://international.iupui.edu/indianapolis/housing/international-house.html>.

- In the mood for ethnic food? www.indyethnicfood.com has an extensive list of ethnic restaurants in Indianapolis.
- The Nationalities Council of Indiana provides a thorough list of international activities happening around Indiana. For more information, for more information visit: www.nationalitiescouncil.org/
- For more information on what you can do to keep your study abroad experience alive once you've returned, visit: abroad.iupui.edu/returned/

TRANSFERRING CREDIT TO IUPUI

If you are participating on a non-IU program and receiving transfer credit, be sure to have your program or host university send your official transcript to the following address:

IUPUI Study Abroad Office
902 W. New York St., ES2129
Indianapolis, IN 46202-5197

Transcripts must be sent directly from the program or institution to IUPUI. (Note: this only applies to students who go on a program not administered by an IU Campus.)

CHECKLIST: TO DO UPON RETURN FROM ABROAD



Complete the program evaluation form.



Submit your photos to the Study Abroad Photo Contest.



Attend an event for returned study abroad students (*Welcome Back Reception is held early during the fall semester.*)

IF YOU RECEIVED A SCHOLARSHIP



Write and submit your reflection paper to the Study Abroad Office. Note: The Reflection Paper is due within one month after you complete your study abroad program.



Schedule to volunteer at an event approved by the Study Abroad Office. Note: You must complete the volunteer requirement within one semester after you return from abroad.