

# Office of International Education and Development

APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY

## Student Handbook



<http://international.appstate.edu>

Phones: Jesse Lutabingwa (828) 262-2046 Fax: (828) 262-4037

*Dear Participant,*

*Congratulations on your decision to participate in an Education Abroad Program, an experience that we hope will be exciting, fulfilling, and transforming. As you embark on this new adventure, you must have a lot of questions on how to prepare yourself for this new endeavor. This handbook was designed to help answer some of your questions, as well as inform you about your rights and responsibilities while overseas.*

*Please make sure to take this handbook with you when you travel as it contains important information you may need.*

*-The Staff of OIED*

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**Important Contacts****ASU Police Department  
ASU Police Emergency**

Phone: 828-262-2150  
Phone: 828-262-8000

**Office of International Education and Development (OIED)**

Appalachian State University  
321 Plemmons Student Union  
Boone, NC 28608 USA

Phone: 828-262-2046  
Fax: 828-262-4037

**Assoc. Vice Chancellor for International Education and Development**

Dr. Jesse Lutabingwa

Office: 828-262-2810  
Home: 828-297-3701  
Email: [lutabingwajl@appstate.edu](mailto:lutabingwajl@appstate.edu)

**ASU Office of Equity, Diversity and Compliance**

Ms. Bindu Kolli Jayne

Office: 828-262-2144  
Email: [jaynebk@appstate.edu](mailto:jaynebk@appstate.edu)

**ASU Counseling Center**

Dr. Dan Jones

Office: 828-262-3180  
Email: [jonesdl@appstate.edu](mailto:jonesdl@appstate.edu)

**U.S. Department of State**

For international travel information, please refer to: <http://travel.state.gov/>

For lists of travel warnings, tips for American students, etc.: <http://travel.state.gov/travel/>

For websites of U.S. Embassies and Consulates, please refer to: <http://usembassy.state.gov/>

Overseas Citizens Services: Call 1-888-407-4747 (from overseas: 202-501-4444) for answers related to questions concerning a crisis/emergency involving American citizens abroad

**HTH Worldwide Global Assistance Services (Medical Assistance 24/7):**

- Call collect from outside the U.S. : 1-610-254-8771
- Call toll free within the U.S. : 800-257-4823
- Email : [assist@hthworldwide.com](mailto:assist@hthworldwide.com)
- Fax: 1-610-293-3529

**Centers for Disease Control (CDC)**

Website: [cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx](http://cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx)

Hotline: 404-332-4559

**ASU Health Services**

Appalachian State University  
614 Howard Street

Website: <http://www.healthservices.appstate.edu>

Main phone number: 262-3100

Appointments phone number: 262-6577

Medical records/Immunizations: 262-6578

**ASU Media Services**

Bottom Floor of The Old Belk Library

Phone: 262-4080

**ASU Office of Student Financial Aid**

Appalachian State University

ASU Box 32059

Boone, NC 28608-2059

Office: 828-262-2190

Fax: 828-262-2585

Website: [www.financialaid.appstate.edu](http://www.financialaid.appstate.edu)

### **What to do Before you Sign Up for an Education Abroad Program:**

**Get your passport.** If you do not already have a passport which will be valid for at least six months after your return to the U.S., apply for one immediately (see later section “Passports & Visas”).

**Get your visa.** Programs to locations such as Africa, India, and China require a visa for US citizens. Please check with your program leader to see if a visa is necessary and how to apply for one. Also, non-US citizens may need a visa for any program and should check with the appropriate consulate/embassy on visas.

- ◇ **Read this handbook in its entirety.** It includes many policies for which you will be held accountable and it also has many important tips based on past students’ experiences.
- ◇ **Visit Financial Aid Office.** ASU students intending to use financial aid to cover the cost of the program must schedule an appointment with the Financial Aid Office.
- ◇ **Arrange your flight.** Make your flight arrangements with a travel agency after consultation with your program leader if airfare is not included in your program cost.
- ◇ **Pay the program cost and prepay tuition.** See payment schedule in the Student Application Package.
- ◇ **Attend orientation.** The date will be communicated to you.
- ◇ **Make photocopies.** Make copies of all your important documents such as passport, airline tickets, prescriptions, credit cards, ATM cards, etc. Leave one set of copies in the U.S. with a family member or friend, and take another set with you in a place separate from the originals. The copies will help speed up the replacement process if documents are lost or stolen.
- ◇ **Make an appointment with ASU Health Services.** Contact ASU Health Services as soon as you sign up for a program to obtain necessary immunizations and health information for your destination country (see the Health and Safety Information sections in this handbook for more information). Please refer to the “Travel Services” section of Appalachian Health Services online at [www.healthservices.appstate.edu](http://www.healthservices.appstate.edu).
- ◇ **Get Prescriptions.** Get copies of all medical and vision prescriptions to carry with you. If possible, have your doctor fill your prescriptions to cover your entire stay abroad (see “Health” section).
- ◇ **Arrange for Phone Calls.** If you plan to use a U.S. long-distance calling card overseas (see “Keeping in Touch” section), contact your long-distance phone company to make sure you know the access codes you will need to dial from abroad.
- ◇ **Pack light!** Lay out everything you plan to take and then take half of that. (see “Things to Bring With You” section). This is the #1 piece of advice from returning students every year!
- ◇ **READ, READ, READ!** You will be going to a place where almost everything is different from what you know here – the food, the customs, the weather, the toilet paper, the electrical outlets, the clothes, etc. (Yes, this is true even for those of you going to an English speaking country.) The more you can

learn about your destination - its history, its culture, and its people - the better prepared you will be to enjoy the differences rather than be overwhelmed by them (see "Home stays" and "Culture"). Many resources such as travel guides are available at ASU library and online.

### **Academic Expectations**

Study abroad participants are expected to perform academically at standards equal to their on-campus performance at Appalachian State University. This includes attending class, taking exams, reading required materials, completing assignments, etc. As a study abroad participant you must follow the academic calendar for these activities and assignments. If you are not maintaining good academic standing while abroad and fear that you may fail one or more courses, you should notify the on-site program leader. Obtaining a GPA lower than 2.0 and completing less than 67% of your attempted hours for the previous term may result in no academic credit awarded and no financial aid for the following semester.

### **Passports**

If you have not already done so, you should **apply for a passport IMMEDIATELY**. Applications for a first-time passport may take only four weeks, but during busy times you should allow six to eight weeks. A VALID PASSPORT IS REQUIRED FOR ALL PROGRAMS.

The University Post Office accepts passport applications on behalf of the U.S. Department of State. Students may apply for their passport at the University Post Office Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Routine processing of passport applications can take anywhere from four to six weeks. Expedited service is available for an additional fee. Please note that in most cases, persons applying for a new passport are required to submit a certified birth certificate. This requirement can take time depending on the municipality issuing the birth certificate.

Passport application forms, fees, current processing times, and other information can be found on the U.S. State Department website ([www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)).

### **Visas**

Tourist visas are not required for U.S. citizens participating in most ASU faculty-led programs. Your program leader will inform you of any specific visa requirements pertaining to your program. Generally, visas are required for travel to Africa, India and China. Non-U.S. citizens must contact the consulate or embassy for the program's host country. Also, if you plan to travel to other countries before or after your program, a visa may be necessary. You should check with the embassy of the countries you intend to visit and inquire about visas before departure.

### **Special Notes for Non-U.S. Citizens**

Non-U.S. citizens must contact the Office of International Education and Development in order to obtain the proper approvals necessary in order to study abroad with Appalachian. Only those non-U.S. citizen students with the proper approval of the OIED will be allowed to study abroad. This is to ensure that all the INS requirements are met and that you do not jeopardize your residency status by participating in a program abroad. Non-U.S. citizens should also contact the embassy of the

destination country for information on visa requirements for citizens of your country. Check with the Program Leader regarding any field trips to other countries which may also require a visa entry.

### **Flights**

Unless otherwise indicated, international airfare is included in all programs. Your program leader will make arrangements for the group and will provide you with flight information. For programs that do not offer arranged flights, the flight and arrival arrangements are often handled separately by each individual student.

Once you have been accepted to the program, the Program Leader will notify you of the arrival location, date and time and any other instructions. It is then up to you to make and pay for your arrival arrangements.

### **General Flight Guidelines**

Unless otherwise indicated, international airfare, insurance, and housing are included in all programs. If the airfare is not included, do not buy your plane ticket(s) before getting confirmation from your program leader that the program is expected to go as planned. As a general rule, we recommend buying a round-trip ticket with a set return date. We also recommend flying into the airport that is closest to your final destination. Many students think they should buy an “open-ended” ticket if they are unsure when they want to return. These tickets are usually several hundred dollars more expensive than a ticket with a fixed return date. Many airfares require you to choose a return date but allow you to change the date for a small fee (usually \$50-\$75). This is usually a better investment than an open-ended ticket. Also, some countries may deny entry if you do not produce evidence of a return ticket. When choosing your destination airport, look carefully at the cost, hassle, and time involved before deciding to fly into an airport that is NOT the closest one to your final destination simply because it is cheaper. Remember that you will have all of your luggage with you, and you will be tired and jetlagged. A cheaper ticket is not always the best ticket.

Do not assume that the first travel agency you contact has the cheapest fare. Different agencies have access to different fares and these may vary by several hundred dollars, so it is best to compare the options.

### **Health Information**

It is very important that you take care of yourself while you are abroad. Your health and safety should be your top priorities, and there are some simple precautions you can take to improve your chances of staying healthy and happy while you are overseas. It is quite possible that you will get sick during the time you are abroad. At the very least you may get the “international cold”. You may wish to take your favorite cold remedy with you. But there are also more serious health risks to keep in mind. While traveling to destinations beyond North America and Europe is common, so are health risks – especially where sanitation and medical conditions are poor. Diseases such as tetanus, diphtheria, polio, typhoid, hepatitis, yellow fever, malaria and travelers’ diarrhea pose threats to the unprotected traveler. Most immunizations or health precautions are not mandatory, but they provide valuable protection for people who wish to travel in good health. While it is impossible to eliminate these risks, certain precautions can be taken to alleviate them.

### **As soon as you sign up for a program...**

Make an appointment with the Travel Nurse at the **ASU Student Health Services** (See Important Contacts) or with another health professional to go over recommended and required health information for your destination. The Student Health Services staff will go over any special preparations you will

need to make for your destination, administer any necessary or recommended immunizations, and provide you with a first-aid kit and basic supplies to take with you.

If you take prescription medications (including allergy shots, birth control pills, etc.), you should carry an adequate supply for the duration of your stay and an updated prescription accompanied by a signed and dated statement from the prescribing health care provider. The statement should indicate the generic name and brand name of the medication, as well as the dosage and notes on any major health problems. This statement will provide vital information for medical authorities in case of an emergency. You should also take an extra pair of glasses or contacts, as well as a copy of your prescription. You should also carry a card, tag, or bracelet that identifies any physical condition, such as allergies or diabetes, which might require emergency care.

For those who take prescriptions on a regular and long-term basis, or who will need to take anti-malarial medication, the OIED strongly encourages you to discuss with your health care provider how you will obtain medication for the duration of the program well in advance of departure. If prescriptions cannot be filled for the entire length of the program, students should investigate how they will be able to obtain medication while abroad (some countries do not allow the shipment of medications through customs). Students should talk with their health care provider about the advisability of having prescriptions filled abroad and any legal issues (some U.S. medications are illegal in certain countries). Sometimes anti-malarial medication is actually cheaper abroad. The International Education and Development Office cannot deliver medications to students abroad. You should carry your prescriptions and medications in your carry-on luggage in their original containers. Customs officials may ask to see them. Make sure the name on the prescription matches the name on your passport. It is also helpful to have a note from the physician stating the medical condition that requires the medication.

Speak with your program leader to understand any particular health risks or precautions for your program's destination. You may also want to contact the **Centers for Disease Control Hotline or Website** (See Important Contacts) for current information about your destination(s).

The HIV virus is prevalent everywhere in the world and can ultimately lead to death. The best way to protect yourself is not to have unprotected sex and not to use drugs intravenously or share needles for any reason. If you have (or have had in the past) any medical or psychological conditions which may require treatment while you are overseas, please be sure inform OIED as well as your program director. The stress of adjustment overseas may cause the recurrence of conditions for which you have successfully been treated in the past. If you have any questions or concerns, consult your physician or the Counseling Center.

### **Mental Health**

Your mental health is also of concern while studying abroad. Stress is the number one cause of exacerbation of a preexisting mental illness, and adjusting to another culture typically involves stress for any program participant. The Program Leader or Office of International Education and Development can help put you get in touch with the appropriate resources for counseling and advice. If you suffer from a mental health condition, it is important that you go to your doctor prior to departure and sign a release for medical records. You should also take a copy of your records with you on the program. This will aid the process if you need to meet with a doctor overseas. The insurance you carry through the program can help identify a counselor abroad in advance, so medical records can also be released directly.

Additionally, the **ASU Counseling Center** (See Important Contacts) is available to you anytime from overseas. They have staff on-call for any emergencies during non-office hours. You can reach them by contacting the number for Campus Police (See Important Contacts). **Campus Police will accept collect calls.**



## **Health Insurance**

The UNC system health insurance for study abroad, HTH Worldwide, is provided to all students participating in ASU faculty-led study abroad programs for the duration of the program. The UNC system policy provides excellent, low-cost comprehensive primary coverage with no deductible.

HOWEVER, YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT ANY INJURY OR ILLNESS RESULTING FROM ALCOHOL USE IS EXCLUDED FROM COVERAGE. Also, please note that HTH's Policy does NOT cover any medical care received in the U.S. as the result of a condition acquired during an Education Abroad Program.

When you get your HTH insurance card, take a moment to register at **hthstudents.com** to access Global Health and Safety Resources that help you identify qualified medical providers around the world, request appointments, translate medical terms and brand names for drugs, and review details of your insurance plan. You must have the ID number for your account prior to logging into the HTH system. This ID number will be provided to you prior to your departure via the Program Leader once you have been registered in the HTH system by the OIED.

**For medical evacuation and other 24/7 emergency international medical assistance**, as well as routine, non-emergency requests for health information, direct billing with physicians and hospitals, and outpatient appointment scheduling, contact **HTH Worldwide Global Assistance Services**:

- Call collect from outside the U.S. : 1-610-254-8771
- Call toll free within the U.S. : 800-257-4823
- Email : assist@hthworldwide.com
- Fax: 1-610-293-3529

**In an emergency, seek appropriate medical care directly, and then call HTH Worldwide.**

For other general benefits information and to replace a lost card, contact HTH Customer Service:

- Call collect from outside the U.S.: 1-610-254-8741
- Call toll free within the U.S.: 1-866-281-1668 or 1-888-243-2358
- Email: studentinfo@hthworldwide.com

Carry your insurance card with you at all times. Also carry your claim forms whenever you travel. Reimbursements are most easily made with a completed claim form and appropriate backup documentation. Although arrangements can be made for the insurance company to pay the hospital directly for very serious and lengthy hospital stays or services provided by an HTH approved physician, it is more typical for students to pay all costs up front and then be reimbursed later.

Be sure you have access to adequate funds to cover a health emergency. If you plan to travel before or after the program dates, you are encouraged to and can purchase an extension to your insurance coverage, for up to 30 days before and/or after your program. The cost for extensions is \$2.95 per day and the coverage will be linked to your program insurance card.

**To request reimbursement**, you must submit a claims form, which is available on the *hthstudents.com*

website. Instructions on how to file a claim are on the back of the form. In order to process your claim quickly and accurately, it is important to complete the form in its entirety and to send it and other necessary documents by mail to:

### **HTH Worldwide Insurance Services**

Department FC  
One Radnor Corporate Center, Suite 100  
Radnor, PA 19087

Fax: 1-610-293-3529

You can track the status of your claim on the [hthstudents.com](http://hthstudents.com) website.

**In the event that you are hospitalized**, please call **Jesse Lutabingwa**, Interim Director of Education Abroad (see Important Contacts).

**Online resources for parents/guardians** are accessible [hthparents.com](http://hthparents.com).

The HTH Study Abroad Parents website helps parents review their student's insurance plan, but also learn about culture shock and the other emotional challenges of life abroad.

### **Safety While Abroad**

No place in the world is completely without risks, and there are several simple precautions that can greatly improve your chances of staying healthy and happy while you are abroad.

In this handbook and at the pre-departure orientation we will address general, personal, and travel safety, along with emergency procedures. Your Program Leader will provide any country specific information that may be necessary. Another good safety resource for students going abroad is the Center for Global Education website at [www.studentsabroad.com](http://www.studentsabroad.com).

### **General Safety**

As student safety is our highest priority, the OIED has a variety of mechanisms in place to aid in decision making about the safety of upcoming study abroad programs, as well as programs that are currently overseas. The following is a list of the most commonly asked questions.

#### **How does the OIED monitor the international situation?**

The OIED pays special attention to the U.S. State Department website and monitors it daily for any new updates tied to international travel announcements and warnings. The main source of information comes from the U.S. State Department (see important contacts). Its websites issue periodic public announcements and warnings about the safety of Americans overseas. We would like for students to visit these websites and share these announcements with their family. The web pages for the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs offer a wealth of information to the international traveler, including:

- Travel Warning/Consular Information Sheets
- List of Current warnings and Announcements
- Travel Publications
- Tips for American Students

Frequent updates require that you visit the website regularly to stay currently informed. We strongly recommend that you subscribe to the State Department's "travel safety information" at the website

<https://step.state.gov/>. Simply provide your e-mail address and then click “Subscribe Now.” You will automatically receive via email full texts of travel warnings.

The highest level of urgency of a U.S. State Department announcement is called a “travel warning”. **Travel warnings** are issued when the State Department decides, based on all relevant information, to recommend that Americans avoid travel to a certain country. In the case of a travel warning, it is often recommended that citizens do not travel to that country until the threat is no longer present.

### **What if the OIED must cancel a program *before* it has started?**

Should a program cancellation become necessary for safety reasons prior to student departure, every effort will be made to refund recoverable costs to the participants.

### **What if the OIED must cancel a program *after* it has started?**

Should a program cancellation become necessary for safety reasons after students have arrived overseas, our priority is ensuring those students return back to the U.S. safely. If the U.S. State Department directs the evacuation of U.S. citizens from a program location site, the Program Leader will arrange for students to return to the U.S. or to another safe location based on the recommendation of the State Department and U.S. Embassy. The OIED and Program Leader will notify all students and their emergency contacts of the specific plan and timeframe. As with canceling a program before it has started, our refund policy for canceling a program after it has started is that every effort will be made to refund recoverable costs to the participants. Because full refunds are often not possible, students may wish to consider purchasing trip cancellation insurance. The UNC system wide insurance provider, HTH, does offer cancellation insurance. Details can be found on their website at [www.HTHstudents.com](http://www.HTHstudents.com). Click on “**more products and services.**” If the program is canceled before courses are completed, the Program Leader will, to the best of his/her ability, assist students in completing the course work for the program.

## **Personal Safety**

The most basic rule to remember is: **if it is not something you would do at home, do not do it abroad.** The excitement and adventure of a study abroad experience can sometimes lead students to forget the basic precautions that we all take on a daily basis: a student who never walks across the ASU campus at night without calling a safety escort suddenly forgets that wandering the streets of Paris alone at three in the morning might not be a good idea. Be open to new experiences, but keep your wits about you.

Remember that, especially in the beginning, you will be on unfamiliar ground, geographically and culturally. You do not know what parts of town are unsafe, you may not be fluent in the language, and you do not know how to read situations here the way you can at home. Read the U.S. State Department travel information for your destination online at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov). Be cautious, talk to your Faculty Director about things to do and not to do, and try to keep the following precautions in mind:

- **Stay informed about developments in your host country, host city and in the world.** U.S. foreign policy does affect how people overseas will treat you. If you plan to travel to another country, check with the nearest U.S. consulate as to what the situation is there. If the U.S. decides to launch military or economic action, you will immediately become a representative of your country. If your travel destination is having political or military difficulties, ranging from demonstrations to terrorists attacks to civil war, stay away from all sites of such activity. Talk to students and/or faculty who have visited or lived in the area where you are going. Pay attention to safety information presented at the pre-departure and on-site orientation sessions.

- Do not take valuable items (expensive jewelry, electronics, etc.) with you overseas. They may get stolen, lost or damaged while traveling.
- Do not carry cash or personal identification in a purse as purse-snatchings are a risk anywhere. Wear your backpack in front if traveling on crowded trains, buses, metros, etc. If carrying a shoulder bag, have the outside flap against your body.
- Carry money in multiple locations like pouches under clothes.
- Carry a wallet in your front pocket rather than your back pocket. Do not fight attackers. If confronted, give up your valuables.
- Be alert in crowds, especially in train stations and other areas with lots of tourists; these are prime territories for pickpockets.
- Be aware of distractions on the streets. In large cities, thieves often work in groups, with one member distracting the target while another takes their bag/purse/wallet.
- Do not hitchhike.
- Do not stay out excessively late at night alone or with strangers.
- Do not travel alone.

### **Sexual Assault/Harassment**

Sexual harassment or assault can happen overseas just as it can on campus. Harassment issues may be particularly difficult to identify abroad, where cultural norms are often different than those in the U.S. Knowing how to identify harassment, and what to do if you experience harassment or assault, is important to help maintain a safe environment. Harassment can be between two students, between a professor or program staff and a student, between a homestay family member and a student, etc. Sexual harassment may include:

- unnecessary or unwanted touching or pinching
- derogatory remarks, jokes or teasing about clothing, body or body parts, or sexual activities
- visual materials or pictures which are offensive
- subtle pressure for sexual activity and/or dates
- demanding sexual favors for things such as grades, letters of recommendation, etc.
- verbal harassment or abuse
- e-mail or any electronic communications which include any of the above
- physical assault

In general, the U.S. description of sexual harassment is any unwanted sexual advances and/or behavior of a verbal, visual, written, or physical nature. You should note, however, that this description may not be the same for the country in which you are studying. In such cases, you are encouraged to discuss the issue with Program staff or the Equity Office staff to determine an appropriate course of action. You should trust your judgment and intuition.

If a situation makes you uncomfortable, it needs to be addressed. You should seek help from the Counseling Center, the Equity Office or other ASU staff (see Important Contacts). These people can

provide you the resources for counseling and advice, and, if necessary, act on your behalf to address a problem. **If you experience sexual harassment while studying abroad**, report the incident to your Program Leader or the OIED as soon as possible.

### **Travel Safety**

Review the **Centers for Disease Control** website (see Important Contacts) to read health and safety topics. In addition, please note the following when traveling: The primary cause of death and serious injury to international travelers under the age of thirty-five is road traffic accidents. While the hazards are greatest in developing countries, many developed countries also have death and serious accident rates higher than those in the United States. Even in countries with low accident rates, you may be at risk if you are not familiar with local traffic rules. For this reason we urge you to use caution when considering your travel plans and always use your seat belt.

Following are some general tips for your travel safety:

- Never ride with anyone under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- While traveling, leave your valuables, plane tickets, etc. in the hotel safe or a hostel locker. Unless local law requires
- It is advisable not to always carry your passport. Consider leaving it in a safety deposit box and carrying a photocopy with you for identification. Remember that you must ALWAYS have your passport with you when crossing international borders.
- Wash hands often with soap and water.
- Check the security of hotels before choosing to stay. A few extra dollars saved on a cheap hotel room will not cover the replacement costs of a passport, camera, rail tickets, etc.
- Get advice from residents and tour guides about areas to be avoided, going out at night, and going out alone.
- If you choose to be sexually active, always use latex condoms to reduce the risk of HIV and other STDs.
- Do not share needles with anyone.
- If you go swimming, find out about the body of water and its safety level first. Never swim alone or under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Never dive head first into an unfamiliar body of water. Be aware of rip-tides and unfamiliar currents.
- Never eat undercooked ground beef and poultry, raw eggs, and un-pasteurized dairy products. Raw shellfish is particularly dangerous to persons who have liver disease or compromised immune systems. Also be wary of raw vegetables or other foods washed in local water and ice cubes made with local water.

### **Emergencies Abroad:**

An emergency is an occurrence or situation that poses a genuine and sometimes immediate risk to the health and well-being of program participants. As student safety is our highest priority, ASU has emergency procedures in place for study abroad programs for both minor and major emergencies.

Some type of minor incident is likely to happen to some participant during your program (sickness, broken bone, lost passport, etc.). **Your Program Leader should be the first contact for any minor incident.** She/he will be able to get you to a doctor approved by your insurance, help you replace your

passport, etc. S/he also knows when to contact the OIED office for further details or instructions. If your Faculty Director is not available, you can contact any other on-site staff members, or ASU Police and the Office of International Education and Development staff for assistance. It is the job of the Program Leader and the OIED staff to ensure your immediate and long-term safety. Once it is deemed that you are safe by the Program Leader or OIED, you will probably then want to contact your family/friends back home to let them know your situation.

In an emergency, if possible, you should first always try to contact your on-site Program Leader. In case there is an emergency that requires you to contact the OIED directly, you may contact one of the following (in sequential order):

ASU Campus Police (24 hour access)	828-262-2150
ASU Office of International Education and Development	828-262-2046
Dr. Jesse Lutabingwa	(See Important Contacts)

If you can only make one call and your Program Leader is unavailable, you may call ASU Campus Police. They have instructions to accept collect calls, and will then try the home number of the OIED staff and other trained administrators until they reach someone who can call you back immediately.

**Emergencies at home:** People need to know how to get in touch with you – especially if you are away from your program or after the program has ended. Unfortunately, experience shows us that someone on a study abroad program may have a relative become ill or die while they are overseas. You should have a conversation with your family before you leave about what you will do in the event that there is a death or serious medical emergency in your family. Please be sure that your Program Leader and the OIED have your complete contact information and inform both if there has been a family emergency. **Also be sure that key family members have valid passports so they can travel to your host country if necessary.**

If you are participating in an approved personal travel during the program dates, or immediately before or after the program, you are required to leave a copy of your itinerary and contact information with the Faculty Director in case of this type of emergency. If preferred, this can be left in a sealed envelope only to be opened if necessary.

### **Student Behavior Guidelines:**

1. Students must recognize their ambassadorial responsibilities as Americans and members of the Appalachian State University community. Appalachian's reputation is at stake. Therefore, any behavior creating a negative impression or that is detrimental to the image of Appalachian must be avoided.
2. The provisions of the Student Conduct Code for Participants in Study Abroad Programs at Appalachian State University that you signed in the application package are supplemental to other policies governing conduct of Appalachian State University students, including, but not limited to, the Appalachian State University Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity Code.
3. Treat all property, including temporary and long-term lodging facilities and personal property, with care and respect in order to avoid damage or other abuse. Just as a student is responsible for damages to the condition of his or her dormitory room on campus, a student is responsible for damages to facilities abroad.
4. Act with patience, politeness and civility (in accord with local cultural standards) towards all service persons, hosts, and others. Promptly pay charges for food, beverages, etc. Avoid

- boisterous, loud, and otherwise disruptive behavior in all public places. Observe quiet hours during night when other residents and guests are attempting to sleep where you are lodging.
5. Respect the right to privacy of other program participants. A successful study abroad program is dependent upon considerate and unselfish behavior by all.
  6. A student may not use or possess illegal drugs. Should authorities be involved, students will be subject to the laws of the country they are visiting, and will be responsible for retaining and paying for legal representation. A student in possession of illegal drugs will be subject to immediate termination in the program; student will be sent back to the U.S. at his or her own expense.
  7. Occasional drinking of alcoholic beverages in moderation is permitted provided that students are of legal drinking age in the country in which they are visiting. Students' excessive and irresponsible drinking leading to intoxication and behavior that interferes with the rights of others is subject to immediate disciplinary action, including termination in the program, parental notification and return to the U.S. at his or her own expense.
  8. Students should recognize that driving or renting a motor vehicle, motor bike, etc. exposes them to certain risks and therefore the University discourages it. However, if a student chooses to do so, then he or she is advised to carry sufficient insurance for adequate coverage in the host country. In addition, students will be responsible for costs of litigation and other expenses that may be incurred as a result of accidents or infractions of local laws.
  9. Additional responsibilities may be required for participation in some programs.
  10. A student must always notify the Program Leader of his/her whereabouts if he or she deviates from group activities
  11. Students should always show respect for the program participants and program director.
  12. When necessary, the program director will determine the appropriate disciplinary action required for violations of this student code of conduct. A program director's decision is final.

The Appalachian State University Code of Student Conduct (including academic and non-academic policies) can be found online at <http://studentconduct.appstate.edu/>. Please familiarize yourself with the content of the Appalachian State University Code of Student Conduct, as you are responsible for the policies outlined therein.

### **Alcohol**

In studying abroad, you will most likely be going to a location where you will be of legal drinking age in that country and where alcohol may be more a part of the everyday culture. In addition, distance from home may lessen your inhibitions. However, you are encouraged to use good judgment if you choose to consume alcoholic beverages while studying abroad.

Occasional drinking of alcoholic beverages in moderation is permitted provided that you are of legal drinking age in the area you are visiting. However, excessive and irresponsible drinking leading to behavior that interferes with the rights of others is subject to immediate disciplinary action, including termination from the program, parental notification and return home at your own expense. **Note that the Study Abroad insurance does not cover any injuries that occur while you are under the influence of alcohol, intoxicants or any drug not prescribed by a physician.**

Students who choose to use alcohol must do so responsibly while studying abroad. This applies during program time, as well as during personal time. Program time is defined as any activity seen as contributing to course work or any event that is included in the program cost; all other time is considered personal.

In general, avoid over-indulging. Be aware of the customs of the country. Drinking to get drunk is never acceptable, even in countries where alcohol is consumed with every meal. Overindulging is a real danger in a foreign country where the beer may be stronger and cheaper and there are no barriers to drinking before the age of 21. Remember that drugging is not at all uncommon. Always try to buy your own drinks. Never leave drinks unattended. Always be in control of your behavior. Never go home with a stranger. Always go out with at least one friend (especially if you are a woman), and return with that friend.

### **Drugs**

Contrary to what you may have heard, the rest of the world does not have looser drug laws than the U.S. and being an American does not mean you will not be put in jail for carrying drugs. In fact, in some places, being an American may mean you are more likely to be suspected of carrying drugs. The U.S. Embassy CANNOT get you out of jail if you are arrested. **U.S. laws or constitutional rights do not protect you once you leave the U.S.** You must abide by the laws of the country in which you are traveling. Additionally, the use or possession of narcotics, or any other illegal substance during study abroad is expressly prohibited and is cause for immediate expulsion from the program and may be subject to prosecution in the host country.

#### **Some interesting facts to note:**

- In a recent year, over 1/3 of all Americans arrested overseas were arrested for drug possession, and 37% of those were arrested for a drug offense involving marijuana.
- In several countries, including Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Turkey, and Thailand, possession of even a relatively small amount of illegal drugs can be grounds for the death penalty. In several others, including Mexico and the Dominican Republic, it can be grounds for mandatory jail sentences.

### **Crimes (Assault, Violence, Vandalism, Harassment, etc.)**

The following list, although not exhaustive, provides examples of criminal behavior that are not acceptable in any case and may be grounds for immediate dismissal from the program. Please note that many of these are also covered in the Appalachian State University Code of Student Conduct.

- Harassment (sexual or otherwise)
- Violence against others
- Verbal abuse of others
- Theft or damage to property, including property of host universities, residence halls, host families, apartments, hotels, facilities used by the program, or of fellow students
- Vandalism
- Unauthorized entry
- Use of technology for any illegal purpose
- Disorderly, lewd, indecent or obscene conduct, gestures or actions



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- Self-endangerment, including involvement in activities or behavior that could result in personal harm (such as frequenting dangerous places, association with criminals, repeated intoxication, etc.)  
Alcohol or drug violations
- Violation of Appalachian Education Abroad Conduct Code

In the case that you are arrested while in a foreign country:

**A U.S. Consular Officer can:**

- Visit you in jail after being notified of your arrest.
- Give you a list of local attorneys.
- Notify your family or friends (including the program director) and relay requests for money or other aid with your authorization.
- Intercede with the local authorities to ensure that you are treated humanely and that your rights under local law are fully observed.

**A U.S. Consulate Officer cannot:**

- Get you out of jail.
- Represent you at trial or give legal counsel.
- Pay legal fees or fines with U.S. government funds

In addition to emergency assistance for American citizens and their families abroad, such as causes of death, serious medical emergency, and legal difficulties, the U.S. Embassy personnel also provide routine citizenship services such as passport replacement. In order to ensure fast and easy replacement of your passport, be sure to keep a photocopy somewhere.

**Other Responsibilities:**

If you are receiving financial aid, **you are to remain enrolled as a full time student during the term of your study abroad experience or you will lose your financial aid.**

All students are required to take one course for academic credit or meet the minimum requirement of your program (many programs require 2 classes). Acceptance to the program is conditional upon your remaining in good standing with the University for the term prior to participation in the study abroad program. You have agreed to read all materials provided to you by the OIED and Program Leader and to share those materials with your parent/legal guardian/next of kin. It is your responsibility to inform your parent/legal guardian/next of kin that you will be participating in the program.

**Special Needs and Concerns**

**Culture Shock**

The process of mentally, physically, and emotionally adjusting to a new environment – such as a study abroad experience is commonly known as “culture shock.” This term covers a wide range of reactions from frustration to mild annoyance to depression to fatigue to excitement. It is a response to being in a situation where everything is different from your previous experiences. Differences in dress, body language, greetings, food, transportation systems, banks, shopping, making friends, etc. are only a few of the elements that can contribute to culture shock.

Of course, we encounter differences every day in our own culture. But as an American, in a very general sense, the differences we experience between ourselves and other Americans are personal, not cultural. When we interact with people from another culture, the expectations on each side are different, and communications may break down, leading to confusion or even hostility.

There are many ways of coping with culture shock:

- Know that everyone experiences some degree of culture shock (even if you don't believe you will now). Everyone's experience will be different, but your experience, whatever it is, is normal.
- Expect things to be different and try not to blow them out of proportion.
- Try not to label the differences as "good" or "bad." Instead, see them merely as "different."
- You do not have to adapt to every difference you encounter. Some you can incorporate into your routine, and others you may not.
- Maintain the ability to laugh at your mistakes. They are not the end of the world and, in fact, can help you in the learning process.

Find support from your faculty director and fellow students on the program. The feelings of culture shock are unavoidable. Simply recognizing its existence is an important first step. As long as you know in advance that you will experience culture shock in one form or another, you can prepare yourself to accept the temporary discomfort and turn it into an advantage by learning from it. And, remember that you are not the only one experiencing culture shock; the frustrating, irritating, and depressing feelings will pass; and you will end up having one of the best experiences of your life. (Information adapted from Bill Hoffa's "Exploring Cultural Differences" at <http://www.studyabroad.com/handbook/cultdiff.html>.)

### **Cultural Issues**

It is important to realize that cultural differences encompass dress and body language. Facial expression, eye contact, clothing styles, the distance you stand from people while talking, and the way you carry yourself can have profoundly different interpretations in different cultures. What you may consider a friendly gesture or comfortable clothing may communicate something totally different and unintended to those around you. Each student's experience is different, and you will find your own comfort zone as you adjust to your new culture. You may feel that many of the adjustments you are being expected to make in your behavior or dress are uncomfortable or unfair.

Remember, though, that you are the foreigner and that the people around you will expect you to adapt to their expectations. As with most aspects of study abroad, the more preparation you do beforehand, the better; that way you will be able to make informed decisions about how much you are willing to adapt and what consequences there will be to those decisions. BUT, while some adaptation is essential to a successful experience, always remember that there is a difference between trying to find ways to adapt your behavior to your new culture and excusing real verbal or physical abuse on the grounds of cultural differences. If you find yourself in an uncomfortable situation, immediately speak with your Faculty Director. If the Faculty Director is unavailable, contact the OIED directly.

### **Gender Issues**

Adjusting to another culture can pose some challenges for male-female interactions and relationships. Often what Americans perceive as appropriate behavior between the sexes or acceptable gender roles is not the same in a different culture. Female students in particular may find their behavior restricted. Because many cultures around the world have been exposed to images of the U.S. and American women through movies, TV shows, and advertising, foreign nationals sometimes make stereotypical assumptions about American women. Female students should be aware of what their dress, body language, and eye contact communicate to people in their host culture. Female students should:

- Talk to women from your host country for advice.

- Follow appropriate standards for dress and body language.
- Trust your instincts. Don't do something that makes you uncomfortable. It is better to look a little silly than to get into an unpleasant or even dangerous situation. Instead, remove yourself from the situation immediately.
- Be careful to avoid situations where date rape drugs could be slipped into your drink.
- Be assertive and say "NO" when necessary.

Immediately speak with your Program Leader if you find yourself in an uncomfortable, hostile or threatening situation. If the Program Leader is unavailable, contact the OIED directly.

Overall when evaluating the gender difference in your host country, both male and female students should keep an open mind and see these differences as an opportunity to gain insights into a new culture.

### **Sexual Identity**

You probably already identify yourself as a heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender student, or you may still be exploring these issues; in either case, you may find that the social climate, laws, and personal interactions of your host culture differ from the U.S. Keep in mind that many of the ideas held in the U.S. about sexuality and sexual orientation are culturally-based and may be different in your program's host country.

In some cultures, Western understandings of "gay" and "straight" do not exist or do not carry the same importance; people involved in same-sex relationships may not see this behavior or preference as an identity. In other cultures, there are active social movements for civil rights for sexual minorities. So, in preparing for your study abroad experience, it may be important for you to research the LGBT climate of the country you will be visiting. Though it might seem frightening to research these kinds of issues, it will help you be better prepared to face the world you will encounter. Please inform yourself about those issues, including:

- The legality of same-sex sexual behavior
- The age of consent for sexual behavior
- Restrictions on freedom of association or expression for LGBT people
- Anti-discrimination laws (these can be national laws or specific to local areas)
- Sodomy laws

You may find that other cultures have more liberal behavior than in the U.S. or that you will need to hide your sexual preferences completely to avoid cultural ostracism or arrest. You can find more information on the web page of the Rainbow Special Interest Group of NAFSA, the Association of International Educators, located at <http://www.rainbowsig.org/us-students-abroad/>

### **When you arrive...**

1. On the flight to your program's host country, remember that jet lag can be worsened by dehydration. Minimize the use of diuretics like caffeine and alcohol on the flight, and drink plenty of juice and water.
2. Take it easy! The first few days in your study abroad location will be very exciting, and you may be tempted to overdo it. Remember that in addition to psychological and cultural adjustment, your body will be going through a physical reaction and adjustment to a new climate, a new time zone, new food, etc.

Eat reasonably, drink plenty of water (start with bottled if you are unsure how your system will handle the tap water in your new environment), get plenty of sleep, etc.

3. Make sure you know how to access health services, both for routine care and emergencies, in your new environment. Your Program Leader can provide more detailed information.

**If you consume alcohol, consume it in moderation.** Because students under 21 are legally entitled to drink in many countries, American students are sometimes tempted to overdo it after arriving overseas. Alcohol dehydrates you, putting further stress on a body which will already be under strain. It also impairs judgment, which can be particularly unwise when you are in a new environment. Note also that the UNC system health insurance does not cover any accidents or injuries that occur while a student is under the influence of alcohol.

### **Race and Ethnicity**

Although we tend to think of race and ethnicity as universally defined, they are very much culturally determined. While abroad, you may find that you are an ethnic minority for the first time in your life, or you may find that the ethnic identity you have always felt to be an integral part of yourself is viewed in a completely different way in your program's host country. Those of you visiting a country where you have ethnic or racial roots may find you are expected to behave according to the host country norms in a way that other Americans of a different background are not. Or, you may find that you are considered American first, and your ethnic or racial identity is considered unimportant.

In many countries, there are homegrown ethnic or racial conflicts, and you may find you are identified with one group or another because of your physical appearance, until people discover you are American. It is extremely unlikely that any of these situations will involve any threat of physical harm to you as an international student; however, by researching the situation in your host country, you can prepare yourself for the situations you may encounter. Please speak with your Program Leader for additional information or to share any concerns you may have.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities are increasingly participating in study abroad programs around the world. As with the other issues mentioned, the key to a successful experience is advance planning. Accessibility and accommodation for students with emotional, mental, learning, or physical disabilities may vary at different program sites. Be sure to consult with your Program Leader and the OIED staff about any accommodation you may need **BEFORE** you leave for your program.

### **Resources for Special Needs**

There are many resources available that cover the topics of culture shock, cultural issues, gender issues, sexual identity and race/ethnicity for students studying or living abroad.

Check with your local bookstore or on the web. Some general resources include:

- **Mobility International USA** is an organization dedicated to international opportunities for the disabled ([www.miusa.org](http://www.miusa.org)).
- ***The Real Guide: Able to Travel*** by Alison Walsh.
- ***Out in the World: Gay and Lesbian Life from Buenos Aires to Bangkok*** by Shelly Anderson.

- ***Half the Earth: Women's Experience of Travel Worldwide*** by Miranda Davies, Laura Longrigg, and Lucinda Montefiore.
- **The Rainbow Special Interest Group of NAFSA**, the Association of International Educators, is located at <http://www.rainbowsig.org/us-students-abroad/>.

### **Money and Budgeting**

Before you leave, be sure that you understand how you will access money while abroad. **AS A GENERAL RULE, YOU SHOULD HAVE MORE THAN ONE MEANS OF GETTING MONEY.** If possible, bring a small amount of your host country currency with you in **CASH** when you leave the U.S. Most major banks can obtain foreign currency, but you should verify this in advance. You should have enough to cover bus/taxi fares, snacks, a phone call, etc. during your first couple of days – we recommend about \$50.00 U.S. or the equivalent in local currency (if possible). You can look up current exchange rates at [www.xe.com/currency/](http://www.xe.com/currency/). Be sure to get small denominations – the equivalents of \$20 or \$10 bills.

### **Accessing money during your time abroad**

Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) are becoming increasingly available overseas. ATMs tend to get you the best exchange rate, and have 24 hour access. Check with your bank for a list of teller locations overseas. Locations can also be obtained from the Internet for MasterCard and/or Cirrus ATMs at [www.mastercard.com](http://www.mastercard.com) or for Visa and/or plus ATMs at [www.visa.com](http://www.visa.com).

- ◇ Make sure you have a four-digit numeric PIN code for your account; longer PIN codes are not accepted in many countries and many do not have letters on the keypads.
- ◇ Check to see what, if any, fee your bank charges for using an ATM card overseas and ask about limits on daily withdrawals.

ATM machines overseas rarely give you the choice between accessing a checking account and a savings account. They will generally only pull from one account, so you will need to consult your bank about the ability of your card to work overseas, as you may need to set the card up to access one type of account only.

If you plan to get a new ATM card for this trip, get your pin number now and try it here in the U.S. before you go abroad – do not expect a brand new card to work overseas. If your parents have access to your account, they can deposit money that you can access from overseas usually within 24 hours.

### **Means of Payment**

**Traveler's checks** are a convenient way to carry money safely, as they are easily replaced if lost or stolen, and they tend to be widely accepted around the world. You can purchase them from your bank, **AAA (American Automobile Association), American Express, Travelex**, and various other financial institutions. Traveler's checks can cost a fee to purchase and usually cost a commission to cash as well. Although generally small, these fees can add up, especially if you cash checks in small amounts.

If you are going to a country such as the United Kingdom, you may want to consider obtaining traveler's checks in the currency of that country (e.g. British pound sterling), as they are often easier to cash. Many banks can order the checks in foreign currencies with advance notice. Otherwise, U.S. dollar traveler's checks are generally easy to cash in most locations. **Keep a record of the serial numbers in a separate place in case the checks are lost or stolen.** Please know that you may encounter problems cashing Traveler's Checks in some parts of Africa.

## CREDIT CARDS

Certain credit cards are widely accepted both for purchases and for cash advances. We strongly recommend that you have a Visa credit card for emergencies (**Mastercard and American Express are generally not as widely accepted**, although this varies from country to country). If you are unable to qualify for a card on your own, your parents may open an account and get a card in your name for your use. Credit cards can be an easy way to pay, and you tend to get good exchange rates when used for purchases.

### Budgeting

Beyond the basic program cost and what it includes, how much you spend on personal expenses is largely a matter of personal preference. Previous participants' estimates of how much they spent vary widely, but most have recommended the following basic strategies:

1. **Work out a preliminary budget for personal expenditures.** Make sure you understand exactly what is included in your program cost and what is not – check with your Faculty Director or the OIED if you have any questions. Check with your phone company about calling card rates to and from your host country. Usually AT&T, MCI, or Sprint will have the best international plans. Figure out how much you and your parents are willing to budget beyond that for discretionary expenses such as travel, entertainment, etc., and be sure to budget at least a minimal amount (\$50-\$100) for incidentals such as laundry, postage, film, toiletries, etc.
2. **Purchase a good guidebook for your program's host country.** The Study Abroad Office has some guidebooks you can browse through while in the office. These books will list costs for accommodations; train, plane, and bus tickets; entrance fees for local attractions; and other items. These figures will help you make a rough estimate of the per-day costs of personal travel during weekends and before or after the program.

**Note: You should check with your Program Leader to ensure you understand any restrictions on personal travel *during* the program.** You will need to plan your personal travel around any required elements. Expect some items to be much more expensive than what you are used to at home, but don't assume there aren't local alternatives which are less expensive. Items which tend to be heavily taxed (and thus much more expensive) in most other countries are consumer goods imported from the U.S. (food, books, etc.), "luxury" items such as electronics, and clothing. Specifics will vary tremendously depending on your destination. Check with your Program Leader for details.

### Keeping in Touch

#### PHONE

In general, it is far more expensive to call from abroad to the U.S. than it is to call from the U.S. overseas. Many students arrange a calling schedule with family or friends, setting a time each week when they will be at a certain number at which the family member or friend can call. U.S. long-distance carriers offer a wide variety of calling card options. Call around to compare prices or check with the carrier that your parents use to see what they offer. You will need to get the appropriate international dialing access allowing you to call from overseas to the U.S.

- If your faculty director, or other people you know, have traveled to your location before, ask about calling cards and rates available in your host country. Some are more economical than calling cards purchased in the U.S.
- Coin-operated phones are increasingly rare in some European countries. Many countries have debit phones instead

- Cards which can be used at public phones & which can be purchased from local stores or offices.
- Depending on your destination, a new or used mobile phone can usually be purchased at a reasonable price on site.
- To keep contact with friends and family back in the USA, internet communication programs such as “Skype” ([www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com)) is highly recommended for those who will bring laptop computers. However, they often require a particular voice speaker and headset that can be purchased at a reasonable price (approx. \$15). This is free from computer to computer and is currently \$.02 per minute to call out to a land-line to most places in the world.

### Email/Internet

You should not expect to access email every day while abroad, if you are able to access it at all. Your program activities will keep you very busy. However, there may be local Internet cafés you can use for a small fee. If you are able to access email through an Internet café, it may not be located near your housing or academic facilities. Check with your Program Leader and/or the Internet for more information. In the event that you have a problem accessing your Appalachian email account while abroad, you should be prepared by having a secondary address (i.e. hotmail, yahoo, gmail, etc).

### Homestays

Programs that include homestays offer a great opportunity to expand your cultural experience beyond the classroom. However, living with a family also poses some special challenges. Remember that families abroad are as diverse as families in the U.S. Also remember that, while your family receives a stipend to cover the costs of your room and/or board, the money cannot possibly reimburse them for the inconvenience and annoyance of putting up with a “bad” student in their home. In most cultures, host families will appreciate it if you do the following:

- Bring a small gift (e.g., non-perishable North Carolina specialties, posters or calendars from your state or region, Appalachian State University insignia items, craft items, t-shirts, etc.). The ASU Bookstore is a great place to buy such items as well as the unique small shops on King Street.
- Offer to help with household tasks.
- Ask about the house rules for telephone use. In many countries, even local calls are charged on a metered basis, and phone service is often quite expensive in comparison to the U.S. Families may prefer that you make outgoing calls from a pay phone.
- Never snack from the family refrigerator or pantry without permission.
- Be careful with electricity and water use – in many other countries utilities are limited or expensive. Turn out lights when leaving rooms, do not take long showers, and ask your host about expectations of living in the house.
- Ask about things like the family schedule and house rules at the beginning of your stay. Would they prefer that you not receive calls after or before a certain time?
- Can you have visitors in your room or overnight? Do they want to know when you will be leaving town for the day or the weekend? **BE PREPARED TO FOLLOW THESE RULES.** Remember, you are a guest.
- If meals are included in your home stay, don’t skip meals with the family without letting your host know well in advance.
- Be open, be flexible, and don’t be afraid to ask questions!



Host families, while they are typically interested in interaction with international students, are also being paid for their hosting duties and in most cases consider it an income supplement. While you should expect your family to provide a safe, clean living environment, adequate meals, and a cultural/language immersion environment, the amount of personal interaction will vary from family to family. Of course, if your family is truly unreasonable or if you are uncomfortable with your family, you should discuss the situation with your Program Leader. However, if you think you want to ask to be moved, be sure your reasons are more serious than small inconveniences and are not differences that are culturally based and likely to be the same from family to family (e.g., attitudes towards phone use or curfews).

## **Things to Bring With You**

### **Luggage**

Most students suggest buying a good, internal-frame backpack from a luggage or travel store to use for weekend and vacation travel. Check with your airline to find restrictions on size, weight, and number of bags permitted. Some suggested luggage combinations are: one small “wheelie” suitcase with a collapsible handle, one internal-frame backpack, and one small day-pack or bag, one internal-frame backpack with a small removable backpack (to be used as a carry-on) and one small duffel bag. Whatever combination you choose, all luggage should be very sturdy. Consider your luggage an investment – it is better to spend more money on a good quality bag than to get a cheap one which breaks.

Consider purchasing baggage insurance, which is available through banks, travel agencies, ISIC cards, and some credit cards if you purchase your airline tickets with the card. Baggage insurance often protects your possessions the entire time you are abroad, not just while you are flying. If your parents carry homeowner’s or renter’s insurance, have them check with their insurance agent to see if your belongings can be covered under their policy while you are abroad.

Pack all of your important documents (passport, tickets, prescriptions, arrival and contact information, etc.), as well as some basics (change of underwear, toiletries, toothbrush) in your carry-on bag. These items should not be packed in your checked luggage, in case your luggage is lost. Be sure to:

- ◇ Label all luggage inside and outside with your name and permanent address and contact information.
- ◇ Check airline guidelines about what is allowed in your carry-on luggage as new restrictions are now in place.
- ◇ Check with the airline about luggage restrictions if you will be taking connecting flights within another continent (e.g., Lima to Cuzco or London to Paris). Many airlines allow only ONE checked bag on flights within Europe, Asia, or Latin America. There are also weight restrictions depending on the airline, which can usually be researched through their respective websites.
- ◇ Learn about and be respectful of the security procedures at the airports. It is not unusual now for customs and immigrations officers to ask detailed questions and/or to open and search luggage.

## Packing

The most common words of advice from former study abroad students: **PACK LIGHT!!!** Lay out everything you plan to take, then remove half the contents, re-evaluate and remove half again. Remember that you will need to carry your luggage on and off planes and trains, up and down stairs, around the block, etc., so be sure you can comfortably carry what you plan to bring.

You will also want to allow some room for purchases you make during the program (shipping things home after the program can be very expensive). Consider taking clothes that can be layered. Homes and residence halls abroad are often not kept the same temperature as buildings in the U.S. Also, for efficiency, consider packing clothes that can be mixed and matched, instead of bringing several individual outfits. Laundry facilities abroad are likely to be more expensive, time-consuming, and harsher on your clothes than they are here. Try to bring sturdy, dark color clothes in fabrics that are easy to wash and dry. Leave anything that needs to be dry-cleaned at home unless it is necessary to bring a suit, formal wear, etc.

Make sure you understand your host country's standards for modesty and/or neatness in dress. In many countries, students dress more formally than American students. Often shorts and sweats are strictly for the beach or the gym. Even in parts of Western Europe, many tourist sites such as churches and historical monuments may not allow visitors to enter in shorts or sleeveless tops.

Electrical sockets and electrical currents are not the same around the world. If you cannot live without your hairdryer or other small appliance, you should buy an adapter or converter kit and read the instructions for your appliances to find out how to change the voltage. You might also consider buying inexpensive alternatives in your program's host country.

We recommend leaving valuable or sentimental items, such as jewelry, at home. If you take expensive items with you (camera, iPod, etc.), be sure to register these with U.S. Customs *before* you leave, otherwise you may be required to pay duty on these upon re-entering the U.S. You may also want to verify that your personal property insurance covers your items during international travel.

A valuable resource called "**Know Before You Go**" is available through U.S. Customs Office and can be found online at <http://www.cbp.gov/travel/us-citizens/know-before-you-go>. This site provides valuable information such as which items require you to pay duties upon re-entering the U.S., prohibited and restricted customs items, etc.



**Packing List****Essentials you must take with you:**

- Passport
- Airline tickets
- Money
- 
- Traveler's Checks and Traveler's Check Counterfoils (carried separately from checks)
- Credit card and/or ATM card
- Photocopies of all documents, prescriptions, etc.
- This handbook
- Prescription medications and directions for use
- Emergency contact information, insurance card, & claim forms

**Near essentials you may need:**

- Money belt or pouch
- Local currency and some U.S. dollars in cash
- ISIC card (available from the Study Abroad Office for \$22) and ASU ID card
- Immunization record and health record of current or serious conditions

**Other items to consider taking:**

- Extra passport photographs
- Clothing that can be layered and mixed/matched (don't forget pajamas!)
- Extra contact lenses, solution, glasses
- Battery-operated alarm clock (not electrical)
- Washcloth, travel towel
- Batteries
- Good, all-purpose waterproof walking shoes with thick soles
- Camera, film or memory card, batteries and charger
- Sewing kit (not in carry-on luggage)
- Zip-lock bags
- Moist towelettes
- Swiss army knife (not in carry-on luggage)
- Fold-up umbrella or rain poncho
- Full toiletry bag with dental floss, soap, shampoo, toothpaste, shaving kit, sanitary supplies, etc.
- Small first-aid kit
- Small flashlight
- Calculator
- Dictionary (e.g. English-Spanish, English-French) or Phrasebook
- Swimsuit
- One set of "nice" clothes (not "dry clean only")
- Small combination lock(s) for suitcase or hostels
- Small gifts for your host family
- Country-specific guidebook (e.g., Lonely Planet, Let's Go, Rough Guide, etc.)
- Sleeping bag/sleep sack, if you plan travel on your own
- Shower shoes if staying in youth hostels

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*If you have any questions before you leave or while abroad, please do not hesitate to ask your Program Leader or the OIED.*

## **Returning to the United States and Appalachian State University**

Just as studying abroad required you to make numerous adjustments, so does returning home. You are not the same person you were when you went abroad. After spending time in a different culture, you have absorbed new knowledge and perspectives that have changed you intellectually and personally.

While you are trying to adjust back to your regular life, you may wonder how to building onto your study abroad experience. Like many returning students, you may be ready to start planning your next study abroad program.

### **Clearing Customs**

Upon your return to the United States, you must pass through U.S. Customs, where you will be asked to declare the value of items that you purchased abroad that you are bringing back with you. You will need to declare everything you brought back with you that you did not take with you when you left the United States. You may be asked to fill out a CBP (Customs and Border Protection) form. Certain items are illegal to bring back into the United State and some require you pay an import tax or duty. Such as absinthe (alcohol), automobiles, biological products, ceramic tableware, cultural artifacts, dog or cat fur, drug paraphernalia, firearms, fish, wildlife, food products, fruits and vegetables, gold, meats, livestock, poultry, pets, plants, seeds, soil, and merchandise from embargoed countries.

### **Post Travel Health Recommendations**

There are a few health issues you need to consider when returning to the United States:

- If you become ill within 12 months of your return, make a medical appointment and inform your physician of the countries you visited while abroad.
- If you have been taking anti-malarial medication, continue doing so for four weeks after you return home.
- If you were sexually active while abroad, schedule an appointment with a health care provider for a sexually transmitted disease test.
- Remember that your study abroad accident and sickness insurance only covers you while you are abroad, so make sure you have adequate coverage in the United States.

### **Reverse Culture Shock**

When you return to the United States, you might experience cultural adjustment or reverse culture shock. Returning travelers experience the same physical and emotional upheavals as in the early stages of study abroad. Reverse cultural shock may include jet lag, as your body adjusts to the change in time zones. Many returning students are surprised to find that adjusting back to life in the United States is more difficult than the adjustment they made to life in a foreign country.

Expect to experience some measure of reverse culture shock. Reverse or re-entry shock can be defined as the unexpected confrontation with the familiar. Remember that the world at home did not stop while you were studying abroad. Most likely things changed while you were gone. Remember to take time to slowly readjust.

The reasoning behind reverse culture shock is that many students realize that study abroad is a life-changing experience, many are not aware of how they have changed or how their experience abroad has caused them to look at life in the United State from a different perspective. You may also experience a sense of loss after leaving your new friends and the life you led abroad. You may feel out of sync with your family and friends, who may express only a small interest in the experience you found

fascinating. You may also experience boredom and lack of direction. You may return to find that problems that were on hold while you were abroad are still waiting for you when you return.

Some returning students experience particular difficulty reintegrating into the structure and expectations of academic studies. It is advisable to allow some time between returning home and starting classes.

### **Build on your Study Abroad Experience**

After you have readjusted to life and studies at Appalachian State University, you may want to build on your study abroad experience. Here are some possible options:

- Maintain relationships with students from your program.
- Become a peer counselor for students who are considering study abroad.
- Volunteer as a past participant at orientation sessions.
- Share some of your study abroad journals with your faculty leader and group members.
- Polish the language you learned while studying abroad by taking advanced language classes or joining a language club.
- Become involved with international students either as a roommate or tutor.
- Join INTAPP, the international organization for students.
- Continue to study about your host country. Read international papers, view films, and videos.
- Pursue to study, work, or travel abroad.



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