



LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK



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Study Abroad Emergency Precautions/Procedures

How to best prepare for handling an emergency abroad...

- **Register with the U.S. State Department before you go abroad.**
We strongly advise on-line registration with the U.S. State Department <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/> . Travel registration is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. Registration allows you to record information about your upcoming trip abroad that the Department of State can use to assist you in case of an emergency.
- **Know your evacuation options and carry your CISI health insurance card at all times.**
In the event of a medical emergency, CISI will be able to provide emergency evacuation services. Please make sure to carry the card on your person as it has important emergency numbers on it.
- **Know your program director and your program's emergency procedures.**
When you arrive at your site be familiar with your on-site director and the emergency procedures/numbers given to you at your site. These people/resources will be the closest to you and the most familiar with local procedures/rules/customs. Familiarize yourself with these procedures and carry with you the emergency contact information for your on-site director.
- **Ask questions!**
If you are unsure about what the emergency protocol is for your program or what services are available to you in case of an emergency, follow up with the Office for International Programs before you go or ask your on-site director.

What to do in an emergency abroad...

- **Contact your on-site director immediately.**
If you are not feeling well and need to seek medical services abroad, contact your on-site director immediately for assistance in getting medical attention. If you are unable to get in contact with your on-site director before seeking emergency medical services, please contact that person to make them aware of your situation as soon as physically possible.
- **Contact Loyola's Office for International Programs if additional assistance is needed.**
If you are unable to get the help you need locally through your on-site director, contact Loyola's *24-hour emergency contact number (773-508-6039)* and you will be connected with someone in the Office for International Programs (OIP) who will assist you. If OIP is contacted regarding a student emergency abroad, we will call the two emergency contacts that the student listed on her/his study abroad application.

Loyola Contact Information

Office for International Programs (OIP) www.luc.edu/studyabroad

During Regular Office Hours

OIP is open 8:30 – 5:00 central time Monday through Friday. You may reach us at 773-508-3899 or e-mail: studyabroad@luc.edu (general OIP e-mail), kheath2@luc.edu (Kelly Heath, Assistant Director of Study Abroad), or aday1@luc.edu (Amye Day, Study Abroad Advisor).

Outside Regular Office Hours

When OIP is not open and there is an emergency, you can contact Campus Safety's 24 hour number (773-508-6039). They handle after hours calls and can reach OIP staff if necessary. For non-emergencies, you may e-mail us at the addresses listed above.

Academic Units

The College of Arts & Sciences
773-508-3500
<http://www.luc.edu/schools/cas>

The School of Business Administration
312-915-6113
<http://www.sba.luc.edu>

The School of Education
773-508-8284
<http://www.luc.edu/education/>

The School of Nursing
773-508-3249
<http://www.luc.edu/nursing/>

University Advising Office
773-508-3770
<http://www.luc.edu/advising>

Student Affairs Units
Dean of Students
773-508-8850
<http://www.luc.edu/studentlife>

Internship & Career Center
773-508-2874
<http://www.luc.edu/resources/career>

Office of Registration and Records
<http://www.luc.edu/regrec/>

Residence Life*
773-508-3300
<http://www.luc.edu/reslife/>
Contact: Sarah Wilson Merriman
swilsonmerriman@luc.edu

Student Activities
773-508-8840
<http://www.luc.edu/saga/>

The Office of the Bursar
773-508-7705
<http://www.luc.edu/sbo>

Student Financial Assistance
773-508-3155
<http://www.luc.edu/finaid>, abroadfinaid@luc.edu

Wellness Center
773-508-2530
<http://www.luc.edu/wellness>

While Abroad:

*Housing: Contact Sarah Wilson Merriman to let her know if you plan to live on campus when you return. You will not have to submit the housing deposit and will be able to request roommates via email. You will receive an email while abroad from Sarah. She will ask you to complete the housing contract and mail it back to her if you want to live on campus upon your return from studying abroad.

Fall 2011 Registration: Spring 2011 study abroad students will register for classes through LOCUS according to the same LUC access time. You can find your access time in LOCUS or at the following link <http://www.luc.edu/academics/schedules/index.shtml>. Make sure to register while abroad according to Central Standard Time and because of this you should factor in time differences.

Financial Information

Financial Aid: For those of you who have questions about what financial aid will apply to the cost of your program, it is important that you contact the Office of Financial Assistance at abroadfinaid@luc.edu. Since some of you may be paying a tuition amount other than Loyola's, your aid might need to be re-adjusted or re-packaged. You should also talk with them about how loan money will be dispersed and how to handle these types of finances while abroad if you have any questions.

You might want to give a family member or member guardian the Power of Attorney to handle your finances while overseas. Also, for any questions about the exact cost of your program, please contact OIP.

Here is a breakdown regarding the portion of your current aid package that will apply to the program you are attending:

Loyola Exchange Programs, The Beijing Center, Rome and Vietnam - Federal Grants and Loans and Alternative loans. Loyola Grants and Scholarships apply.

USAC, IES, SIT, Petitions, Affiliate Programs - State and Federal loans, MAP and Pell Grants

If you have a question about whether or not an outside scholarship you currently have will count towards your semester abroad please contact abroadfinaid@luc.edu.

Billing: Loyola will bill you for the cost of your program tuition, and on some occasions, we also bill for housing (Casa de la Solidaridad, Chile, IES, Beijing, Vietnam, SIT, Marquette and sometimes USAC), and miscellaneous fees (tours, classes w/ additional fees).

Remember also, that there is a study abroad fee for all terms. The actual fee amount depends on the type of program that you attend:

- \$1,000 for Exchange, Petitions, SIT, USAC and IES (semester)
- \$500 for Exchange, Petitions, SIT, USAC and IES (summer)
- \$100 for Beijing, Affiliate, & Vietnam (semester and summer)

Study abroad fees are generally not refundable once they are charged to the student's account (prior to departure). Exceptions may be possible on a case-by-case basis.

Your program charges will typically be posted in LOCUS by mid-May for summer programs, mid-July for fall programs, and mid-December for spring programs.

For those students who want to set up a payment plan, you may do so by contacting the Office of the Bursar at iplan@luc.edu. They will need to know your Loyola ID number, program, and exact program charges in order to be able to work out a plan.

Deposit: The \$200 deposit that you turned in at the time of application will be credited toward your tuition costs.

Course Approval & Credit Transfer Process

All graded courses you take on a Loyola study abroad program will count toward your Loyola degree as general electives unless they are approved to count toward your major, minor or toward core curriculum requirements.

Each student will assume primary responsibility for the approval process, with the Office for International Programs serving as a guide for how to do it. We first recommend that you make an appointment with your academic advisor to discuss progress toward your degree, unmet degree requirements, etc. Talking with your academic advisor might help you decide which Loyola degree requirements you might want or need to meet while abroad.

How Do I Get Courses Approved?

If you decide you'd like **general elective** credit only for your study abroad courses, you do not need to take any action to ensure credit transfer for your courses. If you wish to seek **major, minor or core** credit for any of your courses abroad, you need to take steps to get a "study abroad course approval."

Course Approval Database: Check the Course Approval Database of approved courses (found at <https://info.luc.edu/studyabroad/>) to see if the course you'd like to take have already been approved by Loyola departments. If they have been approved in the way you would like them to apply toward your degree (for major, minor or core), complete the "Database Course Approval Form".

Toward Major or Minor: Use the "Study Abroad Course Approval Form" to seek approval for your study abroad courses (if they are not already in Course Approval Database) to count toward your major or minor program requirements. Take course information (titles and descriptions) to the designated Loyola staff/faculty (list provided below). If an approval is being given, the staff/faculty should provide their signature for the course and indicate whether it will count toward the major or minor.

Toward Core Curriculum: Students enrolled in all Loyola colleges/schools who wish to seek approval for study abroad courses to count toward core curriculum requirements should send an e-mail to their academic advisor stating the course title, description (if available), and specific core requirement you wish to fulfill, or meet with your advisor in person and provide the same course information. Your advisor will then instruct you as to the core course approval process. **Please note: the Core Curriculum Committee is most likely to approve courses take abroad in the Artistic, Literary, and Society/Cultural knowledge areas.**

Submitting Copies- Important!: Once you have completed the necessary course approval paperwork, make two copies of the course approval form/s and/or database course approval form/s: one for your academic advisor and one for the Office for International Programs. Keep the original for your records.

When Should I Get Courses Approved?

Though you may get study abroad courses approved during or after your program, it is ***strongly recommended*** that you go through the process before your departure.

Prior to Departure: Most students should have a list of possible courses that may be offered during their program, but rarely do students have access to an actual course schedule until they arrive in their host country. Given the unpredictable availability of courses, OIP suggests that before you leave, get at least 12 courses approved for every semester you will be abroad. There is no limit as to how many course approvals you can get! Having several courses approved prior to departure can greatly reduce stress and uncertainty. When you arrive and you begin to

choose your courses, you will already know how those courses you have gotten approved and will count toward your degree. Please know that you will not be “locked” into the approvals you get before going abroad unless you wish to be. If you change your mind about how you would like a certain course to count, you can seek approval for a different requirement while you are abroad, and in many cases, even after you have returned home. In cases where you turn in a completed approval form but then decide you no longer want that particular approval, remember to inform your college’s Dean’s Office.

During or After Program: Some students prefer to work on getting courses approved once they are abroad or after they have returned home. Maybe you have decided to take courses that you did not get approved before you left, or perhaps you have changed your mind about course approvals you have already gotten, wishing instead for a course to count differently toward your degree. The process for getting the approvals is the same regardless of the time frame. If you would like to get a course approved toward your major or minor while you are abroad, you do not have to use the form; it may be easier to simply e-mail the course information to the designated staff/faculty instead of using the form and getting a signature. If you get a positive response to your e-mail, make sure to forward it to OIP and to your college’s Dean’s Office to ensure the credit will count in your favor. In cases where you turn in a completed approval form but then decide you no longer want that particular approval, remember to inform your college’s Dean’s Office.

How Many Credits Will My Courses Be Worth?

The Office for International Programs is responsible for determining the number of Loyola credit hours each of your courses abroad will be worth. In most cases, you can find out their credit worth before you leave. OIP has “Course Enrollment Guidelines” available that explain the credit conversion system for each program. Please contact Kelly Heath at kheath2@luc.edu or Amye Day at aday1@luc.edu to request an enrollment guide for your program.

Designated Staff/Faculty:

Contacts for getting courses approved toward your major or minor

College of Arts & Sciences Students

Major Department Chair (or designee) may approve courses toward major.

Minor Department Chair (or designee) may approve courses toward minor.

(For a list of major/minor department chairs and designees visit http://www.luc.edu/cas/academics_contacts.shtml)

School of Nursing Students

Eileen Lynch may approve courses toward a nursing major. elynch1@luc.edu

School of Education Students

Robbie Jones may approve courses toward an education major or minor. rjones7@luc.edu

School of Business Students

Dr. Susan Ries may approve courses toward a business major or minor. sries@luc.edu

School of Social Work Students

Dr. James Marley may approve courses toward a social work major. jmarley@luc.edu

School of Communication

Shawna Cooper-Gibson may approve courses towards a SOC major or minor. scoopergibson@luc.edu

Study Abroad Academic Policies

Enrollment Abroad

Grading Policies

Study Abroad Transcripts

Enrollment in Courses Abroad

For academic semester or year study abroad programs, students must enroll for the equivalent of a full-time course load (minimum of 12 Loyola credit hours per semester) while abroad. “Course Enrollment Guidelines” are available in the Office for International Programs to help you determine how to make sure you enroll in at least 12 credits for your particular program.

For summer programs, there is no minimum or maximum credit load required, unless otherwise specified in the materials provided for your program.

Please note that for almost all Loyola programs, “Course Schedules” are not part of the culture and not commonly available for student use, and you should *expect to officially choose and enroll in courses after arriving in your host country*.

Enrollment Status at Loyola While Abroad

The Office for International Programs will register study abroad students for a Loyola Interdisciplinary Studies (INDS 300X) placeholder course while they are abroad. You will notice that this course appears in your LOCUS enrollment screen for the duration of your program abroad. You will see a 12-credit course each semester you are on a semester or year program and a 6-credit course if you are on a summer program, though these credit amounts are not necessarily a reflection of the actual amount of credit you will receive for your program. Once the Office for International Programs receives the official transcript for your study abroad program, the placeholder course will be removed and the actual courses, grades and credit amounts will be entered into LOCUS by the Office for Registration and Records.

Note: If you need to be enrolled in a 15-credit placeholder course for financial aid purposes, please contact studyabroad@luc.edu and abroadfinaid@luc.edu.

Grading Policies

Grades for all study abroad courses will show up on your transcript and factor into your cumulative Loyola GPA.

Many international universities do not use the same grading system as Loyola. The Office for International Programs will determine grade equivalents for all foreign grades received on study abroad transcripts. If you are on a USAC program, an IES program, a SIT program, or the CASA program in El Salvador, Loyola receives your transcripts with the grades already converted, and Loyola will use these converted grades for posting to your Loyola transcript. If you are on any other program and you would like to know how Loyola will convert your grades from the foreign grades, contact Kelly Heath at kheath2@luc.edu or Amye Day at aday1@luc.edu to request a grade conversion guide for your program.

Grades received on study abroad programs will be subject to each individual Loyola school or college’s policies regarding minimum grades needed for a course to count toward your major, minor, core or other degree requirement.

Pass/No Pass Requests: Loyola's Pass/No Pass policies for study abroad are the same as they are for students remaining on campus. Policies are universal in that they are used by all colleges/schools; however, procedures for getting approvals may vary slightly between colleges/schools. Contact the Dean's Office of your particular college/school to find out all eligibility requirements for the Pass/No Pass option. Please keep in mind that courses taken as Pass/No-Pass will not count toward Core, major, minor, or College/School-specific requirements.

If you are eligible, you may initiate the request for a course to count as Pass/No Pass through your college's Dean's Office. In general, you must have submitted your request and gotten it approved **by the end of the second week of classes** of your study abroad program. OIP can verify for your dean or advisor the specific dates of your program upon request.

If you get a course approved for Pass/No Pass, be sure to tell your advisor or dean and inform Kelly Heath at kheath2@luc.edu or Amye Day aday1@luc.edu in OIP of their decision so that your transcript will be coded correctly.

Transcripts & Study Abroad

When OIP receives your transcript, we will perform credit and grade conversions as necessary and submit the information to Loyola's Registration & Records office for posting to your Loyola transcript. Titles of your study abroad courses, credit hours and grades will all appear on your Loyola transcript and will factor in to your credit totals and cumulative GPA. Each class will appear on your transcript for the term you were abroad in the following way:

Example

INDS 300X	TBA-Foreign Stdy	3.00	A
Course Topic(s): Romantic Lit in English			
(Course)		(Credit)	(Grade)

With a few exceptions, your overseas program/institution will mail Loyola's Office for International Programs an official transcript without your needing to specifically request it. Please note that in some cases transcripts from abroad can take several weeks or even months to arrive at our office. If a delay in the arrival of your transcripts and the subsequent uncertainty you may have regarding final course, credit and grade information causes you difficulty in making informed decisions about enrollment for future semesters at Loyola, please contact OIP and we will find out whether the process can be expedited.



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- ❖ Enrollment/Grade Forms – Students attending Loyola exchange programs are expected to read the “Course Enrollment Guidelines” form and “Grade Conversions” form for their particular program, which the Office for International Programs (OIP) will provide students before their departure.
 - ❖ Course Approvals – In order for a study abroad course to count toward major, minor or core curriculum requirements, students are responsible for obtaining an approval by using either the Course Approval Database in conjunction with the “Database Course Approval Form” or seeking a new approval by using the “Study Abroad Course Approval Form”. For full details about the course approval process visit <https://info.luc.edu/studyabroad/>.
 - ❖ Departmental/College Regulations – Final confirmation of all course approvals will be dependent upon departmental limitations regarding number of courses completed abroad that may apply toward major/minor requirements. Additionally, all courses will be subject to college regulations regarding minimum satisfactory grades required for courses to count toward specific degree requirements.
 - ❖ Semester and academic year abroad students only: Students on semester or year programs are expected to be enrolled for the Loyola equivalent of a full-time course load each semester (12 Loyola credit hours).
 - ❖ Course Offerings/Schedules - Loyola does not have control over and often does not have fore-knowledge of the course offerings and course schedules specific to each study abroad program for any given term.
 - ❖ Credits – After the program ends, Loyola transcripts will be updated to show credit hours for each student’s study abroad courses. These credits will count toward Loyola credit totals. OIP is the final authority on how credit hours for each course abroad will convert from the foreign system to Loyola equivalencies.
 - ❖ Grades – After the program ends, Loyola transcripts will be updated to show grades for each student’s study abroad courses. These grades will be factored into the cumulative GPA unless the student has received approval from their Loyola dean/advisor within two weeks from the start the host institution’s academic term for a course to be graded under the Pass/No Pass option. OIP is the final authority on how grades will convert from the foreign system to Loyola equivalencies.
 - ❖ “Placeholder” Courses – While abroad, OIP will enroll students in a study abroad “placeholder” course each academic term they are abroad. The number of credit hours posted for this course is not related to the number of actual credit hours students will receive for their academic term abroad.
 - ❖ Loyola Transcript Processing – Universities abroad do not often post grades on a regular schedule after the term is over. Consequently, transcripts showing students’ academic performance abroad may take up to three months or more to reach Loyola, and Loyola cannot update student records until we receive them.

Helpful Resources for Traveling Abroad

Travel Book Recommendations

www.letsgo.com – Let's Go

www.lonelyplanet.com - Lonely Planet Guides

www.fodors.com - Fodor's Travel Guides

www.frommers.com - Frommer's Travel Guides

Tip: Buy books beforehand and read them! Get familiar with where you are studying abroad and make sure to bring a map. The OIP Lounge in the Sullivan Center (room 216) has a number of excellent travel books that you may browse through prior to going abroad.

Communication

www.cellularabroad.com

www.skype.com – a program for making free calls over the internet to anyone who also has Skype

Tip: IES students are required by IES to purchase a cell phone that works in their host country. IES provides information regarding cell phone companies that can give you a cell phone before departure that will work while you are abroad.

Currency Rates & Exchanges

www.xe.com - for up to the minute currency conversions and exchange rates

www.x-rates.com - for currency converter and table

Tip: Notify your bank that you are going abroad so they don't think your credit or debit card was stolen. You can ask them about local ATMS in your host city to see if there are any that will not charge you service fees. Also, set up online banking so you can check your balance often and transfer money from accounts online. Plan ahead and get some local currency to use the first few days you arrive to your host country. Many students bring traveler checks with them and others use local ATM's; figure out what your best option is.

For Family

www.studyabroad.com/telcodes.html - for international telephone codes

<http://travel.state.gov> - for useful numbers at the Department of State in case of emergency

<http://blogs.luc.edu/studyabroad/> - for blogs of current LUC students who are abroad. If you'd like to volunteer to blog through this site next semester, please email studyabroad@luc.edu

Tip: Stay in touch while you are traveling--the culture shock going abroad and returning home will not be as hard.

Weather

www.accuweather.com - has 15-day forecasts for cities across the globe

www.worldclimate.com - offer worldwide weather statistics and norms

Tip: Check the season of your host country and what the weather will be like during your stay so you can pack accordingly!



Health & Safety Abroad

HEALTH

Before You Leave: Things to Consider

- **Health Exams:** Have a general physician exam if you have not had one recently. You should be up to date on all shots (e.g. tetanus/diphtheria, polio, measles, mumps, and rubella). Obtain the relevant booster (s). Have a dental checkup. The last thing you need is to have your wisdom teeth impacted while abroad. Females: have a gynecological check up, if needed.
- **Medical Identification:** If you are allergic to penicillin or have a condition such as diabetes or another condition that may require emergency medical care, carry some sort of identification on you to that effect.
- **Medical History:** If you will need to see a doctor on a regular basis once you arrive overseas, inform the Study Abroad Programs Office about this before you leave and then inform the program coordinator upon arrival. *Take a complete medical record to your program site, along with medical and prescription histories.* Know your blood type.
- **Prescriptions:** If you take prescription medicine, speak to your doctor. Prescription medications vary from country to country in name, potency, and purity and may NOT be sent to you through international mail. Some medicines are even illegal in certain countries so it is best to find out beforehand. If possible, you should take sufficient medications with you to last the whole time you are abroad. Keep this medication in the original container. Also, ask your doctor for a letter to present to customs official and overseas doctors explaining what you need to take, including a generic breakdown (not just a generic name) of your medication.
- **Wearers of glasses or contacts:** bring a typed copy of your prescription and a pair of glasses or contacts with you. If you wear contacts bring at least two extra pairs with you and enough cleaning supplies to last you throughout the trip.
- **HIV Tests:** Some countries will require you to have an HIV test after arrival as part of the requirements for a student visa or residency. If you think there is even a remote chance that you will test HIV positive, have a test done well in advance of your departure.
- **Inoculations:** Check with reliable authorities (we recommend www.cdc.org) to find out what vaccinations are currently recommended for your program site. Do not delay since you may need several shots, taken weeks apart.
- **Hepatitis B Vaccine:** This disease is 100 times more infectious than HIV, is common on college campuses and, like AIDS, it has no cure. The disease is endemic in Alaska, the Pacific Islands, Africa, Asia and the Amazon region of South America. However, there is a vaccine. For more details contact your state Department of Health or the Center for Disease Control.

Health While Abroad

- **Staying Healthy:** Eat well and get sufficient rest. If you become ill, get proper care. Don't hesitate to tell your host family or onsite director if you are ill and don't be afraid to visit a doctor or hospital just because you don't speak the language fluently.
- **Continuing Medical Care:** If you will need to see a doctor on a regular basis once you arrive overseas, inform the overseas program coordinator upon arrival.



- **Traveler's diarrhea:** Be careful what and where you eat when traveling in developing countries. The general rule of thumb is to make sure that all fruit and vegetables are peeled and that all foods are thoroughly cooked. Avoid ice cubes or drinks made with ice if you are not sure of water purity. If you are unsure, seek out bottled beverages. If you have a sensitive stomach, proceed carefully with local foods. Drink plenty of liquids such as purified water or clear juices, and avoid alcoholic drinks or caffeinated sodas as these are dehydrating. Take over-the-counter anti-diarrhea medicine for normal traveler's diarrhea, but if the condition lasts more than 24 hours, seek medical attention.

Health Tips

- Bottled or canned beverages can almost always assumed to be safe to drink if the seal is unbroken.
- If you are unsure about water purity, you can also be unsure about ice purity.
- If you are afraid you won't be able to wash your hands before eating, consider buying a hand sanitizer that does not require the use of water.
- No matter how tempting the local fruits and vegetables may look, be wary of buying them from open air markets.
- Food from restaurants is generally safe.

SAFETY

Before You Leave: Things to Consider

- **Document Photocopies:** Before leaving, make two copies of all your important documents (passport, visa, traveler's checks, and travel itinerary). Keep these in a safe place, leaving a copy at the home in the U.S. When you don't need your passport, carry the copy. Get a police report documenting any losses. Bring 4 extra photos in the event that you need to replace your passport or obtain visas.
- **Packing Valuables:** Do not carry valuables in a backpack, never leave bags unattended, and never carry large amounts of cash. Take and use a lock. Take only as much luggage as you can carry and never let it out of your sight. Do not pack valuables (passports, documents, contact lenses, medications, and electrical equipment) in checked luggage.
- **Airport Security:** At airports you should be prepared for lengthy check-ins since thorough security checks can take time. Carry-on luggage will be X-rayed and possibly hand-searched. Do not accept packages from people you do not know well or carry packages for other travelers.

Safety While Abroad

- **Carry Your Loyola Emergency Card:** Loyola University Chicago will provide you with a wallet-size, laminated card with important emergency contact information on it, including your primary emergency

contact in the U.S., Loyola's 24-hour campus safety phone number, and your school or program contact information abroad. It is important that carry this card with you at all times while abroad.

- **Register with the U.S. Department of State:** Registration allows you to record information about your upcoming trip abroad that the Department of State can use to assist you in case of an emergency. It is an easy, on-line process that does not cost anything. Visit <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/>



- **Be Informed:** Read current newspapers and listen to TV or radio news; know what is going on in the world. Check with program staff before you travel regarding possible travel advisories and read up on the customs and political situation of every country you plan to visit. Talk to international students and program alumni from the places you intend to visit before you go (peer resources are listed http://www.luc.edu/studyabroad/contact_students.shtml). Their insights will prove very helpful.

- **Watch and Learn from Locals:** If they do not go out after 9 p.m. without an escort, then you should not either. Ask questions of your host family, fellow dormitory residents, or your program director. If they do not make eye contact with strangers, then you shouldn't either. Talk to hostel or hotel owners, program staff, tour guides, and fellow travelers to find out which scams are in vogue with local thieves.

- **Be Inconspicuous:** Avoid looking too "North American." Do not speak loudly and draw attention to yourself. Learn a few basic language phrases for each country where you plan to travel. To avoid looking like an American tourist, do not wear t-shirts, sweatshirts, or baseball caps with North American logos. Do not wear your camera around your neck. Remember that your map can give you away. Especially in heavily touristed cities, look at city maps and metro guides before leaving your hotel.

- **Be Aware at all times of your surroundings.** Use the precautions that are customary in any major city in the world today. Travel with a friend. Plan your route and walk confidently. If you are being followed, feel threatened, or you are lost, go into a store, restaurant, or other public area. You know what feels comfortable and what does not. If your instincts tell you a situation is "not right," trust them and move along.

- **Use Common Sense.** Use your common sense and your street skills. If you would not camp out in a city park at home, then do not consider doing this abroad. Avoid walking alone at night. Stay in well-populated, well-trafficked areas. Be especially cautious if you have been drinking. Avoid arguments. Be streetwise and you'll encourage thieves to pick another target.

- **Guard Personal Belongings:** Pickpockets can be extremely adept. Do not carry your passport or money in a hip pocket, open purse, or outside pocket on your backpack. Pickpockets mingle widely in tourist crowds, especially at airports, travel agencies, and American Express offices. A money belt or neck pouch is a good idea. If you need to sleep while in transit, use your pack as your pillow. On crowded city subways, always carry your daypack in front of you. Always have a hand or foot in a loop or strap of your luggage when you set it down to avoid having it snatched away while you're not looking.

- **Organize Your Funds.** Organize your funds into two separate packs each consisting of a credit card and currency. When in-country one of these packs should usually be left at your residence as a back-up. Keep the cash you are using separate from the rest of your money. Try to avoid reaching into your money belt in public places.

- **Traffic and the Road:** According to the Association for Safe International Road Travel (ASIRT), statistics indicate that the single greatest cause of death and accidents. These far exceed the number of deaths resulting from disease, violence or terrorism. Avoid car or bus travel at night. Use a seatbelt. We strongly recommend that you not own or operate a motor vehicle of any kind during your time abroad. Driving regulations and habits in many countries are different from those in the U.S. and driving overseas can be potentially dangerous. Your family's liability insurance may not be valid abroad. Pedestrians are also at risk, so be especially careful in crossing the street. Never assume that you have the right of way.



Pay particular attention to all of the following, which are common on the roads of many countries:

- Passing on the right and cutting in front of other vehicles from the right side.
 - Unexpected stops or turns without signaling for no apparent reason.
 - Stopping in unexpected locations to pick up or let off passengers, including main highway entrance ramps, intersections and along major highways.
 - Trucks parked at night without lights on the highway rather than on the side of the road.
 - Disabled vehicles parked without warning signs.
-
- **Do Not Hitchhike. CAUTION TO WOMEN.** Learn quickly those situations where you might be harassed or molested. You have not only the normal burden of sexism, but in many places you also have to contend with the notion that as a Western woman you might be considered promiscuous. Observe the behavior of the local women. Find out about non-verbal messages (eye contact, tone, gestures, and dress) to avoid or adopt. If you are verbally harassed on the street, the best path is to ignore it unless you are touched or your safety is threatened. Again, be very careful about alcohol consumption. Women who have been drinking leave themselves more vulnerable to sexual assault.
 - **Avoid Demonstrations,** especially in politically volatile countries. What appears to be a peaceful situation could suddenly become dangerous and you could become caught in the middle.
 - **Leave Your Travel Itinerary With Friends and Program Staff.** Provide your travel itinerary to your family back home and to friends while traveling. Always tell someone where you are going. Draft a list of important telephone numbers and addresses of the locations you are to visit and the telephone number of your nearest embassy or consulate. Leave a copy with your contact person.
 - **Cellular Telephone:** You should plan to sign up for cellular telephone service. This can be very useful and can save a great deal of trouble.

Safety Tips

- Be aware of your surroundings; foreigners are easily identified as theft targets.
- Do not leave briefcases or purses on the floor or hanging from a chair in a restaurant.
- Avoid walking alone at night, even if you are familiar with the area.
- Choose safe, reliable transportation.
- Leave jewelry and expensive watches at home.
- Do not carry large amounts of cash, ATM cards, or credit cards.
- Do not carry your passport or visa. It is preferable to carry a photocopy of these documents and leave the original in a safe place.
- Do not drink and swim
- Make sure that luggage has identification inside and out
- Avoid large public gatherings of people like demonstrations, celebrations, etc.
- Provide your family with emergency contact information, and keep them informed on an ongoing basis. Include information on any travel away from the program site

HELPFUL WEB-SITES

U.S. Government Resources on Health and Safety

- *The Centers for Disease Control* www.cdc.gov/travel. The web page offers reference information, reports on specific disease outbreaks, and offers geographic health recommendations.

- *The United States Department* www.state.gov and www.travel.state.gov. The web pages offer Consular Information Sheets for every country of the world. They include such information as unusual immigration practices, health conditions, minor political disturbances, drug penalties, current travel warnings and public announcements. The sites are also a good resource to find country specific safety information.

Other Helpful Sites on the World Wide Web:

- Travel Health Online at: www.tripprep.com
- Lonely Planet Guides: Health Information at: www.lonelyplanet.com/health
- Travel Safe: AIDS and International Travel: <http://www.ciee.org/travelsafe.cfm>
- World Health Organization: <http://www.who.org/>
- Great health resource for travelers: <http://www.medicineplanet.com/home/home.phtml>
- <http://www.hthstudents.com>: (contains useful information on health and safety information by destination, doing searches for doctors, etc.)

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How to Utilize Your CISI Insurance Abroad

All Loyola students studying abroad are **required** to purchase the Loyola CISI health and emergency services plan prior to going abroad. To purchase the your insurance visit the Global Travel Center at www.luc.edu/oip/travelcenter.shtml

What should I do if I need assistance while abroad?

The CISI Team Assist plan is designed by CISI in conjunction with the assistance company to provide travelers with worldwide, 24-hour emergency telephone assistance service. Multilingual help and advice can be furnished for the insured person in the event of an emergency.

If you require Team Assist assistance, your ID number is your policy number: **GLM N04849590**.

That policy number, along with important contact information, can be found on your CISI insurance ID card, under “Emergency Contact Info” on the Participant Portal, and on the claim form (which is part of the LUC insurance coverage brochure).

To reach Team Assist from within the US, call 877-577-9504. From outside the US, you can place a collect call to 240-330-1520. You can also email OPS@europassistance-usa.com.

It is very important to carry your ID card with you at all times and to make sure you follow LUC’s suggested emergency protocols that are outlined during study abroad orientation. Proper communication is the backbone to successful care during emergency situations. Remember: CISI can’t help if they are unaware of the situation! In order to ensure that you are taken care of, please note the following:

- Use the buddy system! Always make sure you let someone know your whereabouts if you are going to be spending time alone;
- Make sure you let a staff member know when you are feeling sick (even if you are just homesick!);
- Unless CISI has already made special payment arrangements for all LUC students at a clinic in your city of study, you may be required to pay for visits out of pocket. This can be avoided by opening up a case with Team Assist ahead of any visits. Team Assist can direct you to the appropriate facility based on your needs and can also arrange for direct billing whenever possible;
- If you do pay for treatment out-of-pocket, simply fill out a claim form (available on the Participant Portal) and then scan and email the form along with any receipts to claimhelp@culturalinsurance.com. CISI’s in-house claims staff will process promptly and can mail a check to the address you designate (typically within 15 days).
- Anyone can open up a case on behalf of an insured! Friends, family members, overseas and/or US-based staff can all call Team Assist to open up a case if you are unable to do so. The sooner a case is opened, the better.
- Your medical information will be kept confidential unless you authorize others to have

access to your records. If you have a medical situation that you do not want to discuss with others, you should not attempt to seek treatment alone. Opening up a case with Team Assist will ensure that you receive adequate medical care and that your situation can be monitored.

How do I call Team Assist or make a collect call from abroad?

On your insurance ID card, you will see an 800 number and a standard phone number listed. The 800 number is for calls originating from the US. As a general rule, US-based 800 numbers can't be called from abroad because they are toll-free and typically blocked. If you need to reach Team Assist from outside the US and have an international calling plan, you can dial the standard US phone number listed **(240-330-1520)** using the appropriate country code for placing an outbound international call. You can also place a collect call to Team Assist.

One of the easiest ways to call collect is to use the international AT&T directory service. The number you will need to dial will depend on the country you are in. The below link is an excellent guide (with the ability to select your country from a drop-down menu). Please note that some countries have multiple numbers based on region. No membership is required for this service (per the AT&T site) and if using it to call collect, you should not be incurring any additional costs.

http://www.usa.att.com/traveler/access_numbers/view.jsp?group=language

Cultural Adjustment

Most foreigners living in a new country experience a period of adjustment where they get used to living in a new environment. Generally cultural adjustment is processed in stages, so unlike a step-by-step operation, the stages can overlap or recur throughout the period abroad. Some of the adjustment stages include:

1) **Pre-Departure Stage:** “I just can’t wait to meet my host family, but I’m also a bit nervous about the language.”

In this stage, you are preparing for departure, packing and planning. You may sense the awareness of the potential cultural shift, feeling excitement and anticipation, yet concern about leaving family, friends and a familiar environment.

2) **“Honeymoon”/Spectator Stage:** “This place is so amazing!”

This is where you may experience euphoria at the newness of your environment. Your sense of adventure leads you to explore sites and shops. You may display an outward curiosity about host nationals and a “tourist-like” involvement with the host culture.

3) **Increasing Irritation Stage – “Culture Shock”:** “This place sucks! I hate it here. These people are so stupid.”

If you experience this period, you may begin to feel incompetent in the new culture and experience difficulty in adjusting to foreign aspects in everyday life. Your focus shifts from *similarities* between the new place and home to the *differences*. Lots of things may seem to be going “wrong” – you may feel disenchantment, irritation, anger, homesickness or depression. Small differences and inconveniences could feel like major catastrophes. Physically, your sleeping or eating routines may change or you may not feel well. You might find yourself during this stage avoiding people from your host country and searching for more familiar things – American friends, English-language books, etc. If you experience this stage, it generally means you have immersed yourself enough in the culture to let it deeply affect you. This is where real self-change occurs.

4) **Adaptation Stage:** “As long as I’m here, I’d better make the most of it.”

This stage is characterized by recovery from culture shock and more enjoyment of your host culture. Your new environment feels more familiar, and you may begin to feel more comfortable with the surroundings and language and feel a sense of belonging in the host country. Host national friends may ask you to join them for activities. Your sense of humor may return and you may be able to see things from the perspective of the “locals.”

5) **Return Anxiety Stage:** “No one understands what I experienced.”

This stage covers the period before you leave and after you return home. If you experience this stage, the anxiety comes from not wanting to return home and feeling sad about it. You may be saying goodbyes to local and American friends, finishing courses, and possibly making final travel plans. Once home, you may feel disconnected, disoriented, or homesick for your host country/friends. You could feel like you changed but no one at home did. You might begin criticizing the U.S. or “home” in general and show a deeper interest in foreign affairs.

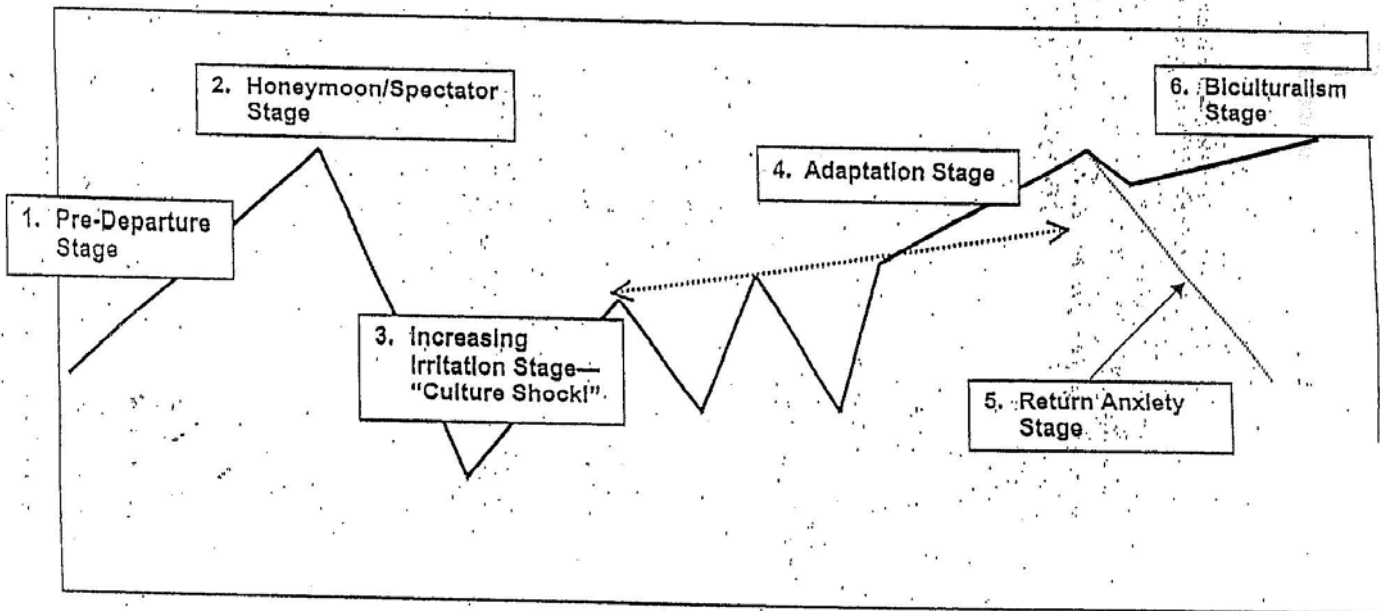
6) **Biculturalism Stage:** “I think in the U.S., it’s good that things are _____, but in (host country), I like the way they _____.”

People who reach this stage feel completely functional within the “new” culture, and it no longer feels foreign – life in the new country is a normal routine and fluency in the language is gained. They feel a sense of belonging to two or more cultures, and can appreciate both good and bad aspects of the home culture and the foreign one.

Cultural Adjustment Chart:

XVI. Adjusting to Life in a Foreign Culture

Studies have shown that when people move to a foreign country, they generally experience a series of emotional stages that fall into a well-documented pattern. The chart below documents these stages. While not everyone experiences them in the same order, or for the same duration, most people follow this pattern of cultural adjustment to some extent, even if their stay abroad is short. Study abroad students will most likely experience stage four at some point, and will probably experience stage five before returning, but will not be abroad long enough to experience stage six (either abroad or back in the U.S.). Even people who live abroad for years often do not experience the final stage.



Adjusting to a Foreign Environment

While adjusting to life in a foreign culture is exciting, it can often be stressful to have to deal with difference in daily life on such a regular basis. Stress is often triggered when our expectations go awry. For example, you are having difficulty understanding the language, even though you've been studying it for years. Or your host family keeps serving you food that you absolutely hate! Try to remember that stress is a common response to spending an extended period of time abroad. Furthermore, experiencing stress is generally a good sign because it means that you are really immersing yourself in a different culture rather than moving about in an American "bubble". We have all heard the expression "no pain, no gain" or "growing pains". It applies to learning a new culture, too!

Of course, even though stress may be a sign of study abroad success, you will probably be eager to minimize it. Remember that difficulties while abroad are a normal occurrence, but that you can be proactive in the way you deal with the adjustment.

Here are some tips to help you deal with the stress:

- Before you leave, learn about your destination: customs, geography, politics, social issues, and history (you can use the fifty questions handout to begin on this).
- Expect change and difference and ambiguity. These are learning opportunities, rather than problems to overcome.
- Keep in mind that during a good amount of time while you are abroad, especially at the beginning, you will not completely understand how things work or what they mean. Learn to be comfortable at failing at some tasks, feeling stupid or silly (like a 5 year old), and asking people for help. Don't be afraid to make a mistake (especially with regards to speaking a foreign language).
- Accept that different cultures may have different concepts of time and punctuality- not inferior, just different.
- Keep in touch with family and friends back home. Share events as they happen.
- Get out and experience the culture! Make friends (and not just American)! Seek out friends and groups that share your interests. Host national language partners are a great way to meet people your own age if you are going to a non-English speaking country.
- Do not forget to take care of yourself physically-eat healthy, exercise, and get plenty of rest.
- Keeping a journal serves as an excellent way to keep track of what you have done and what you want to do. It gives you a place to record your observations and personal reflections.
- Expect some inconveniences, like long commutes! Your goal is to live like a "local"- and generally, the locals do not live in the center of town, especially when in a big city.

- If you have problems/concerns, contact local staff first; they are the people who will most likely be able to help you figure out what to do. Trust your program. They have been working with study abroad students for a long time, and they generally know what students need. Thus, for example, if they require that you attend an orientation, trust that they are telling you things that will be helpful to you as you begin your stay abroad and pay attention, even if the information seems repetitious or like common sense.
- If you have any reoccurring medical concerns, make sure to tell program staff about them as soon as possible (preferably before you leave the U.S.) so that they can be prepared to help you.
- Plan small tasks each day that will help you meet people and accomplish something- like preparing a new food, talking to someone new, accepting an invitation to go somewhere, etc.

Identifying American Values and Learning from Cultural Encounters

Since many of you who are going abroad have lived within American culture for most of your lives, this list is to help you begin to think about the values that Americans prize (below is a list of what Dr. L. Robert Kohls, a Cultural Historian, believes to be the most prominent ones). Identifying aspects of American culture will help you to realize that the society you are about to enter might not follow the same rules, patterns, or systems. You will be distancing yourself from a societal structure that you have lived within your whole life, and everything will be very different. It will be up to you during your time abroad to begin to figure out what the core values and beliefs of the culture you are entering into are. You will begin to understand a new viewpoint and societal approach through experiencing life on a daily basis within the foreign environment. It will be up to you to pick up on these differences. It will be a fascinating discovery!

Why Do Americans Act Like That?

A guide to understanding U.S. culture and its values

Dr. L. Robert Kohls, Director of International Programs at San Francisco State University

This is the kind of advice Dr. L. Robert Kohls gives first time visitors to the United States. Kohls, Director of International Programs at San Francisco State University, has developed a list of 13 commonly held values which help explain why Americans act as they do. He is careful and cautions visitors also, to avoid labeling these values positive or negative. His aim: "I simply want to help you understand the Americans with whom you will be relating-from their own value system rather than from yours". Whether one agrees with Kohls or not - or is willing to accept as valid any generalizations about Americans - his observations are thought-provoking.

1. PERSONAL CONTROL OVER THE ENVIRONMENT / RESPONSIBILITY

Americans do not believe in the power of fate, and they look at people who do as being backward, primitive, or naive. In the American context, to be "*fatalistic*" is to be superstitious, lazy, or unwilling to take initiative. Everyone should have control over whatever in the environment might potentially affect him or her. The problems of one's life are not seen as having resulted from bad luck as much as having come from one's laziness and unwillingness to take responsibility in pursuing a better life.

2. CHANGE SEEN AS NATURAL AND POSITIVE

In the American mind, change is seen as indisputably good, leading to development, improvement, progress. Many older, more traditional cultures consider change disruptive and destructive; they value stability, continuity, tradition, and ancient heritage - none of which are considered very important in the United States.

3. TIME AND ITS CONTROL

Time is of utmost importance to most Americans. It is something to be on, kept, filled, saved, used, spent, wasted, lost, gained, planned, given, and even killed. Americans are more concerned with getting things accomplished on time than they are with developing interpersonal relations. Their lives seem controlled by the little machines they wear on their wrists, cutting their discussions off abruptly to make their next appointment on

time. This philosophy has enabled Americans to be extremely productive, and productivity is highly valued in their country.

4. EQUALITY / FAIRNESS

Equality is so cherished in the U.S. that it is seen as having a religious basis. Americans believe that all people are created equal and that all should have an equal opportunity to succeed. This concept of equality is strange to seven-eighths of the world which views status and authority as desirable, even if they happen to be near the bottom of the social order. Since Americans like to treat foreigners "*Just like anybody else*", newcomers to the U.S. should realize that no insult or personal indignity is intended if they are treated in a less than-deferential manner by waiters in restaurants, clerks in stores and hotels, taxi drivers, and other service personnel.

5. INDIVIDUALISM / INDEPENDENCE

Americans view themselves as highly individualistic in their thoughts and actions. They resist being thought of as representatives of any homogeneous group. When they do join groups, they believe they are special; just a little different from other members of the same group. In the U.S. you will find people freely expressing a variety of opinions anywhere and anytime. Yet, in spite of this independence, almost all Americans end up voting for one of their two major political parties. Individualism leads to **privacy**, which Americans see as desirable. The word privacy does not exist in many non-Western languages. If it does, it is likely to have a negative connotation, suggesting loneliness or forced isolation. It is not uncommon for Americans to say, and almost to believe: "*If I don't have half an hour a day to myself, I go stark-raving mad!*"

6. SELF-HELP INITIATIVE

Americans take credit only for what they accomplish as individuals. They get no credit for having been born into a rich family but pride themselves in having climbed the ladder of success, to whatever level, all by themselves. In an English-language dictionary, there are more than 100 composite words that have the word "*self*" as a prefix: *self-aware*, *self-confident*, *self-conscious*, *self-contented*, *self-control*, *self-criticism*, *self-deception*, *self-defeating*, *self-denial*. The equivalent of these words cannot be found in most other languages. It is an indicator of how highly Americans regard the *self-made* man or woman.

7. COMPETITION

Americans believe that competition brings out the best in any individual and in any system. This value is reflected in the American economic system of free enterprise, and it is applied in the U.S. in all areas - medicine, the arts, education, sports.

8. FUTURE ORIENTATION

Americans value the culture and the improvements the future will surely bring. They devalue the past and are, to a large extent, unconscious of the present. Even a happy present goes largely unnoticed because Americans are hopeful that the future will bring even greater happiness. Since Americans believe that humans, not fate, can and should control the environment, they are good at planning short-term projects. This ability has caused Americans to be invited to all corners of the Earth to plan, and often achieve, the miracles which their goal setting methods can produce.

9. ACTION / WORK ORIENTATION

"*Don't just stand there,*" says a typical bit of American advice, "*do something!*" This expression, though normally used in a crisis situation, in a sense describes most Americans' waking life, where action - any action - is seen as superior to inaction. Americans routinely schedule an extremely active day. Any relaxation must be

limited in time and aimed at "recreating" so that they can work harder once their "*recreation*" is over. Such a "*no-nonsense*" attitude toward life has created a class of people known as "workaholics" - people addicted to, and often wholly identified with, their job or profession. The first question people often ask when they meet each other in the U.S. is related to work: "*What do you do?*" "*Where do you work?*" or "*Who (what company) are you with?*" The United States may be one of the few countries in the world where people speak about the dignity of human labor - meaning hard physical labor. Even corporation presidents will engage in physical labor from time to time and, in doing so, gain rather than lose respect from others.

10. INFORMALITY

Americans are even more informal and casual than their close relatives - the Western Europeans. For example, American bosses often urge their employees to call them by their first names and feel uncomfortable with the title "*Mr.*" or "*Ms.*". Dress is another area where American informality is most noticeable, perhaps even shocking. For example, one can go to a symphony performance in any large American city and find people dressed in blue jeans. Informality is also apparent in Americans' greetings. The more formal "*How are you?*" has largely been replaced with an informal "*Hi*". This is as likely to be used with one's superior as with one's best friend.

11. DIRECTNESS / OPENNESS / HONESTY

Many other countries have developed subtle, sometimes highly ritualistic, ways of informing others of unpleasant information. Americans prefer the direct approach. They are likely to be completely honest in delivering their negative evaluations, and to consider anything other than the most direct and open approach to be "*dishonest*" and "*insincere*". Anyone in the U.S. who uses an intermediary to deliver the message will also be considered "*manipulative*" and "*untrustworthy*". If you come from a country where saving face is important, be assured that Americans are not trying to make you lose face with their directness.

12. PRACTICALITY / EFFICIENCY

Americans have a reputation for being realistic, practical, and efficient. The practical consideration is likely to be given highest priority in making any important decision. Americans pride themselves in not being very philosophically or theoretically oriented. If Americans would even admit to having a philosophy, it would probably be that of pragmatism. *Will it make money? What is the bottom line? What can I gain from this activity?* These are the kinds of questions Americans are likely to ask, rather than: *is it aesthetically pleasing? Will it be enjoyable? Will it advance the cause of knowledge?* This pragmatic orientation has caused Americans to contribute more inventions to the world than any other country in human history. The love of "**practicality**" has also caused Americans to view some professions more favorably than others. Management and economics are much more popular in the United States than philosophy or anthropology, and law and medicine more valued than the arts. Americans belittle "**emotional**" and "**subjective**" evaluations in favor of "**rational**" and "**objective**" assessments. Americans try to avoid being "**too sentimental**" in making their decisions. They judge every situation "**on its own merits**".

13. MATERIALISM / ACQUISITIVENESS

Foreigners generally consider Americans much more materialistic than Americans are likely to consider themselves. Americans would like to think that their material objects are just the "**natural benefits**" that result from hard work and serious intent - a reward, they think, which all people could enjoy were they as industrious and hard-working as Americans. But by any standard, Americans are materialistic. They give a higher priority to obtaining, maintaining, and protecting material objects than they do in developing and enjoying relationships with people. Since Americans value newness and innovation, they sell or throw away their possessions frequently and replace them with newer ones. A car may be kept for only two or three years, a house for five or six before buying a new one.

Critical Incidents: Learning from Cultural Encounters

Critical incidents often revolve around a misunderstanding, a dispute, a linguistic error, or some other kind of cultural faux pas. They are the sorts of events that highlight different cultural assumptions and values. They are about attitudes and behaviors that might be interpreted in different ways by different people, particularly when people from different cultural backgrounds interact. Thus, they help illustrate why you need to be aware of multiple cultural contexts in order to make sense of what happens between people when something goes wrong cross-culturally. Often what we consider “common sense” is seen in other cultures as neither common nor making much sense!

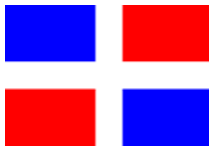
Some of the incidents are very funny and some of them were decidedly not amusing at the time they happened. But they are all instructive. They represent concrete examples of what can occur when study abroad students, operating with the best of intentions, find out that cultures can indeed be very different and that different rules often apply overseas.

The following examples might help to expand upon Kohl’s list of American values. You will begin to notice that as Americans, or individuals who have lived in the U.S. for extended periods of time, we are cultural beings (that is, American culture beings), who might find some situations abroad baffling or odd because we are bringing certain assumptions to the table that might not be applicable to foreign environments.

Here are some examples of what happens when different rules apply abroad.

Critical Incidence #1:

Location: Dominican Republic



When I first arrived in my village in the Dominican Republic, I began to have a problem with my morning jogging routine. I used to jog every day when I was at home in the United States, so when I arrived in my village in the Dominican Republic, I set myself a goal to continue jogging two miles every morning.



I really liked the peaceful feeling of jogging alone as the sun came up. But this did not last for long. The people in my village simply couldn’t understand why someone would want to run alone. Soon people began to appear at their doorways offering me a cup of coffee; others would invite me to stop in for a visit. Sometimes this would happen four or five times as I tried to continue jogging. They even began sending their children to run behind me so I wouldn’t be lonely. They were unable to understand the American custom of exercising alone.

I was faced with a dilemma. I really enjoyed my early morning runs. However, I soon realized that it’s considered impolite in Dominican villages not to accept a cup of coffee, or stop and chat, when you pass people who are sitting on their front steps. I didn’t want to give up jogging. But, at the same time, I wanted to show respect for the customs of the Dominican Republic and not be viewed as odd or strange.

What’s the dilemma?

Answer:

The dilemma faced by the jogger is a classic case of how to balance personal preferences and US-style individuality with the social expectations of local people in a strongly collectivist society. Although the jogger does not recount how the issue was finally resolved, the fact that some hard choices needed to be made involving seemingly diametrically opposed values and behaviors is a typical scenario and frequently encountered by students while abroad.

Another example would be an ill US-American student on a home stay in India wanting the privacy of staying in his or her own room with the door closed, while the family insists on putting him or her in the living room on a couch so the student will not feel “isolated” and everyone in the family can “help” him or her. What is meant to be kindness and a show of concern for the welfare of a guest on the part of the Indian family might be excruciatingly difficult for a US-American who wants nothing more than to be left alone to be sick in private.

Before one goes abroad, it is very useful to know not only how strongly a particular culture may stress collectivism, but also how strong your own preferences are for individualism or collectivism. If you have a marked preference for individualism, then going to a highly collectivist community may take some serious adjustment. If you tend to be more comfortable with collectivist values, you may fit easily into a culture that exhibits such behavior, but feel somewhat out-of-place in a society that is strongly individualistic.

Being aware of your own feelings and preferences about group versus personal orientations, and which of these is likely to predominate in your study abroad destination, can allow you to at least anticipate the kinds of issues that will be likely to arise as you interact with local people.

Critical Incident #2:

Location: London, England



Student: Female 19

I was sitting in the London underground one day, minding my own business, reading a magazine and waiting for the train to arrive. All of a sudden I looked up and saw a British man staring at me. He was standing to the right of me, about one foot away and could not take his eyes off me. My initial reaction was to just ignore him, so I looked up at him, smiled, and then continued to read my magazine. No longer than two seconds later, I heard him say, "You're American, aren't you?" I immediately responded by saying, "Yes, how did you know?"

He said, "Because..."

Answer:

...you kindly smiled at me!" Smiling and being friendly to strangers is a huge US-American culture characteristic. British people are, very often, not friendly to complete strangers and consider others who smile randomly at people they don't know as rather odd.

You might face some of these types of incidents abroad. Do your best with them and remember to have a sense of humor about them. They will be excellent insights into American culture as well as your host culture.



Issues of Cultural Difference and Diversity Abroad

Regardless of your background, encountering cultural differences while abroad will pose many unique challenges and opportunities. The success of your experience depends on the effort you put into learning to navigate a new culture. Planning ahead for the high points and the not-so-high points will go a long way in easing your transition abroad.

Culture and diversity encompasses more than race, ethnicity, and nationality—it also includes multiple backgrounds, perspectives, communication styles, abilities, religions, gender identities, and sexual orientations. Studying abroad provides an amazing opportunity to gain a new perspective on culture and diversity and consider how they relate to your own identity, your home country, your peers, and your host country.

To maximize your experience, we encourage you to learn more about your host country's values, customs, and perceptions of difference. The Brown University *Diversity Issues in Study Abroad* booklet (see the Culture and Diversity Resources page) is a great place for all students to start. It provides first-hand testimonials of various students' experiences crossing cultures and studying in different regions. If you can, try to talk to someone who has been to your host country to find out more information, but keep in mind that each individual's experience may vary. The resources we provide here are only a starting point. If you want to talk more about these topics before, during, or after you study abroad, feel free to contact OIP or one of your program representatives.

Being an American Abroad

One benefit of living in another country is being able to consider your home culture from a new perspective. When you go abroad, you may be treated differently because you are an American. In some countries, being an American sparks intrigue and curiosity. It's possible that you may encounter "Ugly American" stereotypes, which may be frustrating. These are some examples of positive and negative qualities that are sometimes associated with the "typical American": wealthy, promiscuous, generous, hardworking, racially prejudiced, loud, extravagant, politically naïve, outgoing.

Keep in mind that it is just as easy for people of other cultures to stereotype and criticize Americans as it is for Americans to stereotype people of other cultures. While stereotypes can reflect positive or negative images, we should avoid categorizing or making broad generalizations about specific groups. It may be difficult, but try to be patient. In your interactions, try to keep an open mind and be conscious of the perceptions of individuals in your host culture, but at the same time let your true self shine through.

Revisiting your Cultural History

Many students go abroad to learn more about their cultural heritage. Your goals might be to live in the country where your parents or grandparents were born or learn to speak their language. You may also be excited to be part of the racial or ethnic majority for the first time in your life. Studying abroad in a country where your family has roots is a great opportunity to learn more about your culture and examine your identity. When you arrive there, you may feel like you're at a "home away from home," but locals may still perceive you as a "foreigner." Despite your familiarity with the culture, you may struggle to connect with locals or speak the language. To get adjusted, you will need to determine how

to integrate your American identity with your ethnic and cultural identity and this process often takes time.

Students of Color Abroad

As a student of color studying abroad, you may be anxious about being able to adjust and be accepted in a new country. You may also be concerned about encountering possible racial prejudice. At the same time, you might be looking forward to being a part of the racial majority or learning more about your cultural history. Many students of color assume that racism abroad may be so overwhelming that it is safer to stay home. However, many students are pleasantly surprised to have a positive experience abroad. Often, students of color find that in their host countries they are perceived as Americans first and as students of color second.

Although you may have difficulty adapting to a new culture and you may face awkward or uncomfortable situations because of your racial or ethnic identity, you will find that your overall experience abroad is a valuable learning experience. Before you leave, research your destination and consider all facets of the culture, including how discrimination may affect you. Being aware of these factors will help you be more prepared to address problems if they arise. See our Culture and Diversity Resources page or talk to a study abroad advisor to find specific information about your destination.

Religion

There are numerous religious traditions that exist throughout the world. Your personal religious views and those that you may encounter while abroad may affect your experience in different ways. You may be studying in a country where religion plays an important and very visible role in society. If this is the case, you may need to be more conscious of how to adjust your words and actions to compliment cultural norms. In contrast, you may be in a country where religion does not play a central role in everyday life.

If continuing your own religion practices while abroad is very important to you, research your host country to see if there is a local religious community you can connect with. Also, find out more about how your religious tradition fits into the host culture. For example, even if the majority of a country's population identifies as Catholic or Muslim, the religious tradition may manifest itself in different ways. It may be worthwhile to find out if religion has been a point of tension in your host country. Again, being aware of these factors will help you to transition to life abroad and handle problems if they arise.

Adjustments for Men and Women

While you are abroad, you may need to adjust your communication style as a man or woman. It's best to research this before you arrive at your destination, talk to others who have visited this part of the world, and observe how people interact when you arrive at your host country. Observing interpersonal interactions in your host country can help you choose how best to communicate with others in your host country. Men and women need to be aware of how each gender identity is perceived and what typical communication styles and interactions consist of in the host country. For example, eye contact and the concept of personal space can vary greatly from country to country.

Specifically, women may have a difficult time adjusting to attitudes they encounter abroad. Some men may openly comment on women in ways that many women find offensive. In some cultures, it may not be uncommon to be honked at, stared at, verbally and loudly approved of, and, in general, to be actively noticed simply for being a woman, and in particular, an American woman. Sometimes the attention can be flattering. It may become very annoying and potentially even angering or dangerous. Local women, who often experience the same sort of treatment, have learned through their culture how to respond to the attention. If you can, try to observe how local women address these situations.

If you ever feel overwhelmed, uncomfortable, or in danger, contact a program representative or your study abroad advisor for guidance.

LGBTQ Students

As mentioned above, you will want to learn more about your destination, but as an LGBTQ student you may want to consider other factors as well. You may want to research how the LGBTQ lifestyle is expressed and perceived in the host culture. Before you leave, try to talk to other LGBTQ and allied people about their experiences in the specific region you will be visiting. There are also many LGBTQ travel resources in print and online. For example, *Lonely Planet* guidebooks often address LGBTQ concerns.

You will need to balance your knowledge of your host country's culture as it relates to homosexuality with your own needs to create the most positive experience for yourself while studying abroad. It may be helpful to consider:

- How open you will be about your sexual orientation with your peers, roommates, host family, and teachers?
- What are the local attitudes towards LGBTQ individuals?
- What resources and communities are available for LGBTQ individuals in my host country? How will I find them?
- Are there local laws that I need to be aware of, and what is the police attitude towards LGBTQ individuals?

While this information may seem daunting at first, it may help ease your transition into your host culture. If you would like to discuss these topics further before, during, or after your time abroad, please contact a program representative or a study abroad advisor.

References

- Michigan State University Study Abroad (2008). *Information for Multicultural Students*. Retrieved March 19, 2008, from <http://studyabroad.msu.edu/people/studentsofcolor/index.html>.
- Office of International Programs, Brown University (2008). *Diversity Issues in Higher Education* [booklet]. Providence, RI.

Culture and Diversity Resources

To maximize your experience, we encourage you to learn more about your host country's values, customs, and perceptions of difference. The resources we provide here are only a starting point, and many sites provide information that is useful for *all* students. If you want to talk more about these topics before, during, or after you study abroad, feel free to contact OIP or one of your program representatives.

General

Brown University Diversity Issues in Study Abroad Booklet

www.brown.edu/Administration/OIP/pdf_docs/diversity_st_abroad01.pdf

The *Diversity Issues in Study Abroad* booklet was created by Brown University, and it is a great resource for students of all backgrounds going abroad. From White male students in South Africa to Asian American women studying in Europe, the booklet contains first-hand testimonials from diverse students studying all over the world.

Multicultural Students

All Abroad (<http://allabroad.us/>)

All Abroad is a resource for students, faculty, staff, and parents interested in study abroad. It provides many resources addressing issues of diversity abroad. Students can also contact mentors of various cultural backgrounds to receive advice on all aspects of studying abroad.

Diversity Abroad (<http://www.diversityabroad.com/>)

Diversity Abroad is an online study abroad resource that includes information about studying abroad and scholarships. It also includes testimonials and provides ways to connect with other students who have studied abroad.

LGBTQ Students

NAFSA Rainbow SIG (<http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/student.htm>)

Organized by the national professional organization for international education, the site provides information and resources for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered study abroad students.

The Gay Guide (<http://www.gayguide.net>)

The Global Gay Guide Network provides travel guides on various countries prepared by and for the gay community.

International Lesbian and Gay Association (<http://www.ilga.org/index.asp>)

The ILGA is an international network of national and local groups to support LGBT individuals. The site includes important travel information specific to the LGBT community and a world map of LGBT legislation.