

UTA STUDY ABROAD

Where will you go?



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK



"Reflection" by Alexander Kwong; Man Mo Temple, Hong Kong 2008

UTA STUDY ABROAD

Box 19028, 1022 UTA Blvd
Arlington, TX 76019

T: (001) 817.272.1120

F: (001) 817.272.1121

E: studyabroad@uta.edu

WELCOME

Congratulations on your decision to study abroad through UTA! Studying abroad is a life changing experience and you are sure to have the time of your life while abroad. The experience of living abroad for several months in a foreign country, as opposed to that of being a simple tourist, will be of tremendous value to you from every point of view. Culturally, linguistically, personally, intellectually, spiritually, you will grow. You will have the chance to go beyond sightseeing, and become acquainted with another country, another culture, and another fascinating people.

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

With perseverance and a little adventurousness, you will make lifelong friends while studying abroad. It usually requires more thought, effort and creativity to meet locals, but interacting with people from your host country will enable you to learn more about the culture, practice your language skills and develop lasting ties. Some of your friends will be other Americans, of course—but be careful not to seclude yourself in an American ghetto. Interacting with natives is the best way to immerse oneself into a new culture. Some friends will be other “foreigners” that have much in common with you. They feel a little lost at first too, and are fascinated by the same “strange” things that fascinate you. Above all, do not take the easy way out and just sit around at your residence or limit yourself to sightseeing only. The simplest way to meet people is to join a group or take a class that will allow you to pursue an interest or hobby and interact socially. Participating in musical groups, sports, and volunteer projects are some good ways to be socially active and gradually interweave into the new culture.

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

Indeed, you will have your long-held values and beliefs questioned frequently. You may be amazed to discover, however, an intrinsic strength and self-confidence that you never knew existed once you are confronted with certain questions posed by foreigners--questions that will make you think about what it is that you stand for. Nonetheless, you will return to the U.S. with a stronger sense of purpose and with new perceptions of yourself and the world.

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

Farewell and safe travels,

The UTA Study Abroad Staff



TABLE OF CONTENTS

BEFORE YOU GO	6
UTA STUDY ABROAD ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES	7
Reciprocal Exchange Program Enrollment Procedures	7
Affiliated Program Enrollment Procedures	7
More on Enrollment for Exchange and Affiliated Programs	7
UTA Faculty-led Program Enrollment Procedures	7
Non-UTA Program Enrollment Procedures	7
GOALS FOR STUDY ABROAD PARTICIPANTS	8
CULTURE	8
What is Culture?	8
Culture Shock	9
How to Respond to Culture Shock	10
Learn the Local Language.....	11
Be Open-Minded.....	12
MENTAL PREPARATION FOR STUDY ABROAD	12
TRAVEL DOCUMENTS	13
Identification.....	13
Passports.....	13
Visas	13
International Student Identification Card (ISIC)	14
Airline Tickets.....	14
International Cell Phones.....	14
Phone Card.....	14
Rail Passes (<i>BritRail, Eurail Global pass and Eurail France-Germany Pass</i>).....	15
Hostelling Card.....	15
LEGAL MATTERS	15
Power of Attorney.....	16
Taxes	16
MONEY MATTERS	16
Traveler’s Checks	17
ATM Cards.....	17
Credit Cards	17
Transfer of Money	18
Guarding Your Valuables.....	18
SAFETY ISSUES ABROAD	18
Call Home Regularly	18
Keep up with the news	18
Political Unrest.....	18
Stay alert.....	19
Take precautions.....	19
Sexual Harassment.....	19
Registering	19
Alcohol	19
Avoid illegal drugs.....	19
Americans Arrested Abroad.....	20
Safety Guidelines for Participants.....	21
Recommendations to Parents/Guardians/Families	21
HEALTH ISSUES ABROAD	22
Medical Kit	23
AIDS and Other STD’s.....	23
Sanitation.....	23
MEDICAL CARE ABROAD	23
Psychological Counseling	24
Doctors and Clinics.....	24
Traveling with Medication & Pharmacies Abroad.....	24

Dental & Eye Care	25
INSURANCE	25
EMERGENCIES	25
PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST	26
HOW AND WHAT TO PACK	26
Baggage and Weight Allowance	26
Excessive Luggage	26
Electrical Appliances	27
Dress	27
Travel Accessories	28
Bring Gifts	28
Blog & Keep a Journal	28
ACADEMICS ABROAD	28
LIVING ARRANGEMENTS	28
Student Housing Agreement	29
Residence Halls	29
Apartments	29
Independent Housing	29
Homestays	29
Host Families	30
Host Family Hints	30
TRAVELING	31
Independent Travel	32
Holiday Travel	32
Hitchhiking	32
Car Rentals	32
COMMUNICATIONS	32
Mail	32
E-Mail	32
Telephones	32
PLANNING FOR YOUR TRIP HOME	33
Pre-transition Jitters	33
Travel Arrangements	33
Shipping Things Home	33
Completion of Courses	33
Housing Extensions	33
Transcripts and Diplomas	33
U.S. Customs	34
Re-entry into Your Own Culture	34
Change and Adaptation	34
Family and Friends	34
Loss of Status	34
University/College Life	35
Intensity of Readjustment	35
Ways to Cope	35
Seek Out a Support Group	36
Read about re-adjustment	36
Share Your Feelings	36
Stay in Contact with your Host Culture	36
Continue to Keep a Journal	36
Continue to Practice a Foreign Language	36
Building upon the Experience	36
Career Planning	37
RESOURCES	37
IMPORTANT UTA CONTACT INFORMATION	38

BEFORE YOU GO

The following checklist is to help prepare you for your study abroad program. Make sure to complete each item on this list prior to departing UTA. If you have any questions, contact the UTA Study Abroad office at studyabroad@uta.edu.

- Passport** – Don't forget to apply for your passport early! The processing time for passport applications can take up to 6 weeks. If you already have a passport, be sure that it is valid for 6 months after your return date to the United States. For more information visit <http://studentsabroad.state.gov>.
- Student Visas** – Some programs require you to obtain a student visa before entering the country, while other countries may require you to obtain a student visa (sometimes called a Residence Permit or Entry Clearance) once you enter the country. For more information, visit <http://studentsabroad.state.gov>.
- Post Acceptance Forms** – Once you have been accepted to study abroad through UTA, you will need to complete a set of post-acceptance forms. It is imperative that you complete all of these forms online prior to your departure.
- Course Equivalency Forms** - It is important to obtain permission for any class you may possibly take abroad prior to departure. If you find that while abroad you have not had a course approved, you will need to contact an advisor in the academic department that houses the course, as well as your study abroad advisor to get the course approved.
- Housing** – If you will be studying abroad during the spring semester and are currently living on-campus, you will need to speak with a staff member in the UTA Housing Office to early terminate your housing contract. If you plan on living on-campus upon your return from abroad, be sure to inquire about any steps you can complete before departing.
- Financial Aid** - Contact the financial aid office to determine your available financial aid for your program abroad. If you have loans, you may need to complete a form in order to transfer temporary power of attorney to a parent or guardian so your loan forms can be signed in your absence. It is also recommended that you set up direct deposit so any refunds will go into your bank account while abroad.
- Academic Advisor** - Make sure your advisor understands that you will be studying abroad. Give him/her a list of the classes for which you wish to enroll when you return. Make sure to exchange contact information with your advisor prior to your leave. You should contact him/her about half way through the semester to arrange for your submission of course requests for the following semester.
- Medical Check-up** – Get a clean bill of health before leaving the US. It is recommended that you meet with your physician, eye doctor, dentist, etc. before traveling abroad. If you take prescription medications on a regular basis, it is imperative that you speak with your physician to learn about any travel restrictions with your medication and to obtain any prescriptions needed while abroad. More information on traveling with medications can be found at <http://www.miusa.org/ncde/tipsheets/medications>.

UTA STUDY ABROAD ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

All study abroad students on all programs must be enrolled full time during their entire program abroad.

- 4 week programs – 3-4 credit hours
- 6 week programs – 5-6 credit hours
- 8-9 week programs – 6-9 credit hours
- 12+ week programs – 12 or more credit hours

Reciprocal Exchange Program Enrollment Procedures

Students participating on a UTA Reciprocal Exchange program will earn UTA resident credit in letter grade format, which will affect the UTA GPA. Students will be registered in a study abroad course labeled EXCH. The course number will reflect the level of the course and number of credit hours indicated by the advisor on the Course Approval Form. (Example: EXCH 1491.001)

Affiliated Program Enrollment Procedures

Students participating on a UTA Affiliated Study Abroad program will earn UTA resident credit in pass/fail format, with only failing grades affecting the UTA GPA. Students will be registered in a study abroad course labeled ASA. The course number will reflect the level of the course and number of credit hours indicated by the advisor on the Course Approval Form. (Example: ASA 1491.001) Students will not be charged UTA tuition for ASA courses.

More on Enrollment for Exchange and Affiliated Programs

Many programs require students to officially enroll in courses once they arrive in country. Once you have officially enrolled in all courses at your host University, you must submit the Verification of Overseas Courses Form to the UTA Study Abroad Office. The form must be submitted within 15 days from the start of your program in order to receive credit for your courses taken abroad. You can complete this form online.

Once the transcript from the host university is sent back to the UTA Study Abroad Office, your grade and course name will be entered into the UTA system. If the grade you earn at your host university is considered a failing grade, you will receive an F in the UTA system.

UTA Faculty-led Program Enrollment Procedures

Students participating on a UTA Faculty-led program will enroll in the UTA course(s) associated with the program through the student's MyMav account. Students will receive UTA resident credit in letter grade format just as they would for courses taken on UTA's campus.

Non-UTA Program Enrollment Procedures

Students who study abroad through a program not affiliated with UTA will earn transfer credit and not UTA resident credit. Students will not be enrolled at UTA for the semester they are abroad and will not be eligible for UTA financial aid while abroad. Students must work with UTA Admissions to ensure that all courses taken abroad will transfer back to UTA upon completion of the study abroad program.



GOALS FOR STUDY ABROAD PARTICIPANTS

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

We want the following for our students who study abroad through UTA:

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

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

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



CULTURE

What is Culture?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Culture Shock

Culture shock is psychological disorientation similar to feelings of frustration. However, when you feel frustrated you can usually trace the causes and begin to “attack” them. Culture shock is different from frustration because the causes are difficult if not impossible to trace. It is a feeling that grows little by little as you interact with other students, faculty, and people in the new culture. The feelings may also be the result of a combination of many elements within the new environment or the lack of elements from the old. While living in another culture is extremely exciting and rewarding, it can also be disorienting and challenging to be far away from your family, friends, support systems and cultural norms. For most people, the study abroad experience consists of a series of emotional highs and lows. However, the more you know what to expect in the host country, the closer your expectations will match reality and the less shocking your experience will be.

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

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

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

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

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

How to Respond to Culture Shock

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Learn the Local Language

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

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

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

work in your host culture. You will be studied and possibly judged by your own communication style as well.

Be Open-Minded

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

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

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



MENTAL PREPARATION FOR STUDY ABROAD

Most information sent to you deals with necessary physical preparations. We tend to bypass the mental preparation because it is not something tangible. Nonetheless, it is equally important for you to prepare mentally. Books on cross-cultural communication will help you prepare mentally. A book by *Edward T. Hall*, *The Hidden Dimension*, will give you an interesting view of other cultures as well as your own. We would also like to think that we send cultural ambassadors of the United States on our study programs. Therefore, I suggest reading *The Ugly American* by *William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick*, for a view of what we hope you are not.

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

1. What makes me unique? Include such things as background, habits, feelings, values, and beliefs.
2. What do I know about the host culture? It is wise to read as much as possible to prepare yourself on geography, politics, religion, economy, social customs, and roles of men and women to mention a few of the important issues. What makes the host culture unique? How does the host culture view Americans?
3. Why am I going overseas? (It is important for you to recognize your motives. Is it to learn the language, to travel, to investigate another culture?) What expectations do I have? Am I flexible? Do I expect everything to be accomplished the "American" way?

4. How much am I willing to risk? What changes am I willing to make in myself? Being sensitive to the culture in which you will be living cannot be overemphasized. You cannot always know what is expected of you, or exactly what you are communicating. It is not to your benefit to make judgments concerning others or to assume their actions mean the same as in your culture. You will have to discover a middle ground from which to operate. This is the intriguing challenge.

A positive attitude and considerate behavior towards the people of your host country from the very beginning will facilitate a cordial, pleasant, and memorable stay. Verbal and gestural appreciation of everything is highly recommended. Watch the locals and follow their cues to determine what is proper behavior. You will not benefit from your experiences if you are inflexible or have a "superior" attitude. Helping to furnish a climate with mutual respect and courtesy will always serve you well.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Identification

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

Passports

U.S. citizens need a valid passport to travel abroad. You should apply for a passport well in advance to avoid any conflict that may delay your departure. Make sure it is valid through at least six months beyond the end of the program. New passports cost approximately \$100; renewals cost approximately \$75. Expedited service is also available for an extra fee. Passport applications can be obtained at your local county clerk's office and most post offices. Applications can be downloaded from the State Department's Web site at http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html. You can also apply for a passport at the Arlington Passport Office: **Southeast Sub-Courthouse, 700 E. Abram St., Suite 204. Tel: 817-548-3963.** Locations of all county clerk offices in Tarrant County can be found at www.tarrantcounty.com.

Visas

A visa is a stamp or attachment in your passport that allows you to enter a specific country for a certain period of time. It may be necessary to obtain a visa to study abroad depending on the country and the proposed length of stay. Each country has particular requirements for application materials and visa processing. You can find out visa requirements by visiting www.embassy.org. This web site has a list of all foreign embassies in the US. The Study Abroad Office will assist you as needed, but it is your responsibility to apply for a visa and to inform yourself of the visa requirements for your particular country of study.

There is almost always a fee attached to the visa application, and the process can take up to several weeks. Visa application fees are not included in the cost of the program. Please do not wait until the last minute to obtain a visa. You will not be able to board your plane unless the visa is in your hands.

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

Among standard items usually required in the visa application are:

1. A current, valid passport 180 days beyond the end of the program date
2. Visa application form
3. Passport photographs
4. A visa application fee
5. A letter of acceptance from the host institution or program sponsor

*Sometimes you may also be required to provide **evidence of financial support** during the period of time you will be studying abroad and **proof of medical insurance**.

International Student Identification Card (ISIC)

The International Student ID Card is sufficient for identification purposes to obtain admission into museums, theaters, cinemas, expositions, and many other attractions abroad. Students may use this card to obtain discounts on airfare, trains, and ships as well as a document providing for very basic medical insurance coverage. Students can apply for the ISIC card through the UTA Study Abroad Office. Further information and ISIC application material can be found on the UTA Study Abroad Website

Airline Tickets

Airfare is not included in the study abroad program charges. You will need to purchase your own plane ticket in order to arrive on the date designated by The University of Texas at Arlington. When researching travel agencies and airlines, keep in mind that it is not acceptable to arrive after the starting date of your program as a means of trying to save money on airline tickets. Any expenses you incur because of early arrival are your own responsibility.

With your ISIC, you may find discounted student airfare through such websites as STA Travel (www.statravel.com) and Student Universe (www.studentuniverse.com). Other options for purchasing airline tickets would be to contact a local travel agency, research the web, or contact the airlines directly. Regardless of where you book your flight, mention that you have an ISIC. Once you have made a flight reservation, send a copy of your itinerary to the UTA Study Abroad Office.

International Cell Phones

Many companies sale cell phones that will operate overseas with the appropriate SIM card. You may want to inquire with your mobile provider if your current cellular phone will work overseas. You can also research popular international cell phones and service plans at Cellular Abroad (www.cellularabroad.com).

You may find purchasing a “pay as you go” cellular phone once you are abroad a cheaper option. Buying a cellular phone in your host country will allow you to call/text friends in-country cheaply. In most countries, you can also purchase international calling cards with local access numbers, allowing you to make a local call from your cell phone to then connect overseas.

Phone Card

The major long distance companies offer several phone card options. You may also find international calling cards that offer good rates once you arrive in your host country. If you have enrolled in a program where you will be staying with a host family, you should not make long distance calls from your host’s phone. Having a phone card is highly recommended. NOTE: These are not the same as “prepaid” phone cards that you purchase at convenience stores. These will not work abroad.

Rail Passes (*BritRail, Eurail Global pass and Eurail France-Germany Pass*)

Rail Passes can be purchased at almost any travel agency and are available to anyone under 26 years of age. The Eurail Global Pass entitles you to two months of second-class travel in 21 European countries (Britain is a notable exception. Visit www.britrail.com for information). This pass is restricted to persons living outside Europe or North Africa. First-class passes are also available at higher prices with no age restriction. Eurail France-Germany Pass also grants unlimited travel on France and Germany's many high-speed train networks.

For more information on all rail passes, and to purchase rail passes prior to your departure, visit STA Travel at www.statravel.com.

Hostelling Card

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

More information on Hostels and Hostelling Discount Cards can be found at www.hostels.com, www.hostelworld.com.



LEGAL MATTERS

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

While abroad, students are subject to the disciplinary regulations of their host university or program and bear responsibility, as well, to The University of Texas at Arlington Code of Conduct. Records of any disciplinary actions overseas become a part of a student's file at The University of Texas at Arlington and are communicated to the The University of Texas at Arlington Judicial Administrator.

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

Students studying abroad are guests of a foreign government. They can be (and some have been) expelled from the country as undesirable, even when no legal proof exists that they have broken a law.

Students who are jailed will receive the following assistance from the Program Director and the United States Government:

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

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

Power of Attorney

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

A Power of Attorney may be granted for a fixed term, or it can be left open-ended. To grant a Power of Attorney, the principal must be at least 19 years of age, of sound mind, and must grant the power voluntarily.

A general power of attorney is very broad and provides extensive powers to the person or organization you appoint as your agent. Powers that affect students studying abroad may include:

- Handling banking transactions
- Entering safety deposit boxes
- Handling transactions involving U.S. securities
- Settling Claims
- Entering into contracts
- Exercising stock rights
- Filing tax returns
- Matters involving gov't benefits

You may also have the option to grant additional power to your agent such as making gifts or making transfers to revocable ("living") trusts.

Whether a power of attorney is durable or not, you have the right to terminate or revoke it at any time as long as you are still competent. The person who holds your power of attorney must be told of your decision to terminate it. You can do this orally, but as with most things of legal significance, it's best to put it in writing.

Taxes

You may need to arrange to have tax forms sent to you (they are also usually available at a U.S. consulate or embassy) or have taxes paid for you by your power of attorney while you are out of the country. It is also possible to ask for an extension. Be sure to know what your tax responsibilities are and how to comply before you leave. The IRS web site may be a helpful resource. You can reach this web site at www.irs.com.

MONEY MATTERS

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

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

- Transportation
- Meals
- Communication
- Entertainment
- Additional Fees for Accommodation
- Personal Expenses
- Gifts and Souvenirs
- Books
- Miscellaneous Daily Expenses

Managing your finances responsibly is an important and challenging aspect of a successful and enjoyable academic experience abroad. Be wise and always keep a list of your expenses.

Traveler's Checks

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

ATM Cards

You can access money in your savings account in the US by using a bank card that is on systems such as *Cirrus* or *Plus*. Local currency is withdrawn from your US account. Before you leave, visit your bank to make sure your card and PIN number can be used to withdraw money abroad. You might want to tell your bank the dates you will be overseas. (It has not been unknown for smaller banks to cancel a card when overseas withdrawals have been made.) ATM machines can be found in almost every country. If your program is in Europe, most train stations have ATM machines, and they are almost always open. Most banks charge a US\$1-2 fee per withdrawal, but you can get a good exchange and you do not have to pay commission.

If you happen to run out of money, it is easy for someone to put more in your account in the U.S. It is important to keep track of what you're spending. If your card is lost or stolen, you may have to apply for a new one by contacting your bank at home. Also, there may be some quirks when you first try to use an ATM card, depending on your situation. Know your Pin # by the number itself and not alphabetically. You may find that other countries do not put the alphabet on their keypads. You should also determine from your bank whether the funds that you withdraw overseas will be taken from your checking or your savings account. Be sure to have other means of obtaining cash available.

Credit Cards

Even if you don't plan on using them, it's nice to have one in case of an emergency. Many places will require you to pay for medical expenses (doctor, hospitalization, etc.) with a credit card and you are responsible for getting reimbursement from your insurance company.

Credit cards are convenient for larger transactions and purchases but they do require that you have someone at home pay your monthly bill. Some credit cards can be used as a good way to receive cash advances from home. These advances are often considered a loan and you can get the advance only up to your line of credit. There will also be a higher interest rate involved. The card must be in your name (not your parents) and the advance will be in local currency, not dollars.

Transfer of Money

The transfer of money from a domestic account to an affiliate bank abroad is a time consuming and costly tactic. Try to budget your money accurately so that you will not expel yourself from sufficient funds. If you are staying overseas for an entire academic year, you may consider opening a bank account. You can obtain a list of correspondent banks in your host city from your on-site director. Give the bank, of which you are a member, the names of those authorized to send wire transfers to you.

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

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

Guarding Your Valuables

Foreigners are especially vulnerable to theft as their attention is diverted elsewhere by exploring temptations. Money belts and ID holders are recommended to safeguard any valuables you carry during travel. Many travel stores can offer you nifty devices that combine safekeeping and carrying convenience. In the case of loss or theft, make sure to have your account numbers and phone numbers recorded in an accessible place to make any emergency calls. (Note: The University of Texas at Arlington program insurance is medical only, so losses of money, tickets and other valuables are not covered. However, students with an ISIC card are covered for replacement of lost/stolen travel documents.)

SAFETY ISSUES ABROAD

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

Call Home Regularly

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

Keep up with the news

Read local newspapers and stay informed of any political unrest that may take place in your neighborhood. It is wise to be familiar with the laws of your host city. Also, read newspapers such as The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times which have good international coverage and analysis of local problems and issues. You may want to research local and national laws and practices before you depart. A good source for information is the World Wide Web.

Political Unrest

There may be an increased risk of anti-American activity during periods of political conflict that involves the U.S. and other nations. You can minimize risks and avoid obvious dangers by keeping a low profile,

and not identifying yourself by dress, speech, or behavior. Avoid large groups of other Americans, staying away from demonstrations and generally keeping out of harm's way. Stay clear of large crowds and American hangouts that may draw unwanted attention.

Stay alert

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

Take precautions

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

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment occurs in all countries. How it is dealt with varies from culture to culture. Be aware that sexual harassment laws are not the same in every country. If you receive unwanted sexual attention, you should immediately distance yourself from the individual or situation, speak up in a clear and firm manner, and, most importantly, report the incident immediately to your program administrator or housing coordinator.

Avoid walking alone at night and dress conservatively. Be aware that in some cultures, friendliness can be misconstrued as romantic interest.

Registering

Some countries require students to register with the local police department. Your site director will advise you if you need to do this. You should also register any trips out of country with the State Department or your local embassy in-country. Visit <http://studentsabroad.state.gov> for more information.

Alcohol

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

Avoid illegal drugs

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

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

Americans Arrested Abroad

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

- Once travelers leave U.S. jurisdiction, they are not covered by U.S. laws and have no U.S. Constitutional rights abroad
- Few foreign countries provide trial by jury
- Pretrial detention may involve months of confinement in primitive prison conditions
- Trials frequently involve lengthy delays or postponements and are conducted in the language of the foreign country

What U.S. consular officers abroad can do:

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

What U.S. consular officers abroad cannot do:

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

The University of Texas at Arlington Generally:

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

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

Safety Guidelines for Participants

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

Participants should:

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

Recommendations to Parents/Guardians/Families

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

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

HEALTH ISSUES ABROAD

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

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

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

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

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

***Familiarize yourself with the US State Department's brochure for Medical Information for Americans Abroad before departing the United States at http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/brochures/brochures_1215.html.**

Medical Kit

It is important to bring a medical kit so that you have access to supplies that you may need suddenly. Here is a list of items you should include in your kit:

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

Be sure to research any country specific travel restrictions before packing your medical kit. For example, it is illegal to bring into Japan some over-the-counter medications commonly used in the United States, such as some allergy medications (<http://japan.usembassy.gov/e/acs/tacs-medimport.html>).

AIDS and Other STD's

AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) such as gonorrhea, syphilis, and herpes continue to pose health risks for travelers in any country. Knowing this and taking precautions, such as refraining from unprotected sex and other practices that carry the risk of infection, is the only way to ensure protection.

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

Sanitation

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

MEDICAL CARE ABROAD

At some point during your time abroad, you may become ill. It will probably be something simple, without complications and due to changes in food and water, insufficient sleep, or stress of travel. It is essential that you give yourself time to adapt. Jet lag, a new language, exotic foods, registration, beginning classes, and even changes in the weather can take their toll. Use the same stress-relief techniques you use at home—exercise, meditation, reading, etc. Prolonged periods of stress can be quite harmful and hinder your adjustment and health.

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

Further, it is wise to immediately inquire about personal security issues when you go abroad. Lifestyles may be very different from home. This is true even in cultures that seem relatively similar to the United States. Ask about safety issues such as local transportation, traffic patterns, swimming practices at regional beaches, and use of electrical appliances. Ask about security issues such as neighborhood or building security, personal security during evenings or other outings, and culture-specific behavior or security concerns related to gender. You cannot assume that the experiences and practices you took for granted at home will be accepted in your host country. If you are not sure about something, whether it is a simple question about where a service can be found, or a more complex matter, such as expectations about friendship and dating, ask someone you trust.

Psychological Counseling

Most students find study abroad a period of tremendous personal growth in such areas as self-esteem, and independence. Very few experience serious personal problems beyond the usual cultural adjustment and some homesickness, yet some students may experience serious difficulties. These are usually students who have brought ongoing emotional or mental health issues with them, from home.

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

Should you need professional services abroad, contact your program staff for a referral. With your authorization, a licensed psychologist abroad can request in writing any records that may be on file at your college or university.

Doctors and Clinics

Selected doctors may provide bilingual medical care in your particular host country. Physicians overseas may offer full medical checkups, complete laboratory service, and will make arrangements for hospitalization if necessary. You should request a list of doctors from the On-site director at orientation.

Through your membership in International SOS, you can also obtain information about English speaking doctors in or near the city you are studying. You can find local contact information for International SOS in your country on their website at www.internationalsos.com.

Traveling with Medication & Pharmacies Abroad

If you need to purchase a prescription, pharmacies are abundant and easily accessible in most countries, but not all. If possible, try to bring an adequate supply of any prescribed drug you will need during your stay, as not all medicines will be available. Bring prescription drugs in their original containers. You should also bring along an additional prescription written in the host country's native language, as well as the chemical name for your prescription (drug brands differ from country to country) should you lose your medicine and need to replace it. It is simplest to bring your own emergency medicines for headaches, colds, coughs, stomach aches, hay fever, diarrhea, and so on.

It is important to know and understand any restrictions on medications you can bring into the country you are studying. Visit the embassy website for your country (www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/dpl/32122.htm) to determine which medications are restricted. It is also important to know if any medications you

currently take on a regular basis are unavailable overseas (for example, ADD/ADHD medications may not be readily available in many countries abroad). Discuss this with your physician before departing the United States. For more information on traveling abroad with medication, visit www.miusa.org/ncde/tipsheets/medications.

Dental & Eye Care

Your Resident Director should be able to recommend good dentists and optometrists upon request.

A Few additional Notes

In the unlikely but possible cases of rape, pregnancy, venereal disease or other problems, please remember that the Resident Director is prepared to deal with these situations and will offer you the appropriate advice.

INSURANCE

All students participating on a UTA study abroad program must purchase travel insurance that meets or exceeds the minimum coverage provided by the University of Texas Study Abroad Health Insurance Plan. The minimum level of coverage includes:

- Medical - \$100,000.00
- Medical Evacuation - \$10,000.00
- Repatriation of Remains - \$7,500.00

Information on the University of Texas Study Abroad Health Insurance Plan will be provided to you at the mandatory pre-departure orientation. If you choose to enroll in the UTA Insurance Plan, the cost is \$44 per month and is available in calendar month coverage periods. If you are covered by a policy other than the UTA Insurance Plan, find out the terms of the coverage as well as the procedures for reimbursement.

Students who purchase an International Student Identity Card (ISIC) will also be covered by the minimal health insurance provided by the ISIC card. While the Basic ISIC plan does not meet the UTA requirement, students may upgrade to the Premium ISIC card which does meet this minimum requirement. The ISIC Premium card costs \$72 and is valid for one year. More information on the ISIC coverage can be found at www.myisic.com.

Some study abroad programs offer a level of health insurance coverage, which may provide immediate health care without the need for reimbursement. If you elect such a policy, you are advised to maintain the coverage you carry in the U.S. because double coverage will ensure that there is no lapse of coverage when one policy ends and the other begins.

EMERGENCIES

The best advice for emergencies is to use your best judgment. In an emergency, you will first want to contact the Resident Director, then decide from there if you feel that the UTA Study Abroad Office should be contacted. For instance, if your wallet gets stolen, you should IMMEDIATELY cancel your credit cards and file a report with the local police if possible. Then work on getting your documents replaced. For medical situations, you will have been informed of local clinics and doctors during

orientation. You may also ask your host family for any suggestions as they may have dealt with a similar situation with a previous student.

The UTA Study Abroad Office remains available to you in an emergency 24 hours a day. We can be reached Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm by calling 001-817-272-1120. If you need immediate assistance outside of office hours, please call the UTA Police at 001-817-272-3003, and they will notify the Study Abroad Staff.

PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

- Passport
- Visa
- Obtain signatures on Course Equivalency Form
- Speak with Financial Aid regarding application of aid package for the program overseas and possibly obtaining forms for next year (if necessary) while overseas
- Purchase travel insurance & enroll with International SOS
- Purchase your ISIC card through the UTA Study Abroad Office if desired
- Make arrangements with academic advisor(s) to register for classes for the next term
- Purchase Eurail or country pass if desired
- Obtain money belt or something of the like
- Give parents and friends your address overseas
- Return completed Post-acceptance Forms to UTA Study Abroad Office
- If you will be away for your final winter semester, inform the Registrar if you will be attending commencement
- Visit a physician for physical, immunization advice, and necessary information for traveling abroad with medications

HOW AND WHAT TO PACK

Baggage and Weight Allowance

Since policies vary, contact your airline to find out what specific regulations apply to you. Most airlines operate on the cubic measurement system and not on the weight system, but as a general rule of thumb, suitcases should not weigh more than 65 lbs. Some airlines now charge for checked luggage, so be sure to know your airlines policies before arriving at the airport.

Excessive Luggage

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

It is wise to bring anything really expensive with you in your own carry on baggage. Valuable cameras, radios, watches, tape recorders, jewelry, etc. should be registered with the Customs Office before departure from the U.S. Duty may be assessed on unregistered items by American authorities when you return home. Students wishing advance information should read the US Department of Homeland Security's "Know Before You Go" website at www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/kbyg.

Electrical Appliances

Bring as few electrical items as possible. The electrical system may be different from the US system in your host country. If you want to use a hair dryer or an iron, for example, you will need a very powerful transformer as well as an adapter for several foreign plugs. Many transformers bought in the US will not work overseas and it is nearly impossible to find one in a foreign country. It is cheaper in the long run to buy a small blow dryer and to bring a radio or CD player that runs on batteries. Dual-voltage blow dryers are available at reasonable prices in many discount stores in the U.S., but it can be difficult to find an adapter for the plug. Bring a battery-powered or windup alarm clock, not an electric one. Electricity is very expensive, and extensive use can cause problems with host-families. For information on electrical systems in various countries, refer to the web site <http://kropla.com/electric2.htm>.

A GOOD PRINCIPLE TO FOLLOW: Never take anything with you overseas that would be hard to get along without if it is lost, stolen, or damaged. Check with your computer manufacturer's customer service department to obtain a transformer of quality. Do not rely on discount electronic shops for expert advice. Remember, your host family may not want you to use your computer for long periods because of the cost of electricity. Alternative: cyber cafes are very common in most countries.

Dress

Go for comfort. No matter how hard we try to “fit in,” most of us will still stick out as foreigners. You might as well be comfortable. Dress for the climate, but do not be too audacious. In some parts of the world you will not feel comfortable in articles of clothing such as shorts or revealing tops. You may also not be allowed to enter some public buildings or tourist attractions wearing certain garments. It is wise to expect the unexpected in regards to the weather. You should bring an umbrella or raincoat and some clothes that you can layer for warmth. This way, you can easily remove or add clothing when the temperature changes during the day. Remember that some cultures do not change their clothes as often as Americans do and the weather varies less from season to season than in most parts of the U.S. Also, closet space is limited, so the fewer articles of clothing, the better. In regards to more formal wear, wrinkle-resistant and permanent press clothing is ideal, as dry cleaning can be very expensive. Do your research—find out about your host country’s “style” before you go.

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

Other travel essentials that should be considered are:

- Scarves, gloves and hats for dealing with variations in the weather
- Comfortable and versatile shoes – you will probably walk more abroad than you ever do in Texas!
- Bathrobe - especially since bathrooms are not always located in each person’s room

Depending on the program, bed sheets, pillowcases, blankets, and hand towels may be furnished for you. However, if you plan to travel, bring a small towel to take with you.

Travel Accessories

If you plan on traveling at all within the host country or neighboring countries, guidebooks like LONLEY PLANET, BERKELEY'S, or the ROUGH GUIDES are valuable resources and can be purchased in most bookstores. You might want to purchase a money belt or hidden pocket for money and important documents. The best bet for extensive travel is a backpack. Don't skimp or you'll regret it when it rips or breaks later. Internal frames for backpacks are good. Make sure to buy the size you'll need and the size you can carry, but no larger. If you plan on camping your way around Europe, you'll obviously need a larger bag than someone who will stay in hostels. Stores such as REI have staff who can help you choose the right backpack for your body type and desired activity.

Bring Gifts

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

Blog & Keep a Journal

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

If you want to share your experience with family, friends, and the world, you can activate your Journal through the UTA Study Abroad website. This is a great way to show other UTA students what life is really like studying abroad. Log onto the UTA Study Abroad website to learn about activating and using your Journal while abroad.



ACADEMICS ABROAD

The essence of study abroad is an extensive education within and out of the classroom. Formal classes should take precedence during your overseas experience. Though the classroom is a structured setting, the methods of teaching and ideas presented in a foreign system can be valuable educational tools. Generally speaking, overseas curriculums entail more student initiative than those in the US. Homework per se is limited; therefore, you must keep up with the material covered by the professor. Keep in mind that you must maintain a full-time student status throughout your entire program (typically 12 credits for a semester-long program and 3-6 for a summer program), and you are also subject to the attendance policy of your host university.



LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Living arrangements vary by program, but may consist of home-stays, living in apartments, independent housing or residence halls. Some programs include a certain number of meals per day if the student lives with a host family. Other programs are "self-catered." Refer to your host institution's website for more specific information on options available for each program.

Student Housing Agreement

All students participating in a UTA Study Abroad program must accept responsibility for any damage or debts they may incur during their stay. Students must make an effort to adjust to the customs of the host family and agree to try to cooperatively resolve any conflicts that may arise on their own. If a student has tried to resolve any conflict on their own without success, then they should contact their on-site director for guidance in resolving the situation.

Students can request a change in housing if they are dissatisfied with their current living situation. However, housing types cannot typically be changed. This means that a student cannot request to be changed from a host family to an apartment. Changes to housing must be made to the same housing type, i.e. from apartment to apartment or from host family to host family.

All housing is on a first-come, first-served basis (based on your acceptance into the program). Competition for certain categories of housing is quite intense. This is why you should apply for housing with your host institution as soon as possible. There can be no guarantee that you will actually be placed into the housing you prefer, but the Resident Director will make the best possible effort to match your request.

Residence Halls

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

Apartments

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

Independent Housing

Some students choose to provide their own housing while overseas, usually because they already have relatives or friends living in their host country. Some programs that do not offer residence halls or host families may provide assistance in locating independent housing. Please remember that making these arrangements can be difficult and expensive and may require you arriving in your host country several weeks early in order to secure housing. If you intend on securing your own housing, please discuss this with your host institution before arriving in country.

Homestays

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

Your host family's apartment or house may be very different than what you are accustomed to in the U.S. For instance, the home may have only one bathroom shared by all family members, rooms may be

smaller and fewer, and hot water may be carefully rationed. Try not to form preconceived notions about what to expect and be open to the situation in which you are placed.

Most students are paying guests, sharing some or all meals with their host family. No refunds can be given for meals not taken or while travelling. Details of the number of meals included in a homestay should be provided by your host institution or program provider.

Host Families

Host families are personally interviewed and students are assigned to their homes, taking into consideration the various preferences stated by the students, within the limits of the kind of families available. Roommates can sometimes be arranged, but students from the same country and perhaps the same school must keep in mind that the purpose of living and studying in a foreign country is to be immersed in as much of the culture as possible and to build communication skills in the language. To accomplish this goal, the student must discipline him/herself to practice the foreign language even when in the same home with other English speakers.

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

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

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

Host Family Hints

Telephones

Phone service can be very expensive outside of the United States, thus international and local telephone calls may not be made from the home without the prior permission of the host each and every time a call is made. Inquire whether you may receive phone calls at your residence. Please remember the time difference between your host country and the US when making and receiving phone calls.

Some host families may provide a separate phone line for students; however, this is rare. Some students have found it economical and convenient to purchase cell phones while overseas for purpose of any emergencies that may arise or for arranging meetings with friends while on the move.

Water and Electricity

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

Food

Students with particular eating habits (for example, vegetarian or kosher) may prefer a housing option with independent cooking arrangements, although some families may offer an appropriate meal situation. Be sure to notify your host institution or program provider of any dietary restrictions so they can try to place you in the homestay situation you may prefer, though such placements may not be guaranteed.

Laundry

In a homestay, ask your host about how to do your laundry and the procedures to follow. You should be able to do your laundry inside of the house, but you may be limited to a specific number of loads per week. If this is the case, alternate weeks doing darks and whites.

Absences (overnight or mealtime)

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



TRAVELING

Traveling is encouraged and has proved to be an essential part of a student's time spent overseas. You will frequently be using public transportation such as buses, trains, metros, and taxis, all of which are rather practical and inexpensive modes of traveling. Keep in mind, however, that there are various safety issues that you should be aware of.

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

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

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

Independent Travel

Travel on weekends should not interfere with regular attendance of classes. It is recommended that you focus your travel during the term/semester to nearby locations. When travelling to faraway destinations, the majority of your time is spent on the train and searching for lodging with little time left to see the sights. Save your more distant sightseeing trips for before or after the program or during vacations. This is also a much better time to travel with visiting family and friends.

Holiday Travel

Be careful when planning vacations over holidays. Check the countries' holiday calendar from a tourist agency if at all possible. Many monuments and places of interest may be closed on holidays.

Hitchhiking

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

Car Rentals

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



COMMUNICATIONS

Mail

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

E-Mail

You may or may not have direct email access in your host program. Many countries have independent communication offices or internet cafes in larger cities where you can make phone calls and use e-mail. Many Universities may also provide internet service on campus and in residence halls. If you are considering taking a laptop abroad with you, you may consider checking with your host institution concerning internet access before you depart.

Telephones

Phone service and telephone access is not always as reliable or common as many American students might expect. As not all residence halls will have telephones and many host families restrict phone access, again, it is essential that you have a phone card or cell phone to make any calls to home. Specific instructions for making calls should be provided by the program of your in-country orientation.

PLANNING FOR YOUR TRIP HOME

Pre-transition Jitters

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

Travel Arrangements

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

Shipping Things Home

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

Books can be shipped home very inexpensively. Pack them in boxes weighing no more than five kilos and they will go at a special, low rate from the post office. Notebooks and other non-bound, non-printed materials do not qualify as books. The post office sells boxes that are almost indestructible and require no tape. They range in price according to size.

Completion of Courses

You are responsible for completing any courses in which you are enrolled and are expected to take the exams scheduled for your courses if you wish to receive credit for them. Failure to do so will adversely affect your grades, as in any university course in the U.S. Final exam dates will be announced early in the term and usually cannot be modified.

Housing Extensions

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

Transcripts and Diplomas

All transcripts should be sent directly to the UTA Study Abroad Office at the completion of your program abroad and not to the UTA Admissions Office. Please inform your host institution or program provider to send your final transcripts to:

Office of International Education
The University of Texas at Arlington
Box 19028
1022 UTA Blvd
Arlington, TX 76019-0028

U.S. Customs

Upon returning home, you must declare all articles acquired overseas to the officials of U.S Customs. The U.S. Embassy provides booklets that outline the most up-to-date customs guidelines. You may refer to the web site at www.customs.treas.gov to obtain a pamphlet of “know before you go” information.

Re-entry into Your Own Culture

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

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

Change and Adaptation

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

Family and Friends

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

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

Loss of Status

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

University/College Life

The experience of learning within a different education system and cultural environment has a liberating and confidence-building effect. The academic independence that you build overseas will give you more motivation to increase your standard level of achievements as well as help you to appreciate new perspectives on particular subjects.

For those study abroad participants who return directly to your university upon return from overseas, you may find life on campus restrictive and unexciting at first. However, you will be able to add new dimensions to the classroom by sharing your study abroad experience-- the rewards from this can be quite gratifying.

Intensity of Readjustment

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

If the student voluntarily desires to return home, he or she will have more motivation to re-integrate. Likewise, if a student is expecting the reentry in advance and can mentally prepare for the return, he or she will more easily cope during the transition. Students will find it less difficult to manage the move back home if they have had any previous reentry experience and if the length of their stay does not surpass the amount of time it takes to adapt to their surroundings.

The degree of interaction with the overseas culture will have a tremendous effect on the level of readjustment to the home environment. The more involved you become in the local culture, the harder it may be to leave it behind. However, if you stay in touch with your home culture as much as possible while overseas in order to familiarize yourself with the various changes that take place in the U.S, reentry will be less stressful on you because you will have more realistic expectations upon return. Above all, the more familiar and supportive the reentry involvement, the better the student will be capable of handling a healthy re-entry.

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

Even the most aware individual can not avoid reverse culture shock. The returnee should make an effort to fathom the feelings of re-acculturation. Ideally, the student should be calm and capable of focusing on what he or she can do to ease the transition process, look for ways to assimilate the host cultural experience, and translate it so that family and colleagues can understand and share the benefits as well.

Ways to Cope

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

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

Seek Out a Support Group

Being able to share common concerns and coping strategies with other recent or more established returnees may help reduce the frustration, and sense of helplessness that can accompany re-entry. Students who return to places where few people have studied abroad may feel very alone since there is no one with whom they can share their experience. It helps to locate even one other person with whom you can discuss the sensation of re-culture shock. Becoming a UTA Study Abroad Ambassador is one way to interact with other recently returned study abroad students who are probably just as eager to share their stories from abroad as you are. You can apply to be a Study Abroad Ambassador through the UTA Study Abroad website at www.uta.edu/oie/studyabroad.

Read about re-adjustment

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

Share Your Feelings

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

Stay in Contact with your Host Culture

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

Continue to Keep a Journal

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

Continue to Practice a Foreign Language

Another coping strategy is to take an advanced course in the foreign language that interests you. However, if you cannot fit this into your class schedule, then think about becoming a conversation partner with an international student at UTA. Think about starting a language table, whereby a group of students interested in improving foreign language skills in a specific language can meet one to three times a week during either lunch or dinner. This will foster common interests in a specific language and/or a specific region of the world.

Building upon the Experience

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

host for international students on campus or perhaps a tutor for those who are having a hard time adapting to the academic life in the U.S.

Career Planning

As you have completed one important phase of your life and are pondering about ways to put your next plan into action, allow the influence of your overseas experience to guide you in a positive direction. It is important to develop goals for yourself, which allow you to make progress rather than to regress. It is common for students to feel as if they have gone 10 steps forward during their overseas experience, and now are going 11 steps backward once they return to college. Continue to challenge yourself in order to ensure a fulfilling future. Do not let your new perceptions block the continuous learning process.

There are many routes you can take to put to use your cross-cultural adaptation skills and language proficiency that you have acquired overseas. Take advantage of the full range of services offered by the UTA Study Abroad Office and the UTA Career Services Office during your job hunt upon return. Look into international companies that have subsidiary offices located abroad. Perhaps they may do some recruiting on campus. You may also inquire about long or short term work abroad resources through the UTA Study Abroad Office that will allow you to return overseas immediately after graduation. If you participated in an internship overseas or encountered any professionals that will be valuable to your job search, make sure to keep in contact with them so that you may use them as successful networking sources. If you are adamant about returning overseas, you may want to check into taking the TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) exam which would grant you ample opportunities to teach abroad and learn about different cultures.

If you plan to enter directly into graduate school after your 4-year degree, there are many international programs available to you that may permit you to study abroad part-time as you are working towards your degree. Pursuing fellowships and scholarships are some other options that could give you that chance to once again step on foreign soil.



RESOURCES

The U.S. State Department: <http://travel.state.gov>

U.S. Students Abroad: <http://studentsabroad.state.gov>

Embassies and Consulates: www.embassyworld.com

Center for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov

Traveling with Medication: www.miusa.org/ncde/tipsheets/medications

International SOS: www.internationalsos.com

STA Travel: www.statravel.com

Hostelling International: www.hihostels.com

Lonely Planet: www.lonelyplanet.com

Glimpse: <http://glimpse.org>

ISIC: www.isic.org



IMPORTANT UTA CONTACT INFORMATION

DEPARTMENT	WEBSITE	EMAIL	PHONE
UTA Study Abroad	www.uta.edu/oie	studyabroad@uta.edu	817.272.1120 or x2355
→Blake Hart		bhart@uta.edu	817.272.1120
→Kelsi Cavazos		kelsi@uta.edu	817.272.1120
→Dr. Judy Young		jyoung@uta.edu	817.272.2355
UTA Police Dept	http://policy.uta.edu/index.php?navid=17492	policedepartment@uta.edu	Emergency: 817.272.3003 Non-Emer: 817.272.3381
UTA Housing	www2.uta.edu/housing	housing@uta.edu	817.272.2791
→Centennial Court	www.campushousing.com/uta	utahousing@campushousing.com	817.436.4800
UTA Financial Aid	www3.uta.edu/fao	fao@uta.edu	817.272.2561
UTA Registrar	www3.uta.edu/registrar	records@uta.edu	817.272.3372

IMPORTANT PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

It is important to keep contact information for your study abroad program with you as you travel in case of emergencies, travel delays, or in the event you need help finding your destination upon arrive in country. Make note of both US and in-country contact information for your program if available.

In-Country Contact: _____ E-mail: _____

In-Country Phone #: _____ U.S. Phone #: _____

University/Housing Address: _____

IMPORTANT EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

US Department of State Overseas Citizens Services (<http://studentsabroad.state.gov>)

Phone from inside the US: 888.407.4747

Phone from outside the US: +202.501.4444

E-mail: studentsabroad@state.gov

→Contact the Overseas Citizens Services in the case of an emergency abroad. The Overseas Citizens Office can assist you in the event that you are arrested or detained abroad, are robbed, or if you need to report the death or disappearance of a fellow US citizen abroad.

US Embassies, Consulates, & Diplomatic Missions (www.usembassy.gov)

→US consular personnel are at US Embassies and Consulates abroad and in the US 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Visit the list of US Embassies abroad and know the location of your nearest US Embassy or Consulate in the event of an emergency.

Embassy Location: _____ Phone # _____