Read this handbook carefully and take it abroad with you.

INTERNATIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

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Boise ID, 83725-1145
Tel: (208) 426-2630
Email: studyabroad@boisestate.edu
Take this book abroad with you.

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Introduction

Congratulations on your participation in a study abroad program! We at International Learning Opportunities are pleased that you have chosen to take part in what will surely be one of the most memorable times of your lives. We hope that your experience abroad will be both academically and personally enriching and that you will gain new insights into the world we live in.

This is the constantly changing edition of this handbook for Boise State students. Please read it thoroughly. We have attempted to be comprehensive, but invariably some information may have been overlooked. Talk to people who have been abroad, read travel guides, talk to Boise State’s international students, and read about the country you are visiting. This should help you obtain other information we may have missed. Also, be sure to talk to us when you return, we would love to hear your stories and obtain your insights for future editions of this handbook!

"When you travel, remember that a foreign country is not designed to make you comfortable. It is designed to make its own people comfortable." - Clifton Fadiman
Experiences of great intensity- a special dream, a period of concentrated work, a sudden absorption, maybe a love affair--have in common that they are unusually real while they last. Yet, it is precisely this quality which so easily vanishes. Afterwards, how unreal it all seems! We lost ourselves in that dazzling fugue whose importance to us we do not doubt and yet which is now so imaginary. Time which seemed not measurable, so endless, suddenly lapses back into the diurnal and leaves behind its disquiet and longing for lost intensity. Yet there does remain knowledge, like the pleasurable stiffness in the muscles after a previous day’s unaccustomed exercise, to prove that something occurred. Something did after all take place to tax the muscles of the mind. For an unmeasurable time one went somewhere extraordinary and loved extraordinarily. One has been a traveler; and it is not a traveler's feet which ache. -James Hamilton Patterson
Study Abroad Checklist

- Work on Course Approval Form (CAF)
  - Meet with your academic advisor (they will help you pick courses).
  - Check the pre-approved courses in the course finder database here: http://international.boisestate.edu/academic-information/course-finder/
    (this will save you time)
  - Get approval signatures for every class taken at host school by Boise State department chairs

- Return CAF to International Learning Opportunities by deadline.

- Program Agreement form (read, sign and return to ILO).

- Confidential Health History form (read, sign and return to ILO).

- Meet with your physician to discuss health issues while you are abroad.

- Attend mandatory study abroad orientation.

- Be sure your financial aid budget has been updated for study abroad costs with the Financial Aid Office.

- Pay all fines and fees owed to Boise State. All students will be billed for a study abroad administration fee. This fee is non-refundable once charged. Financial Aid will cover this fee.

- Keep mailing and permanent addresses current on My Boise State account.

- Remember to check your Boise State student email account for important information.

- Go abroad, have fun, take photos (USAC pays $50 for photos they publish in the catalog. No alcohol in photos. They also pay for published articles you write that mention USAC! And we have our own photo contest at ILO. The winners get some nice prizes, so submit!)
Preparing to go abroad
Passports
This is the fun part! You can’t go anywhere until you have your passport. All US citizens need a passport to travel to any foreign country, including Mexico and Canada.

What is a passport? A passport is the official documentation of your United States citizenship. You should obtain your passport early.

Where can I get the passport forms? Passport acceptance facilities stock passport forms. Passport forms can also be downloaded from the Internet at: http://travel.state.gov/passport/.

National Passport Information Center: This is the only official U.S. Government website for passport information. If you have a travel emergency, please call the National Passport Information Center to speak to a Customer Service Representative. Telephone Number: 1-877-4USA-PPT (1-877-487-2778) (TDD/TTY: 1-888-874-7793). Customer Service Representatives and Operators for TDD/TTY are available Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. to midnight, Eastern Time, excluding federal holidays.

Automated information available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you have a travel emergency, please call the Center to speak with a customer service representative. Do not e-mail. You may also check for the status of your application on-line.

Local Passport Acceptance Facilities:

International Learning Opportunities Office
Simplot Micron Technology Center Room 101
208-426-2630

Passports are processed by appointment only! Call 208-426-2630 to schedule an appointment. Make sure to be on time. Late appointments will be rescheduled!

To Apply for a Passport You Will Need:

- An official (certified copy) of your birth certificate with the date of registration, or the US naturalization papers signifying US citizenship. If you are renewing your passport, the current passport will suffice.
- A photocopy of your birth certificate or old passport
- A photo identification (i.e. Driver’s License)
- A photocopy of the back and front of your photo identification
- One recent 2x2 passport photos (front-facing, head and shoulders), capable of withstanding 200 degrees Fahrenheit. Snapshots and vending machine photos are not acceptable. Passport photos are available at the International Learning Office ($5 for BSU students, $15 for non-students), the Main Post Office ($12), Costco and Kinko’s, etc.
Two checks or money orders. One will be made out to US Department of State (the passport fee is $110); the other will be made out to the passport acceptance facility (the execution fee is $25). If you must have your passport within three weeks you will need to pay an additional fee of $60 and provide proof of the need for this service.

Note: It takes 6-12 weeks to receive your passport. It can take longer during vacation periods. Apply well before your departure date.

Visas

In most cases you will need a visa for your study abroad program. What is a visa? A visa is official permission from a government to enter their country. It is usually a stamp in your passport from the Consulate General or Embassy of the country you will enter. It can take a significant amount of time to obtain a visa, depending on the country you wish to enter. You may have to send your passport to the Consulate General or Embassy to receive the visa. Information may be obtained at: http://travel.state.gov/foreignentryreqs.html.

Visa requirements vary. However, typically you will need the following to apply for a student visa. Please read everything the consulate requires and send them exactly, what they request. This is only an example of what the consulate might ask for; some may require more documents.

- Visa application (usually at the consulate’s website, but you might have to call and request this)
- Photos
- Visa application fee (money order)
- Program acceptance letter
- Proof of financial support (i.e. financial aid award letter)
- Proof of insurance
- Proof of housing (usually written in the acceptance letter)
- Passport

You can usually apply by mail for your visa, you will usually express mail all of the documents and your passport to the consulate and you will enclose a pre-paid self-addressed express envelope. This allows the consulate to return your documents. In certain cases you may be required to apply in person to apply for a visa, China, Spain, France and Brazil are examples. You will need to appear in person for your Italian or French visa. You will probably need to use a visa expediting service for your Chinese or Brazilian student visa.

Housing Options

You will typically have three options available to you while you are living abroad: living with a family, living in a residence hall, or living in an apartment. Standards of living vary by country. Most buildings are much older than any building in the United States. You should consider your goals before making a housing choice. There are pros and cons to every option.
Living with a Family

✓ Accept differences between your host family and your family at home with an open mind. There will be an adjustment period, but try to get involved in their lives and to contribute to the household.
✓ A small gift for your family is a nice gesture. Ideas: US calendars, chocolate, small toys for the children (not too noisy though).
✓ Check with your family before giving out their phone number, address, or inviting guests over.
✓ If you smoke, check with the family regarding rules for smoking in the house. If you are a non-smoker, be aware that smoking is often more common in other countries than it is here.
✓ Use electricity and hot water conservatively. Utility costs are much more expensive abroad.
✓ Communicate your travel plans with your host family, especially if you are going to miss meals.
✓ If you have concerns about your host family, talk to your on-site resident director.

Residence Halls/Student Apartments

✓ Accept differences between you and your roommates with an open mind.
✓ If you smoke, discuss rules for smoking with your roommates. Non-smokers should be aware that more people smoke abroad than in the US and some students pick up the habit while they are overseas.
✓ Consider establishing rules for overnight visitors, cleaning, etc., before it becomes an issue.
✓ Be considerate of others and communicate respectfully when differences occur.

Academic Information

Course Registration and Transfer of Credit

You will receive a Course Approval Form (CAF) from our office. This form serves two functions. First, it enrolls you in the 13 credit “placeholder” study abroad course (INTPRGM 400 or INTPRG 401). This course is dropped and your actual classes are added upon your return from overseas. Second, it facilitates the posting of your study abroad credits. You must return the Course Approval form to International Learning Opportunities (ILO) before the last day of classes at the end of the semester. We cannot enroll you in the INTPRG courses or disburse your financial aid until we receive this form.

❖ If you are paying a program provider (i.e. USAC). You will be enrolled in INTPRGM 400. Your fees will be zeroed out, and your aid will be sent directly to you, you will then need to make arrangements to pay the provider.

❖ If you are on a direct exchange. You will be enrolled in INTPRM 401. You will pay Boise State by the fee payment deadline. Any excess funds will be sent directly to you.

Please follow these steps to obtain course approvals on the Course Approval form:
Steps to Obtain Course Approvals

Step One: Consult the database of pre-approved courses on our website at http://international.boisestate.edu/academic-information/course-finder/ to see whether any of the courses you intend to take have been pre-approved. This will tell you how the courses will be posted to your student record. You should do this before you talk to your advisor. This will save you some time.

Step Two: Take the Course Approval form to your academic advisor and discuss the courses you wish to take while studying abroad. Bring course descriptions with you. Have the chair of the department offering the course sign your form and indicate the course equivalencies. If they feel the course is an elective then please have them indicate whether they feel it is an upper or lower division elective course. This is very important.

Step Three: You must turn in the Course Approval Form no later than the deadlines indicated on the forms with the appropriate signatures.

Step Four: Once you return from your study abroad program, if the courses you took changed from what you intended to take, you should contact your academic advisor immediately to obtain new course approvals. Turn the revised Course Approval Form into the Office of International Learning Opportunities.

Be advised that the posting of the credits is a complicated process and it cannot be done immediately upon your return. For certain programs, we often do not receive the grades until two to four months after your return to the United States. If you are planning on transferring from Boise State immediately upon your return from a study abroad program, you must notify us in writing prior to departure from the United States. In addition, you must have a completed and signed Course Approval Form on file. Expect a two to four month waiting period for some grades, particularly with the USAC partnership programs and the direct exchanges. We cannot speed up this process.

Failure to obtain approvals for all courses taken abroad can cause delays with financial aid for the following semester. If your courses changed, do not delay in obtaining approvals upon your return to the States.

Grading

All study abroad courses are assigned letter grades unless other arrangements are made with the department offering the class. Be advised that pass/fail credits probably will not apply toward your degree requirements. All grades will be calculated into your GPA and posted on your Boise State record. If you study in a country that uses a different grading scale, ILO will use the conversion scales established by the World Education Service (WES) to determine equivalencies.

ECTS credits

As a general rule if you study in an academic system with European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits, a full course load is considered 60 ECTS credits in an academic year. So, for a semester you would take 30 ECTS credits. ECTS credits generally equate to half the number of US credits. So, 30 ECTS credits equals approximately 15 US semester credits.
Before you leave the United States

You must pay all fees and fines owed to Boise State before you leave the United States. This includes library fines, parking fees, lab fees etc. If these fees are not paid or if you owe the university any other monies, this will prevent us from enrolling you in the INTPRG class. This in turn will prevent your financial aid from being disbursed. Be sure to consult your student account before you leave the United States to see if you owe Boise State University any fees.

Important Note for Those Studying in USAC Partnership Programs or Direct Exchanges

Students studying abroad in the following programs or countries: Australia (all sites), Denmark, the United Kingdom (all sites), Germany (Saarbrucken), France (Lyon and Nancy), Ghana, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Scotland, Sweden, and Turkey must pay special attention to the following:

The institutions you will attend may have different academic structures than you are accustomed to at Boise State. You may be required to do more outside reading and your entire grade for your course may be based upon a final written paper or final examination. You must sit for examinations as required by your host institution.

Be aware that you are responsible for obtaining course approvals. It may be difficult to have your courses pre-approved by Boise State faculty prior to your departure. Some of the institutions do not have course descriptions available prior to arrival. This is due to the academic structure of your host institution. Therefore, you have the following options to facilitate your credit posting:

- **Option One:** Email course descriptions and syllabi to your advisors while you are abroad; have them email their approval to Sara Dart, International Learning Opportunities, saradart@boisestate.edu.

- **Option Two:** Save all your course materials, then upon your return, pick up a copy of the Course Approval Form, bring it to your advisor with your course materials, and discuss the courses you took while abroad with your advisor. Work out equivalencies with the relevant departments and your advisors.

Be sure you save your course materials until after your grades have been posted to the Boise State system.

**ATTENTION: NON USAC STUDENTS!**

If you are participating in a program such as AIFS, CIEE, ISA, CEA, etc. You must be sure that your grades are sent to the office of International Learning Opportunities. This is the ONLY office to send these grades to do not send them to Admissions.

Please be sure your grades are sent to:

Corrine M. Henke  
Boise State University  
International Learning Opportunities  
1910 University Drive  
Boise, ID 83725-1145  
USA
Failure to send the grades to our office will result in the incorrect posting of your classes.

All Students: After you return (posting of credits)
If you took different courses abroad from those you indicated you would take on your Course Approval Form, you must come to our office and pick up another form when you return. You must have those courses approved for Boise State credit as you did prior to departure.

The Office of International Learning Opportunities highly recommends that students bring all of their course materials back to the US with them at the conclusion of the program. Copies of syllabi, course bibliographies, essays, research papers, lecture notes, etc. will facilitate the transfer of credits as well as help your department or advisor determine if the courses you have completed will satisfy requirements for graduation. All students should save course materials from their study abroad courses until their final grades have been posted to the Boise State system.

Registering for Boise State Courses While You Are Abroad
You will register on-line through your My Boise State account at your appointed registration time. We will receive an email from the university indicating the day and time of your appointment. If you forget your password you should email helpdesk@boisestate.edu and they will assist you. You should also email the Help Desk if you experience other technical difficulties.

If you are planning to register for a course that has a prerequisite you are taking while abroad (this is especially common with language courses), then you will need a permission number in order to register. Please contact Sara Dart (saradart@boisestate.edu) for assistance with this.

Graduating Seniors
Boise State students earn Boise State credit on study abroad programs. Study abroad credit is residency credit, not transfer credit. Therefore, the requirement that the “last 30 credits be taken at Boise State”, does not apply. Study abroad credits are recorded to the academic record as Boise State credits, not transfer credits. The “last 30 credit rule” is referring to transfer credits. However, it can be difficult, if not impossible, to receive spring semester grades in time for a May graduation. Therefore, you must discuss your plans with a member of the Office of International Learning Opportunities and your academic advisor if you plan to graduate during your final semester at Boise State.

If you intend to graduate immediately upon your return from studying abroad, you will need to meet with your academic advisor before you leave; to be certain you have met all of your degree requirements. You must notify International Learning Opportunities in writing of your plans, particularly if you want your grades transferred quickly. You are responsible for meeting your graduation requirements and submitting the necessary paperwork. Please be aware that we do not recommend that seniors study on direct exchange or USAC partnership programs unless they have postponed their graduation date. We will not receive the grades in time for your graduation. It may be possible for certain USAC programs.
Financial Aid

If you are receiving financial aid, you must be a full time student (enrolled in at least 12 credits) while you are studying abroad. You must complete at least 12 semester credits abroad. Failure to do so could result in the repayment of federal aid. If you have questions about financial aid you should talk to the Financial Aid Office. They will evaluate your financial aid package and assist you with managing the costs. Their phone number is (208) 426-1664.

Financial Aid Check List for Studying Abroad

- Complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Student Aid). Indicate Boise State University as the school of attendance. Read the instructions for each step carefully. **Be sure to include all eligible siblings/children in your household size (carefully read FAFSA instructions for questions #64 and #65 for dependent students and question #84 and #85 for independent students).**

- Respond to all written correspondence from the Boise State Financial Aid Office or the Federal Processor requesting additional information.

**POWER OF ATTORNEY** - designate a parent, spouse, friend, etc. as your Power of Attorney **(very important).** Completed forms can be notarized at banks and various offices on the Boise State campus, including Human Resources and the Registrar. Power of Attorney cannot be given to an employee in the Financial Aid Office or Office of International Learning Opportunities

- Once you receive your award letter, return appropriate documents to the Financial Aid Office. Be sure to review your awards and budget. Is the loan amount correct for your current grade level? Does the budget correctly reflect studying abroad? Your budget should typically be higher than the normal Boise State University budget (the 2015-2016 Boise State budget is approximately $21,000).

- You may be eligible for more loans.
  - Additional unsubsidized loans for Independent students
  - Parent PLUS loans for Dependent students
  - Outside educational bank loans may also be available

  **(Loan amount cannot exceed your cost of attendance and cannot exceed the annual limit for your grade level. The increase in your budget should allow you to receive your full grade level loan amount.)**

- Do you have a special circumstance? If you think you may have a special circumstance such as extensive medical bills, one time income from the sale of a house, etc., come into the Financial Aid Office to see if you qualify. If such a circumstance applies, it can affect your eligibility for need-based aid.
If your income drops for 2016 compared to 2015 because you are not working while abroad, be sure to bring in your completed 2015 tax return so we can see if the adjustment of income will help you in getting more financial aid.

Any questions? Feel free to drop by the Financial Aid Office open Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the Administration Building room 113.

**Scholarships while on Education Abroad**

If a student seeking to study abroad is currently receiving a scholarship from Boise State the Scholarship Committee at Boise State will evaluate whether the scholarship can be used towards their studies abroad, or if a deferment is required while they are away from the Boise State campus. Prior to leaving Boise State the student needs to contact the Scholarship Committee telling them they are participating in an education abroad program, where they are going, what type of program it is (direct exchange, study abroad etc.), what type of renewable scholarships they have, and when they plan to return. The Scholarship Committee will decide whether the scholarship can be used while on exchange. Students should email scholarships@boisestate.edu. A response will be sent to the student for their review.

**GEM/WUE Scholarship**

Nonresident tuition waivers such as the GEM or WUE Scholarships are not eligible to be used while on some study abroad programs. They can be used for direct exchange programs, but not other programs abroad. Prior to going away, the student will need to notify the Scholarship Office of their plans. When the student returns from their program the Scholarship Office will check to make sure the student maintained the renewal requirements of the scholarship before it will be renewed on their student account.

**Fee Payment**

When your financial aid disburses, it will be applied to your Boise State University student account. However, if you are enrolled in the INTPRGM 400 class there will be a zero balance on your account, because you are paying a program provider (i.e. USAC). All students pay a study abroad fee; your aid will cover this expense. Then, the money will be directly deposited in your checking account, or sent to the address on file with the Boise State University system. The person you have designated as your power of attorney can sign the check and deposit it for you and then pay USAC the monies owed. **The money is not automatically sent to the program provider. A hold will be placed on your Boise State student account if you fail to pay the provider in a timely fashion.**

If you are on a direct exchange (enrolled in INTPRGM 401), when your financial aid is disbursed it will be applied to your student account. All students pay a study abroad fee; your
aid will cover this expense. The remaining balance will be directly deposited in your checking account, or sent to the address listed in the Boise State University system. The person you have designated as your power of attorney can sign the check and deposit it for you.

If you are not on financial aid, your program fees are due to USAC (or others) prior to your departure, unless you have made other payment arrangements with them.

Students attending USAC programs for the academic year may request to be billed by semester, instead of in one lump sum. If you would like this option, please contact USAC at (775) 784-6569.

**Disbursement of Financial Aid**

Due to restrictions on federal funding, typically, your financial aid will be disbursed 10 days prior to the start of classes at your host institution. For example, if your classes in Australia begin February 15th, the earliest you would be able to receive your aid is February 5th. Please plan accordingly for your aid disbursement.

**Early Return/Withdrawal from Programs**

If you are considering withdrawing from your study abroad program, please contact International Learning Opportunities. In order to receive credit for your study abroad program you must satisfactorily complete all course work and remain at the program site for the duration of the program. You must plan your departure based upon the official ending date of the term. Generally, program fees are non-refundable after the start of the program.

Students withdrawing from programs may be required to reimburse financial aid or scholarships to Boise State University. All aid is based on attendance and successful completion of the study abroad program, including at least 12 semester credits. You should check with the office of International Learning Opportunities if you are considering withdrawing from your program.

**Travel**

**International Student Identity Card (ISIC)**

The International Student Identity Card (ISIC) is recommended for purposes of identification and because it offers significant discounts and benefits. It also offers coverage for medical evacuation and other emergency situations. All other students are advised to purchase an ISIC card prior to departure. You can purchase an ISIC card in the International Learning Opportunities office. You will need the following:

- Passport sized photo (2x2) - snapshots are okay.
- Check, cash or money order for $25 made out to Boise State
- Your Boise State student ID card.
- You will fill out the application form in the office.
The ISIC provides card holders with a toll-free help line staffed by multilingual representatives who are prepared to advise travelers on required immunizations for travel abroad, as well as help travelers in case of medical, financial, or legal emergencies abroad.

Each ISIC (which must be purchased in the United States) provides baggage delay, passport replacement insurance, basic sickness and accident insurance when traveling outside the United States, including emergency evacuation coverage up to $250,000, passport replacement ($250) baggage delay ($50) and a 24-hour, toll-free Help Line. All holders of U.S. purchased cards are covered regardless of citizenship.

International Flight Arrangements
Many of you will be utilizing a group flight. In case you are not, there are many options to search for travel deals. The Internet offers many options for locating low cost flight. Be sure you read the restrictions carefully, many low cost flights are non-refundable and there will be penalties if you change your departure dates. Some of the more popular travel sites are:

- Expedia: [www.expedia.com](http://www.expedia.com)
- Travelocity: [www.travelocity.com](http://www.travelocity.com)
- Kayak: [www.kayak.com](http://www.kayak.com)
- Yahoo: [www.yahoo.travel.com](http://www.yahoo.travel.com)
- Orbitz: [www.orbitz.com](http://www.orbitz.com)
- Exitot Travel: [www.exitotravel.com](http://www.exitotravel.com) (Latin America flight specialists)

Flights within Europe

- Easy Jet: [www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com)
- Ryan Air: [www.ryanair.com/site/EN/](http://www.ryanair.com/site/EN/)
- Air Berlin: [www.airberlin.com](http://www.airberlin.com)

Other travel sites

- Eurail passes: [www.eurail.com](http://www.eurail.com)
- Deutsche Bahn: [www.db.de](http://www.db.de)

Student Discounts
There are a number of discounts available for student travel. You can obtain discounts on international flights, rail passes and lodging. Here are some agencies that students have used in the past, use at your own risk and discretion.

- AESU: [www.aesu.com](http://www.aesu.com)
- STA Travel: [www.sta-travel.com](http://www.sta-travel.com)
- Student Universe.com: [www.studentuniverse.com](http://www.studentuniverse.com)
- Travel Cuts: [www.travelcuts.com](http://www.travelcuts.com)

Hostels
For students planning to travel extensively abroad, the cost of hotel accommodations can be prohibitive. Hostels are a popular budget conscious option. A youth hostel, for example can be anything from a remodeled villa to a log cabin. Restrictions vary by hostel, some have strict
curfews, and some are open 24 hours a day. Most hostels have a kitchen, a recreation room and laundry facilities. The rooms are dormitory style. You will need to purchase a hostelling card; this can be done in the United States or at the hostel. Also, there are handbooks available which list every hostel in the country you are visiting. For more information try these web sites:

- Hostels.com www.hostels.com
- Hostel World www.hostelworld.com
- Rick Steves’ Travel www.ricksteves.com

Packing
Believe it or not, you need the same amount of clothing if you are traveling for one week or for two months! When traveling internationally, most airlines will allow you to check two bags and bring one carry-on bag. For most airlines the weight limit is 50 pounds for each checked bag. However, remember that as sometimes you will be carrying all of your luggage at once, lighter is better. Here is a sample packing list to give you some ideas. Adapted from Rick Steve’s at “Europe Through the Backdoor.”

Packing List
- **Shirts** - Bring up to five short-sleeved or long-sleeved shirts in a cotton/polyester blend. Arrange mix according to season.
- **Sweater** - Warm and dark is best for layering and dressing up. It never looks wrinkled and is always dark, no matter how dirty it is.
- **Pants** - Bring two pairs: jeans and another super-lightweight for hot days.
- **Shorts** - Take a pair with plenty of pockets—doubles as a swimsuit for men.
- **Swimsuit**
- **Underwear and socks** - Bring five sets (lightweight dries quicker).
- **Two Pairs of Shoes** - Take a well-used, light, and cool pair, with Vibram-type soles and good traction and a pair of athletic shoes.
- **Jacket** - Bring a light and water-resistant windbreaker with a hood. Depending on where you are going, a winter coat may also be appropriate.
- **A Tie or Scarf**
- **Money Belt** - You could lose everything except your money belt, and you will survive.
- **Documents and Photocopies** - Bring your passport, airline ticket, rail pass or car rental voucher, driver's license, student I.D., hostel card, and so on. Photocopies can help you get replacements if the originals are lost or stolen. Carry photocopies separately in your luggage and keep the originals in your money belt.
- **Small Daypack**
- **Camera** - Put a new battery in your camera before you go. Extra memory cards also come in handy. Store everything in a low-profile nylon stuff bag, not an expensive-looking camera bag.
- **Zip-lock Bags** - Get a variety of sizes for a number of uses.
- **Water Bottle**
- **Earplugs** - If night noises bother you, you'll love these.
- **First-Aid Kit** - A small kit with bandages, blister kit, antiseptic wipes etc.
- **Medicine** - Keep in original containers, if possible, with legible prescriptions.
- **Extra Eyeglasses, Contact Lenses and Prescriptions.**
- **Toiletries Kit** - Put all squeeze bottles in zip-lock bags, since pressure changes in flight cause bottles to leak.
- **Small Travel Towel and a Washcloth** – You won’t find washcloths very often overseas.
- **Sewing Kit**
- **Travel Information** - Rip out appropriate chapters from guidebooks, staple them together. When you’re done, give them away or recycle the pages.
- **Address List** - Use it to send postcards home and collect new addresses. Taking a whole address book is not packing light.
- **Postcards or Pictures from Home** - A zip-lock baggie of show-and-tell things is always a great conversation piece.
- **Journal** - An empty book filled with the experiences of your trip will be your most treasured souvenir. Use a hardbound type designed to last a lifetime, rather than a spiral notebook. Keep a traveler’s check and expenses log in the appendix.
- **Small Notepad and Pen** - A tiny notepad in your back pocket is a great organizer, reminder, and communication.
- **Sunglasses and Sunscreen**
- **Teva – type Sandals or flip flops**
- **Small Flashlight**
- **MP3 player**
- **Travel Locks** - You can purchase special TSA approved locks at most travel stores. These have a red diamond on them identifying them as TSA approved. This allows TSA to open your luggage without cutting the locks.
Health Abroad

Before you leave the United States it is important that you assess your health care needs. It will take your body some time to adjust to different food, water and climate. Even Americans who travel to different parts of the United States experience health problems occasionally. Neglecting to prepare for your healthcare needs could significantly impact the enjoyment of your trip abroad.

**Assess Your Health**
Traveling abroad will not cure the problems and concerns you experience at home. Physical and emotional problems will continue to be with you while you are abroad. If you are concerned about your emotional well-being, use of drugs/alcohol, or eating patterns, you should address these issues before you leave the United States.

**Dental Care**
It’s a good idea to have a dental check-up before you leave to go abroad.

**Glasses and Contact Lenses**
If you wear glasses or contact lenses, take along an extra pair and bring a copy of your prescription.

**Identify Your Health Needs**
If you have allergies, disabilities or other health concerns, make sure to disclose them prior to your departure, so that adequate arrangements can be made. Services for individuals with disabilities vary by country. If you are a person with a disability, identify your needs and understand ahead of time what type of accommodations will be made.

**Personal Health Conditions**
If you have medical conditions which need to be identified (i.e. diabetes, epilepsy, severe allergies) you should wear a medic alert bracelet while you are abroad. It is also in your best interest to notify the on-site director of your health conditions, so that they may be prepared in the event of an emergency. Any medical condition which may be aggravated while you are overseas should be discussed with your physician prior to departure. Medical conditions which require you to carry syringes will require that you carry a letter from your doctor. In some countries, carrying needles and syringes without a prescription is illegal.

It is recommended that you stock up on personal medications prior to travel. These should be in the original bottles, and you should carry a written prescription. If you have a complicated medical history, it would be helpful to carry a copy of your patient medical records.

**Visit Your Health Care Professional**
Prior to your departure, you should investigate immunization requirements for your host country and check health advisories for the area. You can visit the local health department, University Health and Wellness, or your family physician with questions about health issues. Some questions you can ask are:

- What diseases are specific to this region?
- Are there medications I should take to prevent these illnesses?
- What is the quality of the water in the host country?
- Do I need to update my immunizations? (i.e. tetanus, measles, mumps).
Useful Web Sites

- Center for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov
- Travel Health On-Line: www.tripprep.com
- Mobility International: www.miusa.org
- The Well Informed Traveler: www.armchair.com/info/netinfo.html

**Tips for Staying Healthy Abroad**

You should take some time to understand the health conditions in your host country before you leave. It will take time for your body to adjust to food, water, climate, etc. Here are some tips for staying healthy from the CDC:

- Wash your hands regularly
- Be cautious about food from street vendors
- Be cautious about uncooked vegetables
- Be cautious about salads, uncooked foods, and fruits you cannot peel yourself.
- Avoid untreated water or ice.
- Avoid raw seafood and rare or undercooked meats served by street vendors.
- Swim only in well-maintained, chlorinated pools or ocean water known to be free of pollution. Be cautious about fresh water lakes, streams, and rivers.
- Reduce problems related to sun exposure by using sunglasses, wide-brimmed hats, sunscreen lotion, and SPF lip protection.
- You may experience some intestinal distress while studying abroad. This is usually transient and not related to infection. An over the counter anti-diarrheic may be helpful, if you are able to take it.
- If you become ill after returning home, remember to inform the physician of your travel history.

Health facilities and medical services in other countries can vary, it is important to select services that are credible. Your resident director can assist you with selecting an appropriate healthcare facility.

**HIV, AIDS, STDs**

Be aware that the AIDS virus can be transmitted through the use of shared needles, tainted blood transfusions and unprotected sex. In general, it is recommended that you avoid these situations if at all possible. Diabetics are encouraged to bring a sufficient supply of needles and syringes with a prescription or doctor’s authorization.

Avoid acupuncture, dental work, ear piercing, body piercing, and tattooing if you are uncertain of sanitary conditions. If you choose to be sexually active, use good quality latex condoms. HIV is present in both heterosexual and homosexual populations in almost every part of the world. Information can be obtained from the CDC website: www.cdc.gov.

Other sexually transmitted diseases such as hepatitis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, syphilis, herpes and genital warts can also be contracted through sexual contact. While condoms reduce the chances of contracting an STD, you cannot be sexually active and totally eliminate risk. If you think you might have been exposed to an STD, you should see a doctor as soon as possible.
**Insurance**

**Health Insurance**

You **MUST have health insurance** and it is your responsibility to obtain proper health insurance. Also, you must have a medical insurance policy which is valid overseas. If you are covered by your parents’ or spouse’s insurance policy, you should make sure that the coverage is valid during international study and travel. Mandatory international medical insurance is provided for USAC participants and is included in the USAC fees.

Students studying in Germany will be required to purchase the German health care plan.

The ISIC provides minimal health coverage, but it does have medical evacuation and repatriation insurance. However, you are required to have comprehensive medical insurance.

**Please note:** most study abroad health insurance only covers you from the start of the program until the end of the program. If your program ends in May, you **will not** have coverage from that point forward. Likewise, if you choose to travel prior to the start of your program, you will not be covered by the program insurance.

Trip cancellation and baggage insurance is optional. Some students choose to purchase insurance to cover their personal belongings while they are abroad. Certain homeowner’s policies may cover the loss of personal property while abroad. If you have homeowner’s insurance in your name or are a dependent of your parents, check with your insurance provider to determine if this coverage is available to you. Most insurance companies will require a copy of a police report filed at the time of the loss. It is in your best interest to pack light, and do not take expensive items with you. If an item cannot be replaced, it is best not to take it overseas.
Limits of Boise State University’s Liability

By voluntarily participating in a study abroad program you are assuming some risks. While we have done our best to make you aware of these risks, we cannot eliminate all risk. We follow NAFSA’s “Guidelines for Responsible Study Abroad”. However, you should be aware that Boise State University and/or its program officers:

- Cannot monitor or control all of the daily personal decisions, choices, and activities of individual participants.
- Cannot guarantee or assure the safety of participants or eliminate all risks from the study abroad environments.
- 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 not employed or otherwise engaged by the program sponsor, for events that are not part of the program, or that are beyond the control of the sponsor and its subcontractors, or 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.

Safety Tips for Living Abroad

The following suggestions are offered to help you have a safe trip. Students sometimes forget they are visitors in a foreign country. Remember, people who seem friendly do not always have your best interest at heart. We recommend "If you wouldn't not do it while visiting New York (or in Boise), do not do it overseas”. Cities in other countries, like American cities, have their safe and unsafe neighborhoods. You can find out which areas to avoid by asking at an information booth in a train station when you arrive or asking your Resident Director. Use your common sense and do not take unnecessary risks.
Safety Handbook
An organization called Students Abroad has established a safety handbook for study abroad students. This website also has country specific information for many popular destinations. http://www.studentsabroad.com/.

Be Aware of Local Laws
You should be familiar with the customs and laws of the country to which you are traveling. You are subject to the laws of your host country, and U.S. laws while abroad do not protect you. Find more information at www.osac.gov and www.travel.state.gov.

Keep a Low Profile
The inhabitants of many countries dress more formally than we are accustomed to in the western United States. Sweatshirts, blue jeans, and athletic shoes will readily identify you as an American. For example, in England people do not wear “trainers” (athletic shoes), unless they are participating in a sporting event. Observe local people and you will quickly learn the appropriate manner in which to behave and dress.

Leave Valuables at Home
Do not wear expensive jewelry. Anything you cannot replace or would be upset if it was lost should be left at home.

Safeguard Your Luggage
♦ Label each piece inside and outside with your name address and phone number. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is advising passengers not to lock their luggage on flights to and from North America. Consult www.tsa.gov for more information.
♦ Obtain a baggage claim for each piece of luggage you check into the airport.
♦ Do not leave your luggage unattended. Do not allow strangers to watch your luggage while you go to the bathroom or to purchase a ticket.
♦ Do not carry items or luggage for anyone else.
♦ If you see unattended baggage, report it to the authorities immediately.

Passports and Travel Documents
Your passport is the most important document you have while abroad. Make two photocopies of your passport identification page, the barcode page, airline tickets, and credit cards. Leave one copy at home with your parents or a trusted friend, and bring a second copy with you in case something is stolen. You should also leave a list of the serial numbers of your travelers’ checks. It is a good idea to bring extra passport photos with you. These can be used to make a new passport and they are useful to have should you need to make a student identity card at your host institution.

Pickpockets
Beware of pickpockets and con artists. They are everywhere, particularly in areas where tourists gather. Crowded areas such as shopping areas and train stations are common sites for pickpockets. It is a good idea to keep your wallet and/or phone in your front pockets or in a zippered bag across the front of your body. You can also wear a money belt under your clothes to safeguard valuables.
Traveling Independently

Some of the most exciting parts of studying abroad are the opportunities you may have to visit other parts of the host country or surrounding countries. However, remember that you should exercise caution when traveling.

- Do not divulge personal information about yourself, your traveling companions or your study abroad program to strangers.
- Do not tell people where you are staying, when you plan to leave, or where you are going the next day.
- Do not hitchhike. Take precautions when traveling alone. Do not go somewhere with someone you do not know. Be sure you tell your program director where you are going and when you will return if you decide to travel independently of the program.
- Avoid street demonstrations or political rallies. If a crowd is gathering or you feel uncomfortable, leave immediately.
- Be careful crossing the street as pedestrians do not have the right of way in many places. Remember, in Britain, Ireland and some other countries, the traffic comes from the opposite direction than you are accustomed to.
- When exiting trains, check to make sure the door has opened on the correct side. Do not exit the train until you are sure that the platform is there.
- We recommend that students do not rent cars, drive or ride motorcycles or mopeds while they are overseas.
- Leave your travel plans with a friend and with the resident director.
- Always be aware of the closest exit, especially if you are in a crowded place.
- Always be alert to distractions that might be created by pickpockets and thieves.
**Women Travelers**

Women travelers may encounter more difficulties than men. Although we do not wish to frighten or perpetuate stereotypes, we encourage you to be more careful about where you go, when you go, and with whom you go than you might be at home. This is not to say that you should not go out with men and establish relationships of various kinds with them. It is to warn you about casual encounters, misreading of verbal cues, and misunderstandings due to language differences and inaccurate notions about American women in the eyes of many men.

One common assumption is that American women are "easy". Our television broadcasts, movies and previous travelers have created this stereotype of U.S. women in many counties. Some men will harass American women, in a way they would not to women of their own country or culture. This type of harassment is relatively harmless, albeit annoying.

Due to the nature of our society and the mix of cultures in the United States, Americans tend to be less reserved, less inhibited, and less restrained to communicate friendliness and sociability. However, in some countries this outgoing manner, especially from young women, can be misinterpreted. A friendly smile on the streets of Italy could be interpreted by a man as more than friendliness. It is wise to be more reserved and formal in your social contacts until you have established relationships.

Be aware that if you choose to travel alone, in some places your solitude may be interpreted as an invitation for company. Try to understand the role gender plays in the culture in which you are traveling. Observe how the women of the host country dress and act. Speak clearly and emphatically if you wish to be left alone.

**Racial and Ethnic Issues**

No two students studying abroad ever have quite the same experience, even in the same program and country. This same variety is true for students of color and those from U.S. minority ethnic or racial backgrounds.

Reports from past participants vary from those who felt exhilarated by being free of the US American context of race relations, to those who experienced different degrees of curiosity about their ethnicity, to those who felt they met both familiar and new types of ostracism and prejudice and had to learn new coping strategies.

Very few minority students conclude that potential racial or ethnic problems represent sufficient reasons for not going. On the other hand, they advise knowing what you are getting into and preparing yourself for it.

**LGBTQ Students**

It is important to be aware of the laws pertaining to homosexuality in other countries, as well as the general cultural attitudes toward gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender members of the community.
Some countries you visit may be more open-minded, tolerant and welcoming than others. Moreover, whatever the general rule, there will always be individual differences. You should certainly talk with other students who have been where you will be going.

For information on issues and resources pertaining to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender travel, you also may want to consult resources prior to departure. For a comprehensive list of resources, including travel guides, web links, and other types of information for GLBT students, visit: http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay.

**Useful Resources**

NAFSA’s Rainbow Special Interest Group: http://overseas.iu.edu/lesbigay/student.htm


*Damron* – gay and lesbian travel site: https://damron.com/

*Out Travel* – gay travel site: http://www.outtraveler.com/

**September 11, 2001 and Its Aftermath**

September 11th left an indelible imprint on our nation. The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were startling, shocking and devastating on emotional, financial and physical levels.

We feel confident that you will be living and studying in safe locations, and that you are safe traveling to and from your program sites. However, you should always be aware of issues affecting your own personal safety.

It is a reminder to be aware of your environment and to know your surroundings. In case your parents are concerned, you can assure them that we would bring you home immediately if you were in danger. We believe strongly that you are safe.

We encourage you to:

- Be alert. Be prepared to act, if airline personnel ask for help. Do not wait for someone else to act; you should act if you are willing and able.
- Seek advice from the authorities in charge (that is why we hire Resident Directors).
- Keep a low profile (don’t walk around in herds of American students). Remember, Americans have LOUD voices, so try to keep your volume the same as the locals. You are there to have an experience abroad, not to do everything as you do at home (you can go to McDonald’s in Boise).
- Report suspicious events.
- Know what you will do in an emergency.
- Observe, listen, and be a good ambassador of the United States.
We feel that study abroad is even more important in these unusual and stressful times. Only by understanding other places and people can we eliminate acts of hate. Here’s a quote to remember.

"When I despair, I remember that all through history the ways of truth and love have always won. There have been tyrants and murders and for a time they can seem invincible, but in the end they fall. Think of it...always."

--Mahatma Ghandi

**Legal Issues**

**Students with Disabilities**

One of the most fulfilling aspects of study abroad is the opportunity to discover another culture and to understand oneself better. It is important to be aware of the cultural differences about disability and accommodations in order to have a successful and safe experience abroad.

Your active role in disclosing your disability-related needs far in advance will be imperative to your success. Disclose your disability-related request as far in advance as possible to the Office of International Learning Opportunities (ILO) and the Office of Disability Services (ODS) staff. Staff members at some sites abroad have indicated that they may be able to arrange for accommodations that are not already in place, but only with sufficient advance notice.

Even if you do not think that you will need accommodations, it is always best to discuss your study abroad plans with a ODS staff member. Since conveniences in the U.S. may not be available or accessible in other countries, the ODS and ILO Staff member may be able to help you prepare and plan accordingly.

Begin preparing now by doing the following:

- Remember that other cultures may provide disability access in a different way --learn about what types of accommodation are typically provided in your host country, and be flexible and open to different ways of accommodating your disability.
- Before you go, find out as much as you can about your host culture and how they view disability by reading, talking to other students, and attending pre-departure orientation sessions. The more you know, the better prepared you will be for the interaction between your disability and the new environment.
- Think about how you will answer questions about your disability in the language of your host country --look up key vocabulary words ahead of time.
- And continue learning while you are abroad by talking with your new friends, host family, conversation partner, teacher, etc.

**Useful Sites for Students with Disabilities**

**Access Abroad - University of Minnesota /Information for Students with Disabilities:**
This is currently the most comprehensive resource for students with disabilities and study abroad. http://www.umabroad.umn.edu/access/

**Access-Able Travel Source:** Provides access information to disabled travelers. http://www.access-able.com/

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: The Country Reports on Human Rights Practices are submitted annually by the U.S. Department of State to the U.S. Congress. They cover internationally recognized individual, civil, political, and worker rights as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and include summaries of policies toward individuals with disabilities. http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/

Boise State Office of Disability Services: a Boise State resource for students with disabilities. The office offers services and information to those students. http://www2.boisestate.edu/disabilityservices/

Global Access: This disabled travel network is a forum for disabled travelers to share their experiences. Find travel tips and articles on a wide variety of destinations. If you have traveled with a disability, submit your own story to this site. http://www.globalaccessnews.com/

Mobility International USA Mobility International USA (MIUSA) aspires to empower people with disabilities through international exchange, information, Academic and Career assistance and training, to ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities in international exchange and development programs. http://www.miusa.org/

European Higher Education Accessibility Guide (HEAG): This is a guide to accessibility services at institutions in 17 countries across Europe. http://www.european-agency.org/heag/

Students with Disabilities in Education Abroad: Statistical Data and Long-Term Impact Findings: an article by Michele Scheib from Mobility International on the findings of a 2004 statistical survey surrounding participants with disabilities in education abroad, including excerpts from interviews from participants. http://www.ciee.org/annual_conference/past_conferences/santafe/session_presentations.aspx

Student Code of Conduct
All Boise State Students are subject to the Boise State University Student Code of Conduct while they are on exchange. This code can be viewed at:

http://deanofstudents.boisestate.edu/student-code-of-conduct/

Any student who violates the Boise State University Code of Conduct abroad could be subject to additional conduct charges at Boise State when they return to the United States.

Sexual Harassment

“It is the policy of Boise State University that its campuses be places of work and learning which are free from all forms of harassment. Faculty, staff, and students should be aware that harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. All complaints and information will be taken seriously, will be investigated when appropriate, and appropriate corrective action will be taken when warranted by the facts.”

–Boise State Policy BSU 5010-A
Attitudes toward sexual behavior vary widely and may be very different from what might be considered normal at home. For example, comments that would be considered offensive in the US might not be offensive in another country. Also, be aware that US standards of dress might send a message of sexual availability in other cultures. Sexual harassment is generally defined as unwanted sexual behavior, (i.e. physical contact, verbal comments, or suggestions that adversely affect the learning environment). Be sure to contact the resident director of your study abroad program and the Boise State University Office of International Learning Opportunities if you are experiencing difficulties.

**Illegal Drugs**

Do not buy, sell, carry or use illegal drugs while abroad. Boise State University can assume NO responsibility for any student violating laws and student conduct codes. Drug laws are more severe in other countries. Even in places where the use of drugs by local citizens is ignored or tolerated, if a U.S. American is apprehended using drugs or in possession of contraband, they can be dealt with in a very harsh manner. The U.S. Consulate cannot demand your release, get you out of jail, or out of the country, they cannot represent you at trial or give you legal counsel, and cannot pay your legal fees or fines.

**Your 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. Sentences for possession or trafficking of drugs can range from two to 25 years and heavy fines. In some countries, conviction may lead to a life sentence or the death penalty.

**More Information**

The U.S. Department of State and the Bureau of Consular Affairs have a great deal of information for travelers. Important contact and resource information is listed below.

**Bureau of Consular Affairs**

Internet:  http://travel.state.gov/
Phone: (202) 647-5225 (Overseas Citizen Hotline during working hours 8:15 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. EST)
Phone: (202) 647-4000 (Emergencies after hours - ask for duty officer)
Fax: (202) 647-3000

**Consular Affairs Publications**

Internet:  http://travel.state.gov/
Phone: (202) 512-1600
Fax: (202) 512-2250
Money Issues

Budgeting
Individual expenses will vary greatly. You will probably spend more money overseas than you do at home. You should begin by determining how much you spend here on items such as laundry, meals, and recreation. For example, if you currently live at home and your laundry is "free", then that will be an additional cost while you are overseas, because you will have to pay for your laundry expenses. You should then determine how much you will spend on the following:

- Food (groceries and dining out)
- Local travel (buses, taxis, subway)
- Postage
- Weekend excursions
- Recreation
- Souvenirs

Currency Fluctuations
Students tend to overspend during their first month in a new country. Remember, the exchange rate for the dollar can vary dramatically. If you see a good exchange rate, you should take advantage of the opportunity because the exchange rate may be poor the next day. Please remember that if the exchange is poor, you will need budget more carefully because your dollars will not have as much spending power.

Currency Exchange
American currency can be exchanged for foreign currency at most international airports prior to departure, at the international airport of your arrival destination, or most major banks abroad. You should try to have some local currency with you when you arrive in your host country. This could be done in the airport prior to your departure. You should have enough money for taxis, a meal and phone calls. Do not change a large amount of money in the airport; the exchange rates are usually poor.

Each time you exchange money or change from one currency to another you will probably lose money. Do not change more money than you can use. The fee for changing currency varies from one to three percent. Banks usually give the best exchange rate, and hotels and airport exchange counters have poorer rates. Be sure you consider the fee for the exchange before you exchange your money. It usually makes more sense to change a large amount at once. You will need to have your passport with you to exchange money.

Accessing Your Money Overseas
It is recommended that you utilize more than one option to access your money while you are overseas, such as travelers' checks, ATM card and a credit card.

Travelers' Checks
This is the safest way to keep your money. Unlike cash, travelers' checks can be replaced if they are lost or stolen. In addition, the rate of exchange is usually better for travelers' checks than it is for cash. Most banks, post offices, hotels and tourist stores will exchange travelers' checks for local currency. When you purchase travelers' checks, purchase a variety of
denominations. While traveling, you may prefer smaller amounts—perhaps $20 checks. For regular living expenses, once you are established at your program location, larger amounts might be more useful. You must record all your travelers’ check transactions. If your checks are lost or stolen, this will be your record to have them replaced. This record should be kept separately from your travelers’ checks. To cash your checks you will need your passport and you should not countersign them until you are cashing them. In many countries, you MUST wait until someone watches you sign the checks.

**Travel Money/Travelers’ Cheque Cards** (a new option to traveler’s checks)
This allows you to pre-load set amounts of money to a Visa “Travel Money Card” or an American Express “Travelers’ Cheque Card”. The funds are not linked to your checking account and they are replaceable like regular traveler’s checks. For more information contact the following offices:

- **AAA**
  - [http://www.aaa.com/travelmoney](http://www.aaa.com/travelmoney)
  - Ph: (866) 339-3378

- **American Express**
  - [www.americanexpress.com](http://www.americanexpress.com)

**Credit Cards**
Major credit cards such as Visa, Master Card and American Express are widely accepted overseas. Discover card is rarely accepted in other countries. Youth hostels, budget hotels, and small stores may not accept credit cards. Check with your credit card company about obtaining cash advances while you are overseas. You should notify them that you are traveling overseas, so they do not cancel your card due to changes in your spending habits. Be aware that some credit cards charge a foreign transaction fee for every purchase made abroad. Check with your credit card company before you leave the country.

Be prepared. Keep a record of your credit card numbers and the company contact information. You should leave a copy with family or a close friend. If your cards are lost or stolen, you will need to call and cancel them.

**Global Assist** (by American Express) is a 24-hour emergency medical and legal referral services worldwide hotline for American Express cardholders. (1-800-333-2639; from outside the United States, 715-343-7977 collect)

**ATM Cards**
It is generally possible in many countries to obtain money directly from your bank account by using overseas ATM machines, particularly those on the Plus or Cirrus networks. Your bank may need to issue you a PIN for international use. **There will be a fee for using overseas ATMs (range from $5-$10), so you should budget accordingly.**

**Debit Cards**
You should discuss using your debit card while you are abroad with your bank. Debit cards are not subject to the same fraud protection services as credit cards. If your debit card is lost or stolen, someone could gain access to your checking and savings account and the money cannot be replaced. You can be held liable for all charges from the time you lose the card and the time it is reported lost or stolen. You may wish to obtain a traditional ATM card prior to your departure. There will be a fee charged for using overseas ATMs, plan accordingly.
A note: Regarding studying in China and Ghana
Students have informed us that ATM cards and credit cards are not widely accepted in China or Ghana. You should plan on another method of obtaining cash if you are studying in either location.

**Receiving Money from Home**

*American Express*
American Express money orders are reasonably fast. Transactions should be initiated at a US American Express office and completed at an overseas branch. However, not all American Express Offices prepare money orders or wire money. American Express allows its cardholders to cash personal checks of $300-$400 every 21 days at any American Express location with your AMEX card and your passport.

*Western Union*
In most of the foreign countries where Western Union wires money, delivery is usually made through banks. The money should be available in a day or two, but it can take longer. Western Union has no direct control over the delivery system outside the U.S. To collect the money, the recipient must bring identification (usually a passport). Western Union usually adds a test question to make certain of the recipient's identity. With a Visa or MasterCard you can call Western Union day or night to wire money and charge it to your credit card. This is usually the fastest (though not the least expensive) method to use. Western Union's telephone number in the United States is 1-800-325-6000. More information on Western Union can be found on their web site: [http://www.westernunion.com](http://www.westernunion.com)

**Communication Abroad**

*Phones*
Many students usually purchase cell phones to use while they are abroad. Your US cell phone might not work overseas, please talk to your cell phone provider about this issue. Cell phones are usually not very expensive and are easy to use, making it an affordable option for study abroad students. Most students buy cell phones that you pay in advance for the minutes you will use. When you run out of minutes it is very easy to recharge your phone with more minutes. Students like prepay phones because it allows them freedom from not signing a lengthy contract. To use a pay phone to call internationally, you will have to have a calling card (credit or pre-paid), these can be purchased at airports, stores, post offices, etc. Local cell phones are most effective for communication within the host country. Other methods discussed below tend to be better for communication with people back home.

*Skype*
Skype is a software application that allows users to make voice and video calls and chats over the Internet. Calls to other users within the Skype service are free, while calls to both traditional landline telephones and mobile phones can be made for a fee using a debit-based user account system. More information can be found at [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com).
**Calling cards**
If you need to call home you can contact a US operator from abroad by using international phone credit cards such as AT&T, Sprint, or MCI. You will need to contact the providers regarding the access code to reach an English speaking operator. Check the rates you will be charged prior to departure, so you do not receive unexpected bills you cannot afford.

**Pre-paid phone cards**
Pre-paid phone cards are available in most countries. These cards can be purchases at airports, stores, post offices, etc. Pre-paid phone cards can avoid the shock of high credit card or phone card bills. Phone cards purchased in one country sometimes cannot be used in a different country.

**E-kit/ISIC Connect**
Two message and phone services that some study abroad students have used are Hostelling International's “E-kit” and the “ISIC Connect” service. The E-kit is available to anyone. The ISIC connect is for purchasers of the International Student Identification Card (ISIC)

These services allow you friends and family to call an 800 number in the US and leave voice mails that you can retrieve while you are overseas. You can also use this service to make long distance phone calls to the United States.

For more information:
www.ekit.com
www.isicus.com/connect

**Internet**
Internet cafes are widely available overseas. If you wish to use the internet, this is one option. Usually, you are paying for the time you are on the internet and the rates can vary by country. Most programs have internet access for US students. Remember, that you are missing culture opportunities if you are spending a great deal of time sending emails.

**Whats App**
Whats App is a smartphone app that allows the user to text internationally using either wifi or regular cell service for no additional charge.

**Laptops**
Bringing your laptop overseas can make your life easier for downloading photos and composing your homework and essays. However, there are some issues to be aware of before you take your computer abroad.

Electrical currents are different in many countries. You will need to be sure that 1) your computer can convert the voltage 2) that you have a plug adapter. Talk to a computer store for more details

The theft of your laptop can be an issue. Be sure you have insurance covering it in case it is lost, damaged or stolen. There are locks which attach a laptop to a desk, so this is a good investment to secure your laptop.
**Adjusting to Life Overseas**

*Tolerance for Ambiguity*

Studying and traveling abroad involves a great deal of *ambiguity* and *uncertainty*. This is unavoidable because there is no way to determine every detail of a host culture or university ahead of time. Studying abroad means you will be integrating into a different academic system and society. Notions of time, social norms, and academic expectations may be subtly or quite different from those at home. When you take your cultural expectations into another country that does not have these expectations, you cause yourself unnecessary stress. This is “cultural baggage,” so try to relax and suspend judgment.

Frequently, some types of information cannot be obtained until your arrival in the host country. Many overseas academic institutions do not have formal pre-registration, so admission to a certain course cannot be guaranteed. You also may not know the exact address of your housing until you arrive. However, the program will give you mailing address that your mail can be sent to and you will have a place to live. As a reminder, Boise State’s Housing Office does not make room assignments until two weeks before the semester starts, so international students who come here experience the same uncertainty about where they will be living as you could experience while you are abroad.

The best advice in these situations is to be flexible and relaxed. Remember, usually things will work out. This is not being overly optimistic; things actually do work out.

*Research the Host Country*

Many Americans have very little knowledge of countries outside our borders. You should take responsibility for educating yourself by reading about the country you will be visiting. You can also talk to students from that country living in Boise. By learning all you can before you go abroad, you will be more aware of the people and the country, you can then be a better ambassador of the US as well. We encourage you to be aware of issues in American politics and have informed opinions about these issues.

Some questions to guide your research about the host country are:

- *What monetary unit do they use?*
- *What type of government do they have?*
- *Who are the important leaders?*
What are the principle religions?
What are the political parties?
What are the major forms of transportation?
How expensive is life in the host country?
What is the current exchange rate?
How do host nationals perceive US Americans?

Sources of International News
As you prepare to study abroad you should start reading other news sources to make yourself aware of world events. Here are some resources you can utilize.

On line Newspapers  http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/
The BBC            http://news.bbc.co.uk/
NPR              http://www.npr.org

Culture Shock

What is culture shock?
Culture shock is simply adjusting to a transition in your life. In fact, it should be called "transition shock". Any time, people go into a new living situation, relationship or environment, they tend to experience culture shock.

The Stress/Culture Shock Relationship
Essentially culture shock is stress. You should remember that the tools you use to cope with stress at home can be used while you are living overseas.

Here are some important things to remember about coping with stress:

- Stress is normal
- It is temporary and the situation will change
- Stress has positive aspects
- You have gone through stressful times/transitions before and survived

Things to do to cope with stress:

- Take care of your health, eat properly, exercise, and get plenty of rest.
- Establish priorities regarding the things you need to do, to learn, and to adjust to, and do the most important items first.
- Seek out other people. Go explore the city! Getting out will help you remember why you wanted to go abroad in the first place.
- Engage in your favorite activities.
How to cope?
Awareness that culture shock exists is one of the important keys to managing it. Below are the stages of cultural adjustment and the behaviors or feelings associated with each phase.

### THE STAGES OF CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

#### STAGE ONE: ENTHUSIASM/EXCITEMENT

The individual:
- Is very positive about the culture
- Is overwhelmed with impressions
- Finds the culture exotic and is fascinated by it
- Is largely passive, does not confront the culture

#### STAGE TWO: WITHDRAWAL/LONELINESS

The individual:
- Begins to interact with the culture
- Finds the behavior of the people unusual and unpredictable
- Begins to react to the behavior and dislikes the culture
- Feels anxiety and stress
- Begins to criticize the culture/people
- Wants to go home

#### STAGE THREE: RE-EMERGENCE/ADJUSTMENT

The individual:
- Begins to understand the behavior of the people
- Feels more comfortable living in/encountering the culture
- Feels less isolated
- Regains his/her sense of humor

#### STAGE FOUR: ACHIEVEMENT/ENTHUSIASM

The individual:
- Enjoys being in the culture
- Functions easily in the culture
- Prefers certain host country behaviors to that of own culture
- Adopts certain behaviors of the host culture

### SYMPTOMS OF CULTURE SHOCK

- Excessive sleeping
- Boredom
- Lethargy
- Irritability
- Hostility toward locals
- Irrational anger
- Withdrawal
Ways to be successful abroad
- Keep a flexible attitude and open mind.
- Be tolerant of ambiguous situations; sometimes you are not going to understand what is happening and that is part of the adventure.
- Be patient.
- Remember, we all carry baggage and it is called “culture”. Concepts of time and our thought patterns are a few pieces of baggage we all carry.
- Be friendly and outgoing. In the words of Rick Steve’s, “Extroverts have more fun!”
- Try not to control situations.
- Work on your language skills.
- Do not try to find a “little America” abroad. You’ll miss the unique things your host country has to offer.
- Engage in familiar activities from home
- Don’t expect perfection, especially from your language skills.
- Use humor to deal with difficult situations.
- Remember, sometimes it’s the little things that are the most rewarding and memorable. Buying bread and cheese, spending the day in the park, a successful purchase in a second language. Life is a journey, not a destination.

E-mail, Culture Shock and the Impact on Those at Home
The Internet and e-mail are incredibly useful for communication, however, it’s important to consider the implications of what you communicate to people back at home. This is particularly true if you are going through a tough time or a bout of culture shock. When students e-mail their parents complaining about their situation parents naturally start to worry, especially when the student then does not write back for several days. Several days later, life could be great, but your parents still think you are miserable. Please be careful before you send e-mails bemoaning your situation. We suggest sending the e-mail to yourself and re-reading it in a couple of days. You may be surprised at how unhappy you were and how your feelings have changed. Consider it your “virtual” journal. This is not to say that you should not reach out to friends and family if you are having a tough time, but if you do, be sure to keep in regular touch with them so they don’t worry.

Concluding thoughts
We have reached the end of this handbook, but you are at the beginning of your big adventure. Have fun, learn a lot and come visit us when you return. Have a great adventure and please feel free to contact the office of International Learning Opportunities if you need assistance (208) 426-2630 or studyabroad@boisestate.edu.
Appendix

Suggested Reading List

If you want to learn more about your host country, here are some suggested readings. USAC also lists suggested reading for each of their programs on their website.

AFRICA: (all countries combined)
- *All God’s Children Need Traveling Shoes*, by Maya Angelou (Random House).
- *Cry of the Kalahari* by Mark Owens
- *Poisonwood Bible*, by Barbara Kingsolver
- *Don’t Let’s Go to the Dogs Tonight*, by Alexandra Fuller
- *Read this First: Africa*, Lonely Planet publications.
- *Number One Ladies’ Detective Agency*, (series) by Alexander McCall Smith

AUSTRALIA:
- *In a Sunburned Country*, by Bill Bryson

CANADA:
- *Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism*, by George Grant
- *Trudeau and Our Times: The Heroic Delusion* or *Trudeau and Our Times: The Magnificent Obsession* (both by Stephen Clarkson and Christina McCall)

CHINA:
- *Lonely Planet Travel Survival Kit: China*
- *The Good Earth*, Pearl Buck

FRANCE:
- *Evidences Invisibles* (Cultural Misunderstandings, translated version), by Raymonde Carroll
- *French or Foe: Getting the Most out of Visiting, Living and Working in France*, by Polly Platt
- *Au Contraire!: Figuring Out the French*, by Gilles Asselin and Ruth Mastron
- *Black Swan*, by Helene Stevenson, www.booksattransworld.co.uk
• Paris to the Moon, by Adam Gopnik
• Le Divorce (a novel, in English), by Diane Johnson
• Sixty million Frenchmen Can't be Wrong, by Jean-Benoit Nadeau, Julie Barlow
• A Year in Provence, by Peter Mayle, he has several others about Provence, they are all quite good.

GERMANY:
• http://www.worldbridge.wayne.edu/jym/jymbibliography.html (lots of great books listed on this website, including the following:)
• Understanding Cultural Differences, Germans, French, and Americans by Edward T & Mildred Reed Hall
• Old World/New World: Bridging Cultural Differences - Britain, France, Germany and the U.S. by Craig Storti
• Studying Abroad/Learning Abroad: An Abridged Edition of The Whole World Guide to Culture Learning by Daniel Hess
• The Business Culture in Germany, by Collin Randlesome

INDIA:
• A Fine Balance, by Rohinton Mistry
• God of Small Things, by Arundhati Roy
• Art of India: Preshistory to the Present, Edited by Federick M. Asher (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2003)
• A History of India by Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund (New York: Routledge, 2004)
• India: a concise history by Francis Watson (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2002)
• India: a global studies handbook by Fritz Blackwell (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2004)
• India: a million mutinies now by V.S. Naipaul (New York: Viking, 1991)
• India Unveiled by Robert Arnett (Columbus, Ga: Atman Press, 1996)
• Secrets from an Indian Kitchen by Mridula Baljekar (London: Pavilion Books, 2000)

ITALY:
• Ciao! America, by Beppe Severgnini - written by an Italian living in Washington DC, but does hit on lots of cultural differences.
• Alone with Michelangelo: a woman follows her dreams to Italy by Marlene Hill (Portland, Or.: F. Amato Productions, 2002)
• The Oxford History of Italy edited by George Holmes (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997)

JAPAN:
• Learning to Bow: Inside the Heart of Japan, by Bruce S. Feiler
• 36 Views of Mount Fuji: On Finding Myself in Japan, by Cathy N. Davidson.
• From Bonsai to Levis: When West meets East; An Insider's Surprising Account of How the Japanese Live, by George Fields
• *Enlightenment Guaranteed* (English title). It is not a book, but a DVD German movie, but I thought it is a good description of modern Japan. It also gives a great culture shock and cultural adaptation from German going to Japan point of view.


• *Food culture in Japan* by Michael Ashkenazi and Jeanne Jacob (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003)


• *Kitchen* by Banana Yoshimoto (New York: Grove Press, 1993) [novel]

**KOREA:**

• *American/Korean Contrasts* by Susan Oak and Virginia Martin "covers all the basics. It is easy to read and has good details on the main concepts."

• *The Koreas: a global studies handbook* by Mary E. Connor (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC CLIO, 2002)

• *Korea’s Place in the Sun: a modern history*, Updated edition by Bruce Cumings (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005)


• *The two Koreas: a contemporary history* by Don Oberdorfer (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 2002)

**LATIN AMERICA:**

• *The Spanish-speaking South Americans: Bridging Hemispheres*, by Skye Stephenson (Intercultural Press)

• *The House of the Spirits*, by Isabel Allende

• *Love in the Time of Cholera*, by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

**MEXICO:**

• *Good Neighbors*: Communicating with the Mexicans, by John Condon

**SPAIN:**

• *Spanish Lessons*, by Derek Lambert

• *The New Spaniards*, by John Hooper "is an excellent introduction to the contemporary realities in Spain

• *Don Quijote de la Mancha or Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes

**UK:**

• *Brit-think, Ameri-think*, by Jane Walmsley

• *Coping with America*, by Peter Trudgill, a British professor of socio-linguistics

• *White Teeth*, by Zadie Smith (insight into multi-culturalism in London)

• *The English*, by Jeremy Paxman

• *Notes from a Small Island, I'm a Stranger Here Myself, Mother Tongue, and Notes from a Big Country*, all by Bill Bryson.

• *Over Here*, by Raymond Seitz, (1998) (Seitz was the U.S. Ambassador in the early 90s)

• *Old World/New World - Bridging Cultural Differences: Britain, France, Germany and the U.S.*, by Craig Storti, 2001, 288 pp, $25.95
ANTHOLOGIES/MULTIPLE CULTURES/ BOOK SERIES:

- *Europe From a Backpack: Real Stories from Young Travelers Abroad*, edited by Mark Pearson (available April 1, 2004)
- *On-Course World Study Guides* (www.oncourse.co.uk). They publish a number of titles on different countries.
- *Culture Shock! series* (separate guide for a number of countries, including Britain)
- *Tales of a Female Nomad*, by Rita Golden Gelman (mix of cultures)
- *Understanding Global Cultures*, by Martin J. Gannon - this includes chapters on British and American cultures
- *Understanding Cultural Differences*, by E.T. Hall " (with co-author Mildred Hall) discusses differences between Germans, French, and Americans."
- *Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands*, (Culture Shock series)

Other on-line resources with more ideas

Intercultural Press:
http://interculturalpress.com/shop/index.html (also has a good search engine)

Movies