

W ILLINOIS WESLEYAN
UNIVERSITY
INTERNATIONAL OFFICE



**STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK
2020–2021**

Congratulations on your decision to study abroad!

The journey you are about to undertake will be one of the most memorable of your life. We want to ensure this period of study away from the Illinois Wesleyan University campus will be both academically rewarding and personally enjoyable for you.

Keep two key things in mind as you prepare for your sojourn abroad:

1) **If you want to feel at home, stay at home.** Just about everything will be different from what you're used to during the time you study abroad. The way courses are taught, the way you are graded, housing standards, gender dynamics, commuting, Internet access—basically anything you can think of—will not be the same as what you are used to here in the United States. Try to embrace the differences and learn from them rather than falling into a cycle of resistance and complaining. Develop a sense of humor and ability to laugh at your mistakes as you navigate your host culture.

2) **You'll get out of it what you put into it.** If you want to get to know students in your host country, you're going to need to make an effort to form relationships. You're around only for a few months, so challenge yourself to take a class at a local university if possible, meet people in the neighborhood, join a sports club or extracurricular organization, or just seek out people to talk with during your day. Try to limit your out-of-country travel during the semester and travel to other regions of your host country instead; in doing that, you'll get to know the country and culture more deeply, and can arrange to travel to nearby countries after your program ends.

Please take time to read this handbook carefully before you leave. It contains information that will be important to you before departure, while you are abroad, and when you return. You should also take this handbook with you. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact the International Office by email, telephone, or fax.

Sincerely,

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*24-Hour Emergency Phone: (309) 556-1111. (Describe the emergency to **Campus Safety** and ask them to put you in contact with the staff member on call.)*

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ACADEMIC, FINANCIAL, AND HOUSING ISSUES

ACADEMIC ISSUES

Academic Credit

The amount of credit awarded is determined by the teaching institution. A course unit at IWU is defined as the equivalent of 4 credit hours (also called semester hours); the average semester load of a student at IWU is therefore 16 credit hours of coursework. Therefore, a course that is awarded 3 credit hours by the teaching institution or the credit-granting institution is the equivalent of 0.75 IWU course units. A course must carry at least 3 credit hours (0.75 IWU units) to meet a major, minor, or the Shared Curriculum requirement at IWU.

IWU requires study abroad students to take their courses for a letter grade: this means that you may not take any of your abroad courses on a pass/fail basis.

For programs with standing affiliation agreements with IWU and those approved through a petition process, all coursework from a semester or academic year off-campus study program will be reflected as IWU credit on your IWU transcript, including failed courses. All grades are factored into your IWU cumulative grade point average.

Courses and Course Load

When approval is granted for your study abroad courses (using the Course Approval Form [CAF] that you completed as part of your IWU study abroad process), the approval is for the specific course of study listed on that approval form. This means that once you are abroad, you are expected to take the course of study outlined in your proposal. If you must change courses for valid academic reasons (e.g., scheduling conflicts or course availability issues), you should contact our academic advisor and the International Office as soon as possible; in addition, if you want major, minor, or the Shared Curriculum credit for a course not listed on the CAF, you will need to contact the appropriate department chair and/or the director of The Shared Curriculum to request approval. We suggest that you cc the International Office on those correspondences and that you save a copy of all email messages relating to course approval. Upon your return, you will need to complete a new CAF for any courses not approved on the original form.

Upper- or lower-division credit is determined by the teaching institution. (Courses taken at a British or Australian institution are usually upper division if they are classified as second- or third-year classes; first-year classes are lower division.) The International Office confirms whether upper-division credit will be awarded and records this on your CAF.

The actual number of courses you take abroad may vary according to the foreign institution or program you attend, but you must maintain full-time student status as defined by both your host institution and IWU. This means that at no time may you carry fewer than 3 IWU course units or 12 credit hours, or you will no longer be a full-time student and will lose financial aid; we do, however, expect that you will carry a work load comparable to what you would do on campus—4 units, or 16 credit hours. If you are eligible to receive an Illinois State Monetary Award (MAP grant), you must enroll for no fewer than 4 units/16 credit hours to receive the maximum award.

Participation in an off-campus study program generally precludes simultaneous registration for IWU coursework (e.g., independent study, internships, etc.). You should, however, register for the appropriate Off-Campus Study (OCS) number to maintain your status as a full-time student at IWU. Your off-campus study program must report all credit earned.

Summer Course Load

Summer study abroad students take as many credit hours of coursework as are required by their program—usually somewhere between 3 and 12 credit hours of coursework.

Host University Examinations

If you are enrolled at a foreign university, you must sit at the regularly scheduled times for all examinations that are required of you, including those given at the end of individual academic terms and, if you are on an academic year program, any comprehensive exams that are given at the end of the academic year. Failure to do so may result in a failing grade.

Applying Credit to Degree Requirements

Credit earned through off-campus study is degree credit for graduation, but this does not guarantee that it may be applied towards the Shared Curriculum, major, or minor requirements. As part of the approval process, you are required to consult with the appropriate department chair/program director (for major or minor courses) or the Registrar's Office (for the Shared Curriculum courses) to determine how your off-campus study credit will apply towards your degree program.

It is the prerogative of each department or program at IWU to determine whether or not to apply credit from off-campus study toward its requirements. Not all coursework is necessarily approved in advance; departments can require evaluation of certain courses upon your return from the program. It is always a good idea to return to IWU with copies of the course syllabi, reading lists, papers, and exams from off-campus study. You are responsible for getting your transcript to the Registrar's Office. If you owe any money to the program, they will not release your transcript until your account is settled.

Registration

Before Going Abroad

For the semester(s) you will be abroad, you need to register at IWU for OCS-100 (Off-Campus Study). Do not register for IWU classes as a backup.

From Abroad

To register for IWU courses from abroad, you will need to consult with you academic advisor via email. The International Office will send a notice via email about the dates for academic advising, but registration information, including registration dates, can be accessed on the Registrar's Office Website.

When advising begins, you will be able to see the course selections on the web via My.IWU. To access the Schedule of Classes on My.IWU,

- log in to my.iwu.edu
- Click on "Students" tab
- Click on "Banner Self Service"
- Click on "Student Menu"
- Click on "Registration"
- Click on "Look-Up Classes to Add"
- Choose the correct term and click "Submit Term"
- Complete the search criteria (e.g., subject, course attribute, etc.) and click "Get Classes"
- To see course comments, including prerequisites, instructor approval, and cross-listed courses, click on the "CRN"

Because you are off campus, you will need to choose your courses and contact your advisor to have those courses approved prior to your registration. When you contact your advisor, provide your preferred classes, plus some back-up choices and all CRN numbers, and ask for your registration PIN. If your advisor is on leave, please contact the chair of the department: s/he can tell you who has been assigned as your temporary advisor.

You will then register yourself from off campus through My.IWU on or after your assigned registration date and time, which is based on the number of units that you have completed. Once advising begins, you can find your registration date and time on My.IWU under the "Registration Status."

In your conversations with your advisor, make certain that you obtain your registration PIN as you will need it to check your courses and make any necessary changes.

If you have valid technical problems (for example, your program is based in a place where Internet access is unreliable or your program has a scheduled field excursion that will prevent Internet access), please contact the International Office and Registrar's Office before registration begins. While we understand that many students elect to travel in their free time while abroad, being unable to access the Internet while on a personal trip is not a valid reason to ask for registration assistance. In such a circumstance, we would suggest you as a friend or relative to register you and provide them with the necessary information.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

Costs, Financial Aid, and Billing

For **most** programs, you are responsible for your regular IWU tuition for the semester(s) you are abroad—unless the program tuition is higher, in which case you are responsible for the higher cost. For most programs, you will not be billed for IWU room and board; rather, you will be billed by your program for room, possibly for your board, and for any other required costs (e.g., mandatory insurance).

Exceptions to this billing policy are the IWU London and IWU Spain programs, where students are billed by IWU for their regular IWU tuition, room, and board, and a program fee; the AUI exchange, where IWU bills regular IWU tuition, room, and board; and Pembroke Program, where IWU bills tuition and room, and students pay for meals on their own.

You should confer with the Financial Aid Office regardless of whether you are currently receiving financial aid. When you speak with the Financial Aid Office, you should take with you a print out of actual and expected costs (available from your program provider's Website or, in the case of IWU programs, from the International Office). The cost of your study abroad program will be reviewed and your financial aid award may be adjusted as appropriate. If your combined budget for a semester or year away is more than a semester/year at IWU, you are generally responsible for the increased cost. For further information, please contact the Financial Aid Office (iwufaid@iwu.edu).

The Business Office will apply your financial aid to your student account and bill the remaining tuition charges to you, your parents, or your guardians. Housing, board, and other fees will, in all cases except those listed above, be billed directly to you by the program. IWU will pay program tuition charges on your behalf.

Summer Programs

With the exception of students on an IWU Freeman Asia Internship program, students participating in summer study abroad programs will not be billed by IWU for any of the costs: all program costs will be billed by the program directly to the student. Student awarded an IWU Freeman Asia internship will be billed for the internship tuition.

Because IWU does not offer summer courses, there is no financial aid for summer study abroad programs.

Money and Banking

If you do not already have one, you should obtain a credit/debit card through Visa or MasterCard, as these are the most widely accepted credit cards. You should also take a credit card for emergency use. Unless you will be abroad for a year, you should not need to open a bank account—and even then it may be difficult. A few points to remember the following:

- Your credit card purchases abroad are subject to the exchange rate for that day and may also incur international transaction charges.
- Make two copies of your cards; leave one copy with your parents and take the other with you but keep it separate from the cards themselves.
- Call your bank and notify them and ask them to make a note on your account that you will be out of the country. If you fail to do so, when you attempt to use your debit card abroad, the bank may put a hold on your account and deny access in order to prevent what is perceived as fraudulent use of your card.
- Take the emergency cancellation telephone number with you and keep it separate from your wallet in case your card is stolen.
- Your program should advise you on how much money to take with you. If they do not, consider a combination of cash and a debit card.
- When you get to your destination, find out where the closest Western Union location is—you can get money from home quickly in the event of an emergency

HOUSING ISSUES

IWU Housing

The Office of Residential Life requests that students studying abroad register as living abroad for the semester they plan to be away. All housing intentions can be provided to ORL online through the MyHousing web portal. Each student will login to MyHousing and complete an application for the upcoming semester. In general, ORL recommends that students planning to study abroad share their plans for living either on or off campus when they return to IWU.

For students who will be abroad during the fall and return to campus housing in the spring, ORL will contact you in late October or early November about the online housing selection process. You will be provided with a list of open beds on campus: these spaces are assigned on a first-come-first-served basis, so you should respond quickly. If you have a friend on campus with whom you would like to room and there are available rooms with two spaces on the ORL list, you can both request the move.

For students who will be abroad during the spring and return to campus housing the following fall, you will need to be aware of the housing lottery process, which takes place in March. During this process, students will need to complete an online application, make roommate requests, and select a room. All three steps are completed online, so students must have Internet access during this time frame. ORL will send email updates to all students when this process begins.

If you have any questions, please contact ORL (orl@iwu.edu).

CONDUCT, HEALTH, AND SAFETY ABROAD

STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINARY POLICIES

At IWU, study abroad is not college-sponsored tourism: It is an academic endeavor, not a vacation. Study abroad is a way for you to immerse yourself in a different culture, to become an active participant in the life and society of your host country in order to learn as much as possible about it. By applying to your program of choice, you have taken a significant step towards expanding your mind, engaging other cultures, and becoming a more informed participant in our global society. Take full advantage of this opportunity: if

you want to travel in your free time, explore your host country and come to know it in more depth, and reserve semester breaks and post-program free time for travel to other countries.

Keep in mind that, in a very real way, you go abroad as an ambassador for the University and for the United States. Your attitude, interactions and presence abroad will speak volumes about you and about us. You are privileged to be there as a full-time learner, both academically and in every act of your daily life. Resist reinforcing stereotypes of Americans when you interact with others. Resolve instead to develop an understanding of and respect for the culture you are visiting.

Statement of Responsibility and Authorization

You are expected to abide by the conditions set forth in the Agreement form (this form is part of your study abroad application and can be found @abroad.iwu.edu). You should be prepared to obey host country laws, abide by the policies of your host institution, and respect the norms of the host culture with regard to behavior and appropriate attire. You must attend and participate in classes and complete assignments, respect the property of the host institution, and provide the program director with contact information and/or itinerary before leaving for individual travel.

College policies regarding student conduct as outlined in the *IWU Catalog*, including academic infractions such as plagiarism, apply to students studying abroad just as if you were on campus. Students are expected to respect the rights of other students (whether other study abroad students or host national students), as well as those of homestay families, faculty, and staff.

Most cultures have well-established customs with regard to acceptable social drinking. Students abroad need to demonstrate mature behavior and respect for local customs. The misuse of alcohol will not be tolerated and can result in dismissal from the program. The use, purchase, or sale of illegal drugs is prohibited.

Legal penalties with regard to drugs and alcohol may be more severe in the host country than in the United States and entail fines and/or jail time. A student charged with breaking local laws will be subject to the rulings of local courts. U.S. laws and constitutional guarantees do not apply. The ability of program staff or U.S. Embassy personnel to assist is very limited, and in most countries release on bail while awaiting trial is not an option.

Disciplinary Actions

Violations of program policy may result in expulsion from your program at your own expense, loss of tuition fees and academic credit, and separation from then University. Violations of host country law may have even more serious consequences, including imprisonment—and in some countries, drug offenses carry a death sentence.

Violations of program policies and host country laws will be reported back to IWU and may lead to further disciplinary action on your return to campus.

MEDICAL/HEALTH ISSUES

Check the Website for the Centers for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov) for comments on health issues specific to your program location. Their site, gives current information on disease outbreaks and immunization requirements throughout the world.

Complete IWU Medical Information Form/Questionnaire as part of your pre-departure requirements (questionnaire can be found online @abroad.iwu.edu in your IWU study abroad application material submission section) and a Physician's Report before you leave campus. The information you release will not affect your admission to the program and will be shared with program staff only as necessary and allowed under the law. It is crucial that the International Office is aware of any physical or mental health issues before you arrive at your program so that we can ensure you receive adequate care while abroad.

As you prepare for your study abroad experience, keep the following in mind:

- All students are advised to discuss their travel plans with their personal physician or the IWU Health Services staff before they leave. Make sure they know where you are going and how long you plan to stay.
- Some countries require a medical evaluation by a physician for your visa application, so be sure you look carefully at the visa requirements.
- Depending on your program location, you may need additional immunizations prior to your departure. Get started on this early.

Prescription Medications

Take an adequate supply of your prescription medications with you and know the import restrictions for your country. Most countries restrict shipments of medications from abroad, so do not plan to have your parents ship your prescriptions. You should carry a copy of the original prescription and a letter from your physician, and you should have these ready to present to customs officials if asked. This letter should include a description of the problem, the dosage of prescribed medications to assist medical authorities during an emergency, and the generic name(s) of medicine listed. Keep all medications in their original containers.

If you are prescribed narcotic and/or other habit-forming medication, you certainly should carry a copy of your physician's letter with you. You should register this information with the local U.S. Embassy at your destination. You should also discuss this with the program prior to your departure. Narcotic drug laws vary greatly from country to country.

Mental Health Issues Abroad

The stresses of study abroad can exacerbate or lead to recurrence of anxiety, depression, or eating disorders. If you are currently on prescription medication for these or similar conditions, now is not the time to go off your medication. Please complete the IWU Medical Information Form/Questionnaire online completely so that the International Office can work with our partners abroad to ensure adequate care is available should it become necessary.

Allergies/Special Conditions

If you take any needle-injected medication, have serious allergies, or any other condition under which you could become incapacitated, consider a medic-alert bracelet and have a card in your wallet in the native language explaining what should be done should you need assistance.

Food-Borne Illnesses

Many students abroad suffer from some sort of food-borne illness at some point in their travels. Diarrhea is generally the most common symptom. Diarrhea is the body's natural way of ridding itself of toxins. The problem occurs when you happen onto bacteria that your system is not used to. Usually, this does not last more than 5 days. If it lasts longer or seems serious, be sure to see a doctor. Temporary relief from diarrhea can be provided from products such as Imodium, but you should use this with caution.

More serious than traveler's diarrhea is food poisoning. If you become violently ill, cramped, and/or nauseous beyond the norm, it could be food poisoning and you should seek medical attention. Remember these tips to reduce your chances of food-borne illnesses:

- Avoid eating foods or drinking beverages purchased from street vendors or other establishments where unhygienic conditions are present.
- Avoid eating raw or undercooked meat and seafood.
- Avoid eating raw fruits (e.g., oranges, bananas, avocados) and vegetables unless you peel them yourself.

If handled properly, well-cooked and packaged foods usually are safe. Tap water, ice, unpasteurized milk, and dairy products are associated with increased risk. Safe beverages

include bottled carbonated beverages, hot tea or coffee, beer, wine, and water boiled or appropriately treated with iodine or chlorine.

Health Insurance and Emergency Assistance

A student participating in study abroad at IWU maintains registered student status at the University and, as such, must carry health insurance. The Student Health Plan, obtained through the University, covers you year-round and worldwide. IWU also maintains an International Travel Accident & Sickness insurance policy that provides accident and sickness coverage and that applies to all IWU students studying on approved study abroad programs. More information on that policy is provided below (p. 7).

If you or your parents maintain other medical insurance, be sure that the policy offers comparable coverage and make sure that you have the necessary information before departing. Your program may require you to purchase additional health insurance as well.

The IWU Student Health Plan is not designed to make direct payments to health care providers outside the United States. The International Travel plan also will not make direct payments for out-patient care, but may be able to make payment arrangements for hospitalizations—you will need to contact the plan's travel assistance provider to see if this service is available. It is therefore your responsibility to make arrangements for payment, save your receipts, and submit a claim for reimbursement when you return to the U.S. Your IWU student health plan identification card has the address and phone number of the Student Health Plan Office at IWU. Providers can contact that office directly in order to verify coverage and policy provisions.

Make sure that you understand your insurance coverage and how the system works. You should know how bills are paid in the case of a medical emergency and also for routine treatments. Should you require medical attention abroad, you need to have sufficient cash or credit card funds to make payment at the time of treatment, since the foreign physician and/or hospital may not be able to bill you. Be sure to obtain a receipt to submit with your insurance claim for reimbursement upon return to the United States. It might also be helpful to carry a few blank claim forms with you just in case.

EIIA International Travel (Accident and Sickness) Coverage

The University provides International Travel coverage through EIIA for students studying on approved study abroad programs. To access any of this coverage, you would contact Europ Assistance, the travel assistance company that administers the program. Study abroad participants are provided with a downloadable EIIA card and are asked to carry it with them as they travel.

At the time of this writing, coverage includes the following:

- \$100,000 medical accident and sickness coverage with \$0 deductible
- \$25,000 coverage for pre-existing conditions with \$0 deductible
- \$200,000 accidental death and dismemberment
- \$1,000,000 medically supervised repatriation
- \$1,000,000 emergency medical evacuation
- \$300/day in expenses for emergency family travel (limited to \$5,000/incident)
- \$100,000 repatriation of remains
- \$100,000 security evacuation coverage
- \$100,000 natural disaster evacuation coverage
- coverage for personal sojourn travel (for pre-/post-program travel)

To access any of this coverage, it is essential that you contact Europ Assistance, which organizes services for the EIIA/ policy, as soon as possible. **In case of an emergency, please contact Europ Assistance -- collect call +1 240 330-1551 (Group ID: C2EII, Activation Code: 150424).**

The International Travel policy also comes with Traveler's Assistance (see p. 10), which can help with lost document (e.g., passport, tickets, credit cards) replacement, emergency cash, translation services, and travel information. The International Travel insurance also

provides trip cancellation/trip interruption coverage (\$2000) for medical reasons and coverage for lost/stolen checked luggage (\$500); however, it does not cover trip cancellation/interruption for non-medical reasons, nor does it provide coverage for personal property in general. You should check with your family's property insurance to see if it covers loss or damage to your property while abroad. You can also purchase property and trip insurance from a variety of companies online.

Please note that the EIIA policy does include personal sojourn coverage for pre- and post-program travel; however, if you plan to do any personal travel beyond the program, you should make sure you have additional insurance coverage.

International Student Identity Card (ISIC)

International Student Identification Cards (ISIC) are available to IWU students for about \$25 a year. Some of the program sponsors include these in the program fees and some do not. Contact the International Office to find out the most up-to-date information.

Some benefits of the ISIC card include the following:

- Discounts: airfare, accommodation attractions and transportation
- ISICConnect: phone card/email/messaging
- Identification: Serves as a recognized form of identification in 106 countries
- 24-hour Hotline for Medical Assistance: 24-hour medical monitoring, medical evacuation, assistance arranging emergency medical payments, assistance with replacing lost or stolen prescriptions
- Additional 24-hour services: Help with lost or stolen travel documents, emergency message transmission, assistance arranging emergency fund transfer, interpreters
- Additional travel insurance

INFORMED CONSENT

IWU is concerned about the health and safety of its students studying abroad. We review and revise our approach and response plans and make every effort to anticipate health and safety issues. Yet it remains true that many of the risks in study abroad cannot be reasonably anticipated or prevented.

Students are required to acknowledge that

- (1) there are inherent risks in travel and work in international settings, particularly in developing countries;
- (2) the political, environmental, and cultural situations in these countries differ from those in the United States and at IWU;
- (3) that these situations are unpredictable and may become volatile and dangerous, often within a very short period of time; and
- (4) in such circumstances, evacuation may prove difficult or impossible.

Furthermore, students must understand that as foreigners, they should avoid situations that have the potential for becoming politically volatile or otherwise dangerous and to understand health risks associated with travel, including risks associated with motor vehicles and poor driving conditions.

Finally, all students must certify that they have weighed the dangers inherent in foreign travel, the risks presented to their own health and wellbeing, and their personal desire to further their education by studying abroad and have concluded that the risks are acceptable and are outweighed by the desire to participate in study abroad. Students acknowledge that there may be additional factors that may not have been brought to their attention when they sign Release, Assumption of Risk, and Indemnification Agreement online.

TAKING PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR SAFETY

Every student going abroad is responsible for becoming familiar with the Department of State website (www.travel.state.gov) and the information available there. Before leaving, read the Consular Information Sheet for your host country and register yourself with the appropriate U.S. Embassy using the Department of State's STEP program, accessed via the Department's website. For your safety, do the same while abroad for all countries you plan to visit.

Be Alert

- Be alert to your surroundings and the people with whom you have contact.
- Be wary of people who seem overly friendly or interested in you.
- Learn which areas of town should be avoided. If you find yourself in uncomfortable surroundings, act confident. Do not be afraid to say "no" or to call out for help if you feel threatened.
- Be prepared for an emergency—have phone numbers of program contacts handy at all times and memorize the 911 equivalent and your program/resident director's cell number.
- Know how to reach the police in the country in which you are traveling.
- Have sufficient funds or a credit card on hand for emergencies—especially for purchasing a train or airline ticket, or medical care.

Blend In

- Keep a low profile and try not to make yourself conspicuous by dress, speech, or behavior in ways that might identify you as a target. Do not draw attention to yourself either through expensive dress, personal accessories (cameras, radios, sunglasses, etc.), or careless behavior. Returned students suggest avoiding clothing with large logos and talking more quietly than you would in the U.S.
- Integrate yourself as fully as possible into the local community.
- Be sensitive about what you photograph.

Stay Informed and in Touch

- Review U.S. State Department Travel Advisories concerning the countries or region to which you will be traveling.
- Keep informed through radio, TV, newspapers, and the Internet.
- Register at and know the location of your embassy.
- Make sure the resident director, host family, or foreign university official who is assigned the responsibility for your welfare always knows where and how to contact you in an emergency. Leave a schedule and itinerary if you are traveling, even if only overnight.

Avoid Theft

- Keep valuable items in a safe place—lock up valuables in hostel/hotel safe when touring a city.
- Don't take nonessential items such as expensive jewelry abroad with you. If you can't replace it, don't bring it.
- Don't keep all of your documents and money in one suitcase or location on your person.
- Don't flash large amounts of money: carry small bills or credit/debit cards whenever possible.
- Be discrete in displaying your passport when necessary.

- Carry your purse or wallet so that it cannot be easily taken, especially in public transportation and other crowded public places.
- Do not carry anything valuable in the back pocket of your backpack or pants.
- Avoid situations and locations popularly identified with tourists/Americans.
- Get in and out of airports, train, buses, and subway stations as promptly as possible.
- Avoid traveling or going out alone.
- Do not leave your bags unattended (even briefly!) in an airport, bus, or train station.

Be Smart

- Avoid crowds, protest rallies, or other potentially volatile situations.
- Be wary of unexpected packages and stay clear of unattended luggage or parcels in airports, train stations, or other areas of uncontrolled public access.
- Consume alcohol in a responsible and culturally-appropriate fashion.
- Don't use illegal drugs.
- This is still real life: consider the consequences of your behavior.

Emergencies

To be as prepared as possible, memorize your host country's emergency number (the equivalent to 911) as soon as possible. Also memorize your program/resident director's cell or other emergency contact number. It helps to carry additional numbers with you, but you need to be prepared in case your bag is stolen. In-country authorities and staff should be the first calls you make, followed by calls to your family and IWU's International Office (309-556-2770) or emergency number (309-556-1111). Campus Safety maintains contact information for the director and members of the administration and will alert relevant staff of your emergency so that we can work to assist you.

Travel Assistance

Through the EIIA International Travel policy Europ Assistance, you have access to a wealth of resources to help you prepare for your travels and to aid you if you have difficulties while abroad. We strongly encourage you to visit www.sevencorners.com/EIIA before your travels and carry EIIA insurance ID card with you at all times.

AlertTraveler

AlertTraveler is mobile app that allows you access to country and city information as you travel, offers safety and security alerts to let you know of any events that could potentially impact you while abroad, and provides an instant and easy way for you to check in with IWU if there is a major incident where you are. It also allows us to reach out to you when there is an emergency, both to check that you are okay and to see if we can offer assistance.

One month before the start of your study abroad program, an AlertTraveler panel will appear in your abroad.iwu.edu home page. When the panel appears, click "Generate" to create your password. Then you will use your email address and generated password, as shown on this panel, to log in to the AlertTraveler mobile app, which you can download for free on the App Store and Google Play Store.

There are some very short instructional videos in you abroad.iwu.edu account as well, in the Learning Content section

COMMUNICATION

TECHNOLOGY

Email

IWU and the International Office will use only your IWU email address for email communication. You must keep your IWU account open and clear to accept messages and check it regularly. You will probably have less access to the Internet abroad than you are used to; try to get into the habit of using email less frequently now, before you leave campus, to help you transition.

Cell Phones

Many programs require that participants purchase or rent a local pay-as-you-go cell phone for emergency use: this is a good, low-cost option for local calls and texts. Phones can be rented from companies such as PicCell (www.piccellwireless.com) and Cellhire (www.cellhire.com), or your on-site program staff can direct you to a local retailer. However, if your current phone is unlocked, you might consider purchasing a local SIM card, and data use.

If your U.S. phone is not unlocked or you prefer to stay on your U.S. calling plan, make sure that your U.S. service provider has an agreement with a provider in your host country (e.g., that roaming is allowed). If your phone will work overseas, do keep in mind that all of your calls—both back home and to local numbers—will be treated as international roaming calls. You may switch to an international calling plan, which will generally give you reasonable rates calling overseas, but poor rates calling locally.

To avoid costly roaming calls, set your smart phone to airplane mode and use it only when wireless is available. This approach is good for day-to-day use, but make sure that in an emergency you can contact local staff and be contacted by them.

WiFi Communication

Current WiFi technology offers a number of ways in which you can remain in contact. If you plan to take a laptop, tablet, or smart phone with you, you can connect with family and friends using messaging services, such as Facebook Messenger, Viber, and WhatsApp. Programs such as Skype and FaceTime also allow users to make video calls using a WiFi connection.

COMMUNICATION ADVICE

Communicating With Your Family

Modern communication technology allows students to keep in closer touch with family and friends back home than ever before. There is a good side to this, but it is possible to overdo it so that you focus too much on home to the detriment of your experience abroad. Previous study abroad students have reported that excessive Internet use can detract from study abroad, leading students to focus on what they are “missing” rather than on what they are experiencing. Consider limiting your contact with home by setting specific times for communicating with people back home. You might also think about writing frequent letters and postcards, which can be reread and kept as a record of your time abroad. Letters allow you to keep in touch while giving you space to grow in your encounter with a new culture.

Family Visits

Plan family visits to your study abroad site during official vacation periods when you are free to spend time with them and not during the academic session. Visits by family or friends do not count as acceptable excuses for missing class sessions or exams.

Family Emergencies

Since you will be far away from home for an extended period of time, it would be wise to discuss your plans in the event that a family member becomes ill or dies. It is also important to consider what your family would do if you were to become seriously ill or injured while abroad. We strongly advise that before you leave the United States, at least one parent or guardian obtains a current passport to use in case of emergency.

Problem-Solving

At some points in your sojourn abroad, you are bound to encounter challenging situations. It may be something as simple as lack of Internet or computer access, or an issue with your host family or roommate. When this happens, your natural instinct may prompt you to phone your parents for advice or just to vent. But before you pick up the phone or send an email, first think through the following:

- Are my expectations realistic given the culture in which I am living?
- Am I experiencing a temporary frustration and feeling the need to vent, or is there a significant issue here?
- Do my parents understand the cultural context in which I am operating?
- Have I made serious attempts to resolve the situation in consultation with my on-site director?
- What, realistically, can my parents do to help resolve the issue that I cannot do myself?

Too often, we see an ineffective cycle of communication that looks like this:



A more effective method of problem-solving involves working directly with on-site staff:



The International Office wants to help you have the best study abroad experience possible and is always ready to assist you in the event of emergency, serious academic or personal issues, or health concerns. To help us help you, take responsibility for addressing your concerns first with on-site staff before bringing your parents and us into the process.

Change of Address

You need to register a temporary change of address with the Bloomington post office so that your mail can be forwarded to your home or abroad address while you are away. Please note that only first class mail will be forwarded free of charge.

Income Taxes

Students who will be abroad in the spring may normally request an extension of the deadline for filing federal income tax. The best advice is to contact the American Consulate or Embassy in your host country for information on your tax obligations; they may have 1040 forms. You can file from abroad if you make arrangements with your parents to send you the necessary state and federal forms and other documentation.

TRAVEL LOGISTICS

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Passports

You should apply for a passport immediately if you do not already have one. If your passport was issued to you before the age of 16, it will need to be updated. If you have a valid passport, please make sure it is valid for at least 6 months beyond the last date of your program. If you apply for a passport, plan on it taking up to 10 weeks (2-week expedited service is available, but is significantly more expensive). When your passport arrives, make sure you check it for errors (spelling, etc.).

You will need a certified copy of your birth certificate to get a passport. See www.vitalchek.com if you need to order a copy. Passport applications are available on the State Department Website (travel.state.gov/passport/) but need to be submitted in person to a U.S. post office or county clerk's office.

Visas

A visa is official permission to enter a country for a certain amount of time and is granted by the government of that country. For example, if you are going to the UK for no more than 6 months and will not be participating in an internship, you will be given a visa when you pass through passport control in the UK. For most other study abroad locations, if you will be in country more than 90 days, you will need to apply for and receive a visa before you leave the United States. Visa regulations and application procedures vary by country. For details see travel.state.gov/visa/ or the embassy or consulate website for the country in which you will be studying. In addition, keep the following in mind:

- You will need a number of documents to get a visa. Check the appropriate consular Website carefully.
- For many countries, you will need to apply in-person at the nearest consulate.
- You may need a statement from a physician verifying your health. Some students may need an HIV or tuberculosis test.
- You may need to provide a police or FBI background check. If so, you can request one through your local police department or an FBI-approved channeler. (See www.fbi.gov for a list.)
- You may be required to submit proof of sufficient funds, such as a bank statement or a notarized letter from your bank or your parent's bank.

If you live far from the consulate that serves you, you may wish to use a visa expeditor service, if that is allowed. Expeditors will deliver application documents to the consulate for a fee (usually \$75-\$100).

Note to non-U.S. Citizens: Visa procedures and customs requirements are different for students holding non-U.S. passports. Contact the International Office if you do not hold a U.S. passport, particularly if you are planning to study outside the United States for more than one semester.

ARRANGEMENTS

Air Travel

IWU will arrange air transportation only for participants in the IWU London and IWU Spain programs. Otherwise, you are responsible for making your own flight arrangements if a group flight is not offered by your program. Good Websites to check are STA Travel (www.statravel.com) and Student Universe (www.studentuniverse.com), in addition to the standard travel Websites. Some programs have a specified arrival time and place, so that all program participants can be met as a group by program staff. If this is the case, it is essential that you make your travel arrangements accordingly.

Book your travel as soon as you know when and where you have to arrive and when you have a good estimate of your return date. Purchase a roundtrip ticket, and make sure to verify the charges for changing your return flight before making your purchase. Most group flights offered by our affiliated programs have a low change fee.

PACKING SUGGESTIONS

GENERAL ADVICE

- **TRAVEL LIGHT!** Carry your fully packed bags around the block once, and then see what you can live without. Take comfortable, versatile clothing and shoes.
- Mark all luggage, inside and out, with your name and address.
- Mark your bags in some distinctive way, so they are easily identifiable.
- Know the luggage size and weight limits for your airline.
- Check Appendix 1 (p. 25) in the back of this handbook for some further reminders.

Medicine and Toiletries

- Prescription medicine (carry a copy of all prescriptions)
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Soap and Shampoo
- Comb and brush
- Sunscreen, moisturizers, cosmetics
- Deodorant
- First-aid kit
- Contraceptives and condoms
- Aspirin
- Tissues
- Tampons/pads
- Razors/blades
- Extra eyeglasses and sunglasses
- Extra contact lenses and cleaning solutions
- Tweezers, nail files/polish, etc.
- Linens (if not provided by program site)
- Towel/washcloth

Gift Suggestions

- Clothing and items with IWU logo
- Cookbooks with American recipes (pancakes, chocolate chip-cookies, etc.)
- Non-perishable foods (maple syrup, peanut butter, salt-water taffy, etc.)
- Baseball caps
- Cassettes or CDs of American music (jazz, folk, pop, rock, etc.)
- Calendars with U.S. scenery
- Pen-and-ink drawings or professional quality photographs of your area
- U.S.-style paraphernalia (things from Disney World, Warner brothers, NBA, NFL, etc.)
- Hand-made crafts or jewelry (esp. Native-American)

Documents

- Passport and visa(s) + photocopies
- Tickets and rail passes
- International Student Identity Card
- Driver’s License (U.S. or International)
- Money belt or neck wallet
- Cash, travelers’ checks, credit/debit cards, calling card, etc.
- Copies of the above for reporting lost or stolen cards and traveler’s checks
- Acceptance letter from program

CROSSING CULTURES

The degree to which you are willing to learn about and adjust to your host culture will in large part determine the extent of your ability to function well while abroad. You may return to IWU as an expert on your site and culture, and we hope that developing this level of intercultural competence is one of your goals for your time abroad.

Take a moment now to list what you’re most looking forward to about study abroad:

- (1) _____
- (2) _____
- (3) _____

Think about how you’ve handled change before: what strategies work well for you in stressful situations and transitions?

- (1) _____
- (2) _____
- (3) _____

Refer to these notes once you’re abroad and compare your thoughts now with your experiences then.

One thing you can do to prepare yourself is to learn as much as possible about your country before you go. Refer to Appendix 2 (p. 26) for a list of questions about your host country. Most of us would probably have a hard time answering these questions without a fair amount of research, and yet many people you'll meet abroad will be able to answer these questions about the United States. Take the time to educate yourself about your host country: start with guidebooks and then pick up some books, magazine articles, and newspapers on the history, literature, and performing arts of your host country.

You should also be prepared to answer tough questions about U.S. foreign policy. Using the library and the Internet, read newspapers and magazines that cover international affairs in depth. Include foreign news sources to expose yourself to other perspectives; the BBC can be a good place to start. You especially need to be broadly informed about the situation in Iraq and the Middle East. You do not want to arrive abroad poorly informed or be caught off-guard by an encounter with viewpoints sharply different from your own. People will have strong opinions and expect to engage you in dialogue. Don't take these discussions personally, but do be prepared to encounter criticism of U.S. policies. Recognize such discussions as valuable learning opportunities.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Coping With Stress

Along the way, you may react strongly to the psychological disorientation most people experience when living for an extended period of time in a different culture. You can think of this disorientation, commonly known as *culture shock*, as the occupational hazard of overseas living that you need to move through in order to experience another country and culture in depth.

Whether this is yet another chapter in your history of living abroad or the first time you have been outside the United States, you will at some point hit a challenging cultural barrier. For some people the bout with culture shock is brief and hardly noticeable. These are usually people whose personalities provide them with a kind of natural immunity. For many of us, however, culture shock is something we'll have to deal with over a period of at least several months and possibly throughout the entire time we are abroad.

Cultural adjustment progresses slowly. Some students quit their study abroad experience (either literally by coming home or figuratively by shutting down) while others work through it, adjusting and adapting to the challenges around them. You may find that you cycle back and forth between some of the stages described below. Of course no one can predict the exact course of your time abroad—and we wouldn't want to try! We do hope that knowing that cross-cultural communication is difficult and tiring at times, and immensely rewarding at other times, will help you during the inevitable ups and downs of your study abroad experience.

Stages of Cultural Adjustment

1. Initial Euphoria. Many students begin their sojourn abroad with great expectations and a positive mindset. At this point, anything new is intriguing and exciting and the similarities stand out most. You may be impressed with how people everywhere are really very much alike. This period of euphoria may last from a week or two to a month, but doesn't last for long.

2. Irritation and Hostility (a.k.a. *culture shock*). Gradually, your focus may turn from the similarities to the differences. And these differences, which suddenly seem to be everywhere, are troubling. Culture shock happens when the differences are narrowed down to a few of the most troubling and are then blown up out of proportion. (For Americans, standards of cleanliness, attitudes toward punctuality, and the value of human life tend to loom especially large.)

By now, you may be experiencing acute distress and tend to blame the host culture for the natural difficulties inherent in any cross-cultural encounter. This is the stage generally identified as culture shock, and you may experience any of the symptoms below:

- Persistent homesickness
- Psychosomatic illnesses
- Persistent boredom
- Unprovoked fits of weeping
- Withdrawal
- Loss of the ability to work effectively
- Need for excessive sleep
- Hostility towards host nationals
- Compulsive eating
- Stereotyping of host nationals
- Compulsive drinking
- Family tension and conflict
- Irritability

Not everyone will experience a severe case of culture shock, nor will all the symptoms be observed. Many people ride through culture shock relatively easily, only now and again experiencing the more serious reactions. On the other hand, if you never find yourself feeling uncomfortable, you may be insulating yourself too much from your host culture.

There are things you can do to minimize cultural stress:

- Accept the fact that you will make mistakes and give yourself permission to fail. If you haven't already, stumbling through your first few days with your host family or navigating the unfamiliar bureaucracy of your host university is a great way to learn to drop the ball with grace. A healthy sense of humor can be invaluable.
- Learn as much as possible about where you are. By looking consciously for logical reasons behind what seems difficult, confusing, or threatening, you will reinforce the positive attitude that in fact there are explanations behind what you observe in the host culture.
- Don't succumb to the temptation to disparage the host culture. Resist making jokes and comments such as, "Well, what else would you expect from [fill in nationality] people?" intended to illustrate the stupidity of the local population, and don't hang around Americans who do.
- Find your cultural wizard. Identify a host national (your resident director, a faculty member, a neighbor, a friendly acquaintance) who is sympathetic and understanding, and talk with that person about specific situations and about your feelings related to them. Talking with Americans can be helpful, but only to a limited extent. Your problem lies in your relationship to the host culture.
- Above all, have faith—in yourself, in the essential good will of your hosts, and in the positive outcome of the experience. Know that the above responses can occur, that culture shock is in some degree inevitable, and that reactions are emotional and not easily subject to rational management.

3. Gradual Adjustment. This step may come so gradually that, at first, you will be unaware it is happening. Once you begin to orient yourself and are able to interpret some of the subtle cultural clues, the culture seems more familiar. You become more comfortable in it and feel less isolated from it. Gradually, too, your sense of humor returns and you realize the situation is not hopeless after all.

4. Adaptation or Biculturalism. Cultural adaptation will result in an ability to function in two cultures with confidence. You will even find a great many customs, ways of doing and saying things, and personal attitudes to which you have in some degree acculturated—and which you will definitely miss when you pack up and "come home."

RETURNING TO THE UNITED STATES

Before you know it, it's time to head back to the United States. Unfortunately, leaving a new home, new friends, and a new culture you have grown accustomed to makes returning home quite a bit more complicated than just stepping off the plane. Some things to be prepared for upon re-entry to the United States include the following.

Reverse Culture Shock

"For the past month, all I could think about was coming home and seeing my friends and family. Now I can't wait to go back. No one here understands me."

If you find yourself feeling this way when you return from study abroad, you're definitely not alone. You're dealing with feeling out of place in your own country, or experiencing a sense of disorientation—and you thought you'd left that behind when you packed up to come home. While everything is familiar, you feel different. Even walking through the airport and hearing American English spoken can be a very surreal experience. You'll likely find yourself feeling and sounding critical of the United States for a while.

Re-Establishing Relationships

People you were close with when you left, even those you kept in good contact with, will be separated from you by the unique experiences you have had in each other's absence. However, this separation is certainly not permanent, and new experiences can make for some very interesting conversation. Just keep in mind that since both of you have changed, you won't necessarily interact in the same way.

Sharing Your Experience

Since only you have had your experience, there is no possible way that anyone can fully understand what you have gone through. While people will be interested in what you did abroad, no one will be quite as interested as you. But there are ways to leverage your experience—whether through volunteering to mentor a new international student at IWU, participating in panel discussions during study abroad information sessions, or sharing relevant experiences during class.

Readjusting

Fitting your new life into your old one can be frustrating. Since every country has a unique approach to life, it can be difficult if you're used to operating within cultural mode, or have made that approach to life a part of you, to return to the United States where the rules are different. It's easy to become frustrated with aspects of U.S. culture that no longer make sense to you. Try to keep things in perspective. Bear in mind that every country has its flaws and its strengths.

Just as it is possible to dramatize the glory of your return home, it is also possible once you've returned home to over-romanticize your experience abroad. Home is not the impenetrable haven you might remember it as at times, and life would still not be flawless, even if you were back in the host country you left behind.

A few things might make re-entry a little easier: Talk to others who have studied abroad, keep in touch with those you met abroad, use the emotional momentum to continue cultural interactions, and be patient with yourself and others. Savor the rare privilege of having two homes!

RACE AND GENDER ISSUES ABROAD

GENDER

The roles of men and women in society vary greatly from culture to culture. To learn about things like dating, gender discrimination, women's safety, and other such topics, you should consult guidebooks or talk to people who have experience in the culture. But here is some basic advice for men and women.

Perception of American Women

Let's face it—popular culture hasn't helped the international image of American women. In many countries and cultures, American women are stereotyped as morally or sexually "loose." If you wear clothing inappropriate to the culture, move too quickly in a relationship, or flirt overzealously, you will not help that perception. If anything, behave conservatively at first until you figure things out.

Harassment

In the Midwest, you seldom see men whistling, hooting, or staring at women. Such incidents are generally far more common in many other cultures, though of course not all. Female students who have spent time in Jerusalem report being stared at or shouted at as they walked by. In that culture, it is inappropriate for men to behave in such a manner, and they seldom do so to local women. Here's the key: ask local women what to do. They can teach you a few choice phrases to yell, and it works.

Students who study in southern Europe or Latin America may have different experiences. They often receive lots of attention and harassment, but so may their female host national friends. In that culture, it is expected. Returned students advise women studying in these regions to observe the local women and learn to ignore the unwanted attention.

For more detailed information on resources available to you if you experience sexual harassment, see the section on Assault, Harassment Issues, and Title IX (p. 21).

Dating

If you want to date, figure out the norms of your host culture. Ask a host family member, a local friend, or another host national with whom you feel comfortable. Women and men should generally be more cautious than in the United States. Find out the laws governing sexual assault at your site. In some countries, any sexual encounter that happens after a woman has agreed to enter a man's room is considered consensual, and the concept of date rape is unknown. Other cultures may have trouble understanding the American concept of casually dating several people at once; to them, if you date, you are in a relationship. Sure, you can break up and start dating someone else as soon as you want, but if you date two people at once, you are cheating. The point is to realize that there are differences and to understand the expectations of your host culture.

What to Do

Be careful at first, and figure things out with the advice of a local friend. Learn the local laws. Learn the differences between what you are accustomed to at home and the way your host culture works. Respect the culture—you are not there to change it; you are there to learn about it.

The bottom line? Have fun, experience life, but understand and respect the differences between your home culture and host culture.

UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS ABROAD

Societal attitudes toward race and sexual orientation vary considerably across cultures, and IWU students studying abroad inevitably bump into them. Those bumps can be jarring, particularly if students go abroad with unrealistic expectations about how they will be perceived by the host culture. You may need to take a deep breath from time to time and remind yourself that this is a learning experience. You'll be learning a great deal about a foreign culture and about your own identity in juxtaposition to it.

Cultural Reactions to Color

When asked, "What were the biggest differences between your experiences as a person of color abroad as opposed to your experience in the USA?" University of Iowa student Natasha Robinson wrote, "It seems that racism is a little more noticeable in the USA than in Spain. I deal with it on a daily basis [here], but in Spain it seemed that the people reacted to my color due to never seeing an African American in real life, rather than the prejudiced attitudes that some people have about African Americans here."

James Brook's article "U.S. Blacks Find Visits to Brazil Bittersweet" in the *New York Times* (June 1994) explains,

"On and off campus, a semester here gives African Americans a rapid introduction to the complexity of Brazil's race relations. On one level, there are the daily racial slights in a country where the average income of blacks is less than half that of whites. In elegant shopping centers, store clerks often drag their feet in waiting on black customers. At currency-exchange shops a counter attendant will look suspiciously at a young black woman with dollars. 'His whole face changed when I opened my mouth,' said Rashida Sykes, [a] Spelman student here. Addison Le Platte, a business student from Morehouse College, put it bluntly: 'You move into English when you don't want to be bothered.'"

White students traveling to predominantly non-white cultures may be challenged by the unfamiliarity of belonging to a visible minority. Students should seek guidance from program staff and learn how to manage the transition, particularly in cultures where open staring is acceptable.

Hung T. Quan of the University of Montana describes his study in Hong Kong:

"In essence, I have come to understand the deeper implications of my standing as an Asian American. Because of my experiences in both cultures, I cannot feel completely comfortable in either culture, but belong instead in the interface between the two of them. I consider this realization as the most valuable result of my experiences in Hong Kong. In light of my experiences, my advice to any student who is considering going abroad is to do it. Regardless of whether you are a first, second, or 'nth' generation immigrant. I feel cultural identity and roots are important facts that need to be explored."

LGBTQQ Issues

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, queer, or questioning (LGBTQQ) people experience oppression everywhere in the world, though there are different levels of acceptance in different countries. Before you go, it is important to reflect on the culturally based ideas and definitions of sexual identity and consider carefully how your identity as a LGBTQQ person may affect your relationships with host nationals, your cultural adjustment, and your overall education abroad experience. Part of your pre-departure preparations should include reflecting on the larger context of acting on your LGBTQQ identity while abroad. As a visitor, what role do you or should you have in the host culture? Does your right to be LGBTQQ in the U.S. conflict with your host country's religious or cultural values and traditions? How will you reconcile your human rights with the cultural values of your host society? Are there safety or legal considerations you should be aware of?

Familiarize yourself with the laws of your host country. Homosexuality is illegal in many countries, and carries the death penalty in some. In some countries, safety may require you to hide your sexual identity. Inform yourself about country-specific laws on age of consent,

traveling with print or other materials on sexual orientation, and similar issues. If necessary, are you willing to hide your sexual orientation? Finding out about the laws of the host country, would you reconsider your options? If you are “out” in the United States, reflect on what it means to leave behind a support system of friends and family. Being LGBTQQ abroad has been described as some as a second coming out. How will you re-establish your identity overseas?

Students may wish to contact the president of the IWU Pride Alliance to discuss these issues. In addition, consider the following resources:

- www.iglhrc.org/
International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission gives information about current events and laws for specific countries
- www.ilga.org/
The International Gay and Lesbian Association has a country-by-country listing of laws pertaining to LGBT issues and same-sex behavior
- www.gayguide.net/index2.html
Country-by-country information obtained from returnees about climate
- www.damron.com/
LGBT travel guides

ASSAULT, HARASSMENT ISSUES, AND TITLE IX

IWU, in compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972, prohibits sex discrimination in all of its programs and activities—including when students study abroad, either on an IWU or an affiliated program.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex/gender in any of the institution’s programs or activities. Broadly speaking, Title IX prohibits sexual misconduct, including sexual discrimination, violence or harassment, or any behavior of a sexual nature that is experienced as unwelcome.

Sex discrimination (also known as gender discrimination) is behavior or action that denies or limits a person’s ability to benefit from, fully participate in educational programs or activities or employment opportunities because of a person’s sex or perceived gender identification.

Sexual harassment can take many forms: unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, threats or use of intimidation to coerce sex, spying or peeping, and other verbal, written, physical, or nonverbal conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment can occur between members of the opposite sex and members of the same sex, and both males and females can engage in conduct that is considered sexual harassment.

Sexual violence refers to any physical act of a sexual nature perpetrated against an individual without consent or when an individual is unable to freely give consent. Consent is informed, freely given, and mutually understood; it requires an affirmative act or statement by each participant. Consent is not passive. Sexual violence can happen to anyone regardless of gender, race, age, socio-economic status, or religion. Although many people believe that most sexual assaults are committed by strangers, the reality is that assaults are more likely to be perpetrated by someone you know—a friend, date, neighbor, or relative.

It is important to remember that the U.S. concept of sexual harassment is very different from other parts of the world. What we consider sexual harassment may in other cultures be part of the cultural norms of how men and women interact. Sexual harassment abroad can take the shape of cat-calls, staring, gestures, and usually is more uncomfortable than unsafe. If you feel you are being harassed, it is best to try to remove yourself from the situation as quickly as possible, report the incident to program staff, and seek assistance and support immediately.

Protecting Yourself Abroad

It is important to remember that being the subject of sexual misconduct is never your fault. It happens for the same reasons other types of crime and violence occurs. It is not driven by sexual desire. Below are some tips to minimize the risk of becoming a victim abroad:

- Understand cultural norms. Cultures vary widely in their definition of gender norms, their definition of acceptable sexual behavior, their legal response to crimes, and the resources provided to victims of sexual misconduct. Research your host country before you depart and become familiar with cultural norms there. Pathways to Safety International website (<https://pathwaystosafety.org/>) can help provide information on local cultures, laws and other travel considerations for your host country.
- Drink in moderation and avoid drug use. Intoxication impairs judgment and reduces your capacity to protect yourself. When you go out, make sure you are with friends and keep track of each other. Never consume a beverage that has been left unattended.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Walk confidently and act like you know where you are going. Avoid poorly lit, deserted areas and try not to walk alone, especially at night.
- Take cues from locals. Look at how they dress and interact with strangers. You want to be able to express your individuality, but be aware that the way you dress may attract unwanted attention.
- If you have to wait somewhere alone, like in a train station, stay near families or, if you are a woman, near other women. This may help keep you from being harassed or approached.
- Trust your instincts: do not do anything you are not comfortable with.
- Check whether self-defense items, such as mace or pepper spray, are legal in your host country. In certain countries, such items are considered weapons and may be illegal to carry.
- Know the emergency number (comparable to 911) for your host country and carry a wallet-sized card with emergency numbers, including your program's 24-hour phone number, with you at all times.

Resources

Students on study abroad who experience sexual misconduct involving other students, faculty, staff, administrators, or third parties should contact Associate Dean of Students Darcy Greder or another administrator at IWU. Additional information on sexual misconduct, harassment, and consent can be found on the IWU "Sexual Assault Outreach" website (<https://www.iwu.edu/notalone/>).

Additional resources and guidelines on grievance procedures, as well as assistance, can be obtained from the following sources:

- IWU Dean of Students Office
- IWU Counseling and Consultation Services
- IWU Chaplain's Office
- On-site staff and program directors
- Pathwaystosafety (<https://pathwaystosafety.org/get-help-now/>). Pathwaystosafety has a toll-free international crisis hotline (+833-SAFE-833 (833-723-3833)).
- The University of North Carolina's Rape Crisis Intervention Pathfinder has an online list of international rape crisis hotlines (<http://www.ibiblio.org/rcip/northcarolina.html>)

Any incidents abroad that are considered to be in violation of IWU's Title IX policy will be reviewed and adjudicated in accordance with published rules and regulations, and IWU reserves the right to impose sanctions on IWU students found to be in violation of University policy.

ANTI-AMERICANISM ABROAD

Given current world events and the role America has played in them, a major concern of students planning to study abroad—and of their parents—is the reception they will receive as Americans. You will likely find that host-country nationals will want to engage you in political discussions: Don't assume, however, that such discussions are driven by anti-Americanism or are initiated with malice. Though the people you meet may have much more strongly felt opinions than ones we experience in the United States, their motives in opening a political conversation with you will much more likely be driven by curiosity and the pleasure of intellectual give-and-take.

Amy Johnson, in "Students Share Foreign Perspectives on War" (*Transitions Abroad*, April 2003), examines the fear over anti-Americanism and quotes returned students on their actual experiences. One such student said,

"From the moment I stepped off the plane, my first taxi driver wanted to know what I have to say about the war. . . . Occasionally my German friends tease me about supporting Bush or being a warmonger, but beyond that it seems that the German people are really more interested in hearing my own opinions."

"As for the issue of safety," writes Johnson, "students generally agree that the citizens of most countries, regardless of whether they or their administrations support the war, are able to distinguish between American foreign policy and Americans."

Admittedly, some of the students Johnson spoke with experienced less warm receptions—but even then they agree that they felt people were open to their opinions and distinguished between individual Americans and government policy:

"People [in Morocco] are sensitive to my concerns as an American, but they tend to be a bit closed-minded regarding their viewpoints. . . . While people are open to my point of view, they seem to condemn America without sufficient arguments. They have a hard time stepping back and looking at issues as a whole. Overall, my experience has been awesome and I'm learning a great deal about how others view America."

The individual goodwill and curiosity that students describe experiencing does not, however, obviate the need to exercise caution and be prepared for an emergency. As discussed in the Informed Consent and Taking Personal Responsibility sections (p. 9), you should try to blend in rather than to stand out and should avoid politically charged gatherings—political rallies or other potentially volatile situations. Moreover, there are several procedures that should be planned in case of emergency, such as creating telephone trees and setting established meeting points between the on-site coordinators and the students in any given city.

Though we don't want to downplay the danger of politically motivated violence, the reality is that the greatest dangers to students abroad are not terrorists, thieves, or people motivated by anti-Americanism: The greatest dangers lie in students' own risky behaviors—drinking to excess, not paying attention to local customs and laws, practicing unsafe sex, and engaging in risky physical activities.

APPENDIX 1

PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

- Have you turned in all required forms to the International Office?
 - Course Approval Form
 - Statement of Responsibility and Authorization (Waiver)
 - Medical information Form
 - Letter of Understanding
- Have you turned in the Study Abroad Financial Aid form to the Financial Aid Office?
- Do you have a valid passport?
- Have you applied for and received any required visas?
- Have you gotten an ISIC card? Will your program provide it?
- Have you made two copies of your passport, credit cards, driver's license, and/or other important documents—one to take with you and one to leave at home?
- Have you finalized your flight arrangements?
- Have you packed this handbook, course registration info, and an IWU phone/email directory?
- Have you made calling arrangements (phone card, VoIP, etc.)?
- Does the International Office have your parent's emergency contact phone/email info?
- Have you set up your IWU email to be forwarded to another email address? Have you made provisions to check your IWU email address?
- Have you sent us your abroad mailing address? (You may not get this until you are abroad but are to send it to us when you do know it.)
- Do you have an emergency credit card and/or other forms of money you need?
- Do you understand your insurance coverage?

APPENDIX 2

LEARNING ABOUT YOUR HOST COUNTRY

One of the best safety precautions you can take is to educate yourself about the culture and history of your host country. This will not only help you have a more enjoyable experience abroad, but it may also prevent you from unknowingly putting yourself in uncomfortable or dangerous situations. Try to answer the following questions and find out how prepared you are! If you don't know the answers, you may find them in a country guidebook, which has sections about the history, culture, and politics of each country, or on a Website about your country.

- 1) How many people who are prominent in the affairs (politics, athletics, religion, the arts, etc.) of your host country can you name?
- 2) Who are the country's national heroes and heroines?
- 3) Can you recognize the national anthem?
- 4) Are there other languages spoken besides the dominant language? What are the social and political implications of language usage?
- 5) What is the predominant religion? Is it a state religion? What are the most important religious observances and ceremonies? How do members of the predominant religion feel about other religions?
- 6) What is the history of the relationship between this country and the United States?
- 7) What are the most common forms of marriage ceremonies and celebrations?
- 8) What is the general attitude toward divorce? Is it legal? What about extramarital relations? Polygamy?
- 9) What is the attitude toward homosexuality?
- 10) What is the attitude toward contraception?
- 11) What are the laws and attitudes toward gambling? Drinking? Drugs?
- 12) Is the price asked for merchandise fixed or are customers expected to bargain? How is bargaining conducted? If, as a customer, you touch or handle the merchandise or sale, will the storekeeper think you are knowledgeable, inconsiderate, within your rights, or completely outside your rights?
- 13) How do people organize their daily activities? What is the normal meal schedule? Is there a daytime rest period? What is the customary time for visiting friends?
- 14) What foods are most popular and how are they prepared?
- 15) What are taboos in this society?
- 16) What is the usual dress for women? For men? Are slacks or shorts worn? If so, on what occasions? Do teenagers wear jeans?
- 17) What are the special privileges of age and/or sex?
- 18) If you are invited to dinner, should you arrive early? On time? Late? If late, how late?

- 19) On what occasions would you present gifts to or accept gifts from local people? What kind of gifts would you exchange?
- 20) How do people greet one another? Shake hands? Embrace or kiss? How do they leave one another? What does any variation from the usual greeting or leaving signify?
- 21) How long do people talk when they use the telephone? Do friends call each other frequently to chat? How do people feel about having other people make long-distance (overseas) calls from their private house phones? What about local calls?
- 22) What are the important holidays? How are they observed?
- 23) What are the favorite leisure and recreational activities of adults? Teenagers?
- 24) What sports are popular?
- 25) What kinds of television programs are shown? What social purposes do they serve?
- 26) What is the normal work schedule? How does it accommodate environmental or other conditions?
- 27) How will your financial position and living conditions compare with those of the majority of the locals?
- 28) Are typical families nuclear or extended? At what age do people normally move out of their parents' home?
- 29) What games do children play? Where do children congregate?
- 30) What kind of local public transportation is available? Do all classes of people use it?
- 31) Who has the right of way in traffic: vehicles, animals, pedestrians?
- 32) Is military training compulsory?
- 33) Are the largest circulation newspapers generally friendly in their attitude toward the United States?
- 34) How many people have emigrated from this country to the United States? Other countries? Are many doing so at present?
- 35) What kinds of health services are available? Where are they located?
- 36) Is education free? Compulsory? In schools, are children segregated by race? By caste? By class? By sex? What kinds of schools are considered best: public, private, or parochial? In schools, how important is learning by rote? How are children disciplined in school?
- 37) Where are the important universities of the country? If university education is sought abroad, to what countries and universities do students go?