

STUDENT HANDBOOK FOR STUDYING ABROAD

OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
WILLAMETTE UNIVERSITY

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*This handbook can also be found online at willamette.edu/dept/oie/abroad/accepted

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 – Organizational Tools (help me help you), pg. 3**
 - Definitions of Study Abroad Terms
 - What is this Handbook?
 - Checklist for Study Abroad (from acceptance to graduation), pg. 6-7
 - Course Description and Syllabus: IDS 102X (.25) *Maximizing the Study Abroad Experience* pg. 8-9
- 2 - Preparing for Departure (without preparation, study abroad is just a nice idea), pg. 10**
- 3 - Staying Healthy Abroad (your immune system will have culture shock too), pg. 15**
- 4 - Managing Your Money in Another Country (your wallet will have culture shock too), pg. 19**
- 5 - Living Abroad (don't fish for culture, swim in it – these tools will help you breathe), pg. 21**
- 6 - Safety, Security and Legal Issues Abroad (there's no Campus Safety in real life), pg. 25**
- 7 - What It Means To Be An "American" Abroad (howdy folks!), pg. 30**
- 8 - Cultural Adjustment (say what!?!), pg. 35**
- 9 - Returning Home (the definition of bittersweet), pg. 41**
- 10 - Official WU Forms (your copies of documents you will turn in), pg. 47**
- 11 - Index, pg. 58**
- Back page – important contact numbers**

1 - ORGANIZATIONAL TOOLS (help me help you)

These Organizational Tools are designed to help you manage all of the information, meetings, paperwork and thoughts throughout your study abroad experience (now through after returning).

In this chapter you will find:

- Definitions of Study Abroad Terms
- Checklist for Study Abroad (from acceptance to graduation)
- Course Description and Syllabus: IDS 102X (.25) *Maximizing the Study Abroad Experience*

Definitions of Study Abroad Terms

Before getting started it is essential that you understand the following terms.

Willamette Sponsored Program

Willamette programs are either facilitated by Willamette University, a third-party provider, a consortium to which Willamette belongs, or in conjunction with other universities in the case of established bilateral exchanges. On WU Sponsored Programs students pay tuition to Willamette and receive WU credit for their semester abroad. For more information on cost and credits go to the OIE's website: willamette.edu/dept/oie/abroad/programs

Program Page

The term “program page” will be used often to refer to the page on the Office of International Education's website where your program is represented. This page gives basic and essential information that you must know. Also, most program pages have a “Pre-Departure Resource” section where you will find many useful links which you will use throughout the preparation process.

WU Study Abroad Handbook

This handbook is designed to help you organize all of the elements associated with preparing to study abroad (both logistically and mentally), being abroad, and returning home. Many students will receive another handbook for your specific program from the program provider or host university. Although some information may be similar, it is essential that you read all materials you receive.

The ***Study Abroad Checklist*** on pages 6 and 7 will serve as an outline for what is expected of you over the next three to four semesters. You are required to complete all of the points on the Checklist unless marked “if applicable.”

IDS 102X Maximizing the Study Abroad Experience Course (.25)

As a student accepted to study abroad on a Willamette Sponsored Program you are required to take the course *IDS 102X Maximizing the Study Abroad Experience*. The goal of the course is to prepare and assist each student in maximizing the learning potential of the study abroad experience as well as reward credit for the time and effort necessary in the preparation, culture-learning, and re-entry processes of study abroad. By accepting placement in a Willamette Sponsored study abroad program you are registering for the course *Maximizing the Study Abroad Experience IDS102X* during your semester abroad. You will receive .25 credits upon completion of the course. A complete syllabus for the course is found on pages 8 and 9 of this Handbook. The syllabus includes all due dates and instructions for the course. You will use Willamette's online classroom, WISE, organize and submit your assignments.

IDS 203 (W) Intercultural Study within Cultural Immersion (1.0)

Students interested in maximizing their experience even further and earning a writing centered credit while abroad should consider *IDS 203W Intercultural Study within Cultural Immersion (1.0)* during the semester abroad. Students enrolled in *IDS 203* are only required to complete some of the requirements

for the *IDS 102X* course. For more information on the *IDS 203* course visit the OIE website: willamette.edu/dept/oie/abroad/programs/ids203/

General Pre-departure Meeting

The mandatory General Pre-departure meeting is for all students accepted to study abroad on Willamette Sponsored Programs. The meeting date can be found on your Study Abroad Checklist. At this initial meeting, representatives from the Registrar's Office and the Health Center will be present to address the various issues involved in studying abroad. Exact program dates (when available), site-specific pre-departure meeting dates, and other valuable information will be presented. The meeting will last approximately one hour and fifty minutes.

Site Specific Pre-departure Meeting

Each program will have a separate site specific pre-departure meeting where logistics and items regarding each program will be discussed. Past participants from the program will attend these meetings if possible. Meeting lengths vary depending on program; this meeting is mandatory.

Iceberg 101: Intercultural Preparation Seminar

Students will begin a conversation regarding culture learning and cross cultural communication. The session will last approximately one hour; this meeting is mandatory.

Language Learning Strategies Session

The Language Learning Center will present learning techniques and strategies for language acquisition outside of the classroom in "real life" settings as well as tools for improving language prior to departure. This session is mandatory for all students attending programs where the primary language of instruction is not English. Students studying at sites where social interaction is in another language are encouraged to attend the session. The session will last approximately forty-five minutes.

Study Abroad Advisor

By this point you have probably interacted with the Study Abroad Advisor, Stacy West (swest@willamette.edu). Stacy will conduct the pre-departure meetings and is available to help you prepare to study abroad. Although Stacy is your main contact, the other members of the OIE are always available to assist you.

Passport

A passport is a document issued by a national government which legally verifies an identity. If you already have a passport, check the validity dates—some countries require that your U.S. passport be valid at least six months beyond the dates of your expected return. If your passport expires before the required validity, you will have to apply for a new one.

Apply for a passport as early as possible—it usually takes 6-8 weeks from the time you submit the application. Passports cost \$100 and an extra \$60 to have the application expedited (2008). Complete instructions and a downloadable application form are available at: usps.com/passport/. The two locations in Salem where you can apply for a passport are the 1) Marion County Clerk at 100 High St NE and the 2) Main Post Office at 1050 SE 25th St.

The U.S. Department of State has a very comprehensive homepage on the Internet that provides detailed information about passports, including information on downloading a passport application and where to get a certified copy of your birth certificate. The address is travel.state.gov/passport_services.html

Visa

A visa is an entry document issued by the country which you wish to enter which can take the form of a passport stamp, document or computerized registration. The visa authorizes the passport-holder to enter a country for specific purposes for a particular time period. Whether or not you need a visa, the length of the visa, what the visa looks like, and how you get a visa varies SIGNIFICANTLY from country to

country. See the “How do I get a Visa?” page in this Handbook for more guidance. Visa questions and advice will be discussed at the Site Specific pre-departure meeting. If you are not a citizen of the U.S. or if you hold citizenship for more than one country please contact the Study Abroad Advisor for further instructions.

There is almost always a fee to be paid for the visa application and the process can take up to several weeks. Never, ever wait to obtain a visa once you have all of the documents you need to apply. Among standard items usually required in the application are:

- Visa application form
- A current, valid passport
- One or more passport-type photographs
- A visa application fee
- Letter of acceptance from the host institution or program sponsor
- You may also be required to provide evidence of financial support and proof of medical insurance for the period of time you will be studying abroad.

Exact visa requirements are determined by the host country consulate. Requirements can and do change at any time so please follow requirements as issued by the host country embassy or consulate. Also, increasingly, countries are requiring students to appear in person at the consulate to apply for their visa. Usually, this means a trip to the relevant consulate in San Francisco. This is at your own expense and not covered by WU.

Residency Permit

Some countries will not require you to apply for a visa but will require application for a residency permit and/or registration at a local agency before or after you enter the country. In general terms a residency permit is record of your presence in that country. The consulate or embassy website will usually tell you what you need to complete this process.

2 - PREPARING FOR DEPARTURE **(without preparation, study abroad is just a nice idea)**

Congratulations on being selected to study abroad. Your time abroad will undoubtedly be an unforgettable experience. As the subtitle mentions, it is impossible to study abroad without completing many additional steps. Use the Study Abroad Checklist and this chapter to understand what those steps are and how to complete them.

In this chapter you will find:

- Documents to prepare before departure (not including the passport and visa)
- Using financial aid abroad
- Credit guidelines for study abroad
- Travel information and discounts
- International calling/communication

- Packing advise

Forms associated with this chapter:

- Willamette University Sponsored Programs Study Abroad Credit Conversion/Equivalency Form.
- Student

Documents to Prepare Before Departure

Although your passport and visa/residency permit (see Definitions of Study Abroad Terms) are the most important documents, do not forget to take care of the following:

Absentee Voting

Arrange to have an absentee ballot sent to you while abroad. Contact your local, state and national voting authority as soon as you know your address abroad, in most cases you will not know your address until you arrive. Start on the Federal Voting Assistance Program website: fvap.gov

Power of Attorney

It is highly advisable to designate an individual, usually a parent/guardian, to take care of legal or financial matters on your behalf while you are abroad. Find out what the proper procedure is and make those arrangements before you depart.

Taxes – especially year and spring students!

You may need to arrange to have tax forms sent to you (they are also usually available at a U.S. consulate or embassy) or have taxes paid for you while you are out of the country. It is also possible to ask for an extension if you will be outside of the United States in April. Be sure to know what your tax responsibilities are and how to comply before you leave.

Registering with the Embassy

When you know your travel plans it is advisable to register with the U.S. Embassy in your host country through the U.S. State Department's travel registration system. You can find the travel registration system on the State Department's website: <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>

This process is not related to residence permits. This is a safety measure so the US consulate knows you are in the country in case a national emergency occurs.

Online Access to Bills/Credit Cards/ Bank Statements

Before you depart make sure you know how to access your bank account information, bills and credit card through the internet. See "Managing Your Money in Another Country" on page 19 for more tips.

Mail

Notify the WU Mail Center that you will be studying abroad. They will need to know how long you will be gone and where you want your mail forwarded. They are unable to forward mail outside of the U.S.

Using Financial Aid for Study Abroad

You are responsible for paying your semester fees as usual. Be sure to meet with your financial aid advisor on campus to ensure all arrangements are understood and completed before your departure. It is ultimately your responsibility to make sure all correct forms are filled out and returned to the corresponding departments on time and to check with each department to see that all paperwork is being processed correctly before you depart on your program. You cannot assume that everything will be done automatically. Failure to abide by regulations may result in a hold up of grades, registration and future aid disbursements.

If you are receiving financial aid that will be disbursed after the program begins, please make arrangements with the Student Accounts Office (Waller Hall) regarding where your refund should be sent. In addition, you are responsible for any debts you may incur or damage you may cause abroad. Grades will be withheld until a student's account balance is paid in full.

You may contact the Financial Aid Office while you are abroad for any questions or assistance at: finaid@willamette.edu

For those studying abroad in the spring semester, you must file the FAFSA for the following academic year no later than March 1st, even if you are out of the county. This can be done at www.fafsa.ed.gov

Credit Guidelines for Study Abroad

Converting credits from abroad to Willamette credits is not a seamless process! As the study abroad participant you are responsible for making sure you understand how your credits will convert to WU credits before you study abroad.

The following items will help you with the credit conversion process:

- **Willamette University Sponsored Programs Study Abroad Credit Conversion/Equivalency Form** – This form is program specific and will be distributed at your Site-specific Pre-departure Meeting. You will turn in a copy of this form to the Office of International Education before you depart and keep one copy for yourself. An **example** of this form can be found on pages 49 and 50.
- **Meeting with your Academic Advisor** – As you know, every year before you can register for classes you must meet with your academic advisor. Take the time this semester to talk with your advisor about the courses you plan on taking abroad and how they will fit into your graduation requirements.
- **During your semester abroad your Willamette degree audit will read:**
FSTD-WU-01 Foreign Study: Willamette Program 3.05*
*The final credit awarded for your semester/year will depend on the number of credits you earn overseas. Your registration for 3.05 Willamette courses is the minimum number to maintain your full-time student status while you are abroad. This is removed and replaced with the actual course titles, grades and Willamette credit earned on your study abroad program.
- **Foreign Transcript** - When you complete your program abroad make sure your transcript will be sent to the WU Office of the Registrar or OIE. It may take up to several months for Willamette to receive your transcript. Once your transcript is processed you can see your credit on your degree audit in JASON.

- **Grades** (different than credit)
 - It is your responsibility to investigate grade equivalency – A’s, B’s and C’s are not given around the world. When you arrive in your host country figure out in what form grades are given (i.e. percentages, letters, numbers) and what the equivalent U.S. grades are. (A 70% is a very good grade in Ireland!)
 - The equivalent U.S. grades from those you earned abroad will appear on your transcript.
 - You have the choice of having either ALL or NONE of your grades count toward your cumulative GPA.
 - Your grades will not automatically count toward your GPA; if you would like the grades to count, you must inform the Office of the Registrar after you return from your study abroad program.

Travel Information

You are responsible for planning your own travel to the place of your program. Here are some student friendly travel websites:

- CIEE — www.ciee.org
- SkyAuction — www.skyauction.com
- STA Travel — www.statravel.com
- Travel Cuts — www.travelcuts.com
- Student Universe – www.studentuniverse.com

Travel Guides – Aren’t those just for tourists?

No! Travel guides are very useful not only for hotel, airline and restaurant information, but also cultural history, colloquialisms, and money saving tips. The Office of International Education provides many travel guides for in-office use before your departure, but we also recommend that you purchase a recently published travel guide before departing. You can find many travel guides in the Willamette Store, ask about discounts. The most appropriate series for students studying abroad are *Let’s Go*, *Lonely Planet*, *Rough Guides*, and *Footprint*. (letsgo.com, lonelyplanet.com, roughguides.com, footprintbooks.com).

International Student Identity Card

The International Student Identity Card (ISIC) is a bargain for students traveling in Europe. It entitles you to some insurance coverage while traveling, reduced airfares, entrance tickets to cultural events, and other travel benefits and is good for one calendar year. (If you apply in August, your card will be valid until December of the following year). If you are interested in applying for an ISIC you may obtain an application for the card at www.isic.org. Please also check with your particular program to see if an ISIC is included as part of the program.

Other Student Discounts

Like the U.S. many businesses throughout the world have discounts for students with proper identification. Whether you use an ISIC (see above) or your host university ID, you should frequently ask about student discounts at museums, theaters, restaurants, hostels, transportation centers etc. Ask your host country friends/host family about student discounts.

International calling

Calling the U.S. from abroad can be simple and inexpensive, or complicated and expensive. It all depends on the telephone system of the country where you will be studying.

Internet calling - More and more students are using internet based calling services such as Skype. These services are usually free or very inexpensive, but they require a computer, microphone, speaker hardware and a reliable internet connection.

Calling Cards – International Phone Cards are available through most phone companies and can be purchased online and at most grocery and electronics stores in the USA. With phone cards, you will need to first dial an access number (similar to our 1-800 numbers), and from there you will enter your account number and the number you wish to reach. In many other countries, you can purchase pre-paid phone

cards for local and international calls. In country phone card rates are generally cheaper than those purchased in the U.S.; however, it is advisable to have access to a phone card upon arrival.

Cell phones – Recently more and more students are finding that purchasing cell phones while they are abroad is a convenient way to stay in touch locally and internationally. It is easiest to purchase a cell phone after arriving in your host country. Although in most cases making international calls from the cell phone is very expensive, it is often inexpensive to receive incoming calls from abroad. The price of cell phones and the service they provide varies significantly from country to country. It can be complicated and expensive to add international service to your U.S. phone. Usage rates tend to be higher as well.

Packing Your Bags

It is nearly impossible to pack everything you want to bring with you overseas. The trick is to pack what you need, and more importantly, what you can carry! Here are a few tips that may come in handy while you are deciding what you should bring. There is a lot of potential for over-packing.

Suitcases and Backpacks - It is much easier to have two smaller bags than one large suitcase. Backpacks are convenient to carry and they leave your hands free. Suitcases with wheels or portable baggage carts don't always work well on cobblestone or other unevenly paved streets, and large duffel bags are awkward to carry long distances.

TIP

Pack what you think you **MUST** take with you. Then, carry your baggage around the block, and up and down some stairs. You may reevaluate your decision of what is really necessary!

Dimensions and/or weight determine the baggage limit on most international flights. Requirements vary depending on destinations and airlines so do confirm the limit of baggage allowed when you choose your airline. If you are using two airlines, check with both.

Label your luggage with a sturdy identifying tag—a bright identifying marker or ribbon will help in picking your luggage out quickly from a large pile of similar-looking luggage. Be sure to put your name and address **inside** each bag as well. We recommend that you pack at least a day's worth of clothing and supplies inside your carry-on luggage in the unfortunate event that your luggage is temporarily lost by the airline.

Never leave your bags unattended, even for a second. The easiest target for thieves is an unwatched bag. Also, since September 11, 2001, airport security is extremely cautious and confiscates and destroys unattended luggage.

Clothing - Talk to students who participated on your program previously about what to wear and read about average temperatures and weather in your host city. In most countries people dress more formally than most Americans. You will want to bring some nice pieces of clothing to wear. An ideal travel wardrobe consists of coordinated clothes made of easy-care, drip-dry fabrics that can be layered for different temperatures. For touring and exploring, we suggest clothes you are comfortable walking around in, such as a pair of jeans and comfortable shoes. Generally buildings and homes abroad are not heated or cooled as thoroughly as in the U.S.; keep this in mind when packing.

Doing Laundry Abroad - Whether you live with a host family or you have to wash your own clothes expect the experience to be different than in the U.S. In many countries, driers are not frequently used and water is more expensive. You might often find it is easier to wear fewer items more often.

What to wear to "fit in"

It is difficult to figure out what to wear to "fit in" with your host culture before you depart. It is a good idea to ask students who have traveled to your site before what others wore. When you arrive you will slowly observe what others are wearing and you might adapt your own clothing to feel more comfortable in your new surrounding. You may also find that you really can't live without your jeans and you don't care what others think. Like most things related to moving into another culture – make sure to give yourself time to adapt and feel comfortable; don't expect to figure it out right away.

Useful items to pack that you might not think about:

- Pocket flashlight
- Small notebook/address book
- Money belt
- Stationery
- Travel alarm clock
- Soap/soap dish
- Toiletries (adequate supply)
- Sewing kit/safety pins
- Sealable plastic bags for liquids and keeping snacks from critters
- Power adapter/converter

Items to leave at home:

- Valuable jewelry
- Anything you couldn't replace
- Electric razors, hair dryers or other styling equipment (it is generally better to buy an inexpensive styling equipment with the correct voltage abroad.)

Important Documents - Passports and other documents should be securely carried with you yet readily accessible at immigration. Money (except for small bills and change), credit cards, and traveler's checks should always be carried in a money belt.

Medications - If you regularly take prescription medication, information about any restrictions or directions for bringing in and carrying medication(s)/supplies should be addressed to the consulate for the country of your study abroad program. Although most countries allow travelers to carry reasonable amounts for personal use, there may be restrictions on how much, how it's packaged, and the country may require a special permission letter from a source of their choice. Drugs and some medical supplies that are legal and easily obtained in the U.S. may not be legal in your destination country. Always carry medicines in their original container.

Contact Lenses/Glasses - If you wear contact lenses, bring an extra set of contacts, cleaning solutions, and extra glasses. Cleaning solutions and replacing lenses can get very expensive abroad.

3 - STAYING HEALTHY ABROAD (your immune system will have culture shock too)

In this chapter you will find:

- Analyze your health before you leave
- Immunizations
- Packing a medical kit
- Disabilities
- Staying health when you arrive

Forms associated with this chapter:

- Health Information – Student Self Assessment
- Health Insurance Information

Adjusting to life in a new country means excitement and the unexpected. Although no amount of preparation can guarantee a trouble-free transition, you should be prepared when it comes to your health. There is one area in which you do not want to face the unexpected: medical care for yourself. Even routine ailments or minor accidents far from home can take on greater than anticipated consequences. Take responsibility for your own health and wellness, both before you depart and throughout the program.

Much of the following information has been suggested by the *Council on International Educational Exchange* and *NAFSA: Association of International Educators*.

Analyze Your Health Before You Leave

Before you travel abroad, take a close look at the many factors that contribute to your physical *and* emotional well being. A trip abroad will almost certainly affect your health because so many factors of your daily health have to do with lifestyle and environment. Conversely, the state of your health will have a significant impact on the success and enjoyment of your trip. With proper planning, travel can be a happy and healthy experience.

Assess Your Health and Your Health-Related Practices

Going abroad is not a magic cure for concerns and problems at home. Both physical and emotional health issues will follow you wherever you go. In particular, if you are concerned about your use of alcohol and other controlled drugs or if you have an emotional health concern, you should address it honestly before making plans to travel. Contrary to many people's expectations, change of geographic location does not minimize these problems—it can often exacerbate them to a crisis stage while you are away from home.

Identify Your Health Needs

Be clear about your health status and needs when preparing for a program and when making housing arrangements. Describe allergies, disabilities, psychological treatments, dietary requirements, and medical needs so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Willamette University requires that you complete Student Self-Assessment form (pages 55-56) to the best of your ability before you depart. Read through your medical insurance coverage in your program packet to be aware of what is covered and what is not.

Resources and services for people with disabilities vary widely by country and region. If you have a disability or special need, identify it and understand ahead of time exactly what accommodations can and will be made. (See "Disabilities" later in this section.) If you have special health needs, check on any particular conditions that may apply to your travel overseas.

Review your health insurance

Be prepared for surprises! Some of the Willamette Sponsored Programs either include or require that you purchase specific health insurance for the time you are abroad. Read your program page on the OIE's website for more information (willamette.edu/dept/oie/abroad/programs)

Whether health insurance is or is not included in your program you should check with your health insurance carrier to see if coverage extends overseas and what you have to do to file claims. You may need a special “rider” for your policy to cover you while abroad. The university student health plan does give limited coverage while studying abroad on a Willamette program. If you have one health insurance provider evaluate whether you need to augment your coverage with other insurance. There are insurance policies just for studying abroad through private insurers. Brochures and websites are available in the Office of International Education and the Bishop Wellness Center. You will need to inform the Office of International Education about your insurance prior to departure using the Health Insurance Information Form (pages 56-57).

As a Willamette University student you automatically receive Emergency Evacuation and Repatriation insurance if you are covered by another insurance provider for all other medical issues.

Medications - If you regularly take prescription medication, information about any restrictions or directions for bringing in and carrying medication(s)/supplies should be addressed to the consulate for the country of your study abroad program. Although most countries allow travelers to carry reasonable amounts for personal use, there may be restrictions on how much, how it’s packaged, and the country may require a special permission letter from a source of their choice. Drugs and some medical supplies that are legal and easily obtained in the U.S. may not be legal in your destination country. Always carry medicines in their original container.

Additional Resources for Health & Travel Information

- Family Physician
- Bishop Wellness Center: (503) 370-6062
- Center for Disease Control & Prevention:(202) 783-3238 or www.cdc.gov
- State Department Overseas Emergency Center: (202) 647-5225
- Lonely Planet guides for info on international health: lonelyplanet.com/health/health.htm

See Your Health Practitioners

You should visit your family physician and dentist before you leave to help ensure that you are in good health—this may prevent emergencies abroad. A physical may be required by your program. Some are very detailed and require chest x-rays, blood tests (including HIV), respiratory assessments, etc. Do not wait until the last minute and find out you don’t have enough time to get all the required testing/evaluations. The Health Center can perform the required physicals for \$40. Chest x-rays are approximately \$100 and HIV testing is \$22. Get needed immunizations and hepatitis protection, if appropriate. (See “Immunizations” later in this section.) Update your health records, including eyeglass prescriptions and regular medications.

Carry copies of medical records, prescriptions in generic form, and pertinent information in a safe place. If you expect to need regular medical care abroad, take a letter of introduction from your physician at home, providing details of your medical conditions, care, and specific needs. If you self-inject prescribed medication, you may need to carry needles and syringes with you. *You’ll need a physician’s prescription for medication and medical supplies in order to pass through customs.*

Immunizations

There are no required immunizations for most of Western Europe, Australia, and much of Latin America, however always consult with your host school to see if they require immunizations. Make sure your tetanus shot is current and you should seriously consider a vaccination for Hepatitis A, which can be caused by contamination of food or water by sewage and infected food handlers. This immunization is available in the Health Service for \$66 per shot (the series includes two injections given 6 months apart). Other precautions to consider include the meningitis immunization, which is available for \$100 at Bishop and malaria medication. If you are very concerned about possible health problems, you can call the Center for Disease Control (CDC). They have an International Traveler’s Hotline at 877-FYI-TRIP where, by

entering the country code of your host country, you can get recorded information on vaccinations, food and water, and current health problems. You can also visit them online: cdc.gov/travel

Pack a Medical Kit

Don't underestimate the importance of keeping some basic medical supplies close at hand. Inevitably you'll need something when pharmacies are closed or not convenient to get to. You should always travel with a medical kit that includes the following items:

- Diarrhea treatment (such as Imodium A-D)
- Constipation remedy (natural bran or bran tablets)
- Pain/fever relief (aspirin, acetaminophen, ibuprofen)
- Cold/cough/allergy symptom relief (such as antihistamines, lozenges)
- Pepto Bismol tablets (be aware that taking too many of these will turn your tongue black)
- Adhesive strips (Band-Aids)
- Antiseptic (alcohol wipes)
- Antibiotic gel (such as Neosporin)
- Motion sickness medication
- Sunscreen

Be sure to also pack regular medications (in their original containers), contraceptives (including emergency contraceptives), feminine hygiene products if you are traveling where they are not available, and any other routine health and medical products you think you may need or brands that you like. Check the expiration dates of all medications before you leave. Where your health is concerned, it is better to be safe than sorry!

Disabilities

Mobility International USA (MIUSA) and the National Clearinghouse on Disability & Exchange offer guidance to students with disabilities. Contact them for a brochure at (541) 343-1284 or check out the web site at www.miusa.org.

Staying Healthy When You Arrive

Successful planning for a healthy stay abroad does not end once you leave home. Because of cultural differences and adjustments you will need to make abroad, any concerns or questions you may have related to your physical and/or emotional well being should be addressed after you arrive in your host country.

General Care

At some point during your time abroad, and unfortunately often at the beginning, you will probably get sick. More than likely it will be something simple, without complications, due to changes in food and water, insufficient rest, or stress of travel. This is the time when you should focus on getting plenty of rest, eating healthy food, drinking plenty of fluids (particularly on the plane), getting some moderate exercise and washing your hands with soap and water every chance you get. Remember, alcohol will dehydrate you, limit your intake upon arrival.

Take good care of yourself from the very beginning so that you can enjoy all the benefits (and avoid the negatives) of being abroad.

Give Yourself Some Time to Adjust

Culture shock can sabotage your time abroad if you are unprepared and can have lasting effects if you do not take care of yourself. The emotional effects of facing new values, habits, lifestyles, and especially a different language, can leave you impatient, bewildered, or depressed. You may experience confusing emotional highs and lows during this period. Remind yourself that these will soon pass once you are well rested and eating normally—time is the best cure. If symptoms persist, however, consider it a possible medical issue and seek assistance from a counselor or physician. See more about culture shock on page 37.

Stress

A moderate amount of anxiety and stress is a natural part of everyday life and is usually an indication that your body is responding to the problems it must overcome. Jet lag, a new language, unfamiliar foods, registration, beginning classes, and even changes in the weather can take their toll. Recognize that you are tense, then slow down and try to relax. Use the same stress-relief techniques you use at home—exercise, meditation, reading, etc. Get plenty of rest upon arrival and you should be fine after a few days.

Like when you are at home, stress will come and go with the days. Sometimes, stress can be more augmented when you are studying abroad – there are different kinds of stress. Remember that some stress is natural, and think about specifically what is affecting you. Are you experiencing culture shock? (See Chapter 8) Are your usual stress-relief techniques not available? What makes you feel better? If the feelings of stress do not subside after time, or you are seeing symptoms of too much stress (i.e. significant weight loss/gain, sleeping issues, hair loss etc.) be sure to seek out help.

Find Out About Resources

Learn how to get medical help, whether routine or emergency, before the need arises—preferably before leaving home. Is there a 911-style emergency number and, if so, what services does it access? Who will provide routine medical care, and how can you reach that provider? If you need any special resources, find out how to get them. These could include services for those with disabilities, self-help groups (such as Alcoholics Anonymous), or other health-related needs.

Make your medical conditions and medical needs known before you leave. If you require regular medical care for any condition you have, let Willamette staff know what kind of assistance you need. The site director in your host country can research possible resources before your arrival. This may mean simply identifying a doctor or other practitioner who will provide your care, or discussing your condition with people in your host family or classes if you may need emergency intervention during your stay.

Ask Questions

Lifestyles overseas may be very different from what you are used to back home. This is true even in cultures that seem relatively similar to the United States. You cannot assume that the experiences and practices you took for granted at home will be accepted in your host country. If you are not sure about something, whether it is a simple question about where a service can be found, or a more complex matter, such as expectations about friendship and dating, ask someone you trust.

Ask about safety issues such as local transportation, traffic patterns, swimming practices at regional beaches, and use of electrical appliances. Ask about security issues such as neighborhood or building security, personal security during evenings and other outings, and culture-specific behavior or security concerns related to gender.

4 - MANAGING YOUR MONEY IN ANOTHER COUNTRY (your wallet will have culture shock too)

In this chapter you will find:

- Advise on money amounts and forms of money
- Safeguarding money and other valuables

Managing your finances is an important and challenging aspect of a successful and enjoyable academic experience abroad. Dealing with a new currency and cost of living are the beginning of the challenge. Before you leave home, pay attention to the exchange rate between the U.S. dollar and your host country's currency. Learn to think in that currency.

Money Amounts

When considering how much money you will need for your time abroad, it is difficult to make guidelines—you will likely spend as much as you take. You should first check your program description to see what items are included in the program fee. You will need to bring funds to cover all other expenses. The amount you will need for incidental expenses will depend to some degree on your lifestyle, as well as local costs. Take a close look at your current expenses and prepare a budget for yourself based on the estimated expenses. Use the following list to think about all the possible expenses you may have:

- Meals/drinks
- Transportation
- Books
- Personal expenses
- Recreation and travel
- Communications
- Gifts
- Clothes
- Miscellaneous daily expenses
- Entertainment

Taking Money: Traveler's Checks, Cash, Debit and Credit Cards

A good rule of thumb is to have access to your money in more than one way.

- Traveler's checks are insured, safe, and reliable, however, there is usually a small fee to buy them as well as cash them. Having a few traveler's checks as backup to a debit and credit card may be good insurance.
- It is a good idea to arrive in your host country with some of the local currency in cash. It is possible to find currency exchange stores in most major airports in the U.S. – there will likely be a fee for converting the money. You do not want to carry large amounts of cash at any time.
- Debit cards with the symbols of exchange (*Cirrus* and *Plus*) and/or Visa or MasterCard on the front can be used at banks and/or Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) abroad to get local currency at the current exchange rates (bank fees also apply). Before you leave, visit your bank to make sure your card and PIN number can be used to withdraw money abroad—you should also verify the cost of transaction fees and the maximum amount per day that you can withdraw. Your receipt at the ATM abroad will give you the amount of your withdrawal in local currency, but probably not your balance. You may also use this card to make purchases abroad just like a credit card (if a Visa or MasterCard symbol is on the front)—just as at home, the amount debited will be taken out of your checking account.
- Credit cards are handy for larger transactions and purchases in most countries. But, you will want to make sure to pay your monthly bill. You can use a credit card for cash advances, but usually at a higher interest charge. Debt can accumulate quickly while abroad as the temptation to go everywhere and do everything is ever present.

Make sure to inform your credit card company and bank that you will be abroad as frequent credit purchases or ATM use in another county may look like your card has been stolen.

Safeguarding Money and Other Valuables

Every year, several students have had to deal with theft or pickpocket incidents during their travels. All of these thefts may have been prevented with simple precautions. Your cash, traveler's checks, cards, passport, and other valuables should be kept close to your body and out of sight when traveling. You are especially vulnerable to theft when traveling, as your attention is diverted elsewhere—money belts are an easy solution. If you have a secure housing situation, you may want to leave valuables there. If staying with a host family as if there is a good place for your things if you will be away for several days.

Keep a record of your account numbers and a list of important phone numbers separate from the originals in case of loss or theft. You should also have an extra photocopy of the inside page of your passport. Again, it is important to keep copies of these documents separate from the originals—if your wallet is stolen, a copy of your I.D. kept inside your wallet will be useless.

5 - LIVING ABROAD

(DON'T FISH FOR CULTURE, SWIM IN IT – THESE TOOLS WILL HELP YOU BREATHE)

In this chapter you will find:

- Housing information
- Conditions of student housing
- Cultural differences
- Student behavior/dismissal
- Travel during program
- Travel Safety
- Discouragement of vehicle rental

Housing Information

Most programs include housing, which may mean staying with a host family (homestay), sharing an apartment, or other student housing. Some programs include one to three meals a day, particularly if you live with a host family. Program specific information can be found on the OIE's website on your program page. Housing and meals will also be discussed at your Site Specific Pre-departure meeting.

Homestays and Harnessing Expectations

Staying with a host family? Read here.

A large part of your upcoming adventure is your stay with a host family. The relationship you build with your host can be significant in your overall experience abroad. Students frequently say that living with their homestay family is the highlight of their program. Hosts may be a family, a widow, or a couple. They are likely to be experienced in receiving international students and are expected to provide a good environment for students to enjoy and benefit from their stay. They

provide you an opportunity to see daily life up close and increase your foreign language skills through daily conversations.

Though your hosts may be curious about and interested in U.S. Americans, it is important to realize that you are a paying guest and that they are receiving you into their home, in part, as a means of augmenting their income. Your host's apartment or house may be very different than what you are accustomed to. For instance, the home may have only one bathroom shared by all family members, rooms may be smaller and fewer in number or hot water may be carefully rationed. Remember, it is important to be respectful.

Try not to form preconceived notions about what to expect and be open to the situation in which you are placed. Chances are the reality of your living situation will be different than you expect which can cause disappointment and resistance to adaptation. It is hard – but try not to imagine what the experience will be like.

Some things you can expect:

Students stay in homes in town or in a nearby suburb. Generally, the hosts are of an economic level that provides a relatively comfortable standard of living and modern home facilities. Housing arrangements vary, from boarder situations to being accepted as one of the family. The individuals and families that host students have agreed to provide adequate accommodations for students, including a private bedroom with study facilities, heating, bed linens, and meals. You will not lack the basics, but you will not have luxuries like computers, unlimited phone access, and an open refrigerator.

TIP - Communication is a must with your host family. Be prepared to talk about everything from how to use the shower to whether you are allowed to use the kitchen. Ask questions!

As a guest, you are the one who is expected to adapt to local customs and abide by household rules and expectations. Within the first few days of your arrival try to reach an early understanding with your hosts regarding rules and customs in the household, especially with regard to such things as the use of hot water, helping with meals, and having guests. Learn to be sensitive to others' reactions to your words and actions. Be aware that what is "normal" at home might not be at all acceptable in other cultures (e.g. having friends over, leaving lights on, entering certain rooms ect.) It is important to be conscious of the culture gap that exists. A gracious attitude toward your hosts will go a long way in overcoming the

cultural misunderstandings that inevitably arise. Sensitivity, awareness, and thoughtfulness are qualities that will help make your homestay a positive experience and will enhance your academic work and leisure time. A small gift at the beginning of your stay, such as something specific to your hometown, is a thoughtful way to ease awkwardness. Pictures of your family and school life are also good icebreakers and will help your hosts get to know you better.

Staying in an apartment or dorm? Read here.

Apartments and Dorms

At some sites, apartments or dorms are provided for student housing. The same basic standards of courtesy apply, since you are renting from a local landlord or university and sharing the facilities with other students. Loud music and noise may not be tolerated to the extent they are in the U.S. You are expected to abide by the housing rules.

Try not to form preconceived notions about what to expect and be open to the situation in which you are placed. Chances are the reality of your living situation will be different than you expect which can cause disappointment and resistance to adaptation. It is hard – but try not to imagine what the experience will be like.

If you are staying in an apartment or dorm situation then you will either have a meal plan, cook food for yourself, purchase meals or some sort of combination of the three. If you are cooking for yourself for the first time it is important to make sure you are getting the nutrients that you need. This could be a little tricky because you may not be able to find many of the foods you are used to eating or preparing. Before you go, brainstorm meals that have basic ingredients that you could find most places like rice, pasta, meat, beans, vegetables, fruit etc. Be prepared to be flexible – what is inexpensive in the U.S. is not always cheap abroad. But, you may find a new favorite food!

Everyone read here.

Conditions of Student Housing

By enrolling in a Willamette program, each student recognizes and accepts that American customs differ from those of other cultures and agrees to the following conditions of student housing. Disregarding these conditions may result in dismissal from the program.

- I accept full responsibility for any damage or ill I cause during my stay.
- I accept full responsibility for any debts that I may incur during my stay.
- I accept full responsibility for the security of my personal property.
- I will make an effort to adjust to living with my host(s) (with reference to meal times, eating habits, having guests, difference in living standards and common courtesy).
- I understand and agree that if the host agrees to provide meals other than those included in the program costs, I am responsible for the additional costs, at a rate stipulated by the host.
- I agree that in the event that a conflict or grievance arises with the host/landlord, I will attempt to resolve it with the host/landlord directly. In the event that a resolution is not achieved, I will contact the on-site program staff or Office of International Education staff.

Cultural Differences

Meals

The provision of meals varies across programs, so check specific program information for what is included in your particular program. Like in the United States, some hosts are more prepared than others to adapt their cooking to varying dietary needs. If you have certain dietary needs or preferences, you should discuss these with your host to see what might be accommodated and what you may need to do on your own. Hosts are not expected to cater to dietary preferences, but most are open to helping you find food you like. You should prepare yourself to try new things!

Phones

Because phone service is extremely expensive outside of the United States, international and local telephone calls may not be made from your host family's home without the permission of the host each and every time. Families are often charged for local calls in the same way that long distance calls are charged in the United States. See Chapter 2 for more information on international and local calling.

Water and Electricity

Water and electricity are also extremely expensive and, thus, people in other countries tend to use much less of both than people do in the U.S. Your homestay or flatmates may have strict rules about when you may shower or bathe. In an effort to keep good relations, be aware of what may be excessive usage to your hosts—your host will appreciate your efforts to conserve. Also, while traveling, be ready to purchase water and pay for the use of public restrooms.

Local Transportation

In most cases you will use the local public transportation system to get around town, travel to your classes, and take care of personal needs. Your site director will introduce you to local forms of transport. You will soon become familiar with using local buses, trains, subways, or taxis on a daily basis. In compact cities, your main form of transportation may be on foot. In any event, you will find that most host nationals are very accustomed to traveling on public transport and walk far more often than U.S. Americans!

Gender Issues

As a guest in the host culture, you are expected to adapt your dress and behavior to conform to local norms. Understanding a country's gender issues is part of getting to know another culture. The issues are often related to dress or appearance, the role men and women play in the society, religion, and interpersonal behaviors to name a few. Regardless of cultural differences, sexual harassment is never acceptable behavior (see Sexual Harassment, Chapter V).

Alcohol Abuse

Many students mistake a lower drinking age and easy availability of alcohol abroad as a cultural acceptance of drunkenness. However, other cultures have various relationships to alcohol, and getting drunk is almost never socially acceptable. Abuse of alcohol can bring a variety of serious consequences, including dismissal from the program.

Student Behavior/Dismissal

While abroad, students do not only represent Willamette University, but the United States of America. Your actions, good and bad, can affect the relationships that Willamette University maintains with other universities, partner programs and even other countries! Over the years the OIE has seen multiple examples where Willamette students have created special relationships with their host university, host families etc. which have benefited the university as a whole and arguably, even the USA. The OIE and other international offices throughout the U.S. have also encountered situations where students have ruined exchange agreements and relationships between institutions because of poor behavior.

Do not underestimate the significance of your behavior abroad.

Program participants represent Willamette University and their respective third party institutions while they are abroad. They are expected to respect national laws, local ordinances, and cultural norms that may be very different from those in the U.S. The program does not tolerate behaviors judged to be excessive, illegal, or generally detrimental to the welfare of the individual, other participants, or the program.

Willamette University and its partner institutions reserve the right to terminate the participation of any student in the program for refusal to adhere to the appropriate standards of conduct. Any additional costs associated with early dismissal from the program are expressly the burden of the student. *Please refer to the Foreign Study Authorization and Willamette University Standards of Conduct. Pages 51-55.*

Travel During Your Program—How Often and How Far?

Many students have traveled to faraway destinations only to realize they spent the vast majority of their time on the train and searching for lodging with little time left to see the sights. While you may consider leaving town every weekend to go “check out the sites,”

Keep in mind that in the end you will gain more by getting acquainted with your hosts and immersing yourself in the local culture.

When you do choose to travel on weekends, we recommend that you use this time to explore local sights and nearby cities and save the more distant travel destinations for before or after your program, or during extended breaks if you are studying abroad for more than one term. Independent travel should never interfere with regular class attendance or program activities.

Traveling Safely

You will probably be doing more traveling than you would normally do at home. This means that you will be using buses, trains, subways, and taxis. Most countries provide convenient and inexpensive transportation for you as a student. However, there are a number of safety issues you should keep in mind, especially in urban settings:

- Wear a money belt.
- Keep your wallet in a side pocket; keep your purse closed and close to your body.
- Do not display money, jewelry, or other valuable items.
- Beware of pickpockets and purse-snatchers.
- Choose a car or compartment in a train or metro in which others are riding.
- Note the location of emergency equipment and emergency exits.
- Do not fall asleep on short rides: you could end up far from home.
- Do not stand on the edge of a train or metro platform.
- Never leave any luggage or bags unattended.
- If someone is bothering you, inform the driver, train operator, or other uniformed personnel.
- Avoid unwanted attention and confrontations.

Discouragement of Vehicle Rental

During any personal travel, Willamette University strongly encourages students to use mass transportation such as buses, trains, taxis, and the metro/subway, particularly in contrast to leasing a vehicle. Aside from the greater convenience and lower price afforded by these modes of transportation, this recommendation reflects concern for the safety of our program participants.

It is to be noted that Willamette University and our partnering institutions plainly discourage students from leasing or traveling by means of rented vehicles. If a program participant elects to do so, it should be understood that it is by his or her own volition, and that he or she is therefore fully liable for all risks associated with operating vehicles. Please refer to the Foreign Study Authorization and Willamette University Pages 51-54.

6 - SAFETY, SECURITY, AND LEGAL ISSUES ABROAD (there's no Campus Safety in real life)

In this chapter you will find:

- Guidelines for participants
- Guidelines for parents and guardians
- Security guidelines and tips (political unrest, sexual assault)
- Legal matters

Participants can have a major impact on their own health and safety abroad through the decisions they make before and during the program; and by their day-to-day choices and behaviors.

Study abroad programs cannot guarantee the absolute safety of participants or ensure that risk will not at times be greater than at home. Nor can they:

- monitor the daily personal decisions, choices, and activities of individual participants any more than is the case on the home campus;
- prevent participants from engaging in illegal or risky activities if they ignore rules and advice;
- represent the interests of participants accused of illegal activities, beyond ensuring that legal representation is available;
- assume responsibility for acts and events that are beyond their control;
- ensure local adherence to U.S. norms of due process, individual rights, political correctness and sensitivity, relationships between the sexes, or relations among racial, cultural, and ethnic groups.

The Office of International Education is always available as a resource. *NAFSA: Association of International Educators* is another good source and recommends the following to students and their parents. Because the health and safety of study abroad participants are primary concerns, these guidelines have been developed to provide useful, practical guidance to institutions, participants, and parents/guardians/families. Although no set of guidelines can guarantee the health and safety needs of each individual involved in a study abroad program, these guidelines address issues that merit attention and thoughtful judgment.

Guidelines for Participants

1. Read and carefully consider all materials issued or recommended by the sponsor that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in host countries.
2. Consider your health and personal circumstances when applying for or accepting a place in a program.
3. Make available to the sponsor accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary in planning for a safe and healthy study abroad experience.
4. Assume responsibility for all the elements necessary for your personal preparation for the program and participate fully in orientations.
5. Obtain and maintain appropriate insurance coverage and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers.
6. Inform parents/guardians/families, and any others who may need to know about your participation in the study abroad program. Provide them with emergency contact information and keep them informed on an ongoing basis. When you have arrived at your destination and have specific contact information such as an address for where you are, give this information to those who will want to have contact with you while you are abroad.
7. Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct, and emergency procedures of the program, and obey host-country laws.
8. Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions. Express any health or safety concerns to the program staff or other appropriate individuals.
9. Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well-being of others and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.

10. Accept responsibility for your own decisions and actions.
11. Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining health and law enforcement services in the host country.
12. Follow the program policies for keeping program staff informed of your whereabouts and wellbeing.

Guidelines for Parents and Guardians

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

When Appropriate, Parents or Guardians should:

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

Security

No matter how safe your campus and community appear to be, you should acquaint yourself with your new environment by reading and listening to the safety information given during your on-site orientations. You should push yourself to think about security differences to which you may not be immediately aware.

Consider the factors placing study abroad students at risk:

- You may not speak the local language well.
- You will generally be traveling by public transportation.
- You may stand out in a crowd.
- You have not yet learned the best way to say “no” in this culture.
- You may not yet have picked up the “clued” in this culture that you are in danger.

Tips to Reduce Risks

- Familiarize yourself with your neighborhood and campus by walking around in the daylight.
- Ask fellow students or staff members about areas you should avoid at night.
- Do not walk alone at night.
- Locate the police station that serves your neighborhood.
- Locate the nearest fire-alarm box and learn how to report a fire.
- Identify the hospital emergency room nearest to your home and know what to do in case of an accident.
- Keep emergency numbers near your phone at home. Check to see if your host country has a similar 911 system.
- Ask your site director for further information on safety, etc.
- Be cautious, not fearful—most incidents happen when you get careless.
- Exercise the same precautions you would in any U.S. city. In unfamiliar surroundings you may not know the real concerns.
- Use common sense.
- Never carry large amounts of cash! Use money belts or a concealed purse for your passport, visa, money, credit cards and other documents.
- Don't leave your luggage alone. If you want to explore a city, leave your belongings in the checked luggage area, which will probably only cost a couple of dollars in local currency.

- You will probably look like a tourist, at least for awhile, and you may be targeted for an “easy target,” so be aware.
- Listening for what is being said around you
- Avoid being in unfamiliar neighborhoods.
- Hitchhiking is definitely **not** recommended.

The following common sense ideas are for emergency and non-emergency situations.

Keep in Contact with Home

Your parents and friends will have concerns while you are away. Please keep in contact with them on a regular basis and let them know how you are doing. If you make plans to call at a certain time, make every attempt to call at that time. Otherwise, people may worry unnecessarily. If you plan to travel during your program, leave your itinerary with the host coordinator and with your family. If your family does not hear from you for a while, they might worry needlessly.

Everybody faces challenges while abroad and it's easy to “vent” to family and friends; be sure to also include them in your joyful experiences to prevent them from worrying from afar.

Sexual Harassment

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

- Take care of yourself when out on a date: Be prepared to pay your own way, have access to a phone, and arrange for transportation.
- Trust your instincts and your inner voice!
- If you don't like what someone is doing, you can reject the activity without rejecting the person.
- Look confident and strong and ignore inappropriate remarks from strangers
- If an assault is attempted, consider your options to find an escape.

Stay Informed

Stay well informed about local and regional news and conditions. Read local newspapers as well as U.S. media such as the *Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times* that have good international coverage and analysis of local problems and issues. You may want to research local and national laws and practices before you depart. The internet is a good start for your research.

Avoid Political Unrest

There is increased risk of anti-American activity during periods of political conflict and economic change that involve the U.S. and other nations. You can minimize risks and avoid obvious dangers by keeping a low profile, not wearing clothes that signal your nationality (baseball caps, college sweatshirts, etc.), avoiding large groups of other Americans, staying away from demonstrations, and generally keeping out of harm's way. Do not frequent places that may make you vulnerable by association. For example, some restaurants or clubs have reputations for being American hangouts, such as McDonalds and Burger King. Avoid them if possible.

Keep a Low Profile

Walk away from trouble and take a passive approach to any potentially volatile situations. Do not give information about your school, the students, or professors.

Stay Alert

Be aware of your surroundings, including unknown individuals hanging around your building or any strange activity nearby. Be suspicious of unexpected packages, letters with no return addresses and/or excessive postage, and especially letters that appear to contain more than just paper. Be careful of who

has access to your room or apartment. Visitors should be screened and delivery persons should be asked for identification, and should not be left unsupervised.

Take Precautions

Take the same precautions you would at home. Do not give out your name or address to unknown people. Know where the nearest police station and hospital are and keep emergency numbers handy. Do not go into unsafe or unknown areas alone after dark.

Student Property Insurance

Willamette University's policy regarding student property is the same when students are abroad even when in a homestay situation. Students are responsible for maintaining their own personal property insurance and liability coverage for damage, loss/theft of property or fire. Please refer to WU's website for more information: willamette.edu/dept/resservices/information/bring/index.html

Willamette Support

Collectively, the Office of International Education staff has many years of experience in dealing with the unexpected. They have an excellent track record of anticipating and helping resolve challenges students may face as they assimilate into a new culture, language, and environment. Please call us any time with questions or concerns; we are happy to help in any way we can.

Legal Matters

There are a number of common legal matters you should be aware of, regardless of your host country. Some are much more serious than others, so please read the following sections carefully so that you are aware of the liability involved. While you are abroad, your university cannot assume ANY responsibility for your actions.

Registering

Some countries require students to register with the local police department. Your site director will advise you if you need to do this.

Illegal Drugs

Never travel with marijuana or any other contraband drugs. Your university cannot assume responsibility for you if you are apprehended for drug use. Therefore, it is Willamette University's policy that the use of marijuana and other contraband drugs by students on an overseas program cannot be tolerated. Whether it is by you alone or when you are participating in an organized program event, the use of even a small amount of an illegal drug can jeopardize your welfare and the future of the program. Please refer to the Foreign Study Authorization on pages 51-54.

Even in places where the use of drugs by local citizens is either ignored or treated very lightly, U.S. American students, when apprehended indulging in or in possession of contraband, can be dealt with in a very harsh manner. If someone selling drugs approaches you, walk away. Do not talk with that person—a conversation with a suspected narcotics pusher is seen as an act of “intent to purchase” in some countries. Laws concerning drugs are much more stringent (and penalties more severe) in Latin America, Asia, and Europe than in the U.S. Conditions of imprisonment in a foreign jail are not something you want to experience. Remember that when abroad, being a citizen of the United States does not ensure special treatment or consideration. You are subject to the laws of the country you are in—the U.S. Consulate cannot get you released if you are arrested, they can only notify family and arrange for legal representation.

Legal Rights Abroad:

- Once travelers leave U.S. jurisdiction, they are not covered by U.S. laws and have no U.S. constitutional rights abroad.
- Few countries provide trial by jury.
- Pretrial detention may involve months of confinement in primitive prison conditions.

- Trials frequently involve lengthy delays or postponements and are conducted in the language of the foreign country.

Drug Arrests Abroad:

- Sentences for possession or trafficking in drugs can range from 2 to 25 years and possible heavy fines.
- In some countries—like Turkey, Egypt, Malaysia, and Thailand—conviction may lead to a life sentence or even imposition of a death penalty.
- Several countries have stiffened their penalties for drug violations and imposed stricter enforcement of existing drug laws. Proposed laws in Mexico will increase the maximum sentence for drug trafficking from 15 to 20 years.

What U.S. Consular Officers Abroad Can Do:

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

What U.S. Consular Officers Abroad Cannot Do:

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

7 - WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN “AMERICAN” ABROAD (howdy folks!)

In this chapter you will find:

- Why is it important to recognize your Americanism?
- U.S. cultural patterns
- How to react to criticism about the U.S.

Are you Swedish-American, Mexican-American, Vietnamese-American, just U.S. American or do you hold citizenship in another country? How do you identify yourself? Whoever you are, however you define yourself, you will take your “cultural identity” wherever you go. “What is ‘cultural identity?’” you may ask. Well, in simple terms, it is the assumptions that you have about yourself, your family, friends and the world based on your own life experience. Understanding your own cultural identity will help you in the quest to understand someone else’s.

Why is it Important to Recognize Your “Americanism”?

Most likely, your basic view of yourself as an American (or someone who lives in the U.S.) may be that you are a good person, or that at least you have good intentions, and that most other people of the world do too. For this reason, you may be excited and eager to meet people from other countries, share in their culture and experience a different way of life. These interactions will probably be among the highlights of your stay abroad. However, you should be aware that some people may make assumptions about you because you coming from the United States. In such situations, it is important to understand the perceptions of U.S. Americans from the perspective of people from other countries by looking at some basic U.S. cultural values.

Be careful when calling yourself “American.” You might find that others who live in North and South America will identify as American as well. It is best to start with “U.S. American”

U.S. American Cultural Patterns

Dr. Robert Kohls is a renowned writer and researcher on American cultural patterns and cross-cultural value differences. He has developed a list of 13 commonly-held values which help explain to first-time visitors to the United States why U.S. Americans act as they do. He is careful to avoid labeling these

Frustrated with your host culture? Start here to explore why.

values as positive or negative, and cautions others to do the same. As an American, do you recognize these traits in yourself and your peers? Whether you agree with Kohls or not, or are willing to recognize the validity of these generalizations about Americans, his observations are thought-provoking and may help you gain insight into your own variations of “Americanism.”

Personal Control Over the Environment

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

Change is Seen as Natural and Positive

In the American mind, change is seen as indisputably good—leading to development, improvement, and progress. Many older, more traditional cultures consider change disruptive and destructive; they value stability, continuity, tradition, and a rich and ancient heritage—these values are not considered to be very important in the United States.

Time and its Control

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

Equality/Fairness

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

Individualism/Independence

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

Self-Help/Initiative

Americans take credit only for what they accomplish as individuals. They get no credit for having been born into a rich family but pride themselves in having climbed the ladder of success, to whatever level, all by themselves. The equivalent of this concept cannot be found in most other cultures. It’s an indicator of how highly Americans regard the self-made man or woman.

Competition

Americans believe that competition brings out the best in an individual in any system. Value is reflected in economic success and is applied in the U.S. in all areas—medicine, the arts, education, and sports.

Future Orientation

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

Action/Work Orientation

“Don’t just stand there,” says a typical bit of American advice, “do something!” This expression, though normally used in a crisis situation, describes most Americans’ waking life, where action—any action—is seen as superior to inaction. Americans routinely schedule an extremely active day. Any relaxation must be limited in time and aimed at recreating so that they can work harder once their recreation is over. Such a no-nonsense attitude toward life has created a class of people known as “workaholics”—people addicted to, and often wholly identified with, their profession. The first question people often ask when they meet each other in the U.S. is related to work: “What do you do?” “Where do you work?” or “Who

(what company) are you with?” The United States may be one of the few countries in the world where people speak about the “dignity of human labor,” meaning hard physical labor. Even corporation presidents will engage in physical labor from time to time and, in doing so, gain rather than lose respect from others.

Informality

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

Directness, Openness, and Honesty

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

Practicality/Efficiency

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

Materialism/Acquisitiveness

Foreigners consider Americans more materialistic than they are likely to consider themselves. Americans would like to think that their material objects are just the natural benefits that result from hard work and serious intent, a reward that all people could enjoy were they as industrious and hard working as Americans. But by any standard, Americans are materialistic. They give a higher priority to obtaining, maintaining, and protecting material objects than they do in developing and enjoying relationships with other people. Since Americans value newness and innovation, they sell or throw away possessions frequently and replace them with newer ones.

How to Respond to Criticism About the United States

As expressed previously, you probably consider yourself to be a good person, or at least someone with good intentions. But as you meet people outside of the United States, you will begin to discover that others don’t always think that way. In fact, you should be prepared for confrontation based on what and who others *think* you are as an U.S. American—to be judged not for yourself at times, but rather as a collective body of people who live south of Canada and north of Mexico.

The forms of confrontation may vary; sometimes you will be expected to answer questions about American politics, geography, values, and other issues as if you were the number one expert on the subject. At other times, criticisms will simply be words yelled in your face. With few exceptions, you should not expect to be confronted with actual physical harm. Commonly asked questions include:

- Why are Americans so materialistic? Why are they so wasteful of natural resources?
- Why are Americans so racist? How can you justify forcing the Native Americans onto reservations when the whole country belongs to them?
- Why are Americans so ignorant of other countries?
- Why does America give so much foreign aid to countries that abuse human rights?
- Why are there so many homeless people in the richest country in the world?
- Why are teachers so poorly paid in a country that claims to have one of the best educational systems?

There is no one right or wrong way to respond to comments that may be made against you for being American or about the United States in general. You will develop your own method for dealing with confrontation based on your experiences and your opinions. You may choose to take an active role by responding to the questions or accusations, or you may choose to take a passive role and not say anything in response. As you begin to respond to any criticism, keep the following strategies in mind:

- *Try to understand the critic's motive(s)*
Americans are fond of saying "Don't judge a book by its cover." Outward appearances are not always enough to make a judgment about a situation where you are being confronted with anti-American sentiment. Ask your critic questions that may explain this person's beliefs about the United States and why he or she might hold them. Does this person get ideas from the media? Is this something being taught in school? Has this person experienced some sort of harassment from an American? If you understand the critic's motive(s), or where his or her information comes from, perhaps you can find some common ground and a more tolerant way to respond.

Use these words: "I think..." "I feel..."
"In my experience..." "In my life..."

- *Draw upon personal experiences and observations*
When someone asks you a question like, "Why are Americans so wasteful of natural resources?" your first response might be to say, "Oh, not me." Whether or not the question is based on fact, one way to respond might be to draw on your own experiences and observations. In this case, you can say that while you cannot speak for the rest of the American population, you have your own personal practices, such as recycling, water conservation, or use of public transportation.
- *Avoid becoming defensive*
You sometimes can't help becoming defensive when your culture is being criticized. Try to avoid getting defensive as much as possible. Keep an open mind, and remember to try and understand your critic's motives.
- *Become more familiar with common U.S. facts and policies*
It's a common belief overseas that Americans are uneducated. How can you dispel that stereotype? People in other countries will probably ask you a lot of questions about the United States on such varied topics as geography, politics, pop culture, etc. They may be intelligent questions like, "Who decides whether a person is guilty of a crime?" and they may be very simple questions like, "Do all Americans wear cowboy boots and ride horses?"

However, it is not uncommon to find that people overseas know a lot more about U.S. politics and policies than you do. You should familiarize yourself with basic U.S. facts and policies because you do not want to appear uneducated or ignorant of basic facts. Some areas of suggestion are:

- U.S. geography (e.g., differences in regions)
- U.S. political system (e.g., how Congress differs from the Senate)

- U.S. judicial system (e.g., how the jury system works in theory)
- U.S. foreign policy (especially in regard to your host country)

Conclusions

Studying abroad will probably be one of the most memorable experiences of your life. As a visitor in a foreign land, you will get an objective view of a life, culture, and people different than the one you know. Having this “birds-eye-view” may broaden your mind, your world perspective and even help you know yourself a little better. While your time abroad will not be without its moments of uncertainty and discomfort, these moments will probably be few in comparison to all the knowledge and experience you’ll gain. In a nutshell, studying abroad may be difficult at first, but is ultimately enriching and exciting. Keeping an open mind and not making assumptions about things that are not part of your “cultural identity” will help those you meet do the same for you, and help to ensure that you get the most from your time abroad.

8 - CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT (say what!?!)

In this chapter you will find:

- The importance of defining “culture”
- Culture shock
- Intercultural communication
- Language acquisition

When you first walk off the plane in your host country, you may feel nervous at the sound of a language that’s not your own booming over the loudspeaker. However, you’ll probably also feel a sense of great excitement and curiosity, of eagerness to “begin,” whatever this might mean to you. As time goes by and you settle into your routine, register for classes, begin the process of making friends and explore the area you now call home, you will go through many emotional, psychological and possibly, physical changes. This is what is known as “cultural adjustment” or “cultural adaptation.” You cannot avoid these changes, but as long as you recognize them when they occur, you will be better prepared to deal with their consequences.

The Importance of Defining “Culture”

It is difficult to begin a discussion on cultural adjustment without first defining the word “culture” and what its parameters are. According to the American Heritage Dictionary, “culture” is defined as “the arts, beliefs, customs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought created by a people or group at a particular time.”

Dr. Robert Kohls (see list below) found-through his research that “culture” describes the total way of life of any group of people. And to complicate matters, each individual has his or her own personal culture. For instance, you may have a preference for platform shoes over sneakers, or choose rap music over classical. In short, there is no one correct list of components of culture, but the following information is intended to give you a general sense of what makes up culture.

What is Culture?

If you were to ask several different people what they thought culture meant, you might get a list like Robert Kohls did when he wrote Survival Kit for Overseas Living:

- manners and customs
- beliefs and ideas
- ceremonies and rituals
- laws (written and unwritten)
- ideas and thought patterns
- language
- arts and artifacts
- social institutions
- religious beliefs
- myths and legends
- knowledge
- values and morals
- concept of self
- accepted ways of behaving

The Implications of Cultural Adjustment

Cultural adjustment is a continuous, on-going process. It never stops, varying from one individual to another and from one culture to another. However, the end process nearly always results in changes for both the individual and the setting. Your own personal adjustment process may require you to confront not only differences in your new culture; it may also force you to take a good look at your own cultural values and practices. This is a completely normal and natural response to the cultural adjustment process.

Do I have to change when I am abroad?
Are you sure I am going to change?

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

Imposition of Personal Values

The tendency of people to impose their own values and assumptions onto people in the new culture usually inhibits cross-cultural understanding. While you are abroad, you should avoid making definitive, prejudicial judgments that may result from your own cultural responses. For example, it is best not to move rapidly to the conclusion that a native of the new culture is cheating or lying, when that person’s behavior may be the result of other motives. You should be open-minded and receptive to different ideas, concepts and behaviors. A certain amount of self-analysis might reveal much about your own motivations and value system.

Such knowledge can improve communication skills, increase acceptance and understanding of others, and create more productive interactions. Until you have acquired enough self-knowledge to realize the true extent to which your outward personality is shaped by cultural habits and values, you will not be completely capable of comprehending or learning from the cultural habits and values of a different society.

Self-analysis and open-mindedness – sounds easy, right? It can be trickier than it seems:

Influence of Time within a New Culture

Cross-cultural adaptation is a continuing process that involves the evolution of insights, knowledge, and emotional skills. Of course, it is possible to live for years in a new culture and never be affected by it, but those involved in cross-cultural adjustment never cease to learn from the experience. It is important for you to be flexible with new-found knowledge and be prepared to discover that any single piece of information might not have universal applicability in the culture. Language-learning provides an example: you will often learn new words or terms and then, until you learn more, you may use your new vocabulary in inappropriate situations.

It is also possible to misunderstand cultural generalities and then misapply the generalization. For example, a non-American could, after perceiving with some difficulty that “Americans are frank,” misapply the insight and behave rudely in a given situation. One possible reaction you might have to living for some length of time in the new culture is isolating yourself from the most threatening aspects of the culture, and perhaps clinging to people and material representations of your own culture. Another possible reaction is to view all aspects of the new culture negatively and to belittle it, considering these norms and values inferior to your own. Ask yourself: Am I doing this already through sub-cultures in the U.S.? (i.e. Republicans vs. Democrats, Doney Hall vs. Baxter Hall)

Been there? Done that? – Take cultural understanding to the next level, challenge yourself to delve further. No one can ever perfect cultural understanding, so keep striving.

A more positive reaction is to assume or take on many of the new culture’s norms, especially those involved in expressing yourself to others both in image and language. As the length of time in the new culture grows, your ability to learn from your experiences should increase, as should your awareness of your own culturally influenced assumptions and of your personal motivations and value systems.

Culture Shock

Culture shock is not quite as shocking or as sudden as most people expect. It is part of the process of learning a new culture and can be defined as:

The feeling of frustration and anxiety which arises when familiar cultural cues are suddenly removed and replaced by new and seemingly bizarre behavior.
Lewis and Jugman, *On Being Foreign*

You may experience some discomfort before you are able to function well within your new setting. This discomfort is the culture shock stage of the adaptation process. It's important to remember that this is a very normal process that nearly everyone experiences.

Cultural baggage is unavoidable, don't fight it, work with it.

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

Emerging Differences

Culture shock does not happen all at once. It is a feeling that grows little by little as you interact with other students, faculty, and people in the community. Gradually, as you become more involved in activities and get to know the people around you, differences, rather than similarities, will become increasingly apparent to you. Those differences may begin to seem more irritating than interesting or quaint. Small incidents and difficulties may make you anxious and concerned about how best to carry on with academic and social life. As these differences emerge, they may be troubling and sometimes shocking.

For many, this gradual process culminates in an emotional state known as culture shock, although it is seldom as dramatic as the term implies. There are ways to deal with this period of adjustment, and recognizing that culture shock may lie behind physical symptoms and irritability may help. Students are sometimes unaware of the fact that they are experiencing culture shock when these symptoms occur. Some common symptoms may be:

- Homesickness
- Desire to avoid social settings which seem unpleasant
- Physical complaints and sleep disturbances
- Depression and feelings of helplessness
- Difficulty with coursework and concentration
- Loss of sense of humor
- Boredom or fatigue
- Hostility towards the host culture
- Change in eating patterns – weight gain/loss

Coping with Culture Shock

You may find yourself responding more strongly to seemingly minor incidents. It may be as small as what to say when you bump into someone, trying to figure out how to cross the street, or trying to figure out how to get a haircut. A more significant event may be inadvertently using inappropriate language or gesture and dealing with the consequences. The most effective way to combat culture shock is to step back from a given event or incident (big or small) that has bothered you, assess it, and search for an appropriate explanation and response. Try the following:

- Observe how others are acting in the same situation.
- Describe the situation, what it means to you, and your response to it

- Ask a local resident or someone with extensive experience how they would have handled the situation and what it means in the host culture.
- Plan how you might act in this or similar situations in the future.
- Test the new behavior and evaluate how well it works.
- Decide how you can apply what you have learned the next time you find yourself in a similar situation.
- Be open-minded and flexible.
- Keep your sense of humor - you are bound to embarrass yourself at least once while abroad.

The Many Stages of Cultural Adjustment

Many returning students describe study abroad as an emotional rollercoaster.

Knowing the stages of Culture Shock will help you at least understand why your emotions and actions are all over the place. **These stages generally are sequential, but the amount of time each person spends at each stage can vary significantly.**

Stage 1: The Honeymoon Stage

Everything you see is interesting and exciting. Sure, you are having trouble navigating the transportation system, but you are generally happy and enjoying your new adventure.

- Be careful, these early impressions of the host culture could be unrealistic or inaccurate.
- Start writing in a journal or blog and continue through your time abroad. Later on you will love looking back at your initial days and weeks abroad.

Stage 2: The “Everything is Difficult” Stage

Going to the post office, the bank, the grocery store, everything seems hard! People stand too close to you in line, no one is ever on time, you are sick of taking the bus an hour to class. Daily life is a challenge because everything is new and your cultural comforts may be clashing with your host culture’s. As a result of these frustrations and challenges you may feel homesick, angry, bored, or depressed.

Although it can be disconcerting and a little scary, the “shock” gradually eases as you begin to understand and adapt to the new culture. It is useful to realize that often the reactions and perceptions of others toward you—and you toward them—are often based on a clash of cultural values, not personal evaluations. The more skilled you become in recognizing how and when cultural values and behaviors are likely to come into conflict, the easier it becomes to make adjustments that can help you avoid serious difficulties.

- Don’t take your frustrations out on the host culture. Try to understand why some of the culture’s characteristics are affecting you.
- Continue to discover your host site.
- Meet local people! It is hard but very fruitful. Be confident.
- Get back to your goals; are there new ways you can work on accomplishing them?
- Exercise, eat well and get out and about.
- Ask your program directors or email the OIE for more suggestions or counseling.
- If you are experiencing any of the following symptoms contact your program administrators or the OIE because you might be experiencing too much shock: substantial weight gain/loss, loss of appetite, insomnia, sleeping or wanting to sleep too much, feeling depressed for two or more weeks, lack of desire for basic hygiene.

Stage 3: The “Hey! I am Figuring this Out” Stage

Cultural adjustment is fun! You are learning and using local slang in everyday conversation, you are making friends with the host-country nationals and last week you made a joke that they understood! At this stage you are becoming more confident in the culture and you are excited to learn more.

- Keep up the momentum! Don’t stall out in your comfort zone.

- Explore new avenues of culture; go to plays, local movies, a concert, a dance and museums.
- Revisit your initial impressions of your host culture; were you wrong about certain traits? What qualities have you grown to love? What aspects of the culture still bother you? why?

Stage 4: The “It Feels Like Home” Stage

You are finally feeling adapted. Your accent is sounding less and less foreign everyday, you are craving the local food and you hardly ever trip getting on the bus anymore.

- There is still a lot to learn about the culture, so although you are feeling comfortable, continue to ask questions.
- Get ready to leave. You are going to go through culture shock again when you return home, so be prepared, and see pages 42 through 46.
- Make a list of all of the qualities or characteristics of your host culture that you hope to take home with you.

Throughout the period of cultural adaptation, take good care of yourself. Read a book or rent a video in your home language, take a short trip if possible, exercise and get plenty of rest, write a letter or telephone home, eat good food, and do things you enjoy with friends. Take special notice of things you enjoy about living in the host culture.

Just as culture shock derives from the accumulation of cultural clashes, an accumulation of small successes can lead to more effective interactions within the new culture. As you increase your abilities to manage and understand the new social system, practices that recently seemed so strange will become less puzzling. Eventually you will adapt sufficiently to do your best in your studies, enjoy your social life, relax, and fully enjoy the experience.

Making friends abroad:

Many students see their study abroad program as a time to travel on weekends to see more of the host country and neighboring countries. Unfortunately, this weekend travel is a large barrier to making social relationships with locals, since that’s the time they’re available to socialize. So, stay in town on the weekends and look for places and events where locals congregate.

- Take part in activities offered by local youth or university groups
- Meet with one or more language partners and get to know their friends
- Join a club or association that meets for some activity you do at home
- Share a cafe table with some locals
- Don’t hang out in a large group of Americans (more than 2!)

Intercultural Communication

Perhaps the major contributor to unease in a foreign environment is the increased difficulty, or even impossibility, of communicating and receiving information. You will bring your own communication habits, both verbal and non-verbal, that may not transcend cultural limits. Studies of intercultural communication have shown that the amount of time and energy needed for simple communication increases rather dramatically as cultural differences increase. Your gestures and other non-verbal cues can act, unbeknownst to you, as hindrances to communication. Your perceptions of any given person or situation can be quite different from the other person’s perception.

You should try to recognize that other cultures may use different verbal and non-verbal communication methods. Body language, the use of personal space when talking and other non-verbal communication can be very different than what you are used to in the United States. Likewise, some cultures are not nearly as frank, sarcastic or confrontational when discussing certain topics as

Americans, others are more straight forward. Sometimes things are implied in conversation but not voiced. It is important to remember that differences in communication styles are just that - different. You

Intercultural communication isn’t just about words, but expressions, gestures and body language.

should avoid making judgments about a person's rudeness until you understand how verbal and non-verbal communication styles differ in your host culture. You will be studied and possibly judged by your own communication style.

Language Acquisition

Speaking a foreign language will show your interest in the host culture and is, at the very least, a courtesy to your hosts. The desire to use the local language is a good basis on which to build new relationships with local people.

After you arrive, look for as many opportunities as possible to improve your language skills. This can be very exhausting, sometimes even frustrating, when you get the impression that you are not able to express even your most basic feelings and thoughts in the correct way. However, practicing the language is very important. Discipline yourself to speak the local language at all times, even with your American contemporaries.

Don't try too hard to avoid grammatical mistakes. This will change your normal communication style and inhibit relaxed relations with other people. Your language proficiency may delay your feeling comfortable abroad. Take this into account when you evaluate your situation in general. Remember that it is very difficult to become fluent, especially in a short period of time.

Conclusion

Chances are one of the reasons you are studying abroad is to gain new experiences, meet new people, and learn about yourself in a totally new environment. These experiences can be uncomfortable initially, but you'll adjust to your new surroundings and culture. Being nervous about using the wrong word when ordering in a restaurant or misinterpreting an aspect of your host-country's culture is completely understandable. You are, after all, in a world very different from the one that's familiar to you. Try to keep your sense of humor and take things in stride - making mistakes can be fun, and often enriching for your experience.

9 - RETURNING HOME (the definition of bittersweet)

In this chapter you will find:

- Practical matters for returning home
- Preparing for reverse culture shock
- Levels of readjustment
- Coping strategies

As the date of your return ticket draws near, it's a good time to start thinking about what you've learned during your time abroad, and how it will impact your life back in the U.S. Reflecting on questions such as "Why did I choose an overseas program?" and "What do I want to accomplish during my time here?" can help clarify how you are going to integrate your overseas experience into your academic, professional and personal goals for the future. Preparing for your re-entry after an extended period abroad will enable you to turn what can be an awkward time into a productive, exciting one.

Practical matters:

Keeping in Touch with Home

Part of the preparation for returning home includes staying in contact with your family and friends, consulting the Office of International Education about any academic or school-related matters and, to some extent, keeping up with political, economic, and social developments at home. For some students, these changes will be minute; for others, they may be very significant. Regular correspondence with family and friends via E-mail, letters and blogging, as well as checking the Willamette web site for any changes will help you stay in touch.

Making Travel Arrangements

If you already have a return plane ticket you should contact the airline and reconfirm your seat at least 72 hours in advance. Airlines notoriously overbook flights back to the United States. You may decide to travel before leaving the country or have your family and friends join you. Depending upon your ticket restrictions, this may be possible for a fee. If you want to change the return date, contact the airline directly or visit a travel agency. They can tell you about any restrictions.

Some of the material for the following sections was taken from *The Art of Coming Home* by Craig Sorti.

U.S. Customs

Upon returning home you will have to go through U.S. Customs. The duty-free exemption, also called the personal exemption, is the total value of merchandise you may bring back to the United States without having to pay duty. You may bring back more than your exemption, but you will have to pay duty on it. In most cases, the personal exemption is \$800, but there are some exceptions to this rule. See the U.S. Customs website for more details. Duty fees ranging from 5% to 50% or more will be charged on anything over the \$800 duty-free allowance. Certain items will not be charged duty depending upon the country of purchase and type of item. You will not have to pay duty on gifts costing less than \$25 that are mailed from Europe, as long as you do not send more than one gift to any one person on one day.

Keep all receipts for purchases you mail home or bring with you, as you may need them when you go through Customs. If you are taking a foreign made item with you, such as a camera or watch, U.S. Customs's officials suggest you register it at the airport before you leave the country. Failure to do so may result in having to pay duty on it upon your return. In some countries, especially those belonging to the European Union (EU), you may get taxes back on certain purchases. All agricultural items (fruits, vegetables, seeds, some wood products, etc.) are subject to inspection and may possibly be denied entry to the U.S.

Preparing for Reverse Culture Shock: Re-Entry to Your Own Culture

The cycle of overseas adjustment begins at the time you plan to study abroad. You may think your adjustment ends when you have successfully assimilated into the life of your host country, but in fact, the cycle of cultural adjustment continues through your return to the United States. Culture shock and re-entry shock are not isolated events—rather a part of the total adjustment process that stretches from pre-departure to reintegration at home. The rest of this chapter is meant to prepare you for leaving your host country. It is important to read this section before you leave on your study abroad experience, as well as when you are about to return home.

Change and Adaptation

You have just had the opportunity to live, study, and travel overseas. During your stay you have probably assimilated some of the host country's culture, learned new ways of doing things and, perhaps, gained some new views and opinions about certain topics. In short, you have changed. As one returnee comments, "Living abroad has a deep, broadening effect on a person—an effect that I didn't realize until my return." For some people, living overseas and having those changes occur outside of the United States can magnify their experiences, thus causing the return home to be a bit unsettling. In addition, some experiences are specific to being overseas and could not have occurred in the United States.

While overseas, you may have experienced a greater amount of independence, both academically and personally, than previously experienced in the United States. This independence can help make you more confident in your abilities to achieve your goals. You may have become increasingly more sure of yourself and possibly have gained a more mature or focused attitude about your future. You may even be a bit more serious and directed. Some of these new views and attitudes may be in conflict with the views and attitudes of family and friends. They may question your new way of thinking and doing things or even pressure you to "reform." These differences may often be unsettling and uncomfortable at first.

New Skills

Along with the new ideas, views and attitudes that you have developed, you have probably acquired some new skills. These may include discovering a new way to do an old task, a different perspective on your field of study, or increasing your foreign language skills. And, for those of you studying in an English-speaking country, the English language will acquire a new meaning through idioms, lingo, and phrases specific to the host country.

These new skills will now become a part of your daily life. Increased facility with your foreign language will probably have one of the greatest impacts. If you have learned to become dependent on these skills to communicate from day to day, then it may feel strange to revert back to your native language. The degree of strangeness is directly connected to the amount of culture from the host country that you have assimilated and will definitely influence your readjustment. You may feel frustrated and depressed if you cannot communicate your new ideas, skills or opinions. Again, as at the beginning of your sojourn, patience, flexibility, and time will be required.

Loss of Status

In your host country, you may have been seen as an informal ambassador from the United States. This gave you a certain status of being "special." When you return home, you are just like everyone else and the loss of feeling a bit special can be a factor of your readjustment. One returnee describes it this way: "Being in a foreign country as a foreign visitor, you are to a certain extent a 'special person'; your views, accent, lifestyle are all interesting to your hosts. As such, you will receive a lot of attention, make friends and, generally, be popular. However, when returning home, you become again a 'normal person.' I found it very difficult to make that transition."

Friendships

Now that you have studied abroad, you obviously have a new circle of friends. You probably saw some or all of these people on a daily basis, and they became an important part of your life. Leaving your new friends can be, for many, the most difficult part of re-entry. Having to abandon intense friendships, girl/boyfriends, and cultural supports frequently brings disturbing feelings that are characteristic of a grieving process. Though you may seem to make a good surface adjustment once home, that adjustment may hide feelings of uncertainty, alienation, anger, and disappointment.

At first, friends back home will ask about your experiences and appear to be interested. They will often show a slight fascination for your adventures, but this may quickly fade. They will whip through pictures and stories once, but because they have not shared the experience, you should be prepared for their cursory interest. After a while, you may find that your friends are more eager to talk about what has gone on in their lives as opposed to hearing more about your life overseas. If many of your friends have never lived abroad, you may also have to deal with feelings of envy or jealousy. When you talk too much about your experience, people may accuse you of being elitist, even though that may not be your intention.

People are often threatened by new and unusual points of view if they, themselves, have not had a similar experience. As much as you need to talk about your recent time away from home, it is advisable to be sensitive to the attitudes and feelings of others. (Refer to the section on coping strategies later in this chapter, which discusses other options for support.)

As with your family relationships, your relationships with your friends can alter because of the changes that have occurred in your life and the lives of your friends. Former friends may even have found new friendships and have priorities which are now different from yours. Be patient. If the friendship is worth maintaining, adjustments can and will be made. If not, developing new friendships can be as exhilarating as traveling.

Be aware that you may not notice the changes within yourself in the same way others do.

Family Relationships

Your new independence, views and attitudes, your role as informal ambassador, your newly acquired skills and your new friends all have contributed to making you who you are now. The “changed you” will have to readjust to life in the United States, and, for some, this can be difficult. Initially, you may even have to live at home. Also, you may not be the only one affected by re-entry.

Since you are the one who has been away and had so many new experiences, everyone and everything at home should have stayed fairly stable. However, the home that you remember is not always going to be exactly the same as it was when you left. This feeling of dislocation occurs for two reasons. One, because you are now looking at what was once familiar through a new set of perceptions, you will see everything a bit differently. The new experiences and perspectives gained abroad may mean that home is never the same again. Secondly, like it or not, life at home did carry on while you were away. Things have happened to your family and friends, and events have occurred in their lives. These events may have caused changes in their feelings, perceptions, opinions, and attitudes. These changes may not have had an intense effect on your life. However, to specific individuals, their experiences are as important as your experiences are to you. Remember, and be aware, that people at home change too, so expect things to be different and not entirely the same.

It is normal for you to want to hold on to the person you have become. Your overseas experience and life will now be a part of you and reflect who you are right now. The “new” you cannot be discarded or forgotten for the “old” you. However, you and your family must come to terms with this “new” you and continue to build upon your existing relationship from this point forward. It will require commitment to work toward mutual respect and understanding of each other’s views. You may find that you have a totally different relationship with your family.

University/College Life

For those of you who go directly to Willamette without time at home (or limited time at home) you may face a new set of readjustment issues upon return to academic life. For example, some students experience a greater amount of academic independence while overseas than they had previously experienced. If you have found this academic freedom to be particularly gratifying and challenging, then the readjustment to a more structured system can be difficult. Upon your return to university life, you may also feel a bit removed from your university and your department.

Levels of Readjustment

As stated earlier, no experience is the same for everyone. You will go through re-entry much differently than someone else. Research on readjustment to life in the United States after a prolonged stay abroad suggests that there are several variables that may affect the degree of difficulty faced by individuals during re-entry. Some of these variables include:

Age and Academic Level

Older students or professionals who were well established in their field before their sojourn sometimes experience a less troubled re-entry than younger students do. Younger students, anxious to discover new attitudes and explore new ways of living, may be more likely adopt the host culture's way than to selectively integrate it with their own cultural or personal beliefs. Once home, they may constantly compare home country traditions and practices unfavorably with their host country experience, increasing feelings of alienation.

Previous Cross-Cultural Experiences

Students who have previously been away from the United States tend to have less trouble adjusting. A student who expects to experience some difficulties on return is better able to manage reacculturation problems.

Length of Stay in the Host Culture and Degree of Interaction with the Host Culture

The longer a student stays in the host country and the greater the degree of interaction and empathy with the host culture he or she experiences, the more difficult re-entry to the home culture environment may be. For longer stays abroad (more than one semester), observers have noted that students who are able to afford vacation visits home during their study sojourn seem to experience fewer problems upon returning home for good. It is thought that exposure to the home environment during visits results in more realistic expectations.

Readiness to Return Home

It has been hypothesized that students who strongly desire to return home at the end of their study sojourn are most likely to return home with a high motivation to resocialize, while those who strongly desire to stay on in the host country will seem alienated upon re-entry. Those who are moderately looking forward to returning home are expected to have the healthiest re-entry.

Degree of Similarity Between the Home and Host Culture

The greater the differences between the host culture and the home culture, the greater the reacculturation difficulty for the student. An Australian or British student returning home from the United States might expect an easier transition than a Thai or Tanzanian student. However, the less a returnee expects to experience reverse culture shock, the more likely it is that adjustment difficulties will cause alarm.

Changes (or lack of) in the Home Environment

This variable can work in several ways. A returnee may expect everything to be the same at home as it was when he or she left. During the student's absence, there may have been subtle or dramatic changes in political, economic, environmental, or social factors on a national scale. Family relationships or the standard of living may have altered in ways not anticipated. Such unexpected changes may be psychologically stressful. Conversely, a student may return home to find nothing seems to have changed.

This can intensify the student's feeling that there is no one there who can understand what he or she is going through.

Individual Awareness

Even the most aware individual is not immune to reverse culture shock or reacclimation bumps. However, the returnee should be able to understand what is happening and why. Ideally, the student will be calm and capable of focusing on what he or she can do to ease the transition process, will look for ways to assimilate the host cultural experience, and will translate it so that family and colleagues can understand and share the benefits.

Availability (or lack) of a Support Group

Being able to share concerns and coping strategies with other recent or more established returnees may help reduce the frustration and sense of helplessness that can accompany re-entry. Students who return to places where few people have studied abroad may feel very alone since there is no one with whom they can discuss their concerns. It helps to locate even one other person who has shared this experience and see that one can successfully overcome reverse culture shock. You might also benefit from friendships with international students at Willamette.

Length of the Readjustment Period

The length of time for readjustment will, of course, vary from person to person, but it will also depend on the intensity of your experience. If your experience was very intense, your adjustment will most likely take longer than if your experience was less intense. In addition, the length of time the readjustment lasts depends on you and how you cope with the situations that occur.

Coping Strategies

The good news is this phase of readjustment to life in the United States does not last forever! Here are some suggestions of ways to make this phase a bit easier on you, and your family and friends.

Acknowledge Your Adjustment

First, and foremost, acknowledge the re-entry phase as part of the overseas experience. Just as you had to give yourself time while going through the culture shock phase (if you did experience culture shock) so, too, must you give yourself time to go through the re-entry phase. Acknowledging that reverse cultural adjustment is real will help avoid feelings of guilt that might occur if you are feeling depressed or unhappy about being home. As one returnee stated in the survey, "Don't blame yourself, give yourself time . . . I'd have felt less guilty and peculiar if I'd realized it was a common phenomenon."

Share Your Adjustment

Educate your family and friends about this phase of adjustment. Many people have never heard of reverse cultural adjustment and are not aware of its existence. If the people around you know a little about what you are experiencing, then, hopefully, they will be more patient and understanding. If you have difficulty communicating your feelings, share this manual with your family and friends. Remind them that you cannot unlearn what you have learned and that you need time to re-integrate new, often conflicting components within yourself.

Stay in Contact with Your Host Culture

Some returnees have the feeling of never having been overseas after their return to the home country. Keep in contact through letters (and, if possible, through telephone calls or E-mail) with the friends you made in your host country. It will help you feel that what you experienced was real instead of a big dream.

Seek Out Others and Get Involved

If possible, seek out other returnees that live nearby. If you return to Willamette University, find others who have also studied abroad to share experiences with. The Study Abroad Advisor can help you connect with students here on campus. Since they have gone through (or are going through) re-entry

adjustment, they can offer support and advice about how to cope. Other returnees often want to hear your overseas adventure because they have a multicultural and international perspective, allowing them to more fully appreciate your experience. Meeting international students here at Willamette is mutually helpful as international students are often looking for a way to connect here.

One strategy is to take an advanced level course in the foreign language that interests you or to take advantage of the Language Learning Center. Think about starting a language table, where a group of students interested in improving foreign language skills in a specific language can meet one to three times a week during either lunch or dinner and only speak that language. The topics of discussion are irrelevant; the purpose is to get a group together that has a common interest in a specific language and/or a specific region of the world.

Seek out other captive audiences who would have a natural interest in your overseas experience. Part of readjusting is being able to tell your story and describe the experiences that you have lived through. Such audiences include cultural organizations (you may want to consider becoming a member), civic groups that have an interest in the part of the world where you lived, school groups studying the part of the world. Volunteering some time at the Office of International Education can help you affirm the importance of your overseas experiences while helping students learn about opportunities abroad. You are the perfect person to be an advocate for the office and the program.

Set Goals for Your Future

As you have finished one phase of your life and are ready to move ahead, look toward your future. Think about your next challenge or goal. Begin to make plans for that goal and put those plans into action. Even if you are returning to Willamette University to finish a degree, you can develop goals for that period of time so that you will feel you are moving ahead rather than regressing. It is common for students who do return to university to feel they have gone 10 steps forward (their overseas experience), and now are going 11 steps backward (the return to university). It is up to you to get the most out of that time by giving yourself new goals and challenges. Take the influence of your overseas experience and use it positively to help plan this next phase of your life.

Here is some advice from other returnees:

“I think one of the best steps to take is to give yourself, your friends, and family time. It was good to visit with people and catch up on their news and listen to them. Listening is important.”

“Try and reflect on the positive aspects of your time away and the positive aspects of your life here and now, and how they compare and contrast.”

“Don’t be surprised and shy; it will take time to readjust, but you’ll feel at home again in time. Don’t expect to view/see people or things as you did when you left. Try to look for the positive things in returning home, not the negative.”

“First of all, realize it is very natural to experience uncomfortable feelings of readjustment. Secondly, try not to take yourself too seriously (if possible) . . . Keep up your ties with your friends in the ‘foreign’ country with letters and phone calls.”

“Be patient with yourself and your mood swings. Keep in touch with friends you’ve met, but don’t forget to build new bridges at home.”

10 - OFFICIAL WU FORMS

(your copies of the forms you will turn in)

Pages 49 through 57 are copies of the forms you will complete and turn into the Office of International Education. It is important that you keep a copy of all of the forms you sign in addition to the copies provided to you in this section.

1. ACCEPT / DECLINE STUDY ABROAD PLACEMENT
2. Willamette University Sponsored Programs Study Abroad Credit Conversion/Equivalency Form
3. OFF-CAMPUS STUDY AUTHORIZATION AND RELEASE AGREEMENT for Willamette University Sponsored Study Abroad Programs
4. Standards of Conduct Agreement for Willamette University
5. Health Information - Student Self-Assessment for Willamette University Sponsored Study Abroad Programs
6. Health Insurance Information for Willamette University Sponsored Study Abroad Programs
7. Student Accounts – Release

COPY for your reference

ACCEPT / DECLINE STUDY ABROAD PLACEMENT

Please Print Name CLEARLY -

Program Placement as it appears in the award letter:

You MUST either ACCEPT OR DECLINE this placement with your signature by March 7, 2008. Return the original signed copy to the Office of International Education. You keep the copy. See instructions below.

TO ACCEPT THIS PLACEMENT:

- I understand I must pay a non-refundable deposit of \$300 by March 7, 2008 in order to hold my place in this program. This deposit should be made to the Cashier's window in Waller Hall.
I understand that failure to participate in the mandatory pre-departure preparation sessions and/or failure to maintain good academic and judicial standing will result in my dismissal from the program.
I understand that I am enrolling in WU course: IDS 102X (.25) "Maximizing the Study Abroad Experience".
I give my consent to the Office of International Education (OIE) to send informational material regarding my study abroad site to my parent(s) or guardian(s).
I understand that it is my responsibility to fully disclose any health concerns and/or ongoing medical treatment on the forms provided at the mandatory pre-departure session.
I understand further that it is my responsibility to discuss my plans to study abroad with a health professional and how these plans may affect any health issues and/or treatment. This discussion must include a consideration of the availability of continued treatment at the study abroad site, the actual procedures of how the relevant treatment is obtained, the availability of medication at the study abroad site, and the regulations and logistics of carrying with you the necessary amount of medication you will need for the duration of the program.
I understand the Office of International Education will assist me in gathering information relevant to the above, but that ultimately it is my responsibility to acquire the necessary information and that my participation in the program represents my satisfaction that my health needs can be adequately addressed at my study abroad site.

My signature below indicates acceptance of this placement on the WU program designated in my award letter.

*signed by the student upon accepting placement to study abroad

TO DECLINE THIS PLACEMENT:

- I understand that by declining, I am giving up my placement in all WU Study Abroad Programs during the academic year 2008-2009 (this does not include programs outside of the academic year, such as post-sessions).
I understand that my application cannot be forwarded into the next year and, if I wish to participate in a WU Study Abroad Program in the future, I must submit a new, complete application and meet the appropriate deadline for WU Study Abroad Programs.

My signature here indicates that I am DECLINING my placement in the program designated in my award letter.

*NOT completed by the student if above portion signed

COPY for your reference – EXAMPLE ONLY see page. 11 for more info

Willamette University Sponsored Programs Study Abroad Credit Conversion/Equivalency Form

This form is designed to make sure you get the most out of your off-campus or international study experience. Using it will determine in advance the kind and amount of credit you will receive for courses you take on a Willamette Sponsored Study Abroad Program.

Please read carefully:

- 1) Whenever possible, credit for specific courses should be approved in advance by the appropriate academic authority or department. When completed, return this form (2 pages) to the Office of International Education as soon as possible, but no later than your departure date. Please be sure to keep a copy for your own records. (Public copy machines found in Library and Smullin Hall.)
- 2) Unless approved otherwise, credits for courses taken on Willamette off-campus programs will be considered *general elective credit* only, and will not count toward modes of inquiry (MOIs), writing centered (W), or major or minor requirements. (See # 5 below for more information on MOI and writing centered course credits.)
- 3) Your advisor and/or the chair of your major and/or minor department determine whether the course you take abroad is equivalent to a major/minor requirement.
- 4) The Office of the Registrar determines the amount of credit you will receive for courses taken abroad.
- 5) The Office of the Registrar also evaluates petitions for MOI credit. MOI petitions are available in the Registrar's Office. The Writing Center evaluates petitions for writing centered credit courses. Writing centered credit petitions are available at the Writing Center.
- 6) Do not assume a one-to-one conversion between the host university's courses and the WU credit you will receive. (For example, taking four courses abroad does not automatically mean that you will receive 4.0 credits on your WU transcript!)
- 7) Do not assume that because a course is taught in a foreign language that the course will count towards a foreign language requirement, major or minor.
- 8) It is the student's responsibility to understand what credit they will receive while abroad and how that credit will transfer back as Willamette credits.

I have read the points of information above carefully and understand I am responsible for remaining familiar with the content.

Initial here _____

I have met with my advisor and/or department chair about my off-campus class schedule.

Initial here _____

Initial one or more as it applies:

I do not need any courses I take abroad to count towards my major or minor graduation requirements.

Initial here _____

OR

I need or want one or more of the courses I take abroad to count towards my major or minor graduation requirements. My advisor and/or department chair has pre-approved courses to count towards my major and/or minor on the second page of this form.

Initial here _____

OR

I do not yet have enough information for my advisor and/or department chair to pre-approve a course abroad to count towards my major and/or minor. I have discussed with my advisor and/or department chair what information they need in order to approve the course (i.e. course syllabi, exams, papers, course descriptions etc.) and I will contact all parties involved once I have this information.

Initial here _____

Student Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name: COPY for your reference – EXAMPLE ONLY see page. 11 for more info _____ Dates of study: _____

Students: Please complete the form below as soon as possible (before you depart) with either the courses you have already registered for (if known), or courses you plan on taking. You should also have “back-up” courses pre-approved using this form, this will provide you with more flexibility when registering abroad. If you are unable to access the courses you will take abroad before departure, indicate what types of course your advisor suggests you take while abroad, then, contact your advisor and the Office of the Registrar as soon as you register for classes.

Note to Department Chairs and/or Advisors: On all Willamette Sponsored Study Abroad Programs, *general elective credit only* will be given unless the student has the permission of the involved department to count credits toward major or minor requirements. In such a case the student will approach you for your approval.

Students should provide you with a description of the course(s) they plan to take during the term(s) of off-campus study.

Please review the information and decide whether or not credit should be assigned within your department.

- o **If there is not enough information about the courses available before the student departs**, please discuss with the student the type of course he/she should consider and what sort of evidence you need to approve the course when the student returns (i.e. course syllabi, exams, papers, course description etc.)
- o If you approve of a specific course equivalency, please put that course number on this form; if your major requires general department credit (e.g., “three additional credits in History”) and this form meets that criterion, put “departmental” on the Equivalent WU Course line and sign this form.

Course information: Number, Title, Subject, number of contact hours, number of host institution credits. (include as much information as possible)	Equivalent WU Course (if applicable)	Major approval (printed name and signature)	Minor approval (printed name and signature)	Equivalent WU credit – Office use only If enough information is presented the Office of the Registrar will complete this portion of the form. A copy of the form will then be returned to the student. Final credit is determined upon receipt of official transcript.
<i>Example: PS260 Social Psychology, Psychology, 2hrs/week, 5 ECTS credits</i>	<i>Example: PSYC 321</i>			

Return both pages to Office of International Education, Willamette University, 900 State St, Salem, Oregon 97301, Fax (503)370-6951, or email scanned copy to swest@willamette.edu If requesting approval for more than 6 classes print and complete another form.

Official use only: _____ OIE _____ Registrar
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**WILLAMETTE UNIVERSITY
Office of International Education**

OFF-CAMPUS STUDY AUTHORIZATION AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

I, _____ (first and last name), wish to participate in the off-campus study abroad program, _____, as a student of Willamette University, an Oregon non-profit corporation located in Salem, Oregon.

As a participant in an off-campus study program sponsored by Willamette University, I have read, understood, and agree to abide by the terms that follow.

I. TERMINATION OF PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAM

I acknowledge and accept that the University reserves the right to terminate participation of the student in the program for any of the following causes:

- 1) Failure to prepare conscientiously for the program as instructed by the Office of International Education staff and, if applicable, the faculty leader including regular attendance at orientation sessions, pre-departure meetings, and study of assigned materials.
- 2) Failure to satisfactorily meet the requirements of coursework while abroad which includes, but is not limited to, regular attendance at all class meetings and completion of all required class projects.
- 3) The commission of any other acts which are, in the judgment of the University, its agents or officers, detrimental to or incompatible with the interest, harmony, comfort or welfare of the group as a whole, or damaging to the relationships which the University has with persons, institutions and governments upon whom the University relies for assistance and cooperation in maintaining its programs abroad.

II. SECURITY OF PARTICIPANT AND PARTICIPANT'S POSSESSIONS

I acknowledge and accept the safety risks inherent in foreign travel. Willamette University, the host government, nor the government of the United States can completely insure the personal safety of the participant or the participant's possessions. It is understood that in all circumstances, the security of the participant and his or her possessions remains the personal responsibility of the participant and his or her family. This includes purchasing appropriate insurance for personal property if the participant wishes to be so covered.

III. MEDICAL TREATMENT

If I am rendered incapable, I grant to Willamette University, its agents or officers, and any of its personnel full authority to take whatever action they feel is warranted under the circumstances regarding my health and safety. The University's personnel will attempt to seek the direct participation of the undersigned where possible. This authority will permit the Willamette representative, or other appointed official of Willamette University, at their discretion, in the event of injury or illness, to secure any necessary treatment for the participant at any point for medical services, including hospitalization, injections, anesthesia or surgery and such medications as may be prescribed, when such treatment is recommended by a qualified physician or surgeon, or, if no hospital is available, to place the participant in the hands of a local medical authority to fly the participant at his or her own expense back to the United States for medical treatment if this is deemed necessary by the University personnel, in consultation with local medical authorities. The student participant agrees to hold the University and its representatives harmless for any decisions or actions taken in relation to obtaining medical care for the participant.

In conducting study abroad programs, Willamette University makes every effort to protect the welfare and safety of the participants. Recognizing, however, that participation in the program is voluntary and that there are certain inherent risks which the participant must assume, the participant understands that neither the University, nor any cooperating institution, assumes any responsibility for damage to or loss of property, personal illness or injury, or death while a participant is in the program. While the University will endeavor to provide information on limited health care insurance for students participating in study abroad programs, it does not assume any responsibility for any health care expenses, and participants are strongly urged to obtain such additional medical/hospital coverage as they deem appropriate.

IV. TRAVEL REGULATIONS

I agree to the following travel regulations:

- 1) Participants will not travel independently from the group while the program is in session, whether for educational or recreational purposes, without the knowledge of the on-site University representative /program director and without furnishing the University representative/program director with a complete itinerary.
- 2) Participants may travel independently without the knowledge of Willamette University personnel prior to and after the official program dates. Participants, therefore, take on the responsibility of making appropriate passport, visa, accommodation, and travel arrangements associated with non-program travel.
- 3) Willamette University also seeks to discourage students from owning or operating motor vehicles while participating in study abroad program. Traffic congestion and different traffic laws and regulations, civil and criminal, can make driving motor vehicles in foreign countries extremely hazardous. Insurance requirements, or other financial responsibility laws, vary from country to country. If, however, a student is determined to operate a motor vehicle while abroad, he/she recognizes that Willamette University assumes no financial responsibility for legal aid, or for the care

of the student, should he/she be involved in an accident while operating a motor vehicle. Willamette accepts no liability for the students in relation to the student's operation of a motor vehicle.

Failure to comply with any of the conditions set forth in this section will constitute a breach of this off-campus study agreement and releases Willamette University and any of its personnel from any and all claims arising out of such travel.

V. LIABILITY PROVISION

In consideration of the training, experience and educational benefits that will accrue to me as a study abroad student, I agree to release Willamette University, or its Board of Trustees or any of the members thereof, or any officer, agent, representative, or employee of the University or Board of Trustees from any and all responsibility for occurrences beyond the University's reasonable control. I further agree to indemnify and hold harmless Willamette University, or its Board of Trustees or any of the members thereof, or any officer, agent, representative, or employee of the University or Board of Trustees against claims and for all costs and reasonable attorney's fees arising out of or in any way connected with the following:

- 1) Any and all claims for any injury, loss, damage, accident, delay, irregularity or expense to the student beyond the University's reasonable control during the student's participation in this program or during any continuation or extension thereof
- 2) Any intentional or unintentional injury caused in whole or in part by the participant, whether alone or together with or in association with others, to any person or persons
- 3) Any intentional or unintentional damage or injury to property, caused in whole or in part by the participant, whether alone or together with or in association with others
- 4) Any financial or other obligations incurred by the participant during the duration of the program, including without limitation obligations or liabilities incurred by the participant in any country in which the program is conducted.

VI. AGREEMENT NOT TO SUE

I agree that neither I nor my legal representatives, including my family, spouse, heirs, assigns and personal representative, will make a claim against, sue or attach the property of the University for any injury or damage to person or property arising out of any travel or activity conducted under the control of Willamette University or cooperating institutions or out of the negligence of the University or otherwise, or my negligence in combination with that of the College while I am participating in the program of foreign study.

I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THIS OFF-CAMPUS STUDY AGREEMENT AND AGREEMENT NOT TO SUE. I UNDERSTAND THIS IS A RELEASE OF LIABILITY WHEREBY I GIVE UP MY RIGHT TO SUE WILLAMETTE

UNIVERSITY OR ANY COOPERATING INSTITUTION AND THEIR OFFICERS AND AGENTS FOR ANY ACTS, EXCLUDING FRAUD, WILFUL INJURY, OR VIOLATIONS OF LAW, INCLUDING FOR DAMAGES WITHOUT FAULT. I FURTHER AGREE TO INDEMNIFY (REIMBURSE) WILLAMETTE UNIVERSITY FOR DAMAGES CAUSED BY MY NEGLIGENCE FOR ACTS WHICH ARE RELATED TO MY PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM OF OFF-CAMPUS STUDY. IT IS MY INTENT TO ASSUME ALL RISKS AND TO WAIVE AND GIVE UP MY RIGHTS TO SUE. I DO SO KNOWINGLY AND VOLUNTARILY.

**signed by the student before studying abroad*

Standards of Conduct Agreement

COPY for your reference

Willamette University
Office of International Education

The Willamette University Standards of Conduct apply to any “persons enrolled in credit or non-credit courses or educational programs offered through Willamette University”. The Standards of Conduct “apply to any officially recognized academic program, whether it is on or off-campus”. Section III, which is titled *Application of Law*, stipulates that the Standards do not seek to separate the Willamette community from the reach of civil authorities. Furthermore, the Standards specify that students, on and off campus, are subject to federal, state, and local laws, and university policy, procedure, rules and disciplinary action when their conduct violates institutional standards. The university policy makes it clear that the abuse of alcohol and drugs violates the general student conduct policy.

The possession, sale, or unauthorized use of narcotics or illegal drugs in violation of the laws of a host country are actions considered to be in violation of WU Standards of Conduct as well. Because you are traveling on a Willamette University sponsored program, your individual behavior, when it violates University standards, local law, or local social custom, could have negative repercussions on other members of the group and may infringe on the possibility of offering the program in the future.

The WU Standards of Conduct and WU drug and alcohol policies can be found online on Campus Life’s website in the publication called “Selected Policies Manual”.

Participation in Willamette University off-campus programs is a privilege and not a right. Violation of University Standards of Conduct will result in your immediate expulsion from the program and return to the United States at your own expense. In signing this waiver you acknowledge this condition of your participation in an off-campus study program.

I agree to abide by the Willamette University Standards of Conduct while I am on a Willamette University off-campus program.

International program students: I acknowledge that my failure to do so will result in my expulsion from the program and immediate return to the United States at my own expense. Domestic program students: I acknowledge that my

failure to do so will result in my expulsion from the program and program site immediately at my own expense.

**signed by the student before studying abroad*

COPY for your reference

Health Information - Student Self-Assessment

Willamette University – Office of International Education

Name: _____

Program, Country,
Semester(s): _____

This form is to help create awareness of any health issues that you should take into consideration before going abroad. This information will be used primarily to guide us in assessing resources available at the site of your chosen program. All participants are responsible for securing, at their own expense, appropriate health insurance. Some countries have entrance/length of stay restrictions on visitors who have certain serious diseases. Please research individual country health restrictions and conditions for guidance.

Please read the questions below and **answer either YES or NO** by circling the appropriate answer. If circling YES, please use the back of this sheet or attach a separate sheet of paper with a brief explanation.

1. Do you have any pre-existing conditions? – please specify
Yes No
2. Do you currently receive any treatments or medication on a regular basis?
Yes No
i.e. migraine medication, inhalers, etc. – please specify
3. Do you have any dietary restrictions? - please specify
Yes No
4. Do you have any allergies to medication, plants, food, animals, insect stings, etc.?- please specify
Yes No
5. Do you have any physical limitations or disabilities? - please specify
Yes No
6. Have you ever had a major illness? - please specify
Yes No
7. Have you ever had a major surgical operation or been advised to have one? – please specify Yes
No
8. Have you ever been hospitalized? - please specify Yes
No
9. Have you ever received treatment for drug or alcohol abuse? - please specify
Yes No
10. Have you ever been treated by a psychiatrist, psychologist, or counselor for

any mental, emotional, or nervous disorder? - please specify

Yes No

11. Have you ever received treatment for depression, anxiety, or sleep disorder? - please specify

Yes No

12. Have you ever had treatment in an inpatient program for mental or emotional disorders? - please specify

Yes

No

13. Are there any concerns regarding your health, family history, or other matters

Yes No

that you would like to discuss with a member of the Willamette staff before you depart? If yes, please give a phone number and time when you may be contacted:

FOR ALL "YES" ANSWERS, PLEASE use the back of this sheet for an explanation.

In case of emergency

Name of Parent(s) or Guardian(s)

Address

Phone Number _____(day)

_____ (evening)

By signing below, I certify that the above information is true to the best of my knowledge.

If my parents have not signed this form, I represent that I am not a minor.

**completed and signed by the student before studying abroad*

COPY for your reference

Health Insurance Information

Willamette University

Office of International Education

Name _____

WU ID# _____

Program _____

Program Semester/Year

As a Willamette student, participation in an off-campus program requires health insurance that covers you in the country of your program. Please check with all insurance carriers with whom you have coverage to confirm that you will be covered in the country of your program and while traveling. While abroad, most health service providers will require payment up front from you and you will file a reimbursement claim directly to your insurance company. Be sure you understand all of the coverage and requirements of your own health insurance prior to leaving the U.S. Bring your insurance card and policy information with you abroad, even if you have Willamette's student health insurance.

Please note:

Willamette University student are automatically covered for Emergency Evacuation and Repatriation. This does not replace the health insurance requirement.

Please check ALL THAT APPLY and SIGN AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS FORM:

_____ My personal medical insurance provides adequate coverage for me while abroad, I am aware of all of its relevant policies. For my own safety, I understand my coverage should include outpatient, inpatient, and emergency care.

_____ I am covered by Willamette University’s student medical insurance plan. (Information about the WU student health plan can be found online at www.willamette.edu/dept/health/insurance/. If you wish to waive your WU medical insurance, you must complete the waiver on this website or at Bishop Health Center.)

_____ My study abroad program provider requires me to purchase a specific medical insurance for the program. (For example, ISEP requires participants to purchase ISEP provided insurance. I understand that this insurance will only cover me during my program dates.)

_____ Health insurance is automatically included in my study abroad program.

Below is the information for all of my current health insurance policies (use the back of this sheet for additional insurance coverage):

Insurance #1: Name of Insurance Company: _____

Policy / Certificate #/ID: _____

Name of Policy Holder: _____

Insurance #2 (if applicable): Name of Insurance Company: _____

Policy / Certificate #/ID: _____

Name of Policy Holder: _____

**completed and signed by the student before studying abroad*

COPY for your reference

Office of Student Accounts – Release

Willamette University Sponsored Study Abroad Program – Fall 2009

IMPORTANT ! – PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO STUDENT ACCOUNTS IN WALLER HALL

(PRINT NAME)

(BOX #)

(PROGRAM)

(ID NUMBER)

(LOCAL PHONE)

_____ **If you are NOT receiving any financial aid (loans, grants, scholarships etc.), please check here and return to the Student Loan Office in Waller Hall.**

We have been informed that you will be studying abroad for **FALL 2009**

In order to better serve you, we need to know where to send any funds due to you and or checks to be endorsed. We would like to have the name of someone you trust to take care of your financial business.

- A refund check may be issued if a loan or award overpays your account. Who could we send this check to that could deposit the check into your bank account.?
- We need to know if this is a non-Willamette program – who pays what (make note at bottom of page).
- If your loan should come as a paper check instead of electronically, who would we send this to who can deposit this check into your bank account and issue funds back to Willamette University if necessary.
- **Perkins Loan?** -Your Perkins loan is not complete until you have signed the Promissory Note and completed the application. The funds will not be disbursed until you complete your paperwork.
- Contact Bev Loos at 503 375 5455 or bloos@willamette.edu regarding your Perkins Loan.

I give permission for Willamette University to contact the following person regarding my account while I am studying abroad.

(Print Name)	(Relationship)
--------------	----------------

(Address)	(City)
(State)	(zip code)

(Home Phone)	(Work Phone)
--------------	--------------

(Student Signature)	(Date)
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PLEASE RETURN ASAP TO STUDENT LOANS/ACCOUNTS.

INDEX

Accept/Decline Study Abroad Placement form (copy) - 48
American Cultural Patterns – 30-31
Credit – 11-12
Cultural Adjustment - 37, 38
Culture Shock – 37, 38
Culture, the importance of defining - 35
Financial Aid for Study Abroad - 11
General Pre-departure meeting - 4
Health Information - Student Self-Assessment for Willamette University Sponsored Study Abroad Programs form – 55-56
Health Insurance Information for Willamette University Sponsored Study Abroad Programs form – 56-57
Housing – 21-23
Intercultural Communication - 39
Intercultural Study within Cultural Immersion Course IDS 203 (W) 1.0 - 3
International Calling – 12-13
International Student Identity Card - 12
Language Acquisition - 40
Legal Matters - 28
Maximizing the Study Abroad Experience Course IDS 102X .25 - 3
Money Amounts - 19
Money Security - 20
Off-campus study authorization and release agreement for Willamette University Sponsored Study Abroad Programs form – 51-54
Packing Advice – 13, 17
Reverse Culture Shock – 42-46
Safety Guidelines for Parents and Guardians - 26
Safety Guidelines for Participants - 25
Security - 25-26
Site Specific Pre-departure meeting - 4
Standards of Conduct Agreement for Willamette University form – 54-55
Student Accounts – Release Form - 54
Study Abroad Checklist - 6-7
Syllabus – IDS 102X Maximizing the Study Abroad Experience Course – 8,9
Travel Arrangements – 12, 24
Travel Guides - 12
U.S. Customs - 41
Willamette University Sponsored Programs Study Abroad Credit Conversion/Equivalency form – 49-50

IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS (you won't have your cell phone!)

Fill in the following contact information before you depart. You should also consider taking a address book with your friend's and family's contact info so that you can easily stay in contact. Consider that you may not have as much internet access as you are used to and think about how you usually access contact information (i.e. facebook, fusers etc.)

On-site

Emergency number in host country: _____
(is there a "911" equivalent)

Police Department

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Fire Department

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Doctor

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Your on-site program director or main
contact person at school or university

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Emergency information for school or
university

Phone: _____

General contact for school or university

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Host Family or Housing Office

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Connecting with home

International Calling Code for U.S.A. +1 _____

Calling Code for your host country _____ and
city/county _____ cellular phones _____

Willamette's main switchboard

Phone: +1 503 370 6300

Your academic advisors contact information

Stacy West – Study Abroad Advisor

Office of International Education

Willamette University

900 State St

Salem, Oregon 97301

phone: 503-370-6951

Fax: 503-370-6565

Email: swest@willamette.edu

Important family and friend numbers, emails
and addresses

