Study Abroad Orientation

A brief set of guidelines for a successful study abroad experience

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Program Staff & Risk Managers

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Academics

➡ Study Abroad: First and foremost an academic experience

➡ Must be enrolled as a full-time student
  • Required course load: 12 credits

➡ Subject to the Olin Honor Code as if you were on campus
Pre-trip Planning

Passports

» Apply at any full service post office

» On-line Resources:
  • http://travel.state.gov/passport/
  • http://www.usps.com/passport/welcome.htm

» Renew if passport will expire within 6 months of anticipated return date

» If you need one, apply immediately
  • Allow 4-6 weeks for processing

» Keep photocopy of passport, give copy to family or friend

» Store in a safe place or keep it on you if required by law in host country
Academic Support

- Abroad programs are required to provide reasonable accommodations for students with documented learning disabilities

- Make arrangements ASAP
  - At least 4 weeks before departure!
Pre-trip planning

Travel Preparation

- Register with US State Department’s Smart Travel Enrollment Program (STEP), which provides timely updates on travel warnings and alerts via email.
- Visit www.acetravelassistance.com to access global threat assessments and location based on intelligence.
- Keep your ACE insurance card with you all the time.
- Visit the State Department’s website to stay updated on current travel alerts.
- Keep your emergency contact information on you.
- US Embassy or Consulate – learn where they are located in your host country and carry this information with you at all times.
Pre-trip planning

Medical Preparation

➡ Check cdc.gov and websites such as tripprep.com for traveler’s health info

➡ See/talk with your doctor
  - Discuss health concerns and potential impact of international travel
  - Get necessary prescriptions for duration of trip + 1 week
  - Make sure vaccinations are up-to-date

➡ Bring with you:
  - Over the counter drugs and prescriptions
  - All medications IN ORIGINAL CONTAINERS
  - Extra glasses, contacts/cleaning solution
  - A personal first-aid kit
Pre-trip planning

What to Pack

➜ Local culture:
  • **BE SPECIFIC** about clothing that is/is not appropriate
    • For example, no spaghetti straps, no shorts, skirts must be below the knee, need sport coat for visits to businesses

➜ Electricity
  • Different voltage and plug shapes
  • Leave appliances at home or get good adapter/converter

➜ Weather
  • **Know the temperature range and typical weather for season**
    • For example: rubber boots, umbrella, gloves, winter coat, sunglasses, sun hat
Pre-trip Planning

Packing Tips

- You should be able to carry your luggage BY YOURSELF!
- Start packing several days before departure
- Avoid over-packing
  - Need less than you would at home
  - It’s okay to wear the same thing often
- Put your name and contact info on luggage tag and inside bag
- Leave some room for souvenirs, etc.
- Travel backpacks, suitcases with wheels recommended
Pre-trip Planning

VISAs, Travel & Work

⇒ Know requirements for *host country*
  - U.S. citizens
  - Non-U.S. citizens
    - May need visa even if U.S. citizens do not

⇒ Meet with onsite staff regarding
  - Maintain immigration status
  - Travel across boarders
  - Employment
  - Driver’s license
  - Employment
  - Cross-registration
International Air Travel

- You must have a passport
- Check in at least three hours before departure
- Do not leave bags unattended
- Carry ticket and passport on you
- Name on plane ticket must match passport
- Put your itinerary in your carry-on bag with the location of where you will be staying while abroad (used for customs)
- Make copies of your Passport Information Page, all your tickets plus any other important documentation (i.e. credit cards, driver’s license, etc.) and keep them in a secure area in your carry-on – and separate from the bag/wallet where the originals are.
Customs

On the airplane you will be given a customs card to fill out.

Once off the plane, you enter a line to speak with a customs agent. In your carry-on luggage you should have available:

- Your program details, dates, schools, organization
- Your return Flight Itinerary or Tickets
- Your Passport and Visa

The Customs Agent will take your passport and may ask you questions about your travel plans. You may or may not need the program documents.

After the Customs Agent you will collect your checked baggage and take it through security. If you are transferring to another flight you may need to re-check your bags.
Jet Lag

During the flight:
- Try to sleep
- Drink plenty of water
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol
- Wear comfortable clothing
- Change watch to local time at destination

Upon arrival
- Follow local time schedule for meals and sleep
- Moderate exercise
- Eat healthy foods, drink lots of fluids (water and juices)
Meals

- Meals – start thinking about spices, dietary needs, and food allergies
- Be realistic about food expectations
- Budget costs for eating out or buying groceries
Keeping in Touch (or not)

Phones

- Only international access cell phones work overseas
- Pre-paid phone cards work well
- Calling cards—know access code for host country (obtain before departing USA)
- Consider accounts with Skype, G-chat, WhatsApp

E-mail

- Most affordable way to communicate
- Can access UGA account through ugamail
- Internet cafes (cost)
Keeping in Touch (or not)

mail

- Specify by ‘air mail’
- Consider packing preaddressed envelopes for friends and family for fun
Costs

➡️ Budget! Budget! Budget!

- Travel; admission to events, sports games, shows; restaurants

➡️ Have some cash set aside and a credit card for emergencies

➡️ Cost of living
Money

- Local currency
- Current exchange rate
- Best exchange rates: ATM, credit cards
Accessing Funds

- Have more than one way to access funds
  - ATM/Debit card
  - Availability – hours and locations
  - Bank often charges fee for transaction
  - Know numeric PIN and account designated for int’l access

- Credit Cards
  - Visa and MasterCard most widely accepted – tell them you are traveling!
  - High interest rates for cash advances
Accessing Funds

- Traveler’s checks
  - Becoming harder to use—high fees for exchange; very few places will accept or exchange them
  - Buy currency using cash

Make sure to contact your credit card companies and banks to let them know you will be out of the country. Give them specific dates so they know your card has not been stolen.
Greatest Dangers Facing U.S. Students Abroad

1. Traffic accidents
2. Petty crime
3. Illness
4. Reckless behavior
Legal Matters

➤ You are bound by the laws of the host country

➤ Laws and penalties in the host country will be different and relevant (ex. Pepper spray illegal in UK, illegal to photograph military installations and government buildings, penalties for drug possession)

➤ In the event of legal problems, U.S. Embassy or consulate can provide some assistance
Health Precautions

- Destination details: Talk with onsite staff about doctors, health centers, and hospital info
- Avoid street food
- Make sure drinking water is potable
- If sexually active:
  - Use good judgment--know partner’s history
  - Use latex condoms
Staying Healthy

➢ Wash hands often with soap and water

➢ Prevent water borne illnesses
  • Rely on bottled or boiled water, carbonated beverages in cans/bottles
  • Avoid tap water, water fountains, fountain drinks, ice cubes
  • Avoid swimming in fresh water

➢ Prevent food borne illnesses
  • Avoid food from street vendors, un-pasteurized dairy products
  • Peel it, boil it, cook it or forget it!

➢ Protection from insects
  • Repellent w/ DEET, long sleeves/pants, nets
Study Abroad Insurance

- Included in program fee for all Olin programs
- Can extend coverage up to 8 weeks ($1/day)
  - Contact Carol Kelley to make arrangements for extension
- Pay for minor services up front
- Submit claim for reimbursement
- Provides coverage for:
  - Medical care
  - Emergency medical evacuation
  - Repatriation of remains
  - Family reunification
General Safety Tips

Remember that foreigners are more vulnerable to crime

Keep a low profile
  • Try to blend in behavior and appearance
  • Avoid baseball caps, T-shirts with American emblems
  • Speak English quietly

Be aware of your surroundings

Walk with purpose (check maps in private)

Ignore unwanted attention

Be prepared to give up phones, cash or wallet if threatened or robbed
General Safety Tips

- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash/valuables
- Take precautions against pick pocketing (money belt/pouch)
- Limit alcohol intake
- Avoid political demonstrations
- Have more than one way to access funds
- Keep others informed regarding your whereabouts
- Make front and back copies of all credit cards, debit cards, and passports you are taking abroad.
  - Leave copies with a person in the US (parent, friend).
  - Scan copies into your email
Anti-American Sentiment

What is it?
- Usually written or verbal criticism related to U.S. foreign policy and/or cultural influence

How to deal with it:
- Don’t take it personally
- Ignore unwanted attention from strangers
- Be well-informed of history and current events
- In conversations:
  - Use it as an opportunity to learn more about host country
  - Ask questions about the person’s beliefs, national sentiment on particular issues
  - Share your thoughts and experiences
Gender and Relationships

- Unintended messages
- Gender roles as defined by host culture
- Appropriate/inappropriate behavior
- Assess safety of new acquaintances
- Deal with unwanted attention:
  - Avoid eye contact
  - Dress appropriately for local culture
  - Ignore it, walk with purpose
Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexuality and Religion

- Go online and google perceptions of different racial and ethnic groups in the host country
- Develop your understanding of the treatment you can expect to receive in the host culture related to race, ethnicity, etc
- Talk with onsite staff about these issues
Alcohol and Drugs

- Abide by legal drinking age in host country
- Abuse of alcohol impairs judgment, increases risk of accident/injury
- Respect host country norms regarding alcohol consumption and behavior
- Subject to Olin Honor Code
- Remember that violating drug laws can have serious consequences
Cultural Differences

- NORMAL reaction to new environment
- May feel overwhelmed, lonely, homesick, dislike things about host culture
- Cope by:
  - Recognizing it
  - Talking with others in program
  - Keeping a journal
  - Concentrating on positive aspects of host culture
  - Establishing new routines
  - Not calling/e-mailing home too much
  - Talking with program staff
Rail Passes and Bus Travel

- Great way to save money on train travel if you will travel a lot
- Sometimes point to point tickets are cheaper
- Variety of options
  - 3-15 travel days
  - 1-23 country passes
- Some plans you can purchase in the USA
Thank you