

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
EDWARDSVILLE

Study Abroad

Pre-Departure Guide

Office of Study Abroad
2053 Morris University Center
Campus Box 1159
Edwardsville, IL 62026

Phone: (618) 650-2419
Fax: (618) 650-5099

Web: <http://www.siu.edu/studyabroad>
E-mail: jbeall@siue.edu

Our Objective

The Office of Study Abroad at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville is dedicated to providing SIUE students with high quality international academic opportunities that allow them to develop knowledge and skills needed to become productive and successful members of the global community. We seek to increase awareness of education abroad opportunities and to promote intercultural learning. The Office's responsibilities include, but are not limited to advising students on the academic, financial, and cross-cultural implications of study abroad.

We hope this guide provides you with the tools for embarking on an experience of a lifetime.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

What to Do Before you Go	4
Passport	5
Visas	5
Embassies and Consulates	6
Packing	7
TSA Airline Security Measures	8
Luggage	9
Electricity	9
Medical Issues	10
Arriving at your Host Site	11
Soon after Arrival	11
Travel During/After Program	12
Communication	12
Money Issues	14
Safety Abroad	15
Especially for Women	17
Dating and Relationships	18
Alcohol and Drugs	18
Academics	22
Culture	25
Culture Shock	28
Reverse Culture Shock	32
When you Return	32
Useful Web Sites	34
Metric Conversion Chart	36

MINI CHECK LIST

___ Make sure passport is valid at least 6 months after your program ends. If you do not have a passport, apply for one immediately.

___ Apply for student visa, if necessary.

___ Get ISIC Card.

___ Attend required study abroad Pre-Departure Orientation Program.

___ If you live on-campus and are going abroad in Spring semester, cancel your SIUE housing contract.

___ Register your upcoming travel online at the US Dept of State Travel Registration Web site (see page 4)

___ Get a physical and obtain a copy of your medical history to carry with you abroad. Medical history should include blood type, immunizations, allergies, prescriptions, etc. to take with you in case of an accident or illness.

___ Get a dental checkup and eye exam.

___ Submit to Office of Study Abroad your signed "SIUE Study Abroad Participant Agreement and Release Form"

___ Attend the required Study Abroad Pre-departure Orientation Program.

___ Learn as much as you can about your host country. Check the US Dept of State Country Notes online at

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/>.

What to Do Before You Go

1. Make photocopies of all important documents, including:

- Passport (photo/ signature page and visa)
- Traveler's Checks (serial numbers and hotline phone number)
- Credit cards (both sides) and telephone numbers
- Plane tickets and travel itinerary
- Health insurance card

Leave one copy at home with a family member and have a second copy packed in your bags separate from the actual documents/ cards. In case of loss or theft, it will be much easier to report and have these items replaced if you have photocopies.

2. Register with the U.S. Department of State via internet before leaving the U.S.

When an emergency happens, or if natural disaster, terrorism, or civil unrest strikes during your foreign travel, the nearest U.S. or consulate will be a source of assistance and information. By registering the dates you will be in a foreign country, you help the embassy or consulate locate you when you might need them the most. Given the current international situation, it is very important to take this simple precaution.

Instructions for registering online with the U.S. Dept. of State

- Go to <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs>
- Click on "Register My Trip"
- Select "Short Term Traveler" if you will be abroad for less than 6 months.
- Select "Long Term Traveler" if you will be abroad for more than 6 months.
- Follow the directions to complete the online form.

3. Get an ISIC Card (International Student Identity Card)

We recommend that every student purchase the International Student Identification Card (ISIC) before going abroad. For \$22 you receive supplemental emergency evacuation and repatriation insurance, discount airfare, and numerous student discounts abroad. A full list of discounts and details on insurance coverage can be found at www.myISIC.com. You can obtain an ISIC from the Office of Study Abroad at SIUE. You will need to provide a passport size photo and proof of student status (SIUE Student ID Card) and proof of date of birth (Driver's License). For additional information and a link to the SIUE ISIC card application form see <http://www.siue.edu/studyabroad/ISIC.shtml>.



4. Submit all required paperwork to the SIUE Office of Study Abroad

- Signed "Study Abroad Participant Agreement and Release Form"
- "Study Abroad Course Proposal Form" with all required signatures of approval
- Copy of bio-page of passport
- Copy of travel itinerary

5. List of contacts at host site and at home

- Make sure to take a list of all SIUE people you may need to contact while abroad. This may include your study abroad advisor, academic advisor (to get registered for classes for your return semester), financial aid, housing, etc.
- Make sure to carry contact info at host site in your carry on luggage. In the event that you are delayed in arriving to your host destination, you will need to contact the appropriate person/ office to inform them of your new arrival time. In the event of any emergency, delay, or other problem, you need to know who to contact at the host site for assistance. It is essential that you carry this information in your carry on bag so that you will have it with you in the event that your luggage is lost or delayed.

PASSPORT

Every student who studies abroad will need a passport that is valid for at least six months beyond the last date of the program abroad. If you do not yet have a passport, you should apply for one immediately. The Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs has prepared a publication to assist you in applying for your passport: "Applying for your Passport the Easy Way" at www.travel.state.gov/passport/fri_publications_easy.html. This guide provides information on how, when, and where to apply for your passport. The website answers the following questions:



1. [When should I apply for a passport?](#)
2. [When do I have to apply in person?](#)
3. [What do I need to do to apply for a passport in person?](#)
4. [Where can I get passport forms?](#)
5. [May I apply for a passport by mail?](#)
6. [Other than at passport agencies, where can I apply for a passport?](#)
7. [What if I need a passport in a hurry?](#)
8. [What if I need a passport in less than 7-10 business days/2 weeks?](#)
9. [What happens to my passport application after I submit it?](#)
10. [What should I do if my passport is lost or stolen?](#)

In Edwardsville you can apply for a passport at the following location:

Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court
Madison County Courthouse, Room 105
155 N. Main St.
Edwardsville, IL 62025
phone (618) 692-6240 Ext. 0

For more information see <http://www.co.madison.il.us/CircuitClerk/Passport.pdf>

When you receive your passport:

- Sign it in ink.
- Guard it as you would any other valuable.
- Make several copies of the official page (picture page) to make it easier to replace if it is lost or stolen.
- Give one to the Study Abroad Coordinator to put in your file.
- Keep one with you in a safe place separate from your actual passport.
- Leave one copy with a family member.

Loss or theft of a valid passport should be reported immediately to Passport Services, Department of State, Washington D.C. 20524, or the nearest passport agency. If the loss occurs while abroad, you should notify the nearest U.S. Consulate. Theft of a passport should also be reported to the local police.

After arrival to host site: Once you arrive to your host destination, it usually not necessary to carry your passport with you on a day to day basis. Carry your ISIC card as identification and store your passport in a secure location in your room. You will need to carry your passport for identification when you are traveling or to change traveler's checks.

Visas

In most cases, US citizens will need a **student visa** for the country in which they are studying, especially for semester and year long study abroad. Students going on short term programs of 90 days or less USUALLY do not need a student visa to enter the country, but you should always check. Your host university's international office is the best source of information about necessary visa application processes. They should indicate in the acceptance letter if you will need a visa and may give you the information and required forms, but you are responsible for obtaining your own student visa. This can take up to 6 weeks, although it is sometimes possible to pay an extra fee for faster processing.

In most cases you will need several passport sized photos, your acceptance letter from the host university, and evidence of financial aid or personal funds sufficient to support yourself while studying abroad. Start the visa application process as soon as you receive your program acceptance letter.

For information on visa requirements of specific countries, visit the website of the host country's embassy or consulate in the U.S. You can find websites at www.embassyworld.com. The U.S. Department of State "Foreign Entry Requirements" website at http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/brochures/brochures_1229.html is also an excellent resource.

Embassies and Consulates

Embassies are the headquarters for ambassadors from foreign countries. They handle all matters related to citizens of their own country residing/traveling in a foreign country,

country relations, and consular affairs. On almost every embassy website you will find a section called **consular affairs**. Consular Affairs processes and distributes visa applications. Every embassy has a different set of criteria for obtaining a visa to study in their country. Make sure that if you are applying for a visa, you follow the instructions very carefully. Please remember that you are asking for permission to stay in their country. Embassies are not required to give you the visa.

Consulates are branch offices of an embassy. They handle visa matters for a given area. For most students living in Illinois, you will find that there is a consulate of your host country represented in Chicago. You will most likely apply for your visa through the consulate in Chicago. This does not necessarily apply to smaller countries, so look to the embassy first and then see if there is a consulate located in Chicago.

Packing

It is nearly every student's tendency to over pack. Do not pack more than you can comfortably carry by yourself. Remember, you will be carrying all of your luggage, alone, from the airport, to the metro/train station/ taxi, to your residence, up and down stairs (often very narrow stairs), through terminals and crowds, after having flown for several hours and probably feeling completely jet lagged.



Check the weather at your destination for the period of the year you will be there and pack accordingly. Bring clothes you can mix and match and that don't need special care (i.e. dry cleaning, ironing, etc.) Speak to study abroad returnees or natives of that country to see what clothing style people wear. You should bring conservative clothes that do not scream, "I'm American!" if you wish to fit into your surroundings and not stand out.

** Take some small gifts for your host family and other special people you will meet.

In your CARRY ON BAG, be sure to pack:

- at least one change of clothes
- all prescription medications in original container and the prescriptions
- a phrasebook or dictionary in language of host country
- all money and other valuables
- international calling card
- copies of all important documents (passport and visa, travel itinerary, letter of admission to host university, contact information in host country, and plan/tickets for arriving to final destination,).

In the unfortunate event that your luggage is lost, you will be very happy to have these items with you.

WHAT TO PACK?

5 Cs to keep in mind:

1. **COMFORT:** You will want to be sure to bring comfortable shoes for walking (you will probably be walking more than you ever have in your life) and clothing that is easy to wear and appropriate for the host site. Sometimes our clothing can be considered to casual or too revealing.
2. **CARE:** Consider how you will care for your clothing while abroad. Choose easy care clothing. Do not bring clothes that require dry cleaning. Also avoid clothing that is especially heavy and may require extra drying time or clothing that must be ironed.
3. **COORDINATE:** Face it, you can't take everything, so try to mix and match clothes and wear layers for warmth rather than big bulky items.
4. **CONSOLIDATE:** Try to pack basically for 1 - 2 weeks, taking enough shampoo, soap, and other toiletries to get you started. Remember, you will be able to buy what you need or run out of in the host country.

Because electrical systems vary around the world, you may want to bring battery operated items, and buy cheap electrical appliances (hair dryer, etc) when you get there, or go without.

5. **CARRY:** Pack only what you can carry. Remember, it will be your sole responsibility to get your luggage from place to place. Luggage on wheels is great, but you still have to be able to lift it and carry it when going up and down stairs, etc. Keep in mind that narrow luggage is easier to handle when going down the aisles of trains and buses and up and down stairs.

As a self test, after you finish packing, try carrying your luggage all by yourself. If you can go up and down the stairs, lift everything into the trunk of a car, and walk down the length of a city block, you've packed just right. If you can't manage, you should start removing items.

Remember, you will likely purchase items while you are abroad, and you will have to be able to add these to your luggage when you return to the U.S.

AIRLINE SECURITY MEASURES:

In August 2006, airport security measures were tightened and for a period no liquids were allowed on flights, this ban was adjusted at the end of Sept. 2006. For the latest on airport security measures and a list of prohibited and permitted items from the TSA (Transportation Security Administration) go to:

<http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm>

Here is an excerpt from the TSA Web site:

Effective Tuesday, September 26, TSA Is Adjusting The Ban On Liquids, Aerosols And Gels.

1. Travelers may now carry through security checkpoints travel-size toiletries (3 ounces or less) that fit comfortably in ONE, QUART-SIZE, clear plastic, zip-top bag.
2. After clearing security, travelers can now bring beverages and other items purchased in the secure boarding area on-board aircraft.

At the checkpoint travelers will be asked to remove the zip-top bag of liquids and place it in a bin or on the conveyor belt. X-raying separately will allow TSA security officers to more easily examine the declared items.

In addition, larger amounts of prescription liquid medications, baby formula and diabetic glucose treatments must be declared at the checkpoint for additional screening.

In addition to the above changes, the following guidance is provided to ensure the health and welfare of certain air travelers the following items are permitted.

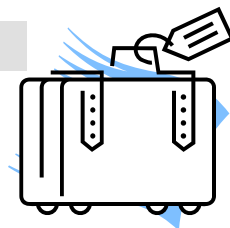
- [Baby formula and breast milk](#) if a baby or small child is traveling;
- [All prescription and over-the-counter medications](#) (liquids, gels, and aerosols) including KY jelly, eye drops, and saline solution for medical purposes;
- Liquids including water, juice, or liquid nutrition or gels for passengers with a disability or medical condition;
- Life-support and life-sustaining liquids such as bone marrow, blood products, and transplant organs;
- Items used to augment the body for medical or cosmetic reasons such as mastectomy products, prosthetic breasts, bras or shells containing gels, saline solution, or other liquids; and,
- Gels or frozen liquids needed to cool disability or medically related items used by persons with disabilities or medical conditions.

You are not limited in the amount or volume of these items you may bring in your carry-on baggage. BUT if the medically necessary items exceed 3 ounces or are not contained in a one-quart, zip-top plastic bag, you MUST declare to one of our Security Officers at the checkpoint for further inspection.

Luggage

Airlines restrict the amount of baggage that passengers are allowed to carry. In general, passengers on international flights are allowed two checked bags and one carry-on bag. Major airlines have recently reduced the baggage weight allowance to from 70 to 50 pounds per bag for international flights. There are also usually dimension limits.

Check with your airline or your travel agent for the latest policy affecting luggage limitations. Fees for extra luggage or exceeding weight limits can be very expensive!



Durable luggage on wheels is recommended for lengthy journeys. You may want to consider a traveler's backpack to keep your hands free. Mark all luggage, **inside and out**, with your name and address. It is a good idea to indicate the address of your study abroad destination and/or to put a copy of your flight itinerary inside each bag.

Mark your bags in some distinctive way (maybe a brightly colored luggage tag) so they are easily found.

Do not bring anything that you would not want to lose. Leave your expensive jewelry and major sentimental items at home.

Electricity

Electrical service varies throughout the world. Most outlets will not accept the two- or three- pronged plugs that are standard in the U.S. Along with a voltage converter, you will probably need a set of adapter plugs in order to use small appliances. These items can be purchased at electronics stores such as Radio Shack or Best Buy. Electric converters work for appliances up to 1600 watts, at least for a while, but good ones are expensive; don't be fooled by cheaper versions because they will burn up your appliance and may even cause a fire. Because of the voltage difference, U.S. appliances often short out, even with an adapter and transformer. It may be to your advantage to buy electric appliances after you arrive in the host country. If you are bringing expensive electronic equipment such as a computer, obtain all necessary conversion information from a professional before departure.

Medical Issues

General Health Advice: Good physical health and emotional stability are essential to your academic performance and successful study abroad experience. If you haven't had one recently you should have a general exam, a dental check up, and a gynecological visit (for women) before leaving. If you have a health condition or other circumstances that require special attention, you should talk with the SIUE Study Abroad Coordinator and/or study abroad program provider to make sure that your needs can be met abroad.

The World Health Organization (WHO) publishes an annual **International Travel and Health Manual** which covers a variety of topics ranging from general health considerations to air travel considerations to environmental health risks to accidents, injuries, and violence. You can either order this publication in a printed form or access its contents for free form www.who.int/ith.

Taking Medications Abroad

- Always pack medications in your carry on luggage.
- Keep them in the original containers. Carry a copy of all prescriptions to avoid any problems with Customs.
- If you take prescription medications regularly, you and your doctor may decide you should take with you sufficient medications to last your entire stay abroad;

however, there may be a limit on the amount of medication that can be brought into the country to which you are headed.

- If you think a prescription will have to be refilled during your stay abroad, make sure your doctor includes on the prescription the chemical composition and generic name of your medication; brand names can be different overseas.
- Prescription medications vary from country to country in name, potency, and purity and may NOT be sent through international mail. It might be wise to obtain a letter from your home physician or pharmacist describing your medicines, their dosage, generic name, and a description of the condition being treated. This letter could be helpful in an emergency.
- If there are certain over the counter medications that you take on a regular basis, you may wish to take a supply with you. Medications that are considered over the counter in the U.S. may require a prescription in your host country. Some over the counter medications that are very common in the US, may be unavailable or more expensive in other parts of the world.
- **All medication MUST be kept in original containers! When traveling, carry all of your medication in your carry-on bag (NOT in checked luggage).**

Immunizations

While some countries require immunizations for a visa or entry, others do not. These requirements can change according to the health conditions of a particular country. Therefore, it is important to check on a regular basis to see if your host country has requirements. Even if immunizations are not required, there may be recommended immunizations that you will want to get. Travelers' Vaccines Website at www.travelersvaccines.com and Passport Health at <http://www.passporthealthusa.com/> are good sites to check for more information on immunizations and other international travel health concerns. Passport Health has a St. Louis office located at 8390 Delmar Boulevard, Suite 1002, St. Louis, MO 63124; Tel: (314) 997-8100. Passport Health offers customized, destination specific Travel Health consultations with board-certified registered nurses who have completed training in the field of travel medicine and immunology. Their travel health services include a complete stock of travel immunizations, specialty travel health products and recommendations for safe food, water and activities while traveling.

ISIC Card

SIUE recommends that all students studying abroad purchase the ISIC (International Student Identity Card) for the travel insurance (Travel Guard) provided with the card. The [travel insurance](#) provided to ISIC cardholders includes coverage for emergency medical evacuation, repatriation of remains, accident and sickness coverage, travel document protection, and more. For emergency assistance ISIC card holders should call Travel Guard Assistance at 1-877-370-4742 (ISIC) in the U.S.A. or collect at 1-715-345-0505 if calling from outside the U.S. For more information see <http://www.siu.edu/studyabroad/ISIC.shtml>.

Arriving to Your Host Site

There may or may not be an airport in your destination city. Even if there is, it may be less expensive to fly in to the major airport and take a train to your final destination.

You should check the website or acceptance materials of your host university to see what airport and/or train/bus station they recommend. Upon arriving in your destination city, you may be greeted at the airport by staff from the university/program, or you may be responsible for taking a taxi or the metro. Make sure you know exactly where to go and how you will get from the airport to your final destination (international office, dormitory, apartment, homestay, etc.) before you leave the U.S. Make all reservations in advance and have a written plan of exactly how you plan to arrive. You will be tired from traveling and may feel overwhelmed in the new surroundings, so this written plan will be invaluable. You should also have contact information written down (phone numbers and addresses of the residence where you will be staying and the international office of your host university) in case you get lost, have questions, your plane arrives late, etc. Carry your contact information and your plan for arriving to your final destination in your carry on bags.

Soon After Arrival to Host Site

- As soon as possible after arriving at your destination, send an e-mail to your SIUE Study Abroad Coordinator to let us know you have safely arrived. Send your contact information (address and phone number) in the host country.
- Make an "Emergency Card" to carry in your wallet. Include an emergency contact in your host country (name, phone number, address) AND an emergency contact in the U.S. (name, phone number, address). The emergency contact in your host country might be the international student advisor at the host institution, a trusted roommate, or your host family.

Travel during your Study Abroad Program

No doubt you will want to take advantage of your new surroundings, proximity to cultural and tourist sites, and often excellent rail or public transportation systems to do some traveling while abroad. There are many resources (and deals!) to help students get around. When making travel arrangements at home or abroad, always be sure to indicate that you are a student and ask if any discounted fares or rates are available.

Always leave your itinerary and expected return date with someone at your host location. If there is an emergency, someone needs to know where you are and when you're expected to return.

Guidebooks

There are numerous guidebooks designed for independent and budget travelers. These books give advice and tips on travel arrangements, food, lodging, entertainment, and tourist (and non-tourist) sites. These can be valuable resources in finding and reserving accommodations when planning trips over weekends or break periods. Some good ones are "Let's Go" and "Lonely Planet." We have "Let's Go" and "Lonely Planet" guides

for various regions/ countries available to borrow (for short periods) from the Study Abroad Office. These guides are also usually readily available to purchase in larger bookstore like Borders or B. Dalton. They can also be purchased online from amazon.com or from directly from www.lonelyplanet.com or www.letsgo.com.

Eurail Passes

Eurail passes are a great bargain for traveling via train throughout Europe. There are different packages and rate plans available. These plans can be purchased from STA travel. **Note: Eurail passes and Europasses can only be mailed to addresses in the US, so plan to purchase yours before you go or you will have to have it sent to a US address and arrange to have a friend or family member send it to you abroad.** For more information check <http://www.eurail.com/>.

COMMUNICATION

Using a Foreign Telephone

When making your first call from a foreign phone, you may experience some frustration because each country has a different telephone system.



Go into the situation planning to learn something new. A good reference for you and your family about dialing internationally is www.countrycallingcodes.com.

In most areas of the world the best method of payment for making international calls will be a pre-paid phone card bought in the host country. If you already have a calling card that you use here in the US, be sure to contact your long distance carrier to check on rates for using the card overseas.

Cell Phones

Cell phones are widely used in many countries. They can be bought or sometimes rented. You will find it much easier to buy a cell phone (GSM phone) and pre-paid service (SIM card) in your host country than to take your own with you. Most standard US/Canada cell phones do not work in other countries.

The following information on International Cell Phones is from http://www.studyabroad.com/marketplace/cell_tips.html

Europe and much of the world adopted a common cell phone standard called Global Service for Mobile (GSM). Equally important, Europe, Africa and Asia not only had the foresight to adopt the same cell phone standard, but they also decided that their cell phone networks would operate on the same frequencies (the 900mhz, initially and later the 1800mhz band). This explains why the same cell phone that works in London will work equally well in Johannesburg, Beijing and Sydney. Most countries around the globe - more than 205 at last count - have adopted the GSM wireless technology and if you plan on studying overseas, outside of North America and want the convenience of carrying a cellular phone, then you're going to need a GSM cell phone.

The United States did not standardize and consequently competing wireless standards emerged from the various wireless carriers. Just so you know the names, in the US our cell phone service is most likely to be the CDMA type (Verizon and Sprint), or perhaps TDMA or even iDEN (Nextel) or AMPS (you don't want to know what these acronyms stand for and fortunately you don't need to know).

While there are some North American GSM cellular providers (T-Mobile and Cingular), they unfortunately operate on a different (1900mhz) frequency than is used abroad, however there are some multi-band world phones now available through these US carriers. The "international roaming" rate for this service can be measured in dollars per minute though you will be accessible on your US number while overseas.

A GSM cell phone can be rented for typically \$29-\$59/week with per minute charges ranging from \$1.50-\$5/minute, for your incoming and outgoing calls. If you travel infrequently (less than once/ year) and your stay is less than a week then this may be the best option even with the outrageous per minute costs. However with most study abroad programs lasting 1-3 months you would need another student loan to simply pay off your phone bill.

To really take advantage of a cell phone overseas and not need a second mortgage on your house, you will want to purchase your own GSM cell phone and a local prepaid SIM card for your next international destination. This is usually the best option for students studying overseas. Unlike typical cell phones in the US, GSM world cell phones do not come with phone numbers programmed into them and the actual service is not even tied to the phone itself. Instead customers activate their mobile phones by popping in so-called SIM cards, little thumbnail sized devices that determine your cell phone number and any additional services like voicemail.

A pre-paid SIM card for each country you visit, gives you a local phone number and local calling rates are usually a low 25 cents/minute. It is easy, convenient, and relatively inexpensive for you to call other people in the country you're visiting, and easy and normal for them to call to you on your local number, too. Best of all, Incoming calls are FREE regardless of where they originate.

You can replenish your airtime on the SIM card by purchasing an airtime voucher in one of the local currency denominations. They are available at most newsstands, kiosks and convenience stores. The airtime vouchers are scratch cards that have a pin code which you simply key into your phone for immediate credit. In summary, with a prepaid cell phone you have a cost effective way of staying in touch with no bills, no roaming charges and no hassles.

For more information on international cell phones see www.telestial.com

MONEY ISSUES

Before departure you may want to purchase a small amount of foreign currency from a U.S. bank. When you arrive it will be useful to already have this on hand for phone calls, taxis, buses, soft drinks, food, and other incidentals. Depending on when you arrive, it may be a day or two before you can go to a bank to exchange currency.

OBTAINING CURRENCY AT THE AIRPORT:

Most all major international airports have currency exchange kiosks in the airport. However, the exchange rate may be less favorable than in banks, so you may only want to change a small amount of currency until you can go to a bank.

MONEY TIPS

- Know the official currency where you will be living or visiting and the approximate exchange rate to the dollar. Check exchange rates online at <http://www.oanda.com/converter/classic>.
- Consider taking along a small calculator to help you convert currency and understand exactly how much you are spending.
- When changing money you will need to have your passport with you for identification.
- Make weekly and/or daily budgets and stick to them!
- Put off making major purchases until you have learned the range of available products and price ranges.
- Be alert for special student rates and discounts; they are abundant abroad. Know what extra discounts are available with your ISIC card.
- Don't carry credit cards or traveler's checks with you on a day to day basis unless you plan to use them.
- Diversification is often the best rule of thumb when traveling with money; reliance on one method may leave you vulnerable in case of theft or absence of credit card/ATM facilities. The following sections discuss each method of obtaining money (or making payments for goods or services while abroad):

TRAVELER'S CHECKS

Traveler's checks are a safe way to carry large amounts of money, since they can be refunded if lost or stolen. Traveler's checks are available for purchase at most banks in the U.S. To lock in a favorable exchange rate before you leave, you may wish to purchase traveler's checks in the currency of the countries you plan to visit. Most U.S. banks charge a commission for the purchase of traveler's checks. You can also expect to pay a commission (either a flat rate or a percentage of what you are changing) when you exchange the traveler's checks for money. Traveler's checks can generally be exchanged for local currency at most banks, post offices, or airports abroad. Banks or post offices generally offer the best exchange rates. Changing currency at hotels, restaurants, or retail shops is not recommended because they typically have very unfavorable exchange rates. Remember, you will need to have your passport for identification to exchange traveler's checks.

Be sure to keep a separate record of the serial numbers and telephone numbers in a safe place in case of loss or theft. Cross off the numbers as you cash the checks so you have an accurate record of your traveler's checks.

ATM CARD

Many students access home funds through automated teller machines (ATMs). Before departing the U.S., check with your bank to see if you can use your ATM card abroad (make sure your PIN is valid abroad) and find out what the fees are. Keep in mind that you should expect a charge for using the local machine and a fee from your home bank for every transaction. While this is a very convenient way to access money while abroad, it is not recommended as your only method of getting cash. Also, check with your bank to see if you have a daily withdrawal limit and plan accordingly.

CREDIT CARDS

Credit cards, especially Visa and Mastercard are honored abroad, although not always as widely as in the United States. Credit cards make foreign currency transactions easy and are invaluable in a financial emergency. Take a credit card (in your name) along, but use it wisely; plastic can be dangerous because it is easy to overspend and service fees and interest charges can be costly. Seek advice from the issuing company as to the card's applicability abroad and the conversion fee for converting the amount of purchases abroad into dollars. Some credit card companies have recently started charging a one or two percent conversion fee, which can dramatically increase your costs over time.

Make sure you know your credit limit and know the number to call in case the card is lost or stolen. Also, let your credit card company know the approximate dates and locations of your travel. When cards normally used in the U.S. suddenly begin being used abroad, some credit card companies will cancel the card to avoid possible fraud and other security issues.

SAFETY ABROAD

As a study abroad student, you should exercise the same personal safety precautions overseas as you would at home, and even more. Be aware that you will stand out overseas, possibly making you an easy target. At times, people you meet may see you with stereotypical eyes. "Americans" tend to carry backpacks, dress differently, speak loudly and have distinct accents. Meeting people and making new friends is an important part of studying abroad, but be mindful. It is possible that an occasion may arise when someone may want to become your friend in order to take your money or your passport. It is important to use common sense at all times.

Protect Yourself

- Know the basic "help" phrases in the native language.
- If you go out alone, always tell someone where you are going.
- Always report your overnight, weekend or longer travel plans to someone at your host institution, whether it is another student, professor, or on-site advisor.
- Register your trip with the U.S. Dept. of State prior to your departure from the U.S. You can do this online at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/>
- Do not give your home phone number or address to someone you have just met.
- Do not hitchhike.

- Be familiar with procedures for obtaining health and law enforcement services in the host country.
- Participate fully in all orientations before departure and on site. Read carefully and consider all information provided by the SIUE Office of Study Abroad, the program provider and/or the host institution that relates to safety and health conditions in the host country.

Protect Your Possessions

- Wear a concealed money belt or neck pouch.
- Keep your money in two places. If you are robbed or lose some money, you will have a backup.
- Do not leave bags unattended.
- Do not accept packages from strangers.
- Leave copies of all important documents (passport, travel itinerary, insurance policies, medical record, etc.) in more than one place (e.g., at home in the U.S. and in your bags or room in the host country).
- Leave your passport and other valuables in your dorm, apartment, or room in a safe place. Do not carry your passport on a daily basis, unless you are going to cash traveler's checks.

Be Vigilant

- Do not stand out as a group or individual. Try to blend with your surroundings the best you can.
- Adopt an attitude of watchfulness and notice the people in your proximity. If someone seems to be following you, vary your route. Go to a store or a populated place or flag down a taxi.
- Do not go out alone with someone you have just met. Try to meet in a public place.
- Know the local laws: Laws and systems of justice are not universal. You are subject to the laws of the host country while abroad.

Situations to Avoid

- Avoid crowds, protest groups, or other potentially volatile situations.
- Avoid impairing your judgment due to excessive alcohol consumption.
- When using public transportation, avoid deserted trains, buses, and metros. Move to where other people are sitting.
- Avoid deserted streets and exercise caution in unfamiliar neighborhoods.
- Watch your alcohol consumption. Excessive drinking is neither appropriate nor safe in another culture and in unfamiliar surroundings. If you drink, know your limit.
- If you are sexually active, take proper precautions to avoid AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, or unwanted pregnancies.
- Do not resist the demands of a robber. Items are replaceable, you are not.

Especially for Women:

In certain locations women may have a difficult time adjusting to attitudes they encounter abroad, both in public and private interactions between men and women. Some men openly demonstrate their appraisal of women in ways that many women find offensive. It is not uncommon to be honked at, stared at, verbally and loudly approved of, and, in general, to be actively noticed simply for being a woman, and in particular, a U.S. American woman. Sometimes the attention can be flattering. Soon, it may become very annoying and potentially even angering. Local women, who often get the same sort of treatment, have learned through their culture how to ignore the attention. Many U.S. students find that difficult.

Let's face it, "Baywatch" (seen all over the world) hasn't helped the image of the American woman. In many countries and cultures, American women are seen as morally/sexually loose. If you wear clothing inappropriate to the culture, move too quickly in a relationship, or flirt overzealously, you will not help that perception. Behave conservatively at first until you figure things out and establish your reputation.

Eye contact with a stranger or a smile at someone passing in the street, which is not uncommon in the U.S., may result in totally unexpected invitations. Some women feel they are forced to stare intently at the ground when they walk down the street. You will have to learn the unwritten rules about what you can and cannot do. Women can provide support for each other; you may wish to get together several times early in your stay abroad to talk about what does and doesn't work for dealing with unwanted attention. U.S. women are seen as liberated in many ways and sometimes the cultural misunderstanding that comes out of that image can lead to difficult and unpleasant experiences. Needless to say, all of this may make male-female friendships more difficult to develop. Be careful about the implicit messages you are communicating, messages you may not intend in your own cultural context. Above all, try to maintain the perspective that these challenging and sometimes difficult experiences are part of the growth of cultural understanding, which is one of the important reasons you are studying abroad.

Uncomfortable situations may be avoided by taking the following precautions:

- Educate yourself beforehand about gender roles in the country you will be visiting.
- Dress conservatively. Clothing that is acceptable in the U.S. may be perceived as provocative in another country or disrespectful in other cultures.
- Do not overreact to stares, whistles or other forms of attention, as they may be intended to be compliments rather than harassment.
- Avoid walking alone at night or in questionable neighborhoods.
- Be aware that men from other cultures tend to mistake the friendliness of U.S. American women for romantic interest. Be aware of the implied messages you may be sending.

For more information, check "Tips for Women Traveling Alone" from the U.S. Department of State: http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips_women.html

Dating and Relationships

Dating is full of misread signals and confusion when you're at home in the U.S. That uncertainty is multiplied in a foreign country with different cultural and social values, expectations, and even languages. You should expect differences, observe before you act, communicate your boundaries clearly, and move away from situations that make you uncomfortable. Women should act more conservatively abroad than they would at home. In many countries a simple smile or hello can be construed as an invitation. Before you go, find a native of the host country to discuss dating issues such as group vs. individual dates, if it is OK for women to ask men out, flirting, sexual expectations, taboos, etc.

Be aware of the stereotypes people in your host country have of American men and women, ranging from "puritan" to "easy." Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students will face different stereotypes abroad. Cultures vary in how sexual identities are defined and understood, so GLBT students should research the receptivity and social climate of the host country. An excellent resource is <http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/>.

Bring all contraception (oral and condoms) with you. It is possible that it won't be available at all or not of the same quality as in the U.S. Keep in mind the long-term consequences of your actions (STDs, AIDS, pregnancy) and take proper precautions.

Alcohol and Drugs

Alcohol

Drinking alcohol can seem deceptively harmless, especially when you travel to countries where attitudes, customs, and drinking age may be different from the U.S. Nevertheless, excessive alcohol consumption impairs your judgment and can lead to disruptive behavior and risk of harm to yourself and to others, in addition to poor academic performance.

- If you choose to drink, be responsible and know your limit.
- Alcohol reduces your inhibitions and makes you an easy target for a multitude of crimes, from robbery to sexual assault.
- You should never feel pressured to drink if you do not want to or feel embarrassed to order nonalcoholic beverages.
- Drugs known as Rohypnal, roofies, GHB, and the "date rape" drug also exist outside the U.S. Be cautious about your drink (alcoholic or non-alcoholic) to ensure you are not a victim.
- Always know how you are going to get home and what time the public transportation stops running.
- Educate yourself about the customs, etiquette, and drinking age laws for your host country.

Drugs and Local Laws

The following information is from the U.S. State Department **Travel Warning on Drugs Abroad: Things You Should Know before You Go**
http://travel.state.gov/travel/livingabroad_drugs.html

THE HARD FACTS ON DRUGS ABROAD

Each year, 2,500 Americans are arrested overseas. One third of the arrests are on drug-related charges. Many of those arrested assumed as U.S. citizens that they could not be arrested. From Asia to Africa, Europe to South America, U.S. citizens are finding out the hard way that drug possession or trafficking equals jail in foreign countries. There is very little that anyone can do to help you if you are caught with drugs. It is your responsibility to know what the drug laws are in a foreign country before you go, because "I didn't know it was illegal" will not get you out of jail.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of women arrested abroad. The rise is a result of women who serve as drug couriers or "mules" in the belief they can make quick money and have a vacation without getting caught. Instead of a short vacation, they get a lengthy stay or life sentence in a foreign jail. A number of the Americans arrested abroad on drug charges in 1994 possessed marijuana. Many of these possessed one ounce or less of the substance. The risk of being put in jail for just one marijuana cigarette is not worth it.

If you are purchasing prescription medications in quantities larger than that considered necessary for personal use, you could be arrested on suspicion of drug trafficking.

Once you're arrested, the American consular officer CANNOT get you out!

You may say "it couldn't happen to me" but the fact is that it could happen to you if you find yourself saying one of the following:

"...I'm an American citizen and no foreign government can put me in their jail."

"...If I only buy or carry a small amount, it won't be a problem."

If you are arrested on a drug charge it is important that you know what your government CAN and CANNOT do for you.

The U.S. Consular Officer CAN

- visit you in jail after being notified of your arrest.
- give you a list of local attorneys. (The U.S. Government cannot assume responsibility for the professional ability or integrity of these individuals or recommend a particular attorney.)
- notify your family and/or friends and relay requests for money or other aid—but only with your authorization.
- intercede with local authorities to make sure that your rights under local law are fully observed and that you are treated humanely, according to internationally accepted standards.
- protest mistreatment or abuse to the appropriate authorities.

The U.S. Consular Officer CANNOT

- demand your immediate release or get you out of jail or the country!
- represent you at trial or give legal counsel.
- pay legal fees and/or fines with U.S. Government funds.

If you are caught buying, selling, carrying or using drugs—from hashish to heroin, marijuana to mescaline, cocaine to quaaludes, or ecstasy....

IT COULD MEAN:

- Interrogation and Delays Before Trial - including mistreatment and solitary confinement for up to one year under very primitive conditions
- Lengthy Trials - conducted in a foreign language, with delays and postponements
- Weeks, Months or Life in Prison - some places include hard labor, heavy fines, and/or lashings, if found guilty
- The Death Penalty - in a growing number of countries (e.g., Malaysia, Pakistan and Turkey)

Although drug laws vary from country to country, it is important to realize before you make the mistake of getting involved with drugs that foreign countries do not react lightly to drug offenders. In some countries, anyone who is caught with even a very small quantity for personal use may be tried and receive the same sentence as the large-scale trafficker.

DON'T LET YOUR TRIP ABROAD BECOME A NIGHTMARE!

This information has been provided to inform you before it is too late.

SO THINK FIRST!

- A number of countries, including the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Mexico and the Philippines, have enacted more stringent drug laws which impose mandatory jail sentences for individuals convicted of possessing even small amounts of marijuana or cocaine for personal use.
- Once you leave the United States, you are not covered by U.S. laws and constitutional rights.
- Bail is not granted in many countries when drugs are involved.
- The burden of proof in many countries is on the accused to prove his/her innocence.
- In some countries, evidence obtained illegally by local authorities may be admissible in court.

Few countries offer drug offenders jury trials or even require the prisoner's presence at his/her trial. Many countries have mandatory prison sentences of seven years or life, without the possibility of parole for drug violations.

REMEMBER:

- If someone offers you a free trip and some quick and easy money just for bringing back a suitcase.... SAY NO!
- Don't carry a package for anyone, no matter how small it might seem.
- The police and customs officials have a right to search your luggage for drugs. If they find drugs in your suitcase, you will suffer the consequences.
- You could go to jail for years and years with no possibility of parole, early release or transfer back to the U.S.
- Don't make a jail sentence part of your trip abroad.

The Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs' Office of Overseas Citizens Services provides emergency services pertaining to the protection of Americans arrested or detained abroad, the search for U.S. citizens overseas, the transmission of emergency messages to those citizens or their next of kin in the United States and other emergency and non-emergency services. Contact the Office of Overseas Citizens Services from Monday through Friday, 8:15 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at (202) 647-5225. For an emergency after hours or on weekends and holidays, ask for the Overseas Citizens Services' duty officer at (202) 647-4000. Internet home page: <http://travel.state.gov>

Institutional Responsibilities

Realize that SIUE:

- Cannot guarantee or assure the safety of participants or eliminate all risks from the study abroad environments.
- Cannot monitor or control the daily personal decisions, choices, and activities of individual participants.
- Cannot prevent participants from engaging in illegal, dangerous or unwise activities.
- Cannot assure that U.S. Standards of due process apply in overseas legal proceedings or provide or pay for legal representation for participants.
- Cannot assure that home-country cultural values and norms will apply in the host country.

Academics

Differences Abroad

You may be wondering if there will be differences in the classroom environment at your host university. You may think that a classroom is a classroom. However, you should be aware that differences do exist so that you can be prepared. There are 4 differences that you should be aware of to help ease your adjustment at the foreign university.



1. **Depth vs. Breadth:** Americans tend to value a well-rounded education, which translates into knowing a little bit about everything. Most foreign universities do not have a system of "general education" as is common in the U.S. While you are abroad you may find that in some classes you will be expected to examine a topic in depth, ALL semester. Furthermore the depth study and research that will be expected of you may be much greater than you have experienced here. DO NOT PROCRASTINATE! You can't wait until the last week of the semester to complete a project/paper that was intended to be completed over the course of the entire semester.
2. **Number of Assignments:** American professors tend to provide several "check points" during the semester to ensure that students are keeping up with the content of the course and that they understand the material that is being presented. Language courses abroad will usually utilize an approach similar to the

US teaching style, but, as mentioned above, in other classes the entire course grade might be based on only one major project, paper, or exam. Don't make the mistake of interpreting the lack of regular assignments to mean that you have an "easy" semester abroad.

Also, Americans are used to being told exactly how to do an assignment, Students at US universities are used to being told how many pages, how many sources, exactly when the assignment is due, the format to be used, etc. Such specific guidance abroad is not typical. It may be advisable to seek tutorial assistance or check with knowledgeable students.

In your courses at the foreign university you may be encouraged to think much more freely and independently. You could possibly feel as if you have been given a very vague assignment; you should visit with your professor to clarify your ideas, even if it is not stated in class. Generally, you will be expected to think on your own much more independently that you may have been pushed to in US classes (especially at the 100 and 200 levels). You may welcome this change or you may feel that you are not receiving adequate instruction or sufficient support and guidance.

3. **Resources:** Sometimes the amount of time you are given for an assignment reflects the depth of the assignment. There is another reason for the longer amount of time - availability of resources. At some study abroad sites, you may find that the resources are very inconvenient, and are not at your immediate disposal like they are here in the US. We take for granted that resource are at our immediate disposal - library services, copy facilities, readily available textbooks via the bookstore, textbook rental or online resources. Resources abroad may not be as readily available as you are accustomed to in the U.S. This can be a mere cultural adjustment or a complete nightmare. Bottom line is don't put off locating resources, printing papers, etc. until the last minute.
4. **Relationship with your professor:** You may be used to calling a professor by his or her first name or feeling like you can chat after class about your personal life, etc. Different degrees of formality and respect occur abroad. Be sure to step back and watch how other students address and interact with the professors before you break any rules.

Earning SIUE Credit and Grades for Study Abroad

Course Proposal Form: By now you should have completed and received all required signatures on the "Course Proposal for Study Abroad." This form certifies that the appropriate academic advisors are aware of, and approve of, your decision to study abroad, your proposed study abroad courses, and SIUE course equivalencies. It also assures that you understand the parameters that courses taken abroad must meet in order to fulfill specific SIUE degree requirements. This form will allow the Study Abroad Coordinator to initially register you appropriately for study abroad ("SAB" or "DEX" sections of SIUE courses) at SIUE once you have been accepted to your program and paid

the \$150 SIUE Study Abroad Fee. This form will be used to award SIUE credit and grades for study abroad courses once the transcript is received from the foreign institution.

SIUE Enrollment for Return Semester to SIUE

Once abroad contact Study Abroad Coordinator to confirm final course enrollment. It is your responsibility to contact the Study Abroad Coordinator after confirming final course enrollment at the study abroad institution by the semester deadlines listed below. The Study Abroad Coordinator will work with the Office of the Registrar at SIUE to enroll you in the appropriate pre-approved SIUE course equivalencies in place of the "SAB" hours prior to the end of the term at SIUE.

Deadlines to confirm study abroad course enrollment:

Study Abroad in Fall: November 15

Study Abroad in Spring: April 1

Study Abroad in Summer: July 15

GRADE POLICY

All study abroad courses must be taken for a grade. Upon receipt of the foreign transcript, SIUE credit (as determined on the Study Abroad Course Proposal Form) and grades will be posted to a student's academic record. Your SIUE transcript will indicate: "The following credit was awarded for study abroad at *study abroad institution* in *city, country*." Letter grades are awarded for all SIUE credit earned for study abroad and these grades are factored into the SIUE GPA.

TRANSCRIPTS

Arrange to have your transcript sent to the SIUE Office of Study Abroad:

It is your responsibility to arrange to have official transcripts of work completed abroad sent directly to:

Office of Study Abroad
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
2053 Morris University Center
Campus Box 1159
Edwardsville, IL 62026-1159
U.S.A.

We cannot accept student copies of the transcript. It must be an official transcript sent directly from the foreign institution to the SIUE Office of Study Abroad.

Bring back your syllabus and paperwork from abroad: For any disputed grades earned abroad or appropriate SIUE course equivalencies, the student must provide the Office of Study Abroad and the relevant SIUE Academic Department with the following: course title and description, syllabus, reading list, exams and term papers. It is in the best interest of the student to bring back all coursework from abroad in the event that there is any issue with grades or determining appropriate course equivalencies.

SIUE Registration for Semester of Return to SIUE:

Before you depart for study abroad, talk with your academic advisor at SIUE about the courses you will want and need to enroll in for your return semester at SIUE. Try to get this all sorted out before you leave. Depending on your departure date and it is likely that it will be too early to register before you leave. If so, you will need to contact your advisor via e-mail while you are abroad and ask them to get you registered for the appropriate courses in your semester of return to SIUE.

Culture

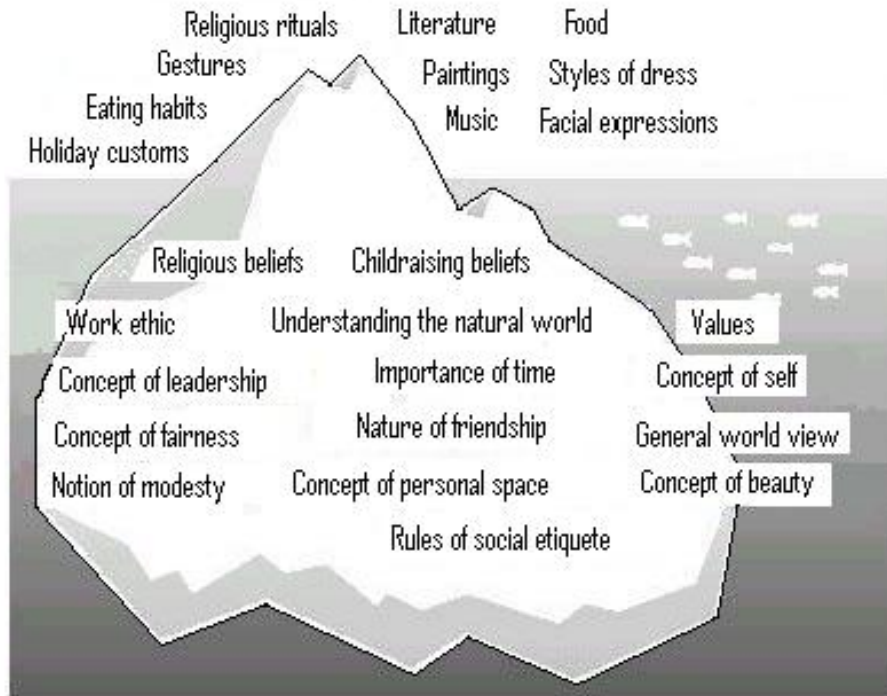
WHAT IS CULTURE?

Culture.....

- influences our expectations of what is appropriate or inappropriate.
- is learned.
- reflects the values of a society.
- frames our experiences.
- provides us with pattern of behavior, thinking, feeling and interacting.
- affects every aspect of daily life.
- **can be most broadly defined as the shared sets of values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors that are widely held by members of a group.**

However, most people are unaware of their own culture until they experience another! In fact, we usually don't think about our own culture until somebody violates a culturally based expectation or we find ourselves in a situation where we have the feeling that WE violated somebody else's cultural expectations, but are uncertain how.

So much of what causes conflict or confusion is the part of culture we can't see or touch. Consider the following illustration and notice the differences between the aspects of culture above and below the "waterline."



Exploring Cultural Differences

It is very difficult to understand what life is really like in a country or region whose culture one has never experienced directly. However, it is very easy to have the illusion of knowing what life in your host country will be like - from images furnished by popular communications media, from reading, or perhaps having even met a few people from "there" here in the U.S. Simply knowing about another culture, however, is not the same as knowing what it will feel like to be learning and living there. Every culture has distinct characteristics that make it different from every other culture. Some differences are quite evident like those that appear above the waterline in the illustration. Other differences can be so subtle that while foreign visitors may be vaguely aware of them, making adjustments is a complex process and one may remain uncomfortable and off balance for quite some time.

One of the difficulties students and other travelers have in adjusting to foreign life comes about because they carry with them abroad too much of their own cultural baggage: misleading stereotypes and preconceptions about others, coupled with a lack of awareness of that part of themselves which was formed by U.S. culture alone. As a result, suddenly feeling like a fish out of water is not an uncommon experience and should be anticipated as normal and likely to occur.

Learning more about your host country and its culture:

The following list of basic questions you can ask about your host country and culture. They are designed to help you become more aware of behaviors found in your host

country and to lay the groundwork for comparative thinking about how cultures differ. This is not intended to be an inclusive list and you will probably think of more questions as you attempt to answer these. We suggest that you go through the list and try to answer as many of the questions as you can. Next, try to answer the rest by reading about the country, browsing the Internet, or by talking to someone here who is from your host country. Take the questions you have remaining with you abroad and utilize the relationships you form with your host country's nationals to help you find the answers. People will most likely be flattered by your interest and will be eager to help you fill in the gaps.

1. Who is the political leader of your host country?
2. Can you recognize the national anthem?
3. What are U.S. relations like in the past and present with your host country and the surrounding regions? Be able to provide a valid opinion of the U.S.'s actions or position.
4. Are other languages spoken besides the dominant language? What are the social and political implications of language usage? What language is used in the schools? At what level are foreign languages introduced in the schools?
5. What is the predominant religion? Are you familiar with the basic beliefs of this religion? Have you read any of its sacred writings? How do members of the predominant religion feel about other religions?
6. What is the attitude toward drinking alcohol? Smoking cigarettes?
7. Is the price for merchandise generally fixed or are customers expected to bargain? How is bargaining conducted?
8. What is the usual dress for women? For men? Are slacks or shorts worn? If so, on what occasions?
9. How do people greet one another? Shake hands? Kiss? Embrace? How do they leave one another? What does any variation from the usual greeting or leaving signify?
10. What are important holidays? How is each observed or celebrated?
11. On what occasions will you present (or accept) gifts from people? What kinds of gifts would you exchange?
12. What foods are most common and how are they prepared?
13. What is the normal meal schedule? Is there a daytime rest period? What is the customary time for visiting friends? Is it okay to drop by without an invitation?
14. If you are invited to dinner, should you arrive early? On time? Late? If late, how late? Does the same timing hold true in terms of arrival at school? Work?

15. What kinds of non-verbal behavior are acceptable between the same sex? Between a male and a female?
16. What sports are popular?
17. How will your financial position and living conditions compare with those of the majority of people living in the host country?
18. What things are taboo in this society?
19. Is military training and/or service compulsory?
20. Are the main newspapers in the host country generally friendly in their attitude toward the U.S.? Give examples.
21. What are the differences/similarities between your home and host culture as to public/private institutions such as banks, libraries, post offices, media, schools, day care, hospitals?
22. What kind of public transportation is available? Do all classes of people use it? Do many people have cars? What is the road system in the host country like?
23. What are some popular leisure and recreational activities in the host country?
24. At what age do people generally marry in the host country? Is it common for couples to live together prior to marriage? What is the divorce rate?
25. What kinds of health services are available? How are they funded?
26. What is the host country's attitude toward age? How are the elderly treated?
27. How will you be expected to address professors at the host university?

CULTURE SHOCK

Traveling, living and studying abroad can be one of the most exhilarating learning experiences of your life. Or, it can turn out to be a series of bewildering and frustrating incidents that leave you longing for home. Aside from the basic preparation of the "dos" and "don't" of your trip, it is valuable to also take some time to investigate and anticipate the kinds of things that will likely happen to you as you mingle with people whose values, traits and characteristics are different from your own. By thinking and preparing for these encounters, you will enrich your study abroad experience.

We are surrounded by elements in our own culture which influence who we are and how we relate to the world. Because we have grown up in this culture, we are comfortable in it. Our values and attitudes about who we are and how things should be have been shaped by our experiences in our native culture. What happens when we suddenly lose cues and symbols that orient us to situations of daily life? What happens when facial

expressions and words are no longer familiar? The psychological discomfort that we feel in this foreign situation is commonly known as "Culture Shock."

Culture shock can be defined as "a set of emotional reactions to the loss of perceptual reinforcement from one's own culture, to new culture stimuli which have little or no meaning, and to the misunderstanding of new and diverse experiences" (Peter Adler). It can also be defined as the expected confrontation with the unfamiliar (R. Michael Paige). However, experts feel the name "culture shock" is misleading because it makes us think of a single moment of shock rather than the more accurate idea that culture shock evolves over a longer period of time and involve mixed emotions. Although a culture can be shocking at times, the reaction to differences is usually more subtle because it is the accumulation of many experiences in a new culture that forms our opinions. For this reason, many experts in this field prefer the term "culture fatigue."

Point of Adjustment (from www.Glimseabroad.org)

Since each country and each individual is unique, the process of acclimation will be different. However, when it comes to cultural disparities between the United States and the rest of the world, there are some that seem to hold true across a wide range of countries:

10 POINTS OF ADJUSTMENT YOU MIGHT FACE ABROAD

1. Concept of time and schedules
2. Approach to work and integration of work into daily life
3. Eating habits
4. Gender relations
5. Reliance on walking and public transit vs. cars
6. Size of public and private spaces
7. Prevalence and permissibility of smoking
8. Incorporation of exercise into daily life
9. Environmental consciousness (prevalence or lack thereof)
10. High interest in domestic and international affairs

U.S. students who have studied abroad stress the element of choice: you can respond to the differences you find in the day to day life, values, customs and social cues of your host country with judgment and rejection, or you can broaden your frame of reference to recognize that other ways of doing things are often as valid as the ones to which you are accustomed in the U.S.

Of course, no matter how tolerant you are on an intellectual level, psychological responses such as those listed above can still be very powerful. Recognizing the symptoms of culture shock, and acknowledging that they are common and not at all abnormal, can preclude further anxiety and frustration.

For additional information on culture and cultural adjustment, we highly recommend you visit http://www3.uop.edu/sis/culture/pub/CULTURE_ISSUES_2.htm

The material on this website was developed to support and enhance a student's ability to make successful cultural adjustments both before going overseas and upon returning home from studying abroad. The interactive website was produced primarily for traditional-aged, undergraduate US-American university students. The focus is generally on the concept of culture and how it impacts one's ability to understand and function in a new and unfamiliar environment. It concentrates on the skills, attitudes, and behaviors which all study abroad students, regardless of their specific destination, will find useful.

PHASES OF CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Culture shock manifests itself differently in different people, but research has shown general patterns of emotional highs and lows experienced by international travelers. These phases vary in duration and severity, and are not necessarily linear. Furthermore, not everyone is in the new culture long enough to pass through all of them.

The Honeymoon Phase - During this period the differences between the old and new culture are seen in a romantic light, wonderful and new. For example, in moving to a new country, an individual might love the new foods, the pace of the life, the people's habits, the buildings and so on. During this period of euphoria both adrenaline and expectations are running high, and everything seems new and intriguing.

The "Everything is awful" phase - After a few days, a few weeks, or a few months, minor differences between the old and new culture begin to add up to become tiresome and annoying. Dissonances between native and host cultures seem more pronounced, and a sense of alienation can set in. One may long for food the way it is prepared "back home," may find the pace of life too fast or slow, may find the people's habits annoying, etc. Common symptoms during this phase include frustration, insecurity, negativity toward local culture, glorification of home culture, exaggerated responses to minor problems, withdrawal and/or depression.

The "Everything is OK" phase - Again, after a few days, weeks or months, one grows accustomed to the new culture's differences, develops routines, and becomes concerned with basic living again, as they were in the home culture. When the adjustment is complete, most students begin to feel they are in tune with their surroundings, neither praising nor criticizing the culture, but becoming part of it.

Reentry or Reverse Culture Shock -Upon returning home, you will be faced with integrating your abroad experience with life in the United States, where you might feel disoriented, out of place or changed in a way that makes relating to your family and friends difficult. Returning to one's home culture after growing accustomed to a new one can produce the same effects as described above. Returnee SIUE students have frequently commented that the re-entry phase has been the most pronounced and difficult to handle.

Recognizing the existence of and your vulnerability to culture shock/ fatigue will ease some of the strain, but there are also several short-term strategies you can use beforehand and on-site to prepare for and minimize the effects of culture shock.

Strategies to Prepare for and to Help Minimize the Effects of Culture Shock

- **Increase your knowledge about the host culture before you go.**
- **Become more familiar with the local language.**

Independent study in the local language should facilitate your transition. Rent and watch foreign films to become accustomed to the rhythm and sounds of the language of your new home. Do not become so concerned with the grammar and technicalities of a language that you are afraid to speak once you are abroad.
- **Go to classes everyday.**

Falling behind in your coursework will cause you even more stress and fatigue, so stay current with your classes.
- **Moderate your expectations and be proud of your “baby steps.”** Feel good about the small accomplishments that you make, such as learning to use the washing machines, finding your way around without getting lost, having the baker understand you when you order something.
- **Expect to feel frustrated and angry at times.**

You are bound to have communication problems when you are not using your native language or dialect. Even if they speak English in your host country, communication may be difficult. Moreover, people will do things differently in your new home, and you will not always think their way is as good as yours. Once you accept that nothing you do is going to radically change the different cultural practices, you will save yourself real frustration. Remember, you are the foreigner and a guest in the other culture.
- **Consider culture shock a natural process, not a sign of weakness.**

Culture shock is a way of sensitizing you to another culture at a level that goes beyond the intellectual and the rational. Just as an athlete cannot get in shape without going through the uncomfortable conditioning stage, you cannot fully appreciate the cultural differences that exist without first going through the uncomfortable stages or psychological adjustment. Every student will experience some form and some degree of culture shock. You too will get through it and appreciate what you have learned from the experience.
- **Keep a journal to help articulate your feelings.**

One of the best ways to deal with cultural adjustment and to reflect thoughtfully on the differences between U.S. culture and other cultures is to regularly write in a journal. Writing may allow you to think your way out of the negative reactions that may result from your unfamiliarity with language and cultural behavior. Journaling may force you to make meaningful comparisons between your own culture and that of the host country. When you return home you'll have more than just memories, souvenirs and photos of your time abroad; you'll have a written record of your changing attitude and process of learning about the foreign culture.
- **Discuss your feelings with others.**

Other international students, from the U.S. or other countries, are likely experiencing the same feelings that you are. Help each other out, explore the city together, etc. Remember to stay positive.
- **Seek help if you need it.**

If you feel sad, angry, or homesick for a long time, ask for help! The international advisor or resident director at the host site may be able to help or refer you to someone with whom you can discuss your problems.

Reverse Culture Shock

Why are we telling you about reentry shock when you have even left yet? Because we won't be with you in your last days abroad and it is important to be aware of this normal occurrence before you come back to the U.S. Returning to the U.S. after an extended period abroad can be as challenging as your initial days in your host country. Most returnees experience a form of "reverse culture shock," in which customs, habits, and people in the U.S. don't make as much sense as they did in your host country. You may feel out of place in your own country or experience a sense of disorientation. While everything is familiar, *you* feel different. Even walking through the airport and hearing American English spoken can be a very surreal experience.

You will have grown, changed, met people, and experienced things and places that your friends and family have not. You will have adjusted to a foreign culture, made new friends, and probably consider your host country as a home. For months, you will have been the foreigner, someone that people notice and are curious to meet. When you get back to SIUE, you may find that classes and daily life are not quite as exciting as in England, Japan, Mexico, etc. Your friends may tire of your photographs and stories of "When I was in _____." Perhaps you will want nothing more than to be back in your host country or maybe you will be happy to be back in the U.S. Either way, you will have changed and your experiences will always remain with you.

It's important to take time to readjust to life in the U.S and learn to incorporate your newfound passions, ideas, and beliefs into your daily life. Some of these strategies may help with the readjustment phase:

- Give yourself time to readjust, relearn, and readapt to your life in the U.S.
- Recognize personal growth and identify positive changes by journal writing, submitting articles and photos to contests, joining community and/or student groups, and volunteering with internationally-minded organizations.
- Seek out other returnees to share experiences and talk about your readjustment.
- Submit an essay and photos from your experience to be published on the SIUE study abroad website and/or help with the SIUE Study Abroad Fair.
- Incorporate your experiences gained abroad into your academic work through papers, presentations, and research projects.
- Keep up your language skills! Continue to take language courses, meet international students, and keep in touch with the friends you made abroad.
- Continue a habit you gained while abroad, such as chatting with friends at a coffee shop, afternoon tea, walks through the park, etc.
- Befriend an international student at SIUE.

Remember that reverse culture shock is temporary and you will be able to readjust to your home culture. Be patient, flexible and understanding of the events, behaviors and people around you and you will be reintegrated into the culture you have always known.

When you return.....

Your study abroad experience will have a profound effect on your life. You may even return home wanting to major in a new subject area. You will no doubt be looking for outlets to share your recent experience abroad. There will be numerous ways to apply the interests and skills you gained while abroad. Be creative in applying what you learned so your growth can continue.

- Share your experiences with others by serving as a “Study Abroad Ambassador”
- Continue your foreign language study or take courses with an international focus.
- Join the SPEAC student organization (Students and Professors Exploring All Cultures)
- Contribute a narrative of your experience and photos for the “Student Stories from Abroad” section of the SIUE Study Abroad Website.
- Befriend international students studying at SIUE. Don’t forget that SIUE hosts 400+ international students from more than 35 countries each year. When you think back to the kindness shown to you as an international student on your study abroad program, don’t forget to extend the same to our visiting students.
- Volunteer to help with SIUE’s Orientation Program for new international students at SIUE.
- Integrate the best of the two cultures. Don’t feel you must give up one at the expense of another.

Stop by the Study Abroad Office when you return to tell us all about your experience. We can’t wait to hear all about it!!!

SIUE Contacts:

Ron Schaefer, Director, Int’l Programs

E-mail: rschaef@siue.edu

Tel: 618-650-3298

Julie Beall-Marshall, Study Abroad Coordinator

E-mail: jbeall@siue.edu

Tel: 618-650-2419

SIUE Office of Financial Aid, Contact for Study Abroad: Tracy Wall

E-mail: twall@siue.edu

Tel: 618-650-3890

SIUE Housing Office

Web site: www.siue.edu/housing

Tel: 618-650-3931

It is also very important that we have your contact information at your host site. Once you arrive at your program site, please send an e-mail to the Study Abroad Office (jbeall@siue.edu) with the e-mail address you will be using while abroad, your overseas mailing address, and your overseas phone number.

Useful Web Sites:

TRAVEL

STA Travel	www.statravel.com
Student Universe	www.studentuniverse.com
Student Flights	www.studentflights.com
Orbitz	www.orbitz.com
Ryan Air	www.ryanair.com (for flights within Europe)
Hostels.Com	www.hostels.com
Hostels of Europe	www.hostelseurope.com
Hostelworld.com	www.hostelworld.com
Eurail	www.eurail.com
Europe on Rail	www.europeonrail.com
Lonely Planet	www.lonelyplanet.com
Let's Go Travel Guides	www.letsgo.com
"Know Before you Go" Regulations for US Residents Traveling Abroad (rules for bring items back to the United States)	http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/kbyg/
Transportation Security Administration (TSA)	www.tsa.gov

HEALTH AND SAFETY ABROAD

Center for Disease Control	www.cdc.gov
World Health Organization	www.who.int/en/
Medical Info for Americans Traveling Abroad (From US Department of State)	http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health_1185.html
Tips for Traveling Abroad (from US Department of State)	http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html
US Dept of State Travel Registration Web Site	https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/
Insurance:	
HTH Worldwide Insurance Services	www.hthstudents.com
Medex	www.medexassist.com/index.html
International SOS	www.internationalsos.com
International Student Identity Card	www.myisic.com

COUNTRY SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Country Background Notes from US Dept of State	http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/
British Council	www.britishcouncil.org
Study Abroad Student Handbook and Country Specific Handbooks from the Center for Global Education	http://www.studentsabroad.com/
"Advice for Parents" article	http://www.globaled.us/safeti/v2n1_hoffa.html

CULTURE

"What's Up with Culture?"

<http://www3.uop.edu/sis/culture/index.htm>

Glimpse Abroad
(travel articles and tools for study abroad)

www.glimpseabroad.org

CURRENCY CONVERTER

Oanda Currency Converter

<http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic>

Books available in the SIUE Study Abroad Office:

- **The Global Etiquette Guide to Europe**, Dean Foster, 2000.
- **Gestures: The Do's and Taboos of Body Language Around the World**, Roger Axtell, 1998.
- **Do's and Taboos around the World**, 3rd Edition, Roger Axtell, 1993.
- **Lonely Planet Blue List 06-07: 618 Things to Do and Places to Go**
- **Developing Intercultural Awareness**, 2nd Ed., Kohls & Knight, 1994.
- **Studying Abroad/ Learning Abroad**, J. Daniel Hess, 1997.
- **Spain in Different**, Wattleby-Ames, 1999.
- **Study Abroad: A Parent's Guide**, William Hoffa, 1998
- **2006-2008 Financial Aid for Research and Creative Activities Abroad**, Schlachter and Weber, 2006
- **Financial Resources for International Study**, Institute of International Education, 1996.
- **A Student's Guide to Scholarships, Grants and Funding Sources in International Education and other Disciplines**, Michigan State University, 2004
- We also have a number of **Let's Go** and **Lonely Planet Guides** to various countries.

We will gladly loan these books out to study abroad students for short periods of time.

Acknowledgements: Some information in this handbook comes from the University of Missouri St. Louis, Illinois State University and Michigan State University.

Metric Conversion Chart

Into Metric			Out of Metric		
If you know	Multiply by	To Get	If you know	Multiply by	To Get
Length			Length		
inches	2.54	centimeters	millimeters	0.04	inches
foot	30	centimeters	centimeters	0.4	inches
yards	0.91	meters	meters	3.3	feet
miles	1.6	kilometers	kilometers	0.62	miles
Area			Area		
sq. inches	6.5	sq. centimeters	sq. centimeters	0.16	sq. inches
sq. feet	0.09	sq. meters	sq. meters	1.2	sq. yards
sq. yards	0.8	sq. meters	sq. kilometers	0.4	sq. miles
sq. miles	2.6	sq. kilometers	hectares	2.47	acres
acres	0.4	hectares			
Mass (Weight)			Mass (Weight)		
ounces	28	grams	grams	0.035	ounces
pounds	0.45	kilograms	kilograms	2.2	pounds
short ton	0.9	metric ton	metric tons	1.1	short tons
Volume			Volume		
teaspoons	5	milliliters	milliliters	0.03	fluid ounces
tablespoons	15	milliliters	liters	2.1	pints
fluid ounces	30	milliliters	liters	1.06	quarts
cups	0.24	liters	liters	0.26	gallons
pints	0.47	liters	cubic meters	35	cubic feet
quarts	0.95	liters	cubic meters	1.3	cubic yards
gallons	3.8	liters			
cubic feet	0.03	cubic meters			
cubic yards	0.76	cubic meters			
Temperature			Temperature		
Fahrenheit	Subtract 32, then multiply by 5/9ths	Celsius	Celsius	Multiply by 9/5ths, then add 32	Fahrenheit