Study Abroad

programs in over 75 countries

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The University of Mississippi
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WELCOME

Congratulations on your acceptance to study abroad through the University of Mississippi! You have taken an important step in adding an international dimension to your education! The staff of the Study Abroad Office is available to assist you as you plan and prepare, when you’re abroad, and when you return. Visit our web site for a listing of staff and their respective responsibilities and contact information (http://www.outreach.olemiss.edu/study_abroad/Contact.html).

Your acceptance packet includes this handbook, instructions for Online Orientation, information on international cellular phones, your international health insurance card and insurance policy, and your acceptance letter.

If you have not already completed an Assumption of Risk Form and/or Health and Emergency Treatment Form, you should do so at the on-campus orientation. These forms must be turned into the Study Abroad Office before your departure. These forms are available online at: http://www.outreach.olemiss.edu/study_abroad/faculty/forms.html.

By applying to study abroad through the University of Mississippi, you have committed to participating in your chosen program and paying the program price and any associated costs that you have authorized the University of Mississippi to charge to your Bursar Account, such as the application fee and airfare through our travel agency. If you choose to withdraw from your program, you will be responsible for costs incurred as set forth in the Withdrawal Policy. You must complete a written Withdrawal Form available at the Study Abroad Office.

Withdrawal Policy

If, for any reason, a student chooses to withdraw from a program, a Study Abroad Office Withdrawal Form (available online or at the Study Abroad Office) must be completed. Verbal statements of withdrawal will not be considered as notification of withdrawal; therefore, the student will still be considered a program participant until written notification is received. Availability for refund will be based on the date that the Withdrawal Form is received by the Study Abroad Office. If acceptance is revoked for any reason, the student is responsible for fees incurred as stated below.

PRIOR TO THE APPLICATION DEADLINE - If a student withdraws from a program prior to the application deadline, he/she will be refunded all funds, less the $50 application fee and any non-recoverable costs (such as housing deposits, field trip pre-payments, etc.) incurred and/or committed on the student’s behalf by UM and its affiliates at the time of withdrawal.

AFTER THE APPLICATION DEADLINE - If a student withdraws from a program after the application deadline, he/she will be financially responsible for the $50 application fee and a $300 deposit and any non-recoverable costs (such as housing deposits, field trip pre-payments, etc.) incurred and/or committed on the student’s behalf by UM and its affiliates at the time of withdrawal.

In the event that extreme circumstances during the 30 days prior to the program’s start cause the student to withdraw, the Study Abroad Director will review the situation on a case-by-case basis. At the discretion of the director, any funds that are recoverable and uncommitted may be refunded, less the $300 deposit and $50 application fee.

Under no circumstances can any refund requests be considered for students who have completed a program.

Any disputes over refunds after an official withdrawal must be directed to The University of Mississippi Refund Committee through the Office of the Bursar.

ACADEMIC MATTERS

The University of Mississippi expects study abroad participants to perform academically at standards commensurate with on-campus performance. This includes attending class, taking exams, reading required materials, completing homework, etc. You must follow the local (not UM) academic
calendar for these activities. If you are not maintaining good academic standing while abroad and fear
that you may fail one or more courses, you can notify the on-site director or leader.

Most instruction in short-term programs is done in English by UM faculty who accompany the
program. Some semester-long program courses are taught in English by local faculty, and those that
have a foreign language requirement are taught in the local language.

If you intend to study abroad for an additional semester, it is your responsibility to contact your
Study Abroad Advisor and Academic Advisor to determine whether this is academically appropriate
and what steps may need to be taken.

**CREDIT LOAD WHILE ABROAD**

All students participating in year-long and semester-long programs must enroll for the equivalent
of 12 credit hours minimum per semester. The Study Abroad Office will register you for 12 hours of
US 111 prior to the start of the UM semester in order to keep you enrolled as a full-time student at
the University of Mississippi.

Students who drop below the equivalent of 12 UM credit hours in the host country will receive F
grades for each hour under the minimum 12 hours.

Students participating in short-term programs are required to enroll in the minimum number
specified in the program information sheet or the program's web page.

**COURSES BASED ON PROGRAM TYPE**

There are two primary types of UM study abroad programs. They are “Faculty-led” programs and
“Exchange or Partner” programs.

**FACULTY-LED PROGRAMS**

As the name implies, faculty-led programs have an accompanying UM faculty leader who coordi-
nates all academic and administrative arrangements on site.

On faculty-led programs, your academic performance is graded by the accompanying UM faculty
leader. We strongly suggest that you contact the faculty member in charge of the program and your
academic advisor to ensure that the classes you intend to take abroad meet your graduation require-
ments. Offered courses are usually based on the number of students enrolled, and low enrollment
numbers may result in the cancellation of courses. Excursions are an integral and academic part of
many programs and should not be viewed as tourist outings. You cannot receive a refund for excurs-
ions you do not attend.

You will be enrolled in your study abroad course(s) by the Study Abroad Office. You should not
manually register for the course you intend to take abroad. You will be dropped by the Study Abroad
Office from any courses that you have registered for during your time abroad. In the event that you
have a Bursar Hold on your account, you will be contacted by the Study Abroad Office to clear this
hold. The Study Abroad Office cannot override this hold. You will not be able to participate in a
study abroad program if you cannot be registered prior to the program start date.

**EXCHANGE OR PARTNER PROGRAMS**

Exchange or Partner programs do not have accompanying UM faculty leaders and involve direct
enrollment in a host institution abroad or participation in a program offered by a UM-approved
provider. If you are unsure as to whether your program is exchange or partner, contact your SAO
Study Abroad Advisor (http://www.outreach.olemiss.edu/study_abroad/Contact.html). Your Study
Abroad Advisor will provide you with information and steps to follow regarding your academic
courses.

There are various advantages to directly enrolling in courses at a host institution. You will learn to
navigate a new academic system and foreign society on your own, usually with the assistance of the
host institution's international office. When you need help, you will turn to your host country peers
and the international office for guidance, building social relationships in the process. Such experi-
ences promote a deep understanding of the host culture, and the impact of such an experience can
be long lasting. However, with these advantages come the challenges of learning to be on your own
in a new academic system and possibly operating in a second language. The courses may be structured very differently from UM courses: your courses may consist of only formal lectures and few exams. Alternatively, they may consist of tutorials or discussion groups with the expectation that you will complete all of the readings on your own before the final exam. Some students have been surprised that such courses may be more challenging than their UM courses. Whatever the academic arrangements may be, remember that the courses offered abroad are not better or worse, but guaranteed to be different from UM! After all, that is one of the reasons you chose to study abroad!

Credit earned for certain courses in UM exchange or partner programs is awarded as regular UM credit rather than as transfer course credit, provided you have completed a Course Approval Form prior to departure. This allows such credit to be listed on the UM transcript using course titles at UM, as well as grades earned, converted into the equivalent UM grade. Grades earned in exchange or partner programs will become part of students’ UM GPA calculation.

If you will be doing directed study abroad, you must apply through the Study Abroad Office using an Independent Study Abroad Program application. You will be registered for the actual departmental course under which you will receive credit. This registration must be for the semester for which you wish to apply the credits. You are required to pay regular UM tuition for these credits.

Adjusting to a Different Educational System

When we find ourselves in a new setting—particularly in a new culture—we usually judge and compare everything against “home”. We tend to use our own cultural framework to make sense of our observations and experiences.

It is difficult to generalize about different educational systems around the world. Most undergraduate instruction will include lectures, seminars, laboratory sessions, papers and examinations, but that may be the end of the similarities. Although it may not be explicitly stated in the syllabus, attendance is important. Adjusting to a new system may be compared to the feeling you have in UM courses prior to taking the first exam. You usually understand the discussion and lectures, but not until you take the first exam do you really understand what you are being asked to retain. You may feel this way throughout your semester abroad.

For instance, you may attend lectures, but a larger share of the classroom time may be spent in small tutorial and seminar groups. You may be asked to be an equal contributor to these discussions. Generally speaking, emphasis is put on reading widely and making use of what you have read in essays and during seminars. Your reading will not usually be based on a textbook or directed in the detailed way that is common at UM. If you are told: “You may wish to have a look at these specific titles,” that implies strong advice that these books should be read! Don’t rely on being told exactly what to do or when to do it.

In many cases, the professor may be expecting you to be reading on your own and ask you for original research and thought in the exam essays. You will be expected to provide your own motivation and to assume responsibility for your own education and learning, and not to simply wait to be taught the course material.

It is likely exams will be essay-type. Before you take your first exam, ask for clarification of the grading system. This will help alleviate any surprises when you receive your results! Grades issued for certain courses on exchange or partner programs will be translated into UM “ABCDF” grades. This translation is based on international standards for grade equivalencies. You may appeal your initial grade; however, because the grade is issued by an instructor abroad, the process can be lengthy and involved.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Program Costs

In an attempt to make study abroad an integral part of your education at UM, the University strives to keep the program fee as low as possible. Many factors may influence the cost of a program. The most important of those are:

- Program length and timing
- Faculty staffing (UM faculty or host-country faculty)
- Location of the program
- Type and inclusion of housing and meals
- Number of field trips and activities
- Number of credits
- International and on-site transportation
All students incur the cost of passports and photographs, and where applicable (and not included in the program price), visas and immunizations. New U.S. passports cost $100 and passport photographs cost between $9 and $13. A visa is an entry/residency permit for a foreign country granted by the authorities of the countries where students will study or travel. The cost and requirements for obtaining visas vary—this information can be obtained from the embassy or consular offices for the respective countries. Some countries require transit visas just for traveling through that country. Students are also responsible for obtaining required and recommended immunizations. Immunizations to some destinations can cost several hundred dollars. In some cases, a visa will not be issued until proof of immunization has been submitted.

Preliminary cost estimates are prepared on the basis of the best available information. These estimates are used by the Office of Financial Aid in establishing financial aid allocations to eligible students. The estimates can be used by non-aided students as guidelines for planning personal budgets. Upon request, the Study Abroad Office staff will print estimated cost of attendance. These estimates should be considered as fully adequate to cover all normal expenses and not as bare minimums. The Study Abroad Office has student evaluations with financial concerns and expectations by past participants. In some categories, students can reduce costs by as much as 10-15% if they shop carefully or simply learn to do without. When evaluating the cost of a study abroad program, students should be encouraged to look at the total cost to them (program fee plus expenditures not included in the fee).

Program costs can be confusing since they vary dramatically. Program fees are costs paid to UM; they are not uniform and do not cover the same expenses for all programs. For faculty-led programs, the program fee typically includes the application fee; deposit; tuition; pre-departure orientation; room and varying numbers of meals; program organized transportation; program-sponsored excursions; international health insurance. Exchange or partner programs in which you directly enroll in classes at a host university typically have a program fee that includes tuition, study abroad fee, and international health insurance. In some cases this fee also includes housing that can be billed to your Bursar Account; however, in many cases housing is paid directly to the host institution. Discuss the program fees carefully with your Study Abroad Advisor before committing to participate in any study abroad program.

The program fee also does not typically include domestic/international transportation, books and other educational materials and supplies, passports and photographs, visas, immunizations, ISIC or other student cards, spending money, independent on-site travel, transportation passes, or incidental expenses.

The total cost of a study abroad program can be dramatically affected by the individual student's budgetary habits and the fluctuations of currency exchange rates against the dollar. Students have different life styles as well as different personal resources and must adapt their standards of living abroad accordingly. Therefore, the bottom line of each student's actual expenditures abroad may be different, but all students should approach the prospect of living abroad with maturity and a sense of financial responsibility.

**FEES AND PAYMENTS**

The costs associated with your study abroad program are described in the program information sheet and on the program’s web page. It will be helpful to plan for these expenses:

1. $50 UM application fee (non-refundable after you submit your application to study abroad; refundable if your program is cancelled by the Study Abroad Office)
2. Non-refundable $300 deposit and any non-recoverable expenses (if you withdraw after the application deadline but included in the program fee if you participate in the program)
3. Remaining balance of study abroad program fee (tuition, housing, meals, program-sponsored excursions, etc.)
4. Airfare (can be billed to your Bursar Account through the Study Abroad Office if desired)
5. Expenses not covered in the program fee such as spending money, remaining meals, etc. (contact the SAO for the cost of attendance)
**Financial Aid**

If you are currently receiving aid, make sure your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is up-to-date for the period when you wish to study abroad.

If you are not currently receiving financial aid, you may apply for aid, including Stafford Subsidized/Unsubsidized Loans, by completing the FAFSA for the same academic period when you plan to study abroad, and mailing it to the federal processing center. The FAFSA is available after January 1 for the academic year beginning the following fall. As soon as possible after January 1 complete the FAFSA and return it to the federal processor. Applications are available at http://www.fafsa.ed.gov or from the Office of Financial Aid, 257 Martindale Student Services Building.

If you plan to participate in a summer program, the previous academic year FAFSA will apply. Contact the Office of Financial Aid in order to be considered for funds available during the following summer semester. Financial aid for summer session is not automatically included in a regular financial aid package and requires additional steps to receive this aid.

If you receive a Study Abroad Office Scholarship, the Study Abroad Office will notify you by email of your award. If you receive other financial aid, including scholarships, grants, and loans, the Office of Financial Aid will notify you directly of your award. If you find that your award does not adequately cover the cost of participation, you may wish to consider Alternative Student Loans. Such loans tend to have higher interest rates but allow you to borrow up to the amount of your educational costs minus any financial aid resources.

For scholarships and grants you must maintain the enrollment level required for each aid program. Credit level required for Stafford Subsidized/Unsubsidized Loan eligibility for all semesters is at least half-time. For undergraduates **half-time** is 6-8 credits; **three-fourths** time is 9-11 credits; and **full-time** is 12 or more credits. The Study Abroad Office will report to the Office of Financial Aid the number of credits you indicated on your application. If you change this number of credits so that it changes your status (half-time, three-fourths time or full-time) it is your responsibility to report this change to the Office of Financial Aid. Some loans require full-time enrollment, and in some cases part-time enrollment reduces eligibility.

Once financial aid funds are available for disbursement, they will automatically be applied to your Bursar Account. If there is NOT enough money to cover both charges, you are responsible for paying the difference. If there is MORE than enough money, the remainder will be issued to you. It is suggested that you enroll in Direct Deposit to your bank account through the Office of the Bursar so that funds will be more easily available to you if you have already departed.

Awards disbursements will be made according to the Office of Financial Aid’s rules. If you would like early disbursement, you will need to make these arrangements by contacting the Office of Financial Aid, 257 Martindale Student Services Building.

**Scholarships**

Students may apply for scholarships offered through the Study Abroad Office.

UM students applying to any credit-bearing study abroad program are eligible for SAO Scholarships. Some scholarships are based exclusively on academic performance; others are based on a combination of academic performance and financial need. Requirements are listed in the scholarship application. The deadlines to apply for these scholarships are available online at http://www.outreach.olemiss.edu/study_abroad/scholarships.html.

Many scholarships you receive at UM will “travel” with you and post to your Bursar Account in the regular manner. However, many scholarships such as participatory scholarships (choral, band, athletic scholarships) will not apply during your time abroad as you will not be available to participate on campus. Other scholarships may have rules that prevent the funds to be used during your time abroad. You should consult your on-campus scholarship advisor/sponsor about your plans to study abroad.

Third party study abroad scholarships are also available to students. Talk with your Study Abroad Advisor or visit our website (http://www.outreach.olemiss.edu/study_abroad/scholarships.html) for more information about these opportunities. There are federally funded scholarships and grants for which every student should apply!
HANDLING YOUR FINANCES ABROAD

Settle on the amount of money you will need while abroad. Make both weekly and daily budgets and stick to them. Learn the value of the local currency and look for special student rates and discounts. Friends with foreign experience, students who have participated in your particular study abroad program, and evaluations available at the Study Abroad Office are excellent sources for advice on spending and saving money while abroad. For conversion tables, consult the foreign exchange listings in a financial newspaper such as the Wall Street Journal or http://www.oanda.com/converter/classic.

The safest way to protect your finances abroad is to diversify them by using an ATM card, debit card, traveler's checks, and credit cards. Should one form be lost or stolen you will have access to your funds through another form.

Most students access home funds through automated teller machines (ATMs) on the PLUS or CIRRUS network. Since many ATMs abroad will only access a checking account, do not leave your funds in a savings account before departure. Otherwise, ATMs are used the same way they are here: your home checking account is debited for your withdrawal and you draw out local currency. You are charged a service charge and the current exchange rate. Although this way of accessing money is convenient, you are warned not to use it as your only form of getting cash. Be sure to check with your bank at home, to ensure that your PIN is valid abroad and to clarify what sorts of charges will be applied. Likewise, check with your bank if you intend to use a check card to access your bank account. Your bank may wish to note when you will be abroad so your access is not blocked due to suspected fraud.

Credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard and American Express are honored abroad, though 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 along, but use it wisely; plastic can be dangerous because it is easy to overspend, service fees and interest charges can be costly, and the loss or theft of a card can inconvenience you, especially while traveling. Seek advice from the issuing company as to the card's applicability abroad and the billing rate for converting the amount of purchases abroad into dollars. Make sure to learn your PIN before departure. Contact your credit card company to find your credit limit and number to call in case your card is lost or stolen. Also let your credit card company know the 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.

If any of your cards are lost or stolen, you will need to contact your bank and clarify whether it is an ATM, debit, credit, and/or check card. The bank will need the number and possibly, the PIN.

Traveler's checks (TC) are inconvenient and not used as a major source of funds. However, you may wish to carry some reserve funds as traveler's checks. Most students only use TCs if they have lost their ATM card or cannot access funds through an ATM. TCs must be cashed at banks or a “bureau de change” and may take time to get cashed. Traveler's checks in U.S. dollars can be used in case of an emergency abroad; and if you don't need them, you can use them as cash when you return. Leave a copy of the serial numbers of your traveler's checks at home; take another list with you separate from the checks themselves. As you cash in the checks, keep a tally of which ones remain unredeemed.

Although it is uncommon, students who stay abroad for a semester or longer may open a bank account abroad. You can discuss this option with your U.S. bank, with a foreign bank upon arrival, or consider an international service such as HTH Worldwide Bank (see http://www.HTHWorldwideBank.com).

The best way to assure yourself of adequate funds is to take more than the proposed budget. If your money runs out and you have a credit card, you may be able to access funds:

- If you are a Visa cardholder, you can obtain a cash advance directly from an ATM or bank. The daily amount available varies with the exchange rate, but averages $150.
- An American Express office can, on presentation of your card, accept a personal check and issue you up to $1,000 every 21 days for a 1% commission. This amount varies with each office. If you don't have a personal check, American Express can provide a counter check.
• A MasterCard may be used to draw either cash or MasterCard traveler’s checks.

If you do not have an ATM card or credit cards to access funds, you have several alternatives, all based on the assumption that someone at home can send you money.

Funds can be transferred or wired from home, but this process is very costly and complicated. Money can also be shuttled from a bank in the U.S. to its branch in a foreign city, if it has one. Banks, however, are notorious for keeping bankers’ hours. One after-hours option is Moneygram (1-800-542-3590; http://www.moneygram.com), a for-profit money transfer service with 23,000 agents in 103 countries; the service charges $40 to send $500 anywhere (more for larger amounts).

Using the local AMEX Office, you can receive funds in about a day, but high fees may apply. If all else fails, turn to the Bureau of Consular Affairs. After an investigation determines that an American is genuinely stranded, a consular official will seek one of your friends or relatives to help. If no one can be found, an official may advance money, but a “limitation” will be put on your passport, signifying that it is to expire when you reach home and cannot be renewed until the loan is repaid.

Avoid the expense and hassle by bringing the necessary funds, carrying your funds in a variety of forms, and sticking to a budget. If you will be absent during tax season and wish to file a tax return, you should make arrangements by issuing a Power of Attorney (http://www.lawdepot.com) for a person you trust before your departure. Alternatively, you can file for an extension with the IRS on the Web at http://www.irs.gov.

PRE-DEPARTURE PLANNING

Your initiative is vital to a successful study abroad program—how involved you become in planning and preparing for your time abroad will directly influence how much you achieve the personal and academic goals you have set for yourself.

There are many ways to prepare for your journey. Visit web sites and read books about the history, geography and customs of the countries you are visiting; study maps; read newspapers with good international news coverage; and watch videos of the places you’ll visit. Check out web sites to access daily issues of foreign newspapers and for helpful information and advice. Visit the Study Abroad Office where you’ll find program evaluations written by previous participants. The Study Abroad Office has a collection of the many guidebooks. The Department of State publishes Background Notes (http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn) on 170 countries worldwide. These are brief, factual pamphlets with information on each country’s people, history, geography, economy, government, and current political situation. Talking with returned study abroad students or international students from the countries you’ll visit can provide invaluable insights. Check out the international travel sections of bookstores and purchase one or two good student guides such as Let’s Go, Lonely Planet, Berkeley Guides, or Rough Guides. Finally, if you don’t speak the language, learn some key words and phrases.

Passport

Due to the unprecedented demand for passports, you should apply for a passport immediately. You should plan on at least ten weeks for standard processing.

U.S. and non-U.S. citizens need a passport both to enter other countries (including Canada and Mexico) and return to the United States. If you already have a passport, make sure it is valid until at least six months after your return date. New U.S. passports take 10 to 12 weeks for processing, depending on the time of the year, and are good for ten years. Apply early to avoid complications caused by misplaced original birth certificates and similar problems.

Passport forms are available at many Federal and state courts, probate courts, some county/municipal offices and some post offices. They can also be downloaded at http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/forms_847.html. This site will also link you to the procedure and form for renewing your passport. This can take the same length of time as issuing a new passport.

For complete information about passport services visit http://travel.state.gov/passport/index.html.

For first-time applicants, age 16 and older, a ten-year passport is $100.00 and includes a application fee ($75) and execution fee ($25).

With your completed application you must also have the following:
1. Proof of U.S. citizenship (i.e. certified copy of your birth certificate)
2. Proof of identity (i.e. a valid driver’s license or social security card)
3. Two (2) identical color photographs (2” x 2” with white background)
4. $100.00 fee
5. A social security number

You must submit your application to a post office.

Passport photos can be obtained by consulting the yellow pages of your phone directory or from the following locations:

- Imaging Services
- Gerard Hall
- University of Mississippi

Walgreen’s
1808 University Avenue
Oxford, MS 38655

If you need a passport in a hurry, consult your travel agent or a respected issuing agency on the internet, such as travisa.com. Additional fees apply for expedited service.

If you need more detailed information, review the back of your passport application. If you still have questions or need to renew your current passport, please contact a post office.

Once you have your passport, be sure to sign it and fill in the emergency information page. Take extra photos with you abroad in case you lose your passport and need to have it replaced quickly.

Visa

A visa is an entry/residency permit and official permission granted by the authorities of the countries where you will study or travel, which allow you to enter and remain in that country. The visa itself is frequently a stamp or sticker in your passport, not a separate document. **You will need a passport before applying for a visa and the passport plus visa process may take three to four months, so start early.** If you are a U.S. citizen (carrying a U.S. passport) a visa is not required by most Western European countries if you are spending fewer than three months in the country visited. However, the regulations change regularly for some Western European countries, so check with the Study Abroad Office or the embassy/consulate of your host country.

The cost and requirements for obtaining visas vary. It is your responsibility to determine visa requirements for all countries you plan to visit while abroad; this includes countries that you plan to visit before or after your study abroad program. You can do so by consulting with a travel agent, calling the consular offices of those countries, or checking the following web sites: http://travel.state.gov/travel/documents.html or http://www.travisa.com.

You may be denied entry into, or be deported from, a country for which you have not obtained a required visa. The Study Abroad Office and the University of Mississippi are not responsible for obtaining visas nor are they in any way responsible for visa denial. For some countries, certain medical requirements must be met before a visa will be issued. Many countries will not issue visas to persons with any type of police record!

**Note:** If you are not a U.S. citizen, consult the embassy or consulate of the countries you will visit to learn their document requirements. You may check the following Web sites:

- Foreign Consulate Offices listing http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/fco
- Embassies and Consulates: http://www.embassyworld.com

The procedures that you will follow may be different from those for U.S. citizens. It is important to initiate this process as soon as possible in order to assemble documents and allow time for lengthy procedures. International UM students must visit the Office of International Programs to obtain a signature on visa documents to permit re-entry to the United States.

**International Student Identity Card**

Your regular student ID may not be honored in some countries. The International Student Identity Card (ISIC) gives students a single, uniform document recognized worldwide as proof of student status. ISIC cards are $22.00 and available for purchase from many travel agencies to any student in a degree-seeking program during the current academic school year. When you purchase an ISIC, bring a clear photo of your face (the size of your driver’s license photo) and proof of your current student enrollment (such as a printout of your class schedule).
Card benefits vary widely from country to country, but may include student discounts on airfare, transportation, and accommodations, and reduced admission to museums, theaters, cultural events, and other attractions. If you purchase an ISIC you will be given an ISIC Handbook that lists exactly which nations recognize the card, types of discounts, and the addresses and phone numbers of student travel offices around the world. Besides the student discounts, the ISIC provides free travel insurance (good for before and after your program dates), an emergency help line, and a communications system (phone card). If you should need to use the insurance benefits, you will need to have a copy of your card and proof of purchase for any claim.

Please note that the Study Abroad Office has received varying reports on the usefulness of the ISIC. In some cases, the card was not honored as expected. The phone card can only be used at public phones. The greatest benefit is usually the reduced airfare; however, some restrictions apply when using ISIC for reduced rates, and you should be aware of the restrictions before flying.

**Flight Arrangements**

Many students find it desirable to travel with other students from their study abroad program, especially if going abroad for the first time. For some programs, the Study Abroad Office works with local travel agencies to obtain competitive airfares for students. However, please keep in mind that the Study Abroad Office does not serve as a travel agency. All arrangements need to be made with an actual travel agency. If you are participating in a program with an optional group flight, you may receive flight information from such an agent. **PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS INFORMATION MAY BE SENT TO YOU BEFORE YOU ARE FORMALLY ACCEPTED INTO THE PROGRAM. IT IS FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY AND DOES NOT IMPLY YOUR ACCEPTANCE.**

The travel agent will assist with travel questions, and make the arrangements that best meet your personal needs. You may reserve a flight with the travel agency or make independent arrangements if you wish. However, you should wait until you receive an official letter of acceptance before making your final booking and payment. If you do use the Study Abroad Office’s suggested travel agency, the cost of your airfare can be billed to your Bursar Account.

Suggested inexpensive airfares can be made through sites such as:

- [http://www.travel.org/airlines.html](http://www.travel.org/airlines.html)
- [http://www.orbitz.com](http://www.orbitz.com)
- [http://travelocity.com](http://travelocity.com)
- [http://hotwire.com](http://hotwire.com)
- [http://expedia.com](http://expedia.com)
- [http://www.cheaptickets.com](http://www.cheaptickets.com)

You are expected to be at the study abroad location the day the program begins and remain for the duration of the program. If you arrive early, you need to make your own housing arrangements. If you are not on the group flight as planned, or you do not check-in on the first official day of the program, this will be considered an emergency and the emergency contact listed on your application will be contacted.

As you begin your arrangements, you may consider having a friend or family member accompany or visit you while abroad. Contact your Study Abroad Advisor to discuss possible resources. Although the SAO staff can make recommendations, the University cannot provide administrative support (transportation, housing, childcare, etc.) or assume responsibility for non-participants. Accompanying non-participants are not part of the program and therefore cannot attend classes, field trips, or any other activities formally associated with the program. If such individuals become disruptive to the program, it may be grounds for your dismissal.

Leave your detailed flight itinerary with your family and if you promised to call them upon arrival, don’t forget!

Whether you are leaving to go abroad or to return home, you must confirm your flight well in advance of the scheduled departure. Arrive at the airport at least two-and-half hours before departure. If you should experience difficulty with your flight, you should contact the travel agent and/or airlines. If it is a travel emergency, inform SAO and we will work with the appropriate travel agent to try to resolve your problem.
HEALTH ISSUES

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

All students participating in UM study abroad programs are covered by a relatively inexpensive mandatory accident and sickness program administered by Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI). There is no need for you to enroll since this is automatically done by the Study Abroad Office. This program only covers students while they are abroad for the official program dates and will not cover students in the United States. (Coverage will be provided by the Study Abroad Office for students participating in programs that have portions in the US, including the Virgin Islands.) It will also not cover international students in their home country. Maintain your U.S. insurance coverage in case you are medically evacuated back to the United States. A detailed policy is available to you at the on-campus orientation and online at: http://www.culturalinsurance.com/umiss0051.

Note that certain high-risk activities, such as hang gliding, parachuting, and/or bungee jumping, are excluded from coverage. Therefore, any illness or injury that results from participation in these activities will be treated at the cost of the student and no claims will be paid by CISI for treatment associated with these activities.

Insurance provided by CISI is a reimbursement insurance. Should you need emergency medical care, please use the emergency number on your insurance card and CISI will cover your expenses. For this reason you should ALWAYS keep your insurance card with you at all times. Should you need reimbursement for medical expenses, submit the claim form and receipts according to CISI’s policy. Only complete the claim form if you incurred medical expenses that exceeded $50.

HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS AND INFORMATION

By orientation you should have completed the Health and Emergency Treatment Authorization form. This form will be forwarded to the UM Student Health Center staff who may contact you if they have concerns regarding your health abroad. They will not contact you regarding any required immunizations. It is your responsibility to ensure that your routine immunizations are up-to-date; inquire whether there are recommended and/or required immunizations or medications for the country/countries you will visit (including any countries you will visit that are not part of the study abroad program’s itinerary); and review educational issues relevant to your personal health and safety (transportation safety, cultural dating customs, laws about alcohol use, etc.).

If you have any questions regarding medical problems, immunization requirements, or other health issues that may affect your successful and complete participation in the program, you are expected to consult with either your personal physician or a local clinic such as the UM Student Health Center. Even if the countries you plan to visit have no required immunizations to enter, you should visit a health practitioner and then make your decision regarding your medical preparation. Do this at least three months prior to departure to nations in Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Latin America and the Middle East, and at least two months prior to departure for all other countries.

The UM Student Health Center provides individualized free consultation to UM students. The clinic provides the following services:

• Information on health risks and requirements for each destination
• Counseling tailored to a traveler’s lifestyle
• Required and recommended immunizations
• Educational materials

Some immunizations require a series or spacing for protection (as long as three months for a series of shots) so allow as much time as possible for immunization.

Worldwide health information and country health requirements are also available through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (http://www.cdc.gov/travel). Please note the special section tailored to study abroad students at http://www.cdc.gov/travel/contentStudyAbroad.aspx and podcast at - http://www2a.cdc.gov/podcasts/player.asp?f=3921.

Students traveling to countries with low health risks (i.e. Western Europe and Australia) will need to make sure routine vaccinations are up-to-date before leaving the United States. Additional vaccines are generally not required for these countries with low health risks.

NOTE: Be sure to check with your insurance company, as some immunizations may not be covered.
**MEDICAL ISSUES ABROAD**

If you have a pre-existing medical condition that may require treatment or need prescription medication while traveling, be sure to bring an adequate supply in the original container, and a prescription with your physician's explanation of the condition and generic and brand names of the medication and dosage information. Check with the embassies of the countries you expect to visit to make sure your medications are not illegal there.

Do not plan on sending medications abroad since it will require customs paperwork and may be delayed in delivery. Maintain your usual dosage and pattern of taking your medication while you're abroad.

If you experience depression or anxiety about your study abroad experience, it may present unique challenges that you may wish to discuss with a medical professional prior to departure. This may allow you to adjust your medication and/or discuss coping strategies.

**LOGISTICS**

**Orientation**

Mandatory general orientation sessions take place twice a year: one in the fall for winter break, spring break, and spring semester participants and another one in the spring for summer, fall and academic year participants. Your UM faculty leader may schedule one or more additional on-campus orientation meetings during the semester prior to your departure. You will be notified by e-mail once these meetings are scheduled. Informational orientation packets will be provided and a wide range of topics pertinent to your program will be discussed.

Attendance is required and your questions are expected and welcomed. Non-UM students will receive this information by mail if they cannot attend.

**Program Housing**

Housing arrangements are made for all programs but only for program dates. If you intend to arrive earlier or stay later than the program dates, you must make your own housing arrangements and be prepared to pay on your own for these additional nights. The Study Abroad Office staff, your faculty leader, or host family cannot make special arrangements regarding your early arrival or late departure. You are expected to stay in the housing for the full length of the program and must vacate the accommodations on the morning of the last official day of the program. If circumstances require that you leave early, you must first obtain permission by notifying, in writing, the faculty leader, the Study Abroad Office, and on-site personnel; no refund will be given for early departures.

You may stay in a home with a host family, a university residence hall, or a modestly priced hotel. Generally, but not in all programs, housing includes all necessities such as sheets and pillows, and you will normally have access to public laundry facilities. In some locations, students have the option of arranging their own housing. In others, participation in program-arranged housing is mandatory. If you choose to arrange your own housing at a site where this is allowed, you must notify the Study Abroad Office of your intent when you apply and provide the staff with your address and phone number abroad as soon as possible.

If you are dissatisfied with your housing, notify the faculty leader or on-site UM personnel. You must consult with and/or inform your program leader, the Study Abroad Office and/or local staff before making any changes in housing arrangements. Every attempt will be made to correct the situation. Reassignment of housing, if necessary, will be provided only once during the program. No housing refunds will be provided for additional moves. Furthermore, since housing payments are commonly done on a monthly basis, any moves made in the middle of the month will result in a forfeit of that month's rent. Payment to the new housing provider must follow the program's established procedure. You are not permitted to move to another home without permission, even if it is permissible by the new homestay family. Additionally, in the case of homestays, gifts given to the original host family cannot be reclaimed.

In the event of serious infractions of housing regulations, UM personnel, in consultation with the UM Study Abroad Office and local University faculty members or staff, will warn students in writing about possible expulsion from the housing facility or other consequences. Repeated offenses or
severe infractions of the housing rules and regulations as established by the local facilities may result in expulsion without notice from housing and expulsion from the study abroad program. If a student is removed from housing but remains in the program, the student will be responsible for locating and paying for the alternative housing. If alternative housing cannot be found, the student must return to the US and forfeit academic credit and any financial refund.

You will be held responsible for all damages you cause to the home, dormitory room, apartment, or classroom as well as any outstanding bills for phone use and the like. If you depart without having paid your bills, including the cost of breakage or damage, a charge will be put on your Bursar Account. If you shared a room or apartment with other participants and the Study Abroad Office is unable to determine who is responsible for the unpaid bill, the bill will be divided evenly and all occupants will be charged the same amount. Any disputes over the amounts should be directed to the Office of the Bursar Refund Committee.

**HOMESTAY**

A homestay will allow one of the greatest opportunities for immersion into a different culture. Although living with a family can be one of the most rewarding aspects of your study abroad experience, it will require flexibility. You will be faced with cultural differences and may have rules and regulations you need to accept and obey. These are not unreasonable and may remind you of the rules you had to obey when you were living with your parents.

Although families have been screened and most have had experience hosting U.S. students, you should allow some time for adjustment. The best advice we can give you is to be sensitive to the cultural differences of your host country. Remember that you will go through some changes that are part of the process of understanding a different culture. Living with a family is a meaningful way to integrate into and gain first hand experience in a different culture.

Living with a family is especially beneficial if you are trying to gain proficiency in a foreign language. You will socialize at a different level and will have the chance to meet local people. You may be by yourself in the homestay and need to develop certain skills to communicate more effectively.

**RESIDENCE HALL**

This is one of the most common forms of student accommodations.

This may be an excellent opportunity to live in a true student environment and get to know local students; alternatively, you may be surrounded by other U.S. students. This could limit your opportunities to meet locals and experience the every day activities of living with a family or on your own.

**APARTMENT/FLAT**

Apartments may be a part of the arranged housing, or students may choose to find their own accommodations and share a flat with other students.

Although you will enjoy the freedom, apartments tend to isolate students from interacting with the local people and culture. If you decide to rent a flat on your own, a deposit is usually required and you will be responsible for maintaining the place in good shape until the day you move out. You may be required to sign lease agreements abroad, and the Study Abroad Office is not responsible for negotiating these lease agreements. You are responsible for any financial obligations incurred as a result of signing a lease agreement, just as you would be in the United States.

**HOTEL**

Hotel accommodations are usually offered only on programs where extensive travel takes place or for short-term programs. Hotels are otherwise avoided since they reflect a tourist approach to the experience and provide limited integration with the local culture.

**HOSTELS**

Originally built for cyclists, hostels (which are open to all ages) are usually situated about 30 miles apart, outside major metropolitan areas. They are inexpensive but occasionally may be dirty, crowded, noisy, or unfriendly. Since the range of quality is so great, it’s best to consult veteran travelers about
specific hostels. Some look like hovels and insist on strict enforcement of regulations. Others ignore the rules, put on four-course feasts, and may be reconstructed castles in beautiful natural settings. These are the hostels you want to find (see http://www.hihostels.com and http://www.hostels.com).

Hostels usually cost from $5 to $20 per night. They vary in size from several hundred beds to a couple of rooms in a private house. Most hostels have dormitory-style sleeping areas (men and women may be assigned to different wings) and kitchen facilities. Some provide breakfast or dinner for an additional fee or you can do your own cooking in the kitchen. Pots, pans, dishes, silverware, blankets and pillows are provided. You have to bring your own sheets or sheet sleeping sack.

Hostels are usually closed during the day, have limited security for left items, and the usual limit for a stay is 3 overnights, but a longer stay may be arranged. Most provide storage facilities for your luggage.

There are many advantages to staying in hostels, particularly if you travel by yourself. You can meet and make friends with other hostellers from all over the world! Membership costs $25 and applications are available at http://www.hostels.com and from most travel agencies. International Youth Hostel Hand-books are available for purchase at bookstores. These handbooks list the addresses and phone numbers of hostels, number of beds, the nearest train station or bus stop, whether laundry facilities are available or meals served, the approximate price ranges, and whether reservations are accepted or required.

**GUESTS AND VISITORS**

If you intend to have family members stay with you throughout the duration of the program, contact your Study Abroad Advisor for possible resources. You are reminded that the University cannot provide any administrative support (transportation, housing, childcare, etc.) or assume any responsibility for accompanying non-participants.

Accompanying non-participants are not part of the program and therefore cannot attend classes, field trips, or any other activities formally associated with the program. If such individuals become disruptive to the program, it may be grounds for your dismissal.

These same policies apply to family or friends who may visit you for brief periods. Such visitors cannot stay in program-arranged housing.

**OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS**

The accommodations you plan to use while you travel should fit your budget, mode of transportation, goals for meeting people, and time limitations.

Arrange for how you plan to travel abroad, how much time you have, and most importantly, what you really want to do. Make reservations in advance for peak season travel.

Clustered around railroad stations, inexpensive hotels are a great alternative for students visiting major cities. Rooms without private baths are considerably cheaper. It's financially worth sharing a bathroom and foregoing daily showers. Showers may cost extra. Pensioni and Bed-and-Breakfasts (B&Bs), which are hotels that include breakfast with the price of a bed and may serve lunch and dinner at an extra charge, tend to be friendly and homey.

Use national tourist information offices and hotel booking services at train stations for assistance in locating accommodations. Student travel bureaus in many cities also have information on tourist homes, rooming houses and pensioni. To beat the hordes of tourists searching for bargain hotels, make reservations well in advance if possible. Without reservations, look for a room early in the day.

**PACKING AND LUGGAGE**

**WHAT TO PACK**

Below is a helpful guide for what to pack. The list should be adjusted according to the length and seasonal weather you will experience during your stay abroad.

**Clothing**

Most travelers pack too much clothing. Take only what you expect to wear. Although public laundry service is available in most places where students will be staying, it is advised to bring dark colors that will not readily show the dirt. Your clothing should be hand washable and require little care.
Learn the typical climate of the locations you plan to visit. You can acquire other inexpensive items in your host country that will have the advantage of fitting with current trends in fashion and make you less identifiable as a foreigner.

- walking shoes
- flip-flops or shower shoes
- socks
- underwear
- shorts
- skirts/trousers
- shirts
- sweater/sweatshirt
- poncho/rain jacket
- light jacket
- bathing suit
- hat
- a nice outfit
- appropriate clothing for an internship, if applicable
- t-shirts (cotton)

**Medicine and Toiletries**

If you chose to put any of the items below in your carry-on luggage, all liquids, gels and aerosols must be in three-ounce or smaller containers. Items must also be placed in a single, quart-sized, clear zip-top plastic bag.

 Prescription medicine: clearly marked with patient name, physician name, drug name, dosage, and written physician prescription explaining the condition and use (NOTE: this may be required in order to bring these medications through customs and into the country.) Some medicines are illegal in foreign countries; consult our physician or the Student Health Center for advice and/or alternatives.

 Over-the-counter unopened medication (i.e., any medications you take on a regular basis or those that are especially effective for you): Although your host country may have the same drug, it is probably called something different and may be difficult to identify at your time of need or not available at all.

 First Aid Kit: include bandages, first aid tape, antiseptic wipes, burn cream, extra-strength aspirin, anti-diarrhea medication, Benadryl™ or similar antihistamines to treat allergies, and first aid guide.

 Also pack the following:

- Comb and/or brush
- Sunscreen, moisturizers, cosmetics, bug repellant
- Water purification tablets and malaria prophylaxis (if applicable)
- Deodorant/antiperspirant
- Razor
- Tampons/sanitary pads
- Contraceptives/birth control/prophylactics
- Eyeglasses, sunglasses, contact lenses and cleaning solution
- Hand sanitizer

**Miscellaneous**

You must declare expensive and/or foreign goods you will take with you before leaving the United States so that you are not charged duty on them when you return. If you are taking imported articles such as cameras, binoculars, watches, laptops, etc., register these foreign-made articles with Customs (before leaving the U.S.) to avoid extra duty charges upon re-entry.

- Battery operated alarm clock
- Camera and appropriate batteries or battery charger
- Film or extra memory cards
- iPod, MP3 player or portable CD player and CDs
- Flashlight
- Address book
- Travel journal
- Pocket calculator
- Books, guides, and maps
- Cards and/or games
- Day pack
- Laundry soap and line, clothes pins
- Sewing kit (this must be packed in your checked luggage)
- Stuff bags, plastic storage bags
- Hostel sleepsack/sleeping bag
- Change purse/fanny pack/money belt
- Umbrella
- Luggage lock and tag
- Batteries
- Water bottle
- Adapter and voltage converter
- Binoculars
- Laptop computer
- Extra set of passport photos of yourself
- Sharing home photos with friends abroad
**Documents, etc.**

These documents should be carried with you (not in your luggage).

- Passport
- Tickets and railpasses (leave a copy with your family)
- ISIC card (if purchased)
- Hostel membership card (if purchased)
- Cash, travelers checks, credit cards
- CISI medical insurance ID card

**LUGGAGE**

1. Check with an insurance or travel agent about insuring your luggage and other personal effects.
2. Avoid oversize and overweight luggage.
3. Mark your luggage tags ahead of time with a clear indication of your name, address and phone number of your destination. Also keep this information inside your bags.
4. Keep your luggage locked and close to you!
5. If you intend to travel before or after your program, make arrangements for storage of your luggage. Do not assume that your luggage can be stored at your housing location during dates outside of the program. Daily storage charges in train stations and airports can be quite costly.

Airlines restrict the amount of luggage that passengers are allowed to carry. In general, passengers on international flights are allowed two bags, each weighing no more than 50 pounds. Requirements vary from carrier to carrier, and it is **your responsibility** to contact your airlines to determine these requirements. Please note that intra-country flights usually have lower limits. Therefore, if your program includes an in-country flight, you should pack less or be prepared to pay for extra luggage.

You will have to carry your own luggage. It is a good idea to pack your bags a few days before departure and try to carry them when you are tired. Eliminate items that are not essential. Don't take anything you would hate to lose. Leave at home all unnecessary credit cards, expensive jewelry, or irreplaceable family objects! Take a collapsible piece of luggage or leave room in your bags for items acquired abroad.

When packing your carry-on luggage we suggest you include:

- an extra pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses and cleaning solution (less than three ounces)
- a map or directions to your destination
- any medications you use (keep medications in their original labeled container to make customs processing easier; if any medications contain narcotics, carry a letter with you from your physician attesting to your need to take them)
- basic toiletries (containers must be less than three ounces each and all must be placed in a quart-sized, clear plastic bag)
- a sweater or sweatshirt
- a change of clothes. Do not pack any gels, liquids, or sharp items such as jackknives, scissors, nail clippers, etc. in your carry-on luggage.

**Communicating Home**

**TELEPHONE**

If you are studying abroad on a short-term program, look into obtaining a phone card from a U.S. telecommunications company that has access numbers abroad, and get the information you need. In
general, local and long distance telephone usage is much more expensive in foreign countries. Calls made directly through U.S. long-distance companies are the least expensive way to call the U.S.—simply dial the access code for the country from which you are calling (http://www.countrycodes.com) plus the U.S. country code (always “1”) followed by the appropriate U.S. area code and local number. You may find that local phone cards work better, but it is still advised to bring a U.S. card.

Many phones abroad require phone cards instead of coins. The cards are inserted into a phone slot and debited as you place calls. You can purchase them at post offices, grocery stores and other locations for varying fixed prices.

Avoid expensive calls from hotel phones; there is usually a surcharge.

Cell phones are an increasingly attractive option for staying in touch with family and friends. Some long-term/semester programs may even include a local cell phone in the program fee. Check with your Study Abroad Office as to what previous students have done and information about reduced rates for UM students through Piccell Wireless.

If you are studying with a host family, check about phone use. Most families will object to your use of the phone, even for local calls because they are not free. Since your family may not discuss this situation in advance, it is important to ask what is expected in order to avoid hard feelings.

Be aware of the time at the other end of the phone. Even if you call at a reasonable hour where you are, it may be the middle of the night elsewhere! **And if you promised to call your family upon arrival, just do it!**

**MAIL**

Mail can easily be sent internationally, but will take longer than mail within the United States. Letters should be marked “air mail” to ensure prompt delivery. If it is not marked, mail may be sent by ship and can take up to three months to be delivered. Mail sent internationally must include the destination country as a final line in the address to ensure delivery. It is advisable to send your family members your address while abroad.

**EMAIL**

Accessing your UM email account will vary according to the facilities available to you on site. You may wish to obtain a commercial e-mail (Hotmail, Yahoo, etc.) since these accounts may be easier to access from abroad than UM accounts. Since you will be responsible for knowing the information UM or the Study Abroad Office sends you through your UM account, **make sure to forward all UM email to any commercial email account you may be using.** Most students use computers at cyber cafes or bookstores that have hourly rental rates.

**BLOGGING**

Writing an online blog has become a useful way to communicate with a large group of family or friends back home. Consider posting photos of your time abroad to share while you are studying abroad. Family and friends find blogs to be reassuring because they can SEE you having a great time!

**ABSENTEE VOTING**

If you will be absent during a U.S. election and wish to request an absentee ballot, you should do so at least two months before the election. To access the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) and instructions, see http://www.fvap.gov/index.html. You can also check with your county registrar or the Secretary of State.

**SAFETY AND TRAVEL**

**UM’s preparation**

UM is dedicated to offering a wide variety of study abroad opportunities to meet the needs of a diverse student population. UM has recognized the importance of establishing policies and procedures in the effort to protect the safety and well-being of study abroad participants, while acknowledging that no single plan can address all contingencies. **Listed below are a few of the ways UM strives to keep study abroad, before and during your participation, as safe as possible.**
The Study Abroad Office strives to keep students, faculty, and parents informed of conditions and decisions related to student safety and well-being. However, in these changing times, it is necessary that each student take responsibility for his/her own safety by staying informed and conducting themselves accordingly.

If you have any questions regarding travel health, safety or security, contact the Study Abroad Office.

### KEEPING INFORMED BEFORE DEPARTURE

Between now and your departure, it is your responsibility to stay informed about developments in the country/countries where you will spend time (including any countries you'll visit that are not part of your study abroad program's itinerary). You can access the U.S. Department of State's Web page (http://travel.state.gov/travel/warnings.html) for information about the country/countries where your program will take you. **On that page you will find three different types of information:**

- **Travel Warning**
- **Travel Alerts**
- **Country Specific Information**

This information is updated based on current events worldwide. According to the Department of State...

- **Travel Warnings** are issued when the State Department decides, based on all relevant information, to recommend that Americans avoid travel to a certain country. Countries where avoidance of travel is recommended will have Travel Warnings as well as Country Specific Information. They can be found on the web at: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html.

- **Travel Alerts** are a means to disseminate information about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term and/or trans-national conditions posing significant risks to the security of American travelers. The TAs are made when there is a specific threat that cannot be countered. In the past, Travel Alerts have been issued to deal with short-term coups, violence by terrorists and anniversary dates of specific terrorist events. On the web at: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1766.html.

- **Country Specific Information** is available for every country of the world. They include such information as location of the U.S. embassy or consulate in the subject country, unusual immigration practices, health conditions, minor political disturbances, unusual currency and entry regulations, crime and security information, and drug penalties. If an unstable condition exists in a country that is not severe enough to warrant a Travel Warning, a description of the condition(s) may be included under an optional section entitled “Safety/Security.” On limited occasions, we also restate in this section any U.S. embassy advice given to official employees. Country Specific Information generally do not include advice, but present information in a factual manner so the traveler can make his or her own decisions concerning travel to a particular country. On the Web at: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html.

In addition, please see the section “Tips for Traveling Abroad” for other important safety and health information from the Department of State. On the web at: http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html.

We ask that you read this information carefully before you depart the United States. Please feel free to call the Study Abroad Office if you have any questions or concerns regarding the information on this site. The Study Abroad Office will notify you of any updates while you are abroad.
PERSONAL DOCUMENT SAFETY

Leave at home all credit cards, keys, and other items not needed abroad. Make photocopies of your valuable documents and maintain an “emergency file” at home containing: airline ticket, passport, traveler's checks, driver's license, blood type and Rh factor, eyeglass prescription, name of doctor and dentist, supplemental insurance policies, and the credit cards you take abroad. Leave one set at home and keep another with you in a separate place from the originals.

Leave a copy of your itinerary and contact information with family or friends at home.

NEVER pack your passport or any other important documents in your checked-in luggage or your carry-on luggage. Passports including visa page, credit cards, and money should be worn in a pouch or a money belt as close to your body as possible. Be aware that certain reading material or literature may offend officials of some countries.

If your passport is lost or stolen abroad, contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate for assistance. See http://www.usembassy.gov for directions and contact information.

EVERYDAY SAFETY TIPS

While you are abroad, you must exercise the same safety precautions you would at home. Don’t take the attitude that you are protected and safe because you are anonymous and no one knows you. Don’t travel with anything you are not prepared to lose. Use your common sense, avoid confrontations, try to blend in as much as possible, try to familiarize yourself with the area, ask the locals where the safe part of town is, and if you feel insecure in a certain place, don’t go there. Do not expose yourself to unnecessarily dangerous situations.

It will be difficult to fully hide the fact that you’re a foreigner. That may make you more vulnerable to theft and crime. While you can’t control everything that happens to you at home or abroad, you can sway the odds. Some practical suggestions include:

• Don’t stand out. While “safety in numbers” is a good rule to follow, traveling as an identifiable group of U.S. students will attract attention and possibly cause problems. Try to fit in with the surroundings and be “invisible”. It is vital to remain alert within your environment—always be aware of what is normal and commonplace about where you live and work to immediately detect the unusual.

• In large cities and other popular tourist destinations, avoid possible target areas, especially places frequented by U.S. Americans. Avoid using U.S. logos on your belongings or clothing, especially athletic and collegiate wear.

• Keep all valuables on your person in a discreet place, preferably stowed away in a money belt or a pouch that hangs around your neck and under clothing. Do not leave valuables unattended.

• Do not wear expensive clothes or jewelry, or carry expensive luggage.

• Try to avoid arriving late at night in cities with which you are not familiar, and take along a reliable guidebook that lists resources and hotels/hostels.

• Try to stay on well-lit, heavily traveled streets. Avoid shortcuts through alleys. Stay in the middle of the sidewalk; avoid walking close to the street or buildings.

• Walk against the flow of traffic so oncoming vehicles can be observed.

• It is preferable to travel with another person. It is not advisable to sleep on a train if you are traveling alone.

• Do not agree to watch the belongings of a person whom you do not know.

• Do not borrow suitcases. Ensure that nothing is inserted into yours.

• Take off your luggage tags after arrival.

• In all public places, remain alert.

• Remember that hitchhiking can be as dangerous abroad as it is in the United States. Hitchhiking is not advisable.

• Never leave handbags/purses/baggage unattended and make sure they are locked. If the item has a shoulder strap, wear it crossing the strap over your body. Do not put valuables in the exterior pockets of book bags or backpacks or in bags that are open at the top.

• Travel light!

• Whenever possible, speak in the local language.
• Be street wise. Avoid deserted areas and exercise caution in crowds.
• Avoid impairing your judgment due to excessive consumption of alcohol.
• Be aware that pickpockets exist and tend to prey on people who look lost or who do not seem to be paying attention to their surroundings.
• Find out which areas are considered to be unsafe by the local people and avoid them.
• Keep up with the local news through newspapers, radio and television, and, in the event of disturbances or protests, do NOT get involved.
• Report suspicious events immediately: contact your leader or resident director if you observe suspicious persons within the premises of your educational environment. Act similarly if anything might indicate threats or an actual terrorist attack on the premises or on student activities.
• If you have been a victim of a crime, report this immediately to your leader or resident director. If you wish to speak directly to someone in the Study Abroad Office, call the University Police Department at 1-662-915-7234 and you will be directed to the Study Abroad Office. If you are calling during regular business hours, you may call the Study Abroad Office directly at 662-915-1508.
• Do not be free with information about other students. Be wary of questions from people not associated with your program. Do not give out your or anyone else’s address or telephone number to strangers. Don’t give away your class or field trip schedule.

• Your leader or resident director may have an agreement with you about leaving the site and staying with others. Be sure to give this person your schedule and itinerary if you are traveling, even if only overnight, and where and how to contact you in case of an emergency.
• Develop with your U.S. family a plan for regular communication so that in times of heightened political tensions or local incidents, you will be able to communicate directly with your family about your safety and well-being.
• Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct, and emergency procedures of the program.
• Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions and promptly express any health or safety concerns to the program staff or other appropriate individuals.
• Learn the location of the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. You should register with the Department of State online at https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui.
• Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well-being of others, comply with local laws, regulations and customs of the host country, community, institution and study abroad program, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
• Become familiar with the local emergency number (comparable to 911) and the procedures for obtaining emergency health and law enforcement services in the host country.
• Be aware that you are responsible for your own decisions and actions.
• Make an agreement with your fellow students that you will look out for each other and practice peer responsibility.

Did you know...?
• Traffic and swimming accidents are the leading cause of death in travelers.
• AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (i.e. Hepatitis B) are a global problem.
• You should always use clean water for brushing your teeth and for drinking.
• You should swim only in well-maintained chlorinated pools or in unpolluted rivers or parts of the ocean.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Once on-site, your program leader should discuss appropriate emergency preparedness steps with you. These steps might reflect preparing for natural disasters such as hurricanes or earthquakes, as well as communication protocols for electrical outages or cell tower overloads. For more information on personal emergency planning visit: http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1212.html.
**ALCOHOL USE AND MISUSE**

Many of the injuries sustained by study abroad students are related to drunkenness and the associated condition of temporary stupidity. Although alcohol misuse may not carry the same legal penalties as use of illegal drugs, it can create dire circumstances for you, your participation the program, your safety on site, and the future of the program. **Remember that you are serving as an ambassador of the University of Mississippi, Mississippi, and the United States.**

Although there may be no minimum or a lower drinking age in your host country, the customs regarding alcohol use may be very different from ours. You may be tempted to slip into—or maintain—patterns of alcohol misuse while abroad. Such use may occur for a variety of reasons: a mistaken impression of how alcohol is used in your new surroundings; cheaper costs in some countries; a lower minimum drinking age; more lenient laws against drunkenness; or a desire to experiment or fit in. Alcohol abuse and misuse are not tolerated globally and will not be tolerated on UM study abroad programs. Violation of local laws and/or UM regulations or policies may result in (i) immediate dismissal from the program; (ii) academic withdrawal from the University for the semester in progress; and (iii) disciplinary action upon return to campus.

During your orientation you will be informed of program requirements and the consequences for misuse of alcohol. Most countries with the exception of those with religious prohibitions, tolerate social drinking. Intoxication, public drunkenness and inebriating behavior, however, are seldom allowed under any circumstances. If you attend Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings in the United States, please notify the Study Abroad Office so we can assist you in locating the AA abroad.

Alcohol misuse is defined as any use that is harmful or potentially harmful to self or others. Alcohol abuse is planned, systematic misuse of alcohol. Alcohol misuse will not be tolerated on UM study abroad programs.

What is “alcohol misuse?” Alcohol misuse is present when:

1. A student misses any scheduled event because of the effects of alcohol consumption;
2. A student becomes ill due to the effects of alcohol consumption;
3. A student is disrespectful of others sharing the same or neighboring housing, due to the effects of alcohol consumption;
4. A student engages in inappropriate behavior toward other individuals that is the result of alcohol consumption;
5. A student engages in destructive behavior toward property that is the result of alcohol consumption;
6. A student does not abide by the laws of the country in which he or she is staying;
7. A student engages in behavior that causes embarrassment to the other members of the group, the faculty member(s) or the in-country host(s) as a result of alcohol consumption;
8. Students in a group encourage or ignore a fellow student who is misusing or abusing alcohol; or
9. Students who transport quantities of alcohol to program sites with the intent of sharing the alcohol with members of the group.

Students are encouraged to use good judgment if consuming alcohol at private homes or other accommodations during non-program hours. Student groups are encouraged to discuss issues related to alcohol abuse by other members of their group with the faculty leader or resident director. Peers should look out for each other and keep each other safe.

If a student becomes incapacitated due to alcohol overuse, or if he/she is in need of medical attention, others are strongly encouraged to contact a local emergency medical service, faculty leader or resident director immediately, in order to protect the health and well-being of the affected student. Peers are encouraged to make the responsible choice to notify program or emergency personnel quickly. The person (or persons) making the call will not be subject to disciplinary action.

If you plan to drink—do it moderately. Do not endanger yourself, others, property, or the future viability of the program. Know when to say “no,” stay with your friends, and look out for each other!

**ILLEGAL DRUGS**

(Adapted from the U.S. Department of State’s Travel Warning on Drugs Abroad, http://travel.state.gov/travel/livingabroad_drugs.html)
DON’T DO DRUGS.

The University of Mississippi has a zero-tolerance policy regarding the possession, use, manufacture, production, sale, exchange or distribution of illegal drugs by students participating in UM study abroad programs. Violation of this policy may result in (i) immediate dismissal from the program; (ii) academic withdrawal from the University for the semester in progress; and (iii) disciplinary action upon return to campus.

Each year 2,500 U.S. citizens are arrested abroad. 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. You are operating under the laws of the host country and the regulations of the local institution. Neither the U.S. government nor the University of Mississippi will be able to secure your release should you be caught.

It is your responsibility to know the drug laws of a foreign country before you go, because “I didn’t know it was illegal” will not get you out of jail. Some laws may be applied more strictly to foreigners than to local citizens; therefore, don’t assume that just because local people are using drugs, it’s acceptable for you to use drugs.


In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of women arrested abroad. These women 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.

U.S. Americans have been arrested abroad on drug charges for possession of an ounce or less of marijuana. The risk of being put in jail for just one marijuana cigarette, or for other illegal substances, 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 U.S. 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 am a U.S. 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 the U.S. government CAN and CANNOT do for you.

The U.S. Consular Office 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 laws 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 Office 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 using illegal drugs by UM on-site personnel, you may be immediately dismissed from the University of Mississippi study abroad program. If you are caught by local authorities buying, selling, carrying or using drugs—from hashish to heroin, marijuana to mescaline, cocaine to quaaludes, to designer drugs like 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
• death penalty in a growing number of countries (e.g., Malaysia and Pakistan)

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.

A few words to the wise...
• A number of countries, including the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Mexico and the Philippines, have enacted more stringent drug laws that 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 to life without the possibility of parole for drug violations.
• 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 with no possibility of parole, early release, or transfer back the United States.
• Don't make a jail sentence part of your trip abroad.

OVERSEAS CITIZENS SERVICES

As part of the online orientation, you should register with the U.S. Department of State in all countries included in your program itinerary. However, you should also register with the U.S. embassy or consulate as soon as you arrive on site. To register, you will need to provide all the information on the front page of your passport. This will be helpful to you and your family if there is a need to locate you in the event of an emergency.

The Overseas Citizens Services of the Bureau of Consular Affairs is responsible for the welfare and whereabouts of U.S. citizens traveling and residing abroad. American Citizens Services and Crisis Management (ACS), a branch of OCS, assists in all matters involving protective services for Americans abroad, including arrests, death cases, financial or medical emergencies, and welfare and whereabouts inquiries. Log-on to http://travel.state.gov/travel/about/who/who_1245.html for details on their services. The OCS toll-free hotline is 1-888-407-4747. From overseas, call (202) 501-4444. An OCS duty officer is available for after-hours emergencies and during Sundays and holidays at (202) 647-4000.

Further information regarding the emergency services to U.S. citizens abroad and related U.S. Department of State services can be obtained at http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html. Travel warnings can be viewed at http://travel.state.gov/travel/warnings.html. You should check this site regularly until your departure to ensure you are familiar with events on-site and any concerns of which you should be aware.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

A phone number provides emergency assistance to any members of the UM community who are abroad on University business or study abroad. You may call this number in an EMERGENCY. It will directly connect you with the University Police Department.

If your host country emergency services are not readily available and you feel there is a threat to
your personal safety, follow these procedures:
1. Dial the international access code for the U.S. (Be familiar with how to use an international phone so as not to delay in an emergency situation.)
2. Then dial 1-662-915-7234
3. Identify yourself as an UM study abroad student and give the country where you are currently located
4. State your name
5. Tell the person what is wrong
6. Tell the person how to contact you
7. Respond to questions and listen carefully to any instructions

ROAD SAFETY
Road safety is not something that you may necessarily think about in planning your study abroad experience, yet the Association for Safe International Road Travel (ASIRT) reports that road crashes will soon become the third greatest global health concern. In fact, death and serious injury from road crashes are among the greatest risk for healthy travelers. And, contrary to popular belief, 85% of such crashes occur in industrialized countries. You can minimize your risk by assessing road culture in your areas and implementing safe precautions.

ASIRT suggests that you:
• select the safest form of transportation in your area
• avoid late night road travel in counties with poor safety records and/or mountainous terrain
• understand how seasonal hazards affect road conditions
• know dates of local holidays (when road accident rates rise)

Additional suggestions for pedestrians are:
• be aware of traffic patterns in your area (they may be very different from the US)
• be especially alert at intersections
• wear reflective clothing if jogging at dusk or dawn (especially in locales where jogging may be uncommon)
• do not walk where you cannot be easily seen
• remember most road fatalities are pedestrians
• avoid hitchhiking

Additional suggestions for passengers are:
• avoid riding with a driver that appears intoxicated, irrational, or over-tired
• always ride in the back seat of a taxi cab
• wear seat belts whenever possible

Many students are tempted to rent cars, mopeds, or motorbikes during their time abroad, but often do so without regard to the risks of driving in a county whose rules of the road are unfamiliar. Therefore, while the Study Abroad Office understands that some students choose to rent such vehicles largely for economic reasons, the SAO does not recommend it. In the past, study abroad participants have been injured and even killed while riding in vehicles with drivers unaccustomed to local driving practices and traffic patterns. To prevent such accidents, some countries also limit the minimum age for drivers to rent a motorized vehicle. Also note that most countries will require an international driver’s license, and driving without one could result in a severe penalty.

Traveling in some developing countries may pose additional road risks. Public transportation in same areas may consist of overcrowded, overweight and top-heavy minivans or buses. Taxicabs may not appear in good condition; drivers may or may not be licensed. Sidewalks may or may not be lit, or exist at all. In these cases, follow the advice of the on-site staff or your faculty leader. They can teach you how to minimize your risk when selecting various modes of transportation.

For more information about safe international road travel, visit http://www.asirt.org.

CROSSING CULTURES
We encourage you to make every effort to take advantage of the many intercultural learning opportunities you’ll have while abroad.
In this section of the handbook, we’re providing some of the information and tools you may need to make the most of your experience.

These are some of the timeless tips for a speedy acclimatization and a more meaningful stay abroad:
1. Learn about your destination before you leave.
2. Learn the local language.
3. As soon as you recover from your jet lag, plunge into the local life in your new home.
4. Don’t allow initial negative experiences sour you on the country.
5. Ignore complaints about the country.
6. Accept the challenge of establishing yourself in the new country and work hard to enjoy your stay.

What is culture?

Culture...
- influences our expectations of what is appropriate or inappropriate
- is learned
- reflects the values of a society
- frames our experience
- provides us with patterns of behavior, thinking, feeling and interacting

In summary, culture affects every aspect of daily life—how we think and feel—how we learn and teach—or what we consider beautiful or ugly. However, most people are unaware of their own culture until they experience another! In fact, we don’t usually think about our 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 the culture we can’t see or touch. Cultural misunderstandings and conflicts arise mostly out of culturally shaped perceptions and interpretations of each other’s cultural norms, values and beliefs.

CULTURE can be defined as the ways in which people relate themselves to their physical and social environment, and how they express these relationships.

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 involves 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.”

The phrase “culture shock” was coined by Cora DuBois in 1951. Kalvero Obert, the first to systematically define and study culture shock, described it as being cut off from your own cultural cues.

“These signs and cues include the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life—when to shake hands and what to say when we meet people; when and how to give tips; how to make purchases; when to accept a date and when to refuse invitations; when to take statements seriously and when not.”

ADJUSTMENTS

Studying abroad is an invaluable experience—a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to live in a foreign country, to learn its customs and culture, and to adapt to new surroundings. The success of your experience depends upon your own efforts to acclimate yourself to living and studying in a foreign culture. You will have moments of exhilaration and moments of real frustration. Gradually, as you come to terms with the culture, the frustrations will become fewer and fewer.

One of the greatest benefits of living in a foreign country is an added depth of appreciation and understanding of U.S. culture. The insights you will gain into yourself and your native culture will be of immeasurable value.

In adjusting to your study abroad environment, you will have to deal with real as well as perceived cultural differences. Keep in mind that people of other cultures are just as adept at stereotyping the U.S. American as we are at stereotyping them—and the results are not always complimentary.
The following, for example, are a few of the qualities (some positive, some negative) that others frequently associate with the “typical” U.S. American:

- outgoing and friendly
- informal
- loud, rude, boastful immature
- hardworking
- extravagant and wasteful
- sure to have all answers
- lacking in class consciousness
- disrespectful of authority

- racially prejudiced
- ignorant of other countries
- wealthy
- generous
- always in a hurry
- promiscuous
- politically naïve

While a stereotype might have some grain of truth, it is obvious when we consider individual differences that not every U.S. American fits this description. Keep in mind that this same thing is true about your hosts vis-à-vis your own preconceptions. Remember that you are an ambassador from UM and the United States. Avoid falling into any of the “ugly American” categories.

**Survival Strategies**

Going abroad requires that you adjust to the same sorts of things as if you would move to another part of the United States: being away from family and friends, living in an unfamiliar environment, meeting new people, adjusting to a different climate, and so on. These changes alone could cause high stress levels, but you will also be going through cultural adjustments and you may experience “culture shock.” In another cultural context, you will often find that your everyday “normal” behavior becomes “abnormal.” The unspoken rules of social interaction are different, and the attitudes and behavior that characterize life in the United States are not necessarily appropriate in the host country. These “rules” concern not only language differences, but also wide-ranging matters such as family structure, faculty-student relationships, friendships, gender and personal relations.

One way to handle these social and personal changes is to understand the cycle of adjustment that occurs. You can expect to go through an initial period of euphoria and excitement as you are overwhelmed by the thrill of being in a totally new and unusual environment. This initial period is filled with details of getting settled into housing, scheduling classes, and meeting new friends, and a tendency to spend a great deal of time with other U.S. students, both during orientation activities and free time.

As this initial sense of “adventure” wears off, you may gradually become aware that your old habits and routine ways of doing things are no longer relevant. A bit of frustration can be expected, and you may find yourself becoming unusually irritable, resentful and even angry. Minor problems suddenly assume the proportions of major crises, and you may grow somewhat depressed. Your stress and sense of isolation may affect your eating and sleeping habits. You may write letters, send e-mails, or call home criticizing the new environment and indicating that you are having a terrible time adjusting to the new country. Symptoms include anxiety, sadness and homesickness.

However, the human psyche is extremely flexible and most students weather this initial period and make personal and academic adjustments as the months pass. They may begin to spend less time with U.S. Americans and more time forming friendships with local people. They often forget to communicate home.

Finally, when the adjustment is complete, most students begin to feel they are finally in tune with their surroundings, neither praising nor criticizing the culture but becoming, to some extent, part of it.

Recognizing the existence of and your vulnerability to culture shock will certainly ease some of the strain, but there are also several short-term strategies you can use beforehand as well as on-site when you recognize culture shock and are faced with the challenge of adjustment.

**Become more familiar with the local language.**

Independent study in the local language should facilitate your transition. Continue your study of the foreign language before and throughout your program. 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.
Know your own country

You will find that people around the world often know far more about the United States and its policies than you do. Whether or not you are familiar with current events, particularly foreign policy, expect to be asked about your opinions and to hear the opinions of others. Start preparing now by reading newspapers and news magazines.

Examine your motives for going

Although you will certainly do some traveling while you’re abroad, remember that your program is not an extended vacation. Set realistic academic goals, particularly if you are studying in another language. Reduce your expectations or simplify your goals in order to avoid disappointment or disillusion, but don’t forget to study!

Recognize the value of culture shock

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, so you cannot fully appreciate the cultural differences that exist without first going through the uncomfortable stages of psychological adjustment.

Expect to feel depressed sometimes

Homesickness is natural, especially if you have never been away from home. Remember that your family and friends would not have encouraged you to go if they did not want you to gain the most from this experience. Don’t let thoughts of home occupy you to the point that you are incapable of enjoying the exciting new culture that surrounds you. Think of all you will share with your family and friends when you return home.

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 that you are the foreigner and a guest in the other culture.

Expect to hear criticism of the United States

If you educate yourself on U.S. politics and foreign policies, you will be more prepared to handle these discussions as they occur. Remember that such criticism of U.S. policies is not personal. Don’t be afraid to argue if you feel so inclined. Most foreign nationals are very interested in the U.S. and will want to know your opinions.

Do not expect local people to come and find you

When was the last time you approached a lonely-looking foreign student with an offer of friendship? Things are not necessarily any different where you are going. If you are not meeting people through your classes, make other efforts to meet them. Take advantage of the university structure and join clubs, participate in sports, attend worship services, participate in volunteer and service-learning projects, and attend other university-sponsored functions. Maintain a sense of meaning to your life and allow time for leisure activities.

Keep your sense of humor and positive outlook

Almost all returned study abroad students have wonderful stories about how much fun they had during their time abroad. If you have a terrible, frustrating day (or week) abroad, remember that it will pass. Time has a way of helping us remember the good times and turning those horrible times into fascinating stories!

Write a journal

One of the best ways to deal with cultural adjustments and to reflect thoughtfully on the differ-
ences between U.S. and the other cultures is to regularly write a journal. As you write, you’ll think your way out of the negative reactions that may result from your unfamiliarity with language and cultural behavior. Journaling will force you to make meaningful comparisons between your own culture and 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 attitudes and process of learning about the foreign culture.

Adopt coping strategies that work for you

Keep in touch with friends and family but not to the point you are consumed with calling and e-mailing that you miss out on the study abroad experience. Exercising can also contribute to improved mood and better sleep.

Talk to someone if you have a serious problem

The Resident Director, faculty leader, or UM staff is near at hand to counsel students with serious problems. He/she has first-hand experience with adjustment abroad and can be a real friend in times of need. Share smaller problems with other students since they are going through the same process and can provide a day-to-day support group.

Adjustment for women

The overwhelming majority of students who study abroad are women, and they report back that they have had incredible experiences. However, in certain locations and programs, 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 respond to the attention.

Eye contact between strangers or a smile at someone passing in the street, which is not uncommon in the U.S., may result in totally unexpected invitations, and some women feel forced to avoid eye contact. 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.

These cultural differences may make male-female friendships more challenging. Consider 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.

Female travelers may be more likely to encounter harassment such as unwanted sexual gestures, physical contact, or statements that are offensive or humiliating. Uncomfortable situations such as these may be avoided by taking the following precautions:

• Dress conservatively; while short skirts and tank tops may be comfortable, they may encourage unwanted attention.
• Avoid walking alone late at night or in questionable neighborhoods.
• Do not agree to meet, in a non-public place, a person who you do not know.
• Be aware that some men from other cultures tend to mistake the friendliness of U.S. American women for romantic interest.

If, after acknowledging cultural differences, you still feel uncomfortable with what you interpret as sexual harassment, you should talk with your leader, resident director, or other on-site personnel. This conversation may provide you with some coping skills and a possible action plan to avoid future encounters. It may also help you gain a different perspective by understanding the local customs and
attitudes. It could be possible that the behaviors you feel uncomfortable with are behaviors that are also considered unacceptable in the host culture.

If you feel you are being sexually harassed by your fellow American students, speak with your program leader. If you feel you are being sexually harassed by your program leader, resident director, or other on-site personnel, contact the Study Abroad Office immediately. You may contact the Study Abroad Office by phone or e-mail, including through the University Police Department 24/7 at 662-915-7234.

If you would prefer to report your concerns to a university unit with no ties to the Study Abroad Office or your academic department, contact the following:

Dean of Students Office at 662.915.7248 or http://www.dosolemiss.com

**Dating and Sex**

It is important to note that different cultures have different norms in regard to gender. Women and men should both be aware that the ways people interact vary widely by region and country, and issues around dating and sexuality can be particularly difficult in a cross-cultural setting. Such things as eye contact, the way one dresses, and body language can send very different messages by region and culture. Observing interpersonal interactions within a culture can be useful in helping you choose the way you communicate verbally and non-verbally with others in that country.

Some people consider traveling an aphrodisiac. Meeting new, exciting, and different people may stimulate action that you would not have taken under similar circumstances in the United States. Don’t be foolish in assuming that you are invulnerable because you are a visitor in the country and no one is judging your behavior. Ask yourself why you are choosing to be sexually active and be aware of and set your boundaries and partner expectations.

If you choose to be sexually active, practice safe sex and protect yourself and your partner against unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS, and misunderstanding about the meaning of the relationship. Sexually-transmitted viruses and bacteria do not respect national borders. Take a supply of condoms with you since conditions of availability and purchase may be limited, and conditions of manufacture and storage may be questionable. Emergency contraception (EC) is birth control that prevents pregnancy after sex, which is why it is sometimes called “the morning after pill” and can be very effective if you think your birth control failed, you didn’t use contraception, or you were forced to have sex.

Be responsible if using alcohol or other drugs because they can affect your behavior and ability to make decisions. Don’t leave the country with anything you didn’t bring: this means a pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, or AIDS.

**Resident Directors**

In some programs a Resident Director serves as the on-site person to assist students. The responsibilities of the Resident Director, as they pertain to your participation, include the following:

- Serve as the official contact with the host university and governmental offices.
- Keep the Study Abroad Office informed of various developments with the program and students.
- Represent SAO in negotiations with the host university or other entities involved with the program.
- Coordinate student arrival, housing, orientation, excursions and program activities.
- Provide for a smooth functioning of the program, including the handling of emergencies and behavioral problems according to established procedures.
- Keep students informed of local laws, regulations and customs of the host country, community, institution and program. Keep the SAO informed of any changes related to these laws, regulations and customs.
- Advise and counsel participants on non-academic (and in some cases, academic) aspects of the program.
- Maintain organized records and files of participants.
- Assist students with personal matters and help them adjust to the new culture.
UM values diversity in its students, faculty, and staff and is committed to non-discrimination. It holds itself to certain standards of conduct more stringent than those mandated by law. UM does not discriminate based on age, color, gender, gender identity, disability status, height, marital status, national origin, political persuasion, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or weight.

As in the United States, some societies and groups are more open to accepting diversity than others. People react differently to looks and behaviors they are not accustomed to or that appear unusual. Reports from students of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds are varied, from those who felt exhilarated by being free of the U.S. American context of race relations, to those who experienced different degrees of curiosity about their ethnicity.

You may have to deal with the possibility of outright racism abroad, the possibility of insensitive attitudes and inadequate facilities for students with disabilities, or the presence of homophobia towards gay and lesbian students.

You may find that your “U.S.-Americanness” is a more important factor in determining your treatment abroad than your religious, racial or ethnic heritage, or physical abilities. While this may be difficult to deal with at times, some members of your host culture will see you as a representative of the U.S. first, and as an individual personality second.

If you have not already done so, schedule an appointment with the Study Abroad Advisor responsible for your program. This person will provide information and descriptions of the local cultural realities that will assist you in your preparation to go abroad. Additionally, the coordinator may be able to put you in direct touch with other students who have studied in your particular country and can share their experiences with these attitudes and customs.

If you are a student with children, please note that accommodations abroad for your children may be difficult to arrange or unavailable.

**Students with Disabilities**

Your active role in disclosing your disability-related needs in advance will be key to your success abroad. By working with Student Disability Services and the Study Abroad Office staff, you can discuss your accommodation needs and identify the site best suited to your capabilities.

**Race/ethnicity and Study Abroad**

As a multicultural student, you may be concerned about facing potential racial bias and prejudice without the comfort of your usual support system. On the other hand, you may be looking forward to being part of the majority population for the first time in your life. Or, you may be planning a self-discovery sojourn to the country or region of your family’s heritage.

Whatever reasons you have for studying abroad, you will find adjusting abroad can be a positive growth experience. It may not always be fun but, in fact, it can present a unique learning opportunity that will serve you well in the future.

**Sexual Orientation**

Preparing for what to expect in a particular country can make the difference between a wonderful experience abroad and an unpleasant one. Before you go, learn the laws pertaining to homosexuality in the countries you plan to visit. Reflect on the culturally based ideas and definitions of sexual identity and consider carefully how your identity as a GLBT person may affect your relationships with host nationals, your cultural adjustment and your overall education abroad experience.

**Discrimination**

Although discrimination is illegal in many countries, it still occurs. If you believe you are being discriminated against, please discuss it with the resident director, faculty leader, or on-site staff.

Discrimination is built on negative stereotypes and prejudices that are influenced by a variety of factors, including the media. Although these attitudes may be frustrating at times, remember that one of the main reasons for your participation in study abroad is to learn about other cultures. This includes both the positive and negative aspects. What you perceive as a discriminatory act or remark may not necessarily be one in the context of the host culture, but rather a cultural difference.
PROGRAM WITHDRAWAL

Withdrawal Policy

If, for any reason, a student chooses to withdraw from a program, a Study Abroad Office Withdrawal Form (available online or at the Study Abroad Office) must be completed. Verbal statements of withdrawal will not be considered as notification of withdrawal; therefore, the student will still be considered a program participant until written notification is received. Availability for refund will be based on the date that the Withdrawal Form is received by the Study Abroad Office. If acceptance is revoked for any reason, the student is responsible for fees incurred as stated below.

PRIOR TO THE APPLICATION DEADLINE - If a student withdraws from a program prior to the application deadline, he/she will be refunded all funds, less the $50 application fee and any non-recoverable costs (such as housing deposits, field trip pre-payments, etc.) incurred and/or committed on the student’s behalf by UM and its affiliates at the time of withdrawal.

AFTER THE APPLICATION DEADLINE - If a student withdraws from a program after the application deadline, he/she will be financially responsible for the $50 application fee and a $300 deposit and any non-recoverable costs (such as housing deposits, field trip pre-payments, etc.) incurred and/or committed on the student’s behalf by UM and its affiliates at the time of withdrawal.

In the event that extreme circumstances during the 30 days prior to the program’s start cause the student to withdraw, the Study Abroad Director will review the situation on a case-by-case basis. At the discretion of the director, any funds that are recoverable and uncommitted may be refunded, less the $300 deposit and $50 application fee.

Any disputes over refunds after an official withdrawal must be directed to The University of Mississippi Refund Committee through the Office of the Bursar.

After arrival

VOLUNTARY

If a student has arrived at the program site and decides to withdraw, he or she must begin by discussing the situation with the UM personnel (faculty, resident director, foreign student adviser) on site. The UM personnel will notify the Study Abroad Office to determine whether a solution exists for the situation. If, after consultation, the student still plans to withdraw from the program, he or she must submit a signed and dated statement of explanation to the on-site personnel. This statement must indicate the student’s understanding that effective the date indicated, he or she will no longer be considered a participant in the program or a student and is therefore responsible and liable for his or her own behavior, insurance, transportation home, etc.

In most cases, grades will be determined according to the academic calendar of the University of Mississippi. In such cases that the academic calendar does not comply with the University of Mississippi’s calendar, grades will be determined by equivalent amounts of time in the classes abroad as on campus.

In extreme circumstances, such as death or serious illness of a family member, grades and status will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Study Abroad.

DISCIPLINARY

Although you may consider yourself independent at home, when you are abroad you are part of a program and serve as a representative of UM, Mississippi, and the United States. Your faculty leader may be aware of your personal life and be involved in most of your activities. The best way to avoid disciplinary action is to take responsibility for your own behavior and to also look out for your peers. If every participant takes ownership and responsibility for the success of the whole program, situations resulting in disciplinary action can be largely avoided.

Conditions as stated in the Study Abroad Policies and Procedures of the application and the Assumption of Risk form apply to all students.

Additionally, the University of Mississippi’s M-Book rules apply to students in study abroad programs. These regulations may be found on the UM Web page under the Dean of Students website:
The University of Mississippi expects study abroad participants to abide by the laws, regulations, and customs of the host country, community, institution and program. There are certain areas under which the faculty leader, local resident director or designated UM staff has the authority to dismiss a student from a study abroad program. **Any behavior that endangers another person or property can result in immediate dismissal.**

The following behaviors are among those that may result in immediate dismissal from the program or temporary suspension pending a final resolution of the matter:

- conduct that violates the University of Mississippi’s M-Book
- violation of the laws, rules and regulations, or customs of the host country, community, institution and program
- behavior that is disruptive and detrimental to the group learning process and academic success of the program
- conduct that damages or destroys property of another person, institution or organization
- behavior that gives the program director and the UM Study Abroad Office reasonable cause to believe that the continued presence of the student in the program constitutes a danger to the health or safety of themselves, persons or property or threatens the future viability of the program
- repeated offenses or severe infractions of the housing rules and regulations as established by the local facilities
- alcohol misuse (as defined previously under “Alcohol use and misuse”)
- physical or sexual assault
- harassment
- possession, use or distribution of illegal drugs
- setting a fire or possession of explosives
- possession of a weapon, including BB guns and knives
- theft
- repeated bad behavior for which the student has been warned in writing

If a student is alleged to have violated the UM M-Book regulations or participated in these aforementioned behaviors while participating in an UM study abroad program, he or she may be referred to the Dean of Students Office University Judicial Council (http://www.dosolemiss.com/page.php?parent_id=&page_id=106772) for a hearing upon his or her return the University of Mississippi. Consequences for drug and alcohol violations may include, but are not limited to, some form of disciplinary probation, required attendance at educational programs, referral for assessment at educational programs, referral for assessment and treatment, and suspension from the University of Mississippi for sale of illegal drugs or repeated violations of the regulations.

In the event of serious infractions of housing regulations or behavior that negatively impacts the housing situation, UM personnel, in consultation with the Study Abroad Office and local University faculty members or staff, will warn students in writing about possible expulsion from the housing facility or other consequences. Repeated offenses or severe infractions of the housing rules and regulations as established by the local facilities may result in expulsion without notice from housing and expulsion from the study abroad program. If a student is removed from housing but remains in the program, the student will be responsible for locating and paying for the alternative housing. If alternative housing cannot be found, the student will be dismissed from the program and forfeit academic credit and any financial refund.

If a student is dismissed for disciplinary reasons during a semester, the student will receive a failing grade for credit hours during the term abroad.

In the event of an infraction, which does not cause immediate danger and where there is an allegation of a violation of the laws, regulations, and customs of the host country, community, institution or program or a violation of the UM M-Book (available online at: http://www.dosolemiss.com/page.php?parent_id=&page_id=106769), the following steps, in order, will be taken:

1. The faculty member in-residence, or the on-site resident director, or the program assistant representing the Study Abroad Office (referred to as the “leader”) will investigate the alleged violation
using the resources available to him or her and have a frank discussion with the student of expectations and consequences.

2. The student will be informed, in writing, of the alleged violation and will be given an opportunity to respond in person and present any witnesses or ask questions of witnesses, if any, that the complainant has identified. The leader will immediately inform and consult with the Study Abroad Office regarding the alleged violation and the process to be pursued in investigating it.

3. If the behavior continues, the student will be warned, in writing, of the expectations and consequences.

4. The leader may, with the concurrence of the UM Study Abroad Office, temporarily suspend the student pending final resolution of the matter.

5. After the facts have been examined, the leader will, after consulting with and receiving authorization from the Study Abroad Office, take appropriate action and inform the student in writing of the decision.

6. Depending on the severity of the case, one or more of the following should apply if the student is found guilty of the allegation:
   - Written Warning
   - Reassignment to another housing location, if available
   - Written dismissal from the study abroad program (which automatically means dismissal from the University of Mississippi for that academic period)
   - Report submitted to the Dean of Students Office to become part of the student’s record.
   - Referral to the University Judicial Council that may include a hearing upon return to UM
   - Other action deemed appropriate to the specific case

**UNAUTHORIZED**

If a student misses three or more consecutive class days without explanation, the faculty leader will seek to determine the location of the student. If the student cannot be located, it will be considered an emergency situation and the emergency contacts listed on the student’s application will be contacted. If, after investigation, it is determined that an emergency situation does not exist, the student will be reminded that attendance is an indispensable part of the study abroad experience. A student who, through his or her absence, demonstrates that he or she has withdrawn from the program without obtaining an official withdrawal will be reported as having failed all courses.

Consideration will be given for the student who leaves a study abroad program because of an emergency situation or illness (either personal or of a family member). Whether it is before or after departure, the student must submit a written statement of withdrawal to the Study Abroad Office and will be subject to the withdrawal policy previously indicated.

A student who leaves the University without formally withdrawing forfeits any fees or deposits paid to the University. Such students will continue to receive and be responsible for payment of tuition and fees and study abroad program fees. Re-enrollment in the University will not be granted until all debts are cleared.

**Refund in Case of Cancellation**

If UM decides to cancel a program for safety and security reasons prior to its commencing:

The Study Abroad Office will provide a full refund of all fees paid to UM for the program (tuition and program fees).

If UM cancels a program for security reasons after it has started:

Additional expenses related to bringing the participants home (or to another approved program location) will be borne by the Study Abroad Office (for example, airline ticket change fees associated with early departures home or to a new program location).

Refunds of program fees paid to UM will be prorated and may be limited by non-recoverable contractual obligations.

Refund of tuition fees paid to UM will depend on how much academic credit the student in the program will still be able to receive for work already completed or to be completed through alternative arrangements. The Study Abroad Office will make every attempt to arrange with faculty and
departments suitable alternatives to completing planned academic credit.

If UM does not cancel a program but a student chooses to withdraw or transfer from a program due to safety and security concerns or any other reason:
The description under the Withdrawal Policy section will apply.

RETURNING FROM ABROAD

For many students, meaningful cross-cultural learning continues in the weeks and months following the study abroad experience. This section of the handbook details what you can do to ensure a smooth return to the U.S. and to continue your international and inter-cultural learning back home.

LEAVING YOUR HOST COUNTRY

PROGRAM EVALUATION

At the end of the program, all participants are asked to complete a program evaluation. Course instructors will not review student evaluations until after grades have been submitted. The information you provide will be crucial in helping the academic units and the Study Abroad Office make program improvements and will provide valuable information to students participating in future study abroad programs.

CUSTOMS INFORMATION

The government requires you to pay duty on goods purchased abroad and brought into the United States. You should know and understand these requirements before leaving so there are no problems when you return. You must declare expensive and/or foreign goods you will take with you before leaving the United States so that you are not charged duty on them when you return. If you are taking imported articles such as cameras, binoculars, watches, laptops, etc., register these foreign-made articles with Customs (before leaving the U.S.) to avoid extra duty charges upon re-entry.

Your exemption is $800 (retail value) on articles acquired abroad, if:

- Articles are for personal use or gifts.
- Articles accompany you.
- You have been out of the country at least 48 hours (Mexico and U.S. Virgin Islands are exempt from the 48-hour limitation).
- You have not claimed the exemption within the preceding 30 days.
- Articles are not prohibited or restricted.

Upon your return, group purchases together and keep receipts ready for Customs inspection. Should you bring back foreign pharmaceuticals, have the prescriptions ready to present.

You must declare, at the price paid, everything acquired abroad, including gifts given to you and articles worn or used. If you fail to declare or understate the value, penalties may be severe. You cannot bring meat, fruits, vegetables and Cuban cigars into the United States.


ONCE YOU’RE BACK IN THE UNITED STATES

GRADE REPORTS

Upon successful completion of courses abroad, all credits and grades (where applicable) earned will be submitted by the Study Abroad Office to the UM Office of the Registrar and will be posted to your UM transcript. All other Non-UM students wishing to have credits transferred to another institution will be sent a UM transcript reflecting grades from the UM study abroad program.

Exchange or Partner Programs

Exchange or partner programs are study abroad programs approved by the University of Mississippi, implemented by a foreign host partner institution, and staffed by non-UM faculty. Exchange or partner study abroad programs may include exchange programs, direct enrollment in a foreign university, or other provider programs.
If your program is an exchange or partner program, a “translation” of credit and grades for certain courses will be made upon your return. This translation of credits and grades is based on the Course Approval Form submitted prior to departure and international standards for credit hour equivalencies. A transcript from your host institution with the record of your academic performance must be sent directly to the Study Abroad Office. It may take several months for a transcript to be sent to the Study Abroad Office. When you return to campus, check periodically with your Study Abroad Advisor about the status of your foreign transcript.

If your Course Approval Form does not match the courses on your foreign transcript, you must submit another Course Approval Form reflecting any changes to your original Course Approval Form. Upon receipt of your transcript, your Study Abroad Advisor will email you requesting that you submit another Course Approval Form if you have not already completed the form upon return. If you do not submit a Course Approval Form after one complete semester from the date your transcript is received in the Study Abroad Office, a “Study Abroad Hold” will be placed on your account. This hold will prevent you from registering for classes and may not be overridden by other departments.

**Faculty-Led Programs**

Your grade will be submitted to the Study Abroad Office by the faculty member. Faculty members have 30 days from the due date of the final assignment for the class to submit the grade.

**POST-TRAVEL HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS**

There are a few health issues you need to consider when returning from travel abroad:

- If you become ill within 12 months after traveling, make a medical appointment and inform your physician of the countries you visited while abroad.
- If you have been taking anti-malarial medication, continue doing so for the prescribed length of time after you return home.
- Schedule an appointment with a health care provider for a sexually transmitted disease check if you were sexually active while abroad.
- Remember that your study abroad accident and sickness insurance covers you only while you are abroad, so make sure you have adequate coverage in the United States.

**CULTURE SHOCK REVISITED**

As difficult as it is to adapt to an entirely new culture, it can be just as challenging to come back home after being away for any period of time. It is best to know what you might encounter in order to prepare for this adjustment period.

Expect to experience some measure of reverse culture shock. Reverse or re-entry culture shock can be defined as the unexpected confrontation with the familiar (R. Michael Paige). Remember that the world at home hasn’t stopped while you were gone. Upon your return home, you may find you aren’t the only one who has changed during your absence. Everyone and everything else will have changed too! Remember to take time to re-adjust slowly.

You’ll notice that you may think differently about the United States. You’ll spend time reflecting on the differences between the U.S. and your former host country, just as you did when you left. Friends and family may be interested in stories or photos for a while, but “really don’t understand.” It may be difficult to express your feelings in words. Remember that many people may have difficulty relating to what you are saying because it hasn't been part of their experience.

Avoid experiencing anxiety about getting a job when your return home. Your study abroad experience can open employment doors for you, so be creative while abroad, ask for interviews by e-mail and promote the self-reliance and maturity your have gained through your experience. When you return, consider attending a Re-entry Workshop offered by UM faculty.

**CONTINUING YOUR EXPERIENCE**

There are countless ways to use the interests and skills you gained while abroad. Be creative in applying what you learned so your growth can continue:
• Talk with students from your program or others who have studied abroad.
• Enter the University of Mississippi Study Abroad Photo Contest
• Attend a Re-entry Workshop provided by UM faculty
• Become involved with international students at the University of Mississippi as a Global Ambassador or Planet Partner.
• Attend International Coffee Hour offered through the Office of International Programs.
• Develop a web site or blog for the program.
• Share your experiences with your Study Abroad Advisor.
• Participate in a Study Abroad Fair! Ask your Study Abroad Advisor how you can help!
• Talk about your experience to clubs and groups, including adults and children.
• Join international organizations and clubs.
• Continue your foreign language study or take courses with an international focus.
• Write for The Daily Mississippian or your local home paper about your experiences.
• Continue studying your host country by taking related courses, reading international papers, viewing films and videos, writing research papers, etc.
• Volunteer to work in the community or on campus. Help organizations that support community service and development. Look for groups working with immigrants, refugees, or the aged so you can use your skills of listening, patience and empathy.
• Start thinking about when and how you'll return. You can apply for Fulbright Scholarships (http://www.cies.org) to study and conduct research; find employment possibilities while you were abroad; join the Peace Corps (http://www.peacecorps.gov); or just return to visit host family and friends.
Please complete, cut out, and carry with you overseas.
The University complies with all applicable laws regarding affirmative action and equal opportunity in all its activities and programs and does not discriminate against anyone protected by law because of age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, handicap, or status as a veteran or disabled veteran.

Please cut out, and carry with you overseas.

Study Abroad Office
(662) 915-1508 phone
(662) 915-6798 fax
abroad@olemiss.edu

For weekend and after-hour Emergencies, please contact:
The University of Mississippi Police Department
(662) 915-7234