Study Abroad Handbook

Let us help you begin planning the most exciting semester of your college career!

Study Abroad
UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD
## Pre-Departure Orientation

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To: Study Abroad and Off-Campus Students
From: Sarah O’Leary, Director of International Studies
Re: Pre-departure Orientation

Congratulations on your decision to study abroad!

You are about to embark on what promises to be one of the most significant experiences of your life! I am here to help you plan for next semester, keep in touch with you while you are away, and when you return I want to hear about your experience and help you reintegrate it back into your life at Hartford. This packet is one tool in this process. The hope is that this packet, in conjunction with advising by our office and your academic adviser, pre-departure orientation, and information you receive from your host program, will be useful to you in planning to make your study abroad the best experience it can be. You should also, of course, plan to do research and exploration on your own to learn as much as you can about where you will be studying.

As the days to your departure come faster and faster, your excitement will start to build, as well as some trepidation as to what may be waiting for you. These are all very normal feelings to be experiencing. Some of you will adjust more quickly than others to your new surroundings --- try not to be too hard on yourself. You will always be your toughest critic. It takes time to adjust to a different environment and culture, new friends, and maybe even a new language. There will be some days when everything is just perfect, and then there may be days when you want to hop on the next plane back home. Stay put --- utilizing the resources at hand, we can make it better. Remember the Study Abroad Office is here to help you.

As you know, off-campus study can enrich your undergraduate education, broaden your worldview, deepen your intellectual and personal maturity, foster self-confidence and independent thinking, and enhance your career prospects, among many other things. I wish you the best in this experience! Don’t hesitate to contact us at any point during the semester if we can be of any assistance.

I wish you all the best of luck on the incredible journey that awaits!

Safe travels,

Sarah

Sarah O’ Leary
Director of International Studies
University of Hartford
200 Bloomfield Ave.
West Hartford, CT. 06117
P. 860.768.5101
F. 860.768.4726
E. saoleary@hartford.edu
www.hartford.edu/studyabroad
Important Contact Information

UH Study Abroad Office
Monday- Friday, 9:00 AM- 5:00 PM, Eastern Standard Time:

Sarah O’Leary
Director of International Studies
International Center, University of Hartford
200 Bloomfield Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06117-1599
TEL: 860-768-5101 Fax: 860-768-4726 Email: saoleary@hartford.edu
Office Hours: 9:00 AM- 5:00 PM, Monday-Friday (closed weekends and holidays)

IF YOU ARE ABROAD AND HAVE URGENT HEALTH, SAFETY, OR SECURITY CONCERNS:

- Contact your Resident Director or in-country staff for assistance locally.
- You may contact the UH Public Safety 24-Emergency line at: 860-768-7777. Try to remain calm. Provide details about the situation, nature of your university travel (individual, group, etc.), your current location, and any concerns. Public Safety will contact the appropriate individuals or organizations who can assist you.

IN A MEDICAL OR SECURITY EMERGENCY:

Call FrontierMEDEX collect at 410-453-6330. Provide the UH ID #324301 (also located on the FrontierMEDEX ID card).

FrontierMEDEX will evaluate the situation and will assist you. FrontierMEDEX will alert the University of Hartford.

For additional information and instructions about FrontierMEDEX, see page 14.
University of Hartford Policy
Related to State Department Travel Warnings
and University-Sponsored Travel Abroad
(revised by ISMT 12/10/08)

Introduction
The University of Hartford is committed to providing a broad spectrum of international experiences for our students, faculty, and staff. We strongly encourage study abroad in University-approved programs, participation in other credit and non-credit international experiences, and faculty international research. At the same time, in the face of the safety risks in the world today, we are also committed to protecting the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff when they journey outside the borders of the United States.

We strongly recommend that before traveling to any part of the world, students, faculty, staff, and other members of the University community (hereinafter referred to as “others”) familiarize themselves with the U.S. Department of State website (http://travel.state.gov), paying particular attention to the “Current Travel Warnings” section which lists countries and regions about which the U.S. Government has serious concerns for American travelers, and the “Public Announcements” section which articulates health and safety issues in various countries or regions. Although the University of Hartford does not prohibit travel to countries for which “Public Announcements” have been issued by the State Department, we urge all travelers to consider seriously the risks in visiting such locales. It is the responsibility of the individual traveler to consult the State Department website to obtain current information about the health and safety conditions of the proposed destination.

In addition, all individuals traveling or studying abroad on a University program or an affiliated program must sign the appropriate “Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability” form. All individuals participating in University-sponsored programs or approved affiliated programs abroad must also obtain FrontierMEDEX coverage from the Study Abroad Office of the International Center (Gengras Student Union 328) before departure.

Nothing in this policy shall serve to extend to any University of Hartford student, faculty, or staff the right to engage in University-sponsored travel abroad, and the University reserves the right to cancel any University-sponsored travel at any time, regardless of whether prior approval has been granted.

1.0 Policy Governing Travel to Countries on the State Department’s “Current Travel Warnings” List

In order to protect the health and safety of its undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff, and others, the University of Hartford restricts University-sponsored travel in those countries or regions of countries for which the State Department has issued a Travel Warning that includes any of the following phrases:

- orders departure of U.S. dependents and non-emergency personnel;
- recommends that any U.S. citizens remaining in the country should depart;
- (strongly) warns U.S. citizens against (all) travel to the country(region); or
- warns (urges) U.S. citizens to defer (all) (non-essential) travel to the country (region).

Click here to view current Travel Warnings on the State Department’s website (http://travel.state.gov).
Any reference to “Travel Warning” in this document refers to the specific kinds of warnings referenced above in 1.0.

When the State Department Warning (1.0) targets a specific region(s) of a country, but not the country as a whole, travel is only restricted in those regions identified by the Travel Warning specified in 1.0 above. For example, a University of Hartford program or an affiliated program in Madrid would not be affected by a Travel Warning (1.0) that applied to the Basque region of Spain. A faculty member’s participation in a conference in Manchester, England would not be affected by a Travel Warning (1.0) that applied to London only.

2.0 Student Travel

2.1 No University of Hartford student is permitted to embark on study abroad in the country/region under a Travel Warning (1.0 above), nor are any short-term programs led by University faculty permitted to depart as long as the Travel Warning (1.0 above) is in effect. This restriction applies to the University’s own study abroad programs, University-sponsored travel programs (e.g., sports teams, performing groups, volunteer activities, organized tours for community members, or alumni, etc.), and study-away experiences sponsored by affiliated programs. Approval for University-sponsored study abroad or travel in these locations is suspended for the duration of the Travel Warning (1.0 above).

2.2 If a student receives formal approval to participate in a program location prior to the issuance of a Travel Warning (1.0 above) or to the development of a critical situation, the University’s approval will be suspended until such time as the Travel Warning has been lifted or the critical situation is no longer a concern.

2.3 In the event that a Travel Warning (1.0 above) is issued or a critical situation arises while a University of Hartford student is participating in a University or an affiliated program already in progress, the University’s International Situation Management Team (ISMT) will do all that it reasonably can to facilitate actions that will improve the safety of the individuals in the program.

2.4 If a University of Hartford student chooses on his or her own to apply for “active status” and to enroll in a study abroad program or pursue any academic work in a country/region where a Travel Warning (1.0 above) has been issued prior to or during the process of applying for study abroad, the student will not receive:

- support or advice from any University of Hartford office or department,
- University of Hartford grants, stipends, or financial aid to support research or travel in the affected areas,
- FrontierMEDEX coverage issued through the University of Hartford, or
- pre-approved credit for the work undertaken in that location.

An exception to this provision of pre-approved credit may be made in cases in which students return to their home countries (they must possess the passport of that country) and are under their parent(s)’s or guardian’s care. With special permission, these students can receive prior approval for courses taken in their home countries.
3.0 Faculty and Staff Organizing Group Travel Experiences in Countries on the State Department’s “Current Travel Warnings” List

No University of Hartford sponsored travel programs may embark for affected areas while the Travel Warning (1.0 above) is in effect. This restriction applies to the University’s own study abroad programs, University-sponsored travel programs (e.g., sports teams, performing groups, volunteer activities, organized tours for community members, or alumni, etc.), and study-away experiences sponsored by affiliated programs. Approval for University-sponsored study abroad or travel in these locations is suspended for the duration of the Travel Warning (1.0 above).

A Travel Warning must be lifted before a University-sponsored trip may depart. In the case of University of Hartford programs already underway when a Travel Warning for the country/region is issued or a critical situation arises, the University’s International Situation Management Team (ISMT), in consultation with the faculty member on site and other knowledgeable sources, will do all that it reasonably can to facilitate actions that will improve the safety of the individuals in the program.

4.0 Staff Travel

4.1. Before traveling to a region of the world on university-related business, staff are required to familiarize themselves with the U.S. Department of State website (http://travel.state.gov) and carefully assess the health and safety risks posed by travel to a particular area.

4.2 Normally, staff may not use any monies paid from a University of Hartford administered account to support travel to countries/regions that have been designated by the State Department “Travel Warning” specified in 1.0 above.

4.3 If staff make the personal decision to travel to countries/regions that have been designated by State Department “Travel Warning” specified in 1.0 above and to use their own funds to support this travel, they do so as private individuals with no connection to the University of Hartford.

4.4 An exception to the policy articulated for staff (4.2; travel to high-risk regions) may be granted under extraordinary circumstances. Staff who seek personal exceptions to this policy should submit in writing a rationale for travel that contains the following:

a. Details about the geographic environment of the work and its relation to security issues;

b. Information about travel advisories or warnings of other countries (e.g., Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada) about the country under the U.S. State Department Warning;

c. The local support structure available to the individual and evacuation plans in case of an emergency;

d. The individual’s familiarity with and experience of the locale, its language, and culture prior to this trip;

e. The importance and significance to the University of the staff member’s travel and the necessity of doing the work in that particular locale;
f. Documentation that the staff member has appropriate health insurance coverage in the locale in question;
g. Documentation about whether the location is covered under the University’s MEDEX assistance program (travel to some high risk regions may involve additional payment beyond what is included in the premium);
h. A signed copy of the “Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability, High-risk Regions” form should be included with the request for an exception.

4.5 This rationale (5.2.1) must be submitted to the individuals who supervise the program, department, and college/school that are funding the trip. Each of these supervisors must review the submitted materials and provide a written assessment of the proposed travel based on its feasibility, importance, and necessity. Each assessment should also contain a recommendation about whether the travel should be permitted to proceed with University support. The staff member’s rationale and the supervisors’ assessments must be submitted to the International Situation Management Team, who will review the documents and decide whether to allow the travel to proceed with University support. The decision of the International Situation Management Team is final and not subject to appeal.

5.0 Faculty Consulting, Travel, and Research

5.1 The University of Hartford encourages faculty to develop international connections and to pursue international research. We do, however, strongly recommend that before traveling to a region of the world, faculty familiarize themselves with the U.S. Department of State website (http://travel.state.gov) and carefully assess the health and safety risks posed by travel to a particular area. A faculty member traveling for professional reasons must check the State Department’s “Current Travel Warnings.”

5.2 A faculty member who for professional reasons (e.g., research, teaching at an international university, attending a conference) wishes to travel to a region which falls under the State Department “Travel Warning” specified in 1.0 above and whose travel/research costs are paid from a University-administered account (whether its own monies or those received through external granting agencies) may undertake such travel only after completing the steps outlined below and receiving the appropriate approvals.

5.2.1 A rationale for the proposed professional activities must be filed with each program, department, or school that is funding the trip. It must contain the following:

a. Details about the geographic environment of the work and its relation to security issues;
b. Information about travel advisories or warnings of other countries (e.g., Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada) about the country under the U.S. State Department Warning;
c. The local support structure available to the individual and evacuation plans in case of an emergency;
d. The individual’s familiarity with and experience of the locale, its language, and culture prior to this trip;
e. The academic importance and significance of the program/research to the faculty member and the necessity of doing the work in that particular locale;
f. Documentation that the faculty has appropriate health insurance coverage in the locale in question;
g. Documentation about whether the location is covered under the University’s MEDEX assistance program (travel to some high risk regions may involve additional payment beyond what is included in the premium);

h. A signed copy of the “Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability, High-risk Regions” form should be included.

5.2.2 This rationale (5.2.1) must be submitted to the individuals who supervise the program, department, and college/school that is funding the trip. Each of these supervisors must review the submitted materials and provide a written assessment of the proposed travel based on its feasibility, importance and necessity. Each assessment should also contain a recommendation about whether the travel should be permitted to proceed with university support. The faculty member’s rationale and the supervisors’ assessments must be submitted to the International Situation Management Team, who will review the documents and decide whether to allow the travel to proceed with university support. The decision of ISMT is final and not subject to appeal.

5.3 If faculty makes the personal decision to travel to countries/regions that have been designated by State Department “Travel Warning” specified in 1.0 above and use their own funds to support this travel, they do so as private individuals with no connection to the University of Hartford.
UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD STUDY ABROAD
ASSUMPTION OF RISK AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY

I, ____________________________, am a student at the University of Hartford
(name)
(hereinafter “the University”). I wish to participate in a University-approved research or
study-abroad program (“the Program”) known as

______________________________
(program title and/or description)

to be conducted from ___________ to ___________.
(date) (date)

In consideration for being permitted to participate in the Program, I hereby agree and represent that:

1. I have carefully identified, reviewed and considered the risks of travel to my destination(s), including by
reading the most recent relevant U. S. State Department (“DoS”) Travel Warning(s) available through
http://travel.state.gov, as well as the University of Hartford Travel Warning Policy
revised December 10, 2008, attached to this form.

2. I have or will secure health insurance to provide adequate coverage for any injuries or illness that I may
sustain or experience while participating in the Program. By my signature below I certify that I have
confirmed that my health care coverage will adequately cover me while outside the United States, and
hereby release on behalf of myself, my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, the University, its
employees, officers and regents from any responsibility or liability for expenses incurred by me for
injuries or illnesses (including death) that I may incur because of those injuries or illnesses.

3. I understand that, although the University will attempt to maintain the Program as described in its
publications and brochures, it (or its partners in the Program) reserves the right to change the Program
or program activities, in its sole discretion, and may do so at any time with or without notice, and that
the University, its employees, officers, regents and agents shall not be responsible for any expenses or
losses that I may sustain because of these changes.

4. I understand the University reserves the right to remove me from the Program at any time should my
actions or general behavior, in the sole discretion of the University, be determined to impede or obstruct
the progress of the Program in any way.

5. I understand that there are unavoidable risks in study and travel outside the United States, and I hereby
release and promise not to sue on behalf of myself, my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, the
University, or its employees, officers, regents and agents, for any damages or injury (including death)
caused by, derived from, or associated with my participation in the Program (including those discussed in
the preceding three sections), except for such damages or injury as may be caused by the gross negligence
of willful misconduct of the employees, officers, regents and agents of the University. It is my express
intent that this release shall bind the members of my family and spouse if I am alive, and my heirs,
executors, administrators and assigns if I am deceased, and shall be deemed as a Release, Waiver,
Discharge, and Covenant Not to Sue the above-named parties.
6. I agree that should any provision or aspect of this agreement be found unenforceable, that all remaining provisions of the agreement will remain in full force and effect.

7. I represent that my agreement to the provisions herein is wholly voluntary, and further understand that, prior to signing this agreement, I have the right to consult with the advisor, counselor, or attorney of my choice.

8. I agree that, should there be any dispute concerning my participation in the Program that would require the adjudication of a court of law, such adjudication will occur in the courts of, and be determined by the laws of, the state of Connecticut.

9. This agreement represents my complete understanding with the University concerning the University’s responsibility and liability for my participation in the Program, supersedes any previous or contemporaneous understanding I may have had with the University on this subject, whether written or oral, and cannot be changed or amended in any way without my written concurrence.

10. I hereby certify that I was born on ____________________. I am, therefore, at least eighteen years of age or, if not, that I have secured below the signature of my parent or guardian as well as my own. I enter into this Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability of my own free will and accord, voluntarily and without duress.

________________________         ______________
Student signature                   Date

______________________________         ______________
Signature of parent or guardian (if required) Date

Relationship: parent or guardian

In case of emergency, contact:

______________________________         __________________
Name                              Telephone

______________________________         __________________
Address                          Email

______________________________
STUDY ABROAD COSTS, FINANCIAL AID, AND PAYMENTS

Tuition Cost
For most approved programs, University of Hartford tuition, registration fee, graduation fee, and mandatory emergency insurance will be charged to your UH account. If the tuition for your program is higher than UH tuition, you will be charged the higher tuition, plus registration, graduation fees, and
mandatory emergency insurance. If the program’s tuition is less than UH tuition, you still pay UH tuition since you are receiving UH credits and grades.

**Study Abroad Room and Board Charges**
Room and Board charges vary for each program. You will be charged the Room and Board charged by your study abroad program and not the University of Hartford Room and Board charges.

For most programs, the University of Hartford will bill Room and Board. However, there are programs that require direct payment and you will be notified directly by your overseas program regarding any direct payments.

**Financial Aid**
Most financial aid will transfer for programs approved by the University of Hartford. If you have checks that require your signature, (most of you have electronic transfers which do not require your signature) you must make arrangements with the Bursar’s Office, either to have these checks mailed to you, or you can designate someone to sign for you. You must notify the Bursar’s Office directly before you leave of your intent.

**Study Abroad Payments**
Most payments will be paid directly by the University of Hartford, so you will continue to pay UH as you have always paid UH. You may still participate in the installment plan. Either the UH Study Abroad Office or your overseas program will notify you of any exceptions.

Questions about finances, registration, and study abroad payments should be directed to:

Sarah O'Leary  
Director of International Studies  
Tel. 860.768.5101  
Email: saoleary@hartford.edu

**Grades, Courses, and Credit**

**Overseas Credits Per Semester**
For study abroad and off campus study, students must take a minimum of 12 U.S. credits per semester to be considered full time students with a maximum of 18 U.S. credits per semester.

Students will be charged the University of Hartford cost per credit hour for credits that exceed the allowed 18 credits per semester.

**Grade and Credit Policy**
All courses, credits and grades you receive while studying off-campus for the semester will be recorded on your University of Hartford transcript and will be calculated into your grade point average. This includes failing grades!

It is your responsibility to be aware of the requirements for your degree and how your study abroad fills those requirements. You must plan out your study abroad courses with your advisor and be fully aware of how this will affect your program of study.
Pass/No Pass Policy
Students can take one course per semester as pass/no pass. This course cannot be in your major. You must email the Study Abroad Office the course title you would like to take as pass/no pass by the UH deadline. Your off-campus program is not involved in this process; please email the Study Abroad Advisor directly.

Policy on Repeating Study Abroad Courses at UH
Students may not repeat a course taken abroad at the University of Hartford. If you take a course abroad that has been approved for a UH equivalent course you will not be allowed to repeat the course when you return to UH to erase the lower grade received abroad.

Overseas Transcript
At the completion of your study abroad program, an official transcript must be mailed to the Study Abroad Office at the University of Hartford (at the address below) for us to post your courses, grades and credits to your UH transcript. For most programs you will be asked to complete a transcript request form giving permission to have your transcript mailed to our office. Not completing the required form will delay posting of your grades. Request the official transcript be sent to the UH Study Abroad Office, GSU 328.

UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD APPROVED INSTITUTIONS
STUDY ABROAD POLICIES

University of Hartford students participating in approved study abroad programs will be charged University of Hartford tuition or host University tuition if higher, student fees, and registration. In turn, they will be allowed to use their financial aid for their study abroad program.

- Tuition abatement may not be used for a study abroad program.

- Study abroad participants will be responsible for all travel and personal expenses.

- Courses taken for study abroad must be approved by the student’s academic advisor prior to departure. Courses which are not approved prior to departure may not be counted toward the student’s graduation requirements. Students must submit the Study Abroad Course Approval Form before departure.

- Approved courses taken for study abroad will be counted as University of Hartford course credits and grades on the student’s transcript.

- Courses taken off-campus cannot be repeated at the University of Hartford.

Updated March 20, 2014
REGISTRATION PROCEDURES FOR FALL/SPRING COURSES

Before You Leave
1. Speak to your advisor about the courses you will need to take the semester you return.
2. Obtain your advisor’s name, email, phone and fax number. Take this information with you.
3. Obtain an up-to-date evaluation from your college evaluator and take it with you (this is especially important if you are within 60 credits of graduation).

NOTE: Study Abroad Students have Priority Registration

1. In mid-March/mid-October, check the University’s main web page (www.hartford.edu) for the Fall/Spring Schedule of Classes. This can be obtained by clicking on the “Academics” button on the main page or by following this link:
   http://www.hartford.edu/academics/schedule_classes/default.aspx

2. Contact your advisor to discuss your preliminary selection of classes. Your Advisor can either give you a PIN number with which you can register yourself or they can register you on-line.

3. To register yourself, go the “Self-Service Center” which can be accessed under “Quick Links” on the Main University’s web page.

4. Print out the sheet listing your web registration and you are all set. Your advisor will get an official copy of your schedule in the mail about one week later.

MAIL INFORMATION

All first class mail can be forwarded to the permanent address on record with the university. (Make sure the university has the correct address on file!) If you want the mail sent somewhere else, you must change your permanent address listed with the university. However, it is best to contact all billing / bank companies, magazines, etc. to change your address. This will help in receiving mail in a timely manner. Unfortunately, you cannot keep your mail box number while you are abroad. You will be assigned a new mail box number upon your return.

PASSPORT & VISA

Passport
You must have a valid passport to go abroad. If you have not applied for a passport yet, please do so NOW. A passport application can be obtained through any US Post Office. It usually takes anywhere from 4 to 8 weeks for a new passport. You can obtain a passport the same day at any passport agency (there is one located in Stamford, CT). Be sure to review the list of required documents.

Visa
A visa is an endorsement stamped into your passport by a foreign government, allowing you to stay in their country for a specific purpose and period of time. Most countries require you to have a student visa in order to enter the country and stay there legally as a student. If a visa is required, the required information to obtain the Visa will be given to you by the program provider. Usually a visa is obtained at the Consulate of
the country of study or by mail. Do NOT wait until the last minute to get your visa. Keep all documents that are sent to you by your program provider—some may be needed by immigration officials upon arrival in your host country.

**MEDICAL INSURANCE**

**Medical Insurance**

Carefully review your current medical insurance policy to make sure you will be covered while you are studying outside the United States. Most of the study abroad programs will provide international health insurance, emergency repatriation, and medical evacuation. Coverage varies widely for each program; it is your responsibility to know your coverage.

- Become familiar with your program’s health insurance and emergency assistance.
  - What is covered under the Study Abroad Medical Insurance Plan?
  - What is covered under the Study Abroad Emergency Assistance Plan?
  - How are prescription drugs covered?
  - What if I have a pre-existing condition, am I covered?
  - Does this plan have a deductible? What is a deductible?
  - If I receive a bill for services I received, what should I do?

- Read and carefully consider all materials issued by the program that relate to your health and safety abroad.
- Consider your physical and mental health, and make available to your program provider accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary in planning for a safe and healthy study abroad experience. This will greatly benefit you if you should need assistance while abroad.
- Provide parents/guardians/families and any others with your overseas insurance information, including emergency contact information, and keep them informed of their whereabouts and activities.
- When outside of the United States, you will likely be asked to pay for your medical care first and then will need to seek reimbursement. Ask your provider how this might be handled.

**FrontierMEDEX**

Important instructions for using FrontierMEDEX services are discussed in the FrontierMEDEX brochure (included in your pre-departure folder). We ask that students and parents keep a copy of the brochure and make sure that it is accessible at all times during the overseas program. The wallet card, which contains the University of Hartford’s group identification number and the Emergency Response Center phone numbers on the back, should be carried by students at all times when they are overseas. Students are automatically enrolled with FrontierMEDEX, so there is no need to activate the card.

The services provided by FrontierMEDEX range from telephone advice and referrals to full-scale evacuation by private air ambulance. The FrontierMEDEX network of multilingual specialists operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year from FrontierMEDEX Emergency Response Centers around the world. Your Medex membership, provided by the University of Hartford, protects you against a variety of difficulties that could
arise while you are abroad. The coverage is designed to supplement the policies, procedures and support staff which the University of Hartford already has in place.

It is important to understand that, although FrontierMEDEX will offer our students travel, medical and security advice and services, as well as online access to information which many insurance companies do not offer, **FrontierMEDEX is NOT health insurance.** The University of Hartford continues to require all students attending our programs to maintain health insurance coverage that meets the standards set forth by the University of Hartford’s Student Health Service and to make certain that their policies cover them while abroad.

Whenever you are traveling or living abroad, you can access up-to-date reports on more than 170 countries worldwide on health issues, medical care and vaccination requirements via the FrontierMEDEX website—your home page for travel, health and safety information (located at [http://www.frontiermedex.com/](http://www.frontiermedex.com/)). The FrontierMEDEX website also contains online security tools including global monitoring, country specific information and travel tips. **We strongly encourage all students to visit the website to gain information about the country and regions they are traveling to.**

- Visit the website http://www.frontiermedex.com/ homepage, and then **click on “Member Center Log-In”.** On the next page that appears click on ‘Create User.’

- You will be requested to “Verify Policy Number.” Enter the University of Hartford FrontierMEDEX ID#: 324301 and then follow the necessary prompts.

- You should next see a page that asks you to set up your user name and password **Make sure you enter your email address** - this is how you will access the Member Center going forward.

- Once you finish creating the User profile, you will be able to enter the **Custom Member Center** will you will find valuable travel resources and health/safety information. Direct link: [https://members.medexassist.com/Default.aspx](https://members.medexassist.com/Default.aspx)

While you are abroad, your first contact should always be the director of your overseas program, as instructed during your orientation. If you are traveling, and/or in an emergency situation where you are not able to reach that person, you should contact FrontierMEDEX who will work to meet your needs immediately and will contact a University of Hartford’s staff member in the United States.

Please be aware that some of FrontierMEDEX’s services outlined in the brochure carry additional charges. These services are addressed in the section titled **Expenses Not Covered.** Should you request a service which has an additional charge, FrontierMEDEX will inform you in advance and will require a credit card number in order to activate the service.

Students will be charged **$160 per semester** for the **FrontierMEDEX Collegiate Security Program.** It will be charged onto the student’s account along with tuition, room and board charges.

**Frequently Asked Questions about FrontierMEDEX**

**What is FrontierMEDEX?**
FrontierMEDEX is a leading provider of international travel assistance services. FrontierMEDEX has been assisting travelers worldwide by utilizing highly trained, multilingual coordinators in conjunction with an extensive information and communication system to provide medical and travel related assistance.

FrontierMEDEX is the University of Hartford emergency travel assistance program. All study abroad faculty, students and staff who participate on a University approved program overseas are covered by FrontierMedEx and can obtain emergency medical, travel, and personal security assistance 24 hours a day, anywhere in the world.

Your SECURE program provides you with access to the 24/7 FrontierMEDEX Emergency Response Center and includes emergency medical, political and security evacuation and repatriation. Please read the full SECURE Program Description for a complete description of services and benefits. These services are subject to certain Conditions, Limitations, and Exclusions also described in the program description.

When Should I contact FrontierMEDEX?
Coordinators are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Many times people assume that the services are to be used only in serious cases. Be assured that FrontierMEDEX is there to help you with any type of problem regardless of the severity.

What if Local Medical Facilities are Inadequate?
If, through our medical management, it is determined that local medical providers are inappropriate for treatment, FrontierMEDEX will arrange for a medically safe evacuation to a facility capable of providing the necessary care.

What Happens If I am Hospitalized?
It is important to notify FrontierMEDEX as soon as possible so your treating physician can be contacted to assess your condition and treatment plans to ensure your safe recovery. FrontierMEDEX will then update your family, employer/organization and personal physician as appropriate and assist you until you have returned home or have received final treatment.

How to Use FrontierMEDEX Travel Assistance Services

1. Always carry your FrontierMEDEX ID card when traveling.
2. If you suffer a medical emergency, go immediately to the nearest physician or hospital without delay and then contact FrontierMEDEX.
3. For help with medical, travel, and security problems, call FrontierMEDEX using one of the country-specific toll-free numbers printed on the back of the card. If you are in a country not listed, call the Emergency Response Center collect (1-410-453-6330). There is no cost to this call!
4. A multilingual Assistance Coordinator will ask your name, your organization’s name, your FrontierMEDEX ID number shown on the ID card (#324301) and a description of the situation.
5. Assistance will be given and FrontierMEDEX will monitor your case until the situation is resolved.

FrontierMEDEX Phone Numbers

FrontierMEDEX Assistance Coordinators are available 24/7 to help you with travel emergencies. For immediate assistance, contact FrontierMEDEX through one of the toll-free numbers listed below or call the multilingual Emergency Response Center collect.
FrontierMEDEX Emergency Response Center
Baltimore, Maryland, USA
Call Collect: 1-410-453-6330

TOLL-FREE ACCESS * - The numbers below must be dialed from within the country. If your location is not listed or the call will not go through, call the 24-hour FrontierMEDEX Emergency Response Center COLLECT: 1-410-453-6330.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/Region</th>
<th>Phone Number/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia and Tasmania</td>
<td>1-800-127-907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>0800-891-2734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China (northern regions)</td>
<td>108888 * 800-527-0218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China (southern regions)</td>
<td>10811 * 800-527-0218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France and Monaco</td>
<td>0800-90-8505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>0800-1-811401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>800-96-4421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>1-809-41-0172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy, Vatican City and San Marino</td>
<td>800-877-204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>00531-11-4065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>001-800-101-0061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>1-800-1-111-0503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of South Africa</td>
<td>0800-9-92379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>800-1100-452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain and Majorca</td>
<td>900-98-4467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland and Liechtenstein</td>
<td>0800-55-6029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>001-800-11-471-0661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.K., N. Ireland, Isle of Jersey, the Channel Isles and Isle of Man</td>
<td>0800-252-074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands, Bermuda</td>
<td>1-800-527-0218</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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FrontierMEDEX: A List of Travel Assistance Services:

Medical Assistance Service
- Worldwide Medical and Dental Referrals
- Monitoring of Treatment
- Facilitation of Hospital Payments
- Transfer of Insurance Information to Medical Providers
- Coordination of Medication, Vaccine, and Blood Transfers
- Assist in Replacement of Corrective Lenses and Medical Devices
- Dispatch of Doctors and Specialists
- Transfer of Medical Records
- Continuous Updates to Family, Employer, and Home Physician
• Hotel Arrangements for Convalescence

Medical Evacuation and Repatriation Services—Coordination and Cost
• Emergency Medical Evacuations
• Transportation to Join Hospitalized Member
• Return of Dependent Children
• Transportation After Stabilization
• Repatriation of Mortal Remains

Travel Assistance Services
• Assist in the Replacement of Lost or Stolen Travel Documents
• Emergency Travel Arrangements
• Transfer of Funds
• Legal Referrals
• Translation Services
• Message Transmittals
• Emergency Pet Housing and/or Pet Return

Worldwide Destination Intelligence
• Pre-Travel Information
• Travel and Health Information
• Real-Time Security Intelligence

Personal Security Services – Coordination and Cost
• Political Evacuation Services
• Security Evacuation Services
• Transportation After Political or Security Evacuation

This document is only a partial description of benefits. Please refer to the program description for full details regarding the benefits, coverages, conditions and limitations of this FrontierMEDEX travel assistance program.
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IDENTITY CARDS (ISIC)

ISIC cards offer extra insurance as well as great savings and benefits in over 100 countries around the globe such as:

- Access to low airfare on major airlines
- International savings on accommodation, museums & culture, transportation, attractions, tours and more!
- Great everyday value discounts in the U.S.

Plus, when you purchase your ISIC, ITIC, or IYTC, the cards provide:

- Free travel insurance (for trips outside the U.S.)*
- An Emergency Help Line that can be used from anywhere in the world
- Full communications system called ISIConnect (for staying in touch with family and friends)

The International Identity Cards are endorsed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and are recognized worldwide as proof of student, teacher, and youth status.

*Insurance Benefits Summary (Cards issued 1 July 2003 or later)

- $250,000 Emergency Evacuation
- $25,000 Repatriation of Remains
- $5,000 Accidental Death & Dismemberment
- $5,000 Accident Medical Expense
- $1,000 (Excluding Air) Accidental Death & Dismemberment
- $250 Passport Replacement
- $100/per day Sickness & Hospital
- $50 Baggage Delay

University of Hartford does not issue ISIC cards through our office, but you can purchase the card through the ISIC website, where it will tell you eligibility requirements: http://www.myisic.com/
STAYING HEALTHY

- **Assess your health and identify your health needs:** Self-disclosure of existing health issues to your study abroad program or university is vital to a successful study abroad experience. Students (along with their parent/guardian, and physician) are responsible for assessing any physical or mental health conditions that may be adversely affected by travel abroad. If physical or mental health conditions require continued therapy, monitoring, or specific support mechanisms while abroad, students must self-disclose the issue(s) to the program organizers well in advance of departure so appropriate accommodations can be arranged.

- **Gather health documentation** such as immunization records, prescriptions, eye glass/contact prescriptions (it is advisable to bring a spare pair). Check to see whether or not immunizations are needed for your host country, or countries in which you plan to travel to. Information on health care and medical facilities in your host country can be found at the Centers for Disease Control website (http://www.cdc.gov).

- **Prescription meds:** Beware of customs limitations and regulations on medicines brought into your host country. Talk to your physician, your study abroad program/university, and the embassy of your host country for more information. Some medications that are routinely prescribed in the U.S. may be much more heavily regulated in other countries. When bringing prescription drugs with you while traveling, bring also a note from your physician describing your condition and the necessity of the medication. Your physician should also include the generic name of the drug as specific brand names available here may not be available elsewhere in the world. Medications should be clearly labeled, include your name, and be in the original container.

- **AIDS and STDs are a problem world wide.** If you choose to be sexually active while abroad, please do so safely. Please note that latex condoms may not always be available where you are traveling so men and women should pack their own supply.

- **Food and Water Born Illness:** Though some stomach problems may be inevitable as you get used to your new environment, avoid food and water born illness by being careful about what you eat and drink (or brush your teeth with!). Many kinds of nasty bugs can be picked up from food and beverages that have been contaminated through improper handling or inadequate purification. Please read carefully the travel advice from the CDC available at http://www.cdc.gov/travel/food-drink-risks.htm.

SAFETY

*Updated March 20, 2014*
Register with the local U.S. Embassy! Registering with the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy will allow them to contact you in case of an emergency. Registering is easy – you can do it online by going to registration section of the Department of State travel web site https://step.state.gov/step/.

Stay informed about local events in your host country and around the world. You can do this by reading the country information available on the Department of State travel website, by reading local papers and listening to local radio stations (stream online). You will also receive a lot of useful information in the pre-departure orientation materials provided by your study abroad program/university.

Make yourself aware of local laws. While living and traveling abroad, you are subject to the laws of your host country.

Be aware of issues (legal, safety and health) around alcohol and drug use. Remember – you are subject to the laws of your host country, and any country to which you travel. The penalties for drug possession and use can be severe, as can be the case with penalties for driving while under the influence (and legal blood alcohol levels can be much lower than is allowed in the U.S.). Drug and alcohol use and abuse are also implicated in many assaults and accidents that happen abroad. Stay safe!

Observe the behavior of the host country nationals. Local habits can give you many clues to what is safe in a city and country. Don’t let your guard down as you become more familiar with your host city/country. Keep your wits about you at all times. Common sense is key!

Keep a low profile while living and traveling abroad – try not to be conspicuous in your dress (college t-shirts, baseball caps and sneakers are usually a sure sign you are from the U.S!), speech, or behavior. Try not to hang out with large groups of Americans, or at restaurants and clubs that tend to be hang-outs for visiting Americans. Exploring smaller neighborhood cafés and shops will give you a far better sense of how the locals live than you would get hanging out in tourists traps.

Traffic accidents are among the biggest safety risks to people traveling abroad. While the risk appears to be greatest in developing countries, students heading to all countries should be aware of road safety – as pedestrians, as drivers, and as passengers. Road safety information can be found on the web site of the Association for Safe International Road Travel (www.asirt.org) and the Department of State: http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1179.html

Avoid crowds, protests, or other potentially volatile situations. It is also a good idea to avoid places (restaurants, clubs, etc.) where Americans are known to congregate – this includes the area around the U.S. Embassy in your host country.

Be aware of the emergency procedures put in place by your program and/or host university. Carry contact information for your program directors with you at all times – even when traveling.
expected to return. You should provide these persons with an itinerary as well as emergency contact information.

THE JOYS OF PACKING

General Packing Tips
Pack an extra duffel in your suitcase for when you come home and have more stuff
A day bag or a little backpack is a must for sightseeing
Leave expensive jewelry at home

The electricity is different in every country; you may need an adapter and converter in order for your plug-ins to work. Do not bring a hair-dryer; you can buy an inexpensive one when you arrive.

If you choose to bring your laptop, it is your responsibility to make sure that you have the appropriate adaptors and property insurance for it. For those who wish to travel after the semester, keep in mind you will have to bring your laptop with you or pay to have it stored.

Luggage weight restrictions vary on each airline. Make sure you check the airline’s website for international restrictions. They will ask you to pay extra fees if you go over the weight limit or they may ask you to remove things.

On the Plane
Passport
Copy of passport; keep it separate from where you keep your passport. Leave an additional copy at home with your family; email a copy to yourself to always have available if lost or stolen.
A few toiletries – i.e. toothbrush, and change of clothes in case luggage is lost.
DO NOT pack daily medications in your checked luggage in case luggage is lost. Leave medications in original prescription bottles.

Miscellaneous
Journal
Extra passport photographs- sometimes needed to make IDs and discount cards
A good book
Travel book on country you are going to be in as well as a travel book (Lonely Planet, Lets Go, Rick Steves)
Camera- extra camera battery and memory cards
MP3 / iPod / Speakers
Money belt- wear when you are traveling under your clothes with your passport in it
A TSA approved lock for your luggage and backpack
Change purse (many countries use lots of coins that are worth lots of money)
Travel Alarm clock
Umbrella
Sunglasses
Swiss army knife- make sure to pack it in your checked bags, NOT your carry-on
A few things to remind you of home
What to Pack (general guidelines)
The general rule should be when you are packing is: if you don’t wear it here you won’t wear it there. Don’t pack too much and don’t pack anything that needs to be dry cleaned or ironed. It’s better to layer up then to have bulky sweatshirts and sweaters. Nobody will care or notice if you wear the same jeans all the time or the same black pants. Pack dark colors that won’t show dirt and don’t pack too many of one thing.

Lay out all of your clothes on the bed or floor, now cut the pile in half, that is what you should bring. You will have to carry everything you bring. (If you’re not able to carry it up and down stairs or around the house a few times, you have packed too much)!

Toiletries
- If you have a prescription bring enough for the entire time and extra just in case
- Contacts/ Glasses: bring an extra pair
- Birth Control/condoms- make sure that if you are going to be sexually active you use contraception. Talk to your gynecologist about bringing a semester’s worth of birth control with you.
- Small pack of tissues
- You can buy refills for most things but if you will only use a particular brand of something, then bring enough to last you the entire time (but be ready to pay extra fees for overweight luggage)!
- Hand sanitizer, so helpful when traveling!

Good Things to Know
- Talk to everyone and try things you normally wouldn’t do- you are abroad for a different experience so make it different.
- ASK FOR DIRECTIONS- don’t be shy.
- Wander off the beaten path, go down side streets and explore the non-touristy sites.
- Be very careful on subways; keep your hands in your pockets and your bag on your front. People will try to pickpocket you.
- Don’t carry your purse on the side of the street- someone might try to drive by and rip it from you.
- Use public transportation.
- Always ask for a discount.
- Never get on a train ride without food and water- a 1 hour train ride can turn into 4 if something breaks down.
- Double and triple check trains and flights times and if you need a reservation.
- When you get to a new city go to the tourist information center. It is normally located within the train station or airport. They often speak English and are very helpful.
- Always watch your bags: never put them on the back of a chair, on the floor or leave them unattended (even if just for a few minutes)!
- Stay in hostels- it’s part of the experience when you travel and it’s a great way to meet people.
- Sign up for weekend trips with your school or program.
Money
Some preparations need to be made while you are still at home. Be prepared with a combination of traveler’s checks, cash, and appropriate credit and bank/ATM cards.

Most of your major costs for the semester (tuition and fees, housing, and sometimes food or excursions) are usually taken care of before you go.

After your major fees are paid, you should try to create a budget and stick to it while abroad so you do not find yourself running out of money or unable to travel or complete the excursions you wished to because of lack of funds.

Learn the local exchange rate and what options you have available to you for changing money. Avoid exchanging money at the airport because of high fees. Look for exchange vendors that may give discounts with a student ID. Here are a few general guidelines:

- Exchange $100 before you depart, when you arrive use ATM machines to obtain local currency.
- ATM cards and credit cards will provide you with the best exchange rate.
- Contact your bank and credit card companies to let them know the dates you will be out of the country.
- Verify with your bank that you can use your debit card overseas, and ask about withdrawal fees.
- Contact your bank and credit cards and ask if they charge an international transaction fee.
- Make of an extra copy of credit card numbers, ATM card and their corresponding phone numbers and leave it at home (that way you have easy access to info if the cards are lost or stolen).
- When using your ATM card or credit card, be very careful that someone isn’t around writing down your number.
- Put aside money when you arrive in your host country to be used for departure fees and day-of-travel expenses at the end of the semester.

Cell Phones & Communication
Cell phones are a good idea, but it is certainly not something that you must have. Some programs do provide cell phones or will offer cell phones at a discount rate. You can easily rent or buy a phone while you are abroad. They do not use contracts in the same way we do. You will buy or rent a phone and then purchase a SIM card which you will “top off” when it runs out of money. This is an easy pay as you go alternative to signing a contract. Many plans include free incoming calls from anywhere in the world if you do buy a cell phone. This option is usually most cost-effective for long-term programs; former students and/or the program provider can provide details as to the best local stores and service plans.
You can take your U.S. phone abroad with you. You should verify with your cell phone service provider that your phone will work in your program location. However, using a U.S. cell phone with a U.S. SIM card is usually very expensive, even if you are able to purchase an international plan that reduces the calling rates. A SIM-unlocked phone for which you can buy and use a locally purchased SIM card is usually cheaper.

If you decide not to get a cell phone, there are calling cards and pay phones everywhere for you to use. Regular calling cards tend to be more expensive, but prepaid calling cards get you more minutes and allow you to add minutes as you need them. You can find prepaid calling cards in the US and abroad.

No phone? No worries! Students often use email, Skype, Facebook, Whatsapp, Textme and personal blogs as alternatives to regular phone communication.

**Useful Websites**

Great Study Abroad Resource [www.studentsabroad.com](http://www.studentsabroad.com)
Great Study Abroad Resource [www.iiepassport.org](http://www.iiepassport.org)
Online Cultural training for study abroad [http://www.pacific.edu/sis/culture/](http://www.pacific.edu/sis/culture/)
Department of State [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)
FrontierMedex Website [http://www.frontiermedex.com/](http://www.frontiermedex.com/)
UH Study Abroad Website [www.hartford.edu/studyabroad](http://www.hartford.edu/studyabroad)
Student Travel Website [www.statravel.com](http://www.statravel.com)
Student Travel Website [www.studentuniverse.com](http://www.studentuniverse.com)
Discount Travel Website [www.travelocity.com](http://www.travelocity.com)
Discount Travel Website [www.cheaptickets.com](http://www.cheaptickets.com)
Discount Travel Website [www.kayak.com](http://www.kayak.com)
Discount Travel Website [www.cheapoair.com](http://www.cheapoair.com)
Discount European Airline [www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com)
Discount European Airline [www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com)
Country & Travel Information [http://www.worldtravelguide.net/](http://www.worldtravelguide.net/)
BBC Country Profiles [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles/](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles/)
ARRIVAL

What is jet lag? In the first few days after your arrival, you are likely to experience physical changes as a result of taking a long flight and traveling through a number of time zones. You will probably be sleeping and waking at the 'wrong' times, feel tired, and have less patience than usual. This will pass within a few days. Upon arrival, get some exercise and do your best to wait to go to sleep until it is bedtime in the new time zone. This disorientation may be minimized by avoiding alcohol and caffeinated products and drinking plenty of other fluids.

Make sure you know how to get to your campus from the airport. Some programs will meet you at the airport and others will expect you to get to campus. Make sure you have these directions written down.

If you are living with a host family, it is a nice gesture to bring a gift with you. If you can bring something “American” or typical to your home town/state, they will appreciate it.

CULTURE

One of first things you will encounter when you go abroad is something you can’t really see, but which, if you don’t understand what it is and how it works, can seriously affect how you adjust to and enjoy your time overseas. That "thing" is CULTURE. The kind of culture we will address here is not at all the kind of thing one refers to when talking about being a "cultured person" or possessing a taste for modern art, champagne, and opera. Nor is culture the exclusive province of educated elite.

Culture is a neutral term, neither good nor bad, and refers to the broadest conception about the learned knowledge that humans use to fulfill their needs and wants. It refers to the collective historical patterns, values, societal arrangements, manners, ideas, and ways of living that people have used to order their society. It is comprised of all those things we learn as part of growing up including language, religion, beliefs about economic and social relations, political organization and legitimacy, and the thousands of "Do’s and Don'ts" society deems important that we know to become a functioning member of that group.

When you go abroad you immediately meet individuals, perhaps a bewildering variety of them, but you also enter another "culture." The behaviors and attitudes you can externally observe in others are molded and motivated by their prior cultural learning, just as you have been molded by yours. You can’t see a person’s culture directly because feelings, judgments, and mental constructs are not always on display, although they may become evident through what people say or do.
Culture has been defined in literally hundreds of ways for different reasons. For study abroad purposes, culture can be most broadly defined as the shared sets of values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors which are widely held by members of the host culture. A sojourner will not only need to be aware of these cultural patterns but will have to respond to them appropriately.

Culture has been aptly compared to an iceberg. Just as an iceberg has a visible section above the waterline and a larger, invisible section below the water line, so culture has some aspects that are observable and others that can only be suspected, imagined, or intuited. Also like an iceberg, the part of culture that is visible (observable behavior) is only a small part of a much bigger whole.

Critical incidents often revolve around a misunderstanding, a dispute, a linguistic error, or some other kind of cultural faux pas. They are the sorts of events that highlight different cultural assumptions and behaviors. They are about attitudes and behaviors that might (read “probably will”) be interpreted in different ways by different people, particularly when people from different cultural backgrounds interact. Thus, they help illustrate why you need to be aware of multiple cultural contexts in order to make sense of what happens between people when something goes wrong cross-culturally. Often what we consider "common sense" is seen in other cultures as neither common nor making much sense! And “just acting naturally” is seldom good enough or effective for very long as an adjustment strategy.

Figuring out how to "figure out" these kinds of things before one goes abroad will go a long way to help you determine “what just happened” and, more importantly, understand the “why.” It won’t prevent critical incidents from occurring, but it will allow you to laugh about most of them when you come home.

Making mistakes is inevitable. Things are not always what you think they are and the most ordinary interactions may occasionally take on a surreal quality. Why? Because the simplest things matter. Errors might arise from language mistakes in which your word choice in French or Swahili sends your audience into gales of laughter or shocked silence. Or you use the wrong hand (who knew there was a “right hand”?) to pass food at a meal in India and your host looks at you like you just did something really gross.

A good start towards figuring this all out begins by acknowledging that:
a. your hosts have a culture
b. you have a culture
c. some things in their culture will be similar (or may seem familiar) to yours
d. some things will be different (maybe in ways you can’t even imagine!)
e. one of your main jobs while abroad is to figure out for the new culture:
   what those differences are...
   where they come from...
   what they mean...
   and how you are going to respond when conflict or misunderstandings arise.

BEING AN AMERICAN ABROAD

In order to understand your host culture, it is best to look at your own culture first. What makes us American? Why do we fall into certain stereotypes?

It is important to recognize your "Americanness" and to think about what cultural attitudes and values you will be carrying abroad.

**Personal control over the environment** - Americans do not generally believe in the power of fate; they see this as superstitious and reflective of an unwillingness to take initiative. Life’s problems tend to be viewed as coming from one’s laziness or unwillingness to take responsibility, rather than from bad luck.

**Change** - Americans tend to see change as good, leading to development, improvement, and progress. More traditional cultures see change as destructive; they value stability and tradition.

**Time** - Time is of utmost importance to Americans. Time is something to be on, kept, filled, saved, lost, wasted, and even killed. Americans tend to be more concerned with getting things done on time than they are with interpersonal relationships. Americans stop discussions abruptly in order to make appointments on time and to be productive.

**Equality and fairness** - Equality is so valued in American culture that it is seen as having a religious basis. At least in theory, Americans believe that all people are created equal and that everyone should have equal opportunities.

**Individualism and interdependence** - Americans tend to view themselves as highly individualistic and resist being thought of as part of any homogenous group. Individualism leads to privacy, which most Americans highly value. It is interesting to note that the word for "privacy" does not even exist in many non-Western languages.

**Self-help and initiative** - Americans tend to take credit for accomplishments as individuals, and they tend to value the "self-made" man or woman.
**Competition** - Americans tend to believe that competition brings out the best in people, and "free enterprise" is valued in many areas of life.

**Future orientation** - Americans tend to value the future, devalue the past, and to an extent, are unaware of the present. Many Americans work so hard and think so much about their future that a perfectly happy present often goes unnoticed.

**Action/work orientation** - Americans tend to see any action as superior to inaction. Americans tend to schedule an active life and schedule in time for relaxation. Often the first question people ask each other when meeting is, "What do you do?" meaning what is their profession.

**Informality** - Americans are more informal than many other cultures. For example, many Americans call their bosses by their first names, dress is more casual even at formal events, and even greetings are casual (e.g., "Hi" rather than, "Hello, how are you?").

**Directness, openness, and honesty** - Americans tend to prefer the direct approach to delivering information, no matter how unpleasant. Americans tend to see honesty as most important, and anyone who uses an intermediary to deliver unpleasant information is seen as manipulative and untrustworthy.

**Practicality and efficiency** - The reputation of Americans is practical and efficient. They tend to value rational and objective decisions over emotional and subjective ones, and the pragmatic approach is the overwhelming philosophy.

**Materialism and acquisitiveness** - Foreigners tend to consider Americans to be very materialistic. Americans tend to give high priority to obtaining, maintaining, and protecting material objects, and they value newness and innovation.

**Dealing with anti-American sentiment**
There may be times when you feel as though you are being attacked personally for being an American. Sometimes you will be expected to answer questions about American foreign policy and to justify the actions of your government that you may or may not agree with. There is no right or wrong way to deal with anti-American slurs or suggestions, and you will certainly develop your own strategy for addressing these issues. However, some suggestions are not to reinforce the negative American stereotypes with your own behavior, and to try to understand the motives of the person criticizing you and your country. Ask more questions to try to understand why the person believes what s/he does. Most importantly, remain tolerant and avoid becoming defensive; keep an open mind and use the experience to learn about yourself and about cultural differences.
Students are encouraged to prepare themselves for conversations about U.S. foreign policies and the reasons behind them by brushing up on American political and cultural history. It is also critical to understand the current U.S. foreign policy towards the country you will be studying in, as well as that country’s current political climate. A well-informed student will be better able to engage himself/herself thoughtfully in conversations with host country nationals rather than taking criticism of U.S. policy as a personal attack or insult.

CULTURE SHOCK AND HOMESICKNESS

Culture Shock
Living and studying abroad is an exciting and enriching opportunity. However, the ways in which you view the world and the views, values and customs of people of other cultures may be vastly different. Culture shock is the stress of the psychological disorientation experienced living in a culture different than your own. Symptoms of culture shock may include the following: discomfort, irritability, homesickness, hostility towards the host culture, frustration, and other physical symptoms of stress. Culture shock has identifiable cycles. They are as follows.

Stage One: Initial euphoria – “It’s great to be here! Look at how much our cultures have in common!”
Possible clues- excitement with new sounds and sights; superficial involvement (like a tourist); intrigue with both similarities and differences between host and U.S. culture; high interest in learning; high motivation; cooperative spirit; feeling that with time patience, and hard work he/she can handle anything.

Stage Two: Irritation and hostility - “Why are they so different? Why can’t I do anything right?”
Possible clues- novelty has worn off; cultural differences begin to intrude; greater involvement in petty personal problems; some prejudices develop against host nationals and the culture is seen as strange; isolation; searching out friends from home culture; uncooperativeness; helplessness and frustration; nostalgia for home country.

Stage Three: Gradual adjustment - Reorientation into the host culture’s norms.
Possible clues- greater participation in culture with a sense of humor; acceptance of some values of the new culture; feeling that “if I am here, better make the most of it”; tempering of radical feelings towards the new culture; feeling of being at home; more pride in work and the ability to communicate; periodic personal highs and lows as adjustment gradually takes place.

Stage Four: Adaptation/Biculturalism- Learning to live in and feel comfortable in another culture.
Here are some strategies to help you cope with culture shock:

- Know the culture prior to living there. Find out all you can. Talk with people from that culture if possible. Talk with returned study abroad students who have lived there.
- Be curious. Explore the values and traditions behind the cultural behaviors.
- Bring familiar items from home—things that make you feel most comfortable.
- Have a sense of humor! You will be making lots of mistakes and it is ok!
- Set realistic goals for yourself. Attempting to be perfect is a sure way to increase your frustration. Also, have the ability to tolerate failure and ambiguity.

**Homesickness**
Almost everyone experiences some degree of homesickness and it is completely normal. The important thing to remember is to dealing with these feelings so that they do not hinder your experience abroad. Here are a few tips you can use to help combat feelings of homesickness.

**Take a piece of home with you**
Take pictures of your family, friends, and pets. If you have a poster that you always hang on you wall, take it with you.

**Stay in touch with the people you miss**
While phone calls are expensive, e-mail, Skype, Whatsapp, Textme and personal blogs are fast and usually free. Corresponding with your family and friends will help everyone keep up to date with the new things in your life.

**Remember that it is worth it**
Do not forget that you are in the middle of a wonderful opportunity. If you find yourself counting down the days you have left, look at the other side of the coin — "Wow! I have been here for two whole months! It is half over and there are so many things I have left to do!" Go and explore your new surroundings. There are people to meet, places to go and things to see.

**Fitting In**
Social customs differ greatly from one country to another. It is, therefore, impossible to give guidelines that will be applicable in every culture. Generally speaking, you can be yourself as long as you remain friendly, courteous, and dignified. Always keep in mind that you are the guest in someone else’s country. Therefore, you would be safe to assume that your behavior should be regulated pretty much in the same manner as if you were the guest in someone else’s home. On the other hand, as an outsider, especially if you are on the side of being respectful, some allowances are likely to be made for the things you do not immediately understand or feel comfortable with.
Politeness
In keeping with the relatively formal manner of social customs abroad, you should place much more emphasis on the simple niceties of polite social interactions than you might at home. Be prepared to offer a formal word of greeting to whomever you meet in your day-to-day activities. For example, should you approach a clerk in the local market in Strasbourg always be courteous enough to begin your conversation with, “Bonjour, Madame (Monsieur, Mademoiselle)” before you launch into your inquiries about the products, and become familiar with the appropriate expressions of gratitude in response to your hosts’ hospitality.

Humor
While each country has its own particular brand of wit and humor, very few of cultures appreciate the kind of “kidding” to which Americans are accustomed. Comments, even when intended to be humorous, can often be taken quite literally.

Speaking the language
When it comes to language, most people will be extremely flattered, rather than amused at your effort to communicate in their native language. Do not be intimidated or inhibited when practicing your own limited command of the language. A couple of words of caution might be in order: do your best to avoid slang expressions, which are usually unique to the particular culture, and which may, therefore, be totally meaningless or inappropriate in the context of another culture. Be aware of the differences between the “familiar” and the “polite” forms of address and be sure to use them properly.

Do not try to translate American idiomatic expressions directly into the native language. Idioms as a whole may be complete nonsense when translated into another language. While it is not true that all people speak English, it is true enough for you to be wary of making impolite or tactless comments on the presumption that those within hearing distance will not understand what you are saying.

Physical Contact
When establishing social relationships “play it by ear” in determining the level of familiarity that you should adopt at the various stages of your relationships. Physical contact, for example, may not be especially appreciated or understood by someone unfamiliar with the American idea of camaraderie; a cheerful pat on the back or a warm hug may be quite embarrassing and uncomfortable in certain cultures. All cultures have different notions about social space, for instance, how far away to stand or sit when conversing, or how to shake hands or wave farewell. Restraint is advisable until you learn how the locals do it and what they expect of you.

Personal Questions
Let your hosts point the way when engaging in “small talk.” While American may find it easy and quite appropriate to talk about themselves, in some countries, your hosts
may view this as being as impolite as asking personal questions of them. On the other hand, don’t be surprised if you are asked very personal questions in some of the places you go (you’re your plans for marriage, children, how much money you make, how much it costs to go to school, etc.).

**Drinking and Drunkenness**
Be extremely sensitive of others’ attitudes and feelings when it comes to drinking. You will probably find that your hosts enjoy social drinking as much as any American, but they might not look upon drunkenness as either amusing, or indeed, tolerable.

**Talking Politics**
Expect people abroad to be very articulate and well informed when it comes to matters of politics and international relations. Do not be at all surprised if your counterparts try to engage you in political debate. There is certainly no reason for you to modify your own convictions, but you should be discreet and rational in your defense of those convictions. Here again, you may very well find yourself butting heads with another of those unfortunate stereotypes, such as the arrogant American who thinks everyone must fall in line with the United States.

**Photography Etiquette** You may want to record many of your memories with photos and it is often convenient to include some of the local populace in your photographs. However, remember that the people you ‘shoot’ are human beings and not curiosity objects. Be tactful and discreet in how you approach photographing strangers; it is always courteous and wise to ask permission before taking someone’s picture.

**GENERAL TIPS FOR SUCCESS ABROAD**

- **Make an effort to communicate.** People will appreciate your questions and your effort to participate in their customs. They would prefer that you make mistakes rather than remain silent in fear, which can often be perceived as coldness. Your efforts to communicate are likely to overshadow your “accent” and your errors, and the more you speak, the more you will improve.

- **Don’t get frustrated.** For many students, one of the goals of traveling abroad is to improve their foreign language skills. Language learning can often be frustrating and embarrassing, but you should remember that the more attempts you make, the more often you’ll succeed. Attempting to speak the language will bring you closer to the people of your host country and open up opportunities to experience your host country more fully.
• **Get involved to make local friends.** The shared experience of study abroad will bring you close to other U.S. students, but can also keep you from meeting people from the culture where you are living. It is important to have people to talk with who can relate to the experience you are having, but getting to know people from your new country will make your experience richer, and could result in life-long friendships.

Making local friends can initially be one of the most difficult aspects of living abroad. Eventually, it will also be one of the most rewarding. Returned students suggest getting involved: volunteering, joining clubs or sports, visiting dance clubs and cafes, etc. Often a shared interest (live music, photography, dance) can help bridge seemingly insurmountable communication barriers. Be prepared to take the initiative and to be friendly. You may make friends at the bus stop, grocery store, gym, etc.

• **Leave your life in the U.S. in the U.S.**

This has become increasingly more difficult in the era of cell-phones, e-mail, Facebook and instant messaging. However, you should try to minimize your contact with your social life here in the States. Every hour that you spend communicating with people back at home or school is irreplaceable time that you have lost abroad. This may be difficult, but most people will understand that you have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to live in another country, and will appreciate the information that you do provide.

Instead of checking e-mail/Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/etc. daily, think about checking it twice or even once a week. Think about writing a “Florence Journal,” or “London Notes,” that you can send back to a group of friends and family via e-mail once every week or ten days (or even better, post to a personal blog). This will cut down on the time you spend communicating with and thinking about the U.S., and also help you have a journal of your time abroad.

A weekly scheduled phone call home should do the trick as well. It will give you and your family something to look forward to, and also help you build up a week’s worth of stories and questions.

> “I spent two or three – sometimes four – hours a day IMing with my friends back home while I was in France, and I began to realize that I wasn’t making as much progress in the language as some of my friends, and didn’t have that close a relationship with my host family. It was expensive, too! I now wish that I had spent less time on the computer, and more time getting to know France, because when I got home, things were pretty much the same, and I wondered what I had missed in France.”

Updated March 20, 2014
Prepare!
Learn about yourself, learn about the country and city that you will be going to, and learn about your own country. You will find that people abroad know a surprising amount about the United States. In general, young people abroad are much more politically aware and active, so you should be prepared for many questions about U.S. politics, history, and foreign policy. A good way to prepare is to begin reading the New York Times or Boston Globe on-line – you can sign up to receive a free email or text alerts of the daily headlines.

Whether you agree with the policies of our government or not, you will be seen as “the American” and will be put into the position of being an ambassador for our country. You should know the names of our government officials and be up-to-speed on U.S. foreign policy, especially as it relates to the country or region that you are going to.

You may be faced with some anti-American feelings. If so, try to remain calm and honest in your reactions. You may also confront certain stereotypes of the “American.” Try to be open and not hostile in your reaction, so that you engage in dialogue and not argument.

Final Suggestions for Overcoming Culture Shock

- Try to resolve family and personal problems before leaving.
- Learn as much as possible about your new culture before you go.
- Be a good observer: listen and look non-judgmentally.
- Take care of your physical and emotional health.
  Exhaustion or illness makes coping all the more difficult.
- Be good to yourself.
- Keep a journal.
- Communicate with your host family, program director, and other students.
- Don’t be afraid to ask questions and resolve issues that arise.

Most of all, have fun and make your new culture part of who you are. Get out and go to museums, the opera, a soccer (or fútbol/calico) game. Take a walk by yourself, observe, explore a new part of town. Read a book at an outdoor cafe, or just sit back and people watch. Write everything down in a journal so you can reread it in six months or twenty years.

In conclusion, although culture shock can be painful, overcoming it provides a valuable opportunity for personal growth. It is a mind-stretching process that will leave you with a broader perspective and wider tolerance for others and others’ ways of life.

Updated March 20, 2014
POP QUIZ

It is important that you learn about your host country and brush up on American history and politics. U.S. college students are often surprised at the amount of cultural, historical, and political discussions they get into overseas, and they return saying they wish they had done some reading before they left.

1. What is the currency of your host country?

2. What is the capital of your host country?

3. List one cultural icon from your host country. (i.e. author, painter, musician.)

4. What countries border your host country?

5. What is the current form of government in your host country?

6. List one political figure from your host country.

7. What is the current political climate of your host country?

8. How do the people of your host country view America?

9. What is the predominant religion?

10. What is the national sport or pastime?

11. What are your thoughts on President Obama?
12. In the education system, what kind of learning is most valued?

ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT ABROAD

How different will it really be?

In deciding to study abroad, you should be aware and be prepared to accept that educational philosophies overseas differ radically from those dominant at U.S. colleges and universities. This is generally also true of overseas programs that are administered by a U.S. college or university, since in most cases their teachers are drawn from local institutions.

The experience of studying abroad will be very different from what you are accustomed to at home. To put it simply, probably the biggest difference between most overseas institutions and U.S. higher education is the approach which the host institution will have to you as a student. They will work under the assumption that you are a serious learner who takes responsibility for your education. In most countries it is highly unusual for professors to go out of their way to ensure that you are doing your work. Chances are you will not be closely monitored or have your hand held, and you will not be told (without asking) how or when to do the work that is expected of you. (However, professors are almost always pleased to interact with students who seek them out.) You will, however, be expected to turn in papers and assignments and to perform successfully on exams. Therefore, you will need to have done a fair amount of reading, thinking about, and discussing, the topics and ideas covered in the course. (Remember: courses you take abroad show up on your UH transcript and are factored in to your GPA).

In many countries you will find large lectures (similar to those at large universities in the United States), as well as smaller classes or seminars, and sometimes small-group or one-on-one tutorials. Participation is often not expected in lectures, but you are usually expected to fully participate in tutorials and seminars, as this is your opportunity to discuss the material. Science, language, and psychology courses will often have labs required as part of the course. You may be assessed by assignments, papers, and exams, just as you are at UH; however, in many countries the majority of your grade for the course may be determined by how you perform on the final examination.

Another difference you may find is that in many countries, university students are much more focused academically than what you find at most liberal arts institutions in the U.S. (an apparent paradox is their more casual attitude toward course work, but they often have several opportunities to take exams, and they often do not receive transcripts and grades, only degrees). In many countries students are not admitted to universities as a whole, but rather, to a particular course of study within the university. Often students have a lot more preparation for their particular subject, and
much less flexibility in taking courses outside of their course of study. The concept of a "liberal arts education" is unique to the United States. Keep this in mind when you select your courses abroad, as you will need to be very careful that you meet any prerequisites that are listed for each course.

Yet another difference you may find abroad is that of available resources (or lack thereof), such as libraries and computers. In many countries libraries are not as willing to loan out books, and you may have to visit several libraries in order to complete a paper or assignment. Also, computers are not as plentiful, and hours of computer labs are not as long or as late as you are probably used to at UH. You may even realize how lucky you are at UH to have these things at your fingertips!

Of course no generalization will apply in every case, and some programs (such as more field-oriented programs) do not fall under these general assumptions, but wherever you go or whatever program you participate in, expect some academic differences. Try not to be scared or intimidated by this, but accept the challenge as a unique educational and cultural opportunity. You would not have been approved for study abroad if it was not felt that you were up for the academic challenge. And, after all, you wouldn’t want things to be exactly the same as at UH, would you?!

**Top Ten Travel Tips for Students**

1. Make sure you have a signed, valid passport and visas, if required. Also, before you go, fill in the emergency information page of your passport!
2. Read the Consular Information Sheets (and Public Announcements or Travel Warnings, if applicable) for the countries you plan to visit.
3. Leave copies of your itinerary, passport data page and visas with family or friends at home, so that you can be contacted in case of an emergency. Keep your host program informed of your whereabouts.
4. Make sure you have insurance that will cover your emergency medical needs (including medical evacuation) while you are overseas.
5. Familiarize yourself with local laws and customs of the countries to which you are traveling. Remember, while in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws!
6. Do not leave your luggage unattended in public areas and never accept packages from strangers.
7. While abroad, avoid using illicit drugs or drinking excessive amounts of alcoholic beverages, and associating with people who do.
8. Do not become a target for thieves by wearing conspicuous clothing and expensive jewelry and do not carry excessive amounts of cash or unnecessary credit cards.
9. Deal only with authorized agents when you exchange money to avoid violating local laws.
10. When overseas, avoid demonstrations and other situations that may become unruly or where anti-American sentiments may be expressed.
Tips for Women Traveling Alone

Each country and culture has their own views of what is appropriate behavior for women. Although you may not agree with these views, it is wise to abide by the local laws and customs to avoid problems. Please become familiar with the laws and customs of the places where you wish to go. Here are two examples of situations you may encounter:

It is illegal in Laos to invite Lao nationals of the opposite sex to one’s hotel room.

Foreigners in Saudi Arabia have been arrested in the past for "improper dress."

Women traveling alone can be more vulnerable to problems in certain cultures. Keeping in mind the following information can help make your trip as safe and rewarding as possible.

Safety and Security: Use common sense and be alert and aware of your surroundings. If you are unsure in general about the local situation, feel free to check with the American Citizens Services section of the local U.S. Embassy or Consulate for the latest security information.

Don't announce that you are traveling alone! Some guides for women even advise wearing a wedding ring if you're single. If you feel like you're being followed, step into a store or other safe place and wait to see if the person you think is following has passed. Do not be afraid or embarrassed to ask for someone to double check for you to see if all is safe. Display confidence. By looking and acting as if you know where you're going, you may be able to ward off some potential danger.

Ask for directions before you set out. No matter how modest your lodgings are, your hotel concierge or other hotel staff should be able to help. If you find yourself lost, do not be afraid to ask for directions. Generally, the safest people to ask are families or women with children. Getting the right information may save you from ending up in a potentially unsafe area.

Hotels: Choose a hotel where security is good and transportation is readily available and nearby. Check that all the doors and windows in your room have locks and that they work. If you feel uncomfortable, ask hotel security to escort you to and from parking lots or your room at night. Always use your peephole and common sense about letting strangers into your room.

Clothing: There is no doubt that fashion makes a statement. Unfortunately, not everyone will interpret how you dress the same way you would. What you consider casual clothing might be seen as provocative or inappropriate in other cultures. Thieves might choose you over another potential target based on your style of dress or
the amount of makeup or jewelry you are wearing. Other might single you out for harassment or even physical violence because they find your clothing offensive, based on their cultural norms. By taking your cues from local women, or at least by dressing conservatively, you could save yourself a great deal of trouble.
To Ensure a Successful Return to University of Hartford

Before You Leave
- Get all signatures on the Course Approval Form
- Talk with your advisor and make sure that s/he has your contact information. You will need to communicate with him/her during the semester to discuss your courses for the semester when you return. You will need to register for classes online.
- Fill out and turn in all forms requested by the Office of Study Abroad. Be sure to make copies for your own records!

While You Are Away
- Notify the Director for International Studies and your Academic Advisor of any changes in your course selection once abroad; seek necessary approvals for new courses.
- Follow all deadlines for housing applications (if applicable).
- Follow all deadlines for financial aid applications & FAFSA (if applicable).
- Contact your advisor to discuss course selection, and follow all deadlines for registering for classes online.
- Request official copies of your program transcript to be sent to the UH Study Abroad Office. The Study Abroad Office will forward the transcript to the Registrar to be processed.

Once You Return
- Become familiar with “reverse culture shock” and adjustments you may need to consider once you have been abroad.
- Meet with your advisor to make sure you are on track with courses and other issues.
- Check in with the Study Abroad Office and ensure that your official transcript has been received from your program and that all credits have been transferred.
- Fill out the online program evaluation on Abroad 101.
- Attend the Welcome Back Luncheon for Study Abroad Alumni.
- Enter our International Photo Contest. Submit your favorite photos to the Study Abroad Office to be considered for one of several prizes!
- Attend the Study Abroad Alumni Career Workshop.
- Join UH’s Global Ambassador Program and make international friends.
- Stay involved and share your experience! (You’ll learn more about opportunities to stay involved upon return).
WRAP-UP

Let’s wrap this up, shall we?!!

Documents
- Passport, Airline Ticket, Credit Cards, ATM Cards – Photocopy EVERYTHING!! – one copy for you and leave one copy at home.

Airport
- Arrive 3 hours in advance
- Contact your airline for baggage specifications. You are not allowed to bring more luggage than the allotted amount. You will be required to leave access luggage at the airport.

What will you do once you arrive at your host country?
- Make sure you know how to get from the airport to your school (or who will be meeting you at the airport if you have arranged transportation).

Keep all of your work
- Keep all of the work that you do abroad back to UH with you. You may need the syllabus, papers, exams and projects from your courses overseas in order to get credit at UH. This is especially true for those students studying in a language program.

Coming Home
- When you return from studying abroad, it is very common to experience what is known as "re-entry or reverse culture shock." Re-entry can be defined as the often unexpected and sometimes difficult experience of re-adjusting to life in one's home culture after living abroad. Some study abroad returnees do not find re-entry to be difficult; however, most returnees experience some degree of stress upon returning home. In fact, for many students the process of re-adapting to home after study abroad is even more difficult than adjusting to your host culture! Re-entry is different for everyone, just as your experience abroad was unique and special. Be patient with yourself and be patient with your friends and family. It will be an adjustment to fit the new you, into your old environment.

- Visit the Career Center when you get back. You have just made yourself so much more marketable by studying abroad! No matter what you want to do after graduation employees look for international experience. The Career Center can help you highlight your experience on your resume.
• The Study Abroad Office will host a Re-entry meeting for all students the semester they return to UH. It’s a chance for all of us to talk about your experiences, figure out how the experience can help you get a job after graduation and how you can abroad again!

• The Study Abroad Office will host a Welcome Back Luncheon with all returning students the following semester. The President, Deans, faculty and staff with join us to hear about your amazing experiences over a delicious lunch at 1877.

• The Study Abroad Office works with The Informer, UNotes and social media outlets so study abroad returnees can write about their experiences. We would love an article from you! We created a Study Abroad Alumni Network for you to become mentors for other UH students.

Have Fun!
Keep an Open Mind
Keep an Open Heart
Laugh, Smile And Enjoy The Journey!
Some people adapt to a new culture more easily than others. Understanding yourself, your goals, your way of thinking, behaving, and going about everyday tasks will facilitate your adjustment to a new environment. While there is no set formula to insure that you will have an effortless transition process, there are certain skills/traits you have (or develop) that can make your adjustment easier.

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Updated March 20, 2014
APPENDIX

Know Your Host Country!

Understanding as much as you can about your host country (and yourself) can greatly reduce the severity of your culture shock. We recommend that you spend time familiarizing yourself with the culture, history, politics, and every day life of your host country and city.

The following questions are just a few things to consider when researching your host country:

How do people greet one another?

What is the normal meal schedule?

What are some typical dishes from your country? How are they prepared?

Is there a daytime rest period?

Current events:

Important political figures and/or leaders:

Cultural etiquette:
National sports and pastimes:
Special holidays and/or festivals that will take place while you are abroad:
Pop Culture (authors, athletes, musicians, celebrities, etc. who are famous in your host country):

Do women work outside the home? In professional jobs?

How do people organize their daily activities?

What is the normal work schedule?

Is it important to be on time?

Common words, phrases and/or expressions from your host country.

What is the predominant religion? Is it a state religion? Are they tolerant of other religions?

In the education system, what kind of learning is most valued?

How direct are people in their communication?
Keeping a Journal Abroad

**What is a journal?**
A journal is a place to reflect and write about experiences, ideas, emotions, reactions, likes, and dislikes. A journal allows you to get to know yourself on a deeper level, and provides an opportunity to see firsthand how much you can grow during a semester abroad. A journal is different than a diary in that it is much more than a simple recording of day-to-day events.

Writing in your journal at least once a week gives you an opportunity to relax and tune out the rest of the world while you think about where you have been, what you have done, and what you have learned on this amazing experience. Your journal will give you an opportunity to integrate what you are learning in your classes, out on the street, and through your travels.

**What do I write?**
Here are a few guidelines to get you started:

**Pre-departure:**
- What are your goals and objectives for studying abroad?
- What do you hope to gain from this experience (personal, academic, career)?
- Why did you select the program you are going on?
- How does it feel to leave friends, family, and UH behind?

**During your program:**
- What are your first impressions? Think about the people, campus life, courses, transportation, politics, food, language, family, music, clothes, etc.
- What insights have you gained about your host country through the courses you are taking?
- How do your American values, beliefs, and traditions differ from your host country?
- What is it like being a minority in another country?
- How does the media respond to different world events?
- What is the relationship between the U.S. and your host country?

**Upon your return:**
- What have you done that has made a significant difference in your life?
- What advice would you give to future study abroad students?
- What did you learn about your host country?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- What is your favorite memory?
Suggestions for Journal Formats:

- Buy any type of paper journal that you like, or even use a spiral notebook. Keep in mind that you might want to travel with it, so nothing too large or expensive.
- Keep your journal on-line by creating a blog at blogspot.com. Keep in mind that if you do not have Internet access you will have to use an Internet café to keep up with your blog. This could be costly!
- Keep your journal by emailing your entries to yourself (friends or family), and printing them out to create your journal.
- Keep a video journal by interviewing your friends, classmates, professors, and people in your neighborhood.

WRITE A LETTER TO YOURSELF ABROAD, AND WE’LL MAIL IT TO YOU!

This is a fun exercise. Answer the questions below, write as little or as much as you like, and halfway through your study abroad, we’ll send it to you. It’s great to get "real" mail, as opposed to just e-mail, and it’s neat to compare what you thought your experience abroad would be like to what it’s really like once you’re there. And, if this letter arrives when you’re in the midst of experiencing "culture shock," it can help to remind you why you’re abroad and how you might make yourself feel better. This is completely confidential. Just put the letter in an envelope and write your name and program on the front. What do you have to lose? We even supply the stamp!

What are your goals for going away/going abroad?

What do you hope to gain from the experience?

What are you most excited about? What are you nervous about?

What will you be most happy to get away from here?

What will you miss the most?

How do you expect you might change while abroad?

What are some of the biggest challenges you’ll have to face?

How can you overcome them?

How does it feel to leave friends, family, UH behind?

What do you think your typical day will be like?