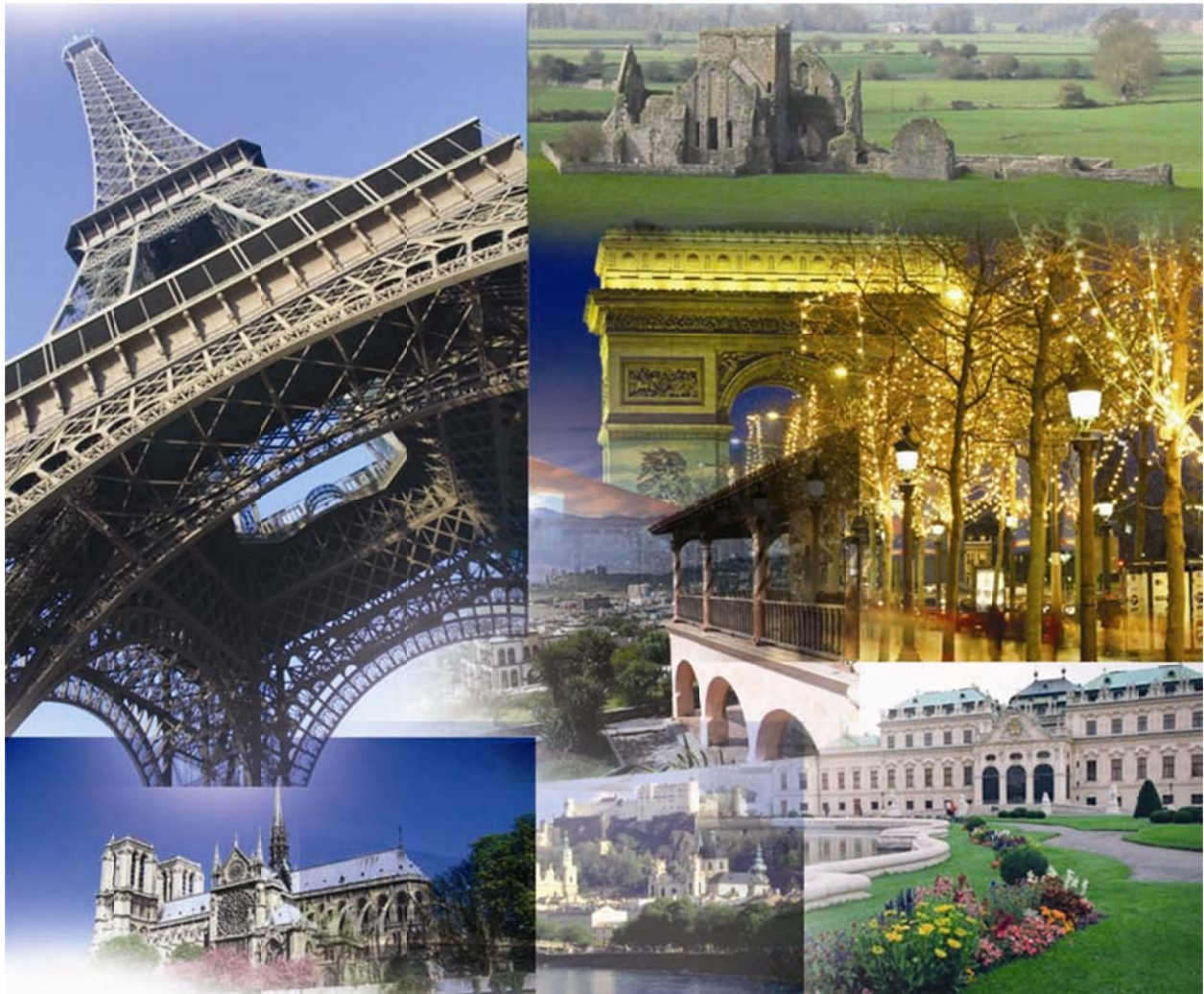


# Semester Study Abroad Student Handbook



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## Welcome

Congratulations on the choice to study abroad with Southern Utah University! We're happy and excited that you've decided to venture out into the world, expand your horizons and broaden your education. To prepare for your study abroad, we encourage you to read this guide and follow its advice. This will make your transition easier and your stay more enjoyable!

We want you to have the best experience possible while you are abroad, and we will do our best to make sure you do. While we can't promise everything will be perfect, we believe if you are well prepared for your stay and have the right attitude, you will make new friends, have a lot of fun and gain insight into yourself, your education, and our global world, just as other SUU students have before you. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns that weren't addressed in this manual. We look forward to working with you!  
SUU Global Engagement Center

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### Websites:

Study Abroad - [www.suu.edu/academics/studyabroad](http://www.suu.edu/academics/studyabroad)  
General SUU Information- [www.suu.edu](http://www.suu.edu)

## Important Dates and Deadlines:

Application Deadlines:

Although the deadlines are different for each foreign university, you must apply by the SUU deadlines.

- Fall semester- March 15
- Spring semester- October 15

\* Apply early to decrease stress during the application process!

## Academic Expectations:

Southern Utah University expects study abroad participants to perform academically at standards commensurate with on-campus performance. This includes attending class, taking exams, reading required materials, completing homework, etc. You must follow the local academic calendar for these activities. Obtaining a GPA lower than 2.0 may result in no academic credit awarded and no financial aid awarded for the following semester.

If you intend to study abroad for an additional semester, it is your responsibility to contact the Global Engagement Center to see if it is a possibility and then contact your academic adviser to determine whether this is academically appropriate and what steps may need to be taken.

### **-Credit load while abroad:**

All students participating in year-long and semester-long programs must enroll for a minimum of 12 credits per semester for undergraduate students or 9 for graduate students.

### **-Adjusting to a different educational system:**

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

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

It is difficult to generalize about different educational systems around the world. Most undergraduate instruction will include lectures, seminars, laboratory sessions, papers and examinations, but that may be the end of the similarities. Although it may not be explicitly stated in the syllabus, attendance is

important. Adjusting to a new system may compare to the feeling you have in SUU courses prior to taking the first exam. You usually understand the discussion and lectures, but not until you take the first exam do you really understand what you are being asked to retain. You may feel this way throughout your semester abroad.

Before you take your first exam, ask for clarification of the grading system. This will help alleviate any surprises when you receive your results. Grades issued for certain courses on study abroad programs will be translated into SUU letter grades (A, A-, B, etc.). This translation is based on SUU agreed upon standards.

## **Financial Arrangements:**

### **-Budgeting:**

SUU requires students to have proof that they have available at least \$1,000 for every month they will be studying abroad. You may need more or less, depending on your spending habits.

You will typically need more in the first week you are abroad then later because you will be buying the things you need, learning your way around and trying to get settled. It will take you a couple of days to adjust to a new currency and understand its value. You will quickly learn the best inexpensive restaurants and shops and how to obtain student discounts. Talk to other students at your study site for tips.

For most programs, SUU tuition will be charged to cover the academic expenses associated with the program. SUU students will pay SUU tuition at the same rates as if they took the classes on campus.

### **-Financial aid and scholarships:**

If you qualify for financial aid it can be used for the semester you plan to study abroad. If you are currently receiving aid, make sure your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is up-to-date for the period when you wish to study abroad.

If you are not currently receiving financial aid, you may apply for aid, including Stafford Subsidized/ Unsubsidized Loans, by completing the FAFSA for the same academic period when you plan to study abroad. The FAFSA is available after January 1 for the academic year beginning the following fall.

Your SUU scholarships also apply during you study abroad. For scholarships and grants you must maintain the enrollment level required for each aid program listed on your award letter. Privately awarded scholarships may vary on what they are willing to cover. Contact the financial aid office with any specific questions.

SUU students may apply for scholarships offered through the Global Engagement Center. Funds are limited and vary from year to year, so apply early for a better chance.

### **-Handling you finances abroad:**

Settle on the amount of money you will need while abroad. Make both weekly and daily budgets and stick to them. Learn the value of the local currency and look for special student rates and discounts. Friends with foreign experience and students who have participated in your particular study abroad program are excellent sources for advice on spending and saving money while abroad. For conversion tables, consult the foreign exchange listings in a financial newspaper or exchange websites.

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

Most students access home funds through ATM's. Since many ATMs abroad will only access a checking account, do not leave your funds in a savings account before departure. Otherwise, ATMs are used the same way they are here: your home checking account is debited for your withdrawal and you draw out local currency. You are charged a service charge and the current exchange rate which can be rather expensive. Although this way of accessing money is convenient, you are warned not to use it as your only form of getting cash. Be sure to check with your bank at home, to ensure that your PIN is valid abroad and to clarify what sorts of charges will be applied. Likewise, check with your bank if you intend to use a check card to access your bank account. **Your bank may wish to note when you will be abroad so your access is not blocked due to suspected fraud.** Your bank may be willing to waive your ATM fees since you are not able to use their machines—it never hurts to ask.

**Credit cards** such as Visa, MasterCard and American Express are honored abroad, though not always as widely as in the United States. Credit cards make foreign currency transactions easy and are invaluable in a financial emergency. Take a credit card along, but use it wisely; plastic can be dangerous because it is easy to overspend. Service fees and interest charges can be costly, and the loss or theft of a card can inconvenience you, especially while traveling. Seek advice from the issuing company as to the card's applicability abroad and the billing rate for converting the amount of purchases abroad into dollars. Make sure to learn your PIN before departure. Contact your credit card company to find your credit limit and number to call in case your card is lost or stolen. Also let your credit card companies know the dates and locations of your travel. When cards normally used in the U.S. suddenly begin being used abroad, some credit card companies will cancel the card to avoid possible fraud and other security issues.

If any of your cards are lost or stolen, you will need to contact your bank and clarify whether it is an ATM, debit, credit, and/or check card. You will not be able to call 1-800 or other toll-free numbers from abroad, so make sure to have local phone numbers for your bank and credit card companies. The bank will need the number and possibly, the PIN. It is useful to make a photocopy of both sides of each of your credit and ATM cards so that you have the account numbers and phone numbers to call in case they are lost or stolen.

It is also a good idea obtain the local currency of your study abroad area before arriving. You can do this by contacting your local bank and ordering the specific currencies that you need. It can be necessary if your credit or debit cards do not initially work while abroad or in case of other emergencies. Know that some currencies take a while to arrive to your local bank, so don't leave it to the last minute.

Although it is uncommon, students who stay abroad for a semester or longer may open a bank account abroad. You can discuss this option with your U.S. bank or with a foreign bank upon arrival.

The best way to assure yourself of having adequate funds is to take more than the proposed budget.

\*If you will be absent during tax season and wish to file a tax return, you should make arrangements by issuing a Power of Attorney for a person you trust before your departure.

## **Pre-departure planning:**

The very first thing you should do if you wish to study abroad is to contact the SUU Global Engagement Center. We can answer any questions you have, help you choose a school appropriate to your needs and educational goals, and get you started on the application process.

After you decide where you're going, you will need to complete the SUU Direct Exchange Application packet. You can download this online or pick it up in the Global Engagement Center. The packet includes the application form and four letters of reference forms which will need to be filled out by

- 1) Your college or academic advisor
- 2) Two professors, teachers, or someone else who knows you well
- 3) A parent or guardian if you are under 21 years old.

When you turn in your application packet

- You will also need to bring a personal statement saying why you want to go, what you think this experience will do for you, etc. This can be a paragraph to a page long.
- You will also need to bring a copy of the identification page of your passport. If you don't have a passport yet, apply for it as soon as possible and bring us a copy of the receipt so we know one is on its way.

## **-Signing up for classes:**

When you choose the classes you wish to take while abroad, it is VERY IMPORTANT to work with your department chair or academic advisor. After you have selected classes you will need to get in contact with the academic advisor or department chair that oversees the area of study your classes belong in and have them designate which class the course you have chosen will transfer back as. They will need to help you fill in the SUU Learning Agreement and sign it. This will ensure that all the courses you take while abroad will transfer back for SUU credit.

You will be given or receive an application packet from the school you wish to attend. These usually include an application for the school, a housing application, and learning agreement form. You will need to fill these out as soon as possible and turn them in. If you would like, the Global Engagement Center can mail the packet for you.

After you have sent your packet you will receive an acceptance letter from the school you'll be attending. **You will need this letter in order to acquire your student visa.**

### **-Necessary Documents:**

SUU requires the following documents before you leave on your study abroad. You will be asked to complete and sign these at orientation.

- Agreement and Release Form
- Emergency Contact Information Form

The following documents are also necessary for you to study abroad:

### **-Passport:**

In recent years there has been an unprecedented demand for passports; therefore, if you do not already have one, **you should apply for a passport immediately**. You should plan on at least six weeks for standard processing.

U.S. and non-U.S. citizens need a passport both to enter other countries (including Canada and Mexico) and return to the United States. If you already have a passport, make sure it is valid until at least six months after your return date. New U.S. passports take 6 to 8 weeks for processing, depending on the time of the year, and are good for ten years. Apply early to avoid complications caused by misplaced original birth certificates and similar problems.

If you do not already have a passport, you can obtain one at the Cedar City post office.

With your completed application you must also have the following:

1. Proof of U.S. citizenship (i.e. certified copy of your birth certificate)
2. Proof of identity (i.e. a valid driver's license)
3. Two identical photographs (2"x2" with white background) Walmart photo studio can do these!
4. Current fee (between \$85 and \$100)
5. A social security number

### **-Visa:**

A visa is an entry/residency permit and official permission granted by the authorities of the countries where you will study or travel, which allow you to enter and remain in that country. The visa itself is frequently a stamp in your passport, not a separate document. **You will need a passport before applying for a visa and the passport plus visa process may take three to four months, so start early.**

The cost and requirements for obtaining visas vary. It is your responsibility to determine visa requirements for all countries you plan to visit while abroad; this includes countries that you plan to visit before or after your study abroad program. You can do so by consulting with a travel agent, calling the consular offices of those countries, or checking the U.S. State Department Document Requirements Web site or the Travel Document Systems Web site.

You may be denied entry into, or be deported from, a country for which you have not obtained a required visa. The Global Engagement Center and Southern Utah University are not responsible for obtaining visas nor are they in any way responsible for visa or entry denial. For some countries, certain



medical requirements must be met before a visa will be issued. Many countries will not issue visas to persons with any type of police record!

Every country's visa procedures are different, but generally you will be required to have an acceptance letter, proof of finances, proof of health insurance, and a valid passport.

#### **-International Student Identity Card:**

Your regular student ID may not be honored in some countries. The International Student Identity Card (ISIC) gives students a single, uniform document recognized worldwide as proof of student status. ISIC cards are \$25.00 and available for purchase from the Global Engagement Center

Card benefits vary widely from country to country, but may include student discounts on airfare, transportation, and accommodations, and reduced admission to museums, theaters, cultural events, and other attractions. Besides the student discounts, the ISIC provides free international health insurance (up to \$25,000 emergency medical and dental, good for one year), an emergency help line, and a communications system (phone card). If you should need to use the insurance benefits, you will need to have a copy of your card and proof of purchase for any claim. Keep all your receipts from medical visits so you can submit a reimbursement request to ISIC.

Please note that we have received varying reports on the usefulness of the ISIC

#### **-Health Insurance:**

Depending on your current coverage, you may also need to have health insurance that will cover you during your study abroad. Contact your health insurance provider to see if you will be covered. Some programs require that you purchase insurance through their country or school. We recommend that you carry the contact information for your insurance company with you while abroad. If you do go to a doctor or hospital, you may be required to pay at the time of service and be reimbursed by your insurance provider. Make sure you have enough money to cover emergency expenses and keep all receipts so that you can be reimbursed if needed.

SUU offers students two kinds of international health insurance. The first is the ISIC card mentioned above. The second is through HTH worldwide, and costs \$12/week. It provides up to \$100,000 emergency medical and dental coverage. Both ISIC and HTH insurances can be purchased through the Global Engagement Center.

#### **-Flight Arrangements:**

Students are responsible for making their own travel arrangements. If you need help finding flights, train tickets, etc., a list of travel resource websites is available at [www.suu.edu/academics/studyabroad/travelresources.html](http://www.suu.edu/academics/studyabroad/travelresources.html). Some countries will require you to show proof that you have tickets both to and from the country in order to issue you your visa, so try to get your tickets as soon as you can. This will generally save you money on the cost of your ticket as well because booking round trip is much less expensive than purchasing two separate one way tickets.

Suggested inexpensive airfares can be made through sites such as:

- Student Universe
- Kayak (compares multiple sites!)
- Travelocity
- Expedia
- Cheap Tickets
- Orbitz

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

In all cases, be prepared for flight changes and delays by writing down the cell phone numbers of your host university and other travelers to facilitate communication, having cash on hand in US dollars and the currency of your host country for meals and incidentals, and most of all, by being flexible.

#### **-Flight and travel insurance:**

Flight insurance covers you only when you are on the airplane and will not remove the need for more inclusive coverage. Should you wish to secure travel insurance for your luggage and other personal effects or cancellation coverage, an insurance agent or travel agent can provide you with information about such policies. ISIC also has some travel insurance coverage.

#### **-Accommodation:**

You will work out accommodation through your host university. There are many different options including homestay, residence halls, apartment/flats, etc. These all vary depending on your specific program.

If you intend to arrive early or to stay late you will be responsible for finding proper accommodation during this time.

Hostels are an inexpensive and fun place to stay anytime you are traveling. You can book hostels online. A good website is [hostelworld.com](http://hostelworld.com). It allows you to book as well as read reviews, look at the location, and it gives a list of provided amenities.

#### **-Luggage:**

Avoid oversized and overweight luggage. Check your airline's website for weight limitations, overage charges and checked bags fees, as many airlines are now charging hefty fees!

Mark your luggage tags ahead of time with a clear indication of your name, address and phone number of your destination. Also keep this information inside your bags.

Airlines restrict the amount of luggage that passengers are allowed to carry. In general, passengers on international flights are allowed one or two checked bags (sometimes there is a charge for one or both bags), each weighing no more than 50 pounds. In addition to checked bags, passengers are generally allowed one or two carryon bags that can fit in the overhead compartment or under the seat.

Requirements vary from carrier to carrier, and it is your responsibility to contact your airlines to determine these requirements. **Please note that regional flights usually have even lower luggage limits. Therefore, if your program includes an in-country flight be prepared to pay for extra luggage!**

**-Carry-on luggage:**

When packing carry-on luggage it is a good idea to pack extra clothing etc. in case of flight cancellation, other holdups, or in case your luggage is lost.

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

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

There are many ways to prepare for your journey.

- Visit Web sites and read books about the history, geography and customs of the countries you are visiting. Study maps, read newspapers with good international news coverage, and watch videos of the places you'll visit.
- Check out Web sites to access daily issues in foreign newspapers and for helpful information and advice.
- Brigham Young University publishes an excellent series called *CultureGrams*, which are summary sheets on such topics as: the people, customs and courtesies, and lifestyles of countries around the world.
- The Department of State publishes *Background Notes* on 170 countries worldwide. These are brief, factual pamphlets with information on each country's people, history, geography, economy, government, and current political situation.
- Talking with returned study abroad students or international students from the countries you'll visit can provide invaluable insights.
- Check out the international travel sections of bookstores and purchase one or two good student guides such as *Let's Go*, *Lonely Planet*, *Berkeley Guides*, or *Rough Guides*.
- Finally, if you don't speak the language, learn some key words and phrases, and purchase a small phrase book to carry with you when you are out and about. Everyone likes to hear even simple words or phrases in their native tongue.

## Communicating home:

Technology has made getting in touch with friends and family back home extremely easy and affordable. Here are some options...

- **International cell phone:** You may wish to obtain an international cell phone before leaving the US. As most standard US cell phones won't work outside the United States, you may want to contact your cell phone provider to discuss if your phone will work or the possibility of renting or buying an international cell phone and the cost of international calls. You may also wish to purchase a disposable phone upon arrival in your host country with prepaid minutes to make communication with classmates easier. These phones are generally very affordable and useful for students abroad.
- **Skype:** Is a fabulous option for contacting the US and fellow students in your host country. Skype offers free laptop to laptop calls and extremely cheap laptop to phone calls. Signing up for Skype is free of charge and easy to do on the Skype website. Skype also includes the possibility of using a webcam so you can see the people you are talking to back home as well. It also offers an instant messaging option.
- **FaceTime:** FaceTime for Mac makes it possible to talk with anyone on an iPad 2, iPhone 4, iPod touch, or Mac from your own Mac. It can be used free-of-charge anytime you have a wireless connection. FaceTime is easy to set up on your Mac. All you need is an Apple ID and an email address and you're ready to chat.
- **E-mail:** You will have some kind of email access at most program sites. Check your email regularly and email your family often so they know you are doing well. Also email the Global Engagement Center periodically to update us with your status so we know how you are doing.
- **Facebook:** is an amazing way to stay in contact with friends and family back home. Facebook chat gives you the opportunity to IM with friends for free as well. You can share photos of your new school, friends, and places that you have traveled.
- **Mail:** can easily be sent internationally, but will take longer than mail within the United States. Letters should be marked "air mail" to ensure prompt delivery. If it is not marked, mail may be sent by surface mail and can take up to three months to be delivered. Mail sent internationally must include the destination country as a final line in the address to ensure delivery. Sending packages internationally is quite expensive so take that into account before planning to mail anything to or from your host country.

## Safety and Travel:

Nothing is more important than your safety! Use care and caution while you are abroad. The following suggestions are offered to help you have a safe trip.

- Protect your valuables from pickpockets and purse-snatchers by remaining alert and cautious. Conceal your valuables in a money belt or satchel under your clothing. Do not carry your wallet in back or coat pockets.
- Avoid offers of "bargain" accommodations, rides or baggage handling. Official taxi stands are generally located outside airports and stations.
- Learn as much about the country you'll be staying in as possible. This will make you better prepared for your stay, more comfortable with your plans, and safer.
- Stay aware of current events while you are abroad and heed special instructions provided by your program staff.

- Be careful about divulging information about yourself, your fellow students and your study program to strangers.
- Memorize the emergency numbers in the countries you visit and keep change for the phone and cab money with you at all times.
- Be careful in helping to maintain security at your residence and other program buildings by keeping your residence area locked.
- Speak the local language whenever possible.
- Keep a low profile in demeanor and dress. College or fraternity shirts or sweaters, baseball caps and U.S. athletic shoes identify you readily as a U.S. citizen. Dressing in a revealing or unusual manner may draw unwanted attention to you. Do not dress expensively, wear expensive looking jewelry, or carry expensive cameras or other electronic equipment.
- Do not attract attention to yourself through careless behavior.
- Be discreet and polite, heeding signs and regulations in public places.
- Do not impair your judgment by consuming excessive amounts of alcohol or by using drugs.
- Do not agree to meet a person whom you do not know in a non-public place.
- Do not leave a public place with anyone you do not know.
- When traveling, do not leave your luggage unattended.
- Do not agree to carry on or check any luggage or other items for anyone. If you see unattended luggage or packages, report it to airport, train or bus station authorities immediately.
- Know local laws. Laws and justice systems are not the same in each country, and you are subject to the laws of the country you visit.
- As is wise anywhere, do not walk alone at night or in remote and unfamiliar areas. Stay near busy and well-lit areas. Do not try to cross through parks, parking lots or other deserted areas, especially after dark.
- Always be aware of the location of your closest exit.
- Be especially careful when crossing streets or waiting to cross. Pedestrians do not have the right of way in most parts of the world.
- Do not hitchhike.
- Do not travel alone. Leave word with someone at home of your travel plans, detailing your companions, itinerary, mode of travel and dates of departure and return.
- Be cautious when entering public restrooms or any isolated area.
- Don't get involved in controversial discussions/situations in public places. If a crowd is gathering somewhere and you feel uncomfortable, leave the area.
- Be wary of beggars. Many times the beggars, even the children, are expert pickpockets or thieves. Giving money is a personal decision. Use common sense and leave immediately if you feel uncomfortable.
- Never count your money in public.
- Do not carry anything in a purse that you cannot afford to lose.
- Use discretion and common sense when using ATM machines. Use ATM machines during daylight hours and when there are other people around. Guard your pin number and do not let anyone distract you while you are using an ATM machine.
- Consider traveling with an extra credit card to use for emergencies only. Keep this separate from your other credit cards and money
- Have a rendezvous point. If someone gets separated from the group, decide in advance where to go to meet up.
- Inspect any gifts received in a foreign country before packing.
- Take off all luggage tags upon arrival

The Global Engagement Center strives to keep students, faculty, and parents informed of conditions and decisions related to student safety and well-being. However, in these changing times, it is necessary that each student take responsibility for his/her own safety by staying informed and conducting themselves accordingly.

#### **-Advice to Women travelers:**

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

Eye contact between strangers or a smile at someone passing in the street, which is not uncommon in the U.S., may result in totally unexpected invitations, and some women feel forced to avoid eye contact. You will have to learn the unwritten rules about what you can and cannot do. Women can provide support for each other; you may wish to get together several times early in your stay abroad to talk about what does and doesn't work for dealing with unwanted attention. U.S. women are seen as liberated in many ways and sometimes the cultural misunderstanding that comes out of that image can lead to difficulties. Some uncomfortable situations may be avoided by taking the following precautions:

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

#### **-Sexual Harassment:**

As in the United States, sexual harassment can arise anywhere. Attitudes toward sexual behavior vary widely and may be very different from what might be considered normal at home. The determination of what behaviors constitute sexual harassment varies with the particular circumstances. For example, comments which would be considered offensive in the U.S. may be acceptable in other cultures, while many types of dress or behavior of U.S. students that are completely innocent in the U.S. may send clear messages of sexual availability in other cultures. In general, sexual harassment is defined as unwanted sexual behavior, such as physical contact, verbal comments or suggestions, or other acts that adversely affect someone. Be sure to contact your host school's international office and the SUU Global Engagement Center if you are experiencing difficulties.

### **Emergency Procedures:**

1. Follow the procedures provided by the host international office.
2. If you are unable to contact your host international office, contact the SUU Global Engagement Center. Our office number is (435) 586-1995 and if you are calling after hours, call (435) 669-1738 (Kurt) or (435) 463-1377 (Tessa).  
If the situation does not require immediate attention, please leave a voice mail at (435) 586-1995. Please note that time differences abroad may create difficulties in contacting you back.
3. When contacting any of these numbers, please provide the following information: Your full name, the nature of the emergency, a number where you can be contacted and how long you will remain at that location (provide the city and country information)
4. If you are unable to contact the on-site director or other program offices personally, attempt to have someone contact your host international office or SUU for you.

### **-Emergency Evacuation: Natural, Political, or Other Crisis Situations:**

Know where your nearest American Consulate or Embassy is before you arrive in the host country.

1. Contact and follow the procedures provided by the host international office.
2. If you are unable to contact your host international office, contact the SUU Global Engagement Center. Our office number is (435) 586-1995 and if you are calling after hours, call (435) 669-1738 (Kurt) or (435) 463-1377 (Tessa).
3. Follow on-site instructions given during orientation. You should provide your contact information to the program's staff whenever you travel away from the host school.
4. If you are unable to contact your host university or SUU, attempt to contact the closest U.S. Consulate or Embassy for further instructions. Local radio and television stations may also broadcast emergency information.
5. Stay calm and stay with other program students or host campus representatives if possible. It is important that you attempt to contact SUU staff; however, it is more important that you remain in a safe environment and follow the instructions provided by local government authorities.

### **-Instructions for Families (Parents or Legal Guardians):**

SUU is aware of your need to keep in contact with your family members, especially in emergency situations. If you need to contact your family member while they are abroad due to a family emergency you may contact the SUU Global Engagement Center for help. Our office number is (435) 586-1995 and our hours are 8:00 AM-5:00 PM weekdays. After hours, if this is an emergency, you can contact the Director of International Outreach directly at (435) 590-3109. Be sure to identify yourself as a family member of a student on an SUU study abroad program. If the situation does not require immediate attention, please leave a voice mail message at (435) 586-1995. We will return your call the next work day.

The Family Rights and Privacy Act prevents staff members from providing certain information to persons other than the student participant. It is necessary for us to balance your needs as a family with the needs of the students to be treated as adults and to follow the laws of the U.S. Our goal is to provide open lines of communication between you and your family members. Please be assured that we will do as much as possible to help you in any emergency situation.

## -Alcohol use and misuse:

Many of the injuries sustained by study abroad students are related to drunkenness and the associated condition of temporary stupidity.

Although alcohol misuse may not carry the same legal penalties as use of illegal drugs, it can create dire circumstances for you, your participation in the program, your safety on site, and the future of the program. **Remember that you are serving as an ambassador of SUU, Utah, and the United States.**

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

What is "alcohol misuse?" Alcohol misuse is present when:

- A student misses any scheduled event because of the effects of alcohol consumption;
- A student becomes ill due to the effects of alcohol consumption.
- A student is disrespectful of others sharing the same or neighboring housing, due to the effects of alcohol consumption.
- A student engages in inappropriate behavior toward other individuals that is the result of alcohol consumption.
- A student becomes so intoxicated that he/she cannot walk unassisted.
- A student engages in destructive behavior toward property that is the result of alcohol consumption.
- A student does not abide by the laws of the country in which he or she is staying.
- A student engages in behavior that causes embarrassment to the other members of the group, the faculty member(s) or the in-country host(s) as a result of alcohol consumption.
- A student engages in behavior that causes his/her companions concern for the safety of the individual or the group.

Students are encouraged to use good judgment if consuming alcohol at private homes or other accommodations during non-program hours. Peers should look out for each other and keep each other safe.

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



## **-Illegal drugs:**

### **Don't do drugs!**

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

There is very little that anyone can do to help you if you are caught with drugs. You are operating under the laws of the host country and the regulations of the local institution. Neither the U.S. government nor Southern Utah University will be able to secure your release should you be caught.

## **Crossing Cultures:**

We encourage you to make every effort to take advantage of the many intercultural learning opportunities you'll have while abroad.

In this section of the handbook, we are providing some of the information and tools you may need to make the most of your experience.

These are some of the timeless tips for a speedy acclimatization and a more meaningful stay abroad:

- Learn about your destination before you leave.
- Learn the local language.
- As soon as you recover from your jet lag, plunge into the local life in your new home.
- Don't allow initial negative experiences to sour you on the country.
- Ignore complaints about the country.
- Accept the challenge of establishing yourself in the new country and work hard to enjoy your stay.

## **-What is culture?**

Culture...

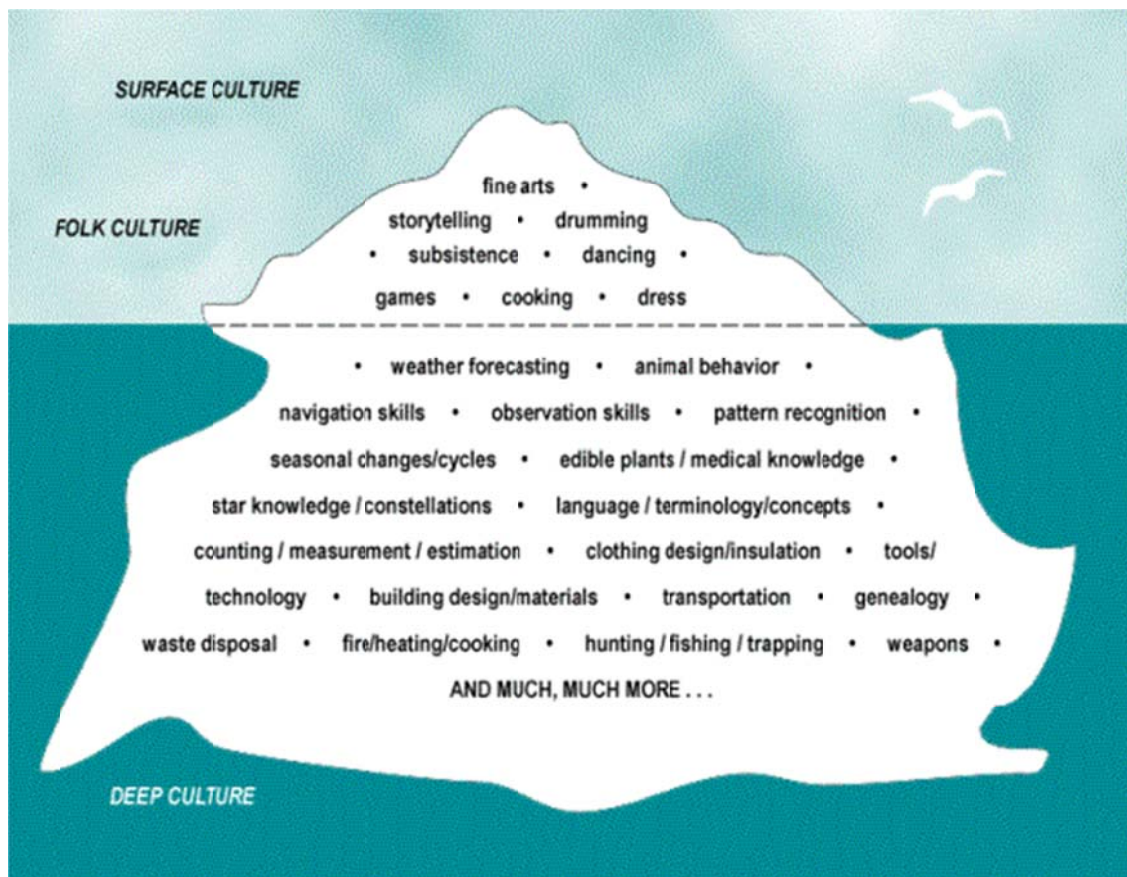
- influences our expectations of what is appropriate or inappropriate
- is learned
- reflects the values of a society
- frames our experience
- provides us with patterns of behavior, thinking, feeling and interacting

In summary, culture affects every aspect of daily life - how we think and feel - how we learn and teach - or what we consider beautiful or ugly. However, most people are unaware of their own culture until they experience another! In fact, we don't usually think about our culture until somebody violates a culturally based expectation or we find ourselves in a situation where we have the feeling that WE violated somebody else's cultural expectations, but are uncertain how.

So much of what causes conflict or confusion is the part of the culture we can't see or touch. Consider the following illustration and notice the differences between the aspects of culture above and below the "waterline." The "tip of the iceberg" is the behavior and "external culture" that can be easily observed. The waterline marks the transition into beliefs. And the bottom portion of the iceberg represents the values and thought patterns that make up the "internal culture" which is subconscious and more difficult to observe.

Cultural misunderstandings and conflicts arise mostly out of culturally shaped perceptions and interpretations of each other's cultural norms, values and beliefs (those elements below the waterline). Entering another culture is like two icebergs colliding – the real clash occurs beneath the water where values and thought patterns conflict.

### THE ICEBERG CONCEPT OF CULTURE



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

CULTURE SHOCK can be defined as "a set of emotional reactions to the loss of perceptual reinforcement from one's own culture, to new culture stimuli which have little or no meaning, and to the misunderstanding of new and diverse experiences" (Peter Adler). It can also be defined as the expected confrontation with the *unfamiliar* (R. Michael Paige). However, experts feel the name "culture

shock" is misleading because it makes us think of a single moment of shock rather than the more accurate idea that culture shock evolves over a longer period of time and involves mixed emotions. Although a culture can be shocking at times, the reaction to differences is usually more subtle because it is the accumulation of many experiences in a new culture that forms our opinions. For this reason, many experts in this field prefer the term "culture fatigue."

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

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

### **-Adjustments:**

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

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

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

outgoing and friendly	sure to have all answers	wealthy
informal	lacking in class consciousness	generous
loud, rude, boastful, immature	disrespectful of authority	always in a hurry
hardworking	racially prejudiced	promiscuous
extravagant and wasteful	ignorant of other countries	politically naïve

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

## **-Survival strategies:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

- **Become more familiar with the local language**  
Independent study in the local language should facilitate your transition. Continue your study of the foreign language before and throughout your program. Rent and watch foreign films to become accustomed to the rhythm and sounds of the language of your new home. Do not become so concerned with the grammar and technicalities of a language that you are afraid to speak once you are abroad.
- **Know your own country**  
You will find that people around the world often know far more about the United States and its policies than you do. Whether or not you are familiar with current events, particularly foreign

policy, expect to be asked about your opinions and to hear the opinions of others. Start preparing now by reading newspapers and news magazines.

- **Examine your motives for going**  
Although you will certainly do some traveling while you're abroad, remember that your program is not an extended vacation. Set realistic academic goals, particularly if you are studying in another language. Reduce your expectations or simplify your goals in order to avoid disappointment or disillusion, but don't forget to study!
- **Recognize the value of culture shock**  
Culture shock is a way of sensitizing you to another culture at a level that goes beyond the intellectual and the rational. Just as an athlete cannot get in shape without going through the uncomfortable conditioning stage, so you cannot fully appreciate the cultural differences that exist without first going through the uncomfortable stages of psychological adjustment.
- **Expect to feel depressed sometimes**  
Homesickness is natural, especially if you have never been away from home. Remember that your family and friends would not have encouraged you to go if they did not want you to gain the most from this experience. Don't let thoughts of home occupy you to the point that you are incapable of enjoying the exciting new culture that surrounds you. Think of all you will share with your family and friends when you return home.
- **Expect to feel frustrated and angry at times**  
You are bound to have communication problems when you are not using your native language or dialect. Even if they speak English in your host country, communication may be difficult! Moreover, people will do things differently in your new home, and you will not always think their way is as good as yours. Once you accept that nothing you do is going to radically change the different cultural practices, you will save yourself real frustration. Remember that you are the foreigner and a guest in the other culture.
- **Expect to hear criticism of the United States**  
If you educate yourself on U.S. politics and foreign policies, you will be more prepared to handle these discussions as they occur. Remember that such criticism of U.S. policies is not personal. Don't be afraid to argue if you feel so inclined. Most foreign nationals are very interested in the U.S. and will want to know your opinions.
- **Do not expect local people to come and find you**  
When was the last time you approached a lonely-looking foreign student with an offer of friendship? Things are not necessarily any different where you are going. If you are not meeting people through your classes, make other efforts to meet them. Take advantage of the university structure and join clubs, participate in sports, attend worship services, participate in volunteer and service-learning projects, and attend other university-sponsored functions. Maintain a sense of meaning to your life and allow time for leisure activities.
- **Keep your sense of humor and positive outlook**  
Almost all returned study abroad students have wonderful stories about how much fun they had during their time abroad. If you have a terrible, frustrating day (or week) abroad, remember that it will pass. Time has a way of helping us remember the good times and turning those horrible times into fascinating stories!
- **Write a journal**  
One of the best ways to deal with cultural adjustments and to reflect thoughtfully on the differences between U.S. and the other cultures is to regularly write a journal. As you write, you'll think your way out of the negative reactions that may result from your unfamiliarity with language and cultural behavior. Journaling will force you to make meaningful comparisons between your own culture and the host country. When you return home you'll have more than

just memories, souvenirs, and photos of your time abroad; you'll have a written record of your changing attitudes and process of learning about the foreign culture.

- **Adopt coping strategies that work for you**  
Keep in touch with friends and family but not to the point you are consumed with calling and e-mailing that you miss out on the study abroad experience. Exercising can also contribute to improved mood and better sleep.
- **Talk to someone if you have a serious problem**  
Your host international office staff is near-at-hand to counsel students with serious problems. They have first-hand experience with adjustment abroad and can be real friends in times of need. Share smaller problems with other students since they are going through the same process and can provide a day-to-day support group.
- **Communicate with SUU's Global Engagement Center**  
Feel free to contact our office to discuss any issues you may be experiencing. We would be happy to assist you in any way possible.

## Returning from Abroad:

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

### -Customs information:

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

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

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

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

### -Grade reports:

All study abroad course work must be completed by the end of the term at your program site.

Incomplete work from study abroad generally results in failing grades. The process by which SUU will receive your transcript from international schools varies. Contact your host school's international office before you leave about the steps you need to take to ensure we receive a copy of your transcript. If we don't get your transcript, you won't get your grades here at SUU.

#### **-Registration and Returning to SUU:**

Students may register for courses at SUU via the Internet. If you have difficulty accessing the information, contact the SUU Global Engagement Center. The Global Engagement Center will assist you with your returning registration if necessary but cannot be responsible for any errors on your registration or for fee payment.

#### **-Program Evaluation:**

We'd love to hear your thoughts and feelings about your study abroad program, and we are constantly trying to improve our students' experiences abroad. Please visit with the Global Engagement Center following your study abroad and let us know your opinions.

#### **-Early return/withdrawal from programs:**

If you are considering withdrawing from your study abroad program, please contact the SUU Global Engagement Center. In order to receive credit for your study abroad program, you are required to satisfactorily complete all course work and remain at the program site for the duration of the program. You must plan your departure based upon the official ending date of the term. Generally, program fees are non-refundable after the start of the program. Students withdrawing from programs may be required to reimburse financial aid or scholarships to SUU. All aid is based on attendance and successful completion of the study abroad program. You should check with the SUU Global Engagement Center if you are considering withdrawing from your program.

#### **-Culture shock revisited:**

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

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

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

## **Packing:**

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

### **-clothing:**

- Walking shoes
- Flip flops or shower shoes (must have for hostels and many residence halls)
- Socks
- Underwear
- Shorts
- Skirt/trousers
- Shirts
- Rain jacket
- Light jacket
- Bathing suit
- Hat
- Nice clothes for going out
- T-shirts
- Winter gear such as hats, scarves, gloves, and coat

Learn the typical climate of the locations you plan to visit. You can acquire other inexpensive items in your host country that will have the advantage of fitting with the current trends in fashion and make you less identifiable as a foreigner.

### **-Medicine and toiletries:**

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

- Prescription medicine: clearly marked with patient name, physician name, drug name, dosage, and written physician prescription explaining the condition and use.
- Over-the-counter unopened medication (i.e., any medications you take on a regular basis or those that are especially effective for you): Although your host country may have the same drug, it is probably called something different and may be difficult to identify at your time of need or not available at all.
- First Aid Kit: include bandages, first aid tape, antiseptic wipes, burn cream, extra-strength aspirin, anti-diarrhea medication, antihistamines, and first aid guide
- Comb and/or brush
- Sunscreen, moisturizers, bug repellent
- Deodorant/antiperspirant
- Razor
- Tampons/sanitary pads
- Contraceptives/birth control/prophylactics



- Eyeglasses, sunglasses, contact lenses and cleaning solution
- Cosmetics
- Shampoo, conditioner, soap
- Hand sanitizer

**-Important Documents:**

- Passport
- Visa
- Medical insurance card
- Airline tickets/ Itinerary
- Credit card, debit card, some cash (U.S. and foreign currency)
- Identification (at least two)
- Copies of all important documents -passport ID page, visa, acceptance letter, birth certificate
- Acceptance letter
- Bank and cell phone company info.
- Your host university's contact information

**-Miscellaneous Items:**

- Camera
- Alarm clock
- Ipod
- Travel journal
- Books, guides, and maps
- Day pack
- Travel sewing kit (can be very handy)
- Plastic ziplock bags
- Water bottle
- Adapter and voltage converter
- Laptop computer and charger
- DVD's and CD's
- School Supplies
- Umbrella
- Bath towels
- Sheets, pillows, blanket/comforter
- International cell phone and charger

Many of the listed Items can be purchased once you arrive in your host country!!