The Office of International Affairs congratulates you for choosing to study abroad. Soon you will find yourself fully immersed in a new and exciting environment, gaining international experiences that will broaden your perspectives about the world in which we live. By studying abroad, you are taking the first step to becoming a truly global citizen, a choice that will shape both your life and your future professional career.

In today’s global market, it is increasingly important for students to graduate with critical thinking skills, technical expertise and the ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural environments. As universities across the nation prepare their students to excel in the global marketplace, Ohio State continues to implement strategies that will integrate international themes into the curriculum and across all majors.

Our goal is for every student to attain global competencies, which can be defined as: the ability to work effectively in international settings; awareness of and adaptability to diverse cultures, perceptions and approaches; familiarity with the major currents of global change and the issues they raise; the capacity for effective communication across cultural and linguistic boundaries; and the ability to comprehend the international dimension of one’s field of study.

With your decision to study abroad, you have taken the initial step. When you study in another country, you will be exposed to a whole new way of living and learning. Remember to keep an open mind and embrace the experience. Please review this Study Abroad Handbook carefully, and be sure to attend all pre-departure orientations so that you are well prepared for both your time abroad and your return to Ohio State.

We are committed to adding a global dimension to your education and we hope you have a rewarding experience.

*Grace Johnson*
Director, Study Abroad
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PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

☐ Apply for your passport and visa, if required, immediately.

☐ Read this handbook thoroughly and prepare questions to ask at your Office of International Affairs pre-departure orientation(s).

☐ Attend all Office of International Affairs pre-departure orientation(s).

☐ Complete the Evaluation of Credit form, if applicable, for the courses you plan to take abroad.

☐ If you receive financial aid, attend Student Service Center walk-in hours to speak with a financial aid counselor.

☐ Arrange for continuation of your regular health insurance coverage while you are studying abroad.

☐ Schedule a Travel Consultation at the Student Health Center (online via My BuckMD Connection or by calling 614-292-4321). You may also choose to meet with another trained travel medical professional. Check wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list to learn about recommended or required vaccinations for your host country.

☐ Plan how to handle your money while abroad. This includes notifying your credit card company and bank of the dates and locations of your travel, being aware of foreign transaction and ATM fees, planning how much money to take and knowing how to access emergency funds if necessary.

☐ Contact your cell phone provider to learn about service abroad and international rates.

☐ Register for the study abroad course(s) required for your program of participation.

☐ Pay all required fees and clear all registration holds on your university Statement of Account.

☐ Log in to your student center to make sure you have completed the Student Financial Responsibility Statement, required each semester.

☐ Familiarize yourself with the history, economy and culture of where you are going.

☐ Make copies of important documents (passport, visa, HTH insurance card, prescriptions, credit cards, etc.), both to carry with you and to leave at home.
Register with the U.S. Department of State’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at step.state.gov/step.

Turn in the following items to your study abroad coordinator:
1. OIA Health Information form
2. Copy of your passport
3. Copy of your travel itinerary

Purchase an International Student Identity Card at isic.org.

If you take prescription and/or over-the-counter medication(s), check with HTH insurance to verify that the medicine is legal to bring into the country. Verify if you can carry enough to last the duration of your trip, plus several days’ extra in case of travel delays during your return.

If you are an international student, consult an immigration coordinator in the Office of International Affairs to make sure your visa and other documents are in order. Be sure to read the FAQ: Study Abroad for International Students under the Getting Started tab at oia.osu.edu/study-abroad.

Discuss safety concerns and emergency contact procedures with your parents.

Visit the websites listed at the end of this handbook.

Make sub-leasing plans (if necessary) for your time abroad, as well as housing arrangements for after your return from your study abroad program.

Consider visiting Student Legal Services to draft a power of attorney to appoint someone to handle your business and financial matters while you are gone.
ON-CAMPUS ORIENTATION WITH THE OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

To help you prepare for your studies abroad, the Office of International Affairs will schedule one or more pre-departure orientation sessions for you. These orientation sessions will provide basic information about studying abroad as an Ohio State student and will cover specific program information. **Your attendance at each orientation session is mandatory.** These sessions will provide you with essential information about your program and destination, allowing you to make the most of your experience. During these orientations, you will:

- Receive essential information about your program, such as travel, visa, housing, health, safety and transfer credit information.
- Meet other student participants and your resident director (if applicable).
- Discuss academic standards for your program and host country.
- Have an opportunity to ask questions.

In addition, nearly all study abroad programs use Carmen (carmen.osu.edu), Ohio State’s online learning management system. Once accepted into a study abroad program, you will be automatically enrolled in your program’s Carmen page. This will be your first stop for information and resources prior to departing for your program. Your study abroad coordinator will provide you with more information and details.

REGISTRATION FOR OHIO STATE STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS

Please read this section carefully, as it provides information on Ohio State registration and program fee payment for the various Ohio State study abroad programs. If you are uncertain about which type of program you are on, please consult your study abroad coordinator.
Ohio State sponsored programs

You will register for your study abroad course(s) for each semester you study abroad. Course enrollment instructions will be provided after you have been accepted. You are required to maintain your study abroad enrollment for the duration of your program. Should you remove your study abroad enrollment from your schedule or fail to enroll by university enrollment deadlines, you will be responsible for any penalties you may incur including removal from your study abroad program.

Your university Statement of Account will list your Ohio State tuition (instructional, general and nonresident fees, if applicable) and your Office of International Affairs study abroad program fee. Your acceptance notification from the Office of International Affairs will indicate the amount of your study abroad program fee.

Third party provider or direct enroll programs

You will register for your study abroad course(s) for each semester you study abroad. Course enrollment instructions will be provided after you have been accepted. You are required to maintain your study abroad enrollment for the duration of your program. You are responsible for any penalties and will be removed from your study abroad program if you are not enrolled in the necessary study abroad course(s).

For third party provider programs, you will pay the program fee directly to the provider. For direct enroll programs, you will pay the program fee directly to the host institution.

Non-Ohio residents are responsible for paying a $5 nonresident fee for each semester of registration.

Students are responsible for paying any balance due as well as a supplemental international insurance fee (if applicable). Please note that this applies to each semester of registration at Ohio State.
International exchange programs

You will register for your study abroad course(s) for each semester you study abroad. Course enrollment instructions will be provided after you have been accepted. You are required to maintain your study abroad enrollment for the duration of your program. You are responsible for any penalties and will be removed from your study abroad program if you are not enrolled in the necessary study abroad course(s).

Your university Statement of Account will list your Ohio State tuition (instructional, general and nonresident fees, if applicable) and your Office of International Affairs study abroad program fee. Students participating in international exchange programs will pay their tuition and fees to Ohio State. International exchange students will be assessed an Office of International Affairs study abroad program fee for mandatory supplemental insurance.

FEE PAYMENT TO THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

You can view your Statement of Account and pay your tuition fees through buckeyelink.osu.edu. The Statement of Account will list the total charges assessed to your account for the semester, including any applicable study abroad program fees. Your study abroad program fee is due the same date your tuition and fees are due for the first semester of your study abroad program.

Any financial aid awarded to you will be posted to your account. The remaining balance will then be listed along with the date payment is due. To avoid penalty, payments must be submitted on or before the listed due date. Be sure to check your Statement of Account prior to the start of each semester that you are studying abroad to confirm that your Ohio State account is paid in full and clear of any holds.

Students participating in study abroad programs are subject to the same policies and procedures regarding fee payment as students studying on campus. Failure to satisfy the account balances may result in late financial penalties, holds and cancellation of university enrollment for non-payment. A student's eligibility to study abroad is contingent upon his or her meeting all university academic and financial obligations.

Please remember that undergraduate students registered for at least 12 credit hours will be considered full time. Any student registered for more
than 18 credit hours will also incur additional tuition charges. For more information, please visit registrar.osu.edu/FeeTables/MainFeeTables.asp.

Before leaving for your study abroad program, you may want to arrange for a responsible person to take care of your affairs at home. The guardian feature at Ohio State allows students to set up a username and password for parents or other student-authorized users to make university fee payments online. Establishing a separate login does not give access to your grades, email, registration information or any other personal information. To access the guardian feature, please visit u.osu.edu/treasurer/bursar/payment/epay. If this authorized user will be contacting the Student Service Center with questions regarding your tuition and fees, you may choose to submit a FERPA Student Information Release. The Student Information Release is available in your Buckeye Link Student Center.

TUITION OPTION PAYMENT PLAN

The Tuition Option Payment Plan (TOPP) is a program that allows Ohio State students to split the cost of tuition and Office of International Affairs program fees into several payments per semester. To learn more about TOPP, please visit scsc.osu.edu/TOPP or contact the Student Service Center at 614-292-0300, 1-800-678-6440 or scc@osu.edu.
Your acceptance to an Ohio State study abroad program and your participation in the in-country portion of the program is contingent upon the following:

• You must complete and submit the Acknowledgement of Understanding by the date indicated in your acceptance letter.

• You must submit the OIA Health Information form, along with other required program-specific documents, by the date indicated by your study abroad coordinator.

• You must have a 2.0 GPA or higher; you must not have a current record action of “Warning,” “Probation,” or “Probation by Special Action.”

• You must observe the Student Agreement, which informs you that the Ohio State Code of Student Conduct extends to study abroad and you are obliged to participate in the program as designed, and the Release of All Claims that you signed as part of your study abroad application.

• You must pass all required pre-departure and/or prerequisite courses with the grade stated in your acceptance letter.

• You must make full payment of all tuition and fees by the due date on your university Statement of Account.

• You must possess a valid passport by the designated deadline required for your study abroad program.

• You must not have a prior criminal record that will affect your ability to enter your host country. In addition, you must have obtained an entry visa* for all applicable study abroad destinations, if required, by the deadline established for your program. International students should refer to the Frequently Asked Questions section at oia.osu.edu/getting-started/faq/faq-study-abroad-for-international-students.html to find out more about the requirements necessary to participate in a study abroad program.

• Any student who is a registered sexual offender, has a felony charge pending against him or her or is on university disciplinary probation is excluded from participating in study abroad programs managed by Ohio State. Please be advised that the Office of International Affairs confirms student eligibility for study abroad through the Office of Student Conduct upon application to the study abroad program and at the end of the term immediately preceding the study abroad program.
If you do not meet all of these requirements, even after you have been accepted, you will not be permitted to participate in your study abroad program, and will be subject to the OIA Cancellation Policy - oia.osu.edu/application-and-policies/cancellation-policy.html. Please contact your study abroad coordinator with any questions.

CANCELLATION OF PARTICIPATION

If you decide to cancel your participation in your study abroad program, you must inform your Office of International Affairs study abroad coordinator and third party provider coordinator or host institution (if applicable) immediately by email. This decision will have financial consequences as described in the Office of International Affairs cancellation policy. In addition, if you do not meet the conditions for participation in an Ohio State study abroad program after you have been notified of your acceptance, you are required to notify the Office of International Affairs. You may not be permitted to participate in your program and will face the same financial consequences outlined in the cancellation policy.

You must also drop your study abroad course from your class schedule. For details on drop deadlines, please visit registrar.osu.edu/registration/index.asp.

CANCELLATION POLICY FOR OHIO STATE SPONSORED PROGRAMS

Cancellation before departure

- If you decide to cancel your participation or are removed from the program after the date of your acceptance notification, you will be subject to the Office of International Affairs cancellation policy. This policy applies to all cancellations, regardless of the reason.

- If you withdraw or are removed from the program within 10 days from the date of your notification of acceptance, you will not be charged any cancellation fees. For example, if your notification of acceptance was postmarked electronically on March 29, you will have until 11:59 p.m. on April 8 to submit your withdrawal notification.
• If you withdraw or are removed from the program any time 11 days after your acceptance notification and more than 95 days prior to the start date of your program, you will be liable for a $200 cancellation fee. For example, if your notification of acceptance was postmarked electronically on March 29, your program start date is October 1 and you withdraw on June 27 or earlier, you will be responsible for a $200 cancellation fee.

• If you withdraw or are removed any time after the electronic notification of acceptance to a study abroad program, you will be subject to the cancellation schedule below.

### Cancellation schedule

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<td>Within 10 days from the date of electronic notification of acceptance</td>
<td>No financial consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96 or more days before departure and more than 10 days after electronic notification of acceptance</td>
<td>$200 cancellation fee will be charged to your Ohio State Statement of Account</td>
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<tr>
<td>60 - 95 days before program start date</td>
<td>25 percent of program fee will be charged to your Ohio State Statement of Account</td>
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<tr>
<td>45 - 59 days before program start date</td>
<td>50 percent of program fee will be charged to your Ohio State Statement of Account</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 - 44 days before program start date</td>
<td>75 percent of program fee will be charged to your Ohio State Statement of Account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 30 days before program start date</td>
<td>100 percent of program fee will be charged to your Ohio State Statement of Account</td>
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To easily calculate dates and deadlines, use the date calculator at www.timeanddate.com/date/duration.html.

### Cancellation Fee Appeal

If you wish to appeal the cancellation fee, please complete the Study Abroad Cancellation Fee Appeal form. Appropriate documentation of the reason for your withdrawal must be submitted with the appeal form. Appeals will only be considered for the OIA Cancellation Fee; the application fee is non-refundable after the application deadline for the program has passed.
Appeals are reviewed by the Study Abroad Appeals Committee and determinations are made based on reason for appeal and supporting documentation. Appeals decisions are typically rendered within 10 business days of submission, and notification of the committee’s decision will be sent via your Ohio State email account. Appeals for the following reasons are considered:

- Medical: Can be physical, mental, emotional, etc. and requires documentation from an attending physician.
- Illness/Death in the Immediate Family: Family medical emergency (surgery, long-term illness diagnosed) which requires documentation from an attending physician. Death of an immediate family member – parents, guardians, siblings, children, spouses, registered domestic partners – does not include grandparents and requires appropriate documentation.
- Military Activation: Requires a copy of the military activation orders showing dates that conflict with the program dates.
- Unanticipated Change in Financial Situation: Termination of main source of income, filing for bankruptcy, etc. are examples of changes in financial situation and require appropriate documentation. Financial emergency does not include “did not understand what I was financially accountable for” nor does it include “not eligible for financial aid/did not receive a scholarship I was counting on.”
- Other: A circumstance of other must be out of the student’s control and requires supporting documentation of situation, process and timeline.

Students sign an Acknowledgement of Understanding at the time of confirmation of acceptance, which includes a statement that they have read and understand the OIA Cancellation Policy.

Return complete appeals form and documentation via student Ohio State email account to: oia-studyabroad@osu.edu with the subject line: Study Abroad Cancellation Fee Appeals.

WITHDRAWAL/REMOVAL AFTER DEPARTURE

If you withdraw or are removed after your program begins, your Office of International Affairs study abroad program fee will not be refunded. If you withdraw from your third party or direct enroll program, there may also be financial consequences administered by your program provider. Please make sure you understand the withdrawal policies set forth by your program provider.
Refund of tuition

Any refund of tuition will be handled via normal student refund processes. For more information regarding student refunds, please visit u.osu.edu/treasurer/bursar.

Student financial aid

If you withdraw or are removed from a study abroad program at any time prior to departure or after the program commences, you should inform the Student Service Center of your withdrawal so that your financial aid can be reviewed, if necessary, and will continue uninterrupted.

Academic and financial consequences

If you withdraw or are removed from a study abroad program after the program commences, your decision may have academic and financial consequences. Depending on the date of your withdrawal/removal, you may receive a “W” on your Ohio State academic record and may forfeit partial or full Ohio State tuition. You are also encouraged to contact your academic advisor to help ensure minimal interruption of your academic progress. For details on add/drop deadlines for tuition refunds, please visit registrar.osu.edu/registration/index.asp.
**FINANCIAL AID**

You will be able to access your financial aid when you participate in an Ohio State study abroad program as long as you are registered for at least half time (for loans) or full time (for most scholarships and grants) during each semester in which you study abroad. In order to access federal aid for any given year, new and renewing financial aid applicants are strongly encouraged to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) electronically by the January 1 Ohio State priority deadline for the upcoming academic year. To file your FAFSA online, go to fafsa.ed.gov. Indicate code #003090 in Section H on the FAFSA to ensure that Ohio State receives your FAFSA form.

Please be advised that the awarding of financial aid does not always align with the timing of application and admittance to study abroad. Financial aid is not guaranteed to any student; it is the student’s responsibility to ensure a financial plan is in place to finance his or her study abroad experience. For more information about using financial aid to fund study abroad, please visit ssc.osu.edu/Study_Abroad.html.

Study abroad expenses will often exceed the amount you would normally incur as a student on campus at Ohio State, and in some instances, you may qualify for additional funding from federal or private loans. Once you have been admitted to a study abroad program, the Office of International Affairs will provide a Financial Aid Study Abroad Budget — an estimated budget letter — with your acceptance materials. Once you receive your budget letter, bring it with you to walk-in hours with a student services specialist at the Student Service Center. The specialist will process this information and review your financial aid package based on this estimated budget. (Please note that, while you may not know the amount of financial aid you will be awarded at the time of your acceptance to your study abroad program, this fact is not a valid rationale for the appeal of cancellation fees.) At that meeting, you may also want to appeal your loss of income resulting from being unable to earn money during the term(s) you are studying abroad.

Please note that you should attend walk-in hours after you have been accepted into the program and have received your Financial Aid Study Abroad Budget, but at least one full semester prior to the departure of your program.
If you are a recipient of financial aid and are participating in a third party or direct enroll program, you should inform your host institution that you are receiving financial aid and discuss your payment plan options with them.

**ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

As a participant in an Ohio State study abroad program, you may be eligible to apply for scholarships and grants through the university or outside resources. To learn more about funding opportunities available to Ohio State students, please see “Funding study abroad” and “Grants and scholarships” under the Getting Started tab at oia.osu.edu/study-abroad.

**DIRECT DEPOSIT**

If you are receiving financial aid or scholarships and your Ohio State fees (tuition and Office of International Affairs program fees) are less than the amount of your financial aid for that semester, you will be able to receive the excess balance (or “refund”), in most cases, five to seven days before the official start date of the term in which you will study abroad.

In order to access your refund, you will need to set up direct deposit to have refunds issued directly to your personal bank account. You do not have to establish a bank account locally to use direct deposit; refunds may be electronically transferred to any bank in the United States. To set up direct deposit, go to buckeyelink.osu.edu.

Once enrolled, the direct deposit service will continue every semester. If you change bank account numbers, be sure to update your direct deposit information in your Buckeye Link Student Center.
The Office of International Affairs is not authorized to register students for classes following their return from study abroad; therefore, you are responsible for registering yourself for the first semester after your return from study abroad. There are several ways to register while abroad:

- You can access essential academic resources and services through buckeyelink.osu.edu. You can browse the Ohio State Master Schedule online, check course availability, view your class schedule and register for classes. Your registration window information will be sent to your Ohio State email address. If for some reason you do not receive this information, you should contact your Ohio State academic advisor.

- Contact your academic advisor to register directly through him or her. It is important to clear this procedure with your advisor before you leave the country to make sure he or she can help. In the past, students have called, emailed or sent a letter to their advisor to facilitate registration while overseas.

- Ask a parent or a trusted friend to register you for the classes you want. This often involves some conversation or email between you and the person in the United States who will be helping you.

You can also wait until you return to the United States to register for classes. Be sure that all holds are off your university record (parking tickets, library fines, health insurance, etc.) prior to leaving for your study abroad program or you will not be able to register while you are abroad.
PASSPORT

A valid passport is required to enter and leave most countries and must be obtained through the U.S. Department of State. Passports are required for every Ohio State study abroad program.

Due to potentially long delays in processing time for new and renewed U.S. passports, for both regular and expedited services, you must apply for your passport as early as possible.

If you currently have a passport, check the passport expiration date. Most countries require that your passport be valid at least six months beyond the end date of your study abroad program. If your passport will expire before then, you should apply to renew your passport immediately.

If you do not have a passport, apply for one immediately. Passport applications for U.S. citizens are available at many post offices, including the Campus Post Office on West 18th Avenue in the Journalism Building. Detailed passport information and application forms can also be found on the web at passports.state.gov/passport.

Each passport application must be accompanied by the following materials:

- Proof of U.S. Citizenship (a certified copy of your birth certificate if you are a U.S. citizen by birth or your naturalization certificate if you are a naturalized citizen)
- Proof of identity (items containing your signature and physical description or photograph, such as your driver’s license)
- Two photographs (must be passport-sized photographs meeting the specifications stated on the application)
- Passport fee of $135

PASSPORT PHOTOGRAPHS

There are many places close to campus to obtain passport-sized photographs. You may need additional photographs for an International Student Identity Card, visa application, bus pass, etc., so it is recommended that you purchase a few extra passport-sized photographs to have for these items.
**VISA**

A visa is an endorsement to a passport that indicates that the traveler meets the eligibility requirements to enter a foreign country for a specific purpose. Based on this visa, the immigration official at the border (port of entry) permits or denies entry to the traveler. A visa is issued by the consular section of the embassy of each country. Keep in mind that the amount of time to apply and process a visa varies according to each country’s requirements.

Visas are required for some Ohio State study abroad programs. To determine if a visa is required for your study abroad destination, visit the U.S. State Department’s country specific information page at travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country.html. You will also want to consult your study abroad coordinator to inquire about your program’s visa requirements and whether the visa application will be completed individually or as a group through Travisa, Ohio State’s visa service. If you are applying as an individual, you can get a discount through Ohio State’s custom Travisa link: travisa.com?id=to01su77.

The campus branch of Huntington Bank (235 West 11th Ave.) can notarize visa documents, if necessary.

If you are not a U.S. citizen, let your study abroad coordinator know immediately. Visa requirements are often different for non-U.S. citizens. Please read the FAQ: Study Abroad for International Students under the Getting Started tab at oia.osu.edu/study-abroad.
If you are an international student, be sure to consult an immigration coordinator in the Office of International Affairs to have your immigration document(s) reviewed and signed before you leave the United States. Walk-in advising hours for immigration coordinators are held Monday through Thursday, 1–4 p.m., and by appointment on Fridays.

Visas are granted solely at the discretion of the issuing Embassy or Consulate of the host country. The Office of International Affairs/Ohio State and its visa provider, Travisa, have no control over visa denials, immigration and visa regulations and/or any changes in the Embassies/Consulates’ policies.

IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS

When you arrive in and depart from your host country, you will be required to pass through Immigration and Customs. Immigration will check your passport and visa (if required) and Customs may check your luggage to ensure that you are following the import/export regulations for the country. In some cases, the foreign immigration system may receive criminal data from the United States, and entry can be denied to those with prior criminal records (including misdemeanors). You will also have to pass through Immigration and Customs when you return to the United States.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IDENTITY CARD

The International Student Identity Card provides the most widely accepted proof of student status worldwide. This card enables students to receive a number of special privileges and discounts throughout the world, such as reduced or free admissions to museums, theaters, concerts and cultural and historical sites, as well as discounted prices on airfare and other travel. For more information about the International Student Identity Card, please visit isic.org.
TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Some Ohio State study abroad programs require you to make your own travel arrangements, while others arrange a group flight so that participants may travel together. In the event that you are responsible for making your own travel arrangements, the Office of International Affairs will give you specific instructions on when and where to arrive. If your program offers an optional group flight, you are strongly encouraged to take advantage of it. Group flights are required for most short-term programs, and their itineraries may not be altered.

There are numerous travel agencies who can assist you in making your travel arrangements, including the university’s designated travel provider, Uniglobe. You should monitor websites where cheaper airline tickets may be on sale and take note of “student airfares,” special fares available only to students currently registered at degree-granting universities. These airfares are generally cheaper and more flexible than published fares.

For example, student airfares permit one-way, or “open jaw,” travel and stopovers and allow travel for as long as a full year. Student airfares are available on major airlines and can be found through student travel agencies like StudentUniverse.com and STA Travel (statravel.com). There are also a number of travel apps available that can help you compare and track fares.

Generally, it is a good idea to do some comparison shopping before purchasing an airline ticket. It is also beneficial to shop early for tickets. The earlier you plan your trip, the more choices you will have in terms of prices and schedules.

If you make your own flight arrangements, you are required to submit a copy of your flight itinerary to the Carmen dropbox for your study abroad program prior to your departure.

No matter your itinerary, it is always important to travel with an open mind and a flexible attitude. Travel arrangements can change quickly due to flight delays or cancellations. Keeping an open mind and a positive attitude are key to a successful trip.
GREEN TRAVEL

Many Ohio State students, faculty and staff are increasingly interested in ways to travel “green,” although what this means and how it can be applied to study abroad varies widely. “Green travel” is an overarching term used to describe responsible travel practices that focus on economic, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability. Green travel is about making sure that travelers choose businesses, tour operators and transportation methods that maintain and preserve the ecological integrity of the environment and contribute to local community development, meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of current or future generations.
M - Modes of transportation
Consider walking or cycling during your trip.

O - Offsets and environmental policy
Calculate and offset the carbon dioxide emitted by your travel and buy your trip from companies with policies that consider environmental, economic and socio-cultural norms.

D - Dollars spent locally
Ensure that local people benefit from your trip by spending money in community or locally-owned business and working with tour operators and lodges that employ local people.

E - Environmental conservation
Choose a trip that strengthens conservation efforts and enhances the natural integrity of the places you visit, including protected areas and wildlife habitats.

R - Respect for local culture
Immerse yourself in and accept the differences of other cultures — learn about their customs and social norms before you visit, and speak their language when possible.

N - Natural resource use
Reduce, reuse and recycle — consider the efficient use of water, energy and building materials, as well as the method of waste disposal used by your tour operator or lodging establishment.

—Adapted from Green.Travel. developed in conjunction with Frances Figart

OHIO STATE FOOTBALL TICKETS

If you are going to be abroad during spring semester, you may want to purchase Ohio State football tickets for the next academic year. Students may go to hangonsloopy.com and order tickets online. If you have questions about ordering football tickets, please contact the Athletic Ticket Office by email at athletic.tix@osu.edu.
STUDY ABROAD ACADEMIC CREDIT AND ACADEMIC ADVISING

Most coursework you take overseas will be for graded Ohio State credit. All credits earned are transferable to Ohio State, pending approval of individual academic departments. Consult the host institution’s website for course descriptions and/or syllabi for the classes you wish to take overseas.

Before leaving for your study abroad program, you will want to meet with your academic advisor to inform him or her of your study abroad plans. This is extremely important if you are participating in an Ohio State study abroad program for which the credits are not predetermined (i.e. international exchange, third party provider and direct enroll programs). Ohio State academic departments approve Ohio State equivalency credit for courses completed during your program, but your academic advisor will advise you on how your study abroad credit fulfills graduation requirements (major, minor, general education and/or elective credit hours). You should contact your academic advisor in your college of enrollment (Arts and Sciences, Business, Education and Human Ecology, etc.) well in advance of your study abroad program to help you plan your course schedule for the semesters preceding and following your program so that you continue to make progress toward your academic degree without interruption.

You will also want to take your academic advisor’s phone number, email and mailing address with you overseas. This information will be useful when it is time for you to register for the classes you will take at Ohio State the semester in which you return.
For most programs, you are required to obtain pre-approval for the courses you plan to take abroad. Each academic department at Ohio State has a transfer credit coordinator with whom you will need to work to obtain pre-approval. Depending on your course selections, you may need to meet with transfer credit coordinators from several different departments. In some cases, there may be courses that have already been pre-approved for Ohio State credit. Please speak with your study abroad coordinator about whether or not this is the case for the university you are attending or program in which you are participating.

To ensure that the appropriate transfer credit coordinator(s) complete(s) the Study Abroad Evaluation of Credit form correctly and within an appropriate timeframe, we recommend the following steps:

1. Review course descriptions: These can be found on your third party provider, direct enroll institution or exchange program website and will help you determine what courses to take while abroad. It is a good idea to obtain approval for several backup courses in case your first choices are not offered or are full.

2. Identify your transfer credit coordinator(s): Each academic department has a transfer credit coordinator that can approve courses taken abroad for equivalent courses at Ohio State. You can find the relevant coordinator(s) at registrar.osu.edu/transfer_credit/tcc_list.asp. If you plan to receive credit in more than one Ohio State department for courses taken abroad, you must meet with the coordinator in each corresponding Ohio State department. For example, if you plan to take a history course, an art course and a psychology course abroad, and would like to receive credit in each of those departments, you must meet individually with each respective transfer credit coordinator.

3. Prepare for your meeting: For each transfer credit coordinator you meet with, you will need to have a Study Abroad Evaluation of Credit form and a copy of the syllabus or course description for each class you plan to take abroad. Once this documentation is prepared, schedule an appointment with each relevant coordinator.
4. Meet with the transfer credit coordinator(s): Make sure to bring the above documentation with you. In some cases, the coordinator can pre-approve your selected courses before you depart. In other cases, you may only receive approval for courses taken abroad after you have completed your program and present additional information, such as syllabi or exam results. Certain departments, such as language departments, might require a placement exam upon your return in order to grant final credit approval. If your transfer credit coordinator cannot pre-approve courses, please encourage him or her to contact your study abroad coordinator with questions.

5. Submit completed Evaluation of Credit form: Once you have received approval for all of your study abroad courses, please return the Evaluation of Credit form to the appropriate college liaisons. This can be done by submitting a hard copy of your form to the college liaison, or your transfer credit coordinator may submit the form electronically.

Please be aware that your graded Ohio State credit will not be posted until the appropriate college liaison receives a signed credit evaluation for all courses completed abroad.

**GRADES**

Grading systems vary across the globe. Regardless of the grading system used, you should ask at the beginning of your program how you will be evaluated and who is responsible for submitting the final course grades to Ohio State. In many cases, the course syllabus will define course objectives and requirements, including criteria for grading. If a course syllabus is not available, consult your resident director or in-country contact person about course requirements and grading criteria at the beginning of the program.
YOUR RESIDENT DIRECTOR

Ohio State sponsored programs

In most cases, students participating in an Ohio State sponsored program will have a resident director. The resident director’s role is to oversee the academic component of the program as well as in-country administrative details. The resident director attends classes, field trips and excursions and, when appropriate, assists in conducting formal courses offered to the students. The resident director ensures that students regularly attend classes and other required program activities. Frequently, the resident director is responsible for the actual grading of student coursework in-country. In the event that you do not have an Ohio State resident director, these responsibilities will be assumed by an employee of the host institution.

The resident director also serves as the liaison between the Office of International Affairs and the host institution. If your program has a resident director, he or she will be available to help you find appropriate solutions to personal, health and academic problems during the program. Your resident director will routinely ask you to complete the Off-Site Travel form for independent travel you plan to do on weekends or other free periods.

Establish good communication with your resident director. If you are experiencing difficulties with the program or with your adjustment to the culture, your resident director is a good person to seek out for assistance and support. The resident director can help you interpret and understand cultural differences and host institution rules and regulations.

Third party provider, direct enroll or international exchange programs

If you are in a third party provider, direct enroll or international exchange program, you will not have an Ohio State resident director. Instead your study abroad coordinator or your host institution will provide you with the name of an in-country contact who will serve as the liaison with Ohio State. It is important that you establish good communication with the liaison and that you contact him or her if you encounter any difficulties and/or problems.
OVERSEAS HOUSING

Housing varies with each study abroad program. Some programs offer on-campus dormitory accommodations, homestays with local families or a choice of housing options. In a few cases, you may be responsible for securing your own housing. To learn about the housing options offered for your program, consult your study abroad coordinator. In your pre-departure orientation, you will be provided with information about your housing and amenities, such as telephone and Internet access, meal arrangements and laundry facilities, as well as items you will need to bring with you, such as bed linens, blankets, etc. It is always a good idea, regardless of your housing situation, to take your own towel(s) and washcloth(s). You may want to bring several small inexpensive gifts — perhaps something that represents the United States or Ohio State (e.g., T-shirts, coffee mugs, cookbooks, etc.) — to give to a roommate, a home stay family or new friends. These gifts will be greatly appreciated.

If you are living in a home stay, your experience will depend as much on your cooperation and courtesy as it does on the family. While you are a guest in a home, the Office of International Affairs recommends that you:

- Help out with daily household tasks, as culturally appropriate, such as washing the dishes.
- Ask permission to use the telephone or Internet and pay adequately for use of both.
- Ask permission before helping yourself to food in the refrigerator.
- Do not use an excessive amount of hot water.
- Establish guidelines with your host family that are mutually acceptable for late-night outings.
- Be flexible and try to fit in with the family’s routine. If you are unsure of something, learn from the other family members and ask questions.
SHARING INFORMATION

The OIA Study Abroad Health form asks you to list any allergies or physical and/or mental health conditions that may affect your study abroad experience. This information is critical since for many chronic or cyclical conditions (physical and mental), changes in diet and schedule can trigger an acute episode. Information that you share on your health form is strictly confidential, will not jeopardize your participation in the study abroad program and will assist the Office of International Affairs in helping you receive proper services and care while abroad.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL MEDICAL CONSULTATIONS

The Office of International Affairs recommends that you schedule a travel medical consultation with a health care professional before studying abroad. This appointment is intended to help you assess any and all health issues relevant to your upcoming study abroad experience. Specific immunization and vaccination recommendations will not come from the Office of International Affairs but rather a trained travel medical professional. Students should review the Center for Disease Control (CDC) Health Information for Travelers (wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list) for each country they plan to travel to with a travel medical professional.

Immunizations and Travel Consultations are available at the Wilce Student Health Center on campus - shs.osu.edu/services/vaccinations/travel-consultation. The cost of a Travel Consultation starts at $50. Students may schedule an appointment online via My BuckMD Connection (shshealthportal.studentaffairs.ohio-state.edu/PyramedPortal) or by calling 614-292-4321. Students should indicate all countries they plan to travel to when making an appointment.

In many instances, the providers at the Wilce Student Health Center stock and can administer most common forms of immunizations. Some immunizations require a series of appointments at specific intervals. It is best to schedule an appointment up to three months in advance of your travel date.
If you are not local to campus, The International Society of Travel Medicine (ISTM) provides a searchable listing of its member clinics by state at istm.org/AF_CstmClinicDirectory.asp.

Your personal physician may also be able to review this information with you or recommend an appropriate local resource.

Vaccines recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), including influenza, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, Td/Tdap, varicella, meningococcal, MMR, pneumococcal, zoster and HPV, are covered at 100 percent by the Ohio State Student Health Insurance. Other travel-related immunizations are covered at 50 percent of the negotiated charge. If you have private primary health insurance, check with your provider about coverage amounts for immunizations. Pre-departure immunizations are not covered by the supplemental travel insurance either prior to or during travel.

### PRESCRIPTIONS AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES ABROAD

If you have a pre-existing medical condition that will require treatment or access to medication while traveling, you should make arrangements to verify a safe and adequate supply to medications or supplies for the entirety of your travel. It is also recommended to carry a medical record with you as well as a list of all drugs you are taking, including any not related to disease, and identify any chronic ailments, allergies or hypersensitivities.

**Prescriptions**

Please note that some common prescription and over-the-counter medications in the United States may be illegal or unavailable abroad (e.g., Adderall is illegal in Japan and Thailand). HTH insurance provides a drug translation database to verify prescription availability of more than 350 brand names in 41 countries - hthstudents.com/drug/index1.cfm.

If you do not see your prescription or country or need further clarification, call HTH Global Health and Safety Services at 1-800-257-4823 (in the United States) or 1-610-254-8771 (outside the United States). The Office of International Affairs recommends that you ask the following questions:

- Is your prescription legal in the countries where you will travel?
- Can you bring enough for the duration of your travel abroad?
- Can you refill the prescription abroad?
• What documentation will you need to get the prescription filled abroad?
• Are there any changes in dosage amounts?

You will need to have your HTH enrollment card and certificate number to access this service. Please contact your study abroad coordinator if you would like to expedite your insurance enrollment to utilize this service.

If, in consultation with HTH, you determine you can bring an adequate supply for the duration of your travel, make sure you:

• Transport all medications in the original container.
• Have a prescription with your physician’s explanation of the condition and generic and brand names of the medication and dosage information.
• Carry all medications and documentation in your carry-on luggage.
• Maintain your usual dosage and pattern of taking your medication while you are abroad and ask your physician how to make adjustments due to travel and time zone changes.

In some cases your doctor or pharmacist may request confirmation of your travel in order to prescribe a more than normal amount. The Office of International Affairs can provide you with a prescription letter to take to your doctor or pharmacist. Please ask for this letter from your study abroad coordinator well in advance of your trip.

Do not plan on sending medications abroad or having them shipped to you. If you require a legal refill of your prescription while abroad, HTH provides coverage for prescriptions prescribed by a medical professional. Participants will need to pay for prescription medicine out-of-pocket and file a claim with HTH for reimbursement. If you cannot locate a prescription that is lost or needs to be refilled, contact HTH Global Health and Safety Services at 1-800-257-4823 (in the United States), 1-610-254-8771 (outside the United States) or globalhealth@hthworldwide.com to discuss options for obtaining medications.

The misuse of prescription medications, including sharing with other individuals, is a violation of the Ohio State code of student conduct and can result in dismissal from a program.
Medical testing and supplies

If you are currently managing a health condition that requires periodic testing (e.g., blood tests) or access to medical supplies or devices (e.g., epi-pen, inhaler, insulin pump, medicine refrigerator, ozone generator) do not assume that supplies will be legal and easily accessible abroad. Contact HTH Global Health and Safety Services at 1-800-257-4823 (in the United States), 1-610-254-8771 (outside the United States) or globalhealth@hthworldwide.com. HTH can help determine accessibility abroad, and, where possible under local laws and insurance coverage, they may be able to arrange access to testing and supplies in-country. If routine appointments are needed and scheduled, please consult with your resident director and study abroad coordinator about making allowances in the program schedule to coordinate these appointments.

Mental Health

The Health Information form asks you to disclose any past and current mental health conditions and prescription medicines you are taking to manage your health. Changes in environment, diet, routine and cultural norms can all impact your health. In addition compounding factors addressed in this handbook such as jet-lag, culture shock, intercultural adaptation and changes in your personal support infrastructure can also adversely impact your well-being.

If you are currently receiving counseling or treatment for a mental health condition, or if you are incurring symptoms of stress, anxiety or depression, we encourage you to discuss your study abroad experience with trained medical professionals. If you are currently receiving counseling or treatment, you should:

1. Discuss. Review your plans for participating in a study abroad program and issues related to cultural adjustment with your mental health professional.

2. Plan. Develop a proactive plan to manage your health while abroad. Traveling abroad will change any support infrastructure you have developed to manage your health. Speak with your medical professional about triggers that might influence your health, indicators that your health may have changed and resources at home and abroad to create a new support infrastructure. If your medical professional has questions about the resources available, they can contact the international risk manager at simmons.541@osu.edu or 614-247-8351.
3. Prescriptions. If you are taking prescription medicine to manage your health, please refer to the section in this handbook on prescriptions. Some common forms of anti-anxiety medications and psychostimulants prescribed in the United States are illegal or unavailable in certain countries. Follow the instructions to work with HTH Insurance on determining availability and accessibility while abroad.

4. Continuing Care. The HTH insurance includes a provision for certain coverage of both outpatient and inpatient support for mental health conditions, including preexisting conditions (see insurance coverage for details and exclusions). An important factor in pre-departure planning is determining the availability of English language medical professionals in your city, region or country abroad. HTH has a searchable function for medical professionals available at hthstudents.com/doctor_search/by_location.cfm. If you cannot identify a professional or want to clarify coverage with another local professional, contact HTH Global Health and Safety Services at 1-800-257-4823 (in the United States), 1-610-254-8771 (outside the United States) or globalhealth@hthworldwide.com. You will need to have your HTH enrollment card and certificate number to access this service. Please contact your study abroad coordinator if you would like to expedite your insurance enrollment to utilize this service. In addition, your primary insurance may have additional resources or coverage. If routine appointments are needed and scheduled, please consult with your resident director and study abroad coordinator about making allowances in the program schedule to coordinate these appointments.

5. If you are not currently receiving treatment but are concerned about managing your mental health abroad, Ohio State’s Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) has trained medical professionals who can work with you to develop a plan to address your concerns and manage your health abroad. CCS services are free to all currently enrolled Ohio State students for up to ten sessions per academic year. Appointments can be scheduled by calling 614-292-5766. CCS appointments are scheduled well in advance and are managed by level of urgency, so plan ahead and prepare to schedule this conversation at least two months before you depart on your program. For more information, see www.ccs.ohio-state.edu.

In the event of a medical emergency abroad please consult the section on medical emergency protocol and contacts.
STUDENT WELLNESS CENTER

The Student Wellness Center offers resources and services for alcohol, tobacco and drug education and prevention, financial education and counseling, healthy eating, healthy relationships, sexual wellness and stress management. Please visit swc.osu.edu for more information.

TRAVEL PREPARATION FOR SURVIVORS/VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

If you are a survivor/victim of sexual assault prior to embarking on your study abroad experience, you may experience emotional or physical reactions that may be disruptive. These reactions are called triggers and they can be quite distressing. So, even when you are abroad, it is very important to take care of yourself and have support available. If you are experiencing triggers, flashbacks or other reactions due to your trauma, consider the following suggestions:

- Seek out support from someone who you trust. Try not to isolate yourself.
- Write down how you are feeling.
- Try to get plenty of rest and eat normally
- Remember that drugs and alcohol are never good coping mechanisms.

Talk to your support coordinator at Ohio State or therapist before embarking on your trip to have a safety plan set in place in case you feel that you need immediate support while abroad.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Just as cultures differ from country to country, so do perceptions of disability and accommodations. Some countries may have a wide range of services for students with disabilities, some may rely on peer or family support and others may have limited disability accommodations available. The most important quality for any study abroad participant is flexibility and an open mind. As a study abroad student, you are going overseas to experience a different way of life, which may also include a different way of dealing with your disability. If you are a student who requires academic accommodations through the Office for Disability Services, you must communicate this to the Office of International Affairs and your resident director or host institution so that we have an opportunity to consider alternative ways to meet those needs. Your study
Jet lag is something that occurs when people traverse multiple time zones rapidly, disturbing their physiological and psychological rhythms. Some symptoms of jet lag include general discomfort, sleep disturbances, reduced mental and physical performance and disturbed appetite and eating patterns. Here are a few tips to help lessen the effects of jet lag:

- **Rest up:** Be sure to get enough sleep the week before your trip and sleep during your flight. You can also bring an inflatable neck pillow for rest on long flights and extended layovers.
- **Reset your watch:** It helps to set your watch to the local time of your destination at the beginning of your flight. This will help you adjust to the new time zone.
- **Drink fluids:** Airplane cabins are very dry places, so be sure to drink lots of liquids like water and juice while on your flight. Avoid alcohol and caffeine, which both cause dehydration.
- **Stay active:** During your flight, make sure to do some stretching exercises in your seat and get up and walk around the cabin frequently. Activity will help your body’s circulation and allow you to feel less sluggish after the flight.
- **Adjust meal and sleep times:** As soon as you arrive in-country, be sure to adjust your meal times and sleep schedule to the local time. This will help your body adjust to the new time zone more quickly.
- **Be aware:** As a result of your jet lag, you may feel sluggish, drowsy and have reduced performance for a few days after you arrive.

For more information, please visit:
- **Office for Disability Services:** ods.osu.edu
- **Mobility International USA:** miusa.org

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HEALTHCARE AND INSURANCE

Keeping yourself in good health is of paramount importance when you study overseas. Changes in climate, diet and the rigors of travel may cause health problems abroad. Colds, sore throats, coughs and gastrointestinal disorders associated with different foods and water are inevitable. It is important to be aware of the things that can affect your health so that you can fully enjoy your time abroad.

PRIMARY MEDICAL INSURANCE

While participating in an Ohio State study abroad program, you are required to maintain your primary insurance coverage. Following university procedures, you will be automatically enrolled in Ohio State comprehensive student health insurance, unless you have completed the waiver process documenting adequate primary medical insurance coverage.

If you have questions about Ohio State’s requirements for primary insurance coverage, please visit shi.osu.edu.

SUPPLEMENTAL INSURANCE

As a participant in an Ohio State study abroad program, you are automatically enrolled in a supplemental insurance plan through HTH Worldwide Services. HTH Worldwide Insurance is required for all Ohio State study abroad programs, including third party provider and direct enroll. You can access information about the insurance at oia.osu.edu/preparing-to-depart/health-insurance.html.

Upon your enrollment in a supplemental insurance plan, you will receive an email directly from HTH with your certificate number and a link to your insurance documents. It is important that you make multiple copies of your insurance card. Leave one copy with your family or a trusted friend and carry a copy with you at all times while you are abroad.

To learn more about HTH benefits and services, including coverage amounts and exclusions, you can access a copy of the Ohio State policy brochure at oia.osu.edu/pdf/HTHWorldwideAccidentandSickness.pdf.
Once you receive your HTH enrollment, you can access several health and safety resources at hthstudents.com. This includes:

- **“Well Prepared”** – Well Prepared is your Personalized Health Profile set up and maintained on hthstudents.com. This service allows you to plan for your medical needs before embarking on your program. The Well Prepared profile is a confidential web page used by members to search the HTH Health and Safety databases, save pertinent health information, request provider recruitment and connect with international medical providers.

- **International Hospital, Clinic and Physician search** – hthstudents.com has a searchable registry of hospitals, clinics, doctors and physicians who have been vetted by HTH and in some cases have direct billing arrangements with HTH. Students should use this function to find what local medical resources will be available in relation to their program location(s).

- **Prescription medicine search** – hthstudents.com has a searchable database of prescription medicine translations and availability in country. Please see the section on prescriptions on page 27 in this handbook.

- **Global Health and Safety reports** - hthstudents.com has safety reports that are searchable by country that will provide information on health resources, emergency medical numbers and other resources for your city and/or country.

Many of the services can be accessed prior to enrollment in HTH; however, some sections will require your personal HTH certificate number, which is on your insurance card. Please contact your study abroad coordinator if you would like to expedite your insurance enrollment to utilize this service.

If you are in need of non-emergency medical care overseas, including routine doctor’s evaluations or periodic testing, HTH can work with you to determine availability overseas and schedule appointments in advance. Use the Well Prepared section to initiate this service, and contact HTH Global Health and Safety Services at 1-800-257-4823 (in the United States), 1-610-254-8771 (outside the United States) or globalhealth@hthworldwide.com. If routine appointments are needed, please consult with your resident director and study abroad coordinator so that proper arrangements can be made.
PRE-DEPARTURE HEALTHCARE INSURANCE CHECKLIST

1. Make copies of your HTH enrollment card. Leave one with your family or a trusted friend and carry one with you at all times while abroad.

2. Complete the Well Prepared section online at hthstudents.com.

3. If you have a pre-existing condition, use the searchable registries at hthstudents.com or contact HTH Global Health and Safety Services to identify the availability of clinics, doctors and prescription medication in your study abroad location. Develop a plan to maintain your health and carry a printed document of all clinics, doctors and scheduled appointments with you.

4. Bookmark hthstudents.com on any laptops or tablets you will have while traveling. If you are traveling with a smartphone, download the mPassport app (available for iPhone and Android devices).

5. Have access to a contingency fund or credit card to cover any out-of-pocket medical expenses that you may incur while abroad.
IN-COUNTRY ROUTINE CARE

If you need to see a medical professional for a minor illness or injury or a prescription while abroad, notify your resident director or program leader. You can consult the directory of local providers at hthstudents.com or mPassport. HTH will list two types of providers:

1. HTH Network Provider
2. HTH listed Non-Participating Provider

If you do not have access to the internet or mobile resources, please contact the international risk manager at simmons.541@osu.edu or 614-247-8351 (8 a.m.-5 p.m. EST) to help locate resources.

There is no deductible and no copayment for your medical care covered by the HTH plan. If you seek medical care from an HTH Network Provider, then the cost of your medical care can be paid directly by HTH. This will require your HTH enrollment card with your certificate number. In many instances, this will require HTH to provide a guarantee of payment in advance of care. In this case, contact HTH Global Health and Safety Services at 1-800-257-4823 (in the United States), 1-610-254-8771 (outside the United States) or globalhealth@hthworldwide.com to initiate this process. HTH will fax the partner a guarantee of payment to cover the cost of your care according to the coverage of the policy.

If you seek coverage from a listed non-participating provider, you will most likely be required to cover any costs in advance and file a claim for reimbursement (see Filing an HTH Insurance Claim on page 37). If the provider will establish a guarantee of payment with HTH, contact HTH Global Health and Safety Services at 1-800-257-4823 (in the United States), 1-610-254-8771 (outside the United States) or globalhealth@hthworldwide.com. If the provider is unable to establish a guarantee of payment with HTH, many times they will require payment in advance of service. It is important that you collect all receipts from any medical expenses incurred while abroad so you can submit a claim for reimbursement to HTH upon your return to the United States.

Keep in mind that even if a doctor or facility is listed in the HTH directory, there is no guaranteed access to immediate medical care for routine and non-emergency medical needs. An appointment can sometimes mean...
long waiting times and missing a scheduled program activity. Although you may not want to miss any of your program, maintaining your health is most important, and you do not want to delay care and risk further complications.

In some locations, including many program sites in smaller cities or rural areas, there will not be an HTH Network Provider or even a listed non-participating provider. If this is the case, consult with your resident director or a local host institution contact about local medical facilities. If you receive medical care from a physician who is not an HTH Network Provider, you will need to pay costs out-of-pocket. Collect receipts for every service provided and submit the receipts and a completed HTH claim form directly to HTH. Ohio State faculty and staff leading programs are advised that they are not to pay costs for routine and non-emergency medical care in-country for students. Participants should expect to cover these costs and are advised to have an accessible contingency fund or credit card with them to cover any out-of-pocket expenses.

**Filing an HTH insurance claim**

Reimbursement claims may be submitted for prescriptions and outpatient and/or inpatient services not invoiced directly to HTH. Please save all of your receipts and complete an HTH Medical Reimbursement Form - [hthadvisors.com/claims_forms/sa_med_claim_form.pdf](http://hthadvisors.com/claims_forms/sa_med_claim_form.pdf)

Completed claims forms may be submitted by mail or email to:

HTH Worldwide Insurance Services
Attn: International Claims Department
One Radnor Corporate Center, Suite 100
Radnor, PA 19087 USA
Email: hthclaims@hthworldwide.com

For general claim inquiries (e.g., to see whether or not something is covered or check on the status of claims submitted), contact HTH Global Health and Safety Services at 1-800-257-4823 (in the United States), 1-610-254-8771 (outside the United States) or globalhealth@hthworldwide.com. If you need assistance with the claims process, contact the international risk manager at simmons.541@osu.edu or 614.247.8351.
Insurance coverage before or after your program

Your HTH Worldwide supplemental insurance is in effect for the duration of your study abroad program only. If you plan personal travel before or after your program, you are advised to obtain health insurance that covers you for international medical care while outside the official dates of your program. You can purchase additional insurance by visiting hthtravelinsurance.com and selecting Travel Medical: Single Trip Plans from the menu. The plan most similar to Ohio State supplemental insurance is the GeoBlue Voyager Choice, although coverage amounts and exclusions will vary. Please also note that the single trip plans do not typically include coverage for evacuation in the event of a political emergency or natural disaster.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

If you or someone else is in need of immediate medical assistance:

1. Know and contact the local equivalent of 911 in your country. 
   travel.state.gov/content/dam/students-abroad/pdfs/911_ABROAD.pdf

2. Immediately seek assistance at a local hospital, clinic or from a trained medical provider. While preference should be given to HTH partner facilities, the most important factor is to establish immediate medical care where it is readily available.

3. Contact HTH Global Health and Safety Services at 1-800-257-4823 (in the United States), or 1-610-254-8771 (outside the United States). Be prepared to give the name of the individual in need of medical attention, his or her HTH certificate number (on the insurance card) and a description of the emergency. The medical care provider can contact HTH on the individual’s behalf but will need the HTH enrollment card. HTH may be able to coordinate hospital payment guarantees and arrange translation services if necessary.

4. Contact the Ohio State international risk manager by calling University Security Services at 1-614-292-6677. If a case has been established with HTH, please be prepared to provide the HTH case number. Provide this phone number to the medical care provider if they need to contact the international risk manager on the participant’s behalf.
5. Contact your Ohio State resident director or host institution coordinator immediately.

Medical Evacuation: If HTH determines the initial provider cannot supply the level of care needed, HTH will provide special assistance in locating the nearest, most appropriate medical care. If medically necessary, HTH will arrange to have participants evacuated to the nearest medical facility in the country or region that can manage the necessary care.

HTH and its assistance providers operate an emergency global assistance service that is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you or someone else needs medical attention but is not in need of urgent medical treatment:

1. Contact your Ohio State resident director or host institution coordinator immediately.

2. Contact HTH Global Health and Safety Services at 1-800-257-4823 (in the United States) or 1-610-254-8771 (outside the United States). Be prepared to give your name, your HTH certificate number (on the HTH insurance card) and a description of your medical situation. The medical care provider can often contact HTH on your behalf but will need your HTH enrollment card. HTH may be able to coordinate hospital payment guarantees and arrange translation services if necessary.

3. Contact the Ohio State international risk manager by calling University Security Services at 1-614-292-6677. If a case has been established with HTH, please be prepared to provide the HTH case number. If not, the international risk manager can help establish a case number with HTH.

**EMERGENCY CONTACT GUIDELINES**

All participants should always carry an emergency contact card that includes the following information:

- The local equivalent of 911 in the country you are traveling in. These numbers can be found at [travel.state.gov/content/dam/students-abroad/pdfs/911_ABROAD.pdf](http://travel.state.gov/content/dam/students-abroad/pdfs/911_ABROAD.pdf), the Country Information Sheets at [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov) or the CityHealth profiles at [hthstudents.com](http://hthstudents.com).
Keep in mind that in many countries there may be a different number for police, fire and ambulance. Also bear in mind that respondents may not be proficient in English, and access and response times may vary depending on your location.

- The Ohio State International Emergency phone line at 1-614-292-6677.
- The in-country contact number for the resident director, host institution coordinator or other in-country contact person.
- The contact number for the U.S. Embassy or Consulate nearest your location. This can be found on Country Information Sheets at travel.state.gov or by directly consulting the U.S. Embassy website for each country.
- A personal emergency contact for a family or friend back in the United States.

In the event of an emergency abroad:

1. If you are in immediate danger or harm, contact the local equivalent of 911 in your country.

2. Contact the Ohio State International Emergency phone line at 1-614-292-6677. This number is a 24-hour collect number that will connect you to University Security Services who can place you in touch with the international risk manager or other key staff.

3. Contact your resident director, host institution coordinator or other in-country contact person immediately.

4. Contact your family or appropriate person(s) in the United States and establish a communication schedule. Ohio State will only contact family in certain emergency circumstances. In this instance, the person contacted will be the person and number listed in the Information Release/FERPA form on the study abroad application. In all other instances we expect the student to maintain contact with their family unless a specific request has been made for the international risk manager or Office of International Affairs staff to be in contact.
OTHER EMERGENCIES

Non-medical emergencies are situations that do not involve injury, illness or urgent medical attention. Nevertheless, such circumstances can be upsetting and stressful and need to be promptly resolved. In the event of a non-medical emergency, follow the emergency contact guidelines above. In some cases, it may be necessary to file a police report with local authorities, particularly if you are assaulted or robbed. If your passport is lost or stolen, you will need to report it to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in your host country as soon as possible. If your credit and/or debit cards are lost or stolen, you should immediately contact the bank or financial institution that issued the cards.
STUDY ABROAD AND SAFETY

Student safety on study abroad programs is a combined effort among the staff from the Office of International Affairs, Ohio State faculty and staff leading programs, international program partners and the individual students choosing to participate in the program. Ohio State regularly monitors and reviews the health and safety of our programs abroad, but there are many facets to health and safety that rely on the actions of the participant who is traveling abroad. Individual safety cannot be guaranteed abroad, just as it cannot be in the United States; however, the Office of International Affairs is committed to take steps to maximize safety for students who participate in Ohio State study abroad programs. We also encourage participants to take important steps to enhance their safety and security abroad. The Office of International Affairs uses multiple resources to establish a protocol for health and safety. These include:

- Consulting the Forum on Education Abroad’s Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad as a resource in developing health and safety procedures.
- Consulting resources from NAFSA: Association of International Educators, including those from the Education Abroad Knowledge Community Health and Safety Subcommittee.
- Reviewing the programs, policies and procedures of outstanding peers in higher education.

The Office of International Affairs follows an established safety protocol for all of our study abroad students:

- Ohio State has an international risk manager who proactively monitors the university’s international programming, updates and implements the university’s emergency response plan and maintains an active emergency response protocol.
- Ohio State has a 24-hour emergency phone number (1-614-292-6677) that connects participants to University Security Services who can put participants in touch with the international risk manager or other key staff trained in the emergency response protocol.
- The international risk manager monitors security updates from multiple government resources, including the U.S. Department of State, the Overseas Security Advisory Council and the Centers for Disease Control, and private analysis, including those from the university’s insurance providers.
• All participants are directed to enroll in the Department of State’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) for the duration of their program.

• Student travel and participation in programs that take place in countries with an active risk designation, including current Department of State Travel Warnings, is subject to petition and review by the provost-appointed International Travel Policy Committee.

• All participants in Ohio State’s study abroad programs are enrolled for supplemental insurance through HTH Worldwide Services. The insurance provides comprehensive medical coverage for illness or injury, including preexisting conditions. In addition, the policy includes coverage for medical evacuation, evacuation for political or natural disaster and repatriation.

• The university maintains an active reporting structure for incidents directly impacting participants’ health and safety abroad and regularly enters incidents into the Forum on Education Abroad Critical Incident Database.

• The Office of International Affairs trains all program leaders on the university’s Clery Act protocol, and Clery reportable data is sought for all programs. This data is included as part of the university’s Annual Security and Fire Safety Report.

• All participants in Ohio State study abroad programs are required to participate in an in-person Health and Safety Orientation delivered by Office of International Affairs staff prior to their initial program experience and at least once every 12 months for subsequent experiences.

• All resident directors and staff leading Ohio State programs are required to participate in an in-person orientation prior to leading their program (or at least once every 12 months).

• The Office of International Affairs routinely surveys participants at the conclusion of their study abroad experience in order to assess all aspects of the program, including health and safety.

• Staff members in the Office of International Affairs are available for contact by telephone or email to address study abroad student concerns before, during and after their study abroad program.
STUDENT STEPS TO HEALTH AND SAFETY

The international risk manager regularly reviews information from government resources, including the U.S. Department of State and other government agencies. Much of this data is publically available, and students are encouraged to make themselves aware of all accessible safety and security information. This includes:

1. Department of State Country Information Sheets – the Department of State maintains a country information sheet for each country in the world at travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country.html. Please read all sections, but students are particularly advised to pay careful attention to the sections on safety and security, health and travel and transportation.

2. The Department of State also maintains a list of countries with an active Travel Warning or Travel Alert at travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html.

3. The Department of State maintains a page of important information specifically for student travelers at studentsabroad.state.gov.


5. HTH Worldwide provides health and security profiles of countries and major cities across the world at hthstudents.com/tp2_cityhealth/health_sec_profiles.cfm.
STEP: SMART TRAVELER ENROLLMENT PROGRAM

The Office of International Affairs directs all study abroad students to sign up for STEP to receive the latest travel updates and information from the U.S. Department of State. The STEP website can be found at step.state.gov/step.

U.S. Embassies and Consulates will post emergency and security messages for U.S. citizens on their individual websites. Enrolling in STEP helps make sure that participants receive this important information about safety conditions in their destination country via email when it is posted. It also allows the U.S. Embassy to contact participants in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest or family emergency.

In the case of an emergency abroad, it is important to be aware of how the U.S. Department of State is able to assist you: travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/emergencies/crisis-support.html.

International students at Ohio State who are studying abroad can enroll in STEP for updates to travel warnings and alerts; however, they are encouraged to see if their home country has a similar service. In the event of an emergency, the U.S. Department of State, embassies and consulates will only be able to provide limited services to non-U.S. citizens.
ROAD TRAFFIC AND SAFETY

According to information cited by the Department of State and the Association for Safe International Road Travel (asirt.org), road traffic deaths are the leading cause of fatalities among U.S. citizens abroad. This not only includes those riding in vehicles but crashes involving pedestrians as well. At Ohio State, pedestrians enjoy the right of way, and those on campus often enter cross-walks engaged in conversation, on their phones or wearing headphones. This should not be the assumption overseas, as traffic patterns, expectations and behavior will vary dramatically. As a general rule:

1. Students should acquaint themselves with the local traffic laws and regulations, including:
   - Legal regulations (e.g. the direction of traffic, posted speed limit)
   - Local norms (adherence or not to legal regulations)
   - Traffic patterns
   - Local weather conditions or holidays that might impact road traffic and conditions

2. Students are strongly advised against owning, renting or driving a motorized vehicle while abroad. In many cases, driving will not be legal if operating with solely a U.S. license and insurance. Moreover, students should recognize that they are not familiar with local road traffic conditions, rules and dangers involved in using a motorized vehicle.

3. Students should read and heed the advice in the Department of State Country Information sheets about Travel and Transportation. This section often includes specific information about various forms of travel to use or be avoided. Advice may include:
   - Information on the use of taxis in a given location
   - Advice on forms of public or information transportation to be avoided
   - Specific recommendations for bus companies for intercity travel
   - Recommendations against overnight travel
   - Specific roads or highways to avoid or be cautious on when traveling
WATER SAFETY

According to statistics cited by the Department of State, drowning is the fourth leading cause of death of U.S. citizens abroad. It is not uncommon for students to travel to oceans, lakes and rivers during their study abroad program. Ocean and river currents have the potential to be imperceptible, swift and dangerous and are subject to change with seasonal weather. In many countries, there may be no lifeguards or signs warning of currents, tides or other inherent dangers. Students should exercise extreme caution when swimming abroad, particularly in developing countries where emergency services may not be readily available. Students should:

- Be aware of their ability to swim and should not enter the water if they are not confident in their ability.
- Swim at designated beaches with clear warning systems, where possible.
- Not consume alcohol before or during swimming activities.
- Never swim alone.

If your plans involve travel to a beach, lake or ocean, acquaint yourself with information about identifying and surviving a rip current. The United States Lifesaving Association (USLA) provides a resource on rip currents and survival tips at usla.org/?page=ripcurrents.

FIRE SAFETY

Students should not assume that fire safety standards will be equal to those in the United States, even when traveling to highly developed countries. In the United States, it is standard regulation for most dormitories, hotels and other accommodations to have working fire-detection systems (e.g., smoke detectors, fire alarms), fire prevention systems (e.g., extinguishers, sprinklers) and published and marked fire evacuation plans. These may or may not be present abroad, and the first day in each accommodation, students should:

- Note if the accommodation has fire detection systems. If they do, do not automatically assume they will function properly.
- Verify the existence and location of fire detection (alarms) and prevention (extinguishers) systems.
- Inquire if the property has a published evacuation plan and review any documentation.
In addition, students should plan ahead by:

- Knowing the local version of 911 in their country (note: in many countries the fire and police number may be different).
- Locating the two nearest exits from their room.
- Counting the number of doors between their room and the exits.
- If above the ground floor, knowing where the stairwell is. If you are above the seventh floor in a high-rise property, be aware that fire truck ladders cannot normally reach above the seventh floor, and be prepared to move lower.
- Knowing if there are any impediments to their exit (e.g., security bars on windows and doors).

In the event of a fire, students should use protocol adapted from the U.S. Fire Administration:

- If the fire is in your room, get out quickly. Close the door, sound an alarm and notify hotel and fire officials.
- Always use a stairwell, never an elevator.
- If the fire is not in your room, leave if it is safe to do so. To check the hallway for fire, touch the door with the back of your hand to test the temperature. If the door is cool, get low to the floor, brace your shoulder against the door and open it slowly. Be ready to close it quickly if there are flames on the other side. Crawl low in the smoke to the nearest exit; the freshest air is near the floor.
- If your room door is hot, do not open it. Instead, seal the door with wet towels or sheets. Turn off the fan, heater and air conditioner. Call the fire department to give your location. Signal from your window.
- Be sure to take your room key with you in case fire blocks your escape and you need to re-enter your room.
- In order to prevent a fire from starting in their room, students should avoid smoking inside their accommodations and avoid leaving small personal electronics (e.g., hairdryers, straighteners) plugged in when not in use.
INDEPENDENT TRAVEL

Depending upon your study abroad program, you may have opportunities to travel in the country/region where you will be studying. Doing research on the country will help you decide what extra activities to do while you are there, as will consulting the list of websites in this handbook. Many study abroad coordinators will give you some program-specific websites during your orientation session as well. Make yourself the most informed traveler possible.

You should also explore a good travel website for the country or region you are visiting. The Office of International Affairs study abroad coordinators recommend websites by Lonely Planet (lonelyplanet.com), Let’s Go (letsgo.com), Rick Steves (ricksteves.com) and Rough Guides (roughguides.com). Beyond guidebooks and websites, students from the country you are going to and/or students who went previously on your program can be great sources of information about what to do while on your program. Please contact your study abroad coordinator for more details about getting in contact with these students.

Whether traveling on a study abroad program or independently, students need to take personal responsibility for their own health and safety. If you are on an Ohio State sponsored group program that allows off-site travel, you will be required to complete the Off-Site Travel form and submit it to your resident director before you travel.

SAFETY GUIDELINES

These safety guidelines have been developed to provide useful, practical information for students studying abroad, as the health and safety of study abroad participants is one of our primary concerns. Although no set of guidelines can guarantee the health and safety of each individual going on a study abroad program, these guidelines address issues that merit attention and thoughtful judgment.

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

- Know the basic help phrases in the local language.
- Travel or go out with others when possible. If you go out alone, always tell someone where you are going, make sure they know how to contact you and always check in if you are late.
- If out with friends, never leave an individual alone by himself or herself or leave with an unknown individual. Be protective of yourself and of the group.
- Always report your travel plans to the resident director.
- If you think someone is making bad decisions about safety issues, share your concerns with the person or with the resident director.
- Do not give your local address or contact information to someone you just met. Check your privacy settings on your phone and turn off the sharing of your location and geotagging of photos.
- Do not hitchhike.
- Choose clothing that will not draw attention to you. Avoid camouflage clothing and t-shirts with slogans and/or words that could be offensive to the host culture. Keep in mind that a crowd of students all wearing scarlet and gray will make the group readily identifiable as outsiders to potential pick-pockets and criminals.

Protect your possessions:

- Carry your money securely (such as in a concealed money belt or neck pouch). Keep your money in two places. If you are robbed or lose money, you are expected to have a back-up to cover your expenses, medical or otherwise.
- Do not leave luggage unattended or accept packages from strangers.
- Leave copies of all important documents in more than one place (e.g., at home in the United States and in your bags or room in-country).
- Leave your passport and other valuables in your room or in a hotel safe. In many countries you do not need to carry your passport on a daily basis.
- Do not wear expensive or conspicuous jewelry.
- Conceal phones, iPods, MP3 players and other electronics as best as possible (this includes using signature earbuds or high-end headphones).
- Have your valuable items (laptop, iPod, camera, etc.) insured. The HTH Insurance is only for health and medical and does not cover personal items. Check your renters insurance or parents’ homeowners insurance for potential coverage, or, if not available, consider purchasing optional insurance.
Be vigilant:

- Try to avoid drawing negative attention to yourself or standing out, both individually and as a group.
- Adopt an attitude of watchfulness and notice the people in your proximity. If someone seems to be following you, vary your route and go to a store or a populated place.
- Do not go out alone with someone you have just met.
- Know the local laws and systems of justice are not universal. You are subject to the laws of the host country while abroad.

Situations to avoid:

- Avoid crowds, protest groups or other potentially volatile situations.
- Even when using acceptable public transportation, avoid deserted trains, buses and metros. Move to where other people are sitting. Follow Department of State guidelines for using licensed taxis. Avoid deserted streets and exercise caution in unfamiliar neighborhoods.
- Be mindful of your alcohol consumption. Excessive drinking is neither appropriate nor safe in another culture and in unfamiliar surroundings. If you drink, know your limit.
- If you are sexually active, take proper precautions to avoid AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases or unwanted pregnancies.
- Resisting robbers’ demands can lead to unpleasant outcomes. Items are replaceable; you are not.
SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature, including sexual violence. Study abroad participants, both women and men, should be aware that Ohio State is committed to providing a living and study environment free from sexual harassment. Cultural norms surrounding gender roles and expectations are often different than those in the United States, and harassment may be particularly difficult to identify abroad. However, cultural sensitivity does not mean that you need to submit to behaviors that make you feel unsafe or uncomfortable. Educating yourself about sexual harassment, violence and gender dynamics abroad can empower you to engage in a safe experience abroad. Follow these guidelines:

- Become educated beforehand about gender roles in the country you will be visiting.
- Dress according to local norms, as clothing that is acceptable in the United States may be illegal or viewed as disrespectful abroad. In some countries certain types of dress may be deemed provocative.
- Avoid traveling alone at night or in unfamiliar areas.
- Avoid meeting people you do not know in a non-public place or leaving a public place with someone you just recently met.
- Be aware that some cultures tend to mistake the friendliness of Americans as aggressive or romantic interest.
- Understand local laws that relate to sexual harassment and sexual violence (e.g., some countries have laws against sexual intercourse outside of marriage that can even be applied to victims of sexual assault).

Sexual harassment

Ohio State’s sexual harassment policy defines harassment to include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature related to academic status, academic decisions or that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for learning or living. Sexual harassment as defined by university policy is also a violation of the Code of Student Conduct.
The university encourages study abroad participants to report concerns and complaints so that prompt corrective measures can be taken to stop sexual harassment whenever it occurs. If you are encountering an environment of sexual harassment:

- If the unwanted behavior is from a stranger, you should remove yourself from the environment, if possible.
- If from a known acquaintance, you should be assertive and let the individual concerned know that his or her conduct is unwelcome and offensive to you.
- Document what has happened in writing.
- Report the situation to your resident director or in-country contact. If you are uncomfortable discussing the situation with your resident director or host, contact your study abroad coordinator or the international risk manager.

Ohio State is committed to taking prompt and appropriate action in your support. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken whether Ohio State or foreign students and/or faculty are involved. If the individual who harassed you is not an employee of Ohio State or the host institution, you should still report the incident because the university may be able to act on your behalf with regard to the situation.

**Sexual assault**

If you are the survivor/victim of a sexual assault abroad, Ohio State is committed to taking prompt and appropriate action in your support. We encourage you to report any incident of sexual assault to your resident director or in-country staff. You are also encouraged to contact the international risk manager at simmons.541@osu.edu or via the 24/7 emergency line at 614-292-6677. Under federal Title IX requirements, any Ohio State faculty or staff member that knows of a sexual assault is required to take certain steps of action and to report the assault to the university’s Clery and Title IX Coordinator. If you report an assault to Ohio State faculty or staff they should:

- Inquire if you feel safe right now. If not, measures can be taken for your continued safety.
- Inquire if you feel safe in the program. If not, measures can be taken for your continued safety.
• Inquire if you need medical attention. The choice to seek medical assistance is entirely the decision of the survivor. Visits to a clinic/doctor, examinations and medications would be covered subject to the conditions of the HTH insurance policy. In addition, subject to conditions, the policy has coverage for ongoing medical care and counseling services.

• Inquire if you would like to call the police or local authorities. The choice to file a police report is entirely the decision of the survivor.

• Note: in some countries local staff may be legally obligated to notify legal authorities of a known sexual assault.

• Note: medical treatment will vary depending on destination and not all services may be available in all countries. However, we still strongly encourage going to the hospital immediately for medical treatment and evidence collection. This will provide additional options for you in the future. If the assault has just happened: do not shower, do not brush your teeth or drink anything, do not change your clothes or you can bring the clothing you had on with you in a bag. Make note of urination frequency post assault. If you have already bathed, etc. evidence may still be collected. Also know that you are welcome to bring a support person with you during your visit.

In addition, under Title IX any faculty or staff who is made aware of a sexual assault is required to report the assault to the university's Clery and Title IX Coordinator. The faculty or staff can offer confidentiality but not complete anonymity. Survivors/victims will receive a notification of assistance and resources from the university's sexual violence support coordinator in the Office of Student Advocacy. Ohio State is committed to providing support and resources for students who have experienced sexual violence; however, the survivor/victim is empowered to avail himself or herself to decline the services. If you are not interested or do not want to seek supportive services abroad, you are still eligible to seek support services upon your return to Ohio State (such as making an appointment with a sexual assault support coordinator).
U.S., OVERSEAS LAW AND STUDENT CONDUCT

U.S. law

A number of U.S. laws apply to citizens traveling abroad and returning to the United States.

Elicitation

The Federal Bureau of Investigation defines elicitation as the strategic use of conversation to extract information from people without giving the feeling they are being interrogated. The FBI has identified incidents, including one very high profile case, where foreign government officials attempted to recruit U.S. students into schemes to access and share sensitive U.S. information. The FBI cautions students to:

• Be skeptical of “money-for-nothing” offers and other opportunities that seem too good to be true, and be cautious of being offered free favors, especially those involving government processes such as obtaining visas, residence permits and work papers.
• Minimize personal information you reveal about yourself, especially through social media.
• Minimize your contact with people who have questionable government affiliations or who you suspect might be engaged in criminal activity.
• Properly report any money or compensation you received while abroad on tax forms and other financial disclosure documents to ensure compliance with U.S. laws.

In a particular high profile case, a student who accepted financial support toward their attempts to pass exams for jobs in U.S. intelligence was convicted and jailed in the United States. If you feel you are being approached in this manner, report it to your resident director, the international risk manager or officials at your local U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

International law and U.S. citizens

While in a foreign country, a U.S. citizen is subject to that country’s laws and regulations which sometimes differ significantly from those in the United States and may not afford the protections available to the individual under U.S. law. Persons violating the law, even unknowingly, may be expelled, fined, arrested or imprisoned.
Arrests abroad

If you are arrested while abroad for any reason, it is important that you know what the U.S. government and Ohio State can and cannot do for you. If you are detained for any reason, do not admit to wrongdoing or sign anything until a U.S. Consular official has been notified and you have obtained appropriate legal counsel.

A U.S. Consulate may:

- Visit you in jail after being notified of your arrest.
- Give you a list of local attorneys (the U.S. government cannot assume responsibility for the professional ability or integrity of these individuals or recommend a particular attorney).
- With your authorization notify your family and/or friends.
- Work with prison officials to ensure treatment consistent with internationally recognized standards and to ensure that U.S. citizens are afforded due process under local laws and international standards.

The U.S. Consulate cannot:

- Demand your immediate release or get you out of jail or the country.
- Represent you at trial or give legal counsel.
- Pay legal fees and/or fines with U.S. government funds.

Likewise, Ohio State faculty and staff can check on your general well-being and make appropriate contact with U.S. Consular officials, local authorities and family and friends in the United States. However, Ohio State cannot secure your release from jail, secure bail or other payments or provide representation in a court of law.
As an Ohio State study abroad participant, you are expected to attend all classes and participate in all program activities, including in-country program field trips, excursions and other group activities. Just as important, you are expected to conduct yourself in a manner appropriate to your status as a guest of your host country and as a representative of Ohio State.

As a member of the Ohio State academic community, you have important rights and responsibilities which are outlined in the university’s Code of Student Conduct. The code applies not only to on-campus conduct of all students but also applies to off-campus conduct of students, including those who participate in study abroad programs. The Code of Student Conduct is published online at studentlife.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp.

The Code of Student Conduct identifies prohibited types of conduct that will subject a student to university discipline. These include, but are not limited to, academic misconduct, endangering the health or safety of any person, sexual misconduct and destruction of property. In addition to the Code of Student Conduct, certain programs may establish group expectations contracts with additional standards and prohibited conduct. Inappropriate behavior abroad that is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct or a signed Group Expectations Contract can result in your dismissal from a study abroad program.

Also be aware that while you are studying abroad, you are subject to the local and national laws of the host country. Once you leave the U.S., you are not protected by U.S. laws and constitutional rights. Therefore, it is important to be informed about the laws of the countries in which you will study and abide by those laws.
ALCOHOL

According to the Code of Student Conduct, students are able to consume alcohol abroad if they are of the legal age of consumption in the country or region to which they are traveling. However, programs are able to establish group expectation contracts with restrictions above and beyond the code. In addition, at some locations abroad, the local host organization may not allow consumption. Regardless of the expectation and legality, if consumption of alcohol violates an expectations contract, impairs your ability to participate in the program, threatens the health and safety of yourself or others on the program and/or causes harm to the relationship Ohio State has established with organizations in the host country, you may potentially be reprimanded or dismissed from the program.

Drinking alcohol can seem deceptively harmless, especially when you travel to countries where attitudes, customs and drinking ages may be different from those in the United States. Nevertheless, excessive alcohol consumption impairs your judgment and can lead to disruptive behavior and risk of harm to yourself and to others, in addition to poor academic performance. If you choose to drink, be responsible and know your limit. You should never feel pressured to drink if you do not want to or feel embarrassed to order non-alcoholic beverages. Educate yourself by talking with your study abroad coordinator about the customs, etiquette and drinking age laws for your host country.

Never accept a drink from a stranger, and never leave your drink unattended. If a drink looks or tastes different, or has been moved or topped off, do not drink it.

DRUGS

Under the Ohio State Code of Student Conduct, the use, production, distribution, sale or possession of drugs in a manner prohibited under U.S. and Ohio law is prohibited conduct on overseas programs. This includes, but is not limited to, the misuse or sharing of prescription drugs. The use of prohibited drugs, even if permissible by local law, can lead to the dismissal from the program and subsequent discipline under the code.
Do not under any circumstances carry, use, buy or sell illegal or controlled substances such as marijuana, hashish, cocaine, heroin, ecstasy, etc. It is also advisable that you do not associate with anyone engaged in such activities. If you are detained or caught with illegal substances overseas, you are subject to local, not U.S., laws. Being ignorant about drug laws of a country that you are visiting is not a defense. Penalties for possession or trafficking of illegal drugs are often more severe than in the United States.

In the event that an Ohio State program participant is detained or arrested by foreign officials for possession of an illegal substance, there is little that Ohio State or the U.S. Embassy or Consulate can do to help you. Many countries do not accept bail, and pretrial detention — often in solitary confinement — may last for months. Prisons lack even minimal comforts. Physical abuse, confiscation of personal property, degrading or inhumane treatment and extortion are not uncommon. Trials can be lengthy, and few countries provide jury trials or require the presence of the accused at his or her trial.

**HIV/AIDS**

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), the virus that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), remains a prevalent health problem worldwide. In some countries, the rate of HIV and AIDS infection is much greater than in the United States. Contaminated blood and unprotected sexual contact remain the primary means by which HIV is transmitted.

There is no foolproof list of guidelines that will protect you from contracting HIV and AIDS. However, while you study abroad, there are things you can do to significantly decrease the risk of infection. Keep the following suggestions in mind:

- Act responsibly.
- Avoid injections, IVs or medical or dental treatments unless you are certain that needles and instruments are sterile.
- If you have a health condition that requires injections (e.g., diabetes), you should take an adequate supply of syringes and needles. Please bring a note or prescription from your doctor if you carry syringes or needles with you.
- Avoid blood transfusions if at all possible. If you require a blood transfusion due to an injury, then you, your resident director or treating physician can call HTH Worldwide at +1-610-254-8771 (collect) for advice before giving your consent.
• Refrain from high-risk activities that involve the use of needles or syringes such as skin piercing, tattooing, acupuncture or intravenous drug use.

• If you are sexually active, use latex condoms.

Some countries may require foreign visitors (usually those staying more than three months) to take an HIV test. Before traveling abroad, check with the embassy of the host country to learn about entry requirements, including HIV testing and whether supporting documentation is required. To review country-specific information, including entry and exit requirements, visit travel.state.gov and click on Learn About Your Country.

For more information about HIV and AIDS, please contact:

Ohio State Student Wellness Center
614-292-4527
swc.osu.edu

National AIDS Hotline
1-800-232-4636

Centers for Disease Control
cdc.gov

POLITICS

It is important to educate yourself about the current political and social issues of your host country, as well as the political and economic relationships between your host country and the United States. You will discover that people in other countries are often very knowledgeable about U.S. issues, and they may approach you to ask questions or discuss opinions.

It is possible that the political situation will be unstable in some countries you may visit during your study abroad experience. It is extremely unwise to become involved in any sort of political demonstration or activity while you are abroad, no matter how strongly you may feel about the issue. Also, while overseas, you may encounter political demonstrations that are specifically anti-American. Try not to take the criticism of U.S. politics personally. You do not have to agree with the critics, but trying to listen to their point of view may be a great learning experience. Even if you agree with the demonstrators, you must remember that you are in another country and should refrain from any action that may jeopardize your status there. Above all, know and obey the laws of the host country, as you are subject to those laws, not those of your home country.
Access to money overseas is a topic of great concern for every study abroad participant. Your study abroad coordinator will discuss country-specific considerations in regards to money at your pre-departure orientation. The Office of International Affairs offers the following general guidelines for study abroad students when dealing with money overseas.

**HOW TO EXCHANGE MONEY**

Access to money overseas is a topic of great concern for every study abroad participant. Your study abroad coordinator will discuss country-specific considerations in regards to money at your pre-departure orientation. The Office of International Affairs offers the following general guidelines for study abroad students when dealing with money overseas:

**SAFETY WITH MONEY**

No matter what type of money you take with you overseas, be careful. Use extreme caution when using public transportation or standing in a public transportation station or in crowded areas where pickpocketing may be prevalent. A money belt worn inside your clothing or a money pouch around your neck is recommended for safekeeping your passport, insurance and emergency cards, health information, credit cards and cash.

**CASH**

For most destinations, the Office of International Affairs recommends that you carry only a small amount of U.S. currency, in case it is lost or stolen. It can be extremely helpful to obtain a small amount of foreign currency before departure from the United States to use for buses, taxis, telephone calls and tips upon arrival. Check with local banks to see if you can obtain foreign currency before you leave.

Depending on which currency you are seeking, it may take up to a week before the bank can obtain the foreign currency. Foreign currency is also available at the Port Columbus Airport Business Center, which can be reached at 614-237-9224 during limited hours, and at most international airports.

Personal checks drawn from a U.S. bank account are virtually impossible to cash overseas due to the long amount of time it takes an overseas bank to clear the check.
DEBIT CARDS AND ATMS

Debit cards with a Cirrus or Plus designation can often be used to obtain foreign currency from an ATM overseas. Debit cards are a popular option for obtaining money overseas, as ATMs abroad are typically available 24 hours a day and you can often get a low exchange rate when the card withdraws money directly from your checking account at home. However, most banks and/or card companies may charge an extra fee for international transactions. Before you go abroad, check with your local bank to see if it is possible to use your debit card in your host country, if there are any added fees for withdrawing money overseas and if your PIN will work abroad. Most ATMs accept only a four-digit numerical PIN. You will also want to tell your bank to note on your account that you will be using your card abroad so they don’t “freeze” it, thinking it has been stolen. You should also be aware of your daily withdrawal limit and have your bank adjust it before you depart, if necessary. Make sure that your card will not expire while you are abroad.

Sometimes debit cards do not work overseas or are “eaten” by an ATM, so make sure you have other ways of obtaining money. Debit cards can also be difficult to replace if lost or stolen. In some countries, ATMs are linked only to local banks and are not part of an international network. You should also be aware that when withdrawing money from an ATM, you may not know the exchange rate you are receiving for your transaction. If you are planning to take a debit card overseas with you, it is advisable to leave a bank account deposit slip at home with a family member who can deposit money into your account in case of an emergency.

Although often the most convenient way to access your money abroad, ATMs can often be targets for thieves and used in express kidnappings (those in which a victim is abducted for a short time and forced to withdraw money). The Safety and Security section in the Department of State Country Information Sheets will often include specific cautions and guidelines about ATM usage and safety in your country. Please consult travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country.html for information about your country.

For information on ATMs worldwide, please visit: visa.com (Visa/Plus card members) or mastercard.com (MasterCard/Cirrus members).
CREDIT CARDS

Most major U.S. credit cards can be used worldwide and are extremely valuable in a financial emergency. It is highly advisable to obtain a major credit card before studying abroad. The most commonly accepted credit cards are Visa and MasterCard. Credit cards you use overseas must be in your own name as given on your passport. Be sure to record your credit card number and emergency card numbers in a separate place in case your card is lost or stolen.

You can get a cash advance at a bank using a credit card, but you will be charged interest continually until you pay back the advance. Therefore, it is important to arrange for someone to pay your credit card bills while you are gone.

Typically, the amount charged to your credit card bill is based on the exchange rate on the day that your bank or credit card company processed the transaction. Be aware that some banks and/or credit card companies may charge an extra fee for international transactions. Not all overseas merchants accept credit cards, regardless of the name brand. You will also want to call your credit card company before you depart to let them know that you will be using your card abroad. Make sure that your card will not expire while you are abroad.

TRAVELER’S CHECK/TRAVELER’S CARD

Traveler’s checks are becoming an increasingly obsolete way to obtain money overseas, but they can still serve as a back-up should you have difficulty accessing money from an ATM or your card is lost or stolen.

Prepaid travel cards are an alternative to traveler’s checks and can often be reloaded once depleted. Lost or stolen cash cannot be replaced; traveler’s checks and travel cards can be replaced. You can purchase either checks or cards from a variety of internationally recognized sources such as American Express, Bank of America, Visa or AAA.
OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT OVERSEAS

If you plan to be overseas for a semester or longer, you may wish to open a local bank account in the host country, which you will need to do in person once you arrive. This is especially helpful if you will need to make payments via wire transfer for housing. Many banks overseas will have their own bank cards, allowing you to make withdrawals from their ATMs. If you plan to open a bank account overseas, you should make your deposit with traveler’s checks or have your U.S. bank wire the funds. A personal check or money order can take weeks and even months to clear and will delay the ability to open a bank account quickly.

HOW MUCH MONEY TO TAKE

How much money to take depends on your study abroad program, the cost of living in your host country and your personal spending habits. Talk to former participants and your study abroad coordinator for advice on how much money to take. Calculate how much you will need, and then add some for a cushion and emergency situations.
LOSS OR SHORTAGE OF MONEY OVERSEAS

Try not to run out of money when you go overseas. Plan to bring enough resources along with you so that you will not be caught short. In the event that you do run out and need emergency funds, you may have money sent to you through these means:

- Wire or online money transfer services (i.e. Western Union or PayPal).
- If you have a debit card, have a family member or friend deposit funds into your account.
- In the event that your debit/credit card is lost or stolen, you will be expected to cover your expenses while a replacement card is organized. A replacement card can be organized through the bank directly or through a friend or family member at home.
Packing for Study Abroad

How much and what you pack will depend a great deal on the location and duration of your study abroad program. A year-long program in Germany calls for a different type of clothing than a six-week program in the Dominican Republic. As a rule of thumb, always pack sensibly and lightly. Keep in mind that, while abroad, it is perfectly acceptable to wear the same outfit a few times in one week. Choose clothes that you can mix and match in order to utilize a minimum number of items. Also, weather can vary quite a bit throughout the day and from town to town, so take clothes that are good for layering.

Remember, you are going to have to carry whatever you pack, so practice carrying your bags with the items you plan to take before going overseas and adjust accordingly. When you fly, you will be limited to two pieces of checked luggage and one carry-on bag. Your carry-on bag should contain all the necessities to live for one or two days in the event that your luggage is delayed or lost.

Packing tips specific to your program will be provided at your orientation; however, here are some more helpful guidelines for all study abroad students:

- Depending on your destination, you may be allowed one piece of checked luggage.
- Consult the website of your airline or the U.S. Department of State website (travel.state.gov) for up-to-date information on restrictions on specific items allowed in checked and carry-on luggage.
- Pack sensibly and lightly.
- Print and pack hard copies of your itinerary, accommodations or meeting points and important phone numbers. This is important so that you can still access information if your phone or laptop is lost or damaged.
- Do not take jewelry or other items of value. It is advisable to take an inexpensive watch.
- Take comfortable walking shoes. You will be walking a lot.
- Take bedroom/house slippers. In many cultures it is unacceptable to walk barefoot in the house.
• Take an extra pair of eyeglasses and/or contacts. Take enough contact lens solution to last for the duration of the program.

• Take enough prescription medication to last the duration of the program plus several days’ worth of extra medication in case of travel delays. Keep prescriptions in their original, labeled containers.

• Take your own towel and washcloth. Some programs may require you to bring bed linens as well. Ask your study abroad coordinator for details.

• Take a small, battery-operated alarm clock.

• Take photographs of family, friends or the Ohio State campus to share with the new friends you will make abroad.

• Electrical service is not identical throughout the world. If you plan to bring any electrical appliances (e.g., hair dryer, electric razor), you will need to take a voltage converter and a set of adapter plugs. For a worldwide electrical guide, visit worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets.

• Bring small gifts for host families or friends that you meet along the way.

• Don’t forget to pack an open mind and a sense of humor.

Many students ask if they should take their laptops overseas with them. You can take your laptop if you have the right converters to adapt to the local electrical currency and are willing to find a place to print your work. If you are thinking of bringing your laptop, consider the following:

• Your laptop should have its own multi-voltage transformer/converter. Inexpensive transformers will not work for computers and can damage your computer.

• Have your computer insured, as laptops are high-risk theft items.

• Carry your computer with you on the plane as a carry-on; do not pack it in your checked luggage.

• Prior to travel, ensure that no sensitive contact, research or personal data is on your electronic devices. You may find yourself using insecure wireless networks; protect the information you would not want intercepted.

• You might not be able to find anyone at your university who can help you with computer problems.
Before you leave the United States, it is vital that you make copies of the following items:

- Your passport information page (the page with your photograph)
- Any special immigration papers
- Tickets
- Credit and/or debit card information
- Your HTH insurance card, any prescriptions for medication and information with any elective appointments prearranged with HTH
- Any other important documents

Carry the copies with you in a separate place from the originals. Store the copies in a safe place, separate from the originals – in your room or in a hotel safe. Also be sure to leave a set at home with your family.

HTH Global Assistance Services will help students who have lost important documents, such as passports, by providing instructions for replacement. This benefit is available to students for the duration of their study abroad program. To obtain assistance from outside the United States, call collect +1-610-254-8771.
COMMUNICATION

CHANGING YOUR MAILING ADDRESS WITH OHIO STATE

Before leaving for your study abroad program, be sure to change your local address with Ohio State to ensure that any mail sent by the university will go to a U.S. address where a parent or responsible friend will take care of your affairs. You can change your address online at buckeyelink.osu.edu.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The Office of International Affairs looks forward to hearing from you while you are studying abroad. One of the first things we need is your address and telephone number while abroad, which you can simply email to your coordinator. If your program has a resident director, he or she will be in regular touch with the Office of International Affairs. If you have questions or concerns about the program, please ask your resident director or host country contact, or contact your study abroad coordinator directly at:

Office of International Affairs
1712 Neil Ave.
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1219 USA
614-292-6101
614-292-4725 (fax)
abroadadvisor@osu.edu

We also appreciate emails or “postcards” that include information on your latest adventures and accomplishments. To submit photographs and descriptions of your study abroad experience, please contact Victor van Buchem, senior communications specialist, at van-buchem.1@osu.edu.

EMAIL

Internet access varies widely from region to region. It can be easy to access in some places or require extra time and effort to access in others. It is important to adjust your expectations accordingly. Be sure to check your Ohio State email on a regular basis, if possible, and keep your account cleared of unnecessary email. You can access your Ohio State
email at webmail.osu.edu. The Office of International Affairs and Ohio State will communicate with you through your Ohio State email account and provide you with important information, such as your registration information. Many host institutions or overseas residence halls will provide computer facilities with Internet access for study abroad students. In addition, you can access the Internet for a fee at a local Internet café.

If you decide to open a personal email account, such as on gmail.com or yahoo.com, you will need to forward your Ohio State email to your new email address by visiting my.osu.edu.

Be sure to inform your Office of International Affairs study abroad coordinator of your email address.
When you make your first call overseas, you will need to learn a new telephone system, which will vary from country to country. Here are some options for phoning while overseas.

**Use your current cell phone abroad.**

If you plan to use your current cellphone abroad, contact your U.S. wireless provider (e.g., Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile) to find out if you need to purchase a specific service plan in order to use your phone and/or to obtain international calling and texting rates.

Another option is to continue using your personal cellphone with a service provider from overseas (such as Vodafone in Europe or América Móvil in Latin America). In this case, your cellphone will need to be “unlocked” before leaving the United States, and you will need to purchase a SIM card when you arrive in your host country. Using a SIM card abroad will give you access to local rates for minutes, texts and data usage, which may be less expensive than the rates offered through your U.S. wireless provider.

**Use an international calling/SMS app.**

Search for specific communication apps that will allow you to make international calls or texts at no charge, such as Skype, Viber, WeChat, Rebtel, Vonage or MagicJack.

**Rent or buy a cell phone.**

You can rent or buy a cellphone in the host country you are visiting for the duration of your stay or purchase a cellphone in the United States that provides international coverage. You should research cellphone options and rates on the Internet.

**Call from a computer.**

There are increasingly more programs, such as Skype, that allow users to make calls for free to other users over existing internet connections. It is also possible to make calls to landlines and cellphones from your account at a discounted rate.
Use an international calling card.

You can purchase a calling card online or from your U.S. telephone service before you depart. It may also be possible to purchase an international calling card in-country. Depending on your location, calling cards can be used to make discounted calls from a pay phone, land line or mobile phone.

SOCIAL MEDIA

We encourage you to think carefully about what you post online regarding your time abroad. Future employers, family members and university officials could come across your “social identity,” which could have a negative impact on your future. Keep in mind that people in the United States are not the only ones watching these websites. Posting revealing information about yourself could make you a target both in the United States and in the country you are visiting.

You should always ask permission before posting videos or photographs of your classmates, instructors, resident directors and tour guides. Remember, when you are online, you are in the public domain, and while you may be comfortable with this, not everyone feels the same way. Please represent yourself, your classmates, your instructors, the United States and Ohio State in a respectable manner.

It is recommended that you share your study abroad stories with others, but be aware of what you are sharing and with whom. Check your privacy settings and turn off the sharing of your location and geotagging of photos. If you share your location (via blog, tagged photo, check in, post, etc.), you may receive unwanted attention, and you or your group may be targeted.

If you choose to stay connected to family and friends via social media, stay connected to the Office of International Affairs as well — the Office of International Affairs can retweet your tweets, share your Facebook statuses, reblog you on Tumblr, connect with you on Instagram and even host a blog on your behalf while you are abroad. For more information, to submit photographs or video or to make social media arrangements, please contact Victor van Buchem, senior communications specialist, at van-buchem.1@osu.edu.
For many students, studying abroad will be their first time in another country and an extraordinary opportunity to learn about another part of the world from firsthand experience. Cultural immersion — interacting and living with people in other cultures — is an important part of the study abroad experience. Studying abroad is both a stimulating and confusing experience. For some students, experiential education is cause for anxiety and apprehension; for others, it is a challenge to be met and an experience that will be valued and cherished for a lifetime.

As a study abroad student, you should know beforehand what to expect from your study abroad program as well as what is expected from you in the classroom, particularly in regard to academic objectives. Educating yourself before your departure is one of the best ways to prepare yourself for what to expect overseas. The Office of International Affairs pre-departure orientation meetings will help you understand specific program goals and direct you to resources and websites about your host country. If you are participating in a third party provider, direct enroll or international exchange program, then you should become familiar with the academic policies of your host institution and the day-to-day academic routine you can expect. You should discuss any concerns or questions you have about the academic program with your study abroad coordinator.

While abroad, you are expected to participate fully and enthusiastically in your study abroad program, attend all classes and participate in all program activities, including in-country program field trips, excursions and other group activities. Many Ohio State sponsored programs involve extensive travel and field study excursions. Students should be prepared to be flexible in the event that an unpredicted change in an itinerary or a health problem arises. An unforeseen emergency can be disruptive. Being able to “go with the flow” and adapt to change is part of the study abroad experience.

It is critical to begin now to learn about the country where you will be studying abroad. The more research you do about the host country’s political system, culture, customs and language, the better prepared you will be for living in and understanding the host society.
Some ways of educating yourself include:

- Read pertinent foreign newspapers and periodicals at libraries or online.
- Read The New York Times, Miami Herald, Christian Science Monitor and other newspapers or magazines with extensive international coverage.
- Listen to radio stations that provide international news coverage, such as National Public Radio.
- Visit area bookstores or your local library to explore their international travel sections.
- Check the Wexner Center for the Arts or the Drexel Theater in Bexley, both of which frequently shows international films.
- Meet former participants from your study abroad program. Ask your study abroad coordinator to connect you with former participants.
- Talk with people who are originally from that country or have lived there for an extended period of time. There are more than 6,000 international students at Ohio State, some of whom may be from the country you are going to visit.
- Review the most recent Consulate Information Sheet and/or current Travel Warnings and Public Announcements issued by the U.S. State Department on your host country. This information can be viewed at travel.state.gov.
CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Living in a new country and culture can be exciting, fulfilling and stimulating. It can also be frustrating and confusing. “Culture shock” is the term used to describe the difficulties experienced as you integrate into a new society and deal with the many emotions that come from adapting to a new culture. Culture shock is a natural reaction to leaving your familiar surroundings and finding yourself in an almost unknown environment where many things are unfamiliar.

Culture shock has two distinctive features:

1. It does not result from a specific event or series of events. It comes instead from the experience of encountering ways of doing, organizing, perceiving or valuing things that are radically different from yours.

2. It does not strike suddenly or have a single principal cause. Instead, it is cumulative. It builds up slowly from a series of small events, which are difficult to identify.

– Survival Kit for Overseas Living, L. Robert Kohls

As a person about to live in another country, it is reasonable to assume that you may experience some degree of culture shock as you adjust and adapt to your new environment. The language, food, daily life and way things look are no longer familiar. If you experience some degree of culture shock, do not despair. You are not alone. Many people experience new and conflicting emotions as they live cross-culturally. No two people, however, experience culture shock in the exact same way. Some might experience it after a few days in the new country, some not until a few months into the stay and others may never experience it. Culture shock varies from individual to individual.

CULTURAL ADAPTATION PHASES

Culture shock can be expressed in a variety of ways: intense homesickness, irritability, hypercritical thoughts, sadness, fear and frustration. Studies in intercultural education have shown that there are distinct phases of personal adjustment that virtually everyone who lives abroad experiences. These stages are:
1. **Pre-Departure**

   **General Attitude:** Anticipation, eagerness, nervousness
   
   **Events:** Planning, packing, processing, celebrating, attending orientation
   
   **Emotional Response:** Excitement, enthusiasm, concern about leaving family and a familiar environment, desire to escape problems
   
   **Behavioral Response:** Anticipation, loss of interest in current responsibilities
   
   **Physical Response:** Tiredness, generally normal health
   
   **Verbal Response:** “I just can’t wait to…”

2. **Initial Euphoria**

   **General Attitude:** Exhilaration, excitement
   
   **Events:** Red carpet welcome, new home stay or dorm, new classes and teachers, exploration of sights and shops
   
   **Emotional Response:** Tourist enthusiasm, sense of adventure
   
   **Behavioral Response:** Outward curiosity about country, avoiding negative stereotypes, enthusiasm for studies and site, passive observer of culture
   
   **Physical Response:** Intestinal disturbances, minor insomnia
   
   **Verbal Response:** “Awesome! This place and these people are a lot like home.”

3. **Increasing Participation**

   **General Attitude:** Bewilderment, disenchantment, restlessness, impatience
   
   **Events:** Classes, everyday life, responsibilities in home stay or dorm, unfamiliar food, language, customs
   
   **Emotional Response:** Frustration, uncertainty, irritability, loss of enthusiasm, skepticism
**Behavioral Response:** Search for security in familiar activities (e.g., reading books in English), increased alcohol and/or food consumption, withdrawal

**Physical Response:** Colds, headaches, tiredness

**Verbal Response:** “Why do they have to do it like that? Why can’t they just…”

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4. **Culture Shock**

**General Attitude:** Impatience, irritation, aggression, hostility

**Events:** Uneven work performance, confrontation with difference

**Emotional Response:** Discouragement, lethargy, depression, suspicion, boredom, homesickness, anger, extreme sensitivity and irritability, loneliness

**Behavioral Response:** Withdrawal, avoiding contact with host nationals, excessive sleep, tearful, loss of concentration, tension/conflict with others

**Physical Response:** Minor illnesses, headaches, preoccupied with personal cleanliness

**Verbal Response:** “This place sucks! I hate it here.”

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5. **Adaptation Phase**

**General Attitude:** Adjustment and/or recovery

**Events:** Work performance improves, able to interpret cultural clues, sense of humor returns

**Emotional Response:** Sense of comfort with surroundings, sense of belonging in culture

**Behavioral Response:** Empathy, ability to see things from perspectives of host national

**Physical Response:** Normal health

**Verbal Response:** “Home” is home stay or dorm. “We” includes host nationals.
6. **Re-Entry Phase**

**General Attitude:** Ambivalence and state of disorientation

**Events:** Wanting to tell others about experience and finding others generally not very interested

**Emotional Response:** Mixed-up, disconnected, disoriented, irritability, depression, desire to return to host country, uncertainty about “home”

**Behavioral Response:** Criticism of home, friends and the U.S., keen interest in foreign affairs and news, apathy

**Physical Response:** Colds, headaches, exhaustion

**Verbal Response:** “I never realized...”

— Adapted from the Fulbright Newsletter, 1988

Just as your experience with culture shock will be individual and personal, you will need to deal with it in an individualized way. An important thing to keep in mind is that **confronting**, rather than avoiding, the symptoms and causes of culture shock will help you to adapt much faster to the host culture. Also, do not hesitate to talk to your resident director, in-country contact or your study abroad coordinator at any time about how you are feeling with your cultural adaptation.

Some suggestions for overcoming culture shock:

- Understand that practically everyone who goes overseas experiences some form of culture shock. It is a very natural part of the study abroad experience, and you will get through it.
- Before you leave, learn as much as you can about the culture you are visiting. Gather information on the country history, basic facts and dos and don’ts of the culture. The number of surprises you experience will decrease with the more you know in advance.
- Form friendships with host nationals, as many will be sympathetic, understanding and open to discussions about the specific situations and feelings you are going through.
- Look for logical reasons behind everything in the host culture that seems strange, difficult, confusing or threatening.
- Avoid the temptation to be negative or to belittle the host culture.
• Take care of yourself, get exercise and eat well. Know how and when to release tension and pay attention to your physical and emotional health.

• While overseas, consider writing a journal to help gather your thoughts about what you are experiencing.

The good news is that culture shock need not last long if you work to keep an open mind and seek to understand your new surroundings and the people you are meeting. Striving to remain tolerant of differences and maintaining a sense of humor can be very helpful tools. Although culture shock can be challenging, overcoming it provides a valuable opportunity for personal growth. It is a mind-stretching process that will leave you with a broader perspective, a deeper insight into yourself and a wider tolerance for others. You will mature in ways that you never would have had you stayed home.

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

To act as a conscientious global citizen and avoid giving a negative perception of Americans:

• Avoid telling people that Americans do things better.
• Be a person who shares and is inclusive in relationships.
• Be genuinely interested in your host country and its people.
• Do not talk a lot about your possessions or your family and friends.
• Do not demand special treatment because you are an American.
• Do not drink to excess.
• Avoid making negative comparisons between your host country and the U.S.
• Do not be too obvious or loud about your patriotism/nationalism.
• Do not throw your money around.

— Adapted from Australian Education Office’s pre-departure guide
INTERNATIONAL GENDER ROLES

You will find that gender politics in the United States are unique and often different from countries around the world. It is extremely important to research your host culture’s gender roles and inter-gender communication.

The greatest challenge for U.S. female students abroad is discovering how different other countries’ gender roles can be and their perceptions of U.S. female college students. At times, behavior and actions that would be acceptable in the United States might be, at the very least, misinterpreted and at the most, dangerous. For example, making extended eye contact with a person from the opposite sex may be much more intimate than it is here in the United States and be seen as an invitation for a closer relationship than intended. The same goes for other forms of non-verbal communication such as clothing. In the United States, students can wear a whole range of different clothing, but abroad some clothing may be outside the local norm. On the other end of the spectrum, here in the United States it may be safe to travel alone and/or at night, whereas abroad, this could be misinterpreted (in some countries women who are alone at night are assumed to be sex workers) or dangerous.

There is also the perception that U.S. female college students are “easy,” an unfair perception that has been cultivated by many contemporary movies, songs and celebrities.

Male students should also be aware of their behavior abroad and understand how their intergender communication may be interpreted. You should ask yourself, “Is it culturally appropriate for me to be alone with a person of the opposite sex?” or “Could my body language or actions be misinterpreted?”

All students should research the host country’s gender roles and intergender communications beforehand. Students of either gender should never travel alone.

Resources:
- **Pink Pangea**: pinkpangea.com (A website full of stories and tips for women travelers.)
- **Diversity Abroad**: diversityabroad.com/women-study-abroad-safety (a general guide for women travelers.)
- **An article on men and studying abroad**: universitypost.dk/article/comment-why-arent-more-men-studying-abroad
Cultural and racial diversity are significant factors for students in choosing a study abroad program. Students who live in racially diverse communities or have attended racially diverse schools are generally aware of the issues that racial differences can produce. Students traveling to a foreign country, especially one in which the racial mix is different from their own, may be challenged to understand their new environment. Attitudes toward race differ widely across the globe, and reactions to racial differences can range from tolerance to intolerance, from acceptance to discrimination.

For some students, traveling abroad may be the first time they have to deal with their own feelings toward people whose racial backgrounds are different from their own. It can also be the first time they realize that others perceive them to be racially different. Stereotypes about race exist in all cultures and can sometimes lead to prejudice, discrimination or harassment.

What should you do if you experience prejudice while abroad?

- Know that you may encounter prejudice or discrimination abroad. Being intellectually prepared for it may help you to cope with it.
- Don’t take it personally. Racism is not directed at you personally but to a generalized perception or stereotype about the group to which you belong.
- Understand that racism is an irrational reaction. Once people get to know you, their prejudice may disappear.
- Take the initiative to educate others about your own ethnic background. Acknowledging racial differences need not be an occasion for strife; it can be an opportunity to help others understand these differences. If you encounter race issues or find yourself in racially tense situations while traveling abroad, feel free to talk with your resident director, in-country contact or another member of your group.
SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY

Studying abroad can be a great time for self-exploration and individual growth and sexual orientation, and gender identity can be a fluid concept. Should you identify yourself as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex it is very important to research your host country’s attitudes, laws and related crime rates prior to your departure.

Some of the questions you should be able to answer are:

- What are the current and past laws in the host country? These include hate crime laws, laws of consent (can be different between hetero couples vs. same-sex couples), etc.
- What is the cultural attitude surrounding the community with whom I identify?
- Are there open communities in the country? Or at the local university?
- What are the inter-gender communications?

Additional questions can be found at diversityabroad.com/guides/diversity-inclusion/sexual-orientation-abroad.

Many students struggle with the concept of being “out” while abroad while being true to their own identity. It is important to remember to put your safety first while at the same time respecting who you are. Here are some resources and tips to help you through this process:

- Talk to your study abroad coordinator about his or her knowledge of the country and past participant information.
- Research the relevant laws in the countries to which you’re traveling:
  - Interactive International legislation map through the International, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association ilga.org
  - International Gay & Lesbian Human Righter Commission: iglhrc.org/content/information-country
- Discuss your feelings and concerns with your resident director or in-country contact person.
- Visit the Office of Student Life Multicultural Center for resources and information, located in Suite 1000 of the Ohio Union.
• Search the Internet for in-country resources, support groups, attitudes, etc. Try some of the following sites:
  – Planet Out: planetout.com (LGBT travel resources)
  – IGLA Europe: ilga-europe.org
  – Utopia Asia: utopia-asia.com
  – Out Traveler: outtraveler.com
  – NAFSA Rainbow SIG: rainbowsig.org
  – TSA: tsa.gov/traveler-information/transgender-travelers (practical travel tips for transgender people)

• Read articles about other LGBT people who have studied abroad:
  – “9 Major Life Lessons I Learned Studying Abroad as an LGBT”
    gooverseas.com/blog/what-i-learned-lgbt-studying-abroad
  – “16 Famous LGBT Folks Who Studied Abroad”
    gooverseas.com/blog/famous-lgbt-study-abroad
  – “Out and Abroad: LGBT Study Abroad”
    outabroad.com/out-and-abroad-lgbt-study-abroad

Whatever your sexual orientation or gender identity, please remember that there may be gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex students on your study abroad program or in the host country. Some may be “out,” some may not and some may still be discovering their sexual or gender identity. Being respectful to this diversity is extremely important and can further enrich your study abroad experience.
Coming home and returning to Ohio State is sometimes just as challenging as leaving. This section contains important information for returning study abroad students.

**STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM SURVEYS**

The Office of International Affairs wants and needs to hear about your experience abroad and learn how we can better prepare future participants. Therefore, the Office of International Affairs asks study abroad participants to complete a survey of their study abroad program. After your program concludes, you will be sent an email that will provide you with instructions to complete an anonymous online survey.

Please give the survey careful consideration. We want to hear your suggestions, criticisms and ideas on what to do and/or not do in coming years. The survey is a valuable tool that we will use to improve our study abroad programs, so your input is essential.

**PROCESSING YOUR STUDY ABROAD CREDIT: THIRD PARTY PROVIDER, DIRECT ENROLL AND INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS**

There are two key steps in getting your study abroad credit transferred quickly to Ohio State: obtain credit evaluation for the courses you took abroad from the appropriate transfer credit coordinator at Ohio State, and make sure a transcript is sent from your program abroad to the study abroad coordinator responsible for your overseas program. See Study Abroad Credit Evaluation on page 22 for further information.
WHERE TO LIVE AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

You will need a place to live after you return from your study abroad program. The Office of International Affairs recommends that you make housing arrangements well in advance of your return to the United States. If you wish to live in an Ohio State residence hall when you return, then you should contact Ohio State Housing Services before you leave for your study abroad program.

Ohio State Housing Services
350 Morrill Tower
1910 Cannon Dr.
Columbus, OH 43210-1290
614-292-8266
housing.osu.edu

You may want to consider living in International House, a residence hall for both international and domestic students who share an interest in international travel and culture. International House features international programming and social events. For information about off-campus housing options, you should contact Neighborhood Services and Collaboration.

Neighborhood Services and Collaboration
3106 Ohio Union
1739 N. High St.
614-292-0100
offcampus.osu.edu

For advice about signing a lease, sublease or other legal matters, you should contact Student Legal Services.

Student Legal Services
20 E. 11th Ave.
614-247-5853
studentlegal.osu.edu
When you return home, you will be entering the last stage of cultural adjustment called the re-entry phase. For some people, re-entry may be challenging. Many of the feelings returnees experience can be similar to those felt when adjusting to your host country. For some, re-entry can be more difficult than when you first went abroad. Study abroad students often find that they themselves have changed a great deal. For many people, the process of re-entry is greatly eased by sharing the overseas experience with like-minded and/or interested people. Seek out other students who have returned from studying abroad as well as international students, especially those from the country from which you have just returned.

Your study abroad experience has also provided you with new skills that will assist you both personally and professionally. The Office of International Affairs offers useful information and additional resources to help assist in your transition back to life at Ohio State. These are available under the Coming Home tab at oia.osu.edu/study-abroad.

Here are some strategies that may ease your adjustment to life after study abroad:

• Give some thoughts to the types of changes you have undergone as a result of your time abroad. How have you changed? What is important to you now?
• Be patient with your friends and family. They are trying to understand your recent experience even as you are listening and trying to understand what they went through while you were gone.
Expect some negative feelings about your home culture. You may be viewing your culture from a completely different perspective. Remember that there are positive and negative aspects of all cultures.

Find ways to keep the international aspect in your life:

- Participate in orientations for students going to your country. The Office of International Affairs is always interested in having past participants share their experiences and photographs at orientations, information sessions, in the residence halls and other presentation opportunities that may arise on campus.

- Get involved with international students/faculty on campus. Attend Global Engagement Nights (http://oia.osu.edu/workshops-and-events/global-engagement.html) where domestic and international students connect to learn about diverse cultures.

- Live in the International House residence hall at Ohio State.

- Take internationally focused courses, or consider adding a major or minor in international studies. Visit the international studies website at internationalstudies.osu.edu.

- Become an English Conversation Partner. The English Conversation Program brings U.S. and international students together to share conversation and friendship. Registration and information are available online at oia.osu.edu/workshops-and-events/english-conversation-program.html.

- Subscribe to a newspaper from your host country.

- Visit oia.osu.edu for upcoming international events at Ohio State.

Consider how you can use what you learned abroad in your academic studies or career. The Office of International Affairs, Student Life Career Counseling and Support Services and your academic advisor can help you explore the options available to you.

If you are eligible for Federal Work Study, consider working at the Office of International Affairs. Interested students should send an email to abroad@oia.osu.edu.

Start planning how you might go abroad again either on a study abroad program, work or volunteer abroad or personal travel.
RETURNING HOME

POST-TRAVEL HEALTH ISSUES

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 15 to 70 percent of travelers returning to the United States have illnesses related to their travels. Some illnesses start while traveling, but others can take months or years to appear. It is important to share your travel history with your healthcare provider, especially if you develop an illness with fever within six months of your return. If you experienced illness during your program or upon return, please contact Student Health Services at 614-292-4321.

Also, don’t forget to finish your anti-malarial pills and get a follow-up TB test as advised at your pre-travel visit. Consider completing any vaccine series not completed prior to travel, so you will be ready for your next program.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Study abroad will enrich your life in many ways. Students frequently describe their experiences abroad as life-altering. For some, the experience is an occasion for personal reflection; for others, it marks the beginning of broadened perspectives, reassessment of personal values and new career paths. The journey does not end upon your return home; rather, the journey continues throughout your life, and your past experiences become a part of who you are.
USEFUL WEBSITES

Accommodations, etc.

**Hotels, B&Bs, Apts.:** [venere.com](http://venere.com)
**Hostel Guide:** [hostels.org](http://hostels.org)
**Routes International:** [routesinternational.com](http://routesinternational.com)
**Hostels:** [hihostels.com](http://hihostels.com)
**Hostels:** [hostels.com](http://hostels.com)
**Hostels:** [hostelseurope.com](http://hostelseurope.com)
**Hostels:** [hostelworld.com](http://hostelworld.com)
**Hostels:** [hostelz.com](http://hostelz.com)
**Virtual Tourist:** [virtualtourist.com](http://virtualtourist.com)

European Rail Travel

**Britrail:** [britrail.com](http://britrail.com)
**Eurail Pass:** [eurail.com](http://eurail.com)
**Rail Europe:** [raileurope.com](http://raileurope.com)
**Railpass Information:** [railpass.com](http://railpass.com)
**Railpass and Hostels:** [eurotrip.com](http://eurotrip.com)

Miscellaneous Travel Information

**Internet Cafés:** [world66.com/netcafeguide](http://world66.com/netcafeguide)
**Currency Exchange Rates:** [xe.net/ucc](http://xe.net/ucc)
**Currency Exchange Rates:** [oanda.com](http://oanda.com)
**ISIC (Student ID Card):** [isic.org](http://isic.org)
**Time Zones:** [timeticker.com](http://timeticker.com)
**Worldwide Metric Conversion:** [worldwidemetric.com/measurements.html](http://worldwidemetric.com/measurements.html)
**Maps of Europe:** [viamichelin.com](http://viamichelin.com)
**HTH Worldwide:** [hthstudents.com](http://hthstudents.com)

Special Interest Groups

**Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender:** [planetout.com](http://planetout.com)
**Mobility International:** [miusa.org](http://miusa.org)
Travel Guides

Fodor’s Travel Guide Online: fodors.com
Let’s Go Travel Guide Online: letsgo.com
Lonely Planet Travel Guide Online: lonelyplanet.com
Rough Guides Travel Online: roughguides.com
Rick Steves’ Europe: ricksteves.com

Government Services

Centers for Disease Control: cdc.gov/travel
Passport Information: travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html
Foreign Entry Requirements: travel.state.gov/visa/americans/americans_1252.html
Drug Warning: travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/drugs.html
Embassy and Consulate Information: embassy.org
Travel Warnings: travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html
Absentee Voting: fvap.gov
U.S. Consulates: usembassy.state.gov
U.S. Department of State: studentsabroad.state.gov
Travel Services (Also check the websites of individual airlines)

Student Universe: studentuniverse.com  
STA Travel: statravel.com  
Uniglobe: uniglobe.com  
Kayak: kayak.com  
Expedia: expedia.com

Green Travel

Carbon Neutral: carbonneutral.com  
Ethical Traveler: ethicaltraveler.org  
Fair Trade Federation: fairtradefederation.org  
The Green Passport Program: greenpassport.us  
Green Travel: responsibletravelreport.com  
Go Green Travel Green: gogreentravelgreen.com

– This list is neither exclusive nor comprehensive in scope