

UGA Study Abroad Passport 1

STUDY ABROAD PASSPORT

THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO !

OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION BUILDING

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PREPARATIONS FOR DEPARTURE

Congratulations on making the decision to study abroad! While you may think the adventure starts when your plane lands, there are actually many things to take care of before you leave. It is important to take time before you go to plan ahead for life abroad. This section outlines some of the preparations you should make before leaving in order to avoid unwanted hassles and to make your experience more enjoyable.

PASSPORTS

A passport is an official government document that certifies your identity and citizenship. U.S. citizens need passports to enter most countries. You will need to apply for a new passport if you have never had one before, if your passport was issued before your 16th birthday, or if your passport is more than 15 years old. Passports cost \$135 for a new passport and \$110 to renew. This is a considerable amount of money, but your passport will last for ten years if you get one after you turn 18 years old. Allow 4-6 weeks for processing. Passport applications are available on-line at: http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html or they may be picked up from the Post Office on Olympic Drive or the UGACard Office in Tate 309.

STUDENT VISAS

A visa is an official government authorization appended to your passport that permits entry into and travel within a particular country for a designated period of time. Almost all countries require that you have a visa if you are planning to study there for longer than three months. Discuss with your program director how to obtain a visa for entrance into the country where you will be studying. Some programs do the work for you; other programs require you to obtain a visa on your own. Each country has its own regulations, so if your program sponsor does not provide the necessary information, contact the embassy or nearest consulate office of the country you are planning to enter. Make sure you have secured a visa before you buy a non-refundable plane ticket. There is almost always a fee attached to the visa application and the process can take several weeks, so don't wait until the last minute! Delays in obtaining a visa may cause you to miss your flight.

Initial information is available on-line at: http://www.uga.edu/oie/sa_travel_visa.htm.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IDENTITY CARD

Some students may wish to purchase the International Student Identity Card (ISIC) available through STA Travel. ISICs will entitle you to some insurance coverage while traveling, reduced airfares, and entrance tickets to cultural events and museums, as well as numerous travel benefits. It can also be used as a pre-paid telephone card. The ISIC can be purchased at the Office of International Education, located in the International Education Building, 1324 S. Lumpkin. The ISIC costs \$23 and is valid up to one year. For more information visit

http://www.uga.edu/oie/sa_travel_isic.htm

<http://www.myisic.com/>

HOSTELLING INTERNATIONAL

Another useful card is the Youth Hostel or Hostelling International (HI) card. It is good for discounts on hostels throughout the world and can also be obtained from STA Travel. <http://www.hihostels.com/>

INTERNATIONAL CALLING

Cell Phones

"Phoning home" from a foreign country can be a very complicated process. Calling collect is always an option, but usually quite expensive. Almost all of the U.S. long-distance UGA Study Abroad Passport 4

telephone companies (AT&T, MCI and Sprint) have an access code depending on which country you are calling from. It is highly recommended that you obtain the access code of a long distance company before going abroad as it is very difficult to get this information from abroad. These numbers will connect you directly to an AT&T, Sprint or MCI English speaking operator and the call will be charged to your calling card. In some cases, the charge can also go on a credit card. There is usually no charge for accessing this number, but you may want to check with an international operator before using someone's telephone to call home. Specific information about calling cards can be obtained by calling any of those long-distance carriers. Be sure to compare calling card rates, as companies are interested in being competitive and may allow you to negotiate.

Calling Cards

In most countries you can now buy pre-paid phone cards. They are usually purchased with cash and you have to buy a new one when the time runs out.

Buying a New Phone

Depending on the length of your stay overseas you might also consider purchasing or renting a cell phone. In some countries this is more convenient and less expensive than making traditional international calls.

Tip: Have people in the U.S. call you back to save money.

* Telephones around the world are wired differently. If you intend to use a modem, please contact the modem company to determine if any precautions should be taken prior to connection with a foreign phone jack.

Skype

Skype is a free software you can download to your computer or cell phone that allows you to call and instant message others. Have friends and family download it as well because Skype-to-Skype calls are free, as well as video calls and instant messaging. You can also call a landline at very inexpensive rates, just pennies for the U.S. Skype is an easy and cost-efficient way to stay in touch with family and friends while you're abroad. For more information, visit

www.skype.com.

E-MAIL

Your UGA email account is accessible from most locations overseas by going to <http://ugamail.uga.edu>. You might prefer, though, to forward your UGA mail to an alternate account.

Please continue to check your UGAmail account overseas, as all official university-related information will be sent to that account. Also, be careful of going over your account quota, which will prevent you from receiving future e-mails. Incoming messages might not continue to be forwarded to a Gmail or other alternate account if your UGAmail quota is full. Also, please be sure to check that your UGA e-mail password is up to date so you do not have trouble logging in while abroad.

Internet Access

Internet cafés throughout the world allow you to keep in touch with friends and family back home. At Internet cafés, you pay for the amount of time you use the Internet service and computer. This is a cheap alternative to calling home. Also check for public libraries, which may offer you free Internet access.

Some restaurants, cafes, hotels, and other public venues may have Wi-Fi available for free or if you are a paying customer. If you have a laptop or a smartphone, you can connect to that Wi-Fi with your own device. Students have turned smartphones to "airplane mode." This mode cuts off the phone's service via your service provider--such as wireless, call, and text capabilities--while still allowing you to connect to the Wi-Fi, provided you are using a Wi-Fi capable device. This prevents expensive charges from your service provider if you do not have an international plan. Contact your wireless provider for more information on international plans and connecting to the internet while abroad.

Staying in Touch with Family while Integrating to your Host Culture

We encourage you to keep in touch with friends and family while abroad and share your experiences with them. However, we will offer a word of caution about e-mail. Part of the growing experience of studying abroad is being out of UGA Study Abroad Passport 5

constant communication with friends and family. Spending too much time on e-mail will also take away from time better spent exploring your new destination and meeting people from the host country. Try not to become too dependent on e-mail while abroad. Perhaps you can start a blog or online journal to share your experiences with multiple friends without needing to send out individual messages. Spend time exploring your host culture so you have more to share with family and friends upon your return.

MAIL

Your study abroad program will likely have an address for you to give to others so that you can receive mail. Check with your program to get this information. In case you don't have an address abroad where you can receive mail, it is important to know that some banks and international credit card companies will accept and hold mail for you at their overseas office. American Express offers customers a mail holding service: mail can be sent to you in care of the appropriate office. You can also have your letters sent to the US Embassy. Although not always reliable, you can use the local post office as your address by addressing mail this way:

Name

Poste Restante (general delivery)

City

"1" After the city name (to ensure it goes to the main branch)

Country

Stamps are sold at post offices, tobacco shops and stationary stores in hotels. "Aerograms" (lightweight combinations of stationary and envelope) are available in post offices and are the cheapest way to send mail.

Shipping gifts home may be expensive, but will save your arms and back while you travel.

Always read the fine print. Some companies ship your packages to a warehouse where you must claim it when you return to the States (and pay the storage, custom, or other fees). Ask if your package will be mailed directly to the shipping address.

EUROPEAN RAIL PASSES

Depending on where you are traveling, investing in a train/rail pass may be a wise and economical decision. STA Travel and other

agencies sell Britrail and Eurail passes. Students under the age of 26 may receive a discounted rail fare. Also, there are some passes you **MUST** buy in the United States before you leave (e.g. Eurail) while others you may purchase in the host country.

Since traveling is an integral part of the study abroad experience, it is important to research the most cost-effective way to explore. An economical option you may want to consider, especially around Europe, is the train system. Rail passes cannot be purchased once you are abroad, so it is necessary to plan ahead. Passes allow for, and even promote, the flexible style of travel that students need and want.

Eurail Passes are the most common railroad passes. A wide variety is available, enabling you to travel to as many European countries as you like, in whatever time frame you desire. They range from the 23-country pass to individual country passes, and from 3 days to 3 months. Having a Eurail Pass eliminates the need to stand in long lines for tickets and can be more economical than buying individual train tickets from one specific city to another. In addition, the pass provides discounted fares on Eurostar, the channel tunnel (chunnel) train between Paris and London or Brussels and London, and free or discounted travel on selected ferries, lake steamers, boats and buses. A complete list of bonuses is included on the complimentary Eurail map you will receive with your pass. Consider buying a supportive backpack or rolling luggage if you travel. For more information, see a travel agent.

Visit a student travel agency, such as STA Travel for more information in planning your trip. They provide information on hotels/hostels, flights, and tours in countries across the world. Please see <http://www.statravel.com/> for more information.

Tip: Think about your travel plans before buying a rail pass. There are a variety of pass options. Make sure to purchase the best for your travel plans. It may turn out to be less expensive to purchase point-to-point tickets instead of a rail pass. It just depends on your travel plans. UGA Study Abroad Passport 6

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

You should make flight arrangements as soon as you know when you are supposed to arrive in your host country. The sponsoring organization or host university can assist you with information about your arrival, including the distance from the airport to the campus/hotel and the best form of transportation. In some cases, your director may meet you at the airport, but others may require you to get around on your own at first. To avoid panic when your plane lands, make sure you have as much information ahead of time as possible.

Tip: In addition to contacting a local travel agent, you should always compare prices with student travel agencies. Always ask about student fares! You may buy a round-trip ticket or two one-way tickets. If you plan to travel after the end of your program, you may want to consider buying an open-ended return ticket, which usually has a one-year limit.

If you will be expecting a time change at your destination, be sure to prepare to spend a day or two recovering from jet lag. International flights require that you check in at the airport at least two hours before departure, so plan to arrive early at the airport.

Airlines set limits on the size and weight of luggage. If you have an unusually large or heavy bag, call the airline to check on size/weight limits.

* Some programs have pre-arranged travel plans, which are included in the program costs.

*This would be a good time to sign up for a frequent flyer program with the airline with which you'll be flying.

PACKING

It is nearly impossible to pack everything you want. The trick is to pack what you need and what you can carry! Here are a few tips that may come in handy while you are deciding what you should take with you overseas.

Remember that you will probably want to make purchases abroad, so leave room or bring an extra bag for bringing things home.

Keep a list of what is in each bag and carry the list with your other documents. If your luggage is lost, this will aid you in making an insurance claim. It will also help you remember what you brought with you in case something is stolen, and it is not immediately obvious.

Due to increased airline security measures, be sure to put anything sharp, such as tweezers, nail clippers or pocket knives into your checked luggage. For more information on airline security, visit www.tsa.gov.

Assume you will over-pack

Keep in mind that it may be easier for you to carry two smaller bags than one large suitcase, although some may prefer one large rolling suitcase and one small carry-on. Many students find backpacks to be ideal because they won't strain your muscles and will leave your hands free. Pack your luggage and carry it around the block and up and down some stairs. Then re-evaluate what is absolutely necessary and empty half of it. You cannot bring too little. Make sure you put your name and address on a luggage tag and also inside your suitcase, in case the suitcase breaks or is lost during your travels.

*Never leave your bags unattended!

*Ask friends and family not to pack 'surprise packages' in your luggage.

Clothing

Take interchangeable clothing that can be layered. In many cases, people in other countries dress up more than most Americans, even to go shopping, so take something nice, as well as a sturdy pair of jeans. Depending on how long you will be abroad, you may be there through more than one season - plan ahead and take some clothes for changing weather. You will be walking far more than usual. Taking a good pair of comfortable shoes is a must! When packing, distribute the weight evenly: breakables and light to medium-weight clothing in the hard-UGA Study Abroad Passport 7

sided suitcase and heavy sweaters, shoes, etc., in the packs or duffels.

It's important to spend some time learning about how people dress in the part of the world you are traveling to. Wearing clothing with logos, English writing and Greek letters will make you stand out as an American. Try to leave baseball caps, jewelry, and brightly colored clothes at home.

Toiletries

Certain toiletry brands may not be available or may be very expensive abroad. Be sure to find out which items may be bought in your country. If you are tied to a particular brand, take it from home. Otherwise, purchase your items once you are in the host country.

Important documents

Passports and other documents should be carried with you, not packed in your checked luggage. These items should be secured yet readily accessible at customs. The same goes for money, credit cards and traveler's checks. Consider purchasing a small travel pack or money belt that may be worn underneath your clothing; keep all valuable items in this pack at all times.

Make a few photocopies of your passport and any necessary visas and put them in safe places apart from your passport. You should leave a copy at home with your family or a close friend. Always carry a photocopy of your passport with you but separate from the passport. If your passport is lost or stolen, report it to local police; get written confirmation of the police report and take the copies you have to the nearest U.S. Consulate to apply for a new passport.

Medications and Contact Lenses

Take along extra prescription medication, such as allergy medicines, asthma inhalers, birth control pills, etc. The amount should last you throughout your stay if possible. Medication sent from the US may not get through customs.

Pharmacies in other countries will be able to fill most prescriptions, but the medication may be slightly different and cause abnormal side effects. Getting a new prescription will also necessitate a visit to the doctor. If you wear contact lenses, take an extra set of contacts, cleaning solutions, your written eye prescription and extra glasses.

ELECTRICITY

In the U.S., we use 110-volt alternating current; however, most European countries use a 220-volt direct current. If you try to use an American shaver, iron, or hair dryer in a European outlet, the high voltage will overheat and destroy the appliance and could shock you or start a fire. Verify the type of current and the voltage of the outlets in the country you will be visiting. To use an American appliance in different voltage/current/shaped outlets, you will need a

transformer and a plug converter. For a hair dryer, travel iron, or water-and-coffee heater, you need a 50-1600-watt transformer. If an outlet is labeled "for shavers only," it can handle an appliance operating at only 15 to 20 watts. For more thorough information on electrical issues abroad, please see the Global Electric and Phone Directory at <http://kropla.com/electric2.htm>. Keep in mind that it may be simpler to buy one or two small appliances overseas. Some students have reported that their American appliances did not work as well with a transformer.

CONVERSIONS

Linear Measures

1 mile = 1.61 kilometers

1 meter = 3.28 feet

1 yard = .91 meters

Temperature Conversions

From Celsius to Fahrenheit - $(1.8 \times \square C) + 32 = \square F$

From Fahrenheit to Celsius - $(\square F - 32) \square 1.8 = \square C$

Measures of Weight/Liquid Measures

1 pound = .45 kilograms

1 ounce = 28.35 grams

1 liter = 1.06 quarts

1 liter = .26 gallons

Currency Conversions

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

XE: <http://www.xe.com>

Time Differences

Check time differences at TimeandDate.com.

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ACADEMIC AND FINANCIAL AID

ACADEMIC ISSUES

There are a number of important academic matters that must be taken care of before you leave to study abroad, as well as when you return. Please review this section regarding procedures and consult your program director and/or OIE study abroad advisor if you have any questions.

CREDIT APPROVAL

UGA Study Abroad Programs

One of the advantages of studying on a UGA Program is that you earn UGA resident credit and grades for the courses you take. Make sure you know how to register for the courses you are taking while abroad.

Non-UGA Programs and UGA Exchange Programs

Approval to study abroad on a non-UGA program does not indicate that courses taken on a program are guaranteed to transfer. Credit must still be evaluated according to university policies. If you want courses to count towards major, minor or general education requirements, you must consult the appropriate department at UGA and/or your academic advisor. It is wise to hold onto all academic work done abroad until after your grades/credits have transferred and appear on your UGA transcript.

In order to transfer credit from a Non-UGA program, OIE must receive a completed Credit Approval Form (CAF) at least 30 days prior to departure. Keep a copy of the CAF for your records. You must make arrangements for your program to send the academic transcript to UGA upon your completion of the program.

Please request that your final study abroad transcripts be sent to the Office of International Education at the end of your program. The OIE

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asks that you no longer send your transcripts to Admissions; this will help us better track the status of your transcript and posting of your study abroad credits. Your transcript may be sent to Study Abroad Transcripts, UGA Office of International Education, International Education Building, 1324 S. Lumpkin Street, Athens, GA 30602.

UGA will evaluate the credit that you earn on study abroad programs in accordance with the policies that govern the transfer of credit (See the UGA Bulletin). Courses must be of a quality and have a workload similar to a course at UGA, and a grade of "D" (1.0) or higher must be earned.

REGISTERING FROM ABROAD

Make arrangements to register for your next semester's courses before you go. Speak with your academic advisor to get clearance. Maintain a copy of all names, phone numbers, postal, and e-mail addresses of campus people and offices that you MIGHT need to contact during your time away.

Declare your major, if you have not already done so.

Clear all registration flags and make sure all outstanding balances are paid. During the appropriate phase of registration, you can access OASIS from abroad and register for your next semester's courses by going to

www.uga.edu/oasis/oasis.html.

Remember, if you are studying abroad on a UGA Exchange or non-UGA sponsored program, you will need a Study Abroad Credit Approval Form on file for the semester you are abroad. This will maintain your eligibility to access registration for next semester. UGA Study Abroad Passport 9

FINANCIAL AID FOR STUDY ABROAD

UGA Programs

If you are enrolled in a UGA Program, you can utilize all of the same financial aid that you would qualify for on campus. Examples include federal financial aid, state financial aid, UGA scholarships and most outside scholarships, including the HOPE Scholarship. The financial aid office will reassess your need, based on the actual cost of studying abroad, and will make appropriate awards. Note that in most study abroad situations work-study grants are not available.

Non-UGA Programs

If you are enrolled in a non-UGA Program you can utilize the following financial aid: federal financial aid, state financial aid and most scholarships, including the HOPE Scholarship. You must submit a Credit Approval Form to the OIE in order to use your aid for study abroad.

STUDY ABROAD SCHOLARSHIPS

There are some scholarships available for study abroad. Information about these scholarships can be found in the OIE Study Abroad Library, International Education Building, 1324 S. Lumpkin Street and on the following website: http://www.uga.edu/oie/sa_scholarship.htm.

It is important to note, however, that most scholarship deadlines run much earlier than study abroad program deadlines. As such, it is likely that at this point in time the deadlines have passed.

UPDATING YOUR FINANCIAL AID PACKAGE TO REFLECT YOUR STUDY ABROAD EXPENSES

Your financial aid package, in particular need-based financial aid such as loans, grants, etc., is based on the Cost of Attendance to take classes at the UGA campus. Study Abroad students may update their individual Cost of Attendance with the actual expenses of their study abroad program, to include tuition/fees, program fees, airfare, etc. As the study abroad program costs can often be higher than if remaining at UGA, some financial aid packages can be adjusted. Of course, not all increases in the Cost of Attendance changes the financial aid package, but it may be worth a look for study abroad participants.

In addition, updating the Cost of Attendance to include the actual study abroad program costs helps if students receive study abroad scholarships.

The Office of Student Financial Aid has an online "Study Abroad Form" for students who wish their financial aid package to be reviewed for their study abroad program.

<http://osfa.uga.edu/index.html>

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have questions or haven't yet made arrangements to use your aid for study abroad, you should make an appointment with a Financial Aid Counselor to discuss your individual financial aid needs for study abroad.

Financial Aid Counselors can be reached at: Office of Student Financial Aid, UGA, 220 Holmes/Hunter Academic Building, 706-542-6147, <http://www.uga.edu/osfa>.

If you have questions about study abroad scholarships, you should make an appointment to meet with a study abroad advisor in the Office of International Education, UGA, International Education Building, 1324 S. Lumpkin Street. UGA Study Abroad Passport 10

HEALTHCARE ISSUES ABROAD

Adjusting to life in a new country means excitement, challenge, and the unexpected. No amount of preparation can guarantee a trouble-free transition. Since you are not a citizen of the host country, you are not usually given the same medical care benefits as its citizens. Arranging and paying for medical care is your responsibility, and you should determine the international coverage offered by your insurance company.

STUDY ABROAD HEALTH INFORMATION

Before you travel abroad, it is worthwhile to take a close look at the many factors that contribute to your physical and emotional well-being. A trip abroad will almost certainly affect your health, because so many factors of your daily health are related to your lifestyle and environment. Conversely, the state of your health will have a significant impact on the success and enjoyment of your trip.

Assess your health & health-related practices

Going abroad is not a magical "geographic cure" for concerns and problems at home. Both physical and emotional health issues will follow you wherever you go. In particular, if you are concerned about your use of alcohol and other controlled drugs or if you have an emotional health concern, you should address it honestly before making plans to travel. Contrary to many people's expectations, travel does not minimize these problems; in fact, it often exacerbates them to a crisis stage while you are away from home.

Identify your health needs

Be clear about your health needs when applying for a program and when making housing arrangements. Thoroughly and honestly describe allergies, disabilities, psychological treatments, dietary requirements, and medical needs so that adequate arrangements can be made. In addition, resources and services for people with disabilities vary widely by country and region - if you have a disability or special need, identify it and understand ahead of time exactly what accommodations can and cannot be made.

Remember to ask questions, such as:

- What illnesses are endemic to the region?
- What medications should you take to prevent these illnesses?
- What is the quality of water?
- What kind of insurance coverage do you need and how much?
- Do you need to take special precautions for any existing medical conditions? Discuss with your doctor.
- Will you have the necessary access to physicians and psychiatrists abroad?
- Will you have access to English-speaking physicians?
- What precautions are recommended for sexual or health practices?
- What are the customs, beliefs and laws in the host country concerning sexual behavior and the use of alcohol and drugs?
- What are the laws governing the importation of medications, medical supplies and contraceptives?

This information can be found in several places, including:

- Family physician
- Campus health service (<http://www.uhs.uga.edu>)
- Local Public Health Department
- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov>)
- State Department for Overseas Citizens Emergency Center (<http://www.state.gov>)
- Travelers with disabilities can get more information from Mobility International at:

<http://www.miusa.org>.

See your health practitioners

UGA recommends that all students get a thorough physical examination before participating in study abroad. Discuss with your physician your intent to study abroad and get advice for managing your physical and emotional health while in another country. UGA Study Abroad Passport 11

Discuss your health condition (allergies, disabilities, psychological treatment, dietary requirements and medical needs) with your physician, and seriously consider the appropriateness of your participation in study abroad in your chosen host country.

A visit to your family physician, gynecologist and dentist will insure that you are in good health before you leave and might prevent emergencies abroad. Update your health records, including eyeglass prescriptions and regular medications. If you are taking a prescription medication, check to be sure it is available in your host country as prescribed or, if not, carry a supply with you. If you self-inject prescribed medication, you may need to carry needles and syringes with you. You'll need a physician's prescription for medication and medical supplies you carry with you in order to pass through foreign customs. Take copies of all medical records, prescriptions in generic form, prescriptions for eyeglasses/contact lenses and pertinent information; carry these with you in a safe place. If you expect to need regular medical care abroad, take a letter of introduction from your physician at home, providing details of your medical conditions, care and specific needs. Try to identify medical resources before you leave.

Immunizations

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has an International Traveler's Hotline (404-332-4559) where, by punching in the country code of your host country, you can get recorded information on vaccinations, food and water, and current health problems. Their website can also be a valuable resource: <http://www.cdc.gov>.

There are no required immunizations for most of Western Europe, Japan, Australia and Canada.

However, there are recommended vaccinations for almost all locations. The Hepatitis B vaccination is now recommended for all destinations. They may include Hepatitis A and/or B if you anticipate contact with blood or other bodily fluids or sexual contact with people from the host country. If you are going to South America, Africa, Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia, Russia or remote areas of your host country, consult the CDC Traveler's Hotline several months in advance of your departure as they may suggest vaccinations as early as six months in advance.

The Travel Medicine Clinic at UGA provides personalized international travel consultations for students, faculty, staff and the general public. Information is provided on general health risks of

travel, risks of contracting diseases related to international travel and methods of prevention, including vaccinations. The clinic also provides vaccinations against common diseases such as MMR (measles/mumps/rubella), influenza and Hepatitis B. This is a fee-per-visit service. Total charges will vary based on the number of vaccines needed. Appointments are necessary, and students are asked to schedule at least 6 weeks prior to departure. Call 706- 542-5575 for appointments and fee information or visit

http://www.uhs.uga.edu/services/travel_clinic.html

Visit Travel Health Online, a free on-line service, to review Destination Information including the health risks in your host country. <http://www.tripprep.com>

Pack a Medical Kit

Traveling with a medical kit may be a helpful tool. Useful items to pack include:

- Band-aids
- Disinfectant
- Antibacterial ointment
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent (DEET recommended)
- Pain reliever
- Tweezers
- Anti-diarrhea medication

You may also include:

- Paper and pencil
- Small flashlight
- Swiss Army Knife
- Small bottle of isopropyl alcohol
- Soap
- Scissors
- Adhesive bandages or gauze with tape
- Thermometer

Depending on the region, you may want to include:

- Water purification tablets
- Salt tablets
- Skin moisturizers UGA Study Abroad

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Also be sure to pack:

- Regular medications
- Medicine for colds, allergies, motion sickness
- Extra pair of glasses/contact lens and copy of prescription. Pack enough lens cleaning solution for the entire trip.
- Contraceptives if you may need them
- Feminine hygiene products if you are traveling where they are not available
- Any other routine health and medical products you think you may need or brands that you like

Pack a supply of all medications you take regularly. Make sure your supply will be sufficient to last the entire trip, including any unexpected delays, as you may encounter trouble with customs if you try to have medicines sent once you are abroad. Keep medications in their original containers and bring along a copy of your prescription. To prevent problems if your luggage is lost or misrouted, pack medications in carry-on luggage. If you will not be able to bring a supply of medication to last the entire trip, bring a prescription with the generic or scientific name of the drug, as brand names are different in foreign countries. Check the expiration dates of all medications before you leave.

Always carry a wallet card or wear a necklace stating any conditions you have (like diabetes). Also, list any allergies to specific medications. You should also make sure that your program director is aware of any special condition that you have that could manifest itself while you are abroad.

If you are leaving children behind, be sure to have a signed emergency treatment consent form on file with your hospital.

Sometimes the onset of an illness picked up during international travel does not occur until weeks or even months after returning home. Symptoms may not surface for as long as 180 days after some infections. Keep this in mind after you return.

Traveling to Tropics and Developing

Countries For those traveling closer to the equator, the sun may burn you faster than you are used to. Bring sunscreen and put it on at least half an hour before going into the sun. If you are in an area with serious insect-borne diseases, such as malaria or dengue fever, take appropriate precautions. Wear clothing that exposes as little skin as possible and apply insect repellent containing DEET (concentration 30 to 35%). Be careful about drinking the water in developing countries, especially in rural areas. Frequently, water is not treated at all but is taken directly from the source, which may be polluted. If your program director advises you not to drink the water, you should not even brush your teeth with the water. Do not use ice or eat vegetables washed in water but not cooked, like salads. Make sure that bottled water is brought to you in sealed bottles, or order sparkling water or soda water to be safe.

Diarrhea is a common affliction that usually strikes a couple of days after arrival in a new

area of the world and seldom lasts longer than about five days. Diarrhea is nature's way of ridding the body of noxious agents; intestinal motility serves as the normal cleansing mechanism of the intestine. The most important way of coping with this disorder is to maintain adequate fluid intake to prevent dehydration. If diarrhea or other stomach upset continues, see a doctor. You may have acquired a parasite. Visit a nearby Travel Clinic, such as the UGA Travel & Allergy Clinic.

http://www.uhs.uga.edu/services/travel_clinic.html ***Medical Facilities/Services***

Medical facilities and services will not be the same in every country. It is important to understand as much as possible about the facilities and services in your host country before you need them.

Tips:

- Be sure you get information in your program-specific orientation about medical facilities and services in your host city/country.
- You will need to understand where to go for common illnesses (i.e. cold, stomachache, flu, etc.) and where to go for emergencies.
- You will need to know how medical services are paid for (i.e. out-of-pocket by the student, host country or institution, insurance, etc.).

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- Understand your insurance coverage before going abroad (does your insurance cover you in another country, what is covered, what is not, how to make claims, etc.).
- Students may enroll in an insurance policy to cover important benefits, such as medical evacuation and repatriation of remains for students studying abroad. Enrollment Forms for Study Abroad Insurance are available in the Office of International Education. Current price \$1/day.

Disabilities

Students interested in accommodation for their disability during a study abroad program should contact the Disability Resource Center and/or the host country Program Director before going abroad. The earlier the request is made, the more measures UGA can take to arrange accommodations in the host country. Please note: "reasonable accommodations" provided on the UGA campus may differ or may not be available in the host country.

If you have not already registered with UGA's Disability Resource Center, contact a representative at 706-542-8719. Or, contact a representative from the Academic Resource Center at 706-542-7575. Set up an appointment to discuss services you might need while studying abroad and how to proceed.

Mental Health

Not all countries have mental health support services similar to what we are accustomed to in the U.S. Thus, students may not have access to mental health services in some countries. Whether students have utilized mental health services in the past or not, it is important for students to know if, what, and where those services are available in their host country.

Actions:

- All students should be prepared for cultural adjustment before studying abroad. Although advanced reading and preparation will not prevent students from experiencing cultural adjustment problems, it will prepare them for the symptoms, the cycle of adjustment, and some helpful advice for a successful adjustment.
- Students who are currently, or have utilized mental health services in the past, should contact the UGA Mental Health Clinic or Counseling and Testing before going abroad. The UGA Mental Health Clinic should be advised as to your needs in case a telephone consultation is required while abroad.

- Students who are currently involved with mental health services should seriously discuss the advisability of participating in study abroad and issues related to cultural adjustment with their mental health practitioner.

CONCERNS ABOUT AIDS AND STDS

As The World Health Organization states: "AIDS is not spread by daily and routine activities such as sitting next to someone or shaking hands, or working with people. Nor is it spread by insects or insect bites. AIDS is not spread by swimming pools, public transportation, food, cups, glasses, plates, toilets, water, air, touching or hugging, coughing or sneezing." This is as biologically true abroad as it is in your hometown. The AIDS virus is actually not particularly contagious when compared to other infectious diseases, such as measles, herpes or tuberculosis. The AIDS virus is primarily transmitted through blood or semen.

Some countries now require incoming foreigners, including students, to take the HIV antibody test. This would usually be part of obtaining a visa. Check with the nearest embassy or consulate for your destination country about visa and HIV testing regulations. Since AIDS knows no geographic boundaries, to avoid infection, you should employ appropriate preventive measures. If at all possible, avoid injections, dental procedures or skin-piercing procedures when in developing countries. If injected medications are necessary, insist that all needles, syringes, and IVs are of the individually wrapped, disposable variety. If you have a known medical condition that requires injections (for example, diabetes), you should bring along your own supply of needles and syringes. Make sure your supply is large enough to last the entire trip. To prevent confiscation in customs, be sure to bring along a letter from your doctor stating your medical need.

In developing countries, it is best to avoid blood transfusions. Unfortunately, this may not be possible if you are in a severe accident and are in dire need of blood. However, in many cases, a safe plasma expander may be used instead of

blood products to stabilize trauma victims until an evacuation service can bring in safe supplies or transport the victim to safely equipped facilities. Less urgent conditions, such as a need for a gamma globulin injection, should be discussed with officials at your embassy. They may have the supplies you need in the embassy infirmary. Sexual contact: Due to the HIV/AIDS threat, the best advice is abstinence from any sexual activity (homosexual or heterosexual). If you do engage in sexual contact, it is imperative that you use latex condoms, although this does not entirely eliminate the risk of HIV/AIDS transmission, nor of other sexually transmitted diseases, and is only 80-90% effective in preventing pregnancy when used alone.

DIABETES

If you have diabetes, you should discuss with your physician any adjustments of insulin doses and timing that may be necessary, especially if you will be traveling east or west across several time zones.

Tip: Be careful with your insulin. Do not put it in the glove compartment or the trunk of a car, since insulin may deteriorate if it is either frozen or exposed to temperatures of 100°F or higher. The best way to transport insulin on international trips is to carry it with you in a specially designed insulin insulator pack, which is sold at most pharmacies. (For travel to hot climates, an accompanying cooler pack is also available.) Once you arrive at your destination, promptly refrigerate your insulin.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Use and abuse of alcohol and drugs abroad increases the risk of accident and injury. Many study abroad accidents and injuries are related to the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs while abroad. Violating drug laws abroad may result in very serious consequences. In some countries, being found guilty of violating drug laws can result in consequences as serious as death. Making poor choices can put your personal well-being at risk.

Many study abroad students will be leaving the U.S. where they may not be of legal drinking age and entering societies where they will be of legal

age to consume beverage alcohol. Unfortunately, many of these students feel pressured to consume alcohol to fit in with the culture of the host country. It is important to note that there are other ways of assimilating into a culture without having to consume alcohol.

Resisting social and cultural pressures to drink may be difficult for some students. Here are some personal strategies that may help:

- Understanding why you are choosing to use alcohol
- Making rules for oneself to guide drinking
- Setting personal limits for drinking, sticking to it, or drinking less
- Maintaining daily physical activity
- Drinking only with meals
- Making oneself aware of the impact one's drinking has on oneself and others

Remember that many cultures do not use and abuse alcohol in the way Americans do. Also remember that you are like an ambassador for your U.S. college or university. Set a positive example. Behave in a way that is respectful of you, others' rights and well-being and encourage others to do the same.

MEDICAL INSURANCE COVERAGE

Check with any pre-existing policy that you may have for international coverage. Look into the policy payments and claim system. If you need to make a claim from overseas, expect to pay the medical facility directly and file for a refund from your insurance company. Be prepared with a means of payment accepted at your destination (credit card, emergency traveler's checks, ATM card, etc.). Save all receipts and treatment forms from the doctor, preferably translated into English. Many insurance policies ask individuals to pay the medical fees first and submit a claim form to the insurance provider afterwards.

If you are traveling on a UGA faculty-led study abroad program, UGA provides supplemental medical evacuation and repatriation coverage for all students. This is included in the cost of UGA Study Abroad Passport 15

your study abroad program. Ask your program director for a brochure so that you understand the policy and its coverage.

If you are traveling on a non-UGA program or a UGA exchange program, UGA does NOT automatically provide insurance coverage. You should check with the program you are studying with in order to see what coverage may be required and/or provided. The International Student Identity Card (ISIC) provides basic insurance coverage, including medical evacuation, hospital benefits, and a 24-hour toll-free emergency help line. There are brochures about a variety of insurance options available in the OIE Study Abroad library at International Education Building, 1324 S. Lumpkin Street. In addition, coverage may be required by your host university abroad. An advisor can help you understand what kind of coverage to look for but students should make decisions in consultation with their families.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE

Once you arrive in a new country, you will soon discover that many elements in the environment may affect or alter your health. Most likely, you will be eating different foods, living in a different climate, and reacting emotionally in some way to this new experience.

Jet Lag

Depending on where you fly, you may experience jet lag or traveler's stress. Some helpful ways to counteract jet lag include: getting plenty of rest, eating healthy food, drinking plenty of fluids (particularly juices and water), avoiding caffeine and alcohol, getting some moderate exercise and wearing loose, comfortable clothing.

Culture Shock and Stress

Culture shock is a typical phenomenon that happens to all travelers who venture to a new culture and country for an extended period of time. There are many emotional effects of facing new values, habits and lifestyles. You may experience confusing emotional highs and lows during your time abroad. You may also feel anxious, impatient, bewildered and depressed at times. These are all initial symptoms of culture shock, and may easily be overcome. Be aware that a moderate amount of anxiety and stress is a natural part of intercultural transitions. A new language, exotic foods, registration, beginning classes and even changes in the weather can affect your stress level. This stress is nothing to be afraid of and can easily be dealt with by having a positive attitude and taking good care of yourself emotionally and physically. See the Cultural Adjustment section for more information.

Find out about available resources in your host country

Learn how to get medical help, whether routine or emergency before the need arises. Is there a 911 type emergency number and, if so, what services does it access? Who will provide routine medical care, and how can you reach that provider? Ask the Program Director or the University what steps need to be taken in these situations.

Notify proper authority of your medical needs

If you require regular medical care for any condition you have, tell those in your host country who can be of assistance. Make sure to notify the Program Director, the host family, or proper medical supervisors of your disabilities and special needs also.

Discover new lifestyles

Lifestyles in your host country may be different from those at home. Ask about safety issues such as local transportation, security issues of different neighborhoods, traffic patterns, and use of electrical appliances. Also, many of the experiences and practices you may take for granted in the United States may be perceived and accepted differently in your host country. Find out how this new culture views relationships, dating, leisure time, holidays, and other customs. An exciting world awaits you. UGA Study Abroad Passport 16

SAFETY AND LEGAL MATTERS

Campus life in other countries is different than it is in the United States, especially in urban areas. You may not even be on a university campus and it is very easy to perceive that your new environment is much more dangerous. This perception is heightened by international media coverage of violent incidents, which, fortunately, occur infrequently in most countries. On the other hand, you may become naïve to the true nature of security in your new environment. Traveling may give you a new sense of freedom and a false sense of how secure your new environment really is. It is very important to be aware of the environment and take necessary measures to ensure your safety at all times.

PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES It is important to prepare for emergencies abroad. Find out the foreign equivalent of 911 or other emergency numbers at your destination before departure or shortly after arrival. Emergency numbers for all the destinations where UGA offers programs will be listed on the General OIE Orientation Information page for each UGA study abroad program. http://uga.edu/oie/sa_orientation_general.htm For additional programs and locations abroad, consult the Department of State Student Travel Section for the emergency numbers for police, fire, and medical at:

<http://studentsabroad.state.gov/emergencies.php> It is also important to know how to contact your UGA program director in the event of an emergency. If this information is not included in your orientation materials, be sure to ask. This information is also listed for each UGA program on the General Orientation Information page. Also, make sure your program director has emergency contact information for you in the U.S.

REDUCING RISK

Try not to make yourself conspicuous by dress (tennis shoes, T-shirts, baseball caps), speech, or behavior, in ways that might identify you as a target. Do not draw attention to yourself either through expensive dress or personal accessories (cameras, radios, sunglasses, etc.). When walking around cities, look self-assured, as if you know where you are going. Consult maps before leaving or slip into a store to look at one. When you go out, make sure you carry the name and address of the place where you are staying. During orientation, ask your program director to identify the parts of town that should be avoided. Do not hitchhike or walk alone at night – This goes for men and women travelers. Use common sense and do not do things in a foreign destination that you wouldn't do in your own town. Do not carry much cash, and do not pull out large quantities of money in public. Do not leave cash or valuables in your hotel room. Use good quality locks on your luggage. Keep luggage in hotel rooms, and especially in youth hostels, locked. Do not leave anything of value in a car for any period of time unless the car is within your view. Don't carry your wallet in your back pocket or in a backpack. If you carry a wallet, put a rubber band around it - that will make it harder for it to be pick-pocketed. Put nothing valuable in the back of a backpack. Use a money belt or neck pouch to carry your money, passport, credit cards, etc. Keep only the money you will need easily accessible in the front pocket of your pants (preferable) or in a zippered jacket pocket. If you carry a purse, put it over your head and shoulder. Beware of con artists. Anything that distracts you - someone asking you for something, someone dropping something in front of you, large groups of small children that come up to you - could be part of an attempt to pickpocket you or take your purse or wallet. Don't hang your

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arm with a watch or bracelet out of a bus or car window when there are people around. If you are in trouble, it's always better to yell "fire" than "help". Limit alcohol intake - it breaks down your defenses and good judgment. Do not use drugs in a foreign country or cross international borders with drugs. Be aware that you can be dismissed from your program with no refund for drug use. Be aware that students on UGA programs are still under the UGA Student Code of Conduct Regulations at: http://www.uga.edu/judicialprograms/code_of_conduct/index.html while abroad. The Code of Conduct applies to transient as well as regular degree seeking students.

Make sure the resident director, host family, or foreign university official who is assigned the responsibility for your welfare always know where and how to contact you in an emergency and your schedule and itinerary if you are traveling, even if only overnight. Information on safety issues specific to your destination is available on the U.S. Department of State. A Country Specific Information sheet for the country or countries you will be visiting. Please see: <http://travel.state.gov/>.

This information also contains the address for the U.S. consulates in each country. Once you know your address, phone, etc. abroad, you should update your contact information and duration of stay details online via the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at: <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>

Your enrollment in STEP will help the US Embassy or Consulate to be in contact with you in the event of an emergency.

If you are not a U.S. Citizen, you will wish to register your information with the Embassy/Consulate of your home country instead.

KNOWING THE LAWS Once you leave the United States, you are not covered by U.S. laws and constitutional rights. It is your responsibility to know the laws of your destination before you go. "I didn't know it was illegal" will not get you out of jail. The local laws and legal processes in your host country can vary a great deal from the U.S. legal system. For example, in some countries, bail is not granted when drugs are involved. Few countries offer drug offenders jury trials or even require the prisoner's presence at his/her trial. Some countries also have mandatory prison sentences of seven years or more without parole for drug violations. The burden of proof in many countries is on the accused to prove his/her innocence. In some countries, evidence obtained illegally by authorities may be admissible in court. If you are arrested abroad, it is one of the functions of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate to assist you in obtaining legal representation and to monitor your treatment abroad. More information on these services can be found at the U.S. Department of State website at:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1212.html

and

<http://studentsabroad.state.gov/smarttravel/locallaws.php>

SECURITY

No matter how safe your campus and community appears to be, you should acquaint yourself with your new environment by reading information that UGA provides or that your host institution provides once you arrive on-site. Explore your new neighborhood and campus during the day and become familiar with areas around you. Ask fellow students or staff members about areas you should avoid at night. Always carry the address and telephone number of your new home with you until you have memorized them. Become familiar with common laws and customs of the host country.

Be cautious

Exercise the same precautions you would in any U.S. city; in unfamiliar surroundings you may not know the real concerns. Do not walk alone at night. It is better to get a cab or walk with a friend. Never carry large amounts of cash! Use money belts or a concealed purse for your passport, visa, money, credit cards and other UGA Study

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documents. Don't leave your luggage alone; if you want to explore a new city, leave your belongings in the "checked luggage" area at a train station, which will probably only cost a couple of dollars in local currency.

Stay informed

Within the last several years, there have been some serious security issues for study abroad participants, especially within countries that are facing internal strife. Also, in many European countries, there have been a series of train delays and strikes. Stay well informed about local and regional news and conditions. Read newspapers with good international coverage and analysis of local issues. Ask your Program Director for the names of newspapers that you can access on-line to better prepare yourself for your trip.

Avoid potentially volatile situations, such as political demonstrations. It is unwise and often illegal to participate in political activities while abroad. While you may see this as an interesting cultural event, protests with large crowds can be very unpredictable and often attract others who wish to make trouble. Keep abreast of local news through newspapers and TV news and avoid areas where there are reported tensions or other dangerous situations.

Keep in contact with home

Your parents and friends will have concerns while you are away. Please keep in contact with them on a regular basis and let them know how you are. Also, if you plan to travel during your stay, leave your itinerary with the host coordinator.

Develop with your family a plan for regular telephone or e-mail contact, so that in times of heightened political tension, you will be able to communicate with your parents directly about your safety and well-being.

Be alert

Be aware of your surroundings, including unknown individuals "hanging out" in your building or any strange activity nearby. Be suspicious of unexpected packages, letters with no return addresses and/or excessive postage and especially letters that appear to contain more than just paper. Be careful of who you give access to your room or apartment while abroad.

Take precautions

Take the same precautions you would at home. Do not give out your name or address to unknown people. Know where the nearest police station and hospital is and keep emergency numbers handy. Do not go into unsafe or unknown areas alone after dark.

Emergency Protocol

The majority of students participating in study abroad never experience an emergency while abroad. However, any emergency is less traumatic when you are prepared to deal with it effectively and efficiently. It will make you feel more comfortable if you take the time to prepare an emergency protocol when you arrive at your host location.

Actions:

- Carry some form of identification with you at all times (your name, your host country address, host country phone #, passport and visa #)
- Carry emergency numbers and contacts with you:
 - Local police
 - Study abroad or residential coordinator in host country
 - Parent/guardian/emergency contact at home
 - UGA police and OIE contact information
 - Embassy in host country
 - Insurance contact information
 - Physician and mental health practitioner at home
 - Know where the local hospitals are located and how to get there
 - By preparing yourself to respond to different types of emergencies, you will feel more confident that you know what to do in the rare event that an emergency should occur:
 - Natural disaster
 - Medical/mental health injury or trauma
 - Civil unrest/terrorism
 - Criminal violence or trauma

Get Registered – Register in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)

▪ **Register with the US Embassy in your host country on-line at:**

<https://travelregistration.state.gov>

[UGA Study Abroad Passport 19](#)

CONTACTING THE OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

If you are abroad and you need to contact the Office of International Education staff during regular business hours (M-F, 8-5), please call (706) 425-3274. If you need to reach a study abroad staff member outside of office hours, please call Public Safety at one of the following numbers:

- UGA Public Safety Emergency Number: (706) 542-2200
- UGA Public Safety Non-Emergency Number: (706) 542-5813.
- Public Safety will be able to reach a study abroad advisor for you.
- Of course you will need to dial the U.S country code first, "1", as well as any other access codes you need to call from abroad.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS ON STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS AND UGA POLICIES

UGA Conduct Regulations for Students

Students on UGA study abroad programs, whether they are regularly enrolled, degree-seeking students or transient or transfer students for a semester or summer are under the UGA Conduct Regulations as established by the UGA Office of Judicial Programs. The UGA Conduct Regulations are listed on the web page of the Office of Judicial Programs <http://www.uga.edu/judicialprograms>.

UGA Sexual Harassment Policy

Students on UGA study abroad programs, whether they are regularly enrolled, degree-seeking students or transient or transfer students for a semester or summer are under the UGA Sexual Harassment Policy as established by the UGA Office of Legal Affairs. The UGA Sexual Harassment Policy can be found at <http://www.uga.edu/eoo/pdfs/NDAH.pdf>.

TRAVELING SAFELY

You will probably be doing a lot more traveling than you would normally do at home. This means that you will be using a variety of public modes of transportation such as buses, trains, metros, taxis and planes. There are several things to be aware of during your travels.

International driving permit

If you intend to drive while you are there, you should apply for an international driver's license through the American Automobile Association (AAA). Some host countries require one, while others will accept your own state license. AAA should be able to tell you whether or not one is required. However, students on UGA study abroad programs are strongly discouraged from driving while abroad.

Traveling Tips

What to be aware of while you are on the road, on the train, or in the air.

- Do not display money, wallet or other valuable items.
- Use a money belt to carry your passport and money.
- Be careful on overnight trains. Choose a car or compartment in a train or metro in which others are riding. Lock your compartment while you sleep and bring a lock to secure your bag to the luggage rack. Keep your valuables on your person.
- Note the location of emergency equipment.
- Do not stand on the edge of a train or metro platform.
- Never leave any luggage or bags unattended.
- Buy a lock for your backpack or luggage.
- If someone is bothering you, inform the driver or train operator.
- Avoid unwanted attention and confrontations.
- Beware of pickpockets and purse-snatchers in overcrowded metro and bus stations; they tend to bump into you casually and take what they can when you are not aware of it.

RELATIONS BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN Before going abroad, be sure to ask your program director about cultural differences regarding male/female relations. In some cultures, even looking at a person of the opposite sex in the eye would imply special interest. Certain types of clothing (such as short skirts or shorts) might be unadvisable as they will attract unpleasant attention or cause people in the host culture to make unflattering assumptions about you. Because you will be in an unfamiliar place, with UGA Study Abroad Passport 20

an unfamiliar culture and potentially with limited language skills, you do not have the skills to assess whether a person is "safe" or trustworthy. Do not assume that because someone is well-dressed, appears nice or speaks nicely that he or she is harmless. Do not invite any person whom you do not know (or have recently met) into your home, hotel or dorm room. Do not get into a car with or go to the home or hotel room of a person that you do not know (or have recently met). Be aware that men and women that you meet in clubs or bars may have other intentions when accompanying you home than you may realize. Tourists have been robbed by people that they brought back with them to their hotel. In some countries, women have been attacked while riding in taxis. Ask your program director if your destination has reported such problems. If so, try to avoid taking taxis alone. If you must take a taxi alone (especially at night), have someone write down the name of the driver and license plate number while the driver is watching. Never sit in the front seat.

WOMEN'S ISSUES

Some female students, in certain overseas locations (i.e., South America, the Middle East and parts of Europe) have a hard time adjusting to attitudes they encounter abroad, in both public and private interactions between men and women. Some (but not all) men in such countries openly demonstrate their appraisal of women in ways that many American women find offensive. It is not uncommon to be honked at, stared at, verbally and loudly appraised, and to be actively noticed simply for being an American woman. Sometimes the attention can be flattering. However, it may become very annoying, and potentially even angering. Indigenous women, who often get the same sort of treatment, have been taught how to ignore this attention. Many American women students find this hard to do. Eye contact between strangers or smiling at someone passing on the street, which is not uncommon in the States, may result in totally unexpected invitations. Some women feel they are forced to stare intently at the ground while they walk down the street. You will have to learn what the unwritten rules are about what you can and cannot do abroad.

Women can provide support for each other, and former students suggest that you get together several times early in your stay overseas to talk about what works and what doesn't for dealing with unwanted attention. American women are seen as "liberated" in many ways, and sometimes the cultural misunderstandings that come out of this image can lead to difficult and unpleasant experiences.

Needless to say, this special and surprising status may make male-female relationships more difficult to develop. Be careful about the implicit messages you may be unintentionally communicating. Above all, try to maintain the perspective that these challenging (and sometimes difficult experiences) are part of the growth of cultural understanding which is one of the important reasons you are studying abroad. Prepare yourself by trying to understand in advance not only the gender roles and assumptions which may prevail elsewhere, but also the uniqueness of American gender politics, which may or may not be understood, much less prevail, in other countries.

Discuss with your Program Director the customs or norms for your destination. S/he will likely have much experience in this area.

For more information visit:

<http://studentsabroad.state.gov/smarttravel/forwomentravelers.php>

RACIAL AND ETHNIC CONCERNS

No two students studying abroad ever have quite the same experience, even in the same program and country. This same variety is true for students of color and those from U.S. minority ethnic or racial backgrounds. Reports from past participants vary from those who felt exhilarated by being free of the American context of race relations, to those who experienced different degrees of 'innocent' curiosity about their ethnicity, to those who felt they met both familiar and new types of ostracism and prejudice and had to learn new coping strategies. Very few minority students conclude that racial or ethnic problems encountered in other countries represent sufficient reasons for not going. On the other UGA Study Abroad Passport 21

hand, they advise knowing what you are getting into and preparing yourself for it. Try to find others who have studied abroad and who can provide you with some counsel.

For more information and resources visit:

□ AllAbroad.US at: <http://allabroad.us/>

□ Diversity Abroad at: <http://www.diversityabroad.com/>

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND/OR TRANSGENDER ISSUES ABROAD

Attitudes and tolerance toward gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (GLBT) persons vary from country to country, just as they vary among U.S. cities and states.

<http://studentsabroad.state.gov/smarttravel/forlgbttravelers.php>

It is important to be aware of the laws pertaining to homosexuality in your host country, as well as the general attitudes of the populace toward gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered members of their community. The countries you visit may be more, or may be less 'liberated' (on a general U.S. scale of values) in these regards, but will in all cases be at least somewhat unique. Moreover, whatever the general rule, there will always be pockets of difference and personal idiosyncrasies. Country-specific information is often available from campus offices, personnel and student groups. You should certainly talk with other students who have been where you will be.

For information on issues and resources pertaining to LBGTT travel, you also may want to consult publications available in some bookstores and libraries, which carry such literature. For a comprehensive list of resources, including travel guides, web links, and other types of information for GLBT students, see

<http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/student.htm>

LEGAL MATTERS

There are a number of common legal matters you should be aware of regardless of your host country. Some of them are much more serious than others, so please read each carefully so that you are aware of the liability involved.

Registering

Some countries require international students to "register" with the local police department or immigration office. Your host coordinator will likely advise you if you need to do this.

It is also a smart idea to register with the U.S. Consulate once you arrive in country. This will likely need to be done in person. Registering with the U.S. Consulate helps you to stay informed during times of crisis.

<https://travelregistration.state.gov>

Working abroad and work permits

Since you will be participating in an academic program, you should take full advantage of that opportunity to study and travel. Therefore, it is recommended that you don't work. However, if you would like to stay and work after the completion of your program or at a later point in time you can get information on work abroad opportunities from OIE in the Study Abroad Library International Education Building, 1324 S. Lumpkin Street or by visiting <http://www.uga.edu/oie>. Keep in mind that most countries require visitors to obtain a special work permit or work visa in order to be legally employed.

Illegal Drugs

DO NOT use or travel with marijuana or any other contraband drugs. The US government can assume no responsibility if you are apprehended for drug use. Even in places where the use of drugs by local citizens is either ignored or treated very lightly, when American students are apprehended indulging in or in possession of contraband, they can be dealt with in a very harsh manner. You can jeopardize your experience abroad by taking such a risk. You may also be dismissed from your study abroad program should you be caught using drugs. If approached by someone selling drugs, walk away. Do not even talk to that person, because a conversation with a suspected narcotics pusher is seen as an act of intent to purchase in some countries. Penalties can be much more severe in Latin America, Asia and Europe than in the U.S. Conditions of imprisonment in a foreign jail are not something you want to check out. UGA Study Abroad Passport 22

INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMS

Please be aware of what you can take into the country you are visiting. Some prescriptions legal in the U.S. are not legal worldwide. Please check with the Embassy/Consulate of your host country for more information.

When you re-enter the U.S., you must declare all articles in your possession that you bought or acquired overseas. Flight attendants usually hand out customs forms for passengers to fill out before landing.

For more information on the U.S. Customs regulations that may apply upon your return, please visit:

<http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/clearing/restricted/>

Absentee Voting

For some students, the first opportunity to vote coincides with their period abroad. Just because you are not in the U.S. at election time does not mean you cannot cast your ballot. Before you may vote from abroad, however, you must be registered to vote at home. Check with your local city or town hall to obtain information on procedures for voting by Absentee Ballot, including timing. Remember to make note of your party, ward, district, and voter registration number (if one is used). If necessary, your Absentee Ballot can be notarized at a U.S. embassy or consulate.

For current voting information visit:

<http://studentsabroad.state.gov/voting.php>

Power of Attorney

If your signature will be needed for any official or legal document during your absence you should make arrangements for "power of attorney" to be held by an appropriate person to act on your behalf. You can do this by writing out in detail the specific duties that the person you choose will execute. Take this to a notary and have it notarized.

Income Taxes

Attention year-abroad and spring semester program participants. If you have earnings that require you to file federal and/or state income tax returns, you must remember that you will be out of the country between January 1 and April 15th. Persons temporarily living abroad may normally request an extension on the deadline for filing federal income tax. The extension is usually until June 15th. The best advice is to contact the American Consulate or Embassy in your host country for information on your tax obligations; they may have 1040 forms and may even be willing to help you with questions. You can file from abroad if you make arrangements with your parents to send you the necessary state and federal forms and other documentation. You can also access various forms from <http://www.irs.gov>.

FACTS ABOUT AMERICANS ARRESTED ABROAD

Rights abroad

- Once travelers leave U.S. jurisdiction, U.S. laws or U.S. Constitutional Rights do not cover them abroad.
- Few foreign countries provide trial by jury.
- Pretrial detention may involve months of confinement in primitive prison conditions.
- Trials frequently involve lengthy delays or postponements and are conducted in the language of the foreign country.

Drug arrests abroad

- Sentences for possession or trafficking of drugs can range from 2 to 25 years and possible heavy fines.
- In some countries - like Turkey, Egypt, Malaysia and Thailand -conviction may lead to a life sentence or even the death penalty. In Saudi Arabia, drug smugglers and traffickers convicted of a second offense receive the death penalty.
- Several countries have stiffened their penalties for drug violations and have imposed stricter enforcement of existing drug laws. In the Bahamas, individuals convicted of possessing even small amounts of marijuana or cocaine for personal use receive harsh sentences, including a minimum of 6 months in prison, a \$2000 fine, or both. Those convicted of possessing larger amounts can receive life imprisonment. There are also stiff penalties for possessing illegal drugs while in the Dominican Republic. Legislation requires 20 years imprisonment of anyone caught bringing narcotics into or out of the country. Proposed laws in Mexico will increase the

minimum sentence for drug trafficking from 15 to 20 years.

U.S. Consular Officer's Abroad

What they CAN do:

- Insofar as it is possible, ensure that the detainee's rights under local law are fully observed and that humane treatment is accorded under internationally accepted standards.
- Visit the U.S. citizen as soon as possible after the foreign government has notified the U.S. embassy/consulate of the arrest.
- Provide the detainee with a list of local attorneys from which to select defense counsel.
- Contact family and/or friends for financial or medical aid and food, if requested to do so by the detainee.

What they CANNOT do:

- Demand the release of a U.S. citizen.
- Represent the detainee at trial, give legal counsel, or pay legal fees or other related expenses with U.S. government funds.
- Intervene in a foreign country's court system or judicial process to obtain special treatment.

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MANAGING YOUR MONEY

Managing your finances is one of the most important and challenging aspects of a successful and enjoyable academic experience abroad. Dealing with a new currency and cost of living are just the beginning of the challenge. Before you leave home, pay attention to the exchange rate between the U.S. dollar and your host country's currency. Learn to think in that currency, and don't forget the value of a good pocket calculator to help with the conversion.

Useful Currency Conversion Website: <http://www.oanda.com>

MONEY AMOUNTS

How much money do you need for your time abroad? It is very difficult to make recommendations - you will spend as much as you take. What is included in your program fee will vary. Make sure you know how much money you will require beyond what you pay for as part of the program fee. The amount you will need for incidental expenses will depend on your lifestyle as well as local costs. Take a close look at your expenses and prepare a budget for yourself based on the estimated expenses you identify.

WAYS TO CARRY MONEY

Cash

It may be wise to have some cash in the correct currency before you enter your host country. You may purchase foreign currency in most banks in the U.S. If you do exchange money before you go, be prepared to receive a high exchange rate. Rates will be much lower once you are in country. Upon arrival you can often change money at the airport or get cash from an ATM in the airport. Carrying cash is always risky; you should avoid taking cash bills to cover all your needs while abroad. If you do carry cash, particularly in a large city, do not put it all in one place and never leave your wallet in the outside pocket of your backpack or purse, or in your back pocket.

Prepaid Debit Cards and Traveler's Checks

Traveler's checks are a safe way to carry money, but are becoming less common and more difficult to cash because fewer banks and merchants are accepting them. Do some research to see if traveler's checks are widely accepted in your host country. A convenient alternative is a prepaid debit card. They are accepted everywhere a credit card of the same brand is accepted and can usually be used at ATMs. You put a certain amount of money on the card and can use it to make purchases or withdraw money up to that dollar amount, or the equivalent in the foreign currency. You can also reload the card online or by phone. Check with the debit card provider about transaction fees and exchange rates. Furthermore, if the cards are lost or stolen, the company that issued them will replace the card. Keep the card number, expiration date and security code in a safe place, separate from the card. Prepaid debit cards can be purchased at banks in the United States, travel agencies such as AAA or through credit card providers.

Credit Cards

Credit cards are valuable for big purchases, emergencies and cash advances, although there are usually higher interest charges for cash advances. Most major credit cards are honored abroad (i.e., American Express, MasterCard or Visa), but there are exceptions! Credit cards are particularly useful for hotels, restaurants, shops, airline tickets and car rental agencies. When you use a credit card, the company makes the exchange rate purchase for you, reflecting the exchange rate on the day your credit card transaction is processed. This amount may be more or less than what you thought you were paying at the time of your purchase. You will be billed in dollars on your statement, and sometimes you will see the foreign exchange conversion listed as well. A word of caution: It is easy to buy something with a credit card even if you do not have money available to pay. However, the interest charged on an outstanding UGA Study Abroad Passport 25

balance adds up quickly and it is very easy to get into debt. Know your credit card limits! You also need to make arrangements to pay your monthly credit card bill since most credit card companies will not send bills to non-U.S. addresses. Furthermore, keep a photocopy of your actual credit card in a safe place when abroad and find out the numbers to call in case it is lost or stolen. Also, it is wise to contact your credit card company or bank before departure to let them know you will be going abroad. Frequently, banks will cancel credit cards when clients show charges from other countries that are unusual for the card holder.

Debit/ATM Cards

You can check for ATMs at your destination from the websites below:

- Mastercard/Cirrus ATM Locator
<http://www.mastercard.us/cardholder-services/atm-locator.html>
- Visa/Plus ATM Locator
<http://visa.via.infonow.net/locator/global/>

ATMs are available in major cities across the globe and are a fast, commission-free way to obtain foreign currency. An ATM, debit, or checking card is excellent for international travel because it allows you to withdraw money from your bank account in the United States in the currency of the host country. Debit cards with Visa, MasterCard, Cirrus or Plus signs are the most widely accepted cards. Typically, you'll only have access to funds in your Checking Account via the ATMs abroad, not Savings. Be aware of the fees that may be involved – You may be charged a fee by the local bank abroad, as well as your home bank for the transaction. Some fees can be quite high, so do your research ahead of time. In some cases, especially for students who are abroad for a semester or longer, setting up a local bank account may be more convenient. Bring traveler's checks as back up cash in case your bankcard becomes demagnetized.

Questions to Ask Your Bank

- What are your ATM fees abroad?
- Do you have partner banks?
- If so, does that mean the fee is lower or that there is no fee at all?

Cash Advances/Check Cashing

With the use of credit cards and computers, it is now much easier to transfer money from a home account. Any bank that honors your type of credit card will help you draw funds in foreign currency as a cash advance. These advances are often considered a loan and you can get an advance only up to your line of credit. When requesting an advance, remember that banks always require proper identification. A high interest rate is charged if this is not paid back within the grace period. If you are cash advancing a large sum of money, you should consider a wire transfer instead. American Express offers check-cashing privileges to its clients. Any American Express office will cash personal checks from a U.S. account at no charge.

Wire Transfers / Drafts

If you think you might need to use bank transfers or have your initial funds sent to you in the form of a bank draft, visit your bank before you leave and ask them for a list of the corresponding banks in your host city. Let them know who is authorized to initiate cable transfers for you. Once abroad, you can contact your home bank by telegram or phone and receive the money, usually within 48 hours. Be advised that you will probably have to pay the cabling charges both ways, in addition to a commission charged by the host bank. Money can also be cabled from home through American Express; this type of transfer will take two to five days and the charge varies according to how much money is sent. Alternatively, you can notify your home bank and request that a bank draft in your name is mailed to you, via registered mail. This may be very expensive and in some countries unreliable and slow. Keep that in mind as you make plans for managing your money while abroad.

Opening a Bank Account Abroad

Once you arrive at your new institution, you may want to open a bank account at a local bank. There are many types of banks abroad, and the site coordinator should give you advice about banking during your orientation. Most banks provide checking and savings accounts for customers, and some UGA Study Abroad Passport 26

banks will allow you to keep your money in US dollars. Overseas banks generally offer services that are similar to those in the United States. You may wish to compare the services and costs of several banks before choosing one at which to open an account. One bank may be more conveniently located than others; another may have more automated teller machines around town; a third may charge less to maintain a checking account.

Banks compete for your business just like they do in the United States, so do not be shy about asking questions, especially if there are restrictions for international students.

BUDGETING

When forming your own budget, consider length of stay, style of living, amount and method of travel and academic costs. Think about any expensive souvenirs you hope to buy and any gifts you will want to purchase. It is recommended that you take 20% more than you think you'll need, but also remember that you can keep some cash in your account back home for emergencies, and access it through cash machines. Your best resource is talking to other students who have been on the same or similar programs.

Tips from Students

- Always present your ISIC and see if you can get a discount.
- Call your nation's tourist board for information about student discounts.
- Don't develop film - it'll be worth having the extra space in your suitcase.
- Bypass expensive restaurants during the day – opt for fruit and bread at local markets.
- Leave tacky souvenirs behind.
- Try some cheap, but exotic local favorite dishes.
- Take overnight trains to save the cost of overnight accommodations.
- Remember that spending a few extra dollars today will be worth the experiences you can have. Don't skimp on museums, attractions, or travel experiences to save a few bucks.
- Most importantly, never sacrifice safety or health to save a few bucks.

Things to Consider when Creating a Budget

- Plane ticket
- Type of travel within country or continent (railroad, plane, car rental, etc.)
- Passport
- Student ID
- Shipping
- Travel Books
- Travel (train, bus, car rental, hostels, hotels, taxis etc.)
- Transportation from the airport to your home or dorm and transportation throughout the city
- Food
- Phone bills
- Film
- Laundry
- Stamps/Mailing supplies
- Museum/Concert tickets
- Sporting events
- Gifts for family and friends
- Souvenirs for yourself

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WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN AMERICAN

Are you Swedish-American, Mexican-American, African-American, or just American? How do you identify yourself? Whoever you are, however you define yourself, you will bring some "cultural baggage" with you wherever you go. Cultural baggage can be defined as the assumptions you have about yourself, your family, friends and the world based on your own experience. Cultural baggage can weigh you down at times, but it can also be used as a resource to help you through uncomfortable situations. Understanding your own cultural baggage will help you in the quest to understand someone else's.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE YOUR "AMERICANISM"?

Meeting peoples of the world is exciting. You are likely eager for the experience to energize you. It is this feeling of anticipation and excitement that makes it a shock when you are met with confrontation because you are an American. It will be difficult to be confronted with seemingly unexpected and challenging questions. When faced with confrontations, it may feel as though you are being attacked personally and criticized as an American. Furthermore, as you spend more and more time in your host country, you will begin to recognize several different cultural patterns that are quite different from your own. These cultural patterns include differences in style, assumptions, values, cultural norms, perception, motivation, forms of achievement, methods of confrontation, personalization, and the list goes on and on. Although these differences are just the tip of the iceberg, it is still important to recognize your own "American" patterns and what they mean to you.

AMERICAN CULTURAL PATTERNS

Dr. L Robert Kohls, Director of International Programs at San Francisco State University, is a renowned literary contributor to the research on cultural patterns. He has developed a list of 13 commonly held values that help explain to first-time visitors to the United States why Americans act the way they do. He is careful, and warns

against labeling these values as positive or negative.

As an American, do you recognize these traits in yourself? Whether one agrees with Kohls or not - or is willing to accept as valid any generalizations about Americans - his observations are certainly thought-provoking.

Personal Control Over Environment

Americans do not believe in the power of fate, and they look at people who do as being backward, primitive or naive. In the American context, to be "fatalistic" is to be superstitious, lazy or unwilling to take initiative. Everyone should have control over whatever in the environment might potentially affect him or her.

The problems of one's life are not seen as having resulted from bad luck as much as having come from one's laziness and unwillingness to take responsibility in pursuing a better life.

Change Seen as Natural and Positive

In the American mind, change is seen as indisputably good, leading to development, improvement, and progress. Many older, more traditional cultures consider change to be disruptive and destructive; they value stability, continuity, tradition and a rich and ancient heritage - none of which are considered very important in the United States.

Time and Its Control

Time is of utmost importance to most Americans. It is something to be on, kept, filled, saved, used, spent, wasted, lost, gained, planned, given, and even killed. Americans are more concerned with getting things accomplished on time than they are with developing interpersonal relations. Their lives seem controlled by the little machines they wear on their wrists, cutting their discussions off abruptly to make their next appointment on time.

This philosophy has enabled Americans to be extremely productive, and productivity is highly valued in their country. UGA Study Abroad

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Equality/Fairness

Equality is so cherished in the U.S. that it is seen as having religious roots. Americans believe that all people are "created equal" and that all should have an equal opportunity to succeed. This concept of equality is strange to seven-eighths of the world, which views status and authority as desirable, even if they happen to be near the bottom of the social order. Since Americans like to treat foreigners "just like anybody else," newcomers to the U.S. should realize that no insult or personal indignity is intended if waiters in restaurants, clerks in stores and hotels, taxi, drivers and other service personnel, treat them in a less-than-deferential manner.

Individualism/Independence

Americans view themselves as highly individualistic in their thoughts and actions. They resist being thought of as representatives of any homogeneous group. When they do join groups, they believe they are special, just a little different from other members of the same group. In the U.S., you will find people freely expressing a variety of opinions anywhere and anytime. Yet, in spite of this "independence," almost all Americans end up voting for one of their two major political parties. Individualism leads to privacy, which Americans see as desirable. The word "privacy" does not exist in many non-Western languages. If it does, it is likely to have a negative connotation, suggesting loneliness or forced isolation. It is not uncommon for Americans to say and almost to believe: "If I don't have half an hour a day to myself, I go stark-raving mad!"

Self-Help/Initiative

Americans take credit only for what they accomplish as individuals. They get no credit for having been born into a rich family but pride themselves in having climbed the ladder of success, to whatever level, all by themselves. The equivalent of these words cannot be found in most other languages. It's an indicator of how highly Americans regard the "self-made" man or woman.

Competition

Americans believe that competition brings out the best in any individual in any system. Value is reflected in the economic system of "free enterprise" and it is applied in the U.S. in all areas - medicine, the arts, education and sports.

Future Orientation

Americans value the future and the improvements the future will surely bring. They devalue the past and are, to a large extent, unaware of the present. Even a happy present goes largely unnoticed because Americans are hopeful that the future will bring even greater happiness. Since Americans believe that humans, not fate, can and should control the environment, they are good at planning short-term projects. This ability has caused Americans to be invited to all corners of the Earth to plan, and often achieve, the miracles which their goal-setting methods can produce.

Action/Work Orientation

"Don't just stand there," says a typical bit of American advice, "do something!" This expression, though normally used in a crisis situation, in a sense describes most Americans' waking life, where action—any action—is seen as better to inaction. Most Americans routinely schedule an extremely active day. Any relaxation must be limited in time and aimed at "recreating" so that they can work harder once their "recreation" is over. Such a "no-nonsense" attitude toward life has created a class of people known as "workaholics" - people addicted to, and often wholly identified with, their profession. The first question people often ask when they meet each other in the U.S. is related to work: "What do you do?" "Where do you work?" or "Who (what company) are you with?" The United States may be one of the few countries in the world where people speak about the "dignity of human labor," meaning hard physical labor. Even corporation presidents will engage in physical labor from time to time and, in doing so, gain rather than lose respect from others.

Informality

Americans are even more informal and casual than their close relatives -the Western Europeans. For example, American bosses often urge their employees to call them by their first names and feel uncomfortable with the title "Mr." or "Mrs." Smith. Clothing is another area where American informality is most noticeable, perhaps even shocking. For example, one can go to a symphony performance in any large American city and find people dressed in blue jeans. Informality is also apparent in American UGA Study Abroad Passport 29

greetings. The more formal "How are you?" has largely been replaced with an informal "Hi!" This greeting is likely used with one's superior or one's best friend.

Directness/Openness/Honesty

Many other countries have developed subtle, sometimes highly ritualistic ways of informing others of unpleasant information. Americans prefer the direct approach. They are likely to be completely honest in delivering their negative evaluations, and consider anything other than the most direct and open approach to be "dishonest" and "insincere." Anyone in the U.S. who uses an intermediary to deliver the message will also be considered "manipulative" and "untrustworthy." If you come from a country where saving face is important, be assured that Americans are not trying to make you lose face with their directness.

Practicality/Efficiency

Americans have a reputation for being realistic, practical and efficient. The practical consideration is likely to be given highest priority in making any important decision. Americans pride themselves in not being very philosophically or theoretically oriented. If Americans would even admit to having a philosophy, it would probably be that of pragmatism. Will it make money? What is the "bottom line?" What can I gain from this activity? These are the kinds of questions Americans are likely to ask, rather than: Is it aesthetically pleasing? Will it be enjoyable? Will it advance the cause of knowledge? This pragmatic orientation has caused Americans to contribute more inventions to the world than any other country in human history. The love of "practicality" has also caused Americans to view some professions as more favorable than others. Management and economics are much more popular in the United States than philosophy or anthropology, and law and medicine more valued than the arts. Americans belittle "emotional" and "subjective" evaluations in favor of "rational" and "objective" assessments. Americans try to avoid being "too sentimental" in making their decisions. They judge every situation "on its own merits."

Materialism/Acquisitiveness

Foreigners consider Americans more materialistic than they are likely to consider themselves. Americans would like to think that their material objects are just the "natural benefits" that result from hard work and serious intent - a reward, which all people could enjoy were they as industrious and hard working as Americans. But by any standard, Americans are materialistic. They give a higher priority to obtaining, maintaining and protecting material

objects than they do in developing and enjoying relationships with other people. Since Americans value newness and innovation, they sell or throw away possessions frequently and replace them with newer ones. A car may be kept for only two or three years, a house for five or six before buying a new one.

HOW TO HANDLE ANTI-AMERICAN CRITICISM

As expressed previously, you probably consider yourself to be a good person, or at least someone with good intentions. But as you meet people outside of the United States, you will begin to discover that others don't always think that way. In fact, you must be prepared for confrontation based on what and who you are, to be judged not for yourself at times, but rather as a collective body of people who live south of Canada and north of Mexico. The forms of confrontation may vary; sometimes you will be expected to answer questions about American politics, geography, values and other issues as if you were the #1 expert on the subject. At other times, criticism will simply be words yelled in your face. Only in rare instances would you expect to ever be confronted with actual physical harm. Here is a list of commonly asked questions, which include:

- Why are Americans so materialistic?
- Why are they so wasteful of natural resources?
- Why are Americans so racist? How can you justify forcing the Native Americans onto reservations when the whole country belongs to them?
- Why are Americans so ignorant of other countries?

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- Why are teachers so poorly paid in a country that claims to have one of the best educational systems?
- Why does the U.S. try to behave as the policeman of the world?

STRATEGIES FOR RESPONDING TO ANTI-AMERICAN CRITICISM

There is no one right or wrong way to respond to attacks made against the United States or yourself for being American. You will have your own method for dealing with confrontation based on your own experiences, your way of dealing with conflict, and your opinions. You may choose to take an active role, and respond to the questions or accusations, or you may choose to take a passive role and not say anything in response. As you begin to respond to any criticism keep the following strategies in mind.

Try to understand the critic's motives

Americans are fond of saying "don't judge a book by its cover." Outward appearances are not always enough to go on in a situation where you are being confronted with anti-American sentiment. Try to talk to your "accuser" and ask questions that may elicit this person's beliefs about the United States and why s/he might hold them. Does this person get ideas from the media? Movies? Television? Is this something being taught in school? Has this person experienced some sort of harassment from an American? If you understand the critic's motive(s), you can perhaps find some common ground and a more tolerant way to respond.

Draw upon personal experiences and observations

When someone asks you a question like, "Why are Americans so wasteful of natural resources?" your first response might be to say: "Oh, not me." Whether or not the question is based on fact, one way to respond might be to draw on your own experiences and observations. In this case, you can say that while you cannot speak for the rest of the American population, you have your own

personal practices, such as recycling, water conservation or use of public transportation.

Avoid becoming defensive in their presence

You sometimes can't help becoming defensive - you are, after all, an American. Try avoiding getting defensive as much as possible. Keep an open mind, and remember to try and understand your critic's motives and beliefs.

Become more familiar with common U.S. facts and policies

"Americans are uneducated." That is a common belief overseas. How can you dispel that stereotype? "Why don't you know who the Secretary of State is?" People in other countries

- Why are there so many homeless people in "the richest country in the world"?
- Why does America give so much foreign aid to countries that abuse human rights?

will probably ask you a lot of questions about the United States on such varied topics as geography, politics, pop culture, etc. There may be questions from, "Who decides whether a person is guilty of a crime?" to, "Does every American wear cowboy boots and ride a horse?" However, it is not uncommon to find that people overseas know a great deal about U.S. politics and policies. You should re-familiarize yourself with basic U.S. facts and policies because you do not want to be uneducated or ignorant of basic facts. Some suggested areas to brush up on are:

- U.S. geography (e.g., differences in regions)
- U.S. political system (e.g., how does Congress differ from the Senate)
- U.S. judicial system (e.g., how does the jury system work "in theory")
- U.S. foreign policy (especially how it applies to your host country)

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CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

If you are studying in Russia that might be okay, but for most of you, as panic sets in, your first thought might be to turn around and hop back on the airplane that has just taken you to this strange land. For others, you may feel a sense of great excitement, of eagerness to "begin," whatever that might mean to you. And for a handful of you returning to a place where you've been before, stepping off the plane might bring a sense of homecoming. As time goes by and you settle into your routine, register for classes, begin the process of making friends and explore the area you now call home, you will be going through many emotional, psychological, and possibly, physical changes. This is what is known as "cultural adjustment" or "cultural adaptation." You cannot avoid these changes, but as long as you recognize them when they occur, you will be better prepared to deal with their consequences.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DEFINING "CULTURE"

It is difficult to begin a discussion on cultural adjustment without first defining the word "culture" and what makes culture. According to American Heritage Dictionary, culture is defined as "the arts, beliefs, customs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought created by a people or group at a particular time." If you were to ask several different people what they thought culture meant, you might get a list like Dr. L. Robert Kohls did when he wrote Survival Kit for Overseas Living:

- Manners and customs
- Beliefs and ideas

The concept of adjustment implies change. In your case, you will be moving from your "American" culture to one overseas. The nature of your adjustment depends on the nature of the differences between your original culture and the new one and on the objectives you seek to complete in the new culture. The concept of adjustment assumes that you already have well-established sets of behaviors for "operating" in your own culture. As you enter into new cultures, those patterns of behavior may no longer satisfy your needs. In developing new patterns of coping with your new environment, you may experience varying degrees of disorientation and discomfort. This is called "culture shock." UGA Study Abroad Passport 32

When you first walk off the plane, you might look around and see this:

ДОБРО ПОЖАЛОВАТЬ

- Ceremonies and rituals
- Laws (written & unwritten)
- Ideas and thought patterns
- Language
- Arts and artifacts
- Social institutions
- Religious beliefs
- Myths & legends
- Knowledge
- Values and morals
- Concept of self
- Accepted ways of behaving

Kohls found that people were describing the total way of life of any group of people. To complicate matters, everyone has their own personal culture. Yours may be your preference for cowboy boots over sneakers, or rap music over classical. In short, there is no one correct list of components of culture but at least you can get a sense of what makes culture up.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

As described in the beginning, cultural adjustment is a continuous, on-going process. It never stops, and it varies from one individual to another and from one culture to another. Your own situation may require you to confront not only differences in your new culture but it may also force you to take a good look at your own cultural values and practices.

Culture Shock

Many travelers go through an initial period of euphoria and excitement, overwhelmed by the thrill of being in a totally new and unusual environment. As this initial sense of "adventure" wears off, they gradually become aware of the fact that old habits and routine ways of doing things no longer suffice. Students abroad might gradually (or suddenly) no longer feel comfortable in their new environment. If this happens to you, as it is likely to, you will feel like an outsider. Minor problems may quickly assume the proportions of major crises, and you may find yourself growing somewhat depressed. You may feel an anxiety that results from losing all your familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse; a kind of psychological disorientation. You will indeed be experiencing what has come to be referred to as Culture Shock. Don't be too hard on yourself if you find this happening to you – This means you are paying attention to differences! Again, such feelings are perfectly normal, so knowing this and with a bit of conscious effort, you will soon find yourself making adjustments (some quite subtle and perhaps not even noticeable at the conscious level) that will enable you to adapt to your new cultural environment.

Culture shock is not quite as shocking or as sudden as most people expect. It is part of the process of learning a new culture that, as you have already learned, is called "cultural adaptation." A definition of culture shock is: "The feeling of frustration and anxiety which arises when familiar cultural cues are suddenly removed and replaced by new and seemingly bizarre behavior."

- Lewis and Jungman, *On Being Foreign*

You may experience some discomfort before you are able to function well in a new setting. This discomfort is the "culture shock" stage of the adaptation process. The main thing to remember is that this is a very normal process that nearly everyone goes through. Just as you will take with you overseas clothes and other personal items, you will also carry invisible "cultural baggage" when you travel. That baggage is not as obvious as the items in your suitcases, but it will play a major role in your adaptation abroad. Cultural baggage contains the values that are important to you and the patterns of behavior that are customary in your culture. The more you know about your personal values and how they are derived from your culture, the better prepared you will be to see and understand the cultural differences you will encounter abroad.

Know What to Expect

Prepare yourself for culture shock before you go abroad by reading books about the culture, travel guide books (for example, the Lonely Planet guides), local magazines or newspapers (some are found on the web) and meeting people from your intended host country. Try to learn the language, including body language, as gestures are frequently different in other countries. Find out about differences in body

language, personal space, manners, etc. Don't be afraid to ask questions of people in the country. Bring photos of your home and family to share with host families/friends that you meet.

Anticipating future events and possibilities makes it easier to deal with them when they happen. For example, it helps to anticipate your initial departure and plan ways to maintain relationships with people at home while you are away, i.e., family, roommates and professors.

Be sure to allow ample time to say goodbye to all the people who are important to you, and plan how to keep in touch. This assures people that you will continue to care about them.

Planning to stay in touch does not require a promise to write or telephone on a strict schedule, but it does help to establish a realistic interval between communications. You will be extremely busy getting settled and learning about your new environment, so it is essential that long periods between communications will not alarm your family and friends at home.

Some surprises always await you when you arrive in a new place. People may walk and talk more quickly or slowly, traffic patterns may be confusing, and buildings may look different than expected. Such differences are easy to see and quickly learned. The housing arrangements at your university or college, the manner in which classes are taught, registration for courses, and other procedures may seem strange or very confusing.

Studying abroad, however, means making big changes in your daily life. Generations of students have found that they go through a

predictable series of stages as they adjust to living abroad. At first, although the new situation is a bit confusing, most students also find it to be exhilarating, a time of new experiences, sights, sounds and activities. With so much to learn and absorb in the new culture, the initial period of settling in often seems like an adventure. During this time, you will tend to look for and identify similarities between your home culture and your host culture. You will find that people really are friendly and helpful. The procedures are different, but there are patterns, things that you can learn and depend on. You may classify other aspects of the culture that seem unusual or even unattractive as curious, interesting or "quaint". There will be many opportunities to meet people in your community; such opportunities can be rewarding, but they also present an expanded array of cultural puzzles.

Emerging Differences

Gradually, as you become more involved in activities and get to know the people around you, differences - rather than similarities - will become increasingly apparent to you. Those differences may begin to seem more irritating than interesting or quaint. Small incidents and difficulties may make you anxious and concerned about how best to carry on with academic social life. As these differences emerge, they can be troubling and sometimes shocking. But culture shock does not happen all at once. It is a feeling that grows little by little as you interact with other students, faculty and people within the community.

For many this gradual process culminates in an emotional state known as "culture shock," although it is seldom as dramatic as the term implies. Common symptoms of culture shock are:

- Extreme homesickness
- Desire to avoid social settings which seem threatening or unpleasant
- Physical complaints and sleep disturbances
- Depression and feelings of helplessness
- Difficulty with coursework and concentration
- Loss of your sense of humor
- Boredom or fatigue
- Hostility towards the host culture

Students are sometimes unaware of the fact that they are experiencing culture shock when these symptoms occur. There are ways to deal with this period of culture shock, so it helps to recognize that culture shock may lie behind physical symptoms and irritability.

Coping with Culture Shock

The most effective way to combat culture shock is to step back from a given event that has bothered you, assess it and search for an appropriate explanation and response. Try the following:

- Observe how others are acting in the same situation.
- Describe the situation, what it means to you and your response to it.
- Ask a local resident or someone with extensive experience how they would have handled the situation and what it means in the host culture.
- Plan how you might act in this or similar situations in the future.
- Test the new behavior and evaluate how well it works.
- Decide how you can apply what you have learned the next time you find yourself in a similar situation.
- Be open-minded and flexible.
- Talk to your Program Director or host country coordinator if you are struggling.

Throughout the period of cultural adaptation, take good care of yourself. Read a book or rent a video in your home language, take a short trip if possible, exercise and get plenty of rest, write a letter or telephone home, eat good food, and do things you enjoy with friends. Take special notice of things you enjoy about living in the host culture.

Although it can be disconcerting and a little scary, the "shock" gradually eases as you begin to understand the new culture. It is useful to realize that often the reactions and perceptions of others toward you - and you toward them - are not personal evaluations but are based on a clash of cultural values. The more skilled you become in recognizing how and when cultural values and behaviors are likely to come in conflict, the easier it becomes to make adjustments that can help you avoid serious difficulties.

Intercultural Communication

Perhaps the major contributor to unease in a foreign environment is the increased difficulty, or even impossibility, of communicating what one wishes to communicate and of receiving the UGA Study Abroad Passport 34

information one wishes to receive. You will bring your own communication habits, both verbal and non-verbal, that sometimes do not transcend cultural limits. Studies of intercultural communication have shown that the amount of time and energy needed for simple communication increases dramatically as cultural differences increase. Your own gestures and other non-verbal cues can act, unbeknownst to you, as hindrances to communication. Your perceptions of any given person or situation can be quite different from the other person's perception.

You should try to recognize that other cultures may use different verbal and non-verbal communication methods. Body language, the use of "personal space" when talking and other non-verbal communication can be very different from what you are used to in the United States. Likewise, some cultures are not nearly as frank, sarcastic or confrontational when discussing certain topics. Sometimes things are implied in conversation but not voiced. It is important to remember that differences in communication styles are just that - different. You will be studied and possibly judged by your own communication styles. You should avoid making judgments about a person's rudeness until you understand how verbal and non-verbal communication styles differ in your host culture.

Imposition of Personal Values

The tendency of people to impose their own values and assumptions onto people in the new culture usually inhibits cross-cultural understanding. While you are abroad you should avoid making definitive, prejudicial judgments that may result from your own cultural responses. For example, it is best not to move rapidly to the conclusion that a native of the new culture is "cheating" or "lying," when that person's behavior may be the result of other motives. You should be open-minded, receptive to different ideas, concepts and behaviors. A certain amount of "cultural self-analysis" might reveal much about your own motivations and value system; such knowledge can contribute to increased communication skills, increased

It is also possible to misunderstand cultural generalities and misapply the generalization. A non-American, perhaps, after perceiving with some difficulty that "Americans are frank," may misapply the insight and behave rudely in a given situation. One possible reaction you might have to living for some length of time in the new culture is to withdraw from it, isolating yourself from the most threatening aspects of the culture, and perhaps clinging to people from your own culture. Another possible reaction is to view UGA Study Abroad Passport 35

acceptance and understanding of others, and more productive interaction. Until you have acquired enough self-knowledge to realize the true extent to which your outward personality is shaped by cultural habits and values, you will not be completely capable of comprehending or learning from the cultural habits and values of a different society.

Influence of Time within a New Culture

Cross-cultural adaptation is a continuing process, with continuous evolution of insights, knowledge, physical skills and emotional skills. Of course, it is possible to live for years in a new culture and never be affected by it; but those involved in cross-cultural adjustment never cease to learn from the experience. It is important that you be flexible with new-found knowledge, to be prepared to discover that any single piece of information might not have universal applicability in the culture. Language learning provides an example. You will often learn new words or tenses and, until you learn more, you may use that new vocabulary in inappropriate situations.

Will I lose my own Culture?

Sometimes students worry about "losing their culture" if they become too well adapted to the host culture. Don't worry: it is virtually impossible to lose the culture in which you were raised. In fact, learning about the new culture often increases your appreciation for and understanding of your own culture. Don't resist the opportunity to become bicultural, able to function competently in two cultural environments.

Just as culture shock derives from the accumulation of cultural clashes, accumulation of small successes can lead to more effective interactions within the new culture. As you increase your abilities to manage and understand the new social system, practices that recently seemed so strange will become less puzzling. Eventually you will adapt sufficiently to do your best in your studies and social life and to relax and fully enjoy the experience. And you will recover your sense of humor!

negatively all aspects of the new culture, to belittle it, to consider its norms and values inferior to your own culture. A more positive reaction is to assume or take on many of the new culture's norms, especially those involved in expressing yourself to others both in image and language. As the length of time in the new culture grows, your ability to learn from your experiences should increase, as should your awareness of your own cultural influence and assumptions, and of your personal motivations and value systems.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT RESOURCES

What's Up With Culture? An On-Line Cultural Training Resource For Study Abroad

<http://www.pacific.edu/sis/culture/>

- Site hosted by University of the Pacific, CA using adapted resources from US Peace Corps & other sources
- Individual self-paced module format
- Covers: Pre-departure, Cultural Adjustment, and Preparing to Re-enter the U.S.

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PLANNING YOUR

You are preparing to go overseas, but it is not too early to begin thinking about the day you will return home. Questions such as "Why did I choose an overseas program?" and "What do I want to accomplish during my time here" can help you clarify how you are going to integrate your overseas experience into your academic, professional and personal goals for the future. Preparing for the surprises that often greet travelers after an extended period abroad will enable you to turn what is often a very awkward time into a productive one. (And your photo album will hopefully reflect it all.)

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Part of the preparation for returning home includes staying in contact with your family and friends, working with the Office of International Education for any academic or school-related matters and, to some extent, keeping up with political, economic, and social developments at home. For some students, these changes will be minute; for others they may be very significant.

MAKING ARRANGEMENTS

There are a number of very important things you must do before you leave your host country. Do not leave everything for the last minute, or you may find yourself with too little time to do what needs to be done.

Confirm Travel

If you already have a return ticket you should contact the airline and reconfirm your seat at least 72 hours in advance. Airlines notoriously overbook flights back to the United States. You may decide to travel before leaving the country, or have your family and friends join you. If you want to change the return date, contact the airline directly or visit a travel agency. They can tell you what, if any, restrictions there are. Depending upon your ticket restrictions this may be possible for a small fee. If you do not have a return ticket, you should book a flight at least 60 days in advance, especially if you are returning in

RETURN HOME

the summer when it is high travel season in the United States.

Transcripts

Make sure you check with the International Office of your host school or your Program Director about how and when you will be getting your transcript sent back to the United States. Since the educational systems vary at each overseas institution, you need to allow ample time for the processing of your transcript and grades. You may want to obtain copies of your transcript or any other relevant documents, for your own records. If you think you might apply to graduate school in the future, get information on how to order a transcript directly in the future since graduate schools will not accept copies. If you are studying abroad for more than one semester, have your academic transcript sent after each semester. Please don't wait until you return home from abroad.

All transcripts should be sent to: UGA Office of International Education, International Education Building, 1324 S. Lumpkin Street, Athens, GA 30602.

PREPARING FOR REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

The cycle of overseas adjustment begins at the time you plan to study abroad. You may think that adjustment ends when you have successfully assimilated into the life of your host country, but, in fact, the cycle of cultural adjustment continues through your return to the United States. Culture shock and re-entry shock (more commonly known as "reverse culture shock") are not isolated events but rather part of the total adjustment process that stretches from pre-departure to reintegration at home. The rest of this chapter is designed to prepare you to leave your host country. It is important to read this section now, as well as when you are about to return home. UGA Study Abroad Passport 37

Change and Adaptation

You have just had the opportunity to live, study and travel overseas. During your stay, you have probably assimilated to some of the host country's culture, learned new ways of doing things and gained some new views and opinions about certain topics. In short, you have changed. As one returnee explains, "Living abroad has a deep, broadening effect on a person—an effect that I didn't realize until my return." For some people, living overseas and having those changes occur outside of the United States can magnify those experiences, thus causing the return home to be a bit unsettling. In addition, some of the experiences are specific to being overseas and could not have occurred in the United States. While overseas, you may have experienced a greater amount of independence, both academically and personally, than you previously experienced in the United States. This independence can help make you more confident in your abilities to achieve your goals. You may have become increasingly more sure of yourself and possibly have gained a more mature or focused attitude about your future. You may even be a bit more serious and directed. Some of these new views and attitudes may be in conflict with the views and attitudes of family and friends. They may question your new way of thinking and doing things or even pressure you to "reform." These differences may often be unsettling and uncomfortable at first.

New Skills

Along with the new ideas, views and attitudes that you developed you probably acquired some new skills. These may include discovering a new way to do an old task, a different perspective on your field of study, or increased foreign language skills. And, for those of you studying in an English-speaking country, the English language will acquire a new meaning through idioms, lingo and phrases that are specific to the host country. These new skills will now become a part of your daily life. Increasing facility with your foreign language will probably have one of the greatest impacts. If you have learned to become dependent on these skills to communicate from day to day, then it may feel strange for you to revert back to your native language. The degree of strangeness is directly connected to the amount of culture from the host country that you have assimilated and will definitely influence your re-adjustment. You may feel frustrated and depressed if you cannot communicate your new ideas, skills or opinions, and this can be distressing. Again, patience, flexibility and time will be required as they were at the beginning of your journey.

Loss of status

In your host country you may have been seen as an informal ambassador from the United States. This gave you a certain status of being "special." When you return home, you are just like everyone else and the loss of feeling a bit "special" can be a factor that you must deal with in your readjustment. One returnee describes it this way: "Being in a foreign country as a foreign visitor, you are to a certain extent a 'special person'; your new views, accent and lifestyle are all interesting to your hosts. As such, you will receive a lot of attention, make friends and, generally, be popular. However, when returning 'home', you become again a 'normal person'. I found it very difficult to make that transition."

Friendships

Now that you have studied abroad, you obviously have a new circle of friends. You most likely saw some or all of these people on a daily basis and they probably became an important part of your life. Leaving your new friends can be, for many, the most difficult part of re-entry. Having to abandon intense friendships, girl/boyfriends, and/or cultural supports, frequently brings disturbing feelings characteristic of those associated in a grieving process. Though you may seem to make a good surface adjustment once home, that adjustment may, at times, cover many contain feelings of uncertainty, alienation, anger and disappointment.

Upon your return, friends at home will ask about your experiences and appear to be interested. They will often show a slight fascination for your adventures, but this may quickly fade. They will whip through pictures and stories once, but because they have not shared the experience, you should be prepared for their waning interest. After a while you may find that your friends are more eager to talk about what has gone on in their lives as opposed to hearing more about your life overseas. If many of your friends have never lived abroad, you may also have to deal with feelings of envy or jealousy. When you talk "too much" about your experience, people may accuse you of being elitist even though that may not be your intention. UGA Study Abroad Passport 38

People are often threatened by new and unusual points of view if they have not had a similar experience. As much as you need to talk about your recent time away from home, it is advisable to be sensitive to the attitudes and feelings of others. (Refer to the section on coping strategies, which discusses other options for support).

As with your family relationships, your relationships with your friends can alter because of the changes that have occurred in your life and the lives of your friends. Former friends may even have found new friendships and may have developed priorities that are now different from yours. Be patient. If the friendship is worth maintaining, adjustment can and will be made. If it is not worth or adjustments cannot be made, developing new friendships can be as exhilarating as traveling.

Family Relationships

These changes—your new independence, new views and new attitudes, your role as informal ambassador, newly acquired skills and your new friends—all have contributed to making you who you are now. The "changed you" will have to re-adjust to life in the United States, and, for some, this can be difficult. Initially, you may even have to live at home. It can be a surprise to learn that you are not the only one affected by re-entry. After all, you are the one who has been away and had so many new experiences. Everyone and everything at home should have stayed fairly stable. However, the home that you remember is not always going to be exactly the same as it was when you left. This feeling of "dislocation" occurs for two reasons. One, because you are now looking at what was once familiar through a new set of perceptions. Therefore, you will see everything a bit differently. The new experiences and perspectives gained abroad may mean that home is never the same again.

Secondly, like it or not, life at home did carry on while you were away. Things have happened to your family and friends and events have occurred in their lives. These events may have caused changes in their feelings, perceptions, opinions, and attitudes. Granted, these changes may not have affected your life as intensely. However, to the specific individuals, their experiences are as important as your experiences are to you. Remember, and be

aware, that people at home change too, so expect things to be different.

It is normal for you to desire to hold onto the person who you have become. Your overseas experience and life will now be a part of you and reflect who you are right now. The "new" you cannot be discarded or forgotten for the "old" you. However, you and your family must come to terms with that "new" you and continue to build upon your existing relationship from this point forward. It will require commitment to work toward mutual respect and understanding of each other's views. You may find that you have a totally different relationship with your family.

University/College Life

For those of you who eventually return to a university setting, you may feel you have re-adjusted during the few months at home. However, if you go directly to UGA without time at home (or limited time at home) you may face a new set of re-adjustment issues upon return to academic life. If you have become very accustomed to a different type of academic system while overseas, you will have to deal with readjusting to UGA's way of handling things. For example, some students, while overseas, experience a greater amount of academic independence than they had previously experienced. If you have found that academic freedom is particularly gratifying and challenging, then the re-adjustment to a system that is a bit more structured can be difficult. Also, remember that every institution has its own feel and unique atmosphere; you can appreciate both your study abroad institution and UGA without making comparisons. Value each of them for their strengths. Returning to university life you may also feel a bit "removed" from your major and department. Stop by those offices and get re-acquainted with the staff and faculty.

LEVELS OF READJUSTMENT

As stated earlier, no readjustment experience is the same for everyone. You may go through re-entry much differently than someone else.

Research on readjustment to the U.S. after a prolonged stay abroad suggests that there are several variables that may affect the degree of difficulty faced by individuals during re-entry. Some of these variables include: UGA Study Abroad Passport 39

Age and academic level

Older students or professionals who were well established in their field before their trip sometimes experience a less troubled re-entry than younger students do. Those who left home as teens, ready to discover new attitudes and explore new ways of living, may adopt the "host culture's way," rather than selectively integrate it with their own cultural or personal beliefs. Once home they may constantly compare home country traditions and practices unfavorably with their host country experience, increasing the feelings of alienation.

Previous cross-cultural experiences

Students who have previously been away from the United States have less trouble adjusting. A student who expects to experience some difficulty on return is better able to manage re-acclimation problems. The longer a student stays in the host country and the greater the degree of interaction and empathy with the host culture he/she experiences, the more difficult re-entry into the home environment may be. Some observers have noted that students who are able to afford vacation visits home during their study sojourn seem to experience fewer problems upon returning home for good. It is thought that exposure to the home environment during visits results in more realistic expectations.

Readiness to return home

It has been hypothesized that students who strongly desire to return home at the end of their study abroad term are most likely to return home with a high motivation to 'resocialize,' while those who strongly desire to stay on in the host country will seem 'alienated' upon re-entry. Those who are moderately looking forward to returning home are expected to have the healthiest re-entry.

Degree of similarity between the home and host culture

The greater the differences between the host culture and the home culture the greater the re-acclimation difficulty for the student. A student returning from Australia or British territory might expect an easier transition than a student who spent time abroad in Spain. However, the less a returnee expects to experience reverse culture shock, the more likely it is that adjustment difficulties will cause alarm. Keep in mind that

the degree to which this is experienced has a lot to do with how much the student assimilated into the foreign culture.

Changes (or lack of) in the home environment

This variable can work in several ways. A returnee may expect everything to be the same at home as it was when he or she left. During the student's absence, there may have been subtle or dramatic changes in political, economic, environmental or social factors on a national scale. Family relationships or the standard of living may have altered in ways not anticipated. These changes may be stressful psychologically and may make it difficult for the student to realize his or her plans. Conversely, a student may return home to find nothing seems to have changed. This can intensify the student's feeling that there is no one there who can understand what he or she is going through.

Availability (or lack) of a support group

Being able to share concerns and coping strategies with other recent or more established returnees could help reduce the panic, depression, frustration and sense of helplessness that can accompany re-entry. Students who return to places where they are surrounded by few people who have studied abroad—in that country or in general—feel very alone since there is no one with whom they can discuss their concerns. It helps to locate even one other person who has shared this experience and see that one can successfully overcome reverse culture shock. If the study abroad office offers events for returnees, make every effort to attend.

LENGTH OF READJUSTMENT PERIOD

The length of time that the re-adjustment phase lasts will, of course, vary from person to person, but it will also depend on the level of intensity you experience. If you experience a very high level of intensity your adjustment will most likely take longer than if you experience a very low level of intensity. One returning student said: "I have been back 4 months and I still find it very hard to communicate about my experiences and often I feel I must hide many of the new attitudes or knowledge I may have gained that seem at odds with my old life." In addition, the length of

time the re-adjustment lasts depends on you and how you cope with the situations that occur.

COPING STRATEGIES

The good news is that this phase of readjustment to life in the United States does not last forever! Here are some suggestions of ways to make this phase a bit easier on you and your family/friends.

Acknowledge your adjustment

First, and foremost, acknowledge the re-entry phase as part of the overseas experience. Just as you had to give yourself time while going through the culture shock phase (if you did experience culture shock), you must also give yourself time to go through the re-entry phase. Acknowledging that reverse cultural adjustment is real will help you avoid feelings of guilt that might occur if you are feeling depressed or unhappy about being home.

Share your adjustment

Educate your family and friends about this phase of adjustment. Many people have never heard of reverse cultural adjustment and are not aware of its existence. If the people around you know a little about what you are experiencing, then, hopefully, they will be a bit more patient and understanding towards you and help you to re-adjust. If you have difficulty communicating your feelings, then share this manual with your family and possibly your friends. Remind those around you that you cannot unlearn what you have learned, but that you need time to re-integrate those often conflicting components within yourself.

Stay in contact with your host culture

Keep in contact through letters (and, if possible through telephone calls and email) with the friends you made in your host country. It will help you feel that what you experienced was real and not one big dream. Some returnees have the feeling of never having been overseas after their return to the home country. Also, if some of your friends are returning to the United States, they will possibly be experiencing similar adjustment problems. You are an obvious support system for each other because you each know how the other is feeling and what the other is missing.

Seek others and get involved

If possible, seek out other returnees that live nearby. If you return to UGA, you should not have a problem finding other returnees who have been overseas where you lived or studied. The fact that they have gone through (or are going through) re-entry and can offer support and advice about how to cope will be helpful. Other returnees often want to hear of your overseas adventures because they have a multicultural and international perspective. Becoming active in events sponsored by the OIE offers you an outlet

to share your concerns and also your experiences.

Keep your ears open for group reunions or reentry orientations held by your program director or the Office of International Education. For example, the OIE coordinates a Study Abroad Peer Advisor Program for returned students each year, which is a great way to remained involved with study abroad programs, even after your return. OIE may also offer workshops on ways to highlight your study abroad experience in your job search.

If you want to keep using your foreign language skills, there are a couple of things you can do:

- Take an advanced level course in the foreign language that interests you.
- Organize a reunion to exchange photos and converse in the language.
- Start a "language table," where a group of students interested in improving foreign language skills in a specific language can meet 1-3 times a week during either lunch or dinner and only speak that specific language.

If you want to stay connected to international things at UGA, here are some things you can do:

- Seek out other "captive" audiences who would have a natural interest in your overseas experience. Part of re-adjusting is being able to tell your story and describe the experiences that you have lived through. Being a Peer Advisor in the OIE is a great way to do this. You are the perfect person to be an advocate for study abroad. OIE looks for returnees who are willing to be Peer Advisors and to help other students interested in studying abroad.
- Get involved with the International Student Life office and serve as a Global Friend or World Ambassador. More information about these UGA Study Abroad Passport 41

two student organizations can be found at
<http://www.uga.edu/isl> .

Set goals for your future

Now is the time for you to look toward your future. You have finished one phase of your life and are ready to move ahead. Think about your next challenge or goal. Begin to make plans and put those plans into action. Even if you have to return to UGA to finish a year or two of a degree, you can develop goals for that period of time so that you will feel you are moving ahead rather than regressing. It is common for students who do return to university to feel they have gone "10 steps forward (their overseas experience), and now are going 11 steps backward (the return to university)." It is up to you to get the most out of that time by giving yourself new goals and challenges. Take the influence of your overseas experience and use it positively to help plan this next phase of your life. UGA Study Abroad Passport 42

APPENDIX

The staff of the Office of International Education at The University of Georgia compiled the "UGA Study Abroad Passport". The information contained within was taken and adapted from a variety of study abroad resources, including guides, books and the Internet. It has been adapted and modified to meet the needs of The University of Georgia. The following is a list of resources used to develop the "UGA Study Abroad Passport".

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USC SAFETI (Safety Abroad First - Educational Travel Information) Clearinghouse. Website located at <http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/globaled/safeti/> and <http://www.studentsabroad.com/>

U.S Department of State Resources

Students Abroad <http://studentsabroad.state.gov/>

International Travel Information <http://travel.state.gov/>