Acknowledgement

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The UNC Asheville Study Abroad office
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IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Study Abroad Office
Bonnie Parker, Cara Gilpin, Diane Royer
28 Ramsey Library, CPO#1560
One University Heights
Asheville NC 28804
Phone: (828) 251-6666
Fax: (828) 251-6492
Email: studyabroad@unca.edu

Financial Aid
Jonathan Griffin
2nd Floor Brown Hall, CPO 1330
One University Heights
Asheville, NC 28804
Phone: 828.251.6535
Fax: 828.232.2294
finaid@unca.edu

Academic Accessibility
Joshua Kaufman
Ramsey Library 011, CPO 1575
1 University Heights
Asheville, NC 28804
Phone: 828-232-5050
Fax: 828-251-6492
Email: kaufman@unca.edu

Student Health and Counseling
118 W.T. Weaver, CPO 3710
1 University Heights
Asheville, NC 28804
Phone: 828-251-6520
Fax: 828-251-6887
Email: jcutspec@unca.edu
IMPORTANT DATES

JANUARY
FAFSA (financial aid) applications for the next academic year become available. Forms may be downloaded from the Financial Aid website: financialaid.unca.edu

FEBRUARY
Application deadline for students studying in the summer or fall semesters
Scholarship applications due to the Study Abroad Office for summer and fall semesters
Students currently abroad will receive an e-mail about Courses form

MARCH
FAFSA (financial aid) applications or renewal forms due for next academic year.
First payment due for Faculty-Led Summer programs
Advising begins for summer and fall
Pre-Departure Orientation for students going abroad on summer programs
Pre-Departure Orientation for students going abroad on fall or Academic Year programs
Students check for any holds to get them released before pre-registration
Pre-registration begins for summer and fall

APRIL
Second payment due for Faculty-Led Summer programs

MAY
Payment due for KSSP program
Tuition and fees due for summer programs
Students currently studying abroad request that transcripts be sent from host university to the UNC Asheville Study Abroad office or to ISEP (as appropriate)

SEPTEMBER
Students currently abroad will receive an e-mail about Courses form

OCTOBER
Application deadline for students studying abroad in the spring semester
Scholarship applications due to Study Abroad for the spring semester
Advising begins for spring semester

NOVEMBER
Pre-Departure Orientation for students going abroad on spring programs
Pre-registration for spring semester

DECEMBER
Students currently studying abroad request that transcripts be sent from host university to the UNC Asheville Study Abroad office or to ISEP (as appropriate)
PREPARING TO GO ABROAD

The mirror is an essential tool in your preparation, any household variety will do. The task at hand: an objective look at the way others may perceive you in your future host community abroad. We often like to think of ourselves as being very complex. That is not at issue in this exercise. What are at issue are first impressions that factors like gender and race play a part.

We have learned, over time, the implications of gender, ethnic and class identifications within the U.S. context and historical background of race and class relations and the role of women in society. Imagine a few different scenarios, if you will. What if, for example, Asian-Americans had been the early inhabitants of this country and had been driven from their land? Asian-Americans would occupy a very different space in our current dynamic. Or if European-Americans had been enslaved in lieu of the African-American? Or if men had been homemakers for centuries? It may be becoming apparent that changing any part of the whole has a dramatic effect. Now change everything. That’s study abroad.

Every country has a rich history that shapes the way that people relate to each other and how they will relate to you. You may find that you are diametrically opposed to some of the standards of relations in your host country. You will not change the world in a year. In order to get the most from your experience, you will have to come to understand it. Who you are before you ever pack your first bag, let alone arrive in your host country, will largely determine the kind of experience you will have.

Before you travel, you will want to know as much as possible about the cultural norms and social, economic, and political situation in your future host country. In researching your host country, try to find out how they get their information about the world around them and how current that information is. It would be helpful to know what Americans they might be familiar with already and what ideas they might have about the United States and Americans based on that. Just as important an issue is how nationals of that country are treated in the United States. The more informed you are about your potential reception, the more prepared you’ll be.
THINGS TO DO: Before leaving the U.S.

- **Read this handbook**: Read this handbook in its entirety. You will be held accountable for knowing and abiding by the policies.

- **Get your passport**: Apply immediately if you do not already have a passport that will be valid for at least six months after you return to the U.S. See page 8

- **Get your visa**: Refer to the U.S. Department of State website (http://travel.state.gov) to find entry requirements for your host country (as well as other countries to which you plan to travel). See page 9

- **Visit Financial Aid**: UNC Asheville students intending to use financial aid toward the cost of the study abroad program must schedule an appointment with the Financial Aid Office. See “Important Contacts” on page 4

- **Make flight arrangements**: Do **not** make flight arrangements until your acceptance to the program is confirmed and you have verified your required arrival date. See page 15

- **Get immunizations**: Refer to the website of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel) to find health and vaccination requirements for your host country and other countries to which you plan to travel.

- **Get prescriptions**: Get copies of all medical and vision prescriptions to carry with you. If possible, have your doctor fill your prescriptions to cover your entire stay abroad. In addition, if your prescription is a controlled substance, you will want to obtain a letter from your doctor explaining the need for the drug. See page 23

- **Make photocopies**: Make copies of all of your important documents, including your passport, visa paperwork, airline tickets, prescriptions, etc. Leave one set of photocopies with a family member or friend in the U.S. and take the other set with you, separate from the originals.

- **Make financial arrangements**: Develop a budget for your time abroad and plan for multiple ways of accessing money. If you plan to use your debit or credit card from the U.S., check with your bank or credit card company to verify locations of use and extra fees that may apply. See page 11

- **Power of Attorney**: Consider arranging to give a family member or friend “Power of Attorney” to handle some of your financial affairs in your absence. For those using financial aid, this is required. See page 13

- **Arrange for phone calls**: If you plan to use a U.S. long-distance calling card while abroad, contact your phone company to obtain access codes and rates. See page 17

- **Plan ahead for Registration**: If you have trouble getting access to register while abroad, email Diane Royer in the Study Abroad office and she can register for you. Make sure to include your Course Number, Title, Section and Banner ID Number. You must email your academic adviser to get approval for courses while abroad. Use your UNC Asheville email only. See page 35

- **Arrange for housing**: Complete any applications necessary to obtain housing overseas and upon your return to UNC Asheville. See page 38

- **Register with the US State Department Smart Traveler Enrollment Program**: https://step.state.gov/step/
PASSPORT INFORMATION

If you have not already done so, you should apply for a passport IMMEDIATELY. Applications for a first-time passport may take four to six weeks, but during busy times you should allow eight to ten weeks. A VALID PASSPORT IS REQUIRED FOR ALL PROGRAMS. If you are really short on time, you may request express processing of your passport application for an extra cost. The U.S. Post Office on Coxe Avenue has a Passport Processing office: 33 Coxe Avenue, Asheville NC 28802; 828-271-6429.

The following website has the latest information and application:
http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english.html.

When applying for your passport, you will need:

- Completed application
- Two Identical Passport Photos
- Proof of U.S. Citizenship (any of the following):
  - Previous U.S. Passport
  - Certified Birth Certificate
  - Naturalization Certificate
  - Certificate of Citizenship
  - Consular Report of Birth Abroad or Certification of Birth
- Evidence of Identity (any of the following):
  - Previous U.S. Passport
  - Naturalization Certificate
  - Current, Valid:
    - Driver’s License
    - Government ID: city, state, federal
    - Military ID: military and dependents
    - (Social Security Card does NOT prove identity)

Non-U.S. citizens should contact the embassy of the destination country for information on visa requirements for citizens of your home country. Check with your program regarding any field trips to other countries which may also require a visa entry.
VISA INFORMATION

Please note you must have your passport before you can obtain a visa. Nearly every country in the world requires that international visitors obtain a visa. More common types of visas are tourist, student, and work. You will need to apply for a student visa. A visa is an official document (endorsement or stamp) issued by the government of the host country, placed by officials of the host country on a U.S. passport that allows the bearer to visit that country. The visa conditions usually specify a period of time for your entry and departure from the host country; or as a student, you must maintain a full-time course schedule, or it may deny permission to work for money. If you violate the terms of the visa, you are subject to legal action or deportation.

Visa and residence permit requirements vary widely. It is your responsibility to determine what documents you are required to submit to the embassy or consulate as these vary from country to country. If you delay in submitting the necessary materials, your study abroad office can do very little to assist in obtaining the documents required for entry. To avoid potential disappointment, begin the process as soon as you know your host country. Locate and collect necessary documents. Most commonly requested documents are proof of insurance, adequate funding, and police clearance or reports. If you gather the required documents now, then you can send for your visa as soon as you receive your acceptance letter from your host institution. Be aware that you may have to appear in person for an interview at the consulate in Atlanta or Washington, D.C. or elsewhere with your application and documents. You can find information at [http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english.html](http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english.html).

If you are not a U.S. citizen or do not travel under a U.S. passport, you should allow extra time to obtain a visa to travel abroad. Remember, there are regulations changes, so keep on top of things. You can find information at [www.embassy.org](http://www.embassy.org). Depending on your country of citizenship, you may need to allow a number of weeks or even months for your host country to process all of the required documents.

“Whitehaven Beach” By Sarah Baartz, 2014  Location: Whitsunday Island, Australia
All countries have strict regulations governing the ability of foreign nationals (including students) to work while residing in the country. Often, foreign students are not allowed to work at all, and restrictions may be included with your visa. Even in countries which do allow foreign students to work part-time, you may find that jobs are scarce, it’s difficult to combine work and studies, or both.

In any case, do not plan on working while abroad as a way to cover your expenses during your study abroad program. Your host university may restrict you from working even if it is legal for you to do so. At best, a part-time job while studying abroad should serve as a supplement to your personal expenses and travel budget. The best source of information about work options in your host country is your host university coordinator.

Working without legal permission will, in many countries, be considered grounds for deportation. Ignorance of the law is not accepted as an excuse. Be sure to check with your overseas program coordinator for updated details about work regulations in your host country.
FINANCIAL MATTERS

The cost of your trip will depend on how you choose to live and which countries you visit. Expenses can be lowered by purchasing food at grocery stores instead of eating out at restaurants; staying at youth hostels; utilizing your ISIC for discounts on transportation and admissions; and traveling on trains at night. Keep in mind that you will inevitably spend more money the first few days in a country until you have begun to adapt to the local customs and monetary exchange rate. Once you have determined your travel budget, plan to live within it, and keep a $100 emergency reserve. Here is some advice on developing a budget:

- Gather information on program costs. Find out how much is included in your exchange, or what costs are expected for non-exchange enrollment. Know what is included in your fees, and what additional costs you may have to pay while “settling in” (bed linens, toiletries, replacements for things you left at home).
- Determine how much you and your family are willing to budget for discretionary expenses (travel, entertainment, etc.) and incidentals (laundry, postage, film, etc.).
- Expect some items to be more expensive overseas. This may include food, books, and “luxury” items, such as electronics and clothing.
- Check the exchange rate and guidebooks for your host country. Guidebooks typically list costs for accommodations, transportation, entrance fees, and other items that will help you estimate for personal travel. One exchange calculator is Oanda at http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/.
- Look for ways to cut costs. Evaluate your personal spending habits and where you are willing to cut back to afford other things while abroad. Consider getting an International Student Identity Card (ISIC) for discounts.

How to take money abroad: It is a good idea to take $50-$100 in local currency with you to pay for initial expenses before you can get to a bank. (Local banks carry some foreign currencies or they can order it for you, which can take three to five days). It is also possible to exchange money at currency exchange bureaus at the airport. Do not exchange a lot of money at the airport, however, because the exchange rates are high. Also, most countries restrict how much cash you can bring in or out. Check with the appropriate embassy or consulate for any such requirements.

Traveler’s Checks: You can take traveler’s checks, but they are not as widely used and may be difficult or costly to cash. Traveler’s checks, in U.S. and foreign currency, are sold by several agencies (e.g., American Express) and major banks throughout the United States, usually at the rate of one percent over the value of the checks you are buying. Be sure to keep the receipts for traveler’s checks separate from your checks, in case you need replacement checks. You will be reimbursed for lost or stolen checks if you report the loss within 24 hours. Buying a well-known brand of traveler’s checks will make cashing them easier.

Personal Checks: It is virtually impossible to cash personal checks abroad. You should not expect to be able to cash checks abroad.

ATMs: Automatic Teller Machines are widely available overseas. ATMs tend to give you a good exchange rate, charge no exchange commission, and have 24-hour access. You may consider withdrawing funds from your U.S. account via an ATM machine. The exchange rate is often better and the actual money is the currency of your host country. This is also useful when traveling and can save you charges for changing money. Be aware that there is a limit on the amount of money you can withdraw at any one time and charges vary according to bank and country. Because you are withdrawing your own money, you do not pay interest as you would with a credit card. However, your bank may charge extra fees for using an ATM abroad, or have limits on daily withdrawals. Check with your bank for the following:
• Get a list of ATMs or branch locations overseas.

• Make sure you have a four-digit numeric PIN; many countries do not accept longer PIN codes or may not have letters on the keypad.

• ATMs overseas may not give you the choice between accessing a checking account and a savings account—they may pull from one account. Consult with your bank about the ability of your card to work overseas, as you may need to set the card to access only one type of account.

• If you plan to get a new ATM card, get your PIN and use the card in the U.S. before you go abroad. Do not expect a brand new card to work overseas.

• Notify bank of travel dates and locations so access to your account is not closed due to suspicious activity abroad.

• Refillable debit cards not tied to your bank accounts.

• ISIC cards can be used as refillable ATM cards.

**Dealing with exchange rates**: Should you buy traveler’s checks in the foreign currency or exchange your dollars in the United States? Should you exchange money upon arrival or as you need it throughout the year? There is no simple answer to these questions, since exchange rates fluctuate in many countries.

The safest thing to do is to call several banks. Shop around. Larger banks may give you a better rate of exchange. **Watch the exchange rate for a period of time and deal when it seems most advantageous.** Remember that the rate quoted to you will be different for buying than for selling.

When traveling, before leaving a country, convert the loose change you have into bills; most places will not change coins. Plan to arrive in the next country during banking hours, if at all possible, since the exchange windows at rail stations usually have a lower, worse exchange rate than banks will give you.

Toward the end of your stay, exchange money only as necessary to avoid paying a fee to convert your funds back to dollars. You will want some dollars for your return trip home.

**Prepaid Currency Card (Europe Only)**: If you do not have an ATM card, or you want to keep your travel funds separate from your regular account, some banks or companies offer prepaid cards which work just like a debit card. Only Euros or GB Pounds are available at this time.

The card can generally be used at ATM machines, stores, and restaurants for your everyday purchases. It stays secure through microchip and PIN protection.

Be sure to check the exchange rate used when purchasing one of these, as it may not have the most favorable exchange rate. Some fees may also apply.

**Credit Cards**: Credit cards are widely used in most countries. Visa and American Express are the most widely accepted worldwide and can be used in many large department stores, hotels, car rental agencies, and restaurants. Contact your credit card company and ask for guidelines in relation to international money matters.

The holder of an American Express card can cash personal checks at any foreign American Express office for up to $1000 every 21 days (the first $200 will be provided in local currency, the rest in American Express traveler’s checks, with the regular fees applying). Diners Club card holders have a limit of $500.

Any bank that honors your type of credit card will help you draw funds (in local 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.
Note: your credit card bill will reflect the exchange rate on the day your credit card transaction was processed, which may be more or less than what you thought you were paying at the time of your purchase. Be aware that you are charged interest from the minute you withdraw money on credit cards so credit cards are best used for purchases, not cash withdrawals. Keep in mind:

- Credit cards can be easily used abroad and tend to offer a good exchange rate on purchases. Some credit cards, such as Visa, are widely accepted, while others may not work world-wide.
- Check with your credit card company to find out if they charge fees for international use. Some companies may charge per transaction; others may have a monthly fee.
- If you are unable to qualify for a card of your own, your parents may open an account and get a card in your name for your use.
- As with ATM cards, if you plan to get a new credit card, use it in the U.S. before you go abroad to ensure it works properly.
- Receipts may have your credit card number printed on them, so keep them in a safe place for your records. You may need to refer to receipts for customs paperwork upon leaving the host country and/or entering the U.S.
- Credit cards should never be used as a means of getting cash, except in an emergency. There is a transaction fee for each cash advance, and you will be charged interest from the day the transaction is made.
- Notify your credit card company of travel dates and locations so access to your card is not closed for suspicious activity abroad.

Foreign Cables/Wires: In emergencies, money can also be wired overseas. While this is theoretically the fastest way to transfer money, caution is advised since it may take several weeks for delivery in practice. Cables/wires must be sent to a commercial bank, not to an individual post office box. Be advised that you will probably have to pay the cabling charges both ways, in addition to a commission charged by your U.S. 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.

Foreign Drafts: Foreign drafts can be a fast, reliable, and relatively inexpensive way of transferring money. You can buy a foreign draft in U.S. dollars or foreign currency from your bank. The draft should be made payable to the student and mailed directly to you via an express mail service (FedEx, DHL, etc.). Drafts must be drawn on a bank abroad which maintains a relationship with your home bank. The name of the foreign bank will usually be written somewhere in the draft, and it is that bank that the student will go to draft the cash. Not all overseas banks can receive transfers from the U.S., so have a back-up plan for transferring money or in case of an emergency. If you think you might need to use bank transfers, or want to take your initial currency in the form of a bank draft, visit your bank in the United States before you leave and ask them for a list of their correspondent banks. Let them know who is authorized to initiate cable transfers to you. Alternatively, you can notify your home bank and request that a bank draft in your name be mailed to you (registered), again at a specific bank and location. Bank drafts may take up to three weeks to clear.

Power of Attorney: Consider arranging to give a family member or friend “Power of Attorney” to handle some of your financial affairs in your absence (i.e. to deposit checks made out to you into your bank account, sign official documents on your behalf, file your taxes, sign apartment leases, etc.) This is especially important if you will be receiving financial aid checks or other payments while you are abroad which would normally require your signature for deposit.
Financial Aid: If you will be receiving financial aid, it is very important to meet with Financial Aid, and it is recommended that you fill out a Cost of Attendance Adjustment Request form for the Financial Aid office and a Study Abroad Refund Authorization form for the Cashier’s Office.

Failure to maintain full-time status while abroad could jeopardize your eligibility for financial aid. Students receiving financial aid may need to pay back a portion of their aid if they do not maintain a full-time course load.

Scholarships: The Study Abroad office scholarship deadlines are in February and October. For those who have received scholarships, scholarship funds will be applied to your OnePort account. Any refund will be disbursed based on the information given on the Study Abroad Refund Authorization form.

REFUND POLICY

It is not possible for payments to be refunded if a student chooses to withdraw from a program. Application fees are non-refundable. For Summer Faculty-Led programs, refund policies are listed on the Courses, Payment and Withdrawal Policy for each individual program. This form is required by each student before being accepted into the program.
TRAVEL INFORMATION

Be sure to begin immediately completing all forms given to you by your home and host institution and collecting the necessary documents for your exchange program.

**Flights:** Please do not make flight arrangements until you receive your official acceptance from your host university. You should refer to the required arrival date and the final exam schedule of your host university/program when securing an airline ticket. Here are some general tips to consider before buying your tickets:

- We recommend buying a student fare, round-trip ticket with a set return date, and flying into the airport closest to your final destination. Open-ended tickets are usually more expensive than a ticket with a fixed return date.

- Many fares, including student fares, require you to choose a return date, but allow you to change the date for a fee ($75—$200). This is usually more economical than an open-ended ticket. Also, some countries may deny entry if you do not show evidence of a return ticket.

- Look carefully at the cost, hassle, and time involved before deciding to fly into an airport that is NOT the closest to your final destination simply because it is cheaper. Remember that you will have all of your luggage, and you will likely be tired and jetlagged.

- Don’t assume the first travel agent or website you check is offering the cheapest fare. Different agencies have access to different fares, and prices vary. Shop around; student fares are not available from all agencies. See below for a list of recommended travel agents and resources.

**General Travel:** One of the most exciting things about studying abroad is the opportunity to explore your host country and other surrounding areas while you are overseas. Here are some general tips:

- If you are interested in learning more about traveling during weekend and school breaks, the best resources will be the student travel agencies listed in this handbook and people in your host country.

- You may find helpful information in country-specific guidebooks (Lonely Planet, Fodor’s, etc.). These resources can provide helpful information about discounts, flights, and train/bus passes, as well as historical and cultural information about locations around the world.

- Because you may not know your specific travel plans before leaving the U.S., some students suggest waiting to purchase items, such as inter Europe flight tickets, until after you arrive overseas. Please note: Eurail passes must be purchased in the U.S.

- Students traveling before or after their study abroad program are also eligible to purchase an extension on the UNC system health insurance. (See the Study Abroad website at studyabroad.unca.edu/after-insurance-coverage)

**U.S. Citizens**—You should register with the U.S. Embassy in your host country AND in the countries where you will be traveling. You can do so on-line at [https.step.state.gov/step](https://step.state.gov/step).

**Non-U.S. Citizens**—You should register with the Embassy of your country of citizenship in your host country, and in those where you will be traveling.

**Travel Agencies & Travel Resources:**

- STA Travel - [www.statravel.com](http://www.statravel.com)
- Student Universe - [www.studentuniverse.com](http://www.studentuniverse.com)
**ISIC (International Student Identity Card):** The ISIC serves as an internationally recognized form of identification and allows students to take advantage of discounts all over the world for things such as flights, public transportation, accommodations, restaurants, and tourist attractions. You can also use the ISIC to establish an email account or international phone plan. The ISIC card is also a refillable ATM card. For full details, visit www.myisic.com. You can obtain an ISIC on-line. In order to apply, you will need to complete an ISIC application, and provide a passport size photo (2”x2”). The cost is $25, plus shipping. You can also obtain information from our website at: [https://studyabroad.unca.edu/international-student-identity-card-information](https://studyabroad.unca.edu/international-student-identity-card-information).

“Running Errands” By Kimberly Tierney, 2014
Location: Mali

**KEEPING IN TOUCH**

In this section we will look at ways to maintain communication with your family, friends and UNC Asheville while abroad. Be sure to contact family upon your arrival. Let your parents know you may not be in touch for the first 24-48 hours, but assure them you will make every effort to contact them as soon as feasible.

If you are going to be traveling away from where you are studying, be sure to leave your schedule, contact names, etc. with your parents or program coordinator. Parents panic when they can't get in touch with you.

Think about what you are writing in your letters home. Don’t exaggerate illnesses or harrowing experiences. Your parents have no context for understanding what you're describing, and will call the school when they are concerned. Save your horror stories for when you get back. **If something happens in your country that is likely to make international news (bombs, hurricanes, etc.) write or call your family immediately to assure them you are okay.**
**Phone:** Many students arrange a calling schedule with family and friends, setting a time each week when they will be at a certain number. There are several options if you plan to use phone services.

- **International Calling:** U.S. long-distance carriers offer a wide variety of calling options. Call around to compare prices or check with the carrier your parents use. You may need to get international dialing access to call from the U.S. and/or to call from overseas to the U.S.

- **Calling Cards:** Your host institution may send you information about international calling cards and rates from overseas. If not, ask a representative from your host university if they can make recommendations. Some calling cards purchased overseas are more economical than calling cards purchased in the U.S.

- **Public Phones:** In some countries, it is rare to find coin-operated pay phones. Some countries will have card-operated phones, and you can purchase phone cards at local stores and kiosks.

- **Cell Phones:** Students typically use cell phones overseas only for calling others within the host country. Most cell phones purchased in the U.S. will not work abroad, and GSM (global) cell phones are expensive, so it is often cheaper to lease or buy a cell phone once you arrive overseas. Check with your host institution or fellow students after you arrive for options available in your city. Remember—a phone purchased overseas will typically NOT work in the U.S., so renting/leasing a phone, or buying an inexpensive prepaid phone may be your best choice if you can’t live without a cell phone.

- **Internet Phone Service:** If both users have a microphone and speakers/headphones on their computers or internet access on a Smartphone, you can talk for free through an internet phone service such as Skype, www.skype.com. You can also use Skype to call from your computer to phone numbers in the U.S. at very reasonable rates.

**Email & Internet:**

- **UNC Asheville Accounts:** Because you will still be enrolled at UNC Asheville while abroad, you will continue to have access to your UNC Asheville gmail account. The Study Abroad office is required to send correspondence to your UNC Asheville email account, so please make sure you check this address frequently while abroad or have it forwarded to the account you are using.

- **Host University:** The majority of universities overseas will give students access to email and internet services, which is typically the least expensive way to keep in touch and access the web. You may find their computer centers to have fewer computers or limited hours, but it will help you appreciate the technology available in the U.S. If you choose to take a laptop, have it insured and check the technological requirements and facilities of the host university. When emailing your host institution before you go, remember to be courteous. Please be sure to identify yourself as an exchange student, and always write something positive at the beginning of the email about how delighted you are for the opportunity to study at their institution or to thank them for their support. Then keep your questions to a minimum; it is much better to write several emails rather than bombard your hosts with a barrage of questions. You will find that you get quicker and better responses this way. If you do not receive an answer within a few days then resend your email with the remark that you are resending the email in case they did not receive the previous email. Keep in mind that those who receive your emails are dealing with a lot of requests and may need more time to get you an answer than you expect. Be sure to include your complete name in all correspondence. The same advice holds for correspondence with your home institution. If you need urgent help from your home institution, it is always good to include a telephone number and time you can be reached at that number as you may find that your home coordinator may respond by calling.
• While Traveling: Many cities around the world have internet cafes, where you can pay for internet access on a minute or hourly basis. Prices will vary.

Mail:
From the U.S., international mail can take up to 2-6 weeks for delivery. Postal services from abroad will vary, and could take longer. Generally, cards and letters are easy and inexpensive to send. However, if you or a family member wants to send a gift or care package, check with the customs agency of your host country to find rules and regulations about what can be mailed to/from the country.

When sending packages, the following guidelines are helpful:
• The mailing address should be included both on and inside the box.

• When sending items home, check to see if there are any specific host country requirements that should be met. In some countries, packages over a certain weight or size cannot be sent through the post office but are handled instead by another agency.

• Having packages sent to you can be very risky, since their arrival is not always guaranteed and customs tariffs can be levied; but it is very nice to get a package from home once in a while. Never send computers or electronic equipment through the mail, as they often get waylaid at customs, and have very high customs fee or tariff upon arrival.

Websites & Blogs: Keeping in touch around the world can be difficult, so more and more students are choosing to create their own websites or blogs. There are several free sites where you can write about your experience and post photos for friends and family to view, such as www.tripod.com, www.wordpress.com and www.blogspot.com. If you’re interested in reading about other students studying abroad, or creating your own blog, check out www.blogabroad.com. Please feel free to share your blog with the Study Abroad office as well.

Sending Items Home: Any single item worth more than $25 is liable for customs tax. Mark inexpensive gifts “UNSOLICITED GIFT, VALUE UNDER $25” and no duty will need to be paid by the recipient.

• Books can usually be mailed home at a special rate if they are packed according to certain specifications. They are exempt from duty regulations.

• When sending home clothes, you should declare them as “USED CLOTHING” of an American abroad, which has no commercial value, so that you are not charged duty. Used clothing does not include items that are purchased abroad and worn.

• You can also ship home personal goods of U.S. origin duty free, if you mark them as “American goods returned.”

• Liquor cannot be mailed to the United States.

CAUTION: Do not misrepresent what may be contained in a package. U.S. Customs opens packages regularly and randomly (not just “suspicious-looking” ones), and making a false declaration can be a serious matter.
SAFETY

Be cautious about what you post; similar to Facebook, if your site is open to the public, you should not include specific information such as your full name, where you are, or where you’ll be this weekend. Be aware that anything you post on-line is public information, so if you are doing anything illegal or in violation of university policies, you can be held liable. Most U.S. citizens who go abroad encounter no vast differences in safety or crime. However, no place in the world is completely without risk, and you should use simple precautions to improve your chances of staying safe, healthy, and happy while abroad. In this handbook and at the Pre-Departure Orientation, we will address general health and safety, along with emergency procedures. It will be important for you to use common sense and remember: if it is not something you would do at home, do not do it abroad. Be open to new experiences, but keep your wits about you. For general safety, learn from the locals, but also follow some general guidelines. We suggest that you spend the first few days abroad orienting yourself to your new environment. Attend your host university on-site orientation, learn which neighborhoods should be avoided, learn the transport system, and observe social cues such as appropriate dress and language.

Safety Tips:

- Act like you know where you are going and what you are doing. If you are lost or need to check a map, step into a café or other business, but be aware of your surroundings and your belongings.
- Backpacks, purses, and camera bags can be a target. Wear them snug to your body and keep them closed. Carry your wallet in your front pocket rather than your back pocket. If confronted, give up your valuables instead of fighting the attackers.
- Don’t carry large amounts of cash, and don’t carry all of your money and documents in one bag.
- Be alert in crowds, especially in train stations or at tourist attractions. Thieves may use distractions to their advantage.
- Don’t carry your passport unless you absolutely need it or are crossing international borders. A photocopy of your passport will probably suffice for everyday use.
- Check the security of a hotel or hostel before booking a room by making sure your items can be secured in a safe or locker. A few extra dollars saved on cheap accommodations will not cover the replacement costs of a passport, camera, etc.
- Never drive or ride with anyone under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Do not stay out excessively late at night alone or with strangers.
- When traveling at night by bus or train, attach your bag to the luggage rack or your seat by using a lock or strap from the bag.
- Do not take valuable items with you overseas, such as expensive jewelry, electronics, etc. They may get lost, stolen, or damaged while traveling. If you can’t live without your iPod or laptop, consider having it engraved by the UNC ASHEVILLE campus police program, https://police.unca.edu/property-registration.
- If possible, don’t travel alone. Stay in public places, travel with a friend, and always let someone know where you are.
• When making travel arrangements abroad, please consider safety and do not sacrifice safety for cost. There are some means of transportation that may be cheap but may also come with a greater degree of risk.

• Stay informed about developments in your host country and around the world. Read the U.S. Department of State travel information at (http://travel.state.gov/). If the U.S. decides to launch military or economic action, you will immediately become a representative of your country. If your destination is having political or military demonstrations or attacks, stay away from all sites of such activity.

• Talk to students, faculty, and others who have visited or lived in the areas where you will be traveling. You will be able to discuss this with other students and Study Abroad office staff at the orientation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

• Take off your luggage tags after arrival.

• In all public places remain alert.

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

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

• **Travel light!**

• Whenever possible, speak in the local language.

• Be street wise. Avoid deserted areas and exercise caution in crowds.

• Avoid impairing your judgment due to excessive consumption of alcohol.

• Be aware that pickpockets exist and tend to prey on people who look lost or who do not seem to be paying attention to their surroundings.
• Find out which areas are considered to be unsafe by the local people and avoid them.
• Keep up with the local news through newspapers, radio and television, and, **in the event of disturbances or protests, do NOT get involved.**
• Do not be free with information about other students. Be wary of questions from people not associated with your program. Do not give out your or anyone else’s address or telephone number to strangers. Don’t give away your class or field trip schedule.
• Develop with your U.S. family a plan for regular communication so that in times of heightened political tensions or local incidents, you will be able to communicate directly with your family about your safety and well-being.
• Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct, and emergency procedures of the program.
• Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily chores and decisions and promptly express any health or safety concerns to the program staff or other appropriate individuals.
• Learn the location of the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.
• Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well-being of others, comply with local laws, regulations and customs of the host country, community, institution and study abroad program, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
• Become familiar with the local emergency number (comparable to 911) and the procedures for obtaining emergency health and law enforcement services in the host country.
• **Be aware that you are responsible for your own decisions and actions.**
• Make an agreement with your fellow students that you will look out for each other and practice peer responsibility.

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

**Anti-American Sentiment:** There may be times, for reasons of personal safety, that you do not want to be marked as an American or otherwise identified as an easy target for theft or assault. If you are concerned about anti-American sentiment, you may want to refer to an organization such as The Glimpse Foundation (https://www2.cortland.edu/dotAsset/102290.pdf). They have published a Cultural Acclimation Guide called “American Identity Abroad,” which “aims to help study abroad students navigate the sticky issues that surround being a citizen of the world’s only superpower.”

**How does the Study Abroad Office monitor safety?** The Study Abroad office pays special attention to the U.S. Department of State website and receives immediate notification of international travel announcements and warnings. Travel warnings are issued when the State Department decides, based on all relevant information, to recommend that Americans avoid travel to a certain country. The Study Abroad office staff and Study Abroad Emergency Response Team review this information, along with a variety of other reliable sources, to have up-to-the minute information on any countries where students are or will be studying.
• All students studying abroad are required to submit several forms, including an Emergency Contact Form, which enables the Study Abroad office to aid in an emergency.

• All students studying abroad are required to purchase study abroad health insurance which includes emergency assistance, evacuation, and repatriation. You should carry your insurance card with you at all times.

• All students are provided with an emergency contact card before departure. You should carry this with you at all times.

“Eye-Opener” By Gray Barrett, 2014
Location: England

EMERGENCIES

Emergencies Abroad: An emergency is an occurrence or situation that poses a genuine and sometimes immediate risk to the health and well-being of program participants. Student safety is our highest priority. If you have an emergency abroad, first contact your on-site program coordinator. If there is an emergency that requires you to contact the Study Abroad office, you may call 828-251-6666 during business hours, or UNC Asheville University Police at 828-251-6710 (available 24 hours/day). Both the Study Abroad office and Campus Police will accept collect international calls. If you can only make one call, you should call UNC Asheville University Police. They have instructions to accept collect calls, and then to call a member of the Study Abroad Emergency Response Team until they reach someone who can call you back immediately. If you would like a family member or friend to be available to travel to your host country in case of an emergency, make sure they have valid passports.

Emergencies at Home: People need to know how to get in touch with you while you are away. You should have a conversation with your family before you leave to discuss what you will do in the event that there is a death or serious emergency in your family. Please be sure that your host university coordinator and the Study Abroad office have your complete contact information, and inform both if there has been a family emergency.

U.S. Embassy Assistance: U.S. Embassy personnel provide routine citizenship services (such as passport replacement) and emergency assistance for American citizens abroad. They may also provide assistance to Americans abroad and their families in cases of death, serious medical emergency, and legal difficulties. You should locate the U.S. Embassy closest to your location by visiting http://usembassy.state.gov.
HEALTH

Good health is a prerequisite to an enjoyable stay abroad and crucial while you are traveling. You may be exposed to unfamiliar climates, food, medicine, and health care systems. In many cases, a good measure of common sense and a healthy respect for your own body (and its limitations) will help to avoid medical problems. A few preliminary precautions can spare you a good deal of unpleasantness. We want you to enjoy your experience abroad, and hope that your health and safety will be your top priorities. Here are some simple precautions to maintain your health and enjoy your study abroad experience.

Before You Leave:

Assess your own health and any requirements for your host country. Some countries will require you to have a physical exam due to visa regulations. Others may require or recommend vaccinations and inoculations. Any inoculation should be recorded with the officially approved stamp on the form, “International Certificate of Vaccination as Approved by the World Health Organization”. See the Center for Disease Control for more information on your host country (www.cdc.gov). Since many inoculations require more than one visit to the clinic or cannot be taken in combination with others, it is recommended that you begin your inquiries well in advance of your departure. You may be able to combine your physical checkup with an appointment for inoculations.

You can order the free booklet, Health Information for International Travel, at www.cdc.gov/travel. Click on Yellow Book. It is also available for Android or iOS mobile device.

- Consult a travel clinic at least 6-8 weeks prior to your departure date. Make an appointment with the Travel Clinic or with your physician. Although most family healthcare providers administer routine immunizations, they may not stock specialized vaccines for your destination.

- Update your prescriptions. If you take prescription medication (including allergy shots or birth control pills, or if you wear prescription contact lenses), make sure you have an adequate supply for the duration of your stay. For medications, obtain statements from your prescribing doctor which are signed and dated by your doctor, indicating the generic and brand name of the medication, any major health problems, and recommended dosage. This will be vital information in case of an emergency. In addition, if you are prescribed a controlled substance, obtain a letter from your prescribing doctor that indicates the generic name of the controlled-substance, recommended dosage, health issue, and why he/she has prescribed it to you.

- Pack wisely. Pack your prescriptions and medications in original packaging in your carry-on luggage along with documentation (letters, notes, etc) from your doctor. Make sure the name on the prescription appears the same as on your passport. Customs officials may ask to see this.

- Plan for long term medication needs. If you take prescriptions on a regular and long-term basis, or if you will need anti-malarial medication, we strongly encourage you to talk with your health care provider to obtain medication for the duration of the program well in advance of departure. If prescriptions cannot be filled for the length of your program, investigate if your prescription can be filled abroad OR how you will be able to have prescriptions filled in the U.S. and have the medication shipped abroad. If your medication has to be shipped, check with customs officials in your host country to check for any restrictions.

- Document any medical conditions. If you have asthma, allergies, diabetes, or any other condition that may require emergency care, you should also carry a card, tag, or bracelet that identifies your medical condition. If you have (or have had) any medical or psychological conditions, be aware that the stress of adjustment overseas may cause the recurrence of conditions for which you have been successfully
treated in the past. Please be sure to indicate these on the Health History Form submitted to the Study Abroad office.

- Pack necessities. Certain products may be more expensive or difficult to obtain overseas, or the brands and products may be unfamiliar. Thus, you may want to consider taking the following items with you: your preferred pain reliever or cold medication, contact lens solution, extra pair of glasses/contacts, syringes for medical injections, and feminine hygiene products.

- Medic Alert Emblem. Be sure to wear a Medic Alert emblem (recognized internationally) for a specific medical problem. In how many languages can you convince a nurse that you are allergic to a medication and not just afraid of a needle? For more information, contact the MedicAlert Foundation International at 1-888-633-4298 or visit their website (http://www.medicalert.org).

- Practice abstinence or safe sex. We encourage students to be cautious about their sexual activity while abroad. HIV and other sexually-transmitted diseases are prevalent everywhere in the world. In some countries, the availability of condoms and other prophylactics is restricted, so if you plan to be sexually active, we recommend you pack your own.

- Medical Records. While living and traveling abroad, it is a wise precaution to keep personal medical records with you to be used in case of an accident or illness. A good medical record will mention ALL drugs you are taking, including any not related to disease, and identify any chronic ailments, allergies or hypersensitivities. It will also list your immunization history, blood type, eyeglass prescription, personal physician, health insurance (along with the number of the policy) and, if pertinent, your religion. Be sure to make a photocopy of your medical records in case of loss. Carry these documents in a place that is both secure and accessible by you at all times while traveling.

**While Traveling:**

- Avoid alcohol and caffeine. Remember that jetlag can be worsened by dehydration. Caffeine and alcohol contribute to dehydration, so avoid them and drink plenty of other liquids, such as juice or water. The extra vitamins in juice will also help boost your immune system.

- Reset your body’s internal clock. Try to adjust your sleep schedule to the time zone of your destination. If you start doing this a few days before you depart, it may help reduce jetlag.

**When You Arrive:**

- Take care! The first few days or weeks in your study abroad location will be very exciting and you may be tempted to overdo it. Remember that in addition to your cultural adjustments, your body will be going through a physical adjustment to a new climate, time zone, food, etc. Eat reasonably, drink plenty of water, and get plenty of rest.

- Drink water. You may want to start with bottled water if you are unsure of the tap water in your new environment. This will help reduce the likelihood of becoming dehydrated or having diarrhea.

- Look for health services. Make sure you know how to access health services, both for routine care and emergencies, in your new environment. This information may be included at your host university orientation. If not, contact the international office at your host institution.

- Use moderation when drinking alcohol. If you consume alcohol, consume it in moderation and follow the UNC Asheville alcohol policy. Because students under 21 are legally permitted to drink in many countries, U.S. students are sometimes tempted to overdo it while overseas. Alcohol can dehydrate you, further stress your body, and impair your judgment, all of which add strain to you in a new environment.
Mental Health:

Your mental health is also a concern while studying abroad. Adjusting to another culture typically involves stress for study abroad students, and stress is the number one cause of exacerbation of a preexisting mental illness. The Study Abroad office and staff at your host university can help put you in touch with the appropriate resources for counseling and advice. If you have a mental health condition, it is important that you go to your doctor prior to departure, sign a release for medical records, and take a copy of your records with you on the study abroad program. This will aid the process if you need to meet with a doctor overseas. For students with the UNC system health insurance (HTH), the insurance provider can help identify a counselor abroad in advance so that medical records can be released directly.

Additionally, the UNC Asheville Student Health and Counseling Center is available to you anytime from overseas. They have staff on-call for any emergencies during non-office hours. You can reach them during business hours at 828-251-6520, or after hours via University Police at 828-251-6710. Both University Police and the Study Abroad office will accept collect international calls.

Medical and Dental Checkups:

Medical and dental checkups prior to your departure are musts. It is a good idea to review your travel plans with your physician. Remember: only your physician knows your personal medical history and can advise you if your situation warrants some alteration of the general preventative guidelines outlined here. Sometimes, health statements from your doctor are required to obtain a visa to enter your host country.

HEALTH INSURANCE

All participants must be insured during their stay abroad. Insurance coverage is a requirement, and all participants will be enrolled in one of the following: 1) the North Carolina study abroad insurance program (HTH); 2) the ISEP insurance plan; 3) the plan of your host country; or 4) your private program provider’s policy. As mentioned previously this insurance is only valid while abroad so it is highly recommended that you keep your home coverage in case you come home during your time abroad for medical care or holidays.

Below please find detailed information about the UNC Asheville system coverage. (The information does not apply if you are studying through ISEP or you are expected to have your country’s plan.)

For those students who are enrolled in the UNC System policy, HTH, it provides excellent, low-cost comprehensive primary coverage with no deductible. However, you should be aware (1) that any injury or illness resulting from alcohol use is excluded from coverage and (2) the insurance is only good while abroad. In the case of a severe injury or illness in which you must stay beyond the dates of the program to receive treatment you should have your dates on the insurance extended. Be sure to contact your home institution and HTH.

You will receive an insurance card prior to your departure. Your insurance card includes your certificate number for HTH and the number to call for assistance if a sickness or injury occurs. This certificate number is important because it is your password for the HTH student website (www.HTHstudents.com), and the number that HTH will require if they are contacted. Please read the instructions on your insurance ID card letter and register at HTH’s student website. This will give you access to their Global Health and Safety Resources. Carry this insurance card with you at all times. Also carry your claim forms whenever you travel.
Reimbursements are most easily made with a completed claim form and appropriate backup documentation. Although arrangements can be made for the insurance company to pay the hospital directly for very serious and lengthy hospital stays or services provided by an HTH approved physician, it is much more typical for students to pay all costs up front and then be reimbursed later. Be sure you have access to adequate funds to cover a health emergency.

If you plan to travel before or after the program dates, you are encouraged to and can purchase an extension to your insurance coverage through HTH (https://studyabroad.unca.edu/after-insurance-coverage). The cost for extensions is a slightly higher rate than while in school but the coverage is the same as during the program dates. This can be purchased for one month before or after the program or any combination up to a month of coverage. If you wish to stay longer you may purchase insurance directly through HTH.

If you are covered by HTH and have any questions about your insurance coverage, please contact:

HTH Worldwide Insurance Services
One Radnor Corporate Center
Suite 100
Radnor, PA 19087
Tel: 1.877.424.4325 / 1.610.254.8700
Fax: 1.610.293.3529
Outside the U.S.: 1.888.243.2358 or +1.610.254.8769
hthstudents.com
studentinfo@hthworldwide.com
or refer to your insurance card.

Remember, you can also access your insurance account on the HTH website at www.HTHstudents.com. On this same site you can obtain a list of English-speaking doctors for your location, find a local hospital, etc. You must have the ID number for your account prior to logging into the HTH system. (This ID number will be provided to you on your insurance card prior to your departure once you have been registered in the HTH system by the Study Abroad Office.) Be sure to print out the materials pertinent to your study abroad location and take this with you.

“Secrets” By Anna Gachechiladze, 2014 Location: Peru
STUDENT CONDUCT

As a participant in a study abroad program with UNC Asheville, you are expected to take responsibility for your own actions or failure to act at all times while studying abroad. You will be held accountable for your behavior and you are expected to abide by the UNC Asheville Student Code of Community Standards and Citizenship (Pages 305-321 in the Catalog: www.registrar.unca.edu/course-catalogs), all Study Abroad office policies, and the laws and customs that govern the host countries where you are studying or visiting. Additionally, it is expected that you will demonstrate respect for yourself and others at all times. These policies exist to ensure a safe, fair and successful experience for all students participating in the program. Ignorance of the policies is not an acceptable excuse for policy violation. Also the Study Abroad office policies and University Rules and Regulations are in writing to give you general notice of expected behavior. These standards should be read broadly and are not designed to define misconduct in exhaustive terms. Failure to comply with host country laws/regulations, the University Rules and Regulations, the Study Abroad office policies, and/or engaging in behavior which, in the judgment of the Faculty Director (for Faculty-Led programs) jeopardizes the safety or well-being of yourself, others, or the program may result in immediate dismissal from the program, failure of courses, loss of program costs, and/or an early return home at your expense. Note that due to the circumstances of foreign travel and foreign study programs, a due process hearing may not be possible and therefore may not be available until after the trip or program has ended and you have returned home. If you are dismissed from the program, you may be sent home at your own expense with no refund of fees or expenses. In being dismissed, you may be subject to failure of courses and/or an early return home. You may also be subject to further disciplinary, civil and/or criminal action upon return to UNC Asheville. Students will be held financially responsible for any damages or fines incurred on the study abroad program as a result of their misconduct.

Foreign Laws, Regulations and Standards:

Each foreign country has its own laws and regulations and has standards of acceptable conduct in the areas of dress, manners, morals, religion, social customs, politics, alcohol use, drug use and behavior. Behavior or conduct which violate those laws or standards could harm the program’s effectiveness, the University’s relations with those countries in which the program is located, your own health and safety or the health and safety of other participants in the program.

Therefore it is important for you to become informed of all laws, regulations and standards for each country to or through which you will travel during your participation. Many practices that are illegal or grounds for mistrial in the U.S., including extraction of a confession, entrapment, police searches without a warrant, etc., are admissible in court in other countries. In many systems, there is no bail requirement, no jury trial; the burden of proof is on the accused to prove his or her innocence, etc. You are fully responsible for any legal problems, any encounters with any foreign government or any individual and the University is not responsible for providing any assistance under such circumstances. Note that contrary to popular belief, the U.S. Embassy CANNOT get you out of jail if you are arrested. U.S. laws or constitutional rights do not protect you once you leave the U.S. You must abide by the laws of the country in which you are traveling.

For US Citizens - A U.S. Consular Officer can:

- Visit you in jail after being notified of your arrest.
- Give you a list of local attorneys.
- Notify your family or friends (including the program director) and relay requests for money or other aid with your authorization.
• Intercede with the local authorities to ensure that you are treated humanely and that your rights under local law are fully observed.

**The U.S. Consular Officer cannot:**

• Get you out of jail.

• Represent you at trial or give legal counsel.

• Pay legal fees or fines with U.S. government funds.

In addition to emergency assistance for American citizens and their families abroad, such as cases of death, serious medical emergency, and legal difficulties, the U.S. Embassy personnel also provide routine citizenship services such as passport replacement. In order to ensure fast and easy replacement of your passport, be sure to have a photocopy somewhere secure.

**UNC Asheville Rules and Regulations (including Academic and Non-Academic policies)**

As you will be enrolled as a UNC ASHEVILLE student while attending the study abroad program, you are expected to abide by the UNC ASHEVILLE Student Code of Community Standards and Citizenship, which can be found online at [http://registrar.unca.edu/course-catalogs, pages305-321](http://registrar.unca.edu/course-catalogs, pages305-321).

This Student Code covers many topics, including but not limited to, academic integrity, cheating, plagiarism, disorderly conduct, harassment, hazing, drugs, theft, and weapons. Please familiarize yourself with the content of the Code of Community Standards and Citizenship, as you are responsible for the policies outlined therein. Note that due to the circumstances of foreign travel and foreign study programs, a due process hearing may not be possible and therefore may not be available until after the trip or program has ended and you have returned home.
ALCOHOL

While studying abroad, you will most likely be going to a location where you will be of legal drinking age in that country and where alcohol may be more a part of the everyday culture. Distance from home may lessen your inhibitions. However, you are encouraged to use good judgment if you choose to consume alcoholic beverages while abroad. Occasional drinking of alcoholic beverages in moderation is permitted provided that you are of legal drinking age in the area you are visiting. However, excessive and irresponsible drinking, leading to intoxication and behavior that interferes with the rights of others, is subject to immediate disciplinary action, including termination from the program, parental notification, and return home at your own expense. Per the UNC Asheville Alcohol Policy, “L. Use, possession, manufacturing, or distribution of alcoholic beverages, except as expressly permitted by law and University regulations, (which includes the Alcohol policy and BYOB policy). Prohibited conduct also includes but is not limited to: public intoxication; possession or use of caffeinated alcohol beverages; and possession or use of prepackaged alcoholic beverages designed for rapid consumption of high alcohol volume content.”

Tips for responsible use of alcohol:

- Be aware of and abide by the customs and laws of the host country. Alcohol may be stronger and cheaper, and drinking ages may vary. Avoid over-indulgence. Do not become intoxicated, arrive at events/classes intoxicated, or miss any scheduled events or classes due to alcohol consumption. Do not drink so much that you become ill, engage in inappropriate or destructive behavior, or cause embarrassment to UNC Asheville, the host institution, or any in-country hosts.
- Drinking to get drunk is never acceptable, even in countries where alcohol is consumed with meals.
- Remember that drugging is not uncommon. Always buy your own drinks, and keep them with you.
- Never go home with strangers. Use the buddy system—go out with at least one friend, and make sure each other returns home safely.
- Know who to contact in case of an emergency. Get contact information for local emergency services in your host city.
- Remember, injury or illness resulting from alcohol use is EXCLUDED from the UNC system health insurance (HTH) coverage. If alcohol is found in your system, they will deny your claim.

DRUGS

Despite what you may have heard about relaxed drug laws outside of the U.S., drugs are illegal in most countries around the world. In fact, drug laws are often more strict around the world. In some countries, possession of even a relatively small amount of illegal drugs can be grounds for a mandatory jail sentence or the death penalty. Once you have ventured beyond U.S. borders, U.S. laws and constitutional rights no longer protect you. Many practices which are illegal or grounds for mistrial in the U.S., including extraction of a confession, entrapment, or police searches without a warrant, are admissible in courts in other countries. In some judicial systems, there is no bail requirement, no jury trial, and the burden of proof is on the accused to prove his or her innocence. It is your responsibility to understand the laws of a foreign country before you go. “I didn’t know it was illegal” is not an acceptable defense. If you ever get into legal trouble abroad, you should immediately contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.
SEXUAL HARASSMENT & ASSAULT

In general, the U.S. description of sexual harassment is any unwanted sexual advances and/or behavior of a verbal, visual, written, or physical nature. You should note, however, that this description may not be the same for the country in which you are studying. In such cases, you are encouraged to discuss the issue with staff at your host university or the Study Abroad office to determine an appropriate course of action. You should trust your judgment and intuition. There are many types of harassment, including psychological, sexual, and verbal. Harassment can be between two students, between a professor or staff member and a student, between a homestay family member and a student, etc. Harassment or assault can happen overseas just as it can on campus. Harassment may include:

- Derogatory comments, jokes or teasing about the body, body parts, clothing, or sexual activities
- Visual materials or pictures which are offensive
- Subtle pressure for dating and/or sexual activity
- Demanding sexual favors for grades, letters of recommendation, etc.
- Persistent verbal attacks
- Unnecessary or unwanted touching or pinching
- Physical assault
- Emails or other electronic communications which include any of the above.

If a situation makes you uncomfortable, it needs to be addressed. Per the UNC Asheville Policy on Sexual Harassment, Appendix D, Page 332 “Sexual harassment and discrimination are illegal and endanger the environment of civility and mutual respect that must prevail if the University is to fulfill its mission. The University of North Carolina at Asheville is committed to providing and promoting an atmosphere in which employees can realize their maximum potential in the workplace and students can engage fully in the learning process. Toward this end, all members of the University community must understand that sexual harassment, sexual discrimination and sexual exploitation of professional relationships violate the University’s policy and will not be tolerated. The University will take every step to resolve grievances promptly. Any act of reprisal, interference, or any other form of retaliation, whether direct or indirect, against an individual for raising concerns covered by this policy are also violations of this policy and are prohibited.” Make sure you are aware of any harassment and assault policies at your host university, and know how to report an incident or emergency.

Special Note for Women

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

Eye contact between strangers or a smile at someone passing in the street, which is not uncommon in the U.S., may result in totally unexpected invitations, and some women feel they are forced to stare intently at the ground when they walk down the street. You will have to learn the unwritten rules about what you can and cannot do. Women can provide support for each other; you may wish to get together several times early in your stay abroad to talk about what does and doesn’t work for dealing with unwanted attention. U.S. women are seen as liberated
in many ways and sometimes the cultural misunderstanding that comes out of that image can lead to difficult and unpleasant experiences.

Needless to say, all of this may make male-female friendships more difficult to develop. Be careful about the implicit messages you are communicating, messages you may not intend in your own cultural context. Above all, try to maintain the perspective that these challenging and sometimes difficult experiences are part of the growth of cultural understanding, which is one of the important reasons you are studying abroad.

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

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

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

SPECIAL NEEDS & CONCERNS

Disabilities

Students with disabilities are increasingly participating in study abroad programs around the world. As with other issues mentioned in this section, the key to a successful experience is advanced planning. Accessibility and accommodation for students with emotional, mental, learning, or physical disabilities may vary at different program sites. Be sure to consult with staff at your host university or the Study Abroad office about any accommodations you may need BEFORE you leave for your program. One resource to check out is Mobility International USA, an organization dedicated to international opportunities for people with disabilities.

Helpful sites: http://www.miusa.org
http://www.sandiego.edu/studyabroad/resources/useful-links.php#disability

Gender Issues: Adjusting to another culture can pose some challenges for interactions and relationships. Often what Americans perceive as appropriate behavior between the sexes, or acceptable gender roles, are not the same in other cultures. Take cues from natives of your host country to gauge what is appropriate. Overall, when evaluating the gender differences in your host country, both male and female students should keep an open mind and see these differences as an opportunity to gain insights into a new culture. Female students in particular may find their behavior restricted. Because many cultures around the world have been exposed to images of the U.S. and American women in movies, TV shows, and advertising, foreign nationals sometimes make stereotypical assumptions about American women. Female students should be aware of how their dress,
body language, and eye contact communicate to people in their host culture. All students should consider the following:

- Talk to women or men from your host country for advice on appropriate standards of dress, body language, and dating.
- Trust your instincts. Don’t do something that makes you uncomfortable. It is better to look a little silly than to get into an unpleasant or dangerous situation.
- Be careful to avoid situations where drugs could be slipped into your drink. Buy your own drinks, and keep them in sight.
- Be assertive and don’t be afraid to say “NO.”
- Immediately contact a staff member at your host university or the Study Abroad office if you find yourself in an uncomfortable, hostile, or threatening situation.

Helpful sites: http://studenttravel.about.com/od/womenstudenttravelers/a/womentips.htm

**Race & Ethnicity:** Although you may think of race and ethnicity as universally defined, they are very much culturally determined. While abroad, you may find that you are an ethnic minority or majority for the first time in your life, or you may find that the ethnic identity you have always felt to be an integral part of yourself is viewed in a completely different way in your host country. If you are visiting a country where you have ethnic or racial roots, you may find you are expected to behave according to the host country norms in a way that other Americans of a different background are not. Or, you may find that you are considered an American first, and your ethnic or racial identity is considered unimportant. In many countries, there are homegrown ethnic or racial conflicts, and you may find you are identified with one group or another because of your physical appearance, until people discover you are American. It is extremely unlikely that any of these situations will involve any threat of physical harm to you as an international student. However, by researching the situation of your host country, you can prepare yourself for situations you may encounter. Upon request, the Study Abroad staff will try to put you in contact with a student or staff member at UNC Asheville who has experience in your host country and can address these issues with you.

Helpful sites:

Minority Students: http://www.diversityabroad.com
http://www.allabroad.us/discrimination_afam.php
Asian/Pacific Islander Travelers: http://www.globaled.us/plato/statement_apia.html
http://www.allabroad.us/discrimination_apia.php

**Sexual Identity:** You may already identify yourself as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, or you may still be exploring these issues. In any case, you may find the social climate, laws, and personal interactions of your host culture differ from the U.S. Keep in mind that many of the ideas held in the U.S. about sexuality and sexual orientation are culturally-based and may be different in your host country. In some cultures, Western understandings of “gay” and “straight” do not exist or do not carry the same importance; people in same-sex relationships may not see this behavior or preference as an identity. In other cultures, there are active
social movements for civil rights for sexual minorities. So, in preparing to study abroad, it may be important for you to research the LGBT climate of the countries you will be visiting. Though research might lead to frightening information, it will help you to be better prepared to face the environment you will encounter abroad. Even if you do not plan to have sexual relations while abroad, you should be informed about specific laws pertaining to sexual behavior and sexual/gender orientation. When doing research, you should try to ascertain:

- The legality of same-sex sexual behavior
- The age consent for sexual behavior
- Restrictions on freedom of associate or expression for individuals who identify as LGBT
- Anti-discrimination laws (national or local)
- Sodomy laws

You may find that other cultures have more liberal behavior than the U.S., or that you will need to hide your sexual preferences to avoid cultural ostracism or arrest.

Helpful sites:

http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/index.html
http://www.studyabroad.msu.edu/forms/glbt.html
http://www.ilga.org
http://www.iglhrc.org
http://www.nyu.edu/lgbt
http://www.udel.edu/global/studyabroad/information/LGBTQ.html

“Reconstructed Memory of Potato Point Wildlife Park” By Heather Brown, 2014  Location: Australia
ACADEMICS

Differences in Academic Systems

Part of studying abroad is learning how different academic systems function and understanding some of the comparative advantages and disadvantages of the American system. Although every host country will be somewhat unique, there are a few general points to keep in mind.

Support services and office hours are generally less extensive than what you may be accustomed to in the U.S. You must actively seek information as to how the services and office hours work at your host university.

Course requirements will typically not be as extensive as you are accustomed to in the U.S. Other academic systems do not usually offer continuous assessment through quizzes, short papers, midterms, labs or discussions and reading assignments. You may be given only a recommended reading list and then have 70-100% of your final grade based on only one or two projects or a comprehensive exam. Students may be expected to work very independently. If you find that you have a lot of time on your hands, make sure that you clarify the course requirements with your professor so that you do not put yourself at risk of missing assignments or failing a course. Undergraduates must receive at least the equivalent of a C at UNC Asheville in order to receive transfer credit for your coursework abroad.

Accessibility of professors will often be less than in the U.S. Professors may have limited or no office hours. Nevertheless, you should make every attempt to speak with your professors if you have questions about course content or academic performance expectations.

Teaching styles will vary. In most other university systems, professors are not considered responsible for motivating students or for ensuring good academic progress. You may encounter professors who only read prepared lectures, or who require a great deal of note learning.

Classroom norms also vary across cultures. Be sure you understand policies and expectations regarding class attendance, late arrival, participation in discussion, and the importance of lecture details.

Grading systems differ at almost every university. If you are studying abroad through another program (not faculty-led), ask that agency for grade and credit equivalencies.

Language issues may be of concern if you are taking classes in a foreign language. The first few weeks will require extra effort. In the beginning, you may want to focus on listening comprehension. Before class, ask your professor if you can record lectures, or ask a fellow student if you can borrow his/her notes. Another helpful strategy is to join or create study groups with other students.

Completing the Permission to Study Abroad (PSA form): please make sure you complete the entire form including the following important information:

- Number of hours you anticipate completing – the number of semester hours of study abroad you want to be registered for at UNC Asheville. If using a system other than semester hours, please specify the type of credit you have indicated.
- Semester Hours – The total number of credit in semester hours (Please indicate the type of credit if other than semester hours.)
- Satisfies which UNC Asheville requirement? – the UNC Asheville equivalent course or the requirement that will be fulfilled: SOC 100; FREN 300; Arts requirement, Lab Science requirement, etc.
- Department Chair Approval – the Chair of the department must initial their approval of each course from their discipline. Departmental approval is not required for general electives.
**Course Requirements**

Your credit will be put online after it is converted to our educational system. You will either see a UNC Asheville prefix/number/title or you will see the Study Abroad prefix (SABR), the level of the course (172, 271, 373 for 100-level, 200-level, 300-level, etc.), and the course title as it was at the host school translated into English (“Elementary Swedish for Foreigners”, “Differences in Brazilian Society”, etc.). For either option, you will also see the number of semester hours of credit (1, 2.5, 6, etc.), and a grade of “S” or “U”. What these courses count as at UNC Asheville is determined by what is on your original PSA or from subsequent communication with the respective departments. This information will be kept with your hardcopy record. Please note that GradPlan (the automated degree audit system on OnePort) can read UNC Asheville equivalents and some electives and special topics credits. After your study abroad credit has been added to your record, any application to general or major/minor requirements will be reflected next time your Graduation Checksheet is updated by the Office of the Registrar.

For undergraduate students on UNC Asheville programs, all credit from courses passed (equivalent of C or better) from your study abroad may be awarded as transfer credit towards your UNC Asheville degree and you will receive a grade of “S”. This will not count toward your GPA. If you receive any grade that is the equivalent of a C-, D+, D, or D-, you will not receive any credit and will receive a grade of “NC”. Any grade that is the equivalent of “F” on your host university transcript will transfer back as a “U” on your UNC Asheville transcript and it will count in your GPA. Credit will be granted at the discretion of your academic department(s) and the Office of the Registrar’s Transcript Evaluator. The PSA form which you completed as part of your application, serves as preliminary approval for fulfillment of such requirements. The Transcript Evaluator will review your transcript upon your return before granting final approval. The Transcript Evaluator may contact any department necessary to assist in making the decision about credit transfer. Only the credit hours will transfer; grades from your study abroad program will not be recorded on your UNC Asheville transcript.

**Registering for Courses Abroad**

When you applied to study abroad, you should have kept a copy of the PSA form, which you filled out in consultation with your department and advisor. This form should be your first point of reference when choosing your courses overseas. However, sometimes students get overseas and find they need to make adjustments to their class schedule, due to scheduling conflicts or lack of course prerequisites. Here are some general guidelines for registering for classes overseas:

- Email your department and advisor contacts that pre-approved your courses before enrolling in classes that are not listed on your PSA form.
- Once you give them as much information about the courses you are able to take, s/he should be able to tell you whether it will transfer for credit. Include information such as course titles, course descriptions, and any reading lists or course requirements that you can obtain.
- Make sure you have the UNC Asheville Contact’s name, address, phone number, fax number and email address with you.
- Your academic department at UNC Asheville along with the Transcript Evaluator in the Office of the Registrar has the final authority in accepting (or not accepting) classes towards the fulfillment of degree requirements.

**Enroll in 12 credit hours**: You must be enrolled in the equivalent of at least 12 credit hours (6 for summer students) each semester you are abroad. Failure to maintain full-time status while abroad could jeopardize your eligibility for financial aid at UNC Asheville. Students receiving financial aid may need to pay back a portion of their aid if they do not maintain a full-time course load. In some cases, your host university may have different full-time enrollment regulations. If your host university requires you to enroll in MORE than the
equivalent of 12 credit hours per semester, you are required to meet their minimum enrollment requirements. If your host university allows you to enroll in LESS than the equivalent of 12 credit hours per semester, you are still required to meet UNC Asheville’s minimum enrollment requirement of 12 credit hours per semester.

Complete the Courses form that will be sent to you at the beginning of the semester from the UNC Asheville Study Abroad office once you have arrived abroad and made your final course selections. Scan and email the form to the UNC Asheville Study Abroad office. Keep your work. Keep copies of reading lists, exams, papers, and other documentation of the coursework you complete overseas. This material is extremely important for the final approval of transfer credit and may be needed by your academic department at UNC Asheville. Do not mail or pack this material; carry it with you in your carry-on bag on your return flight home.

Transcripts

In order to receive credit for the courses you take abroad, you will need to have your overseas transcript sent to the Study Abroad office (not to yourself). The Study Abroad office and the Office of the Registrar will only accept a transcript that is received in a sealed and signed envelope. Once the Study Abroad office receives and processes your transcript, it will be given to the Office of the Registrar’s Transcript Evaluator. The Transcript Evaluator will notify you if you need to take your supporting materials (test, papers, notes, assignments, etc. from your courses overseas) to the appropriate department. The timeline for transcripts varies, and in many academic systems, the transcript may not be available until several months after the end of the semester abroad. Therefore, if you need your transcript shortly after your return, because you are applying for scholarships, honors programs, or graduate school, you should:

- Consult with admissions and advising representatives at any post-graduate programs
- Upon arrival at your host university, consult with international services staff to ask if there are ways to ensure that your grades and transcripts are processed as quickly as possible
- Avoid incompletes. Trying to complete papers or make up exams after you have left your host university can be extremely difficult and will certainly cause significant delays in processing your transcript.

Transferability: When students go overseas, circumstances sometimes require that students enroll in courses other than those on their original PSA form. That is why we will contact you soon after the start of your semester overseas to request a list of your courses. We will try to ascertain whether or not these courses can transfer back to UNC Asheville. Types of courses we do not accept are: internships, practicums, community service, research, independent study, professional or technical courses (nursing, agriculture, culinary, etc).

Pre-Registering at UNC Asheville

You will receive an email from the Office of the Registrar while you are abroad which will include detailed information and deadlines for on-campus course registration. It is your responsibility to email your academic adviser to obtain your RAN while you are abroad. Send your adviser an email with a reminder that you are studying abroad, a list of courses that you are considering for registration, and a request to approve the courses. It is in your best interest to do this well in advance of your registration appointment to avoid complications! If you are unable to register yourself online, you may contact the Study Abroad office to register for you. Email using your UNC Asheville email account and include your RAN, your course numbers, and titles of courses. If you do not register by the UNC Asheville registration deadline, you will not be able to pre-register.
Notes for Seniors: All academic departments have residency requirements that state that you must complete a certain number of credit hours on campus at UNC Asheville. If you plan to spend part of your senior year abroad, you will not be able to graduate until the end of the following semester at the earliest.

If you plan to apply to graduate school, you may want to request extra transcripts to be sent to your home in sealed envelopes. Keep the envelopes sealed in order to keep the integrity of the transcript. Many universities do not accept transcripts that are not in sealed envelopes.

HOUSING

Housing Abroad

Housing options at your host university will vary. Some may require all study abroad students to live in a certain area, while others may offer choices such as residence halls/dorms, apartments/flats, or homestay. Also know that the accommodations in your host country may not be as luxurious as you are accustomed to at home, so keep an open mind. You will find more in-depth information from your host university. It is up to you to research your options and make the decision that is best for you.

Homestay: If you have the option of homestay, you will have a great opportunity to expand your cultural experience beyond the university. However, living with a family can also pose special challenges. Remember that while the host family will typically receive a stipend to cover the costs of your room and/or board, the money cannot possibly reimburse them for the inconvenience and annoyances of having a bad student experience. If you choose homestay, here are some general recommendations:

- Bring a small gift (no more than $20), such as a t-shirt or other item with the UNC Asheville logo, a cookbook of American recipes, or a CD of traditional American music (blues, jazz, etc.)
- Ask at the beginning of your stay about the family schedule and house rules. Are there expectations to participate in family activities? Do they expect you to be at family meals? Do they want to know when you’ll be out late or gone for the weekend? Will they allow you to have guests?
- Ask about the house rules for telephone use. In many countries, even local calls are charged on a metered basis, and phone service is quite expensive. Families may prefer that you make outgoing calls from another location. Also ask about appropriate hours for receiving incoming calls.
• If meals are included in your homestay, don’t skip family meals without letting your hosts know well in advance.

• Don’t snack from the family refrigerator or pantry without asking. Also, ask where you can keep food of your own.

• Be conservative with electricity and water use. These services may be limited or more expensive in your host country. Turn off lights and appliances when not in use, and don’t take long showers.

• Offer to help with household tasks.

• Be open, flexible, and don’t be afraid to ask questions. While host families are typically interested in interaction with international students, they are also being paid for their hosting duties, and in some cases consider it an income supplement. While you should expect your family to provide a safe, clean living environment, adequate meals, and a polite, respectful atmosphere, the amount of personal interaction may vary from family to family. If your family is truly unreasonable or if you are uncomfortable with your family, you should consult with your host university coordinator. Be sure the reason for wanting to move are more serious than small inconveniences (phone use, curfews, etc.), or culturally-based issues that are likely to be the same from family to family.

### Housing at UNC Asheville

If you have already signed a contract and are assigned to University housing for the semester you will be abroad, you will need a release from your contract. You will need to go to Governors Hall and complete a form that states that you are studying abroad for the semester. If you want to live on campus when you return, you will need to put that on the form. You will also need to apply on your OnePort account. If you currently live off campus, or if you want to live off-campus upon your return, it is your responsibility to make your own arrangements and any necessary payments.

### PACKING

#### Luggage

Don’t take more luggage than you can carry. You should be able to maneuver comfortably through airports and train stations with your bags. Check with the airline (of your originating flight and any connecting flights) to find restrictions on size, weight, and number of bags permitted. Whatever combination of luggage you choose (suitcase, backpack, duffle, carry-on, etc.), all luggage should be sturdy, and able to withstand the bumps and bruises of air, bus, and train travel. Consider luggage an investment—it is better to spend more money on a good quality bag that can be used for years to come. Label all luggage inside and out with your name and permanent address contact information. Learn about the customs and security procedures of the airports where you will be traveling, and be respectful. It is not unusual for customs and immigration officers to ask detailed questions or search luggage. If you or your parents carry homeowner’s or renter’s insurance, check with the insurance agent to see if your belongings can be covered under the policy. If not, consider purchasing baggage insurance, available through travel agencies, ISIC, and some credit card companies (if you purchase your airline ticket with the card). Baggage insurance often protects your possessions the entire time you are abroad, not just while you are flying.

#### General Tips:

Packing is going to vary for every individual. Here are some general guidelines to keep in mind:

• Pack as light as possible. Experienced travelers recommend you pack your luggage, remove half of the contents, reevaluate, and remove half again. Find some great tips at: www.onebag.com
• Do not take more than you are willing and able to carry on your own.
• Consider leaving valuable or sentimental items (such as expensive jewelry or electronics) at home.
• Pack all of your important documents (passport, tickets, prescriptions, contact information, etc.) in your carry-on bag. You might also want to pack some basics (change of underwear, toothbrush and toiletries) in your carry-on in case your luggage is delayed or lost.
• Consider taking clothes that can be layered for warmth, as homes and residence halls abroad may not be as warm during winter as in the U.S.
• Laundry equipment and detergents abroad may be more expensive and harsher on your clothes, and some countries do not use dryers. Try to bring sturdy clothes in fabrics that are easy to wash and dry. Anything that needs to be dry cleaned should be left at home.
• Pack clothes that can be mixed and matched, instead of bringing several individual outfits.
• Make sure you understand your host country’s standards of modesty and/or neatness in dress. In some countries, students dress more formally than American students typically do, and shorts and sweats may be strictly for use at the gym or beach. Some tourist sites (such as churches) may not allow visitors to enter wearing shorts or sleeveless shirts. Some upscale clubs may not allow you to enter wearing tennis shoes or t-shirts.
• Electrical currents and sockets are not the same around the world. Look to see if your appliances have wattage settings that can be adjusted. If so, you may want to purchase electrical converters (plug adapters) or consider buying these items in your host country.
• Most universities abroad will provide computer access for their students. While some students take their laptop computers abroad for convenience, others choose to leave theirs at home to avoid the chances of damage/loss, or the extra weight it adds to their luggage.
• Allow room for the personal purchases, gifts, and other things you may acquire while abroad. Barring any baggage restrictions, consider packing a small, empty duffle bag in your luggage or buying a small bag overseas to allow for extra items on your return.

“The Push” By Tegan Consol, 2014
Location: Napa River, Ecuador
PACKING LIST

Essentials:
- Passport
- Airline tickets
- Money (~$100 cash in foreign currency)
- ATM and credit cards
- Study Abroad Handbook
- Emergency Contact Information
- Prescriptions
- Photocopies of all documents, prescriptions, ATM, credit card, passport, visa etc.
- Insurance card and claim form

Helpful Items:
- Toiletries—Consider taking only travel-size items and purchasing more overseas.
- Extra glasses, contact lenses/ solutions
- Clothes that can be mixed/ matches/layered
- Rain jacket/umbrella
- All-purpose, waterproof walking shoes
- Guidebook for host country
- One set of “nice” clothes for special occasions
- ISIC (international ID)
- Foreign-language dictionary
- Small first aid kit
- Camera, film/memory card, batteries/charger
- Money belt/pouch
- Immunization/health record
- Small gift for host family
- Travel towel/washcloth
- Small flashlight
- Pictures of friends/family

If you plan to travel extensively while abroad:
- Small lock for your bag and hostel lockers
- Moist towelettes/anti-bacterial gel
- Swiss Army knife (not in carry-on luggage)
THINGS TO DO: Once you are abroad

- Call home: You may not be able to call home immediately upon arrival, but do call or email someone at home to let them know you arrived safely.

- Register with the U.S. Embassy or that of your country of Citizenship in your host country.

- Send contact information: Send your overseas address, phone number, and email to the Study Abroad office so that we can send you important information.

- Keep in touch with academic contacts: Correspond with your UNC Asheville department and the Study Abroad office if you change your class schedule after arriving overseas. Keep copies of those correspondences so that you have record of what has been approved.

- Send your Courses Form: After registering for classes abroad, complete the form, keep a copy for yourself, and email the form to the Study Abroad office.

- Save your work while studying abroad: Save copies of all academic work (class notes, syllabi, reading lists, tests, papers, etc.). At the end of your program, bring these materials home in your carry-on luggage. Your academic department may need to see your work before approving your transfer credit from the university abroad.

- Arrange to have your transcript mailed to the Study Abroad office: Make sure your main contact at your host institution has an accurate list of the courses you have taken, and will send your transcript to the Study Abroad office at the conclusion of your program. After we check-in your transcript, we will give it to the Transcript Evaluator in the Office of the Registrar.

- Register for UNC Asheville classes for next semester. It is your responsibility to email your academic adviser to receive your RAN while you are abroad.
CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

CULTURE SHOCK

The process of mentally, physically, and emotionally adjusting to a new environment is commonly known as “culture shock.” It is a response to being in a situation where everything is different from your previous experiences, including language/slang, food, transportation, body language, and everyday activities. Culture shock covers a wide range of reactions from mild annoyance to frustration, depression, fatigue, and excitement. The Glimpse Foundation has published several guides based on their extensive survey research with study abroad returnees. Here is their description of culture shock and its phases, excerpted from their Culture Shock guide: “...Culture shock manifests itself differently in different people, but research has detected general patterns of emotional highs and lows experienced by international travelers. These phases vary in duration and severity, and are not necessarily linear.

- **Euphoria**—The first few hours, days or weeks abroad are often characterized by the excitement of sensory overload. Both adrenaline and expectations are running high, and everything seems new and intriguing.

- **Irritability and Hostility**—Once the initial ‘honeymoon’ phase subsides, dissonances between native and host cultures begin to seem more pronounced, and a sense of alienation can set in. Curiosity and enthusiasm about-face, transforming into frustration, insecurity, negativity toward local culture, glorification of home culture, exaggerated responses to minor problems, withdrawal and/or depression.

- **Gradual Adjustment**—With time, you’ll begin to orient yourself to a different set of cultural practices and feel increasingly comfortable and confident in your new surroundings. Your sense of humor, which may have been lying dormant for a while, will reemerge.

Reentry or Reverse Culture Shock: Upon returning home, you will be faced with integrating your abroad experience with life in the United States, where you might feel disoriented, out of place or changed by your experience in a way that makes relating to family and friends difficult. Here are a few ways to cope with culture shock:

- Know that everyone experiences some degree of culture shock, and everyone’s experience is different.

- Remember that you are the foreigner and that people will expect you to adapt to their expectations.

- Try not to label things as “good” or “bad,” but merely “different” and don’t blow things out of proportion.

- You may incorporate some cultural differences into your routine, and others you may not. Some habits may disappear when you leave the host country, and others may stay with you.

- Develop habits or join organizations that will help you interact regularly in the host campus and city.

- Maintain the ability to laugh at your mistakes. They can in fact help you in the learning process.

The feelings of culture shock are unavoidable, but recognizing their existence and knowing about them in advance will help you prepare yourself to accept the temporary discomfort and learn more from the experience. Everyone experiences culture shock and adjustment differently. Do research before leaving to try to understand what to expect. Utilize the resources listed in this handbook, talk to the Study Abroad office staff or other students who have been abroad, and enjoy the journey!
KNOW YOUR HOST COUNTRY

Reseaching your host country is one way to reduce culture shock, and also to be a responsible traveler and citizen of the world. Here are some questions to consider about the culture and history of your host country. Try to answer as many of them as you can before you leave. If you need help finding the answers, use the resources listed in this handbook. Also, talk to international students on campus, or students who have already studied abroad. If you haven’t met any of them, make an effort to do so! The Study Abroad office can help.

- **Politics**: Who is the country’s leader? What is the country’s current political structure?
- **History**: What is the history of the relationships between this country and the United States? Who are the country’s most important national heroes and heroines? Who are the most widely admired public figures today?
- **Language**: Are languages spoken besides English? What are the political and social implications of language usage?
- **Holidays**: What are the national holidays? Why are they celebrated? Will the university, banks, post office, or other businesses be closed?
- **Religion**: What is the predominant religion? Does religion play an important role in the political and social life of the average citizen? What are the most important religious observances and ceremonies? How do members of the predominant religion feel about other religions?
- **Social Norms**: What is the attitude toward drinking? What things are taboo in this society? What are some of the prevailing attitudes toward divorce? Toward extra-marital relations? Toward homosexuality? Toward contraception?
- **Laws**: What is the legal age for drinking alcohol? What other laws might affect your daily life (driving, traffic, drugs, visa regulations, employment)?
- **Family**: Are typical families nuclear or extended? At what age to people normally move out of their parents’ home?
- **Shopping**: Is the price asked for merchandise fixed or are customers expected to bargain? How is bargaining conducted? If, as a customer, you touch or handle merchandise for sale (including such things as fruit or linen tablecloths), will the seller in the store or market think you are knowledgeable, inconsiderate, within your rights, completely outside your rights? Other?
- **Daily life**: How do people organize their daily activities? What is the normal meal schedule? Is there a daytime rest period? What is the customary time for visiting friends? What is the normal work schedule?
- **Communication**: How long do people talk when they use the telephone? Do friends call each other frequently to chat? How do people feel about having other people make long-distance (overseas) calls from their private house phones?
- **Food**: What foods are popular and how are they prepared?
- **Clothing**: What is the usual dress for women? For men? Are pants or shorts worn? If so, on what occasions? Is it o.k. to wear jeans or tennis shoes in certain settings? Is it o.k. to wear sleeveless shirts? What are expectations for dressing for class, a family dinner, or a more formal event?
- **Medical care**: How is medical care structured (private or public hospitals)? How is medical insurance structured—am I covered by my U.S. insurance, or does the host country government require additional insurance?
SEVEN LESSONS FOR CROSS-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

Taken from Cross-Cultural Dialogues: 74 Brief Encounters with Cultural Differences by Craig Storti

**One:** Don’t assume everyone is the same.

**Two:** What you think of as normal behavior may only be cultural. Much of human behavior is universal but certainly not all. Before you project your norms on the human race, consider the possibility that you might be making incorrect assumptions.

**Three:** Familiar behaviors may have different meanings. The same behavior – saying “yes”, for example – can exist in different cultures and not mean the same thing. Just because you’ve recognized a given behavior, don’t assume you’ve understood it.

**Four:** Don’t assume that what you meant is what was understood. You can be sure of what you mean when you say something, but you can’t be sure how this is interpreted by someone else. Check for signs that the other person did or did not understand you.

**Five:** Don’t assume that what you understood is what was meant. We all hear what others say through the medium of our own experience. You know what those words mean to you, but what do they mean to the person speaking them?

**Six:** You don’t have to like or accept “different” behavior, but understanding where it comes from may help you find ways to deal with it.

**Seven:** Most people do behave rationally; you just have to discover the rationale.
**AMERICAN CULTURAL VALUES & ASSUMPTIONS**

Of course Americans, like any other cultural group, are a collection of individuals and we are extremely diverse! However, most visitors to the U.S. and most cultural anthropologists would argue that as a group, Americans tend to hold the following cultural values, some of which are very different from those of other cultures. (Adapted from American Ways: A Guide for Foreigners in the U.S., Gary Althen.)

**Individualism & Independence:** We see ourselves as individuals, responsible for our own situations. We emphasize self-fulfillment. We give choices even to very young children, and believe that it’s wrong to expect individuals to always sacrifice their wants and needs for the good of the group. We admire individuals who fought their way to the top, do something first or the longest or the best. We define ourselves by what we do, not by our birth situation.

**Privacy:** We assume that everyone needs time alone. In some cultures one is rarely alone and all translations of the word “privacy” carry a negative connotation of being isolated. U.S. children often have their own rooms and their own possessions. We have rules about confidentiality.

**Egalitarianism:** We generally express strong belief in the principle that all people are created equal, with equal opportunities; yet most Americans will admit that discrimination (racism and sexism) still exists in the U.S. We tend to enjoy stories of “self-made” individuals who rise from poverty to riches through hard work and initiative. Most Americans believe that individuals control their own destinies; children are told “you can be whatever you want to be.” We generally don’t like displays of social status – being bowed to, deferred to, etc. We show respect in more subtle ways; tone of voice, order of speaking and seating arrangements (getting the most comfortable chair). Children are often allowed or encouraged to question their parents and “discuss” their parents’ decisions. Questioning professors is often highly valued, and bosses often go out of their way to seem like “one of the gang”. We chitchat with taxi drivers, waiters, bellmen, doctors, and lawyers. We give respectable titles to all jobs (sanitation worker).

**Time:** We are very concerned with time and efficiency and look for faster and more efficient ways of doing things. We talk about not “wasting time” or about “saving time” – in many cultures time just is. We value organization and punctuality. We make “to do” lists, plan our leisure time, carry calendars and schedules.

**Informality:** We use first names, even with people older than we are and people who have more social status. We use idiomatic speech, prop our feet up on desks, wear informal clothing on many occasions.

**Future oriented:** We are less concerned with history than other cultures (in explaining conflicts, people from other cultures may go back several centuries). We value new things and ideas more than the old – products are advertised as “new and improved”. We believe we can and should improve our situation, as in “Don’t just stand there, DO something.” Some other cultures have more of a reverence for the past, and believe that it’s arrogant for human beings to believe they can change their fate.

**Achievement and action oriented:** We value hard work and continually want to improve our situation. We feel that we never achieve enough and should always keep bettering ourselves. We are always doing something and we feel bored or guilty after “doing nothing” for several hours.

**Honesty and Directness:** We value “getting to the point” more than maintaining “face” (prestige or dignity). We look up to the person who tells us directly and honestly when he is upset about something. We do not like to have a third person mediate. We believe it’s important to tell the truth even though it may put us in an unfavorable light. Some other cultures are more concerned with “saving face” and may say something indirectly or put a more positive spin on the situation in order to do so.
RETURNING HOME

A GUIDE FOR STUDY ABROAD RETURNEES

You went, you saw, you conquered. And now, you’re back. Coming home from an extended period abroad can cause a confusing mixture of feelings, both positive and negative. You will probably remember hearing about culture shock at your pre-departure orientation. Most of you probably also remember experiencing it, to one degree or another, while you were abroad. What you may not have been prepared for is the re-entry shock of coming home. Just as with culture shock, re-entry shock encompasses a wide range of feelings and responses, from mild frustration or fatigue to feelings of alienation and depression. Everyone’s experience is different, but some aspects of re-entry shock typically mentioned by students are listed below.

Reasons for Re-entry Shock:

1. **Realities vs. expectations:** While abroad, many students combat homesickness and culture shock with thoughts of how terrific things will be once they return home. When the return home doesn’t meet those expectations, it can make adjustment harder.

2. **Personal changes and growth:** Most students returning from an overseas experience feel that they’ve learned a lot, grown as a person, acquired new attitudes and knowledge, etc. Many students come back to the “same old thing” at home and find that friends, family, and people at school don’t recognize or appreciate the new you or your experiences.

3. **Becoming ordinary:** As international students, many returnees got used to being automatically considered interesting, asked for their opinion as the American, or invited to interesting events, simply because of their status as a foreigner. Students also typically spent their free time doing exciting things (taking weekend trips to other countries, going to festivals and other cultural events, etc.) Coming back to the U.S. and returning to ordinary life and no longer being considered unusual can contribute to feelings of isolation and depression.

4. **Isolation from changes at home:** Many returnees find that it’s hard to keep up with changes in friends, family, and pop culture that took place while they were overseas. While you may be excited about your experience and want to share stories from abroad, people here may not seem very interested or may be more interested in sharing with you what you missed while you were abroad.

Symptoms of Re-entry Shock:

Re-entry shock symptoms can be very similar to those of culture shock, and will also vary tremendously in specifics and in intensity from person to person. There is no standard reaction — your experience, whatever it is, is normal. Some common symptoms are: disruptions in sleeping or eating habits; fatigue; irritation; problems with concentration (mentally wandering abroad); feelings of isolation; and depression.

Ways to Combat Re-entry Shock:

Getting over re-entry shock is a balancing act. On the one hand, you don’t want to devalue your experience abroad; on the other hand, you need to find ways to fit back into your life in the U.S. There are many ways to integrate your experience abroad with your life here. Think about some of the ways that you got over culture shock while you were abroad; becoming involved with activities, forming a routine, trying to interact with host-country, international, and other U.S. students. These can also be very helpful ways to get over re-entry shock. On the following pages, you’ll find suggestions for ways to continue your international experience at UNC.
Asheville, as well as suggestions for possible additional experiences abroad. Whatever route you choose to follow, one way to ensure a successful re-entry is to find a peer group. Your fellow returnees are one of your best sources of support and of common experience; you’re all in the same boat, so remember that you can help each other! Also, keep in touch with friends from your host country. You’ll enjoy having those ties even years from now.

GETTING INVOLVED

When you get back, stay involved! Who would be better to talk about study abroad or cultural differences than a student who has just returned from studying abroad? There are many opportunities to share your experiences once you have returned. Here are ways for you to get involved:

- **Peer Presenters**: The Study Abroad office gets requests to do presentations in classes and residence halls throughout the year, and most often they want to hear from students! Commitment is minimal, and we encourage you to share your own experience and photos during the presentation. Contact the Study Abroad office at studyabroad@unca.edu for more information.

- **Study Abroad Fair**: The Study Abroad office hosts a Study Abroad Fair each fall, and each spring, in hopes of attracting more students to study abroad. We invite representatives from our partner universities, faculty directors from our summer programs, and students who have returned from studying abroad. If you are interested in volunteering at the Study Abroad Fair and sharing your experiences with interested students, contact the Study Abroad office at studyabroad@unca.edu.

- **Make Use of Your International Experience**: Get Involved at UNC Asheville! There are many opportunities to get involved with study abroad or international issues after you return to campus. Contact the Study Abroad office about programs such as Orientation, Global Ambassadors, Study Abroad Photo Contest, and Peer Mentoring Program.

- **Orientation**: The Study Abroad office coordinates orientations throughout the year for outgoing UNC Asheville study abroad students. The pre-departure orientation for outgoing students is a great opportunity for you to help UNC Asheville students who are planning to go abroad. If you would like to help, contact the Study Abroad office at studyabroad@unca.edu for more information.

- **Global Ambassadors Program**: The Global Ambassador Program serves the Buncombe and neighboring counties by connection UNC Asheville students with local community members and area schools as a free public service. Student Program presenters use their international knowledge, experiences and talents to engage pupils in interactive learning experiences designed to be grade-appropriate and to complement textbook and classroom instruction. Contact the Study Abroad office at studyabroad@unca.edu for more information.

- **Study Abroad Photo Contest**: Each year, the Study Abroad office offers for recently returned students to submit photos for four different categories; Cross Cultural, Nature, People, and Reflections for our annual Photo Contest. After all submissions have been collected, the photos are sent to a committee made up of faculty, staff and students. There is also a Chancellor’s Choice award with a monetary award of $250. We encourage you to participate. You can find out more on our website at https://studyabroad.unca.edu/photo-contest.
Post-Graduate Opportunities Abroad

Below is some general information on the types of opportunities available. For more detailed information on programs and opportunities, check with the Career Center at UNC Asheville. There are MANY opportunities to work overseas for students and recent graduates. However, there are also some realities that you need to be aware of before beginning your international job search.

It is usually NOT possible simply to enter another country and (legally) work, or even volunteer. Most countries have some unemployment problems and therefore most countries restrict the ability of foreign nationals to work within their borders. Working usually requires that you have a special visa or residence permit, issued by the government of that country, which authorizes you to be legally employed; employers overseas will usually tell you that they can’t hire you without a work visa or permit, and governments will tell you that they can’t give you a work visa or permit without proof that you have a job. This “Catch-22” is what has given rise to the many programs which exist specifically to help students and recent graduates navigate the bureaucratic obstacles to gaining practical experience overseas.

Most multinational and international corporations which have offices overseas prefer to hire mostly local personnel for those offices. Americans sent to those offices are usually only considered for overseas postings after putting in a minimum amount of time (3-5 years) in the U.S. offices of the company. If your ultimate goal is to work for this kind of company, participating in a practical overseas experience during college or shortly after graduation is probably one of the best investments you can make towards fulfilling that goal, even if the experience itself costs rather than makes money.

Working overseas as a student or recent graduate is unlikely to make you rich. Even if you choose a work experience for pay (as opposed to an internship for academic credit or a volunteer experience), and even if the pay is similar to what you would earn here, you will probably have extra expenses to cover, at least initially (for example, international airfare, program fees, etc.). The long-term benefits of an international work experience, for your personal satisfaction, professional preparation, and resume building, are likely to be much greater than for a similar experience within the U.S., so think of it as an investment! There are many opportunities which cover your expenses, although you may not make enough for extensive personal travel or savings. Many volunteer or unpaid internship positions cover room and board costs, and sometimes a stipend, for participants. Programs which require placement or participation fees, especially for developing countries, often provide detailed information to help participants fundraise at least some of the fee.

Finally, finding the right experience for you will take time, thought, and effort. Many programs have early deadlines, sometimes as much as one year before the experience begins. Add to that the time to research programs and complete applications, and you will quickly see that 1-2 years in advance is NOT too early to start planning! As a general rule, longer programs and those which are career-related require more advance time than short, casual-work programs; 3-6 months in advance is probably plenty of time to plan for a summer volunteer or casual work program, while a year-long career-related program will usually require you to start researching a year or more in advance.

How to get started: Start by thinking about your personal goals for a work experience.

- What do you want to gain from this experience—an inexpensive means to spend time overseas, practical experience in your field, or a combination?
- Do you want to go to a specific country, or are you flexible? Do you want to work in a big city or in an environment such as a national park or resort area?
- Is it important to work in a specific field, or are you willing to do casual work such as assisting on a farm or in an office?
Does the work need to be paid, or at least cover your living costs? Are you willing to spend money to participate in a career-related internship? (In some cases, you can earn credit.)

If you want a paid experience, how much money are you willing to pay for initial expenses (placement fees, airfare, living expenses, etc.) until you get your first paycheck?

When do you want to go (during your undergraduate program, over a summer, after graduation) and for how long?

**Researching your options:** Once you’ve gathered basic information about a number of programs and opportunities, you will need to start contacting the sponsoring institutions and programs to get specific information about the application, costs, expectations, etc. Be prepared to contact many different organizations and programs before finding the one that will work best for you.

**A Word of Caution:** Most programs do their best to provide a worthwhile experience, but IT IS UP TO YOU to make sure that the programs you are interested in offer what they claim, and that what they offer is what you want. Before paying a placement fee, signing a contract, or buying a plane ticket, make sure you understand the fine print. Contact the program organizers with any questions, including but not limited to: What are the consequences (financial and otherwise) if you leave the program before the time you agreed to? What happens if you are not placed in a position or if your placement is not satisfactory, either to you or the organization you’ve been placed with? What support services are provided by the organization once you arrive?

There are no “right” answers to these questions; you must make your own decisions about what your criteria are for the program you want. Finally, ask to contact former participants of the program. Any reputable organization should be able to put you in touch with others who have participated and who will be able to give you an unbiased assessment of the good and bad points of the program.

“Sapa” By Alexa Ramirez, 2014
Location: Sa Pa, Vietnam
RESOURCES

Resources for Learning About Options Abroad
Here are some links for opportunities available:

Live & Work Abroad: A Guide for Modern Nomads by Huw Francis and Michelyne Callan
Survival Kit for Overseas Living: For Americans Planning to Live and Work Abroad by Robert L. Kohls
Work Abroad: The Complete Guide to Finding a Job Overseas by Clayton A. Hubbs
Teaching English Abroad by Susan Griffith

Other Resources:

International Health Insurance
HTH Insurance Brochure 2014-15 - Information about your health insurance coverage
https://studyabroad.unca.edu/students-traveling-out-unca

Travel Related Information
- US Department of State- http://www.state.gov
  Information on living abroad, travel warnings, U.S. Embassy and Consulate websites, and other important information, including:
- Passports – http://travel.state.gov
  Includes information about applying for and renewing passports.
  For Americans traveling abroad. Follow link to “Foreign Entry Requirements” to find visa information for the country where you will be studying.
- International Calling: www.countrycallingcodes.com
- Translations: http://babelfish.altavista.com and Google language tools
- Currency conversions: www.oanda.com

Culture & Etiquette
- Culture Shock and Culture Smart cultural guidebooks
  These books can be found on Amazon.com. There is a book for almost every country in the world and they provide useful and easy-to-read information related to culture & etiquette.
- What’s Up With Culture? http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture
  An excellent online resource for pre-departure and re-entry exercises!
- Diversity Abroad http://diversityabroad.com/
  Destination guides, travel tips, and information to help you prepare for the cultural experiences you’ll encounter
- Mobility International http://www.miusa.org
  A resource for traveling students with disabilities (both physical and mental).
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“The Sunset of Cartagena”, By Andre Mileti, 2014, Location: Spain

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