



Study Abroad Fall 2016 HANDBOOK

CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
Mercy Hall Room 301
studyabroad.loyola.edu
(504) 864-7550

The best thing about study abroad was being challenged and the worst was coming home.

Morgan Carey, Chile



center for INTERNATIONAL education

INTRODUCTION

You are about to embark on a very exciting, life-changing experience, whether you are studying abroad for a semester or a year. One of the main goals of our office, the Center for International Education (CIE), is to give you the opportunity to immerse yourself in another culture - academically as well as socially and culturally - and to provide support and guidance before you leave, while you are abroad and after you return.

We know you are both excited and a little nervous in anticipation of your program overseas. To make your life easier, we have developed this handbook. It is a valuable resource for you, both as you prepare for your overseas experience and once you are abroad. **Please read the entire handbook and take it with you on your study abroad experience.** We recommend sharing the handbook with your parents. The best way to help them understand what you are going through is to share information with them, both before you go and while you are abroad.

Former study abroad students are an invaluable resource for you, as are exchange students from your host country. Please take advantage of their experience and get in touch with them as you plan for your study abroad program. Be sure to speak to several different students as experiences differ according to the individual. Don't be shy about asking questions and discussing your personal fears and expectations, as former participants have been through these experiences themselves. You will find when you return home, sharing one's overseas experience is beneficial to both former and current exchange students.

Please keep CIE informed of your address and telephone number overseas, as well as any changes of these during the semester. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact CIE via e-mail, phone, or fax.

Finally, use this handbook and help us make it better by sending us comments and suggestions for useful additions (or better yet, a postcard or e-mail to say hello) while you are on your program as well as after you return.

Have a wonderful and safe experience abroad!

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STUDY ABROAD CHECKLIST

More information on each checklist item is provided in this handbook.

BEFORE YOU GO

- ☐ Apply for your passport. A U.S. passport can take six to eight weeks to process.
- ☐ Check to see if you need a student visa and apply for visa. If you need an FBI background check, this will take more time.
- ☐ Have extra passport pictures taken for other program related documents.
- ☐ Read all material you receive from the Center for International Education, your host university, and your program sponsor.
- ☐ Attend the mandatory pre-departure orientation.
- ☐ Schedule an appointment with a travel clinic or family physician for a physical. Have them complete your program's health information form, if applicable. Depending on where you are traveling, you may need a series of vaccinations, which can take up to several months.
- ☐ Make sure that you have study abroad health insurance.
- ☐ Make logistical arrangements for your time abroad and your return.
- ☐ Registration- sign financial agreement on LORA
- ☐ Power of Attorney
- ☐ Complete all the required forms for your Financial Aid including TOPs, consortium and contractual agreements.
- ☐ Payment of bills including program fees- YOUR responsibility to ensure payment
- ☐ On- or off- campus housing arrangements (if applicable)
- ☐ Absentee voting (if applicable)
- ☐ Income taxes (if applicable)
- ☐ Be certain that your mailing/email address is correct so you can receive accurate and timely financial documents including invoices and credit balances.
- ☐ Consult with appropriate offices and websites for accurate, official, and up-to-date information related to your trip (i.e. CIE website, U.S. State Department travel advisory and warning web page, CDC website).

- ☐ Complete and return forms from your program sponsor and host institution by the dates requested.
- ☐ Call your bank and credit card companies to notify them of your travel plans so they do not freeze your accounts.
- ☐ Make copies of your passport, traveler's checks, credit cards and debit cards. Keep one copy in a safe place with someone at home. Bring other copies with you; keep copies safe at all times. Make a copy of your birth certificate and have it notarized. Bring it with you.
- ☐ Bring a copy of approved classes with you on your program.

WHILE ABROAD

- ☐ Register with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, <https://step.state.gov/step/>
- ☐ Contact CIE if you make changes to your course schedule.
- ☐ Keep records of all academic information (including all course information: syllabi, notes, homework, compositions, exams, contact information of your professors).
- ☐ Correspond with your academic advisor at Loyola in advance of registration for next term.
- ☐ Collect references from any relevant supervisors from internships, etc. for future use.
- ☐ Make sure that the courses you are taking have been approved. If you have to change the courses that were pre-approved, contact CIE to get your courses approved.
- ☐ Email CIE with the course that you want to take pass/fail by November 1 for the fall semester and April 1 for the spring.

UPON YOUR RETURN

- ☐ Complete the program evaluation at <http://studyabroad.loyno.edu>, login and go to your study abroad program. It will be a questionnaire.
- ☐ Make sure your transcript will be sent to CIE.
- ☐ Update your address information in LORA.
- ☐ Continue your international experience at Loyola.
- ☐ Have another go!

BEFORE YOU GO

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Passports: You will need a passport, even if you are going to Mexico. If you don't already have one, apply for one now and GET EXPEDITED PROCESSING. For complete information on applying for a passport, go to:
<http://travel.state.gov/passport/index.html>

Once you have your passport make 2-3 copies: leave one with a family member or friend and put one in your suitcase. If you lose your passport, report it to local police, get written confirmation of the police report, and take the above documents to the nearest U.S. consulate or embassy to apply for a new passport.

Birth Certificate: Make sure you bring a CERTIFIED copy of your birth certificate (not the original).

Visas: Requirements for visas vary for each country. If you need a visa to study in a country you will most likely need it before you arrive. Check the website of the embassy or consulate of your host country. Allow sufficient time for processing your visa application, it could take 1-3 months or longer. Some countries require you to get a FBI background check for your visa (http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/background-checks/background_checks). You may have to apply at the consulate that handles the state in which you reside and you may have to make a personal appearance at the consulate. So **DON'T WAIT** because you wouldn't want to miss this opportunity because you didn't have a visa. You can check on the Department of State website for general travel requirements <http://travel.state.gov> but you must review the specific information on the consular website for your country.

Do you have your passport? Ok, now breathe and open your mind to new experiences!
Natalie Jones, Argentina

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Compare prices - there are huge differences. The following websites have good prices for international and student travel.

Check STA travel, they often have student discounts and allow you to change your return flight.

Student Travel Website: www.statravel.com

Student Travel Website: www.studentuniverse.com

Flight Comparison Website: www.kayak.com

Name your own price: www.priceline.com

Track flight prices: www.airfarewatchdog.com or www.vapta.com

PACKING AND BAGGAGE

Baggage allowance for overseas flights is normally 2 pieces of checked baggage (approx. 50 lbs. each) and one carry on. Items over the limit may be charged excess baggage or you may be required to remove items and leave them. Check with your airline as allowances may vary.

Former students say one suitcase and one carry on is sufficient. Mark all luggage inside and out with your name and destination address. Keep a list of what is in each bag and keep that list with you. This will aid in making an insurance claim if your luggage is lost.

Travel LIGHT!!! You will find few bellmen to carry your bags up and down steps. Take only what you can carry yourself. You should wear clothes in which you feel comfortable and which are appropriate in your host culture. What may be appropriate clothing in the U.S. may not be in your host country, so dress carefully. The weather may be colder or hotter than in New Orleans so remember to check the weather before you go and remember seasonal changes. Think layers!

Remember you will buy things and your bags will come back heavier. It is a good idea to take clothes that you are willing to leave behind at the end of your study. Some students suggest bringing an extra empty suitcase for items purchased abroad.

One thing I would recommend is to pack as light as possible, especially if you plan on traveling. If I could do it over again, I would have only brought a backpack with me. Chances are, there is nothing you absolutely will need that you can't get abroad, and too much stuff can end up being a huge burden when it comes to airport luggage restrictions, traveling, etc. Before going home, I flew to Ecuador from Buenos Aires to spend ten days there and then flew home from Quito. I ended up having to leave a bunch of stuff in the Buenos Aires airport because my bag was over the weight limit (the airline's restrictions for flights originating or ending in Latin America were more

stringent than for flights originating or ending in the U.S., which I didn't know). Then, in Ecuador, I had to travel around by bus with my big suitcase, which was a huge pain. One thing I did that was incredibly helpful was to bring a good pair of hiking shoes with me, since I did a lot of hiking while traveling.

Rene Rivette studied in Argentina

I got charged \$1300 USD in oversized luggage,

Annelise Rickert, South Africa

Don't pack your life just because you are afraid to leave. Less is more. You will gain more on your journey that you will want to share with others. This goes with luggage and beyond.

Jenna Knoblach studied in Turkey

SUGGESTED CLOTHING LIST (VARIES ON YOUR LOCATION):

- Underwear, socks, and hose
- 2 pairs of jeans (not old or worn)
- 2 pairs of dress pants or skirts
- 2 nice outfits
- 5-7 short sleeve shirts
- 3-5 long sleeve shirts or blouses
- 2 sweaters or sweatshirts
- Winter jacket or raincoat with lining (waterproof!)
- Warm gloves, a hat, and scarf
- 2 pairs of comfortable walking shoes
- 1 pair of dress shoes
- Slippers and robes
- Sleepwear for warm and cold weather
- Bathing suit and flip-flops (only for the beach and hostel bathroom)
- Appropriate sportswear or exercise gear

Remember to Pack:

- Your CIE handbook
- Financial Aid documentation
- A neck or waist pouch that will hold currency, a passport, and credit cards safely.
- iPod/MP3 player, etc.
- Battery operated alarm clock, camera

- Photos of home, family, friends etc.
- Small gifts to give to your host
- Fold up umbrella
- A towel for travel
- Basic medical kit
- Small appliances that have dual voltage or run on batteries. You may need to purchase “adapter” plugs to modify the flat prongs (used in the U.S.) to prong shapes used in other countries. These can be purchased at online or at electrical supply stores, like Radio Shack.

What to carry with you on the airplane:

- Airplane ticket
- Passport, visa, and other important documents (birth certificate)
- International Student Identity Card (ISIC)—which you can buy through STA Travel, www.statravel.com)
- Letter of acceptance/verification of participation in a study abroad program
- Health insurance card, claim form, any medical alert information
- Destination Information (name of resident director/contact, address, telephone number, housing information)
- Money, credit cards, and/or travelers cheques
- All prescription medicines in their original bottles with copies of prescriptions
- One change of clothes

Make sure you check current security regulations for carry-ons.

What to leave at home:

- ✗ Most of your clothes!!!
- ✗ The voltage in many countries is 220-250V rather than the 110V common to the U.S. If you try to use an American shaver, iron, or hair dryer in one of these countries, the high voltage will overheat and destroy the appliance and could shock you. Verify the type of voltage of the outlets in the country you will be visiting and studying in (<http://www.voltagevalet.com/>). Note: It is sometimes easier to buy a hair dryer and curling/ straightening iron in your host country.
- ✗ Tank tops (guys)

RESOURCES FOR PREPARING

Don't wait until you are overseas to learn about your host country. A little knowledge can go a long way in establishing good relations with your hosts. Should you bring a gift? If so, what's appropriate? How formal should you be with your hosts? What should you expect in terms of how to register for your classes? What are some major political issues facing the country? Knowing the answers to these questions will help you get off to a good start and will build your confidence.

Many students find themselves intimidated by the knowledge people from other countries have not only about their own politics, history, and culture, but also about U.S. American politics and culture. Feeling insecure, it's easy to shut yourself off from these conversations, further preventing you from gaining the knowledge you seek! We're not suggesting you "know everything" but rather prepare yourself with a few key pieces of information. You can do lots of pre-departure research on the Internet.

Here are a few suggestions for getting prepared. Of course, you can't do all these before you go, so select the areas most interesting or most challenging to you. The more you know, the better.

1. Literature
 - a. Check out books written by individuals from your host country—novels, short stories, poetry, etc. Learn about the major literary figures and their works.
 - b. Explore language readers and textbooks for cultural information.
 - c. Read non-fiction books on history, geography, politics, etc.
 - d. Seek out travel writing.
2. Films – Check out films from your host country on Netflix, the public library or any other source.
3. Internet
 - a. U.S. Department of State travel.state.gov and studentsabroad.state.gov — Essential help from the U.S. government for everything from travel safety advisories to crisis assistance, as well as contact information for all U.S. embassies and consulates abroad. Also lists foreign embassies and consulates in the U.S. This website also has background notes on 170 countries and consular information sheets:

http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/index.html

b. Center for Intercultural Learning Culture Insights -
<http://www.intercultures.ca/cil-cai/countryinsights-apercuspays-eng.asp>

c. Read local newspapers from the major cities of the world.

d. Cia World Factbook

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>

e. Student Study Abroad Handbooks on different countries:

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

f. Look up maps of the country. Have an understanding of where the major cities and other important geographical areas are located.

g. Tour your study abroad site with Google Earth.

h. Preparing to Study Abroad: The Cross-Cultural Experience
<http://www.pacific.edu/culture> — is an online cultural training resource for study abroad

4. Books to help you prepare - **Travel Books:** Many students say they lived by their travel guides, so get a complete and updated one. Let's Go, Lonely Planet, and the Rough Guide are good budget travel books with good background information on countries and world areas. There is also useful hostel/hotel information as well as must see sites. Europe on a Shoestring (Lonely Planet) is a great all-around guide with accurate, up-to-date information and advice.
5. If you don't know the language, try and learn some before you go. Download language learning software, get a tutor, take a class. People will be very appreciative of your attempts and you will have a lot more fun and a richer experience if you can interact with people from the country.

I had many ideas about Mexico and my experience before I came, so I was a little thrown off when I was really here. For example, I expected I would be fluent in Spanish in one month's time. That was just setting myself up for disaster. Also, the weather was something that totally threw me off. I imagined Mexico to be a big desert with beaches and piña colodas. But Mexico City is way up in the mountains so its colder than New Orleans most of the time.

Portia Becker, Mexico City

I found that people were much more likely to open up to me and help me when I knew a little bit about their culture first. For example, be familiar with their cuisine or the love of everyone's life: dulce de leche! If there was a terrible political crisis, be familiar with what happened and maybe even some names. (Argentines love to talk politics and they will ask your opinion on theirs and the U.S., so be prepared!) When I mentioned that I was a fan of Spinetta (super influential Argentine singer during the 70s-90s), people instantly became more receptive and willing to help.

Natalie Jones, Argentina

Basic things you should know before you go

It's good to have some basic facts about your host country at your fingertips. This helps you get into conversations and shows your respect for the culture. Take some time to investigate the following topics—use the *Resources for Preparing* or ask a person from your host country to help you find out the information.

1. Names of political leaders.
2. Names of political parties.
3. Major religion(s)/spiritual beliefs and their effect on the host country
4. Hot topics of the day (e.g., government scandals)
5. Recent conflicts and the role of the U.S. in those conflicts
6. Type of government
7. Year of independence and circumstances.
8. Economic conditions
9. Cultural diversity (immigration and refugee populations, etc.)
10. U.S. role in local economy, politics, culture

Once you are there, talk to people and find out more about their country, concerns, and culture.

ACADEMICS, COURSES AND CREDITS

You are still registered at Loyola!

Depending on the program you are attending, the Center for International Education registers you in a 12-credit dummy course at Loyola which includes the name and location of your study abroad program. The number of credits associated with this course may not correspond to the actual number of credits that you are taking while you are abroad – don't worry! When Loyola receives your transcript at the end of your semester abroad, the actual number of credits you earned while abroad will be posted instead. You will continue to receive e-mails from Loyola and be able to early register while you are abroad.

Course Approval

You should have completed a course approval form specifying what courses you will be taking and how they will be counted, i.e. major, minor, common curriculum, etc. You must have prior approval for your study abroad program or you will not receive credit for your program.

Make a copy of your course pre-approval form and bring it with you when you go abroad. There is also a digital copy in the documents section of your online Loyola application. Once you arrive in the country, if you have to change your schedule, please send your new courses and course descriptions to CIE and we will make sure that your new courses are approved by your advisor and college.

Credit for your courses

Upon your return to Loyola, you will be asked to complete an evaluation of your study abroad program. These evaluations are extremely useful for future participants and to improve the program. Only after you complete the evaluation will the credits from your study abroad program be posted.

Loyola requires that your grades be sent on a university transcript from either a U.S. or foreign institution, not a study abroad provider's transcript. Please make sure that your transcript is sent to CIE.

Policy in italics is pending approval by Associate Deans.

It is important that you understand how your grades will be reported. Your grades are transferred as follows:

- All grades from study abroad programs will appear on a student's Loyola transcript including Ds and Fs. Credit will only be awarded for grades of A, B, or C.
- Grades from programs without a US grade scale will be converted by the staff of CIE.
- Grades from a non-Loyola study abroad program and ISEP programs will not be factored into the student's Loyola GPA but will appear on the transcript and in the higher education GPA (used for grad school).
- Grades from Loyola exchange programs (including Loyola Study Abroad) will average into the student's cumulative Loyola GPA.
- *Students on Loyola programs and ISEP programs will be allowed to take one course P/D/F. The student would earn a P for an A, B or C in the course. A grade of D would appear as D on the Loyola transcript. A grade of F would appear as F on the transcript. Students must notify CIE by November 1 for the fall semester of the course that they want to take as P/D/F and April 1 for the spring.*

Depending on your program, the grading system, the academic expectations of the faculty, and number of credits assigned may be very different from Loyola. For example, the professors may not give you a syllabus or tell you how you will be graded. Your entire grade could be based on one exam at the end of the semester or an oral and written exam, and the grading scale may not be directly equivalent to our system. Find out what is expected of you in each class **and what the grades mean.**

Talk to your fellow students and make sure you understand what is expected of you and how you will be graded. In case there are any questions about what is covered in your courses abroad, we recommend that you keep copies of all your work done abroad and syllabi. Professors abroad frequently do not return papers and so it is important to keep copies.

You must be enrolled in a full course of study at your program abroad. This could be 30 credits or 60. You may be enrolled in 3 classes or 10. This will vary from country to country. It is your responsibility to make sure that you are taking enough credits in your host country to count for the equivalent of at least 12 credits at Loyola. If you enroll in less than a full course of study, this could affect your financial aid package in your semester abroad as well as future semesters at Loyola. Students have lost TOPs and other financial aid because they did not

complete a full course of study while abroad.

FINANCIAL AID

Whether you are on a Loyola or a non-Loyola program, make sure that you have completed all the necessary forms with the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid. **You are responsible for completing all of the forms and making sure that your study abroad or exchange program is paid.**

- Loyola exchange programs: All Loyola tuition scholarships and grants, federal and state aid applies to these programs. There is nothing you need to do to receive this aid since you will be billed tuition through Loyola. Ignatian scholars on Loyola programs are responsible for paying for their housing while abroad.
- ISEP Exchange programs: All Loyola scholarships and grants, federal and state aid applies to these programs. There is nothing you need to do to receive this aid since you will be billed tuition through Loyola.
- Loyola study abroad programs (NUI Maynooth, Massey University, University of East London): Only federal and state aid apply, but you will be billed directly through Loyola and do not have to complete any additional forms.
- Study abroad provider and ISEP Direct: Only federal aid applies to study abroad and ISEP Direct programs. Additionally, in order to use this federal aid, you must complete a Consortium or Contractual agreement before this aid can be released. If you receive TOPs, you must complete the TOPs Exemption Request and give it to the CIE to remain eligible for this aid upon return. You are responsible for paying for these fees although your federal aid can be transferred directly to the program by Scholarships and Financial Aid if you complete the appropriate forms for Loyola and the specific program.

BUDGETING AND MANAGING YOUR MONEY

Know what your program fee covers and prepare a preliminary budget of the funds that you are able to spend. These figures can change but it is a good idea to have some sort of plan beforehand so that you don't run out of money too quickly.

- ✈ As a precaution, have at least two forms of payment when traveling, such as a debit card and a credit card, in case one of them is not accepted as payment where you are traveling.
- ✈ Keep a written record of your card numbers, and their overseas emergency telephone numbers, apart from the cards themselves. This way if you lose your wallet or have other problems, you will be able to contact your bank and credit card companies quickly. Leave a record of your card numbers and passport with your family back home. If your belongings are lost or stolen, you can call your family to get your key information.
- ✈ Remember to inform your bank and your credit card company that you will be out of the country so they don't think your card has been stolen and freeze your accounts.

ATM Cards: Cities throughout the world have ATM cash card machines. Foreign ATMs may charge both ATM fees and currency conversion/international transaction fees for withdrawals. Find out if you can reduce your bank fees when traveling. Does your bank have a partner bank? Be aware that sometimes you may not be able to choose between withdrawals from checking or savings accounts on foreign ATMs. It is best to have funds in both accounts because you will not be able to tell from which account money was drawn. Transactions may take up to a month to appear on your bank statements, so keep close track of withdrawals. Daily withdrawals are usually limited to \$200 and \$300. You will be charged a fee for withdrawals, so make sure you have adequate funds to cover this. Exchange rates at ATM machines are typically very good. If you plan on using your ATM card remember to check with your bank to see where it is accepted. Many foreign countries don't accept cards at stores and restaurants, so always keep cash available to you.

Credit Cards: Credit cards may be very useful in emergencies. Credit cards may be used to take out cash from ATM machines but beware of very high interest charges that incur immediately. Be sure to keep the number on file in case it is lost or stolen and bring your pin number (you may need to apply for one if you have never withdrawn cash before on the card). **You should ask the bank that issues your card for details and procedures for overseas use of the card.** There can be some variation in services that are available for each type of card. In various countries VISA and MasterCard are more useful for shopping and entertainment. American Express is not as widely accepted in local shops and restaurants. Some countries have chips in credit cards that are different from the U.S. You might consider getting a pre-paid travel money card (e.g. <http://www.cashpassport.com/>) for use abroad. **Remember to inform your bank that you will be out of the country so they don't think your card has been stolen and freeze your account.**

Foreign Currency and Changing Money: Purchase about \$250 of your host country currency before leaving the US. This can be done at your local bank for a nominal fee at the current exchange rate. You will find it very useful to have this cash on-hand as you may not have immediate access to a bank. Some of this currency should be in small denominations to be used for incidents, tipping, and baggage handling. If you cannot exchange money before departure, you should exchange money at the airport or train station immediately upon arrival.

Changing money: Try to avoid changing money in hotels, restaurants, airports, or train stations where the exchange rate is less favorable and fees may be high. Banks usually give the best rates. Often a Bureau de Change (money exchange office) may appear to offer a better rate but may also charge a high service fee. **Beware of changing money at change offices that are unofficial.**

Sending and Receiving Money: One of the easiest ways for receiving money from family members is to complete a Power of Attorney form before leaving. This legal document is a written authorization to act on your behalf at a bank while you're gone. Using this allows family members to make deposits, withdrawals, and transfers on your behalf. For more information or a copy of this form please contact the CIE.

Your parents/family can send you money by purchasing a cashier's check in the currency of your host country at their bank (made payable to the student) and sending it to you by Express Mail or FedEx. Your family can also wire you money through American Express to one of their offices overseas. This option can be expensive but is good for emergencies.

Wiring money from an American account to a student's account overseas is possible. Your parents will need your bank account number, bank address, and routing number from your overseas bank. Inquire at the bank about the arrival of the funds because banks do not usually notify you when money arrives. There may be a substantial fee for this service (~\$40) for both sender and receiver of funds and the transfer abroad may take anywhere from two days to several weeks.

A certified check can be deposited into your account. In most cases you will have to wait for the check to clear (up to two weeks) before the money can be withdrawn. Try to plan your finances at least a month in advance if you are choosing this option.

If the country you study in has a currency where the exchange rate to the dollar is very favorable, like the Chinese yen, for example, it can be easy to fall into the trap of converting a price in foreign currency to a price in USD. In some places,

this will make you feel like everything is cheap and that you have plenty of money to burn. ...Pay attention to prices relative to the foreign currency and the prices of other goods in the country, don't convert back to USD in your head too much.

Olivia Burns, Turkey

Always bring more money for travel because otherwise you may limit yourself.

Louis Williams, New Zealand

Madrid is not New Orleans, and by this I mean it's not a cheap way of living plus the currency change right now is not in favor of the dollar, so keep that in mind and make budgets.

Francisco Villanueva, Spain,

YOUR HEALTH ABROAD

Your health during your study abroad experience will depend in large part on the choices you make and precautions that you take prior, during, and following your time overseas. Before your departure, make sure that you are in good health, get any immunizations that are required and learn as much as you can about the health and safety conditions in your host country. Then adjust your behavior so that you can take precautions to protect yourself. An excellent resource is the Center for Disease Control (http://www.cdc.gov/travel/study_abroad.htm)

Checkups

Be sure to have a physical and dental checkup before you go, especially if you will be gone at a time when you would normally schedule these appointments and/or you will be studying in a developing country. This will give you an opportunity to talk with your health care professionals about any general health precautions you need to take or pre-existing conditions you may have. Students that have complicated travel itineraries (e.g. travel to rural areas of developing countries) or have medical problems that will need to be managed while abroad are especially advised to consult a healthcare provider who specializes in travel medicine.

Prescriptions

If you take prescription medicine regularly or expect to take any while abroad, you should try and take a sufficient supply along for your entire stay abroad. Be sure to keep all prescription medications in the original bottles to facilitate clearance through customs and have a copy of the written prescription with the drug's generic – not U.S. brand – name.

If you cannot take an adequate supply of medication with you, then you need to make arrangements prior to your departure. Some countries restrict importation or supply of certain medications that are commonly prescribed in the U.S.; so check with CIE, the consulate, embassy, the study abroad insurance company or the study abroad program. **NOTE: you may need special permission to bring the medication into the country or you may not be able to bring it at all.** If you take such a controlled medication, it will help to bring a copy of your medical records and a letter from your doctor stating the specific ingredients of the drugs in the compound, as well as the amount and length of time you will be taking the medication.

Glasses or Contact lenses

If you wear glasses or contact lenses, take an extra pair with you and the original prescription. Contact wearers may want to consider taking extra bottles of solution as costs for these items overseas can be quite steep.

Immunizations

Check with the Center for Disease Control for the recommended immunizations for the country in which you will be studying: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>

Sexually Transmitted Disease/AIDS/HIV

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (including gonorrhea, genital warts, and herpes), HIV and AIDS are significant problems around the world. While the easiest mode of HIV transmission is through blood contact with someone with HIV, the most common mode of transmission is through sexual intercourse. Since AIDS knows no geographic boundaries, avoiding infection relies on appropriate preventive behaviors. The best advice to avoid exposure to the AIDS virus is to abstain from sexual activity. If you choose to be sexually active while overseas, health professionals recommend the proper use of latex condoms. Information concerning HIV and AIDS prevalence in different countries may be found at the Center for Disease Control website (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>). If you are sexually active, you should consider bringing a supply of condoms.

Illegal Drugs

Since illegal drugs or narcotics may be more available overseas than in the U.S., many people assume that their use is condoned and that drug laws and their enforcement in other countries are more lenient than in the U.S. These assumptions are not true. In most countries, prosecution for the possession, sale, and use of drugs and narcotics by foreigners as well as locals is severe. Aid from the U.S. embassy will be limited to providing a list of local attorneys and contacting a family member in the U.S., then the offender is on his or her own. Do not use illegal drugs or narcotics overseas. If you attend a gathering where people are using drugs, leave.

Medical Kit

Be prepared for minor health problems with a home medical kit. This should include:

- Prescribed medication in original containers, bandages, gauze, and adhesive tape
- sterile cleansers
- antibacterial cream
- painkillers (aspirin or tylenol)
- anti-diarrhea medicine
- sunscreen
- common cold/allergy medicine
- insect repellent (for any warm climate)

HEALTH INSURANCE

All students studying abroad should ensure that they have a health insurance policy specifically designed for study abroad. Generally, the health insurance that you have in the U.S. does not have the special features needed by you while abroad.

All students on Loyola exchange programs will have health insurance through the Lower Agency and should have a card and information prior to their departure. This insurance will be billed through Loyola. For information on the insurance, please visit <http://studyabroad.loyno.edu/?go=HealthInsurance>. Make sure you know how to use the health insurance before you need it. If going through ISEP, you will be required to purchase the ISEP health insurance. Generally, students on other programs will have study abroad insurance through the program. Contact the program sponsor to learn how to use the policy.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

You are encouraged to make arrangements as early as possible. Be sure to disclose any accommodations you may need early in the process. Although overseas programs and universities are becoming more inclusive of students with special needs, the extent to which accommodations can be provided depends on the nature of the needs in addition to accessibility and available services in the host country. The same accommodations may not be available at all overseas locations.

Your acceptance to a program is not influenced by disclosing accommodation needs, and it is to your advantage to be certain that the accommodation you need will be available. You should arrange for any disability accommodations at overseas sites

before you depart. Receiving accommodations once you are abroad will be more difficult and may not be possible. CIE and the Academic Resource Center will be happy to work with you and your study abroad site on this.

Students with learning disabilities should contact your host university or program provider to ensure appropriate accommodations can be made for your academic success abroad. You are also encouraged to discuss your plans to study abroad with CIE or Academic Enrichment.

Students with mobility issues should contact your host university or program provider to ensure appropriate accessibility is available in your host country and on your host campus. Please visit www.miusa.org to learn more about accessibility abroad.

MENTAL HEALTH

Students with mental health needs should contact your host university or program provider prior to departure to ensure counseling and other mental health services are available on your host campus. It is important that you discuss your plans to study abroad with your current therapist.

If you have mental health concerns while abroad, please get in touch with your program coordinator or CIE to discuss options for counseling on-site. The Loyola University Counseling Center is available to you anytime from overseas. You can call the office at 504-865-3835 or email counsel@loyno.edu.

SAFETY: CRIME, VIOLENCE, AND TERRORISM

Most countries in the world have less street crime than exists in the U.S. Indeed, students returning from abroad often report that they never felt safer. This does not mean that there is no crime and that your safety is assured. Being a foreigner and not knowing the rules of local behavior may increase the odds of your becoming the victim of crimes such as fraud, robbery, or theft. Moreover, in some circumstances it is possible that you will get caught in the midst of political strife which may not be directed at you personally, or even at you as a U.S. American, but nevertheless can be very dangerous.

One of the most important factors in your safety abroad is likely to be your behavior. Learn as much as possible about your host country before you go. Safety and security depend to a large degree upon you being well prepared, listening and

heeding the counsel you are given, and remaining vigilant. Read all the information that you receive from your program, particularly about safety conditions and concerns in your host country. Safety information on all countries is available from the U.S. State Department website, <http://travel.state.gov/>. Listen carefully to the information provided in the on-site orientation.

U.S. citizens residing abroad should register with the U.S. Embassy online at <https://step.state.gov/step/>.

A FEW RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR SAFETY

1. **USE COMMON SENSE** – Think before you act. Be aware of your surroundings at all times. Don't wander through unfamiliar areas alone and always remain alert.
2. Don't go out alone at night. Even when you're with friends, stick to well-lit streets where there are a lot of people.
3. Make sure the resident director, host family, or foreign university official who is assigned the responsibility for your welfare always knows where and how to contact you in an emergency. Leave a schedule and itinerary if you are traveling, even if only overnight. Let the program coordinator, your host family or roommate know of any traveling you plan to do.
4. Develop with your family a plan for regular telephone or e-mail contact, so that in times of heightened political tensions you will be able to communicate with your parents directly about your safety and well-being.
5. Always try to travel with at least one other person. If you do decide to travel alone, refer to the section on traveling solo. You will need to take extra precautions.
6. Use caution when walking or jogging. Remember that in some countries, drivers use the left side of the road. In certain areas, drivers may not expect anyone to be running along the road.
7. Remain alert when walking. When crossing streets, keep in mind that pedestrians may not be given the right of way.
8. Be careful with alcohol. If you drink, make sure it is only with people you know and trust, and designate one person to remain sober. As in the United States, never drink and drive. Drunk driving laws abroad are sometimes much more severe than those in the United States.
9. Keep a low profile and try not to make yourself conspicuous by dress, speech

or behavior, in ways that might identify you as a target. Don't attract attention to yourself with provocative or expensive clothing or boisterous conversation in public. Observe local students' behavior and try to mimic it.

10. Use only official taxis. Unless meters are used, agree on the fare before you get in. Know what the appropriate action is if your taxi gets into an accident.
11. Before you travel from your program site, update yourself on your destination and consider postponing a visit to a place if there have been problems there recently. Find out what methods of transportation are safest and whether any roads should be avoided.
12. Protect your passport. Keep it in a secure place and carry a copy with you at all times. Be careful when displaying it. When you travel, use a money belt or waist pouch to carry your passport and credit cards. Wear the pouch under your clothes. Keep a separate record of your credit cards, and passport/visa information in another part of your belongings so that you will have a record if these are lost or stolen and leave a copy with a contact person at home.
13. Have sufficient funds or a credit card on hand to purchase emergency items such as train or airline tickets or to fund hospital stays.
14. In case of an emergency, remain in contact with the on-site staff or the U.S. consulate or your home country consulate.
15. Although your first instinct may be to call home, it is typically easiest and fastest to take care of a situation on site. Please be sure to contact your host university international office or program provider when non-emergency situations arise.
16. Try to visually blend into the host culture by dressing like the locals. Leave particularly U.S. American forms of dress (baseball caps, baggy clothes, running shoes, etc.) in the suitcase or closet.
17. Spend social time with host country nationals rather than with groups of U.S. Americans. Avoid large noisy groups of U.S. Americans that would draw attention. Try visiting local cafes, restaurants, bars and cultural sites rather than gathering at "American style" locations such as fast food restaurants, American named discotheques, bi-national centers, etc.
18. Familiarize yourself with local laws and customs of the countries to which you are traveling. Remember, while in a foreign country, you are subject to their laws!
19. In general, avoid being engulfed in a crowd. This is the preferred environment of pickpockets.

20. Avoid demonstrations or any kind of civil disturbances. Even innocent bystanders can be hurt or arrested.

When walking around Madrid keep an eye on your purse and bags especially in the subway because even though they seem and are pretty safe, bad people notice when you are not Spanish! (A friend had her Ipod and cash stolen without even noticing until she got home.)

Francisco Villanueva, Spain

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO TO PREPARE FOR EMERGENCIES?

1. Be familiar with all materials sent to you by your program or the Center for International Education including the Consular Information Sheets on your host country and Center for Disease Control Travel Information.
2. Know how to use the study abroad health insurance information and keep a copy of the card with you at all times along with the 24/7 assistance phone number, +1-609-452-8570.
3. Make 2 copies of your passport. Leave one with your family and bring one with you on your trip and keep it separately from your passport. While you are traveling, protect your passport. Use a money belt or neck pouch.
4. Keep the program director's and university emergency numbers with you at all times.
5. Learn as much as you can about your country before you go.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF THERE IS AN EMERGENCY?

1. If there is an emergency, you should immediately contact the Program Director or coordinator. His/her responsibility is to make sure that you are safe. The director will be in touch with Loyola and will recommend appropriate steps depending on the situation. Follow the director's instructions.
2. During a political crisis or some other emergency during which foreigners in general or U.S. citizens in particular may be at risk, keep a low profile; avoid demonstrations, confrontations or situations where you could be in danger; avoid behavior that could call attention to yourself; avoid locales where foreigners or U.S. Americans are known to congregate; and take down signs, avoid using luggage tags and wearing clothes that would label you as U.S. Americans.
3. Contact CIE as soon as possible to let us know that you are o.k.

OBEYING THE LAW

Don't make the mistake of assuming that other countries will excuse illegal acts simply because you are a foreigner or a student. Even "minor" infractions, such as exchanging money on the black market or making purchases for foreign friends in hard-currency shops that are off limits for natives, can lead to severe penalties. Breaking a law will, at a minimum, get you dismissed from your study abroad program and possibly deported from your host country or arrested.

U.S. embassies and consulates are able to offer only limited assistance to U.S. visitors who break laws. If you are arrested, they can contact your family and provide you with a list of local attorneys. They can visit you in prison to see that you are being treated humanely. They cannot, however, provide free legal assistance or money for bail. Most importantly, they cannot get you out of jail.

WOMEN ABROAD

Some women students from U.S. campus environments have a hard time adjusting to attitudes they encounter abroad, in both public and private interactions between men and women. In some countries, it is not uncommon for women to be honked at, stared at, verbally and loudly appraised, and to be aggressively addressed in other ways. U.S. women are especially likely to get this treatment, simply because they may look different. The attention can be flattering, especially when it is still a novelty. However, it may soon become very annoying and frustrating. Local women, who often get the same sort of treatment, have learned to ignore it. They know that eye contact between strangers or a smile at someone passing in the street, which is common in the U.S. may result in totally unexpected invitations.

You will have to learn the unwritten rules about what you can and cannot do abroad. Women can provide support for each other, and former students suggest that you get together several times early in your stay to talk about how to deal with the unwanted attention. U.S. women are seen as "liberated" in many ways, and sometimes the cultural misunderstandings that come out of this image can lead to difficult and unpleasant experiences.

Be careful about the messages you may be unintentionally communicating. Appropriate behavior for young women varies from country to country, and even within countries. Some countries have well-defined gender roles, others restrict

certain activities for women. You may find that behavior and dress that are acceptable in major cities are inappropriate in rural areas. Sometimes, though, just the opposite is true, and behavior is more relaxed outside of metropolitan areas.

Observe how local women your age act and dress and try to do likewise. Watch the local women; see how they react to certain situations, by avoiding and turning away unwanted gestures. But if your intuition tells you a situation is dangerous, then act as if it is.

Questions to consider:

- ☐ What is the attitude towards gender in my host country?
- ☐ What are the society's perceptions and expectations for men, women and transgender individuals in my host country (and in the U.S.)?
- ☐ What are the gender stereotypes of U.S. Americans in my host country?
- ☐ Are there differences in political and social power based on gender?
- ☐ How do my personal values compare with my host country's attitudes about socially accepted gender roles?

Review the following online resources to better prepare yourself for the journey ahead. Many uncomfortable situations and misunderstandings can be avoided by preparing yourself and becoming aware of differences in cultures.

<http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/publications/her-own-way>

<http://www.ciee.org/high-school-study-abroad/downloads/school-resources/Women.pdf>

<http://www.journeywoman.com/index.html>

Being a foreigner and a woman you will get a lot of attention so just take note of your surroundings and be aware.

Portia Becker, Mexico City

I experienced some verbal and physical harassment from men because of my gender. They ranged from mild flirtatious comments said by someone in a low voice as I passed him on the street to being groped in dance clubs. My advice to other women going to Latin America is to do what local women seemed to generally do: ignore it. While it may be tempting to react it probably would do no good.

Renee Rivette, Argentina

LGBTQIA ABROAD

Living abroad will open up opportunities to think about LGBTQIA identity in a whole new context. It can represent a second “coming out” and you will need to make decisions about how and when to express your LGBTQIA identity and the support that will be available.

Countries view gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation in many different ways. Some host cultures may be more welcoming and tolerant of LGBTQIA identities than in the US, but others may have laws that criminalize homosexuality. Gender norms vary from country to country as well, and it is important to do research on those prior to departure. Learn the laws of your host country regarding LGBT issues, same-sex sexual behavior and expressions of LGBT identity and community. It is important to remember that you will no longer be protected by US laws once you leave to go abroad. If same-sex acts are illegal in your host country and you are reported for engaging in them, you could be arrested and imprisoned in that country. (See [map of international laws](http://ilga.org) at ilga.org related to homosexuality). Some students have found that their identity was accepted in larger cities but not so much in smaller towns within the same country. Part of your pre-departure preparations should include reflecting on the larger context of acting on your LGBTQ identity while abroad along with researching the laws and attitudes of your host country.

Here are some questions to ask yourself:

- ☐ What role as a visitor do you/should you have in the host culture? Does your right to be LGBTQ in the U.S. conflict with your host country’s religious or cultural values and traditions? How will you reconcile your human rights with the cultural values of your host society?
- ☐ What are the cultural and local attitudes towards Americans, tourists and sexual orientation and gender identity in my host country?
- ☐ What is the attitude of the police towards LGBT visitors?
- ☐ What is the social perception of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people in my host country?
- ☐ How open will I be about my sexual orientation and gender identity with my teachers, peers, friends, host family and others?
- ☐ The LGBT population is often misunderstood by others. To what degree am I comfortable with educating others and dispelling myths?
- ☐ Are there situations in which I would not disclose my sexual orientation?

- ☐ How important is it to me to find other students and friends who share my identity while abroad?
- ☐ How will I make connections with other sexual minority students, local residents, or community organizations?
- ☐ Are there LGBT friendly establishments nearby? How can I find them?
- ☐ What may make the coming out process different in the host country compared to the U.S.?
- ☐ Will I need access to any medications, supplies, or services due to my transgender status? Are they available in my host country? If not, will I need any additional documentation to travel with my medication or supplies?
- ☐ What are the norms and behavioral expectations within the LGTBQ communities in my host country?
- ☐ Will laws and attitudes be the same for different social classes or geographic areas?

For more information, the following websites are good resources:

- ✈ Department of State LGBT Travel Information - http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/lgbt/lgbt_5887.html
- ✈ For information on laws in different countries - International Lesbian, Gay, Trans and Intersex Association – <http://ilga.org>
- ✈ For information on a wide variety of countries based on actual visits, see: <http://www.globalgayz.com/>
- ✈ [Damron \(http://damron.com\)](http://damron.com) offers a searchable online database of worldwide gay and lesbian travel listings, including accommodations, hotels, resorts, bars, nightclubs, and more.

SOLO TRAVEL

If your goal is to really interact with the culture, you are visiting, then solo trips will give you a much greater chance of doing this. While it would be great if you have the opportunity to travel with family or friends, often it is hard to coordinate schedules and interests. Traveling solo can be a very rewarding experience and allows you to meet interesting people, but you should take additional precautions. Two excellent methods for travelers to avoid hassles are to behave and dress in ways that allow one to blend in with the culture and to understand and conform to standards of gender roles in the culture in which one is traveling.

There is a lot you can get out of a solo trip that just doesn't happen when you're not

on your own:

1. **Meet other travelers more easily**-- Solo travelers simply invite company by being there alone. Once you start meeting other travelers, you get a lot of options that you probably wouldn't have had with your traveling companion by your side.
2. **Do what you want, when you want**-- You are your own decision maker. You can plan your day according to your own desires. Avoiding the conflict that often comes with traveling with others is another bonus of the solo trip. Spending virtually all your time with another person, even a good friend, can produce a few sparks of conflict, especially in the sometimes stressful negotiations of budget travel. This can be avoided when traveling on your own.
3. **(Re)ignite your "can do" spirit**-- Traveling alone may lend itself to real moments of clarity that don't occur when traveling with someone else. Making your own choices in a foreign place can give you a "I can do anything" attitude, does wonders for your power of self-reliance and can even boost your self-esteem. Taking responsibility for all the tasks involved in traveling, without having someone else to talk over the possibilities with or to make the decisions for you, is empowering. It's especially powerful if you're navigating through a foreign country, perhaps using some knowledge of a foreign language, and managing to find your way from place to place alone.
4. **But don't travel alone all the time** --Where possible, mix up your travel mode. Travel with friends, family, partners, groups of strangers, etc, but always remember to savor the trips you have the privilege of taking alone.

SOME THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

1. Avoid being out alone at night in unfamiliar territory-on the street, in parks, on trams, or in trains. For example, if you suddenly find yourself alone in a train car, move to another one where others are sitting.
2. Keep a low profile wherever you are. Avoid traveling in large noisy groups.
3. Always carry extra change or a local phone card for emergencies and money for a bus or taxi.
4. Look as if you know where you are going (even when you don't!) and consider approaching shopkeepers, couples or women when asking for directions. Use your own discretion and common sense.
5. Carry a whistle on your key chain to use in an emergency.
6. Do not react to verbal harassment. Seek out the police or passersby for help.
7. Don't take unnecessary risks, but don't lose your sense of adventure either.

8. Think before you act. Be aware of your surroundings at all times. Don't wander through unfamiliar areas alone, and always remain alert.
9. Carry a good book, a journal or postcards and take advantage of evening hours in your hostel or hotel for resting and recording your adventures or sharing with family and friends back home.

Learning to enjoy time by myself. At first it was a bit isolating but once I made myself get out and do things on my own I had a blast.

Dominique Ellis, Scotland

Be independent - willing to go somewhere you've never thought of visiting.

Anthony Ortenzi, Morocco

COMMUNICATIONS

Family and Friends

Please keep your family and friends in the loop about your upcoming experience. We encourage you to share the information from this publication with them so they have an idea of the experience ahead of you. Please leave them your contact details and update them with any new contact information along the way. Also make sure they have our web address, <http://studyabroad.lovno.edu>, and contact information. Establishing a calling/phone schedule with your parents is a good idea because it keeps you in contact and helps lessen your parents' worries.

Phones

Cell phones may be even more common in your host country than in the U.S. You may want to get a cell phone to talk to your new friends in your host country. But remember calling home on your U.S. cell phone can be very expensive.

U.S. cell phones are often locked (restricted) to only work with U.S. cell phone services. Sometime U.S. phones can be unlocked and become compatible with international sim cards, but this service works on only a few phones and can be expensive. The best idea is usually to buy a phone once you arrive in your host country.

When you arrive in your country start looking around and identifying what cell phone companies are offered. Ask around, the locals or your host university international office can give you great advice on which company offers the best service. Pre-paid or pay-as-you-go cell phone service is generally the best plan for study abroad students. You do not want to get tied down and have to deal with the hassle of contracts and plans. Although this varies from country to country, it is very easy to

find pre-paid minutes to add on to your phone anytime you need them. For making phone calls to the U.S., we recommend a VoIP such as Skype or Google Voice. You can download these programs for free and use them to call family and friends in the U.S. through the internet. There is no cost for this service.

Computers

Most former study abroad participants recommend bringing a laptop abroad. E-mail, VoIP (e.g., Skype, Google Voice), social networking websites and blogging are great (and affordable) ways to keep in touch with your family and friends while you are abroad. But bringing your computer along with you is also a significant liability. If you choose to bring your laptop, please make note of the following suggestions:

- ✈ You should make a complete backup of all of the information/software on the computer.
- ✈ Computers should be insured under your family's general household policy or a specialized student insurance policy to the FULL replacement value of the computer, including any peripherals.
- ✈ Check whether your computer has a built in transformer which can handle voltages of 110 (US) to 240, the voltage used in most of the rest of the world. You will also need outlet adapters for any countries where you intend to use your computer.

GREEN STUDY ABROAD

Study abroad is a great opportunity to explore new places, meet and learn about new people, and expand your world view. A not-so-great side effect of study abroad is the environmental impact of your globetrotting. For instance, traveling 2,000 miles in an airplane emits ONE TON of CO₂ per passenger. Not to mention the traveling you will do throughout your semester or year abroad and the souvenirs you will buy to memorialize your time abroad. Instead of visiting every European capital, consider exploring your host country by train, bus or bicycle. You may never have a chance like this again.

We have provided some information to help you understand the environmental consequences of your study abroad experience and make responsible choices at home and abroad to help minimize the negative environmental impact of study abroad.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS as listed in Transitions Abroad, Fall 2006 edition.

- **Learn about current environmental issues** in the places you are visiting. Different regions will have different situations based on their ecosystems. Learn about the effects of mass tourism on beaches, mountains, wetlands, deserts, etc. and then seek to counter those effects.
- **Use accommodations that have a reputation for being sustainable** (they recycle, use alternative forms of energy, are owned by or employ locals, contribute to local causes). Increasingly, there are regional and national certification systems that accommodations can obtain if they are sustainably operated, much like the organic labeling system. Check to see if there are any local certification labels that can help you to determine where to stay. Search the Internet to do this (country name + tourism certification) or inquire with the visitors bureau or local tourism offices.
- **Use water sparingly.** Many communities face water shortages and water usage costs money. Take quick showers.
- **Save electricity.** Turn off lights, air conditioners, and heaters when you are not in the room.
- **Don't litter!** Even if you notice the locals doing so, try to find a container to dispose of your litter. Always recycle if possible.
- **Don't buy products made from endangered species or valuable, historical, or cultural artifacts.** Ask about where a product comes from. Many of these products are illegal to export.
- **Don't disturb the wildlife.** Maintain a proper distance at all times. Don't use loud, motorized equipment among small communities of people or in areas where there is wildlife.
- **Don't pick up and take home natural resources** such as shells, plants, animal bones, etc.
- **If you go camping,** make sure you have any necessary permits and follow local park rules. Pack out what you pack in. Stay on trails.
- **Choose your recreational activities wisely.** Low impact sports that don't involve a lot of equipment or fossil fuels and that don't disturb the environment or local communities are preferable.
- **Use local and public transport whenever possible.** Take a train or bus. Bike or walk. Try to fly less—airplanes produce massive amounts of ozone-depleting carbon dioxide. Think about taking a weekend bike trip instead of flying.
- **Carbon Offsetting.** Consider contributing to an organization involved in carbon offsetting when you fly. They will, in turn, contribute money to worthy organizations that are involved in projects that seek alternative

energy sources, plant trees, etc. in order to reduce the amount of ozone-depleting carbon in the atmosphere, largely caused by air traffic. They will determine how much you need to spend based on the amount of miles you have flown. To purchase carbon offsets, please visit www.nativeenergy.com, www.carbonfund.org, or www.terrapass.com. To learn more about sustainable study abroad and what you can do to help off-set the environmental impact of your upcoming experience please visit <http://www.abroadview.org/green/>.

If you would like to further your commitment to responsible study abroad consider joining The Green Passport http://www.abroadview.org/green/get_passport.htm. The Green Passport recognizes socially and environmentally responsible travel. Acknowledging the interconnectedness of the world's people and the environment, Green Passport holders agree to:

- Minimize their impact on the environment
- Act in culturally respectful ways
- Engage with locals and immerse themselves in the local community
- Give back to their host communities

ADJUSTING TO YOUR HOST COUNTRY

Nearly everyone goes through an adjustment when starting a new job or moving to a new city, so adjusting to a new culture and country is like other transitions, but a little more difficult because of the culture and language differences.

Being able to adjust to your new environment and culture is perhaps one of the most important facets of your experience abroad. Not only will your cross-cultural adjustment help your learning and development in the new country, it will make your international life more rewarding and interesting.

Remember, it is totally normal to experience some challenges and frustrations-the key is to recognize them and make efforts to work through them. There are multiple stages of cultural adjustment and not everyone goes through each of them at the same time or with the same intensity. It is important to remember that these stages may occur repeatedly; however, the intensity will diminish as time goes by.

Stages of Cultural Adjustment

Stage 1- Cultural Euphoria

This is the starting point, both as you prepare for your experience abroad and upon your arrival. Everything is new and exciting. You enjoy the differences you are finding. Although you miss your friends from home, the novelty and excitement of experiencing a new environment outweigh the loss. This stage seems pleasant enough, but there are some drawbacks. You tend to see the culture through rose-colored glasses, and your interpretations aren't necessarily realistic. You also focus more on all the visible aspects of the culture (e.g. food, scenery, clothing) and are ignoring the more complex and less obvious cultural aspects. In addition, you tend to focus on similarities rather than differences in the early stage of the visit.

"The European lifestyle is SO much better than the American lifestyle!"

"Everyone here is so friendly and great"

"I love taking public transportation, the metro is more efficient and cooler"

Stage 2-Cultural Confrontation

At some point after you arrive, the newness wears off and you will feel frustrated. Your feelings can shift from very positive to extremely negative. You may view both the home and host cultures in unrealistic terms, one is superior while the other is lacking. This is because everything that you used to do with relative ease back home appears more difficult due to the culture and/or language. Homesickness may also contribute to your feelings of discomfort. You feel discouraged and begin to doubt whether you can learn the language or adjust to the culture. Despite these feelings, you are making critical progress in expanding your cross-cultural awareness. Whether or not you are aware of it, you are developing your own strategies for coping with cultural differences. There are steps you can take to make a smooth transition through this stage.

"People on the streets are so rude! They bump into me all the time."

"The food here is bad, I want less rice and a slice of decent pizza."

"I could get used to living here. People are so patient and laid back. I wish my life back home were more with the flow."

How to Cope with Stage 2

1. Prepare yourself before you go abroad by reading books about the culture, travel guide books, local magazines or newspapers (look on the web) and meeting people from the country you will be living in.
2. Learn the language, including body language, to help you fit in more easily. Find out about differences in body language, personal space, manners, etc.
3. Create realistic expectations of what your academic and personal experiences will be like while abroad. Write down your goals for what is important to you to get out of the study abroad experience. Discuss these with your professors, CIE staff and resident directors and friends. Don't be afraid to revise your goals as you grow and change.
4. Expect cultural adjustment to happen.
5. Recognize cultural adjustment as a normal process of adjusting to a new culture.
6. Remember that you are not the only one experiencing occasional frustration, irritability, and depression, etc. Going through culture shock, in other words, does not imply the existence of any psychological or emotional shortcomings on your part.
7. Get involved. Join a club, gym, choral group or volunteer for an organization related to your interests or in an area you wish to explore.
8. Don't hide in your room or with a group of U.S. Americans.
9. Make new friends.
10. Take care of yourself – eat healthy, exercise, and get enough rest.
11. Read some of the local newspapers and listen to the radio every day.
12. Keep a journal and write letters to friends and family at home.
13. Make an effort to immerse yourself in the host culture. Repeated efforts pay off. Remember that you are the “new” person.

Things will happen, mistakes will be made one time or many times but that's what makes it all interesting. Everyday is an experience. Expect to make mistakes with the language, the metro, and pretty much everything else. But you will get into a groove and eventually you will be more used to living abroad than in the U.S.

Portia Becker, Mexico City

When you get homesick, because it will probably happen at some point, think of the opportunity that you are having... it's not every day that you

are studying in Europe.

Francisco Villanueva, Spain

Stage 3- Cultural Adjustment and Adaptation

You are starting to feel at home. You feel increasingly comfortable and competent in the culture. You start to look forward to further interactions in the host country and what you can learn throughout the remainder of your experience.

Undergoing difficulty with cultural adjustment is in itself a learning experience and you should take advantage of it. It is a way of sensitizing yourself to another culture at a level that goes beyond the intellectual and rational. Once you have gone through the “uncomfortable” stages of psychological adjustment you will be in a much better position to fully appreciate the cultural differences that exist.

The intensity and process of passing through the stages of cultural adjustment vary depending on the characteristics of the individual, the host country and the program. Some study abroad students may experience few changes while others may be more aware of major differences. One major factor that slows down your adjustment to the new environment is excessive contact with family and friends back home or on the home campus. Constant e-mail and phone contact with friends and family in the U.S. may be reassuring but it will also keep you from learning about a new environment and making new friends. We suggest you limit your communication to a few hours one day a week and spend the rest of the week living your new life.

Try to bond as much as you can with other people besides the ones you are coming with from NOLA and I guarantee you that you'll have a great experience, i.e. I was the only one coming from Loyola this semester so I was forced to bond with the Spanish kids and now I have a bunch of friends and I'm trying to get them to come abroad to LOYNO.

Francisco Villanueva, Spain

If I had known the importance of the [Catalan] language beforehand, I would have at least learned the basics.

Even though it will be very tempting to go out to the places Americans go, try to do what locals do. Go to their bars, parks, etc. There are always wonderful places that may not be so visible to the non-locals. Make an effort to find them and socialize with locals. It will pay off.

Camille Ducos, Spain,

Stage 4: Re-Entry Transition and Returning to Loyola

When you return from your study abroad experience you will be a different person. Your reactions to people and situations at home will be affected by your experience abroad. You will have been exposed to many new ideas, experiences, and independence. Remember the adjustments you experienced while abroad? What happens when you return is known as “reentry.” Immediately after your return, you can probably expect to go through an initial stage of euphoria and excitement.

Most people are overwhelmed by the sheer joy of being on their home turf again. But as you try to settle back into your former routine, you may recognize that your abroad experience has changed many of your perceptions and assumptions, old ways of doing things, even what it means to be yourself. This intellectual and personal growth means that you can expect a period of disorientation as you are adjusting to Loyola, not unlike the experience you had when you first went abroad.

Be prepared for people to ask about your experience but not want to hear all you have learned and want to share. Some people ask and just want to hear your response, “Oh it was amazing” and that is it. This is another good reason to get involved with international groups on campus and other study abroad returnees. Your experience does not have to end with your return to the U.S.

How can you prepare for re-entry?

It is helpful to talk about your challenges with former study abroad program participants and to begin to think about ways you can continue to share and develop your international experiences.

Try to stay in touch with friends you made while abroad. Remembering what it was like for you to have been “for a time” a foreigner should inspire you to try to get to know the international students on campus who may themselves be feeling some of the same social disorientation and alienation you once felt.

Loyola has international clubs and events and a growing international community. Joining clubs and meeting international students and scholars is a wonderful way to continue your international growth upon your return to campus.

Initiating contact with international students, those who have been abroad, and students currently abroad is a good way of readjusting and staying in touch with the international scene.

Here are some additional activities and opportunities to continue your new global vision:

1. Apply to CIE for a work-study position. Non-work study options may also be available.
2. Apply to CIE to be a peer advisor for students interested in studying abroad.
3. Join inBUS and become a mentor or “buddy” for a new international student attending Loyola.
4. Volunteer to staff your study abroad country table at Loyola’s annual country fair.
5. Volunteer as a past participant with CIE. Represent your program at the Study Abroad Info Table, participate in the annual Study Abroad Fair, or serve on the student panel at the pre-departure orientation for the next group of outgoing study abroad participants.
6. Submit your travel photos to the CIE for the annual International Photo Contest.
7. Write about your experiences on the Loyola University New Orleans Study Abroad Facebook page (see the “Discussions” tab).
8. Work or volunteer as a tutor for the Loyola Intensive English Program (LIEP). Contact liep@loyno.edu if interested.
9. Submit original writing you did while abroad or reflections on what you learned or on being back to The Maroon, or travel magazines and websites such as Transitions Abroad, Glimpse, Cafe Abroad or Abroad View.
10. Enroll in courses at Loyola that build upon your overseas experience.

Have another go! There are many ways of ‘returning’ -- if not to the same country, then to another. Perhaps you are seeking volunteer work or teaching opportunities abroad. Maybe you’re qualified for a graduate fellowship, such as a Fulbright, Marshall or Watson. Or maybe you would like to do graduate or professional school work, earning a degree from a university in another country. For information on study and work opportunities abroad, contact CIE or the Career Development Center.

TRAVEL TIPS

Your overseas experience extends beyond the classroom. Students on tight budgets will find more activities, people, and adventures in and near their study sites than they can take advantage of in a semester or year. Students with larger travel budgets may travel widely. For all students we recommend the following:

1. While on study abroad, many students say they lived by their travel guides, so get a complete and updated one.
2. Host Country residents are a great source of information on local sights and festivals. Talk with students about the best places to visit and the cheapest ways to travel. Making friends with host country students frequently results in invitations to homes and visits with families. Make sure to inform your family of your travel plans and it can be a good idea to email them an itinerary if you have one.
3. Traveling during vacation periods can be a fun, but occasionally a costly experience. If you plan to travel during vacation periods remember to plan for the additional costs of this travel.
4. The International Student Identification Card (ISIC) is your official card for obtaining reductions at certain restaurants, theaters, stores, museums, and student lodgings, as well as reduced student fares. This card costs about \$25 but may be worth it in Europe and Australia with all the discounts you will receive. The ISIC card offers proof of student status, is recognized internationally, and can be used as a pre-paid phone card. The ISIC automatically provides you with limited accident and medical insurance outside the U.S. as well as medical evacuation and repatriations coverage. Make sure that your card will not expire before you return to the U.S. It is strongly recommended to obtain the ISIC card before leaving the U.S. The ISIC card can be obtained at any STA Travel Center or on www.isic.org. The site also includes an extensive list of discounts by country.
5. International Youth Hostel membership provides inexpensive lodging while you travel. Membership is available through STA Travel or at www.iyhf.org.
6. Hitchhiking can be dangerous and for this reason you are strongly advised NOT TO hitchhike.
7. Ways to travel in Europe:
 - a. There are a number of rail passes you can get if you are studying abroad

in Europe. The Eurail pass allows for unlimited first-and second-class travel. Eurail Youthpass (Student rail) gives unlimited second-class travel to anyone under the age of 26. Eurail Selectpass is a shorter version of the traditional Eurail pass. Rail passes are most useful if you will be traveling for a long period of time. Once purchased, rail passes must be validated within 6 months. You may want to purchase your EuroRail pass before you depart for your term abroad. Once in Europe, passes can be purchased online but they have to be sent to a U.S. address. This means if you do not buy a pass before going and want to buy one while abroad online, you have to have it sent to your parents'/guardians'/friends' house and then they must send it to you at your foreign address. For more information on rail passes go to www.raileurope.com.

- b. Individual countries also offer special deals for student rail travel. The Inter-Rail pass is available to students who have resided in Europe for 6 months and is split into zones for various regions of Europe. Some students have indicated the Inter- Rail pass is a better bargain than the Eurail pass.
 - c. Air Travel is another alternative for traveling. Some cheap European airlines are:
 - i. www.ryanair.com
 - ii. www.easyjet.com
 - iii. www.brusselsairlines.com
 - iv. www.transavia.com
 - v. www.babybmi.com
 - vi. www.vueling.com
 - vii. www.edreams.com
 - viii. www.pegasus.com
8. U.S. Customs: Become familiar with customs regulations before you leave. The brochure "Know Before you Go" is available at most travel agencies, passport offices, and from the Customs Bureau. Note in particular that personal belongings purchased in the US (cameras, mp3s, computers, etc.) that are not American-made may be subject to duty upon re-entry. Be sure to carry the sales receipt for the item with you.

You will have some kind of culture shock and you will miss home and your friends at some point. But it is so worth it. Not only have I met so many Mexicans but also other students from all over the world (Finland, Norway, France, Australia, Asia, Sweden, Brazil, South Africa, etc.) who are also here to study. You discover so much about yourself and about another culture. Going into the experience with an open mind is the best advice I can give. Simply give everything a chance, from the people to the food, is the best thing to do. Good luck.

Portia Becker, Mexico City