



# Bryant University Study Abroad

*Student Handbook 2019-2020*



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Because Education Should Have No Boundaries

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# Pre-Departure Planning

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## Travel Documents

Proper documentation and identification is required for entry into your destination country and for re-entry into the United States. Each country has its own special requirements for entry based on your citizenship, purpose of visit and length of stay. Find out which requirements pertain to your situation, and plan in advance; obtaining documents from embassies or consulates can take from one hour up to three months. Getting a new passport may take up to six weeks.

**Visa:** A visa is a document, provided by the country to which you will be traveling, which confirms your legitimate status as a foreign student. A visa is generally attached to a passport, so having a passport is necessary before you can apply for a visa. Some visas are free and easy to acquire, while others may cost over \$100 and require a lot of documentation and planning ahead. Check with your program about a visa for your study abroad location, as they will help provide information on obtaining a visa as part of your acceptance packet.

**International students MUST make every effort to obtain their visas in the US before returning home for the summer and/or holidays (depending on when you study abroad).** More and more, international students are being denied visas in their home countries because they are students in an American institution. Therefore, we STRONGLY recommend that F-1/J-1 students obtain their necessary study abroad documentation (visas) before leaving the US.

See the items below as additional items you may need in order to obtain your visa:

1. **Tickets:** As most students will fly to their destination, your plane ticket will serve as your primary travel document. For others, a train or bus ticket may suffice. Some countries will require you to show that you have a return or ongoing flight scheduled within the allotted time for your visa. Student visas can last from one month to one year depending on the country where you will be studying or traveling. If you plan to stay longer, you will need to extend your visa.
  2. **Proof of Sufficient Funds:** Your destination country may also require proof of self-sufficiency while abroad. You may be asked to provide a bank statement with your current balance to show that you have enough money to pay for your needs while abroad without having to ask the country to provide you with monetary assistance.
  3. **Letter of Acceptance:** You may be required to show an official letter of acceptance or invitation to study abroad and this will be provided to you by your program.
  4. **Proof of Insurance:** You should have an insurance card or other document verifying that you have travel and health insurance to cover you for the entire time you will be abroad. If you are studying abroad through a program provider, they will supply you with supplemental health insurance for your time abroad, and typically this is the insurance that your visa official will need to see with your visa paperwork.
  5. **Confirmation of Good Health:** Foreign officials, or your program administrators, may require that a health form or letter of good health (confirmation that you are free from certain diseases, etc.) be provided to obtain a visa.
  6. **Confirmation of Vaccination:** You may also be asked to show proof of having received certain vaccinations to travel in regions with endemic diseases, like cholera, yellow fever, etc.
- **Copies of Travel Documents:** Along with your originals, bring a copy of all travel documents and leave copies of your travel documents with a contact in the United States and abroad. Remember to keep copies in a safe place, separate from where you keep your original documents.
  - **International Student ID Card:** An optional item to purchase before you leave is an International Student ID Card (ISIC), as this can provide discounts, helps verify your travel purposes, and includes a limited amount of insurance and 24-hour assistance. More information available at [www.isic.org](http://www.isic.org).



## Other Important Business to Think about Before You Leave

- **Voting:** Students may want to vote in their home elections while they are abroad (states that do not allow online voter registration must be a registered voter prior to departure). U.S. students can obtain absentee ballots abroad through the U.S. consulate or embassy in their host country. Go to the Secretary of the State website for the state you live in, which will allow you to print out an application for an absentee ballot for the national elections.
- **Power of Attorney:** Getting "power of attorney" is strongly encouraged and allows you to designate a person who would control your assets and other personal information in the event you become unable to do so. Power of attorney makes the person you designate able to withdraw your money, deposit money for you, and write your checks; His or her signature counts as your signature. You and your designated person will need to go to your bank(s) in order to set up this type of power of attorney. A notary public can also set up power of attorney for you so that the individual you designate can control not only your assets, but also other paperwork requiring your signature.
- **Paying Bills:** Credit card bills, cell phone bills, and some debt payments can be paid online through a personal account. Check to see whether or not your credit card company or cell phone carrier offers this billing option if you're still paying by mail. If you can't pay your bills online, consider paying them in advance before you go abroad. You could also leave payments with a trusted, close friend or family member if he or she is willing to send in your payments for you.
- **Registration with the Embassy**  
Before you leave for your host country, register with the U.S. Consulate or Embassy via STEP- "Smart Traveler Enrollment Program"; (if you are not a U.S. citizen, register with the embassy/consulate of your home country). This will make it easier for them to contact you in case of an emergency and to assist you in case you lose your passport, etc. (See "IMPORTANT" section at the bottom of pg. 14)

## Financing Education Abroad

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How much money do you need for your time abroad? It is very difficult to make guidelines - you will spend as much as you take, and your spending habits may be very different from other students going overseas. You will need to bring funds to cover all other expenses including meals, books, local transportation, personal items, snacks, travel and any other incidental expenses. The amount you will need for incidental expenses will depend on your lifestyle as well as local costs. Take a close look at your expenses and prepare a budget for yourself based on the estimated expenses. Be prepared to revise that budget, especially after the first month overseas.

Being aware of the foreign exchange rate is extremely important while budgeting your finances. Helpful websites for currency conversion are

- [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com)
- [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com)

## Budgeting

While abroad, one of the most important tasks you should be mindful of is to **budget your money and expenses**. Studying Abroad is an incredible opportunity to experience all the world has to offer and sometimes money can become an issue. The following are tips to help you control your finances while abroad:

- Keep a daily expense account the first couple of weeks to be able to plan a budget for your entire stay.
- You will spend more money upon arrival than at any other point. **Be prepared.** You do not know where to find the best bargains yet, and the exchange rate will take some getting used to.
- **Focus on what is important to you.** If you know you are going to extensively travel while abroad, make sure that you budget enough money for transportation, lodging, food, etc, for each time that you travel. It would be



wise to plan trips in advance (but AFTER you know what your semester and final exam schedules look like) in order to allocate a portion of your funds just for traveling. Travel, food, and entertainment are going to be your three largest expenses, so spend wisely, and experience as much as possible.

- Below is a sample of a budget worksheet for you to estimate your costs while abroad. Make sure that you over-estimate, rather than under-estimate, your projected costs while abroad.

Daily Needs	Estimated Cost Abroad
Meals, Snacks, Beverages	\$
Laundry	\$
Souvenirs	\$
Entertainment	\$
Emergency money for illness/hospital	\$
Personal Travel	
Train/Air Tickets to/from countries	\$
Hostel/Hotel Reservations for each country	\$
Public Transportation	\$

## Ways to Carry Cash

**Please Note: Avoid bringing large amounts of hard currency!!!**

- **Debit Cards:** A debit card, also known as a check card, is excellent for international travel because it allows you to withdraw money from your bank account in the United States in the currency of the host country. If you have a Visa or MasterCard symbol on your card you may be able to withdraw from any ATM that supports Visa or MasterCard. The transaction debits money from your checking account in that day's exchange rate. Check with your bank regarding transaction fees and make sure your debit card is not just an ATM card. You should also **inform your bank that you will be using your debit/credit card overseas**, so that they know your card has not been stolen when international withdrawals appear on your account. Another good idea is to allow your parent/guardian(s) access to your account, so that they can easily transfer money, if needed.
- **Credit Cards:** Credit cards are great for emergencies, hotels, restaurants, shops, airline tickets, and car rental agencies. However, beware of higher interest charges on outstanding balances because it is easy to get into debt. It is wise to have someone you trust at home responsible for paying your monthly balance because companies will not send bills to international addresses. Also, note that the exchange rate of your purchase will be the exchange rate on the day the transaction is processed. This may be more or less than the rate on the day of purchase.

**It is wise to make copies of your credit card and debit card numbers along with the phone number to call in case of theft (1-800 numbers do not work overseas). Also, you should leave this information with a family member at home.**

## Obtaining Money while Abroad

- **Opening a Bank Account:** It is wise to open a bank account in your host country for convenience. It avoids unnecessary charges and can help to budget your money. Your site director should give you advice about banking during orientation and you should be able to open either a savings or checking account. Before choosing a particular bank, compare in regards to convenient locations, location of ATM's, and charges to maintain an account.
- **Wire Transfers/Bank Drafts:** When opening an account abroad, you may need bank transfers or a bank draft to receive your initial funds. Check with your U.S. bank to get a list of corresponding banks in your host city and what person is authorized to initiate cable transfers. When abroad, contact your U.S. bank by phone or email and you will



receive money approximately within 48 hrs. You will probably incur both cabling charges and an additional commission charge by the host bank. Money can also be wired through American Express or Western Union within 2-5 days and charges will vary.

- **Advances and Check Cashing:** For emergency situations, any bank sponsoring your credit card will allow you to draw funds in foreign currency as a cash advance, often considered a loan; know that you may be limited up to your line of credit. Proper identification is required and be aware that a high interest rate is charged if the loan is not paid off within a month. For larger sums of money a wire transfer may be more appropriate.
- **Financial Responsibilities:** Semester students are paying Bryant University tuition, and are therefore, still responsible for paying your fees on time for the Fall and Spring semesters when Bryant bills you. **If you withdraw from your program, you will be responsible for partial payment or will be assessed a cancellation fee; either of which could be somewhat substantial, depending on the date you withdraw from your program.** Save copies of forms you sign, such as contracts and statements of financial responsibilities from Bryant and your selected program, in case there is any question about what you are required to pay.

## Methods of Communication Abroad

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In this section, you will learn how to communicate better with a program's administration, family, and friends while you are abroad. When looking at a program, see if it has a 24-hour communication contact person both abroad and in the U.S.

### Cell Phones

Cell phones have become less expensive around the world. Although local calls may be inexpensive, international calls may have a high cost. Some unlocked phones that can be used in the United States can also be used while abroad, with the purchase of a country-specific SIM card. If you don't own an unlocked phone, but would like to have a cell phone while studying abroad, you can purchase your own cell phone for anywhere from \$40 to \$300 (prices may change depending on the time of your study abroad program, type of phone being purchased, and location of program). Most cell companies abroad also provide "Pay-As-You-Go" cards, which is ideal for students in short-term programs. Always check with your program first to see if they offer a cell phone option as part of your program to rent during your term abroad.

- Unlocked phone
  - SIM card(s) required (if a student is traveling to other countries and wishes to use their phone, other country SIM cards will need to be purchased based on the countries being traveled to)
  - Text messages cost more than phone calls
  - Incoming calls are generally free to you and charge the caller
  - Phone calls are charged by the minute

### Skype

Skype allows users to make telephone calls over the internet to other Skype users free of charge. With Skype's free software, which works seamlessly with your internet connection, you can chat with free Skype-to-Skype calls and never worry about cost, time or distance. [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com).

- Cheap and easy
- Video and voice – best way to get the full experience of 'being with' family/friends
- Ability to message contacts (like instant messaging), update your status, etc.
- You will need to add credit to your Skype account using:
  - PayPal
  - Debit/Credit Card

Many students use Skype often while abroad – it is a very popular method of communication with family, friends, and closer relationships, but do not forget about:

- Interviewing - Skype is a great tool and cheaper alternative than calling if you are looking to keep up with the internship scene while abroad (recommended!)
  - Skype is much cheaper than calling using landlines or using your cell phone for interviews



- If interviewing on Skype keep in mind to choose a professional environment that is quiet and make sure your profile picture and status are appropriate!

## E-Mail

E-mail is a quick and inexpensive way to keep in touch with family in friends while abroad. Keep in mind that internet access may be slower than what you are used to in the U.S. Additionally, Wi-Fi access may not be as readily available in certain places where you will live, and should be equipped with an Ethernet cable for internet access. Confirmation of this need can be obtained from your program.

## “Snail-Mail”

- Traditional mail is another way to keep in touch – a few possible ways include:
  - Postcards
  - Care packages
  - Handwritten letters
  - Birthday packages/gifts

**\*\*\*Keep in mind: Where do people send you packages...to your address or program’s main office?** You should ask this at the in-country orientation if it is not already covered.

## Social Media

These applications not only allow you to stay up-to-date with friends and family back home, they also allow you to post updates and photos of your time abroad. Keep in mind that certain applications, like Facebook, may not be available in all international locations, and you should not rely on these as the sole means of communication while you are abroad.

## Packing

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Here are some basic guidelines/considerations to follow when starting to pack:

1. **Economy:** Keep in mind you probably *will not* need your three favorite pairs of jeans. *We have not heard of any student who has complained about taking too little.* You are likely to accumulate additional possessions while abroad, so pack light!
2. **Weather:** Keep in mind the climate of your location for the entire time you will be abroad when packing – we suggest you visit [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) for more information.
3. **Travel:** How much traveling will you be doing while abroad? Do you really want to lug around several suitcases? (Probably not!) You should pack a smaller bag (e.g. backpack) for short, weekend trips!

## Luggage Guidelines

Airline limitations and restrictions regarding carry-on luggage will vary from country to country and airline to airline. U.S. Airlines allows for 1 carry-on bag and 1 personal item such as a purse. However, the UK does not allow a personal item, they only allow 1 carry-on per person. Large amounts of liquids and sharp metal objects are also restricted from your carry-on-bag. Liquids are limited to 3 oz containers or less in 1 quart-sized Ziplock bag. The size and weight of your carry-on also may become an issue when connecting flights or traveling from country to country so be aware of all the restrictions you may encounter. It would be wise to check [www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov) for any new restrictions to be aware of before you pack.

Checked luggage is also limited to certain weight restrictions that will vary from place to place. Restrictions regarding the number of bags you have checked and the weight of those bags can be different according to airline and country. The weight limitations can range from 50 (or 22.6796 kg.) and this may become an issue if you connect from an international flight to a domestic flight. A fee is applied according to how many lbs or kilos over the allowed weight your bag is. Please check all of your airline regulations before you go so you will not have to throw away any of the items in your bag.

When packing, keep in mind that you will have to carry your own luggage: **Do not pack more than you can carry and fit in the trunk of a SMALL taxi!** Remember that you may have to get from the airport to public transportation by yourself.



## Carry-on Luggage

In general, there are some very important items you will NOT want to pack in your checked baggage; rather, you will want to have them handy at all times and packed in your carry-on bag:

- Passport
- Visa
- Tickets
- Prescription medicine
- Money (For taxi rides to and from airports, phone calls, emergencies, etc...)
- Other official documentation

You may also want to have a few personal items in your carry-on in order to make your trip more comfortable and enjoyable. Consider including items like a book, a toothbrush/toothpaste and a change of clothes and underwear in case of flight delay/cancellation.

## Checked Baggage



*Less is more.* Although just about everyone will caution you to pack light, packing can be a very personal process. Packing can be especially challenging if you plan to stay abroad for a relatively long time. You want to have as many comforts abroad as you have at home, yet you know you cannot bring everything with you. In addition, part of the reason you are going abroad is to get out of your comfort zone and away from home; therefore, you will have to prepare to make do with fewer things.

Not only does your airline have a baggage limit, but also you will have a space limit at your residence abroad. When you travel, you probably will not want to lug around, or pay to store, all the stuff you've brought with you. You are most likely going to acquire things while traveling, including souvenirs, clothes, gifts, etc... You will need some extra packing space in order to fit in these newly acquired items.

*Do not be a packing procrastinator!* Packing for a semester abroad a couple of hours before your flight just is not a smart idea. Packing takes planning, and you will most likely pack and re-pack a number of times before you are satisfied (and before you can cram everything into your bags so they shut properly!)

## Backpacks

Often, students want to do independent traveling on weekends or holidays. We recommend daypacks for these adventures – a bag big enough for a change of clothes and a few necessities, but small enough that you do not mind toting it around all day. For longer trips, e.g. 1-2 weeks, consider purchasing a larger backpack, as it will be much easier to carry around than a suitcase.

Make sure that your bag is **STURDY!** The best option is a hiking backpack with an internal metal frame for support. You would not want to spill your belonging in the middle of a crowded intersection. (Often, good manufactures offer lifetime warranties on their equipment.) Finally, you may want to purchase **combination locks (so you don't have to worry about keeping track of one or more set(s) of keys to open the locks)** to secure the many compartments on your backpack. Just remember to make note of the combination in secure place!

## The Packing List

### Clothing (the bare minimum)

- 1 light, water-repellent jacket (or raincoat)
- 1 lounge outfit/sweat pants
- 1 bathing suit
- 1 pair of long-underwear (e.g. silk)
- 2 pairs of pajamas (summer & winter)
- 1 pair of jeans
- 1 pair of khakis



- 1 or 2 skirts (men substitute another pair of pants)
- 1 or 2 dresses (men substitute a suit and tie)
- 1 cotton sweater
- 1 dark cardigan sweater/sports coat
- 2 blouses/shirts
- 2 pairs of shorts
- several t-shirts/summer shirts
- 1 weeks worth of socks (also pack hosiery and dress socks)
- 1 weeks worth of underwear
- 1 or 2 belts
- Additional professional clothes for students participating in an internship

### **Shoes**

- 1 pair of dress shoes
- 1 pair of VERY comfortable and broken-in walking/hiking shoes (waterproof preferred)
- 1 pair of casual shoes/loafers
- 1 pair of flip flops/sandals and/or slippers

### **Bath & Toiletries**

- 1 towel
- Deodorant
- Glasses/contacts & contact solution
- 1 toothbrush and toothpaste
- 1 hair brush
- 1 travel size manicure set
- 1 shaver
- Cosmetics
- 1 month of feminine hygiene products
- Small travel size toiletries (optional)

You can purchase most toiletries abroad, but you may not be able to find the same brands you use at home. If you favor a certain brand of toilet article essential to your well-being, take a supply with you. For electrical appliances (hair dryer, iron, etc.), it is best to purchase these items in country, since electrical specifications vary.

### **Accessories**

Accessories help round out a seemingly sparse wardrobe. A belt or scarf adds a lot to an outfit and packs easily. However, do **NOT** pack expensive jewelry or clothes as these will mark you as "wealthy" – an invitation to crooks – and may get lost in your travels.

### **Prescriptions**

Please consult your country-specific program guide for recommendations and warnings about taking prescribed drugs into your host country. Do not forget to pack copies of your prescriptions for medication or glasses/contacts. Bryant's Health Services Office can assist with writing letters for students to give their insurance companies who need to take a full term's supply abroad for additional proof.

### **Miscellaneous**

- Sunglasses
- Journal (even if you don't currently keep one, we highly recommend taking one)
- Language dictionary, phrase book, currency converter (see "Recommended Apps" section below)
- A list of family/friends addresses for sending postcards



- Copies of contact information for academic advisor, credit card companies, hometown banks (for emergency situations)
- Travel alarm clock (battery operated)
- Small flashlight
- Digital camera (one that's NOT part of your phone for taking more quality images abroad)
- Film or memory card (these can be much more expensive abroad)
- Batteries
- Plug converter kit for your country
- Travel guide(s)
- A small sewing kit
- A few packets of Woolite or similar detergent
- A few photos of family and friends
- A few of your favorite recipes (to make for friends or your host family)
- Small gift for your host family

### Recommended Apps to Use While Abroad

- Dictionary
- Translator
- Currency converter (i.e. "Kurrency")
- City Maps (i.e. "City Guides by National Geographic")
- In-city walks
- Transportation App (i.e. for the London Tube or flights around Europe like "EasyJet")

## Coming Home: What to Leave Behind or Donate

There are people in need everywhere in the world. Donation is an excellent way to get rid of items you do not need anymore and ones that will not fit in your suitcase, reduce the costs of having to ship items home, or having to pay for excess baggage. It is easy to find out where to donate your items - ask your program administrator, residence hall/dorm advisor, the local hospital staff or a local resident of the community. Possible donation items include books and school supplies, clothes and shoes, sheets, blankets, towels, umbrellas, kitchenware, and food.

## Expectations of Living Abroad

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Living abroad will be different, and it is crucial for you to start expecting this! Simply anticipating some of the differences ahead of time can help better prepare you for life abroad. The single most important thing to remember is to be flexible. You will no doubt have to adapt to new things you encounter while on your program. You should learn to **expect the unexpected**. Accept the fact that everything will not be the same as it is here in the United States. The following are some very general and basic things to which you are probably accustomed in the United States, but that may be very different overseas:

- **Routines and Schedules:** Your routine will change once you get to your destination. Not only might you be dealing with a time difference upon arrival, but also the locals may have a unique work schedule such as the tradition of taking an afternoon siesta in Spain and Mexico. You may eat lunch and dinner later or earlier than you are accustomed to doing. Shops and stores may be closed earlier than you expect, so you will have to work your routine around those business hours. You will also have to adapt your routine to bus and metro schedules and to your roommates' schedules.
- **Facilities:** Facilities may be modern or rundown, working or out of order, clean or dirty. You take what you get and deal with it. You have to be your own judge of when facilities like hospitals, restaurants, beaches, public transportation, apartments, or even phone booths are in safe, working condition. In many cases, especially in poorer areas of the country, you may have to lower your standards a bit and accept what is available to you. Facilities do not have to be new to be useful or safe.



- **Modern Conveniences:** In foreign supermarkets, you probably will not be able to find certain favorite food items you always eat in the United States. Just because you cannot find something you are looking for does not mean you can't find an appropriate substitute. In fact, it might be an opportunity for you to try a new food you would not have access to in the U.S. You should not expect to find the same foods in restaurants or supermarkets, the same fast food chains or name brand items, the same style or sizes of clothing and shoes, etc. Other modern conveniences like ATM machines, hair dryers, cell-phone reception, Internet hook-ups and microwaves may not be available. In short, if you cannot have or find everything you want; you will have to compromise.
- **Bathrooms and Toilets:** You may very likely find things are different, even in British bathrooms. The idea of a western toilet with a porcelain bowl and a seat is not universal. Bathroom facilities abroad can literally be holes in the floor, outhouses, or non-existent. Bidets (“bid-ays”) are common, especially in Europe. Toilet paper is often not available, or not commonly used. You may always want to carry a pocket pack of tissues with you just in case. Sinks and running water for you to wash your face and hands or brush your teeth may or may not be an option. If sink water is an option, be sure to ask if you can drink it or brush your teeth with it. Showers may also be different, as some cultures prefer to bathe in a tub or other water source instead. Hand-held water sprayers may replace U.S. style fixed showerheads.
- **Co-ed Living:** If you are not comfortable with living with the opposite sex, make sure to make your wishes known before you are assigned housing, or before you place an ad for a roommate. Otherwise, you may be assigned to live in a co-ed dorm, or find that your roommates are of the opposite sex.

## Medical Care and Insurance

ALWAYS consult your program for insurance information and questions related to the supplemental insurance they are providing you with FIRST and FOREMOST. Since it is through them, they will be the BEST source of information on the insurance.

If you are concerned about any health related issues, please consult Health Services before you leave Bryant at the end of the semester before you study abroad at 401-232-6220 or [bhs@bryant.edu](mailto:bhs@bryant.edu). Health Services is **CLOSED** during the winter break and summer months so you should be visiting your regular physician for treatments and prescriptions.



## The Healthy Way to Fly

### In-Flight Hydration and Nutrition

The recirculated air on a plane is filtered with hospital-grade HEPA filters, leaving it bone-dry. The more dehydrated you become, the more likely you are to contract a viral or bacterial infection due to lack of moisture in your membranes. “At minimum you should be drinking eight ounces of water an hour,” advises Amy Joy Lanou, M.D., senior nutrition scientist for the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine. “Take along an empty Nalgene and ask a flight attendant to fill it.” Also, skip the peanuts, pretzels, and chips. To combat muscle soreness and boost hydration, pack a plastic container with fruit and vegetables that are crunchy, and high in potassium, such as cucumbers, cherry tomatoes, and oranges (be sure to eat these before you arrive in-country, as most fresh fruits and vegetables are not allowed through customs). For flight across time zones, eat every hour or two in flight, even if it’s just a snack. Your stomach is used to eating three meals a day and will be confused as you travel across time zones. This is the best way to keep your tummy from getting too confused.

### In-Flight Fitness



“Sitting for a long time is not something the body likes to do,” says New York City-based gym owner David Barton. Barton’s in-flight workout, which requires an easily packed, two foot-long resistance band, focuses on muscles close to your core—the ones least mobile on a long flight. To work the seat-locked lower body, start with the glute extension: Put your heel in the middle of the band, sit up straight with your arms at your sides, and grip the band’s handles. Slowly lift your leg toward your



torso, bending at the knee, and then push straight down. “This creates circulation from your hips to your feet,” Barton says.

For upper back tightness, try the seated row: Place both feet on the middle of the band and grip the handles. Lean forward 45 degrees from the hip and keep your back straight. Without breaking form, slowly draw back your elbows along your sides while squeezing your shoulder blades together. This contracts muscles around the spine, which get stressed when you are seated for extended periods. On flights longer than five hours, Barton recommends doing ten reps of each exercise at least twice.

## Health Conditions and Flying

- Upper respiratory infections: have it treated before flying because it can cause greater health problems if it goes untreated (e.g. severe ear infections). **If you currently have a cold, or develop one in the near future, please see Health Services or your Primary Care Physician for treatment before you leave.**
- Urinary Tract Infections: (for women on their period) do not use a tampon because you will be sitting for a long time and the tampon can drastically increase your chances of getting a bladder infection.
  - Cipro: good for those prone to bladder infections. It is a 3-day prescription that Health Services can give you a prescription for.
- Eye Problems
  - Eye infections: there is no over-the-counter meds for eye infections. Make sure to go to the doctor immediately if this happens. Below are some preventative measures for eye infections.
  - Eye drops: Lower quality of air filtration in plane can dry your eyes and makes you more susceptible to eye infections. Keep your eyes moist with eye drops.
  - Contacts: if you wear these, it is better to wear your glasses if you are on a flight longer than 6 hours.
  - Makeup: it can hold onto bacteria (e.g. mascara, liquid eyeliner). Make sure not to rub your eyes, or put your fingers near your eyes, if you are wearing makeup.
- Dry nose: saline spray is great for a dry nose on a long flight
- Stretching
  - Keep moving and stretching your legs and toes *every hour*.
  - If you are on birth control, stretching is especially important. Staying seated too long can cause deep vein thrombosis, which is a compression of the veins that leads to blood clots. These blood clots will result in serious leg pain.

## Medications and Over-the Counter Meds

- **Over the counter drugs:** most over-the-counter drugs in the U.S. are *not* readily available overseas without a prescription and you should *not* rely on specific medications you normally buy here at home as being an option overseas. *Everyone should pack something that will help with pain (i.e. Aspirin, Advil, Tylenol, or Excedrin).* If you are prone to certain health issues, some things that you should consider taking with you, could include the following:
  - *Allergies:* Benedryl, or an EpiPen for those who have serious, life threatening illness to insects or food allergies (EpiPens are not easily found overseas and this is something that you would need right away if you had an allergic reaction).
  - *Yeast Infections:* Monistat 3-day
  - *Insect bite relief:* After Bite (might be good for those going to Australia/New Zealand).
  - *Athletes Foot:* Lotrimin AF (especially good if you will be traveling in a warm, humid location).
  - *Asthma:* Inhaler (for those who currently have asthma **or who have had it in the past**). Keep in mind that living in a completely different area of the world can leave you more exposed, and possibly susceptible, to a recurrence of asthma.
  - *Easily upset stomach/Acid Indigestion:* Imodium AD (this is very difficult to find overseas)/Malox. Change in food and diet overseas can make you more susceptible to these issues.
  - *Sprains/Strains:* ACE wrap. Good idea to pack for those wearing high heels on cobblestones and hiking enthusiasts.



- **Prescription Medications:** Bring a large enough supply to last you the entire time you are overseas.
  - Check with your insurance provider to see if you can get coverage for the entire semester. Make sure to mention to the insurance company that this is a “Necessary Medication.” Getting coverage can be a lengthy process, so look into it as soon as possible. Also, Health Services or your Primary Care Physician can write letters to the insurance company to help you get the coverage for your medication in advance.
- **Tropical Locations:** Wounds do not heal as quickly in these areas. If you have a wound that has not healed by the time you leave the U.S., clean it only with soap and water. Then use ointment and dress. Don’t use peroxide because it will kill new cell growth.



## Medical Care

- **Reviewing Your Medical History and Needs before Going Abroad:** It is a good idea to have a checkup to know your current medical condition. Your doctor or nurse practitioner can also advise you on what special precautions to take based on your medical history and where you are studying abroad. You may need to go to a special travel health clinic to get clear advice on medical care abroad and what challenges you may face.
- **Special Needs:** If you have any special needs, check with your study abroad program to determine how he/she can best help you. Regulations for accessibility may not be as updated in other countries as they are in the U.S. Check to determine if accommodations like wheelchair ramps are provided in all modes of transportation, and to determine if the housing facilities are equipped to serve people with special needs.
- **Availability of Medical Care:** The type of medical care available will vary from country to country. In some countries it will seem similar to the type of care you find in the U.S. In others, finding an English speaking doctor or appropriate medical facility might be difficult.
- **Support Services for Medical Care:** Ask your program staff about their capability to provide you with medical care assistance. Does this staff speak both the local language and English? Do they have a list of the best available local medical facilities? Also, find out if someone in the staff or administration is trained to handle emergency situations.

## Insurance

- **What Insurance Covers:** Know exactly what is and is not covered by your insurance plan. For example, high-risk sports injuries, dental care, and optical care are sometimes not covered by basic medical insurance. Also, if certain pre-existing conditions are excluded, check on the exact definition of "pre-existing."
- **Insurance Provided By Program Sponsor:** Your program may have included supplemental insurance as part of their program fee and have pre-planned insurance arrangements for their participants. (If you are studying through a program provider.) Be sure to read it thoroughly to see what is covered under the insurance. Some items to look for might include pre-existing conditions, high-risk activities, continuing coverage in the U.S., advance payment vs. reimbursement, 24-hour emergency assistance/help line, family emergencies, and airline/program bankruptcy. Student studying at a direct partner school have to get their own insurance that will cover them while they’re abroad (which may or may not be available for purchase through the school you are attending). If your school does not offer the option to purchase overseas health insurance coverage, you should inquire what types of coverage are needed and in what amounts are required.

## Basic Health and Safety

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The process of wellness starts before you go abroad with a visit to your doctor to get a clean bill of health prior to traveling. You will also learn some tips from your program during its orientation to ensure you drink clean water and eat uncontaminated food.

- **What to Know about Your Country:** Learn all you can about the health and safety issues of the countries you plan to visit. This includes reading about the cultural and political climate of those countries, as well as learning about how



others view people from your country, race, ethnic group, religion, gender and sexual orientation. (See Consular Info Sheet)

- **Physicals and Check-ups:** Get a complete physical, eye exam, and dental check-up before going abroad. The quality of dental and medical care may be different in your country and/or more expensive than similar care would be in the United States.
- **“Can You Drink the Water?”:** Find out if water is safe to drink in the country/ies to which you will be traveling. Purify unsafe water before you drink it. Make sure water bottles come sealed when you buy them. *Remember that ice can also be unsafe, as well as the water you use to brush your teeth.*
- **Food Safety:** Poor refrigeration, undercooked meat, and roadside/outdoor vendors could pose problems related to food contamination. If you get diarrhea or food poisoning, remember to drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated. As with any illness, consider seeing a doctor if your condition worsens. Give your body time to adjust to new types of foods you will be eating. Consider this with food abroad: “boil it, peel it, cook it or forget it!”
- **Laws and Codes of Conduct:** Make yourself aware of both the rules and regulations of the study abroad program sponsor, and the local laws and customs of the countries that you will be visiting. Understand that you will not only have to conform to the legal system of the country you will be visiting, but also obey the codes of conduct required of program participants.
- **Mental and Physical Health:** Consider your own mental and physical health issues when applying for a study abroad program, and make all your necessary health information available to the program’s administrators so they can assist you with any special needs, or advise you on the risks you might face.
- **Prescriptions:** Get a doctor’s signed prescription for any medication you have to bring abroad. Some prescriptions may need to be translated if you wish to fill them abroad. Include your glasses or contact lens prescription. Bring an extra pair of glasses.
- **First-Aid Kit:** Consider a well-stocked first-aid kit as a first line of defense. Some items to include are: sunscreen, bandages, flashlight, sterile pads, insect repellent, adhesive tape, aspirin, antacid, anti-diarrhea tablets, anti-malarial medication, extra bottled water, feminine protection, condoms, rubber gloves, etc.
- **Fitness and Exercise:** Try to get fit in the time you have before departing overseas. A healthy body can help you to fight off illness and recover faster if you do get sick. Get a good pair of comfortable walking shoes and break them in before you intend to wear them abroad. Without access to a car or public transportation abroad, you may have to do quite a bit of walking. Break in your shoes before you go. Also, try to stay fit while abroad, even though it may be harder to follow a structured workout routine.
- **Emergency Contacts:** Keep the program staff and an emergency contact at home well informed of your whereabouts and activities and provide these people with copies of your important travel documents (i.e. passport, visa, plane tickets, debit/credit cards, and prescriptions).
- **Transportation:** Accidents involving in-country travel, whether by air, bus, train, taxi, car, etc., are a major cause of injury to students abroad. It is important to understand what the safe modes of travel are abroad.
  - **Bus:** Since it is the cheapest way to travel (though rather tedious), travel by bus is often a very popular choice for students and travelers. However, since it is so slow, you may prefer to take the train. Often, if you cannot find service to a particular location on national or regional bus lines, local service should be able to take you to your desired destination.
  - **Train/Metro:** Travel by train is usually much faster than by bus, and can be a better option if you want to see more places in a short amount of time. You may want to avoid traveling by train alone at night, particularly in more urban areas. In major cities especially, you will find the metro system (where available) to be the most convenient form of transportation to move about the city, although beware of pickpockets.



- **Air:** Air travel can be a good value compared to a long bus ride. If you know of discount airfare websites, you can find tickets for less than a train ride would be. Especially if road travel is unsafe due to poor road conditions, and if train travel is too slow for your needs, then air travel can be a safe and pleasant option.
- **Alcohol and Drugs:** Use and abuse of alcohol and drugs abroad can increase the risk of accident and injury. Many study abroad accidents and injury are related to the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs abroad. Violating drug laws abroad may result in very serious consequences. In some countries, being found guilty of violating drug laws can result in consequences as serious as death. If behavior warrants university prosecution, then you will be subject to Bryant University policy upon your return.
- **Using internet abroad:** It is not wise to be in an unsecure internet access area while using your private and confidential information online (e.g. using your credit/debit card to book a trip online in an overseas café). This runs you the risk of being exposed to people stealing your information over WiFi networks (just as it would in the U.S.).
- **Setting an Example:** Set a good example. Remember you are like an ambassador for Bryant. Behave in a way that is respectful of others' rights and well-being and encourage others to do the same.

## Helpful Safety and Health Websites

**IMPORTANT:** Students studying abroad for an extended period must **register online with the U.S. consulate** at <https://travelregistration.state.gov>. If you need a VISA for study, then register yourself as a STUDENT (e.g. semester students). If you DO NOT need a VISA for study, then register yourself as a VISITOR (e.g. summer/winter abroad students).

### Students Abroad

"When you go abroad...*go from here!*" This website is a wonderful resource from the U.S. Department of State for students going abroad. It provides students with information on travel documents, health, embassies, emergencies, voting, and news and alerts. <http://www.studentsabroad.state.gov/>

**Country Fact Sheet** is provided to you in your Pre-Departure folder, and contains information about the country (specifically where you are studying abroad) in terms of health conditions, crime, entry requirements, areas of instability, travel warnings on drugs abroad, and location of the nearest embassy or consulate in country, just to name a few topics. This information can be viewed online at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html>, and then entering the country name in the search box on the middle right side of the page, '**Learn about your destination**'.

**Travel Advisories** are Public Announcements issued by the State Department to disseminate information quickly about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term conditions that pose significant risks or disruptions to U.S. citizens. This announcement can be viewed online at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/>

**Travelers' Health**, provided by the CDC, is online at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/destinat.htm>. This website will link you to regional health information about the area of the world to which you will be traveling.

**Crisis Abroad: What the State Department Does:** What can the State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs do for Americans caught in a disaster or a crisis abroad? To learn more about this, go online to <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/emergencies/what-can-you-do-crisis-abroad.html>.

**Medical Information for Americans Traveling Abroad:** If an American citizen becomes seriously ill or injured abroad, a U. S. consular officer can assist in locating appropriate medical services and informing family or friends. More information, as well as a list of emergency service companies, is available at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/your-health-abroad.html>.



# Risk Factors and Strategies to Reduce Risk

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In this section, you will find information on how to avoid being a target of crime. There are helpful tips on how non-verbal communication - like gestures or manner of dress - can help keep you safer. You will also learn how to become more aware of your surroundings. Based on anecdotal information, most of the incidents resulting in injury or death of students while participating in study abroad involve:

- travel/traffic accidents
- use and abuse of drugs or alcohol
- sexual harassment and assault
- crime/petty theft
- mental health issues/stress
- diseases and illnesses that exist in the host country



## Precautions

**When Accepting Food and Drink:** Be cautious about accepting drinks (alcoholic or non-alcoholic) from a stranger. Use the same caution you would have about accepting a drink from a stranger in the United States while you are overseas. Also, be cautious about accepting food from a stranger.

## Risk upon Arrival

Travelers, especially those having just arrived abroad, are often targets of crime and at higher risk of harm, because they:

- Are unfamiliar with their surroundings
- Travel in unmarked taxis
- Might not speak the local language well
- Are clearly recognizable as foreigners
- Have not yet learned the social norms or unwritten rules of conduct
- Are eager to get to know new people and the local culture
- Are naive to the intentions of people around them
- Are carrying all their valuables with them when they first step off the plane, train, or boat

## Keeping In Control

In addition to the circumstances involved with being new in a foreign country, which are often beyond one's immediate control, students can control many situations. Some controllable factors that place students at greatest risk include:

- Being out after midnight
- Being alone at night in an isolated area
- Being in a known high crime area
- Sleeping in an unlocked place
- Being out after a local curfew
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

## Verbal and Non-verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication (like body language and hand gestures) considered harmless in the U.S. might be offensive to people in other countries. The list of gestures and phrases considered rude in other countries are not necessarily obvious.

## Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Keep yourself free from sexually transmitted diseases by using protection (like condoms or abstinence). Also, remember that "no" may not always be interpreted as "no" in other countries. Inform yourself about the types of diseases prevalent in the area in which you are traveling.



## International Sources of Information

Inform yourself as much as possible about your new environment, making use of as many different sources as possible - online, in the library, on television and radio news programs, and in the paper. Do not limit yourself to solely U.S. sources. Instead, contrast the U.S. information with that provided by other countries.



## Understanding Locals

Beyond tuning into yourself, make it a point to try to understand what locals are communicating to you, how they feel about you and about U.S. citizens in general, how you are fitting with their values, and how well you understand them. Obviously, a stronger grasp of the native language will help you with these things, but even knowing a few essential phrases can be immensely beneficial.

## How to Dress

*It is often best to dress conservatively - by local standards, so you cannot be identified on sight as a tourist or a U.S. citizen.*

## Jewelry and Other Valuables

Be cautious with how you display valuables (does it look like you are flaunting wealth?). Leave your good jewelry at home, and keep money in a safe place like a money belt or hidden pouch under your clothes.

## Becoming Aware of Your Surroundings

You should be aware of your surroundings, remembering to:

- Pay attention to what people around you are saying
- Find out which areas of the city are less safe than others
- Know which hours of night are considered more dangerous
- Stay and walk only in well-lit areas
- Avoid being alone in unfamiliar neighborhoods
- Know where to get help (police station, fire station, phones, stores, etc.)
- Do not touch suspicious items like letters or packages mailed to you from someone you don't know
- Know what is "normal" and "not normal" to see on a daily basis in the areas you frequent
- Do not respond to explosions or gunfire by going to a window; seek cover away from windows and exterior walls

## Political Rallies

Avoid political rallies, which can increase tensions and emotions or breed angry mobs for which a U.S. citizen may serve as a scapegoat.

## Political Conversations

Try not to engage in conversations about contentious political issues with locals and avoid retaliating against hostile or bigoted remarks about Americans. Know that locals tend to be more aware and outspoken about politics than Americans.



## Special Issues

### Women

Unwanted attention can range from a mild nuisance to a serious threat of danger. Acceptable treatment of women in your host country may be very different from the kind of treatment acceptable in the United States. In addition, the way women interact with men in the United States may not be as socially acceptable in other countries. What is considered "being friendly" in the United States can be considered flirting or a sexual invitation in other countries. Even reacting (positively or negatively) to un-wanted attention can serve to egg-on the other person. Personal space and boundaries are also different in other countries, so make sure to clearly establish behavior that shows you are not interested.

**In television and movies, the media tends to portray U.S. women as promiscuous.** Simply smiling or saying hello to the opposite sex may be all that is needed to confirm this unflattering stereotype in their minds. To avoid trouble and unwanted attention, ask local women you meet and your program's administrators about what is considered "appropriate" behavior and dress for women. Dressing conservatively and traveling in groups are always safe bets. Although it is important to learn to adapt to a foreign culture, that does not mean you should have to compromise your own sense of security and dignity.

## Minorities (Ethnic and Religious)

You may not be considered an ethnic or religious majority in the United States, but by going abroad you become, in a sense, a minority. There might not be a lot of U.S. students studying in the area you will be, so, in that sense, you are a novelty—



someone new and different who stands out from the locals. In some cases, your outward appearance can also make you stand out, especially if the country's population is very homogeneous. Sometimes the locals' curiosity, interest, ignorance or misunderstanding of you can be unpleasant. If a comment offends you, try to be tactful with your response, or if you are very upset, leave the room. **Remember that cultural and ethnic sensitivity is not as strong abroad as it is in the United States**, and some comments are simply made out of ignorance, not malice.

Political turmoil or lack of tolerance can make some ethnic and religious groups a target for mistreatment or even violence in many countries. Political rallies and certain dates like anniversaries of historic events also often spur ethnic and religious conflicts in many countries. Certain hate crimes may not even be considered crimes in your host country. With regard to religion, the risk or censure you attract depends on your level of religious involvement abroad. If others where you will be studying have been attacked for practicing the religion you practice, any signs of your religious affiliation may put you at risk as well.

Ethnic or religious issues should not be a negative factor of your study abroad experience. That is why it is important to do a little research ahead of time to survey the national sentiment and current events of your host country.

### **Non-heterosexuals**

In some countries, even modern ones, homosexual sex itself can result in severe state-sanctioned punishment up to and including the death penalty. It is usually not homosexuality that brings about such punishments, but rather the sex act itself. You might want to consider how a possible threat of punishment might affect your activities in your host country. Acceptance and tolerance of non-heterosexuals is increasing, but some countries and individuals remain intolerant. Make sure to research the prevailing sentiment toward non-heterosexuals abroad, and laws related to it.

### **Disabled**

Disabled persons abroad can also be the victims of prejudice and stereotyping. People who identify as disabled report being stared at, ignored, un-assisted, and/ or talked down to more frequently abroad than they tend to be in the United States. In many countries, there are no standards or requirements for providing access for the disabled (the American with Disabilities Act, or ADA, is only in the U.S.). Wheelchair ramps, handicapped parking spaces, braille signs, and other aides may be non-existent in parts of your host country, especially in rural areas. In addition to a lack of services provided to the physically disabled, there may also be a lack of services provided to those with a learning disability, those with a psychological or emotional need, or those who are mentally challenged. If you need to make special arrangements abroad, it is a good idea to inquire far in advance. Your program's staff abroad may require some time in order to facilitate your needs. Even though you request that your special needs be met, it may be impossible for your program's staff abroad to assist you.

### **Americans**

The foreign policy of the United States does not always sit well with citizens of foreign countries. In some cases, Americans living abroad can be targets of the frustrations of these individuals. Consider the nature of the political climate and relations between the United States and your destination, as well as the other countries you plan to visit. There are some steps you can take to avoid being targeted for politically motivated crime or anti-U.S. crime in general. **Try to assimilate your style of dress and mannerisms as much as possible into the local norms.** "Dressing like a U.S. citizen" (Jeans, t-shirt, or white tennis shoes), or any way conspicuously different from the local look, makes it easier to identify you as "the other" or an "outsider" and can make you a target. Some **common stereotypes** about Americans portray Americans as loud, inconsiderate, ignorant, rude, rich, arrogant, cheap, greedy, lazy, promiscuous, overweight, English-only speakers, etc. To avoid reinforcing such stereotypes, remember you are like an ambassador of the United States and its culture; as an ambassador abroad, it is your job to respect others and to act responsibly.

## **Foreign Laws—How They Apply to You**

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The U.S. Embassy or Consulate abroad is limited in what it can do to assist you if you should get into legal trouble abroad. As a foreigner in a foreign land, **you are obligated to act in accordance with the foreign law of your host country and any other countries you visit.** Just because something is legal in the United States does not mean it is legal in the country where you will be studying or visiting during your travels.



**If you break local laws while abroad, the U.S. government can do very little to help you.** The U.S. and foreign governments encourage all visitors to their countries to become familiar with local laws before they visit.

**Remember, most students who study abroad wind up breaking the law unintentionally, and alcohol consumption has been associated with law breaking in most cases.**

For more complete information on foreign laws and the legal system of the country to which you will be traveling, visit <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/>.

### **Know the Relevant Laws**

Make sure you know the relevant laws for each country to which you plan to travel. Foreign laws apply to visitors, regardless of the visitor's country of citizenship.

### **Travel Warnings and Consular Information Sheets**

Read the Travel Warning and State Department Consular sheets for information on the legal systems in the countries to which you will be traveling.

### **Embassy or Consulate Assistance**

If you find yourself in legal trouble abroad (for example, arrested), the U.S. Embassy or Consulate (or that of the country where you are a citizen) may only be able to assist you in the following ways:

- Visit you in jail after your arrest
- Give you a list of local attorneys
- Notify your family and friends and relay request for money and other aid
- Intercede with local authorities to help ensure your proper treatment under the law and in accordance with internationally recognized standards
- Protest mistreatment

### **Constitutional Rights**

You cease to be protected by U.S. law and Constitutional rights once you leave the country.

### **Unfair Imprisonment**

If you feel you have been unfairly imprisoned by another country's government, the U.S. State Department can provide some assistance. It may be necessary to hire a local attorney as well.

### **Kidnapping/Terrorism Situations**

If you are kidnapped or taken hostage by a terrorist organization, the U.S. State Department may help negotiate for your release. Check with your insurance provider to see if you can purchase additional hostage, terrorist, or emergency assistance insurance.

## **Student Code of Conduct**

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Students are expected to obey applicable local, state and federal laws as well as the policies of Bryant University, and are not entitled to greater immunity or privilege before the law than that enjoyed by local citizens. As they prize rights and responsibilities for themselves, students are expected to respect the rights and responsibilities of others. For infractions of laws, regulations, policies, and standards, students may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University. Such disciplinary action may be imposed for violations which occur off campus when the violation may have an adverse effect on the educational mission of the University.

**As a study abroad student, you still maintain Bryant University student standing and will therefore remain subject to the policies in our student handbook, with disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University for any infractions of laws, regulations, policies and standards which occur while studying abroad.**



# Crisis Management

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## Things to Do Before a Crisis Occurs

### Emergency Action Plan

The first step in crisis management is being prepared before a crisis occurs. In the event of an emergency, you should have a list of people to call in case you are hurt, along with copies of your insurance papers, passport, and names of any medications to which you are allergic.

Make sure that you **and your family** have a copy of the following information in case of an emergency:

- Your primary emergency contact abroad (this may be your abroad campus/institution's department(s), which maintains emergency contact information for study abroad students, where applicable (such as a school's International Student Office, or the in-country office of your program provider)
- Your Passport
- Housing coordinator abroad/home-stay family member(s)
- Friends or family abroad (both in your host country and in other neighboring countries you may visit)

## What To Do If An Emergency Occurs

### Emergency Procedures

**If an emergency occurs while you are abroad, contact your program first (in country program provider staff, or school's International Students Office if on a direct partner program). Their local staff will be the best people to assist you in an emergency.**

Please call the DPS emergency line at 401-232-6911. DPS will take down your contact information and will relay your situation to a member of the Study Abroad Office, who will return your call.

## A Student's Guide to Studying Abroad

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### Do not be afraid to go alone

Do not be afraid to step outside your comfort zone—going abroad is an experience that is going to change your life and in the end, it is going to be individually rewarding. Also, keep in mind that it is easy to meet new people because many students studying abroad are outgoing and have some sense of ambition/adventure to experience life in a foreign country.

### Expect differences in the classroom

Oftentimes, education outside the U.S. can be more independent which takes self-discipline and patience during the transition phase.

### Take classes about your chosen host country

This will help you learn about the country in which you are living and gain a better understanding of the culture.

### Utilize study abroad staff

They are available through the program provider or directly at institution that you applied to and are more than willing to help!

**Avoid stereotypes and be open-minded as there are different customs throughout the world!**

## Living in a Foreign Country Tips

- Try local food/drink—especially since home comforts may not be there
- Tipping—usually not necessary



- Research the weather to know what clothes to bring
- If needed, buy an adapter to allow you to plug your Bryant laptops into different outlets
- If needed, buy a voltage converter to plug in all other devices (e.g. a digital camera)
- Write in a journal
- Keep brochures/receipts/ticket stubs
- Take lots of pictures!!!
- More tips at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html>

## Traveling Tips

- Safety—1st concern—leave an itinerary with a friend/staff in your host country.
  - Check out travel warnings and advisories at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/>
  - Be aware of public holidays when shops/museums may be closed and traveling will be more expensive
- Be aware of time changes
- When traveling in a foreign country where they do not speak English as their national language, get directions ahead of time to where you need to go in order to avoid miscommunications (e.g. Google Offline Maps)
- Be aware that if you have a map, you'll be identified as a tourist and may be more susceptible to pick pocketing
- **Have a plan:** Knowing a bit about the destination that you are traveling to is helpful. Guidebooks can give a closer look at one city or an overview of every city, as well as helpful hints!
  - Rick Steve's: The Best of Europe: [www.ricksteves.com](http://www.ricksteves.com)
  - Lonely Planet: [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)
  - Let's Go!: [www.letsgo.com](http://www.letsgo.com)
  - Frommer's Guidebooks
  - [www.travelpunk.com](http://www.travelpunk.com)
  - [www.backpackeurope.com/links/](http://www.backpackeurope.com/links/)
  - [www.whichbudget.com](http://www.whichbudget.com)
- **Ask for directions:** Many people throughout the world speak English, although it is important to remember that their English skills may be basic. Be patient/respectful to those who may not speak English well, just as you hope they will be kind to you if you decide to attempt to speak their language. If you are in a foreign speaking local, it is beneficial to know some common phrases & have a map.
- **Hop-on Hop-off bus tours:** A good, inexpensive way to see the major sites. Having a tour guide can be restrictive and hop-on hop-off allows you to choose what you want to do.
- **Public transportation in each city:** A great way to get around. Subways/underground systems = the cheapest. Taxis are pricey but crucial when you are traveling late at night. Be aware of the rates you are charged!
- **Get lost:** As long as you remain safe, this is a way to see the city in a different light. When you go to the main sites, you will see what everyone else who travels there sees. However, if you 'get lost' you can experience a special perspective (more so of everyday life in that culture). One of the best places to experience this is Venice, Italy (an island). Get lost all you want and as long as you do not leave the island, you will eventually find your way back.
- **Enjoy the time:** Study abroad is a once in a lifetime opportunity! You will never be this age again! Read a book in Hyde Park. Watch the sunrise from atop a mountain in Switzerland or watch the sunset from any Australian beach. Finally, people watch—as it is the best way to understand life in each foreign country you visit.
- **Know the currency:** You may get ripped off. This is especially true in cities such as Amsterdam and Prague. While getting out of a taxi, count your change as it is given to you to avoid situations where the taxi may drive off before you have a chance to realize you were not given back the amount you were owed!
- **Stay in hostels:** Especially if you are on a budget! Hostels give accommodation that is affordable with all of the amenities you will need. Most hostels have private rooms (for 2-4 people) and communal rooms (for 8-12 people, or sometimes more). It is something you get accustomed to when traveling. Keep in mind that you will not want to spend much time in your room anyways! The point of traveling is to spend as much time as possible seeing the world! If traveling in Europe, look at ratings of your hostel and read comments on their safety, cleanliness, central location, or



lack thereof ([www.hostelworld.com](http://www.hostelworld.com))! Also, hostelworld lists cheap hotels (sometimes cheaper than hostels) that may be more desirable for privacy and having a room that you can lock your things up in. Hotels can be found at a number of websites ([www.hotels.com](http://www.hotels.com)).

- **Flying:** The quickest way to travel! Use e-tickets for short notice flights. You will receive email confirmation and can print your e-ticket (including confirmation number) directly from your email. Then, all you need at the airport is to present your confirmation number and passport! Cheap tickets can be booked through any of the following websites:
  - [www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com) (Europe)
  - [www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com) (Europe)
  - [www.expedia.com](http://www.expedia.com)
  - [www.statravel.com](http://www.statravel.com) (offices all over the world)
  - [www.travelocity.com](http://www.travelocity.com) (all over the world)
  - [www.cheaptickets.com](http://www.cheaptickets.com) (all over the world)
- **Trains:** European trains allow you to see the countryside, which you might not normally see. In Europe, there is a Eurail Pass which you can pay for online (at [www.eurail.com](http://www.eurail.com)) and then while traveling you just pick up a ticket at each location and pay a small fee each time. *Eurail passes tend to be expensive* so we suggest that you also look into other travel options.
  - [www.eurostar.com](http://www.eurostar.com)
  - [www.raileurope.com](http://www.raileurope.com)
  - [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com)

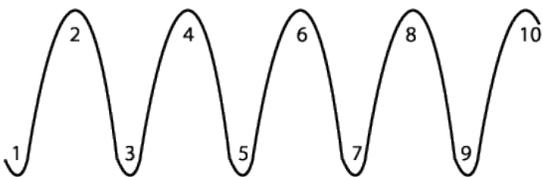
## Adjustments and Culture Shock

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Experiencing new cultures, and obtaining a better understanding of your own culture, can result in some of the most positive, life-altering experiences students have while studying abroad. When going abroad, students will experience differences in manners, beliefs, customs, laws, language, art, religion, values, concept of self, family organization, social organization, government, behavior, etc. All of these elements combine to form your host country's rich and unique culture.

While the introduction to new and foreign cultures greatly benefits students, it can also be overwhelming. The new cultural elements a student encounters abroad may be so different that they seem "shocking" in comparison to cultural norms they are used to at home. As Bruce La Brack writes in his article "The Missing Linkage: The Process of Integrating Orientation and Reentry":

*"Just as you can't really describe the taste of a hot fudge sundae to someone who has never experienced one, it is difficult to actually convey just how disorienting entering another culture can be to a student without any cross-cultural experience."*



### Rhinesmith's Ten Stages of Adjustment

Source: Returning Home, Canadian Bureau for International Education, 1984, p. 7.

Culture shock and its effects can occur in a number of stages, though it is not an exact step-by-step process; every student doesn't experience culture shock the same way or at the same time. The following 10 steps of cultural adjustment outlined by Steven Rhinesmith show how culture shock can be like a roller coaster ride of emotions:

1. initial anxiety
2. initial elation
3. initial culture shock
4. superficial adjustment
5. depression-frustration
6. acceptance of host culture
7. return anxiety



8. return elation
9. re-entry shock
10. reintegration

Riding the roller coaster of culture shock, a student actually follows a natural pattern of hitting peaks and valleys. The high points of excitement and interest are succeeded by lower points of depression, disorientation, or frustration. Each student will experience these ups and downs in different degrees of intensity and for different lengths of time. The process is necessary in order to make the transition from one culture to another; it helps a student or traveler to balance out and adjust.

### **Stages 1 through 5: Exposure to a new culture**

Prior to going abroad, students may be excited about new adventures to come. A student arrives in the host country and perhaps begins to develop increasing independence as he/she starts to experience the local culture or another country's culture. At first, a student's expectations may be too high. He or she may see things almost as a tourist would during the first few weeks in a new country.

A student may be heavily comparing and contrasting his/her home culture with the culture abroad. It is common for students to focus on what they see as weaknesses in foreign cultures. Students tend to point out what a foreign culture lacks; this often leads to feelings of frustration over what is "missing" or what cannot be obtained abroad in the same ways it can be at home. Students may be challenged on a regular basis by different ways of living abroad (banking, eating, relationships, etc.). Negative feelings and frustrations may reach a level where you begin to recognize you are going through "culture shock".

### **Stage 6: Acceptance of a new culture**

As a student gets used to the host country's ways, things that seemed like a "crisis" may now simply be seen as different ways of doing things. Most students gradually adjust their lifestyles to be balanced with a country's own cultural norms. The cultural traits that once annoyed or bothered a student generally come to be accepted as normal. Students usually begin to understand and appreciate the cultural differences between the United States and the host country. However, if significant problems arise, a student may briefly return to the "frustration" stage of culture shock. As a student begins to adapt more and more, he/she may have a new set of friends, may be traveling more, and may even be dreaming in another language. The "other way" may now become the "normal" way of living.

### **Stages 7 through 10: Leaving a new culture behind**

As a student becomes integrated to the ways of the host country's culture, the more difficult it may be to re-adapt to the United States upon return home. The United States just won't look the same way it did before leaving to study abroad; a student may see home with new eyes and may also be more critical of U.S. cultural traditions once thought to be "normal". This is called "reverse culture shock". Fear of experiencing reverse culture shock should not deter students from trying to integrate as fully as possible while abroad. No matter how integrated a student becomes while abroad, he or she will probably still be "shocked" by differences noted at home after so much time spent abroad and the other countries to which you will be traveling. However, over time, a student will learn to re-adapt and reintegrate into his or her home culture.



### **Homesickness**

Homesickness is one of the most common adjustment problems related to culture shock and loneliness.

The following are a few tips to help you cope with feelings of homesickness:

- Do not wait for homesickness to go away by itself. Confront your feelings by talking to someone (a counselor, family member, roommate, or another student, etc.) about your homesickness. Chances are that the other students in your program may be feeling the same way you are.
- Bring some of home along with you.
- Make friends with locals and invite them to spend time with you. Creating a support network can really help to alleviate homesickness while creating lasting friendships.
- Be patient with yourself as you adjust to the unexpected realities of being abroad, and how abroad is not like home.



- Get involved by seeking out opportunities that keep you busy and occupied so that you won't think about home. Try to work, intern, volunteer, or travel.

## Stress

Stress has many definitions. Stress affects everyone differently. The additional/new kinds of stress you may encounter while abroad may lead to anxiety/panic disorders, depression, paranoia, eating disorders, and other phobias. Any mental health challenges you have prior to going abroad may become more severe once you experience the effects of culture shock. Even mental fatigue from constant language immersion and time change may cause the symptoms of culture shock to seem overwhelming.

## Worldwide Concern

The symptoms of cultural adjustment you may experience may be more intense due to the various worldwide events that have taken place in the last couple of decades, such as natural disasters or terrorist related attacks overseas in popular travel destinations. Therefore, any added feelings of panic or fear related to those events can directly affect how well you deal with culture shock. If you feel worldwide concerns are adding to your culture shock, you should seek out family, friends, or program staff/counselors with whom you feel comfortable discussing your concerns, so they can finish your program and not risk money or academic credits from withdrawing after your program has begun.

## Duties and Customs

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No matter the country from which you are departing or entering, it is important to understand airport and airline safety and security, remembering to cooperate with airport, airline and customs officials. Customs control regulations may affect what you can and cannot bring in and out of your host country. Following various events that have taken place since September 11, 2001, US airport and customs security has become much stricter, leading to long waits prior to boarding your plane, body searches, a necessary early arrival time and questions from officials in both countries. Remember to be patient and be honest when answering all officials' questions. The following information from the U.S. Department of State discusses border issues in more depth. For more complete information on border issues, please visit the [U.S. Customs and Border Protections Agency](#).

- **Clearing Customs:** Follow the directions given to you by flight attendants and your program for the process of clearing customs.
- **Declaration Forms:** In most cases, you will be given a card to fill out that will require your passport information, items you have purchased while abroad and are bringing back into the country, and the cost of these items.
- **Receipt of Purchase:** Retain all receipts, or make an itemized list of purchases, prior to customs inspection.
- **Taxes:** If the total cost of your purchases exceeds a certain amount, you will be asked to pay a tax on all items over the allotted amount.
- **Items You Cannot Bring Into the United States:** The following is a general list of items that cannot be brought into the United States:
  1. Fruits, veggies, meats, food, plants, animals (especially those on lists of endangered species), and all live birds, unless you have a valid certificate or license from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
  2. Drugs - even if a drug was legal in your host country or other countries, it may not be legal to bring it back to the United States. If you are carrying prescription drugs, it is important to have your prescription with you for proof.
  3. Firearms, knives, explosives, and gas canisters.
- **Items You Can bring Into the United States:** There are limits on bringing in substances that are not illegal, such as alcohol or tobacco. Check with customs for updates on these legal quantities. **Even if a minor can purchase alcohol and tobacco in your host country or other countries, he or she cannot bring these substances back into the United States if you are not of the legal drinking age here.**



- **Smuggling:** What may be legal abroad may not be legal in the United States, and vice versa. Smuggling can be a federal offense leading to fines or imprisonment.

## Grades, Credits, & Registration

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Once your semester has begun abroad, you have a short window of time to adjust your schedule before no further changes can be made. You have been told from your first meeting and throughout the semester before studying abroad that you are responsible for communicating your final courses to your Bryant country specific advisor. This is to make sure that everything you are enrolled in is approved to transfer back to Bryant. **Students enrolled in any course abroad that has not been pre-approved at Bryant, run the risk of having the course(s) not transfer back for credit. Therefore, if you change your initial schedule to accommodate new courses that are not pre-approved, you are responsible for sending the new course syllabi to your Bryant country-specific advisor for review.** There is no guarantee that your desired courses will be approved for credit if you have not had them pre-approved, hence why you were told early on to work on getting courses approved prior to leaving.

You have also been told several times throughout your study abroad process that **as long as you pass your classes abroad with a “C” or better (as it equates to a C in the U.S.), your overseas course credits will transfer back to Bryant.** However, no matter what grades you receive, ALL of your grades earned abroad will appear on your Bryant transcript. You can ask your program staff what the equivalent grades are in your host country, so you will be prepared for what the grades will be on your transcript when it arrives to Bryant for processing, and not be surprised later.

The grades you earn at your overseas institution will NOT affect your Bryant GPA, with a couple of exceptions: IB students participating in a customized Bryant study abroad program with the early start course taught by a Bryant faculty, and/or completing an international internship overseas during the semester for specific credit (e.g. IB elective). These course grades DO count towards your Bryant GPA, as a Bryant faculty member supervises these courses. Students who are late to join their IB customized course, OR who are asked to leave their internship during their semester abroad risk earning poor/failing grades.

You will register for your following semester Bryant classes while you are abroad (if you’re studying abroad for a semester), and will receive information from the Registrar’s Office, your assigned Academic Advisor, AND the Study Abroad Office about how and what to register for regarding your following semester’s courses. It is important to know that registration information typically is sent out the month prior to when it is scheduled to occur, and not before you leave for your semester abroad. If you have already booked trips that will coincide with your registration time, you are still responsible for registering on time for your necessary courses. Study abroad students (who are not in earlier registration groups like RAs, ROTC, in-season athletes, or the Honors program) are usually provided with an extra block of time to register ahead of your peers who remained at Bryant, and you should refer to their email from the Study Abroad Office.

## Withdrawing from or Deferring Study Abroad

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**Students who need to switch their plans for studying abroad to a different term or not going altogether are responsible to inform the Study Abroad Office and their intended study abroad program ASAP.** After you inform your program of needing to withdraw or defer your plans, **the fees incurred up until then will vary depending on the date the program is informed of your plans, and are your responsibility!** The program sets these fees, and remember that you were advised to check on the program’s withdrawal policy before you applied. It is important to know that the closer you are to the departure date, the more expensive it will be to withdraw or defer.

If you decide you want to withdraw from your program after it has already begun, ***you will be responsible for all semester fees incurred by the program at that time.*** If you withdraw after the program begins, but are still able to add into classes back at Bryant for that semester (based on your date of returning home), you could be responsible for the equivalent of two semesters’ worth of fees. This is because you are responsible for paying the program’s withdrawal fees for covering that semester you just withdrew from AND now also the cost of attending Bryant for the same semester.

