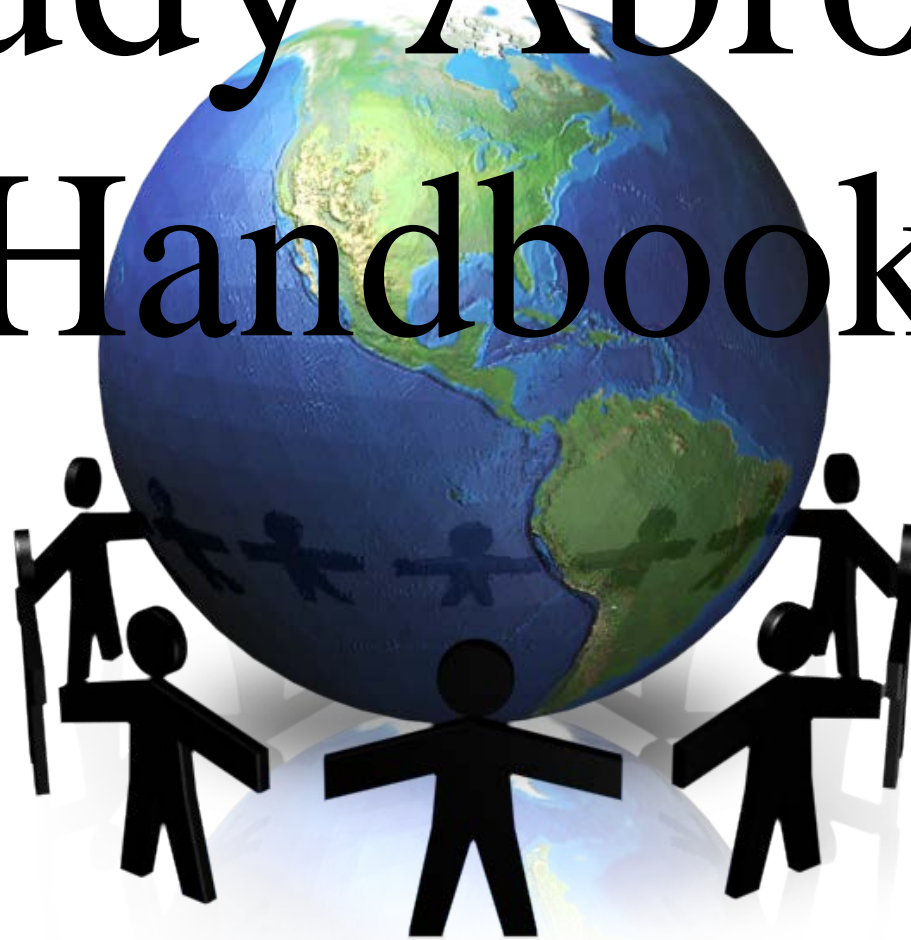


# Study Abroad Handbook



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**STUDY ABROAD PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST**

- Make sure your **passport** is signed and valid until at least six months after your program ends. If you do not have a passport, apply for one immediately. Passport applications are available at: [http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport\\_1738.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html)
- Apply for your **student visa** from host country, if necessary. You should do this as early as possible. Visa applications and requirements are available at: <http://travel.state.gov>
- Attend a mandatory Study Abroad **pre-departure orientation** session.

- Submit to the Study Abroad Office:
  - o Clemson Study Abroad Application
  - o Clemson Recommendation Form
  - o Copy of Clemson Transcript
  - o Completed Foreign University/3<sup>rd</sup> Party Application
  - o Completed Coursework Approval Form
  - o Study Abroad Insurance Form (if applicable)
  - o Copy of Passport
  - o Copy of Visa (if applicable)
  - o Copy of Flight Itinerary
- If you receive **financial aid**, meet with Gail Woods in the financial aid office (864) 656-2280.
- Sign your **FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)** for the next academic year, if necessary. This application **MUST** be signed by the student and not someone to whom you gave power of attorney or parent.
- Provide copies of passport, visa and other travel IDs, itineraries, host contact information, prescriptions, insurance card, and ATM/credit cards to your emergency contact in the U.S.
- Arrange to have your **income taxes** filed, if you will be abroad during tax season.
- If you will be abroad during an **election year** and wish to **vote**, make proper arrangements through your voter registration office. Also, see [www.overseasvotefoundation.org](http://www.overseasvotefoundation.org)
- If you want to **live on-campus upon your return from abroad**, complete a housing application at [www.housing.clemson.edu](http://www.housing.clemson.edu)
- Print a copy of your current DPR (Degree Progress Report) and remember your **CUID number** and **password** for registration for classes the semester you return to CU. Study Abroad students are given the privilege of registering with Seniors, Honor students, Co-op students and Student Athletes, which is the first day of undergraduate student registration.

**CLEMSON UNIVERSITY CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Clemson Police Department**

(+1)-864-656-2222 (after hours)

**Study Abroad Staff**

Study Abroad Office [abroad-L@clemson.edu](mailto:abroad-L@clemson.edu) (+1)-864-656-2457  
 Meredith Wilson [mfant@clemson.edu](mailto:mfant@clemson.edu) (+1)-864-656-0579  
 Laura Braun [braun2@clemson.edu](mailto:braun2@clemson.edu) (+1)-864-656-3670  
 Dr. Uttiyo Raychaudhuri [uttiyo@clemson.edu](mailto:uttiyo@clemson.edu) (+1)-864-656-1753

Main Number: (+1)-864-656-2457

Fax Number: (+1)-864-656-6468

Mailing Address: E-307 Martin Hall, Box 345714  
 Clemson, SC 29634, U.S.A.

Website: <http://www.clemson.edu/IA/>

**Office of Global Engagement**

Dr. Sharon Nagy [snagy@clemson.edu](mailto:snagy@clemson.edu) (+1)-864-656-1455  
 Gloria Freeman [gfrmn@clemson.edu](mailto:gfrmn@clemson.edu) (+1)-864-656-1455  
 Tabitha Blackwell [tabithb@clemson.edu](mailto:tabithb@clemson.edu) (+1)-864-656-2605  
 Lisa Marcus [llynch@clemson.edu](mailto:llynch@clemson.edu) (+1)-864-656-1752

Website: [www.clemson.edu/IA](http://www.clemson.edu/IA)

**It is also VERY important that we have your contact information.**

Once you arrive at your program site, please email the CU Study Abroad Office ([abroad-L@clemson.edu](mailto:abroad-L@clemson.edu)) with the following information:

- your **name**
- your overseas **mailing** address
- your overseas **phone** number

If you move during your study abroad, notify the Study Abroad Office immediately of your new address and phone number.

**BEHAVIOR AND ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS**

**STUDENT CONDUCT**

As a participant in a study abroad program with Clemson University, you are expected to take responsibility for your own actions at all times while studying abroad. You will be held accountable for your behavior and you are expected to abide by the Clemson University Code of Student Conduct, all Study Abroad policies, and the laws and customs that govern the host countries where you will be studying or visiting. Additionally, you are expected to demonstrate respect for yourself and others at all times. These policies exist to ensure a safe, fair, and successful experience for all students participating in study abroad programs. Failure to abide by these policies may result in your dismissal from the study abroad program.

The Clemson University Student Code of Conduct can be found online through the Office of Student Conduct (<http://tinyurl.com/7p3rw6o>). The Code covers many topics, including but not limited to: academic integrity, cheating, plagiarism, disorderly conduct, harassment, hazing, drugs, alcohol, theft, and weapons.

**ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS**

You are an **ambassador of Clemson University** and of U.S. higher education and are expected to represent your institution honorably. We require that you take this responsibility seriously, and encourage you to strive for academic excellence while abroad as you would at Clemson University.

**CLEMSON UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY**

"As members of the Clemson University community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson's vision of this institution as a "high seminary of learning." Fundamental to this vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of others. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form."

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

For students on a direct exchange or 3<sup>rd</sup> party provider program, credit from pre-approved courses passed (C minus or better) will be transferred back to Clemson. This will be transfer credit only, not graded credit, and will not count toward your GPA. Credit for fulfillment of your department (major or minor) requirements will be granted at the discretion of your academic department(s). If you receive any grade lower than the equivalent of a C minus, you will not receive any credit.

The "Request for Approval of Work to be Taken Abroad" form, which you completed as part of your application, serves as preliminary approval for fulfillment of such requirements. The department will review your transcript and academic work upon your return before granting final approval. Only the credit will transfer; grades from your study abroad program will not be recorded in your Clemson University GPA\*.

*If your transcript is issued through a university which is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, your hours and grades will count in the calculation of your LIFE GPR.*

**\*Exceptions:** If you are in a program where you will be enrolled in Clemson courses abroad, your credits will not be treated as transfer credits. Credits and grades will be recorded on your transcript as Clemson University courses and calculated in your Clemson University GPA. This exception applies most frequently with Clemson summer programs, but on a few semester programs as well.

It is also essential that, prior to departure, you get advice from your academic advisor on courses you will need to take upon your return to Clemson. Remember the Study Abroad Advisors are not academic advisors and cannot give course approvals.

## ACADEMICS

When students attend a pre-departure orientation, the Study Abroad Office will register them for the TSAP 101 or SAP 101 class for the term in which they are studying overseas.

This class will ensure the student is enrolled at Clemson while abroad and will be able to register for classes at Clemson for the next term. By being registered in the TSAP 101 or SAP 101 class, the computer system allows students to register for the next term. When the student logs in to (<http://www.registrar.clemson.edu/portal>) to register, the system will still ask for an advising number, but it does not have to be entered. It is waived. The students just have to hit the "submit" button and it will allow them to register.

**\*Exception:** If in Clemson University courses, it is necessary that you obtain your advising number from your academic advisor.

The Study Abroad Office recommends students meet with their advisor and plan the classes they should register for their next term at Clemson. This facilitates registering for Clemson courses while abroad.

## REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF WORK TO BE TAKEN ABROAD FORM

In order for students to get credit for work taken abroad, they must complete the "Request for Approval of Work to be Taken Abroad" form. This can be found on the website ([http://media.clemson.edu/ia/programs/coursework\\_approval\\_for\\_m.pdf](http://media.clemson.edu/ia/programs/coursework_approval_for_m.pdf)). The student is to fill out the biographical information at the top of the form. Then they are to request the approval of courses from their respective departments by meeting with a qualified professor, advisor, or department head. The student is to research possible courses to take at the abroad university and bring the course descriptions to the meeting with the departmental representative. We recommend getting more courses approved than you actually need to take in case courses are not available or if you decide not to take a particular course once you are abroad.

## GRADUATE STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

To have courses considered for transfer, students must have a transcript sent from the institution(s) at which credit was earned to the Enrolled Student Services Office. No more than one-third of the graded coursework required for a master's degree may be transferred from an accredited institution. For the doctoral degree, as many as 48 credit hours of coursework may be transferred. In all cases, the use of transfer credits must be recommended by the student's advisory committee and approved by the department. Under no circumstances will transfer credit be awarded for research, internship, courses graded on a pass/fail basis, or courses in which a grade lower than *B*, or its equivalent, has been received. Grades earned for courses taken at institutions other than Clemson University will not be included in the student's grade-point ratio. Credits may be transferred for work completed at off-campus centers of accredited institutions, provided such courses are acceptable, without reservation, in degree programs at those institutions. No credit will be given for continuing education units, correspondence, extension, or in-service courses or for concentrated courses and workshops that award credit at a rate exceeding one credit per week. All transfer credits must be verified by an official transcript from the institution at which the work was completed. Coursework completed outside the six-year time limit may not be transferred to Clemson University or validated for graduate credit. Valid transfer credits will appear on the student's transcript as credits earned.

Graduate students will also need to fill out the Plan of Study (GS2) form in order to indicate which courses they plan to transfer to Clemson. The form will need to be approved by their graduate committee, Department Chair and College Dean. Once the form has been received, the Graduate School will wait for the official transcript from the foreign institution offering the course to validate the transfer work. The form can be found on the Graduate School web page (under forms & catalog): <http://tinyurl.com/7q93rrp>

## TRANSCRIPTS

It is the student's responsibility to request an official transcript from the overseas institution to be sent to:

Study Abroad Office  
E-307 Martin Hall  
Box 345714  
Clemson, SC 29634 USA

**Be aware that academic calendars abroad may affect the release of financial aid, registration priorities and graduation requirements. The release of academic transcripts and the timelines will vary from country to country.**

## FINANCIAL AID

Those who wish to receive financial aid for course work outside the United States should contact Student Financial Aid at least three months prior to their departure. Gail Woods is the Study Abroad contact at the Financial Aid Office. Her telephone number is (864) 656-2280.

Generally: Federal financial aid is available for approved study abroad programs. Scholarships and campus-based aid can be used for study abroad, however, some restrictions apply. Therefore it is extremely important that you verify availability and use of financial aid with the Financial Aid Office.

Financial aid is disbursed upon verification of the student's enrollment at the overseas institution. Therefore, financial aid is not available in time to pay upfront costs such as advance deposits and plane fares.

When you see the Study Abroad Financial aid officer please bring:

- Information about your program dates
- Estimated cost of attendance (tuition, room, board, airfare, local transportation, etc.)
- Address of the institution

- Name of the contact person
- Other information pertaining to your program

## REFUNDS

For tuition and fees paid to Clemson University, Study Abroad Programs fall under Clemson's return policy. If you are attending a program in which you pay Clemson University tuition, please see refund policy below or at the following link:

<http://www.clemson.edu/receivables/studentaccts.htm>

### REFUND POLICY

The Study Abroad Office abides by the same refund as set by Clemson University for tuition and fees.

#### GENERAL

If you are enrolled less than a full term, you may be eligible for a refund. Students receiving Title IV Financial Aid follow a different policy. If you drop to part time during the refund period, you will be refunded and your status changed automatically. Enrollment in a class ends when you, the teaching department, or Registration Services drop the course using the online registration system. If you withdraw from the University, your enrollment in a class is based on the effective date of the withdrawal.

To be eligible for a refund for a previous term, your request must be received by University Revenue and Receivables prior to the beginning of the next fall/spring semester or subsequent summer term.

### TITLE IV POLICY

Students who receive Title IV Funds (Federal Pell Grant, Federal SEOG, Federal Perkins, Federal Stafford Loans (unsubsidized or subsidized or Federal Plus Loans) and withdraw completely from the University are subject to the Return of Title IV Funds regulations. Students with funds from any of these programs "earn" their financial aid dollars while enrolled. If a student withdraws prior to completing 60% of a term, a pro-rated portion of the federal financial aid dollars must be considered "unearned" and

returned to the federal programs and could cause the students to owe the university a significant amount upon withdrawal.

In addition to the amount of federal aid that Clemson must return, students who received financial aid for other education costs, including off-campus living expenses, may be required to repay a portion of those funds to the federal programs. Failure to return aid due to the federal aid programs will result in loss of eligibility for federal aid assistance.

Federal aid funds to be returned are distributed to the programs in the following order:

- Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loan
- Subsidized Federal Stafford Loan
- Federal Perkins Loan
- Federal Plus Loan
- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal SEOG

Other Title IV Programs

See Title IV Policy refund schedule:

<http://www.clemson.edu/cfo/receivables/sar/refundsfinaid.html>

## TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

### PASSPORTS

A signed valid U.S. passport is required to enter and leave most foreign countries. If you do not already have one, you should apply for a passport immediately, especially if the country where you will be studying requires a visa. You will need a birth certificate, social security number, proof of identity (driver's license) as well as two passport sized photographs as part of the application. Rite Aid, CVS or Walgreens, located in downtown Clemson, have the capability of taking these photos for you. It takes 3 (expedited service) to 8 weeks to get a passport and currently costs \$135 (passport and processing fee.) You can obtain a US passport application and information at major post offices





(including the City of Clemson), some public libraries, and a number of county and municipal offices. You can also obtain them from: <http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/index.html>

If you already have a passport, make sure that it is valid at least six months beyond the last day you will be abroad.

## VISAS

Some countries also require U.S. citizens to obtain a student visa before entering. Check with the embassy of the foreign country that you are planning to visit or your program coordinator for up-to-date visa and other entry requirements. Each country varies widely on the requirements for a student visa and the length of time it takes to acquire the visa. Therefore, you should start looking into this process now as some can take up to two months to process and others require a personal visit to the embassy. You must obtain your passport before you can get a visa. If you already have a passport, make sure that it is valid for at least six months beyond the last day you will be abroad, as this will be required by most countries that require visas.



## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IDENTIFICATION CARDS (ISICs)

As a study abroad student, we suggest that you obtain an International Student Identity Card (ISIC). It is a widely recognized student identification card and it will entitle you to a number of discounts on flights, buses, trains, ferries, as well as at museums, hotels, and youth hostels. You may apply for an ISIC at the Tiger 1 Office located in Fike Recreation Center. The cost of the card is \$22. To see where this card can be used and what discounts you can receive please visit [www.myisic.com](http://www.myisic.com).



## SPECIAL NOTES FOR NON-US CITIZENS

If you are not a U.S. citizen, contact the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) immediately to ensure that you understand immigration requirements and do not jeopardize your residency status by participating in a program abroad. (See <http://uscis.gov>) You will also need to contact the embassy or consulate of your host country to obtain the visa requirements for residents of your country of citizenship. Make sure you bring proper documentation abroad in order to return to the United States after your study abroad.

You can also speak with the Office of Global Engagement, International Student & Scholar Services (864) 656-3614.

Lisa Day, International Services Advisor - [days5@clemson.edu](mailto:days5@clemson.edu)

Tina Rousselot, International Services Advisor - [rrouss@clemson.edu](mailto:rrouss@clemson.edu)

## TRAVEL INFORMATION

Flights: Please do not make flight arrangements until you receive your official acceptance from your Host University, program provider, and/or Clemson University and confirm the required arrival date.

Here are some general tips to consider before buying your tickets:

- We recommend buying a student fare, round-trip ticket with a set return date, and flying into the airport closest to your final destination. Open-ended tickets are usually more expensive than a ticket with a fixed return date.
- Many fares, including student fares, require you to choose a return date, but allow you to change the date for a fee (\$75-\$200). This is usually more economical than an open-ended ticket. Also, some countries may deny entry if you do not show evidence of a return ticket.
- Look carefully at the cost, hassle, and time involved before deciding to fly into an airport that is **NOT** the closest to your final destination simply because it is cheaper. Remember that you will have your entire luggage, and you will likely be tired and jet-lagged.
- Don't assume the first travel agent or website you check is offering the cheapest fare. Different agencies have access to different fares, and prices vary. Shop around; student fares are not available from all agencies.

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

- If you are interested in learning more about traveling during weekend and school breaks, the best resources will be the internet and the people in your host country. Try these websites for student discounts and travel assistance:
  - STA Travel--<http://www.statravel.com/>
  - AESU-- <http://www.aesu.com/>
  - Student Universe--<http://www.studentuniverse.com/>
- You may find helpful information in country-specific guidebooks (Lonely Planet, Fodor's, Rick Steve's, etc.). These resources can provide helpful information about discounts, flights, and train/bus passes, as well as historical and cultural information about locations around the world.
- Because you may not know your specific travel plans before leaving the U.S., some students suggest waiting to purchase tickets, until after you arrive overseas.
- Students traveling before or after their study abroad program are also eligible to purchase an extension on the Clemson University study abroad insurance. The length of insurance can extend to one month past the end of the program date. Note that your Clemson health insurance and your study abroad insurance are SEPARATE policies. One does not substitute for the other.
- We **strongly recommend** you register with the U.S. Embassy in the countries where you will be traveling. You can do so on-line by signing up for Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at: <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>

#### TRAVELING CHEAP

- Many Europeans travel on budget airlines - a concept that is only just starting in the U.S. Beware that these budget tickets are usually nonrefundable and non-changeable. Remember that cheaper airlines often charge for baggage, so pack light! The websites below will be helpful to you when you're planning to fly within or around your host country:
  - SKY SCANNER - [www.skyscanner.net](http://www.skyscanner.net)

- RYANAIR - [www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com)
- VUELING - [www.vueling.com](http://www.vueling.com)
- AER LINGUS - [www.aerlingus.com](http://www.aerlingus.com)
- EASY JET - [www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com)
- WIZZ AIR - [www.wizzair.com](http://www.wizzair.com)

- Always look at the online rating systems on booking websites for accommodations, such as [www.hostelworld.com](http://www.hostelworld.com) and [www.hostelbookers.com](http://www.hostelbookers.com), before booking.
- The best expert on cheap travel within and around your country is always a past participant - try asking someone who has been on your program in the past.
- It's generally cheaper to use local transportation such as buses and the metro, rather than renting a car or taking a taxi. If you are able, walk or bike to explore the city.
- E-mail everyone you know, including friends of friends, living in that country/area. They would love to show you how the locals spend their time, and you get to sleep for free!

#### PACKING

##### LUGGAGE

Don't take more luggage than you can carry. You should be able to maneuver comfortably through airports and train stations with your bags. Check with the airline (of your originating flight and any connecting flights) to find restrictions on size, weight, and number of bags permitted.

Whatever combination of luggage you choose (suitcase, backpack, duffel, carry-on, etc.), all baggage should be sturdy, and able to withstand the bumps and bruises of air, bus, and train travel. Label all baggage inside and out with your name and permanent address contact information.

Learn about the customs and security procedures of the airports where you will be traveling, and be respectful. It is not unusual for customs and immigration officers to ask detailed questions or search luggage.

##### GENERAL TIPS:



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

- Pack as lightly as possible. Experienced travelers recommend you pack your luggage, remove half of the contents, reevaluate, and remove half again.
- Do not take more than you are willing and able to carry on your own. Don't assume that wheeled carts and escalators will always be available.
- Leave valuable or sentimental items (such as expensive jewelry or electronics) at home. If you can't live without an item (iPod, laptop, etc.), consider registering with U.S. Customs to avoid paying duty on it when you return.
- Pack all of your important documents (passport, tickets, prescriptions, contact information, etc.) in your carry-on bag. You might also want to pack some basics (shirt, change of underwear, toothbrush, and toiletries) in your carry-on in case your luggage is delayed or lost.
- Be sure to pack photocopies of your important documents (passport, visa, prescriptions, etc.) in your checked luggage.
- Consider taking clothes that can be layered for warmth, as homes and residence halls abroad are often not kept as warm during winter as buildings in the U.S.
- Laundry equipment and detergents abroad may be more expensive and harsher on your clothes, and some countries do not use dryers. Try to bring sturdy clothes in fabrics that are easy to wash and dry. Anything that needs to be dry-cleaned should be left at home.
- Pack clothes that can be mixed and matched, instead of bringing several individual outfits.
- Make sure you understand your host country's standards of modesty and/or neatness in dress. In some countries, students dress more formally than American students typically do, and shorts and sweats may be strictly for use at the gym or beach. Some tourist sites (such as churches) may not allow visitors to enter wearing shorts or sleeveless shirts. Some upscale clubs may not allow you to enter wearing tennis shoes or t-shirts.
- Electrical currents and sockets are not the same around the world. Look to see if your appliances have wattage settings that can be adjusted. If so, you will still need to purchase

electrical converters (plug adapters). If not, you will need to purchase a plug adapter and power converter. You may want to consider buying these items in your host country or bring battery-operated appliances when possible. If you want to bring them home, purchase an electrical converter in your host country.

- Most universities abroad will provide computer access for their students. While some students take their laptop computers abroad for convenience, others choose to leave them at home to avoid the chances of damage/loss, or the extra weight it adds to their luggage. If you do plan to take your laptop make sure it is covered under a homeowner's or renter's policy for loss or damage.
- Allow room for the personal purchases, gifts, and other things you may acquire while abroad. Barring any baggage restrictions, consider packing a small, empty duffel bag in your luggage or buying a small bag overseas to allow for extra items on your return. Or take old items (towels, t-shirts, etc.) that you can throw or give away at the end of the semester.

#### **PACKING LIST**

**BASIC Rule of Thumb: LESS IS MORE!!!**

##### Essentials:

- Passport
- Visa
- Other forms of ID
- Airline tickets
- Money (~\$100 cash in foreign currency)
- ATM and credit cards
- Prescriptions
- Photocopies of all documents, prescriptions, etc.
- Emergency contact information
- Insurance card & claim form
- Study Abroad Pre-Departure Handbook

##### Helpful Items:

- Flash Drive
- Toiletries -Consider taking only travel-size items and purchasing more overseas.

- Extra glasses, contact lenses/solutions
- Clothes that can be mixed/matches/layered
- All-purpose, waterproof walking shoes
- Rain jacket/umbrella and swimsuit
- One set of "nice" clothes for special occasions
- Guidebook for host country
- Foreign-language dictionary
- Camera, film/memory card, batteries/charger
- Immunization/health record
- ISIC (international student ID)
- Small first aid kit
- Money belt/pouch
- Travel towel/washcloth
- Small unwrapped gift for host family
- Pictures of friends/family

If you plan to travel extensively while abroad:

- Day bag or backpack for day trips
- Small lock for your bag and hostel lockers
- Small flashlight and Swiss Army knife (*not in carry-on*)
- Moist towelettes/anti-bacterial hand gel
- Sleeping bag

**HEALTH**

**IMMUNIZATIONS AND VACCINATIONS**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is recognized as the lead federal agency for promoting, preventing and controlling disease, injury and disability. The CDC's website (<http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx>) has a Traveler's Health section that you should consult prior to departure. This site will also help you determine, with your doctors' guidance, the immunizations required and suggested for the area(s) where you plan to travel. Because some inoculations require a series of medical visits over the course of several months, prior to you entering your host country, you should begin investigating this matter as soon as possible.

For more information regarding immunizations, contact Passport Health at 1(888) 499-7277. Passport Health has offices in Greenville, Spartanburg and Anderson.

**AVIAN FLU AND INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL**

Clemson University, along with many other institutions and agencies across the country, is developing plans to address the possibility of an outbreak of avian flu leading to a pandemic flu outbreak. Asian bird flu has not been found in the United States; however, it has been found in a few foreign countries and has received worldwide attention. We take this situation seriously and are following recommended protocols for students' safe participation in study abroad programs. At present the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have not issued any travel warnings with regard to avian flu.

Avian influenza is also known as H5N1 and bird flu. It is an infectious disease caused by viruses that infect birds, and less commonly, pigs. It is present in the droppings of birds, especially chickens. Sporadic human cases have occurred after direct contact with poultry. The risk to travelers is small, but it is important to avoid poultry farms and live animal markets. Well-cooked chicken is safe to eat. See the handout included with this pre-departure packet on "Avian Flu and International Travel."

More information is also available through the CDC website: <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx>

**MEDICAL ISSUES**

Good physical health and emotional stability are very important to your academic performance and successful study abroad experience. If you haven't had one recently, you should have a general physical exam, a dental check up, and a gynecological visit (for women) before leaving. You should be up to date on all shots and get the relevant booster(s), if needed. You should also check with your physician regarding appropriate immunizations for the countries you plan to visit.

If you have a health condition or other circumstances which require special attention, you should inform your program about any

special study or living requirements you may have, so that steps can be taken to meet your needs.

## MEDICATION

If you take prescription medicine, make sure to speak with your doctors about how you can continue taking your medication while abroad. Prescription medications vary from country to country in name, potency, and purity and may NOT be sent through international mail. In fact, some drugs that are legal in the U.S. may not be legal in other countries. You and your doctors may decide you should take with you sufficient medications to last the whole time you are abroad; however, there may be a limit on the amount of medication that can be brought into the country where you are studying. If you think a prescription will have to be refilled during your stay abroad, make sure your doctor includes on the prescription the chemical composition and generic name of your medication because brand names can be different overseas. You will then need to see a local doctor for further prescriptions in your host country.

If you need specific over-the-counter medications, take these with you as they may not be available abroad. However, you may find substitutes in other brand names. It is wise to take some aspirin type medicine and some antacid.

**All medication MUST be kept in their original container(s)! When traveling, carry all of your medication in your carry-on bags (NOT in your checked luggage).**

If you wear glasses or contacts, you should bring a typed copy of your prescription as well as an extra pair of glasses or contacts.

## FOOD & WATER SAFETY

Learning to appreciate the food preferences in your host country may take some time. More importantly, you must know which foods are safe to eat. Cooking preparation procedures may not be up to the health standards of the U.S. and could cause food-related sickness. Do not eat foods that appear to be undercooked or that have not been properly refrigerated. Observe what locals eat and ask questions. Use common sense but explore. Eat what you are

comfortable with and check out travel guides for food sections and information on tipping. Be prepared to have to eat at different times than you are used to eating. Most countries eat healthier and smaller portions than Americans.

Water may also present a health issue in some countries. You should choose bottled water over tap water. You should also be wary of ice in drinks as it will most likely be made from the local tap water. Your on-site orientation should provide further tips on which local food and water options are the safest. Don't be surprised by more people drinking alcohol. Abroad the drinking age is different but again be smart and use common sense. Some drinks like beer are stronger and served in greater portions. Binge drinking is typically not seen abroad.

## DIETARY NEEDS

Your special dietary needs or restrictions may bring about some difficulties while abroad, but if proper action is taken, accommodations can be made. Research the culture and customs of the country in which you will be living to find more specific information regarding typical eating habits. Many guidebooks include restaurant information and shopping tips for vegetarians or individuals with other special dietary needs. If you are living with a host family, you will most likely be eating the meals they provide. While some families will do their best to meet your needs, you must realize that they should not alter their routines or traditions for you.

When filling out your housing forms, be sure to be as specific as possible when requesting a housing situation and provide all dietary information on the forms. If you have a serious health issue or allergy, be sure to learn the translation or carry a written version with you to present to waiters to avoid confusion.

Dietary Card: [www.dietarycard.com](http://www.dietarycard.com)

Vegetarian Restaurants: [www.happycow.net](http://www.happycow.net); [www.veg dining.com](http://www.veg dining.com)

## STAYING HEALTHY WHILE TRAVELING

Follow these easy tips to ensure that you will be healthy during your travels:

- Wash hands frequently
- Avoid unwashed fruits and vegetables
- Avoid swimming in fresh water that could harbor disease
- Only drink tap water you know is safe
- Be careful about dairy products

World Health Organization: [www.who.int/ith](http://www.who.int/ith)  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)

## DISABILITIES

Clemson University encourages all students to consider participation in study abroad. Because U.S. laws and regulations related to disabilities generally do not extend beyond this country's borders, and because study abroad sites vary greatly regarding their capacity for accommodation, you should make use of all campus resources to research appropriate programs and services available abroad.

If you need to request adapted accommodation for your disability at your program site, you must talk to Clemson University's Disabilities Services Office about what kinds of accommodations you should request and how you go about making that request. Prior to or upon arrival you should speak with a disabilities contact at your program site about your request. Prior planning is key to working with disabilities abroad.

**Student Disability Services**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of Class of '56 Academic Success Center  
Clemson, South Carolina 29634-5126  
864.656.6452 - [asc@clemson.edu](mailto:asc@clemson.edu)

**Waiting to disclose until after classes begin may result in you forfeiting the accommodation you need.** Because most programs require documented proof of disability, you should bring with you to the program site a full copy of your disabilities documentation. It is also recommended to send disability services requests to program providers well in advance of arrival to the program. There are many excellent resources available to students with disabilities who are interested in studying abroad. Two are listed here:

**Mobility International USA**, [www.miusa.org](http://www.miusa.org)

MIUSA, along with the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States Department of State, manages the National Clearinghouse of Disability and Exchange. MIUSA publishes books and other resources, many of which are free for you to download from its website. Publications include "A World Awaits You: A Journal of Success in International Exchange" and "Survival Strategies for Going Abroad: A Guide for People with Disabilities."

**Access Abroad:** <http://tinyurl.com/accessabroad>

The Access Abroad website is devoted to making existing international opportunities accessible to college students with all types of disabilities, in accordance with ADA regulations, and was developed by the University of Minnesota. This site has resources for students with disabilities, descriptions of typical accommodations for a variety of disabilities, and summaries of accommodations available in other countries.

An individual with a visible disability should expect to experience unwanted attention. Do not try to be too independent. We expect you to grow individually but you should realize that people are there to help you and assistance may be needed for you to explore the wonders of the world. Be realistic about your explorations and the challenges that may present themselves.

## INSURANCE

Your health and safety are our top priority. In order to insure that you have appropriate coverage, the Office of Study Abroad has contracted with CISI for study abroad insurance. All Clemson University students are required to enroll in CISI study abroad insurance for the duration of their program abroad.

For all students traveling to Germany or Australia, you are required to purchase an in-country health plan. Our Risk Management department has reviewed their policy and have found it inadequate by Clemson University standards, thus we **require** that you purchase Clemson insurance in addition to the required in-country health insurance that you will purchase for your host country.

The CISI policy is approximately \$36.00 a month. A month is measured as one calendar month + 5 additional days. Anything over will equal an additional one month of coverage.

*Example:* May 1 to June 1 = 1 month of coverage  
May 1 to June 6 = 1 month of coverage  
May 1 to June 7 = 2 months of coverage

Again, **study abroad insurance coverage is mandatory**. Please fill out the CISI Insurance form and provide us with the following information:

- CUID
- First Name
- Last Name
- Program/University
- Destination Country
- Exact Departure Date
- Exact Return Date
- Months of Coverage (*see formula above*)
- Date of Birth
- Gender
- Country of Citizenship

Please see CISI insurance policy for an exact listing of what is covered:

[http://media.clemson.edu/ia/programs/study\\_abroad\\_insurance.pdf](http://media.clemson.edu/ia/programs/study_abroad_insurance.pdf)

### SAFETY

Most U.S. citizens who go abroad encounter no vast differences in safety or crime. However, no place in the world is completely without risk, and you should use simple precautions to improve your chances of staying safe, healthy, and happy while abroad.

In this handbook and at the Pre-Departure Orientation, we will address general health and safety, along with emergency procedures. It will be important for you to use common sense and remember: if it is not something you would do at home, do not do it abroad. Be open to new experiences, but keep your wits about you. For general safety, learn from the locals, but also follow some basic guidelines. We suggest that you spend the first few days abroad orienting yourself to your new environment. Attend your host university's on-site orientation, learn which neighborhoods should be avoided, learn the transport system, and observe social

cues such as appropriate dress and language. Realize you are going to be a representative of the U.S. regardless of if you want to or not. Use caution with drugs, alcohol and sex. Ask the Onsite Coordinator about natural phenomenon of the area, environmental and natural hazards, norms of cultural dress and behavior and about individuals that can be trusted.

### SAFETY TIPS:

- Act like you know where you are going and what you are doing. If you are lost or need to check a map, step into a café or other business, but be aware of your surroundings and your belongings.
- Backpacks, purses, and camera bags can be a target. Wear them snug to your body and keep them closed. Carry your wallet in your front pocket rather than back. If confronted, give up your valuables. Do **NOT** resist or fight attackers.
- Don't carry large amounts of cash, and don't carry all of your money and documents in one bag.
- Be alert in crowds, especially in train stations or at tourist attractions. Thieves may use distractions to their advantage.
- Don't carry your passport unless you absolutely need it or are crossing international borders. A photocopy of your passport will probably suffice for everyday use.
- Check the security of a hotel or hostel before booking a room by making sure your items can be secured in a safe or locker. A few extra dollars saved on cheap accommodations will not cover the replacement costs of a passport, camera, etc.
- When traveling at night by bus or train, attach your bag to the luggage rack or your seat by using a lock or strap from the bag.
- Do not take valuable items with you overseas, such as expensive jewelry, electronics, etc. They may get lost, stolen, or damaged while traveling.
- Don't travel alone. Stay in public places, travel with a friend, and always let someone know where you are.
- Stay informed about developments in your host country and around the world. Read the U.S. Department of State travel information at: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) if, the U.S. decides to launch military or diplomatic action, you will immediately become a representative of your country. If your destination is



having political or military demonstrations or attacks, stay away from all sites of such activity.

- Talk to students, faculty, and others who have visited or lived in the areas where you will be traveling. You will be able to discuss this with other students and Study Abroad Office staff at the orientation.
- Stay in contact with your parents and your emergency contact. Make sure they have up to date information about you.

## Sex

Being in a new situation, meeting new, exciting and different people may prompt sexual behavior you would not have taken part of in the US. Think before you act! If you choose to be sexually active, practice safe sex and protect yourself and your partners. Realize that STDs and AIDS exist around the globe and are, in some cases more common and widespread than in the U.S. Stay safe and make sure you know the individual. Do not try to prove anything or think that because you are in a different place you are immune. Also, some cultures strongly disapprove of sex before marriage and will treat individuals who engage in that activity differently.

**A NOTE TO WOMEN:** American women are almost universally perceived as having lower sexual inhibitions “easy”. Be aware that wearing revealing clothing may cause some unwanted and unexpected attention. Think before you act and refer to your advisors and peers at your host institution about advice on this matter. For example, if studying abroad in Africa, a woman should not ask a man for directions. If at any time you feel like you are in an uncomfortable situation, please notify your program coordinators immediately.

## Alcohol and Drugs

As with sex please use caution if you use alcohol or drugs. We strongly recommend you do neither of these things but we cannot control you overseas. Drugs are illegal and dangerous anywhere and will get you put in jail. Be aware that the U.S. cannot get you out of jail on drug charges and you will be subject to the laws of country you are in. Jails are not like the U.S. and many countries

have stricter alcohol and drug laws. Be wary of drug dealers who pose as tour guides only to take advantage of you. Mainly if you would not think about using alcohol or drugs at home then **DO NOT USE THEM ABROAD!** What locals do with alcohol and drugs is their culture not yours. Realize your capabilities and surroundings.

## REGISTRATION WITH THE U.S. EMBASSY OR CONSULATE

Americans living abroad can register with their nearest embassy or consulate through the U.S. State Department’s website. By doing so, you will receive updated information on travel and security within the country to which you are heading. You also make it easier for the U.S. embassy (and your family) to locate you in case of emergency or disaster. To register, go to:

<https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/>

Other services provided by U.S. consular officers are the following:

- Replacing your passport (this may take a few of days)
- Helping you to find medical assistance
- Helping you to get funds
- Helping you in an emergency
- Visiting you in (but not getting you out of) jail
- Helping in a disaster/evacuation
- Assisting with absentee voting
- Also see the US State Department’s tips for traveling abroad at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)

## IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY

Each program has an on-site person whom you can contact for any emergency. It may be a program director or someone in the local International Office. Find out who that emergency contact is before you need them because emergencies often happen after office hours or on weekends.

Because “911” is not the universal emergency number, you should memorize and write the local emergency number for police, fire, and ambulance on your Emergency Card. If you need a doctor, you can use the emergency number on your ISIC card to locate an English-speaking doctor.

In case of a serious emergency, contact the Clemson University Police Department. They have a representative available 24 hours a

day for student emergencies. Do not be afraid to contact them. The phone number (864-656-2222) is listed on your Emergency Card as well as on the inside of this Pre-Departure Orientation Guide.

The Center for Global Education suggests that students studying in a non- English speaking country should know and have a written list of certain phrases in the local language. These phrases include the following:

#### *Health & Safety*

- I need help.
- Please take me to the hospital/doctor.
- Where can I get help?
- I'm not feeling well.
- Stop! Thief!
- How do I get to the (doctor, hospital)?
- This is an emergency.
- My blood type is...
- Where is the police station?
- I'm allergic to penicillin/aspirin, etc.
- Please help me.
- I am diabetic, etc.

#### *General Information, Food & Water*

- Please speak slowly.
- Where can I get something to eat?
- I'm lost.
- Is this safe drinking water?
- Can you write this down for me?
- Where is the market?
- Can you contact this person for me?
- I am allergic to...
- My name is...
- I can't/don't eat meat/pork, etc.
- Where is the nearest (bathroom, telephone, bank)?

#### *Arrests*

- Please call the American Embassy/Consulate immediately.
- I don't understand.
- What (time, date, day) is it?
- I am an American citizen.
- I have a right to call the American Embassy/Consulate.

## COMMUNICATION

### CALLING HOME

#### *USING A FOREIGN TELEPHONE*

Before you leave, you should contact your long distance carrier for information on using their calling cards overseas. Family and friends who plan to call you while you are abroad can also check on special calling rates to your host country.

If your housing arrangements include a private phone, please remember that in some countries you will be charged for local as well as long-distance calls. However, be aware that private phone access may or may not be available in your housing arrangement (i.e. homestays, student dorms).

When making your first call, you may experience some frustration because each country has a different telephone system. Go into this situation planning to learn something new. A good reference for you and your family about dialing internationally is [www.countrycallingcodes.com/](http://www.countrycallingcodes.com/)

When calling home or friends, please consider the time difference! Another good reference for you and your family is [www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/](http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/) which identifies the local date and time for 140 cities around the world. For the most part, you will have access to payphones. The cheapest and easiest method of payment is usually a pre-paid phone card bought in-country. Check with local staff or students for recommendations on where to buy these.

#### *MOBILE PHONES*

Mobile phones are widely used in many countries. They can be bought or sometimes rented. You will find it much easier to buy a mobile phone and prepaid service in your host country than to take your own mobile with you as most standard US/Canada mobile phones will not work in other countries. Contact your personal telephone provider for recommendations for international use of your mobile phone. The following services allow you to buy the phone in the U.S. to take abroad, which is beneficial because the

instructions are in English and you will have the phone number to give to friends and family:

- Piccell [www.piccellwireless.com/](http://www.piccellwireless.com/)
- Telestial [www.telestial.com/](http://www.telestial.com/)

Some third party providers give each student a mobile phone. You will need to check with them about rate and payment information.

#### **INTERNET PHONES**

Several internet phone packages exist that allow you to talk from computer-to-computer for free around the world. Also, some services offer computer-to-phone service for competitive calling rates. These services include the following:

- *Skype* ([www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com)) This internet telephone service is free from computer-to-computer and charges just over \$0.02/minute to call into the US from anywhere in the world. Skype is known for its telephone-like voice quality. Video, call in, and voicemail also available.
- *JAJAH* ([www.jajah.com](http://www.jajah.com)) Provides free calls to landlines and cell phones in numerous countries.
- *Google Talk / MSN / AOL*: These instant message services also offer free computer-to-computer telephone service. However, voice quality depends on the quality of the internet connection.

Internet phones are something to consider when deciding to bring your laptop. Remember: all these services require a computer microphone or headset. Also think about how much privacy you may have where you will have internet access.

**\*\*Please note that the Study Abroad Office is in no way endorsing these companies above others that provide the same or similar services. The companies listed above have been used by study abroad students in the past.**

#### **EMAIL**

Please note that the study abroad office will use your Clemson email address to keep in contact with you while abroad. If you do not plan to use your Clemson email, please forward it to the email address that you will be using.

You may have access to email either through your study abroad program or through local cyber cafes. You will be able to access your CU account through Webmail using your CU ID number and your password.

Calling and communicating with those back home is important in order for them to keep up with you. However, remember you are abroad to grow. Try to avoid excessive use of email and phones when abroad and become a part of that country's society. Take into consideration that family members might expect the worst when talking to you. Try to clearly explain your feelings and situations. Avoid using terms such as "I am having a bad day" or "I am sick" because they might overreact.

If homesick try to communicate with locals or participate in some of that country's activities to meet people. Communicating and functioning in the host language and culture could help you adapt to that society to become an independent individual. Try to deal with emergencies on your own with the local contacts first, then if needed call your parents. Remember people in your program and your on-site coordinators are there for a reason. Write about, photograph, and record your experiences to send to parents and loved ones to help ease their concerns and to show them what you are experiencing.

## **FINANCES**

### **BUDGET**

The amount that students spend while abroad varies greatly. Here is some advice on developing a budget:

- Gather information on program costs. Find out how much is included in your exchange, or what costs are expected for direct enrollment. Know what is included in your fees, and what additional costs you may have to pay while "settling in" (bed linens, toiletries, replacements for things you left at home).
- Determine how much you and your family are willing to budget for discretionary expenses (travel, entertainment, etc.) and incidentals (laundry, postage, film, etc.).

- Expect some items to be more expensive overseas. This may include food, books, and "luxury" items, such as electronics and clothing.
- Check the exchange rate and guidebooks for your host country. Guidebooks typically list costs for accommodations, transportation, entrance fees, and other items that will help you estimate for personal travel.
- Look for ways to cut costs. Evaluate your personal spending habits and where you are willing to cut back to afford other things while abroad. Consider getting an International Student Identity Card for discounts.
- Consider costs of communications—phone calls home, internet access, etc.

### **BANKING**

Before you leave, be sure that you understand how you will access money while abroad. You should have more than one means of getting money.

What to take with you: You should have a small amount of foreign currency with you in cash when you arrive abroad. Most major banks can obtain foreign currency, but you should verify this in advance. Currency exchange services are also available at most international airports (in the U.S. and abroad). Make sure you have enough cash to cover bus/taxi fares, snacks, and a phone call for the first couple of days. We recommend taking about \$100(U.S.) or the equivalent in foreign currency. Be sure to get small denominations - the equivalents of \$10 or \$20 bills. You can look up current exchange rates on websites such as <http://www.oanda.com>

### **PERSONAL CHECKS**

You should not expect to be able to cash personal checks (or any kind of check) abroad; it is virtually impossible. Traveler's checks usually have to be cashed at banks (see below).

### **TRAVELER'S CHECKS**

Traveler's checks offer a convenient and safe way to carry money overseas. They are widely accepted around the world, and easily replaced if lost or stolen. However, this may not be a convenient option for accessing money if you are in a remote or rural area. You

can purchase traveler's checks at most banks, AAA, and various other financial institutions. They can be purchased in U.S. dollars or some foreign currencies. There may be fees involved in purchasing and/or cashing the checks. Inquire at your bank for more information. We also recommend checking with past participants as acceptance of traveler's checks can vary from country to country.

### **ATMs**

Automatic Teller Machines are becoming increasingly available overseas. ATMs tend to give you a good exchange rate, charge no or limited exchange commission, and have 24-hour access. However, your U.S. bank may charge extra fees for using an ATM abroad, or have limits on daily withdrawals. Check with your bank for the following:

- Check on fees for international withdrawals and daily limits.
- Get a list of ATMs or branch locations overseas.
- Make sure you have a four-digit numeric PIN; many countries do not accept long PIN codes or letters on the keypad.
- ATMs overseas may not give you the choice between accessing a checking account and a savings account - they may pull from one account. Consult with your bank about the ability of your card to work overseas, as you may need to set the card to access only one type of account.
- If you plan to get a new ATM card, get your PIN and use the card in the U.S. before you go abroad. Do not expect a brand new card to work overseas.
- If your parents have access to your account, they can deposit money that you can access from overseas, usually within 24 hours.
- Let your bank know you will be abroad and the dates.

### **CREDIT CARDS**

Credit cards can be easily used abroad and tend to offer a good exchange rate on purchases. Some credit cards, such as Visa, are widely accepted, while others may not work world-wide or are less widely accepted.

- Alert your credit card company that you will be abroad so they do not put a hold on your account for suspicious activity.

- Check with your credit card company to find out what fees are charged for international use. Some companies may charge per transaction; others may have a monthly fee.
- If you are unable to qualify for a card of your own, your parents may open an account and get a card in your name for your use.
- As with ATM cards, if you plan to get a new credit card, use it in the U.S. before you go abroad to ensure it works properly.
- Receipts may have your credit card number printed on them, so keep them in a safe place for your records. You may need to refer to receipts for customs paperwork upon leaving the host country and/or entering the U.S.
- Credit cards should never be used as a means of getting cash, except in an emergency. There is a transaction fee for each cash advance, and you will be charged interest from the day the transaction is made.
- You will also need to make arrangements for paying your credit card bills while abroad.

#### **FOREIGN CABLES/WIRES**

In emergencies, money can also be wired overseas. While this is theoretically the fastest way to transfer money, caution is advised since in practice it may take several days or weeks for delivery. Cables/wires must be sent to a commercial bank, not to an individual post office box.

#### **FOREIGN DRAFTS**

Foreign draft can be a fast, reliable, and relatively inexpensive way of transferring money. You can buy a foreign draft in U.S. dollars or foreign currency from your bank. The draft should be made payable to the student and mailed directly to him/her via an express mail service (FedEx, DHL, etc.). Drafts must be drawn on a bank abroad which maintains a relationship with your home bank. The name of the foreign bank will usually be written somewhere in the draft, and it is that bank that the student will go to draft the cash. Not all overseas banks can receive transfers from the U.S., so have a back up plan for transferring money or in case of an emergency.

#### **POWER OF ATTORNEY**

It may be advisable to designate an individual, usually a parent or guardian, to take care of legal or financial matters on your behalf

while you are abroad. Find out what the proper procedure is and make those arrangements before you depart.

#### **TAXES**

You may need to arrange to have tax forms sent to you or have taxes paid for you while you are out of the country. It is possible to ask for an extension. Be sure to know what your tax responsibilities are and how to comply while you are away.

#### **VOTING**

If you will be abroad during an election year and wish to vote, make proper arrangements through your voter registration office. Also, see [www.overseasvotefoundation.org](http://www.overseasvotefoundation.org)

### **CROSS CULTURAL LEARNING**

#### **DEFINITION OF CULTURE**

Culture can be difficult to define. It is usually thought of as knowledge, beliefs, art, laws, morals, customs, and any capabilities or habits acquired by one as a member of a certain group. Culture is shared by all or almost all members of a group. It is passed on from generation to generation, and it shapes our behavior and structures our perceptions.

#### **COMPONENTS OF CULTURE**

Culture has both visible and invisible components. Visible culture includes those things we use our senses for, what we can see, taste, feel, or hear; for example, art, food, music, architecture, clothing, and so forth.

Invisible culture includes those things we do not see either because they are not visible (values) or because we don't think to look for them (communication styles and nonverbal behaviors) or they are outside our consciousness (assumptions).

#### **"Invisible" aspects of culture**

It is the invisible aspects of culture that create the greatest challenges, because we consider our own assumptions, values, behaviors, communication styles, and nonverbal behaviors to be "normal." When someone acts differently from us, we often judge them negatively. Conversely, when they act like us, we either



don't pay much attention or we think they are okay. Either conclusion can be incorrect.

### **Intent and impact are not the same!**

We might exhibit a behavior with very good intentions, but it may have a negative impact on another person. If we call someone by her or his first name with the intent of being friendly and inclusive, and if that person has a different cultural perspective, our friendly gesture may be experienced as an insult or as disrespect because he or she expects to be addressed formally (Mr., Dr., Ms., Professor).

Similarly, someone may behave in a manner that has a negative impact on us. An Arab might ask, for example, "Why don't you have children?" Our "natural" inclination is to be offended and to want to say, "It's none of your business." The safest assumption, however, is that the person's intention is good. Effective intercultural skills include (a) sharing with others the impact their behavior has had on us and asking them to help us understand their intent, (b) asking about their intent without sharing the impact—which allows us to revise the impact, (c) stating our own intent before acting when behaviors can have multiple interpretations, and/or (d) seeking a wide range of interpretations for the behavior before negatively interpreting it—in other words, avoiding premature judgment.

Stringer, D. and Cassiday, P. (2003). *Activities for Exploring Values Differences*, 231-232.

### **Cross cultural learning is a key component of study abroad.**

Here are a few things to think about:

- Culture can be defined as the ways in which people relate themselves to their physical and social environment and how they express these relationships.
- A lot of what makes up one's culture is not immediately visible, but is in people's heads, including their values, beliefs, expectations, etc.
- Most of the time we're not aware of our own culture—we become aware when we encounter an unfamiliar one: "A fish would be the last one to notice the water."

### **Before: Preparing for Cultural Adjustment**

- This topic is often overlooked by students in a rush to handle logistical details, but is one of the most important aspects to prepare for.
- For those of you going to a country whose national language is not English, we highly recommend *Maximizing Study Abroad: A Student's Guide to Strategies for Language and Culture Learning and Use*, published by the University of Minnesota. Ask the Study Abroad Office for details on how to get a copy.
- *What's up with Culture?* is also a great on-line resource to help with cultural questions and adjustments.  
[www.pacific.edu/sis/culture/pub/CULTURE\\_ISSUES\\_2.htm](http://www.pacific.edu/sis/culture/pub/CULTURE_ISSUES_2.htm)

### **Know where you're from**

- Prepare yourself to respond to foreign people's interest in your country by keeping up with US current events, politics and policies and by understanding US history.
- Be able to describe Clemson (enrollment, location, etc.) and your hometown (population, location, etc.).

### **Know where you're going**

- Prepare yourself with background information on your host country. Check into history, culture and the arts, geography and current events.
- Use the web!
- Students from the place you're going may be on campus now. Most would be thrilled to meet you and discuss their home countries. Contact the Study Abroad Office for more information.

### **Things to consider**

- Some of you may be planning to go abroad together with one or more close friends. This can enrich your experience abroad. But before you go, think about how much richer your experience could be if you made a group of close friends abroad, too.
- Ask yourself some questions about your motivations and expectations of yourself and your experience
  - How do I expect to change while I'm abroad?

- What will foreign people think of me?
- What will I be most glad to get away from at home? What will I miss most? Why?
- If I feel lonely or homesick when I'm abroad, what could I do to overcome it?

### **During: Adjusting to a new culture**

- Culture Shock is very real and almost everyone will experience it to some degree.
- Adjusting to your host country can be compared with your first day at Clemson University.
- Cultural differences can lead to miscommunication.

### **Coping with the stresses of culture learning**

- Adjusting to a new culture and dealing with the demands of cultural adjustment can make you feel worn-down or stressed, depressed.
- Draw on experiences you've already had in your life and think about how they are similar to adjusting to a new culture (e.g., when you first came to Clemson University).
- Spend time with U.S. friends but also make host country friends.
- Challenge yourself and your friends to adapt.
- Home stay situations: think about how you can adjust to having less privacy and independence.
- Write about your experiences regularly in a journal.
- Do you notice any differences between what you expected and what you're really experiencing?
- Do you see things differently now? How?

### **RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR ABROAD**

Supporting Diversity in Study Abroad (<http://allabroad.us>)

### **RESOURCES FOR GLBT STUDENTS ABROAD**

NAFSA: Association of International Educators Rainbow Special Interest Group (SIG)  
(<http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/index.html>)

## **DEALING WITH ANTI-AMERICANISM**

While anti-Americanism is nothing new in certain regions of the world, given the current world situation, new forms and increased demonstrations of anti-American sentiment and actions are to be expected. As you prepare yourself for your study abroad experience, consider the following suggestions.

### **Things to do before you go...**

- Find out enough about current events (the American presence in Iraq in particular) to participate in class discussions and informal conversations.
- Think about your opinion on the U.S.' action in the world. Where do you stand and why? Make sure you have reasons to back up your position.
- Familiarize yourself with the history of the relationship between the U.S. and your host country. Has it traditionally been friendly or unfriendly? Have there been tensions?
- Try to look at the US and its impact abroad from the perspective of your host country.
- Be sure to attend all pre-departure orientation programming.

### **What can you do when confronted?**

- Try not to get defensive--and never go on the offensive.
- Stay calm and cool.
- Politely excuse yourself from a conversation you're not comfortable with.
- Avoid thinking in terms of 'us' versus 'them'
- Demonstrate through your actions and words that you are an individual with your own ideas—not a representative of any faction. Treat your foreign counterparts as individuals, too.
- Don't confuse anti-Americanism and normal political conversation in your host country. People in some other countries discuss politics more critically and directly than we do.
- Don't take criticism of the US or even your own political views personally.
- Seek the advice of your on-site program contacts if you find yourself facing a level of anti-American sentiment you don't feel prepared to deal with it.

