

*All Other*  
*Locations/Programs*  
STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK



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# **OFFICE OF GLOBAL EDUCATION**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Office of Global Education and Partnerships promotes the internationalization of the university community so that Millersville may realize its mission to:

- Prepare its students to live in an increasingly diverse and multicultural society
- Offer a curriculum that is rich and multifaceted
- Serve as a model of a pluralistic community and by providing leadership in this regard to the greater community.

Global Education fulfills this mandate by:

- Championing borderless learning and exchange of ideas by promoting institutional development to achieve these ends;
- Encouraging MU students, faculty, administrators and staff to communally embrace a vision of a globally connected campus through dissemination of information, coordination and support.
- Welcoming international students and scholars and ensuring an enriching and successful stay at Millersville by providing consistently professional logistical support and counseling where appropriate.
- Developing, operating and maintaining a comprehensive, cost-effective education abroad program (study, interning and service-learning) that meets the highest levels of professional and academic integrity and adheres to recognized “best practices” in the field;
- Organizing globally focused programming of benefit to the MU campus as well as the public and private sectors in the wider community.

## **NOTES ABOUT THE OFFICE**

The Office of Global Education has been administering study abroad programs since 1989. It is a full time office dedicated to international mobility of students and faculty, including study abroad and is staffed by individuals with several decades of combined international education experience.

### ***ROLE OF GLOBAL EDUCATION***

- Support students through pre-departure, study abroad and re-entry stages in partnership with partner institution and MU offices related to:
  - MU paperwork processing
  - Partner institution paperwork processing
  - Legal matters (passports, visas)
  - Insurance issues
  - Travel information related to study abroad experience
  - Housing and board arrangements (program dependent)

- Academic course selection and equivalencies process
- Medical, counseling and academic support where needed
- Cost information related to Financial Aid
- Program billing (program dependent)
- Issues at study abroad destination that cannot be solved “locally”
- Dormitory housing upon return
- Transcript processing after return
- Resolution of other outstanding study abroad issues upon return (academically, financially, etc.)

### **LIMITS OF GLOBAL EDUCATION**

- Address academic issues between study abroad participants and their advisors
  - TAP #s
  - Course changes/course equivalents
- Directly make flight arrangements
- Advise on housing, travel or other arrangements outside of formal study abroad program
- Address questions related to specific financial aid issues
- Assist students with program issues when Global Ed is not “kept in the loop” through regular communication with student
- Provide instant responses on non-emergency questions or routine matters

## **GETTING READY TO GO – DOCUMENTS/PAPERWORK**

### **PASSPORT**



The passport is your official identification as a citizen of the United States. It will be checked upon entering or leaving the United States or any foreign country as well as upon various other occasions that require official identification. All students going abroad need to have a passport. After you obtain your passport, be sure to sign on the signature line, make a photocopy of the record page (with your picture on it) and put it somewhere safe. It is suggested to take a copy of it with you abroad and keep it in a safe place. You may also want to keep a photocopy of your birth certificate and social security card with each photocopy of your passport. This is very helpful should your passport get stolen or become lost as it is a hassle to get your passport replaced. Take good care of this document.

**For more information and to download forms please see**  
[http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport\\_1738.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html)

### **IF YOU LOSE YOUR PASSPORT**

Loss or theft of a valid passport should be reported immediately. You must contact your nearest US Embassy or Consulate. For locations and further instructions reference <http://www.usembassy.gov/>. This will provide country specific instructions on how to proceed.

## **SMART TRAVELER ENROLLMENT PROGRAM (STEP)**

The U.S. State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, or STEP, is an invaluable resource for American citizens abroad. The State Department developed this program to better aid American citizens in emergency situations. By registering with the STEP program, you will receive updates, information, and travel warnings via email from the U.S. Embassy regarding your host country while you are abroad. The contact information you provide through this registration process allows the State Department to better assist you should an emergency arise. All students going abroad for academic credit are required to enroll in this program as part of the pre-departure paperwork process.

## **DOCUMENTS YOU SHOULD TAKE**

### **GENERAL DOCUMENTS**

- Passport\*
- Visa (if applicable)\*
- Flight Itinerary/Confirmation\*
- International Student Identity Card (ISIC)\*
- Insurance Card(s) - detailed company and insurer information\*
- Photocopies of credit cards\*

### **MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY DOCUMENTS**

- Copy of your Study Abroad Resident Credits Form (course selection with MU equivalencies)
- Updated DARS (Degree Audit Report)
- General Ed/major/minor curriculum sheets for reference
- Academic advisor and department chair's names, addresses, emails, and phone numbers in case you need to contact them while abroad.
- This handbook\*



### **HOST INSTITUTION DOCUMENTS AND MATERIALS**

- Acceptance letter\*
- Visa materials (if applicable)\*
- Relevant accommodation information and directions\*
- Host university's international student guides/handbooks (if available)\*

\* *Items to be taken in **carry-on** or on your person during travel, not in checked luggage.*

## **POWER OF ATTORNEY**



We suggest that you make arrangements with someone to give them power of attorney (POA) while you are gone. This enables the designated person

to have access to your accounts – deposit and withdrawal - and they are able to sign on your behalf. For MU, Power of Attorney may be necessary for the Financial Aid appeal process. Declaring a POA comes in handy as often applications, appeals and checks for financial aid must be signed and returned by a certain date which could be while you are abroad and your POA could sign on your behalf. (See “While Abroad – Financial Aid” for more information.)

The student seeking power of attorney can write up their own statement stating who is assuming the duties of power of attorney and have it notarized. This can be arranged through any lawyer or public notary. (Notary services are conveniently available at 2 locations on Millersville’s campus; the Purchasing Office and the Student Programs Office. Feel free to contact these offices for more information.)

The requirements to prove a person has power of attorney can vary by the organization or agency that is requesting the proof. It is best that you or your POA inquire directly with the agency as to what their policies are regarding this matter. It may be in your best interest to obtain several **original** copies of the notarized statement because your POA might be required to send originals with each POA signature.

Below is an example of the format for a power of attorney statement:

*I, (name of student), hereby grant power of attorney to my (state relationship), (name of person), for the following time span: (list dates of study abroad).*

*(Student signature)* \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Signature of person assuming power of attorney)* \_\_\_\_\_

## **HEALTH ISSUES**

### **HEALTH PRECAUTIONS & IMMUNIZATIONS**

Information for travelers on health precautions, immunizations and areas with specific health issues can be obtained from local health departments, private doctors, travel clinics or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia. More information on the CDC can found at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>.

For local services in Lancaster, you may contact Passport Health. Passport Health is a national network of independently owned and operated Travel Health and Immunization Clinics. They provide information, immunizations and consultation for international travel.

<http://www.passporthealthusa.com/locations/pa/monroeville/154/>

Phone: 1-888-474-8907

In Lancaster:

150 Farmington Lane  
Suite 201  
Lancaster, PA 17601

Another web site that may be helpful is [www.travelersvaccines.com](http://www.travelersvaccines.com).

Consider all travel plans when researching health precautions, immunizations and areas with specific health issues so you can be fully prepared for your time abroad whether in or outside of your host city and country.

## MEDICATIONS

### **BEFORE YOU GO**

- Students should consider getting check-ups pre-departure for general wellness, vision, and dental.
- Prescription Considerations
  - Be aware that some commonly prescribed medications in the U.S., such as prescriptions for ADHD, may be considered illegal controlled substances in other countries. Check with the customs authority or local embassy of your host country, if this applies to you, to determine local laws.
  - Obtain a clearly written prescription as well as a letter from your physician fully explaining the use of your medication, including the generic name of the drug. Customs officials may want to see this, and should you require any additional prescriptions while abroad, the pharmacy there will require this information.
  - Plan how you will supply yourself the amount of your prescription(s) needed while abroad. You may want to pack enough for the entire period of time, especially if you have medication that has been specifically made for you, such as allergy serum; however getting prescriptions and carrying them in large amounts can be an issue with certain insurance companies and/or customs' officials.
  - If you wear glasses and/or contacts, take along your lens prescription and, if possible, an extra pair of glasses and/or an ample supply of contacts.

### **WHILE ABROAD**

- We do not recommend buying medications "over the counter", unless you are familiar with the product. Keep in mind, "over the counter" drugs abroad are not regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.
- All medications should be carried in their original containers and clearly labeled, throughout your travels.

## INSURANCE



Health insurance coverage abroad is mandatory for MU study abroad participants and for Non-MU students participating in MU programs.

### **Important Notes About International Health Insurance:**

- Should medical attention be required while abroad, understand that you will often pay out of pocket for medical services and submit a claim to your insurance company to be reimbursed.
- It is important to have access to funds to pay for out of pocket medical costs as most insurance companies do not pay international medical providers. The cost



is on you to pay upfront. The Office of Global Education recommends having a credit card available to pay for an emergency medical situation.

- Before departing for your experience abroad, you should contact your primary insurance provider to determine if your insurance covers you internationally. If so, you want to know the details of your coverage while abroad and the claims process. It is much more helpful to have this information before a medical issue occurs.
- Your ISIC insurance through April Travel Protection is supplemental insurance to your primary provider in the U.S. If you do not have insurance here in the U.S., or your primary provider does not cover you while abroad, your ISIC insurance is your primary coverage when studying abroad.

### ***INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IDENTITY CARD (ISIC)***

(This information is taken from STA Travel, the issuing agency of the ISIC and is therefore subject to change.)

Millersville University policy requires that you purchase a Basic International Student Identity Card (ISIC) valid for the duration of your program abroad. The card is required due to the coverage it provides in certain emergency situations and for the many benefits provided to ISIC/ITIC cardholders such as:

- Medical/Health Insurance
- Travel Insurance
- Discounts

Additionally, ISICs may also be recognized as an official form of student identification.

### ***ISIC INSURANCE***

The ISIC Basic provides the minimum health and travel insurance coverage recommended for traveling abroad. ISIC also offers Premium & Explorer options which provide a higher level of health and travel insurance coverage as well as other benefits. Health insurance for both the ISIC Basic and the ISIC Premium is administered by April Travel Protection. [www.AprilTravelProtection.com](http://www.AprilTravelProtection.com)

Should you decide that you require additional health insurance coverage beyond the ISIC Basic and do not wish to purchase the ISIC Premium or ISIC Explorer, other independent international health insurance providers are available to you. You will need to research these options on your own. Please note, however, that you will still be required to purchase the ISIC Basic for its other benefits.

***NOTE for NON-MU programs:*** Some Non-MU programs require or include health and travel insurance. If this is the case, this insurance must be approved by your program coordinator at the Office of Global Education to determine if it is or is not necessary for you to purchase the ISIC Basic plan. Non-MU program participants must provide your program coordinator with the details of your NON-MU insurance coverage, (meaning Global Education needs to see what the insurance covers you for and up to how much). Your program coordinator will review your program's coverage and make sure it is at least comparable to the ISIC Basic.

- If your coverage is not adequate, MU requires you to purchase at least the ISIC Basic plan by completing the registration form and submitting it with payment to the Office of Global Education.
- If your coverage is approved, you must submit proof of having the insurance coverage through your Non-MU program provider, such as a letter from the insurance company or a copy of your insurance card. Additionally, if you choose your Non-MU program's insurance provider, it is your responsibility to be familiar with the specifics of their coverage, emergency hotline numbers and the procedure to make a claim.

**SEEKING IN-NETWORK PROVIDERS**

Before you depart, *it is **strongly recommended** that you contact April Travel Protection and/or your independent health insurance provider to determine a list of network providers within your study abroad destination area.* If you do any traveling for an extended amount of time, you may also want to consider obtaining a list of providers within your travel destinations. It is always best to contact April Travel Protection **prior** to seeking medical attention, if possible, to determine the closest in-network medical facility and so that they can arrange an appointment with the physician's office on your behalf.

**COVERAGE DETAILS**

April Travel Protection provides a letter showing proof of ISIC-related health insurance coverage. This proof of coverage will be emailed to you from The Office of Global Education to keep for your records and/or for use with your student visa application.

**Review the chart below for a breakdown of ISIC coverage benefits:**

<b>Coverage</b>	<b>BASIC</b> (min. required)	<b>PREMIUM</b>	<b>EXPLORER</b>
ISIC Card Validity	1 Year	1 Year	1 Year
Multi-Trip Insurance Validity	1 Year	1 Year	1 Year
Trip Cancellation	NA	NA	\$3000
Trip Interruption	NA	\$1500	\$3000
Trip Delay/ Per Day	\$250/\$100	\$500/\$200	\$500/\$200
Emergency Medical Evacuation & Repatriation (included emergency reunion assistance)	\$250,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
Repatriation of Remains	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
Accident and Sickness Medical Expenses	\$25,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Emergency Dental/ Deductible	\$500/\$0	\$500/\$0	\$500/\$0
Accidental Death/Dismemberment – Entire Trip	\$1,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
Accidental Death/Dismemberment – Entire Trip Common Carrier Air Only	\$5,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Baggage and Personal Effects (If lost or stolen)	NA	\$2,000	\$2,500
Baggage Delay (Minimum of 12 Hours)	\$100	\$200	\$200
Adventure Sports	NA	NA	Included
Mental Health	NA	Included	Included
24/7 Travel/Medical Assistance Services	Included	Included	Included
Non-Medical Emergency Evacuation due to Catastrophe	NA	\$50,000	\$50,000
Security and Political Evacuation	NA	\$50,000	\$50,000
<b>Price:</b>	<b>\$25</b>	<b>\$95</b>	<b>\$200</b>

## **Additional Information about Coverage: 24-Hour Emergency Assistance Services**

- Emergency travel assistance services are provided by April Travel Protection. If you need assistance, you can call toll free 24 hours a day, 365 days a year at one of these telephone numbers:
- Within the USA Toll Free: (855) 743-6739
- Outside the USA Collect: (305) 455-1571
- Assistance Email: [assistus@apriltravelprotection.com](mailto:assistus@apriltravelprotection.com)

### **Assistant Services:**

#### **EMERGENCY MEDICAL EVACUATION & REPATRIATION**

- Medical Transport
- Dispatch of a Physician or Specialist
- Transportation of a Family Member
- Escort Services
- Repatriation of Remains

#### **MEDICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES**

- Medical & Dental Referrals
- Medical Case Management & Monitoring
- Coordinate Hospital Admission & Discharge
- Vaccination Recommendations & Precautions
- Prescriptions Replacement

#### **TRAVEL ASSISTANCE**

- Telephone Interpretation Service
- General Travel Assistance & Information
- Pre-Trip & Cultural Information
- Emergency Cash & Bail Assistance
- International Claims Assistance
- Lost Luggage Assistance
- Lost Document Assistance
- Urgent Message Relay
- Legal Referrals

*There may be times when circumstances beyond April Travel Protection control hinder its endeavors to provide services. April Travel Protection will, however, make all reasonable efforts to provide such services and help you resolve the emergency situation.*

*April Travel Protection will not provide any services when the U.S. or other applicable trade or economic sanctions, laws or regulations prohibit April Travel Protection from providing such services, including, but not limited to, the payment of any claims. Accordingly, no services will be provided in connection with travel to Cuba and such services may be limited and/or delayed, or prohibited, in other countries.*

## ***PURCHASED A BASIC OR PREMIUM ISIC AND WANT TO UPGRADE TO A PREMIUM OR EXPLORER?***

You can upgrade to an ISIC Premium or Explorer by contacting The Office of Global Education via email or by coming into the office. In order to upgrade, you need to submit payment for the cost difference of what plan you purchased versus which plan you would like to upgrade to. This can be done in the form of cash, check, or money order payable to Millersville University.

**If you are considering upgrading your ISIC card, note that you may only upgrade PRIOR to departing the US.**

## ***SUBMITTING A CLAIM***

Follow the directions below to submit a claim to April Travel Protection (ISIC). If you have other primary insurance that covers you abroad, such as your parent's health insurance or insurance through your employer, April Travel Protection will require you to make a claim with your primary insurance first and then submit the remaining costs to April Travel Protection. Note that April Travel Protection must receive written communication within 90 days after a covered loss occurs:

### **1. Request an Insurance Claim Form**

Call or email using the contact information below to request an Insurance Claim Form & inquire about the required documentation given your coverage (Basic, Premium, and Explorer).

### **2. Provide the Required Documentation**

After you complete your claim form, provide the supporting documentation needed to complete the claim process.

-Trip Delay: Obtain specific dated documents which provide proof of the reason for delay (airline or cruise line forms, medical statements, etc. Submit this documentation along with your trip itinerary and all receipts for expenses incurred.)

-Medical Expenses: Obtain receipts from the providers of services, etc., stating the amount paid and listing the diagnosis and treatment; submit these first to other medical plans. Provide a copy of *their* final disposition of your claim.

-Baggage: Obtain statement from the common carrier that your baggage was delayed or a police report showing your baggage was stolen along with copies of the receipts for your purchases.

Report your claim to April Travel Protection at one of these telephone numbers:

Within the USA: Toll Free: (855)-743-6739

Outside the USA: Collect: (305) 455-1571

Email for claims: [Claims@apriltravelprotection.com](mailto:Claims@apriltravelprotection.com)

Claims Address:  
**April Travel Protection**  
**11900 Biscayne Blvd**  
**Miami FL 33181, USA**

All benefits will be paid in United States Dollars.

### **WHAT TO DO IF YOU LOSE YOUR CARD**

You are still covered under the insurance benefits for the validity period of the card; however if you wish to use the card to receive discounts and/or as a form of international ID, you will need to locate an ISIC issuing office close to you to purchase a replacement card. Contact ISIC to assist you with locating an ISIC issuing office.

The insurance benefits that come with an ISIC are only offered on cards issued in the US; therefore, you will not have double insurance coverage by purchasing a replacement card.

Keep your receipt should you get a new card and you can submit a claim to get reimbursed for the lost/stolen card.

## **LUGGAGE/U.S. CUSTOMS**

### **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

Airlines or travel agencies should be able to inform you of the latest policies affecting luggage limitations. Each airline has its own restrictions/requirements regarding checked luggage and carry on items. Excess luggage can be very expensive. Remember that luggage should be small enough to go up narrow stairways, go down train aisles, and fit on luggage racks. You may wish to use a backpack as your second piece of luggage for ease and flexibility while traveling. You should label your luggage on the outside, and it is recommended that you also include a name and address label inside your locked luggage as well.

### **TSA ACCEPTED AND RECOGNIZED LOCKS**



Company logos for *Travel Sentry* and *Safe Skies*

The vendors above, Travel Sentry and Safe Skies, have an arrangement with TSA to supply TSA “accepted and recognized” locks. TSA screeners have tools for opening

and re-locking luggage locks with either of these logos, thus avoiding damage to the lock or bag if a physical inspection is required.

Please check the web sites below for more information on TSA Accepted and Recognized Locks.

Travel Sentry: <http://www.travelsentry.org/>

Safe Skies: [www.safeskieslocks.com](http://www.safeskieslocks.com)

## CARRY-ON RESTRICTIONS

***Due to increased security at airports worldwide, the following restrictions have taken effect. Please read carefully.***

**3-1-1** for carry-ons = **3** ounce bottle or less; **1** quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag; **1** bag per passenger placed in screening bin. A one-quart bag per person limits the total liquid volume each traveler can bring. The 3 oz. container size restriction is a security measure.



Consolidate bottles into one bag and X-ray separately to speed screening. Be prepared. Each time TSA searches a carry-on it slows down the line. Practicing 3-1-1 will ensure a faster and easier checkpoint experience.

3-1-1 is for short trips. **If in doubt, put your liquids in checked luggage.**

Declare larger liquids. Prescription medications, baby formula and milk are allowed in quantities exceeding three ounces and are not required to be in the zip-top bag. Declare these items for inspection at the checkpoint.

Be aware, heavy travel volumes and the enhanced security process may mean longer lines at security checkpoints.

**Note:** These requirements are being strictly enforced. You must bring your own plastic bag as none are available in the airport. You will already have checked your other luggage so **anything that does not meet the requirements will be thrown away/confiscated.**

## U.S. CUSTOMS UPON RE-ENTRY



As you pass through the United States, or any other country, you will have to go through a customs inspection. United States residents are permitted to bring into the U.S. \$800 worth of foreign souvenirs and gifts provided that:

- The goods are for personal use or will be given as gifts
- They are in your possession (goods shipped are excluded from the \$800 exemption)

- They have been declared to U.S. Customs and Border Protection
- You have been abroad for at least 48 hours
- You have not utilized the \$800 exemption within a 30-day period preceding re-entry
- The articles are not prohibited by law

Examples of articles specifically prohibited by law are:

- Narcotics, dangerous drugs, or drug paraphernalia
- Obscene articles and publications
- Seditious and treasonable materials
- Hazardous materials- fireworks, toxic or poisonous substances
- Absinthe (a common European Wormwood and a green liqueur flavored with wormwood)
- Switchblade knives
- Endangered species and products made from them may not be brought into the United States. The penalty is confiscation and a possible fine.

You will be assessed an import duty based on 3% of the value for anything in the \$800 to \$1,800 range. Import duty varies according to the nature of the articles when you go over \$1,800.

### **Some Helpful Small Print about Customs**

Articles acquired abroad and in your possession at the time of your return to the United States must be declared to Customs officials in writing. Declaration forms will be distributed to you by the flight attendants on your flight and should be completed immediately to avoid the last-minute hassle at Immigration and Customs. Your declaration must include, in addition to the gifts and souvenirs you purchased while you were abroad, any items that you are bringing back to another person on their request, alterations or repair of articles taken abroad, and gifts given to you while you were abroad. Wearing or using an article acquired abroad does not exempt it from duties, and it must be declared at the price you paid for it, although Customs agents may make a reduction in value due to the use or wear of the article. To avoid misunderstandings, it would be wise for you to retain receipts for any purchases that you make while abroad. You must declare the price actually paid for an article. If you do not know the price, say so. If an article was not purchased (i.e. a gift), state its fair market price. Personal belongings of U.S. origin taken abroad may be sent back by mail duty-free if, on the outside packaging, it is stated that the articles were taken out of the U.S. as personal effects and are being returned without having been repaired or altered while abroad ("American Goods Returned").

If you expect to carry a foreign-made item (i.e., an expensive camera, a watch, etc.) with you out of the United States, you may be subject to duty on those items when you return to the U.S., unless you have acceptable proof of prior possession. Documents that fully describe the article, such as a bill of sale or an insurance policy, may be considered "as acceptable proof". Items, which may be readily identified by serial

number or permanently affixed markings, may be registered with the Customs officials prior to departure.

## **LAW AND SECURITY ISSUES ABROAD**

This section was obtained from the US State Department website at:  
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en.html>

When you travel abroad, the odds are you will have a safe and incident-free trip. Travelers can, however, become victims of crime and violence, or experience unexpected difficulties. No one is better able to tell you this than the U.S. consular officers who work in more than 250 U.S. embassies and consulates around the globe. Every day of the year, U.S. embassies and consulates receive calls from American citizens in distress.

Happily, most problems can be solved over the phone or with a visit to the Consular Section of the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. There are other occasions, however, when U.S. consular officers are called upon to help U.S. citizens who are in foreign hospitals or prisons, or to assist the families of U.S. citizens who have passed away overseas.

We have prepared the following travel tips to help you avoid serious difficulties during your time abroad.

### **THE LAW ABROAD**

#### **LOCAL LAWS AND CUSTOMS**



When you leave the United States, you are subject to the laws of the country you are visiting. Therefore, before you go, learn as much as you can about the local laws and customs of the places you plan to visit. Good resources are your library, your travel agent, and the embassies, consulates or tourist bureaus of the countries you will visit. In addition, keep track of what is being reported in the media about recent developments in those countries.

Familiarize yourself with legal expectations in the countries you will visit. The [Country Specific Information](#) (This link guides you to another portion of the US State Department Webpage) pages include information on unusual patterns of arrests in particular countries, as appropriate. Again, keep in mind that while you are visiting a foreign country, you are subject to the laws of that country. Legal protection and personal rights that we take for granted in the United States are left behind when you depart. American Embassies and Consulates are limited in the assistance they can provide. They cannot provide you with any financial assistance in paying for legal or medical services, nor can they intervene on your behalf in the administration of justice as seen from the point of view of the host country.



Bail provisions, as we know them in the U.S., are rare in foreign countries. Pretrial detention, without bail, is quite common. Prison conditions are often deplorable in comparison with conditions in the U.S. The principle “innocent until proven guilty” is not necessarily a tenet of the legal system abroad. It should also be stressed that students are subject to the statutes, ordinances and regulations of the host institution.

### ***DRUG VIOLATIONS***

More than one-third of U.S. citizens incarcerated abroad are held on drug charges. Some countries do not distinguish between possession and trafficking, and many have mandatory sentences – even for possession of a small amount of marijuana or cocaine. A number of Americans have been arrested for possessing prescription drugs, particularly tranquilizers and amphetamines that they purchased legally elsewhere. Other U.S. citizens have been arrested for purchasing prescription drugs abroad in quantities that local authorities suspected were for commercial use. If in doubt about foreign drug laws, ask local authorities or the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

### ***POSSESSION OF FIREARMS***

The places where U.S. citizens most often experience difficulties for illegal possession of firearms are nearby – Mexico, Canada and the Caribbean. Sentences for possession of firearms in Mexico can be up to 30 years. In general, firearms, even those legally registered in the U.S., cannot be brought into a country unless a permit is obtained in advance from the embassy or a consulate of that country and the firearm is registered with foreign authorities on arrival. (NOTE: There are also strict rules about bringing firearms or ammunition into the U.S; check with [U.S. Customs](#) before your trip.

### ***PHOTOGRAPHY***

Be cautious when taking pictures. Local authorities in many countries consider all airports, police stations, military locations, oil installations, harbors, mines and bridges to be security-related. Photography of demonstrations or civil disturbances is also usually prohibited. Tourists have had their cameras confiscated and have been detained for trying to take these types of pictures. When in doubt about whether you can take a picture, ask first.

## **SECURITY ISSUES**

### ***PACKING***

Safety begins when you pack. To help avoid becoming a target, do not dress in a way that could mark you as an affluent tourist. Expensive-looking jewelry, for instance, can draw the wrong attention.

Always try to travel light. You can move more quickly and will be more likely to have a free hand. You will also be less tired and less likely to set your luggage down, leaving it unattended.

Generally, it is suggested to carry the minimum number of valuables, and plan places to conceal them. Your passport, cash and credit cards are most secure when locked in a hotel/hostel safe. When you have to carry them on your person, you may wish to put them each in a different place rather than all in one wallet or pouch. Avoid handbags, fanny packs and outside pockets that are easy targets for thieves. Inside pockets and a sturdy shoulder bag with the strap worn across your chest are somewhat safer. One of the safest places to carry valuables is in a pouch or money belt worn under your clothing.

### ***SAFETY ON THE STREET***

Use the same common sense traveling overseas that you would at home. Be especially cautious in (or avoid) areas where you may be more easily victimized. These include crowded subways, train stations, elevators, tourist sites, market places, festivals and crime-ridden neighborhoods.

- Don't use short cuts, narrow alleys or poorly lit streets.
- Try not to travel alone at night.
- Avoid public demonstrations and other civil disturbances.
- Keep a low profile and avoid loud conversations or arguments.
- Do not discuss travel plans or other personal matters with strangers.
- Avoid scam artists by being wary of strangers who approach you and offer to be your guide or sell you something at bargain prices.
- Beware of pickpockets. They often have an accomplice who will:
  - jostle you
  - ask you for directions or the time
  - point to something spilled on your clothing
  - distract you by creating a disturbance.
- Beware of groups of vagrant children who could create a distraction to pick your pocket.
- Wear the shoulder strap of your bag across your chest and walk with the bag away from the curb to avoid drive-by purse-snatchers.
- Try to seem purposeful when you move about. Even if you are lost, act as if you know where you are going. Try to ask for directions only from individuals in authority.
- Know how to use a pay telephone and have the proper change or token on hand.
- Learn a few phrases in the local language or have them handy in written form so that you can signal your need for police or medical help.
- Make a note of emergency telephone numbers you may need: police, fire, your hotel/hostel, and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.
- If you are confronted, don't fight back -- give up your valuables.

### ***SAFETY IN YOUR HOTEL/HOSTEL***

- Keep your hotel/hostel door locked at all times. Meet visitors in the lobby.
- Do not leave money and other valuables in your hotel/hostel room while you are out. Use the hotel/hostel safe.
- If you are out late at night, let someone know when you expect to return.

- If you are alone, do not get on an elevator if there is a suspicious-looking person inside.
- Read the fire safety instructions in your hotel/hostel room. Know how to report a fire, and be sure you know where the nearest fire exits and alternate exits are located. (Count the doors between your room and the nearest exit; this could be a lifesaver if you have to crawl through a smoke-filled corridor.)

### ***SAFETY ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION***

If a country has a pattern of tourists being targeted by criminals on public transport, that information is mentioned in each country's [Country Specific Information](#) in the section about safety and security.

### ***TAXIS***

Only take taxis clearly identified with official markings. Beware of unmarked cabs.

### ***TRAINS***

Well-organized, systematic robbery of passengers on trains along popular tourist routes is a problem. It is more common at night and especially on overnight trains.

If you see your way being blocked by a stranger and another person is very close to you from behind, move away. This can happen in the corridor of the train or on the platform or station.

Do not accept food or drink from strangers. Criminals have been known to drug food or drink offered to passengers. Criminals may also spray sleeping gas in train compartments. Where possible, lock your compartment. If it cannot be locked securely, take turns sleeping in shifts with your traveling companions. If that is not possible, stay awake. If you must sleep unprotected, tie down your luggage and secure your valuables to the extent possible.

Do not be afraid to alert authorities if you feel threatened in any way. Extra police are often assigned to ride trains on routes where crime is a serious problem.

### ***BUSES***

The same type of criminal activity found on trains can be found on public buses on popular tourist routes. For example, tourists have been drugged and robbed while sleeping on buses or in bus stations. In some countries, whole busloads of passengers have been held up and robbed by gangs of bandits.

### ***HOW TO HANDLE MONEY SAFELY***

- Do not flash large amounts of money when paying a bill. Make sure your credit card is returned to you after each transaction.
- Deal only with authorized agents when you exchange money, buy airline tickets or purchase souvenirs. Do not change money on the black market.

If your possessions are lost or stolen, report the loss immediately to the local police. Keep a copy of the police report for insurance claims and as an explanation of what happened.

After reporting missing items to the police, report the loss or theft of:

- Credit cards to the issuing company
- Airline tickets to the airline or travel agent
- Passport to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate

## **JET LAG**



Management of the phenomenon known as "jet lag" or "travel fatigue" begins when you board the plane. You may wish to grab a pillow and blanket from the overhead storage space in order to relax and save your energy on your long flight.

You probably have heard of "jet lag," which is as much a physical phenomenon as much as a psychological one. Your body, through long years of habit, has become acclimated to functioning in accordance with its own physiological clock based on a particular daily cycle.

When you arrive at your study abroad destination, that clock is going to be automatically out of sync with the local cycle because of the time difference. It will take your body a few days to adjust (some bodies take longer than others), during which time you can expect to feel quite tired and run down. This fatigue, in conjunction with the unfamiliar surroundings, customs and language, may produce a temporary sense of depression and "homesickness." It is a perfectly normal reaction and it may not even affect you; however, if it should happen, remember that it will soon pass.

**Although it's difficult to avoid jet lag, a few precautions are worth taking:**

- "Reset" your sleep patterns by going to bed early a few nights before you leave.
- On the plane, sleep as much as you can, and walk and stretch when awake.
- Avoid alcoholic and caffeinated beverages, and drink plenty of water in flight.
- On arrival in a new time zone, take a short nap, have a light meal at the appropriate local hour, and perhaps a brief stroll afterward.
- Eat lightly for two or three days.
- Keep the first day's itinerary relaxed.
- Allow at least 24 hours to adjust

## **CULTURE SHOCK**

### **HOW TO COPE WITH CULTURE SHOCK**



With Permission from the Council on International Educational Exchange, we are reprinting the following advice on preparing for successful cultural adaptation. Although you may not encounter difficulties with culture shock, you will certainly have some cultural adjustments to make which will require you to be prepared. Please read this material carefully.

## **PREPARING FOR SUCCESSFUL CULTURAL ADAPTATION**

The concept of culture shock may be very familiar to you, and any travel, which you have done abroad and perhaps even within your own country will have exposed you to it. However, if it has been quite a while since you have lived abroad, or if you have never lived abroad for a length of time, you will want to do some thinking about both what culture shock is and how you can develop personal strategies for overcoming it. Most people eventually develop their own ways of coping, but since the duration of your stay abroad will be relatively brief and the academic pressures considerable, preparing for adaptation ahead may save you a lot of time and anguish.

## **UNDERSTANDING CULTURE SHOCK**

Culture shock has been defined as "...the loss of emotional equilibrium that a person suffers when he moves from a familiar environment where he has learned to function easily and successfully, to one where he has not."<sup>1</sup> The effects of culture shock range from mild uneasiness, homesickness, and unhappiness to panic, severe irritability, and loss of perspective. The basic cause of this syndrome is believed to be the abrupt loss of the familiar, which produces feelings of isolation and diminished self-importance as you find yourself unable to fully interact with the rest of society. It is important that you understand that culture shock is a personal experience, affecting each individual differently.

Since all people undergo psychological as well as physical and social adjustments to new cultures, some knowledge of acculturation may be helpful.

### Stage I

This may be called the "tourist stage," "the honeymoon phase," or the "stage of euphoria." The student is fascinated and thrilled with all that is new and tends to see similarities between the host and the home country. Even difficulties are viewed as novel and interesting.

### Stage II

During this stage, the student will be taking a more active role in his/her setting. This will produce frustration, because of the difficulty in coping with even the most elementary aspects of everyday life. There may be a tendency to overreact to minor frustrations, delays, or inconveniences with irritation or anger out of proportion to the cause. Accomplishing small tasks, such as shopping and making telephone calls, become a major nuisance. The student's focus will turn to the differences between the host and home cultures, and these differences can be troubling. These sometimes-insignificant difficulties can be blown into major catastrophes. Hence, this stage is referred to as "culture shock."

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon, Arthur. "How to Cope with Culture Shock," Re-entry Preparation and Integration for Study Abroad. Center for International Education. Cal. State U., Long Beach (1986), pp. 1-6.

### Stage III

The student slowly recovers. Interest in and sensitivity to the new culture and other people emerge. A sense of humor and an ability to joke about new experiences and difficulties return. One is able to accomplish everyday tasks without undue amounts of stress.

### Stage IV

A meaningful understanding of the new environment develops. The student stops assessing the new culture by using his/her own culture as a model and accepts the culture and people for who and what they are—not better or worse, just different. Ideally, the student is able to make the transition between the cultures' value systems and behaviors without internal conflict. The student develops the ability to operate comfortably and effectively between cultures.

### Stage V

The last stage is the re-entry phase, when the student returns home. For some, this is the most painful phase of all! The student will be excited about sharing his/her experiences, he/she will realize that he/she has changed, but he/she will not be able to explain how or why. The student will have acquired different ways of behaving, feeling, and responding to others. One set of values has already been instilled in him/her, another he/she will have acquired in the host country. Both may seem equally valid.

## ***SYMPTOMS OF CULTURE SHOCK***

Health care providers, exchange program coordinators, academic advisors, and all staff involved in international educational exchange need to understand the phenomenon of culture shock and the impact it can have on a student's personal life and educational experience. A person passing through of acculturation may experience some of the following symptoms:

- feelings of helplessness and a dependence on compatriots
- homesickness
- greater irritation than appropriate when things go wrong
- a fear of being cheated, injured, or robbed
- excessive concern about physical pains or skin eruptions
- a strong desire to be home with one's own people who understand them
- reluctance or refusal to learn the language of the country
- insomnia or fatigue
- excessive concern for cleanliness
- loss of appetite
- loneliness
- poor concentration
- headaches
- stomach problems
- withdrawal from the host culture
- depression

## **OVERCOMING CULTURE SHOCK**

Just as your experience of culture shock will be individual and personal, you will need to deal with it in an individualized personal way. In adopting the following suggestions and developing your own strategies, an important thing to keep in mind is that while you should only expect yourself to tackle the symptoms and cause of culture shock in stages, confronting rather than avoiding them will help you to adapt much faster and more effectively. The following ideas are drawn from the experience of past participants (and the sources listed under *Recommended Reading* below):

- *Resolve any personal and family problems before you leave.*  
While you may think that by going abroad you will be escaping pre-existing problems, they will only follow you and be exacerbated by the especially stressful time of adapting to a new culture. Resolving personal problems before you leave home will make you more emotionally free to deal with the stresses of your new environment.
- *Learn as much about your new culture as possible.*  
The more you can learn about the culture which you are traveling to, and its customs, the easier it will be to figure out the “cultural cues” necessary to communicate with new friends and to feel at home in the new society. As mentioned in the introduction to this book, don't stop when you're through at the library. Seek out nationals of the country you'll be visiting through international student associations, international student centers, any local Embassies or Consulates, or community cultural organizations. Make friends with other students who have studied in the country you're heading to and keep on top of the news.
- *Develop cross-cultural communication skills.*  
Chances are you count on this strategy as one you have already developed if you've had friends from other countries or have lived abroad. If not, it would be worth taking advantage of any cross-cultural communication workshops arranged on your campus, participating in activities with international students studying at Millersville, and actively seeking out students from the country which you will be studying in.

One of the most important skills in cross-cultural communication, which you will need is the basic skill of learning to open-mindedly inquire and listen without being judgmental. You may be surprised to run into negative stereotypes. Americans, for example, are often assumed to be rude, always in a hurry, promiscuous, disrespectful of authority, and ignorant of other cultures. When trying to show that you are different, be tactful and try to understand the reasons for these stereotypes.

Likewise, you may find that you have brought along your own preconceived ideas about the people of your host country, and the ethnocentric attitude that the way

things are done at home is "better." Remember that you have chosen to study abroad to learn from your host country. Reserve judgment and try to understand and appreciate the new customs and ways of thinking you encounter, remembering that although different from what you are used to, they are equally valid.

- *Learn to indulge yourself in positive ways.*  
If you are feeling anxious, frustrated, lonely and/or confused, a first step, which will help you to adapt more easily, is to make yourself feel better and stronger by reducing these feelings. Spending 24 hours a day trying to communicate in a new language with new people in very new surroundings is extremely exhausting. This means that you will benefit from paying a little more attention to your physical and emotional health.

Obvious as it may seem, many students forget that added stress means needing more, not less sleep; and better, not worse eating habits. Exhaustion and eventually illness makes coping all the more difficult. A good sleep can sometimes put a previous day's crisis into perspective.

Feeling emotionally better may mean easing back a little on any campaign to become one of the natives in a few short weeks. Let yourself write letters home to friends and family who understand you, listen to any familiar music which you've brought along and try to incorporate familiar routines (such as running or making a favorite food, etc.), into your new life-style. While we certainly do not advocate hanging out only with other program students, we do not encourage you to alienate yourself from them. Avoiding students who seem bent on reacting against the host culture and making friends with other students who share both your country of origin and your desire to get to know the new one will make adaptation much easier and much more fun.

- *Form new friendships with host nationals as much as possible.*  
Students who have ultimately made friends among the students of the host institution and other host nationals are almost always those who have gotten to know the host country, its language and people the best and who have enjoyed themselves the most in the process. While spending some time with your own nationals will help ease culture shock, keep in mind that your purpose is to get better acquainted with the people, language, and culture of your host country. Making friends as early as possible with the nationals from your host country will speed the process of adaptation and allow you to get the most out of the experience.

## **CHARACTERISTICS FOR SUCCESS WHILE ABROAD**



What personal characteristics are needed, not just to survive, but to enjoy the experience abroad?



Key traits are:

- An attitude for learning.
- Flexibility, a sense of humor, and the ability to laugh at yourself.
- Communication skills, especially the ability to communicate your feelings.
- The ability to tolerate ambiguity.
- The acceptance of different cultural demands.

## **COPING STRATEGIES FOR CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT**

### **PAY ATTENTION TO SELF-CARE**

- Eat healthy foods
- Rest/Relaxation
- Exercise
- Avoid overuse of alcohol

### **KEEP A POSITIVE ATTITUDE**

- Suspend judgment and keep an open mind
- Be curious
- Stay flexible
- Maintain your sense of humor – laughter relieves stress
- Read humorous books
- Rent a funny movie

### **THINK**

- Identify your expectations so you can minimize disappointment if they are not met- or turn them into realistic goals
- Try to identify situations that upset you the most
- Think about what you have control over and what you don't – let it go
- Take life one day at a time

### **GET INVOLVED**

- Ask questions
- Try new activities/foods
- Practice the language
- Set small goals for yourself
- It's okay to take risks and make mistakes

### **DO FAMILIAR THINGS – something you did at home to make you feel good**

- Familiar physical activities such as walking or sports
- Listen to music
- Share your culture
- Meditate

## EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS

- Talk with others about what you're experiencing – they might feel the same way!
- Write – journals, letters, poetry
- Drawing, painting or other creative expression

## UTILIZE RESOURCES

- There are people who can help!

## **WHILE ABROAD – THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND**

### **LOCAL/EMERGENCY STUDENT CONTACT INFORMATION**

You will be contacted by the Office of Global Education to provide your local contact information for while you are studying abroad. You will be emailed shortly after your arrival for your physical address (written in proper format), local phone number, and SKYPE name (if you have one). This information will be issued to a limited number of campus officials such as Millersville University Police and is extremely important in the event of an emergency. Throughout your stay the Office of Global Education may need to contact you and without reliable contact information this will not be possible.

You will also be provided with a Trip Notification form which we strongly suggest you complete and submit to the Office of Global Education if you are traveling away from your host city overnight. It requests information of where you are going, dates of travel, accommodation details, mode(s) of transportation itinerary, availability of email access, etc. Should an issue or emergency occur while you are traveling, Global Education will have resources to assist you. If you do not inform Global Education of your whereabouts, we will have no information to go by in the event of an emergency.

### **CONFIRMATION OF CLASSES REGISTERED (AT HOST INSTITUTION)**

In order to facilitate both you and the Registrar's Office with processing your transcript from your study abroad institution, Global Education will request a list of the classes that you are actually taking soon after you have been abroad. This is for the purpose of cross checking that list with your Transfer of Credits Form that you completed pre-departure with your academic advisors. We encourage you to do this on your own as well. If the Transfer of Credits Form does not match the courses that you are currently taking, then you will need to work with your academic advisor to make the appropriate changes so that the Registrar's Office may process your host institution transcript. Not ensuring that the Transfer of Credits Form matches the list of classes you take seriously delays processing the transcript once it is received at MU.

### **MU CLASS REGISTRATION/GRADUATION APPLICATION REMINDER**

A reminder of Millersville class registration will be sent to you while abroad. You will need to communicate with your academic advisor(s) for advising and to obtain your TAP number.

If you are studying abroad during your last semester prior to graduation, you will need to complete and submit a Graduation Application to the Registrar Office prior to departure and ensure that you are registered for graduation.

## FINANCIAL AID ISSUES TO ADDRESS

The release of financial aid for the following academic year may be delayed while Millersville awaits the receipt of your academic transcript from the international institution. Transcripts from Spring semester study abroad will not arrive until early September. Because Millersville University cannot confirm that you have made “Successful Academic Progress” (SAP) in May, for the previous academic year without the transcript, your financial aid may be placed on hold until the transcript is received. The definition of SAP differs between state and federal aid:

- *Federal:* SAP is defined as earning 75% of ALL credits attempted at MU. (Example: A student completed 30 credits but earned 24 credits, therefore he/she earned 80%, calculated  $24 \div 30$ , meaning he/she made successful academic progress and will not have issues with financial aid for the following academic year.)
- *State:* SAP is defined as successfully completing, at minimum, 24 credits for the academic year.

We strongly encourage you to check your **MAX account** mid/late May to determine if you are identified as not making SAP. If you did not make SAP, you will receive an email from the Office of Financial Aid and it will be stated on your MAX account.

### **What If You Do Not Make SAP?** – Release Your Aid:

- *Federal Aid:* To ensure that your federal aid is released without your study abroad transcript being received, we suggest you complete the Financial Aid Appeal Form by indicating that you are studying abroad. The official appeal form is accessible from the Office of Financial Aid website and it is due in mid-June.

This process will release your *federal* aid even if the transcript has not yet arrived. Power of Attorney, processed prior to departure, may be required if you will need someone else to complete this form for you in your absence. This form can also be submitted as a scanned document via email with required signature(s).

Note: If your transcript is received, and you did not meet the minimum required Satisfactory Academic Progress, you will be required to immediately reimburse the Office of Financial Aid for any money already received. Failure to do so will result in a hold being placed on your account at Millersville University which will affect registration/graduation.

- *State Aid:* Your PA State Aid cannot be appealed because of study abroad yet it will be retroactively released upon receipt of your study abroad transcript confirming Satisfactory Academic Progress.