



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TOLEDO

1872

Health Science Campus

STUDENT INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES

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Introduction

The Office of Student Life (OSL) and UT College of Medicine students have worked hard to provide a comprehensive guide to assist you in planning and participating in an international experience. We know the value of these experiences and wish you the best in your experience. If you have any suggestions for these guidelines please submit them to the OSL.

Pre-Departure Information

Passport Information

U.S. and non-U.S. citizens need a passport both to enter other countries and return to the United States. If you already have a passport, make sure it is valid until at least six months after your return date. New U.S. passports take 4 to 6 weeks for processing, depending on the time of the year and are good for ten years. Apply early to avoid complications caused by misplaced original birth certificates and similar problems. Passport forms are available at many federal and state courts, probate courts, some county/municipal offices and some post offices. For first-time applicants, 16 years of age and older, a ten-year passport is \$85.00 that includes the execution fee. Check http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html for information and a printable application.

With your completed application you must also have the following:

1. Proof of U.S. citizenship (original or certified copy of birth certificate)
2. Proof of identity (i.e. valid driver's license)
3. Two (2) identical photographs (2" x 2" with white background)
4. \$85.00 fee
5. A social security card

You must submit your application to a post office. Do NOT send your application by mail. Bring them to a post office where an officer will review your materials and process them on your behalf. Two local post office branches that accept passport applications are:

South Toledo Station
1144 S. Detroit Avenue
Toledo, OH 43614
(419) 385-9536

Passport Hours: M-F 9-4 (by appointment)

Kenwood Station
2941 Haughton
Toledo, OH 43606
(419) 471-9094

Passport Hours: M-F 9-4 (by appointment)

Passport photos can be obtained by consulting the yellow pages of your phone directory or from the following (suggested, not endorsed) locations:

Moto Photo
1515 S. Byrne Road
Toledo, OH 43614
(419) 382-6686

Kinko's
2306 South Reynolds Road
Toledo, OH 43614
(419) 866-5464

You must apply early to purchase or renew a passport since five to six weeks are usually required for processing. During peak travel seasons, more processing time is required.

If you need a passport quickly, consult your travel agent or http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/first/first_831.html. It is possible to obtain a same day passport in Chicago. The Chicago Passport Agency serves customers who are traveling within two weeks (14 days) or who need foreign visas for travel. Arrive early because processing time is approximately four to six hours. The office address is:

Chicago Passport Agency
Kluczynski Federal Office Building
230 S. Dearborn St.
18th Floor
Chicago, IL 60604-1564
(877) 487-2778

Hours: 9:00 am – 4:00 pm (Central Time), Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays.

Once you have your passport, be sure to fill in the emergency information page. Take extra photos and photocopies of your passport with you abroad in case you lose your passport and need to have it replaced quickly. Also leave passport copies with your emergency contact person in the United States and with the Office of Student Life.

PLEASE NOTE: Effective December 31, 2005, all travelers to and from the Caribbean, Bermuda, and Central and South America will be required to have a passport to re-enter the United States.

Visa Information

A visa is an entry/residency permit and official permission granted by the authorities of the countries where you will travel, which allow you to enter and remain in that country. The visa itself is frequently a stamp in your passport, not a separate document. You will need a passport before applying for a visa and the passport plus visa process may take several months, so start early. If you are a U.S. citizen (carrying a U.S. passport) a visa is not required by most Western European countries if you are spending fewer than three months in the country visited. However, the regulations change regularly for some Western European countries, so check with the embassy/consulate of your host country.

The cost and requirements for obtaining visas vary. It is your responsibility to determine visa requirements for all countries you plan to visit while abroad; this includes countries that you plan to visit before or after your international experience. You can do so by consulting with a travel agent, calling the consular offices of those countries, or checking the following Web sites: <http://travel.state.gov/travel/documents.html> or <http://www.traveldocs.com/>.

You may be denied entry into, or be deported from, a country for which you have not obtained a required visa. The Office of Student Life and the University of Toledo are not responsible for obtaining visas nor are they in any way responsible for visa denial. For some countries, certain medical requirements must be met before a visa will be issued. Many countries will not issue visas to persons with any type of police record!

Note: If you are not a U.S. citizen, consult the embassy or consulate of the countries you will visit to learn their document requirements. You may check the following Web sites:

- Foreign Consulate Offices listing
http://www.state.gov/www/travel/consular_offices/fco_index.html
- Embassies and Consulates: <http://www.embassyworld.com>

The procedures that you will follow may be different from those for U.S. citizens. It is important to initiate this process as soon as possible in order to assemble documents and allow time for lengthy procedures.

Flight Arrangements

If you are participating in a group international experience, you may receive flight information from such an agent. PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS INFORMATION MAY BE SENT TO YOU BEFORE YOU ARE FORMALLY ACCEPTED INTO THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE. IT IS FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY AND DOES NOT IMPLY YOUR ACCEPTANCE. The travel agent will assist with travel questions, and make the arrangements that best meet your personal needs. You may reserve a flight with the travel agency or make independent arrangements if you wish. However, you should wait until you receive an official letter of acceptance before making your final booking and payment.

Suggested inexpensive airfares can be made through sites such as:

<http://www.travel.org/airlines.html>

<http://travelocity.com/>

<http://expedia.com/>

<http://www.orbitz.com>

<http://www.cheaptickets.com>

You are expected to be at the international experience location the day the group flight arrives and remain for the duration of the international experience. If you arrive early, you need to make your own housing arrangements. If the Office of Student Life receives notification that you have not checked in with your international experience group, then this will be considered an emergency and the emergency contact listed on your application will be contacted.

Whether you are leaving to go abroad or to return home, you must confirm your flight well in advance of the scheduled departure. If you should experience difficulty with your flight, you should contact the travel agent and/or airlines. If it is a travel emergency you may contact the Office of Student Life for assistance in communicating with the appropriate travel agent to try to resolve the problem (419-383-4240). The Office of Student Life will aid the student as much as possible.

Funding Your International Experience

Dorothy Price Award

Ms. Dorothy Price, in her wish to support University of Toledo student involvement in medical missions around the world, has generously provided Students for Medical Missions (SMM) with funds to be used to alleviate the financial burden of such endeavors. Any University of Toledo student may apply for and receive a maximum \$500 reimbursement for expenses incurred for each medical mission in which they participate.

<http://www.meduohio.edu/depts/stuaff/stulif/smm.html>

MAP International Medical Fellowship

MAP-RDIF - International Fellowship Program. The MAP-Reader's Digest International Fellowship Program provides for 75% of the most economical regularly scheduled round-trip airfare to one site for senior medical students and resident physicians. Students serve with well-qualified physicians associated with rural or outlying mission hospitals, clinics, or community health programs recognized by MAP. The purpose is to offer clinical experiences in settings that will enable them to become familiar with the cultural, social and medical problems characteristic of developing countries and thereby encourage the students to seriously consider career involvement in Christian medical missions. A minimum of eight weeks must be spent on location. Application Deadline: June 1. Contact:

Ms. C. G. Rosser, RDIF Coordinator
Medical Assistance Program International (MAP)
PO Box 215000
Brunswick, GA 31521-5000
ph: (800) 225-8550
fax: (912) 265-6170
e-mail: mapus@map.org

<http://www.map.org/site/pp.asp?c=fsJRK2PGJpH&b=959755>

Christian Medical and Dental Society - James S. Westra Memorial Endowment Fund

CMDS offers a program of grants-in-aid through the James S. Westra Memorial Endowment Fund that provides selected medical/dental students with clinical experiences of two weeks or more in mission settings in developing countries. The awards cover transportation and project-related expenses up to \$1000. Applicants must be a CMDS member, a third or fourth year medical/dental student enrolled in a traditional four-year program, be able to show financial need. Application deadlines: June 1 and Dec 1. Applications can be printed out from the following website: <http://www.cmds.org/index.cgi?CONTEXT=art&cat=15&art=846>

Contact: James S. Westra Memorial Endowment Fund Coordinator
Christian Medical and Dental Society
PO Box 7500
Bristol, TN 37621
ph: (423) 844-1000
fax: (423) 844-1005
e-mail: gloria@christian-doctors.com

UCSD School of Medicine

<http://medschool.ucsd.edu/osa/resources/careers-med/intnatl/funding.html>

University of Washington International Health Group

www.depts.washington.edu/ihg/funding.htm

Packing and Baggage

Quick Tips

1. Check with an insurance or travel agent about insuring your luggage and other personal effects.
2. Avoid oversize and overweight baggage.
3. If you intend to travel before or after your international experience, make arrangements for storage of your luggage. Do not assume that your luggage can be stored at your housing location during dates outside of the international experience. Daily storage charges in train stations and airports can be quite costly.
4. Mark your luggage tags ahead of time with a clear indication of your name, address and phone number of your destination. Also keep this information inside your bags
5. Leave your detailed travel/flight itinerary with your family. Make sure they know when you are coming home!
6. Arrive at the airport AT LEAST two-and-a-half hours before departure. Go directly to the ticket counter to check your bags and learn about any flight schedule changes.
7. Keep your luggage close to you!

Airlines restrict the amount of baggage that passengers are allowed to carry. In general, passengers on international flights are allowed two bags (with weight restrictions). Requirements vary from carrier to carrier, and it is your responsibility to contact your airlines to determine these requirements. Please note that intra-country flights usually have lower limits. Therefore, if your international experience includes an in-country flight, you should pack less or be prepared to pay for extra baggage.

You will have to carry your own luggage. It is a good idea to pack your bags a few days before departure and try to carry them when you are tired. Eliminate items that are not essential. Don't take anything you would hate to lose. Leave at home all unnecessary credit cards, expensive jewelry, or irreplaceable family objects! Take a collapsible piece of luggage or leave room in your bags for items acquired abroad.

When packing your carry-on luggage we suggest you include:

- an extra pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses and cleaning solution
- a map or directions to your destination
- any medications you use (keep medications in their original labeled container to make customs processing easier; if any medications contain narcotics, carry a letter with you from your physician attesting to your need to take them)
- basic toiletries
- a sweater or sweatshirt
- a change of clothes. Do not pack any sharp items such as jackknives, scissors, nail clippers, etc. in your carry-on luggage.

Electrical service varies throughout the world. Most outlets will not accept the two- or three-pronged plugs that are standard in the United States. Therefore, if you intend to take small appliances you will need a set of adapter plugs as well as a voltage converter. These items can be purchased at electronics stores. Electric converters work for appliances up to 1600 watts, at least for a while, but good ones are expensive; don't be fooled by cheaper versions because they will burn up your appliance and perhaps cause a fire. Because of the voltage difference, U.S. appliances often short out, even with an adapter and transformer. It may be to your advantage to

buy electric appliances on-site. If you are bringing expensive electronic equipment such as a computer, obtain all necessary conversion information from a professional before departure.

What to Pack

Most travelers pack too much clothing. Take only what you expect to wear. Although public laundry service is available in most places where students will be staying, it is advised to bring dark colors that will not readily show the dirt. Your clothing should be hand washable and require little care. Learn the typical climate of the locations you plan to visit. You can acquire other inexpensive items in your host country that will have the advantage of fitting with current trends in fashion and make you less identifiable as a foreigner.

Financial Issues

Settle on the amount of money you will need while abroad. Make both weekly and daily budgets and stick to them. Learn the value of the local currency and look for special student rates and discounts. Friends with foreign experience, students who have participated in your particular international experience and evaluations in the Office of Student Life are excellent sources for advice on spending and saving money while abroad. For conversion tables, consult the foreign exchange listings in a financial newspaper such as the Wall Street Journal or <http://www.oanda.com/converter/classic>.

Before departure, you may wish to purchase small amounts of foreign currency (at least \$50 equivalency) from a U.S. bank to use for buses, taxis, phone calls, tips and other incidentals when you arrive.

In case of theft or loss, it is a good idea to carry some of your money as traveler's checks. To lock in a favorable exchange rate before you leave, you may wish to purchase travelers checks in the currencies of countries you plan to visit; however, traveler's checks in U.S. dollars are accepted at banks abroad. Leave a copy of the serial numbers of your traveler's checks at home; take another list with you separate from the checks themselves. As you cash in the checks, keep a tally of which ones remain unredeemed. Check with your international experience organizer and/or other people who have visited the site of your international experience—in some areas it is extremely difficult and timely to cash traveler's checks.

Most students access home funds through automated teller machines (ATMs) on the PLUS or CIRRUS network. Since many ATMs abroad will only access a checking account, do not leave your funds in a savings account before departure. Otherwise, ATMs are used the same way they are here: your home checking account is debited for your withdrawal and you draw out local currency. You are charged a service charge and the current exchange rate. Although this way of accessing money is convenient, you are warned not to use it as your only form of getting cash. Be sure to check with your bank at home, to ensure that your PIN is valid abroad and to clarify what sorts of charges will be applied. Likewise, check with your bank if you intend to use a check card to access your bank account.

Credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard and American Express are honored abroad, though not always as widely as in the United States. Credit cards make foreign currency transactions easy and are invaluable in a financial emergency. Take a credit card along, but use it wisely; plastic

can be dangerous because it is easy to overspend, service fees and interest charges can be costly, and the loss or theft of a card can inconvenience you, especially while traveling. Seek advice from the issuing company as to the card's applicability abroad and the billing rate for converting the amount of purchases abroad into dollars. Make sure to learn your PIN before departure. Contact your credit card company to find your credit limit and number to call in case your card is lost or stolen. Also let your credit card company know the dates and locations of your travel. When cards normally used in the U.S. suddenly begin being used abroad, some credit card companies will cancel the card to avoid possible fraud and other security issues.

Make sure to check with the issuing company that your ATM card and/or your credit cards are properly working. If they don't work properly the company will issue new ones, but this may take up to one week.

Although it is uncommon, students who stay abroad for a semester or longer may open a bank account abroad. You can discuss this option with your U.S. bank, with a foreign bank upon arrival, or consider an international service such as HTH Worldwide Bank (see <http://www.HTHWorldwideBank.com>).

It is strongly recommended that when planning your international experience you set a budget for yourself. A budget worksheet is provided for your convenience—[APPENDIX A](#). Please remember there may be other expenses not included on the worksheet depending on your international experience. The best way to assure yourself of adequate funds is to take more than the proposed budget.

If your money runs out and you have a credit card, you may be able to access funds from the following sources:

- If you are a Visa cardholder, you can obtain a cash advance directly from an ATM or bank. The daily amount available varies with the exchange rate, but averages \$150.
- An American Express office can, on presentation of your card, accept a personal check and issue you up to \$1,000 every 21 days for a 1% commission. This amount varies with each office. If you don't have a personal check, American Express can provide a counter check.
- A MasterCard may be used to draw either cash or MasterCard traveler's checks. If you do not have an ATM card or credit cards to access funds, you have several alternatives, all based on the assumption that someone at home can send you money.

Funds can be transferred or wired from home, but this process is very costly and complicated. Money can also be shuttled from a bank in the U.S. to its branch in a foreign city, if it has one. Banks, however, are notorious for keeping bankers' hours. One after-hours option is Moneygram (1-800-542-3590; <http://www.moneygram.com/>), a for-profit money transfer service with 23,000 agents in 103 countries; the service charges \$40 to send \$500 anywhere (more for larger amounts).

Using the local AMEX Office, you can receive funds in about a day, but high fees may apply. If all else fails, turn to the Bureau of Consular Affairs. After an investigation determines that an American is genuinely stranded, a consular official will seek one of your friends or relatives to

help. If no one can be found, an official may advance money, but a “limitation” will be put on your passport, signifying that it is to expire when you reach home and cannot be renewed until the loan is repaid.

Avoid the expense and hassle by bringing the necessary funds and sticking to a budget.

Health Recommendations and Information

Once you are accepted, you will need to schedule and complete a travel consultation at University Health Services (APPENDIX C of Student International Travel Policy). It is your responsibility to ensure that your routine immunizations are up-to-date; inquire whether there are recommended and/or required immunizations for the country/countries you will visit (including any countries you will visit that are not part of the international experience itinerary); and review educational issues relevant to your personal health and safety.

If you have any questions regarding medical problems, immunization requirements, or other health issues that may affect your successful and complete participation in the international experience, you are expected to consult with either your personal physician, University Health Services (419 383-5394) or the Lucas County Health Department (419-213-4100). Even if the countries you plan to visit have no required immunizations to enter, you should visit a health practitioner and then make your decision regarding your medical preparation. Do this at least three months prior to departure to nations in Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Latin America and the Middle East, and at least two months prior to departure for all other countries.

University Health Services provides extensive individualized free consultation to eligible University students. The clinic provides the following services:

- Information on health risks and requirements for each destination
- Counseling tailored to a traveler's lifestyle and medical history
- Required and recommended immunizations
- Educational materials

Some immunizations require a series or spacing for protection so allow as much time as possible for immunization. You can check the status of your routine immunizations through Student Information Systems (<https://www.sis.meduohio.edu/>).

Worldwide health information and country health requirements are also available through Web sites such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>) and the World Health Organization (<http://www.who.int>).

Students traveling to countries with low health risks (i.e. Western Europe and Australia) will need to make sure routine vaccinations are up-to-date before leaving the United States. Additional vaccines are generally not required for these countries with low health risks.

NOTE: Be sure to check with your insurance company, as some immunizations are not normally covered.

If you have a pre-existing medical condition that may require treatment or need prescription medication while traveling, be sure to bring an adequate supply in the original container (enough for the entire trip). Also bring a copy of your prescription including your physician's explanation of the condition with the generic and brand names of the medication and dosage information. Check with the embassies of the countries you expect to visit to make sure your medications are not illegal there. If you have a serious medical condition or life threatening allergies, it is strongly advised to carry this information on your person at all times (i.e. a medical bracelet). Do not plan on sending medications abroad since it will require customs paperwork and may be delayed in delivery. Maintain your usual dosage and pattern of taking your medication while you're abroad.

If you experience depression or anxiety about your international experience, it may present unique challenges that you may wish to discuss with a medical professional prior to departure. This may allow you to adjust your medication and/or discuss coping strategies.

Did you know...?

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

Insurance Coverage

The minimum requirements for insurance coverage are:

- Medical Expense (accident/sickness)—\$100,000 per incident
- Accidental Death/Dismemberment—\$10,000
- Emergency Medical Evacuation—\$50,000
- Repatriation of Remains—\$25,000

The following companies (as listed in the Student International Travel Policy) are approved by OSL:

- CISI (<http://www.culturalinsurance.com>)
- HTH Worldwide Insurance Services (<http://www.hthstudents.com>)
- CMI (<http://www.studyabroadinsurance.com>)
- IMG (<http://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com>)

REMEMBER THE OFFICE OF STUDENT LIFE REQUIRES DOCUMENTATION OF MINIMAL REQUIRED INTERNATIONAL INSURANCE COVERAGE.

Flight and travel insurance are not included as part of most insurance plans. Flight insurance may be purchased at most international airports. Flight insurance covers you only when you are on the airplane and will not remove the need for more inclusive coverage. Should you wish to secure travel insurance for your luggage and other personal effects or cancellation coverage, an insurance agent or travel agent can provide you with this information.

International Student Identity Card

Your regular student ID may not be honored in some countries. The International Student Identity Card (ISIC) gives students a single, uniform document recognized worldwide as proof of

student status. ISIC cards cost \$22.00 and are available for purchase at the University of Toledo Center for International Studies (located in University Hall Rm. 3210, ph. 419-530-8550). When you purchase an ISIC, bring a clear photo of your face (the size of your driver's license photo) and proof of your current student enrollment (such as a printout of your class schedule).

Card benefits vary widely from country to country, but may include student discounts on airfare, transportation, and accommodations, and reduced admission to museums, theaters, cultural events, and other attractions. If you purchase an ISIC you will be given an ISIC Handbook that lists exactly which nations recognize the card, types of discounts, and the addresses and phone numbers of student travel offices around the world. Besides the student discounts, the ISIC includes travel insurance (good for before and after your international dates), an emergency help line, and a communications system (phone card). If you should need to use the insurance benefits, you will need to have a copy of your card and proof of purchase for any claim.

Please note that the Office of Student Life has received varying reports on the usefulness of the ISIC. In some cases, the card was not honored as expected. The phone card can only be used at public phones. The greatest benefit is usually the reduced airfare.

Keeping Informed Before Departure

Between now and your departure, it is your responsibility to stay informed about developments in the country/countries where you will spend time (including any countries you'll visit that are not part of your international experience itinerary). You can access the U.S. Department of State's Web page (<http://travel.state.gov/travel/warnings.html>) for information about the country/countries where your international experience will take you. On that page you will find three different types of information: Consular Information Sheets, Public Announcements, and Travel Warnings. This information is updated based on current events worldwide. According to the Department of State:

- Consular Information Sheets are issued as a matter of course, and are available for every country of the world. They include such information as location of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in that country, unusual immigration practices, health conditions, minor political disturbances, unusual currency and entry regulations, crime and security information, and drug penalties. They can be found on the Web at http://travel.state.gov/travel/warnings_consular.html
- Public Announcements are issued as required, and are a means to disseminate information about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term and/or transnational conditions posing significant risks to the security of U.S. travelers. On the Web at http://travel.state.gov/travel/new_pa_list.html
- Travel Warnings are issued when the Department of State decides based on all relevant information, to recommend that Americans avoid travel to a certain country. On the Web at http://travel.state.gov/travel/warnings_current.html

We ask that you read this information carefully before you depart the United States.

Absentee Voting

If you will be absent during a U.S. election and wish to request an absentee ballot, you should do so at least two months before the election. To access the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA)

and instructions, see <http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/onlinefpca.html>. You can also check with your county registrar or the Secretary of State.

Income Taxes

If you will be absent during tax season and wish to file a tax return, you should make arrangements by issuing a Power of Attorney (<http://www.lawdepot.com>) for a person you trust before your departure. Alternatively, you can file for an extension with the IRS on the Web at <http://www.irs.gov/>.

Living Abroad

We encourage you to make every effort to take advantage of the many intercultural learning opportunities you'll have while abroad.

In this section of the guidelines, we're providing the information and tools you need to make the most of your experience.

These are some of the timeless tips for a speedy acclimatization and a more meaningful stay abroad:

1. Learn about your destination before you leave.
2. Learn the local language.
3. As soon as you recover from your jet lag, plunge into the local life in your new home.
4. Don't allow initial negative experiences sour you on the country.
5. Ignore complaints about the country.
6. Accept the challenge of establishing yourself in the new country and work hard to enjoy your stay.

Homestay

A homestay will allow one of the greatest opportunities for immersion into a different culture. Although living with a family can be one of the most rewarding aspects of your international experience, it will require flexibility. You will be faced with cultural differences and may have rules and regulations you need to accept and obey. These are not unreasonable and will remind you of the rules you had to obey when you were living at home.

The best advice we can give you is to be sensitive to the cultural differences of your host country. Remember that you will go through some changes that are part of the process of understanding a different culture. Living with a family is a meaningful way to integrate into and gain first hand experience in a different culture.

Living with a family is especially beneficial if you are trying to gain proficiency in a foreign language. You will socialize at a different level and will have the chance to meet local people. You may be by yourself in the homestay and need to develop certain skills to communicate more effectively.

Residence Hall

Some international experiences may have residence halls for the student to stay in. An aspect of staying in the dorms is that you may be surrounded by other U.S. students. This could limit your

opportunities to meet locals and experience the every day activities of living with a family or on your own.

Hostels

Originally built for cyclists, hostels are usually situated about 30 miles apart, outside major metropolitan areas. They're inexpensive but occasionally may be dirty, crowded, noisy, or unfriendly. Since the range of quality is so great, it's best to consult veteran travelers about specific hostels. Some look like hovels and insist on strict enforcement of regulations. Others ignore the rules, put on four-course feasts, and may be reconstructed castles in beautiful natural settings. These are the hostels you want to find (see <http://www.iyhf.org> and <http://www.hostels.com>).

Hostels usually cost from \$5 to \$20 per night. They vary in size from several hundred beds to a couple of rooms in a private house. Most hostels have dormitory-style sleeping areas (men and women may be assigned to different wings) and kitchen facilities. Some provide breakfast or dinner for an additional fee or you can do your own cooking in the kitchen. Pots, pans, dishes, silverware, blankets and pillows are provided. You have to bring your own sheets or sheet sleeping sack.

Hostels are usually closed during the day, and the usual limit for a stay is 3 overnights, but a longer stay may be arranged. Most provide storage facilities for your luggage. There are many advantages to staying in hostels, particularly if you travel by yourself. You can meet and make friends with other hostelers from all over the world! Membership costs \$25 and applications are available at <http://www.hostels.com/> and from most travel agencies. International Youth Hostel Handbooks are available for purchase at bookstores. These handbooks list the addresses and phone numbers of hostels, number of beds, the nearest train station or bus stop, whether laundry facilities are available or meals served, the approximate price ranges, and whether reservations are accepted or required.

Inexpensive Hotels

Clustered around railroad stations, inexpensive hotels are a great alternative for students visiting major cities. Rooms without private baths are considerably cheaper. It's financially worth sharing a bathroom and foregoing daily showers. Showers may cost extra. Pensioni—hotels that include breakfast with the price of a bed and may serve lunch and dinner at an extra charge—tend to be friendly and homey.

General Accommodations Information

The accommodations you plan to use while you travel should fit your budget, mode of transportation, goals for meeting people, and time limitations. Arrange for how you plan to travel abroad, how much time you have, and most importantly, what you really want to do. Make reservations in advance for peak season travel.

Use national tourist information offices and hotel booking services at train stations for assistance in locating accommodations. Student travel bureaus in many cities also have information on tourist homes, rooming houses and pensioni. To beat the hordes of tourists searching for bargain

hotels, make reservations well in advance if possible. Without reservations, look for a room early in the day.

Telephone

Before you leave, get a phone card from a U.S. telecommunications company that has access numbers abroad, and get the information you need. In general, local and long distance telephone usage is much more expensive in foreign countries. Calls made directly through U.S. long-distance companies are the least expensive way to call the U.S. - simply dial the access code for the country from which you are calling (<http://www.countrycodes.com>) plus the U.S. country code (always "1") followed by the appropriate U.S. area code and local number. You may find that local phone cards work better, but it is still advised to bring a U.S. card.

Many phones abroad require phone cards instead of coins. The cards are inserted into a phone slot and debited as you place calls. You can purchase them at post offices and other locations for a fixed price.

Avoid expensive calls from hotel phones; there is usually a surcharge.

Check with host families about phone use. Most families will object to your use of the phone, even for local calls because they are not free. Since your family may not discuss this situation in advance, it is important to ask what is expected in order to avoid hard feelings.

Be aware of the time at the other end of the phone. Even if you call at a reasonable hour where you are, it may be the middle of the night elsewhere! And if you promised to call your family upon arrival, just do it!

Mail

Mail can easily be sent internationally, but will take longer than mail within the United States. Letters should be marked "air mail" to ensure prompt delivery. If it is not marked, mail may be sent by ship and can take up to three months to be delivered. Mail sent internationally must include the destination country as a final line in the address to ensure delivery.

It is advisable to leave a copy of contact information with family members.

E-Mail

Accessing your UT e-mail account will vary according to the facilities available to you on site. You can access your UT account through the UT Health Science Campus remote home page (<http://webmail.meduohio.edu>). You may wish to obtain a commercial e-mail (Hotmail, Yahoo, etc.) since many students have indicated these accounts are easier to access from abroad than UT accounts. Since you will be responsible for knowing the information UT sends you through your UT account, make sure to forward all UT e-mail to any commercial e-mail account you may be using.

Most students use computers at cyber cafes or bookstores that have hourly rental rates.

Alcohol use and misuse

Although alcohol misuse may not carry the same legal penalties as use of illegal drugs, it can create dire circumstances for you, your participation in the international experience, your safety on site, and the future of the international experience. Remember that you are serving as an ambassador of UT, Ohio, and the United States. Although there may be no minimum or a lower drinking age in your host country, the customs regarding alcohol use may be very different from ours. You may be tempted to slip into - or maintain - patterns of alcohol misuse while abroad. Such use may occur for a variety of reasons: a mistaken impression of how alcohol is used in your new surroundings; cheaper costs in some countries; a lower minimum drinking age; more lenient laws against drunkenness; or a desire to experiment or fit in. Alcohol abuse and misuse are not tolerated anywhere in the world and will not be tolerated on UT-approved international experiences. Violation of local laws, UT regulations or the international experience policies may result in:

- i. immediate dismissal from the international experience
- ii. academic withdrawal from the University for the semester in progress
- iii. disciplinary action upon return to campus
- iv. suffering all legal consequences of the local jurisdictions

During your self-study orientation you should determine the host country laws on alcohol consumption. Most countries with the exception of those with religious prohibitions, tolerate social drinking. Intoxication, public drunkenness and inebriating behavior, however, are seldom allowed under any circumstances. Additionally, your insurance will not cover expenses incurred for injury resulting from your being legally intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol.

Alcohol misuse is defined as any use that is harmful or potentially harmful to self or others. Alcohol abuse is planned, systematic misuse of alcohol.

Alcohol misuse will not be tolerated on UT approved international experiences.

What is “alcohol misuse?” Alcohol misuse is present when:

1. A student misses any scheduled event because of the effects of alcohol consumption;
2. A student becomes ill due to the effects of alcohol consumption;
3. A student is disrespectful of others sharing the same or neighboring housing, due to the effects of alcohol consumption;
4. A student engages in inappropriate behavior toward other individuals that is the result of alcohol consumption;
5. A student engages in destructive behavior toward property that is the result of alcohol consumption;
6. A student does not abide by the laws of the country in which he or she is staying;
7. A student engages in behavior that causes embarrassment to the other members of the group, the faculty member(s) or the in-country host(s) as a result of alcohol consumption;
8. Students in a group encourage or ignore a fellow student who is misusing or abusing alcohol; or Transporting quantities of alcohol to international experience sites with the intent of sharing the alcohol with members of the group.

Students are encouraged to use good judgment if consuming alcohol at private homes or other accommodations during non- international experience hours. Student groups are encouraged to discuss issues related to alcohol abuse by other members of their group with the appropriate authority. Peers should look out for each other and keep each other safe.

If a student becomes incapacitated due to alcohol overuse, or if he/she is in need of medical attention, others are strongly encouraged to contact a local emergency medical service, appropriate authority immediately, in order to protect the health and well-being of the affected student. The individual needing medical attention will not receive disciplinary sanction in these circumstances, but rather will be referred for assistance to address issues of chemical use/abuse. Peers are encouraged to make the responsible choice to notify international experience or emergency personnel quickly. The person (or persons) making the call will not be subject to disciplinary action.

If you must drink—drink wisely. Do not endanger yourself, others, property, or the future viability of the international experience.

Illegal Drugs

(Adapted from the U.S. Department of State's Travel Warning on Drugs Abroad, http://travel.state.gov/travel/livingabroad_drugs.html)

University of Toledo has a zero-tolerance policy regarding the possession, use, manufacture, production, sale, exchange or distribution of illegal drugs by students. Violation of this policy may result in:

- i. immediate dismissal from the international experience
- ii. academic withdrawal from the University for the semester in progress
- iii. disciplinary action upon return to campus

Each year 2,500 U.S. citizens are arrested abroad. One third of the arrests are on drug-related charges. Many of those arrested assumed as U.S. citizens that they could not be arrested. From Asia to Africa, Europe to South America, U.S. citizens are finding out the hard way that drug possession or trafficking equals jail in foreign countries.

There is very little that anyone can do to help you if you are caught with drugs. You are operating under the laws of the host country and the regulations of the local institution. Neither the U.S. government nor the University of Toledo will be able to secure your release should you be caught.

It is your responsibility to know the drug laws of a foreign country before you go, because "I didn't know it was illegal" will not get you out of jail. Some laws may be applied more strictly to foreigners than to local citizens; therefore, don't assume that just because local people are using drugs, it's acceptable for you to use drugs. Information regarding drug penalties of your host country is available at the Web site, http://travel.state.gov/travel/warnings_consular.html.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of women arrested abroad. These women serve as drug couriers or "mules" in the belief they can make quick money and have a

vacation without getting caught. Instead of a short vacation, they get a lengthy stay or life sentence in a foreign jail.

U.S. Americans have been arrested abroad on drug charges for possession of an ounce or less of marijuana. The risk of being put in jail for just one marijuana cigarette, or for other illegal substances, is not worth it. Once you're arrested, the U.S. consular officer CANNOT get you out!

You may say "it couldn't happen to me" but the fact is that it could happen to you if you find yourself saying one of the following:

"I am a U.S. citizen and no foreign government can put me in their jail." "If I only buy or carry a small amount, it won't be a problem."

If you are arrested on a drug charge it is important that you know what the U.S. government CAN and CANNOT do for you.

The U.S. Consular Office CAN:

- visit you in jail after being notified of your arrest
- give you a list of local attorneys (The U.S. Government cannot assume responsibility for the professional ability or integrity of these individuals or recommend a particular attorney)
- notify your family and/or friends and relay requests for money or other aid - but only with your authorization
- intercede with local authorities to make sure that your rights under local laws are fully observed and that you are treated humanely, according to internationally accepted standards
- protest mistreatment or abuse to the appropriate authorities

The U.S. Consular Office CANNOT:

- demand your immediate release or get you out of jail or the country
- represent you at trial or give legal counsel
- pay legal fees and/or fines with U.S. government funds

If you are caught by local authorities it could mean:

- interrogation and delays before trial including mistreatment and solitary confinement (for extended lengths of time) under very primitive conditions
- lengthy trials conducted in a foreign language, with delays and postponements
- weeks, months or life in prison (some places include hard labor, heavy fines, and/or lashings), if found guilty
- death penalty in a growing number of countries (e.g., Malaysia and Pakistan)

Although drug laws vary from country to country, it is important to realize before you make the mistake of getting involved with drugs that foreign countries do not react lightly to drug offenders. In some countries, anyone who is caught with even a very small quantity for personal use may be tried and receive the same sentence as the large-scale trafficker.

A few words to the wise...

- A number of countries, including the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Mexico and the Philippines, have enacted more stringent drug laws that impose mandatory jail sentences for individuals convicted of possessing even small amounts of marijuana or cocaine for personal use. Once you leave the United States you are not covered by U.S. laws and constitutional rights.
- Bail is not granted in many countries when drugs are involved.
- The burden of proof in many countries is on the accused to prove his/her innocence.
- In some countries, evidence obtained illegally by local authorities may be admissible in court.
- Few countries offer drug offenders jury trials or even require the prisoner's presence at his/her trial.
- Many countries have mandatory prison sentences of seven years to life without the possibility of parole for drug violations.
- If someone offers you a free trip and some quick and easy money just for bringing back a suitcase...SAY NO!
- Don't carry a package for anyone, no matter how small it might seem.
- The police and customs officials have a right to search your luggage for drugs. If they find drugs in your suitcase, YOU will suffer the consequences.
- You could go to jail for years with no possibility of parole, early release, or transfer back the United States.
- Don't make a jail sentence part of your trip abroad.

Culture

What is culture?

Culture is:

- influences our expectations of what is appropriate or inappropriate
- is learned
- reflects the values of a society
- frames our experience
- provides us with patterns of behavior, thinking, feeling and interacting In summary, culture affects every aspect of daily life - how we think and feel - how we learn and teach - or what we consider beautiful or ugly.

However, most people are unaware of their own culture until they experience another! In fact, we don't usually think about our culture until somebody violates a culturally-based expectation or we find ourselves in a situation where we have the feeling that WE violated somebody else's cultural expectations, but are uncertain how.

The Iceberg Concept of Culture

Adapted from "Understanding and Coping with Cross Cultural Adjustment Stress" in R.M. Paige (Ed.), Education for the Intercultural Experience, page 160.

So much of what causes conflict or confusion is the part of the culture we can't see or touch. Consider an iceberg and notice the differences between the size above and below the "waterline."

The “tip of the iceberg” is the behavior and “external culture” that can be easily observed. The waterline marks the transition into beliefs. And the bottom portion of the iceberg represents the values and thought patterns that make up the “internal culture” which is subconscious and more difficult to observe.

Cultural misunderstandings and conflicts arise mostly out of culturally shaped perceptions and interpretations of each other's cultural norms, values and beliefs (those elements below the waterline). Entering another culture is like two icebergs colliding – the real clash occurs beneath the water where values and thought patterns conflict.

CULTURE can be defined as the ways in which people relate themselves to their physical and social environment, and how they express these relationships.

CULTURE SHOCK can be defined as "a set of emotional reactions to the loss of perceptual reinforcement from one's own culture, to new culture stimuli which have little or no meaning, and to the misunderstanding of new and diverse experiences" (Peter Adler). It can also be defined as the expected confrontation with the unfamiliar (R. Michael Paige). However, experts feel the name "culture shock" is misleading because it makes us think of a single moment of shock rather than the more accurate idea that culture shock evolves over a longer period of time and involves mixed emotions. Although a culture can be shocking at times, the reaction to differences is usually more subtle because it is the accumulation of many experiences in a new culture that forms our opinions. For this reason, many experts in this field prefer the term "culture fatigue."

The phrase “culture shock” was coined by Cora DuBois in 1951. Kalvero Obert, the first to systematically define and study culture shock, described it as being cut off from your own cultural cues.

“These signs and cues include the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life – when to shake hands and what to say when we meet people; when and how to give tips; how to make purchases; when to accept a date and when to refuse invitations; when to take statements seriously and when not.”

Adjustments

Participating in an international experience is an invaluable experience – a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to live in a foreign country, to learn its customs and culture, and to adapt to new surroundings. The success of your experience depends upon your own efforts to acclimate yourself to living and studying in a foreign culture. You will have moments of exhilaration and moments of real frustration. Gradually, as you come to terms with the culture, the frustrations will become fewer and fewer.

One of the greatest benefits of living in a foreign country is an added depth of appreciation and understanding of U.S. culture. The insights you will gain into yourself and your native culture will be of immeasurable value.

In adjusting to your study abroad environment, you will have to deal with real as well as perceived cultural differences. Keep in mind that people of other cultures are just as adept at stereotyping the U.S. American as we are at stereotyping them - and the results are not always complimentary.

The following, for example, are a few of the qualities (some positive, some negative) that others frequently associate with the “typical” U.S. American:

- outgoing and friendly
- informal and lacking in class
- sure to have all answers
- wealthy
- generous
- loud, rude, boastful, consciousness always in a hurry
- immature
- hardworking
- extravagant and wasteful
- disrespectful of authority
- racially prejudiced
- promiscuous
- politically naïve
- ignorant of other countries

While a stereotype might have some grain of truth, it is obvious when we consider individual differences that not every U.S. American fits this description. Keep in mind that this same thing is true about your hosts vis-à-vis your own preconceptions. Remember that you are an ambassador from UT and the United States. Avoid falling into any of the “ugly American” categories.

Survival Strategies for Adjusting to a New Culture

Going abroad requires that you adjust to the same sorts of things as if you would move to another part of the United States: being away from family and friends, living in an unfamiliar environment, meeting new people, adjusting to a different climate, and so on. These changes alone could cause high stress levels, but you will also be going through cultural adjustments and you may experience “culture shock.”

In another cultural context, you will often find that your everyday “normal” behavior becomes “abnormal”. The unspoken rules of social interaction are different, and the attitudes and behavior that characterize life in the United States are not necessarily appropriate in the host country. These “rules” concern not only language differences, but also such wide-ranging matters such as family structure, faculty-student relationships, friendships, gender and personal relations.

One way to handle these social and personal changes is to understand the cycle of adjustment that occurs. You can expect to go through an initial period of euphoria and excitement as you are overwhelmed by the thrill of being in a totally new and unusual environment. This initial period is filled with details of getting settled into housing, scheduling classes, and meeting new friends,

and a tendency to spend a great deal of time with other U.S. students, both during orientation activities and free time.

As this initial sense of “adventure” wears off, you may gradually become aware that your old habits and routine ways of doing things are no longer relevant. A bit of frustration can be expected, and you may find yourself becoming unusually irritable, resentful and even angry. Minor problems suddenly assume the proportions of major crises, and you may grow somewhat depressed. Your stress and sense of isolation may affect your eating and sleeping habits. You may write letters, send e-mails, or call home criticizing the new environment and indicating that you are having a terrible time adjusting to the new country. Symptoms include anxiety, sadness and homesickness.

However, the human psyche is extremely flexible and most students weather this initial period and make personal and academic adjustments as the months pass. They may begin to spend less time with U.S. Americans and more time forming friendships with local people. They often forget to communicate home. Finally, when the adjustment is complete, most students begin to feel they are finally in tune with their surroundings, neither praising nor criticizing the culture but becoming, to some extent, part of it.

Recognizing the existence of and your vulnerability to culture shock will certainly ease some of the strain, but there are also several short-term strategies you can use beforehand as well as on-site when you recognize culture shock and are faced with the challenge of adjustment.

Become more familiar with the local language

Independent study in the local language should facilitate your transition. Continue your study of the foreign language until your departure. Rent and watch foreign films to become accustomed to the rhythm and sounds of the language of your new home. Do not become so concerned with the grammar and technicalities of a language that you are afraid to speak once you are abroad.

Know your own country

You will find that people around the world often know far more about the United States and its policies than you do. Whether or not you are familiar with current events, particularly foreign policy, expect to be asked about your opinions and to hear the opinions of others. Start preparing now by reading newspapers and news magazines.

Examine your motives for going

Although you will certainly do some traveling while you’re abroad, remember that your international experience is not an extended vacation. Set realistic academic goals, particularly if you are studying in another language. Reduce your expectations or simplify your goals in order to avoid disappointment or disillusion, but don’t forget to study!

Recognize the value of culture shock

Culture shock is a way of sensitizing you to another culture at a level that goes beyond the intellectual and the rational. Just as an athlete cannot get in shape without going through the uncomfortable conditioning stage, so you cannot fully appreciate the cultural differences that exist without first going through the uncomfortable stages of psychological adjustment.

Expect to feel depressed sometimes

Homesickness is natural, especially if you have never been away from home. Remember that your family and friends would not have encouraged you to go if they did not want you to gain the most from this experience. Don't let thoughts of home occupy you to the point that you are incapable of enjoying the exciting new culture that surrounds you. Think of all you will share with your family and friends when you return home.

Expect to feel frustrated and angry at times

You are bound to have communication problems when you are not using your native language or dialect. Even if they speak English in your host country, communication may be difficult! Moreover, people will do things differently in your new home, and you will not always think their way is as good as yours. Once you accept that nothing you do is going to radically change the different cultural practices, you will save yourself real frustration. Remember that you are the foreigner and a guest in the other culture.

Expect to hear criticism of the United States

If you educate yourself on U.S. politics and foreign policies, you will be more prepared to handle these discussions as they occur. Remember that such criticism of U.S. policies is not personal. Don't be afraid to argue if you feel so inclined. Most foreign nationals are very interested in the U.S. and may know more about U.S. politics than you do.

Do not expect local people to come and find you

When was the last time you approached a lonely-looking foreign student with an offer of friendship? Things are not necessarily any different where you are going. If you are not meeting people through your classes, make other efforts to meet them. Maintain a sense of meaning to your life and allow time for leisure activities.

Talk to someone if you have a serious problem

The international experience leader or appropriate authorities are near at hand to counsel students with serious problems. Most have had first-hand experience with adjustment abroad and can be a real friend in times of need. Share smaller problems with other students since they are going through the same process and can provide a day-to-day support group.

Keep your sense of humor

Almost all returned students have wonderful stories about how much fun they had during their time abroad. If you have a terrible, frustrating day (or week) abroad, remember that it will pass. Time has a way of helping us remember the good times and turning those horrible times into fascinating stories!

Write a journal

One of the best ways to deal with cultural adjustments and to reflect thoughtfully on the differences between U.S. and the other cultures is to regularly write a journal. As you write, you'll think your way out of the negative reactions that may result from your unfamiliarity with language and cultural behavior. Journaling will force you to make meaningful comparisons between your own culture and the host country. When you return home you'll have more than

just memories, souvenirs, and photos of your time abroad; you'll have a written record of your changing attitudes and process of learning about the foreign culture.

Student Diversity

Students should be aware that, as in the United States, some societies and groups are more open to accepting diversity than others. People react differently to looks and behaviors they are not accustomed to or that appear unusual. Racial and ethnic minority students' reports are varied, from those who felt exhilarated by being free of the U.S. American context of race relations, to those who experienced different degrees of curiosity about their ethnicity. You may have to deal with the possibility of outright racism abroad, the possibility of insensitive attitudes and inadequate facilities for students with disabilities, or the presence of homophobia towards gay and lesbian students. You should be aware of the laws pertaining to homosexuality in other countries. Accommodations for students with children may be difficult to arrange or unavailable.

You may find that your "U.S.-Americanness" is a more important factor in determining your treatment abroad than your religious, racial or ethnic heritage, or physical abilities. While this may be difficult to deal with at times, some members of your host culture will see you as a representative of the U.S. first, and as an individual personality second.

The international experience coordinator can possibly provide information and descriptions of the local cultural realities that will assist you in your preparation to go abroad. Additionally, the coordinator may be able to put you in direct touch with other students who have studied in your particular country and can share their experiences with these attitudes and customs.

Special Note to Military Personnel

Remember that in today's world, there is a lot of tension between the U.S. Governments and many foreign governments. Sometimes that tension escalates into violence targeting representatives of the U.S. Government, particularly members of the military. If you are currently serving the in reserves of any branch of the United States Armed Forces, it is in your best interest not to advertise this in any way while traveling on your international experience. It is therefore, not a good idea to bring your uniform or other identifying articles to wear while on your international experience. It is also not a good idea to talk to strangers about it because you can never be sure of what their beliefs are, even if they seem to be outwardly agreeable. While participating in your international experience, you are traveling in the capacity as an American Medical Student, not a soldier or sailor. Drawing attention to yourself as a member of the armed forces not only puts yourself at risk, but the rest of the members of your group. You may be exposed to anti-U.S. Military talk and signage, but as a member of a medical mission, you are in no place to argue. It is imperative to stay quiet, turn the other way, and ignore statements against the U.S. Military--as personal as it may seem. There is nothing honorable about getting you and your group in danger over name calling.

Special Note to Women

In certain locations of international experience women may have a difficult time adjusting to attitudes they encounter abroad, both in public and private interactions between men and women. Some men openly demonstrate their appraisal of women in ways that many women find offensive. It is not uncommon to be honked at, stared at, verbally and loudly approved of, and, in

general, to be actively noticed simply for being a woman, and in particular, a U.S. American woman. Sometimes the attention can be flattering. Soon, it may become very annoying and potentially even angering. Local women, who often get the same sort of treatment, have learned through their culture how to ignore the attention. Many U.S. students find that difficult.

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

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

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

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

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

Dating and Sex

It is important to note that different cultures have different norms in regard to gender. Women and men should both be aware that the ways people interact vary widely by region and country, and issues around dating and sexuality can be particularly difficult in a cross-cultural setting. Such things as eye contact, the way one dresses, and body language can send very different messages by region and culture. Observing interpersonal interactions within a culture can be useful in helping you choose the way you communicate verbally and non-verbally with others in that country.

Meeting new, exciting, and different people may stimulate action that you would not take under similar circumstances in the United States. Don't be foolish in assuming that you are invulnerable because you are a visitor in the country and no one is judging your behavior. Keep in mind the following information from the CDC when assessing the risks of being sexually active in your particular situation: "Sexually transmitted diseases are among the most common infections with an estimated 18.9 million new infections annually in the United States and 340 million infections worldwide... Some STDs are more prevalent in developing countries (e.g., chancroid, lymphogranuloma venereum, and granuloma inguinale) and may be more likely to be exported into developed countries by travelers. International travelers are at risk of contracting STDs, including HIV, if they have sexual contact with partners in locales with high STD prevalence. Increased sexual promiscuity and casual sexual relationships tend to occur during travel abroad to foreign countries. Abstinence or mutual monogamy is the most reliable way to avoid acquisition and transmission of STDs. For persons whose sexual behaviors place them at risk for STDs, correct and consistent use of the male latex condom can reduce the risk of HIV infection and some STD transmission during sexual contact."

<http://www2.ncid.cdc.gov/travel/yb/utills/ybGet.asp?section=dis&obj=stds.htm&cssNav=browseoyb>

If you find yourself in a possible sexual relationship ask yourself why you are considering being sexually active and be aware of and set your boundaries and partner expectations. If you choose to be sexually active, use safe sex and protect yourself and your partner against unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Communicate clearly to avoid misunderstanding about the meaning and depth of the relationship. Take a supply of condoms with you since conditions of availability and purchase may be limited, and conditions of manufacture and storage may be questionable. Be responsible if using alcohol or other drugs because they can affect your behavior and ability to make decisions. Don't leave the country with anything you didn't bring: this means a pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, or AIDS.

Safety

Overseas Citizens Services

You should register with the U.S. embassy or consulate as soon as you arrive on site. To register, you will need to provide all the information on the front page of your passport. This will be helpful to you and your family if there is a need to locate you in the event of an emergency.

The Overseas Citizens Services of the Bureau of Consular Affairs is responsible for the welfare and whereabouts of U.S. citizens traveling and residing abroad. American Citizens Services and Crisis Management (ACS), a branch of OCS, assists in all matters involving protective services for Americans abroad, including arrests, death cases, financial or medical emergencies, and welfare and whereabouts inquiries. Log-on to <http://travel.state.gov/travel/overseas.html> for details on their services. The OCS toll-free hotline is 1-888-407-4747. If you are unable to use the toll-free number, call (317) 472-2328. An OCS duty officer is available for after-hours emergencies and during Sundays and holidays at (202) 647-4000.

Further information regarding the emergency services to U.S. citizens abroad and related U.S. Department of State services can be obtained at <http://travel.state.gov/travel/warnings.html>. You

should check this site regularly until your departure to ensure you are familiar with events on-site and any concerns of which you should be aware.

Emergency Assistance

A dedicated collect-call phone number provides emergency assistance to any members of the UT community who are abroad. You may call this number in an EMERGENCY. It will connect you directly to the UT Police Operations Desk.

If your host country emergency services are not readily available and you feel there is a threat to your personal safety, follow these procedures:

1. Dial the international access code for the U.S.*
2. Then dial 419-383-3770 (call collect if possible)
3. Identify yourself as an UT student and give the country where you are currently located
4. State your name
5. Tell the person what is wrong
6. Tell the person how to contact you
7. Respond to questions and listen carefully to any instructions

*To prepare in advance, learn the international access codes for calling to the U.S. from abroad at <http://www.countrycodes.com/>. Write that number on the back of the card.

The above procedures, produced on a wallet-size card, are given to all students prior to travel. Students should carry this card with you at all times while traveling. Be aware that the UT Emergency Assistance number is not a toll-free number; however, it will accept collect calls from anywhere in the world. Therefore, you should know how to place collect calls from your host country.

Document Safety

Leave at home all extra credit cards, keys, and other items not needed abroad. Make photocopies of your valuable documents and maintain an “emergency file” at home containing: airline ticket, passport, traveler’s checks, driver's license, blood type and Rh factor, eyeglass prescription, name of doctor and dentist, supplemental insurance policies, and the credit cards you take abroad. Leave one set at home and keep another with you in a separate place from the originals.

Leave a copy of your itinerary and contact information with family or friends at home and the Office of Student Life. Prior to departure you will be provided with the address and telephone number of where you are going to live.

NEVER pack your passport or any other important documents in your checked-in luggage or your carry-on luggage. Passports including visa page, credit cards, and money should be worn in a pouch or a money belt as close to your body as possible. Be aware that certain reading material or literature may offend officials of some countries.

If your passport is lost or stolen abroad, contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate for assistance.

Road Safety

Road safety is not something that you may necessarily think about in planning your study abroad experience, yet the Association for Safe International Road Travel (ASIRT) reports that road crashes will soon become the third greatest global health concern. In fact, death and serious injury from road crashes are among the greatest risk for healthy travelers. And, contrary to popular belief, 85% of such crashes occur in industrialized countries. You can minimize your risk by assessing road culture in your areas and implementing safe precautions.

ASIRT suggests that you:

- select the safest form of transportation in your area
- avoid late night road travel in counties with poor safety records and/or mountainous terrain
- understand how seasonal hazards affect road conditions
- know dates of local holidays (when road accident rates rise)

Additional suggestions for pedestrians are:

- be aware of traffic patterns in your area (they may be very different from the US)
- be especially alert at intersections
- wear reflective clothing if jogging at dusk or dawn (especially in locales where jogging may be uncommon)
- do not walk where you cannot be easily seen
- remember most road fatalities are pedestrians
- avoid hitchhiking

Additional suggestions for passengers are:

- avoid riding with a driver that appears intoxicated, irrational, or over-tired
- always ride in the back seat of a taxi cab
- wear seat belts whenever possible

Many students are tempted to rent cars, mopeds, or motorbikes during their time abroad, but often do so without regard to the risks of driving in a county whose rules of the road are unfamiliar. Therefore, while the Office of Student Life understands that some students choose to rent such vehicles largely for economic reasons, OSL does not recommend it. In the past, students abroad have been injured and even killed while riding in vehicles with drivers unaccustomed to local driving practices and traffic patterns. To prevent such accidents, some countries also limit the minimum age for drivers to rent a motorized vehicle. Also note that most countries will require an international driver's license, and driving without one could result in a severe penalty.

Traveling in some developing countries may pose additional road risks. Public transportation in same areas may consist of overcrowded, overweight and top-heavy minivans or buses. Taxicabs may not appear in good condition; drivers may or may not be licensed. Sidewalks may or may not be lit, or exist at all.

For more information about safe international road travel, visit <http://www.asirt.org>

Everyday Safety Tips

While you are abroad, you must exercise the same safety precautions you would at home. Don't take the attitude that you are protected and safe because you are anonymous and no one knows you. Don't travel with anything you are not prepared to lose. Use your common sense, avoid confrontations, try to blend in as much as possible, try to familiarize yourself with the area, ask the locals where the safe part of town is, and if you feel insecure in a certain place, don't go there. Do not expose yourself to unnecessarily dangerous situations.

It will be difficult to fully hide the fact that you're a foreigner. That may make you more vulnerable to theft and crime. While you can't control everything that happens to you at home or abroad, you can sway the odds. Some practical suggestions include:

- Don't stand out. While "safety in numbers" is a good rule to follow, traveling as an identifiable group of U.S. students will attract attention and possibly cause problems. Try to fit in with the surroundings and be "invisible". It is vital to remain alert within your environment – always be aware of what is normal and commonplace about where you live and work to immediately detect the unusual.
- In large cities and other popular tourist destinations, avoid possible target areas, especially places frequented by U.S. Americans. Avoid using U.S. logos on your belongings or clothing, especially athletic and collegiate wear.
- Keep all valuables on your person in a discreet place, preferably stowed away in a money belt or a pouch that hangs around your neck and under clothing. Do not leave valuables unattended.
- Do not wear expensive clothes or jewelry, or carry expensive luggage.
- Try to avoid arriving late at night in cities with which you are not familiar, and take along a reliable guidebook that lists resources and hotels/hostels.
- Try to stay on well-lit, heavily traveled streets. Avoid shortcuts through alleys. Stay in the middle of the sidewalk; avoid walking close to the street or buildings.
- Walk against the flow of traffic so oncoming vehicles can be observed.
- It is preferable to travel with another person. It is not advisable to sleep on a train if you are traveling alone.
- Do not agree to watch the belongings of a person whom you do not know.
- Do not borrow suitcases. Ensure that nothing is inserted into yours.
- Take off your luggage tags after arrival.
- In all public places, remain alert.
- Remember that hitchhiking can be as dangerous abroad as it is in the United States. Hitchhiking is not advisable.
- Never leave handbags/purses/baggage unattended and make sure they are locked. If the item has a shoulder strap, wear it crossing the strap over your body. Do not put valuables in the exterior pockets of book bags or backpacks or in bags that are open at the top.
- Travel light!
- Whenever possible, speak in the local language.
- Be street wise. Avoid deserted areas and exercise caution in crowds.
- Avoid impairing your judgment due to excessive consumption of alcohol.
- Be aware that pickpockets exist and tend to prey on people who look lost or who do not seem to be paying attention to their surroundings.
- Find out which areas are considered to be unsafe by the local people and avoid them.

- Keep up with the local news through newspapers, radio and television, and, in the event of disturbances or protests, do NOT get involved.
- Report suspicious events immediately: contact your leader or resident director if you observe suspicious persons within the premises of your educational environment. Act similarly if anything might indicate threats or an actual terrorist attack on the premises or on student activities.
- If you have been a victim of a crime, report this immediately to your group leader and the Embassy or local U.S. Consulate.
- Do not be free with information about other students. Be wary of questions from people not associated with your international experience. Do not give out your or anyone else's address or telephone number to strangers. Don't give away your trip schedule.
- Develop with your U.S. family a plan for regular communication so that in times of heightened political tensions or local incidents, you will be able to communicate directly with your family about your safety and well-being.
- Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct, and emergency procedures of the international experience.
- Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions and promptly express any health or safety concerns to the international experience staff or other appropriate individuals.
- Learn the location of and register at the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.
- Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well-being of others, comply with local laws, regulations and customs of the host country, community, institution and international experience, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
- Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining emergency health and law enforcement services in the host country.
- Be aware that you are responsible for your own decisions and actions.
- Make an agreement with your fellow students that you will look out for each other and practice peer responsibility.

When You Come Back

Returning from Your International Experience

For many students, meaningful cross-cultural learning occurs in the weeks and months following the study abroad experience. This section of the handbook details what you can do to ensure a smooth return to the U.S. and to continue your international and intercultural learning back home.

Customs Information

The government requires you to pay duty on goods purchased abroad and brought into the United States. You should know and understand these requirements before leaving so there are no problems when you return. You must declare expensive and/or foreign goods you will take with you before leaving the United States so that you are not charged duty on them when you return. If you are taking imported articles such as cameras, binoculars, watches, computers etc.,

register these foreign-made articles with Customs (before leaving the U.S.) to avoid extra duty charges upon re-entry.

Your exemption is \$800 (retail value) on articles acquired abroad, if:

- Articles are for personal use or gifts.
- Articles accompany you.
- You have been out of the country at least 48 hours (Mexico and U.S. Virgin Islands are exempt from the 48-hour limitation).
- You have not claimed the exemption within the preceding 30 days.
- Articles are not prohibited or restricted.
- Upon your return, group purchases together and keep receipts ready for Customs
- Inspection. Should you bring back foreign pharmaceuticals, have the prescriptions ready to present.

You must declare, at the price paid, everything acquired abroad, including gifts given to you and articles worn or used. If you fail to declare or understate the value, penalties may be severe. You cannot bring meat, fruits, vegetables and Cuban cigars into the United States.

Check “Know Before You Go” at <http://www.customs.ustras.gov/> for more customs information.

International Experience Evaluation

At the end of the international experience, all participants should complete an International Experience Evaluation Form—APPENDIX F of Student International Travel Policy—(this is separate from a “clerkship evaluation” required by the registrars office). Upon return to the University, students are to turn in an international experience evaluation to the Office of Student Life. The information you provide will be crucial in helping the Committee and the Office of Student Life make international experience improvements and will provide valuable information to students participating in future international experiences.

Post-Travel Health Recommendations

There are a few health issues you need to consider when returning from travel abroad:

- If you become ill within 12 months after traveling, make a medical appointment and inform your physician of the countries you visited while abroad.
- If you have been taking anti-malarial medication, continue doing so for four weeks after you return home.
- Schedule an appointment with a health care provider for a sexually transmitted disease check if you were sexually active while abroad.
- Remember that your study abroad accident and sickness insurance covers you only while you are abroad, so make sure you have adequate coverage in the United States.

Culture Shock Revisited

As difficult as it is to adapt to an entirely new culture, it can be just as challenging to come back home after being away for any period of time. It is best to know what you might encounter in order to prepare for this adjustment period.

Expect to experience some measure of reverse culture shock. Reverse or re-entry shock can be defined as the unexpected confrontation with the familiar (R. Michael Paige). Remember that the world at home hasn't stopped for you while you were gone. Upon your return home, you may find you aren't the only one who has changed during your absence. Everyone and everything else will have changed too! Remember to take time to readjust slowly.

You'll notice that you may think differently about the United States. You'll spend time reflecting on the differences between the U.S. and the former host country, just as you did when you left. Friends and family may be interested in stories or photos for a while, but "really don't understand." It may be difficult to express your feelings in words. Remember that many people may have difficulty relating to what you are saying because it hasn't been a part of their experience.

Continuing Your Experience

There are countless ways to use the interests and skills you gained while abroad. Be creative in applying what you learned so your growth can continue:

- Talk with students from your international experience or others who have studied abroad.
- Develop a Web site for the international experience.
- Talk about your experience to clubs and groups, including adults and children.
- Join international organizations and clubs.
- Continue your foreign language training or take courses with an international focus.
- Write for your local paper.
- Continue studying your host country by taking related courses, reading international papers, viewing films and videos, writing research papers, etc.
- Volunteer to work in the community or on campus. Help organizations that support community service and development. Look for groups working with immigrants, refugees, or the aged that can use your skills of listening, patience and empathy.
- Integrate the best of the two cultures. Don't feel you must give up one at the expense of another.

APPENDIX A

**University of Toledo
International Experience**

BUDGET WORKSHEET FOR INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Use this worksheet to estimate the total cost of your experience.

Program Fee \$ _____
(See program's Web page to determine what is included in this fee)

Accommodations \$ _____
(If not included in the program fee)

Meals \$ _____
(If not all meals are included in the program fee)

On-site Transportation \$ _____
(If not included in the program fee)

Field Trips \$ _____
(If not included in program fee)

Tuition & Fees \$ _____

Airfare \$ _____

Books and other Educational Supplies \$ _____

Passport (\$85) and Passport Photographs \$ _____
(See <http://travel.state.gov/passport/index.html>)

Visa(s) \$ _____

Other Required Documents \$ _____

Immunization(s) \$ _____

International Student Identity Card \$ _____
(Optional; see <http://www.statravel.com>)

Spending Money \$ _____

TOTAL ESTIMATED COST \$ _____