



CENTER FOR
GLOBAL
EDUCATION
MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

Pre-Departure Handbook

2014-2015

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Welcome Letter

Dear Global Citizens:

Congratulations! You are about to embark on an experience of a lifetime that you will never forget. Global Education is a privilege that a growing number of American college students experience. In fact, you are one of approximately 283,000 US college/university students who study overseas either for an academic year, semester, and summer or 1-2 week study tour.

As you think about your future and career interests, it is becoming more and more essential that US college/university graduates possess a global perspective and awareness in order to be successful in the workplace. Prospective employers from a variety of professional sectors are searching for employees who acquire this awareness and knowledge especially as a result of first-hand experiences. Not only will the formal knowledge that you acquire, but also the personal experiential learning achieved outside the “classroom walls” prove to be some of the most valuable portable skills to bring to the work environment.

Part of the success of your upcoming journey is in the planning and preparation before your departure to ensure a positive beginning and outlook. The materials provided in this handbook are important before you leave as well as upon arrival. Read through the information carefully, take notes and make a list of additional questions, if necessary.

Reading through this handbook will prepare you to make a “soft landing” and easy transition and adjustment into the new culture and society into which you are entering as a short-term visitor and participant. The better prepared you are, the easier it will be for you, your family, and friends!

Ultimately, no written materials or suggestions are going to fully prepare you for what lies ahead. Remember to expect the unexpected. The best that you can do is to commit yourself to keeping an open mind, remaining flexible, and being patient as you adjust to your new environment. Most importantly, remember to have fun!

On behalf of the Center for Global Education (CGE), we wish you a safe journey!



Victor Betancourt
Executive Director, Center for Global Education



IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Center for Global Education (CGE)

Suite 1004, Rowley Hall, Marymount University
2807 N. Glebe Road, Arlington, VA 22207

Phone: (703) 284-6744

EMERGENCY Phone: (571) 265-7295

Fax: (703) 284-5998

Email: studyabroad@marymount.edu

Study Abroad Advisor: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Academic Advisor/Department Information

Name of Academic Advisor: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Dean of School: _____

Office of Financial Aid

Marymount University
Rowley Hall, 1st Floor
2807 N. Glebe Road, Arlington, VA 22207
Phone: (703) 284-1530
Fax: (703) 516-4771
E-mail: financial.aid@marymount.edu

Office of Campus & Residential Services

Marymount University
Berg Hall, 1st floor
2807 N. Glebe Road
Arlington, VA 22207
Phone: (703) 284-1608
E-mail: ocrs@marymount.edu

Office of the Registrar

Marymount University
Rowley Hall, 1st Floor
2807 N. Glebe Road, Arlington, VA 22207
Phone: (703) 284-1520
Fax: (703) 516-4505
Email: registrar@marymount.edu

BEFORE YOU GO



Alice Carpenter • March 2014 • Amsterdam, Netherlands

CHECKLIST: Things to do BEFORE Leaving the US

- ❑ **Read this handbook:** Read this handbook in its entirety. You will be held accountable for knowing and abiding by the policies.
- ❑ **Get your passport:** Apply immediately if you do not already have a passport that will be valid for at least six months after you return to the U.S. See **page 10**
- ❑ **Get your visa:** Refer to the U.S. Department of State website (<http://travel.state.gov/foreignentryreqs.html>) to find entry requirements for your host country. See **page 11**
- ❑ **Complete ALL post-acceptance requirements:** Review the essential forms list and *be sure to read each form very carefully before signing.*
- ❑ **Visit Financial Aid:** Students intending to use financial aid toward the cost of study abroad must schedule an appointment with the Financial Aid Office. See “Important Contact Information” on **page 4**
- ❑ **Make flight arrangements:** Do not make flight arrangements until your acceptance to the program is confirmed and you have verified your required arrival date. See **page 17**
- ❑ **Get immunizations:** Refer to the website of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov/travel) to find health and vaccination requirements for your host country. Make an appointment with the Arlington Travel Clinic or other health professional at least six weeks prior to departure to obtain necessary immunizations.
- ❑ **Get prescriptions:** Get copies of all medical and vision prescriptions to carry with you. If possible, have your doctor fill your prescriptions to cover your entire stay abroad. See **pages 22-23**
- ❑ **Make photocopies:** Make copies of all of your important documents, including your passport, visa paperwork(if applicable), airline tickets, prescriptions, etc. Leave one set of photocopies with a family member or friend in the U.S. and take the other set with you, separate from the originals.
- ❑ **Make financial arrangements:** Develop a budget for your time abroad and plan for multiple ways of accessing money. If you plan to use your debit or credit card from the U.S., check with your bank or credit card company to verify locations of use and extra fees that may apply. See **pages 12-16**
- ❑ **Power of Attorney:** Consider arranging to give a family member or friend “Power of Attorney” to handle some of your financial affairs in your absence. See **page 13**
- ❑ **Arrange for phone calls:** If you plan to use a U.S. long-distance calling card while abroad, contact your phone company to obtain access codes and rates. See **pages 39-40**
- ❑ **Plan ahead for Registration:** Make arrangements with a friend, family member, or academic adviser to register you for courses at Marymount for the semester after you return, in case you are unable to register while abroad. See **page 32**
- ❑ **Arrange for housing:** Complete any applications necessary to obtain housing overseas and upon your return to Marymount. See **page 44**
- ❑ **Confirm your permanent address:** Verify that the CGE and Registrar have your correct permanent address to mail bills and other information.
- ❑ **Register with the US State Department Smart Traveler Enrollment Program**
<https://step.state.gov/step/>

ESSENTIAL FORMS

CGE Documentation

You must leave a copy of the following forms with the CGE prior to your departure. Check each once you have turned them in to keep track of what you have given us:

- Signed Acceptance Confirmation Form
- Signed Waiver & Release Agreement Form
- Signed Medical Self-Assessment and Release Form
- Signed Study Abroad Accommodation Form (if applicable)
- Signed Course Approval Form
- Signed Study Abroad Permission to Release Information Form
- Flight Itinerary
- Copy of your Passport Identification Page
- Copy of your Visa (if applicable)

Documents to Take With You Abroad

- **This Handbook:** This very handbook is an essential companion for your study abroad experience. Make sure you read it thoroughly before you go and keep it handy for reference while you are abroad. You will also receive a PDF version of this document before you leave.
- **International Student Identification Card (ISIC):** You can get an International Student Card (ISIC) from <http://www.myisic.com>. It is the only document internationally accepted as proof of your student status. Although you are not required to carry an ISIC card some of the benefits of ISIC are:
 - Access to special student airfares;
 - Student prices on coach, rail and ferry travel abroad;
 - Access to the worldwide student travel office network;
 - Savings on accommodation, sightseeing and entertainment;
- **Course Approval Form (With Back-up Courses):** For ease of reference, make sure you carry your approved list of courses with you. This will be particularly useful if courses you have selected become unavailable and you have to refer to your back-up selections.
- **Copies of Documents/Spare Passport Photos:**
 - Passport photos will always be required – we advise you to take some with you so you don't suddenly have to find a photo booth in an unknown city!
 - Passport
 - Visa (if applicable)
 - ACE Travel Assist insurance card & personalized letter
 - Travel Guard account information
 - Acceptance letter from host institution or program providers
 - Copy of birth certificate
 - Driver's license can also be a useful form of identification and proof of age

RESEARCH YOUR DESTINATION

Researching your host country is one way to reduce culture shock (**Page 41**), and also to be a responsible traveler and citizen of the world. Here are some questions to consider about the culture and history of your host country. Try to know the answers to as many of them as you can before you leave. If you need help finding the answers, use the resources listed in this handbook. Also, talk to international students on campus, or students who have already studied abroad. If you haven't met any of them, make an effort to do so! The CGE can help connect you.

- **Politics:** Who is the country's leader? What is the country's current political structure?
- **History:** What is the history of the relationships between this country and the U.S.? Who are the country's most important national heroes and heroines? Who are the most widely admired public figures today?
- **Language:** Are languages spoken besides English? What are the political and social implications of language usage?
- **Holidays:** What are the national holidays? Why are they celebrated? Will universities, banks, post office, or other businesses be closed?
- **Religion:** What is the predominant religion? Does religion play an important role in the political and social life of the average citizen? What are the most important religious observances and ceremonies? How do members of the predominant religion feel about other religions?
- **Social norms:** What is the attitude toward drinking? What things are taboo in this society? What are some of the prevailing attitudes toward divorce? Toward extra-marital relations? Toward homosexuality? Toward contraception?
- **Laws:** What is the legal age for drinking alcohol? What other laws might affect your daily life (driving, traffic, drugs, visa regulations, employment)?
- **Family:** Are typical families nuclear or extended? At what age do people normally move out of their parents' home?
- **Shopping:** Is the price asked for merchandise fixed or are customers expected to bargain? How is the bargaining conducted? If, as a customer, you touch or handle merchandise for sale (including such things as fruit or linen tablecloths), will the seller in the store or market think you are knowledgeable, inconsiderate, within your rights, completely outside your rights? Other?
- **Daily life:** How do people organize their daily activities? What is the normal meal schedule? Is there a daytime rest period? What is the customary time for visiting friends? What is the normal work schedule?
- **Communication:** How long do people talk when they use the telephone? Do friends call each other frequently to chat? How do people feel about having other people make long-distance (overseas) calls from their private house phones?
- **Food:** What foods are popular and how are they prepared?
- **Clothing:** What is the usual dress for women? For men? Are pants or shorts worn? If so, on what occasions? Is it o.k. to wear jeans or tennis shoes in certain settings? Is it o.k. to wear sleeveless shirts? What are expectations for dressing for class, a family dinner, or a more formal event?

- **Medical care:** How is medical care structured (private or public hospitals)? How is medical insurance structured—am I covered by my U.S. insurance, or does the host country government require additional insurance?

Cultural Education

For some assistance in answering the questions above and to learn about the culture of your host country, take advantage of these tips and resources:

- Review your host institution/program providers website in depth
- Read the local newspapers in your host country: <http://www.refdesk.com/paper.html>
- Research some of the items in the list above using the following resources
 - State Department Website: <http://travel.state.gov/content/travel/english.html>
 - CountryReports.org: <http://www.countryreports.org/>
 - CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>
 - Host Country's US Embassy Website (most countries have a cultural center in DC as well): <http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/dpl/32122.htm>
 - Center for Disease Control for your country: http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list/?s_cid=cdc_homepage_topmenu_003
- Reach out to Marymount's Office of International Student Services to see if there are any international students studying at Marymount from the country or region you will be travelling to. If so, they may be able to introduce you to the culture and language.
- Visit cultural centers in the Washington, DC area to partake in events prior to your departure and practice the language – simply Google search your country + cultural center + Washington, DC to find out if there is one!
- Buy a good travel book to research your host country:
 - Lonely Planet Travel Guides : <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/>
 - Let's Go Travel Guides: <http://www.letsgo.com/>

Language Education

Regardless of your current language proficiency, it is a good idea to strengthen your skills or introduce yourself to the language of your host country prior to departure. Some familiarity with the language not only shows respect to the individuals in your host country, but it will also strongly enhance your experience abroad even if your classes are offered in English.

If you purchase a travel book for your host country, you may find some basic phrases that are helpful for getting around. It is also a great idea to purchase a small pocket dictionary/phrase book for the language of your host country to help with quick translations on the go. To supplement these hard copy materials, we recommend these free, online language resources to use in preparation for departure as well as while you are abroad:

- <http://www.openculture.com/freelanguagelessons>
- <http://www.fluentin3months.com/free-links/>
- <http://www.omniglot.com/links/resources.htm>
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/>

Be Informed of US News & Events

Even though you are studying outside of the United States, you may be surprised to find that the U.S. is a common topic of conversation in foreign countries. In fact, you may find that the individuals in your host country know more than you about what is going on in the U.S.! Many study abroad alumni have returned to say that one of the main things they wish they had done in preparation for their time abroad was to spend more time reading the US news so that they could knowledgeably respond to the questions of their in-country friends and have more well developed opinions on controversial issues. In combination with the host country education you seek out prior to your departure, this intentional awareness of your own country will allow you make insightful comparisons between countries and cultures and ultimately get more out of the study abroad experience.

So, just as educating yourself about the culture, politics, and customs of your host country shows respect, so does educating yourself about what goes on in the US. To show up in your host country completely clueless of what is going on in the US and how it might relate/impact the individuals you are interacting with abroad demonstrates a self-centeredness and lack of awareness far too many people outside of the US attribute to Americans; challenge this stereotype and show up informed! Remember: When you study abroad, you are not just an ambassador for Marymount University; you are an ambassador for the U.S.

PASSPORTS

Passport Basics

A passport is an official government document proving your citizenship. You are required to show your passport when entering and departing a country, including the U.S..

Passports are generally valid for ten years. ***Apply for your passport as soon as possible if you have not already done so.***

Your passport must be valid for the full duration of your stay abroad plus six additional months after your return. If it is due to expire within this period, you should renew your passport now. Many foreign consulates will not issue a visa if your passport is due to expire within six months of your application. It can take six to eight weeks to process a passport and it costs between \$100 and \$200, depending on how quickly it is needed. Passport applications can be obtained at U.S. government and postal offices. Refer to the U.S. State Department Web site, passports section, for more info.

If You Lose Your Passport or Your Passport Gets Stolen

If your passport gets lost or stolen while you are abroad, you will need to contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate immediately. For a list of U.S. Embassies and Consulates, go to <http://www.usembassy.gov/>

For easier replacement of lost or stolen passports, we recommend that you carry copies of your passport in checked luggage. Also, leave a copy with your parents and the CGE as back-up. When

replacing a passport, if you offer a copy to the embassy, it tends to speed up the replacement process. After an identification investigation, the consulate will usually issue you a three-month temporary passport. Never pack your passport in your luggage. When traveling from country to country, keep your passport with you at all times, preferably in a money belt or attached somehow under your clothes. Once you have arrived at your program “home base,” you will want to locate a safe place to keep your passport.

VISAS

Visas

A visa is a permission to enter and stay in a foreign country. The government of the country you are going to—not the U.S. government—issues a visa. Visas are usually stamped into your passport, so you’ll need your passport before you can obtain a visa.

As soon as you receive your acceptance packet from your host university/program provider, make sure to check with the foreign consulate of your destination country on their visa requirements for students. You can also do so by using the following link: www.embassyworld.com

Each country has different rules and charges for visa applications. Some countries may require a medical examination. Fees will vary by country. Please call the nearest consulate in Washington, DC for specific application and procedures.

U.S. embassies are generally located in capital cities only; travelers in other locations will have to visit the U.S. consulate in the capital city nearest them.

Country-specific information is available for every country of the world. The website <http://travel.state.gov/travel> includes such information as location of the U.S. Embassy or consulate in the subject country, unusual immigration practices, health conditions, minor political disturbances, unusual currency and entry regulations, crime and security information, and drug penalties.

If you are not a U.S. national, you will need to determine if additional steps are needed from the Consulate Offices of the host country. In addition, check in with an advisor in International Student Services, to be sure that your papers are in order for re-entry into the U.S.

WORKING WHILE ABROAD

All countries have strict regulations governing the ability of foreign nationals (including students) to work while residing in the country. Often, foreign students are not allowed to work at all, and restrictions may be included with your visa. Even in countries which do allow foreign students to work part-time, you may find that jobs are scarce, it’s difficult to combine work and studies, or both.

In any case, do not plan on working while abroad as a way to cover your expenses during your study abroad program. Your host university may restrict you from working even if it is legal for you to do so. At best, a part-time job while studying abroad should serve as a supplement to your

personal expenses and travel budget. The best source of information about work options in your host country is your overseas program coordinator.

Working without legal permission will, in many countries, be considered grounds for deportation. Ignorance of the law is not accepted as an excuse. Be sure to check with your overseas program coordinator for updated details about work regulations in your host country.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Tuition

All Marymount students who study abroad must pay tuition, plus the program's housing fees (see below). Regardless of whether they are paying out-of-pocket, by scholarships, or through financial aid, students will be billed for these charges by Marymount, and the CGE will then pay the study abroad program – students may not pay the program directly, except for the application fee and the required deposit if applicable. A few of MU's approved programs have tuition rates higher than Marymount, and students are responsible for making up the difference in cost in those cases.

Financial Aid

Any financial aid that a student receives for studying at Marymount will automatically be applied to the study abroad program. If you will be receiving financial aid, it is very important to meet with the Office of Financial Aid and fill out a Direct Deposit Authorization. These forms will allow most aid to be deposited directly to your checking account, and will allow any aid which cannot be directly deposited to be mailed to the person you designate (family member or friend).

Failure to maintain full-time status while abroad could jeopardize your enrollment at Marymount and your eligibility for financial aid. **Students receiving financial aid may need to pay back a portion of their aid if they do not maintain a full-time course load.**

Housing Fees

Fees vary greatly among programs, depending on the location of the program, the strength of the dollar with regard to the local currency, the type of lodging, the number of meals provided, etc. The most accurate information regarding room and board options and costs are available on each program's individual website. The program's housing fee will show up on your bill from Marymount.

Airfare

With the exception of a few program providers who offer to purchase group flights for their students, students will typically pay for their own airfare.

Health

All MU students are enrolled under the ACE TravelAssist Health Insurance Program during their time abroad. Some programs may also include health insurance in their fees. If you have a pre-existing condition, you may wish to continue your personal insurance coverage abroad. Please contact your insurance company for international options.

Deposit

Students should pay the required deposit directly to their program provider/institution; this charge will subsequently be deducted from the student's Marymount semester bill. Note that deposits are nonrefundable. If a student withdraws from a program for any reason, the deposit will be lost. Please note that paying the program deposit authorizes the provider (whether Marymount or a third party) to incur expenses on that student's behalf; should a student withdraw from a program for any reason after paying the deposit, he or she will be responsible for any nonrecoverable expenses. These expenses can include (but are not limited to) housing fees, and partial or full tuition.

Miscellaneous Expenses

These may include passport and visa application fees, textbooks, immunizations, special course fees (see below), personal expenses, and optional travel. These expenses are the responsibility of the student.

Course Fees

Some programs, including Saint Louis University in Madrid and Lorenzo de Medici, charge additional fees for course materials, orientation programs, and/or course-related travel. These fees are not included in the tuition, even if the course is required, and students are responsible for paying them.

Penalties and Fees For Late Withdrawal

Deposits are nonrefundable; should a student withdraw from a program for any reason, the deposit will be lost. Also note that paying the program deposit authorizes the provider (whether Marymount or a third party) to incur expenses on that student's behalf; should a student withdraw from a program for any reason after paying the deposit, he or she will be responsible for any nonrecoverable expenses. These expenses can include (but are not limited to) airfare, housing fees, and partial or full tuition.

Power of Attorney

While studying abroad, Marymount University strongly recommends that students obtain a Power of Attorney that allows a family member, friend, or bank officer to sign Financial Aid or other Student Accounts checks received by Marymount University. This action provides that, in the case of a check needing to be deposited, a representative of the student can deposit the check into their account without having to worry about mailing the check back and forth from the student's host country. A copy of the Power of Attorney should be placed on file at the Cashier's Office. More information about the process will be discussed at the mandatory information meeting before your departure.

Exchange Rates

For the first-time international traveler, exchange rates and foreign currencies can be confusing. When you "exchange" money, you are buying foreign dollars/pounds/euros with your U.S. dollars. International markets determine the relative value of the dollar. When the foreign currency is stronger than the dollar, basic items such as food cost more. Learn to shop the European way: in small quantities. **You will find great shopping while abroad, but think like: "if that sweater costs £50, it's really \$100!" Until you learn to think in your host country's currency, you should convert prices to dollars mentally before purchasing an item that "looks" like a bargain.**

Expect the exchange rate to vary from day to day. We suggest that you monitor the dollar's progress regularly prior to your departure (see the "Foreign Exchange" section of *The Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post* or *New York Times* or visit www.xe.com/ucc). This can help you determine how much money you will want to exchange/withdrawal when you arrive and each week. Keep in mind that your purchasing power improves when the relative price of the currency decreases. When you withdraw money from an ATM, that day's rate is usually charged.

Exchanging Money Before you Leave

You generally get a more favorable rate of exchange when you buy a currency in the country where it is used. However, it is wise to change a small sum into the appropriate foreign currency before you leave the U.S. so that you will have at least a minimal amount of cash upon arrival. Amex has foreign currency, you may exchange money at the airport, OR you may exchange money upon arrival at the host country airports. Not all branch banks keep a supply of foreign currency on hand, but if you give them a couple of days notice, they will order it for you. Should you decide to order currency through your local bank, be sure to ask about rates and commission charges. You may be better off waiting until the airport or upon arrival. Use the ATM to get money as soon as you arrive.

Overseas Banks

It is sometimes quite difficult for foreigners to open bank accounts outside the U.S. due to lengthy residency requirements and demanding high minimum balances. As a result, it is not advisable to attempt opening an account. Consequently, you should not bring money to your host country or have money sent to you in the form of a personal check, whether certified or not. No bank will cash the check unless you have an account with them and there is no easy way to get one.

ATM Card

You can usually use the cash card from your U.S. bank throughout the world. Multinational banks like Citibank have branches in major worldwide cities. Otherwise, check the back of your ATM card to see what network your card is on. **Cirrus** and **Plus** are perhaps the most readily accessible network. Since ATM transactions are converted at close to the wholesale bank rate for the day, you get a very good rate of exchange. Be warned, however, that there can be a substantial charge for each transaction. If you bank with a credit union or a bank located only in your hometown, check to see how you can access your money overseas. Check with your bank for information on fees and networks.

Credit Cards

It is advisable to bring a credit card(s) with you. As with an ATM card, you get an exchange rate close to that given to banks. (Be warned, however, that some banks have announced a 2-3% surcharge on credit card purchases outside the U.S. Check with your bank.) In emergencies, you can also use your charge card for cash advances. To do so may require a special "PIN" number, so check with your Credit Card Customer Service prior to departure. A 7 – 10 day waiting period may be involved, so check EARLY! This type of transaction is costly: you begin incurring interest from the moment you get the cash advance and interest continues to accrue until you've paid off the cash advance. **Visa** and **MasterCard** are the most widely accepted credit cards.

Before departure it is a good idea to call the Customer Service Representative for those credit cards you plan to use to advise them IN ADVANCE that you are traveling abroad. Sometimes major credit cards deny approval of purchases, because making charges outside the U.S. "breaks your typical spending pattern."

How to Wire Money

A fast and efficient way of wiring money is by American Express. The sum is taken to an American Express Office in the U.S. and is wired directly to the American Express Office in the host country. You can then collect the funds after showing proof of identity. Alternatively you may wish to use Moneygram or Western Union, which allows you to send money from certain retail establishments in the US (including some supermarkets) overseas.

Budgeting While Abroad

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

- Gather information on program costs. Find out how much is included in your exchange, or what costs are expected for direct enrollment. Know what is included in your fees, and what additional costs you may have to pay while "settling in" (bed linens, toiletries, replacements for things you left at home).
- Determine how much you and your family are willing to budget for discretionary expenses (travel, entertainment, etc.) and incidentals (laundry, postage, etc.).
- Expect some items to be more expensive overseas. This may include food, books, and "luxury" items, such as electronics and clothing.
- Check the exchange rate and guidebooks for your host country. Guidebooks typically list costs for accommodations, transportation, entrance fees, and other items that will help you estimate for personal travel.
- Use the sample budgeting sheet on the "Budgeting While Abroad" page of our website: <http://www.marymount.edu/global/students/financial/budgeting.aspx>
- Look for ways to cut costs. Evaluate your personal spending habits and where you are willing to cut back to afford other things while abroad.

VOTING FROM ABROAD

If there are important elections scheduled while you will be abroad, you can vote by absentee ballot as long as you make the proper arrangements. Contact your local state government website for more information about absentee voting.

FLIGHTS & TRAVEL IN COUNTRY

Flights

Please do not make flight arrangements until you receive your official acceptance from your host university/program providers. You should refer to the required arrival date and the final exam schedule of your host university/program when securing an airline ticket.

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

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

General Travel Tips

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

- If you are interested in learning more about traveling during weekend and school breaks, the best resources will be the student travel agencies listed in this handbook and people in your host country.
- You may find helpful information in country-specific guidebooks (Lonely Planet, Fodor's, etc.). These resources can provide helpful information about discounts, flights, and train/bus passes, as well as historical and cultural information about locations around the world.
- Because you may not know your specific travel plans before leaving the U.S., some students suggest waiting to purchase items, such as inter Europe flight tickets, until after you arrive overseas. **PLEASE NOTE:** Eurail passes must be purchased in the U.S.
- U.S. Citizens: You should register with the U.S. Embassy in your host country AND in the countries where you will be traveling. You can do so on-line at http://travel.state.gov/travl/abroad_registration.html.

- Non-U.S. Citizens should register with the Embassy of your country of citizenship in your host country, and in those where you will be traveling.

Travel Agencies & Travel Resources

- STA Travel www.statravel.com
- Student Universe www.studentuniverse.com
- World Travel www.worldtrav.com
- Prestige Travel (travel to Africa) www.prestigetour.com
- WSA Europe (weekend travel tours in Europe) www.wsaeurope.com
- ISTC (International Student Travel Confederation) www.istc.org

SAFETY

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

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

General Safety Tips:

- Act like you know where you are going and what you are doing. If you are lost or need to check a map, step into a café or other business, but be aware of your surroundings and your belongings.
- Backpacks, purses, and camera bags can be a target. Wear them snug to your body and keep them closed. Carry your wallet in your front pocket rather than your back pocket. If confronted, give up your valuables instead of fighting the attackers.
- Don't carry large amounts of cash, and don't carry all of your money and documents in one bag.
- Be alert in crowds, especially in train stations or at tourist attractions. Thieves may use distractions to their advantage.
- Don't carry your passport unless you absolutely need it or are crossing international borders. A photocopy of your passport will probably suffice for everyday use.
- Check the security of a hotel or hostel before booking a room by making sure your items can be secured in a safe or locker. A few extra dollars saved on cheap accommodations will not cover the replacement costs of a passport, camera, etc.
- Never drive or ride with anyone under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

- Do not stay out excessively late at night alone or with strangers.
- Don't hitchhike.
- When traveling at night by bus or train, attach your bag to the luggage rack or your seat by using a lock or strap from the bag.
- Do not take valuable items with you overseas, such as expensive jewelry, electronics, etc. They may get lost, stolen, or damaged while traveling.
- If possible, don't travel alone. Stay in public places, travel with a friend, and always let someone know where you are.
- When making travel arrangements abroad, please consider safety and do not sacrifice safety for cost. There are some means of transportation that may be cheap but may also come with a greater degree of risk.
- Stay informed about developments in your host country and around the world. Read the U.S. Department of State travel information at (<http://travel.state.gov>). If the U.S. decides to launch military or economic action, you will immediately become a representative of your country. If your destination is having political or military demonstrations or attacks, stay away from all sites of such activity.
- Talk to students, faculty, and others who have visited or lived in the areas where you will be traveling. You will be able to discuss this with other students and the CGE staff at the pre-departure orientations.

Anti-American Sentiment

There may be times, for reasons of personal safety, that you do not want to be marked as an American or otherwise identified as an easy target for theft or assault. If you are concerned about anti-American sentiment, you may want to refer to an organization such as The Glimpse Foundation (<https://www.uakron.edu/dotAsset/ac19152b-4d56-45e3-a43f-42680e274150.pdf>) They have published a Cultural Acclimation Guide called "American Identity Abroad," which "aims to help study abroad students navigate the sticky issues that surround being a citizen of the world's only superpower."

How does the CGE monitor safety?

- The CGE pays special attention to the U.S. Department of State website and receives immediate notification of international travel announcements and warnings. Travel warnings are issued when the State Department decides, based on all relevant information, to recommend that Americans avoid travel to a certain country. The CGE staff reviews this information, along with a variety of other reliable sources, to have up-to-the minute information on any countries where students are or will be studying.
- All students studying abroad are required to submit several forms, including an Emergency Contact Form, which enable the CGE to aid in an emergency.
- All students studying abroad are automatically enrolled with ACE Travel Assist Health insurance and Travel Guard Insurance, which includes emergency assistance, evacuation, and repatriation. You should carry your insurance card with you at all times. (See **page 29** of this handbook for more details.)

- All students are provided with an emergency contact card before departure. You should carry this with you at all times.

EMERGENCIES

Emergencies Abroad

An emergency is an occurrence or situation that poses a genuine and sometimes immediate risk to student health and well-being. Student safety is our highest priority. If you have an emergency abroad, first contact your on-site program coordinator. If there is an emergency that requires you to contact the CGE, you may call (703) 284-6474 during business hours, or Marymount University Campus Safety at (703) 284-1601 (available 24 hours/day). If you can only make one call, you may call the Director of the CGE at his EMERGENCY ONLY line: (571) 265-7295. If you would like a family member or friend to be available to travel to your host country in case of an emergency, make sure they have valid passports.

Emergencies at Home

People need to know how to get in touch with you while you are away. You should have a conversation with your family before you leave to discuss what you will do in the event that there is a death or serious emergency in your family. Please be sure that your host university coordinator and the CGE have your complete contact information, and inform both if there has been a family emergency.

U.S. Embassy Assistance

U.S. Embassy personnel provide routine citizenship services (such as passport replacement) and emergency assistance for U.S. citizens abroad. They also provide assistance to U.S. citizens abroad and their families in cases of death, serious medical emergency, and legal difficulties. You should locate the U.S. Embassy closest to your location by visiting <http://usembassy.state.gov>.

STUDENT ACCESS, SPECIAL NEEDS & CONCERNS

Students with Disabilities

Accessibility and accommodation for students with emotional, mental, learning, or physical disabilities may vary at different program sites. If you have a disability that will require accommodation while abroad, or if you think you may qualify for disability support and do not yet have it, you must meet with Hope Fisher in Student Access Services (703-526-6925) to complete the "*Study Abroad Disability Accommodation Request Form*" before your departure. This must be done in a reasonable timeframe so as to allow for satisfactory evaluation of the requested accommodation and adequate time to implement the accommodation, if any. If you do not disclose your disability or request accommodations in a timely manner, MU may not be able to assess and accommodate your needs nor communicate with your host institution in time to accommodate your needs before you go abroad. One resource to check out is Mobility International USA, an

organization dedicated to international opportunities for individuals with disabilities
<http://www.miusa.org>.

Gender Issues

Adjusting to another culture can pose some challenges for interactions and relationships. Often what students perceive as appropriate behavior between the sexes, or acceptable gender roles, are not the same in other cultures. Take cues from natives of your host country to gauge what is appropriate. Overall, when evaluating the gender differences in your host country, both male and female students should keep an open mind and see these differences as an opportunity to gain insights into a new culture.

Female students in particular may find their behavior restricted. Because many cultures around the world have been exposed to images of the U.S. and American women in movies, TV shows, and advertising, foreign nationals sometimes make stereotypical assumptions about American women. Female students should be aware of how their dress, body language, and eye contact communicate to people in their host culture.

All students should consider the following:

- Talk to women or men from your host country for advice on appropriate standards of dress, body language, and dating.
- Trust your instincts. Don't do something that makes you uncomfortable. It is better to look a little silly than to get into an unpleasant or dangerous situation.
- Be careful to avoid situations where drugs could be slipped into your drink. Buy your own drinks, and keep them in sight. Be assertive and don't be afraid to say "NO"
- Immediately contact a staff member at your host university or the CGE if you find yourself in an uncomfortable, hostile, or threatening situation.

Helpful sites:

- <http://studenttravel.about.com/od/womenstudenttravelers/a/womentips.htm>
- http://www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/travel/women/index.shtml#women_travel_advisor

Race & Ethnicity

Although you may think of race and ethnicity as universally defined, they are very much culturally determined. While abroad, you may find that you are an ethnic minority or majority for the first time in your life, or you may find that the ethnic identity you have always felt to be an integral part of yourself is viewed in a completely different way in your host country. If you are visiting a country where you have ethnic or racial roots, you may find you are expected to behave according to the host country norms in a way that other Americans of a different background are not. Or, you may find that you are considered an American first, and your ethnic or racial identity is considered unimportant.

In many countries, there are homegrown ethnic or racial conflicts, and you may find you are identified with one group or another because of your physical appearance, until people discover

you are American. It is extremely unlikely that any of these situations will involve any threat of physical harm to you. However, by researching the situation of your host country, you can prepare yourself for situations you may encounter. Upon request, the CGE staff will try to put you in contact with a student or staff member at Marymount who has experience in your host country and can address these issues with you.

Helpful sites:

Minority Students:

- <http://www.diversityabroad.com>

Black/African American Travelers:

- <http://www.blacktravels.com/index.html>
- http://www.allabroad.us/discrimination_afam.php

Asian/Pacific Islander Travelers:

- http://www.gloaled.us/plato/statement_apia.html
- http://www.allabroad.us/discrimination_apia.php

Latin-Hispanic American Travelers:

- http://www.allabroad.us/discrimination_hispam.php

Native American Travelers:

- http://www.allabroad.us/discrimination_natam.php

Sexual Identity

You may already identify yourself as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, or you may still be exploring these issues. In any case, you may find the social climate, laws, and personal interactions of your host culture differ from the U.S. Keep in mind that many of the ideas held in the U.S. about sexuality and sexual orientation are culturally-based and may be different in your host country.

In some cultures, Western understandings of “gay” and “straight” do not exist or do not carry the same importance; people in same-sex relationships may not see this behavior or preference as an identity. In other cultures, there may be active social movements for civil rights for sexual minorities or there may be prohibitions on behavior.

In preparing to study abroad, it is important for you to research the LGBT climate of the countries you will be visiting. Even if you do not plan to have sexual relations while abroad, you should be informed about specific laws pertaining to sexual behavior and sexual/gender orientation. When doing research, you should try to ascertain:

- The legality of same-sex sexual behavior
- The age of consent for sexual behavior
- Restrictions on freedom of expression for individuals who identify as LGBT
- Anti-discrimination laws (national or local)
- Sodomy laws

Through research, you will learn to better understand the culture of your host country and be better prepared to face any environment you encounter abroad.

Helpful sites:

- <http://www.rainbowsig.org/us-students-abroad/>
- <http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/index.html>
- <http://www.gaytravellerguide.com>
- <http://www.studyabroad.msu.edu/forms/glb.html>
- <http://www.ilga.org>
- <http://www.iglhrc.org>
- <http://www.nyu.edu/lgbt>

HEALTH & EMERGENCIES

HEALTH

We want you to enjoy your experience abroad, and hope that your health and safety will be your top priorities. Here are some simple precautions to maintain your health and enjoy your study abroad experience:

Before You Leave

- **Assess your own health and any requirements for your host country.** Some countries will require you to have a physical exam due to visa regulations. Others may require or recommend vaccinations. See the Center for Disease Control for more information on your host country (www.cdc.gov). It is a good idea to make sure you are up-to-date on Tetanus and Hepatitis A and B vaccines. This is practical advice that is generally recommended in and outside the U.S.. The CGE defers to the advice of your regular physician on assessing your individual health needs while overseas. Any action you take concerning your health is solely your responsibility.
- **Consult a travel clinic at least six weeks prior to your departure.** Make an appointment with Traveler's Medical Service (<http://www.travelersmedical.com/>) at least six weeks before your departure. Although most family healthcare providers administer routine immunizations, they may not stock specialized vaccines for your destination. Not only do these location do pre-travel healthcare, they also provide post-travel medical care for those who may need it.
- **Update your prescriptions.** If you take prescription medication (including birth control pills and prescription contact lenses), make sure you have an adequate supply for the duration of your stay. Please make sure that you carry these prescriptions in their originally labeled bottle to alleviate any confusion or delay in customs. For these medications, obtain statements from your prescribing doctor which are signed and dated by your doctor, indicating the generic and brand name of the medication, any major health problems, and recommended dosage. This will be vital information in case of an

emergency. Finally, if you regularly carry an EpiPen for allergy reasons, make sure you have checked the date for expiration as EpiPen's do lose potency if expired.

- **Pack wisely.** Pack your prescriptions and medications in original packaging in your carry-on luggage. Make sure the name on the prescription appears the same as on your passport. It is also helpful to have notes from your physician explaining the need for the medication. Customs officials may ask to see this.
- **Plan for long-term medication needs.** If you take prescriptions on a regular and long-term basis, or if you will need anti-malarial medication, we strongly encourage you to talk with your health care provider to obtain medication for the duration of the program well in advance of departure. If you are having trouble getting your prescription filled for the appropriate length of time needed, you should request the pharmacist contact your medical insurance company. It is customary for insurance companies to override a typical 30 day or even 90 day prescription and allow a one-time refill of 180 pills, if not more, if a person will be out of the country for an extended period of time. If prescriptions cannot be filled for the length of your program, investigate if your prescription can be filled abroad OR how you will be able to have prescriptions filled in the U.S. and have the medication shipped abroad. If your medication has to be shipped, check with customs officials in your host country to check for any restrictions.
- **Document any medical conditions.** If you have asthma, allergies, diabetes, or any other condition that may require emergency care, you should also carry a card, tag, or bracelet that identifies your medical condition. If you have (or have had) any medical or psychological conditions, be aware that the stress of adjustment overseas may cause the recurrence of conditions for which you have been successfully treated in the past. Please be sure to indicate these on the Student Medical Self-Assessment Form submitted to the CGE upon your acceptance to your program.
- **Pack necessities.** Certain products may be more expensive or difficult to obtain overseas, or the brands and products may be unfamiliar. Thus, you may want to consider taking the following items with you: your preferred over the counter pain reliever or cold medication, contact lens solution, extra pair of glasses/contacts, syringes for medical injections, and feminine hygiene products. If you are bringing syringes for a medical condition, you will need a note from your primary provider so customs is aware the syringes are being used for legal purposes.
- **Practice abstinence or safe sex.** We encourage students to be cautious about their sexual activity while abroad. HIV and other sexually-transmitted diseases are prevalent everywhere in the world. In some countries, the availability of contraception is restricted, so if you plan to be sexually active, please come prepared.

While Traveling

- **Avoid alcohol and caffeine.** Remember that jetlag can worsen by dehydration. Caffeine and alcohol contribute to dehydration, so avoid them and drink plenty of other liquids, such as juice or water. The extra vitamins in juice will also help boost your immune system.

- **Reset your body's internal clock.** Try to adjust your sleep schedule to the time zone of your destination. If you start doing this a few days before you depart, it may help reduce jetlag.

When You Arrive

- **Take care!** The first few days or weeks in your study abroad location will be very exciting and you may be tempted to overdo it. Remember that in addition to your cultural adjustments, your body will be going through a physical adjustment to a new climate, time zone, food, etc. Eat reasonably, drink plenty of water, and get plenty of rest.
- **Drink water.** You may want to start with bottled water if you are unsure of the tap water in your new environment. This will help reduce the likelihood of becoming dehydrated or having diarrhea.
- **Look for health services.** Make sure you know how to access health services, both for routine care and emergencies. This information may be included at your in-country orientation. If not, contact your overseas program coordinator.
- **Use moderation when drinking alcohol.** If you consume alcohol, consume it in moderation and follow the Marymount University alcohol policy. (See **page 35** of this handbook for more details.) Because students under 21 are legally permitted to drink in many countries, students are sometimes tempted to overdo it overseas. Alcohol can dehydrate you, further stress your body, and impair your judgment, all of which add strain and increase risk.

MENTAL HEALTH

Adjusting to another culture typically involves stress for study abroad students, and stress is the number one cause of exacerbation of a preexisting mental illness. The CGE and your overseas program coordinator can help put you in touch with the appropriate resources for counseling and advice.

If you have a mental health condition, it is important that you go to your doctor prior to departure, sign a release for medical records, and take a copy of your records with you on the study abroad program. This will aid the process if you need to meet with a doctor overseas. Marymount's overseas health insurance provider, ACE Travel Assist, can help identify a counselor abroad in advance so that medical records can be released directly.

Additionally, the Marymount University Counseling Center is available to you anytime from overseas. They have staff on-call for any emergencies during non-office hours. You can reach them during business hours at (703) 526-6861. If you have been seeing a counselor in the Counseling Center, keep them in the loop about your study abroad plans from square one. This way you can come up with a plan of action for your time overseas and know in advance of how you can reach them if you need to.

HEALTH INSURANCE

All students who participate in study abroad programs coordinated by Marymount University's CGE are provided with limited health and accident insurance through the ACE Travel Assist Health Insurance Program (www.acetravelassistance.com). ACE Travel Assist provides health coverage for accidents, sickness, medical conditions that may arise, and emergency medical reunion. Students will be given an ACE Travel Assist membership card during the pre-departure orientation sessions as well as a personalized letter indicating their coverage by ACE for the dates of their program to use as needed when applying for a visa (if relevant) and/or when entering their host country. They will also be emailed an electronic copy of both of these documents for quick access if needed while abroad. Students should carry the hard copy card and the personalized letter in their carry-on bag so that they have immediate access to it when going through customs in their host country upon arrival. The physical card should also be carried by students at all times once they arrive as it includes emergency phone numbers and instructions for submission of claims.

EMERGENCY TRAVEL INSURANCE

Marymount University has partnered with Travel Guard to provide 24-hour support of an extensive range of medical, security and emergency travel assistance services. As Premier Assist member, students now have access to a full range of benefits and services through one of the world's most trusted global assistance providers. Students will be given a Travel Guard Insurance card during the pre-departure orientation sessions, which they should keep with them at all times upon arrival into their host country. An electronic copy of the card will be emailed to them as well. For the specific travel assistance services you seek or for questions regarding your membership, call their 24-hour Assistance Center, (877) 272.5742, to get help with:

- Emergency medical assistance
- Security services
- Emergency travel assistance
- Worldwide travel assistance
- VIP personal assistance services
- Lost luggage assistance

In the event of an emergency or for general assistance before or during your trip, please call (877) 272.5742, (715)342.2401 (International Collect) or email PAservices@travelguard.com. To ensure a prompt response when calling or emailing, provide your name, organization name and membership number from the front of your membership card.

PACKING

Packing

Airline luggage requirements are very strict. **Check with the airline to find out luggage restrictions prior to departure.** All airlines strictly enforce luggage rules and penalties for overweight luggage are very expensive. Airlines have the authority to refuse to carry luggage that

does not meet their regulations. We strongly recommend that you pack only one suitcase with wheels and a backpack. **Over packing is the most common challenge for students.**

Students are advised to obtain insurance for their personal belongings, especially for anything of value such as a computer or camera. It is best to obtain insurance before departure because most theft occurs in transit. Insuring personal belongings is the students' responsibility. Some students' parents already have insurance coverage for personal possessions. Students should first find out if their parents' insurance will cover their own items while in transit and abroad.

Items banned and permitted in U.S. airlines:

- Liquid and gel toiletries in three-ounce containers or smaller are allowed if they are in a clear plastic, quart-size or smaller ziplock bag.
- Eye drops; saline solution, prescription and nonprescription medicine and personal lubricants are allowed.
- Large bottles of liquids and gels including shampoo, lotion and toothpaste are allowed in checked baggage only.
- Drinks, liquids and gels purchased in airport stores inside the security checkpoints can be carried into plane
- Lighters are banned in carry-on bags and in checked luggage.

Tips for Effective Packing

- Pack as light as possible. Experienced travelers recommend you pack your luggage, remove half of the contents, reevaluate, and remove half again. Find some great tips at: www.onebag.com
- Do not take more than you are willing and able to carry on your own.
- Consider leaving valuable or sentimental items (such as expensive jewelry or electronics) at home.
- Pack all of your important documents (passport, tickets, prescriptions, contact information, etc.) in your carry-on bag. Do not pack it where it will be difficult to access at the border or at customs upon arrival.
- Pack some basics (change of underwear, toothbrush and toiletries) in your carry-on in case your luggage is delayed or lost.
- Consider taking clothes that can be layered for warmth, as homes and residence halls abroad may not be as warm during winter or cool during summer as in the U.S.
- Laundry equipment and detergents abroad may be more expensive and harsher on your clothes, and some countries do not use dryers. Try to bring sturdy clothes in fabrics that are easy to wash and dry. Anything that needs to be dry cleaned should be left at home.
- Pack clothes that can be mixed and matched, instead of bringing several individual outfits.
- Make sure you understand your host country's standards of modesty and/or neatness in dress. In some countries, students dress more formally than in the U.S., and shorts and sweats may be strictly for use at the gym or beach. Some tourist sites (such as churches) may not allow visitors to enter wearing shorts or sleeveless shirts. Some upscale clubs may not allow you to enter wearing tennis shoes or t-shirts.

- Most universities abroad will provide computer access for their students. While some student take their laptop computers abroad for convenience, others choose to leave theirs at home to avoid the chances of damage/loss, or the extra weight it adds to their luggage.
- Allow room for personal purchases, gifts, and other things you may acquire while abroad. Barring any baggage restrictions, consider packing a small, empty duffle bag in your luggage or buying a small bag overseas to allow for extra items on your return.
- When packing, try to use every available space – you can save space by stuffing shoes with socks, etc. Keep in mind you will most likely be purchasing things in country that you will need space for on the way home.
- Pack at least one nice dressy outfit.
- Don't forget to bring any prescription medication or contact lenses/solution, etc. that you might be taking - these are difficult to buy in-country without a prescription.
- Pack comfortable closed-toe walking shoes.
- Remember that baggage allowance on transpacific or transatlantic flights may differ among the flight companies and that it is usually higher than on inter-continental flights. Some international airlines also have restrictions on the content and weight of luggage.
- Verify restrictions with the specific airline you are using, including connecting airlines. These requirements differ by airline and change frequently. Consult your airline's website for the current policy. For federal guidelines regarding carry-on baggage, see <http://www.tsa.gov/>
- Make sure your covered luggage tabs are labeled with your name, address and phone numbers. Also, place your contact information inside each piece of luggage.
- Don't carry all of your valuables in the same place.
- Leave a copy of your itinerary, passport identification page, driver's license, insurance documents, medical prescriptions and credit cards with friends or family. Pack another set of copies in a place separate from where you carry the originals.
- Bed sizes abroad are often different to the USA - don't take bed linen with you - it might not fit.
- Electrical goods may not work on foreign voltage systems. Pack converters and adapters for things you cannot do without – chargers for cameras or cell phones – and consider chipping in with roommates to purchase items like hair dryers or irons when you arrive.
- Take a few small mementos of home with you - photos of friends and family will brighten your room and remind you of what you're temporarily leaving behind.
- In addition, T-shirts or tokens from Marymount or your hometown make nice gifts to new friends in your host country!

For a comprehensive, item by item packing list, visit:
<http://www.diversityabroad.com/packing-study-abroad>

WHILE IN COUNTRY



Antonia Sanclemente • March 2014 • Silcily, Italy

CHECKLIST: Things To Do WHEN YOU ARRIVE ABROAD

- ❑ **Call home:** You may not be able to call home immediately upon arrival, but do call or email someone at home as soon as possible to let them know you arrived safely.
- ❑ **Send contact information:** Send your overseas address, phone number, Skype name, and email to the CGE so that we can send you important information.
- ❑ **Keep in touch with academic contacts:** Correspond with your Study Abroad Coordinator, Marymount University academic advisor, department dean, and college contacts if you change your class schedule after arriving overseas. Keep copies of those correspondences so that you have record of what has been approved.
- ❑ **Save your work while studying abroad:** Save copies of all academic work (class notes, syllabi, reading lists, tests, papers, etc.). At the end of your program, bring these materials home in your carry-on luggage. Your academic department may need to see your work before approving your transfer credit from the university abroad.
- ❑ **Arrange to have your transcript mailed to the CGE.** Make sure your main contact at your host institution has an accurate list of the courses you have taken, and will send your transcript to the CGE at the conclusion of our program. After we assess your transcript, you will be contacted to pick up the transcript and submit it to your academic department.
- ❑ **Register for your Marymount classes for the next semester you will be back on campus:** In March and October, the CGE sends email reminders to register for courses for the semester following your return. It is your responsibility to email your academic adviser to release your advising hold while you are abroad.

ACADEMICS

Differences in Academic Systems

Part of studying abroad is learning how different academic systems function and understanding some of the comparative advantages and disadvantages of the American system. Although every host country will be somewhat unique, there are a few general points to keep in mind:

- **Support services** and office hours are generally less extensive than what you may be accustomed to in the U.S. You must actively seek information as to how the services and office hours work at your host university.
- **Course requirements** will typically not be as extensive as you are accustomed to in the U.S. Other academic systems do not usually offer continuous assessment through quizzes, short papers, midterms, labs or discussions and reading assignments. You may be given only a recommended reading list and then have 70-100% of your final grade based on only one or two projects or a comprehensive exam. Students may be expected to work very independently. If you find that you have a lot of time on your hands, make sure that you clarify the course requirements with your professor so that you do not put yourself at risk of missing assignments or failing a course. Undergraduates must receive at least the equivalent of a C- at Marymount University in order to receive transfer credit for your coursework abroad.

- **Accessibility of professors** will often be less than in the U.S. Professors may have limited or no office hours. Nevertheless, you should make every attempt to speak with your professors if you have questions about course content or academic performance expectations.
- **Teaching styles** will vary. In most other university systems, professors are not considered responsible for motivating students or for ensuring good academic progress. You may encounter professors who only read prepared lectures, or who require a great deal of note learning. Classroom norms also vary across cultures. Be sure you understand policies and expectations regarding class attendance, late arrival, participation in discussion, and the importance of lecture details.
- **Language issues** may be of concern if you are taking classes in a foreign language. The first few weeks will require extra effort. In the beginning, you may want to focus on listening comprehension. Before class, ask your professor if you can record lectures, or ask a fellow student if you can borrow his/her notes. Another helpful strategy is to join or create study groups with other students.

Course Registration Before Going Abroad

Regardless of your study abroad plans, the CGE recommends that students go ahead and register for courses at Marymount for the semester they plan to be abroad as a back-up in case something comes up that prevents you from being able to study abroad. When you are about to leave for your time abroad, the CGE will then replace those back-up plan courses you enrolled in at Marymount with an overall “Study Abroad” course block for 12-15 credits before you leave the U.S.. Upon your successful completion of coursework abroad, this course block will be replaced with the individual course titles and credits as decided upon by your academic advisor and dean on the “*Study Abroad Course Approval Form*”.

Course Requirements

For all undergraduate students studying abroad, all credit from courses passed (equivalent of C- or better) from your study abroad may be awarded as transfer credit towards your Marymount University degree. This will not count toward your GPA. If you receive any grade lower than the equivalent of a C-, you will not receive any credit. Credit will be granted at the discretion of your academic department(s).

The “*Study Abroad Course Approval Form*” which you completed as part of your application, serves as preliminary approval for fulfillment of such requirements. The department will review your transcript and academic work upon your return before granting final approval. Only the credit hours will transfer; grades from your study abroad program will not be recorded in your Marymount GPA and individual courses will not appear on your transcript with the exception of Marymount faculty-led programs. *Marymount faculty-led programs provide Marymount credit and will not be treated as transfer credit. Credits and grades from Marymount Faculty-led Programs will be recorded on your transcript as Marymount courses and calculated in your Marymount GPA.*

Registering for Courses While Abroad

When you applied to study abroad, you should have kept a copy of the “*Study Abroad Course Approval Form*”, which you filled out in consultation with your academic advisor, dean, and CGE staff. This form should be your first point of reference when choosing your courses overseas. However, sometimes students get overseas and find they need to make adjustments to their class schedule, due to scheduling conflicts or lack of course prerequisites. Here are some general guidelines for registering for classes overseas:

- **Email the CGE staff member, academic advisor, and dean who pre-approved your courses *before enrolling in classes that are not listed on your “Study Abroad Course Approval Form”*.** Once you give them as much information about the courses you are able to take, they should be able to tell you whether it will transfer for credit. Include information such as course titles, syllabi, course descriptions, and any reading lists or course requirements that you can obtain. Make sure you have your dean and academic advisor’s name, address, phone number, fax number and email address with you. (There is a place at the front of this handbook to enter the information.) Your academic department at Marymount has the final authority in accepting (or not accepting) classes towards the fulfillment of degree requirements.
- **Enroll in 12-15 credit hours.** You must be enrolled in the equivalent of at least 12 credit hours each semester you are abroad. Failure to maintain full-time status while abroad could jeopardize your enrollment at Marymount and your eligibility for financial aid. *Students receiving financial aid may need to pay back a portion of their aid if they do not maintain a full-time course load.* In some cases, your host university may have different full-time enrollment regulations.
- **Keep your work.** Keep copies of reading lists, exams, papers, and other documentation of the coursework you complete overseas. This material is extremely important for the final approval of transfer credit by your academic department at Marymount. Do not mail or pack this material; carry it with you in your carry-on bag on your return flight home.

TRANSCRIPTS

Transcripts

To receive credit for the courses you successfully completed while abroad, Marymount will need an official, sealed and signed transcript from your host institution or program provider displaying coursework, grades and credit amounts. (This does not apply if you studied through a Marymount faculty-led program) Some institutions will automatically mail the CGE an official copy of your transcript in the semester after you study abroad. However, other institutions require you to order these transcripts, or will mail them directly to you rather than to the CGE. If your host program asks you to fill out a form to request an official transcript or is unsure of where to send the transcript upon completion of your program, the address is:

Attn: Victor Betancourt
Center for Global Education, Rowley Hall 1004
Marymount University
2807 N. Glebe Road
Arlington, VA 22207
USA

If you need your transcript shortly after your return, because you are applying for scholarships, honors programs, or graduate school, you should:

- Consult with your academic adviser at Marymount before you leave, and make sure s/he understands that your transcript will be delayed.
- Consult with admissions and advising representatives at any post-graduate programs.
- Upon arrival at your host university, consult with international services staff to ask if there are ways to ensure that your grades and transcripts are processed as quickly as possible.
- Avoid incompletes. Trying to complete papers or make up exams after you have left your host university can be extremely difficult and will certainly cause significant delays in processing your transcript.

Registering at Marymount

Don't forget to arrange registration via Marynet for the semester following your return. You will receive an email from the CGE while you are abroad which will include detailed information and deadlines for on-campus course registration. It is your responsibility to email your academic adviser to release your advising hold while you are abroad.

Send your adviser an email with a reminder that you are studying abroad, a list of courses that you are considering for registration, and a request to release your advising hold. It is in your best interest to do this well in advance of your registration appointment to avoid complications. In fact, doing it the *semester before you go abroad* makes the most sense!

If you are unable to register yourself online, make arrangements for a friend or family member to register you through Marynet at the appropriate date/time. If you do not register by the registration deadline, Marymount will assume you have withdrawn from the university and you will be charged a late registration fee.

Notes for Seniors

- Students planning to graduate the semester after they return from study abroad must complete the Graduation Petition Form at the Registrar's Office before leaving the U.S.
- Students who spend part their senior year abroad must remember that they may not receive your transcript from the overseas university until several months after they return. This is why students cannot study abroad the semester before they graduate.
- Some academic departments have residency requirements that state that you must complete a certain number of credit hours on campus at Marymount (such as 30 of the last 45 credits earned towards your degree). Study abroad is often regarded as an exception to this requirement, but you must apply for permission for such an exception from the dean of your school or college before leaving.
- As with other students, your transcript should be mailed directly to CGE. Once the CGE receives and processes it, you will be notified and you are responsible for taking it to your academic department(s) to have the credits applied to your degree.

- If you plan to apply to graduate or professional school, you may want to complete application requirements prior to leaving for your study abroad program. Speak with an admissions officer at the school before leaving to discuss your plans and the possibility of grades and/or your degree being delayed. If necessary, you may take the GRE, LSAT, MCAT, or other graduate and professional school exams at many locations abroad. For more information, contact the Educational Testing Service at (609) 921-9000 or visit their website at www.ets.org. For the MCAT, contact the Medical College Admissions Testing Service at (319) 337-1357.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Attendance Policy

In order to maintain the CGE's academic integrity, a rigorous attendance policy is in force. Instructors will take attendance in every class and will report any absences accordingly. Students who can demonstrate good cause for missing class (e.g., illness, emergency) may appeal to the Program Staff for an excused absence. Early departures from the program due to death/illness in the immediate family are considered excused absences in consultation with the Program Staff and the Executive Director of the CGE. Immediate family is defined as mother/father; step/mother & father; sisters/brothers; step sisters/brothers; and grandparents. Other such absences will be considered UNEXCUSED and grades will be lowered according to the course instructor. All work is to be made up to the satisfaction of the course instructor and he/she must be notified prior to emergency departure.

Academic & Community Conduct Code

Marymount Honor Pledge: I agree to uphold the principles of honor set forth by this community in the University mission statement and the Academic and Community Conduct Code, to defend these principles against abuse or misuse and to abide by the regulations of the University.

Marymount seeks to strengthen your desire to learn, commitment to academic integrity, sense of responsibility and responsiveness to the needs of others. The Academic and Community Conduct Codes are built on the acceptance of personal responsibility for your social and academic conduct and the belief that freedom requires the exercise of responsibility.

Every Marymount regulation and policy is intended to serve student welfare and to support the values of the University and its Catholic heritage. Knowing these policies and living by them promotes campus harmony. Because students' actions impact on others in the Marymount community, students are expected to abide by the rules and regulations of the University, federal, state and local laws, and to exhibit acceptable behavior both on and off campus. The Student Faculty Council encourages full exercise of personal responsibility by actively supporting and reviewing University policies.

Violations Include:

- 1. Cheating:** using books, notes or assistance from other students, or giving such assistance while taking quizzes, tests or examinations, or doing any graded assignments, unless specifically authorized by the instructor;
- 2. Plagiarism:** representing the work (words or ideas) of others as one's own on research papers, homework assignments, essays and other assignments.
- 3. Lying:** the telling of an untruth or any form of deceit or attempted deceit or fraud relating to the student's academic and social responsibilities;
- 4. Stealing and possession of stolen property:** taking of property or services belonging to another (including the University) without permission or possessing property that is known to be stolen; examples include shoplifting; use of someone else's credit card or ATM card, passing bad checks, telephone fraud;
- 5. Behavior detrimental to the University:** behavior on or off campus which is damaging or potentially damaging to the reputation of Marymount, its students, faculty and administration, and behavior which is harmful or potentially harmful in any other way to members of the Marymount community or others.
- 6. Violation of state, federal or local laws.**
- 7. Obstruction:** engaging in activities which interfere with the official functions of the University or staff or students performing their duties, or which obstruct access of members or guests of the University to a University facility; engaging in activities which interfere with the educational mission of the University within the classroom, library, laboratory, or in off-campus instructional settings;
- 8. Falsification:** falsification, forgery, alteration, misrepresentation or unauthorized use of documents, information, University records, or personal identification such as student identification card or driver's license;
- 9. Alcohol and drug violations** as stated in Alcohol and Drug Policy published in the Student Handbook;
- 10. Physical violence:** including but not limited to assault, sexual assault, rape, physical intimidation;
- 11. Threat, Harassment and Verbal abuse:** verbal or other acts, which threaten, demean intimidate or harass another person; includes stalking;
- 12. Vulgarity:** lewd, obscene or indecent conduct or language;
- 13. Destruction of Property:** intentionally or recklessly damaging, destroying, defacing or tampering with University property or the property of any person or business;
- 14. Misuse of safety equipment:** unauthorized use or tampering with fire safety or fire fighting equipment or any other emergency safety equipment; includes falsely setting off fire alarm without reasonable belief that there is a fire;
- 15. Failure to Comply or Identify:** failure to comply with directions of a University official acting in performance of his or her duties, or failure to identify oneself when asked to do so by a University official;
- 16. Weapons:** possession, use or distribution of any explosives (including fireworks and ammunition), guns (including air/pellet/BBguns), or other deadly or dangerous materials;
- 17. Visitation:** see Community Living section of Handbook. .

- 18. Guest Violations:** students whose guests behave in violation of University policy may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 19. Disturbing the Peace:** creating a level of noise that impairs the ability of students, faculty or staff to study, teach, work, and sleep and the like;
- 20. Violation** of University Policies not specified here, including those described in the Catalog or other University documents; including but not limited to policies on residence life and computer use.

STUDENT CONDUCT

As a participant in any study abroad program facilitated by Marymount's CGE, you are expected to take responsibility for your own actions or failure to act at all times while studying abroad. You will be held accountable for your behavior and you are expected to abide by the Marymount Community Conduct Code, all CGE policies (as stated on the CGE "Acceptance Confirmation" and "Waiver & Release" Forms), and the laws and customs that govern the host countries where you are studying or visiting. Additionally, it is expected that you will demonstrate respect for yourself and others at all times.

These policies exist to ensure a safe, fair and successful experience for all students participating in the program. Ignorance of the policies is not an acceptable excuse for policy violation. The CGE's Conditions of Participation is in writing to give you general notice of expected behavior. These standards should be read broadly and are not designed to define misconduct in exhaustive terms.

If you are told that you are not complying with program regulations, you are responsible for changing your behavior as requested, or risk early dismissal and consequent loss of time, money, and academic credit. If you are dismissed from the program, you may be sent home at your own expense with no refund of fees or expenses. In being dismissed, you may be subject to failure of courses and/or an early return home. You may also be subject to further disciplinary, civil and/or criminal action upon return to the University.

Students will be held financially responsible for any damages or fines incurred on the study abroad program as a result of their misconduct.

Foreign Laws, Regulations and Standards

Each foreign country has its own laws and regulations and has standards of acceptable conduct in the areas of dress, manners, morals, religion, social customs, politics, alcohol use, drug use and behavior. Behavior or conduct which violate those laws or standards could harm the program's effectiveness, the University's relations with those countries in which the program is located, your own health and safety or the health and safety of other participants in the program. Therefore it is important for you to become informed of all laws, regulations and standards for each country to or through which you will travel during your participation.

Many practices that are illegal or grounds for mistrial in the U.S., including extraction of a confession, entrapment, police searches without a warrant, etc., are admissible in court in other countries. In many systems, there is no bail requirement, no jury trial; the burden of proof is on the accused to prove his or her innocence, etc.

You are fully responsible for any legal problems, any encounters with any foreign government or any individual and the University is not responsible for providing any assistance under such circumstances.

Note that contrary to popular belief, the U.S. Embassy CANNOT get you out of jail if you are arrested. **U.S. laws or constitutional rights do not protect you once you leave the U.S.** You must abide by the laws of the country in which you are traveling.

For US Citizens, A U.S. Consular Officer CAN:

- Visit you in jail after being notified of your arrest.
- Give you a list of local attorneys.
- Notify your family or friends (including the program director) and
- relay requests for money or other aid with your authorization.
- Intercede with the local authorities to ensure that you are treated
- humanely and that your rights under local law are fully observed.

A U.S. Consular Officer CANNOT:

- Get you out of jail.
- Represent you at trial or give legal counsel.
- Pay legal fees or fines with U.S. government funds.

In addition to emergency assistance for American citizens and their families abroad, such as cases of death, serious medical emergency and legal difficulties, the U.S. Embassy personnel also provide routine citizenship services such as passport replacement. In order to ensure fast and easy replacement of your passport, be sure to have a photocopy somewhere secure.

Marymount University Community Conduct Code

As you will be enrolled as a Marymount student while studying abroad, you are expected to abide by the Marymount Community Conduct Code which has been reproduced in full in **Appendix 1 of this handbook, page 57**. This Code covers many topics, including but not limited to, academic integrity, cheating, plagiarism, disorderly conduct, harassment, hazing, drugs, theft, and weapons.

Please familiarize yourself with the content of the Community Conduct Code, as you are responsible for the policies outlined therein. It is especially important to note in *Section 2: Jurisdiction Over Student Conduct* of the Community Conduct Code the definition of "University sponsored activity":

“The Community Conduct Code and the student conduct process apply to the conduct of individual students and University affiliated student organizations. Because the Community Conduct Code is based on shared values, it sets a range of expectations for Marymount University students no matter where or when their conduct may take place; therefore, the Community Conduct Code applies to behaviors that take place on the campus, at University sponsored events and may also apply off-campus when the administration determines in its discretion that the off-campus conduct affects a substantial University interest.

Study abroad is considered a “University sponsored activity”, so your behavior on the study abroad program is subject to the Community Code of Conduct.

ALCOHOL, DRUGS, & CRIME

While studying abroad, you will most likely be going to a location where you will be of legal drinking age in that country and where alcohol may be more a part of the everyday culture. Distance from home may lessen your inhibitions. However, you are encouraged to use good judgment if you choose to consume alcoholic beverages while abroad.

Occasional drinking of alcoholic beverages in moderation is permitted provided that you are of legal drinking age in the area you are visiting. However, excessive and irresponsible drinking, leading to intoxication and behavior that interferes with the rights of others, is subject to immediate disciplinary action, including termination from the program, parental notification, and return home at your own expense. The Marymount Community Conduct Code and all regulations are applicable while you are studying abroad.

Tips for responsible use of alcohol:

- Be aware of and abide by the customs and laws of the host country. Alcohol may be stronger and cheaper, and drinking ages may vary. Avoid over-indulgence. Do not become intoxicated, arrive at events/classes intoxicated, or miss any scheduled events or classes due to alcohol consumption. Do not drink so much that you become ill, engage in inappropriate or destructive behavior, or cause embarrassment to Marymount University, the host institution, or any in-country hosts.
- Drinking to get drunk is never acceptable, even in countries where alcohol is consumed with meals.
- Remember that drugging is not uncommon. Always buy your own drinks, and keep them with you.
- Never go home with strangers. Use the buddy system—go out with at least one friend, and make sure each other returns home safely.
- Know who to contact in case of an emergency. Get contact information for local emergency services in your host city.

- Remember, injury or illness resulting from alcohol use is EXCLUDED from the Marymount health insurance (ACE Travel Assist) coverage. If alcohol is found in your system, they will deny your claim.

DRUGS

Despite what you may have heard about relaxed drug laws outside of the U.S., drugs are illegal in most countries around the world. In fact, drug laws are often more strict around the world. In some countries, possession of even a relatively small amount of illegal drugs can be grounds for a mandatory jail sentence or the death penalty. Once you have ventured beyond U.S. borders, U.S. laws and constitutional rights no longer protect you.

Many practices which are illegal or grounds for mistrial in the U.S., including extraction of a confession, entrapment, or police searches without a warrant, are admissible in courts in other countries. In some judicial systems, there is no bail requirement, no jury trial, and the burden of proof is on the accused to prove his or her innocence.

It is your responsibility to understand the laws of a foreign country before you go. “I didn’t know it was illegal” is not an acceptable defense. If you ever get into legal trouble abroad, you should immediately contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT & ASSAULT

In general, the U.S. description of sexual harassment is any unwanted sexual advances and/or behavior of a verbal, visual, written, or physical nature. You should note, however, that this description may not be the same for the country in which you are studying. In such cases, you are encouraged to discuss the issue with staff at your host university or the CGE to determine an appropriate course of action. You should trust your judgment and intuition.

There are many types of harassment, including psychological, sexual, and verbal. Harassment can be between two students, between a professor or staff member and a student, between a homestay family member and a student, etc. Harassment or assault can happen overseas just as it can on campus.

Members of the University community shall not engage in sexual harassment. Persons who do so are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including program dismissal.

Harassment may include:

- Derogatory comments, jokes or teasing about the body, body parts, clothing, or sexual activities
- Visual materials or pictures which are offensive
- Subtle pressure for dating and/or sexual activity
- Demanding sexual favors for grades, letters of recommendation, etc.
- Persistent verbal attacks

- Unnecessary or unwanted touching or pinching
- Physical assault
- Emails or other electronic communications which include any of the above.

If a situation makes you uncomfortable, it needs to be addressed. The Marymount University Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Policy can be found online at: www.marymount.edu . This is a quick and easy reference for you that includes confidential and responsible employee resources so you can choose the best option for you.

The University is committed to treating all members of the community with dignity, care and respect. The University recognizes that deciding whether to make a report and choosing how to proceed can be difficult decisions. The University encourages any individual who has questions or concerns to seek the support of campus and community resources.

What should I do if I am the victim of sexual misconduct?

Students are encouraged to discuss their concerns with their in-country study abroad program directors and with the Off Campus Study Abroad Office.

Reports may be made to:

- Linda McMurdock, Vice President for Student Development and Title IX Co-Ordinator at 703-284-1615 or by emailing her at: lmcmurdock@marymount.edu * required to refer
- Eric Hols, Director of Campus Safety at 703-284-6911 or by emailing him at: ehols@marymount.edu * required to refer
- Natalie Mitchell, Director of the Counseling Center, at 703-526-6861 or by emailing her at: nmitchell@marymount.edu * Confidential resource

Please reference the Marymount University Sexual Harassment and Misconduct policy online for more detailed information and a list of additional resources.

COMMUNICATION

Phones

Many students arrange a calling schedule with family and friends, setting a time each week when they will be at a certain number. There are several options if you plan to use phone services.

- **International Calling:** U.S. long-distance carriers offer a wide variety of calling options. Call around to compare prices or check with the carrier your parents use. You may need to get international dialing access to call *from* the U.S. and/or to call from overseas *to* the U.S.
- **Cell Phone:** The cell phone standard, Global Services for Mobiles (GSM) has been adopted in most countries and therefore using a GSM phone will substantially decrease your expenses. You may purchase phone and pre-paid SIM card once you have arrived in your host country. You may add to your airtime by purchasing an airtime voucher. If you plan on using your current cell phone, smart phone, or iPhone, check with the carrier to inquire after any applicable fees. Know the country codes and make a plan with family and friends

for how you will contact each other. The most affordable means of calling home will be Skype (<http://www.skype.com/>) or GoogleTalk (<http://www.google.com/talk/>), both of which are Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). For both programs, you will need to download the software, but once you do you will be able to call (or video chat to) friends and family at home for free as long as you have access to WiFi.

- **Calling Cards:** Your host institution may send you information about international calling cards and rates from overseas. If not, ask a representative from your host university if they can make recommendations. Some calling cards purchased overseas are more economical than calling cards purchased in the U.S.
- **Public Phones:** In some countries, it is rare to find coin-operated pay phones. Some countries will have card-operated phones, and you can purchase phone cards at local stores and kiosks.
- **Internet Phone Service:** If both users have a microphone and speakers/headphones on their computers, you can talk for free through an internet phone service such as www.skype.com. You can also use Skype to call from your computer to phone numbers in the US at very reasonable rates.

Email & Internet

- **Marymount Gmail:** You will continue to have access to your Marymount Gmail account. The CGE is required to send correspondence to your Marymount email account, so please make sure you check this address frequently while abroad or have it forwarded to the account you are using.
- **Host University:** The majority of universities overseas will give students access to email and internet services, which is typically the least expensive way to keep in touch and access the web. You may find their computer centers to have fewer computers or limited hours, but it will help you appreciate the technology available in the U.S. If you choose to take a laptop, have it insured and check the technological requirements and facilities of the host university.
- **While Traveling:** Many cities around the world have internet cafes, where you can pay for internet access on a minute or hourly basis. Prices will vary.

Mail

From the U.S., international mail can take up to 2-6 weeks for delivery. Postal services from abroad will vary, and could take longer. Generally, cards and letters are easy and inexpensive to send. However, if you or a family member wants to send a gift or care package, check with the customs agency of your host country to find rules and regulations about what can be mailed to/from the country.

Websites & Blogs

Keeping in touch around the world can be difficult, so more and more students are choosing to create their own websites or blogs. Maintaining a blog while you are abroad can be a great way to process your experiences, share with family and friends, and create a personal record for yourself

once you return home. Suggested sites include Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/>), Word Press (<http://wordpress.org/>) and Blogger (<https://www.blogger.com/start>). If you're interested in reading about other students studying abroad, or creating your own blog, check out www.blogabroad.com.

Students should also consider photo-sharing sites as a way to connect with family and friends. Suggested sites, in addition to the blog sites include, Shutterfly (<http://www.shutterfly.com/>), Picasa (<http://picasa.google.com>), Snapfish, (<http://www.snapfish.com/>), Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com/>), and Kodak (<http://www.kodakgallery.com>).

Be cautious about what you post; similar to Facebook, if your site is open to the public, you should not include specific information such as your full name, where you are, or where you'll be this weekend. Be aware that anything you post on-line is public information, so if you are doing anything illegal or in violation of university policies, you can be held liable.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

CULTURE SHOCK

The process of mentally, physically, and emotionally adjusting to a new environment is commonly known as "culture shock." It is a response to being in a situation where everything is different from your previous experiences, including language/slang, food, transportation, body language, and everyday activities. Culture shock covers a wide range of reactions from mild annoyance to frustration, depression, fatigue, and excitement.

The Glimpse Foundation has published several guides based on their extensive survey research with study abroad returnees. Here is their description of culture shock and its phases, excerpted from their Culture Shock guide:

"...Culture shock manifests itself differently in different people, but research has detected general patterns of emotional highs and lows experienced by international travelers. These phases vary in duration and severity, and are not necessarily linear.

Euphoria: The first few hours, days or weeks abroad are often characterized by the excitement of sensory overload. Both adrenaline and expectations are running high, and everything seems new and intriguing.

Irritability and Hostility: Once the initial 'honeymoon' phase subsides, dissonances between native and host cultures begin to seem more pronounced, and a sense of alienation can set in. Curiosity and enthusiasm about-face, transforming into frustration, insecurity, negativity toward local culture, glorification of home culture, exaggerated responses to minor problems, withdrawal and/or depression.

Gradual Adjustment: With time, you'll begin to orient yourself to a different set of cultural practices and feel increasingly comfortable and confident in your new surroundings. Your sense of humor, which may have been lying dormant for a while, will reemerge.

Reentry or Reverse Culture Shock: Upon returning home, you will be faced with integrating your abroad experience with life in the U.S., where you might feel disoriented, out of place or changed by your experience in a way that makes relating to family and friends difficult.”
(www.glimpseabroad.org)

Here are a few ways to cope with culture shock:

- Know that everyone experiences some degree of culture shock, and everyone's experience is different.
- Remember that you are the foreigner and that people will expect you to adapt to their expectations.
- Try not to label things as “good” or “bad,” but merely “different” and don't blow things out of proportion.
- You may incorporate some cultural differences into your routine, and others you may not. Some habits may disappear when you leave the host country, and others may stay with you. Develop habits or join organizations that will help you interact regularly in the host campus and city.
- Maintain the ability to laugh at your mistakes. They can in fact help you in the learning process.”

The feelings of culture shock are unavoidable, but recognizing their existence and knowing about them in advance will help you prepare yourself to accept the temporary discomfort and learn more from the experience. Everyone experiences culture shock and adjustment differently. Do research before leaving to try to understand what to expect. Utilize the resources listed in this handbook, talk to the CGE staff or other students who have been abroad, and enjoy the journey!

SEVEN LESSONS FOR CROSS-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

Taken from *Cross-Cultural Dialogues: 74 Brief Encounters with Cultural Differences* by Craig Storti

- **One:** Don't assume everyone is the same.
- **Two:** What you think of as normal behavior may only be cultural. Much of human behavior is universal but certainly not all. Before you project your norms on the human race, consider the possibility that you might be making incorrect assumptions.
- **Three:** Familiar behaviors may have different meanings. The same behavior – saying “yes”, for example – can exist in different cultures and not mean the same thing. Just because you've recognized a given behavior, don't assume you've understood it.
- **Four:** Don't assume that what you meant is what was understood. You can be sure of what you mean when you say something, but you can't be sure how this is interpreted by someone else. Check for signs that the other person did or did not understand you.

- **Five:** Don't assume that what you understood is what was meant. We all hear what others say through the medium of our own experience. You know what those words mean to you, but what do they mean to the person speaking them?
- **Six:** You don't have to like or accept "different" behavior, but understanding where it comes from may help you find ways to deal with it.
- **Seven:** Most people do behave rationally; you just have to discover the rationale.

AMERICAN CULTURAL VALUES & ASSUMPTIONS

Of course Americans, like any other cultural group, are a collection of individuals and we are extremely diverse! However, most visitors to the U.S. and most cultural anthropologists would argue that as a group, Americans tend to hold the following cultural values, some of which are very different from those of other cultures. (Adapted from *American Ways: A Guide for Foreigners in the U.S.*, Gary Althen.)

Individualism & Independence

We see ourselves as individuals, responsible for our own situations. We emphasize self-fulfillment. We give choices even to very young children, and believe that it's wrong to expect individuals to always sacrifice their wants and needs for the good of the group. We admire individuals who fought their way to the top, do something first or the longest or the best. We define ourselves by what we do, not by our birth situation.

Privacy

We assume that everyone needs time alone. In some cultures one is rarely alone and all translations of the word "privacy" carry a negative connotation of being isolated. U.S. children often have their own rooms and their own possessions. We have rules about confidentiality.

Egalitarianism

We generally express strong belief in the principle that all people are created equal, with equal opportunities; yet most Americans will admit that discrimination (racism and sexism) still exists in the U.S. We tend to enjoy stories of "self-made" individuals who rise from poverty to riches through hard work and initiative. Most Americans believe that individuals control their own destinies; children are told "you can be whatever you want to be." We generally don't like displays of social status – being bowed to, deferred to, etc. We show respect in more subtle ways; tone of voice, order of speaking and seating arrangements (getting the most comfortable chair). Children are often allowed or encouraged to question their parents and "discuss" their parents' decisions. Questioning professors is often highly valued, and bosses often go out of their way to seem like "one of the gang". We chitchat with taxi drivers, waiters, bellmen, doctors, and lawyers. We give respectable titles to all jobs (sanitation worker).

Time

We are very concerned with time and efficiency and look for faster and more efficient ways of doing things. We talk about not "wasting time" or about "saving time" – in many cultures time just is. We value organization and punctuality. We make "to do" lists, plan our leisure time, carry calendars and schedules.

Informality

We use first names, even with people older than we are and people who have more social status. We use idiomatic speech, prop our feet up on desks, wear informal clothing on many occasions.

Future Oriented

We are less concerned with history than other cultures (in explaining conflicts, people from other cultures may go back several centuries) We value new things and ideas more than the old – products are advertised as “new and improved”. We believe we can and should improve our situation, as in “Don’t just stand there, DO something.” Some other cultures have more of a reverence for the past, and believe that it’s arrogant for human beings to believe they can change

Achievement and Action Oriented

We value hard work and continually want to improve our situation. We feel that we never achieve enough and should always keep bettering ourselves. We are always doing something and we feel bored or guilty after “doing nothing” for several hours.

Honesty and Directness

We value “getting to the point” more than maintaining “face” (prestige or dignity). We look up to the person who tells us directly and honestly when he is upset about something. We do not like to have a third person mediate. We believe it’s important to tell the truth even though it may put us in an unfavorable light. Some other cultures are more concerned with “saving face” and may say something indirectly or put a more positive spin on the situation in order to do so.

HOUSING

Housing Abroad

Housing options at your host university will vary. Some may require all study abroad students to live in a certain area, while others may offer choices such as residence halls/dorms, apartments/flats, or homestay. Also know that the accommodations in your host country may not be as luxurious as you are accustomed to at home, so keep an open mind. You will find more in-depth information from your host university. It is up to you to research your options and make the decision that is best for you.

Homestay:

If you have the option of homestay, you will have a great opportunity to expand your cultural experience beyond the university. However, living with a family can also pose special challenges. Remember that while the host family will typically receive a stipend to cover the costs of your room and/or board, the money cannot possibly reimburse them for the inconvenience and annoyances of having a bad student experience. If you choose homestay, here are some general recommendations:

- Bring a small gift (no more than \$20), such as a t-shirt or other item with the MU logo, a cookbook of American recipes, or a CD of traditional American music (blues, jazz, etc.)
- Ask at the beginning of your stay about the family schedule and house rules. Are there expectations to participate in family activities? Do they expect you to be at family meals? Do

they want to know when you'll be out late or gone for the weekend? Will they allow you to have guests?

- Ask about the house rules for telephone use. In many countries, even local calls are charged on a metered basis, and phone service is quite expensive. Families may prefer that you make outgoing calls from another location. Also ask about appropriate hours for receiving incoming calls.
- If meals are included in your homestay, don't skip family meals without letting your hosts know well in advance.
- Don't snack from the family refrigerator or pantry without asking. Also ask where you can keep food of your own.
- Be conservative with electricity and water use. These services may be limited or more expensive in your host country. Turn off lights and appliances when not in use, and don't take long showers.
- Offer to help with household tasks.
- Be open, flexible, and don't be afraid to ask questions.

While host families are typically interested in interaction with international students, they are also being paid for their hosting duties, and in some cases consider it an income supplement. While you should expect your family to provide a safe, clean living environment, adequate meals, and a polite, respectful atmosphere, the amount of personal interaction may vary from family to family.

If your family is truly unreasonable or if you are uncomfortable with your family, you should consult with your host university coordinator. Be sure the reason for wanting to move are more serious than small inconveniences (phone use, curfews, etc.), or culturally-based issues that are likely to be the same from family to family.

Housing at Marymount

If you currently live on campus, you should let the Office of Campus and Residential Services (OCRS) know ASAP that you will not need housing for the semester(s) that you will be going abroad so that they can open up the room to another student.

If you want to live on-campus when you return, you will need to contact OCRS while you are abroad to express your intentions to return to on-campus housing (if you have not already done so before you go abroad)

Global Thinkers Residential Community

We highly encourage you to consider continuing your international experience by applying to live in the Global Thinkers Residence Hall when you return!

If you currently live off campus, or if you want to live off-campus upon your return, it is your responsibility to make your own arrangements and any necessary payments.

RETURNING HOME



Faithe Lindsay • March 2014 • Gulf of Finland, Scandinavia

ADJUSTING TO LIFE BACK AT HOME

Although most students are excited to come home and share their experiences with friends and family after completing an enriching study abroad experience in another country, some students also have issues re-acclimating and may experience some reverse culture shock in the weeks following their return.

How long and how strongly an individual experiences reverse culture shock can depend on multiple factors, such as length of time away, previous travel abroad, and frequency of communication with people back home while abroad. Students and parents alike should be prepared to for a re-acclimation period and should be patient with one another. After the initial "honeymoon stage" of being home has passed, students often experience "re-entry shock" or "reverse culture shock."

Similar to the period of cultural adjustment you went through after first arriving in your study abroad location, you might experience:

- Boredom
- Difficulty articulating your experience
- Reverse homesickness
- Changed relationships
- Feelings of alienation
- Inability to apply new knowledge and skills
- Fear of losing the experience
- Critical/negative views of your culture

These feelings are all perfectly normal; in fact, they signal that you had a successful study abroad experience in which you grew, changed, and developed new perspectives on life! If you're experiencing these feelings, you're probably eager to figure out how to move as quickly as possible from the "reverse culture shock" stage to the more comfortable re-adjustment stage.

COMBATTING REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

The best way to approach re-entry is to expect that there will be differences. People, home or abroad, will have changed with time. Part of the re-entry process will include finding a new lifestyle to combine the best of your old lifestyle and your new lifestyle. Some areas of your life might present new opportunities for understanding and personal growth. Consider the following challenges and strategies to facilitate re-entry.

Family

You may be expected to fit back into your family but find it difficult to communicate effectively because your family has not shared your overseas experiences. Your family may not adjust well to your new independence and changed values.

Strategies:

- Share your experience through photos, stories, etc.

- Let your family know how much you appreciate the chance they have given you to grow in new ways by living, studying, and traveling overseas.

Friends

You and your friends may no longer be as close. You need to be sensitive about discussing your experience with them. You may also miss the new friends you made while overseas.

Strategies:

- Ask and listen to what your friends have experienced while you were away.
- Ask to be brought up to date on local events.
- Try to do new things together to get the relationship on a new footing.
- Write to your new friends and try to involve them somewhat in your home life or make plans to visit them again.

School

You may look at your home campus in a new light. You may also miss the feeling of being part of a close-knit group of students.

Strategies:

- Talk over your academic experience with your adviser, especially if you are considering new career goals.
- Seek out the International Student Services Office to learn how to make contact with international students on your campus.
- Apply to become a Global Ambassador.
- Talk with the CGE so that you can offer your expertise to students who plan to study abroad.
- Seek out other students who have studied overseas.

In addition, try to choose university courses that will allow you to build on your study abroad experience, such as language courses, regional studies courses, and writing courses. You may even want to talk to your adviser in your major department about writing a senior (honors) thesis based on a topic you studied abroad!

Country

Your home culture may no longer be entirely to your liking, and you may have the sense that you no longer fit in. In the future you will probably continue to evaluate ideas and events in the context of the broader cultural perspective you have acquired.

Strategies:

- Come to terms with the fact that we all tend to look past the shortcomings of our home culture when we are away, and tend to criticize it on the basis of changed perceptions when we return.
- Seek out others on your campus with interest in international and intercultural matters.
- Keep up with your host country by means of news, reading, friends, etc.

Self

You've become accustomed to a high level of activity and anticipation that your home and campus probably can't match. You may feel restless or a bit depressed for a while after your return.

Strategies:

- Think of the ways you have changed -- which of those do you like?
- What did you learn about yourself? How have your family and friends at home reacted to the new you?
- Keep a journal so you can see your thought processes evolve.
- Keep your sense of humor!
- Be flexible and open-minded.
- Maintain a healthy diet and incorporate exercise into your daily life.
- Write about your experiences abroad.

If you enjoy writing about your experiences abroad, you may want to try turning some of your reflections into stories, articles, or poetry. Consider submitting your writing to publications:

- GoAbroad.com
- GoOverseas.com
- TransitionsAbroad.com
- LifeAfterStudyAbroad.com
- StudyAbroadScout.com

Campus Resources

If you are having significant difficulty re-adjusting, Marymount's Counseling Center is here to offer additional support. Meet with counselor who can assist you with your cross-cultural adjustment. Call 703-526-6861 to set up an appointment.

GETTING INVOLVED

When you get back, stay involved! Who would be better to talk about study abroad or cultural differences than a student who has just returned from studying abroad? There are many opportunities to share your experiences once you have returned. Here are ways for you to get involved:

- **Volunteer to speak at CGE Events & Orientations:** The CGE is always looking for study abroad alumni to come speak about their time abroad to prospective students. To get on our mailing list for volunteers, please fill out this form: https://docs.google.com/a/marymount.edu/forms/d/1IzbBAw9GUDzyGdY46EyP3p80BP_Lkc9M4vAKnqwyNbUs/viewform
- **Study Abroad Fair:** The CGE hosts an annual Study Abroad Fair each September in hopes of attracting more students to study abroad. We invite representatives from our partner universities, faculty directors from our summer programs, and students who have returned from studying abroad. If you are interested in volunteering at the Study Abroad Fair and sharing your experiences with interested students, contact the Carin Usrey at cusrey@marymount.edu
- **Global Thinkers Residential Community:** The Global Thinkers Residence Community is a residence hall in Gerard and is geared towards students interested in interacting with

people from different cultures. It is the perfect place to live just before or after study abroad, so you don't have to hassle with breaking a lease or subletting an off-campus apartment. The community focus is one of global awareness and understanding. Visit <http://marymount.edu/studentLife/services/iss/globalThinkers.aspx> for more information.

- **Global Ambassadors:** the Global Ambassadors Program is a unique leadership opportunity for Marymount students, especially for (but not limited to) those students who have recently returned from a study abroad experience. Global Ambassadors meet monthly to discuss global issues, attend international events in Washington DC, and participate in leadership development activities including diversity training and a "Career Connections" workshop. In addition to developing their global leadership skills, Global Ambassadors promote global engagement by sharing their international experiences with the Marymount community.
- **Study Abroad Photo Contest:** Every spring, the CGE asks recently returned students to submit up to five photos for a variety of different categories, for our annual Photo Contest. After all submissions have been collected, the photos are voted upon by CGE Staff and Students, and the winner of each category receives prize. We encourage you to participate, and reminder emails will be sent in March!

POST-GRADUATE OPPORTUNITIES ABROAD

Below is some general information on the types of opportunities available. For more detailed information on programs and opportunities, check the CGE resource area and the CGE website at www.marymount.edu/global. There are MANY opportunities to work overseas for students and recent graduates. However, there are also some realities that you need to be aware of before beginning your international job search.

- It is usually NOT possible simply to enter another country and (legally) work, or even volunteer. Most countries have some unemployment problems and therefore most countries restrict the ability of foreign nationals to work within their borders. Working usually requires that you have a special visa or residence permit, issued by the government of that country, which authorizes you to be legally employed; employers overseas will usually tell you that they can't hire you without a work visa or permit, and governments will tell you that they can't give you a work visa or permit without proof that you have a job. This "Catch-22" is what has given rise to the many programs which exist specifically to help students and recent graduates navigate the bureaucratic obstacles to gaining practical experience overseas.
- Most multinational and international corporations which have offices overseas prefer to hire mostly local personnel for those offices. Americans sent to those offices are usually only considered for overseas postings after putting in a minimum amount of time (3-5 years) in the U.S. offices of the company. If your ultimate goal is to work for this kind of company, participating in a practical overseas experience during college or shortly after

graduation is probably one of the best investments you can make towards fulfilling that goal, even if the experience itself costs rather than makes money.

- Working overseas as a student or recent graduate is unlikely to make you rich. Even if you choose a work experience for pay (as opposed to an internship for academic credit or a volunteer experience), and even if the pay is similar to what you would earn here, you will probably have extra expenses to cover, at least initially (for example, international airfare, program fees, etc.). The long-term benefits of an international work experience, for your personal satisfaction, professional preparation, and resume building, are likely to be much greater than for a similar experience within the U.S., so think of it as an investment! There are many opportunities which cover your expenses, although you may not make enough for extensive personal travel or savings. Many volunteer or unpaid internship positions cover room and board costs, and sometimes a stipend, for participants. Programs which require placement or participation fees, especially for developing countries, often provide detailed information to help participants fundraise at least some of the fee.
- Finally, finding the right experience for you will take time, thought, and effort. Many programs have early deadlines, sometimes as much as one year before the experience begins. Add to that the time to research programs and complete applications and you will quickly see that 1-2 years in advance is NOT too early to start planning! As a general rule, longer programs and those which are career-related require more advance time than short, casual-work programs; 3-6 months in advance is probably plenty of time to plan for a summer volunteer or casual work program, while a year-long career-related program will usually require you to start researching a year or more in advance.

How to get started:

Start by thinking about your personal goals for a work experience.

- What do you want to gain from this experience—an inexpensive means to spend time overseas, practical experience in your field, or a combination?
- Do you want to go to a specific country, or are you flexible? Do you want to work in a big city or in an environment such as a national park or resort area?
- Is it important to work in a specific field, or are you willing to do casual work such as assisting on a farm or in an office?
- Does the work need to be paid, or at least cover your living costs?
- Are you willing to spend money to participate in a career-related internship? (In some cases, you can earn credit.)
- If you want a paid experience, how much money are you willing to pay for initial expenses (placement fees, airfare, living expenses, etc.) until you get your first paycheck?
- When do you want to go (during your undergraduate program, over a summer, after graduation) and for how long?

Researching your options:

By following the links on our website, you can find descriptions and contact information for just a sample of the many opportunities available. Once you've gathered basic information about a number of programs and opportunities, you will need to start contacting the sponsoring

institutions and programs to get specific information about the application, costs, expectations, etc. Be prepared to contact many different organizations and programs before finding the one that will work best for you.

A Word of Caution:

We provide program listings for informational purposes only. Inclusion of any given program on the CGE website or in our office should not be taken as an endorsement of the program by the CGE. Most programs do their best to provide a worthwhile experience, but IT IS UP TO YOU to make sure that the programs you are interested in offer what they claim, and that what they offer is what you want. Before paying a placement fee, signing a contract, or buying a plane ticket, make sure you understand the fine print. Contact the program organizers with any questions, including but not limited to:

- What are the consequences (financial and otherwise) if you leave the program before the time you agreed to? What happens if you are not placed in a position or if your placement is not satisfactory, either to you or the organization you've been placed with? What support services are provided by the organization once you arrive?

There are no "right" answers to these questions; you must make your own decisions about what your criteria are for the program you want. Finally, ask to contact former participants of the program. Any reputable organization should be able to put you in touch with others who have participated and who will be able to give you an unbiased assessment of the good and bad points of the program.

Resources for Learning about Options Abroad Post-Graduation

Links to a number of opportunities can be found on the CGE website at www.marymount.edu/global/alumni/working.aspx.

EVALUATIONS

To ensure our staff continues to provide the best support possible to students studying abroad through Marymount, we pay close attention to the feedback of our study abroad alumni and greatly value their timely completion of our online evaluation forms. In signing the required CGE forms prior to your departure, you agree to complete our post-program evaluation in a timely manner following your return and acknowledge that failure to complete this survey will result in a delay in the posting of your grades until the evaluation is completed.

RETURNEE WORKSHOP & LUNCHEON

At the beginning of the fall and spring semesters, the CGE hosts a Returnee Workshop & Luncheon for all newly returned students. This workshop and luncheon are mandatory for all returnees to attend. If you are not able to attend said the returned workshop and luncheon, you must schedule

a one-on-one appointment with a CGE staff member to make up this requirement. Failure to attend the Returnee Workshop & Luncheon or assigned equivalent will result in a credit processing delay until the agreed upon assignment is completed.

CAREER-BENEFITS OF STUDY ABROAD

The majority of students study abroad during their sophomore or junior years. This means that you will have at least one, and perhaps two, years to “unpack” your study abroad experience upon returning to campus. This is enough time to clarify how your international experience could influence your career goals and impact your job search strategy. It is up to you to make the case and demonstrate the link between your study abroad experience and the specific skills valued by the company or organization you want to work for.

Upon Your Return to Campus:

- Attend the CGE Returnee Luncheon & Workshop, which will be held at the beginning of the semester you return to Marymount. At this session, a great deal of information will be provided regarding resources and events that study abroad alumni can take advantage of upon their return to process the personal and professional impact of their international experiences.
- Visit a career services advisor to revise and edit your resume to incorporate the new interpersonal skills and intercultural competencies that you strengthened while abroad.
- Discuss ways to strengthen your cover letter to articulate how your study abroad experience is an asset for an employer.
- Participate in campus or community programs that provide opportunities to practice articulating what you learned and the steps you took to gain or strengthen intercultural and professional skills.
- Discuss your international experience with international students from the country in which you studied to gain a fresh perspective on the culture and values of that society.
- As you prepare to conduct your job search, re-write your resume, develop a cover letter, and prepare for interviews, keep in mind the qualities and skills that employers expect of a candidate who had studied abroad. These would include:
 - Strong problem solving skills and keen analytic ability
 - Tolerance for ambiguity and ability to adapt in new environments
 - Interpersonal communications skills
 - Cross-cultural competencies (could include language skills and ability to work well in different cultural settings)
 - Personal traits such as character, self-reliance, and dependability

Articulating Newly Acquired Skills & Competencies in a RESUME

Before writing your resume, you need to reflect upon the international skills and competencies you have gained from your study abroad experience. As we suggest on our [Education Abroad & Career Development](#) page, the time to consider how your experience “fits” into your resume is

before you leave campus. Whether or not you visit a career counselor before departure, you do want to make an appointment to see an advisor upon your return.

While there are generally accepted formats for a resume, it's best to discuss your document with a career services counselor or advisor who understands your specific academic program and career interests or preferences. Audit your time abroad to highlight professional experiences and new intercultural competencies, and be prepared to describe them – using specific language in your resume. You will need to develop a number of unique and individualized bullet points that show specific ways in which you gained skills and competencies during your study abroad experience.

An employer will not automatically “see” what may be very obvious to you about a skill or an experience you had while studying abroad! It's up to you to showcase and articulate the value of critical incidents, classroom work, community engagement, or international travel – and to be able to discuss why any or all of these activities make you a strong candidate for a particular job assignment in an organization or company.

In capturing your study abroad experience on your resume, consider using alternative titles for your section headers that will showcase your overseas experience and related accomplishments on your home campus include. Some section headers to consider include:

- Global Experience
- Cross-Cultural Campus Involvement
- Foreign Languages
- Countries Visited
- Volunteer Service

Here are examples of the type of thought-provoking phrases you might use to craft bullet statements about different international experiences on your resume.

Strengthened Cross-Cultural Skills:

- Adapted to cultural differences and customs through daily interaction with my host family over a period of 4 months
- Overcame societal differences and fostered cultural understanding through a short-term work experience at a local business
- Gained a greater appreciation for diversity and cultural differences through voluntary service experience at a local school

Developed Language Competency/Communication Skills:

- Passed proficiency examination in [name of language] or obtained certificate for intensive language study at [name of college or institute]
- Cultivated language and communication skills through sustained dialogue with my host family and others whom I met in my host community
- Learned to use nonverbal and verbal communication to overcome language barriers

Flexibility/Risk-Taking:

- Learned how to adapt to unanticipated situations and improvise new plans due to periodic travel mishaps and unexpected events

- Modified my way of life to maximize exposure and opportunities for learning in my local community

Visit the “Career Benefits of Study Abroad” section of our website for more support on incorporating study abroad into your resume and to access several examples of how you can capture your study abroad program on your resume: <http://www.marymount.edu/Media/Website%20Resources/documents/global/SampleResumes.pdf>

Presenting Skills & Competencies in a COVER LETTER

A cover letter complements the experiences outlined on your resume. It should not replicate the same information in a prose style format. It should highlight the attributes that set you apart from other candidates! One such attribute is your international experience while you studied abroad. The cover letter should demonstrate to an employer – in as explicit language as possible – why you possess the skills and experiences that are a match for the requirements of the job.

Tips:

- Keep it to one page
- Write it in a formal business style
- Even if it’s not evident that the job requires international experience, you can highlight appropriate transferable skills gained through your time abroad (e.g., independence, tolerance, self-confidence, problem-solving skills, ability to adapt in different environments and to work in harmony with people of differing values and backgrounds)
- If the job is with an international NGO or a multinational company doing business in the part of the world where you studied, then the direct value of all your international and intercultural skills is more obvious – but you still need to be specific in describing how your studies, skills, and competencies will be of value in your performance on the job

Articulating Skills & Competencies in an INTERVIEW

A good interview is about telling a good story. It’s about weaving a narrative in response to questions about your ability to do a job, carry out your duties, and adapt to the organization and its expectations of staff.

When speaking to employers, address the value of both the general and the specific skills you developed while studying abroad. It’s important not to assume that the interviewer will realize how your international experience is relevant to your candidacy.

Examples might include: You are adept at managing change; you are independent and have self-discipline while being sensitive to the needs of others. Dozens of work-related characteristics are developed abroad, which you can discuss in your interview: resourcefulness, versatility, persistence, an observant and calm demeanor, diligence, multifaceted skills in communications, broad and strategic thinking, an ability to deal with ambiguities, courage, an ability to take on challenging work, open-mindedness, flexibility, resourcefulness, tact, listening and observing skills, an ability to deal with stress, sense of humor, awareness of interpersonal politics, respect

for protocol and hierarchy, loyalty, and tenacity. An interviewer may provide you with an opportunity to tell a story based upon your international experience and your answers to any question should not be too lengthy. Questions may be posed like these:

- What did you learn about yourself as a result of your study abroad experience?
- Why did you choose to study in [name of country]? Why was it important to you?
- How did you get engaged in the local culture outside the classroom?
- Can you describe a time when you had to change your behavior to accommodate or adjust to different local conditions?

Tips:

- Practice – practice – practice
- Work with your career services office to arrange a mock interview with an alumnus ideally someone who studied abroad!
- Craft examples to share in the interview that illustrate how you gained a specific interpersonal or intercultural skill during your study abroad experience

APPENDICES:

APPENDIX A: STUDY ABROAD CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Risks of Study Abroad

I understand that participation in the Program involves risks not found in study at Marymount University ("University"). These risks include: traveling to and within, and returning from, one or more foreign countries; foreign political, legal, social and economic conditions; different standards of design, safety and maintenance of buildings, public places and conveyances; and other matters which may be described in brochures and other written information concerning this Program which I have received and reviewed. I have made my own investigation and am willing to accept these risks.

2. Independent Activity

Although the University is sponsoring this course, I understand that neither the University nor any of the Faculty directors or travel arrangers will be supervising me at all times. I will have the opportunity and the right to independently leave the group periodically, subject to the faculty director's requirements for participation in and attendance at classes and other activities that are required part of the Program. Therefore, I will be responsible for my own safety and cannot hold the University liable for any injuries to my person or property or any other losses as a result of my participation in the Program.

3. Institutional Arrangements

I understand that the University does not represent or act as an agent for, and cannot control the acts or omissions of, any host institution, host family, transportation carrier, hotel, tour organizer or other provider of goods or services involved in the Program. I understand that the University is not responsible for matters that are beyond its control. I hereby release the University from any injury, loss, damage, accident, delay or expense arising out of any such matters.

4. Early Departure

If I decide to leave the Program before completing my course of study, I will provide the University

with advance written notice of my intention to leave the Program. If I leave the Program prior to its completion, the University has no liability to provide or arrange for transportation, housing, dining or other services to me in connection with my early departure.

5. Standards of Conduct

A. I understand that each foreign country has its own laws and standards of acceptable conduct, including dress, manners, morals, politics, drug use and behavior. I recognize that behavior violating those laws or standards could harm the University's relations with those countries and the institutions therein, as well as my own health and safety. I will become informed of, and will abide by, all such laws and standards for each country to or through which I will travel during the Program.

B. I will comply with all rules and regulations issued by the University, faculty directors or any coordinating institution. It is within the faculty directors' discretion to determine that my violation of such rules and regulations warrants my termination from the Program. In that event, I may be sent home at my own expense. I agree that the University has the right to enforce its rules and regulations, in its sole judgment, and that it will impose sanctions, up to and including expulsion from the Program, for violating these rules and regulations or for any behavior detrimental to or incompatible with the interests, harmony and welfare of the University, the Program or other participants. I recognize that due to the circumstances of foreign study programs, procedures for notice, hearing and appeal applicable to student disciplinary proceedings at the University do not apply. If I am expelled, I consent to being sent home at my own expense with no refund of fees. I also agree that I will (a) not buy, sell or use drugs at any time, (b) not engage in abusive use of alcohol, (c) participate in all classes and scheduled activities unless ill, and

(d) abide by dress and cultural codes suitable in the countries visited.

6. Program Changes

The University may, in its sole discretion, determine that circumstances within a foreign country may require the cancellation of the Program within that country. The University will provide me with as much advance notice as possible of its intention to cancel the Program in which I will participate. I also understand that the University, the on-site coordinators or the foreign government may prematurely terminate the Program. I understand that the University's fees and Program charges are based on current airfares, lodging rates and travel costs, which are subject to change. If I leave or am expelled from the Program for any reason, there will be no refund of fees already paid. I accept all responsibility for loss or additional expenses due to delays or other changes in the means of transportation, other services, or sickness, weather, strikes, computer problems or other unforeseen causes. If I become sick or injured, I will, at my own expense, seek out, contact and reach the Program group at its next available destination. The University bears no liability for any losses or claims incurred by me in connection with my own early termination from the Program or the University's termination of its participation in the Program. If I decide to remain in the foreign country after receiving notice of the University's intent to terminate the Program, I bear complete responsibility and liability for my own care and safety.

7. Health and Safety

A. I have consulted with a medical doctor with regard to my personal medical needs. There are no health-related reasons or problems, which preclude or restrict my participation in this Program.

B. I am aware of all applicable personal medical needs. I have arranged, through insurance or otherwise, to meet any and all needs for payment of medical costs while I participate in the Program. I recognize that Marymount University has purchased supplemental insurance in my name. I

recognize that the University is not obligated to attend to any of my medical or medication needs, and I assume all risk and responsibility therefore. If I require medical treatment or hospital care in a foreign country or in the U.S. during the Program, the University is not responsible for the cost or quality of such treatment or care.

C. The University may (but is not obligated to) take any action it considers to be warranted under the circumstances regarding my health and safety. I hereby authorize the University and/or faculty directors to procure all necessary medical assistance while I participate in this Program and to authorize any competent medical person to do all things reasonably necessary to treat any injury or illness that occurs during my participation in the Program. I agree to pay all expenses relating thereto and release the University from any liability or any actions.

8. Assumption of Risk and Release of Claims

Knowing the risks described above, and in consideration of being permitted to participate in the Program, I agree on behalf of my family, heirs and personal representatives to assume all the risks and responsibilities surrounding my participation in the Program. I and my heirs and successors and assigns agree to release, indemnify and hold harmless Marymount University, its past and present trustees, officers, employees, agents and the heirs, successors and assigns of each from any and all loss, cost, damage, liability or expense (including reasonable attorney's fees) resulting in or arising from my participation in the Program (including periods in transit to or from any country where the Program is being conducted).

