



PHILA U STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK

2017

READ CAREFULLY AND KEEP FOR YOUR REFERENCE

Important Policies, Procedures and Best Practices for your Semester Abroad. You are expected to understand and abide by the contents of this handbook.

**Office of International and Domestic Study
Away Programs**

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Pre-Departure Academic & Administrative Matters

I. ACADEMIC MATTERS

Course Authorization:

Before going abroad, students are required to meet with their academic advisor and the study abroad advisor from their discipline in order to fill-out their Course Authorization Form.

- Since courses abroad, as with courses offered on any campus, may not be offered during a given semester – or may conflict with primary selections – students are required to select several Alternates.
- All alternates must be approved and appear on the completed course form.
- Any deviations from approved coursework on students' Course Authorization form must have written approval (email is okay) from the appropriate academic department director/dean and a copy of that approval must be sent to the Study Abroad office.
- **WARNING: Unauthorized courses cannot be processed for transfer credit!**

Registration for Study Abroad:

All Study Abroad students will be registered with the Philadelphia University Registrar in order to receive credit for their coursework abroad. This process is handled by the Study Abroad office. Students are registered for a 12 credit study abroad “place holder” course prior to departure. The actual courses you take abroad will not appear on your transcript until after you return home at the end of your term abroad.

Pre-Registration from Abroad for Courses at Philadelphia University:

Students register from abroad through the WebAdvisor online interface. Just prior to the opening of Pre-Registration on the Philadelphia campus, students will receive an email advising them of the dates for Pre-Registration, the deadlines that they must abide by, and instructions on how to pre-register. Remember to watch for his email while you are abroad.

It is recommended that students use their Returning Course/Planning form as a reference while completing registration from abroad. This will give students an approved list of courses to use that has already discussed with their advisor.

If you are planning to take courses somewhere other than Philadelphia University when you return (i.e. summer courses), please contact that institution before departure. Ask them how you may pre-register from abroad and then plan accordingly. See also the “Courses Take Elsewhere” section in the Philadelphia University catalog, under “Academic Policies and Procedures.”

Students without Internet access, or with limited Internet access, must notify the Study Abroad office of this fact and provide the office with an alternate means by which we might be able to process their registrations (for example, via fax or express mail).

- Just prior to Pre-Registration, a Master Schedule will be sent to your study abroad institution just as soon as Study Abroad receives it from the Registrar.
- Students select their courses and fax or email their selections back to the Study Abroad office.
- Once registered, students' schedules are faxed or emailed back to students.
- Registration information is available on-line from the Registrar's office at www.philau.edu/registrar.

During pre-registration time it is imperative that students must check their email regularly. Students must also check-in regularly with the office abroad that handles incoming faxes for students.

To be better prepared for registration from abroad, please make sure you take abroad with you:

- A copy of your advising checksheet
- A copy of your completed Returning Course/Planning form
- Your Advisor's email address, telephone number and fax number.

The Study Abroad office staff is available to help you forward your registration materials, but we cannot fulfill any advisory roles. Any curricular questions that you might have must be directed to your advisor at Philadelphia University.

Honors Program:

To receive Honors credit for study abroad, students must add an Honor's component. We recommend that you register for the online course Study Abroad: Reflection and Discovery (STUAB-302) run with Dr. Wilcox as your upgrade. Further information, plus the required forms, can be obtained from the director of the Honors Program. See <http://www.philau.edu/honors/>.

Credits:

While studying abroad, Philadelphia University students remain registered at the university and enroll for twelve or more credits. These credits are recorded on the student's permanent transcript largely as transfer credits. Some exceptions apply (see below).

- Students must receive the equivalent of a **C minus or better** for the course credits to be applied as transfer credits. **If you get a grade of D or lower, you will not get credit!**
- The auditing of Study Abroad courses is not permitted.

Grades:

In accordance with published university policy, grades earned while studying abroad are *not* made part of the student's permanent Philadelphia University transcript.

- **Exception:** Students enrolled in the Philadelphia University Rome (UARC) or Costa Rica (CEA) programs transfer both credits and grades. Grades from the UARC and PhilaU Costa Rica programs will be factored into the student's cumulative GPA.

Class Attendance:

Philadelphia University policy states that all students are responsible for – and grades earned abroad will be determined by – all requirements outlined by the foreign instructor's syllabus. This may include class participation, as well as the completion of all assignments, the reading of all required materials, the completion of laboratory [or studio] assignments and/or field trips, and the taking of required examinations. Students are also expected to meet the following *PhilaU requirements*:

- Students studying abroad must comply with the attendance policies of Philadelphia University and those of their host institution abroad.
- Students are expected to invest - at minimum - the same amount of time and effort in classes abroad as is required at home.
- Independent travel while abroad will not excuse absences, tardiness, or the need to "leave early."
- Note: Some student visas now establish class attendance requirements. Students found in violation of those standards are subject to the automatic termination of their visas and deportation at the student's expense plus loss of fees.

Students are advised to not make definitive plans to travel while abroad until they have received their course syllabi, and their assignment and examination schedules.

Coursework:

All required coursework (exams, essays, papers, reports, presentations, projects, etc.) must be completed and submitted prior to your departure from your foreign institution.

- Post-departure work - *except in extreme and documented emergencies* - will not be accepted.
- Incompletes – except for the above – will count as failures.
In the event that an Incomplete is awarded, students are reminded that Philadelphia University policy states (*Philadelphia University Undergraduate Catalog*) that an Incomplete “automatically becomes a failure unless removed within four weeks of the next semester, including summer sessions.” The date by which Incompletes must be satisfied is published with each semester’s academic calendar by the Registrar.
Students are responsible for contacting their foreign institutions and instructors and ensuring that any incomplete work is completed and graded by the due date established by the Registrar of Philadelphia University.

You should retain your course syllabi, reading lists and copies of your work until you receive your transcript and final grade report.

- In the event of a grade dispute or any other questions related to your academics abroad, this material would serve you well.
- Students are responsible for saving their own documentation, which may otherwise be difficult to obtain after the fact.

Withdrawals

Students who take a leave or withdraw from the University either before or after a Study Abroad semester commences are responsible for the non-refundable University fees, e.g. Study Abroad fee, as well as for the full amount of any cancellation fees charged by the Study Abroad institution or provider. [These fees are published on the program’s websites] Students who take a leave or withdraw after a semester commences are subject to the terms of the University’s Withdraw Policy pertaining to tuition and the policies and procedures pertaining to the student’s University and non-University financial aid. Withdrawals after a semester commences may prompt repayment of non-University loans.

Students are required to officially withdraw in writing and submit a withdrawal form from the registrar.

The University offers [Tuition Insurance](#) through a third-party vendor. Student may either opt-in and renew annually or opt-out of this insurance policy. The insurance covers circumstances in which a student must withdraw from the University due to a serious illness or accident. Claims are filed directly with the vendor. In the absence of the insurance, the University’s [Withdraw Policy](#) and billing are in effect

Transcripts and Grade Recording:

Students are responsible for ensuring that an official transcript is sent to the Philadelphia University Study Abroad office upon the completion of each semester of study abroad. Students do not receive credit for their studies abroad unless a transcript is received in a timely manner.

Once the transcripts are received by Study Abroad – generally six to eight weeks after the conclusion of studies abroad - and then processed by the Registrar’s office, the credits will be

adjusted and grades (for UARC) recorded. Following that, a new and official Grade Report will be generated by the Registrar and sent out.

Grade Inquiries: Please be advised that for reasons related to privacy, policy and procedures, the Study Abroad Office cannot divulge grades.

Grade Disputes/Appeals: These are subject to the regulations and procedures of foreign school. The Study Abroad Office/Philadelphia University cannot (and will not) intercede.

Schedule Revisions:

While abroad, students are permitted to change their schedule during the Add/Drop period at the start of a semester.

Important: If you change your course selections and add courses that do not appear as alternates on the Study Abroad Course Authorization sheet that was approved by your advisors and submitted to the Study Abroad office, you must, *without exception*:

1. Contact the Study Abroad Office.
2. Describe the changes you wish to make, and
3. Explain why these changes are necessary.

Students are responsible for ensuring that requests are made in a timely manner and that deadlines are met.

If the course(s) you are adding is not listed on one of the Study Abroad Office's pre-approved course equivalency sheets, additional approval from the appropriate academic director/dean will need to be obtained. The Study Abroad Office must have a record of approval in order to process your foreign transcript at the end of your study abroad semester and forward it to the Registrar. Unauthorized courses cannot be processed for transfer credit!

Academic Models and Time Management:

Studying abroad frequently requires students to develop – or to strengthen – their independent study skills. Time management and goal setting will better ensure success. You may find you need to look closely at the way you learn things and perform academically, since it is frequently the case that instructors abroad expect students to take on greater responsibility for their own learning. Planning will help.

Perhaps more so than at home, you will need to be well organized from day to day. In addition to juggling your coursework and outside interests (interests which can become overwhelming with so much to see and do), you may find that it just plain takes longer to get things done, plus business days and hours are often far different from what students are used to at home (More on this below). Therefore once abroad, plan your time carefully!

- Note when Midterms and Finals are scheduled.
- Consult your syllabi and see when papers and projects are due.
- Allocate specific blocks of time for regular periods of study, noting special needs such as preparations for Midterms, Finals and major projects.
- Take into account the fact that foreign instructors generally give less feedback than what you are used to and expect students to take on a greater share of responsibility for their learning.
- Grading structures of simply a Midterm, paper, and Final exam are common. This means that you need to be very ready for the Midterm as it may be difficult to get caught up otherwise.

- Consider the regular day-to-day tasks that you will need to accomplish and the local business hours or conditions that determine when you can do them.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Assumption of Risk and Release Form:

All Study Abroad students are required to have signed the “Assumption of Risk and Release” waiver included in the application packet and available from the Study Abroad office. Any questions regarding the contents of the form should be brought to the attention of the Director of Study Abroad. And students under 21 years of age at the time of signing must also have a parent or legal guardian sign the waiver.

Emergency Contact Information/Travel Plans:

Before departing to study abroad, all students are *required* to update the Study Abroad Office at Philadelphia University if the names, addresses and telephone numbers of persons to be contacted in the case of an emergency change from what was initially provided in your application. The same applies to any allergies or illnesses the student may have, and prescribed medications that the student is taking – please update the Office with any changes.

- Under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1999, health information cannot be used to determine eligibility. All health information is confidential and only made available to caregivers in order to respond to the needs of our students.

Students are further required to provide the Study Abroad office – before departure - with the date of their flight abroad to begin their studies, and the date of their planned departure from abroad. And if you purchase or rent a cell phone while abroad, please provide the Study Abroad office with this cell phone number.

Students are encouraged to contact the Study Abroad office within 24 hours after their expected arrival abroad. If the student does not contact the Office, Study Abroad staff may contact the host institution the student is attending to confirm the student’s whereabouts. You can contact the Study Abroad Office at: (215) 951-2815 or studyabroad@philau.edu.

Disabilities:

Philadelphia University welcomes - and encourages - the Study Abroad participation of students with disabilities, a right guaranteed under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. With a coordinated effort on the part of the student going abroad (where access and attitudes may not be the same as in the United States), the Study Abroad Office, and the Disabilities Services office, the needs of the disabled student can be met. Advance planning is essential towards a successful international experience, and eligible students are urged to discuss their needs with Disabilities Services immediately after their acceptance into the program.

Tuition:

All Philadelphia University Study Abroad participants pay the same Philadelphia University tuition as they would on-campus. The Philadelphia University tuition covers tuition abroad up to six courses (or 18.5 transfer credits) per Philadelphia semester. In the event that tuition costs abroad exceed those charged by Philadelphia University, students are responsible for the extra cost. Tuition costs abroad are available from the Study Abroad Office, or from the websites of institutions abroad. Excess tuition fees are added to students’ bills, and need not be paid to the institution abroad.

Other Philadelphia University-billed fees:

1. Housing arranged by institutions and programs abroad (recommended where available) is billed to students' accounts.
2. All Philadelphia University Study Abroad students are required to participate in the university's international major medical plan, provided by HTH Worldwide. This coverage is also required by many nations abroad for visa-issuing purposes. The university enrolls students and bills a small fee – generally about \$172 (4 months) - to their account.
3. Study Abroad participants also pay a \$800 administrative fee (\$500 for summer) billed to the student's account.

Depending on the program, students are likely responsible for any **deposits** involved. They are also responsible for any other fees required by their program, and for documents, travel and personal expenses. Complete information about costs and fees is available from Study Abroad.

Financial Aid:

In order to ensure that students are fully informed of all the financial aid opportunities available to them, students receiving financial aid (FA) should talk to Lisa Cooper, Director of Financial Aid, before finalizing arrangements to study abroad. The Financial Aid office can be reached at (215) 951-2940.

Important: Students are responsible for ensuring the application of Financial Aid funds to their account(s) at Philadelphia University while they are abroad. If checks will need to be signed by the student and returned to Philadelphia University for disbursement, students must pre-arrange these transactions well before departure. Students are to inquire as to the transaction options available to them

- The Study Abroad office cannot send FA checks abroad.
- To ease the transfer of student loan funds, ask about the Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) option.

Philadelphia University Grants and Aid:

Fall and spring semester study abroad students are able to transfer most all of their regular Philadelphia university scholarships and grants to their program abroad. For special scholarship situations, please check with the Financial Aid office. For summer financial aid, the student should speak with the financial aid office about their options.

Billing Policy:

Students will receive a bill from Philadelphia University for their tuition. And in most cases, Philadelphia University will also bill students for study abroad housing charges.

- Students are responsible for the direct payment of any application or deposit fees (or similar), housing deposit fees required by foreign institutions, and/or student visa application fees.
- University policy states that in order for a student to be permitted to study abroad through Philadelphia University, all student account balances *must* be paid in full by the student's departure.

In the case of a credit balance due to financial aid, a refund check will be mailed to the address on file at the Business Office, unless the student has made other arrangements with the Business Office prior to the student's departure.

When study abroad charges are payable in foreign currency – housing, for example, an estimated U.S. dollar equivalent is initially used to charge student accounts. **Accounts may later be**

adjusted for any difference between the estimated and actual charges resulting from foreign currency exchange variances.

Residence Hall Contract with Philadelphia University:

Students are responsible for informing themselves of current Philadelphia University Housing policies that relate to Study Abroad, and for abiding by the established regulations. Students in University housing are responsible for canceling their Philadelphia University residence hall contracts before departing for study abroad.

Please note that returning study abroad students are not necessarily guaranteed housing upon their return. Students were required to make contact with the Residence Life office at Philadelphia University during their early planning and be certain that they understood the rules and procedures that impacted their eligibility for housing upon their return.

- In particular, students were responsible for informing themselves of the eligibility requirements for participation in the selection lottery, and of the means by which they might participate in the selection process itself while they are abroad.
- Students not following the procedures of the Office of Residence Life - whether on-campus or abroad – may not be permitted to participate in the housing selection process

Please direct all questions about Philadelphia University Housing to the Office of Residence Life: Tel: (215) 951 -2543. Fax: (215) 951-2644. Email: [http://reslife@philau.edu](mailto:reslife@philau.edu)

Study Abroad Website:

Once you are abroad your online application status will change and new materials will be available to you. Please remember to use the Study Abroad Office website as a resource for important information while you are abroad!

United States Income Tax:

Students who will be abroad on April 15 are required to file a tax return or to apply for an extension. For more information, see: <https://www.irs.gov/publications/p54/index.html> or call 1-800-829-1040.

Health, Safety & Security Abroad

I. SAFETY & SECURITY

Students must recognize that the bulk of their security rests upon the decisions that they make everyday. Unsound decisions with regard to personal safety can have serious consequences when the student is at home in a known environment, let alone when one is abroad in a foreign country.

Students are advised to:

- Be “street smart” when going out to explore. Always be aware of your surroundings and avoid areas that look sketchy or deserted.
- Employ a buddy system; never go out at night alone.
- Avoid crowds, protest groups and potentially volatile/dangerous situations.
- Refrain from un-necessarily divulging personal or group-related information.
- Recognize that judgments impaired by drug and alcohol abuse can lead to dangerous situations even in one’s home environment. In a foreign environment, these dangers can become greater, due to language and cultural barriers, and less familiarity with one’s surroundings.
- Never store or carry all your valuables in one place.
- Do not take expensive jewelry with you. Wearing expensive jewelry while abroad is an invitation to be robbed!
- Be extra careful with cameras, cell phones and iPods – these are easy items for pickpockets to steal.
- Carry only those credit cards that are necessary. Keep all other cards in a safe location.
- Maintain a list of all credit cards, their account numbers and the card company's contact telephone number and emergency replacement procedures.
- Always have some taxi money, list of emergency numbers, and a telephone card or wifi enabled phone with you.
- Avoid all situations in which illegal drugs are involved. Foreign governments can be quite severe when dealing with students who use drugs or who associate with persons who use or sell drugs.
- Never leave bags unattended at airports or train stations. And remember that jokes or careless threats to transportation personnel will result in serious consequences as they are on constant watch for possible terrorist activity.
- Do not hitchhike under any circumstances.

Securing Your Important Documents:

All important documents: passports, airline tickets, travelers' checks, credit cards, and keys to luggage should be kept on one's person while traveling internationally. A money pouch worn around the waist or neck, and under your clothing, is a worthwhile investment. Once you are safely settled in your housing abroad you will likely be able to leave these things out of sight in your apartment (a safe deposit box would be ideal).

While going about your daily routine as a student you should carry a photocopy of your passport and leave the original in your apartment in a safe location. You should also make photocopies of all of your important documents (credit cards, airline tickets, IDs) and leave one set with your parents/guardians and bring one set with you. Having photocopies of these documents will be very helpful in the event you need to replace them.

Violent Crime:

Violent crime, particularly that directed towards tourists and foreign students, is a comparative rarity in Europe and most other locations abroad. Students should not be lulled, however, into complacency and should remain attentive and on guard at all times. Be careful, likewise, with valuables and never leave any personal items unattended.

Also, be particularly attentive in crowds (mass transit especially) and consider any sudden unexpected occurrence as suspicious and a possible planned distraction. If in a non-English-speaking nation, learn the word for “help” and for “police”. Angered and shrieking tones are universally recognized. If you find yourself in a bad situation, forget language barriers and just react appropriately in English.

Sexual Harassment:

Just as in the United States, sexual harassment and assault can occur abroad. Knowing how to identify harassment—whether it is between two students, between a professor and a student, between a staff or residence authority and a student, etc.—and where to report an incident can help to maintain a safe, harassment-free environment. Study Abroad students should trust their judgment and intuition. Simply put, if a situation makes you uncomfortable, then it needs to be addressed. A difference of culture does NOT excuse psychological, verbal or physical abuse. If you experience sexual harassment while abroad, report the incident immediately to the Student Services Coordinator or another school official at your study abroad institution.

Petty Theft:

While abroad students should be aware of the risk of petty theft. Try to avoid pan handlers if possible by making it a habit to look ahead of you as you walk. Individuals will attempt to distract you, frequently through the use of newspapers, cardboard or even babies. If approached, make eye contact before they are within striking distance and wag your finger while saying “NO” in a firm voice. Stealth, distraction and speed are their main tools. If they are certain that you are aware of their presence and that you are going to make things difficult, they will move on to another target. If you find yourself suddenly in the midst of a group of threatening individuals, hold tightly onto your valuables and break free by twisting and running. *While warnings are often focused on gypsies or Roma, theft is also committed by people dressed as tourists, students, and professionals.* Your best protection is to be aware of suspicious behavior and avoid individuals who are exhibiting such behavior.

Independent Travel Precautions:

All Philadelphia University students traveling independently away from their study abroad base over weekends and breaks (etc.) are required to submit to the Student Life staff at their foreign institution an itinerary before their departure. This itinerary must contain the following information:

- Date of departure.
- Cities to be visited & their dates.
- Means of transport (air, train, bus, etc.) and the carrier (if known).
- Contact info (hotels, hostels, friends, etc.) or some other means by which you may be reached in an emergency. If possible, please provide a telephone number.
- Date of expected return.

Please keep a telephone card and a set of emergency numbers with you at all times, along with your insurance card and the telephone number of your local U.S. embassy or consulate. Embassy and consulate contact information can be found online at <http://travel.state.gov/links.html>, or from our Study Abroad website (“For Students Abroad”). We recommend that you jot down the contact info for the areas that you’ll be visiting in advance so that you will have this information if the need arises.

When visiting an unfamiliar city, please remember to:

1. Pay attention to landmarks and streets when first going to your lodging.
2. When you arrive at your lodging, note the street and adjacent landmarks.
3. When you leave your lodging for the first time, make sure you know:
 - a) The name and correct pronunciation of your lodging.
 - b) Your lodging's full address and nearest major landmark.
 - c) Your lodging's telephone number.
 - d) the closing hours of the front doors. Many lodgings will lock their front doors at midnight. If your lodging will be closing for the night at a certain hour, ask as to how you might be admitted if you arrive after closing.
4. Take several of your lodging's business cards before going out so that you will have all the correct information. You can also give one of these to your cab driver to make your return easier and diminish misunderstandings or language barriers.

II. TRAVEL WARNINGS & CONSULAR INFORMATION SHEETS

The United States State Department issues travel warnings and consular information sheets concerning countries throughout the world. These can be accessed at their website:
<http://travel.state.gov/travel/warnings.html>

[From the Dept. of State website] “**Travel warnings** are issued when the State Department decides, based on all relevant information, to recommend that Americans avoid travel to a certain country. Countries where avoidance of travel is recommended will have Travel Warnings as well as Consular Information Sheets.”

“**Consular Information Sheets** are available for every country of the world. They include 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. ... Consular Information Sheets do not include advice, but present information in a factual manner so the traveler can make his or her own decisions about travel to a particular country.”

The Study Abroad office **strongly encourages** students who are studying abroad to register with the local US Embassy in their study abroad destination. Registering when abroad serves several purposes. It helps when you renew your passport and it can also facilitate the replacement of your passport if yours is lost or stolen while abroad. Further, it allows the Embassy to contact you should the need arise in an emergency. The address and contact information for the US Embassy abroad can be found at the end of the **Consular Information Sheet** and on the US Department of State website of US Embassies and Consulates: <http://usembassy.state.gov/>

Additional Safety Resource:

There is an online resource available to you and your parents regarding safety and study abroad. The **Safety Abroad Handbook** provides resources and preparation tips for students considering studying abroad and parents trying to help them. The Handbook should help you ask the right questions and find helpful resources for international study and travel. It can be found at:
<http://www.studentsabroad.com/>

III. INSURANCE & MEDICAL MATTERS

HTH Insurance:

All Philadelphia University students are required to purchase accident/health/emergency evacuation/repatriation insurance through HTH Worldwide Insurance. The Study Abroad office will enroll each student in the University's plan and the fees for this coverage will be placed on your Philadelphia University student account.

HTH is the recognized "gold standard" for overseas coverage and offers a number of advantages over other providers. Most importantly, they have created a (truly) worldwide network of providers that permits HTH to make direct payments to these providers, even when students are traveling on their own away from our study abroad bases on weekends or over breaks. As a result, students and parents need not worry about out-of-pocket payments provided that students stay within the HTH network. Staying within the network is facilitated by the fact that HTH has gone to a largely web-based format.

Equipped with their HTH insurance card – or just the identification number that appears upon it - students may go to the HTH Students webpage (www.hthstudents.com) Here they can locate information about which doctors and hospitals are in the HTH network in the city they're studying abroad in, or any other city they might be planning to visit while abroad. And by clicking a link next to the doctor's name, they can learn about a doctor's background, the languages they speak, etc. All doctors in the HTH network, by the way, must speak English in order to be included. Students may also research the translations for medical terms and symptoms, and even the local names for prescription medicines and the availability (or not) of that medication abroad. In general, there is a wealth of information online, including health and security information, and, of course, policy information. Thus, no matter where students might be, medical assistance is but a click or telephone call away.

Parents also may access all of the above information, plus content created especially for them, from a parent's page (www.hthparents.com). All features may be previewed in "demo" mode from either the Students or the Parents pages. **The Study Abroad office strongly encourages parents and students to review the insurance coverage information for the specifics of what you are covered for prior to departing.**

We also recommend that students with cell phones abroad should enter HTH's Global Assistance Services number (610-254-8771) into their cell phone so that they may seek assistance at any time 24/7. Operators at HTH's U.S.-based Global Assistance Service center will aid you in locating and contacting emergency providers and services at your location, and in obtaining emergency medical evaluation if it is required. This emergency service is especially valuable should you find yourself in need when you are traveling away from your study abroad base. Operators at this center can also address some non-medical emergencies such as replacing a lost passport, locating legal assistance and interpreters, or other incidental aid as may be required by the situation at hand. Please remember to keep your policy ID card and number, and a copy of the policy, with you at all times and have copies ready in case of loss. And in the event of a true medical emergency, seek immediate attention at the nearest emergency room or summon local help!

Prescription Drugs:

Students who are under the care of a physician, or require regular medication or injections, should be sure to check with their personal physician for advice concerning their welfare while abroad.

- Prescription medicines taken abroad should be accompanied by a letter from your physician, and should be kept in their original, labeled, containers.

- The physician's letter should state the student's name, a description of the student's medical condition, the dosage of the prescribed medication(s), and the chemical composition of the drug rather than the brand name.
- It is recommended that students take a supply of their medication that will last the duration of their time abroad.
- Students should notify the Student Affairs coordinator (or similar) at your study abroad institution of any special needs that they have.
- Students with diabetes or any physical condition that might require emergency care should carry identification that specifies their condition and which details all prescribed medications.

Glasses and Contact Lenses:

Students who wear glasses should take along an extra pair, and students wearing contacts should take enough extra pairs for the duration of their time abroad. A copy of the prescription should be taken along as a precaution.

Vaccinations:

Students are responsible for obtaining whatever vaccinations that may be required for border entry and/or are necessary to maintain their health. The Study Abroad office recommends contacting the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC)'s International Traveler's Hotline or website for more information. The hotline number is (404) 332-4555. And their website is: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/vaccinat.htm>.

You can also see the Consular Information Sheets for specific country vaccination information. Also, you should inquire of your family or personal physician about vaccinations that might be necessary or recommended given your personal health or medical history.

Center for Disease Control (CDC) Recommendations:

The CDC recommends that all travelers take the following precautions, no matter the destination:

- Always use latex condoms to reduce the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. And don't share needles with anyone.
- Wash hands often with soap and water.
- Don't eat or drink dairy products unless you know they have been pasteurized.
- Never eat undercooked ground beef and poultry, raw eggs, and unpasteurized dairy products. Raw shellfish is particularly dangerous to persons who have liver disease or compromised immune systems.
- The water in Europe is generally safe. But its mineral and bacterial content is different from that which your system is used to, therefore it is advisable to drink bottled water for the first few days. Your system will adjust gradually through the absorption of the local water from foods and their preparation.
- Above recommendations from: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/westeurp.htm> where further information and advice is available.

CDC & Motor Vehicles:

Please be careful when in or around motor vehicles. The CDC notes that injuries from motor vehicle crashes "pose the greatest risk of serious disability or loss of life to international travelers. ... Motor vehicle crashes result from a variety of factors, including inadequate roadway design, hazardous conditions, lack of appropriate vehicles and vehicle maintenance, unskilled or inexperienced drivers, inattention to pedestrians and cyclists, or impairment due to alcohol or drug use; all these factors are preventable or can be abated." *CDC Health Information for*

International Travel, 1999-2000, Washington, 1999, 185.

<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbk99.pdf>

- Avoid vehicles not equipped with seat belts, and always be sure to buckle up.
- The most serious and deadly incidents occur returning from “social events.”
- Avoid non-essential night driving/riding, and do not ride with persons who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Take a taxi instead!
- Helmet use is imperative for bicycle and motorcycle travel.
- **Important: Because of the dangers involved, Philadelphia University does not encourage students to rent or drive motorized vehicles while abroad!**

CDC & AIDS/HIV:

The CDC recommends that students make themselves aware of HIV and AIDS. It is important for students to understand how the disease is transmitted and diagnosed. They should also understand what constitutes high-risk behavior (most commonly unprotected sexual intercourse) for becoming infected with HIV. Students should develop a realistic view of their own personal risk and know that they are capable of controlling their risks and developing strategies to reduce them.

The CDC has noted “...because HIV infection and AIDS are globally distributed, the risk to international travelers is determined less by their geographic destination than by their sexual and drug-using behaviors.” (See <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/hiv aids.htm>). Please note that students choosing to be sexually active place themselves on a risk continuum based on the level of risk associated with the behaviors they choose. And alcohol use is prevalent among students and is implicated in high-risk sexual activity. Decreased alcohol and substance use is an essential element of risk reduction. The CDC has an important page of links on travel-related AIDS and HIV issues at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/diseases.htm#AIDS>.

IV. STUDENT CONDUCT

Student Conduct Abroad:

Students studying abroad are required to observe the laws of their host nation and all the academic and disciplinary regulations in effect at their study abroad institution.

Students are advised that foreign governments do not necessarily extend to their citizens, or to visitors from the United States, the same civil rights enjoyed at home by U.S. citizens and visitors.

Because Philadelphia University students remain enrolled at the University concurrently while studying abroad, they must also adhere to the Philadelphia University Student Code of Conduct (published in the University’s *Student Handbook*), the contents of which they should be familiar with before departing. The Philadelphia University Student Code of Conduct is also available online at: <http://www.philau.edu/studenthandbook/2015-2016/>

Important: University-arranged housing is considered university housing and is subject to the Philadelphia University Student Code of Conduct found in the *Philadelphia University Student Handbook*, and Paragraph I (“Personal and Academic Conduct”) of the Philadelphia University Study Abroad Program “Assumption of Risk and Release” form required of all Study Abroad students.

Philadelphia University Standards of Conduct:

Generally, the University defines prohibited conduct for which a student may be held responsible as follows:

1. Acts of academic dishonesty or misconduct including, but not limited to, cheating, computer theft, stealing and plagiarism.
2. Acts of non-academic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, theft, attempted theft, possession of stolen property, forgery, and falsification of information provided to any University official or agent.
3. Physical or sexual assault or any other conduct which threatens the physical or psychological health and safety of any person (including the person committing the act) or the sanctity of the campuses.
4. Damage to University public, private or personal property.
5. Violation of policies as described in the *Student Handbook*, the current *Catalog*, and the *Study Abroad Handbook(s)*, and all other rules governing University facilities, documents and services.
6. Intentional disruption or obstruction of teaching, research, administration, disciplinary procedures, other activities or activities authorized to take place on University properties.
7. Disorderly conduct, including acts which breach the peace, and/or are lewd, indecent or obscene.
8. Failure to comply with directions of University, local, state or national officials performing official duties. This shall include failure to give proper identification when requested.
9. Violation of a student's rights or privileges and verbal or written harassment, discrimination, abuse and/or disrespect to any person.
10. Violation of the statutes, laws, ordinances and/or regulations of the city of Philadelphia, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, or other cities, states and nations while abroad, and the United States of America.

The following behaviors are specifically prohibited in the Philadelphia University community. Students may not:

- Use, possess, manufacture, distribute, dispense or sell illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia on University premises or in University-owned vehicles.
- Use, possess, manufacture, distribute, dispense or sell a controlled substance on University premises unless otherwise authorized.
- Store in a locker, desk or other repository on University premises any illegal drug, drug paraphernalia or any controlled substance whose use is unauthorized.
- Be under the influence of an unauthorized substance or illegal drug on University premises or in University-owned vehicles.
- Use alcohol to the extent that it adversely affects the performance of the employee or student.
- Use alcohol to the extent that the safety to self or others on the campus is jeopardized.

The prohibited behaviors listed above, and as published in the *Philadelphia University Student Handbook*, apply to all members of the University community, including those abroad.

Participation in study abroad at the university is not a right. Rather, it is a privilege extended to qualified applicants. Students must meet certain expectations and eligibility criteria, as well as exercise responsible judgment and behavior.

- Application to and acceptance into the study abroad program is separate from admission to Philadelphia University.
- When students accept their admission to the study abroad program, they agree to abide by the policies and regulations set forth in this Study Abroad handbook, the university's

current academic catalog, the university's current Student Handbook and other relevant university publications.

Statement of Social Behavior:

Due to its very nature, study abroad requires students to comport themselves in a mature and responsible manner. It asks them to perform with academic distinction in a foreign environment that can engender intellectual stimulation and personal and cultural enrichment on the one hand, and seductive distraction, risks and even danger on the other. Good judgment and responsible behavior, thus, is essential; not only for your own personal growth, enrichment and safety but that of your fellow students and friends. At a minimum, you are expected to:

- Comply with local laws and regulations
- Abide by host (foreign) university policies and regulations (including local housing regulations and policies), and
- Adhere to the social patterns of local housing placement and the local community.

Any behavior that in the judgment of the Office of the Dean of Students in conjunction with the Study Abroad Office causes pain or discomfort to others, or which reflects discredit on the individual or upon the University, is considered unacceptable, and may subject the offender(s) to immediate administrative action by the Office of the Dean of Students in conjunction with the Study Abroad Office including, but not limited to, immediate dismissal from the study abroad program.

Students who are dismissed from their study abroad program will be:

- Withdrawn from their courses overseas and awarded the grade of "F" for each course.
- Removed from their program-provided housing, and expected to return to the United States as soon as possible, and at their own cost.

Students dismissed from their studies abroad may, in separate administrative action, also be withdrawn from the University depending upon the severity of the infraction. Students dismissed from their studies abroad are not entitled to any refund of unused fees.

To protect the integrity of Philadelphia University, its Study Abroad programs, and the various individuals and entities that the university relies upon abroad, in addition to the rights, safety and well-being of the university's students and the citizenry at large (both foreign and domestic), the Office of the Dean of Students in conjunction with the Study Abroad Office reserves the right to pursue separate sanctions against offenders under the university's judicial system in the event that they are permitted to continue as students at Philadelphia University.

Examples of unacceptable student behavior while on study abroad that may lead to immediate administrative action by the Office of the Dean of Students in conjunction with the Study Abroad Office include, but are not limited to:

- Illegal drug use
- Alcohol abuse
- Violence or vandalism
- Failure to attend classes and/or other required academic activities
- Unauthorized absence from the study abroad program
- Unauthorized changes in housing
- Arrest for infractions of local laws
- Other violations of Philadelphia University policies.

V. ALCOHOL & DRUGS

Policy on Alcohol and Drugs:

Philadelphia University is required by law to inform students of the sanctions which may be imposed upon them if they violate federal, state or local laws regarding the unlawful possession, use or distribution of illegal drugs or alcohol. In addition, Philadelphia University is required to inform students of the standards of conduct, University penalties, and counseling options as they pertain to substance abuse. All members of the Philadelphia University community are hereby notified of the primary components of the Substance Abuse Prevention Policy in compliance with the Drug-Free Schools and Community Act (DFSCA) of 1989.

- Complete details of the University's policy on alcohol and other drugs as required by DFSCA is contained in the *Philadelphia University Student Handbook*.
- The policy is also available online at: <http://www.philau.edu/studenthandbook/2015-2016/studentlifepolicies/alcoholanddrugs.html>
- Students are required to familiarize themselves with this policy before departing to study abroad, and – by signing the required “Assumption of Risk and Release” form - have agreed to adhere to the policies.
- The present handbook discusses related and additional issues directly impacting students studying abroad.

Alcohol Policy:

As an institution of higher education, Philadelphia University wishes to promote the educational purposes of the University in all activities and to establish in our students a professional level of behavior and personal deportment that is concurrent with those educational objectives. In light of problems of alcohol abuse in our society, the University seeks to encourage a social life that does not emphasize the role of alcoholic beverages in either private or group activities and yet allows students of legal age some opportunity to develop good habits for moderate and appropriate drinking.

The laws and statutes of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania regulate the possession and consumption of alcoholic beverages on the campuses of Philadelphia University, and at University-related events. Abroad, students must abide by the laws and customs of their host nation, city and academic institutions.

- University-provided housing abroad is considered university residential campus housing and is subject to the Philadelphia University Student Code of Conduct found in the *Philadelphia University Student Handbook* and amended here, and Paragraph I (“Personal and Academic Conduct”) of the Philadelphia University Study Abroad Program “Assumption of Risk and Release” form required of all Study Abroad applicants.
- Students are reminded that as registered participants in the Study Abroad Program, they remain students of Philadelphia University while abroad.

Alcohol Policy Violations:

1. Consumption or possession of alcoholic beverages in the public areas of the campus not designated as a permit area or without a permit. These areas include residential hallways, public lounges and bathrooms, and anywhere out of doors, including residential patios.
2. Consumption or possession of alcohol by a person under the local legal drinking age.
3. Being intoxicated as indicated by appearance or behavior, such as: slurred speech, unstable walk, unconsciousness, destruction of property, use of abusive language, alcohol on breath, vomiting or disturbance to others.
4. Sale or trade of alcohol on the campus property or to members of the Philadelphia University community.

5. Possession of kegs, beer balls or similar bulk containers.

The resident(s) in whose room/apartment/townhouse alcohol is being consumed is (are) responsible for the behavior of guests and will be held accountable for policy violations. It is the responsibility of the dwellers to ensure that:

- Local minors do not consume alcohol.
- Guests do not leave the room/apartment/townhouse with open containers of alcohol.
- Guests do not become intoxicated and/or disorderly.

Violations of the alcohol policy will remain active and will accumulate for the duration of a student's matriculation at Philadelphia University. Any student who has three semesters with no violations of the alcohol policy may submit a written request to the Associate Dean of Students to have his/her previous violations removed from his/her record.

Any University official (including members or agents of Safety & Security, Residence Life and the Student Life staffs) who has a reasonable suspicion that the alcohol policy is being violated may access any University facility to determine an appropriate course of action.

- University officials are authorized to intervene in any situation that warrants action including, but not limited to: removal of attendees; closing of the event; and/or dumping or confiscation of alcohol; and notification of University personnel.

Consuming Alcohol While Studying Abroad:

Philadelphia University is required by the United States government's Drug-Free Schools and Campuses Act to certify that it has adopted and implemented a program to prevent the unlawful possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by students and employees. The Act also applies to programs abroad in which students are enrolled.

While the information provided here is in compliance with the Act, it is especially directed towards informing students of the risk that drug and alcohol use presents to their health, safety and well-being - particularly within the context of studies abroad - so that they might make well-informed choices and take responsibility for their actions.

- The consumption of alcohol and drugs is – far and away – the number one cause of serious incidents in study abroad programs nationally.
 - These incidents need not happen, and students must recognize that control resides with them.

Philadelphia University, and the Study Abroad Office, cares about your health and safety while abroad.

- All students, whether of U.S. legal drinking age or not, are asked to read the following attentively and to discuss drinking – and especially the potential risks that it carries abroad – with their families.
- The special risks associated with alcohol use by American students below the U.S. legal drinking age are discussed further below.
 - Professional help and advice is available from the university's Counseling Services: (215) 951-2735.

Drinking and Intercultural Experience:

Cultures view alcohol – and various types of alcohol – in differing ways. Depending upon the culture in question, alcohol may be seen as a complement to a meal, a privileged drink, an element of a sacred rite, a socially-acceptable way of unwinding, or in various other ways or combinations. If you are under the age of 21, it is illegal for you to consume alcoholic beverages

in the state of Pennsylvania. However, because the legal drinking age abroad is frequently lower than it is in the United States (the legal age in Italy, for example, is 16), it is not unlikely that you will encounter social, or other, situations that involve the consumption of alcohol in a culturally appropriate manner.

- Remember, you do not have to drink! It is culturally acceptable to decline the offer of an alcoholic beverage, particularly if you do so in a gracious manner.
- You should never feel culturally pressured to do anything that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- If you do choose to consume alcohol, please consume it responsibly and safely.
- Alcohol belongs to that class of drugs known as sedatives, which can impair judgment and cause a loss of inhibition, judgment and fine motor control skills even in small doses.
- Warning: Consuming large amount of alcohol, or overly rapid consumption, can result in alcohol poisoning, and even coma or death through stoppage of the involuntary muscles – the heart and lungs.

Health Risks of Alcohol:

Please be aware of the fact that alcohol affects the body and the mind.

- Alcohol enters the bloodstream almost immediately, and circulates to the brain and all organs.
- It depresses the central nervous system, slowing the thought process, impairing judgment, and reducing reflexes and other physical skills.
- A person may find him or herself to be confused, moody, angry, and emotional and disoriented under the influence of alcohol.
- In a less familiar, foreign, environment such affects could have catastrophic, even deadly, consequences.
- Dangers associated with - and not limited to - the use of alcohol include: addiction, damage to key organs, personal and motor vehicle accidents, social problems (family, school, and job problems), birth defects, and other serious physical problems, including death due to alcohol poisoning.
- According to 1994 data from the National Center for Health Statistics, some 400 young people aged 15 to 24 die per year from binge-drinking (more on this below).
- Alcohol has been shown to have a greater (and more rapid) effect on women due to a difference in the rate of metabolism.

If You Decide to Drink, Be S-A-F-E About It!

S: Slowly

The human body can safely metabolize (digest) only about ½ ounce of alcohol per hour.

- One 12-ounce beer made of 4% alcohol.
- One 4-ounce glass of (12%) wine.
- One ounce of (100 proof/50%) spirits.
- Remember: Consume only one drink per hour and never consume more than four drinks in any one sitting!

If you have never (or rarely) consumed alcohol before – go slow!

- Getting sick – and you will if you do not go slowly (it is your body's way of sounding an alarm and cleansing itself) – is decidedly not fun.
- If you become violently ill, internal damage (or worse) may result.
- Drinking may be portrayed as cool or elegant in the movies, but vomiting most definitely is not and is socially repulsive universally, so go slow.

A: Aware

Recognize the context of your drinking: a foreign and (largely) unfamiliar environment.

- All countries and cities have places that should be avoided. Be intelligent: avoid them and do not drink there. Unsure? Stay away!
- Wine and (especially) beer may be 2 to 3 times more potent than in the United States. The effect is a “stealth attack” – you may not recognize that you have overdone it until it is too late. This is another good reason to drink slowly.
- There are personal – as well as health - dangers involved in being drunk while at home in the United States. These dangers are magnified many times in unfamiliar bars and restaurants, on unfamiliar streets and transit systems, and where a language barrier may further complicate matters.
- Students (both male & female) are at a greater risk regarding “date rape” drink additives when in an unfamiliar environment.

F: Family and Friends

If you decide to drink, make it an element of a truly social occasion: dinner, dancing at a club, enjoying music at a jazz club, etc.

- Drinking to get drunk is antisocial and an activity associated with social dysfunction, drug dependency, and low social status in most cultures.
- Do not drink in solitude, or alone in public, but with responsible friends and family.
- Depression and stress can have a further negative impact upon the way alcohol affects the brain.
- When drinking, look after your friends’ health and safety. Know the limits of healthy drinking, and be aware of your surroundings and the possibly serious consequences of drinking in unfamiliar settings.

E: Eat When You Drink

Food slows the absorption of alcohol into the bloodstream.

- Alcohol should be a complement to food and not a substitute.
- Drinking on an empty stomach can lead to unexpected results – the alcohol will go directly, without impedence, into the bloodstream and into the brain whose operations (thought, judgment, motor skills, etc.) will be impaired to a higher degree compared to a drink taken with food; a situation that (again) could lead to serious consequences abroad.

Binge Drinking:

In the 1990’s, the Harvard School of Public Health began surveying U.S. college students about binge-drinking. According to statistics from their 1999 report, 44% of students are not just drinkers, but binge drinkers. A binge-drinker is defined as a male who drinks five or more drinks in a row at least once during any given two week period and a female who drinks four or more drinks in a row during a two week period.

Alarmingly, 23% of all students are frequent binge-drinkers, a figure that is actually on the increase. And heavy, not just social, use of alcohol use affects more students than all other drugs combined: cigarettes, marijuana, cocaine, etc. And frequent binge-drinkers are 17 times more likely to miss class and jeopardize their academic careers. They are 10 times more likely to vandalize property and 8 times more likely to get hurt or injured as a result of their drinking. Frequent binge-drinkers account for 60% of all students who are injured, commit vandalism and experience problems with the police. Consider the ramifications of such a result in a foreign

environment, a different health care system, and under stricter law enforcement, and an unfamiliar judicial system where the application of American “rights” (and bail) is likely foreign.

While abroad, students sometimes dangerously rationalize that they can increase their consumption of alcohol because they will not be operating motor vehicles. Do not jeopardize the health, safety and well-being of yourself – and others – by falling under the sway of this dangerous and irresponsible “not driving” argument!

Alcohol Poisoning:

Alcohol poisoning – a severe and potentially *fatal* physical reaction to an alcohol overdose – is the most serious single consequence of binge drinking. When excessive amounts of alcohol are consumed, the brain is deprived of oxygen. The struggle to deal with an overdose of alcohol and lack of oxygen will eventually cause the brain to shut down the voluntary functions that regulate breathing and heart rate. Alcohol poisoning is a medical emergency that requires immediate attention!

Unfortunately, it is sometimes difficult to tell if someone has just (!) “passed out” or is in serious medical danger. Here are some symptoms of alcohol poisoning:

- Subject does not respond to being talked to or shouted at.
- Does not respond to being pinched, prodded or poked.
- Cannot stand up.
- Will not wake up.
- Slow, labored or abnormal breathing.
- Skin has a bluish or purplish color.
- Skin feels clammy.
- Rapid pulse rate.
- Irregular heart rhythm.
- Lowered blood pressure.

Important: Choking to death on one's vomit after an alcohol overdose is more common than you might think. Death by asphyxiation occurs when alcohol depresses the body's reflexes to the point that the person cannot vomit properly.

People who have overdosed on alcohol are unable to help themselves, so it is up to you to get assistance. **A friend's life may depend upon it!**

- You should call (or have someone else call) for medical attention immediately.
- If you're unsure if you should call....CALL! (Better safe than sorry!)
- Do not leave the person alone, particularly with unknown persons or in an unfamiliar setting. Stay with the person until help arrives.
- Turn the person on one side so that if vomiting does occur, the discharge will not be caught in the windpipe.

Unfortunately, there are no hard and fast rules on how many drinks will result in alcohol poisoning. This will vary from person to person and from situation to situation. When making choices about drinking, consider your own safe limit - and those of your friends - and the recommendations of professionals presented here above.

Non-Drinkers & Responsible-Drinkers:

56% of students do not binge drink and they expect and deserve an environment that is safe and conducive to responsible socialization and study. These students (non-drinkers and those who drink responsibly) need to step forward as change agents. Positive peer pressure is a powerful tool that can help to turn back the tide of alcohol abuse. Non-binge-drinkers should not be judgmental. Rather, recognize alcohol abuse as a serious problem to be overcome. Drinking, *per*

se, is not the issue; abusive drinking is. And when out socializing with friends who drink, look after their safety and encourage them to drink responsibly. Above all, show them that you care for their well-being and for the well-being of others.

Assault Prevention

Heavy alcohol use, especially combined with inexperience in drinking, puts young women at serious risk for sexual assault. Research indicates that greater alcohol use in men is related to greater sexual aggression. All students should be aware of the dangers posed by binge drinking to themselves and others.

- Among female students nation-wide who are binge-drinkers – and thus suffer from impaired judgment and reduced situational control when they drink - 10 percent reported having been raped or subjected to nonconsensual sex.
- Among non-binge drinking and non-drinking women, 26 percent had experienced an unwanted sexual advance by another student who had been drinking, and 2 percent said they had been victims of sexual assault or date rape by a drinking student.

In a related issue, binge drinkers appear to engage in more unplanned sexual activity and to abandon safe sex techniques more often than students who do not binge drink. (Advocacy Institute, 1992).

Drinking is a recorded and verifiable contributing factor to rape and other risks, and most student-reported rapes can be attributed to heavy drinking.

- The message is clear: drinking, especially heavy drinking, is dangerous to a woman's health and safety. Recognize the dangers and take precautions accordingly.
- Keep your own drinking in check.
- Recognize and monitor the risk that a drinking situation may present for you.
- Do not be pressured to remain in any environment that makes you feel uncomfortable or potentially at risk.
- If you hear someone "kidding" about rape or date rape drugs, pay attention. That should be a warning to leave that party or individual.
- If you feel you must escape a possibly threatening situation, call (or ask for) a taxi and return directly to your residence or seek police protection.
- When you leave, do not announce that you are leaving alone. Leave with a trusted friend or a trustworthy group.
- Always have some taxi money and a telephone card with you.
- Alcohol abuse does not legally justify anyone's behavior, and cannot be used as an excuse in a court of law.
- Men: You should also recognize the risk that your drinking habits may pose to the women you interact with. Take responsibility for your (and/or your friends') drinking and associated behaviors, and (thus) protect women's rights to safety and well-being.

For more information on Date Rape prevention, see the excellent resources available at:

http://www.vachss.com/help_text/date_rape.html.

Special Risks Associated With Underage Drinking:

Understandably, under-aged (by U.S. standards) drinkers put themselves at greater risk in relation to drinking due to their inexperience. All of the warnings and dangers presented above impact underage drinkers to an even greater degree, and underage drinkers are urged to be especially prudent in their drinking.

Please also be aware that underage drinkers tend to drink on fewer occasions, but drink more on those occasions. 42% of underage drinkers usually consumed five or more drinks when they

drink and as a result, underage drinkers have more alcohol-related problems than of-age drinkers. And underage or inexperienced drinkers (particularly women) should recognize that cheap prices and promotions such as “All You Can Drink”, “Ladies Night” or other similar marketing strategies put them at special risk. All students – whether underage, experienced or nondrinker – should recognize that cheap prices and promotions directed towards capturing their drinking business increase all the risk factors associated with drinking.

Drug Policy:

The possession and/or consumption of illegal drugs on the campuses of Philadelphia University is regulated by the laws and statutes of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the United States, or that of the host city, region or nation. If suspected drugs are confiscated and the student denies the substance(s) are drugs, the Office of Safety and Security or its agents will provide for testing of the substance. If the substance is found to be an illegal drug, the student will be charged for the cost of the testing, in addition to the other sanctions that may be imposed through the student disciplinary process. As noted in the “Assumption of Risk and Release” signed by each Philadelphia University student permitted to study abroad, the use or possession of illegal drugs during the program is cause for immediate dismissal without refund.

When University officials or their agents confiscate illegal drugs, such items will be turned over to the local police authorities as required by law. Prosecution for violation of the law will be made at the discretion of the local police department. **In the case of** alleged supplying of or selling of illegal drugs, students may be referred, upon return to Philadelphia University, to the Student Conduct Committee for judicial action. Sanctions could include suspension or permanent expulsion from the University. The University and its agents reserve the right to test a student for the presence of drugs in his/her system if necessary and may prevent a student’s return to University-provided housing (or withhold other privileges) until such tests show an absence of illegal drugs.

Drug Policy Violations:

1. Consumption or possession of illegal drugs on campus property.
2. Being under the influence of illegal drugs as indicated by appearance or behavior, such as: slurred speech, unstable walk, unconsciousness, destruction of property, use of abusive language, alcohol on breath, vomiting or disturbance to others.
3. Sale or trade of illegal drugs on the campus property or to members of the Philadelphia University community.
4. Possession of drug paraphernalia.

The resident(s) in whose room/apartment/townhouse illegal drugs are being consumed is (are) responsible for the behavior of guests and will be held accountable for policy violations. It is the responsibility of the dweller to ensure that guests do not consume illegal drugs.

Law Enforcement Issues:

While studying abroad, students are not immune from prosecution under foreign laws. Drug laws, especially, vary from country to country and are, in most cases, severe regardless of whether or not the drug in question is for personal use or for resale. It is important to remember the following:

- Buying or carrying even small amounts of drugs can result in arrest and prosecution.
- Americans abroad have been jailed for the possession of as little as three grams (one-tenth of an ounce) of marijuana.
- In most foreign countries, bail provisions are unknown and pretrial detention (sometimes lengthy) without bail is common.

- While U.S. government agencies and your required Philadelphia University insurance policy can provide limited assistance in terms of referral to competent attorneys, they cannot supersede or counter-act local authority. See the U.S. State Department's statement on "Assistance to U.S. Citizens Arrested Abroad" at http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1199.html.

Information on drug laws in specific foreign countries is available online from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Statistics' *World Factbook of Criminal Justice Systems*: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/wfcj.htm> and from the embassies of foreign nations. And students and parents should also consult U.S. Department of State Consular Information Sheets available from Study Abroad, or online.

Health Risks Associated with Common Drugs of Abuse:

Philadelphia University and the Study Abroad Office urge students to not do drugs abroad. In doing so, you risk entanglements with an unfamiliar and more severe judicial system. You risk immediate dismissal from the study abroad program and more importantly, you risk your life! Drug abuse is risky enough at home; do not increase those risks by doing drugs abroad!

University Sanctions Related to Drugs and Alcohol:

The disciplinary response to alcohol and drug policy violations provides a balance between punitive action and an opportunity for education and personal growth. These sanctions are applicable to both residential and commuter students. Sanctions for alcohol and other drug violations accumulate over the duration of a student's matriculation at Philadelphia University.

- Any student found to be in violation of the alcohol and other drug policy during a probationary period would automatically have his/her violation level increased one level.
- Any student who is of legal drinking age and who is documented for providing underage students with alcohol is subject to doubling of the fine for his/her violation level.
- Violations of the drug policy are considered one level higher than alcohol violations. For instance, a first violation of the drug policy is considered a second-level violation.

A University judicial body determines the sanctions imposed by the University for students.

Drug & Alcohol: Assistance and Counseling:

If you realize or suspect that you - or a friend or roommate - are having difficulty in dealing with alcohol or drug-related problems, please contact a member of the Student Life staff of your study abroad institution. They can assist you, and put you in touch with professional counselors. If you prefer to speak with someone on the Philadelphia University campus, Counseling Services can be reached at (215) 951-2735. Or feel free to contact the Director of Study Abroad at (215) 951-6862.

Important: Approximately 10% of all U.S. college students are in recovery. If you are in recovery, your continued health and well-being is especially important to us. Please seek planning assistance from Philadelphia University's Counseling Services prior to going abroad.

Study Abroad: Practical Matters

I. MONEY MATTERS

Currency Exchange:

When traveling abroad, it makes good sense to handle your finances carefully and wisely. The exchange rate abroad can vary greatly during the time before you depart and during your semester abroad. It is wise to regularly check a currency conversion website (such as www.xe.com) so that you're aware of the current exchange rate.

It is strongly recommended that you bring a small amount of foreign currency with you (about \$200 USD) when you depart for your semester abroad. Avoid exchanging currency at the airport, hotels, restaurants or retail shops as the exchange rate is generally very poor at these locations. Exchanging currency at your bank is probably your best option. Main branches of large commercial banks (Commerce, Wachovia, PNC, etc) located in Center City Philadelphia usually carry supplies of most foreign currency. And with sufficient notice (usually 1 to 2 weeks) most other banks/locations can order foreign currency for you. You can also exchange currency at Travelex Currency Services (formerly Thomas Cook) or AAA offices. While abroad, banks are the best locations to change currency as they afford travelers the fairest exchange rates. However, expect to pay a commission every time you exchange currency. In some cases the commission is based on a percentage of the amount exchanged, while in others there is a flat-fee regardless of the amount exchanged.

ATMs:

ATMs around the world provide students with the easiest way of transferring money and exchanging currency. Many ATMs abroad are connected to the United States by the "Plus" or "Cirrus" systems (look at the back of your debit card to see if it has the Star or Cirrus logo). This system allows students to receive cash in local currency directly from their bank accounts in the United States. Check in advance on limits on withdrawals and cash advances within specified periods and make sure that your PIN code is four digits (codes with more than four digits typically don't work on foreign ATMs). **In Europe most cards now contain chips but cards without these chips do still work at most locations.** Also, the account being accessed in the U.S. must be a checking account – savings accounts cannot be accessed.

It is recommended that you contact your bank prior to departing to inform them that you'll be abroad for an extended period of time. Also ask your bank about ATM withdrawal fees you may incur while using your debit card abroad as well as local partner banks at your destination. Students overseas typically do not use their debit cards as frequently as they may in the United States. If your bank charges a fee for every time your card is used, it may be wise to visit the ATM less frequently but withdraw larger sums of cash at those times.

Credit Cards:

It is recommended that all students take a credit card overseas with them – even if only for use in an emergency. Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted all over the world; American Express is accepted (though not as often as Visa and MasterCard) and Discover card will not be accepted outside of the United States. Again, inform your credit card company that you will be abroad for a semester. With identity theft on the rise, your account may get flagged with unusual activity if it is being used in cities around the world. So please notify your credit card company that you'll be abroad. Also, check with your credit card company about international bank fees that they may charge with every purchase you make. Most credit card companies charge a 1%

international fee based on the amount of the purchase. Some credit cards may allow you to negotiate this rate since you will be living overseas for several months. It is also recommended that you speak with your credit card company (and bank) about granting account access to a parent or guardian. If your card is lost or stolen, or you have questions about your account, it may be easier for your parent or guardian to contact the credit card company on your behalf. However the credit card company will not speak to a parent or guardian unless you give permission to them prior to your departure.

While abroad, carry only the credit card that you need. Keep additional credit cards in a safe place in your apartment/bedroom. Also, prior to departure, make photocopies of the front and back of your credit cards. Leave a set of copies at home with a parent/guardian and take another set of copies abroad with you. Keep these copies separate from the cards themselves. In the event of accidental loss or theft, you will still have the photocopy which contains the 800 number to call and the credit card number/expiration information.

Travelers' Checks:

Travelers' Checks are another option for students going abroad, however less and less students are using this option and it is not recommended. It is still one of the safest ways to carry money abroad since lost or stolen travelers' checks can be refunded. However students find that fewer stores/restaurants are accepting travelers' checks. And locations abroad that exchange travelers' checks tend to charge a steep fee to do so. If students decide to take travelers' checks with them, be sure to leave a list of travelers' check numbers at home and carry another list separately from the checks themselves in case they are lost or stolen.

Budget:

Budget, plan and spend wisely! It is recommended that all students sit down with their parents or guardians prior to departure to discuss a realistic budget for their time abroad. It is important to know how much you can spend so that you don't run out of money! Students should be aware that they are more likely to spend more money during the first month of your semester abroad than at any other time. The first month can often be twice as expensive as later months as students haven't figured out the best locations for bargain grocery shopping, the most economical forms of transportation and you will be buying all of the things you forgot to pack (shampoo, sheets, towels, etc!). Students should plan accordingly for this first "expensive" month and develop a budget for future months as well. There is nothing more satisfying than knowing you have budgeted enough money to do the things you want to do. Conversely, there is nothing more frustrating than watching others take advantage of everything another country has to offer while you sit in your apartment because you have spent your money unwisely.

II. PACKING

What to pack:

Do not over-pack! It is understandable that you will want to pack *everything* in your closet since you will be away from home for a few months! Don't do it – you will thank yourself for not taking too much. Keep in mind the season during which you'll be traveling. Check online weather sites or travel guidebooks for packing suggestions and weather information for the specific country that you're going to.

Students should pack clothes that have multiple uses, are easily layered and are climate friendly. It is also smart to bring several "dressy" outfits for situations where the dress code calls for "smart casual" such as at a nice restaurant or to a museum or site-visit during a classroom trip. Keep in mind that clothes worn by students in the US are not always commonly seen abroad. For

example, you will never see a local wearing sweatpants and flip flops to class! We're not asking you to change your appearance, but students typically feel more at ease when they dress to fit in. Also, remember to pack at least one pair of comfortable walking shoes as you'll be walking much more abroad than you do in the United States! And don't bring expensive jewelry or handbags – or any other expensive item that will make you a target for thieves!

Additionally, keep in mind that there will be limited storage space in your room/apartment for clothes and other items so don't pack too much or you'll have nowhere to put it when you unpack!

Carrying your bags:

Do not over-pack! It is understandable that you will want to pack *everything* in your closet since you will be away from home for a few months! Don't do it – you will thank yourself for not taking too much. First, keep in mind that when you get off the plane in Italy, England, Japan or wherever you're going, there will be no one there to help you with your bags. You will be carrying everything by yourself – so don't take more than you can comfortably carry. And that includes carrying your bags up flights of stairs as you may be required to move through airports, train stations, or apartment buildings that do not have elevators or escalators.

Airport & Luggage restrictions:

Before packing, it is suggested that students visit the website of the airline they're traveling with. Every airline has its own baggage allowances in terms of the number of suitcases allowed and the weight limit for each bag. Additionally, most airlines now charge passengers for checked luggage – so keep these fees in mind before you start packing!

Airlines are also increasingly enforcing carry-on restrictions. Visit the TSA website (www.tsa.gov) for more information on what you are/are not allowed to carry-on.

III. COMMUNICATING WHILE ABROAD

Cell Phones:

Using an American cell phone abroad incurs expensive roaming charges very quickly. Before you go, learn how to adjust your phone so that you don't incur unwanted charges. You can either limit your usage to wifi by putting it airplane mode or unlocking your phone for a local simcard. If you do want to use your phone to make calls back home, check with your provider about rates and plans. Online apps such as Skype, Whatsapp and Line are great ways to talk with friends and family back home that run on wifi and do not require an international plan.

Since most programs require you to have a local contact number, we recommend that you get a local cell phone number. If you wish to have a cell phone while abroad, consider renting a cell phone prior to departing or purchasing a phone upon arrival. There are cellular rental companies, such as Piccell Wireless that allow you to rent a cell phone for use overseas. Students have had mixed experiences with Piccell and other US-based cellular rental companies therefore the Study Abroad Office does not endorse any particular company. It is suggested that you thoroughly research any company you are considering renting through and carefully read their contract to find out about roaming charges or other fees.

Again, another option if you wish to have a phone while abroad is to purchase a phone upon arrival. During the arrivals week at your study abroad program, all students will have an on-site orientation. During this orientation, most programs will provide information on obtaining a cell

phone. Overseas, most cell phone companies do not have monthly plans or contracts like we do in the United States. Typically you would purchase a cell phone and then “top it up” by purchasing minutes to use on that phone. Most cell phone companies do not charge you money or minutes for incoming calls therefore you can provide your cell phone number to family and friends back in the United States and they can call you at their own expense and it will not cost you anything. And then you can purchase minutes, as mentioned, for when you want to text or make outgoing calls on your phone. It is recommended that you “shop around” to find the cell phone company with the best rates to the United States for the times you wish to use your phone to call home.

International Calling Cards:

For additional phone access in case of an emergency, you can purchase international calling card. Most international calling cards will allow students to call the United States from almost anywhere in the world. Generally there is a local access number you can dial for an English speaking operator who will connect your call to the United States. You can check with your current phone service to inquire if they have such a card. These cards are useful if your overseas apartment has a landline telephone. In that case, you can make outgoing calls using this card. It is wise to carry the number or card with you at all times.

Students can also purchase International Calling Cards while overseas. Most shops or newsagents sell calling cards that have favorable rates to the United States. Oftentimes, the cards purchased abroad will have better rates to the US than cards purchased in the US.

Laptops:

Many study abroad programs do require students to bring a laptop abroad with them. Students will have access to computers while abroad through the foreign institution’s computer labs therefore students will have alternate computer access. If students decide to bring their laptop with them, they should check the international warranty and learn how to secure your laptop with laptop locks and protective cases for travel. Do be aware that internet connectivity and security abroad is not always as robust as on campus at home so build in some time for time sensitive correspondence. Make to password protect sensitive documents.

Skype:

Skype is software that allows users to make telephone calls over the internet. This is one of the most popular ways study abroad students communicate with family and friends back home. For more information on Skype, visit their website: www.skype.com
Other applications that can be used include Whatsapp and Line.

Making the Most of your Time Abroad

I. CULTURE SHOCK

Dealing with Foreign Cultures & Culture Shock:

(Based upon a on-line text by Bill Hoffa, Academic Consultants International)

Despite one's best efforts, one cannot really know what life might be like in a country or region until one has lived there for a while. It is easy, however, to have the illusion of knowing what it might be like by relying upon information gleaned from the mass communications media, or from reading, or perhaps even from having met a few people from that culture.

Every culture - including one's own - has its own distinct characteristics, some of which might be subtler (or more unexpected) than one might have supposed, with the result that adjusting to a new culture can be more difficult than was anticipated. Complicating this are the stereotypes and ill-formed preconceptions that the visiting student might bring along. Often these elements are further combined with a lack of awareness on the part of the student as to how much of themselves has been formed (just as with the residents of the culture that they are visiting) by their home culture. Considered in this way, the disorientation and displacement that one frequently feels when first abroad can be understood as normal, and perhaps should even be seen as expected.

Stereotypes:

Consider the foreign perception of "Americans". Abroad, the stereotype of the American is frequently far from being complimentary. Americans, for example, might be perceived as those boorish tourists who expect everyone to speak English; the arrogant travelers who think that every country in the world should function like, or pattern itself after, the United States; or the drunken revelers who see the anonymity of traveling abroad as an opportunity to drop all civilized inhibitions.

Here is something for you to ponder: Is there any truth behind these perceptions? Whether or not the stereotypes are accurate is not really the point. The point is that the stereotypes exist. You must, furthermore, be aware that they do exist. This awareness serves two purposes:

- It will prepare you to better understand otherwise unexpected reactions to you on the part of your new hosts.
- Knowing these preconceptions, you can comport yourself in such a way as to demonstrate to your hosts abroad that the preconceptions are, indeed, stereotypes or that, at the very least, they do not apply to you.

Taken within a global context, the social and cultural manner of the United States is unique. Most Americans tend to be far less reserved, less inhibited, and less restrained in their friendliness and sociability than those in the cultures encountered abroad. As a result, the easy and outgoing manner that Americans find so natural at home can easily be misinterpreted by others when one is abroad.

This is particularly the case with American women, who enjoy a freedom and social status that is higher than that imposed upon most women elsewhere. A friendly smile and a pleasant "ciao" on the streets of Rome, therefore, is likely to be interpreted by an Italian male as something far more

meaningful than the simple common friendliness expected of two people passing on a street in the USA.

- As a general rule of thumb, until you develop a feel for the social customs characteristic of the area where you are living and studying, it is wise to be more formal and restrained in your social manner.
- Similarly, do not expect the local populace to welcome you immediately with open arms. Their formality and restraint are not necessarily an expression of unfriendliness, but may simply be characteristic of the local social manner that is adopted when in the presence of strangers.

As you travel abroad, be mindful of the following characteristics that others frequently associate with the "typical" American:

- Hard working
- Attentive to detail
- Demanding
- Impatient and always in a hurry
- Wealthy
- Generous
- Extravagant and wasteful
- Outgoing and friendly
- Informal
- Promiscuous
- Open-minded
- Disrespectful of authority
- Lacking in class consciousness
- Racially prejudiced
- Fun-loving
- Immature
- Loud, rude, boastful
- Well-educated
- Sure that they have all the answers
- Ignorant of other countries and what happens in news beyond U.S. borders or that does not impact American "interests."

Notice how these "traits" curiously dovetail with, or flow from, one another. Clearly, subtleties matter to human relationships, but they can be dangerous when used as assessments divorced from context, knowledge and understanding. Similarly, take care with the assessments that you make of the ways, institutions and people of the culture that you are visiting

Culture Shock:

Many travelers who are abroad for an extended period go through an initial period of euphoria and excitement. Everything is new and exciting. After a period of time, however (often two to three weeks), this initial sense of adventure and discovery sometimes diminishes and is replaced by an entirely new sensation. This sensation is difficult to describe, comprised as it is (frequently) of two or three opposing, disconcerting, and yet oddly intertwined realizations:

- The traveler begins to see that the "new" culture is not all that perfect or as exciting after all.
- That "things," and ways of doing "things," were better (or easier) at home.

- That it has become increasingly difficult to operate within the new culture with the same self-confidence and assurance as one did “back home.” The old ways of home do not work in the new environment; the new ways are unsatisfactory. Frustration sets in.

The result of this complex process is that you no longer seem to be “you.” Here, too, we encounter a dichotomy, for clearly you are still the same person that you were when you left “home.” At the same time, however, you are in a state of metamorphosis. You are becoming a new or (to put it more correctly) an expanded “you” – a person who will come to feel more at ease (and, hence, “yourself”) in your new cultural home

For some people this transformation occurs rapidly; for others it may take some time. We are all different and that is what this is all about: the wonderful diversity that is human culture. In the meantime, you might feel a bit lost, disoriented and perhaps even lonely and depressed. Minor problems may quickly assume the proportions of major crises. You may feel an anxiety and insecurity resulting from a loss of all the familiar signs and symbols of social interaction that you took for granted back home; that feeling that you are now an outsider. You will indeed be experiencing what has come to be referred to as “Culture Shock.”

Given what we have thought about here already, it is clear that such feelings are to be expected and that they are perfectly normal. Falling victim to culture shock does not necessarily imply the existence of any psychological or emotional shortcomings on your part. It will pass and you will survive and (in fact) thrive as a more worldly citizen. You will realize this immediately when you return home, and are able to look at American life through new eyes. By recognizing all this in advance, and by undertaking some conscious preparatory efforts, you can more readily make adjustments that will enable you to adapt yourself to your new cultural environment and to make the most of your experience abroad.

Combating Culture Shock:

A wise strategy to adopt (both in life and in travel) is that of maintaining an open mind. This does not mean abandoning your culture or your convictions, just that you are willing to consider other ways of thinking and other ways of doing.

Make an honest attempt to understand the culture of the land that you are visiting. After all, isn’t that one of the reasons that you decided to go abroad in the first place?

- Read up on the culture and history.
- Buy a map of the town that you will be living in abroad before you leave, preferably one marked in the native language. Study it and learn your way around a bit so that it won’t feel as foreign once you land.
- Similarly, buy a phrase book. Think of the situations that you will find yourself in for the first few days and work up the phrases that you might need most often.
- Once you arrive, one of the best ways to reduce the effects of culture shock is to begin to try to think and speak as a native as soon as possible.
- If you have a hobby or sport interest, try to do the same abroad. Not only will it keep you busy, it is a great way to meet people that share your interests.
- Go to places where your native peers go, rather than where all the Americans go.
- Get into the habit of reading a local newspaper. It is an excellent way to practice your language skills, learn what’s of interest – and important – to your hosts, and begin to see the world through non-American eyes.
- Television is increasingly a mirror of society. Consider, for example, how much about America a visitor could pick up from American television shows, news and commercials. Some aspects are pure fantasy, to be sure, but even fantasy is in itself indicative of the mindset of a culture and its aspirations.

If you feel that you are falling under the spell of culture shock consider the following remedies:

- If you feel depressed, ask yourself what it was that you expected your situation to be like. Write them down if that will help you best define and analyze them. Next ask yourself if – given what you know now – your expectations were genuinely reasonable. If you decide objectively that your expectations were, in fact, reasonable (learning the language or making new local friends, for example) ask yourself what it will take to reach those expectations and then follow through. If your expectations turned out to have been unreasonable, set new goals for yourself in consultation with a trusted advisor, and follow through on them.
- Talk to people whose opinions you respect (and whose advice you can trust) about your feelings. Work on one matter at a time, rather than trying to solve a number at once.
- If you develop physical problems (headaches, stomach aches, difficulty sleeping) seek medical attention, but be aware of the possibility that they could be stress-related.

Stress can be relieved best by recognizing both the fact that you are under stress, and what it is that puts you under stress. While you may not be able to avoid those things that stress you, you can (and should) develop strategies for minimizing their effects. Again, speak with someone you trust about this as they might recognize aspects that you have missed or perhaps are even unaware of.

- Keep active and avoid the urge to stay in or to sleep (or drink!) your problems away.
- Find time for yourself or for things that you like to do. Schedule some “Me Time” each day and go to places that are unique to your host city and which will stimulate your mind.
- Information about stress and practical ways of coping with it may be found online at: http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTCS_00.htm.

Culture Shock – A Summary:

Expect things to be different overseas. One of the basic reasons for your participation in a study abroad program should be to develop a sensitivity to - and appreciation for - different cultures and ways of thinking. If you go abroad demanding – perhaps even expecting - that everything be the same as in the United States, you will be sorely disappointed and frustrated. Go abroad with an open mind and as a student seeking to learn and understand the ways of others. This way everyday and every experience will be new and exciting, and you will return home as a wiser citizen of the world.

II. FITTING IN

Social customs differ greatly from one country to another. It is therefore impossible to give guidelines that will be applicable in every culture. Generally speaking, it is a mark of civility to remain friendly, courteous, and dignified. Always keep in mind that you are the guest in someone else's country.

Politeness: In keeping with the relatively formal manner of social customs encountered abroad, you should place much more emphasis on the simple niceties of polite social interaction than you might otherwise at home. Be prepared to offer a formal word of greeting to whomever you meet in your day-to-day activities. Similarly, become familiar with the appropriate expressions of gratitude in response to your hosts' hospitality.

Humor: While each country has its own particular brand of wit and humor, very few cultures understand (let alone appreciate) the kind of “kidding” or biting sarcasm that Americans are

accustomed to. Comments, even when intended to be humorous, will be taken quite literally. Part of this has to do with the more formal nature of non-American cultures, the other part revolves around the very nature of informal translation. That is to say that if you are attempting to speak in, say, Spanish, and your listener knows that you are not a native speaker, your listener will be expecting to have some difficulty in understanding you. Thus, humor may not be recognized as humor, but either as an error on your part in speaking a foreign language, or an error on the part of the listener who feels that they have misunderstood your valiant attempt to speak the language.

Speaking the Language: When it comes to language, most people will be extremely flattered by your efforts to communicate in their native language. Do not be intimidated or inhibited when practicing your own limited command of the language. It really is true that you learn best by making mistakes. Nonetheless, a couple of words of caution are in order:

- Avoid slang expressions. As in English, using them in an inappropriate context may be insulting to your listeners.
- Be aware of the differences between the "familiar" and the "polite" forms of address that may exist in your host's native language. Learn them and be sure to use them properly.
- Do not try to translate American idiomatic expressions directly into the native language unless asked. They will most likely make no sense to your listener. There is also the possibility that your "translation" will produce a phrase, or sense, that is insulting or degrading.
- Be especially careful to avoid any impulses to make tactless or rude comments in English on the assumption that your listener will not understand. Rude English comments – particularly expletives – are well-known abroad as a result of the exportation of American popular culture.

Physical contact & Personal Space: Until you have had time to observe local etiquette regarding such matters, it is best to play it safe and adopt a more formal stance regarding contact than that which is the norm in the United States. Cheerful pats on the back or a warm hug, for example, might not only prove embarrassing but could possibly violate social and religious restrictions. Similarly, all cultures have different notions regarding personal space. Generally speaking, the personal zone observed abroad is smaller than that in the USA. Observe how the locals comport themselves in various situations and attempt to adjust accordingly.

Personal Questions: Let your hosts point the way when engaging in "small talk." While Americans generally find it easy and quite appropriate to talk about themselves, in some countries your hosts may view this as being arrogant, conceited or impolite. Likewise, asking personal questions of them might be considered rude and intrusive (or worse), particularly in regions with a recent history of non-democratic rule. Observe and respect the boundaries of local social discourse.

Drinking and Drunkenness: It is extremely important for young Americans going abroad to be aware of the fact that while drinking is as socially acceptable in Europe and elsewhere as in the United States, drunkenness – whether in public or not – is generally considered a social disgrace. Abroad, only those of an extremely low social status are ever seen drunk in public. And unfortunately, American students abroad are increasingly falling into this undesirable category. Make sure that you know your limits (and that of your friends) when it comes to alcohol consumption, and be sensitive both to the sensibilities of your hosts and the image that you project as an American student abroad.

Price Bargaining: Haggling is appropriate and even expected in some circumstances, particularly in the Middle East and Asia. In Western Europe, this once-common feature of retail commerce has largely disappeared. You may inadvertently insult the merchant if you try to bargain in an inappropriate situation. You can always test the waters by politely indicating that you like the product very much but that it is a bit more than you had anticipated spending. If the merchant wishes to bargain further, this will give him the opening he needs to offer you the product at a lower price. Should the merchant not wish to discount the purchase, you are then free to politely terminate the discussion, thank the merchant, and move on.

Remember that the merchandise belongs to the merchant. If you simply offer a lower price out of the blue, you are insinuating that the merchandise is of a lesser quality than the merchant presents it as, and (thus) that the merchant is being dishonest. Given the accusation, the merchant's response is predictable.

Politics: Expect people abroad to be very articulate and very well-informed when it comes to matters of politics and international relations. In general, they are better informed of international matters than are most Americans. Do not be at all surprised if your counterparts try to engage you in political debate. In many places abroad, it is as much an expected topic of conversation as are discussions of sports or pop culture in the USA.

- If the subject turns to America and American international relations (and it will), you need not modify your own convictions for the benefit of your foreign hosts (nor take it, necessarily, as an act of hostility), but you will be expected to be more rational in your defense of those convictions than might be the case when discussing the matter with friends back home.
- Keep in mind the widespread stereotype of the arrogant American who thinks everyone must fall in line with the United States. Listen to what is being expressed in the discussion.
- Be open to the opinions of others. You do not have to agree, but be respectful of the opinions being discussed. Handled properly – “diplomatically”, one might say – such discussions are great opportunities to see America as others see us, and for your hosts to hear your own honest, individual, opinion on matters of interest or importance to them.
- Whenever possible, find a way to end the discussion amicably and with an increased sense of understanding on all sides.

Photography Etiquette: You will probably want to record many of your memories on film. If people feature prominently in any photo that you are about to take, keep in mind that (in most instances) those people are simply going about their daily business. Subconsciously, it is easy to forget this and to consider them as “objects” and curiosities. Respect the dignity and privacy of others. Always ask first (a smile helps) before taking anyone's picture. Likewise, cheerfully respect their wishes should they decline to give you permission.

- Never take photographs in security-sensitive areas.
- In many instances it is forbidden to photograph people at work. Always ask first.
- Never use flash in a painted historical environment such as museums or frescoed churches. Intense flash breaks down pigments over time. Buy a postcard instead.

III. SPECIAL CONCERNS FOR STUDENTS

For Women:

American women going abroad must be prepared to cope with the different status that women have in other cultures. Women students in certain regions overseas (particularly South America, the Middle East, and parts of Europe) sometimes have a hard time adjusting to attitudes they encounter abroad, in both public and private interactions between men and women.

Some (but not all) men in such countries openly demonstrate their appraisal of women in ways that many American women find offensive. It is not uncommon to be honked at, stared at, verbally and loudly appraised, and to be actively noticed simply for being an American woman.

Sometimes the attention can be flattering. However, it may become very annoying, and potentially even angering. Indigenous women have been taught to ignore the attention.

- Many American women students find this understandably hard to do, and exacerbate the situation by talking back. Rather than “putting-down” the target of your remark, the fact that you have openly spoken will likely signal interest – a flirting - on your part, or (at the very least) be seen as a challenge (particularly in public) that will only embolden further exchange. Silence is universally recognized as an insult; use it.
- Eye contact between strangers or a smile at someone passing in the street, which is not uncommon in the States, may result in totally unexpected invitations.

You will have to familiarize yourself the unwritten gender roles for woman abroad. The situation is complicated by the fact that American women are frequently seen as “liberated,” (aka: “loose”) and sometimes the cultural misunderstandings that come out of this image can lead to difficult and unpleasant experiences. Women should provide support for one another, and former students suggest that women should get together several times early in their stay overseas to talk about what works (and what doesn't) in dealing with unwanted attention.

Needless to say, this situation can make male-female friendships more difficult to develop. Be careful about the implicit messages you may be unintentionally communicating. Above all, try to maintain the perspective that these challenging experiences are all part of your growth in cultural understanding.

- Prepare yourself by trying to understand in advance not only the gender roles and assumptions which may prevail elsewhere, but also American gender politics, which may or may not be understood in other countries.

Racial and Ethnic Concerns:

No two students studying abroad ever have quite the same experience, even though they might be in the same program and country. This same variety of experience is true for students of color and for those from U.S. minority ethnic or racial backgrounds. Reports from past participants vary. Some have felt exhilarated by being free of the American context of race relations. Others report that they experienced different degrees of “innocent” curiosity about their ethnicity. Some even felt that they had met both all-too familiar prejudices, as well as new types of ostracism and prejudice and that required new strategies for coping.

- Very few minority students concluded that the racial or ethnic problems that they encountered in other countries represented sufficient reasons for not going.
- Nonetheless, they do advise knowing what you are getting into and preparing yourself for it. Try to find others on your campus who have studied abroad and who can provide you with some counsel.

Issues affecting Gays, Lesbians and Bisexuals:

It is very important to be aware of the laws pertaining to homosexuality in other countries, as well as the general attitudes of the populace toward gay, lesbian, and bisexual members of their community. Depending upon where you go, the countries you visit may be more, but also possibly less, liberal in these regards. As is to be expected, however, whatever the general rule might be, there will always be pockets of greater or lesser acceptance and the ever-present matter of personal belief.

For a great list of resources on the Internet, including travel guides, web links, and other types of information on these issues, please see Michigan State University's website at:
<http://studyabroad.msu.edu/forms/glb.html>

After Study Abroad

I. COMING HOME

It may seem premature at this point to discuss what life will be like when you return, but it is best to be aware of such issues before you even depart.

Study Abroad Outcomes

Students are advised that Philadelphia University will soon be implementing Study Abroad Outcomes. The Outcomes are seven discipline-independent learning results that are expected of all Study Abroad participants. Students are further advised that they may be asked to substantiate how they achieved each of the seven outcomes while abroad, and may be required to complete specific tasks and/or assignments in order to substantiate compliance. Students may be required to be able to substantiate how they:

1. Learned about the economic interdependence of the world and its implications for their professional development.
2. Increased their knowledge regarding international developments within their field and their particular areas of interest.
3. Acquired an enhanced level of intercultural awareness.
4. Became more aware of their professional responsibilities as a member of a global community.
5. Increased their adaptability, resourcefulness, and flexibility.
6. Learned about the environmental, geographic, historical and cultural factors affecting the country in which they studied.
7. Increased their sense of personal responsibility and independence.

Reverse Culture Shock:

If you have been thinking about the issues involved in successfully adapting to a new culture, it will stand to reason that one might encounter similar issues upon returning home from abroad. That is to say that after your time abroad you may also have to prepare yourself for a similar period of readjustment back home.

The reason for this is that if you have had a full experience living and learning overseas, you are sure to have changed some yourself. It is part of that metamorphosis that we addressed earlier. As a result of your enhanced perspective of the world, the place you return to may seem to have changed.

As with your arrival abroad, immediately after you return home, you can expect to go through an initial stage of euphoria and excitement at being back home. As you settle back into your former routine, however, you may recognize that your overseas experience has changed some or many of your perceptions and assumptions; your ways of doing things; even what it means to be “yourself.”

The re-adjustment period is usually rather short, since “home” rarely ever becomes “foreign,” unless you have been away for a very long time indeed. Also, your experience in successfully dealing with culture shock abroad will have provided you with the tools and skills you need for re-adapting.

As a means of readjusting and yet staying in touch with the international scene that had become such a part of you, consider contacting students who have been abroad, who are currently abroad, or who are thinking about going abroad. The key is to build on the cross-cultural coping skills you now possess and to find conscious ways of integrating your new ‘self’ into your evolving personal and academic life, and not looking back on your international experience as a “dream” or something irrelevant to your future.

- Discussing things and sharing experiences with others by e-mail, letters or the telephone is always worthwhile.
- Remember what it was like for you to have been, for a time, a “foreigner.” Get involved with the International/Study Abroad program at school. You could, for instance, be of assistance as a mentor to international students on your campus who may themselves be feeling some of the same social dislocation and alienation you once felt when you were overseas.
- Volunteer to serve as a resource at the on-campus Orientation for the program you attended.
- Ask about joining – or starting – a Study Abroad Alumni club.
- Stay in touch with your adopted culture abroad (Italy, for example) through newspapers, magazines and web-sites, particularly those published or created abroad in the native language. For international newspapers and magazines on-line see <http://libraries.mit.edu/guides/types/flnews/>.

As with going abroad initially, you should begin to give some thought to your re-entry into your home situation a few weeks before your return. As noted, culture shock is part of the educational experience of learning about the world and its cultures. It is also part of learning about yourself and your place in the world. The whole study abroad experience can be trying at times, but – in the end – you will see that it is well worth the effort, and one that we hope that you will recommend to others.

Return Interview & Program Evaluations:

After you return from being abroad, the Study Abroad Office would love to meet with you to hear about your experience. It is not mandatory that you meet with our office, however we would like the opportunity to find out more about your program and to hear any thoughts/suggestions you have about it. Feel free to contact the Study Abroad Office upon your return to schedule an interview. Additionally, upon return, the Study Abroad Office may provide you with a Program Evaluation form for you to share your thoughts on the program with us.

Re-Entry Workshop & Events:

Upon return, if you are interested in attending a Study Abroad Re-Entry Workshop, the University of Pennsylvania hosts one every February for study abroad students from

Philadelphia-area Universities. This workshop enables you to put your study abroad experience into perspective and to consider how to incorporate it into your future career. It is also a great venue to meet other study abroad students and to hear/share experiences. The Study Abroad office will email you with information about this event in December.

Peer Mentor Program

The Study Abroad Office also encourages you to get involved with our office's Peer Mentor Program upon return! We would love to have your help at information sessions or classroom visits where you can talk about your experience to freshmen or sophomores who may be considering studying abroad. Please feel free to contact our office upon return for more ways that you can get involved and share your experience!