A Message to Parents

Congratulations on your son/daughter’s acceptance to an off-campus program. Studying abroad is likely to be one of the most life-changing – and demanding – experiences that your son/daughter will have in college. Learning to deal effectively with new living situations, social environments, and academic expectations inherent in an intercultural experience can be powerful and rewarding. A successful experience depends on your son/daughter’s commitment and eagerness to learn from a variety of encounters. The preparation for the study abroad experience is a partnership between the Center for International and Intercultural Studies (CIIS), the Program Director or program provider **AND** the student!

This is a condensed version of the orientation manual your student received after acceptance to the program. It is a general guide to prepare students for what they will experience abroad and is not program specific. It may contain information that does not pertain to the program on which your son/daughter will participate. While we have tried to include a wide array of information, no one source can be completely comprehensive, so we encourage you to consult other sources of information.

Participating in off-campus study is one of the best ways for students to develop independence, self-confidence, and maturity. It is important to understand that the development will not magically happen. It is the student’s responsibility to take ownership and initiative. Often parents wonder how to best support their student in this process. We encourage you to be available and to lend advice and assistance with setting realistic expectations; however, we believe that it is critically important for the student to take primary responsibility for planning for the off-campus experience.

Students will receive information regarding visa application processes, housing, travel arrangements and course registration. They will attend orientation sessions containing cultural as well as health and safety information—including information on required immunizations where applicable. They may be required to submit documents to our office or to relevant consulates/embassies. If you have questions about any of these requirements please **speak with your student** before contacting our office. Demonstrating confidence in your student’s abilities will contribute to his/her development and overall sense of accomplishment.

If you plan to visit your son or daughter, please plan to do so before or after the program begins or during the student’s break. Students have indicated that it is overwhelming to balance visitors and a regular class schedule. In addition, classes and excursions are mandatory; the student will not be excused because he or she has visitors.

It is helpful if you take time to learn about the location where your child will be studying. If you are familiar with the history, basic demographics and current events, you will be able to more fully engage in discussions with your son/daughter.

We have one final request of you and that is to limit contact by cell phone. Cell phones are valuable for students to have for safety and convenience purposes but they can impede the learning and cultural adjustment processes if they are abused. Having near-daily contact with family prevents them from overcoming the challenges they face and therefore from integrating into the new culture.

Along these same lines, there may be times when telephones or email are not readily available to your son or daughter. If this happens, please do not panic.

Thank you for supporting your student in this cross-cultural endeavor. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

The Staff in the Center for International and Intercultural Studies
An Abbreviated TIMELINE

Pre-departure:
- Attend orientation meetings: All orientation meetings are mandatory. **Your eligibility for the program could be jeopardized if you do not attend.**
- Select courses and arrange for credit
- Complete and submit all necessary documents
- Gather information on your destination’s culture and your own

During your stay:
- Make observations and record them, you will appreciate it later
- Go out of your way to meet people from your host culture
- Keep an open mind. Try new things.
- Respect the director and others on your program

Upon return:
- Talk to your advisor about how to integrate your experience into your studies on campus
- Learn about re-entry issues and reverse culture shock
- Re-read this manual
- Talk to other returnees or the CIIS staff about your experiences.

Important:
Your participation on the program is **NOT** guaranteed. In order for us to make the necessary arrangements for you and for you to be prepared for this experience you must:

- complete all medical requirements;
- maintain the academic and social/disciplinary record that your acceptance was based on. If there are changes in this you are obliged to report these immediately to the Associate Dean for International Studies. Reporting such changes does not mean you will be withdrawn from the program; however, failure to report such changes will be grounds for rescinding your acceptance;
- **attend all orientation meetings and complete all of the paperwork** required for participation in this program. Persistent delinquency will be grounds for rescinding your acceptance.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Study abroad processes (i.e. orientation meetings and visa application appointments) are not an excuse to miss class or assignments. It is your responsibility to be in contact with your professors well in advance of any potential conflicts. Courses are always more important than orientation. Contact CIIS IMMEDIATELY if you have a class conflict.

**If you have questions or concerns, please contact the staff in CIIS. We will be happy to assist you.**
Pre-Departure:

On campus

- Attend all orientation sessions.

- **Arrange on-campus housing** for the semester you return by completing and submitting the required forms BEFORE you leave.

- Confirm with your advisor that you will be off campus.
  It is extremely important that you discuss your plans with your advisor. You will need to inform your advisor of any changes or developments while you are abroad as well.

- Complete the **Transfer Credit Form** if it is required for your program. If you are not certain whether it is required for your program, ask. You must return the completed form to CIIS within two weeks of the orientation.

- If you will require accommodations related to a **learning disability**, discuss your situation with the Office of Academic Services for Students with Special Needs and ask them to forward the necessary information to the International Studies Office. This will be shared with your program director. If you do not have a documented disability but have concerns, please come in to discuss these with staff in CIIS. Not all programs can provide accommodations. We will be glad to offer advice about how much support your program can provide.

Travel Documents

**PASSPORT and PHOTOCOPY:** If you do not have a passport that is valid 6 months beyond the end date of the program, you must apply **now**.

Make two photocopies of the ID pages of your passport. Maintain one copy with you AT ALL TIMES (not in the same place with the original passport) and leave one at home.

Your passport is an official government document. It is important that you keep it in a safe place and do not deface it in any way.

Register your trip with the **US Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)**. The STEP program provides Americans residing abroad with information from the nearest US embassy or consulate, allows the Department of State to better assist registrants in an emergency, and facilitates passport replacement.

Check the State Department web site for information relating to your host country: [http://www.state.gov/travel/](http://www.state.gov/travel/)
**VISA or RESIDENT PERMIT** (if required): If the country to which you are traveling requires a visa/resident permit, you must apply for it in advance.

Application processes to obtain visas for certain countries can be complicated and lengthy. In order to insure that you will be able to enter the country to which you are travelling and begin your program on time, please begin the visa process as soon as you are asked to do so and follow all instructions you are given very carefully.

**Please Note:** The staff in CIIS will do its best to provide you with up to date instructions on applying for a visa. Embassies may, however, change the process at any time and without notification. In fact the application process may vary according to the regulations of the consulate where you apply. Therefore, it is ultimately your responsibility to follow the guidelines posted on the web page of the consulate to which you intend to apply for your visa.

**AN ADDITIONAL FORM OF PHOTO IDENTIFICATION:** This can help verify your identity if your passport is lost or stolen.

**DESTINATION INFORMATION:** Have contact information of the director or your program, initial meeting instructions, etc. with you in your carry-on luggage.

**INSURANCE CARD/POLICY:** Carry proof of worldwide coverage with you and make sure that you know how to submit a claim—likely upon your return to the U.S. You will likely be required to pay for services up front and seek reimbursement directly from your insurance company.

**CREDIT/DEBIT CARD:** You must travel with a source of additional funds in case of emergency.

You might want to consider taking:
- An **ISIC Card** (International Student Identity Card) This card provides emergency assistance, discounts, and more in many, but not all, countries.
- **Extra passport photos**

**Travel**

**AIRPLANE TICKETS**

Students on some programs – Global Francophone Cultures, Kenya and London FYP – are required to travel together on an outbound group flight, there may be flexibility on the return. Information about these flights will come directly from the designated travel agent.

Students on all other programs must book their own flights, paying careful attention to the announced date and time of arrival expected and end date for their particular program. Students may not depart before the official conclusion of the program.
Flights booked on the internet are often less expensive but if you experience flight delays or cancellations, you often will not receive assistance in the re-scheduling process. There are a number of travel agencies that deal primarily with students.

Contact the airlines directly or your travel agent to find out exactly what the baggage/weight limit is and stay under it.

Health Concerns

HEALTH INSURANCE - (worldwide coverage including medical evacuation and repatriation)

At the end of this manual there is a memo regarding health insurance. Make sure that the HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE and EMERGENCY CONTACT FORMS have been completed and returned with the other items required. If you are not enrolled in the St. Lawrence University student health insurance plan, you must verify that your plan has worldwide coverage.

All students studying on SLU or SLU-affiliated programs are required to have global emergency assistance and evacuation coverage during the period of the program. This coverage is provided to all students participating on St. Lawrence study abroad programs. Please visit the following web site for information [https://www.stlawu.edu/business/secure/travel_assistance.html](https://www.stlawu.edu/business/secure/travel_assistance.html). Scroll to the bottom of the page and click “wallet card/brochure” to print an ID card. Students participating on ISEP and CIEE programs will be provided with similar coverage by the program providers.

Some countries, Australia, Italy, Japan, and New Zealand for example, require you to enroll in their national insurance plan in order to obtain a visa. You are responsible for the additional cost of this insurance. Kenya participants are required to purchase Kenyan health insurance upon arrival. ISEP participants must purchase ISEP insurance or national insurance, depending on the country.

A Medical Orientation session will be organized for anyone participating on a program that requires immunizations/vaccinations.

Health preparations:
Bear in mind that study abroad programs cannot provide the same level of support that you have on campus in the areas of counseling or advising. If you have a health concern, stress, eating disorder, emotional challenge, or any issue which could be exacerbated by great distance from home and immersion in a different culture, please discuss your situation with your physician, counselor or therapist to develop a plan for how to manage best in this new situation. Staff in CIIS is happy to be a partner in such discussions. Note that your physician may not be fully aware of the conditions on the study abroad program, one good reason to consult with this office.

Health Checklist:
- physical
- dental checkup
- arrangements for any medical supplies
- all prescriptions
- immunization record
- health insurance

Medical and Dental appointments:
You should visit your regular doctor and dentist before you go. Allow enough time for treatment of cavities or other problems that require additional visits. If you have a chronic medical condition, ask your doctor for a letter that has a
brief history or statement, so if and/or when you need to see a doctor overseas, they will have a brief history.

**Prescription Medication:**
You should take enough medication with you to last through your return date. It is possible to get prolonged prescriptions if you talk to your physician and explain to your insurance company that you will be travelling abroad. Make sure that you pack all medications in their original containers and clearly marked in your carry-on luggage. Do not send medication from the U.S. by mail or Federal Express, this requires special permits. In addition to the supply of medication, you should also bring a copy of the prescription including the Latin compound (the names of medications may vary, but a pharmacist can fill the prescription with the Latin compound) in case your medication is lost or damaged. If you take a Class II/controlled substance (e.g. Ritalin), you will likely encounter difficulties getting more than one month’s supply. Ask your physician to write separate scripts for each month and, on each, indicate that you will be on a study-abroad program. Each month’s supply should go in its own bottle. Even so, your supply may be restricted, so discuss this with your physician EARLY.

**Glasses and contacts:**
If you wear glasses or contacts, we recommend that you take an additional pair(s) with you as well as your prescription in case of loss or damage. Also, specific contact lens solution can be difficult to find. Take a sufficient supply to last through the end of the program.

**Dietary adjustments:**
Foods in your host country may differ from what you are accustomed to eating. If this may be an issue for you, we encourage you to research what foods are common and readily available. Note: A change in eating and sleeping patterns can cause medications such as Ritalin to lose effectiveness.

**International Certificate of Vaccination (Yellow Immunization Card):**
Some of you will be required to carry this with you. If you are not required to have a card but would like to be able to demonstrate which vaccinations you have had, you may obtain a yellow immunization card from the Health Center.

**Health Care Costs**
If you require a doctor or hospital visit, in most cases, you will be required to pay the fees upfront. Please have sufficient resources available to you to pay for health care costs. Typically your insurance will reimburse you AFTER the fact, when you file claim forms with detailed receipts. Please note that records and reports may be printed in foreign languages that will require translation.

**Money**
How much to bring?
Familiarize yourself with what costs are covered by your program and what you will be expected to cover. If you are participating on a SLU program, this may be addressed in your program specific materials. If you are participating on a partner program, refer to the program’s web site.
The amount of spending money required varies greatly depending on the individual. CIIS maintains student evaluations which include their recommendations about how much money you will need. You are more than welcome to view these at any time. See also the table with additional costs and immunization information attached in the back of this booklet.

Keep track of your money. It helps to put things into perspective. Even if it’s not perfect, or if you forget to record items from time to time, it will give you a better idea of how much money you’re spending and what you spend it on.

→ There is a budget worksheet included at the end of this packet that can be used as a guide when planning your trip and throughout your stay.

**Student loan options** exist if you are seeking resources for the additional costs associated with study abroad programs. It is important to note that most loan options will require a credit worthy co-signer and sufficient time to process the loan request. SLU students should contact the St. Lawrence University Financial Aid Office for more information regarding the possibility of additional financial assistance. See also the Student Financial Services website at [www.stlawu.edu/sfs](http://www.stlawu.edu/sfs) for more information.

In what form?

There are many options available—explore all of your options before determining what is best for you. Refer to the country specific guide for more detailed information about monetary access in your respective location.

**DEBIT CARD**

Talk to your bank about the capabilities of your debit card. Typically a card with the Visa or Mastercard® symbol will be accepted as if it were a credit card at most ATMs and retail stores but allows you to avoid interest charges. If you utilize a debit card in this way, it is crucial that you keep track of spending so you don’t run out of money. Not all countries have letters associated with the number pad, so know your pin as a number only, and be aware that some foreign ATMs may only accept 4-digit PINs.

**ATM CARD**

Consult your bank about fees for withdrawing money from ATMs outside the US. If you choose to use this method to access funds you may want to withdraw sufficient funds to last for two to three weeks at a time to avoid costly ATM fees. There is usually a limit, however, on the amount you can withdraw in a day. Research the availability of ATMs and if your card is accepted before you travel.

**CREDIT CARDS**

Carry a credit card in case of major emergencies. Be sure to notify your credit card company that you will be out of the country so that they don’t cancel your card! There are places that don’t accept credit cards, so you should have cash available when you go out. Beware of interest rates, as well. Make arrangements with your parents for bills to be sent home and for them to pay the balance to avoid interest charges.
CASH
Cash is good to have for emergencies, but it is risky because it can get stolen or lost quite easily. Currency exchange booths may also charge a high rate to exchange it. Nevertheless, it is a good idea to carry some US dollars with you when you go.

Mail/Communication
MAIL and PACKAGES: Regular mail to and from many countries takes a long time, please plan accordingly. If your family intends to send you packages while you are away, you should check the import regulations of your host country. You may be taxed on any items that are not personal belongings. Please Note: Some countries do not permit the receipt of personal belongings via mail. DO NOT mislabel what you are sending. Packages are often checked, and fines for false representation can be serious.

Friends and relatives may receive gifts from you by mail duty free as long as the person does not receive gifts of more than $100 per day.

Make sure to talk with your family and friends before you leave home about how and how often you will communicate once you are abroad. It is important to keep in touch with home/campus, but avoid becoming dependent on those conversations. You chose to study abroad, allow yourself to become fully engaged in the experience. Daily conversations with mom/dad/boyfriend/girlfriend back home impede this.

The Journal as alternative
Keeping a journal can be extremely beneficial. You can write everything down, satisfying the need to share all of your experiences. You can also be brutally honest when things seem terrible and no one will judge what you write. A journal can be a valuable learning tool as it encourages reflection; is can also be a wonderful record of your experiences, as well. If you don’t like to write, consider blogging or perhaps keeping a photo-journal.

PHONE: Consult your country specific information for details on utilizing cell phones, phone cards, public phones.

Do Not assume that you may utilize the phone in your homestay to make international (or local) calls. Each student should discuss phone usage with his/her individual family. Please give your parents/guardians your host family contact information so that they may contact you directly, in case of emergency.

From the SLU mailroom:
- All FIRST CLASS mail will be forwarded to the permanent address on file with the University. International students: you may want to contact the student mailroom to provide an alternate address to which your first class US mail may be forwarded. Otherwise, you mail will be returned to sender.

- SECOND CLASS mail will be discarded. If you subscribe to magazines, suspend subscriptions or change the address to which they are sent. If you do not do this, you will lose all the issues sent while you’re abroad.

- NON-SLU students should inquire about mail practices at their home university.
Packing

What to pack: →See the checklist in the back
Pack light! The airline will have limitations on the number of bags, weight or both. There is no need to carry an abundance of products with you as most products are available in your host country and, if not, this gives an opportunity to try new things.

People in many countries tend to dress up more than most people in the US yet, due to repeated wear, you are likely to wear out whatever you pack. Keep these things in mind as you pack. The evaluations from previous program participants are a great source of information about what to pack.

Electrical current in most countries is different from that in North America (110 volts). You may need to have voltage transformers (most laptops “switch” automatically, some hairdryers are “dual voltage”). You will also need plug adapters appropriate for your host country if you want to use North American electrical appliances there. It’s probably easier to buy small electrical items like alarm clocks and hairdryers in the host country.

Check before you plug things in: an adaptor will allow you to plug in a US plug (for example a charger on a digital camera) but without a voltage transformer you may damage your recharger.

Gift for host family
Your host family is sharing their home and life with you. It is appropriate to offer a gift to acknowledge your awareness and appreciation of that. Something homemade from your town, state, or region would be thoughtful. Your gift should demonstrate appreciation, not wealth.

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Gift ideas from past participants:

- Games ~ sweet treats ~ materials to make a scrapbook with your family
~ the makings for a traditional celebration ~ something you’ve made—crafts, etc.
~ calendars ~ t-shirts ~ music ~ picture books ~ wall hangings
~ necessities if you’re going to a third world country.

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Prepare for cultural exchange before you leave

About the US – (general info, latest events, demographic info, etc)
People with whom you will interact may have questions about the US and your home. Know some basic demographical facts about the USA and your home state, area, or your home country. Take the time to watch the news or read the papers. Pay special attention to international politics in particular the way in which the US engages in international issues.

Know about your destination -
There are many resources (maps, guides, fiction from area, news articles, etc.) readily available about locations all over the world. Inform yourself about your host culture before you go. This will enable you to engage with people from your host culture more easily upon arrival and you will likely be seen as someone who has a genuine interest in the area rather than a typical tourist. This will make your stay much more interesting.
Cultural Adjustment

An intercultural experience can be a powerful teacher that forces you to look at yourself and others in new ways. Most travelers have some expectation about differences in the host culture; what is sometimes shocking is the realization of how your own culture has shaped you.

The process of cultural adaptation or coping with culture shock can be challenging but it is important to remember that it is temporary and that it will become easier as you become more familiar with the host culture. Initially this process can be emotionally, mentally, socially and even physically stressful. Admitting this to yourself can be the first step to working through it.

Culture shock can be described as the frustration or uneasiness that results from not understanding the host culture’s norms of behavior, unwritten rules, and even gestures and appropriate body language. Even mild cases of culture shock typically involve four stages.

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STAGES OF CULTURE SHOCK:
1. Initial euphoria – excitement about the new culture; everything about the new culture is perceived as wonderful.
2. Irritability and hostility – This is the period of “shock”. Everything is seen as different and therefore bad.
3. Gradual adjustment - This stage occurs when things become more comfortable and familiar.
4. Adaptation or biculturalism – The final stage occurs when the individual can appreciate, value and live easily in both the home and host culture.

Professionals have described and diagrammed this process as a u-curve. Each individual will experience culture shock in his/her own way. For some, it will be a quick down and up process with only slight discomfort. For others, the U may plunge deeper or flatten out before slanting back up.
What you might do to prepare for this:

You have already taken the first step by becoming familiar with the existence and stages of culture shock! Take time to imagine what it will feel like for you to live in the host culture. Anticipate what may feel uncomfortable for you. Think about how you deal with stress and whether or not this will be possible in the new culture.

Parents: Culture shock is a common phenomenon that anyone who encounters an unfamiliar culture is likely to experience. It is important to remember that reactions to daily life can be exaggerated when someone is dealing with culture shock. It will be helpful to your child if you can maintain a balanced perspective even though your he/she may not. We will encourage your son/daughter to speak with the program director or assistant on-site as they are familiar with both cultures and can counsel students. We hope you will do the same.

WHILE YOU’RE THERE

Wherever you are, be there. -Emerson

Take care of yourself. Eat and sleep well, get exercise, etc. It can be exhausting to be aware and observe what is happening around you, but well worth the effort. Rest when you need to do so.

Observe, listen and describe rather than look for examples that validate your preconceived notions: do not interpret or judge before you are sure you have observed and listened carefully.

Try to be objective, but recognize that you can never entirely succeed. The filter of your own culture will always affect what you see.

Be persistent in asking questions and learn to ask the kinds of questions that elicit comprehensive answers. Listen actively to the answer you get – and ask for feedback if you are not sure you understand.

Tips to help with culture shock:

• Keep busy and set goals – regardless of how small they might be.
• Settle in the room or residence – make it ‘home’.
• Write a journal – it will put things into perspective.
• Share feelings with other students or advisors or host families – sometimes just talking things through will help you feel better.
• Improve language abilities by practicing with friends and neighbors.
• Learn about the new school and the new neighborhood.
• Get involved in an activity that you enjoy and that helps you meet people.
• Plan excursions – simply having plans and something to look forward to will keep your mind off other things.
• Participate in sports/recreational activities – it is a good way to work out frustration, relieve stress, and meet new people.
**Advice for Participants and their Families**

As with any endeavor, study abroad is enhanced when all parties take an active role in ensuring the safety of participants. The following tips are intended as guidelines for participants and their parent(s)/guardian(s).

Participants and their parent(s)/guardian(s) should be in communication throughout the program. Participants should immediately notify their emergency contacts in the event of any emergency, accident, serious health problem, or other serious mishap. Please be sure to inform each other and the CIIS office should your contact information change at any point during the program.

Communication between SLU and the administration of the off-campus program is considered “internal communication” in the sense of the Family Rights and Privacy Act, and therefore program administrators have the right and the duty to communicate all relevant information concerning participants’ health and safety, academic progress, behavior, etc. to appropriate persons at St. Lawrence University on a need-to-know basis.

**Academics**

As you are aware St. Lawrence values the education that takes place on off-campus study. SLU programs require your active participation in the academic courses in order to be successful on the program. Credit for programs designated as SLU or affiliated/partner off-campus programs, is residence credit, not transfer credit, (i.e. grades earned are computed in the student’s quality point average). Participation in a SLU or affiliated/partner program counts towards the residence requirement. The cross-cultural learning that takes place in a new environment extends to the classroom setting as well. You will need to be flexible to adjust to the expectations of classroom culture in the host setting. For example, you may not be provided with a detailed syllabus, your work may be assessed infrequently and you may be expected to keep up on your own, or it may not be as appropriate as on SLU’s campus to interrupt the professor to ask questions.

You are expected to take a full course load while participating on an off-campus program. For those of you participating on a SLU partner program, please refer to the chart below to verify the number of courses in which you are required to enroll.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Require (Approximate)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Four courses/subjects (the equivalent of 12 credit points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>A minimum of 15 credits, including the mandatory language course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>15 credits required; typically 5 courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy - Cortona</td>
<td>15 credits required. Please note: Studio courses transfer in as 1 SLU unit while other courses transfer in at .83 units. It may be necessary to enroll in more than four courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy - LdM</td>
<td>15 credits required. The courses offered at LdM vary in the amount of credit. Make sure that your courses total 15 credits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>A minimum of 15 credits including Arabic language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>72 points at the University of Otago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>A minimum of 15 credits. This will include two required courses (3 credits each), Thai language (for 3 or 6 credits) and one or two electives depending on how many credits of Thai you enroll in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad</td>
<td>Four courses including two required courses and two electives through direct enrollment at the University of the West Indies</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
To Your Health

Off-campus programs can be a time of significant change and reflection and this may be stressful for some. It is therefore important for you to monitor your emotional and physical health.

Practice good self-care: eat well, get adequate rest, and exercise. New foods may be difficult for you to digest at first. In certain parts of the world, you will need to be cautious of raw foods, untreated water (and ice), or unpasteurized dairy products. Consider vitamin supplements if you feel you aren’t getting the necessary nutrition to stay healthy.

If you deal with mental health issues, they will not go away and may intensify in an off-campus setting. Do not make drastic changes in your medication directly prior to the program. Do not stop taking your medication and remember to take a sufficient supply with you to last throughout the program as all medications may not be available in other countries. Working with a professional before you depart may aid in developing new coping skills or strengthening the skills you have to minimize issues while on the program.

Reduce the risk of HIV and other STDs by always using latex condoms.

Relationships

Feeling lonely at first is normal. We encourage you to get out and do things. Doing things by yourself can provide more opportunities to meet new people.

Having friends from the US is not a bad thing – as long as they are not the only group with whom you engage.

Tips for Living in a Host Family

► Do not expect things to be like they are at home. You will need to adapt.
► Spend time getting to know the family. Make an effort to join in family activities.
► Do not use the phone, laundry, or TV without permission.
► Be energy conscious—be conservative in your use of hot water and electricity.
► Abide by family rules, curfews, standards of dress, etc. When in doubt, ask.
► Use your language skills.
► Demonstrate an interest in the culture.
► Do not be overly critical of the host culture.
► Have realistic expectations.
► Offer to help with household chores, even if they don’t accept your offer.
► Do Not bring uninvited guests into the home.

The standards for friendship and dating may be very different than those on campus or in the U.S. It is important to take note of societal norms and to realize that signals that mean one thing in the U.S. might mean something entirely different in another culture.

Engage with your host family and engage in activities outside the program to develop multi-generational friendships. Do not limit yourself to activities with students.
Conduct
The same behavioral expectations exist overseas with regards to student-to-student relationships, class attendance and academic honesty. In fact, it may be more demanding and strict. It is very important to follow the instructions of your program director. He or she is trained to help and assist you.

Disciplinary Sanctions
For off-campus programs, the associate dean of international and intercultural studies, in consultation with the program director/administrator, has the authority to make immediate decisions on all disciplinary issues, academic and social. The associate dean may also assign disciplinary sanctions for a period of time that may extend beyond the period of the program and be upheld on campus. (For more detailed information, please refer to the SLU Student Handbook.)

Obey local laws. You are subject to the laws of the country in which you are traveling. If you break them, you will be accountable for your actions. Ignorance of the law is not an excuse. The legal process and the rights accorded to the person suspected of crime may differ significantly from those in the US. In many circumstances there is very little anyone, including the State Department, can do to assist you.

Familiarize yourself with local conditions and laws: The State Department web site at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html has useful safety and general information about the countries you will visit.

Safety
The selection of locations for and the continuation of, all off-campus study programs is based on, among other factors, the availability of a safe environment for students. Unforeseen circumstances may cause an interruption in or termination of a program. Should that happen, CIIS will try to find alternative arrangements to accommodate affected students, but suitable alternative arrangements cannot be guaranteed and may not always be available.

Safety depends on a partnership between the program and its participants. It is reasonable to be concerned about your safety abroad, and it is important to heed all advice, warnings, and alerts put out by the Department of State and the Director of your program. It is also equally important to keep your concerns rational. Unfamiliar places are commonly assumed to be inherently dangerous. Your lack of familiarity with an area does not imply increased danger. There is a need for increased awareness and precaution, but not paranoia.

Use common sense. It is never a good idea to ‘stand out’ in a crowd or draw attention to your national identity. Particularly in these times, when the political actions of the US government frequently come under scrutiny, it is especially wise to maintain a low profile. Do not give your address and/or phone number to casual acquaintances, and don’t announce group activities.
**Help from the US consul:**
- US consulates exist in most countries overseas. Be aware of which consulate is nearest to your location.
- Consular officers will advise and help you in the event of an emergency through the Office of American Citizen Services.

**From the State Department web site:** Consular personnel at U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad and in the U.S. are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to provide emergency assistance to U.S. citizens. Contact information for U.S. Embassies and Consulates appears on the Bureau of Consular Affairs website at [http://travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov). Also note that the Office of Overseas Citizen Services in the State Department’s Bureau of Consular Affairs may be reached for assistance with emergencies at 1-888-407-4747, if calling from the U.S. or Canada, or 202-501-4444, if calling from overseas.

Consular offices ARE NOT travel agencies, information bureaus, or police. They CANNOT help you if you break the law in a foreign country.

**Sexual Harassment:**
If you experience sexual harassment or assault while you are abroad, it is important that you report it immediately and seek any assistance you need. You should report it to the program director, the program assistant, and campus security (315-229-5555). The Associate Dean for Student Life at St. Lawrence will be able to put you in touch with a student or staff Advocate (on Campus). You can reach the Dean at (315)229-5551.

Sexual harassment is unwelcome, offensive conduct of a sexual nature that makes someone uncomfortable or embarrassed. Although sexual harassment may be defined differently in the host country, it is important to talk about any uncomfortable encounter as soon as it happens.

→ Please see the SLU Safety and Risk Management Plan at [http://www.stlawu.edu/ciis/content/435](http://www.stlawu.edu/ciis/content/435)
TRANSPORTATION

The ISIC card may be helpful in obtaining discounted student rates. Always ask if there is a student discount before you buy anything.

OH, THE OPTIONS! (bike, bus, train, subway, taxi, walking, etc.)
Public transportation is often more accessible in other countries. There will be alternatives to consider, and the prices can vary significantly. Find out which options you have and the respective costs before you purchase any long-term plan. There may be information in your country specific manual that addresses transportation.

SAFETY FIRST
Traveling in a new place is always exciting, and it’s natural to seek out adventure in the name of budgeting, but please educate yourself about the safety of various methods of transportation, including road safety – in your host country and the places you plan to visit. There is an organization called ASIRT that produces reports on road safety in foreign countries. ASIRT has been working with the US State Department to incorporate that information into the travel advisories, as well. Look into this before you go. (www.asirt.org)

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<th>Top Tips for Road Safety:</th>
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<tr>
<td>-Learn the highway hazards in the countries in which you are traveling</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Be aware of local driver behaviors and road conditions</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Choose the safest form of transportation in each country</td>
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VACATION TRAVEL
In Europe, if you intend to do quite a bit of travel to a variety of countries, the Eurailpass may be a good option. Consult your program calendar to see if and when you would be able to use this travel pass. Remember that Eurail passes must be ordered in advance in the U.S. There are other economical travel options particularly if you intend to visit one or two other countries. Check specials offered by the local bus or train companies or with travel agencies that may have ‘last minute’ deals.

ITINERARY
Whenever you travel, leave an itinerary with the director and your host family or roommate and let others know who has it. At a minimum indicate the town you will visit, the projected date/time of arrival, and the projected date/time of return. If that itinerary should change en route (which it probably will) notify the person with the itinerary as soon as possible.

COMING HOME
Re-entry and cultural adjustment
Be aware that upon returning home, it is likely that you will go through a period of adjustment similar to the one that you encountered upon arriving in the host culture. You will have changed and will have new perspectives which may cause you to re-examine your patterns of behavior at home. At the same time, you might expect that nothing will have changed at home -- but they have. This is a significant period for learning and personal growth. Before you depart the program site reflect on your experiences, consider what perspectives you have gained and the ways in which you have changed. Consider how you might incorporate these changes into your life at home.

"Culture shock is the expected confrontation with the unfamiliar. Re-entry shock is the unexpected confrontation with the familiar." - R.M. Paige

There are 4 stages to reverse culture shock:
1. DISENGAGEMENT (before you leave the host country you start dreaming of home and reducing involvement abroad)
2. HONEYMOON PHASE (just before you leave you get really excited and it lasts through the first reunions and greetings when everyone is happy to see you and you are happy to see everyone again)
3. IRRITABILITY (all those bad things that arise- from irritation to depression- also the part we focus on in this section)
4. READJUSTMENT AND ADAPTATION (it even sounds soothing, doesn’t it?)
You may experience a variety of feelings that previous participants have described as follows:

- You can’t explain what it was like to people who haven’t had a similar experience or “no one wants to hear” about the experience; they lose interest too quickly. It’s true - ‘you had to be there.’

- You get bored with the everyday life at home. There won’t be nearly as much stimulus and things aren’t continuously new and exciting.

- You may miss the people and places that became so familiar to you. Email, telephones, letters and journals can help you deal with those feelings.

- Some relationships may have changed in your absence.

- You, too, have changed, people may notice new habits and think they are odd or what you say might be misinterpreted, or misunderstood.

- Some returnees feel alienated, they tend to be more critical of their society than they were in the past. This is natural, because you have a basis for comparison.

Utilize the adjustment skills you learned abroad, be patient, change what you can, and try to remain open-minded.

Now that you know how you might feel, and the difficulties you might face, we can offer some tips to help you make it through.

- Expect a time of adjustment, be prepared for the familiar to seem different.

- Time is on your side. If something feels out of place, or not quite right, ALLOW YOURSELF THE TIME to work through it.

- Take the time to think about how you are feeling. REFLECTION can be beneficial and it raises awareness of how you’ve changed. Continue to WRITE in your journal!!
- Be SENSITIVE to other people’s feelings and reserve judgment. It is often tempting to be blunt and judgmental after seeing all that you have for the past semester or year, but this can be especially hurtful. Objectivity is key; phrase your comments tactfully.

- Spend time with others who have had similar experiences. Find comfort in the FELLOWSHIP of other returnees. They will be able to empathize and help you through.

- Read, read, READ. There are a number of books about everything covered in this manual, and a great deal of people who have written personal accounts of their struggles. Type in “re-entry” or “reverse culture shock” on any search engine and discover endless websites about all aspects, or refer to our suggested reading list.

- Attend reentry activities on campus

- Learn about ways to go abroad again