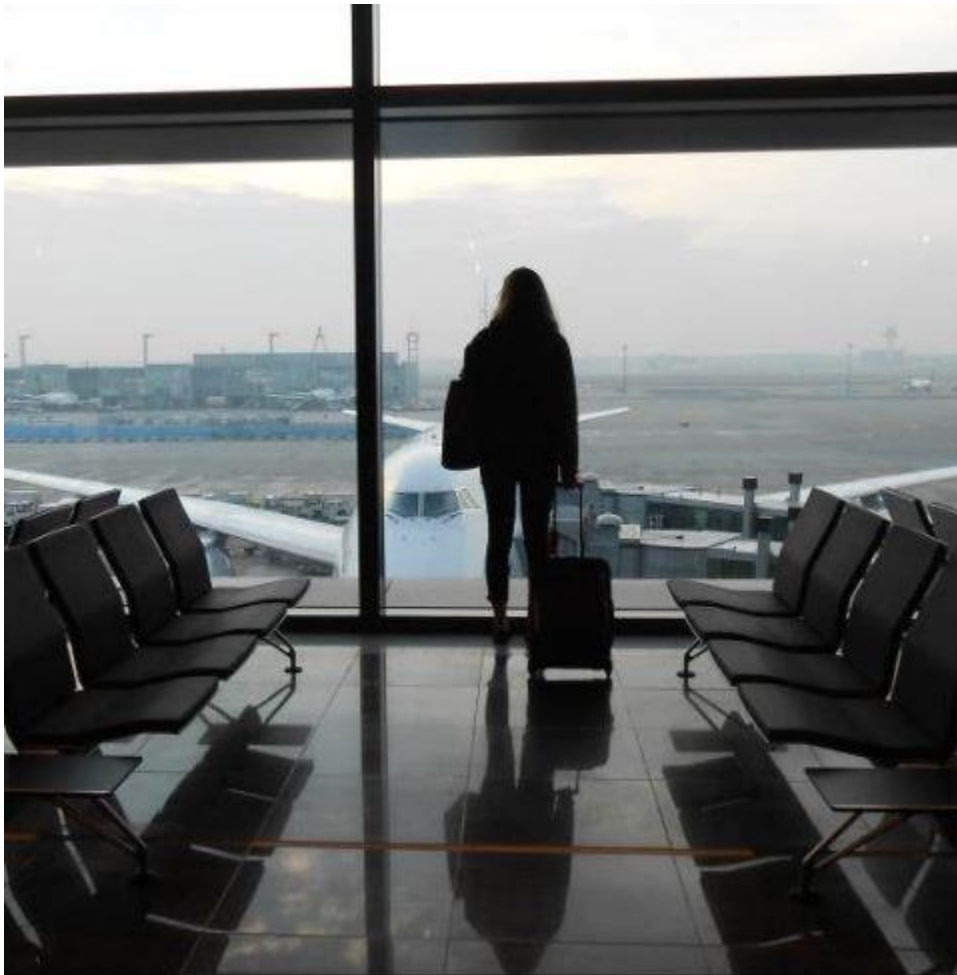


# WINTHROP

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## *study abroad*

THE WINTHROP UNIVERSITY  
STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK



*Photo Credits: Rachel Burns – Frankfurt Airport, Germany*

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<http://www.winthrop.edu/international>

Dear Student,

*Congratulations* on choosing to study abroad! You are about to embark on the journey of a lifetime! You will find excitement, adventure, growth and –most certainly- memories that will stay with you the rest of your life.

This handbook is designed to help you make the most of your time abroad. Read it thoroughly before you leave and take it with you to refer to when you have questions while abroad. 90% of the questions students ask us from abroad are answered right here in this book! Through your pre-departure preparations and the orientation you will receive when you arrive, I am confident you will be well prepared to have an amazing and successful semester abroad.

If you encounter any problems while you are there, remember that your program staff is there to help you and should be your first point of contact if you need assistance. But also know that we are here via phone or email if you need us while you are away.

Please keep in touch with us while you are abroad. We love to get updates, hear stories, and see pictures! We can always be reached by mail at [studyabroad@winthrop.edu](mailto:studyabroad@winthrop.edu). Please stop by when you return to tell us about your experience. We want to hear how it went, and the more we learn about your program, the better advice we can give to prospective study abroad students. We'll also have a Re-entry Workshop early in the semester upon your return. It gives you the opportunity to reflect upon your experience and hear others' stories.

Have a safe and wonderful time abroad. You are about to enter a new chapter of your life- make the most of it and enjoy every second!

Bon voyage and carpe diem!

Dr. Leigh Poole

Leigh Poole, Director of the International Center and Assistant Professor

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Updated: 3/23/15

## BEFORE YOU GO

The following checklist is for your use. Make sure you complete each of the items between now and your departure. If you have questions, contact the Study Abroad Office.

- Study Abroad Program** - Keep in contact with the International Center about your study abroad program. Let us know any changes regarding your intent to study abroad, admission, courses, living arrangements, etc.
- Passport** – Yes, you need one! Check that it is valid for 6 months after your return. Bring a copy of the info page to the Study Abroad Office.
- Student Visa** - Know if you need a visa (in some countries called a Residence Permit, Entry Clearance, etc.), the status of your visa application and inform the Study Abroad Office when you receive it from your host government.
- Advisor** - Meet with your advisor to determine the courses you will take abroad and the courses you will take at Winthrop following your study abroad semester. This ensures the transfer of credit process and makes your registration process while you are abroad much simpler. You will register for your returning semester while you are abroad through Wingspan just as you do on campus.
- Approval to Transfer Credit Form** - Complete the form with your advisor and get it signed by the appropriate faculty/staff in your department and college. Please bring a copy to the International Center before you leave. If you make changes to your course load while you study abroad, let your advisor know, and copy Leigh Poole [poolela@winthrop.edu](mailto:poolela@winthrop.edu)
- Off-campus Financial Aid Request Form** – You will complete this during the Pre-Departure Orientation. Set up direct deposit so any refund will go into your bank account.
- Winthrop Residence Life** - If you live on-campus, visit 237 DiGiorgio Center and complete the forms that indicate that you will be studying abroad next semester. Let them know your housing plans following your study abroad experience.
- Cashiers Office** - Clear debts from your account and remember to **VALIDATE YOUR SCHEDULE** for your study abroad semester!
- Change of Address Form** - Complete the form so that correspondence from Winthrop will be mailed to your home address not your Winthrop address.
- Itinerary** - Upload a copy of your travel itinerary to your online account.
- Medical Check-up** – Visit the Winthrop Travel Clinic. Have complete physical, dental and eye checkups and get any necessary immunizations before you depart.

## **ACADEMICS**

“Study Abroad” is first and foremost an academic experience. Familiarize yourself with the educational system of your host country before you go.

### **Foreign Institutions**

In many study abroad programs, you will find that there is less professorial supervision of your academic work than you are accustomed to in the U.S. This is especially true if you are enrolled in a foreign university – remember that different approaches to education are part of cultural difference! Such systems place greater responsibility on the student with regards to work done out of the classroom. Syllabi, if provided, may be less detailed with more readings assigned, required textbooks may not exist and attendance policies either not enforced or non-existent. Often there are fewer assignments and quizzes during the semester and, in many cases, your entire grade depends on a final exam or paper. Therefore, it is important to work diligently and consistently throughout the term.

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you currently receive or think you may need an accommodation for a disability while abroad, discussing this with your host institution before you leave the U.S. can help make your transition to your program much smoother. While many institutions abroad can offer the same or similar accommodations to what is available in the U.S., they are not required to comply with the ADA and some accommodations may simply not be available. You should inquire about this as soon as possible and also ask what documentation they may require you to provide. For further assistance, please contact Winthrop’s Services for Students with Disabilities office or the Study Abroad Office.

### **Transfer or Academic Credits**

Equivalent courses and credits hours need to be documented on the Approval to Transfer Credit Form prior to your study abroad.

By now, you have hopefully completed the above-mentioned form. This ensures that the courses you take abroad will be accepted by Winthrop University as transfer credit.

If you have yet to complete the form, immediately meet with your advisor and your college’s academic student services coordinator or department chair. Bring with you the descriptions of the courses that you plan to take abroad. Complete the form and bring the yellow copy to the Study Abroad Office.

### **Registration for Semester/Year Abroad**

Once your courses have been approved and listed on the transfer credit form, turn in the form to the Study Abroad Office so you can be registered as a study abroad student. A special course section, INSA 399, has been created for study abroad students. You will be signed up for 12 credit hours. After successful completion of your study abroad program, the INSA 399 will be replaced with the actual courses that you took at the host institution and with the actual credit hours that you earned.

## Receiving Credit

Your transfer credits cannot be posted until the Study Abroad Office receives your official transcript, diploma or other official certificate from your host institution and you have on file the Approval to Transfer Credit Form. The host institution should send your transcript, diploma or other official certificate to Winthrop University. At the end of your semester abroad, before you return home, request that your program send all such documents to:

Study Abroad Coordinator  
International Center, Winthrop University  
212 Dinkins Hall  
Rock Hill, SC 29733 USA

You will receive academic credit for the courses that you pass with a C- or higher grade; the actual grades do not transfer. Therefore, your Winthrop GPA prior to studying abroad will be the same as after studying abroad. **HOWEVER, grades earned overseas WILL be counted towards honors designation at graduation and scholarship eligibility. It is possible to lose your scholarships if your cumulative GPA drops below your scholarship's minimum GPA requirement.**

### Note to ALL Study Abroad Students:

If the courses that you had pre-approved are unavailable when you arrive at your host institution, and you choose new courses, contact your student services coordinator and your advisor with your new course selections. Provide them with course descriptions or syllabi so that they have the information they need to approve the new courses. Failure to do so means risking the chance to receive credit for the new courses. Once the courses have been approved, inform the Study Abroad Office of your new course selections.

## Course Load while Abroad

While abroad, you ***must*** be enrolled in the equivalent of 12 or more semester credit hours at your host institution so that you can continue to be enrolled as a full-time student at Winthrop. Full-time enrollment is required to receive most forms of financial aid and falling below full-time could compromise your aid eligibility. Please consult with the Office of Financial Aid regarding your particular financial aid situation. If for any reason you think you may need to drop below full time enrollment while abroad, you must contact the International Center and Office of Financial Aid before you make any changes to your enrollment.

## Cultural Events Credit

Upon successful completion of your study abroad semester, you will automatically receive three cultural events credits. The credits appear on your record a month or two after your return. You have the option to petition for additional credits during the semester following your study abroad semester.

To petition for additional cultural events credits, refer to the cultural events credits website, <http://www.winthrop.edu/culturalevents/petitionguide.htm>

The following is an excerpt:

*Cultural events credit may be obtained for travel within the U.S. or to a foreign country... Foreign travel could include "semester abroad" experiences. One or more credits may be granted for such travel experiences. A single petition form should accompany the written report which should be more extensive than the one-page report required of other petitions. Use as many pages as you need to effectively discuss your experiences. Detail the things you saw and did, especially those things which are of a cultural nature. For example, a report on a trip to Paris might include the following:*

*"I visited the Cathedral de Notre Dame, the Sacre Coeur, and the Left Bank of the Seine. I also spent the afternoon at the Louvre Museum where I saw the Mona Lisa and many other famous paintings. I found the architecture of the new pyramid addition to the museum very fascinating. I attended a performance of the opera, Carmen, at the Paris Opera in the evening."*

*Some documentation for the trip should also be included such as a receipt for a plane ticket or an itinerary. The committee will read the report and will note the number of actual cultural things you did. A single cultural event credit may be given for just the general sight-seeing and experiencing of another culture.*

## **STUDY ABROAD AGREEMENT/RESPONSIBILITIES**

As part of the process to enroll in a study abroad program, you have completed and signed the Winthrop Study Abroad Agreement that includes Health Information, Academic Responsibility and Assumption of Risk Statements. For your reference, the details of these statements are included below so that you are informed of our program policy.

### **Health**

I agree that I am physically, mentally and emotionally capable of participating in the program.

I assume all risk and financial responsibility for any loss or injury that may occur to me while participating in the program.

I assume all risk and financial responsibility for any loss or injury that may occur to others as a result of my negligence or misconduct.

I certify that I have adequate international health and accident insurance coverage as described below and I am covered for the entire period of my participation.

### **Student Academic Responsibility**

I agree to attend all pre-departure orientations at Winthrop and orientations at the host campuses.

I agree to attend regularly scheduled classes at the host institution.

I agree that I am responsible for making sure that courses taken and academic credits earned from the host institution transfer back to my Winthrop University academic record.

I acknowledge that I receive transfer credit only for those courses I pass with a C- or higher.

I acknowledge that no study abroad grades are averaged into my Winthrop GPA.

I acknowledge that all study abroad grades, including Ds and Fs, are averaged into my GPA used to determine eligibility for my financial aid and for honors designation at graduation.

I agree to invest the same amount of time and effort on course work that is required at Winthrop University for courses at the same academic level at the host institution.

## **Study Abroad Policy and Assumption of Risk**

**Finances** - I acknowledge my participation in this study program and understand that I am accountable for all program fees. I acknowledge that an official hold may be placed on my records until all financial responsibilities are fulfilled.

**Personal conduct** - I understand that during the study abroad program I am subject to Winthrop's Student Code of Conduct and that of the host institution/program. I also acknowledge that Winthrop University, through its official representatives, has the authority to establish additional rules of conduct necessary for the safe and effective operation of the program. The rules apply during the entire period of the program, including free time. The use of drugs during the program is strictly prohibited and can be cause for dismissal from the program. I am responsible for my personal conduct and understand that I can be dismissed from the program for violation of program rules.

**Local laws and custom** - I agree to respect and adhere to the laws and customs of the host country and understand that the violation or disrespect for those laws and customs may result in my dismissal from the program.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that the violation of such laws and customs may have legal ramifications with consequences beyond the control of Winthrop University and even the US Government.

**Dismissal** - Winthrop University, through its official representatives in collaboration with the home and host campus, may decide that a participant must be dismissed from the program because of violation of any stated rules, for disruptive behavior, or for any conduct that might bring the program into disrepute or its participants into legal jeopardy. That decision will be final.

Dismissal from the program will result in the loss of all academic credit for the program. Persons dismissed from the program will remain responsible for all program costs and any additional costs resulting from their dismissal and early departure.

**Orientation** - I agree to attend all orientation, pre-departure, and re-entry meetings and read any preparatory materials given to me.

**Insurance coverage** - I acknowledge that I am required to have health, accident, and hospitalization insurance during my participation in the study abroad program. The policy must include coverage for expenses relating to sickness, injury, medical evacuation, accidental death, and repatriation.

**Medical Treatment** - I have read and understand the Study Abroad Health/Emergency Information sheet provided to me and know what actions to take for support and assistance in preparing for my study abroad experience.

In the event of illness or injury to me to such an extent that I am unable to make decisions relative to my immediate medical condition, I authorize any official representative of Winthrop University to secure on my behalf medical treatment, including surgery and the administration of an anesthetic, and I accept all financial responsibility for such treatment.

**Responsibility during free time** - I acknowledge that during free time before, during and after the period of this study abroad program, I may elect to travel independently at my own risk and expense. I agree to inform an official representative of the Winthrop University International Center of my travel plans. I also agree that neither Winthrop University nor its representatives are responsible for me during such free time.



**Assumption of risk** - I acknowledge that there are risks involved in international travel and study abroad program participation, including but not limited to dangers to my own health and personal safety posed by civil unrest, use of public transportation, political instability, terrorism, crime, violence, and disease, and that I am willing to assume those risks.

I further acknowledge that health, safety and security standards vary greatly around the world and I have reviewed the U.S. Consular Information Sheets and Travel Warnings [contained on the U.S. Department of State Consular Affairs web site] and the Traveler's Health section of the Center for Disease Control's web site regarding travel to and around the country in which I plan to study abroad.

I agree that during the period of this study abroad program I release and forever discharge Winthrop University, and its official representatives, from any liability for damage to or loss of my possessions, as well as any injury, illness or death arising out of or in any way relating to my participation in study abroad programs.

**Withdrawal/Refund policy** - I acknowledge that if I withdraw from the study abroad program, even if for reasons beyond my control, prior to or while studying abroad, the withdrawal and refund policy and deadlines of the host institution or program provider will be followed. If I have paid tuition and/or fees to Winthrop University, I understand that I will be responsible for any tuition or fees that Winthrop has paid or owes to the host institution or program on my behalf which may equal or exceed Winthrop's tuition and fees. These costs may include: tuition, tuition deposits, cancellation fees, room and board, study tour fees, and any other non-recoverable expenses.

Additionally, the \$325 study abroad participation fee is non-refundable after Winthrop's add/drop deadline. In addition, I will be responsible for any non-refundable out-of-pocket expenses, including airfare, housing costs or other related travel and living expenses. I understand that travel insurance may be available to cover some of these costs and it is my responsibility to research such insurance options.

I understand that it is my responsibility to read and understand the withdrawal and refund policies of the host institution or program provider. In the event that the host institution does not have a refund policy, the current Winthrop withdrawal policy will be followed. I understand that if I cannot locate my host institution's withdrawal and refund policy, I may contact the Winthrop Study Abroad Coordinator for assistance.

## **NECESSARY DOCUMENTS**

When you travel, it is necessary for you to have the following documents. It is good policy to always have a photocopy of each of the items below in case of theft. Keep the copies in a safe place separate from the actual documents. You may also want to scan them and keep a copy in your email for easy access from abroad.

### **Passport**

As a study abroad student, you need a valid passport. Passports are valid for ten years if you were 18 or older when you received it. New passports cost \$135 and require a certified copy of your birth certificate (contact the health department in the county where you were born); renewed passports cost \$115. It takes approximately 32 working days to obtain a passport. The nearest passport office to Winthrop University is at the York County Complex on Heckle Blvd, located in the Clerk of

Courts Office. For more information on passports, visit the U.S. Dept. of State website, <http://www.travel.state.gov>

Once you receive your passport, sign it **IN INK** immediately. Otherwise, it is not valid! Fill in emergency contact information in pencil so you can keep it current if your contact changes. Make several copies of your passport. Take at least two with you, keeping one on your person at all times, and leave one with your family. It is a good idea to scan a copy of your passport and student visa and save them as attachments in your email. That way, you will always have a copy in a secure location, in the event of a lost or stolen passport.

Many countries now require that your passport be valid for six months after your visit to that country. Check with the consulates of the countries you plan to visit.

### **Student Visa – This is not a Bank Card!!!!**

Most countries require a student visa for study abroad students. This document is also known as a residence permit. **A student visa is official permission to stay in a country for a certain period of time for the purpose of study.** Check with the consulate of your host country for information concerning visas. The website will list the location of the nearest consulate, the documents you need to apply for the visa as well as its cost. All countries require a valid passport to apply for a visa.

Several months before your departure, contact the consulate of your host country to find out if a visa is required (some countries require a visa only if you are studying more than 90 days). Some requirements, such as a police background check and a doctor's letter stating good health can be time-consuming and involve pre-planning. Do not wait until the last minute to get these documents. Please note that some student visas carry certain restrictions, i.e. no employment. Once you have been accepted to study abroad, begin the visa application process.

**Note to Non-U.S. Citizens:** Requirements for non-U.S. citizens participating in Winthrop Study abroad programs often vary from those of U.S. citizens. You should thoroughly research the requirements for the citizens of your home country to study in your host country. Contact Mrs. Lindsey Hill, International Student Advisor, to secure necessary documents to return to the U.S.

### **International Student Identity Card (ISIC)**

Students throughout the world, with proper identification, can take advantage of free or reduced price admission to museums, theatres, concerts, and cultural as well as historical sites. The International Student Identity Card (ISIC) is a widely recognized proof of your student status. You may purchase the card online at <http://www.myisic.com>

To purchase, you will need to show proof of student status (Winthrop ID), one passport size photograph, and pay a fee of \$25.

Purchase of this card provides reduced airfare through STA Travel, basic accident and sickness insurance, 24-hour help line for emergencies, communication services including web-based email, fax, voicemail and phone card services as well as accommodations and entertainment world-wide.

## Plane Ticket

After you have been accepted in the study abroad program, make arrangements for your travel. Some programs include airline tickets, while others require you to purchase your own ticket. Find out exactly what your program includes and how you will get to your destination once your plane arrives at the airport (Will there be a bus for students or will you need to travel to the university on your own?).

If you wait until the last minute to get your plane tickets, it could be quite costly. For discounted fares, check out:

<http://www.kayak.com/>

<http://www.statravel.com>

<http://www.studentuniverse.com>

Once you have your ticket, check with your airline regarding baggage restrictions. This includes weight, size, and items you cannot carry on board. Beware: overweight luggage can be very costly!

## Money

Bring a small amount of U.S. dollars in cash. This may prove handy while en route and can always be changed abroad into the local currency at a bank or money exchange counter.

Contact your bank to see if they can obtain foreign currency for you. If possible, bring a small amount of the local currency of your host country. This will help you cover immediate expenses such as phone calls, bus or train rides, taxis or meals. However, most airports have ATMs or exchange counters where you can obtain local currency, and it is a good idea to either withdraw cash from an ATM or exchange USD for local currency immediately upon your arrival.

## Bank, ATM or Credit Card

This is increasingly the easiest and least costly means of getting money. The exchange rates are usually good and fees minimal. Before leaving, notify your bank and credit card company that you will be abroad. Tell them which country (ies) you will be traveling to and when you will be there. Ask them to make a note of this on your account. This will help prevent denying access to your card while overseas. Also, ask for the card's international long distance customer help number to call (collect) should a problem arise.

Find out if your bank has any reciprocal agreements to waive withdrawal fees with specific banks in the country in which you will be studying. Also, in order to use ATM cards abroad, make sure they are either VISA or MasterCard debit cards or credit cards, as these are most widely accepted.

**Please note:** Though traveler's checks may be safer than cash as a way to travel with large amounts of money, there are risks to relying on them exclusively. Often, local businesses will not accept them, and many foreign banks do not know how to handle them. At present, ATM and credit cards are more reliable sources for cash, and provide the benefit of allowing cash withdrawal 24 hours a day. If you do decide to use traveler's checks, do so as a supplement to ATM and credit cards. Traveler's checks can be purchased prior to departure from your bank in either U.S. dollars or in foreign currency. The advantage of having the checks in your host country's currency is that there is

no fee for exchanging them for cash. Remember to keep the checks in a safe place and keep a list of the check numbers in a separate safe location.

### **Health Insurance Card**

You must have sufficient health insurance coverage while you are abroad. Check if your program provides insurance or if your current medical coverage is valid outside the U.S. Find out if the policy covers medical evacuation and repatriation. Although it is not pleasant to think about, be aware of what would happen if you were to become seriously ill while abroad and had to return home. Questions to ask your insurance company are:

- Does the policy cover me for all the countries I want to visit?
- What illnesses/injuries are covered?
- What are the pre-admission requirements for receiving treatment abroad?
- Am I covered for injuries sustained from terrorism, acts of war, high risk activities (such as skydiving or bungee jumping), or personal foolishness?
- How do I pay? How do I get reimbursed? What kind of financial and medical documentation will be required for reimbursement, and is such documentation readily available in the countries where I will be living and traveling?
- Does the insurance company require claims to be submitted in U.S. dollars?

If your current policy doesn't provide adequate coverage, purchase the CISI World Class Coverage Plan for Winthrop University study abroad participants (policy number 0098). With this plan, you are able to receive medical attention all over the world for only \$40 per month. For information on this policy, contact the Study Abroad Office.

### **Immunization Card**

It is always a good idea to carry with you a small card listing your prior immunizations and medical history. If you do not have one, get one from your primary care physician. Carry this card with your passport as this may prove invaluable should you encounter a problem.

Some countries require proof of immunization from various diseases; some require proof of a recent HIV test. Since requirements are constantly changing, several months before departure visit the website or contact the consulate of the countries you will be visiting for details. Another good source of such information is the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta. Their hotline number is 404.332.4559 or visit the website at <http://www.cdc.gov>

If you have severe asthma, epilepsy, heart conditions, allergies to antibiotics or other medical conditions, wear a Medic-Alert tag. These tags are internationally recognized. For more information, contact Medic Alert at 1.800.423.6333.

### **Personal Info Card**

Carry a small card that lists your name and the names and contact info of your parents or friends. Also include with this list the names and telephone/fax numbers of your primary care physician, eye doctor, dentist, and other medical or legal help.

If you have a medical history, include this on the card. With this information, you or someone with you will be able to obtain information quickly should an emergency arise.

Include the name and contact info of your bank. This may be helpful in case of suspected fraud on your account or if you need money wired.

If your family or friends have any contacts overseas, include their names and numbers on the card. Local contacts can provide you with information or suggestions, and help you in an emergency situation.

### **Copies of Prescription**

If you take any prescription medication, consult with the Winthrop Travel Clinic regarding the availability of your medication abroad and quantities you can bring with you. When you depart, bring legible copies of medical prescriptions you are taking as it may be necessary to document your need to import medication upon entry. You may or may not be able to fill prescriptions overseas so ask your physician to prescribe generic drugs, just in case. Also, to be on the safe side, bring legible copies of glasses or contact lens prescriptions.

## **IMPORTANT PREPARATIONS**

Be prepared for lots and lots of walking! Unlike in the U.S., people overseas are out on the street, moving around, going places by foot, riding bicycles, and using public transportation. Wear comfortable shoes!

### **Gifts**

It is customary to bring a small gift when invited to people's homes in many countries. Bring with you a few items from home that represents the U.S. or your local community or university. Some suggested ideas include:

- Local interest picture book, cookbooks or calendars
- Postcards of Winthrop, your home or state, tourist attractions
- School or sports paraphernalia like T-shirts, hats, key rings, etc.
- Local crafts, souvenirs

### **Taxes**

Don't forget to have someone take care of your taxes for you! You are responsible for filing taxes while you are overseas. This applies to students going abroad for the academic year or the spring semester. For more information, contact the IRS at 1-800-829-1040.

### **Change of Address**

Several weeks before leaving, consider making address changes for the following:

- Monthly phone and utility bills, rent bills
- Credit cards statements, bank statements
- Magazine subscriptions or other memberships

### **Your Health**

As you make your final preparations for study abroad, it is important to spend some time on issues related to your health:

- **Prescriptions:** If you are taking medication regularly, you should take an adequate supply to last for the term abroad (providing the particular medication is not perishable). Talk to your doctor about your plans to study abroad. Be sure to label all medication clearly and to keep it in containers that clearly show the prescription on the label. Also bring a copy of your prescriptions, just in case.
- **Non-prescription medication:** You will want to take small amounts of any over-the-counter medication that you normally use, such as vitamins, cold remedies, aspirin, and medicines for digestive problems, etc. Often, the medication you are used to taking here will not be available abroad, or may be sold under a different name and difficult to identify.

Gastrointestinal disorders, sore throat, and colds may occur more frequently in a foreign country than at home, particularly soon after your arrival. This is a result of the change in climate, environment, diet, water and personal habits. Be prepared. Use hand sanitizer liberally!

- **Glasses or contact lenses:** If you wear glasses, it is a good idea to bring an extra pair with you. If you wear contact lenses, bring sufficient quantities of contact lens solution with you as it may not be readily available.
- **Foreign medical practice:** The manner in which medical help is obtained, the way patients are treated, the condition of overseas medical facilities as well as how health care is afforded often present marked differences from U.S. practice. You need to be flexible; you need to be prepared for the reality that not all U.S. healthcare values, assumptions and methods are going to be found in the country that you visit.
- **Medical evacuation:** Although some health insurance companies may pay “customary and reasonable” hospital costs abroad, very few will pay for medical evacuation back to the United States. Medical evacuation can easily cost \$10,000 or more, depending on your location and medical condition. One of the main advantages of health and emergency assistance policies is that they often include coverage for medical evacuation to the U.S. Even if your regular health insurance covers you for emergencies abroad, you should consider purchasing supplemental insurance to cover medical evacuation.

## Emergency Funds

In some countries, major banks and certain travel agencies can help arrange a transfer of funds from your U.S. account to a foreign bank. If you do not have a bank account from which you can obtain emergency funds, you should make arrangements in advance with a relative or friend to either make deposits in your account or send you emergency funds should it become necessary.

## Pre-Departure Reading

Learn as much as you can about your host country before your arrival. Buy a good guidebook (Lonely Planet, Rough Guide, Let’s Go, Rick Steves, etc.) or other resource materials to familiarize yourself with your host culture.

Also check out the following literature:

- *Coming Home Crazy* by Bill Holm and Harrison E. Salisbury
- *Getting the Most from Study Abroad (Students Helping Students)* by Michael Gallant

- *Learning Across Cultures* by Gary Althen
- *Study Abroad: How to Get the Most Out of Your Experience* by Michelle Dowell
- *Study Abroad: A Parent's Guide* by William Hoffa
- *Survival Kit for Overseas Living* by L. Robert Kohls
- *The Art of Crossing Cultures* by Craig Sorti
- *Whole World Guide to Language Learning* by Terry Marshall
- *Let's Go!* Travel Guides (written by Harvard students for college students going abroad)

## PACKING TIPS

### The Basics

- Bring as little as possible.
- Bring things that you can leave behind to make room for what you buy abroad.
- Bring a backpack (handy for school and weekend jaunts).
- Bring clothing appropriate for your host country climate and what you will be doing.
- Bring comfy shoes, but no more than 3 pairs.
- Consider luggage with wheels, or a large travel backpack that can be easily carried.
- Consider purchasing compression bags for packing your;21410030417782?  
clothes to save space.

Airlines have strict baggage and weight restrictions. Baggage policies seem to be changing constantly these days - be sure to inquire with your airline(s) about the number of bags you can check and carry on, weight limits, size restrictions, and fees for checking luggage. Excess baggage may be refused or be subject to fees.

**Packing:** For maximum ease, travel light. You will have to carry your own luggage. If you can't carry your bags for a half of mile including up and down a flight of stairs, lighten your load. Take less to avoid storage problems and being loaded down with cumbersome gear.

Laundry service can be expensive. Pack hand-washable permanent press/wrinkle-free clothes. Be prepared to occasionally wash your clothes in a sink. Bring a clothesline for drying laundry. Keep in mind that many cultures have a different attitude toward cleanliness. This may mean that people wear clothing more than once before washing, and tend to wash clothing less often than in the US.

Since weather varies, pack non-seasonal clothes that you can layer for warmth and peel off as the day gets warmer. To save on space, roll your clothes rather than fold. Use plastic bags to organize; you can later use the bags to separate damp items from dry, soiled items from clean. Pack small things inside shoes to protect shoes and conserve space.

Carry liquids in plastic containers to avoid breakage; use tape to seal lids. Check carry on liquid limits. Currently, the TSA has a 3-1-1 rule; see <http://www.tsa.gov/311/index.shtm> for more information.

**Labeling:** Label every piece of luggage on the inside with your name and home address. Put your arrival address (host country address when leaving the U.S.) on the outside tag.

**Valuables:** To minimize the risk of loss or theft, leave objects of sentimental value or expensive items at home. Pack any valuable or important items, such as documents, medicines, money, laptop,

camera, digital toys, etc., in your carry-on luggage, plus enough clothes for 1-2 days in the case of a baggage delay.

**Medications:** Make sure that prescription drugs are clearly marked in the original containers. Have the prescriptions ready to show the customs officer.

**The Essentials (do not put in checked luggage)**

- Passport and student visa, if you have one
- Plane ticket/Copy of e-ticket print out
- Money = cash, credit or ATM cards, traveler's checks, etc.
- Health insurance card, immunization card, personal info card
- Photocopies of all documents, including prescriptions, etc.
- This handbook, travel guidebooks, and course materials
- Other travel documents as required by the study abroad program
- The address of your destination
- Medication that you regularly use

**The Near Essentials(do not put in checked luggage)**

- Money belt or pouch
- Local currency
- ISIC and other ID cards such as International Youth Hostel Card
- Travel insurance
- Photos of your family and friends to share
- Extra passport-sized photos of you, just in case
- Electronics such as laptop and camera, along with adapters and converters

**The optional and not-so-optional Essentials**

- All-weather coat/jacket (with zip-out fleece liner, if cold destination)
- Sweater
- One "dress-up" outfit
- Four or five everyday outfits (choose clothing that can be mixed/matched, you will have variety without adding additional weight)
- Undies, about 7 days worth, include light long underwear for layering
- Warm sleepwear
- Toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, personal products, etc...)
- Swimsuit
- Battery alarm clock
- Washcloth/towel (consider a fast-drying camp/travel towel)
- Wet wipes and hand sanitizer gel
- Powdered laundry detergent (put in a small zip-top plastic bag), clothesline
- Extra contact lenses, solution, glasses
- Your toys: mp3 player, laptop, converter/adapter (see below)\*
- Comfortable walking shoes (sturdy, comfortable and broken-in)



- Compact, fold-up umbrella
- Camera, batteries, memory card, headset for Skype
- Sewing kit
- Small swiss army knife (pack in your CHECKED luggage!), small flashlight
- Small first-aid kit (band-aids, pain reliever, sunscreen, anti-bacterial ointment, bug stuff, water purification tablets, anti-diarrhea or bellyache medicine, personal stuff)
- Bicycle lock or cable (for chaining your luggage to the overhead baggage rail on trains and busses when traveling overnight)

*\* If you plan on bringing electrical items, know that electricity in the U.S. is 110 volts/60 cycles; in many countries it is 220 volts/ 50 cycles. The plug on your item may not fit into the socket in your host country. To be able to use your items and not run the risk of ruining them and/or starting an electrical fire, bring a converter to change the current and an adaptor for your plugs, making sure it has proper prongs for your host country.*

*Consider purchasing an inexpensive razor or hairdryer overseas as American ones are notorious for not working abroad. Also check to see if your appliances have “universal voltage” – most digital cameras and other modern electronics do NOT necessarily need an electricity converter.*

## **CULTURESHOCK**

Everyone who lives abroad encounters ways of doing, organizing, perceiving or valuing things different from one’s own. This can initially be exciting and novel, but can also end up feeling overwhelming. This is all part of cultural adjustment, or “culture shock”. There are distinct phases of adjustment which virtually everyone who lives abroad goes through. Knowing that this is normal and temporary is key to making the most of your experience.

The phases most people experience is:

- Initial Euphoria, or the “Honeymoon” phase
- Irritability (the Culture Shock phase)
- Gradual Adjustment
- Adaptation and Biculturalism
- Re-Entry Phase

Initial euphoria or the “Honeymoon Phase”, begins with your arrival in the new country. You are excited to be there and soak up all the new experiences. Exploring your new home and host culture is fun, exciting, and eye opening. You may be struck by the monumentality of being in a new country after so much planning. This phase ends when the novelty and excitement of the early experiences wears off and you enter the Culture Shock phase.

During the Culture Shock phase, you will be taking a more active role in your setting which often produces frustration, because of the difficulty in coping with even the easiest aspects of everyday life. Your focus will turn to the differences between host and home cultures, and these differences can be troubling. Things that you initially found charming (“The pace of life is so much slower here!”) may now seem frustrating or annoying (“The buses are NEVER on time!”). Sometimes insignificant difficulties can be blown into major catastrophes. Hence, Culture Shock.

When this stage is over, you slip into the gradual adjustment stage. You may not even be aware that it is happening. You will begin to orient yourself and be able to interpret subtle cultural clues. The culture will become familiar.

Your ability to function in two cultures with full confidence is the fourth phase, adaptation and biculturalism. Your sense of "foreignness" no longer exists. Not only will you be more comfortable with the host culture, you may feel at one with it, a part of it. You will have a sense of shared fate concerning events in the host country.

The last stage is the re-entry phase, when you return home. This can be, for some, the most painful phase of all. You will be excited about sharing your experiences. You will realize that you have changed, but you will not be able to explain how or why. One set of cultural values will have been instilled in you since birth; another you will have acquired in the host country. Both will seem equally valid, yet integration may be unsettling.

It is important that you realize that all phases are a natural part of adapting to a new culture. Take a breath, write in your journal, or talk to your friends or program administrators before calling home or acting on any feelings of frustration you may have. Remember, culture shock is natural and *temporary*.

### **Transition Tips:**

- Resolve problems before you go abroad. If you have any personal or family issues, make amends before you go. Do not think that by going overseas, you will be able to escape problems. Sometimes lingering problems may even compound the already stressful time of adapting to a new culture.
- Try to make friends from other countries. One typical tendency is to hang out only with people from the U.S. Remember, you are living and studying abroad to get to know other people, cultures and languages.
- Be flexible. The U.S. way of doing things is not the only way. You can expect to encounter different views of time/punctuality, personal space, communication, sharing, consumption, and gender roles, among other things. Accept that fact and you will be on your way to making your stay an enjoyable one.

If you have never been abroad, what you are reading may not make much sense. During your stay, if you feel bewildered, pull out this section on culture shock and read it again.

### **A NOTE to Winthrop Study Abroad Students and Parents:**

Study abroad is a time for new experiences, challenge and growth. It also involves separation which often confuses what's really going on. It is not wise or fair for students to involve parents or parents to involve students in issues which might be exaggerated due to the separation of time and space. Be thoughtful. Reserve talk about "emergencies" for emergencies. Be careful about the impact of messages and concerns during a study abroad term.

Regarding incidents that a student might experience while abroad, realize that the first call seeking help should be made by the student to the appropriate resource people on site. They are best positioned by both geography and experience to assist. Contacting home first is usually the most circuitous and least efficient method.

Respond to problems as you would on campus. If you have a concern about housing, seek out your resident director or program coordinator. If you have an issue with

billing, go to the Business Office. If you are anxious about your performance in class, speak first with your professor, and, if necessary, seek assistance either from your advisor or program director.

This logical approach to problem-solving often seems to crumble during study abroad. The recommendation here is for you to not let that happen. In the rare case that satisfactory resolution cannot be secured by these actions, contact the Study Abroad Office.

You are personally responsible for your success. As in any new adventure, this requires commitment and maturity. Here are some tips for studying abroad:

\* **Be Adaptable**

Food, customs, lodging, history, culture, laws, expectations and a host of other topics may be new and strange. These differences may take adjustment. Some will be easy and fun; others more difficult, perhaps even painful. Adjustment requires patience and flexibility on your part.

\* **Be Accepting**

Be gentle, non-judgmental and accepting of your new culture. Ask “how” things are different, rather than “why.” All who do not conform to American patterns of thought and behavior are not wrong; they are just not American.

\* **Be Responsible**

You are required to completely and fully obey the laws of your host country and the rules and regulations of your study abroad program and new university. Running afoul of local laws can result in immediate dismissal from the program and return to the US. Know that you are also subject to the institutional rules and regulations of Winthrop University. Be a good ambassador of Winthrop and of the U.S.

\* **Be a Good Student**

To study abroad, you must be in good academic standing both at the time of admission to a program and at the time of participation. Your academic work counts just as though you were on campus. Remember, you are s-t-u-d-y-i-n-g abroad, not just a tourist passing through!

## **ONCE YOU ARRIVE**

### **Customs**

When going through immigration and customs upon entering a country, have your passport and travel documents (the ones given to you to fill out during your flight) ready. Pack your luggage to make inspection easy; that is, have valuable items accessible.

Stand in the lines marked “Visitors - Nothing to Declare” or something similar to that. It will make your entry into the country easier.

### **Arrival at Host Institution**

Be sure to have the address of your university or student housing handy when you exit the airport. Go to your program location. Meet your staff. Learn your new address and phone numbers, and emergency numbers. If you have any special needs, please make the program aware of your requirements. They can only help you if you let them know.

Think of your new environment as a fun puzzle. Take a walk around your surroundings. Locate the nearest bus/train stops, and learn the routes and fares, etc. Also, locate the nearest grocery store, post office, currency exchange, internet café, public phones, newsstand, hospital/doctor and pharmacy. Most importantly, learn your way around your university to be able to find your classes before the first day of school!

Become familiar with the local currency. Remember to count your change when you purchase things. You may be taken advantage of if you don't quickly learn how money units are arranged.

Sleep! Jetlag is real. Feelings of fatigue, disorientation, depression and homesickness can overcome you. This is normal and may take a few days to go away. Give yourself time to get accustomed to the time zone of your host country.

### **Living Arrangements**

Whether you are staying in a dormitory, student apartment or with a host family, your living accommodations may be more modest than what you are used to. Be prepared for less heat, less hot water, less AC, fewer electrical conveniences, smaller bedrooms, etc. Don't let this bother you as it is part of the cultural experience!

If you have a roommate, be considerate. Just as you are getting used to a new culture, it is likely that your roommate is also getting used to living with someone from a new culture!

Illness: If you get sick, inform the resident director or host parent who will help you find a doctor.

### **A Word about Homestays**

Staying with a family is as rewarding as it is challenging. It is the best way to gain unique insight into another culture, improve a language, and adopt a family that will last a lifetime.

Know in advance what is included in your home stay so there are no surprises upon arrival. Are meals included? If so, how many meals per day per week? Laundry? How often?

If you follow strict religious observances, have special health needs, require a special diet or non-smoking host, and notify your program sponsor well in advance of your departure. Your homestay experience will depend as much on your planning, cooperation, good will and courtesy, as it does on your host family's desire to have you as their guest.

Contact your host family before you arrive, if possible. Send an introductory email or letter.

When you meet your host family, introduce yourself and talk about the rules of the home. Understand and respect what is expected of you. Know that arrangements can vary greatly from home to home. Ask for the house address plus family members' names and phone number/s. Keep this information with you when you are out of the house.

**Homestay tips:**

- Bring your host family photos to show what life in the U.S. is like. Also bring little gifts that represent where you are from. It is the thought, not the price that counts.
- Present yourself well. Be considerate of others.
- Keep your room neat and tidy. Offer to help with the household tasks, although your offer of help may be declined.
- Talk to your family about entry/exit habits. Do they have a spare key for you? Is there a curfew? Are doors to be locked or unlocked?
- Always notify your family if you are going to deviate from set plans. Even though they are not your natural parents, they may feel responsible if you do not come home when expected. Call or check in to let them know what is going on.
- Ask permission regarding the use of the house telephone. This includes incoming as well as outgoing calls. Time spent on the phone in some countries may be limited or expensive. Always use your phone card. It may be preferable to use a public phone for most of your calls.
- Ask permission before extending an invitation for visitors. Know your family's position on guests of the opposite sex. Also know the rules about overnight visitors. In general, overnight guests are not appropriate.
- If you smoke, respect the family rules concerning smoking in the house.
- Do not raid the refrigerator without permission.
- Be considerate when using hot water and electricity. Do not leave lights on when not in the room. If you can control the temperature in your room, check with your host family to know the acceptable temperature. Heat and AC may be expensive.
- Watch your spending habits. If you are spending an excessive amount of money on shopping or other purchases, your family may feel uncomfortable, especially if their standard of living is lower than yours.
- If your family has a washing machine, ask for help the first time you use it. Even though it may look familiar, the machine may operate differently and you could end up having to mop a flooded floor. It is common in many places to have only a washing machine and no dryer.
- Periodically bring home house gifts (food items, flowers, etc.) to show your appreciation.

## **Orientation**

It is of utmost importance that you attend your program's orientation session for new students. This will help you understand the program and make the most of your time abroad. Take this opportunity to get acquainted with your program director, academic advisor and key faculty members involved with international students. They will be responsible for you while you are on campus and be your first point of contact for assistance you may need while abroad.

## **Social Adjustment**

For most of you, your study abroad experience will be your first time out of the U.S. for an extended period of time. You will have the opportunity to make some very good friends. You may find that you need to take the initiative to meet people. Just as you have an established circle of friends in the U.S., students overseas have established friends and habits. Be confident. Start a conversation. Meet new people.

U.S. citizens are easy to identify. They often gather in groups, speak loudly (with U.S. accents), dress differently, carry backpacks and wear sneakers. Some people from some countries automatically assume all people from the U.S. are wealthy and have lives similar to those seen on American sitcoms. It may be difficult to dissuade these stereotypes.

Know that there may be differences in attitudes toward females in other countries. This may include dress, behavior, expectations and assumptions. U.S. women are often thought of as easy sexual partners. Be cautious. Do not go to the home or apartment of someone you do not know well.

### **Relationship tips:**

- Be cautious of persons wanting to get to know you too quickly, as they may have ulterior motives. Know what to do if a new friend wants to take advantage of what you have; that is, your money, your citizenry or your self.
- Use common sense when giving out your address or phone number. Agree to meet your new friends during the day and in public places. Bring along a friend.
- Enter into a cross-cultural relationship with the same precaution you would use at home. The idea of a once-in-a-life-time romance can be very tempting. Realize that you are only in the country for a short period of time.
- In terms of intimate relationships, know your partner for a sustained period of time. Take necessary precautions. Be aware that you could end up with a sexually transmitted disease, AIDS or a pregnancy.

## **U.S. Embassy or Consulate**

Whenever possible, visit the U.S. embassy or consulate that is nearest to your study abroad site to register your passport. Let them know that you are studying abroad, and give them your program information, location and the dates you will be in-country.

Should you encounter an emergency or find yourself in trouble abroad, important services provided by the embassy or consulate to help U.S. citizens abroad include passport replacement, medical, financial or legal information, serious injury or illness, disaster and evacuation services. In terms of the latter, if an unforeseen disaster occurs, the embassy or consulate will be able to contact you.

There are certain things that consular officers at American embassies CANNOT do for U.S. citizens abroad. For example, they cannot cash checks, lend money or serve as your attorney. To educate yourself on consular services, pick up a free copy of “U.S. Consuls Help Americans Abroad” when you register your passport.

To find the embassy or consulate nearest your study abroad location, go to: <http://www.usembassy.gov/>

In the U.S., the Office of Overseas Citizens Services can also assist families of American students abroad in emergency cases. The 24-hour number to call is 202.647.5225.

### **U.S. Travel Warnings, Consular Sheets, Public Announcements**

**Travel Warnings** are issued when the State Department decides based on all relevant information, to recommend that U.S. citizens avoid travel to a certain country.

**Consular Information Sheets** are available for every country of the world. They include information about unusual immigration practices, health conditions, minor political disturbances, unusual currency and entry regulations, crime and security information and drug penalties. If an unstable condition exists in a country but it is not severe enough to warrant a Travel Warning, a description of the condition may be included under an optional section entitled “Safety/Security.” Consular Information Sheets generally do not include advice, but present information in a factual manner so the traveler can make his or her own decisions concerning travel to a particular country.

**Public Announcements** are a means to disseminate information about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term and/or trans-national conditions posing significant risks to the security of U.S. citizens traveling abroad. They are made any time there is a perceived threat and U.S. citizens are the particular target group. In the past, Public Announcements have been issued to deal with short-term coups, bomb threats to airlines, violence by terrorists and anniversary dates of specific terrorist events.

## WHILE YOU ARE ABROAD

### The Winthrop Things

- **Contacting us:** Email the Study Abroad Office with your new address, tidbits of your experiences, updates on classes (especially any changes that need to be made on your Approval to Transfer Credit Form) and attach photos. We love to hear from you!
- **Registering for the semester you return:** Use Winthrop's website to know registration dates and times. Contact your advisor a week or so before it is time for you to register. Decide together on your courses, and remember to ask your advisor to remove your advising flag. The Study Abroad Office can help you if you encounter problems.
- **Arranging housing for the semester you return:** To avoid housing problems upon return to Winthrop, pre-arrange your room assignment prior to studying abroad. If you forget to do this, contact the housing office ([wellsd@winthrop.edu](mailto:wellsd@winthrop.edu)) with your

### Staying Healthy

Good food, exercise and rest are the key ingredients to staying healthy no matter where you are in the world. Maintaining your physical health is essential for you to be able to enjoy your time abroad.

Keep in mind that the water supply in certain countries may not be safe for drinking. Check to see if it is recommended that you drink bottled water during your travels. Also, certain foods such as uncooked salads, fruits and vegetables should be avoided in locations where consumption of tap water is not advised.

Carry a small medical kit with you as you travel, just in case.

### Seeing the World

Hopefully you will travel and see some of the world during your time abroad. Either before or shortly after you arrive make a list of 3 things you want to do while abroad. Start working on that list ASAP so you will have no regrets when your semester comes to an end! The world is a wonderful place and you are now its citizen. Enjoy!

Use common sense, just as you would at home. Keep track of potential problems in areas where you may be traveling. Be cautious in crowded subways, train stations, elevators, market places and festivals. Keep your documents and currency in a money belt; leave valuable items at home.

When planning a trip, consider where you want to go, what you want to do and the dates of travel. Guide books have detailed information as do travel agents.

About dates, holiday travel can be especially frustrating with regards to closings of cultural sites. Also, many shops are closed in Europe on Sundays; in Israel, on Saturdays. Many museums are closed on Mondays, or another day a week.



When on the road, leave a copy of your itinerary and contact/lodging info with your program director, host family or friends. You can then be reached in case of an emergency!

**Driving overseas?** In general it is best if you do not drive overseas. Use public transportation which is widely available. Check with the embassy or consulate of the countries where you will visit to learn about requirements for driver's licenses, road permits and auto insurance. If possible, obtain road maps of the countries that you plan to visit before you go. This is especially true of less developed countries.

### **Travel tips:**

- Learn the local numbers for police, fire, and medical services.
- If using a travel agent, consult a reputable student travel agency. They will be able to locate student discounts and recommend places to visit and things to do.
- If traveling to neighboring countries, check visa requirements before you depart.
- If purchasing tickets for plane, train or boat travel, know of restrictions on the tickets. This may include fees/deadlines to change dates or itinerary.
- If purchasing a travel package, consider whether you should buy travel insurance to cover the cost of trip cancellation. Travel agents have more information.
- If using Eurail passes for travel in Europe, check the rules. There are different types of passes for different lengths of travel. Compare costs with local costs as sometimes Eurail passes are more expensive. Eurail passes are sold in the U.S., not in Europe. For more info, <http://www.raileurope.com>
- If going by train, check at the local train station if reservations are needed. They are available (for a small fee) on most train routes, especially in the high tourist seasons and between major cities.
- There are a number of very low cost airlines in Europe, which make intra-European travel by airplane often less expensive than train travel. Book flights early for best prices.
- If site-seeing, ask about daily passes on buses, trams or trains, as this may be less expensive than buying individual tickets as needed. Some cities offer 24-hour travel passes, and/or 2- or 3-day passes.
- If attending festivals (fun!), beware. Festivals are well attended by petty criminals and pickpockets. Be aware of anything unusual or distracting. Keep your bag, wallet or pack safe. Know how to say "Thief" or another phrase to call for help.
- If traveling, keep abreast of world news. Strikes can spoil your plans; anti-American demonstrations may jeopardize your safety. Don't draw attention to yourself.
- If arriving in a new place, try to pre-plan your lodging for the first night. If you don't have lodging, some transportation hubs have helpful tourist offices. Beware of advice from street folks.

## Keeping in Touch

There is adequate postal, email and phone service in most countries in the world.

**Post office:** Sending and receiving mail can take a week or more and is expensive if the item sent is larger than a postcard or letter. Know that everyone back home will love to receive a postcard or a letter from you even if it does arrive a month or more later!

To receive mail, have it sent to your overseas residence. If this is not possible or you are traveling, some banks and credit card companies handle mail for customers at their overseas branches. In most countries, General Delivery (Poste Restante) services at post offices will hold mail for you. U.S. embassies/consulates do not handle private mail.

**Internet:** You, as a Winthrop student, will be able to access your email accounts through the Winthrop website (Eagle Mail). Most programs will have computer labs and some have email access in student residences. Almost all cities in the world now have internet cafes at reasonable prices. Using the internet will be the most cost-effective way to stay in touch with your family and friends.

**Skype:** One method of communication that has become quite popular is Skype. Skype is a downloadable computer program that allows you to talk to other people via the internet. You will need a computer, internet access, and some type of microphone and headphones. Calling computer-to-computer is free (so encourage your family and friends to get Skype, too!), but calling from computer-to-phone is also possible and very inexpensive. See Skype.com for more information. You may want to purchase an inexpensive headset for use with Skype.

**Phones:** For calling back to the U.S., buy prepaid phone cards once you are in your host country. These cards usually have better rates than ones you buy in the U.S. However, if you want to bring a card with you, buy one from your long distance company, ATT or ISIC.

- To make an international call to the U.S., dial first 001 + area code + local number.
- To make an international call from the U.S. to anywhere in the world, dial 011 (the international access code) + country code + city code + local number. If the city code begins with a 0, delete it when dialing from the US. The 0 is used only when the call is made when you are in that country. Check for the appropriate codes in your local phone book.

Before you make a call, remember there may be a big time difference between local times.

Technological advancements are currently being made in the area of intercontinental cell phones. Most US cell phones now operate in other countries, but it can be VERY EXPENSIVE. Check with your provider for specific information. Many students purchase cell phones at their study abroad locations and use SIM cards. If you choose to do this, you will be responsible for paying for your phone, plan and cards.

## Using Money

Change money at reputable currency exchanges or banks. Avoid street people or black market vendors who want to exchange your dollars as it may be illegal and dangerous.

Keep track of your receipts from all transactions: cash, card and travelers checks. You never know when you may need them later.

Only deal with authorized vendors or agents when purchasing art, antiques or other valuable goods. Keep all receipts as you will need to show them when going through customs upon your return to the U.S.

### **Staying Safe; Staying Secure**

You and many other college students are getting ready for that much anticipated program abroad. Most will have a safe and enjoyable adventure, but for a very few the program can become a nightmare. A program can be ruined by drugs, alcohol and disorderly behavior.

Each year, more than 2,500 U.S. citizens are arrested abroad - about half on narcotics charges, including possession of very small amounts of illegal substances. A drug that is legal in one country may not be legal in another.

Besides drugs, alcohol can also cause trouble for students. Students have been arrested for being intoxicated in public areas, for underage drinking and for drunk driving. Do not assume that local authorities will overlook such foolish, drunken conduct.

Avoid disorderly, reckless and immature behavior. In many countries, conduct that would not result in an arrest in the U.S. may constitute a violation of local law. Being arrested is not the only misfortune that can occur overseas. Young Americans have suffered injury and even death from automobile accidents, drowning and falls, in addition to other mishaps. While these incidents are sometimes chance occurrences, many are caused by alcohol or drug abuse. Sadly, some students have been sexually assaulted or robbed because they have found themselves in unfamiliar locales with unfamiliar people or are incapable of exercising prudent judgment while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Do not be victimized because you are unaware of the laws, customs or standards of the countries you are planning to visit. You are not immune from prosecution in foreign countries because you are a U.S. citizen. In fact, you are expected to obey all of the laws of all of the countries you visit. If you break national laws, you will have to face the penalties, including prison sentences, the same as nationals of any country. Often, many countries have harsher sentences and are less lenient than in the US.

Other hidden safety issues to be aware of include varying standards of security, safety and supervision. Many travelers have died from or been seriously hurt in automobile accidents, falls from mountaintops, balconies or into open ditches, drowning in the ocean or in hotel pools, and other mishaps. The outdoor sports industry world-wide is not carefully regulated. In some cases, unlicensed operators have been linked to assaults. Tourists have been killed or injured by improper equipment maintenance as well as lack of environmental knowledge about the site where they are visiting. Please be aware of such risks.

If any legal emergency comes up while you are abroad, contact the Study Abroad Office immediately and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. Consular officials cannot serve as attorneys or give legal advice, but they can provide lists of local attorneys and help you find legal representation. If you are arrested, ask permission to notify a consular official - it is your right! U.S. consular officials will visit you, advise you of your rights under local laws and will contact your family and friends, if you wish. They can assist you with any money transfers that may be necessary and refer you to proper health facilities, if necessary.

## **Safety and Security Tips:**

- Carry only the amount of cash that you need not large amounts. Never carry your wallet in your back pocket. Understand that as a foreigner, you are vulnerable to petty theft. Pickpockets are common on public transportation and at tourist attractions including museums.
- Make a list or copies of credit and debit cards and their emergency numbers. Keep them in a safe place separate from your wallet. Save scanned copies of these documents in your email inbox.
- Keep your passport and return ticket in a safe place.
- Know the local traffic laws. Be a cautious pedestrian. In some countries (such as the UK), cars are driven on the left side of the street. Remember this when crossing the street.
- When out at night, stay in groups.
- Only use official taxis. Get information on safe taxis from nationals.
- Be careful when drinking. The alcohol content in beer and other drinks may be higher than you are used to. Be careful in bars. There have been reported cases of drinks being drugged, so have the drink opened while you are watching and do not accept a drink brought to the table and paid for by an *admirer*. Keep in mind that the laws concerning drinking, including drunk driving, may be more severe than in the U.S. Even if you are not at fault, you may find yourself “guilty by association” if you are at the scene where such activity is taking place.
- Stay away from all recreational drugs. Keep in mind that the laws concerning the possession and selling of illegal drugs are often more severe than in the U.S. Even if you are not at fault, you may find yourself “guilty by association” if you are at the scene of drug activity.
- Use the same precautions for STDs and unwanted pregnancies overseas as you would at home. Be aware that the quality of some contraceptives in some counties is unreliable. Act responsibly!

## **TIME TO COME HOME**

### **Preparations**

Several weeks before you return home, start preparing for re-entry. Take those photos that you haven't taken yet. Catch up on local issues at home by checking your hometown's or Winthrop newspapers' websites for stories. Email or talk to your family and friends.

Spend quality time with your new family and friends so that you enjoy your final weeks abroad. Taking two minutes to say goodbye on the last morning may not be the best way to leave, to say good-bye.

Prepare yourself mentally by beginning to think about packing and how you will get all of those things you've accumulated into your luggage. Remember, excess baggage fees are expensive! It may be a good idea to send heavy items such as books back home by mail.

Reconfirm your return ticket by contacting either your program director or the airlines. Do this at least 72 hours before departure.

Don't forget to request that your program send your transcript to the Study Abroad Office at Winthrop! We can often not do this for you and it is easier and we receive it quicker if you do this before you leave!

### **U.S. Customs and Immigration**

On your arrival in the U.S., exit your flight and proceed to immigration for U.S. Citizens. Have your passport ready. After you pass through the passport control line, follow the signs for Customs or Baggage Claim. Pick up your bags and proceed to the customs counter. The officer will either send you on your way or ask you to open your luggage. This process could go quickly or take a considerable amount of time. Be patient and be polite. U.S. Department of Homeland Security is quite thorough in checking all people entering the U.S.

Most U.S. airports have drug and agriculture officials and trained dogs at baggage claims. They are looking for drugs, food and agriculture items (flowers, plants, seeds, etc.) brought into the U.S. If you are asked to open your bags, cooperate with the search.

You are permitted to bring \$800 worth of merchandise/gifts purchased abroad into the U.S. Items bought in Duty Free are to be included in this amount. If you exceed this amount, you will be required to pay a tax on the rest of merchandise. For updated information, refer to <http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/>

### **Reverse Culture Shock**

As excited as you are about coming home and talking about your experiences, some of you may be surprised that your family or friends don't seem to share your enthusiasm. This is not because they don't care or aren't happy to have you back, but because you have just had a unique experience that they can't understand. You have just spent a considerable amount of time away from home and campus experiencing a world outside of most people's imagination. Although your family and friends will be delighted that you are home, you may feel that they lack interest in really understanding your experience.

This is the re-entry phase, a unique experience for every person. It is a process of readjustment that may be more difficult than the adjustment you made to your life in your host country. In some cases, the academic experience overseas that you are wrapping up provides a new perspective on your academic objectives. As a result, many students question or change their long-term goals.

Whatever your feelings are about returning home, know that this phase is a natural part of cultural learning and reflects the depth of your experience abroad. You will undoubtedly, throughout your life, continue to evaluate ideas and events in the context of the broader cultural perspective that you have acquired.

#### **Re-Entry tips:**

- Be proud of your new insights, but don't impose your cultural changes on others.
- Use diplomacy in raving about your host country. Avoid criticizing the US or comparing it to your host country.
- Seek out your good friends to share your joy and readjustment problems.
- Listen to those who have remained at home as they also have stories to tell.

- Consider the techniques you used to adjust to your host country and use those same strategies to adjust to being home.
- Answer questions, even silly ones, with your observations and real experiences. Maintain a sense of humor!
- Stay physically healthy since stress may cause you to be unduly tired, easily depressed or prone to illness.
- Spend time alone to sort out your feelings, set new goals/priorities, put things into perspective and separate lasting benefits from casual impressions.
- Meet with other returning students to share experiences and get advice on readjustment issues.
- Extend hospitality to international students, faculty/staff and visitors on campus.
- Keep up with developments in your host country.
- Seek the services of the counseling center on campus. Many students benefit from speaking to someone about the difficulties they may be experiencing upon return.

One of the best parts of an overseas experience for most students is the lasting friendships that you have made with folks in your host country. Write to your new friends. Invite them to visit you in the US or travel with you to other parts of the world. Make every effort to maintain the gift of their friendship as this is something you can nurture and cherish for the rest of your life.

Winthrop University will host a Re-Entry Workshop for all recently returned study abroad students early in the semester of your return.

## IMPORTANT WINTHROP CONTACT INFORMATION

NAME	TELEPHONE	EMAIL
The International Center of Winthrop University	803.323.2133	studyabroad@winthrop.edu
Jennifer Sandler Study Abroad Coordinator	803.323.2376	sandlerj@winthrop.edu
Residence Life	803.323.2223	wellsd@winthrop.edu
College of Arts and Sciences	803.323.2183	belkal@winthrop.edu
College of Business Administration	803.323.2186	randolphg@winthrop.edu
College of Education	803.323.2151	gaylorr@winthrop.edu
College of Visual/Performing Arts	803.323.2323	fredericksa@winthrop.edu
Winthrop University Police (in case of after-hours emergency)	803.323.3333	

### Your Winthrop University Contacts:

Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Dept Chair: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### Your Study Abroad Program Contact Information:

Resident Director/On-Site Coordinator information:

### United States Department of State - Bureau of Consular Affairs

**WEBSITE** - <http://www.travel.state.gov>

International Travel, Passports, News, Travel Warnings, Consular Information Sheets, Travel Safety for Students, etc.

**OVERSEAS CITIZENS SERVICES:** +202.647.5225 [www.studentsabroad.state.gov](http://www.studentsabroad.state.gov)

Death of U.S. Citizen Abroad, Arrest/Detention of U.S. Citizen Abroad, Robbery of U.S. Citizen Abroad, U.S. Citizens Missing Abroad, Crisis Abroad Involving U.S. Citizens, After-Hours Number for an Emergency Involving U.S. Citizens Abroad, etc.

## TOP TWELVE TIPS FOR TRAVELERS

1. Make sure you have your signed valid passport and student visa, if required. Before you go, fill in the emergency information page of your passport!
2. Read the Travel Warnings, Consular information Sheets and Public Announcements for the countries you plan to visit.
3. Leave copies of your itinerary, passport info page, bank cards and study abroad program contact names/numbers with family/friends at home. Carry copies with you and keep in a secure place separate from the originals. This is to help you in case of an emergency abroad.  
Also check that a close relative/friend has a valid passport, in case of an emergency requiring him or her to travel.
4. Make sure you have international health insurance that covers emergency medical/repatriation needs.
5. Familiarize yourself with the customs and local laws of the countries where you are traveling. Remember, you are a guest and subject to its laws!  
Respect foreign customs, social rules, manners and dress. Do not draw attention to yourself.
6. Learn about the local currency. Only change money at reputable locales. Stash your cash in a safe place before you leave the locale. Save receipts.
7. Be aware of your personal possessions at all times; do not become a target for thieves. Carry IDs, travel documents, money in a money belt, pouch or a concealed pack, NEVER IN A BACK POCKET! Carry purses/packs with a zipper or other closure slung across your body and held in front of you, not over your shoulder.  
Always keep an eye on your luggage. Do not leave it unattended. Do not carry excessive amounts of cash or unnecessary credit cards. Do not wear expensive clothing or jewelry.
8. Never accept packages from strangers.
9. Never buy or use illegal drugs or associate with people who do. Know your limit when you drink alcoholic beverages. Do not drink (or do drugs) and drive or engage in other potentially risky activities.
10. Avoid demonstrations and other situations that may become unruly or where anti-American sentiments may be expressed.
11. Respect the rules and regulations of public and private venues, such as museums and monuments. Some forbid the use of flash or photographic equipment. Do not photograph soldiers or military areas!
12. If you plan to work part-time during or after your semester abroad, know and comply with the employment laws and work visa regulations for foreigners.