



Central Washington University

**Study Abroad and  
Exchange Programs**

# **Education Abroad Handbook**

# Contents

<b>Pre-Departure</b>	<b>3</b>
Academics	3
Registration – CWU Exchanges & Non-CWU Programs	3
Registration – International Internships	3
Finding Courses	3
Credit Transfer Agreement	3
Grades and Credit Transfer	4
Repetition of Courses	4
Applying for Graduation	4
Financial Aid	4
Financial Aid Disbursements	4
Family Educational Records Privacy Act (FERPA)	5
Power of Attorney	5
Communicating with SAEP	5
Passport and Visas	6
Passport	6
Visas & Residency Permits	6
Schengen Area	7
Embassy and Consular Information	8
Travel Arrangements	9
International Student Cards	9
Money Matters	9
Certificate of Participation & Budgeting	9
Program Fees & Deposits	9
Fees for CWU-Sponsored Faculty-Directed Programs	10
Fees for CWU-Sponsored Exchanges	10
Fees for Third-Party Programs	10
Fees for International Internships	10
Concurrent Enrollment Fees	11
Charges for Additional CWU Credits	11
Program Withdrawal and Cancellation Policies	11
Converting Currency Prior to Departure	11
Taxes	12
Packing	12
General Packing Tips	12
Baggage Allowances	12
Transportation Safety Administration (TSA) Regulations	12
Change of Clothes	13
Medication	13
Electronic Devices	13
Voltage Converters and Plug Adapters	13
Health and Disability Issues	13
Pre-Travel Vaccinations	14
Insurance	14
Coverage Details	14
Exclusions	15
Emergency Assistance	16
Premium	16
Enrollment & Extension	16

Billing	16
Requesting a Waiver	16
Insurance Card and Documents	17
CISI Portal	17
Making a Claim	17
Trip Cancellation Insurance	18
Voting	18
<b>While Abroad</b>	<b>18</b>
Registration	18
Money Matters	18
ATM, Debit and Credit Cards	18
Foreign Bank Accounts	19
Traveler's Checks	19
Personal Checks	19
Protecting Your Money Abroad	19
Communication	20
Email	20
Mobile Phones	20
Skype	20
Communication with CWU	20
Host Country Contact Information	21
Health & Safety	21
Travel Safety	21
US Citizens Abroad	21
Women	22
LGTBQIA	22
Ethnic and Religious Minorities	22
Alcohol and Drugs	22
Sex and Dating	23
Emergency Contacts	23
Culture Shock and Cultural Adaptation	23
Country Shock	23
Culture Shock	24
Stages of Culture Shock	24
Strategies for Coping with Culture Shock	24
<b>Return</b>	<b>25</b>
Requesting Transcripts	25
Registering for Classes at CWU	25
Housing at CWU	25
Reverse Culture Shock	25
Strategies for Coping with Reverse Culture Shock	26
Staying Involved	26
<b>Important Contacts at CWU</b>	<b>27</b>

## **Pre-Departure**

### **Academics**

#### **Registration – CWU Exchanges & Non-CWU Programs**

Study Abroad & Exchange Programs (SAEP) will enroll students participating in a CWU-sponsored exchange program or non-CWU program in placeholder while abroad, which maintains the student's enrollment for financial aid purposes without encumbering tuition. While it will not appear on the student's quarterly schedule in myCWU, a notation will appear on the student's transcript indicating (s)he is participating in education abroad in a given term. Students may verify enrollment by viewing their unofficial transcript in myCWU.

Registration at the host institution most likely will occur after the student has arrived and the semester has begun. As transfer credit, these courses will not appear on the student's myCWU profile or CWU transcript. Furthermore, while grades for these classes will be factored into a student's overall GPA, they will not impact the CWU GPA.

Students must ensure that any holds or fees that would prevent registration must be moved or removed prior to registration. Students should monitor their account and satisfy the requirements of any negative holds that may appear.

#### **Registration – International Internships**

Students participating in international internships may receive direct credit or transfer credit, depending on the policies of the student's academic department. Students receiving direct CWU credit will be enrolled for co-op credit through Career Services, as outlined on the Learning Agreement. Registration for direct credit will subject the student to the equivalent CWU tuition, and grades will impact the CWU GPA.

Students opting for transfer credit will be treated in the same manner as students participating in CWU exchanges or non-CWU programs. Students

#### **Finding Courses**

Students participating in a CWU exchange program or a non-CWU program should consult the partner institution website for available courses. For some exchanges, students should consult SAEP directly.

#### **Credit Transfer Agreement**

The Credit Transfer Agreement outlines how courses taken abroad will be applied to the student's degree program at CWU. All students participating in CWU exchanges or non-CWU programs must complete this form. At the time of writing, the only exceptions are for classes for languages currently taught at CWU. It does not apply to students participating in CWU-sponsored faculty-directed programs or to those receiving direct CWU credit for internships.

Course approval and equivalency should be sought from the chair (or designee) of the department that would own the class at CWU. For example, students seeking an equivalency for a history class must consult the chair of CWU's History Department. Students seeking approval for general education requirements must consult the Registrar. The student's academic advisor should be able to

approve major and minor elective equivalencies. The student's academic advisor must approve each course also.

As it often cannot be guaranteed students will be able to register for one or more of their preferred courses, students should also identify and receive approval of an equal number of secondary course choices. The student is responsible for obtaining any signatures prior to leaving for their study abroad program.

Please note that the Credit Transfer Agreement must be completed before a student departs for the education abroad program. Approval for courses not pre-approved must be obtained after the student's return, and the equivalencies must be matched manually by an advisor.

A copy of the completed form must be returned to SAEP.

### Grades and Credit Transfer

Students must pass classes according to the host institution's grading policy. Students should be sure they understand what constitutes a passing mark upon arrival at the host institution.

### Repetition of Courses

Courses taken abroad as repeats of courses previously taken at CWU will not transfer for CWU credit or impact the student's CWU GPA.

### Applying for Graduation

CWU's graduation policy states students attending another institution during their last quarter will graduate the following quarter. They may not graduate at the end of that same term. For example, students completing their final courses while abroad during Fall Quarter will graduate at the end of Winter Quarter at the earliest. This is largely due to the delay in receiving transcripts from international institutions, which may take several months.

## **Financial Aid**

Most forms of financial aid can be applied toward education abroad expenses at CWU. These include Direct Loans, Perkins Loans, the Pell Grant, Washington State Need Grants and most scholarships. Please note that financial aid for summer programs may be more limited. Federal work-study and tuition waivers may not be used for off-campus programs. Financial aid may be applied toward program costs whether a charge is placed on a student's CWU account or the student is billed directly by the program sponsor. Each student receiving aid through CWU must complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the renewal application form.

To assist students and CWU's Office of Financial Aid in determining awards, SAEP will create a Certificate of Participation (COP) that includes a budget of estimated expenses (see more below). For more detailed financial aid questions, please consult the CWU Office of Financial Aid. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to ensure all paperwork required to facilitate financial aid is completed.

### Financial Aid Disbursements

Financial aid will be disbursed according to the usual disbursement schedule at CWU. Students starting their program before the disbursement date generally will need to plan to have money to live until aid is disbursed. It may be possible to obtain an advance of aid via short-term loan to pay certain costs.

However, students should consult with the Office of Financial Aid to verify the availability, procedures and terms of this arrangement.

In the event a student's program term overlaps two CWU quarters—such Spring Semester in Europe, most aid for students participating in a semester program overlapping two CWU quarters will be divided between the two quarters. Aid for students participating in academic year-long programs will be split into three disbursements at the beginning of Fall, Winter and Spring Quarters.

It is common for programs to begin before aid is disbursed, particularly in fall. Students participating in non-CWU programs and other programs for which fees are not charged to the student's university account should verify program payment deadlines and any procedures for deferring payment until aid is disbursed.

Students may not use future disbursements of financial aid to pay for a program fee balance of the current quarter. For example, if the program fee for Fall Quarter is \$3,000.00 and financial aid for that term is only \$2,500.00, the student may not wait until Winter Quarter's disbursement to make up the \$500.00 difference. Students are responsible for paying the difference in the applicable term. Failure to do so prevents SAEP from completing registration for subsequent terms, endangering those terms' aid disbursements.

Once disbursed, aid first covers charges on the student's account before a refund will be issued for the balance. If you are participating in a non-CWU program, it is your responsibility to pay the program fee once you receive your financial aid refund.

### **Family Educational Records Privacy Act (FERPA)**

FERPA is a federal law that restricts the information US institutions may disclose about a student to another party, including parents/guardians and spouses. For more information regarding FERPA and types of information with permitted or restricted disclosure, students should consult [Registrar Services](#). If desired, students may waive their FERPA privacy rights by completing CWU's Release of Information Form.

In the event of an emergency, FERPA restrictions do not apply. However, while FERPA allows institutions latitude in determining what constitutes an emergency, providing a temporary waiver of a student's FERPA will provide SAEP more leeway in situations that may not be clear-cut. A copy of the Release of Information form is provided in the packet of post-acceptance documents, students are asked to return it regardless of their intent to waive their FERPA rights. Those not wishing to waive those rights should so indicate on the form.

### **Power of Attorney**

Students may wish to grant a trusted person, typically a parent or guardian, Power of Attorney to facilitate certain transactions, such as banking and taxes, on the student's behalf while the student is abroad. For students abroad for a semester or longer and utilizing the insurance coverage contracted by CWU (see below), Power of Attorney may help processing claims and any reimbursements.

### **Communicating with SAEP**

Education abroad requires students to have varying degrees of initiative, independence and autonomy. Therefore, students have a responsibility to take ownership of their education abroad experience and to the primary contact for our office, other CWU offices and program partners, expect in the event

of an emergency. A completed Release of Information Form does not absolve students of this responsibility.

Family and friends are encouraged to maintain open communication with their student and seek information from or through them. If needed, the student is welcome to initiate contact between SAEP and a parent or guardian him- or herself, though the student also must be included in all non-emergency communications to ensure (s)he receives all information and is involved in all facets of the program.

## **Passport and Visas**

### Passport

A passport is issued by one's country of citizenship and is required for (almost) all international travel. Students who have an [enhanced driver's license](#) issued by Washington or another state may use it in the same manner as the passport card described later in this section.

Students without a valid passport or whose passport will expire within six months of their return to the United States should apply for one or for renewal immediately. US citizens should visit the Department of State's website (<http://travel.state.gov>) and follow the instructions for obtaining a passport. Processing time can be anywhere from 6-8 weeks, so it is important to apply early. For an extra fee, it is also possible to request expedited processing and receive one's passport more quickly, should it be necessary.

US citizens have the choice of applying for a passport card, a passport book or both. While less costly, the passport card is only valid for land or sea travel between the US and Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda. The passport book is valid for global travel and is required for all international air travel. Both are valid for a period of 10 years for applicants 16 years of age or older.

Students are required to submit a copy of the information and signature pages of their passports to SAEP; program providers may also require a copy. Students should make extra copies to take with them (stored separately from the original) and to leave with a parent or guardian at home. In the event the passport is lost while abroad, the copy will make obtaining a replacement easier.

### Visas & Residency Permits

A visa is issued by the host country and allows entry for a stated period of time. Typically, a visa is stamped or pasted into the passport.

In most cases, students will be required to obtain a visa for their host country, though the exact type will depend on the type and duration of the student's program. Students with US citizenship participating in short-term or summer programs, particularly those in Europe, are less likely to need a student visa. Non-US citizens may be subject to different visa requirements than US citizens and may, in fact, require multiple visas if their program has multiple destinations or they wish to travel. Students should always verify visa requirements. Some countries, such as Austria, require a residence permit, rather than a visa, for stays of a longer duration, usually six (6) months or more.

Generally, a visa must be obtained prior to arrival in the host country; however, some countries do offer the possibility to apply upon arrival. Resident permits may only be available upon arrival. When possible, SAEP recommends students obtain their visa prior to departure from the United States. Students should consult the website of their destination's consulate or embassy, as well as with their

host institution or program provider for the exact requirements, procedures and costs. For some destinations (e.g. France, Spain), the process may move slowly and/or require an interview in-person, so it is best to begin as soon as possible.

### Schengen Area

For students studying in Europe, the Schengen Area will be important. Named for the town in which it was signed, the Schengen Agreement is the treaty that eliminates border checks between its signatory states, creating what is known as the Schengen Area. The Schengen member states are: Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Romania, Ireland and the United Kingdom—while members of the European Union—are not members of the Schengen area, though the four former are currently candidates to join the treaty and may have regulations that mirror those of the Schengen Agreement. The Holy See (Vatican City), Monaco and San Marino are *de facto* member states. Andorra is a member of neither the EU nor the Schengen Area and maintains border checks with France and Spain.

Thus, the Schengen Area has a number of practical meanings for students. At the most superficial level, when traveling by land between Schengen member states, there will be no passport checks, though students will still be subject to passport control when traveling by air. More importantly, Schengen regulations are likely to affect the amount of travel students are allowed outside of their program dates. **Students should always verify regulations with the appropriate consular mission(s) in the US prior to departure.**

Under the Schengen Agreement, member states issue a “Schengen visa” based on common rules for stays shorter than 90 days in length. For stays longer than 90 days, member states issue “national visas” (or residence permits) based on rules specific to themselves. Due to bilateral agreements with most Schengen member states that allow US citizens visa-free travel for up to 90 days, students who enter on a US passport most likely will only need (or even be eligible for) a visa if their programs run longer than 90 days. Nonetheless, Schengen regulations strictly limit visa-free travel within the zone to 90 days within a period of 180 days.

In combination, these regulations mean that the entire stay of student participating in a program shorter than 90 days in length is limited to a maximum of 90 days. If a student’s program runs 85 days, (s)he then only has another five (5) days before being required to leave the Schengen Area without risking consequences. France appears to be an exception to this in that agreement with the US government may allow US citizens who stay in France for the 90 days to travel within the Schengen Area (but outside of France) without consequence. Students participating in multiple programs that collectively run 90 days or longer in a single country should be able to obtain a national visa for the total duration. However, a student would not be able to participate in multiple programs in multiple Schengen states that collectively run more than 90 days. Such a student would be ineligible for a national visa and would overstay the 90 day limit.

Schengen and the 90 day limit also have the potential to affect students participating in programs that run longer than 90 days and, thus, are eligible for a national visa or residence permit. Students should consult the consular mission of their host country as well as the immigration specialists at their host institution and/or program provider.

Students who are not US citizens must verify visa requirements for nationals of their home country

with the appropriate consular mission in the US. Non-US citizens participating in multi-country programs most likely will apply for a visa either through the country in which they will spend the most time or the country they will enter first. If a visa is not required under either circumstance, non-US citizens should verify the requirements of any additional countries to be visited.

### Embassy and Consular Information

In order to find out more information on visa requirements and application procedures, students should visit the website of the appropriate consular mission of their host country or other designated entity. Those most common for CWU students are listed below. Students with residency in another state may be required to work through a different consular mission. Students may find a list of all consular offices in the United States [here](#).

Some countries, such as France, Italy and Spain, technically require visa applicants to appear in person at the consular mission. Italy allows applicants to satisfy this requirement at an Honorary Consulate prior to posting the application materials to the Consulate General. Of the two closest to CWU—Bothell and Portland, students have reported better experiences with Portland. Certain consular missions of Spain allow batch processing of visa applications, meaning a program sponsor may gather visa applications for all of its students on a program and take them to consular mission on the students' behalf. Some third-party providers provide such a service, so student should inquire. While France is considering such accommodations, some have only been adopted by specific consular missions on a trial basis. For the time being, students applying for a French visa should plan on appearing at the appropriate consular mission.

Australia:

- [Consulate General of Australia in San Francisco](#)
- [Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection](#)

France:

- [Consulate General of France in San Francisco](#)
- [Honorary Consulate of France in Seattle](#)
- [Campus France - USA](#)

Italy:

- [Consulate General of Italy in San Francisco](#)
- [Honorary Consulate of Italy in Seattle](#)
- [Honorary Consulate of Italy in Portland](#)

Japan:

- [Consulate General of Japan in Seattle](#)

Russia:

- [Consulate General of Russia in Seattle](#)

Spain:

- [Consulate General of Spain in San Francisco](#)

South Korea:

- [Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Seattle](#)

United Kingdom:

- [British Consulate General in San Francisco](#)
- [UK Visas and Immigration](#)
- [US DHS Application Support Center in Yakima](#)

## **Travel Arrangements**

Students should arrange their flights only after they are accepted to their programs and know when they are expected to arrive and depart. The sponsoring organization or host university can assist students with information about their arrival, including the distance from the airport to the campus and the most reliable form of transportation. However, very few programs arrange the flight to the program site. Study Abroad and Exchange Programs does not arrange travel for students.

Students should shop around for the best prices to find the best price; try asking if student fares are available. Two organizations specializing in student travel are [STA Travel](#) and [Student Universe](#).

## **International Student Cards**

The [International Student Identity Card \(ISIC\)](#) and the [International Student Exchange Card \(ISEC\)](#) are examples of internationally accepted student identification. In addition to the supplemental insurance mentioned above, the cards provide for discounts at certain accommodations, restaurants and attractions. They are generally Eurocentric, but are inexpensive. Both also provide access to airfare discounts.

## **Money Matters**

### Certificate of Participation & Budgeting

Upon acceptance to education abroad by SAEP, SAEP will create a Certificate of Participation (COP) for the student, which will include a budget of estimated expenses based upon advice from partners and program sponsors. The student will take the COP to the Office of Financial Aid, who will use it to calculate the student's aid package. Included in this budget will be such expenses as tuition/program fees, airfare, housing, meals, personal expenses and more. It should be understood that most amounts will be estimates and often will be intentionally high. A student's precise expenses will depend on several factors, including the student's own spending habits and travel plans.

The cost of living in some countries or regions (e.g. the United Kingdom, the Nordic countries) may be significantly higher than that to which students may be accustomed, while the cost of living in others (e.g. Latin America) may be significantly lower. Prior to departure, students should thoroughly research their destination and possible travel options.

### Program Fees & Deposits

Every program has a program fee, and many will have an application fee or deposit that may or may not be deducted from the program fee. However, how one pays fees will depend on the type of program. Students on CWU-sponsored programs, i.e. faculty-directed programs and exchanges, pay program fees to CWU just as they would normal tuition and fees. Students participating on non-CWU programs make all payments directly to the program sponsor.

Students are responsible for being aware of any and all payment deadlines and procedures; late or non-payment may result in dropping the student from the program. Students participating in non-CWU programs and using financial aid should ask their program sponsor about the possibility of delaying payment until aid is disbursed and the procedures for doing so.

### Fees for CWU-Sponsored Faculty-Directed Programs

Students participating in CWU-sponsored faculty-directed programs likely will have to sets of fees. While details may vary for each program (students should check the program-specific information), the program fee will include expenses such as insurance, some transportation, accommodation, faculty expenses, etc. Usually the program fee is broken into two installments—due well before departure, SAEP will place these charges on each student’s CWU. Students should know that payment deadlines may not coincide with financial aid. As a consequence, students may need to make some payments upfront and rely on aid for reimbursement.

Students participating in credit-bearing programs will also pay CWU tuition according to the credit value of the program. Tuition is billed in the normal manner.

### Fees for CWU-Sponsored Exchanges

Program fees are charged at the beginning of each term according to the host institution’s academic calendar. Students participating in a program at a quarter-based institution will see charges at the beginning of each CWU quarter they are abroad. Students studying at a semester-based institution will see charges at the beginning the CWU quarter corresponding to the beginning of that semester. For example, charges for a spring semester beginning in January will appear at the beginning of CWU’s Winter Quarter.

Students may pay program fees charged to their CWU account online through myCWU, by mailing a check or money order to the Cashier’s Office with the student name and ID number on it, or in person at the Cashier’s Office in Barge Hall. Students should write their full name, program name and the words "Study Abroad" on the check on the notes or memo line to ensure that the funds are applied to the correct account.

### Fees for Third-Party Programs

Program fees charged for programs not sponsored by CWU are solely the purview of the program sponsor, and CWU generally has no role in billing for these programs. Students should read carefully the policies of their program’s sponsor, including included items, excluded items and cancellations & refunds. Most third-party program sponsors have a mechanism by which students using financial aid may defer payment of all or part of the program fees until aid is disbursed. Students using financial aid to pay for education abroad should be sure to investigate this procedure.

In some cases, when all or part of a student’s aid must be paid to a US institution—as is sometimes the case with GET, the GI Bill and others, CWU will act as an intermediary for processing payment to third-party program sponsors. Students with such types of aid should contact SAEP as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements.

### Fees for International Internships

Payment of fees for international internships will depend on how students earn credit. Students earning credit through a program sponsor’s School of Record and transferring that credit back to CWU will pay all fees to the program sponsor. All comments and caveats regarding payments to third-party programs included in the previous section apply equally here.

As with faculty-directed programs, students earning internship credit through CWU will pay CWU tuition according to the number of credits students earn for the internship. Tuition will be billed by

CWU in the normal fashion, and students will pay any program fee charged by the internship sponsor directly to that partner.

### Concurrent Enrollment Fees

As SAEP is a self-support unit, meaning it receives minimal funding support from the university, we are forced to charge a concurrent or service fee to students participating in education abroad programs. These fees go directly to SAEP operating costs. They also serve to maintain a student's enrollment status at CWU while (s)he is abroad. The only students currently exempt from these fees are those participating in CWU faculty-directed programs or international internships.

While students are enrolled in their programs, they will be assessed a concurrent enrollment fee in lieu of tuition for each quarter of participation. This fee is currently set at \$500 for quarter-based programs and \$750 for semester-based programs. This fee is charged to the student's CWU account at the beginning of each term for the host university. If students receive financial aid and will be abroad for spring semester, the concurrent enrollment fees for the entire program will be charged at the beginning of that program.

### Charges for Additional CWU Credits

Unless receiving direct CWU credit (such as for an internship or short-term, faculty-directed program), education abroad program participants are not assessed overload fees for credit earned as part of a domestic or international program. However, students who register for classes at CWU other than those for which Study Abroad and Exchange Programs registers them must pay the appropriate tuition and fee rates for those credits. For example, students who are abroad and working on an independent study course they have arranged with a CWU faculty member must pay tuition and fees for that course on top of the regular education abroad program fee. The program fee covers education abroad program costs only.

### Program Withdrawal and Cancellation Policies

Students choosing to withdraw from any education abroad program must submit their cancellation to both Study Abroad and Exchange Programs and the program sponsor in writing.

Those students participating in non-CWU programs should read their program sponsor's refund policy carefully and understand their own financial responsibilities and liabilities, keeping copies of relevant documents.

Refunds following cancellation by a student participating in a CWU-sponsored faculty-directed program are subject to recoverable funds and the effect cancellation may have on other participants' costs. This means that students may only be refunded the amount recoverable from vendors and not part of group expenses, such as faculty expenses, group travel, etc.

Concurrent enrollment fees charged to participants in CWU exchanges or non-CWU programs are forfeit if cancellation is not received in writing prior to the program start date.

### Converting Currency Prior to Departure

Some students find it comforting to exchange a relatively small amount of money (approximately \$100) prior to departure, so that cash is available upon arrival for such things as taxi fare, a calling card, etc. However, it is also usually possible simply to withdraw cash from an ATM at the airport upon arrival.

## Taxes

Students abroad during the spring tax season should verify filing requirements and procedures with a tax professional. Students may need forms sent to them while abroad, or may be eligible for an extension.

## **Packing**

Packing, particularly for a semester or year abroad, can be a challenge. By default, many students tend to pack too much. To avoid this, students can follow these tips:

- Certain clothing items can be re-worn multiple times before washing. Many cultures have a different conception of what constitutes ‘dirty’ clothes. Rather than wearing an item only once per wash, they will wear it two or more times per cycle, as long it is not too soiled or smelly.
- Depending on the location, large, bulky items, such as winter clothing, may be shipped to the student abroad. Students should consult with their host coordinator or program contact.
- To conserve space, students can roll items, rather than laying them flat. Items such as socks may also be able to fit into shoes, etc. Space-saver bags may be an option, but it is not always possible to guarantee a vacuum cleaner will be available for the return journey.
- Students should keep in mind that they will be the ones to carry their luggage. To test the weight, students can carry their luggage around the house a few days prior to departure. If the student’s house has stairs, (s)he should carry his/her luggage up and down the stairs a few times.
- Students should remember that they will want to bring gifts and souvenirs *back* with them, and shipping may not always be an option. Therefore, students should leave space in their bags to do so or bring an additional, empty bag.

## General Packing Tips

- Take interchangeable clothing that can be layered.
- Students should be sure to write their address on a sturdy luggage tag, as well as inside the case. This will help in the event of lost or damaged luggage.
- People in most cultures dress more conservatively or nicely in public than most Americans. Students should be sure to pack nicer clothes, including something appropriate for special events.

## Baggage Allowances

Most airlines have limits on the weight and quantity of bags passengers are permitted to check or carry on the aircraft, and passengers who go above these limits frequently incur hefty fees. While limits for international flights may not be as restrictive as for domestic flights, they do exist. Students should always consult their air carrier’s website for the most up-to-date information.

## Transportation Safety Administration (TSA) Regulations

The Transportation Safety Administration (<http://www.tsa.gov>), a division of the Department of Homeland Security, is responsible for airport security checks and regulates, among other things, items passengers may bring on aircraft. The most famous example of this is the 3-1-1 rule for liquids, gels and pastes brought in carry-on baggage. [Liquids must be contained in 3 oz. (max.) containers, stored

together in one 1-quart zip-top bag. Each passenger is limited to one such bag.] TSA security policies, regulations and restrictions change frequently. Before departing for the airport, students should consult the TSA website for the most up-to-date information.

### Change of Clothes

Students should consider packing a change of clothes in their carry-on baggage. In the event the student is separated from his/her checked baggage, (s)he will be able to change clothes and feel refreshed, which goes a long way toward relieving the stress of the situation.

### Medication

Students should pack over-the-counter and prescription medication in their carry-on baggage. Medication is not subject to the 3-1-1 rule; however, special inspection procedures may apply. Medication should always be transported in the original container, and students should always have both English-language and translated copies of their prescription(s) available, including the generic name (as trade names vary internationally).

Some medications legal in the US are illegal in other countries. These are often either contraceptives or psychoactive drugs such as anti-depressants. Students should always verify their prescriptions are legal to import into their host country.

### Electronic Devices

Electronic devices such as computers, music players, cameras, etc. should never be placed in checked luggage. Always place such items in carry-on bags. Students should also take special note of TSA guidelines for transporting batteries and film.

### Voltage Converters and Plug Adapters

Many countries will have a different electrical current or plug shape (or both) than the US. Students should research the current and required plug shape(s) of their destination prior to departure. Voltage converters and plug adapters can be found at luggage and travel stores, as well as the travel section of most large department stores.

A voltage converter will change the electrical current, so that a device may be used without damaging it. However, function may still be affected negatively to some degree. As a consequence, students should consider simply purchasing an inexpensive hair-dryer, shaver, etc. in the host country. Laptops with power cords with the box attached should have a built-in voltage converter. Nonetheless, students should always consult their device's instruction manual to verify voltage compatibility.

Plug adapters allow a device to be plugged into a wall outlet. Students bringing devices with a three-pronged, grounded plug head should either purchase an additional adapter or an interchangeable power cord (e.g. for laptops), as the female ends of most plug adapters only accept two-pronged plugs.

### **Health and Disability Issues**

In considering education abroad and selecting a program, students must consider their current physical and mental health. Students must also be realistic about the demands of the program, their own limitations and how those relate to one another. [Disability Services](#) is available to consult on appropriate accommodations, but it is the student's responsibility to make contact with them. Students should understand that accommodations may not be available for all education abroad

programs offered through CWU or its partners.

Participation in education abroad should not be considered an escape from mental or emotional challenges at home. Education abroad can be stressful as students adjust to a new culture and new surroundings, and this stress can exacerbate existing concerns. Students in such a situation or with diagnosed mental health issues are encouraged to consult the [CWU Counseling Center](#) or another mental health professional to receive guidance and explore strategies and services that might help the student manage his/her challenges in order to be as successful as possible abroad.

As part of SAEP's post-acceptance paperwork, students are required to complete a medical form that includes voluntary disclosure of medical and mental health conditions. This information is sought for advising purposes and to be sure the appropriate people are well-informed in the event of an emergency.

Students are encouraged to consult with their treating physician prior to departure regarding managing any diagnosed chronic medical condition. In order to ensure an adequate supply of any necessary medication, a student may need to consult with both his/her physician and his/her insurance company. Should a student have any normally prescribed medication that is banned in his/her host country, (s)he should consult with his/her physician on acceptable alternatives and/or ways of managing the affected condition.

### **Pre-Travel Vaccinations**

Depending on their destinations, students may have certain vaccines recommended or even required prior to departure. Students should investigate this early, as some vaccines require multiple shots and/or a significant lead time for timely and proper efficacy. The host country's appropriate consular mission (i.e. consulate or embassy) in the US and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) travel resources are two good starting points.

Both the [CWU Medical Clinic](#) and [Kittitas County Public Health Department](#) provide travel consultations and can administer many vaccines, though availability may depend on the precise vaccine and clinic. As a CWU student, the CWU clinic is likely to be the most cost-effective and, thus, the best place to begin. If they are unable to provide the needed care, they can refer students to the appropriate resources.

### **Insurance**

CWU policy requires all students participating in university-sponsored or -sanctioned education abroad and international travel programs to obtain international health and emergency insurance coverage. The university has contracted [Cultural Insurance Services International \(CISI\)](#) as our designated provider; however, students who have comparable coverage from another source (such as a third-party program provider) may request a waiver (see below).

#### Coverage Details

Figure 1 is a chart of coverage levels. Upon acceptance, students will receive an official policy brochure with more details, and that brochure is also available on the SAEP website and in the CISI portal, to which students will receive access upon enrollment.

Figure 1

Coverage Description	
Period of Coverage Maximum Benefit	at least \$500,000
Maximum Benefit per Injury or Sickness	at least \$500,000
Accidental Death and Dismemberment	at least \$10,000
Accidental Death and Dismemberment – Common Carrier	at least \$25,000
Emergency Medical Evacuation Coverage Maximum Lifetime Benefit	at least \$1,000,000.00
Visit By Family Member or Friend	at least \$20,000
Felonious Assault – Visit by Family/Friend	at least \$5,000
Return of Mortal Remains	at least \$100,000
Repatriation Due to Felonious Assault	at least \$500,000
Political Evacuation, Natural Disaster Evacuation Coverage	at least \$100,000
24 Hour Emergency Assistance	Included
In-Patient Mental/Nervous Conditions	Included as any condition

Within the policy brochure, students will notice the headings *Accident Medical Expense – Emergency Only* and *Sickness Medical Expense – Emergency Only*, which bear some explanation. These headings are meant to distinguish between acute and chronic conditions. As an example: treatment for an illness such as the flu or bronchitis would be covered, but routine treatment or maintenance for a condition such as diabetes would not. (However, treatment of an acute instance of diabetic shock would be covered.) Similarly, treatment of acute injury, such as a broken limb, would be covered, but ongoing physical therapy to rehabilitate an injury would not. This same distinction will apply to mental and nervous conditions, as well.

The CISI policy also includes coverage for expenses caused by baggage delay, up to \$250. This coverage is limited to the outward leg of the journey only; it does not cover the return leg. Moreover, it is subject to additional exclusions laid out in the policy brochure and the applicable amendatory endorsement.

### Exclusions

Students should carefully review the policy’s exclusions as described in the policy brochure and the applicable amendatory endorsement. Some of the most important exclusions and those most likely to arise are injury arising from piloting or crewing an aircraft; injury arising from motorized racing; injury arising from extreme sports; dental treatment not necessitated by accident or injury; routine physicals; and sensory aids such as hearing aids, eyeglasses and contact lenses.

The CISI policy does not provide coverage domestically within the US, nor does it provide coverage to international students returning to their home countries. US territories such as Guam and Puerto Rico are not considered domestic locations for these purposes.

### Emergency Assistance

The CISI policy includes 24-hour emergency assistance through EuropAssist. EuropAssist provides a number of services to assist in times of medical emergency, including multilingual support. When necessary, EuropAssist assists with evacuation due medical, political or natural emergencies, repatriation of remains and facilitating travel for a family member to a hospitalized student. Contact information for EuropAssist is on each student's insurance card and easily accessible in the CISI portal.

### Premium

The premium for the term September 1, 2015, through August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016, is \$1.56 per day per person.

### Enrollment & Extension

Unless granted a waiver (see below), SAEP will automatically enroll students in the insurance policy. Students participating in CWU faculty-directed programs, CWU exchanges, international internships and third-party programs will be enrolled using information from their CWU education abroad/exchange application. All other students must first complete the CWU Education Abroad Application packet.

Students will only be enrolled for the official duration of their program. Those students who wish to extend their travel beyond those dates are advised to obtain individual policies for the duration of their travel. Please note that individual policies have a different pricing structure. Students may contact CISI directly for individual policy options.

### Billing

Insurance fees for students participating in CWU faculty-directed programs will be included in the program fee for that program. Appropriate charges will be placed on all other students' accounts.

### Requesting a Waiver

Students who have comparable insurance from another source (such as a third-party program provider) may request a waiver. To request a waiver, students must complete the *International Health and Emergency Insurance Waiver Request Form* and supply proof that their alternate insurance provides the coverage outlined in Figure 1. Waiver requests must be submitted by the deadline corresponding the term in which their program starts as identified in Figure 2.

<b>Departure Quarter</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Early Fall	May 1st
Fall Quarter	July 1st
Winter Quarter	October 15th
Spring Quarter	January 15th
Summer Quarter	April 1st

Waiver approval or denial decisions are made at CWU's sole discretion, and waivers granted for one or more quarters do not guarantee waivers for any future quarters.

## Insurance Card and Documents

Upon enrollment, each student will receive a Welcome Packet from CISI via his/her CWU email address. This packet will contain the student's insurance card, a letter to the appropriate consular mission to support any visa application that may be required, a claim form and a copy of the policy brochure.

Students should print their insurance cards and keep them on their persons while abroad. Students may wish to print a copy of the policy brochure also in order to have it available for easy reference. If misplaced, all of these documents are available in the CISI portal, as well.

## CISI Portal

Along with the Welcome Packet each student will receive instructions and unique credentials for logging into the CISI Portal. As mentioned previously, policy materials such as the insurance card, policy brochure, consulate letter and claim form are easily accessible and (re)printable through this portal. Also as mentioned previously, contact information for EuropAssist and CISI are both easily accessible through the portal. However, students also have access to resources such as links to Department of State and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention country-specific information, including travel warnings and alerts, embassy and consulate information and recommend vaccinations.

The portal also contains "drug translation tool" that identifies local brand names for certain medications. However, particularly for prescription medications, students should not use this tool as a substitute for consultation with a physician.

Students may also use the portal's resources to find local medical service providers with English-speaking staff, including those who have accepted direct claim payments from CISI in the past, dubbed "preferred providers". This information is often compiled from US Department of State sources and past experience, but it is not comprehensive. If students are unable to find a provider in their specific location, they should consult the US consular mission with jurisdiction over that location, local contacts and/or EuropAssist.

## Making a Claim

When possible, students should have claims paid directly by CISI. As mentioned previously, CISI has identified "preferred providers" within its provider search who have accepted this in the past. If a preferred provider is not listed for a student's location, EuropAssist can help find one or establish direct payment with another provider. If direct payment is not possible for whatever reason, students may need to pay for treatment at the time of service and submit original, itemized bills and receipts (if applicable) with a completed claim form to CISI as instructed on the claim form itself.

CISI asks claims to be submitted within 20 days of service or "when reasonable to do so". Students participating in shorter programs, particularly CWU faculty-directed programs, should be able to wait to submit claims after returning to the US without significant issue. However, students participating in programs a semester or more in length likely will need to submit claims from abroad.

By default CISI makes reimbursement payments in US dollars sent as check to a student's US address. However, they may be able to make accommodations for students abroad. Either way students should carefully consider the manner in which they are most easily reimbursed and consult, when necessary, with CISI.

## Trip Cancellation Insurance

This policy is not trip cancellation insurance and, thus, does not provide coverage for financial losses associated with canceled programs, canceled or delayed flights, lost or delayed baggage beyond that already mentioned, and other similar situations. Students may wish to purchase such insurance separately, though the decision to do so ultimately lies with each student. CISI does offer an individual Trip Cancellation policy which students may purchase by going to [www.mycisi.com](http://www.mycisi.com) and then clicking on *Marketplace*.

## **Voting**

Students may be abroad during a time in which an election is held. The [Office of the Secretary of State of Washington](#) provides guidance on voting abroad. Students registered to vote in other states should consult the appropriate office of that state.

## **While Abroad**

### **Registration**

As mentioned earlier, registration for courses at international host institutions typically takes place after students have arrived. Moreover, students may also have one or more weeks at the beginning of the semester to visit multiple classes before finalizing registration. Should a student register for any courses not pre-approved, the student must consult his/her academic advisor upon return to ensure such courses are applied to his/her degree program in whatever way is possible.

Students must maintain full-time status while abroad, as defined by both the host institution and CWU. During the academic year, full-time status is defined as registration for the equivalent to 12 quarter credits per CWU quarter at minimum. During the summer, full-time status is defined as registration for the equivalent to six (6) quarter credits at minimum. Failure to maintain full-time student status may have negative repercussions on financial aid.

### **Money Matters**

#### ATM, Debit and Credit Cards

ATM, debit and credit cards can be a convenient method of obtaining cash and making purchases while abroad, and most cards issued by US banks will be accepted abroad. Cards not linked to international networks like Cirrus, Maestro or Plus may be difficult to use abroad. The network logo(s) should appear on the reverse of the student's card; if not, the student should call the issuing bank to inquire.

Using a card gives the purchaser the best exchange rate for that day, as the bank-to-bank rate is used. Banks and exchange kiosks may charge a service fee or adjust the exchange rate in order to make some profit on the transaction. Additionally, the US bank account provides easier access to family members making replenishing deposits.

However, US banks may charge significant transaction fees for using ATM, debit and credit cards abroad. Bank of America is part of the Global ATM Alliance, which allows customers to use the ATMs of partner banks free of charge within a specified coverage area. Students should always consult with the issuing bank to determine applicable fees. Depending on a student's destination, host country banks may also charge some sort of transaction fee. These fees can add up quickly, so students may

wish to withdraw larger sums of cash and use credit cards sparingly to reduce the frequency of transactions subject to such fees.

Before traveling abroad, students should contact the issuing bank with travel plans, including dates and destination when available. Sudden international charges may appear to the bank to be fraudulent, and the bank will likely freeze the account to prevent further access.

### Foreign Bank Accounts

Students abroad for a semester or longer should carefully consider opening a bank account in the host country. Some host institutions may, in fact, require students to do so. Local bank accounts provide more flexibility for local transactions and reduce the need to worry about the transaction fees levied by US banks, thereby eliminating the need to carry large amounts of cash.

Once students open a local bank account, they have several options for depositing money into it. First, students may periodically withdraw cash using a US bank card and deposit what is not needed immediately into the local account. Second, a contact at home could wire the student money using a service like Western Union, which the student can then deposit into the account. The wire service will charge a fee for the transaction. Third, a contact at home may complete a transfer from a US bank account to the local account. The US bank will and the host country—depending on location—may charge a significant fee for such a transaction, so it is generally best reserved for large sums of money.

### Traveler's Checks

Traveler's checks may be purchased for fixed amounts in the US from banks and other sources, most notably American Express, and redeemed and exchanged abroad. Unlike cash, they can be replaced if stolen, if the holder has the receipt number(s) available.

However, traveler's checks have fallen into relative disuse, and it can be difficult to find somewhere to redeem them. Moreover, fees for doing so may be significant, making them cumbersome and expensive to use. While certainly an option, traveler's checks are not generally recommended, especially for students abroad for a semester or longer.

### Personal Checks

Personal checks drawn on US banks will not be accepted abroad.

### Protecting Your Money Abroad

Theft can be a problem anywhere, even in the US; however, as travelers unfamiliar with the environment of the host city and country, students may be more vulnerable than they would be at home. Nonetheless, students can take steps to protect themselves from theft abroad.

- Students should avoid carrying large amounts of cash on their persons and be discreet with the cash they do carry. Taking these precautions makes one less of an obvious target for thieves.
- Students should not carry all of their cash in one place. Carry smaller amounts of cash in multiple locations, such as pants pockets, coat pockets and bags.
- When traveling, students should carry cash, cards, identification, etc. in a money belt worn around the waist, beneath clothing. Gentlemen should never carry their wallets in a back pocket of their pants; if necessary, carry it in a front pocket or an inner jacket pocket. Ladies

should carry handbags across and in front of their bodies; if possible, handbags should have zippers that can be closed securely.

- If using traveler's checks, students should record the check and receipt numbers and store the list and actual receipts separately from the checks. Similarly, students should keep a record of all ATM, debit and credit card numbers, PINs, and corresponding Customer Service numbers and store that record separately from the cards.
- Students should be mindful of their surroundings when using ATMs, keeping an eye out for thieves and protecting their PIN.

## **Communication**

It is important for students to maintain occasional contact with family and friends back home, and there are many ways to do so. However, in order to maintain the integrity of their international experience, students should not do so excessively. It may be advisable to arrange a communication schedule with family to have predictable intervals, perhaps once or twice a week at the most frequent. If students need to deviate from that schedule, they should be sure to provide advance warning, though.

### Email

One of the easiest ways for a student to communicate with family and friends while abroad is to use e-mail. Students should be sure that their e-mail service provider is available in the host country. Some countries restrict access to certain email providers; for instance, China has blocked access to Gmail in the past.

### Mobile Phones

There are many options for mobile phone service while abroad. The most cost effective option is to purchase a phone in the country of destination that is connected to a pay-as-you-go service. Obtaining a mobile phone and contract while abroad may be extremely difficult, if possible at all. If students have an unlocked mobile phone, they may be able to purchase a SIM card in the host country. However, this would also create the need to ensure a viable way to charge the phone, considering differences in electrical current. Students may also look into international cell phones through their U.S. providers, as well as pay-as-you-go services through companies such as [STA Travel](#). Some third-party program sponsors also provide phones for participants, who are then responsible for purchasing the minutes.

### Skype

Through the use of Skype, students can easily stay connected with their home country while abroad. Free of charge, Skype can be used for Skype-to-Skype calls, one-to-one video calls, instant messaging and screen sharing. For more information, visit [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com).

### Communication with CWU

It is the student's responsibility to maintain contact with CWU while abroad; this includes regularly monitoring one's CWU student email address. The CWU student email is the official and exclusive mode of communication for all University offices, including SAEP, Housing and Registrar Services.

## Host Country Contact Information

Upon arrival, students should acquaint themselves with relevant contact information and persons including the host institution's equivalent to SAEP, the program coordinator and the resident director. There may be additional points of contact that students will be provided once they arrive in the host country.

## **Health & Safety**

### Travel Safety

On average, traveling abroad is no more or no less dangerous than traveling within the US. The key difference is that students will be unfamiliar with their surroundings and, therefore, not always as attuned to possible dangers as they might be at home. Students can take the following steps to reduce their risk while traveling abroad:

- Thoroughly research the host country and countries to which one might travel before departing.
- Consult the US Department of State's website (<http://travel.state.gov/>) for travel warnings and advisories in the country and/or region.
- Consult the website of the Centers for Disease Control (<http://www.cdc.gov/>) for information about potential health concerns in the country and/or region.
- Sign up for the Department of State's [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#). In the event of an emergency that requires the evacuation of US citizens, registering informs the Department of State of a student's presence. Students will also receive periodic updates from the embassy or consulate.
- Always inform someone of one's travel itinerary and when one intends to return.
- When possible, avoid traveling alone.
- Use common sense and trust one's instincts. If something feels wrong; it usually is.
- Never leave belongings unattended.
- Avoid excessive use of alcohol and all use of recreational drugs. Under the influence of these substances, students' decision-making abilities are compromised, thus, making students more vulnerable to victimization or accident. (More below.)

### US Citizens Abroad

The foreign policy of the United States is often unpopular abroad, and individuals do not always separate US citizens from their government. Students should make a point of researching their host country's political situation and relations with the US. Students may also reduce their risk of being targeted for politically motivated crime or violence by following these tips:

- Try to blend in with locals' style of dress, mannerisms and behaviors as much as is possible.
- Avoid political demonstrations and rallies. The tone of such gatherings may change quickly.
- Choose carefully with whom one discusses sensitive issues such as politics and religion.

Many people abroad will only know the US and Americans from what they see in film and television. International stereotypes of Americans include being loud, inconsiderate, ignorant, rude, rich, arrogant, cheap, greedy, lazy, promiscuous, overweight and English-only speakers. Students should keep in mind that they represent both UA and the US while abroad and must act as ambassadors

rather than reinforcing stereotypes.

### Women

Depending on the host country, acceptable treatment of women and definitions of gender roles abroad may vary significantly from the US. Moreover, the international stereotype of American women abroad is that they are promiscuous and ‘easy’. This may lead to unwanted attention, ranging from a nuisance to potentially violent. Female students may avoid being targeted by following these tips:

- Research gender roles in the host country. While one may not be expected to adhere to such cultural expectations explicitly, research will help one avoid egregious errors.
- Dress conservatively, or in a way that does not attract great attention to oneself.
- Establish firm boundaries early on. It is perfectly acceptable to say ‘No’. However, do so at the first instance of the undesired behavior and be consistent.
- Exercise caution when traveling alone.
- Do not be afraid to draw attention to yourself if being harassed in public.
- Avoid excessive use of alcohol and always be aware of where one’s beverage is.

### LGTBQIA

The acceptance and definition of LGTBQIA identities varies around the world. In some countries, homosexual sex may carry severe legal penalties, including the death penalty, and identifying oneself as LGTBQIA may put one at risk for harassment and physical violence. LGTBQIA students should thoroughly research the attitudes and laws regarding LGTBQIA issues abroad and be selective in the countries to which they travel.

### Ethnic and Religious Minorities

Even students unaccustomed to being a minority in the US may become one while abroad, which can create unique challenges. Students may be treated as a novelty. For instance, locals may touch one’s skin or hair in wonder. Students may also be the subject of stares and offensive (whether intentional or not) comments or jokes. Students should find a polite and tactful way of correcting such remarks and setting their boundaries.

Heritage students (students traveling to the countries of their ancestors) may find other challenges. They may not stand out from locals as obviously as other students and may be expected have the language abilities and accumulated cultural knowledge of a local. Therefore, at first, locals may not be as forgiving of mistakes as they might be to others more obviously foreign. In these instances, students should be calm and patient. As students become known, cultural expectations should relax.

Tolerance of certain ethnic or religious groups varies among cultures. Sometimes specific holidays, festivals and political events may spark flare-ups of ethnic or religious intolerance. Students should research this aspect of their host country carefully before departure and avoid such gatherings when they occur. Students should choose carefully with whom they discuss such topics as politics and religion.

### Alcohol and Drugs

As mentioned above, students should avoid excessive use of alcohol and all use of recreational drugs

while abroad. Primarily, this is a matter of personal safety, as inebriation and being under the influence of drugs compromise one's ability to perceive danger and make decisions, increasing one's vulnerability to victimization, accidents resulting in physical injury or death, and/or legal trouble.

Laws regarding recreational drugs vary from country to country, and the penalties for possession, use and/or trafficking may be harsh in some. Students caught with such drugs will be at the mercy of the local justice system. There is little to nothing that CWU or the United States government can or will do to help a student in this situation. US citizens arrested abroad are entitled to contact the consulate or embassy, but consular officials have little authority in these instances.

Moreover, students are subject to the CWU Student Code of Conduct while abroad and will be subject to judicial action at CWU should they be sent home for alcohol- or drug-related infractions.

### Sex and Dating

Societal norms governing gender relations, sex and dating practices are culturally based. Students should research gender roles in their host countries to avoid cultural incidents. Furthermore, rates of infection with HIV and other STIs vary widely internationally. Students should be sure to research this aspect of their host country and take steps to protect themselves should they choose to be sexually active. Remember: STIs come home with you.

### Emergency Contacts

Students must establish contacts with their host institutions and identify whom to contact in the case of an emergency. Students should be aware of the emergency services phone number in their host countries; in most instances, it is not 911. After notifying the appropriate local contacts, students should notify SAEP or KITTCOM at the earliest safe opportunity in the event of an emergency.

### **Culture Shock and Cultural Adaptation**

Entire books have been written about culture shock and cultural adjustment. This section is not meant to be a comprehensive guide, rather a brief summary of the key points. We hope to provide basic information about what to expect while abroad, as well as to provide suggestions for coping. The following books are recommended further reading:

- Paige, R. Michael, et al. *Maximizing Study Abroad: A Students' Guide to Strategies for Language and Culture Learning and Use*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, 2007.
- Slimbach, Richard. *Becoming World Wise: A Guide to Global Learning*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2010.
- Storti, Craig. *The Art of Crossing Cultures*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press, 2001.
- Williamson, Wendy. *Study Abroad 101*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Charleston, IL: Agapy, 2008.

### Country Shock

Even before encountering the host culture, students will encounter and adjust to the host country itself. Students may need to adjust to a climate hotter, colder, wetter and/or drier than that to which they are accustomed. Students will need to find the closest grocery store, the fastest way to campus and alternate routes to these places. Students will need to figure out how to negotiate the public transportation system, how use the shower, how to do laundry and/or how to grocery shop. Even if students are proficient in the language spoken in the country, they may need to acclimate to a regional

accent, regional vocabulary and idioms, or faster speech.

While these may seem trivial, small frustrations can add up quickly. Left unaddressed, they can eventually affect one's mental and physical health negatively. These suggestions may help to mitigate frustration and surmount these hurdles:

- Research the host country's climate prior to departure and pack accordingly.
- If climactic differences are extreme, try not to overly exert oneself until acclimatized.
- Explore one's surroundings. Wander around the vicinity; attempt public transit.
- When possible, watch locals and take cues from them. Ask questions of local contacts.
- When speaking the host language, do not be afraid of mistakes or of asking people to speak more slowly or to repeat things.
- Set small, achievable goals and build upon them gradually.

### Culture Shock

Culture has many facets, some immediately apparent and others not. An iceberg is a good metaphor for culture. Just as the small portion of an iceberg above the water's surface belies a much larger portion below it, so too is it with culture. The greatest part of a culture is the unspoken mores and norms that guide and influence the actions we see. In our host culture, we hardly give these thought, as we know them intuitively; they have been ingrained in us since birth. However, when experiencing a new culture, we lose those internal guideposts. It is this conflict that produces culture shock.

### Stages of Culture Shock

Culture shock has multiple stages with a series of peaks and valleys. Everyone goes through these stages at a different rate, making it impossible to give a specific timeline. Different people may also experience these stages to differing degrees, with higher peaks or shallower valleys, for example. However, everyone does go through the culture shock process. Below are basic descriptions of the different stages:

- **The Honeymoon Period** – Everything is new; differences between the host and home cultures are exciting.
- **Culture Shock** – The differences between cultures become irritating and frustrating. One may feel anger towards the host culture. *Why can't these people act normally?! That's stupid!* There is also the potential to descend deeper into full-blown depression at this stage.
- **Recovery** – One develops coping strategies and begins to adapt to the new culture.
- **Adaptation and Assimilation** – One becomes comfortable in the new culture, perhaps even considering it as 'home'.

### Strategies for Coping with Culture Shock

- Acknowledge that it is occurring. This is the first step in dealing with it.
- Remember that there is much to a culture that occurs 'below the surface'. There may be a logical reason for the way something is done, though that reason may not be immediately apparent. Look for it.
- Maintain a healthy diet and sleep schedule. Illness and exhaustion will only compound the challenges and add stress.

- Keep in occasional contact with friends, family and events at home. However, after experiencing a setback, students should give themselves time to calm down before calling or writing home.
- Establish a routine. The disruption of one's routine is a great source of stress, and establishing a new one will help create a sense of normalcy.
- Be active and establish new relationships. Occupying one's body and/or mind prevents one from over thinking. Loneliness will exacerbate otherwise minor frustrations.
- Make an effort to learn about the host country and culture. Read and/or watch local news, speak with locals, watch local films and television, read books by local authors. Eat local food! Speak the language!
- Take cultural breaks. Find small things that may allow oneself a taste of home, whether it is news, books, films or food.

## **Return**

### **Requesting Transcripts**

Prior to leaving their host institutions, students participating in CWU-sponsored exchanges and non-CWU programs must be sure to arrange for official transcripts to be sent to CWU at the end of their program. The exact processes and requirements will vary by the student's program.

Transcripts must be sent to the following address:

Study Abroad & Exchange Programs  
Central Washington University  
400 East University Way  
Ellensburg, WA 98926-7407

### **Registering for Classes at CWU**

Students will complete course registration for their next term at CWU via myCWU as they normally would. Students should monitor their CWU student email address and myCWU for their assigned registration appointment. SAEP does not provide assistance in the registration process, as there is little we can do. Should problems arise, it is best for students to contact their academic advisor.

### **Housing at CWU**

Students are responsible for organizing housing upon their return to CWU. For on-campus housing, students should apply through the [University Housing and New Student Programs](#) website. Students are encouraged to consider living in Kennedy Hall and taking part in the International House LLC.

### **Reverse Culture Shock**

Students expect to experience culture shock when traveling to a different country; however, they may not expect to experience it when they return to what is meant to be their 'home' culture. It is natural to look at one's home culture differently after returning from abroad; that is part of the point of going abroad in the first place. However, just as with 'normal' culture shock, some students will struggle with 'reverse' culture shock more than others. SAEP is eager to help with the re-entry process.

## Strategies for Coping with Reverse Culture Shock

- Seek out students with similar experiences to yours. Hundreds of CWU students go abroad each year and return eager to share their experiences. Moreover, CWU is home to many international students from around the world.
- Seek out on-campus and/or community activities with an international focus.
- Stay involved.
- Maintain contact with friends made while abroad.
- Take internationally-focused courses.

## Staying Involved

Staying involved with internationally-focused activities upon return to the US is one of the best ways to both combat reverse culture shock and to build one's resume. Here are a few suggestions:

- *Work for SAEP*  
SAEP employs returned education abroad participants as student assistants, though there are a limited number of positions available.
- *Become an International Peer Advisor (IPA)*  
The Asia University America Program (AUAP) employs several students each year as live-in peer mentors for students from CWU partner Asia University in Japan participating in a special language and culture program. Inquire at AUAP for more information.
- *Work for other OISP units*  
Other sections of OISP also have periodic openings for student assistants.
- *Take part in International Café and other activities on campus*  
International Café is a special event co-sponsored by the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement (CLCE) and OISP designed to facilitate interaction between domestic and international students. Three sessions will take place each quarter during lunch. Sign up through the CLCE. Also, the International Club, Friends of AUAP and many other clubs have cultural or international themes and provide opportunities to meet and interact with international students.
- *Participate in the Campus Friends Program*  
Campus Friends is a program run by AUAP that matches one of their students from Japan with a CWU student to encourage interaction and cultural exchange.
- *Join the International House Living-Learning Committee or request an international roommate*  
The International House LLC is located in Kennedy Hall and consists of both international students (such as our exchange students) and domestic students interested international and cultural learning. Several activities are planned each quarter to encourage interaction between these groups and many others may take place informally. Students living on campus can always make a request to be placed with an international roommate when applying for housing. The likelihood of that request being fulfilled will depend in part on where students are willing to live.
- *Seek out internationally or culturally oriented coursework*  
A number of departments on campus offer courses and even degree programs that are internationally or culturally oriented. OISP even oversees an International Studies Minor.

## Important Contacts at CWU

<b>NAME</b>	<b>OFFICE</b>	<b>PHONE</b>	<b>EMAIL</b>
General Inquiries	Study Abroad & Exchange Programs	+1-509-963-3622	<a href="mailto:goabroad@cwu.edu">goabroad@cwu.edu</a>
Roberta Lowe Secretary Senior	Study Abroad & Exchange Programs	+1-509-963-3623	<a href="mailto:lower@cwu.edu">lower@cwu.edu</a>
Matthew Zielsdorf Study Abroad Advisor	Study Abroad & Exchange Programs	+1-509-963-3615	<a href="mailto:zielsdorfm@cwu.edu">zielsdorfm@cwu.edu</a>
Steven Cook Assistant Director for Study Abroad & Exchange Programs	Study Abroad & Exchange Programs	+1-509-963-3621	<a href="mailto:cookse@cwu.edu">cookse@cwu.edu</a>
Inti Valverde	Financial Aid	+1-509-963-3049	<a href="mailto:valverde@cwu.edu">valverde@cwu.edu</a>
	Student Financial Services	+1-509-963-3546	<a href="mailto:sfs@cwu.edu">sfs@cwu.edu</a>
Joey Thornton	Registrar Services	+1-509-963-3114	<a href="mailto:thornton@cwu.edu">thornton@cwu.edu</a>
Violence Prevention and Response Coordinator	Wellness Center	+1-509-963-3233	<a href="mailto:VPRC@cwu.edu">VPRC@cwu.edu</a>
Abuse Support and Prevention Education Now		1-866-925-9384	<a href="mailto:dvsa@cwcmh.org">dvsa@cwcmh.org</a>
	KITTCOM	+1-509-925-9811	