

University of Minnesota, Morris
Study Abroad Handbook
for
Global Student Teaching and
English Language Teaching Assistant
Program
(GST and ELTAP)



Preparing to Teach, Research, and Serve
Abroad

Introduction	
GST/ELTAP	1
Policies	
Student Rights and Responsibilities	2
Academic Expectations	2
Release and Waiver	2
Health and Health Insurance	
Health Information Form	3
Pre-departure Health Procedures And Precautions	3
Prescriptions	3
Health Issues and Illnesses While Abroad	4
Health Insurance	4
The CISI Health Insurance Policy	4
Liability Insurance	5
Emergencies and Safety Precautions	
Emergencies	5
U.S. Consulates and Embassies	5
Safety Precautions	5
Health and Safety Guidelines	5
Specific Emergency Procedures	
Contact Information	7
Contacting UMM	7
Emergency Protocol	7
Emergency Situations	7
Cultural Adjustment	
Social Adjustments	8
Relationships	9
Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Issues	9
Participants with Disabilities	9
Logistics	
Customs and Immigration	9
Travel while Abroad	9
Money	9
Packing	10
Communications	11
Electrical Appliances/Computers	11
Creating a Positive Environment for the Study Abroad Experience	
Basic Program Rules	11
Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault	12
Drugs	12
Alcohol	13
Early Withdrawal or Termination	13
Student Grievances	13
Conclusion	13
Websites	
Safety	14
Travel Advisories or Warnings	14
Health	14
Other	14

GST/ELTAP:

Preparing to teach, research, and serve abroad

You have decided to participate in academic activities abroad and now it is time to begin preparation. Careful planning, both before and during the study abroad experience, assures a successful and rewarding time abroad. In preparation, please carefully read the contents of this handbook, which is designed to be helpful to participating or interested students, staff, and faculty. It contains important steps that you must take to prepare for your study abroad experience, essential information about health, safety and security, as well as policies and guidelines by which you must abide while on a study abroad program.

The Center for International Programs is committed to providing you with a meaningful academic experience abroad. However, it is your responsibility to ensure that all of the preparatory steps have been taken.

We wish you the best during your upcoming adventure!



The contents of this handbook are used with permission from the UMM International Programs Office and UMTC's The Global Campus.

Study Abroad Policies

Policies determined by the University of Minnesota and the Center for International Programs guide the administration, planning, and program development of all study abroad activity. These policies and guidelines were established primarily for the protection of study abroad participants. For these reasons, the Center for International Programs and the University of Minnesota, Morris (UMM) expect you to read, understand and adhere to the policies outlined in this handbook. This handbook is available online, and can be printed, for easy reference. Please ask a Center for International Programs of GST/ELTAP staff member if you have questions regarding any of these policies.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

In accordance with University policy, the Center for International Programs and GST/ELTAP staff members wish to reaffirm student rights and responsibilities in relationship to studying abroad. The following statement is issued in accordance with University policy and after consultation with appropriate University officers.

As with all academic programs, the student is responsible for learning the content of a course of study according to the standards of performance established by the faculty. In turn, the student has the right to a course grade that represents the instructor's good-faith judgment of the student's performance in the course.

For students participating in UMM's study abroad programs, the University of Minnesota, Morris reserves the right to expel a student from a program if the student's conduct violates the law of the host country or city or otherwise does damage to the program or UMM. In such instances, the student will be entitled to the same guarantees of due process established on campus.

Students are expected to:

- Be responsible for all information contained in Center for International Programs and GST/ELTAP materials, especially where fees and programs details are concerned.
- Attend all orientation meetings and/or appointments (unless considerable distance prevents them from doing so).
- Pay all fees and personal expenses incurred while studying abroad.
- Arrange for and complete all academic work within the allotted time abroad.

- Participate in travel, sightseeing, and individual contact with citizens of the host country as described in the program literature.
- Respect the reasonable wishes of the hosts when living in a private home.
- Obey laws, police regulations and practices of the host country. Diplomatic representatives and U.S. laws will be able to offer little or no help to a student arrested and/or convicted of drug-related or other crimes.
- Arrive and depart at the prearranged program accommodations per specified dates and times.

Academic Expectations

Courses and credit offered through the Center for International Programs (CIP) are part of the University of Minnesota, Morris curriculum and are offered in accordance with University academic policies and standards. Participants should be prepared for work loads and grading standards similar to those in on-campus courses. Each semester credit normally entails ten in-class hours and up to twenty hours of effort out of class. For many programs, grades earned count in the participant's UMM grade point average. (Exchange programs usually generate transfer credit, which does not count in the participants' GPA.) Participants are urged to seek academic advising on the applicability of overseas courses to specific degree requirements (major, minor, and general education, etc.) Non-University of Minnesota, Morris students should check their own institution's policies regarding credit transfer and applicability.

While Center for International Programs, including GST/ELTAP, encourage participants to take full advantage of the overseas setting for travel and other experiences outside the classroom, such activities should not interfere with academic commitments. Attendance at all class sessions and fulfillment of all GST/ELTAP assignments is required, and assigned work is to be turned in on time. **To avoid conflicting with studies, friends and family are encouraged to confine any visits to vacation periods scheduled during the program or to defer plans until the program is completed.**

Release and Waiver

In order to accept the terms of the program and secure space, each participant completes a Release and Waiver form. This form outlines participants' responsibilities when taking part in a study abroad program. The statements outlined and agreed to on the release include items such as: personal conduct, insurance coverage, medical treatment, responsibility during free

time, theft and other crimes, political unrest, travel, cancellation and a general release and waiver statement. It further clarifies that the University of Minnesota, Morris and its staff are not liable for damage to or loss of property, injury, illness, or death during the period of the program, arising on the part of fellow participants, host family members, agencies and educational organizations persons or groups with which the Center for International Programs contracts for the provision of services for the program. (See *Release and Waiver, Appendix 1*).

Health and Health Insurance

Health Information Form

All participants of UMM sponsored programs are required to complete the Health/Contact Information Form. This information is used to assist you to make any necessary preparations and be advised of any health issues. If there is any further information regarding health issues, please contact the Director of GST/ELTAP at UMM.

By signing the Release and Waiver Form, students have authorized the Center for International Programs staff to release medical information contained in the files to health care providers. They also authorize them to secure medical treatment on the student's behalf in case of emergency medical illness or injury. They have also agreed to accept financial responsibility for the treatment.

Pre-departure Health Procedures and Precautions

You will need to give the students information regarding any required inoculations for the country you are entering. While the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) publish guidelines for immunizations and other health precautions for travelers, only an individualized assessment can help you decide what *they* should do to prepare. Usually a family physician does not have the necessary background to provide travel information, since travel medicine is a unique specialty. A travel specialist is trained to consider your health history, current medications, drug allergies, and travel plans when recommending shots and other medications. Because travel clinics often book far in advance (especially around the holidays), you should find a travel clinic and make an appointment as soon as possible so that

you can get a scheduled appointment in time to complete any recommended immunization series. *Be aware that some immunizations need to be started months in advance of your departure.*

Below is a list of clinics in Minnesota that specialize in travel medicine:

Hennepin County Medical Center Traveler's Clinic
525 Portland Ave S
Minneapolis, MN 55414
612-348-2741

St. Paul-Ramsey County Public Health
555 Cedar St
St Paul, MN 55101
651-292-7746 (no telephone consultation, only travel appointments)

The International Society of Travel Medicine (ISTM) provides a listing of its member clinics by state. For more information about ISTM or a listing of clinics and doctors in your area, contact:

International Society of Travel Medicine
P.O. Box 871089
Stone Mountain, GA 30087-0028
Tel: 770-736-7060
Fax: 770-736-6732
E-mail: bcbistm@aol.com
www.istm.org/clinidir.html

You can get more information from CDC by calling 404-639-3311. The CDC Travel Health WWW Page is located at: www.cdc.gov/travel/travel.html

Prescriptions

You should bring enough of any prescription medication and vitamins that you are currently taking to last throughout your overseas stay. For each prescription, you should carry a letter from your physician stating that you are required to take the medication under medical supervision or a photocopy of the written prescription. All medication should be stored in its original containers with the identification label attached and clearly visible. Carry enough to last a week or two with you in your carry-on luggage in case your checked luggage is delayed or lost. We also suggest that you learn the generic name of your medication in case you need to purchase more in your host country. If you have allergies—especially to dust, mold or pollens—plan ahead and take any medication that you might need.

Health Issues and Illnesses while Abroad

Eat and drink lightly for several days after arrival until your system has had a chance to adjust to changes in climate and food. Adjusting to a new diet often causes mild intestinal upsets or diarrhea. If you are very ill, see a doctor. Depending on the country where you will be studying, you should bring along non-prescription medication such as Imodium for digestive illnesses. You should also check on other health issues, such as whether it is safe to drink the local water, and ask your doctor about preventive medication for the common illnesses that can result.

You should understand the health conditions in your host country before you leave, and obtain information about appropriate precautionary measures. A couple of tips are especially important no matter where you will be traveling:

- If you have a medical condition that is not easily identified (diabetes, epilepsy, and severe allergies), you should wear a medic alert bracelet while you are abroad. You should also inform the GST/ELTAP director and traveling companions, so that they can be prepared in case of an emergency. If you have a medical problem that could be aggravated by conditions abroad (e.g. asthma), consider carefully how you will deal with the problem abroad and discuss it with your physician before you leave home.
- AIDS is a major concern in some locations. While abroad, avoid injections and blood transfusions. If an injection is required, make sure that the syringe comes directly from a sealed package or that it has been sterilized in boiling water for 20 minutes. Diabetics are encouraged to bring a sufficient supply of needles and syringes with a prescription or doctor's authorization. Avoid ear piercing and tattooing if AIDS is a concern in the area.

It may sound like there are many health risks to be aware of, but do not be obsessed with your physical health! Most travelers and students overseas will not experience anything worse than a mild case of diarrhea, and just a few common sense practices can help greatly to keep you healthy during your overseas stay.

Health Insurance

The University of Minnesota, Morris provides mandatory international study abroad health insurance coverage through Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI) and the University of Minnesota

Global Campus. The cost of this insurance is billed, in addition to the program (tuition) fee.

All students covered by the University's CISI policy will receive a detailed policy description defining all items covered and not covered along with an insurance card before departure.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have adequate insurance coverage for your particular circumstances. We recommend that faculty/staff going abroad who extend their stay abroad beyond or before the stated program length purchase additional coverage from CISI to cover the complete length of their stay. You may purchase up to thirty days of additional coverage. Applications can be obtained from the GST/ELTAP office or by contacting the GST/ELTAP director at 320-589-6403.

Keep in mind that the international health insurance coverage begins only when you leave the U.S. and ends immediately upon your return to the U.S. For coverage in the United States, you must purchase or maintain a separate plan.

We recommend that you consider retaining your U.S. health insurance, even while overseas. This will cover you both before you leave and after you return from your program, and should you have an accident or illness overseas that requires long-term care, you will have insurance upon your return to cover these expenses. You may find it difficult to purchase a health plan if you return with what the insurance companies consider a pre-existing condition. Keep in mind that if you have special insurance needs, or if you plan any personal travel before, during or after the program, you are responsible for the coverage.

While abroad you should carry your insurance policy number and medical information concerning allergies, medications, blood type, immunization history, eyeglasses or other prescriptions. A good place to keep this information is with your passport.

The CISI Health Insurance Policy

The University of Minnesota has chosen an international health insurance policy from *Cultural Insurance Services International* (CISI) to provide health insurance coverage for students participating on study abroad programs through the University of Minnesota, Morris. For those of you covered by this plan, the following are basic items included in the CISI health insurance policy:

- Accidental Medical/Sickness Expense: up to \$100,000 per incident (unlimited number of incidents)
- Deductible: \$50 per incident, including standard doctor visits
- All visits, hospital or doctor, pay at 100% after deductible
- Mental and Nervous Benefits: Inpatients are covered 100% to \$2,500 maximum, outpatients are covered 100% to \$500 maximum
- Emergency Medical Evacuation: \$50,000
- Emergency Family Reunion Benefit: Paid coach airfare for family members; hotel and meal expenses are paid at \$75/day up to \$2,000 maximum
- Medical Repatriation: \$50,000
- Repatriation of Remains; \$50,000
- Accidental Death & Dismemberment Accidental Death: beneficiary will receive \$10,000 (Disappearance will be paid as an accidental death if the body is not found at the end of one year). Dismemberment is covered on a prescribed schedule
- Prescription Drugs: Paid at 100%
- Home country coverage up to \$5,000
- Emergency 24-hour Telephone Assistance
- Medical/Travel/Technical Assistance Services
- Will guarantee payment and pay claims directly to foreign hospitals

In order to minimize the need for on-site medical and dental expenses, we strongly encourage you to see your doctor and dentist before your departure. Since most insurance plans require that you pay up front and be reimbursed later, we also advise that you budget some money for medical situations while in-country. Although the University of Minnesota's international policy through CISI will pay the foreign hospital directly, for non-major medical situations, you will need to pay at the time of service and then get reimbursed later. As with most insurance companies, CISI will need time to investigate the claim before paying it.

Liability Insurance

Faculty/staff should consider purchasing liability insurance prior to departure, which will cover them for any damage to property and lost or stolen items while overseas. Your family's homeowner's insurance or rental insurance may also provide coverage.

Emergencies and Safety Precautions

Emergencies

In case of a political, social, or natural emergency, the Center for International Programs will be in close contact with you for any study abroad program offered through UMM. You should in turn seek advice from the local authorities and the U.S. Consulate or Embassy nearest the program location.

U.S. Consulates and Embassies

The U.S. State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs in Washington, D.C. aids Americans needing emergency assistance. They are in contact with their consulates and embassies overseas and can assist friends and family members with a number of different kinds of emergencies. During a crisis, the State Department will try to locate the whereabouts of an American overseas if needed. In case of injury overseas, the Bureau of Consular Affairs can assist in sending funds to the injured American and collect any necessary health information to forward to the in-country embassy or consulate. In case of evacuation, the embassy or consulate overseas will try to establish special air flights and ground transportation to help Americans depart. If destitute, Americans can turn to a U.S. consular officer abroad for help. The Citizen's Emergency Center will help by contacting the destitute person's family, friends, or business associates to raise private funds. It will also help transmit these funds to destitute Americans overseas. If necessary, it can provide small government loans to tide a destitute American over until private funds arrive. In case of the death of a participant overseas, the Bureau of Consular Affairs provides guidance on how to arrange for local burial or return of the remains to the United States. The U.S. State Department's Crisis Emergency Center telephone number in Washington, D.C. is 202-647-5225. Updated recordings on State Department travel advisories are also available at this number.

Safety Precautions

When traveling overseas, there are a number of precautions you can follow to travel safely. You should also consult the U.S. State Department Travel advisories for up-to-date information on travel precautions for the country where you will be studying or traveling. Travel advisories are available for reference on the World Wide Web at http://travel.state.gov/travel_warnings.html.

Health and Safety Guidelines

Because the health and safety of study abroad participants are the primary concern for all study abroad providers, the following guidelines have been developed by NAFSA: The Association of International Educators, to provide useful practical guidance to participants. Although no set of guidelines can guarantee the health and safety needs of each individual involved in a study abroad program, these guidelines address issues that merit attention and thoughtful judgment.

All Participants Should:

1. Read and carefully consider all materials issued by the sponsor that relate to health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in the host country.
2. Consider their health and other personal circumstances when applying for or accepting a place in a program.
3. Make available to the sponsor accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that are necessary in planning for a safe and healthy study abroad experience.
4. Assume responsibility for all the elements necessary for their personal preparation for the program and participate fully in orientations.
5. Obtain and maintain appropriate insurance coverage and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers.
6. Inform parents/guardians/families, and any others who may need to know about their participation in the study abroad program, provide them with emergency contact information, and keep them informed on an ongoing basis.
7. Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct, and emergency procedures of the program, and obey host-country laws.
8. Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to the program leader or other appropriate individuals.
9. Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well being of others and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
10. Accept responsibility for your own decisions and actions.
11. Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining emergency health and law enforcement services in the host country.
12. Follow the program policies for keeping the program leader informed of your whereabouts and well being.

Additional Safety Precautions

1. When traveling, do not leave your bags or belongings unattended at any time. Security personnel in airports, bus depots, and train stations are often instructed to remove or destroy any unattended luggage. Do not agree to carry or look after packages or suitcases for anyone. Make sure no one puts anything in your luggage.
2. When using local transportation, avoid traveling in old, poorly maintained vehicles. Inquire about the safety records of different bus companies. When taking a taxi, it is good advice to sit in the back seat.
3. Never keep all your documents and money in one place or one suitcase.
4. If you find yourself in uncomfortable surroundings, try to act as if you know what you are doing and where you are going.
5. Use caution when traveling alone. Women especially should not walk alone at night. Try to find an escort. In some countries, it is dangerous to take a taxi alone at night for both men and women.
6. Keep the program leader informed of your whereabouts. You should let the leader, your host family, or your roommates know of any traveling that you plan to do.
7. Have sufficient funds or a credit card on hand to purchase emergency items such as an airline ticket.
8. Be alert to your surroundings and the people with whom you have contact. Be wary of people who seem over friendly or overly interested in you. Be cautious when you meet new people, and do not give out your address or phone number. Be careful with information about other students or group events. Be alert to anyone who might appear to be following you, and to any unusual activity around your place of residence or classroom. Report any unusual people or activities to the program leader immediately.
9. Exercise good judgment about what sorts of places to frequent during the day and at night, and avoid being on the street at late hours more than necessary.
10. Avoid alcohol consumption in quantities that might impair your judgment.
11. Don't flash money or documents in public places. Keep small bills in your pocket and use them whenever possible to pay for things. Be discrete in displaying your passport.

Safety Precautions for Times of Political/Social Unrest or Conflict

In times of political or social unrest in the host country or region, or when the United States becomes a party

to a political conflict anywhere in the world, additional precautions are advisable:

1. Keep in touch with the current political situations by listening daily to the television or radio, if available. If not, ask friends, host family, and colleagues to share with you any relevant information they learn. In case of an emergency, advisories may be made to the general public through the media. In case of an emergency, remain in contact with the program leader.
2. Make sure that you are registered with the closest American Embassy or Consulate.
3. When in large cities and other popular tourist destinations, avoid places frequented by North Americans: bars, discos, and fast food restaurants associated with the U.S., branches of U.S. banks, American churches, U.S. businesses and offices, U.S. consulates or embassies.
4. Keep away from areas known to have large concentrations or residents aligned with interests unfriendly to the United State and its allies. Always consult with the program leader before undertaking travel to neighboring cities or popular tourist destinations.
5. Be as inconspicuous in dress and demeanor as possible. Wear moderate colors and conservative clothing. Avoid American logos on your belongings and clothing. Avoid large loud groups.
6. Keep away from political demonstrations, particularly those directed toward the United States. If you see a situation developing, resist the temptation to satisfy your curiosity and investigate what is happening. Walk the other way.
7. Do not agree to newspaper or other media interviews regarding political conflicts. If is important to remain as inconspicuous as possible. Do not refer to your program group. In such cases, always say “no comment” and hang up or walk the other way.

Specific Emergency Procedures

Contact Information

Prior to departure, or as soon as possible after arrival at the study abroad destination, the faculty director should advise the Center for International Programs of the address and telephone number of the primary residence of the study abroad program. While recognizing that many study abroad programs involve extended or number of excursions away from the

“home base”, faculty directors should, wherever possible, leave with the Center for International Programs the itinerary of the program, with anticipated stops, telephone numbers, and/or fax numbers.

Contacting UMM

The emergency telephone numbers/fax numbers and email addresses for reaching UMM are provided in a separate handout. Carry these numbers with you. Call any time, day or night, seven days a week, when you need assistance.

Emergency Protocol

While it is not possible to predict all problems that may arise as we participate in this program, all participants (students, faculty, colleagues) need to be ready to respond to the unexpected as professionals and as individuals concerned about the welfare of others.

Whether it is a concern of the host school or country, teachers or administrators, student teacher, or GST university/faculty and staff members, the goal is to assure that the best possible decisions are made and that action is taken in response to the needs of participants and colleagues under the circumstances that prevail.

In preparation for such circumstances the following guidelines are presented.

Decisions, in Case of Emergency:

The first response to an emergency situation or concern is in the hands of the individuals closest to the situation – usually the student, teachers, and administrators in the host school - recognizing that decisions are best made by the individuals closest to the situation where circumstances and options are best known.

Initial steps involve identifying the seriousness of the situation, determining decisions to be made and who is responsible for those decisions, and taking appropriate action given existing circumstances. Where necessary, services of the appropriate non-governmental or governmental agency should be sought.

Decisions are made by individuals in this order with each assisting the other in seeking to make the best possible decisions under the circumstances:

- Participant directly involved in the emergency situation

- Host school (administration and/or cooperating teacher)
- University/faculty member assigned to supervise student work
- Level I Supervisor serving as host country coordinator and/or placement director.
- UMM GST Program Director - Pamela Solvie

Sharing of information is on a 'need and right to know' basis. It is important that only those who need and have the right to know are informed in a timely and regular manner as circumstances allow.

- At no time will individuals associated with the program communicate with the media about cases of concern or emergency.
- Being informed does not presume the need to take action.
- At the same time, it is important that GST university/faculty and staff members be made aware of emergency situations. The Level I Supervisor (Host Country Coordinator) and/or GST university/faculty supervisor should be contacted immediately - or as soon as feasible - so they are informed and can offer assistance. These individuals will report to faculty and staff in the UMM GST office (320-589-6403, 320-589-6406), and together we will assist as best we can to assure the well being of all participants.

If the Level I Supervisor (Host Country Coordinator) and/or GST university/faculty supervisor are unavailable, do not hesitate to contact the UMM GST Program Director at any time in case of an emergency.

Issues that may arise at the time and given the situation (that may or may not be decided by the participant) include among others:

- Need to involve police and/or immigration authorities
- Participant privacy such as whether to notify parents or relatives

Emergency Situations

There are a number of emergency situations that might require prompt contact with the GST/ELTAP and Center for International Programs at UMM. Those emergencies may be categorized as having to do with problems related to an individual student, the entire

group or a calamity that has befallen the country or location in which the group is staying.

Individual Student Problems

Participants may become aware of problems and emergencies. The worst that could occur would be the untimely death of one of the student participants in a study abroad program. If you are with another participant when a problem arises or an emergency occurs, follow the emergency protocol identified above. You may need to seek the assistance of the establishment management in which our students are staying. Then make direct contact with the authorities. Also, you should make contact with the United States Embassy or consulate. And, of course, contact the Center for International Programs as quickly as possible. You should not directly contact the student's parents in the case of a death. That should be left to officials at UMM. The Center for International Programs will assist in whatever way possible for the arrangements to return the remains to the United States.

Other Student Problems

Belligerent, depressed or suicidal students require immediate attention. In a cause of belligerent students a GST/ELTAP supervisor will have a conversation with the student about the nature of the belligerency. If it is a discipline problem, appropriate warning will be given to the student about their conduct—if that effort fails, GST/ELTAP and Center for International Programs and will be contacted where efforts will be made to intervene on behalf of the supervisor. The supervisor is at liberty, if all other efforts fail to arrange for the student to withdraw from the program and be returned to the United States. It is up to the supervisor to determine if the belligerency of the student is of such a nature that it is disruptive to the entire program. Here again, the intent of the Center for International Programs is to back the faculty supervisor in the field.

If a student shows signs of depression, or more seriously, exhibiting suicidal behavior, the supervisor should be in contact with local health officials and GST/ELTAP at UMM. If the situation is critical, every effort will be made to get that student to a health care facility. If the situation persists, GST/ELTAP and the Center for International Programs will be contacted to arrange for the student to be returned to the United States.

If an entire group of students becomes ill, students should go to the nearest hospital or clinic for care. If the matter seems to be serious, contact GST/ELTAP and the Center for International Programs. If the

student or students cannot pay the bill, the Center for International Programs will make every effort to provide funds so that the supervisor may make payments.

Communication with GST/ELTAP and CIP

Either before departure or upon arrival in the country of destination, the supervisors will receive contact information to ensure most efficient and effective way to communicate with the GST/ELTAP and Center for International Programs.

Locate Health Facilities and GST/ELTAP students

Ascertain the location of the health care facilities of various kinds (physicians, nurses, social service personnel, dentists, etc). Related to this, again, to anticipate emergencies, the supervisor should locate the nearest American consulate or embassy, police station or religious facility—church, temple—synagogue or mosque.

Notify the American Embassy

Notify the nearest American Embassy or Consulate with your name and the duration of your stay.

Student Contact Information

The Center for International Programs will provide the supervisor with details such as addresses and telephone numbers and emergency contacts for each student.

Student Travel

Traveling apart from the study abroad group is acceptable, though it is important to underscore during orientation that students have a responsibility to inform the university/faculty supervisor, of their whereabouts and travel plans during the program.

Evacuation Procedures for Entire Groups

It may be necessary, on rare occasions, to evacuate an entire group in a study abroad program.

Host schools administrators and university faculty, supervisors will inform students of emergency evacuation plans. Each program will have worked out an emergency evacuation plan. Obviously, such plans are always subject to modification depending upon the circumstances in the field. Circumstances demanding this might be a calamity in the country such as a war, rebellion, other public unrest or an outbreak of some serious (communicable) disease. The emergency procedures typically would define the safest and most rapid point of departure from the country from the location where the students are lodged. In the most

dire emergencies, when departure is not immediately possible, the host school administrator and/or university faculty supervise, director should direct the students to either an American Consulate or Embassy, or a nearby religious center or health care facility.

Cultural Adjustment

Social Adjustments

As a foreigner, you will need to take the initiative to meet people. Just as you have an established circle of friends in the United States, students overseas also have established friends and habits. Don't be afraid to start a conversation and to pursue contact in order to meet new people.

Females should consult the cultural and travel books available about the possible differences in attitudes toward females overseas. Some countries are more chauvinistic, and women are sometimes unprepared to deal with these different styles.

Remember to use common sense when giving out your address or telephone number. If you are uncomfortable with someone, you may have a real reason to be. Although you want to meet and get to know people, you should remember that some people might not share in that innocent quest. It is wise to set up times and places to meet others rather than give out any personal information. For those living with a family, be sure to check with your host family before giving out their telephone number, address, or inviting guests over. Do not have overnight guests without checking with your roommate or host family first. In general, overnight guests are not appropriate with a host family.

Relationships

Please be aware that in any type of relationship, whether heterosexual or homosexual, you could end up with a sexually transmitted disease, AIDS, or possibly a pregnancy. This is not meant as a scare tactic but rather for you to realize that it can and has happened. Be sure that you know the person very well before developing a more intimate relationship and always demand that you both take necessary precautions.

Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Issues

Attitudes towards sexuality vary greatly from country to country. Some cultures are open about homosexuality, and strong gay communities exist in many cities. However, some cultures and peoples are intolerant of different sexual preferences, and strict taboos or laws

against such relationships may exist. We encourage you to find out how different sexual preferences are viewed overseas and where your support may exist, so that your time overseas can be as enriching as possible.

Participants with Disabilities

Many of the disability accommodations or services that are provided at U.S. universities may be unavailable or different overseas. Being in a completely different environment can also be stressful, and accommodations that you may not have needed at home may become necessary in an unfamiliar setting. As a result, you should arrange for any disability accommodations at overseas sites before you depart, and we encourage you to begin the process as early as possible. Receiving accommodations once you are abroad will be more difficult and may not be possible. Before you depart, you should be certain that you understand what arrangements are not available.

Logistics

Studying abroad is one of the most challenging and rewarding academic and personal experiences that universities offer students. Making the necessary arrangements is a big task since so many details need to be considered. Below are some of the things that students need to consider when planning for their study abroad experience.

Customs and Immigration

Upon arrival to and departure from your host country, you will be required to pass through immigration and customs. Immigration will check your passport and visa (if required) and customs may check your luggage and carry-on to ensure that you are following the import and export regulations of the country. Individual rules and regulations vary from country to country. You will also have to pass through customs and immigration when you return to the United States.

Travel while Abroad

Rail Passes

Many economy rail passes can be purchased only in the United States; therefore, you may wish to plan ahead. The International Study and Travel Center (ISTC) sell Eurail and a variety of country-specific passes.

Other Modes of Travel

Travel by bus is an inexpensive way to get around in most cities and most countries. On the other hand,

driving an automobile while abroad may be a more expensive and even risky mode of transportation. Traffic patterns and driving customs may be very different, possibly even dangerous in some parts of the world. In addition, insurance requirements or restrictions in some countries are costly or prohibitive, and your home policy may not cover you while driving abroad. The Center for International Programs does not recommend renting a car or driving while participating on a study abroad program (except as a part of the program sponsored activity).

Money

It is advisable to enter a foreign country with some local currency in hand. You can exchange currency for a fee at many local banks and at any major international airport in the United States and overseas. Some of your money should be carried in the form of traveler's checks (American Express traveler's checks are accepted usually without question) in U.S. dollars, which must then be converted into foreign currency at a bank or currency exchange office. Visa, MasterCard and American Express are accepted in most countries overseas and students can often withdraw funds through an ATM. You will need to obtain a Personal Identification Number (PIN) from your bank or credit card company to access your account overseas. However, ATM cards are not universally accepted, so it is important to bring both traveler's checks and credit cards. Always carry enough cash on you to cover an emergency (\$50 - \$1200).

Be careful with your money, especially in public transportation stations and while using the public transportation, and always take care in crowded areas. A money belt worn inside your clothing or a pouch worn around the neck is recommended for safekeeping. In public places purses should be tucked under your arm or carried in front of your hip, and wallets should be carried in the front pocket. You may want to carry all important documents (passport, credit cards, health information, traveler's checks, etc.) in this manner also.

Please keep in mind that wiring money can be expensive and is not always reliable. In a few locations, it is not safe to have a bank account or to wire money. Personal spending habits vary too greatly to state exactly how much you will need during your program.

Packing

Pack sensibly! Remember that you will be carrying your luggage yourself during the trip, often for long stretches

in airports and bus and train stations. Take only as much as you can carry easily by yourself. One way to measure what is easily carried is to pack everything you would like to take, pick it up, and walk around the block. If you are not comfortable doing so, you may want to re-evaluate what you have packed.

Take clothing that needs a minimal amount of care (this is especially important if you plan to do any independent traveling). Here are some suggestions to consider when you pack:

- What are the weather conditions going to be like in your host country while you are there? Take clothing that will allow you to be comfortable in the climate where you will be living and traveling.
- What sorts of activities will you be doing as a participant on the program you have chosen?
- What is the local custom for dress? Find out and dress accordingly. For instance, there are some cultures where shorts, jeans, and T-shirts are considered inappropriate in public. And please, do not take any items of clothing that have political, sexual, or derogatory printing, or which may prove offensive to your hosts. Do not forget that you are a guest in your host culture as well as an ambassador for your own country.

Communications

Telephone

Probably the best and most convenient way to call the USA is to use the USA Direct Services available with AT&T, MCI, SPRINT or another calling card. This service allows you to have a direct number to a U.S. operator, who will then connect your call and bill you on your international calling card. To obtain a card, contact your long distance telephone company of preference before your departure. Each company establishes its own rates for international calls.

Remember that there may be a significant difference between the time at your location while on the program and the time back home. Plan ahead with your friends and family so that you are not unexpectedly waking them up in the middle of the night. Cheap times to call long distance are frequently about the same in your host country as back home, but according to their time zone. Learn both the country and city telephone codes for the country where you will be visiting.

Email

While electronic mail is readily available throughout the U.S., accessing e-mail while abroad may be more challenging and in a few locations, virtually unavailable. There most likely will be charges for access to e-mail.

Mail

Sending and receiving mail while abroad may take longer than you are accustomed to in the U.S.

Electrical Appliances

Most American appliances are built to handle current at 110 volts, while the current in many locations around the world is 220 or 240 volts. If you plan to take any electrical appliances with you from the U.S. (e.g. hair dryers, alarm clocks, laptop computers, etc.), be sure to check a travel guide book to determine whether or not you will need an adapter plug and transformer to adapt your appliance to the local current and plug. The adapter will change the size/shape of the plug, and the transformer will change the voltage. This will help to save your appliance and the electrical system in your host country dwelling.

Laptop Computers

If you plan to take a laptop computer, check ahead to make sure that your computer is compatible with computers in the computer labs or the local print/copy shops. Otherwise, you may not be able to find a way to print from your disks. Do not forget to make sure that you have the correct adapter, transformers, and any other electrical equipment needed to run your laptop while abroad. Using the wrong voltage could be an expensive mistake. A surge protector is a must in countries with unreliable electricity. It is wise to purchase liability insurance for valuable possessions.

Creating a Positive Environment for the Study Abroad Experience

Basic Program Rules of Conduct and Expectations of Students

Over the years, the great majority of students have been excellent ambassadors for their study abroad programs. Some of the infrequent exceptions, however, have had a damaging impact on host families, agencies, and

other students in the program. The student code of conduct for the University of Minnesota is applicable for all students studying on a study abroad program. Please read and familiarize yourself with the student code.

Being a Good Ambassador

During your time abroad, you are an ambassador not only for your country and your university but also for the program. The good reputation enjoyed in the host countries by our programs is a tribute to your predecessors. It is because of these previous good ambassadors that so many families are eager to host students, so many agencies are willing to receive interns, so many host universities are willing to receive students, and that our programs are able to attract quality faculty and guest lecturers. Your program's future will in turn depend on the impression you create.

Some of the keys to creating a good impression are culture-specific. One of the best ways to learn more about your host country is to talk to people who have lived, studied, or visited there. Students who were on your program in previous years, faculty and staff who have lived or worked in your host country and international students from the country are all good resources for information and guidance.

Many of the keys to creating a good impression, however, transcend the individual host cultures. Two crucial words are *respect* and *commitment*. They are closely related, for true respect for your host family, your host agency or institution, and your program faculty and staff also implies a commitment to them. You need to keep their interests uppermost in your mind, and to remember that you are not entirely free to act any way you would like, despite American notions of individualism that you may carry in the deepest part of your being.

What do respect and commitment mean in practical terms? A few examples might be helpful. In a family, they may mean that you are willing to spend some time chatting, even when you really need the time for something else, or that you will forego a weekend trip with classmates because an important family event is taking place. In the classroom, they mean that regular attendance—and attentiveness—is essential. They also mean that persistence in the face of adversity is important and that you should request a change in your host placement only as a last resort. You have a responsibility to try your best to make relationships work out with your host family, roommates, faculty, staff, and others you interact with on your study abroad experience.

Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault

The University of Minnesota's sexual harassment policy is included with this handbook. If you feel that any faculty or staff, or anyone with supervisory responsibilities over you, has behaved in a manner inconsistent with the policy, please, inform someone immediately.

Local standards concerning what constitutes appropriate behavior may differ considerably from those in the U.S. In some countries, for example, women might experience suggestive catcalls on the street or rather aggressive advances by men in social situations. Sexual assault is illegal and unacceptable in all countries, although the degree of aggressiveness with which local authorities pursue violations varies greatly from country to country. In all locations, any attempt at forcible sexual advance, by anyone, should be reported immediately.

You can reduce the danger of sexual assault by exercising good judgment and taking some basic precautions. North American women are often stereotyped as being promiscuous, and study abroad participants sometimes find themselves in difficult situations that they could have avoided. In some countries, the concept of date rape is almost unknown and the general feeling may be that if a female goes home with a man she is willing to sleep with him, regardless of how many times she says no. Avoid putting yourself in such a situation.

Drugs

You are reminded of the following paragraph in the Release and Waiver form that you signed.

ILLEGAL DRUG USE. The purchase, possession, and/or use of illegal or unauthorized drugs during the entire period of the program, including free time, is strictly prohibited. U.S. citizens in a foreign country are subject to the laws of that country. The U.S. Embassy cannot obtain release from jail for a U.S. citizen and can only aid in obtaining legal assistance. Illegal activities place not only the individual but also the group and the program in jeopardy. The consequences of purchase, possession, and/or use of illegal or unauthorized drugs during the program include immediate expulsion from the program, loss of all course credit and full payment of the program fee.

The University of Minnesota, Morris takes this policy extremely seriously and assumes you will also. The prohibition on drug use, purchase, or possession is absolute, and the Center for International Programs will recognize no extenuating circumstances for violations.

Alcohol

The Center for International Programs expects moderation and good judgment in the use of alcohol. Drunkenness can seriously jeopardize student safety as well as damaging relations with host families or agencies or communities. Monitor carefully your approach to alcohol consumption; unfamiliar surroundings and the emotional strain of adjusting to another culture can sometimes contribute to misuse. Keep in mind that the alcohol content in foreign beers and beverages is often higher than American made drinks. Also, consider any change in altitude, as it will impact the effects of alcohol consumption. Patterns of alcohol abuse that affect adversely student safety, class attendance, academic performance, or relations with hosts can, if sufficiently serious, be grounds for expulsion from the program.

Early Withdrawal or Termination

The Release and Waiver form that you signed includes conditions, procedures, and refund policies in the event of early withdrawal or expulsion.

Student Grievances

Academic grievances are complaints brought by students regarding the provision of education and academic support services affecting their role as students.

Conclusion

We hope this information will help clarify your expectations and the expectations of your program administrators for a safe and fulfilling experience.

Websites

Safety

Association for Safe International Road Travel,
<http://www.asirt.org/>

Travel Advisories or Warnings

US State Department
Telephone (202) 647-4000
http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html

Fielding's Dangerous Places—a travel guide for risky countries

<http://www.comebackalive.com/df/dgrawait.htm>

British Foreign and Commonwealth Office

<http://www.fco.gov.uk>

Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/>

Health

Center for Disease Control, 1600 Clifton Road NE,
Atlanta, GA 30333, telephone: (404) 639-3311

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

CDC National Prevention Information Network, (800) 458-5231 or <http://www.cdcnpin.org>

International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers, 417 Center Street, Lewiston, NY 14092.
(716) 754-4883 for free information.

Other Web Sites

www.lonelyplanet.com

- traveler's guide; good sense of places US visitors travel regularly, view of where to go and not to go, etc.

www.cnn.com

- e.g., for news coverage of particular incidents

See also other newspaper web sites from around the world to gain other (non-US) perspectives on particular issues or incidents