

Old Dominion UNIVERSITY
Office of Study Abroad



FALL
2011

PRE-DEPARTURE HANDBOOK



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ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & SERVICES

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

The Old Dominion University values diversity and seeks talented students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, disability or status as a disabled or Vietnam Era veteran in the administration of its educational policies, programs, or activities, admissions policies and procedures, scholarship and loan awards, employment, recreational, athletic, or other university administered programs.

Questions or complaints regarding this policy should be directed to Pamela Jackson, Director of Equity and Diversity, Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, 121-A Spong Hall, Norfolk, VA 23529-0291, (757) 683-3141.

STATEMENT ON SAFETY & SECURITY ISSUES RELATED TO TRAVEL / STUDY

Safety and Study Abroad

Nothing in life is risk-free. There are risks to studying and living abroad just as there are risks to studying and living in the U.S. At Old Dominion University, we want you to have confidence in the safety conditions of the program of study abroad that you have selected, and we also want you to be aware of what you -- and we -- can and should do to minimize risks to your health and safety while abroad. Old Dominion University subscribes to "The Guidelines for Responsible Study Abroad," developed in 1998 by a task force of international educators. These guidelines contain sections for sponsors of study abroad programs, for participants, and for parents/guardians/families. The sections are reprinted in this handbook. Please read them and ask your family or friends involved in your decision-making to do the same.

The Office of Study Abroad has a number of additional resources that are available to you, including an excellent book published by NAFSA: The Association of International Educators entitled Study Abroad: A Parent's Guide, which contains a thorough discussion of safety issues (pp. 38-40).

For our part, the staff and faculty at Old Dominion University will do everything in our power to assure you that your experience abroad is as safe and rewarding as it can be.

Responsible Study Abroad: Health and Safety Guidelines

Program sponsors should:

- 1) Conduct periodic assessments of health and safety conditions for the program, and develop and maintain emergency preparedness processes and a crisis response plan.
- 2) Provide health and safety information for prospective participants so that they and their parents / guardians / families can make informed decisions concerning preparation, participation, and behavior while on the program.
- 3) Provide clear information concerning aspects of home campus services and conditions that cannot be replicated at overseas locations.
- 4) Provide orientation to participants prior to the program and as needed on site, which includes information on safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in the host country, dealing with health and safety issues, potential health and safety risks, and appropriate emergency response measures.
- 5) Consider health and safety issues in evaluating the appropriateness of an individual's participation in a study abroad program.
- 6) Either provide appropriate health and travel accident (emergency evacuation, repatriation) insurance to participants, or provide information about how to obtain appropriate coverage. Require participants to show evidence of appropriate coverage.
- 7) Conduct appropriate inquiry regarding the potential health and safety risks of the local environment of the program, including program-sponsored accommodation, events, excursions, and other activities, on an ongoing basis, and provide information and assistance to participants and their parents / guardians / families as needed.
- 8) Conduct appropriate inquiry regarding available medical and professional services, provide information for participants and their parents / guardians / families, and help participants obtain the services they may need.
- 9) Provide appropriate and ongoing health and safety training for program directors and staff, including guidelines with respect to intervention and referral, and working within the limitations of their own competencies.
- 10) Communicate applicable codes of conduct and the consequences of noncompliance to participants. Take appropriate action when aware that participants are in violation.
- 11) Obtain current and reliable information concerning health and safety risks, and provide that information to program administrators and participants.
- 12) In cases of serious health problems, injury, or other significant health and safety circumstances, maintain good communication among all program sponsors and others who need to know.
- 13) In the participant screening process, consider factors, such as disciplinary history, that may impact on the safety of the individual or the group.
- 14) Provide information for participants and their parents / guardians / families regarding when and where the sponsor's responsibilities end, and of the range of aspects of participants' overseas experiences that are beyond the sponsor's control. In particular, program sponsors generally:
 - a) cannot guarantee or assure the safety of participants or eliminate all risks from the study abroad experience;
 - b) cannot monitor or control all of the daily personal decisions, choices, and activities of

- individual participants;
- c) cannot prevent participants from engaging in illegal, dangerous, or unwise activities;
 - d) cannot assure that U.S. standards of due process apply in overseas legal proceedings or provide or pay for legal representation for participants;
 - e) cannot assume responsibility for the actions of persons not employed or otherwise engaged by the program sponsor, for events that are not part of the program, or that are beyond the control of the sponsor and its subcontractors, or for situations that may arise due to the failure of a participant to disclose pertinent information;
 - f) cannot assure that home-country cultural values and norms will apply in the host country.

Participants should:

- 1) Read and carefully consider all materials issued by the sponsor that relate to safety, health, legal, environment, political, cultural, and religious conditions in host countries.
- 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 is 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 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 staff 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 their 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 program staff informed of their whereabouts and well-being.

When appropriate, parents / guardians / families should:

- 1) Obtain and carefully evaluate health and safety information related to the program, as provided by the sponsor and other sources.
- 2) Be involved in the decision of the participant to enroll in a particular program.
- 3) Engage the participant in a thorough discussion of safety and behavior issues, insurance needs, and emergency procedures related to living abroad.
- 4) Be responsive to requests from the program sponsor for information regarding the participant.
- 5) Keep in touch with the participant.
- 6) Be aware that some information may most appropriately be provided by the participant rather than the program.

Security Issues

The Office of Study Abroad staff consults regularly with colleagues around the country who are involved in the administration of study abroad programs, with resident program directors and responsible officials of foreign host universities, with contacts in the U.S. Department of State and other governmental and non-governmental agencies, and other experts, including our own faculty, who keep well-informed on issues and events in the locations of our sponsored programs. Our ability to communicate almost instantaneously worldwide via fax machines and electronic mail enables us to obtain and share information quickly and accurately with colleagues in the event of an emergency at a foreign study site that may have repercussions for study abroad programs. In short, we use an effective system of consultation and consensus of informed opinion in making both proactive and reactive decisions concerning the safe operation of our programs.

For example, with regard to the threat of terrorism, in those sites where our students attend some courses in private facilities not attached to a host university, program directors work with local police and U.S. consular personnel in setting up practical security measures to prevent access by unauthorized persons. In other sites where students are registered directly at a host university, we exercise no control over security measures, but we also believe that these individual students are at relatively little risk because of the very depth of their integration into the local environment. All of our students are briefed about safety concerns during orientation programs and are reminded at times of heightened political tension about being security conscious in all of their daily activities.

We must all live with the fact that terrorism is an unfortunate reality. To succumb to the threat by reacting in fear may well be the objective that terrorists seek to achieve. Nevertheless, there are certain obvious precautions that U.S. American students abroad can take. Among these are the following:

- Keep a low profile and try not to make yourself conspicuous by dress, speech, or behavior in ways that might identify you as an outsider or a targeted individual.
- Avoid crowds, protest groups, or other potentially volatile situations, as well as restaurants and entertainment places where U.S. Americans are known to congregate.

- Be wary of receiving unexpected packages and stay clear of unattended luggage or parcels in airports, train stations, or other areas of uncontrolled public access.
- Report to the responsible authority any suspicious persons loitering around residence or instructional facilities, or following you; keep your residence area locked; use common sense in divulging information to strangers about your study program and your fellow students.
- Register upon arrival at the U.S. consulate or embassy having jurisdiction over the location of your study abroad program.
- Make sure the resident director, host family, or foreign university official who is assigned the responsibility for your welfare always knows where and how to contact you in an emergency. Provide them with your schedule and itinerary if you are traveling, even if only overnight.
- Develop with your family a plan for regular telephone or email contact so that in times of heightened political tension you will be able to communicate with them directly about your safety and well-being.

Note: The U.S. Department of State provides information for each country of the world on its website. Country listings include such information as the location of the U.S. embassy or consulate in the subject country, unusual currency and entry regulations, health conditions, and other useful information for travelers. You may also monitor the website for travel warnings or advisories for a specific country or region. Information from the State Department can be accessed from this website:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html

Please register your travel with the State Department's "Smart Traveler Enrollment Program" (STEP): <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENT

Final admission to the study abroad program is contingent upon maintaining the academic performance requirement of the program during the semester prior to participation. A GPA of 2.5 is the baseline standard for the Office of Study Abroad to consider your application. Exceptions may be made in some circumstances, however. Students are encouraged to present any evidence in their favor if their GPA is lower than a 2.5. Finally, the eligibility requirements of certain study abroad and exchange programs may be higher than a 2.5.

COST ESTIMATES FOR STUDY ABROAD

A student planning to study in a foreign country should, early in their preparation, consider the costs of the program in relation to the resources at their disposal. Most programs sponsored by Old Dominion are comparable in cost to equivalent time on campus. The cost of outside programs, where a student is paying all fees directly to another institution, will vary.

Preliminary cost estimates (budgets) for both Old Dominion-sponsored and non-Old Dominion programs are prepared on the basis of the best available information. The Office of Financial Aid uses these estimates as guidelines in establishing financial aid allocations to eligible students. The estimates can be used by non-aided students and their parents as guidelines for planning personal budgets. Please note that the OSA versions are intended to be comprehensive and attempt to list all currently projected expenses. Students should understand that some budget figures (airfare, food, etc.) may reflect estimates and will vary from individual to individual. The totals are also likely to differ somewhat with Financial Aid award calculations with respect to certain covered items.

It must be understood that the cost of spending time abroad is significantly affected by the individual student's budgetary habits and the fluctuations of currency exchange rates against the dollar. Students have different life styles as well as different personal resources and must adapt their standards of living abroad accordingly. Therefore, the bottom line of each student's actual expenditures abroad may be different, but all students should approach the prospect of living abroad with maturity and a sense of financial responsibility. These estimates should be considered **as fully adequate to cover all normal expenses and not as bare minimums**. In some categories, students can reduce costs by as much as 10-15% if they shop carefully or simply learn to do without. Reasonable allocations are listed for room and board, books and school supplies, transatlantic and local transportation, program required expenses, essential personal expenses, and cultural activities. No provisions can be made in a financial aid budget for major purchases of clothing or other incidental items, nor for weekend excursions or vacation travel.

FINANCIAL AID GUIDELINES FOR STUDY ABROAD

Students who qualify for federal, state, or institutional aid through Old Dominion may apply these awards toward study abroad provided they are enrolled in a program of study administered by Old Dominion, or an agreement is reached with the sponsoring institution. Students must earn a full semester's worth of credits (12 credits for undergraduate students, 9 credits for graduate students) in order to receive a full semester's worth of financial aid.

Students must apply for financial aid as though they were attending classes on the Old Dominion campus. Please note that students filing early will have a better chance of all paperwork clearing before they leave for their program. The priority deadline for the FAFSA is February 15th.

It is very important that the student communicates with the Financial Aid Office early in the semester prior to departure. The Financial Aid Office is located in 111A Rollins Hall (683-3675). **Wantonia Gee** (wgee@odu.edu) and **Margaret Strachan** (mstracha@odu.edu) are the designated financial aid contacts for students going abroad.

Each student should check with the Financial Aid Office to verify the proper procedures to be followed and the anticipated disbursement dates. Financial aid will first be credited to the student's account and applied to program charges. If funds in excess of what is owed are awarded, a refund check will be issued to the student.

If a student wishes to apply for financial aid for the academic year following study abroad, he/she may be required to apply while overseas. Some Spring program participants may be able to file before they leave the country, but all full academic year participants must file by mail from abroad after January 1st.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND BENEFITS

Students who receive any kind of scholarship or who plan to use veteran's benefits while studying abroad must notify both the Office of Study Abroad and the Financial Aid Office upon application.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

All participants in ODU-sponsored exchange programs will be billed by Old Dominion University for tuition and fees in the amount set for each program. Payment for the Fall and/or Spring semesters will be due by the date indicated on the bill. This date will generally be during the first week in August for the fall semester and the first week in January for the spring semester. **It is up to the student to arrange for payment of their tuition bill!**

Students who are participating in outside programs should request that the bill(s) for the program fee (tuition and sometimes room and/or board) be sent to the Office of Study Abroad. The Office of Study Abroad will pay the bill to the appropriate source and put the full amount of the billing (including international wire transfer fees if applicable) on the students' account. **Once again, it is the responsibility of the student to arrange for payment of their bills!**

Payment not received by the due date may result in exclusion from the program. Exceptions will be made only under the most extraordinary circumstances. If a student is forced to withdraw from the program prior to departure from the U.S., only the unexpended portion of the fee is refundable. As a general rule, no refunds are possible for either voluntary or involuntary withdrawal from the program after departure from the U.S.

NAMING A POWER OF ATTORNEY

All students who receive financial aid are required to fill out a Power of Attorney form prior to their departure. Naming a family member or trustworthy friend as Power of Attorney will allow them to conduct financial transactions such as signing promissory notes and cashing checks while students are abroad. This form can be attained in the Office of Study Abroad and must be notarized by a notary public. A copy should be left in the Office of Study Abroad and the original should be filed in the Financial Aid Office along with the address and phone number of the person who will be Power of Attorney. Students who do not receive financial aid are encouraged to name a Power of Attorney as well. This can be useful if any financial transactions need to be made while you are abroad.

Most banks have a notary public, and there is often a notary at the Information Desk of Webb Center or in the Public Safety Office on 49th Street.

WITHDRAWING FROM A STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM

Both the Office of Study Abroad and the Financial Aid Office must be notified in writing of withdrawal from a study abroad program. If a student applies for financial aid with the intention of studying abroad and then does not go abroad or withdraws prior to the end of the summer, semester or academic year, the student's financial aid must be adjusted.

ACCOMMODATION

Housing arrangements vary in Old Dominion-sponsored study abroad programs. Information and application forms are supplied to students in accordance with the timetable and procedures of each host university and program. For some programs, room and board costs are billed by Old Dominion. In other cases, students are responsible for all housing costs, including deposits, and must make payment directly to the designated person at each institution. Students who are participating in homestays may be asked to make payment directly to their host family. Students are subject to all regulations in effect at the host institution, including those governing housing.

Students who wish to have on-campus housing at ODU upon their return from abroad need to contact the Office of Housing (housing@odu.edu) to arrange for accommodation. It is the responsibility of the **STUDENT** to fulfill all housing requirements by the appropriate deadlines.

STUDENT CONDUCT

As a guest in a foreign country, it is extremely important that your behavior is in concordance with the laws and the customs of the host country as well as with the policies and regulations of the host institution where you are studying. Both the host university and Old Dominion University may take disciplinary actions in connection with violations of their rules and regulations.

Regular attendance and following culturally appropriate norms are critical to the success of an academic study abroad program. As a representative of Old Dominion University in an academic environment, you should act respectfully toward program administrators, faculty, and host nationals, etc. Regular class attendance is strongly encouraged, although it may not be expected in some cultures. Keep in mind that classroom behavior in an American university can be somewhat different from that of your host university. Observe what the norms are by watching other students.

Note: If you are involved in an illegal activity in a foreign country, the U.S. government cannot offer you any protection. In particular, you should not become involved in political activities or demonstrations. Additionally, penalties for conviction on drug charges can be severe. Should you encounter legal difficulties, however, contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate for assistance. The U.S. consular officer can provide you with a list of local attorneys and contact your family or friends. Consular officials cannot intercede with local authorities on your behalf (see section entitled "U.S. Embassies and/or Consulates").

ACADEMIC PROCEDURES

TRANSFER CREDIT EVALUATION FORMS

Individual academic departments at Old Dominion are responsible for determining exactly which courses taken abroad will be accepted as transfer credit and whether the courses fulfill major or other requirements. To complete the Transfer Credit Evaluation form, you must consult with the **chief undergraduate advisor** for the department under which the selected course falls. **This form must be filled out prior to your departure for study abroad -- there is no guarantee that courses which were not pre-approved will be accepted for transfer credit!**

Example - If you are planning to take a European History course at Leicester University, you must make an appointment to see the departmental advisor in the History department. This is true whether or not you are a History major! Once you show the advisor the course description, s/he will determine the equivalent course at Old Dominion and sign off on the Transfer Credit Evaluation form.

Certain departments require students to submit their work for evaluation and approval upon their return from study abroad. Before you leave Old Dominion, be sure that the departmental advisor explains exactly what the department's standards are concerning the proposed course.

Although your assigned academic advisor may not be authorized to sign off for acceptance of courses taken while abroad (remember – this should be the chief departmental advisor), you should meet with this person to discuss your plans and how they will affect your degree completion.

On most study abroad and exchange programs, registration for courses takes place only after you have arrived at your host institution. For this reason, all students should make every attempt to have at least 2-3 “back-up” courses approved in case their first choices are not available.

Finally, please contact the Office of Study Abroad (by phone, fax, regular mail, or email) with a final listing of the courses you are taking while abroad.

REGISTRAR

The Office of Study Abroad and the Registrar's Office exchange information regularly on study abroad program enrollments and make every effort to insure that you are properly registered for your program. For our purposes, you will be enrolled through an artificial course and section number for a full load during the term(s) that you are abroad. This course will always show up on your transcript as IDS 400 (IDS 500 for graduate students). This course is a non-graded, zero-credit course which holds your place as a full-time student at the university.

NUMBER OF COURSES TAKEN WHILE ABROAD

Study abroad students must fulfill Old Dominion University's academic enrollment requirements. A full-time load is at least the equivalent of **12 credit hours** each semester. We often encourage study abroad students to take the minimum number of hours. Easing your academic burden usually enables you to take advantage of getting involved with extracurricular activities and weekend travel, an important part of your experience. Some programs (particularly exchanges) may not allow you to take over 12 credit hours without paying additional fees – please see the Study Abroad Advisor if you have questions about this.

Students should also note that 3 credits at a foreign university does not necessarily equal 3 credits at Old Dominion. There is an equivalency system in place for translating foreign credits into the U.S. American system. **If you are unsure as to how many classes you need to take for a full-time load, do not assume anything – ask the Study Abroad Advisor!** If you are studying in Australia, do not assume that you need to take the same number of classes as your friend who is studying in England. Every country (and even different universities within a country at times) assign credit differently!

Note for Students Studying in Europe: Many European universities are in the process of converting to the **European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)**. If the university you are attending assigns ECTS values to their courses, you should be aware that Old Dominion will divide the ECTS points in half to assign credit. Therefore, a full-time load for a single semester is 24 ECTS points or 12 ODU credits.

GRADES

Students abroad must earn the equivalent of a grade of “C” or better for their credits from each study abroad course to transfer. Courses for which students receive a grade of “C-” or below will not be transferrable to Old Dominion. If you are attending an institution with a different course credit and/or grading system, an equivalent system will be established. Because study abroad courses appear as transfer credits, your grades will not be displayed on your Old Dominion transcript. Keep in mind, however, that graduate and professional schools may require a copy of your foreign transcript which will show these grades. Therefore, you should always strive to do your best by completing assignments, attending class, and taking required tests and exams.

Students may sometimes audit courses during study abroad, but these courses will not show up on their Old Dominion transcript.

POST-PROGRAM EVALUATION AND FINAL TRANSCRIPT

It is important to be sure that the registrar of your study abroad program or of your host university has been instructed to send your final transcript to **Office of Study Abroad, Old Dominion University, Attn: Study Abroad Advisor, Spong Hall 212, Norfolk, VA 23529-0093** (not to the ODU Registrar). If possible, you should request your own copy of the transcript as well. You must also take steps to ensure that all of the courses that you take will appear on your transcript. (This is particularly important if you study in more than one faculty or are completing an early assessment for the Fall term at a British university.)

It is always a good idea to keep a copy of your transcript in your personal files. Once the Office of Study Abroad has your transcript, it is evaluated for the appropriate number of transfer credits. Courses which do not show up on the Transfer Credit Evaluation will not be awarded transfer credit. Once your credit has been loaded into the student system, your study abroad transcript will be sent to the Admissions Office to be kept in your official student file.

Please note that it may take some time for transcripts to arrive from abroad (up to several months for some countries) and to be processed onto your transcript. When you return to campus, check periodically with the Study Abroad Advisor to verify that your transcript is being updated correctly. **Do not assume that your credits will be loaded automatically! You must be proactive and ensure that your transcript has arrived and that all courses taken abroad have been approved!**

PRE-REGISTRATION

Being away from campus during pre-registration week can sometimes present frustrations for the study abroad student. With careful advance planning and coordination with your advisor, however, most students are able to pre-register with success. Nevertheless, while the Office of Study Abroad can offer the following suggestions and guidelines, we cannot guarantee foolproof results. It is the responsibility of the student to be pro-active about pre-registration!

Students can now register themselves online through the LEOONLINE system. You must have your PIN number with you to do this! (If you have never used LEOONLINE, your PIN is defaulted to your 6-digit birthdate until you change it to a secure code.) If you have access to the Internet while you are abroad, LEOONLINE may be the easiest way to register and to avoid the "middleman." Students may also arrange to have a friend or family member register them through LEOONLINE. To do so, this person will need your PIN number, so be sure that it is a person you trust!

<http://www.leonline.odu.edu>

An alternative method is for you to contact the Office of Study Abroad with your course requests prior to the start of registration. The Study Abroad Advisor will send an email to all students with email access when the schedule is available on the ODU webpage (early October for Spring, early March for Summer and Fall). Students should review their options and email their requests to Patti Thorner (pthorner@odu.edu) well in advance of the start of registration. Students should be sure to include all relevant information for each course (call number, department, course number, name of course, building and room number, instructor), as well as 1-2 back-up selections in case first choices are not available.

Students who do not have access to email or to the Internet need to make sure that they provide the Office of Study Abroad with their contact information early in the semester so that a hard copy of the Schedule Book can be sent to you as soon as it is available.

Note: If there are any restrictions placed on your registration, you will not be able to register for classes for the semester you return to ODU. It is your responsibility to take care of any restrictions on your registration. All students will have an **advising hold** on their account. You should discuss this with your academic advisor prior to the start of your program to discuss procedures for lifting this hold. Some advisors will lift if for you in advance while others will require you to contact them from abroad to “discuss” your plans for the next term.

Also Note: If you have access to the internet you can check LEO periodically for course schedules and registration information.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

STUDY ABROAD RECRUITMENT

Every year, the Office of Study Abroad asks students who have studied abroad to assist with recruitment on campus upon their return. Students talk about studying abroad to prospective applicants enrolled at Old Dominion. We may ask you to speak specifically to students interested in the programs or locations where you studied. You can also step forward and volunteer for this most worthwhile activity yourself in our office.

GRADUATING SENIORS

If you are planning to graduate at the end of your study abroad semester/year or if you plan to take a leave of absence before resuming your studies in the U.S., make sure that you apply for graduation **BEFORE** leaving the U.S. Contact: Office of Records and Registration 757-683-4425 or graduate@odu.edu).

Deadlines for undergraduate students to apply for graduation are as follows:

May Graduation:	second Friday in November
August Graduation:	second Friday in April
December Graduation:	third Friday in July

Students who are going abroad in their final semester of study should realize that they may have to delay graduation to allow for processing of their transcript and credits. For example, a student studying abroad in Spring 2011 may not graduate in May 2011, as their transcript may not be available in time for clearance. An August 2011 graduation is a possibility, but some international systems will take longer and students should not count on graduating until December 2011. **Please realize that it is impossible for the Office of Study Abroad to predict the exact date when your study abroad transcript will be available.**

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Important issues for non-U.S. citizens studying abroad from Old Dominion:

- **Health Insurance:** Old Dominion University requires that all international students have adequate medical and hospitalization insurance.
- **U.S. Immigration Status:** Before leaving the U.S., be sure to bring all of your visa documents to the Office of International Students and Scholar Services to be reviewed by the foreign student advisor. It is important to be sure that your papers are in order for your return to the U.S.
- **Permanent Residents (Green Card Holders):** If you are a permanent resident of the U.S. and plan to be away from the U.S. for more than twelve consecutive months, please consult the INS at least one month prior to departure to ensure your permanent resident status.
- **Application for Practical Training:** It takes approximately three months from the time of application to issue permission for practical training in the U.S. You should be aware that regulations on optional and curricular practical training require that you maintain a valid F-1

status and be physically present in the U.S. for the academic year immediately prior to your application for training. Your participation in an ODU-approved study abroad program will not override the rule requiring this physical presence!

- **Taxes:** If you plan to be away from the U.S. during the Spring semester, consult with the foreign student advisor about your tax situation. In all cases, foreign students must file U.S. income tax returns.

OFFICE OF STUDY ABROAD SERVICES

CONTACT WITH THE OFFICE OF STUDY ABROAD

Normally, all contact with the Office of Study Abroad should be channeled through the main number **(757) 683-5378**. In a real emergency outside normal operating hours, you may contact Campus Police at **(757) 683-4000**. Please be sure to indicate clearly the nature of your emergency, a telephone number at which you can be reached, and a fixed time when you will be available to receive a return phone call.

Please contact the Office of Study Abroad as soon as you have your permanent address at your host university.

Director of Study Abroad (Steve Bell):	sdbell@odu.edu
Associate Director of Study Abroad (Mike Dean):	mdean@odu.edu
Study Abroad Coordinator (Beth Parker):	b2parker@odu.edu
Study Abroad Advisor (Rachel Spence):	rspence@odu.edu
Office Manager (Patti Thorner):	pthorner@odu.edu

NEWS FROM HOME

While you are abroad, the Office of Study Abroad will send advance registration materials and other information and announcements as the need arises. Students with access to email will receive this information electronically. **Please remember – we cannot keep in touch with you if we do not know how to contact you!**

YOUR RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES

Upon your return from abroad, the Office of Study Abroad will request your participation in a “re-entry conference” designed to help you evaluate your experience, explore opportunities for graduate fellowships and work opportunities abroad, and adjust to the problems of having been away from home for a semester/year. This program allows you to share your tales of excitement, and possibly sorrow, with others like you! The semester following re-entry is often the first time that students really begin to feel the impact that the foreign experience has made on their lives. In addition, attendance at the re-entry conference is vital to ensure that you understand procedures regarding the evaluation of your study abroad credit.

CONTACT ADDRESSES AT OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

For those students who may have access to the internet and email while abroad, it is recommended that you record the names and email addresses of your advisors at Old Dominion prior to departure. The ODU Faculty/ Staff directory can be found online at <http://www.odu.edu/oduhome/directories.shtml>.

Some Old Dominion addresses and phone numbers which may be useful to you while you are abroad include the following:

**Study Abroad
(Office of International Programs)**

Dragas International Center
Norfolk, VA 23529-0093
(757) 683-5378

Financial Aid Office

Rollins Hall, Room 111A
Norfolk, VA 23529-0093
(757) 683-3683

Office of the Registrar

Rollins Hall, Room 116
Norfolk, Virginia 23529-0093
(757) 683-4425

Housing and Residence Life

4603 Elkhorn Ave., Suite 1208
Norfolk, VA 23508
(757) 683-4283

College of Arts and Letters

9000 Batten Arts and Letters Bldg.
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, VA 23529
(757) 683-3925

College of Business and Public Admin

Room 2004 Constant Hall
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, VA 23529
(757) 683-3520

College of Engineering and Technology

Room 214, Kaufman Hall
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, VA 23529
(757) 683-3787

College of Health Sciences

Room 2114 Health Sciences Building
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, VA 23529
(757) 683-4960

College of Sciences

Room 145, Oceanography and Physics
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, VA 23529
(757) 683-3274

Darden College of Education

Room 120, Education Building
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, VA 23529
(757) 683-3938

The Honors College

Room 2000, Batten Arts & Letters
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, VA 23529
(757) 683-4865

Women's Center

Suite 1000, Webb Center
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, VA 23529
(757) 683-4109

TRAVEL INFORMATION

TRAVEL PREPARATIONS

In most cases, students attending Old Dominion-sponsored programs are responsible for making their own travel arrangements. Students should consult their program advisor for additional guidelines as necessary. In addition, students should provide the Office of Study Abroad with a copy of their itinerary once travel arrangements have been made.

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS

While you will probably spend a big chunk of your budget on airfare, as a student you may be eligible for some discounts. Many variables affect the cost of your trip, including the season, the airline, the length of stay, and the desired departure date. Some general tips for finding a low fare include:

- * shop around
- * do not plan to fly on a weekend unless the school or program requires it
- * make your reservation as early as possible
- * be sure to tell the travel agent that you're a student

You can also take advantage of low-cost student rates on regularly scheduled international carriers through the following companies:

CI Travel:	888-461-0022
Student Universe:	www.studentuniverse.com
STA Travel:	www.statravel.com ; 1-800-781-4040

Some of these companies also offer one-way tickets for approximately half the price, which gives you maximum flexibility, particularly if you want to travel at the end of your study abroad term.

The best way to find out about your many options is to shop around online. There are many websites that you can use to search a multitude of airlines and options: www.expedia.com, www.travelocity.com, www.kayak.com, www.orbitz.com, and more.

If you are a wandering spirit with the world as your destination, there are a few options for world travel tickets. Several airlines offer "Around the World" fares that allow several stops within a limited period of time. As an alternative, Council Travel's point-to-point student or youth fares can be used to customize your itinerary and give you benefits like extended validity and free stopovers.

No matter where you fly, plan ahead—that will save you the most money and, especially around the holidays and spring break, help guarantee you get the flight you want.

Three words of caution when making travel arrangements:

- 1) Before purchasing a ticket from an unknown agent or organization, check out its reputation with the local Better Business Bureau to find out how long the firm has been in operation and its past

record of service.

- 2) While considerable money can be saved by using smaller low-cost airlines, these companies will frequently observe strict baggage allowances of 20 kilograms (44 pounds). Consider the fine print on baggage allowances and other fees (change fees, cancellation fees, etc) to make sure your "cheap" fare is actually a bargain. If you do not intend to travel light, be advised that the going rate for excess or overweight baggage could be up to \$150. You should check the airline's policy in advance to see if your baggage allowance will be determined by size or by weight, or both. Almost any discount travel has restrictions, however. Wherever you purchase your ticket, be sure that you study the fine print.
- 3) Some travel agents or companies offer trip cancellation insurance. Prices for this service can vary greatly, but could be worth checking if you think there is a chance you may have to cancel your flight reservation at the last minute. This insurance will only apply to medical emergencies, and cannot be used if a student simply decides at the last minute not to participate in the program.

JET LAG

Try to relax and save energy on long flights. You have probably heard of "jet lag," which is as much a physical as a psychological phenomenon. Your body, through long years of habit, has become acclimatized to functioning in accordance with its own physiological clock based on a particular daily cycle. When you arrive at your study abroad location, that clock is going to be automatically out of sync with the local cycle because of the time difference. If you are arriving in Luxembourg at noon, for example, your body, which is still functioning in accordance with the cycle to which it was accustomed in the EST zone, will be telling you that it is just about time to be waking up, while the sun outside your aircraft window will be telling you that the day is half over. It will take your body a few days to adjust (some bodies take longer than others), during which time you can expect to feel quite tired and run down. This fatigue, in conjunction with the strange surroundings, may produce a temporary sense of depression. Be prepared for that during the first couple of days; it is a perfectly normal reaction and your body will adjust.

ARRANGING TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

If you will be living in college or university accommodations, you will be notified in advance of the date when your room can be occupied. If you intend to arrive earlier than the date of occupancy, then you would be well advised to make temporary housing arrangements before leaving home. The International Office at your host institution can usually offer suggestions for safe and affordable places to stay in the area.

LUGGAGE AND SHIPPING

First pack everything you thought you had to take. Next try carrying your luggage around the block and up a flight of stairs. Finally, repack and take unnecessary items out!

If you feel there are things you must have which do not fit into your airline limit of luggage, you have two options:

- 1) Pay for excess luggage on your flight (First, make sure you can take excess luggage); this may be cheaper than air freight, and the things do arrive when you do. Do not forget, however, that you will have to get it all from the airport to your university!!!
- 2) Have packages sent to you via post office parcel post (surface/sea mail). Packages can be insured. The cost for all packages will depend upon the weight and destination. For specific rates contact your local post office or call the Postal Answer Line (215-332-3201, ext. 317). Surface/sea mail parcel post will usually take six to eight weeks to arrive.

Note: Beware of shipping a trunk by boat or air freight. The first takes as long as parcel post. For either option you will have to pay dearly for storage and delivery from the port of entry to your university.

TIPS FOR PACKING

The best advice is to travel light. For your emotional comfort, you may want to pack one or two items which you feel are personal necessities, but by and large you will find excessive amounts of clothing, gadgets and books to be an unnecessary burden. With regard to bulky clothing items, take only the essential coats and sweaters that are appropriate for the climate. You can acquire other, inexpensive items in your host country that will have the advantage of fitting in with current trends in fashion and which will not make you stand out as a foreigner.

Use this list as a general guideline to pick and choose what is essential for you. Be sure to consult the specific information provided for your program as well as recommendations from former participants. Remember—most students say they brought about twice as much clothing as they actually needed!

Suggested Packing List (will vary according to location and nature of program):

Clothing and Shoes

rainproof walking / hiking shoes
dress shoes
shower shoes
underwear
shorts (may not be appropriate in certain cultures)
skirts / pants
sweater / sweatshirt
poncho / rain jacket
light jacket
bathing suit
hat
1-2 dress outfits
winter coat, hat, gloves (depending on location)

Linens (if not provided by program site)

bedsheets (be sure to check size)
towel / washcloth
hostel sleepsack (folded-over sheet which is hemmed on the side)
* A pillow and blanket can be purchased abroad—these items can take up valuable packing space

Miscellaneous

watch
camera and film
Swiss Army knife
flashlight
address book
journal
paperback books (to read and trade with friends)
guidebooks, maps
day pack or small, compressible knapsack
stuff bags or plastic storage bags
laundry soap and line
sewing kit
umbrella
luggage lock and tags
battery-operated alarm clock
batteries
small locks for backpack or locking luggage to overhead train racks
U.S. cookbook, measuring cup
photographs of friends and family
extra eyeglasses / sunglasses
contact lenses and solution

Medicine and Toiletries

prescription medication (and a copy of the Rx.)
toothpaste and toothbrush
soap and shampoo
comb and brush
sunscreen
moisturizer
cosmetics
deodorant
first aid kit
contraceptives and condoms
aspirin
tissues
tampons / pads
razors / blades

Gift Suggestions for Host Family

professional-quality photos of your hometown
hand-made crafts / jewelry
calendars with U.S. scenery
U.S.-style paraphernalia (things from Disney World, NBA, NFL, etc.)
music CD's
items with the ODU logo
cookbook with American recipes
non-perishable specialty foods

Documents

passport and visa(s)
copy of Transfer Credit form
traveler's checks
tickets and rail passes
hostel membership card
credit card(s)
international calling card
health insurance card
* It is always a good idea to pack photocopies of important documents.
* Purchasing a money belt or underarm pouch is generally a good idea for traveling securely with important documents.

BRING THIS HANDBOOK!!

ELECTRONICS

American electrical appliances will usually be of no use to you. For example, the standard electric current in Europe is 220 volt/50 cycle. The electrical appliances you may be taking along (e.g., hair dryers, razors) will probably be made for 120 volt/60 cycle. The standard electric converters will work for appliances up to 1600 watts, at least for a while, but good ones are expensive; don't be fooled by cheaper versions because they will burn up your appliance and perhaps cause a fire. Because of the voltage difference, American appliances often short, even with an adaptor and transformer. It may be to your advantage to buy electrical appliances on-site. Be sure to determine what the voltage will be in your country of study, as well as what size prongs are used.

Do not take expensive jewelry or luxury items which would mark you as a worthwhile target for a casual thief or pickpocket. Carry your airline tickets, travel documents, credit cards, travelers checks and cash in a money belt or underarm pouch while traveling.

Finally, a common question is whether there will be access to computers while studying abroad, and if not, whether one should take along a laptop. The use of laptops and wireless internet in universities abroad is not nearly as widespread as it is on the Old Dominion campus, although it is becoming more and more common in many countries around the world. Internet cafes and university computer labs are pretty common and information on accessibility should be available from the university or program provider. If carrying a laptop with you, check to make sure that the voltage requirement is a range that includes the voltage of the host country. For example, Japan's outlets are 100 volts, so a laptop with a voltage range of 100-240 would work with a plug adapter. Also, be sure to check the Hertz usage (most countries are 50-60 Hz). This website will give you an overview for most countries:

<http://www.kropla.com/electric2.htm>.

LAUNDROMAT / DRY CLEANING FACILITIES

Your program's location will determine whether or not you have access to these services. In many locations, people must hand wash their laundry. You can prepare for this by packing detergent that dissolves easily in water (liquids are usually best), rubber gloves, a sturdy clothesline, and clothespins. It is also easy to purchase what you need on site. When laundromat and dry cleaning facilities are available they may be much more expensive than in the U.S. Keep this in mind when packing.

In some study abroad locations, students may be housed with a host family. Laundry arrangements in these situations can vary. In some places, the host family takes care of washing all laundry except delicates (underwear, etc.) which the student is responsible for hand washing on his or her own. In other locations, students may have access to laundry facilities within the home. If you are uncertain as to the arrangements, check with your program director or politely ask your host family.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

The best way to learn about a city is to walk. Walking at different hours of the day and by different routes leads to new and unexpected discoveries at every turn. A year spent walking the streets of a city will give you knowledge of its physical layout and an understanding of the life of its people which probably cannot be matched by most residents. Study abroad participants should remember, however, to watch the traffic lanes and patterns carefully at street crossings. In some countries, vehicles travel in the left lane as opposed to the right lane. You must be very attentive when crossing streets in places where you are unfamiliar with traffic patterns. Caution should also be used when walking about an unfamiliar city. Both males and females would be well-advised not to walk alone at night, and to draw as little attention to themselves as possible when exploring a new area.

In many study abroad locations, local mass transportation is used to a far greater extent than it is in the U.S. Such transportation may take the form of buses, metros, or taxis. Most guidebooks will provide you with detailed information regarding where and how to access such transportation, and schedules can usually be picked up at the local tourist information office. Many study abroad participants report that being forced to explore the local transportation system (rather than depending on their own car, as in the U.S.) provides them with yet another opportunity to immerse themselves in a new culture.

RAIL PASSES

Wherever your travels may take you (particularly in Europe), chances are trains will be a primary mode of transportation. Rail travel is usually the most affordable and simplest way to get from place to place, and it is one of the best ways to make new friends.

If your railway plans are restricted to Europe, you should consider one of the many Eurail pass options. The choice of most travelers under 26 is one of the Youth Passes which allow unlimited second-class travel for the duration of your pass. If you want a bit more comfort, or if you are 26 or over, first-class Eurail passes are available. If you do not plan to use your pass frequently, you may want one of the Eurail Flexipasses. Information about the different pass options and how to purchase can be found online at www.eurail.com/home. **NOTE: Eurail passes must be purchased in the U.S., so plan your travels before you leave home.**

ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS: YOUTH HOSTELS

Youth Hostels are cheap and reliable sources of accommodation in many parts of the world. Hostels generally provide meals or cooking facilities and are much sought after, so it is advisable to book in advance. The YWCA and YMCA both operate international hostels. If you want to have access to International Youth Hostel Federation hostels, you must first become a member (\$25 annually). This can be done by contacting the American Youth Hostel Association (AYH National Office, P.O. Box 37613, Washington, D.C. 20013; tel. 202-783-6161 or 202-783-0717). Their webpage is: www.iyhf.org. You might also want to purchase the annual IYHF Handbook and Guide to Budget Accommodation (2 vols. \$13.95 each) for listings.

DOCUMENTS

PASSPORT

A passport is an official identification document issued by governments to their own citizens. If you are a U.S. citizen, you may apply for a passport at any office of the U.S. Passport Agency, or at one of the several thousand federal or state courts or U.S. post offices authorized to accept passport applications. The Office of Study Abroad has instruction sheets and information can be found online at <http://travel.state.gov/passport/>.

All study abroad participants are required to have a passport which is valid for at least six months beyond their expected date of return!

All **new** passport applications must be made in person at a local post office: The closest location is the Post Office at 38th Street and Colley Avenue, Norfolk, VA 23508. Please call the post office (757) 624-9472) to schedule an appointment. Before you apply, gather all of the following:

- 1) A completed DS-11 application form (found online).
- 2) Proof of U.S. citizenship (original or certified copy of your birth certificate, previous U.S. passport not more than 8 years old, or naturalization papers).
- 3) One piece of identification bearing your signature and your photo (such as a driver's license).
- 4) Two identical photographs (2 inches square on a white background) taken not more than six months before the application date. You may buy 2 photos for at the ODU Card Center or at most drug stores like Walgreens.
- 5) Credit card, check or money order made out for the \$135 (payable to Department of State).

After your application is processed, your passport will be mailed to you. Processing can take anywhere from two to eight weeks, so be sure to allow for plenty of time, particularly if you will need to apply for a visa!

If you are **renewing** your passport by mail, your old passport will serve as both proof of citizenship and identification; do not forget to enclose it with a DS-82 application for renewal.

It is important to remember that your passport is your most important legal document while you are outside of the U.S. In some countries it is required that aliens carry their passports at all times. Be sure to guard it carefully. ***Do not travel away from your study abroad site, and particularly away from your host country, without your passport.*** For day-to-day travel around your study abroad site, however, carrying a photocopy of your passport may be sufficient. Check with the on-site advisor of your program to verify local requirements. For the sake of security, it is always a good idea to leave photocopies of your passport in the Office of Study Abroad and with your family. This will make it easier to obtain a new passport should you lose yours while traveling.

VISAS/ENTRY DOCUMENTS

A visa is official permission granted by the authorities of the country where you will study or travel which allows you to enter and remain in that country. Some countries require visas to enter as a tourist, while others require them only for extended stays. Visas are not usually required for tourism in Eastern and Western European countries, but there are frequently different regulations concerning study and work.

A student visa is required to enter many of the countries where Old Dominion sponsors study abroad. The visa itself is usually a stamp in your passport rather than a separate document. Visas are issued at the country's embassy in the U.S. or at consulates located in major U.S. cities. It is imperative that you fully complete all documents and submit them exactly according to instructions. You will work with the appropriate embassy or consulate that serves your legal residence here in the U.S. The Office of Study Abroad can provide you with information regarding how to obtain the appropriate visa application. BE SURE TO APPLY FOR A VISA WELL IN ADVANCE OF YOUR DEPARTURE DATE!!!

In some cases, even though a visa is not required, appropriate acceptance letters and financial documentation are required for entry into the country (e.g. United Kingdom, Ireland). The Study Abroad Advisor or your program advisor can provide you with instructions concerning what documents will be needed.

If you plan to travel outside of your host country, you may need additional visas; check requirements with the consulates of specific countries. The State Department website can also provide valuable information regarding entry requirements for various countries: <http://travel.state.gov>.

DOCUMENTS FOR NON-U.S. CITIZENS

If you are not a U.S. citizen, you should consult the nearest consulate of the country of your citizenship and the nearest consulate of the country where you plan to study. The procedures which you will follow may be different from those for U.S. citizens. It is important to initiate this process as soon as possible in order to assemble documents and allow time for lengthy procedures. U.S. permanent residents must check with the U.S. Immigration Service concerning regulations for reentry into the U.S. It is particularly important to verify procedures for those who contemplate being outside the U.S. for more than one year.

International students must also see the International Student Advisor and obtain a signature on visa documents to permit re-entry to the U.S.

PERSONAL CONCERNS

ABSENTEE VOTING

Before you may vote from abroad, you must be registered to vote at home. Check with your local city or town hall to obtain information on procedures for voting by absentee ballot. Remember to make note of your party, ward, district, and voter registration number. If necessary, your absentee ballot can be notarized at a U.S. embassy or consulate abroad.

INCOME TAX INFORMATION

Attention Year-Abroad and Spring Semester Program Participants: If you have earnings which require you to file federal and state income tax returns, you must remember that you will be out of the country between January 1 and April 15. Persons temporarily living abroad may normally request an extension on the deadline for filing federal income tax. The extension usually is until June 15. Because you can eFile, you may be able to complete your taxes online from abroad. You may need to make arrangements with your family to send you the necessary documents (W-2, 1098-T, etc.). **The Office of Study Abroad cannot provide this service.**

POWER OF ATTORNEY

If your signature will be needed for any official or legal documents during your absence, you should make arrangements for "power of attorney" to be held by an appropriate person to act on your behalf. You can do this by writing out in detail the specific duties which that person will be permitted to execute. Take this to a notary and have it notarized. Most banks have notaries, and a notary is also available at the Public Safety Office on 49th Street as well as at the front desk of Webb Center.

Attention financial aid recipients: All Old Dominion study abroad participants who receive financial aid are required to complete a standard Power of Attorney form (see page 10). Copies of this form can be obtained in the Office of Study Abroad. Once this form has been notarized, a copy should be filed in the Office of Study Abroad and the original in the Financial Aid Office. The Financial Aid Office also needs to be informed as to the appropriate address where financial aid information should be sent (promissory notes, loan checks, etc.) while you are abroad.

PROPERTY INSURANCE

Student travelers may want to purchase insurance to cover at least partially any loss of money due to trip interruption or cancellation, as well as loss of baggage either while traveling or living in residence halls. Many homeowners' insurance policies contain a clause about their coverage extending worldwide. Normally a copy of the police report filed at the time of loss or theft will be required by the insurer before any claim will be considered.

GENDER ISSUES

In certain study abroad sites, women have had a hard time adjusting to attitudes they encounter abroad, both in public and in private interactions between men and women. Some men openly demonstrate their appraisal of women in ways that many women find offensive. It is not uncommon to be honked at, stared at, verbally and loudly approved of, and in general, to be actively noticed simply for being a woman, and in particular, a U.S. American woman. Sometimes the attention can be flattering. It may also become very annoying, and potentially even cause great anger. Indigenous women, who often get the same sort of treatment, have been taught, either explicitly or through experience, how to ignore the attention. Many U.S. American students have found that hard to do.

Eye contact between strangers or a smile at someone passing in the street, which is not uncommon in the U.S., may result in totally unexpected invitations, and some women feel that they are forced to stare intently at the ground when they walk down the street. You will have to learn what the unwritten rules are about what you can and cannot do. Women can provide support for each other; former students suggest that you get together several times early in your stay overseas to talk about what works and what doesn't for dealing with the unwanted attention. U.S. American women are seen as liberated in many ways, and sometimes the cultural misunderstandings that come out of that image can lead to difficult and unpleasant experiences.

Needless to say, all of this may make male-female friendships more difficult to develop. Be careful about the implicit messages you are communicating, messages you may not intend at all in your own cultural context. Above all, try to maintain the perspective that these challenging and sometimes difficult experiences are part of the growth of cultural understanding which is, all things considered, one of the most important reasons you are studying abroad.

RACIAL ISSUES

Minority students' reports are varied, from those who felt exhilarated by being free of the U.S. American context of race relations, to those who experienced different degrees of curiosity about their skin color and/or ethnicity. The staff at the Office of Study Abroad is willing to discuss individual concerns or to put you in contact directly with minority students who have studied in your particular country.

GAY, LESBIAN, AND BISEXUAL ISSUES

It is important to be aware of the laws pertaining to homosexuality in other countries as well as the general attitudes of the populace toward the gay, lesbian, and bisexual members of their community. More information is available in the Office of Study Abroad. Referrals can also be made to talk to students who have been abroad. The Office of Study Abroad has a topical bibliography for further information on issues and resources pertaining to gay, lesbian, and bisexual travel and study abroad.

SAFETY

Just as in the United States, most study abroad locales have their share of crime. Listed below are some guidelines intended to assist you in living safely during your study abroad term.

DOCUMENTS

- Take good care of passports, travel tickets, and any other important documents. Always keep copies of these documents in a separate location.
- When traveling, keep your passport with you at all times, preferably in a money pouch that you can wear on your body. You should also keep proof of citizenship (an expired passport, ISIC, or copy of your birth certificate) and proof of identity (any type of photo ID), as well as a note of your passport serial number, in a separate location and a copy in your file in the Office of Study Abroad. This will expedite the administrative process in the event that your passport is lost or stolen. At your program site, it is advisable to carry photocopied information with you at all times. When cashing travelers' checks, you will need your passport.

PERSONAL SAFETY

- Do not stand out! While "safety in numbers" is a good rule to follow, traveling as an identifiable U.S. American group of students will attract attention and possibly cause problems. Try to fit in with the surroundings and be "invisible."
- Whenever possible, speak in the local language.
- Report suspicious events immediately: Contact the study abroad coordinator or resident director at your study abroad campus if you observe suspicious persons within the premises of your educational environment.
- Careless talk: Do not be free with information about other students. Be wary of new people. Do not give out your or anyone else's address or telephone number to strangers. Do not give away your class or field trip schedule.
- Official contact: Your study abroad coordinator or resident advisor may have an agreement with you as far as leaving the campus site and staying with others. Please let someone know if you are leaving for a vacation.

GENERAL TRAVEL ADVICE

- Do not plan trips within or near a war zone or in an area where the inhabitants are unsympathetic to a U.S. cause.
- In large cities and other popular tourist destinations, avoid possible target areas such as places which are heavily frequented by U.S. Americans (e.g. American banks, American schools and churches, U.S. embassies and consulates, American-style eating places).
- Avoid using American logos on your belongings or clothing, especially athletic wear.
- Keep all valuables on your person in a discreet place, preferably stowed away in a pouch that hangs around your neck and under clothing.

- Try to avoid arriving late at night to cities with which you are not familiar, and take along a reliable guidebook that lists resources and hotels/hostels.
- It is always preferable to travel with another person. It is not advisable to sleep on a train if you are traveling alone.
- Do not agree to watch the belongings of a person whom you do not know.
- Do not borrow suitcases, and ensure that nothing is inserted into yours.
- In all public places, remain alert.
- Remember that hitchhiking can be as dangerous abroad as it is in the U.S.

MONEY

- Carry only the amount of money you need for your daily expenses.
- Deposit excess cash in a bank.
- Keep your list of traveler's check serial numbers separate from your traveler's checks.
- Take good care of bank, credit, and calling cards.

HANDBAGS/PURSES/BAGGAGE

- Never leave these unattended and make sure that they are locked.
- If the item has a shoulder strap, wear it by crossing the strap over your body.
- Do not put valuables in the exterior pockets of book bags or backpack or in bags which are open at the top.
- Travel light!

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual assault is a tragic experience that can unfortunately take place abroad. While we hope you will be safe and happy during your time overseas, we feel it is important to address the possibility and provide you with an outline of the resources available to you. We want to emphasize that we are here for you and will do whatever we can to support you in your time of need.

If you are a victim of sexual assault while studying abroad, there are international services available to help you. We recommend that your first and primary contact be your study abroad provider's (and/or host university's) on-site coordinators. They are there to support you, especially during emergency situations, and have an understanding of the resources available to you locally. In addition, you are required to carry comprehensive medical insurance, as either offered through ODU or through your provider, which should include emergency medical coverage. Please check your policy for contact information and coverage in the event of such an assault. We also advise that you contact the Office of Study Abroad at ODU so that we can assist you from our end, and help coordinate any additional actions or support you may need. Many of the services available at ODU are also available to you remotely. For example, the Women's Center (<http://studentservices.odu.edu/wc/>), Health Center (<http://studentaffairs.odu.edu/healthservices/>), and Counseling Services (<http://studentaffairs.odu.edu/counseling/>) can often provide support.

Furthermore, the University of Minnesota has compiled a list of international sexual assault response centers, which is available online at http://www.international.umn.edu/travel/assault_handbook.pdf. While this list is not exhaustive, and more appropriate resources may be available to you, this does provide useful information in the terrible event of a sexual assault. Regardless of where you turn, we hope you recognize you are not alone and will seek support.

OTHER POINTS

- Be street wise. Avoid deserted areas and exercise caution in crowds.
- Avoid impairing your judgment due to excessive consumption of alcohol.
- Be aware that pickpockets exist and tend to prey on people who look lost or who do not seem to be paying attention.
- Find out which areas are considered to be unsafe by the local people and avoid them.
- Do not leave valuables unattended.
- **For female travelers** who may be more likely to encounter harassment, uncomfortable situations can usually be avoided by taking the following precautions:
 - Dress conservatively; while short skirts and tank tops may be comfortable, they may also encourage unwanted attention.
 - Avoid walking alone late at night or in questionable neighborhoods.
 - Do not agree to meet a person whom you do not know in a non-public place.
 - Be aware that some men from other countries tend to mistake the friendliness of American women for romantic interest.

MONEY

BUDGETING

The overall cost of living abroad can sometimes be higher than at home because you are in an unfamiliar environment and are confronted with an almost endless array of entertainment possibilities and attractions. It is important to keep in mind that the host students with whom you will be studying are all managing to survive and even to enjoy life on fairly limited means. Everything you can learn from your new peers will help you to conserve your own funds. The following suggestions may be helpful:

- Make both weekly and daily budgets and stick to them. Learn the value of the money wherever you are and be consistently alert for special student rates and discounts. Be careful not to fall into the habit of equating one unit of a foreign currency with one U.S. dollar!
- Take advantage of less expensive alternatives wherever possible. Cook for yourself, use refectory or cafeteria meals over restaurant meals, and save even moderately priced restaurant outings for special occasions. Unless you are using a collegiate dining service, never purchase breakfast which you can easily prepare for yourself. Always try to take your main meal in the subsidized collegiate refectories, either at noon or before you leave for the day. This will leave you with a smaller, less expensive evening meal or snack to purchase or prepare for yourself.
- Plan your entertainment and recreational activities around the availability of free, inexpensive, discounted, and university-sponsored events.
- Plan to shop in street markets or major chain supermarkets, and avoid specialty shops and convenience stores that add a 20-30 % mark-up. Part of your experience abroad should include learning how to get the best available value for your money. Try to put off making major purchases as long as you can.
- When you travel, stay in hostels or in modest bed-and-breakfast accommodations as opposed to hotels. An International Youth Hostel Federation membership card is valid for student hostels abroad (<http://www.hiusa.org/>)
- Safeguard your traveler's checks and cash. Be sure to record the numbers of the traveler's checks which you have cashed.
- If you are in Europe, take advantage of the exemptions for overseas visitors (non-European Union countries) from paying the value-added tax (VAT) on goods, but not on services. The trouble is worthwhile only if you are buying expensive items, and only certain stores participate in the program. Ask the store for a certificate of exportation when you make your purchase (they will need to see your passport), and present the certificate and the goods to the customs officer for validation when you leave the country. You must take the goods out of the country within three months of their purchase. Lines at airports are long so leave plenty of time. Once you depart, you can claim a refund of the tax from the store by mail -- if possible, obtain it in U.S. currency. You cannot reclaim VAT for goods you do not carry out of the country with you.
- Join organizations that have subsidized travel like church choirs, sports teams, or international student organizations.

BANKING AND CURRENCY EXCHANGE

Individual circumstances will define the way you handle your financial affairs, and you should investigate the safest and most convenient way to carry and exchange money in your country of destination. In some regions, the most convenient way to take money with you is to carry traveler's checks. These may be purchased in foreign currency or U.S. dollars from any number of companies, such as American Express, Barclay's, Citicorp, Thomas Cook, etc. Traveler's checks are safe because they are refundable if lost, but you must have a record of the check numbers lost in order to have them replaced. **Therefore, write down all traveler's check numbers and put them in a separate place from the checks.** As a precaution, leave a list of the numbers with someone in the U.S.

In many parts of Europe and throughout the world, ATM machines are readily available, and many students use their bank cards from home to withdraw money in the local currency. This option will often provide a better exchange rate than changing traveler's checks at a bank. If you have a credit card or bank card from home that is on the CIRRUS network, you should be able to withdraw money from bank machines in Europe. Be aware of service charges both at the ATM you are using abroad and your home bank. Taking \$5 out of an ATM may cost you \$10 in fees.

It may also be helpful for you to arrive with some of your host country's currency in various denominations already in your pocket. This will save you the trouble of having to exchange your dollars immediately and will let you pay for local transportation and other incidentals. Foreign currency may be ordered in advance from a local U.S. commercial bank for a small service charge, or may be purchased on demand at large U.S. banks in major cities. Money can also be easily exchanged at the airport when you arrive in most countries. Be certain to carry enough money (in the form of traveler's checks, host country currency, or a bank draft) with you for at least a month after you arrive.

Most students wait until their arrival in the host country to establish a bank account. The reason for this is not only to let you become acquainted with the various banks, their services and incentives, but also to allow you to familiarize yourself with the different types of bank accounts and find the branch office closest to where you will be during banking hours. If you already know a particular bank and have the exact address of a convenient branch location, then you may want to write in advance to see if you can open an account before you arrive so that funds will be waiting for you. You will need to send a reference from your current bank.

Remember: Each time you exchange money from one currency to another, be it dollars to francs or pounds to marks, you lose money. Try not to cash more money into a particular currency than you think you'll use. The fee for changing money is generally about one percent, although this can vary widely. Banks give the best rate of exchange and have lower service charges. Currency exchange services at railways and airports often have poor rates and high fees. Hotels and restaurants generally offer the worst rate of exchange and have the highest service charges.

TRANSFERRING MONEY FROM HOME

You may wish to consult your own commercial bank to find out about the various ways to send money abroad. There are several different ways, including purchasing an international bank draft in foreign currency and wiring money from one bank to another. The foreign currency bank draft is the easiest way to transfer funds, and the service charge is not excessive except for small amounts. It must be drawn on a major bank and should be made out for deposit to your account. You take the draft with you, and once you have opened an account with it at a convenient branch of the named bank, you can have subsequent drafts sent to you (they should clear within seven to ten days). Inter-bank wiring follows the same principle and is easier in an emergency, but carries a higher service charge. It is also possible to wire money to a Western Union Agency, or possibly to a country's post office through Western Union. This service usually takes two business days. In addition, Western Union now offers a "Will Call" service that allows you to pick up money at a Western Union office within minutes of receiving an order from the U.S. The sending party can place the order using a credit card by calling 800-225-5227. The drawback to the convenience and speed of the "Will Call" is that it is expensive, costing between \$25 and \$50 to wire any amount under \$500.

CREDIT CARDS

Credit cards make foreign currency transactions easy and they are invaluable in a financial emergency. ***Do take a credit card along, but use it wisely.*** Plastic can be dangerous because it is easy to overspend, service fees and interest charges can be costly, and the loss or theft of a card can inconvenience you, especially while traveling.

You should advise your bank and/or credit card company that you will be traveling abroad before you leave so they don't "deny" any charges from abroad. It is also important to obtain a PIN number for your credit card so that you can use it for a cash advance (from an ATM machine) in the case of an emergency.

HEALTH CARE

GENERAL

All students should have a complete physical, gynecological, and dental check-up as well as an eye examination before departure. For obvious reasons, it is best to do as much preventive health maintenance as possible before leaving for an unfamiliar environment.

AIDS AND INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

AIDS, the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, is a viral disease which breaks down the body's immune system and leads to infections that may be fatal. Even though there are no known vaccines to prevent AIDS, there have been several medical breakthroughs recently in drugs and assistance in treating AIDS, both in the U.S. and abroad.

The AIDS virus can be transmitted in four general ways:

- 1) Through intimate sexual contact with an infected person when semen, blood or vaginal fluids are exchanged.
- 2) Through infected blood or blood products.
- 3) Through contaminated needles or any other HIV-contaminated skin piercing instruments.
- 4) From an infected mother to her infant before or during delivery, or possibly while breastfeeding.

The AIDS virus is not transmitted through casual contact nor spread by insects and insect bites.

When traveling abroad, be aware that some countries may require HIV antibody tests for entrance into the country. This is a test for antibodies to the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) that causes AIDS. Check with a country's local consulate to see if HIV antibody testing is required. If so, learn about the test and its ramifications from a trained counselor. If you decide you want to be tested, do so only at a center that provides pre- and post-test AIDS counseling. Allow two weeks for the testing process and consider getting tested twice - first anonymously (which allows you the privacy to decide what you want to do if the result is positive), then again for a doctor's certificate if needed.

Living overseas may present greater risks to those who test positive for the HIV virus. Many overseas locations have limited medical facilities that cannot monitor the progress of such infections. Therefore, if you believe you may be infected, knowing your HIV status will help in planning your trip.

While many countries such as the U.S. and parts of Europe have mandatory screening of donated blood to check for the AIDS virus, not all do. Travelers should inquire at the local Red Cross office or at the U.S. embassy about safe sources of blood overseas. In some locales, ascertaining the availability of HIV-screened blood and blood products may be difficult. Because of obvious uncertainties, consider these precautions:

- People traveling together can form a "walking blood bank" in which members know each other's blood type and agree to be possible donors for each other. This, of course, presumes that all of those participating are HIV negative.
- If you are injured or ill while abroad, avoid or postpone any blood transfusion unless it is absolutely necessary. If you do need blood, try to ensure that screened blood is used.
- If driving, wear a seatbelt and drive carefully.
- If you are sexually active, **use a condom**. Take a supply with you as conditions of availability and purchase may be limited, and conditions of manufacture and storage may be questionable.
- Take good care of yourself while traveling. Do not wear yourself down, watch out for excessive exposure to heat, drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration, and get plenty of sleep.

OVERSEAS INJECTIONS

Here in the U.S., we may take for granted disposable equipment such as needles and syringes. Be advised that some foreign countries will reuse even disposable equipment. In some countries, if injection is required, you can buy needles and syringes and bring them to the hospital for your own use. Avoid injections unless absolutely necessary. If injections are required, make sure the needles and syringes come straight from a package or have been sterilized with chemicals or by boiling for twenty minutes. When in doubt, ask to see how the equipment has been sterilized. Caution regarding instrument sterilization applies to all instruments that pierce the skin, including acupuncture, tattooing, body piercing, and dental work.

The Center for Disease Control recommends that diabetics or other persons who require routine or frequent injections should carry a supply of syringes and needles sufficient to last their stay abroad. Be aware, however, that carrying needles and syringes without a prescription may be illegal in some countries. Make sure that you carry a letter from your doctor explaining your need for the instruments.

FOOD AND WATER

In areas where chlorinated tap water is not available, or where hygiene and sanitation are poor (most of Western Europe, for example, would be excluded from this category), travelers are advised that only the following may be safe to drink:

- 1) beverages, such as tea and coffee, made with boiled water;
- 2) canned or bottled carbonated beverages, including carbonated bottled water and soft drinks;
- 3) beer and wine.

Where water may be contaminated, ice (or containers for drinking) should also be considered contaminated.

If no source of safe drinking water is available, tap water that is uncomfortably hot to touch is usually safe. After allowing such hot water to cool at room temperature in a thoroughly cleaned container, it can be used for brushing teeth as well as for drinking.

Food should be selected with care to avoid illness. In areas of the world where hygiene and sanitation are poor, the traveler should be advised to avoid unpasteurized milk and milk products, such as cheese, and to eat only fruit that has been peeled personally by the traveler.

Since the sources of the organisms causing travelers diarrhea are usually contaminated food or water, precautionary measures are particularly helpful in preventing most serious intestinal infections. However, even when people follow these general guidelines for prevention, they may still develop diarrhea. Diarrhea is nature's way of ridding the body of noxious agents; intestinal motility serves as the normal cleansing mechanism of the intestine. Most cases of diarrhea are self-limited and require only a simple replacement of fluids and salts lost in diarrheal stools. Fluids that are readily available, such as canned fruit juices, hot tea, or carbonated drinks, may be used. Travelers may prepare their own fruit juice from fresh fruit. Iced drinks and noncarbonated bottled fluids made from water of uncertain quality should be avoided. It is strongly recommended that the traveler consult a physician rather than attempt self-medication if the condition is severe or does not resolve itself within several days, if there is blood and/or mucus in the stool, if fever occurs with shaking chills, or if there is persistent diarrhea with dehydration.

For more information, contact the International Travelers Hotline of the Center for Disease Control, 404-332-4559 or check out the CDC webpage: www.cdc.gov.

PRESCRIPTIONS

If you have to take medicine containing habit-forming or narcotic drugs with you, you should carry a doctor's certificate attesting to the prescription. Label all medicines. Prescriptions from doctors in the U.S. are usually not refillable at foreign drugstores. If you take any medication regularly (including contraceptives), consider taking along a large enough supply to last the length of your stay. You should also verify with a local physician or your family doctor what kinds of medication are available in your particular country that would serve as generic substitutes for your regular prescriptions. If you wear contact lenses, consider taking extra solution and a special sterilizing unit which can be used overseas as well as a spare set of lenses or glasses.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Old Dominion University is committed to offering and supporting safe, academically rigorous and diverse international education abroad programs and services for ODU students, faculty and staff.

The University requires that all students, faculty, administrators and staff participating in international education abroad initiatives -- whether of a credit or non-credit nature -- carry complete international health insurance coverage for the duration of their program.

Students, faculty, administrators and staff should contact the Office of Study Abroad to facilitate compliance with the [Education Abroad International Health Insurance Policy](#).

Also Note: Students studying in Australia are required to pay the mandatory **Overseas Student Health Charge** in order to receive a student visa. More information on this fee is available in the Office of Study Abroad.

IMMUNIZATIONS

If you are planning to travel to developing countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East, it would be a good idea to consult a qualified physician as to what immunizations are necessary for which countries. **It is recommended that every traveler have primary vaccinations and boosters to protect against tetanus, diphtheria, measles, mumps, rubella, and polio.** It may also be a good idea to pack copies of your immunization records when going abroad.

Information regarding immunizations may be obtained at the Health Services Office of the Norfolk Health Department (683-2732) or from the Centers for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov).

MEDICAL CARE ABROAD

During weekends or post-program travel, you may find yourself in a variety of unfamiliar and possibly remote locations. If you need medical attention and are not fluent in the language of the host country, try to seek out an English-speaking doctor. When it comes to health matters, you will not want to take any chances on a breakdown in communications. American embassies and consulates, many large travel agencies, and a number of large hotel chains abroad will have lists of English speaking physicians. Some agencies have also been established to assure that travelers needing medical care (e.g. with a pre-existing medical problem) have access to a reasonable, preset fee with reputable physicians fluent in English. One such agency in New York is the International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers (IAMAT) located at 736 Center Street, Lewiston, NY 14092 (716-754-4883). In addition, some credit cards, such as American Express, offer assistance and provide services to U.S. travelers needing medical attention.

The medical insurance that you purchased (either through ODU or a program provider) has an emergency assistance phone number that can assist you in finding appropriate medical care worldwide. Have your insurance card available when you call. If you purchased the MEDEX insurance through ODU, the emergency phone number is 1-410-453-6330. While this is a USA number, you may call it collect 24 hours a day. Companies typically will have country-specific phone numbers as well, and you should look this number up and keep the number handy while you are abroad. MEDEX numbers can be found here: <http://www.medexassist.com/groups/ContactUs/EmergencyResponseCenter.aspx>.

LEGALITIES AND COPING WITH EMERGENCIES

AIRPORT IMMIGRATION

Upon arrival, you will go through immigration. This will occur either before or after you have collected your luggage. Be sure to carry your passport, and any other documents that you have been told you will need for immigration, in your carry-on luggage.

Remember that admission to the country is entirely at the discretion of the immigration officer, and it can be useful to be polite and to dress neatly. The interviewing immigration officer, who determines the length of stay to be authorized and stamped into your passport, will ask you how long you plan to remain in the country, and what your purpose is for travel.

CUSTOMS

After going through immigration, you will go through customs. The customs officials have the right to search your belongings, and you are responsible for unpacking and repacking your goods. It is advisable to declare any goods subject to duty taxes, and it is strongly advised that you not attempt to bring in any drugs unless you have a certificate from the doctor who prescribed them. If caught with illegal items, you may be sent to prison and/or deported.

U.S. CUSTOMS

Contact the U.S. Customs Office in advance of your departure for further information and obtain a copy of their publication "Know Before You Go" (available online at http://www.cbp.gov/linkhandler/cgov/travel/vacation/kbyg/kbyg_regulations.ctt/kbyg_regulations.pdf). You should also get and save sales slips for any large purchases you make and intend to take home.

Aside from certain restrictions on the quantity of tobacco products, wine and spirits you may bring back into the U.S., you will have a \$400 duty-free allowance on personal items after which you must pay 10% on the next \$1000 worth of goods.

THE LAW ABROAD

Keep in mind that you are subject to the laws of the country in which you are studying. Legal protection and personal rights that we take for granted in the U.S. are left behind when you depart. The principle of "innocent until proven guilty" is not necessarily a tenet of legal systems abroad.

PENALTIES FOR INVOLVEMENT WITH DRUGS

Despite repeated warnings, drug arrests and convictions of American citizens overseas are still on the increase. If you are caught with either soft or hard drugs overseas, you are subject to the local laws. Penalties for possession or trafficking are often the same. If you are arrested, you will find the following:

- Few countries provide a jury trial.
- Most countries do not accept bail.
- Pre-trial detention, often in solitary confinement, may last months.
- Prisons may lack even minimal comforts—bed, toilet, washbasin.
- Officials may not speak English.
- Physical abuse, confiscation of personal property, degrading or inhumane treatment, and extortion are possible.

If convicted, you may face one of the following sentences:

- Two to ten years in most countries.
- A minimum of six years hard labor and a stiff fine in many countries.
- The death sentence in some countries.

U.S. EMBASSIES AND/OR CONSULATES

The Bureau of Consular Affairs of the U.S. Department of State publishes useful information about travel and residence abroad. Two are of particular interest, *A Safe Trip Abroad* and *Living Abroad Tips*. These are found online: http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1747.html and http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/living_1243.html.

It is recommended that U.S. citizens residing abroad for any extended period of time register with the local U.S. Embassy or Consulate. US Embassies and Consulates worldwide provide services to U.S. citizens abroad. Some of these include:

LEGAL ADVICE

If your passport is lost or stolen, notify local authorities and the American Embassy at once. After an investigation determining identification, the embassy will issue you a three-month temporary passport.

If you are arrested and/or detained abroad, consular officials can visit you, inform you of your legal rights, and provide you with a list of reliable local attorneys and physicians. Consular officers protest, both orally and in writing, any violations of the prisoner's legal or human rights. They visit the prisoner as often as needed during the pre-trial period and at regular intervals thereafter, and also provide humanitarian assistance. For example, the consular officer insists that the prisoner receive needed medical and dental care and adequate food and clothing. Finally, a consular official tries to insure equal treatment under national laws during all phases of the legal proceedings against you.

Consular officers cannot provide certain services. For example, they cannot post bail, give legal advice or

recommend a specific foreign lawyer, “spring” a U.S. citizen from jail, or interfere in an arrested person’s relationship with his or her lawyer.

HEALTH PROBLEMS

In case of illness or accident, embassy personnel can make sure you are in an approved hospital, check on the fairness of billing procedures and explain your payment options. For smaller problems, the embassies provide English speaking doctors and dentists in various areas. ***Remember, adequate health insurance coverage is your responsibility.***

MONEY

While officially prohibited from furnishing cash or loan money, embassy personnel can suggest possible sources of financial assistance. They may also get in touch with someone back home for money for you and deduct the cost of getting in touch with that person when the money arrives.

SPEAKERS BUREAU

If you enjoy talking to people about the U.S. and feel that you might like to be a “private ambassador,” you may wish to register with the Embassy Speakers Bureau. You will be asked to speak at groups interested in the U.S. Your local travel expenses may be paid for providing this service.

DUAL NATIONALITY

Different countries have different laws concerning citizenship. Some countries may still claim you as a citizen of their country if you were born there, if one of your parents is a citizen of that country, if you are married to a citizen of that country, or if you are a naturalized U.S. citizen. If any of these apply in your circumstances, be sure to clarify your status with that country’s embassy or consulate before you leave. If you want to terminate any such previous citizenship, you will need to consult with the State Department.

OFFICE OF OVERSEAS CITIZENS SERVICE

Should your family need to contact you while you are traveling (e.g. after the program is over), emergency assistance is available through the Citizens’ Emergency Center of the Office of Overseas Citizens Services (OCS) operated by the State Department’s Bureau of Consular Affairs. To contact the OCS from within the U.S., call 1-888-407-4747. From outside the U.S., call 1-202-501-4444. They can, for example, transmit emergency messages from your family, provide protection in the event of arrest or detention while abroad, transmit emergency funds to destitute nationals when commercial banking facilities are not available, etc. It is required that you provide the Office of Study Abroad and advisable to provide your family with an itinerary so that in an emergency, they can give the State Department some idea where to begin looking for you.

Please register your travel with the State Department’s “Smart Traveler Enrollment Program” (STEP): <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency.

COMMUNICATION

ADDRESSES ABROAD

Every effort is made to provide you with your foreign residential address and telephone number before you leave the U.S. In some cases, however, circumstances simply make this impossible. In this case, you will need to let your family and friends know the official program address and/or your residential and email address shortly after arrival. Once you are settled, please send your address to the Office of Study Abroad as well.

ACCESS TO TELEPHONE / COMPUTERS

At your study abroad site and in your residence or homestay, you may have restricted or no access to certain amenities to which you have become accustomed. You may have to share a telephone with an entire dormitory or use a public phone to make calls. You might also have limited access to television and computers. If this is the case, you will hopefully learn to appreciate the benefits of participating in a less technologically oriented society. Should you have concerns over what facilities and services will be available to you, be sure to discuss this with your advisor or past program participants.

In the last several years, students have been able to purchase a prepaid cell phone in the host country. These are cheap options for making local calls to friends and host families, but beware of high costs for international calling.

While email/facebook/skype can be efficient ways to maintain necessary contact with family and friends, beware of using email extensively as a "lifeline" to home. Time spent in the computer lab or internet café could be time spent exploring your new home and making friends with your hosts. Many students also report re-discovering the pleasures of "snail mail" and post cards during their time abroad.

INTERNATIONAL TELEPHONE

Direct dial calls are less expensive than operator-assisted station-to-station calls, which are in turn less expensive than person-to-person calls. You can contact the international operator for the current rates and discount time periods. Should you wish to make a direct-dial call to the U.S., simply dial the access code for the country from which you are calling plus the U.S. country code (always "1") followed by the appropriate US area code and local number.

CALLING CARDS

You may want to obtain an additional calling card on your parents' account (as long as they are willing to have your calls on their phone bills). It is often cheaper to use a calling card and to be billed in the U.S. for an overseas call. Be sure to obtain dialing instructions for international calling. For example, with an AT&T USA Dial Direct service, you access a U.S. operator with the published codes and charge the call to

your AT&T card or make the call collect. AT&T issues a pocket directory with the dialing codes for each country connected to this service.

TIME ZONE

When making phone calls to or from the U.S., keep in mind that there will be a time difference. England is 5 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time (EST); most western European countries are 6 hours ahead of EST; most parts of Australia is 10 hours ahead of EST; Japan is 14 hours ahead of EST; Mexico is 1 hour behind EST. Should your friends, for example, decide to give you a call in France at 9:00 p.m. EST, they should be aware of the fact that you have probably long since been in bed since it is 3:00 a.m. there!

Please note: Not all countries switch to daylight savings time simultaneously. Therefore, there will be one or two weeks when the time differences listed above are not accurate. Also note that some countries do not switch to daylight savings time at all.

Practical Information

WORK ABROAD

Working while you are on a study abroad program can be a very satisfying personal experience and can give you a better opportunity to meet people from different walks of life outside the “ivory tower.” The major disadvantage is that time spent working will be taken away from study and leisure time which, in a new and unfamiliar environment, is likely to be in short supply. Obtaining a work visa can also be a time-consuming process in some countries and may not be possible in others. Contact the embassy of your host country for information on work regulations and restrictions.

Be forewarned that if you attempt to work without formal permission and are caught, you may be subject to immediate deportation without right to appeal. It is important to determine what the laws are pertaining to working in your host country. The Office of Study Abroad also has resources on various work abroad programs.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Be sure to learn what the public holidays are in the countries in which you plan to study or travel. During those days, banks and stores may be closed. You may also find that the daily routine of commerce is different than in the U.S. in some countries even on non-holidays. In many parts of Latin America, for example, all businesses close for an hour or two in the middle of the day.

24-HOUR CLOCK

You will find out that most official timetables abroad are based on the 24-hour clock. This method of telling time avoids confusion between a.m. and p.m.

Using this method, all times between 12:01 a.m. and 1:00 a.m. begin with 00. Thus, 00:45 would be 12:45 a.m. All times between 1:00 a.m. and 12:59 p.m. coincide with the way we normally tell time in the U.S. From 1:00 p.m. until midnight, however you may have to do a bit of mental arithmetic to know what time is indicated. On the 24-hour clock, for example, 1:00 p.m. appears as 13:00. ***If you simply subtract 12 from all times between 13:00 and 24:00 you will arrive at our standard afternoon and evening times.***

METRIC SYSTEM CONVERSIONS

The metric system has been standard in most countries for years; it is only the U.S. that has been out of step. If you are accustomed to thinking in terms of quarts, miles, and pounds, this may take a bit of getting used to. The following are a few simple conversions that may be helpful:

1 gram	=	0.04 oz
1 kilogram	=	2.20 lbs
1 metric ton	=	1.10 tons
1 liter	=	1.06 quarts
1 meter	=	1.09 yards
1 kilometer	=	0.62 miles
1 fluid ounce	=	28.4 milliliters
1 U.S. pint	=	0.47 liter
1 U.S. quart	=	0.94 liter
1 U.S. gallon	=	3.78 liters
1 inch	=	2.54 centimeters
1 yard	=	0.9 meters
1 mile	=	1.6 kilometers
1 square yard	=	0.8 square meter
1 square mile	=	2.6 square kilometers
1 acre	=	0.4 hectare

Distance

To convert kilometers to miles (as you try to make road signs more meaningful) simply divide the number of kilometers by 8 and multiply the result by 5. Should you wish to convert from miles to kilometers, divide the number of miles by 5 and multiply the result by 8.

Temperature

Freezing on the centigrade thermometer is 0 and boiling is 100. Since temperature abroad will be expressed in centigrade, you will primarily be concerned with conversion from that to Fahrenheit: the mathematical procedure is to multiply the number of degrees "C" by 1.8 and add 32. Should you wish to convert from Fahrenheit to centigrade, you must first subtract 32 from the number of degrees "F" then divide the result by 1.8. Eventually, you should become accustomed to thinking in terms of the metric system, after which it will not be necessary to make such conversions.

Expectations and Living With Differences

It is impossible not to have expectations when embarking on an adventure to a foreign land. It is also impossible to accurately predict everything that you will encounter during your semester abroad. Since both expectations and encountering the unexpected can sometimes lead to trouble, a few words on the subject might be helpful. One can react to the unexpected in different ways. When living in a foreign culture, one's natural (and unfortunately most common) way to react to the unexpected is often inappropriate. In general, **the best policy is to be as open-minded as you can, consider the possibility that your way is not the only "right" way, relax, and accept whatever comes your way.**

Perhaps more importantly, if you do NOT EXPECT the following you will be let down or frustrated less often: things to work as you are accustomed to them working, schedules to be followed, information to be accurate, 'common' (U.S.) courtesies to be used, etc. Since you will be living in another culture, people will have a different sense of right/wrong, a different understanding of what is common sense, politeness, appropriate behavior, etc. than you do. There will be many opportunities for complaints and frustrations when arrangements are not made, service is slow, directions are wrong, and telephones, electricity, or supplies are not available. Some of the above is going to happen - expect it! One of the most important travel skills is to be able to say "oh well" and shrug; complaining brings everybody down and helps nobody. Watch the locals...they all probably shrug and laugh a lot.

Morality, by definition, differs between cultures. For the potentially more offensive things like God/religion, male/female relations, alcohol/drugs, be careful. Often tact is better than honesty. The treatment of women in non-Western (as well as Western) countries can be very difficult to accept and even downright infuriating to those of us who believe in equal rights/status for men and women. Your true feelings and beliefs may be quite offensive to your host family and friends; however, so you may have to weigh what is more important - your relationship with your family and friends or your need to speak your views. On the other hand, there are people who would listen to and even appreciate your opinions. Overall, it is important to remember that you are there to listen, watch, and learn, and not to convert or to teach the "American" way.

You may want to tell your family or a friend that you are offended by something they do, or that you just have to describe why you believe God is an energy-field of love, why people should get in line at the store, or why people should not give directions if they do not know where some place is! **You will convince nobody in arguing your viewpoint, and you may anger and offend!** Yes, they may sometimes also offend you, but you are in their home and in their country. Depending on the country, you might do better to shake your head and keep your feelings to yourself. There exist many conflicting, but equally valid points of view and value systems. Accepting that is one of the most important lessons a human being can learn.

Americans have quite a reputation for treating the world as their own, and for believing that the "American Way" should be spread to all who have not been fortunate enough to have been experienced it. Being humble and respectful, and offering opinions in a manner is non-derogatory and that is open to other views will make your experience much smoother, and will allow you to become closer to your hosts. They may want to know all about you and your beliefs, but do not expect that they will accept your views any more than you are willing to accept theirs. You may very well come to believe that some of their "ways" are better than some of ours!

You are going abroad to live with and learn from your hosts and host culture, and to share yourself and your culture. The result will hopefully be that your life will be enriched. Half of the fun of going abroad is learning about the things "foreigners" do differently; the other half is adding many of their customs, beliefs and perspectives to your cultural repertoire, thereby learning to live and work comfortably within two worlds.

Checklists

OFFICE OF STUDY ABROAD

- _____ Pay your study abroad participation fee.
- _____ Meet with the appropriate academic advisors to complete your “Transfer Credit Evaluation” form. This should be filed in the Office of Study Abroad **before** you leave.
- _____ Complete “Health Information Sheet” and return to study abroad advisor.
- _____ Sign “International Study Participation Agreement” and return to study abroad advisor.
- _____ Provide the Office of Study Abroad with a copy of your travel itinerary.
- _____ Provide the Office of Study Abroad with a copy of your Power of Attorney form.
- _____ Provide the Office of Study Abroad with a copy of your passport and visa.
- _____ Purchase required health insurance from OSA, unless specifically exempt. Coverage cost for your program is _____.
- _____ Attend mandatory predeparture orientations.

OLD DOMINION ADMINISTRATION

- _____ Update phone numbers and addresses on LEO Online.
- _____ Clear all registration holds and make sure outstanding balances are paid.
- _____ Submit all required financial aid documents as early as possible. Discuss your award with the financial aid study abroad liaison.
- _____ Terminate contracts with residential living, dining services, etc. Make arrangements to resume these contracts upon your return if necessary.
- _____ Make a list of important Old Dominion University contact addresses.
- _____ If you are a non-U.S. citizen, consult with the foreign student advisor.
- _____ If someone other than the emergency contact on your university application form will handle affairs in your absence, leave that person’s name with the study abroad advisor.

PROGRAM PREPARATION

- _____ Apply for a passport, or renew your old passport if necessary.
- _____ Apply for a visa if necessary.
- _____ Make travel arrangements as far in advance as possible.
- _____ Gather documents you are required to take with you (letter of acceptance from host university, financial statement, etc.)
- _____ Apply for housing by the appointed deadline.
- _____ Request that transcripts from your program be sent to the Office of Study Abroad at Old Dominion University.
- _____ Meet with your academic advisor(s) and complete the Transfer Credit Evaluation form.
- _____ Use available resources to research information on your country of destination.

GENERAL PREPARATION

- _____ Plan your budget. Factor in an emergency fund.
- _____ Arrange to have at least a one-month supply of easily accessible money for arrival.
- _____ Obtain traveler's checks.
- _____ Obtain rail passes, hostel membership cards, etc. as needed.
- _____ Consider purchasing insurance for personal liability, property loss, trip cancellation, etc.
- _____ Find out your health insurance company's claims procedures and emergency assistance phone numbers.
- _____ Arrange for an international calling card.
- _____ Discuss safety and terrorism issues with your family.
- _____ Arrange for absentee voting.
- _____ Arrange to pay your taxes if you will be abroad during the Spring term.
- _____ Get a complete physical and dental check-up.
- _____ Secure medication, prescriptions, saline solutions, etc. for the entire duration of your stay abroad.