SHORT-TERM STUDY ABROAD

Student Handbook

SJSU GLOBAL EDUCATION AND INITIATIVES
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Congratulations, Global Spartans!

Congratulations on your acceptance to your San José State University Faculty-Led Program (FLP)/Summer School Abroad (SSA)! By studying abroad, you’ll be adding an important international and cross-cultural dimension to your SJSU education. Less than 2% of U.S. college students take advantage of the opportunity to study abroad. By participating in an FLP/SSA, you are joining an elite group of students who are able to include an international experience on their academic resume!
# POINT OF CONTACT

We are here to assist you with the process of preparing for your study abroad program. Below is a guideline for where you can direct your questions. If you do not see a question topic listed on here, feel free to contact our office, Global Education and Initiatives. We will be happy to help!

## Faculty-Led Program (FLP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Leader(s)</th>
<th>Global Education &amp; Initiatives Office</th>
</tr>
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| ● program-specific questions such as itinerary, course work and activities  
● site specific inquiries  
● housing arrangement  
● on-site management  
● travel details (arrival airport, meeting points and times, etc.) | questions regarding application process, deadlines, course registration, course payment, program policies, withdrawal process |

* Check the program web page for the program leader’s contact information.

Email: global-education@sjsu.edu  
Phone: 408-924-2670

## Summer School Abroad (SSA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University Partner</th>
<th>Global Education &amp; Initiatives Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ● program-specific questions such as itinerary, course work and activities  
● site specific inquiries  
● housing arrangement  
● on-site management  
● travel details (arrival airport, meeting points and times, etc.) | questions regarding application process, deadlines, course registration, course payment, program policies, withdrawal process |

* Check the program web page for the university partner’s contact information.

Email: global-education@sjsu.edu  
Phone: 408-924-2670
PROGRAM CHECKLIST

Program Logistics

☐ Click “Commit” in the Terra Dotta application system.
☐ Read and sign the online Commitment to Participate form to accept your spot in the program. A link to the form will be sent to you in your acceptance email.
☐ Check your MySJSU account to make sure your email address, mailing address, and phone number are current.
☐ Check your inbox for important emails from our office. All program-related communication will be sent to the email address on your application. The content of the email will contain important action steps and deadlines. Please make sure to meet all deadlines and correspond with our office in a timely manner.
☐ Review this handbook.
☐ Pay the deposit to secure your spot in the program.
☐ Register for your FLP/SSA course in MySJSU.
☐ Make full program payment.
☐ Complete the required general pre-departure orientation in Canvas.
☐ Complete the online Student Health form.
☐ Upload a copy of your passport into the Terra Dotta application system.
☐ Attend course meetings.

Pre-Departure Planning

☐ Apply/renew for a passport (and visa - if necessary). Make copies.
☐ Prepare a wellness plan (if needed): medications, immunizations, dietary needs.
☐ Review the insurance brochure and print your insurance ID card. Follow the instruction to download the Searchlight app on your phone.
☐ Put together a communication plan with your family and friends.
☐ Research your destination(s) to prepare for a new culture and environment.
☐ Plan your finances - contact your bank and credit card companies.
☐ Register with the U.S. Department of State’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) if you are planning to travel before or after your program dates.
☐ Have a plan ready for once you arrive at your destination (direction to your lodging from the airport, etc.).
☐ Watch a few packing videos to get inspiration for keeping your luggage light.

Returning Home

☐ Complete the feedback survey.
☐ Talk about your experiences. Contact us to find out volunteering opportunities to share your experiences with other students.
☐ Join another abroad program/opportunity!
ACADEMICS

Academic Expectations

It is important to remember that an FLP/SSA is NOT a vacation. This is an academic program, and participants are expected to maintain a high academic standard. This includes:

- attending class
- taking exams
- reading required materials
- completing homework
- participating in course activities and excursions

Pre-Course Preparation

Although it varies from one FLP/SSA to another, almost all programs will ask students to complete some preparation work prior to the official start date of the course.

PARTICIPATION POLICIES

Safety and Security

Each program will register all participants with STEP (Smart Traveler Enrollment Program) to receive up to date travel warnings and advice for specific locations. [https://step.state.gov/step/](https://step.state.gov/step/)

Each program provides detailed information with location-specific safety information. Participants should follow all recommendations. This includes information about emergency gathering points, on-site contact information, and SJSU contact information.

You should always avoid demonstrations and protests while on program, as even peaceful ones can sometimes turn violent.

For faculty-led programs that include free time, you must provide all travel plans in advance to the program leader(s). Additionally, participants who choose to travel independently during their scheduled FLP/SSA cannot travel further than 3 to 5 hours' distance from the program site within the host country. This is to ensure that we can have participants gather on short notice if an emergency were to occur in the region.
When an emergency happens, transportation and borders are likely to be closed for an indefinite period of time; for this reason, participants traveling outside of the program site must remain within the host country.

You may be able to travel independently before or after your FLP/SSA, but we strongly advise you to discuss any independent travel plans with your families and others that you rely upon before making any concrete plans.

During free time, we strongly advise that participants do not go out alone, and we ask them to also consider traveling in smaller groups of 3 or 4 people rather than large groups.

**University Policies**

Participants must abide by San José State University policies, including the [SJSU Student Conduct Code](#) while enrolled in the program. You may be subject to disciplinary action upon return to campus for violations of those policies.

**Alcohol and Drugs**

As a participant in an SJSU FLP/SSA, you must abide by host country laws, local institutional regulations, and program rules with respect to alcohol and other drugs. Unless permitted by host country law, local institutional regulations, and the program leaders, participants will not possess, consume, furnish, or distribute any alcoholic beverages. Participants are responsible for knowing and obeying the laws of the host country, as well as all local institutional regulations, and the rules of their specific program regarding alcohol and other drugs. Alcohol misuse and abuse are not tolerated anywhere in the world and will not be tolerated on SJSU faculty-led programs/summer school abroad programs.

The use of illegal drugs on an SJSU FLP/SSA is prohibited, just as it is on campus. Participants must understand that violations of law or policy may result in (i) immediate dismissal from the program; (ii) academic withdrawal from the University for the semester in progress; and (iii) disciplinary action upon return to campus. You should also remember that even though a drug may be legal in the United States (ex: recreational marijuana uses in California), that does not mean it is legal in your host country.
Host Country Customs

You are expected to abide by the laws and customs of the host country, community, institution and program.

Be sensitive to the social norms of the host culture. This may include, but is not limited to, the following examples: dressing appropriately for the host culture; being respectful of local guides, host, and other community members with whom you may interact as part of your program’s curriculum; respecting property of individuals, businesses, and institutions in the host country; etc. Your behavior will be viewed by local hosts as a reflection of San José State University and of the U.S.

Spouses/Partners, Children, Parents

FLPs/SSAs are for registered San José State University participants only; spouses/partners, children, and parents may not participate in, overlap with, or plan personal/family travel experiences with participants during an FLP/SSA. If such a person affiliated with a participant disrupts the program, it will be grounds for dismissal from the program. All participants on an FLP/SSA must be taking a course for credit, per California State University (CSU) - Executive Order (EO) 1081.

On-Site Lodging

Participants are required to reside in the lodging that is arranged by their FLP/SSA. If you wish to arrive prior to, or stay after, your program dates, you are responsible for making your own lodging arrangements.
Program-Specific Additions

Individual SJSU FLPs/SSAs may, in conjunction with GEI, establish additional rules and policies regarding issues specific to that program. You will be responsible for reading and understanding these additional rules and agree to abide by them while participating in the program.

Participants are also subject to the disciplinary codes and processes of any host institution(s) and providers of contracted services.

*Policies are subject to change.

PRE-DEPARTURE PLANNING

Your initiative is vital to a successful study abroad program – how involved you become in planning and preparing for your time abroad will directly influence how much you achieve the personal and academic goals you have set for yourself.

Below are some ways to prepare for your program:

- Visit web sites and read books about the history, geography and customs of the countries you are visiting. It is always good to have some idea about the history and culture of the place where you will be visiting. Check out the international travel sections of bookstores and purchase one or two good student guides such as Let’s Go, Lonely Planet, or Rough Guides.

- Another way to prepare for your time abroad is to talk with returned students or international students from the countries you will visit. They can provide invaluable insights.

- Learn some key words and phrases. Everyone likes to hear even simple words or phrases in their native language. Look for websites that will help you start learning a new language (ex: Duolingo).

- Although not required, it is a good idea to consider getting an International Student Identity Card (ISIC) before you start your travel. Students going abroad, whether to study or have fun, can get huge discounts with an ISIC. ISIC will save you hundreds of dollars on hotels, airfare, ground transportation and admission fees to see the sights. All you need is a copy of your passport photo. You can get a passport photo at Foto Express, Walgreens, or Costco. The fee for an ISIC is $25.00.
The ISIC can be obtained at the AS (Associated Students) General Services Desk in the SJSU Student Union. Students must show their Student ID, some type of proof of enrollment for the current semester such as a printout showing class registration, must provide the required passport photo and will also need to provide the $25 fee.

The ISIC Card may also be obtained online at [https://www.isic.org/](https://www.isic.org/)

### Required Travel Documents

#### Passport

You must have a passport valid for the duration of your stay abroad, and it should be valid for at least six months past your expected return date (in order to allow for any unanticipated delays in your return). Some airlines and countries require that your (U.S.) passport be valid for at least six months past the date of your return to the U.S.

**Apply/Renew for a U.S. Passport**

If you need to apply for a new passport or renew your current passport, visit the [U.S. Department of State website](https://travel.state.gov/) for more information.

*Keep in mind:* allow at least 4 to 6 weeks for regular processing, 2 to 3 weeks for expedited requests

#### Visas (may not be required)

This will depend on the destination/country of your program. Your program leader will be able to address the visa requirement (if your program requires a visa) once the cohort is formed for the program.

*International Students*: As the process may differ from individual to individual depending on citizenship/nationality, it is best to consult with:

- the embassy/consulate of the program destination to make sure the appropriate steps are taken if entry visa is required
- The SJSU International Student and Scholar Services Office (ISSS) for any required actions to take for departing and re-entering the U.S.
Airline Ticket to Destination

Participants should not purchase airline tickets until all of the group members are registered in their program course and have fully paid the entire program fee. Unfortunately, FLP/SSA courses may be canceled if enrollment is insufficient to provide appropriate instruction or if contracts with providers are incomplete before the start of the course registration. If a course is canceled, tuition fees will be refunded. However, SJSU is not responsible for refunding any personal expenses (e.g. flights, spending money, etc.) if the program is canceled for any reason. Airfares and other individual expenses are the responsibility of the participant.

To be able to get the best airfare, all participants should register for their program course and make full payment by the stated deadlines. Failure to meet the deadlines can delay all other participants’ ability to buy their plane tickets.

Health and Personal Care

Health Insurance

Your health insurance premium has been built into your program fee. You will receive an email from JCB Insurance Solutions/On Call International once you are enrolled in the insurance plan. Make sure to not delete this email because it contains your insurance ID card and policy brochure. It is important to understand your health insurance policy now – not when you are sick or injured.

To determine available options for medical services, contact the Global Response Center for more information (phone number and email are listed on the ID card). If you would like your visit paid for in advance (direct pay to provider), you simply need to contact the Global Response Center via phone or email. They will find the most appropriate facility for your ailment, make an appointment that works for you and set up a guarantee of payment so you will not have to pay out of pocket. If you choose your own facility and self-pay, you can submit a claim and be reimbursed in approximately 30 days. For more details, please contact the Global Response Center.

You will have insurance coverage for the program dates you are abroad. The insurance covers illnesses and medical emergencies while you are abroad for the program. For the list of other coverages provided by your insurance, please review your policy brochure.

The insurance policy also includes evacuation and repatriation. Medical evacuation is generally defined as the evacuation of persons (usually by air transportation) to a place where they can receive medical care. Repatriation means to restore or return to the country of birth, citizenship, or origin if death occurs.
Traveling before or after your program:
If you are planning to travel before or after your program, you will need to get additional insurance coverage. When purchasing additional insurance for yourself, make sure the policy also includes evacuation and repatriation coverage. If you decide to get the International Student Identity Card (ISIC), the card does provide coverage for evacuation and repatriation. For more details about what insurance benefits the ISIC provides, visit http://www.myisic.com/the-cards/isic-card/

Medications

It is important to check with the embassies/consulates of the countries you will visit to make sure your prescription and over-the-counter medications are permissible. Some common prescription medications in the U.S. are illegal in other countries.

If you have a pre-existing medical condition that may require treatment or need prescription medication while traveling, be sure to bring an adequate supply in the original container, and a prescription with your physician's explanation of the condition, generic and brand names of the medication, and dosage information.

Do not plan on sending medications abroad since it will require customs paperwork and may be delayed in delivery.

Be sure to maintain your usual dosage and pattern of taking your medication while you are abroad, and ask your physician how to make adjustments due to any time zone changes.

Immunizations

Do your research before departing for your program.
- Visit the Center for Disease Control website for advice on which immunizations are appropriate: http://www.cdc.gov/
- Visit the embassy website of your program destination to find out if any immunizations are required for entry into the country.
If you are going to get immunizations, you can meet with the Student Health Center on campus or with your healthcare provider early on for guidance, as some will take time before they are effective. Some immunizations also require a series or spacing for protection (as long as three months for a series of shots) so allow as much time as possible for your immunizations.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your routine immunizations are up-to-date. All countries recommend that travelers be up-to-date on routine immunizations.

- Tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis (DTP)
- Hepatitis B
- Polio
- Meningitis
- Chickenpox (Varicella)
- Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)
- Influenza

Remember to bring a copy of your immunization record. In the case you may need another immunization while you are abroad, the medical facility needs to verify the immunizations you have received in the U.S. in order to make the best recommendation for treatment.

**Finances Abroad**

**Budgeting**

Settle on the amount of money you will need while abroad. Creating both weekly and daily budgets will help you stick to your budget while you are abroad. There are numerous websites that can help you with budgeting by showing you the cost of living where you will be studying, such as [www.numbeo.com](http://www.numbeo.com).

If you are planning to travel before or after the program, take some time to research for any student discounts and specials available in the location you will visit. Many museums, theaters and monuments will have a special discounted price, or even no cost at all, for students. If you plan to have an International Student Identity Card (ISIC), check out the ISIC website for more details on available discounts: [http://www.myisic.com/discounts/](http://www.myisic.com/discounts/)
Exchange Rates

Learn the exchange rate for the country/countries that you will be visiting. Keep in mind the exchange rate when making a purchase so you can track how much you are spending each time.

Here is one of the currency websites that you can check out:  
https://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/

Accessing Your Money Abroad

Debit/ATM Cards: ATM cards can be used in most countries, but it is recommended to check with your program leader to confirm that ATM machines/local banks are available. There is generally a charge associated with using ATMs, but students report it is still the most effective and least expensive way to access money. Prior to leaving, ask your bank about charges associated with using ATMs abroad and be sure to notify the bank of your travel plans and when you will be abroad. If you do not notify your bank, your card may be blocked when you try to make a purchase abroad.

Credit Cards: If you plan to bring along a credit card, check with your credit card company about their fees prior to departure. Most cards charge an additional fee for each international transaction (about 2.5% to 7.5% per transaction). Remember to also notify the credit card company of your destinations and when you will be abroad.

Cash: If possible, you should have a little local currency with you upon arrival. You are encouraged to review the recommendations below, but it will be your responsibility to determine the best option for you.

You can...

- contact your U.S. bank to find out if you can purchase currency for the countries you’re visiting.
- purchase local currency from a currency exchange booth located in the international terminal of either your departure or arrival airport.

Keep in mind that the exchange rate in either situation above may not be as favorable as it usually is at an ATM machine or a local bank, so first look for ATM machines that are in relatively safe locations (in banks, lobbies, hotels, airports, etc.) or a local bank. Remember to check the ATM machines for any suspicious modifications.

If you exchange money at a U.S. bank or a currency exchange booth, plan to exchange enough for a few days’ expenses. You can exchange for more money once you are able to locate an ATM machine or a local bank at your program site.
Program Housing/Lodging

Housing arrangements are typically made for most of the programs, but only for the program dates. If you intend to arrive earlier or stay later than the program dates, you must make your own housing arrangements and be prepared to pay on your own for these additional nights.

If the program requires students to book their own housing arrangement, students will be provided with information/suggestions on how to make the arrangements.

You are expected to stay in the housing arrangement for the full length of the program and must depart at the time when the group is checking out of the housing arrangement. If circumstances require that you leave early, you must first obtain permission by notifying, in writing, the program leader, Global Education and Initiatives, and on-site personnel; no refund will be given for early departures.

Program housing arrangements are made only for approved participants of the program. Family members, friends, or any other individuals may not share the arranged housing with the program participant.

Transportation at Arrival Airport

Some programs may provide airport pickup at the arrival airport. If transportation is provided from the airport to the program’s lodging/accommodation, a designated date and time will be provided to all students. If you arrive early or later than the designated date and time, you will need to arrange your own transportation to the meeting point for the program. To see if airport pickup will be provided, check with your program leaders for more details.

Packing and Luggage

Pack light and leave room for souvenirs! Below is a recommended guideline to help you plan with your packing for the trip.

General Rules

- Pack what can be mixed and matched. Get the maximum use out of your clothes with flexible items like a pair of jeans that you can either dress up or wear casually. Remember to bring a nice outfit for a more formal event.
● Be mindful of the items that you plan to bring along with you on the trip. Each country has its own regulations and laws as to what could be considered a dangerous weapon if in possession. Please do not bring any weapons along with you.

● Be prepared for the return trip. Remember that you will need space for souvenirs if you are planning to bring some back with you. Be sure to pack in a way that can be repeated when you are packing for the trip home (i.e. a vacuum sealed bag is not recommended if you will not have a vacuum where you are staying while abroad).

● Check out some packing videos online (e.g. YouTube) for recommendations on how to keep your luggage organized and light.

The Carry-on

● Liquids in a 3-1-1 bag in accordance with TSA guidelines
● Make sure your laptop, camera, cell phone, and other electronics are easily accessible. You will need to remove them when you go through the security checkpoint
● Toiletries and extra clothes for one to two days. This is a good backup in case your checked-in luggage is delayed or lost
● Important documents (passports, visas, tickets, money)
● Prescriptions/medications (including glasses)
● Medications – you should pack enough to last you the entire trip, including time that you may be traveling before or after the program dates

The Checked Bag

● Clothes
● Adapter plugs – make sure you have one with the proper wattage or shape to support your electronics
● General toiletries – we recommend packing just enough for a few days and stock up once you are at your program site. If you have specific items that you may not be able to get while you are abroad, you may consider bringing enough to last you during the trip
● Emergency supplies (simple ones) – first aid kit, flashlight
● Extra Stuff – journal, belts, scarves, etc.

Communicating Home

Most students like to maintain some form of contact with friends and family back home while they are abroad. While it is a wonderful experience to share with your friends and family back home, keep in mind that you will be very busy during your program and most likely will not be able to speak with them on a daily basis. You should discuss your communication plans with your friends and family before you leave.
Below are some methods of communicating home while you are abroad:

- **Messaging apps**
  - Skype
    - Has both texting and call capabilities
    - Smartphone and tablet apps available
    - Face-to-face communication is wonderful when you’re feeling homesick
    - Need internet to access
- **Email**
  - Easy way to maintain contact with people back home
  - It is important to check your email account to make sure that you are not missing any important communications
- **Prepaid cell phone**
  - Pay for what you need as you go which helps you track your spending of cell phone usage

**SAFETY AND TRAVEL**

SJSU has recognized the importance of establishing policies and procedures in the effort to protect the safety and well-being of FLP/SSA participants. Below are a few of the ways SJSU strives to keep FLP/SSA participants, before and during the program, as safe as possible.

**Keeping Informed before Departure**

Between now and your departure, stay informed about the developments in the country/countries where you will spend time (including any countries you will visit that are not part of your study abroad program itinerary).

The U.S. Department of State offers a web page tailored specifically for study abroad students. You can access this page for information about the country/countries where your program will take you: [https://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en.html). You can search by country in order to learn very helpful information about where you will be traveling.
On the website, you will find various types of information, including:

- Embassies and Consulates
- Destination Description
- Entry, Exit & Visa Requirements
- Safety and Security
- Health
- Local Laws & Special Circumstances
- Travel & Transportation

Your insurance coverage from On Call International will also provide you access to Searchlight where you can have an overview of potential risks in your country/location of study. Instruction on how to access Searchlight will be provided in your insurance email. The insurance email will be sent to you once our office has enrolled you in the plan.

We ask that you read this information carefully before you depart the U.S.

**Safety of Personal Documents**

Leave at home all credit cards, keys, and other items not needed abroad. Make photocopies of your valuable documents that you will be bringing along and maintain an “emergency file” at home containing:

- airline ticket
- passport
- driver's license
- prescriptions
- credit cards you take abroad

Leave a copy of your itinerary and contact information with family or friends at home. Prior to departure, you will be provided with the address and telephone number of where you will be staying during the program.

NEVER pack your passport or any other important documents in your checked-in luggage. Passports including visa page, credit cards, and money should be kept as close to your body as possible.

If your passport is lost or stolen abroad, contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate for assistance.

**Everyday Safety Tips**
FLP participants often travel in groups during the program activities, but there may be time when you and your classmates will be able to explore areas in your program site on your own. While you are abroad, it is important to exercise precaution because you will be in a new and unfamiliar environment.

- Familiarize yourself with the area where you will be staying
- Be aware of your surroundings – if you feel unsafe in any particular place, leave the location as quickly and safely as possible
- Do not travel with any valuable items
- Exercise common sense
- Avoid confrontations
- Dress conservatively and in accordance with the local norms
- Know the emergency number(s) in your host country

**Emergency Preparedness**

Once on-site, your program leader should discuss appropriate emergency preparedness steps with you. These steps might reflect preparing for natural disasters such as hurricanes or earthquakes, as well as communication protocols for electrical outages or cell tower overloads.

**In an Emergency**

Depending on the nature of the emergency, immediately contact the appropriate authorities in order of importance:

- In-country emergency medical, police, or consular services
- Your program leader(s) or in-country program management staff. This can include your host institution’s emergency contact or program leader
- SJSU Global Education and Initiatives Office (GEI). Depending on the type of emergency, GEI may or may not be able to assist from the U.S. If it is an emergency requiring absolutely essential immediate contact with a GEI staff member outside of GEI hours, contact the University Police Department at +001-408-924-2222
- Your family and friends to keep them updated on the situation when necessary
Alcohol Use and Misuse

Many of the injuries sustained by study abroad students are related to alcohol. Alcohol misuse can negatively affect your participation in the program, your safety on site, and the future of the program. Remember that you are serving as an ambassador of SJSU and the U.S.

Although there may be no minimum or a lower drinking age in your host country, the customs regarding alcohol use may be very different from the U.S. Remember, no matter which country you are in, a loud, unruly and intoxicated individual is not well received.

Participants are encouraged to use good judgment if consuming alcohol at any given point during the program. Participants are encouraged to discuss issues related to alcohol abuse by other members of their group with the program leader. Peers should look out for each other and keep each other safe.

If a participant becomes incapacitated due to alcohol overuse, or if he/she is in need of medical attention, participants are strongly encouraged to contact a local emergency medical service and the program leader immediately to protect the health and well-being of the affected individual(s). Peers are encouraged to make the responsible choice to notify program or emergency personnel quickly.

Do not endanger yourself, others, property, or the future viability of the program. Know when to say “no,” stay with your friends, and look out for each other.

It is important to note that even while you are abroad, you are still responsible for adhering to the SJSU Student Conduct Code in addition to the local laws.

Illegal Drugs

SJSU has a zero-tolerance policy regarding the possession, use, manufacture, production, sale, exchange or distribution of illegal drugs on campus. We require students participating in FLPs/SSAs to abide by the same policy while abroad as well.

Each year, an average of 2,500 U.S. citizens are arrested abroad. One third of the arrests are drug-related charges. It is important to remember that you must adhere to the laws of the host country and the regulations of the local institution. Neither the U.S. government nor SJSU will be able to secure your release should you be arrested for possession of illegal drugs.
It is your responsibility to know the drug laws of a foreign country before you go. Some laws may be applied more strictly to foreigners than to local citizens; therefore, do not assume that just because local people are using drugs, it is acceptable for you to use drugs.

CROSSING CULTURES

Culture Shock

When traveling to a new country or culture, it is common to feel a sense of disorientation or mixed emotions; this is called culture shock.

Be aware of possible indicators of culture shock which include:

- compulsive eating or lack of appetite
- feelings of helplessness, irritability, and loneliness;
- homesickness
- sleeping more than usual
- feeling depressed or getting angry easily
- decline in inventiveness, spontaneity, or flexibility
- stereotyping of host country/culture
- increase in physical ailments or pains
- inability to work effectively
- boredom
- unexplainable crying

Most study abroad participants will experience some form of culture shock. However, some might experience it after only two days in the host country, others not until several weeks into their stay.

Furthermore, the concrete indicators of culture shock vary from individual to individual. It’s important to take care of your health and eat well to help yourself through these stages. If you display one or more of these behaviors, it is very likely that you are going through the culture shock phase of cross-cultural adjustment. Just be sure to remember that this is a natural occurrence and given enough time it will pass. If you need someone to talk to, you can always
reach out to your program leader, classmates in your program (who may even be having similar experiences), or our office.

Communication Across Cultures

Embracing differences in languages or even accents is an essential part of studying abroad. Language barriers may be intimidating, but with some effort, you can reduce the challenges and have a more immersive experience. Look into what languages are most popularly spoken at your destination and try to learn simple and essential phrases before you travel. You will find that most locals will be pleased to hear you try and use their language, even if you aren’t anywhere near fluent. Effort matters and it is respected. Remember that your program leaders should also be able to help you communicate with locals if needed.

Adjustments

Studying abroad is an invaluable experience – a unique opportunity to live in a foreign country, to learn its customs and culture, and to adapt to new surroundings. The success of your experience depends upon your own efforts to acclimate yourself to living and studying in a foreign culture. You will have moments of exhilaration and moments of real frustration. Gradually, as you come to terms with the culture, the frustrations will become fewer and fewer.

One of the greatest benefits of living in a foreign country is an added depth of appreciation and understanding of U.S. culture. The insights you will gain into yourself and your native culture will be of immeasurable value. In adjusting to your study abroad environment, you will have to deal with real as well as perceived cultural differences.

The following, for example, are a few of the qualities (some positive, some negative) that others frequently associate with the “typical” U.S. American:

- outgoing and friendly
- informal
- loud, rude, boastful, immature
- hardworking
- extravagant and wasteful
- lacking in class consciousness
While a stereotype might have some grain of truth, it is obvious when we consider individual differences that not every U.S. American fits this description. Keep in mind that the same thing is true about your hosts and your own preconceptions. Remember that you are an ambassador from SJSU and the United States. Avoid falling into any of the “ugly American” categories.

**Adjustment Strategies**

- Become more familiar with the local language
- Know your own country
- Examine your motives for going
- Recognize the symptoms of culture shock
- Expect to feel depressed sometimes
- Expect to feel frustrated and angry at times
- Expect to hear criticism of the United States
- Do not expect local people to come and find you
- Keep your sense of humor and positive outlook
- Write a journal
- Adopt coping strategies that work for you
- Talk to someone if you have a serious problem

**Adjustment for Women**

The overwhelming majority of students who study abroad are women and they report back that they have had incredible experiences. However, in certain locations and programs abroad, women may have a difficult time adjusting to attitudes they encounter, both in public and 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. Sometimes the attention can be flattering; other times, it may become very annoying and potentially even angering. Local women, who often get the same sort of treatment, have learned through their culture how to respond to the attention.
Female travelers may be more likely to encounter harassment such as unwanted sexual gestures, physical contact, or statements that are offensive or humiliating. Uncomfortable situations such as these may be avoided by taking the following precautions:

- Avoid walking alone late at night or in questionable neighborhoods.
- Do not agree to meet, in a non-public place, a person who you do not know.
- Be aware that the friendliness of U.S. American women can be mistaken for romantic interest in other cultures.

You will have to learn the unwritten rules about what you can and cannot do. Women can provide support for each other; you may wish to get together several times early in your stay abroad to talk about what does and doesn’t work for dealing with unwanted attention. U.S. women are seen as liberated in many ways and sometimes the cultural misunderstanding that comes out of that image can lead to difficult and unpleasant experiences.

Cultural differences can often affect expectations in relationships/friendships. Consider the implicit messages you are communicating, messages you may not intend 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 one of the important reasons you are studying abroad.

If, after acknowledging cultural differences, you still feel uncomfortable with what you interpret as sexual harassment, you should talk with your program leader, and/or other on-site personnel. This conversation may provide you with some coping skills and a possible action plan to avoid future encounters. It may also help you to gain a different perspective by understanding the local customs and attitudes. It is possible that the behaviors that you feel uncomfortable with are behaviors that are also considered unacceptable in the host culture.

**Dating and Sex**

It is important to note that different cultures have different norms in regards to gender. Participants should be aware that the ways people interact vary widely by region and country, and issues around dating and sexuality can be particularly difficult in a cross-cultural setting. Such things as eye contact, the way one dresses, and body language can send very different messages by region and culture. Observing interpersonal interactions within a culture can be useful in helping you choose the way you communicate verbally and nonverbally with others in that country.

If you choose to be sexually active, practice safe sex and protect yourself and your partner against unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS, and misunderstandings about the meaning of the relationship. Sexually-transmitted viruses and bacteria do not respect national borders. Take a supply of condoms with you since
availability may be limited, or conditions of manufacture and storage may be questionable.

Be responsible if using alcohol or other drugs because they can affect your behavior and ability to make decisions.

**Diversity in Study Abroad**

SJSU values diversity on campus and is situated in one of the most diverse cities in the United States. However, the country you are traveling to may be much more culturally homogenous than you are accustomed to.

As in the U.S., some societies and groups are more open to accepting diversity than others. People react differently to looks and behaviors they are not accustomed to or that appear unusual. Reports from students of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds 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 ethnicity.

You may have to deal with the possibility of outright racism abroad, the possibility of insensitive attitudes and inadequate facilities for students with disabilities, or the presence of homophobia.

You may find that your "U.S.-Americanness" is a more important factor in determining your treatment abroad than your religious, racial/ethnic heritage, or physical abilities. While this may be difficult to deal with at times, some members of your host culture will see you as a representative of the U.S. first, and as an individual personality second.

Your program leader can provide you with information and descriptions of the local cultural realities that will assist you in your preparation to go abroad. Additionally, the program leader and GEI may be able to put you in direct touch with other students who have studied in your particular country who can share their experiences with these attitudes and customs.

**Students with Disabilities**
Your active role in disclosing your disability-related needs in advance will be key to your success abroad. You can discuss your accommodation needs with GEI and identify the site best suited to your capabilities.

Disability accommodations available in the United States may not be available while abroad. Speak to your program leader to find out more details about possible accommodations and what arrangements can be made.

**Race/Ethnicity and Study Abroad**

No two students studying abroad ever have quite the same experience. The same is true regarding issues of race. Some students have had an exciting opportunity where they are not recognized at all for their race based on their host country, others who experience ‘innocent’ curiosity regarding ethnicity, and others who feel similar or even new types of prejudice. Try to find friends on campus who have studied abroad before and learn about their experience. Consult your program leader and learn if they have ever had memorable experiences (good or bad) regarding ethnicity in the host country.

*Recommended Questions to Consider:*

- How is my ethnic group perceived in my host country? What kind of stereotypes are there?
- How should I react if I find something to be offensive?
- Is the person curious or do they have bad intentions?
- Has my host family (if applicable) housed minority students before? If not, will this be an issue for them?

*Some Tips:*

- Remember that people have different cultural norms and views.
- Be prepared if an incident does arise, but don't go abroad expecting racism or discrimination.
- Research what kinds of contact and relations your group has had in your host country. You may also want to research immigration views in general.
- Be aware that people may generalize or incorrectly identify your ethnicity.
- Learn more about other students’ experiences abroad. For example, you can talk to other students who have studied abroad or research online.
- Build a support network among other study abroad students so that if you do face racial or discriminatory incidents, you'll have support to deal with it.

**Sexual Orientation**

Attitudes toward sexuality vary greatly from country to country. While some cultures are open about homosexuality and different gender identification, some cultures hold strict
taboos and even laws about such relationships and lifestyles. Research how different sexual preferences are viewed in your destination country and consult with your program leader for more information on various social issues.

Explore LGBTQ+ travel guides and internet resources. Talk with other LGBTQ+ groups and allied people about their experiences in certain countries or regions. Once in your host country, find out what local newspapers, e-magazines or online resources may be available.

Some questions to ask include:

- How open will I be about my sexual orientation and gender identity with my teachers, peers, friends, host family and others?
- How important is it to me to find support with other LGBTQ+ students while abroad?
- How will I make connections with other LGBTQ+ students, local residents, or community organizations?

**Discrimination**

Although discrimination is illegal in many countries, it still occurs. Discrimination is built on negative stereotypes and prejudices that are influenced by a variety of factors, including the media. Although these attitudes may be frustrating at times, remember that one of the main reasons for your participation in study abroad is to learn about other cultures. This includes both the positive and negative aspects. What you perceive as a discriminatory act or remark may not necessarily be one in the context of the host culture, but rather a cultural difference. It is also important to keep in mind that one person’s discriminatory act may not represent the host culture as a whole.

If you believe you are being discriminated against by locals or your SJSU peers, please discuss it promptly with your program leader or on-site personnel.

**Dietary Accommodations**

Keep in mind that you are a visitor to the country and required dietary needs may not be easily accessible. Be sure to research the dietary habits of different countries before choosing a trip. If you hate fish, it may not be a great idea to visit an island where fish makes up the majority of a local’s diet.

If you have special eating habits, are committed to a particular way of eating (e.g. vegetarian, vegan, kosher, macrobiotic) or have health issues or food allergies that result in a special diet, you will need to research your study abroad destination carefully and not assume that the food you need will be available.
Learn what is and isn't available so that you can experience the food of the culture you're living in while at the same time having your dietary needs met. Being flexible, whenever possible, about what you eat will make your study abroad experience easier and more enriching.

**RE-ENTRY**

**Reverse Culture Shock**

Many participants can expect to experience some measure of reverse culture shock. In fact, many participants who report having little or no culture shock upon arrival in a new culture do report significant reverse culture shock after returning home. The world at home didn’t stop while they were gone. Upon return home, participants may find they aren’t the only ones who have changed during their absence. Everyone and everything else will have changed too! It’s important to take your time, re-adjust slowly, and make sure to give yourself time to reflect on your feelings in your current situation.

Some ways to help you re-adjust to life post study abroad are:

- Talk with participants from the program or others who have studied abroad.
- Share your experiences by working as a GEI Global Ambassador.
- Participate in the FLP/SSA Fair. Ask your program leader how you can help them promote their program to future students.
- Work with international students by volunteering to be a peer mentor.
- Talk about your experience to clubs and groups, including adults and children.
- Write an article about your great experience abroad for *The Spartan Daily* or your local home paper.
- Join international organizations and clubs.
- Continue foreign language learning or take courses with an international focus.
- Continue studying the host country by taking related courses, reading international papers, viewing films and videos, writing research papers, etc.
- Volunteer to work in the community or on campus. Help organizations that support community service and development. Look for groups working with immigrants, refugees, or the aged so you can use your skills of listening, patience and empathy.
- Visit the Career Center and ask how to incorporate your cross-cultural experiences into your resume and how to talk to potential employers and graduate schools about the value of these experiences.
- Start thinking about when and how you can return abroad. You can study abroad again on another FLP/SSA, or go longer for a semester or academic year; apply to graduate schools abroad; apply for Fulbright or other scholarships to study and conduct research; find employment possibilities where you were abroad; join the Peace Corps; or just return to visit host family & friends.
Integrate the best of each culture. It is not necessary to give up one at the expense of another!

Remember, you are not alone in readjusting. GEI and your program leaders are here to help you in any way that we can.

Feedback Survey

Upon returning home, you will receive an email with the link to our feedback survey. It is an anonymous survey, and your feedback will help us make changes and improvements for the next year. Given the anonymity of the survey, we ask you to be as honest and detailed as possible about your experience. Remember to complete the survey and get your input in by the deadline.
IMPORTANT CONTACTS

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