

The Study Abroad Program at Clafin University

Congratulations on your decision to study abroad!
You are about to begin an experience that we hope will be both exciting and life changing.

The purpose of this brief manual is to help you as you prepare yourself for your adventure abroad. Use this as a guide that will lead to important resources that you need as well as steps that you will need to take to make your return to Clafin University an easy one.

If you have any suggestions or comments on this guide, please do not hesitate to contact us.

The Study Abroad Office.



Mission Statement

The Study Abroad Program, a component of International Studies, exists to expand the horizons of the Claflin University students through exposure to other cultures through international study. Students who take advantage of this program will primarily have the opportunity to study in Kenya and South Africa in Africa, The United Kingdom in Europe, and Japan in Asia. Taking part in the Study Abroad Program equips students with skills that are vital to international competence, enabling them to communicate in other languages, to know other cultures and markets and to understand increasingly fluid economic and political realities.

**The Study Abroad Programs
W.V. Middleton Fine Arts Center
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Helpful Internet Resources:

ONLINE STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM DATABASES:

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

<http://www.iiepassport.com>

<http://www.studyabroad.com>

FINANCIAL AID AND STUDY ABROAD:

University of Minnesota: <http://www.istc.umn.edu/>

(click on 'Funding & Scholarships' for a searchable database)

Gilman Scholarship: <http://www.iie.org/gilman>

MIEA: <http://www.towson.edu/miea>

Freeman Asia: <http://www.iie.org/programs/freeman-asia/>

NSEP: <http://www.iie.org/nsep>

CONSULAR AND TRAVEL SAFETY ABROAD:

The State Department: <http://www.travel.state.gov/>

Contains a wealth of information such as consular information sheets on most destinations, travel warnings, information for Americans abroad, as well as information on how to apply for a passport.

Passport Information: http://www.travel.state.gov/passport_services.html

Tips for American Students Abroad:

<http://www.travel.state.gov/studentinfo.html>

Foreign Entry Requirements: <http://travel.state.gov/foreignentryreqs.html>

Contains contact info for foreign consulates in the US. To get information on student visa requirements for a country, you should contact the embassy directly.

HEALTH AND STUDY ABROAD:

The Centers for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>

Health-related information for travelers organized by region. Also includes information on vaccine recommendations and food and water safety in developing countries.

Information on HIV/AIDS for travelers:

<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/hiv aids.htm>

World Health Organization: <http://www.who.int/ith/>

Health and safety information.

Lonely Planet—Pills, Ills and Bellyaches:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/health/>

Practical advice on staying healthy while traveling.

CULTURE AND STUDY ABROAD:

Peterson's—Info on Culture Shock:

<http://www.petersons.com/studyabrd/abroad4.html>

UC Irvine—Cultural Adjustment:

<http://www.cie.uci.edu/world/shock.html>

FIND CYBERCAFES FROM ACCRA TO ZÜRICH:

<http://cybercaptive.com/>

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

GLBTQ TRAVELERS ABROAD:

Information for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Students abroad:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/index.html>

Women Travelers: <http://www.journeywoman.com/>

STUDY ABROAD FORMS and PROCEDURES

Permission to Study Abroad Form

This form requires the signatures of your department chairman and your dean., because the course that you wish to study abroad should fit into your course of study.

The first part of the form asks for you to complete personal information—this helps us keep in touch with you as you prepare to study abroad, and also reminds us of your program. The remaining part of the form provides simple instructions to you on the following topics:

On-campus housing the semester following your time abroad.

The importance of keeping in contact with your academic advisor. The section regarding courses, course approvals, and next-semester registration methods is vital!

Financial aid and pointers on how to carry over your money.

Lastly, you will receive 'Final Reminders' from the study abroad office that will give you a few more things to keep in mind as your departure date draws closer.

We also recommend that you make a personal photocopy of the Study Abroad Procedures form for future reference. You will notice that the address for our office is listed on the last page—***please be sure to request that your official transcript be sent to the Study Abroad Office!*** **By signing and submitting this form, you demonstrate you have read it and understood the information covered.**

PERMISSION TO STUDY ABROAD FORM (PSA)

Our office cannot acknowledge you as a study abroad participant without this document!

Although the PSA is relatively easy to follow, students are often confused by what needs to be done, who needs to sign first, etc. Please do not hesitate to ask questions if you are not sure how to proceed.

Special Note: In order for credits to transfer (grades do not count toward your GPA) you must receive a C or above. You cannot take any classes as pass/fail.

There are three sections of the PSA:

- 1) Personal Information—helps us link your name and program to the time you will be abroad.
- 2) Course Information—outlines which courses you will take abroad, how many credits they are worth, how they apply to requirements at UMCP, and advisor approvals for each course listed.
- 3) Signatures—You sign, we sign, your advisor signs, the dean signs. Ta da!

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

PASSPORTS

If you already have a passport, please check that it has not expired and that it will be valid for at least **six months** beyond your planned return to the United States. Many countries will not permit you to enter with a passport with less than six months.

If you do not already have a passport, you must apply for one IMMEDIATELY.

You can secure a passport application from any United State Post Office or you can obtain the application online at <http://travel.state.gov/passportservices.html>.

Follow the instructions carefully and factor in at least four to six weeks in your schedule to receive your passport.

Make a copy of the photo page of your passport and laminate it; When traveling, keep it in a separate location from the passport itself. Be sure to leave a copy with your parent or guardian. This will help if your passport is lost or stolen. The nearest consulate or embassy will be able to process a new passport for you much more quickly with the copy. You should find out the location and address of the American Embassy before you depart and take the contact information with you. We recommend that you purchase a security belt to keep your passport on you at all times.

VISAS

In order to spend a prolonged period of time in a country as a student, you may need to obtain a visa. Each country has very different requirements for how you get your visa and the necessary documents needed to obtain one. (Note: there is a fee attached to the visa; each country determines the amount- budget for the expense) You will get your visa from the consulate or embassy of the country in which you are studying, **before you leave the U.S.** Many embassies and consulates have helpful websites that outline their specific procedures. Foreign entry requirements can be viewed online at http://travel.state.gov/visa_services.html.

This process can also take along time (up to two months) and will require you to gather lots of different bits of information so give yourself plenty of time.

INTERNATIONAL CALLING CARD

It is imperative that you purchase an international calling card so that you can call your family as soon as you arrive to your destination. Because you will be in a foreign country, away from your family, they need to know that you have arrived safely. Also call them, and email them, your phone numbers and email, if you secure one there.

Tips for Traveling Abroad

From: The US Department of State <http://travel.state.gov>

If you are traveling abroad here are the top 10 tips you need to make your trip easier:

1. Make sure you have a signed, valid passport and visas, if required. Also, before you go, fill in the emergency information page of your passport!
 2. Read the Consular Information Sheets (and Public Announcements or Travel Warnings, if applicable) for the countries you plan to visit.
 3. Familiarize yourself with local laws and customs of the countries to which you are traveling. Remember, the U.S. Constitution does not follow you! While in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws.
 4. Make 2 copies of your passport identification page. This will facilitate replacement if your passport is lost or stolen. Leave one copy at home with friends or relatives. Carry the other with you in a separate place from your passport.
 5. Leave a copy of your itinerary with family or friends at home so that you can be contacted in case of an emergency.
 6. Do not leave your luggage unattended in public areas. Do not accept packages from strangers.
 7. Prior to your departure, you should register with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate through the State Department's [travel registration website](#) . Registration will make your presence and whereabouts known in case it is necessary to contact you in an emergency. **In accordance with the Privacy Act, information on your welfare and whereabouts may not be released without your express authorization. Remember to leave a detailed itinerary and the numbers or copies of your passport or other citizenship documents with a friend or relative in the United States.**
 8. To avoid being a target of crime, try not to wear conspicuous clothing and expensive jewelry and do not carry excessive amounts of money or unnecessary credit cards.
 9. In order to avoid violating local laws, deal only with authorized agents when you exchange money or purchase art or antiques.
 10. If you get into trouble, contact the nearest U.S. embassy.
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CROSS-CULTURAL ISSUES

CULTURE SHOCK/ADJUSTMENT

(source: The “Take It With You “ Guide to Study Abroad’ – Univ. of Maryland)

The severity of culture shock varies from person to person: you may experience it like a slap in the face or it may be something that slowly and gradually manifests itself. Very few people are totally immune to it. It strikes as you attempt to go about normal, daily activities in the absence of familiar patterns of communication and social interaction. Our expectations of the host culture, shaped by our own patterns of behavior or culture, sometimes 'clash' with the reality of the host country's culture. Initially many travelers experience feelings of anxiousness and excitement, which turn to feelings of discomfort, frustration, or anxiety over the absence of familiar patterns. Eventually these feelings change again and mellow out as you begin to accommodate and integrate new cultural norms. Regardless of the degree of culture shock you experience and the point in time at which you are aware of it, it is important to remember that culture shock is a normal reaction.

Survival Tips

- **Get involved** in your new community by joining a club, getting involved in sports, singing in a church choir; whatever you like to do at home – try it while abroad. This is a great way to meet people and use your language skills.
- **Explore** your surroundings, try new foods, and make new friends! Host country friends can help you navigate and adapt to your new environment.
- **Keep** a journal, read books in English, bring pictures from home to share with new friends. Allow yourself time to “get away from it all” once in awhile. Discussing your ups and downs with other Americans who are experiencing the same things you are can be a positive outlet.

ADAPTING TO A NEW CULTURE

Keen Observations

Always keep in mind, you are a guest in your host country and your actions will not only have an impact on how people view you, but also on how people feel about the U.S. It is important to be a diligent observer while you are abroad. Stay open-minded and flexible. You may be able to make some minor adjustments in your own behavior, dress or mannerisms that may help you fit in a little more easily. Some of the attitudes and freedoms you are accustomed to in the U.S., such as openly criticizing the government, views on homosexuality or relationships between men and women, may be more conservative or restrictive in your host country. On the flip side, some of the restrictions placed on you in the U.S may be lifted. An example of this is a younger drinking age. Keep in mind, however, that while you may be able to drink legally, you should pay close attention to the social rules regarding drinking in your host country. People may frown upon public drunkenness or drinking to “get drunk”.

Some Signs of Culture Shock

- Being overly negative about your surroundings
- Wanting to show the natives a better way of doing something (more effectively, more quickly, etc).
- Unreasonably praising everything American

- Avoidance of the host culture and things that make you uncomfortable by surrounding yourself with only familiar people and things
- Overt attempts to deny identification with one's own culture

Traveling to a new destination with different cultural norms and traditions can be a challenging yet a rewarding experience; a little research before you leave will help tremendously. Your most important asset will be an open mind.

A New Academic Setting

Many aspects of life may vary dramatically from what you are used to in the U.S. – the academic environment will be no exception. You will quickly learn that the academic environment in the U.S., which tends to be student-centered, is unique. Expectations of the roles of students and professors will be different in your new host culture and will be different depending on where you are. You may find that professors interact very little with their students and that classes are lecture-only with no or little opportunity for discussion. Your time may be much less structured with fewer or no formal assignments throughout the semester. You will be expected to know the material you have covered in class and do outside research. However, formal assessment may not come until the end of the semester through a comprehensive test or paper. For those of you attending institutions catering to foreign students, which are often smaller units within the universities, you may find a more open, relaxed environment more similar to what you are used to in the U.S. Flexibility and diligence are crucial for adapting to a new academic system and achieving success.

Cross-Cultural Competence

If you have a cross-cultural interaction you don't understand, try describing and interpreting the situation before you judge it. Attempt to determine and understand possible underlying explanations for cultural differences. If your home stay family keeps the house temperature at 62 degrees, put on a sweater and see if you can establish the economic or environmental reasons for the need to keep heating costs at a minimum. Adjusting to your new culture does not mean you have to agree with everything you come across. But as you learn more about the history, traditions, and values of the people in your host culture, you will develop the tools to empathize with and understand new customs and viewpoints. Once again, the more you interact with local people and truly become part of your community the easier it will be for you to adapt to the new culture. Allow your values and views to be challenged and use these encounters as a basis for reflection on who you are and your own cultural inheritance. Experiencing a different culture can stimulate personal growth and creativity. The unusual circumstances of your sojourn present a special and challenging opportunity for you.

Parent Support for the Study-abroad Student

How often should I be in contact with my son or daughter?

We recommend that students contact you as soon as they can after arriving overseas. Most students will have cell phone and extensive email access. We recommend that you maintain contact with your student, but not on a daily basis. Familiarize yourself with the program dates and your student's travel itinerary- if you have not heard from your student, it may be because they are on an excursion.

What can I do from home to support my son or daughter while abroad?

- Familiarize yourself with your student's host country and cross-cultural resources so you can help him or her with the transition to life abroad.
- Familiarize yourself with the host program's schedule of classes and breaks.
- Encourage your son or daughter to maintain contact with Claflin University regarding academics and program issues
- Be in contact with your student, but understand that living abroad has ups and downs. Your student has been given the tools to adapt to a new culture and university system, but he or she may need your encouragement to understand and use adaptation strategies.
- Contact Study Abroad Office if you have any questions or concerns.

Additional Parent Resources:

Study Abroad: A Parent's Guide, William W. Hoffa, 1998, 112 pp. NAFSA: Association of International Educators. Available online at www.nafsa.org

State Department Website for Updates, Consular Information Sheets, etc: www.travel.state.gov

Promoting Health and Safety in Study Abroad: <http://www.secussa.nafsa.org/safetyabroad/default.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov