

**Pittsburg State University**  
**Study Abroad**



**Individual Program Pre-departure**  
**Guide**

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## **Know Before You Go!**

### **Information on your Destination**

One of the most important things you can do before you decide to study abroad is to learn about your destination. Please take a look at the following sources and share the information with any parents or guardians who are interested in your study abroad plans before turning in your study abroad application:

**The US State Department** - [http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel\\_1744.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html) - has Background Notes and Consular Information on every country.

**Center for Disease Control** - <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/> - Talks about health information in each country, advised vaccines, precautions.

**Wikitravel** - [http://wikitravel.org/en/Main\\_Page](http://wikitravel.org/en/Main_Page) - Has Free worldwide travel guides

Consider getting a **Lonely Planet Guidebook**, a **Rough Guide Guidebook** or a **Let's Go Guidebook** for your destination (check Amazon.com).

By getting this information in the early stages of planning for study abroad you can make an informed decision about where you want to go, and appreciate it when you get there.

## PSU Study Abroad Policies and Procedures

Do you have all your paperwork in order to study abroad?

This is necessary for a smooth transition to and from the study abroad program.

### *Credits & credit transfer*

Getting credit at PSU for the courses you take abroad is not automatic. You need to take the proper steps to assure the courses you take abroad will transfer back to the university.

1. Work with your advisor to choose about two or three times the amount of classes you will take abroad from the course catalog provided by the program. If the course descriptions are not in English, have them translated before meeting with your advisor. The Study Abroad Coordinator can help you find a person that can translate for you if this is needed.
2. Your advisor will direct you to the proper department chairs to have the courses matched with PSU equivalents. If there is no PSU equivalent, the department chair will determine how the credit will appear on your PSU transcript. The courses and their equivalents will be recorded on the *Course Credit Transfer Form*. The department chair for each department that approved courses will sign the form.
3. The final person to review and sign the *Course Credit Transfer Form* is the Transcript Analyst in the Registrar's Office, 103 Russ Hall. The form will be kept in the Registrar's Office.
4. After submitting this form, you will meet with the Administrative Specialist in the Registrars Office to register for your semester or summer abroad.
5. Bring a **copy** of the completed form to the Study Abroad Coordinator in International Programs & Services to keep in your study abroad file.
6. When you arrive at your host institution, you need to register for and take a full load of credits (12 hours for fall and spring). If you are thinking about dropping a class keep this in mind. Also if you end up taking a course that has not been pre-approved, send the course information through email to the department chair. Keep track of your communication. If it is approved send it to the Study Abroad Coordinator. It will be kept in your file for when you return so the transfer credit can be appropriately applied.
7. At the end of your program, make sure you have requested that your transcripts are sent to PSU. You will send your transcripts to:  

Assistant Registrar  
Registrar's Office  
Pittsburg State University  
1701 S. Broadway

Russ Hall 103c  
Pittsburg, KS 66762 USA

### ***Financial Aid***

At Pittsburg State University, we work so that students' loans, grants, and institutional scholarships can be applied to their semester abroad. However, in order for this to happen you are responsible for completing the proper paperwork.

1. Complete the Course Credit Transfer process with the Registrar's office. This will register you in a Study Abroad block course. This course is proof that you will be a full time student. This makes you eligible for aid.
2. Complete the Financial Assistance Form. You will bring the form which includes your calculated costs for your time abroad to Financial Assistance. You will work with the designated Financial Assistance Counselor for study abroad. Together you will fill out the proper paperwork for your loans, grants, and scholarships to be transferred to study abroad.

Here is the contact information for Financial Assistance:

Financial Assistance  
103 Horace Mann  
620-235-4240  
[finad@pittstate.edu](mailto:finad@pittstate.edu)

### ***Enrollment***

Don't forget you are coming back to PSU after you study abroad. Stay in contact with your academic advisor while you are abroad. Make

sure you schedule your classes for your returning semester to PSU while you are abroad.

### ***Billing/ refund policy***

For individual programs, your billing depends on the type of program you are participating in. If you are studying abroad on an exchange program with one of PSU's partner schools, you will receive a tuition bill from PSU and pay PSU. You will have to pay room and board through the host institution or the institution providing these services. If you are participating in a study abroad program that is not part of PSU, you will pay the program directly. Make an appointment with the Study Abroad Coordinator if you decide not to participate in an exchange or study abroad program after making payments.

### ***Codes of conduct***

#### ***You represent PSU while you are abroad.***

Read about the laws of your host country before leaving. You must abide by the laws of the country even if they are different from US law.

You will sign a waiver that states the expectations of PSU for students abroad. Your participation in study abroad can be terminated if you do not fulfill these expectations.

## **Travel Documents**

### ***Passport***

You should apply for a passport as soon as you begin thinking about going abroad for your passport.

You can search for the nearest passport application location on the United States Postal Service website ([www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com)).

In Pittsburg, you can apply for a passport at the Post Office at 702 N. Locust. The hours for passport services and photos are different from the regular post office hours. Make sure to check them before going. You can pick up an application for a passport at the post office and many local libraries or online. Be sure to bring all that is required to apply and be aware of the cost of the application. If you are applying for the first time, you will need to apply in person. There is a different process for renewal of a passport.

Check

[http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport\\_1738.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html) for details on how to get a passport.

You can get passport pictures from Walgreens or the Post Office in Pittsburg.

### ***Visa***

Each country has different regulations when it comes to Visa's. Don't assume that because you did it one way for a previous study abroad or international travel experience that it is the

same for this study abroad. Regulations change so check with the consulate before sending in your materials to make sure you have a complete application.

Do not wait until the last minute to apply for your Visa. They can take up to 2 months to process. If you do not have your Visa on time, you will have to delay your flight or even cancel your program participation. Remember that there is no guarantee you will receive a Visa. They are issued by the host country. The Study Abroad Coordinator, International Programs & Services, and Pittsburg State University do not have any power to grant you a Visa.

Send a copy of your Visa to the Study Abroad Coordinator when you receive it.

## **Travel Information**

### ***Flight***

Make your flight plans as soon as possible.

Before booking a flight, make sure you have your VISA and your start and end dates of the program.

There are travel companies that provide discount to student travelers like Student Universe and STA travel. These are good places to start your search for a ticket.

When you are preparing to leave, make sure you have all information you may want and need when you arrive in your carry-on baggage like your host school's address and contact information, your host family's information, taxi information, public transportation, a calling card, some cash in the foreign currency, your passport, and anything else you may think you need.

Make sure you send your flight itinerary to the Study Abroad Coordinator as soon as you have it.

If you make any flight changes while studying abroad, make sure you are still in compliance with the stipulations of your VISA.

### ***Luggage***

Make sure your luggage is something you will be able to carry and move relatively easily. You may have to transport your luggage from the airport to a taxi and then from a taxi into where

you will be staying. You may have to go up and down stairs and so forth.

Backpacks are a good idea but watch the zippers in crowded areas. It is easier to get around with two smaller pieces of luggage than one huge one.

Also bring something that is easy to use for weekend or short trips.

Put a luggage tag on each piece of luggage and also put your contact information inside your luggage in case the luggage tag breaks. It is good idea to buy TSA approved locks for your luggage.

### ***Packing Tips***

- ✓ Pack as light as possible.
- ✓ Check the typical weather in the country during the time when you will be there. Remember if you are staying for a semester, you will have to plan for season changes. Dressing in layers is a great way to save space and be prepared for season changes.
- ✓ Make sure you have comfortable walking shoes because most likely you will be doing more walking than you are used to in the US.
- ✓ In some countries people dress nicely for things as simple as going shopping so bring one or two nice outfits just in case.

- ✓ If you are planning on bringing electrical things, research if you will need converters and where you can get them.
- ✓ Find out what is readily available where you are going. You may be able to buy shampoo, soap, toothpaste and so on at reasonable prices so you can leave these things out if you are running out of space.
- ✓ Make sure you keep all your documents with you in your carry on luggage.
- ✓ Get a money belt or some sort of travel purse that can be hidden under your clothes to put things such as your passport and credit cards in.
- ✓ Make 3 copies of these important documents. Keep one in your purse, one in your luggage, and leave one at home.
- ✓ Pack your prescription drugs and your contact lenses in your carry on luggage. You should have the prescription with you and a note from your doctor explaining why you have the medication. Check the Transportation Security Administration website for guidelines on how to pack medications ([www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov))
- ✓ Bring a small first aid kit with band aids, Neosporin, anti-bacterial hand gel, eye drops, aspirin, anti-diarrhea medicine, vitamins, and other items.
- ✓ Check airport and airline regulations to make sure you are in agreement for things like size and weight of luggage,

number of pieces of luggage, what you can carry on and so forth. Regulations are getting stricter and change from country to country, so be aware.

## Communication

### *Email*

Make sure your email that you have in the directory and have given to the Study Abroad Coordinator stays active during the time you are abroad.

Email will be the main means of communication from Pittsburg State University. Upon arrival, contact the Study Abroad Coordinator to report that you made it safely. If you are experiencing difficulties like homesickness, health issues, or any other concerns, you should talk with the resident coordinator at the host institution to find how to get help. You should also contact the Study Abroad Coordinator at PSU.

### *Calling*

International cell phones are becoming more popular. Many study abroad students use pay as you go phones while overseas. This is a direct line that your parents, family, and friends can call. Make sure you check the rates for calling internationally on the cell phone.

Another option for calling home is calling cards. You can buy calling cards before you leave or upon arrival in the host country. You may want to research which cards are more economical. Another option is using instant messenger programs offered through email providers. Skype is a phone service run through the

internet through which you can call landlines and cell phones at reasonable rates (skype.com).

Be cautious of using a host family's home line to make and receive calls. In some countries families are charged for incoming and outgoing calls.

Make sure you find out how public phones work in the host country. Some have cards you may need to buy before calling.

Before you leave, make sure your friends and family know how to dial internationally, in case they need to reach you. They dial 011-country code-city code-phone number. When you are trying to call home remember to dial the country code for the U.S. You need to dial 001-area code-local number.

**Keep in contact with Study Abroad Office.** If you have questions while you are there and don't know to whom to direct them, you can contact the Study Abroad Coordinator. The coordinator will be able to answer the question or direct you to correct person on campus to answer your question. Remember to communicate with your resident coordinator at the host institution. This person is a valuable in country resource.

Here is the contact information for the Study Abroad Coordinator at PSU:

International Programs & Services

Pittsburg State University

1701 South Broadway, Whitesitt 118

Pittsburg, KS 66762 USA

Phone: 620-235-4221 Fax: 620-235-4962

[www.pittstate.edu/office/study\\_abroad/](http://www.pittstate.edu/office/study_abroad/)

## Health and Health Insurance

### *Pre-Departure Travel Consults & Immunizations*

Study abroad, although a rewarding experience can be quite stressful. Studying abroad will not make family problems disappear or cure physical ailments. It may make problems you had before going abroad seem larger and less manageable. Make sure you talk to the necessary health professionals before you leave about any concerns you may have.

You should visit your primary care physician, gynecologist and dentist before studying abroad. This is a preventative measure to try to lessen the chance of having health issues arise while you are abroad.

If you are going to need regular care while you are abroad, bring a letter from your doctor that introduces you to the doctor you will be visiting while abroad.

While visiting with your primary care physician, get the proper amounts and documentation of regular medications you take. You should take with you the full amount of medication you will need while abroad. Your doctor should give you a note along with the prescription and medications that informs customs officers and others why you have a large quantity of prescription drugs. The medications should be in their original container and clearly marked. If

you are going to a country that has an official language other than English, you should get your prescription translated. Check the TSA website ([www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov)) for packing regulations on medications.

*As part of your preparation to go abroad, you have to visit the Student Health Center for your Gorilla Wellness Travel Consult.* The health providers at the consult will advise you on the immunizations that may be needed to go to your destination. They will also tell you about other health concerns of the country like drinking water, food concerns, and other health related issues.

When you are applying for the program or housing make sure you communicate with the program all your special dietary and physical needs. The program may have special suggestions for vegetarians, diabetics or others who need to follow a strict diet. Also if you have physical disabilities be clear on what accommodations you need while abroad. If you have learning disabilities explain clearly the accommodations you need to the resident coordinator in the host country. You will work together to see how or if they will be addressed in the program.

***Do not assume accommodations are available. Communicate and ask questions.***

### ***Jet Lag***

When you arrive you may experience jet lag. Your body needs time to adjust to time

changes and to recover from the long travel you just went through. Going through airports and being on planes can be quite stressful. Good ways to recover from jet lag are to rest, eat healthily, drink water and other non-alcoholic beverages, avoid alcohol and caffeine, do some moderate exercise, and wear comfortable clothing.

Be nice to your body upon arrival and you will be happier sooner.

### ***International Insurance:***

#### ***HTH Worldwide***

Many domestic health insurance plans do not cover all the necessary areas that are special to international living. The health insurance you have abroad should cover services specific to international travel and study abroad such as repatriation of remains, medical evacuation and other benefits such as covering part of the cost if a parent would come visit you while you are in the hospital. Ask your insurance company how the insurance works internationally. You may have to pay upfront and file a claim when you return.

The Office of International Programs and Services at PSU has available coverage with HTH Worldwide International Insurance. The temporary insurance was designed for study abroad students. It covers Repatriation of Remains and Medical Evacuation among other benefits for the time the student is abroad. They have a large network of doctors and

dentists internationally. You can search for a medical professional in their network on their website ([www.hthstudents.com](http://www.hthstudents.com)). In addition, all the network medical professionals speak English. Once the policy has been purchased, students have access to the HTH Students website. There they can search for doctors. There is also a Security Guide, a drug translation list, and other good resources for health issues abroad. Parents can also get on and communicate with their students through the website to help pick a doctor and check claims and so forth.

Students must have appropriate insurance for the time they will be abroad. If a student would like to check if their domestic insurance covers the necessary items, a summary of the HTH plan can be attained from International Programs & Services to compare to your insurance coverage.

#### ***International Student ID (ISIC) card***

You may buy an ISIC card to be used when you go abroad. The card serves as another form of ID abroad. Many museums and touristy places will give ISIC card holders discounts. In addition, it comes with supplemental health insurance. You can go to the website <http://myisic.com> to find the benefits and discounts provided by the ISIC card specific to where you will be studying.

You can purchase the card in International Programs & Services. For details on how to apply contact IPSO.

### ***Find Your Health Resources Abroad***

Upon arrival you should find out about the health and safety resources in your area.

Find the nearest emergency room, doctor, and so forth.

Make sure you know emergency numbers and if there is a general number for emergencies like 911 in the United States.

If a medical emergency should take place, first get help. Be sure to contact the resident coordinator and insurance company if necessary. Then contact your emergency contact and the study abroad coordinator at PSU. We will all work together to make sure that the proper measures are taken to take care of the situation. You never know when an emergency will occur. That is why it is important you know which hospitals you would prefer to go to before anything happens.

## **Safety & Security**

### ***Embassy or Consulate***

Upon arrival or before leaving the US find the nearest US embassy or consulate to your host institution. You should have their contact information.

Before you leave the US, you should register online with the embassy before you leave. You can do this online by visiting <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/> . This creates another record of your presence in the country.

Upon arrival, locate the embassy or consulate. *If there is an incident in the country, contact the embassy immediately.* Also be in contact with your resident director, the PSU study abroad coordinator and your parents.

A good rule of thumb is to avoid demonstrations especially anti-American ones.

### ***Behavior***

Remember you are a guest in the host country. You will be leaving your comfort zone with this experience which is good but comes with its challenges.

Be open to new experiences and having to adjust to new customs, schedules, smells and tastes.

Also remember you are foreign. You will stick out as an American. You should take precautions as you are out and about. Don't

carry a lot of cash and carry just a copy of your passport.

Be aware of your surroundings. Avoid unwanted attention. Stay on main streets and with groups if possible especially at night. Know where you are going. Keep an eye on your bags and your pockets especially if it is an area that is known for pickpockets. It is a good idea to use a money belt or some sort of purse that you put under your clothes to carry valuable items. Don't ever leave your bags unattended.

Basically be street smart and be aware you may be targeted because you are foreign. Be suspicious of people, especially if strangers approach you. Don't talk to them.

If you find yourself in a confrontation, don't escalate the situation. Give them what they want as long as they are not physically hurting you and leave the situation as soon as possible.

A good way to be safe is to know what is going on in the country. Read the news especially local news. Then you may start to learn what areas are safe and not so safe. Also you will be more aware in general of the climate in the country.

A good resource to learn your way around is your resident director or coordinator. He/she should be able to advise you on safe areas, safe transportation and other precautions you should take.

Be responsible for your actions and behaviors. You are representing PSU and Americans

while you are overseas, help break down stereotypes instead of reinforcing them!

### ***Emergencies***

Know emergency contact numbers like your resident director, your study abroad coordinator, the embassy/ consulate, the hospital, your doctor in country, the police, and so on. Make sure you get help as quick as possible.

Don't try to fight back if you are being robbed. Let them take your things, they are replaceable. It would be worse if you got hurt.

### ***Alcohol & Drugs***

Make sure you know and obey the alcohol laws in the country you are staying in. If you are of legal age and choose to drink, drink responsibly. Many problems and bad situations can come out of drinking too much and losing control. This is compounded by being in an unfamiliar setting. Remember to know when to say when.

Do not consume illegal drugs while you are abroad, they are still illegal. No one can get you out of jail, not your parents, not PSU, not the embassy.

Some countries have strict punishments for drug use and possession, don't test them.

They include several years in jail to a life sentence to the death penalty. Do not even talk with a person that approaches you to sell you drugs because in some countries that may be

seen as intent to buy which is a punishable offense.

### ***Sex***

Sometimes you can get a little starry eyed while abroad. Everything is new and different and you want to take part in the social scene in your new environment. Do that but be cautious and don't lose your sense of judgment.

If you choose to have a sexual relationship, take the same precautions you would take in the United States. Sexually transmitted diseases do not stay within the borders of the U.S.

## Money matters

### **Cash**

**Do not** take all your money in cash. Try to have your money in a few different forms.

Also **do not** keep all your money in one place. If you take out a large amount don't carry it all on you. Make a budget for yourself before you leave for your study abroad. There will be a lot of new things and chances to travel so having a budget will help you stay in control of your finances.

It is a good idea to change over \$50 to \$100 before you leave the U.S. in case you need to pay a taxi, buy a phone card, or need a snack when you arrive.

### **Debit cards**

A good way to get cash is using your debit card. Many cards are accepted in ATM machines in other countries. The most widely accepted are VISA, MasterCard, Cirrus, or PLUS. The back of the debit card shows the systems that work with your card. Match those with the signs on the ATM.

You will be charged fees most likely from your bank and the bank you are withdrawing from, therefore, you may want to withdraw larger amounts of cash at one time.

This is also a way to budget. Your parents or guardian may deposit a certain amount in your

account each month for you to use that month while you are abroad.

It is important to alert your bank you will be abroad and will be withdrawing money so your card doesn't get flagged for suspicious activity.

### **Credit cards**

It is a good idea to have a credit card while you are abroad just in case. Credit cards are useful because you can pay for large expenses with it. It can be reserved for emergency situations, hospital bills, changing a plane ticket or other travel expenses. *Remember*, however, if you are using a credit card abroad that your bill will be coming at home. Make sure you have a person at home who is taking care of your bill to avoid late charges and so forth.

Give your numbers of your cards or a copy of your cards to your parents or emergency contact while you abroad along with the contact number for the company in case of stolen cards.

Again, remember to inform your credit card company that you will be abroad to avoid any holds for suspicious activity on the card.

Be careful with your card. Don't carry it when you don't need it just like with large amounts of cash.

### **Travelers Checks**

Another way to bring money is Travelers Checks. If you can buy Travelers Checks in the foreign currency this would be best.

Travelers Checks are more difficult to cash when they are in US Dollars. You must ask your resident coordinator where you can cash Travelers Checks. Once you have found that information out, visit the different places to find the best exchange rate. It will probably be in a bank. Be aware that there may be a charge to cash the check and you may lose money in the exchange. You will need your passport in order to cash your checks.

Travelers Checks have the advantage that if they are stolen, they can be replaced. Make sure you keep track of your use of your checks on the receipt the bank provides. Keep this in a safe place separate from your checks.

### ***Bank accounts***

It is difficult to open a bank account abroad. If you are staying for only a summer or semester, it is not advisable. If you are staying in another country for a year, you may want to consider this option. Contact your host school or the study abroad coordinator on what you would need to do that.

### ***Wire transfer***

If at some point you need money to be transferred to you this can be done. You may want to talk with your bank before you leave to see if they have cooperating banks where you are studying.

You can also wire money through Western Union or other agencies. However, they may charge larger amounts for the transfer.

## Cultural concerns

### *Preparation*

Buy guide books like *Lets Go* or *Lonely Planet* about the country or area where you will be studying. This will give you some ideas about places, culture, and language in the host country.

The US State Department has a website designed specifically for students traveling abroad: [www.studentsabroad.state.gov](http://www.studentsabroad.state.gov) . It has valuable information and also includes checklists and packing lists.

The Center for Global Education has great Country Handbooks online that can help you to get acquainted with the host country. This may help reduce your anxiety before leaving and ease your transition in the first weeks you are abroad. Their website is [www.lmu.edu/globaled](http://www.lmu.edu/globaled). They have handbooks on specific countries and a general handbook if your host country does not have a handbook. The handbooks also provide good background and safety information for you and your parents before you go abroad.

If you are going to the UK, the British Council has a very thorough handbook about the UK that you can find at [www.studyintheuk.org](http://www.studyintheuk.org).

*There are some experiences you can never prepare for but knowing something is better than nothing.*

### *Cultural adjustment*

Studying abroad is an exciting experience but also a stressful experience.

Be ready to feel a wide array of emotions as you prepare to go abroad, study overseas, and return to the U.S. You may feel anxious, homesick, awestruck, ecstatic, impatient, bewildered, depressed or many other things.

This mix of feelings can be dealt with by keeping a positive attitude.

Also you should be aware of the normal reaction to going abroad called **culture shock**. When you first arrive you will be amazed by everything. Everything is novel and exciting. Later you may start to get frustrated as everything you do seems to be a bit harder and you want the country to adjust to you. During this time, try to accept changes and minimize home country versus host country comparisons. This will help you start to develop a new perspective. It also helps to communicate your feelings either by talking with friends and family, talking with the resident director or journaling.

Finally, you will start appreciating differences and adapting. Your mood and anxiety level will improve. Believe it or not when you are preparing to leave, you may feel anxious about your reentry and adjusting back to the U.S. Everyone has a different experience with culture shock but these are the general patterns. Expect to go through this wave of

emotions. If you are feeling anxious and you are not improving in mood, seek professional help. Ask your resident coordinator to refer you to a counselor who can help you work through your feelings or you can search for resources through your international insurance provider. Remember these are normal reactions. You are stepping out of your comfort zone. This will help you grow as a person.

When you return, visit the Study Abroad Coordinator to find ways to stay involved with the international community. These options include joining the International Knowledge and Experience Program, writing an essay about your experience, working with international students, talking with perspective study abroad students, and more.

### ***Communication***

It is important to communicate with family, friends, and your home university while you are abroad. Although they are far away these people are a network of support for you.

Family and friends should be aware that you may complain a lot at the beginning. They should not be too alarmed. People at home will notice your mood changes as you adjust to the culture.

Also communicate with yourself by journaling or being conscious of how you are feeling. Find ways to relax if you feel stressed like running, hanging out with Americans, taking a bath, eating at McDonalds, or whatever helps.

Sometimes it helps to have a little taste of home.

Take care of yourself while you are abroad. Eating right, staying hydrated, exercising regularly, and making new friends are great ways to keep your spirits up.

### ***Specific groups: women, religious groups, minorities***

There may be specific cultural differences that affect specific groups. Read the handbooks referenced before to find out what you may encounter if you are part of one of these groups.

Please contact the Study Abroad Coordinator or your Resident Director with any specific questions or concerns.

## **Practical Information**

### ***Language key words***

It is helpful to familiarize yourself with commonly used phrases before you leave. The country guide books and travel guides often provide a list of key phrases if you are studying in a country that doesn't speak English. Also the British Council translates some British lingo into American lingo. PSU's Axe Library has a language learning program called Mango Languages – it is similar to Rosetta Stone, and absolutely free to students. Spending a couple of hours with Mango could really increase your enjoyment of your destination.

### ***Weather***

Books and the internet are great resources to find out what the weather will be like where you are going during the time you are there. Will you need a heavy winter coat? An umbrella? Boots?

Find out the weather and plan your packing of clothes appropriately.

### ***Appropriate clothing***

Try not to over pack, even though you want to bring everything. Remember you will probably be coming back with more things than you left with so leave room for that. Also be aware of cultural differences. Will your clothes be

culturally appropriate? Are you going somewhere where short shorts will draw a lot of attention? Is wearing pj's to class accepted in the host country?

### ***Schedules***

Not every country eats lunch at noon.

One thing to pay attention to as you read about the host country is the schedule.

When do people eat breakfast, lunch and dinner? Which is the strong meal of the day?

Do shops close during the day? Are places open on Sundays? What are bank hours?

These types of schedules are different all over the world.

### ***Money/cost***

Be aware of your expenses that are not covered in your program fee including food, travel, public transport, books, entrance fees, shopping excursions, souvenirs and so on.

Make sure you know the exchange rate so you are aware of how much you are paying.

Try to find pictures of the currency used in the host country before you leave. Then you will be familiar with the money before it is in your hands.

### ***Power of attorney***

#### ***If you will be spending a long time abroad***

Make sure your parents, guardians or friends have the legal authority to do that tasks that

you leave behind for them. You may need to give “power of attorney” to a trusted individual. With this power their signature serves as your signature while you are abroad. They can do such things as deposit and withdraw money from your bank account and sign your checks. Ask your bank how to arrange this if it is needed.

### ***Laws***

Become acquainted with the laws in the country you are staying in. Make sure to abide by their laws. You are not in the United States. If you break the law of your host country while in your host country, you broke the law. You will face the consequences of your decisions and actions.

## **Upon return**

### ***Taking care of business***

Before you leave, make sure that your transcripts are being sent back to PSU.

Also make sure that you have registered for classes at PSU. Furthermore, make sure you have a place to live when you come back.

Before leaving your host institution, give your resident coordinator a forwarding address.

Make sure all your outstanding bills in the host country are paid.

Close to your departure date, you should confirm your flight with your airline. Many airlines overbook flights so you want to assure you have a seat on that flight. You can do this up to 72 hours in advance.

### ***International Knowledge & Experience Program***

Pittsburg State University offers the International Knowledge and Experience Certificate for students that are involved internationally on and off campus. IKE participants must complete two of the three following components to earn the certificate: Study Abroad, Academic Coursework, & Co-Curricular Activities. For more information contact the Study Abroad Coordinator or go to [www.pittstate.edu/department/ike/](http://www.pittstate.edu/department/ike/) .

### ***Photos***

The Pittsburg State University International Programs & Services office and Admissions office would love to have pictures of PSU students in PSU wear while abroad.

Submit your favorite pictures from abroad electronically to the study abroad coordinator.

### ***Cultural adjustment***

You will experience reverse culture shock as you return. This is another period of adjustment. You may find that you have changed but everything back here is exactly the same or you may find that everything is different.

Friends and family may not have the patience to listen to the many stories you have about being abroad or look at all your pictures.

Look for someone who is interested in your experience to talk with. For example, you can meet with the study abroad coordinator. You may be able to promote study abroad on campus or get involved in another way. There are opportunities to get involved with IKE, international students on campus, or other groups that fit your interests. You are lucky in that we have a good number of international students on campus. *Your international experience does not have to end when you get off the plane.*

**Get involved!**

**Have fun, be safe!**