The Study Abroad Orientation Handbook is divided into sections that focus on the major areas of concern that most students encounter before, during, and after a study abroad experience.

SECTION I  ACADEMIC CREDIT  2
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Whether you are studying abroad on a reciprocal exchange or an affiliated/approved program, the courses you plan to take abroad must be pre-approved, their OSU equivalence established, and their applicability to your degree program determined.

**RECIPROCAL EXCHANGE**
Reciprocal Exchange enables you to pay tuition and fees to Oklahoma State University while studying abroad at a host university. You pay all other charges such as room and board, books and supplies, at your host institution.
You are enrolled at OSU in a holding number designated as “Study Abroad 3090,” specific to your academic college.
Once abroad, you enroll in specific classes at your host university. The classes taken abroad replace “Study Abroad 3090” credits when you complete your studies and the courses are posted on the OSU transcript.
To efficiently and successfully complete the enrollment process and to receive credit for your work abroad, please carefully follow the *Reciprocal Exchange Timetable* and observe the deadlines for submitting required documents. The Timetable was developed to help you organize your time; *failure to observe deadlines may result in your dismissal from the exchange.*

**AFFILIATED/APPROVED PROGRAMS**
Affiliated/approved programs encompass programs offered by US universities and study abroad organizations as well as direct enrollment. The process of pre-approval of courses is similar to that for reciprocal exchange, but there is no holding course to enroll in at OSU.

**SELECTING CLASSES AT YOUR HOST INSTITUTION**
Ideally, you select all the classes you may consider taking abroad before you leave OSU. The classes are then evaluated for their OSU equivalence using the *Course Equivalency Evaluation* form. You can then use this evaluation to help select classes when you enroll abroad. In some cases you must wait until you are on site before knowing which classes will be available.

You must complete the Course Equivalency Evaluation Form and obtain the appropriate signatures from your college academic advising office, the Financial Aid Office, the Study Abroad Office, and the International Admissions Office before you are authorized to enroll in Study Abroad 3090 in the Sectioning Office for reciprocal exchange, or before you have confirmation that your courses will transfer back to OSU as you expect for affiliated/approved programs.

**VERIFYING YOUR ARRIVAL AND ENROLLMENT**
Between the first and fifth day of classes at your host university, you are expected to fax your Enrollment Verification and Arrival Report to the Study Abroad Office. Do not fax the form earlier, as it won’t be accepted. Your federal financial aid will be disbursed as soon as the Enrollment Verification has been received and evaluated by the International Admissions Office. The Enrollment Verification and Arrival Report must be submitted no later than the Friday of the first week of class.
You will be notified by e-mail of the evaluation of your courses. This notification will enable you to make informed decisions about dropping or adding classes.

You are responsible for all the courses you report on the Enrollment Verification and for any changes you make within six weeks after the date classes begin at your host university. Make certain the number of credit hours is accurately indicated for each course. If there is a discrepancy between the courses and number of credit hours reported on the Enrollment Verification and the official academic record (transcript), you must provide an explanation of the discrepancy from your host coordinator who has previously verified the accuracy of the credits, so we are ensured of having valid information.

**MAKING CHANGES IN YOUR ENROLLMENT**
Use the Drop/Add Notification to make course changes. Making changes in your schedule is allowed through the Friday of the sixth week of classes at your host institution. Your final schedule of classes will be determined by the Verification of Enrollment and any subsequent Add/Drop Notifications received by the six-week deadline. You will be responsible for payment of fees for the total hours of enrollment based on these verifications. In addition, you may not add a course after the six week deadline.
You may drop a class after the deadline, however, you will receive a grade of “W” and you will be charged for the course, just as you would be if you were in residence at OSU.
If a course appears on the official academic record from your host university that was not reported on your Enrollment Verification or Add/Drop Notification, you will not receive credit for the course. If a course that appears on your Enrollment Verification or subsequent Add/Drop Notification does not appear on the official academic record from your host institution, you will receive an “N” grade, meaning no grade reported. You will still be charged for the credit hours.

If you add any courses that were not previously evaluated by the International Admissions Office, you should provide a description of the course in English. Neither the Study Abroad Office nor the International Admissions Office will be able to translate course descriptions for you.

OBTAINING AN OFFICIAL ACADEMIC RECORD (TRANSCRIPT)
At the end of each term of your studies abroad, please ask that an official academic record be sent to the Study Abroad Office. If your host university issues an academic record only once a year, please let us know so we can note the exception. Your financial aid will be disbursed when you demonstrate that you have successfully completed the previous period of academic work.

If you think you will not receive an official academic record promptly and that your financial aid for the subsequent semester may be delayed because you are not able to provide a transcript, use the Academic Progress Report to record the signatures from your individual professors indicating you successfully completed your classes. The form can temporarily serve as an official transcript; however, the official document must be provided within a reasonable time.

Remember, it’s in your own best interests to be as organized and as accurate as possible! The forms were designed to make the process more efficient and easy to use. It’s your academic record that will be affected. We have to work together as a team to try to coordinate two different academic systems. The better organized you are, the more time you will have to spend absorbing the host culture!!!

*The forms indicated in this section are included in the Study Abroad Forms section of this handbook.

FINANCIAL AID

When you decided to Study Abroad, one of your major concerns was probably the cost - the cost of the program as well as the cost of traveling to, and living in, another country. If you are eligible, you may use financial aid to help pay for your study abroad experience. REMEMBER, TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR FINANCIAL AID, THE COURSE WORK YOU TAKE WHILE ON A STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM MUST TRANSFER BACK AND APPLY TO YOUR DEGREE

You may already receive financial aid to assist you with educational expenses or you may plan to apply for financial aid to help with the cost of study abroad. The following checklist will help you remember the necessary steps to take.

- If you plan to apply your existing financial aid to study abroad, contact the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid at (405) 744-6604.
- One of the early steps you need to take is to get a cost of living estimate from your host university. The Study Abroad office can help you with this step.
- To apply for Federal/State Financial Aid, complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA) - paper applications are available in 119 Student Union or in the Student Services Offices of the individual OSU Colleges. An electronic application can be completed by using FAFSA Express in the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid, 213 Student Union, or by using FAFSA on the Web at www.fafsa.ed.gov.
  1. Provide the required supporting documents (U.S. Income Tax Returns, for example) as requested by the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid;
  2. Review your Financial Aid Award Letter and accept or decline offers. Return the signed award letter to 119 Student Union. If you are accepting a Federal Loan, you will need to have completed a Master Prom Note (MPN) using your FAFSA pin number at http://dlenote.ed.gov and entrance interview at www.dl.ed.gov. Check with the
Bursar – Student Loans, 113 Student Union, telephone (405) 744-6447, regarding the processing or your promissory note if you are accepting a Federal Perkins Loan.

3. If you are a previous borrower in any of the following loan programs, you should contact the holder of your loan to ensure you have complete deferment forms and any other information required to keep you in good standing in these programs:
   - Federal Perkins Loan
   - Federal Subsidized or Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loans
   - Federal Ford Direct Subsidized or Unsubsidized Loans

• **If you hold scholarships or plan to apply for scholarships…**
  1. Check with the awarding Agency/Department to see whether you can use your scholarship money to study abroad.
  2. Apply for the following OSU programs: Continuing University Fee Waivers – application is available online beginning (approximately) December 1 or via the Web at www.okstate.edu/finaid. Application deadline is March 1; departmental Scholarships may be offered specifically for study abroad. Check with the individual College Student Service Office; freshman and Transfer Fee/Tuition Waivers – apply using the OSU Application for admission and filling out the scholarship application. Check with Office of High School and College Relations, 219 Student Union, or the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid, 119 Student Union.

**Important Facts About Federal Financial Aid Disbursements for Study Abroad Students**

- Disbursement of Federal Student Aid cannot occur until the first day of attendance at the host institution. *This attendance must be confirmed by faxing official documentation to Study Abroad Office.* We will forward this information to the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid
- Disbursements are divided by the type of terms at the host institution, for example, into blocks, quarters, or semester. Your financial aid may be disbursed in increments that differ from the traditional two-semester academic year.
- If you are studying abroad for more than one block, semester or quarter, **the subsequent term’s financial aid cannot be disbursed until you submit the grades for completed coursework.**

**Official grades for completed coursework at the host institution must be received before disbursement will be made to students returning to OSU for subsequent terms within the current academic year (for example, spring or summer) or for the next academic year for students returning to the U.S. in late spring or summer.**

In general, federal financial aid will be dispersed into your Bursar’s account when you confirm you are enrolled and classes have begun at your host university. Any surplus payment after tuition and fees will be refunded to you as you have designated: direct deposit, check to parents, etc.

If you are using financial aid to study abroad, you will receive a financial aid checklist and statement of responsibility. The financial aid checklist and statement of responsibility provide further details and cautions regarding financial aid.

**KEY FINANCIAL AID POINTS:**

- Linda Millis, financial aid specialist for Study Abroad at Oklahoma State University, is located in the Office of Financial Aid, 119 Student Union, e-mail: lbm6233@okstate.edu.

- Before your aid will be released on the first day of class abroad, you must provide the Financial Aid office with the following
  - A signed course evaluation form
  - A signed statement of responsibility
  - A signed verification of enrollment

- Make certain you maintain full-time student status
  - Undergraduates: 12 hours per semester
  - Graduates: 6 hours per semester
  - Scholarship recipients: 28 hours per academic year or other specific requirements
BEFORE you leave, be sure to request from your host university that your transcript be forwarded to OSU. You must demonstrate that you successfully completed the previous semester and that you are presently enrolled in classes (enrollment verification) before your financial aid will be released for future semesters.

NOTE: Make sure you sign all the promissory notes before you leave OSU and that you have arranged for direct deposit from your bursar’s account.

Students must have a signed, valid passport (and visas, if required). Students studying abroad must be sure that they have the proper visa to study there; a visitor’s visa or entry without an appropriate visa may not allow one to study. Students should remember to fill in the emergency information page of their passport.

- It is a good idea for relatives of students abroad to obtain and maintain a valid passport as well, in case of an emergency requiring them to travel.
- Students should make copies of their passport's data page and any visas. They should keep a copy separately from the originals while traveling and leave one at home with their family and with their student advisor. This will help to obtain a replacement passport in the event the passport is lost or stolen.

**Passports and Visas**

If you do not have a passport and have not begun the application process, get busy! The months from January to August are the busiest for passport offices, so allow lots of time for processing, especially if you are studying abroad for the summer or fall semester.

**Student Visa Applications**

Find out if you will need a visa by checking the foreign entry requirements of your host country: http://travel.state.gov/foreignentryreqs.html

If the country in which you will be studying requires a student visa, get it as soon as possible. Do not procrastinate, or you may not receive your visa in time. Remember to send the visa application and passport by certified mail or Fed Ex so you can track the documents.

**International Student I.D. Card (ISIC)**

This card is invaluable to student travelers because it makes you eligible for special privileges, student discounts and travel bargains--that means lower-price air fares and accommodations; sometimes admission is reduced or free to museums, theaters, and cultural or historic sites. The ISIC card also gives students some emergency evacuation and repatriation insurance coverage. Please review the materials that accompany the card.

You should **get the card before you leave the U.S. but be aware that it expires at the end of each calendar year (i.e., in December), so if you are going to be abroad when it expires, arrange to have a new card forwarded to you.** Here on the OSU campus the card is available through the Study Abroad Office:

060-G Student Union
Stillwater, OK 74078-7064
(405) 744-8569

Remember to bring the following:
- One passport-size photo with your name written on the reverse side
- Your OSU school I.D.

The ISIC card costs $22.00 and will be taken from your bursars account. The card takes two days to produce.
Make sure to have a complete physical before you go. At your doctor's office, do the following:

- Check that all shots are current, particularly the following: measles, rubella, polio, mumps, diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough. Check on any immunizations needed for vacation travel.
- Get copies of all prescriptions (including for glasses or contacts), and be sure to request that any prescriptions include the generic names of drugs, since U.S. brands may not be available (or may be expensive). If you rely on any over-the-counter U.S. medicines (Advil, Tylenol, etc.), take them with you in a quantity sufficient for your stay.
- Have your doctor write a specific medical history if you are required to take any medications that might be considered suspicious narcotics in a foreign country. Do not assume that you know the difference: ask your doctor about this specifically.

Please review the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site for updated immunizations information:
www.cdc.gov/travel

You should also schedule a dentist appointment before you go, if possible. Try to do this well in advance, so that any necessary dental work can be completed before your departure.

**Medicine and Packing**
Remember to keep all medications (even common things like Tylenol or Advil) in their original containers with any prescriptions clearly marked. If you have allergies or need medication regularly, be sure to pack it in your carry-on luggage rather than in baggage that will be checked. You should have your carry-on luggage with you at all times, which will reduce the risk that necessary medication will be lost in transit or stolen.

Bring an extra pair of glasses or contact lenses. (Always bring spare glasses, even if you think you'll never need them.) Also bring a legible copy of your prescription. Contact lens wearers should bring extra contact lens solution and a 220/110 volt converter if you use heat disinfectant.

**Medical Insurance**

Medical insurance is required of all students participating in an OSU study abroad program. You must be covered by medical insurance while abroad, including during travel to and from the program. Be sure that your present insurance will be in effect when you are overseas!

Every year, hundreds of students become ill or suffer injuries overseas. It is essential that students have medical insurance that would cover a medical emergency abroad. Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's web site at http://www.cdc.gov/.

Discuss the following items with your insurance company:

- eligibility requirements
- duration of coverage
- the dollar limit of the policy, per incident and in total
- emergency evacuation and repatriation coverage and procedures
• cost of premium
• coverage for accidents
• contact and procedures for making claims
• related benefits such as 24-hour emergency contact, doctor referral services, etc.

Take along some claim forms from your insurance company so that you'll have them on hand if they are needed. Be sure that you understand what your insurance company's method of reimbursement will be while you are overseas—in many cases you will be required to pay the total cost of any treatment and then wait for reimbursement. It is wise to discuss a plan with your parents for receiving emergency money while overseas, if your plan requires you to pay for medical treatment up-front, even if you will eventually be reimbursed by your insurance.

The following telephone numbers and websites are listed as resources for insurance companies specializing in travel and foreign study. You should confirm with your current or prospective provider that coverage for you is not limited or excluded while you are out of the country. Some companies listed below offer only health insurance or medical assistance programs; others provide comprehensive coverage including health, cancellation and baggage insurance. MAKE SURE YOUR PLAN INCLUDES EMERGENCY MEDICAL EVACUATION AND REPATRIATION OF REMAINS. Another option to include is provision for and inclusion of pre-existing conditions. Participation in a reciprocal exchange or study abroad program requires that you have adequate coverage abroad in the event of a medical emergency, so please take the time to consider and review your policy status. Inclusion of companies on this page does not suggest endorsement by Oklahoma State University or the Study Abroad Office.

*This has been reviewed by Oklahoma State University Office of Student Health Insurance. Brochures are available in the OSU Study Abroad Office.

| *OSU’s Insurance – for Reciprocal Exchanges Only | Student Travel Association
| Travel Insurance |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|

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You will want to plan your financial needs for study abroad carefully. Take traveler’s checks and cash to tide you over for a few days or a week upon arrival in the host country. Some options for handling money include using Automatic Teller machines (ATM), traveler’s checks, cash advances on credit cards and wire transfers. Some of these can be complicated and expensive so you should ask your program staff to recommend the most effective means in the host country. You will probably spend relatively large sums of money in your first few weeks abroad as you learn your way around a new setting and buy what you need to get settled. It takes a few days to adjust to a new currency and understand its value.

• **Automatic Teller Machine (ATM) Card**
Without a doubt, the most convenient, secure, and economical way to keep yourself supplied with cash in the local currency is by using an ATM debit card (or check card), preferably with a Visa or MasterCard logo, and with a four-digit PIN code. With such a card you can draw money out of a checking account in your home bank in the U.S. (but not out of a savings account). You will receive the commercial exchange rate, which is always better than the tourist rate, and you will not be tied down to banking hours. There is a limit to the amount you can draw out on any one day—usually $300, and your home bank will usually charge a fee for each transaction, typically somewhere between $1 and $3. Therefore, it makes sense to take out the maximum allowable amount each time. And of course, if you are going to need large amounts of cash, you will need to do some planning ahead. It is also important to know how much money you have in your checking account back home and to keep track of your cash transfers. If you plan to use an American Express card for accessing your checking account, you need to sign up with American Express for that service ahead of time at (800) CASH-NOW. The service is ultimately more expensive than using a debit or check card with a Visa or MasterCard logo.

Since you could lose your ATM card or have it stolen, it is important to have a backup financial plan for emergencies. The most sensible one is to take a few hundred dollars in traveler's checks.

• **Traveler’s Checks**
Travelers checks are a good means of transporting money abroad because you are given a record of the check numbers and stolen checks are replaced. Keep check numbers recorded in a safe place. Traveler’s checks are especially useful if you plan to travel to several countries with different currencies. American Express will cash American Express traveler’s checks free of charge. Banks usually offer good exchange rates, but may charge a commission. Hotels, railroad stations and commercial “exchanges” tend to give expensive rates and charge the highest commission. Traveler’s checks are a safe way to keep emergency funds.

• **Credit Cards**
Credit cards often give you the best exchange rates for purchases, but many small restaurants, stores and cafés do not accept them. You should also find out which card is most commonly accepted in your host country. When using a credit card abroad, always verify the amount on the bill and keep your receipts. Notify your credit card company of your study abroad plans to avoid the cut-off or blocking systems activated by out of pattern charges to your card. Purchases made overseas are not subject to U.S. purchase protection policies for damaged or stolen goods. Some credit card companies charge high interest rates immediately on a cash advance unless there are sufficient funds in your credit card account.

• **Wire Transfers**
Wire transfers are yet another option. Banks, American Express offices and commercial agencies will wire money to a bank account or agent abroad in 3-4 business days. There may be a large transaction fee both to send and to receive the money. Ask about these fees both at home and abroad before wiring money.
Nearly everyone agrees that you can't take as much as you'd like to. Once you've dragged your bags across airports, bus terminals, train stations, up and down stairs, over cobbled streets and uneven sidewalks, you'll probably wish that you had listened to the “less is more” advice. Analyze your travel plans: How often do you have to change vehicles (airport to train station, train to bus, and bus to taxi)? How much flexibility will you have about leaving things behind while you travel during vacations? If you plan to see the country you're visiting at either the beginning or end of your program, you will probably have to carry everything with you, so you should take less.

The standard advice for choosing how much stuff to take is as follows: lay out all the clothes you plan to take and then cut the amount in half. This should give you the right amount!

OSU's programs are all located in areas of varying weather. Temperatures can change dramatically overnight or even in the course of a single day, so the best rule for choosing a wardrobe is to select items that can be interchanged and layered when you need more warmth and dressed up or down as the occasion warrants.

Past participants said that in England, France, and Spain students dress up, both for class and to go out. One year students will tell us that European style is to wear only black. The next year they will say Europeans wear all types of clothes and colors. It is hard to say what the style will be when you are over there, but make sure the clothes you pack are comfortable and that you like them. You can always buy new clothes when you arrive. Students have commented that there are good secondhand clothing stores all through Europe.

**Some suggested clothing items:**

- solid colored items that can be worn with at least two or three outfits
- practical, comfortable clothes that can be layered for warmth
- a few clothes for each season
- one dressy outfit that can be worn in any season (a dress for women, sports jacket and slacks for men)
- slippers (most floors will not be carpeted, and, in Europe, bare feet are considered offensive)
- flip-flops or shower shoes for traveling and for the beach
- a bathing suit or two
- a raincoat or pull-over and a jacket
- a sweatshirt and a few sweaters
- gloves and a scarf (students on every program have recommended both of these)
- a pair of comfortable walking shoes and a pair of dress shoes. **Don't take too many shoes!** They are bulky.
- lots of underwear and socks (you can save trips to the laundry by taking lots of underwear)
- sunglasses

**Other Essentials:**

- Small, battery-powered, travel alarm clock
- Postcards of your hometown and of the OSU campus
- Small first-aid kit
- Walkman with compact speakers (in addition to headphones).
- Dictionaries, grammar review texts, etc.
- An OSU calendar that tells you of important dates back here on campus, e.g., course sign-up deadline, off-campus application deadline, and housing lottery
- Family photos and mementos
The store down the street from your new home probably sells everything that you will need, but if you have “special” needs then pack up these items just in case.

**Luggage information**

It is possible to study abroad for a full academic year on an internal frame backpack and a carry-on bag.

You can only check two pieces of luggage, each no larger than 62” (L+W+H) and weighing no more than 70 pounds. If you bring more than the two pieces, the airlines may charge you $50 to $70 per extra bag. You may also take a carry-on bag that is no larger than 8” x 16” x 21”. Eight inches is the maximum height for a bag to fit under the seat. Do not assume that you can take a larger bag and find room in the overhead compartment. Space overhead is limited in overseas flights and may already be full when you get to your seat. It is a good idea to call your airline and verify the baggage regulations for your particular flight.

**Remember to leave room in your luggage to bring items home.**

**Documents to Take in Your Carry-on Luggage**

In addition to the documents listed below, students from all OSU programs should carry a list of important addresses and telephone numbers, including the program director's office phone number and address.

- Passport (with your visa if you need one)
- Proof of medical insurance while abroad
- International Student Identity Card
- Medications
- Change of clothing
- Schedule
- Cash

**Customs Tip:** You may need proof of prior ownership for foreign-made goods, particularly cameras and stereo equipment, in order to avoid paying Duty when you come home. It is possible to pre-register these items with Customs before you go—they'll note the serial numbers and give you a certificate. Taking the receipts along will do just as well, provided you still have them. *Save the receipts for things you buy while abroad.* They can sometimes prove very useful at Customs on your return.

**SAFETY TIPS**

“Should I register with the US Consulate?”

If students are going to be in a country for more than a couple of weeks, they should to register at the American Embassy or Consulate.

**WHAT U.S. CONSULAR OFFICERS CAN AND CAN NOT DO TO HELP U.S. CITIZENS ABROAD:**

- If students find themselves in trouble overseas, the Consular Officer at the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate can provide certain assistance and advice. Consular Officers can also help in the event of illness, injury, natural catastrophe, evacuations, destitution, or death.
- In the United States, the Office of Overseas Citizens Services can also assist American students abroad and their families in the USA in emergency cases. The 24-hour number to call is (202) 647-5225.
- There are certain things that consular officers at American embassies **CAN NOT** do for American citizens abroad. For example, they cannot cash checks, lend money or serve as your attorney.

For more information see the U.S. Department of State website at [http://travel.state.gov/studentinfo.html](http://travel.state.gov/studentinfo.html)
Security Issues

Please read this section very carefully and refer to it while abroad. There is no way to guarantee that you won't be involved in an unpleasant incident. Remember, awareness is your best defense: be alert, know the dangers, and avoid them. It is also important that you keep a low profile; however, it is difficult, if not impossible, to blend in entirely. Here are a few tips to help you lay low.

- In Europe, avoid cabs that pick up more than one person at a time. If there is not a clearly visible meter, establish the fare with the driver before the taxi begins to move. Make sure that the meter is clear when you get into the cab. If you are not comfortable, get out. Be sure that you are able to give directions to the driver. Do not get into a cab that does not have a visible meter.
- When traveling by train, particularly at night, have one member of your group serve as look-out. Sleeping students have had their security pouches (including passports, money, and return air tickets) stolen without waking up until it was too late. Try to get the lower or upper bunks; the middle bunks are uncomfortable and not secure. Always take turns sleeping on trains. Sleep with your belongings, and check under your beds.
- Keep your wallet in your front pocket.
- Check your luggage before crossing borders to make sure no one has added anything to your backpack without your knowledge. Also, don't keep anything valuable in the outside pockets of your pack; they're an easy target for thieves, so use them to store guidebooks, maps, and toilet paper. Tuck your camera, film, and anything else that you'd like to hang onto at the bottom of your pack.
- Don't carry all your money (or traveler's checks) in one place, and avoid carrying large amounts of cash.
- Don't take anything that is extremely valuable (jewelry) or that couldn't be replaced.
- Use a small lock to close the zipper of your backpack and keep the key in a separate location. This is one more deterrent for a would be thief.
- If you must put down your bag or daypack, particularly while traveling, put it between your feet with one leg through a strap.
- Stay away from bags or packages that don't have an obvious owner standing right next to them. Never pick up a package that someone has "forgotten"; instead, leave the area, if possible.
- Trust your instincts. If you don't feel comfortable in a situation, restaurant, or hotel, get out. Don't stay anywhere you feel unsafe.

Remember that when you're in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws and not those of the United States. Learn the local regulations, and obey them, even if they seem silly to you. Otherwise, you may be sorry!

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

For many, graduating from high school is as large a cultural adjustment as going abroad – Why? Because all the rules change! Many of the same principles involved in adjusting to another country apply to adjusting to any new situation. Studying abroad is one of the best opportunities you'll have to get to know yourself and to better understand your own culture. We have compiled some information regarding culture shock and the discomfort you may experience when confronting a new culture to help you understand and recognize the adjustment process and assist you in adjusting quickly to a new culture.

STAGES OF ADJUSTMENT
Be prepared to undergo a fairly typical adjustment cycle during your stay. You will start out your study abroad experience with a great deal of excitement. After a while, the novelty may begin to wear off and reality will set in. You may feel frustrated, disappointed, depressed, homesick and irritable, and you may start complaining about people and things. This is normal! Part of what gets you through the cultural adjustment process is knowledge and understanding of the different feelings, or stages, of adjustment.

**Culture Shock:** Signs of culture shock include depression, homesickness, excessive sleeping, withdrawing from others, and irritability. Again, this is a very normal process. It is important not to give up. This stage will pass and remember…your family and friends believe in you and what you are doing. Bit by bit things will get better. As you complete your adjustment cycle, you’ll come to accept and enjoy your new situation.

Some reasons for culture shock are:

1. The new experience of encountering ways of doing, organizing, perceiving or valuing things which are different from yours and which threaten your basic, unconscious belief that your acculturated customs, assumptions, values and behaviors are ‘right’.
2. Culture shock is a cumulative process. It builds up slowly, from a series of events that are difficult to identify.
3. Culture shock comes from being cut off from the known cultural cues and patterns with which you are familiar – especially the subtle, indirect ways you normally have of expressing feelings. All the nuances and shades of meaning that you understand instinctively have been taken from you. Having your values brought into question yanks the moral rug right out from under you!
4. Culture Shock also derives from living and/or working over an extended period of time in a situation that is ambiguous.

**STAGES OF CULTURE SHOCK**

1. Quaintness – everything is new, wonderful and exhilarating, even liberating.
2. Sameness – once the novelty begins to wear off, an effort is frequently made to dismiss cultural differences and point out similarities.
3. Differences – eventually, the focus shifts from sameness to differences in the culture, sometimes to such an extent that these differences become overwhelming.
4. Culture shock – final stage; comes about when the differences are narrowed down to a few of the most troubling ones and are then blown out of proportion (for Americans, standards of cleanliness, attitudes toward punctuality and the value of human life tend to loom especially large).

**RE-ENTRY SHOCK**

When you return home from your study abroad experience, you will find that you have changed. There is a good chance that you will find it difficult to re-enter your home environment. Re-entry shock can cause you to re-examine your life, values and attitudes. In essence, you will unlearn everything about life you had learned up to that point and see it through a more worldly perspective.

Some signs of re-entry shock are:

1. Disorientation – tasks and decisions that used to be simple are now overwhelming.
2. Re-evaluation of the goals you set before leaving.
3. Alienation – feeling like a ‘foreigner’ in your own country.
4. Nostalgia – looking back at your past experience and wishing you were there.

Not everyone will experience a severe case of culture shock, nor will everyone experience all of the conditions. Many people sail through culture shock with relative ease and manage to experience a new culture in a positive way. Remember…you are not alone!
## NOTES, PHONE NUMBERS & ADDRESSES

Oklahoma State University  
Study Abroad  
060-G Student Union  
Stillwater, OK 74078-7064  
Phone: 405-744-8569  
Fax: 405-744-5667  
E-mail: abroad@okstate.edu

Oklahoma State University  
Financial Aid  
Linda Millis  
119 Student Union  
405-744-6604  
E-mail: lbm6233@okstate.edu

Other Important Notes, Names and Addresses:

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CHECKLIST

Pre-departure Preparation is essential!
Once you have received official notice of your acceptance to an OSU Study Abroad program, you may proceed with the following:

☐ Apply for a Visa, if necessary (this can take 8-12 weeks). U.S. Department of State lists foreign entry requirements on its web site (http://travel.state.gov/foreignentryreqs.html).

☐ Apply for a passport (this can take 4-6 weeks).

☐ Make flight arrangements and be prepared to pay airline bill.

☐ Check the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) web site, http://www.cdc.gov/travel for information on required and recommended vaccinations for the country to which you are traveling.

☐ Complete all forms (located in the back of this handbook).

☐ Check with the Bursar and financial aid to see how your bill looks.

☐ Attend the OSU general Orientation.

☐ Check the State Department website (http://travel.state.gov/) regularly between now and your departure for information related to safety in the countries you plan to visit.

☐ Prepare to receive and pay a bill for your tuition and fees or instructional fees.

☐ Purchase any textbooks or materials needed before departure.

☐ Plan a budget and obtain sufficient funds to cover expenses while abroad. Ensure that these funds are either accessible from abroad (credit card, ATM) or can be carried with you (traveler’s checks).

☐ Inform your family or friends of how you can be reached while abroad.
STUDY ABROAD FORMS