

**Study Abroad
Predeparture Information
Handbook**



**Whitman College
Spring 2013**

Off-Campus Studies

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BEFORE YOU GO

Passports

If you do not have a valid passport, you should apply for one as soon as possible. (Some universities abroad require a passport number before they will officially accept applications from foreign students.) Current passport holders need to make sure their passports are valid at least six months beyond the date of their intended return to the U.S. For more information on passports visit our website at <http://www.whitman.edu/content/ocs/applying/passports-and-visas> or call the Walla Walla County Clerk's Office at (509) 524-2780, or visit the passport information on the Department of State's homepage at <http://travel.state.gov/passport/>.

Visas

Visas are the agreements on conditions of entry that are issued to foreign visitors. Because study abroad students remain in the country longer than a typical tourist, it is usually necessary to obtain a student visa for the country of your destination. The visa is usually applied for in the U.S. prior to departure and stamped in your passport by the consulate or embassy of the country in which you plan to study.

Students are responsible for obtaining their own visas. The program you are attending will send you information about how to obtain a visa, if required. This information usually is sent after you have been admitted to the program and paid the enrollment deposit. (To avoid delays in processing your visa, it is important to pay the deposit in a timely manner.) For some countries, applying for a visa may be an elaborate process. **It is very important that you follow visa application instructions carefully and submit your application in a timely manner.** Delays in applying for a visa can result in your not being able to study abroad.

Because of the complexity of the visa application process and the fact that U.S. citizens must usually apply for student visas from the U.S., it is not advisable to travel outside of the U.S. or to remote locations in the U.S. prior to study abroad. If you plan to travel abroad or work abroad before your study abroad program begins, you should consult with your program or Off-Campus Studies immediately about the feasibility of your travel plans with respect to obtaining the visa.

Generally foreign countries require that you apply for your visa from the consulate or embassy of that country that is nearest to your permanent residence. Be aware that visa requirements may vary from consulate to consulate even for the same country. In most cases you will need to mail your passport along with the visa application materials to the consulate or embassy in the U.S. Unless your program, the consulate or the embassy instructs you otherwise, we recommend you use a mail service that can be traced in the event that your passport and application gets lost such as Express Mail, Fed Ex or UPS. To speed up the return of your passport, we also suggest you include a pre-paid express mail envelope addressed to yourself so that the consulate can return your passport to you quickly. Some consulates of countries like Chile, France and Spain may require that you apply for your visa in person, which means that you may have to travel to the consulate nearest your home to obtain your visa. For students from the Pacific Northwest, this usually means traveling to San Francisco about 60 days prior to departure.

Typical things that you may be required to submit with your visa application include:

- letter of acceptance into the study abroad program/foreign university
- documentation (such as a statement from your bank and/or letter from Whitman about your financial aid funding) indicating that you will have sufficient funds to support yourself while abroad
- proof that you possess a roundtrip airline ticket to and from the country
- medical report that demonstrates you are in good physical and mental health
- visa fee

Non-U.S. Citizens

Non-U.S. citizens planning to study abroad should contact their national consulate or embassy, as well as the consulates or embassies of the countries where they will be traveling to find out which documents will be needed. Kris Barry, the INS designated school official at Whitman, should be contacted to discuss your departure and U.S. re-entry issues. **It is extremely important for non-U.S. citizens to obtain current signatures on your I-20 form. Failure to do so may result in refusal of permission to enter the foreign country and/or to re-enter the U.S.** You should make an appointment to see Kris Barry at least one month prior to leaving campus for study abroad.

Housing and Other Program Forms

You should complete the forms that you receive from your program thoroughly and on time. It is the student's responsibility to mail or fax required forms directly to your program. If you are sending program forms overseas, be sure to use airmail postage.

With respect to housing preferences, it is very important to be as specific as possible on your program accommodation form about your desires. Be honest about your dietary needs, whether you smoke, if you keep late hours, whether or not you are tidy, if you want to live with children, etc. so that the program can find an appropriate housing placement for you. Remember that they do not know you and will not know what you want if you do not tell them. If there is not a space on the housing form for information you want to convey, we suggest writing it on the form somewhere or contacting the program directly about it.

Preparation for Major Exams

If you are unclear about the major exams/thesis requirements for your major you should make an appointment to discuss this with your adviser before you go abroad. Some departments have reading lists or study guides that you may need to have with you while you are abroad. Asking for this information early will help you avoid unnecessary stress when you return to Whitman.

Copies of Important Papers

Before going abroad, you should make at least two copies of all important documents and papers, including your passport, visas, airline tickets, credit cards, insurance cards, travelers' checks, university or program admissions papers, serial numbers of valuable objects, etc. One copy should be left with a family member or friend in the U.S. and the other should be kept with your personal possessions (but separate from the originals). This precaution is invaluable in case of theft or loss. Many countries will allow foreigners to use a copy of a passport or a student identity card for identification purposes.

Photographs

Photos of yourself will be needed for your passport, visa, and International Student Identity Card. You should also take a few extra photos of yourself with you overseas because you may need them for things such as a library card, student I.D. for your program, transportation pass, etc.

Power of Attorney

Before going abroad, you may want to give power of attorney to a family member or friend in the U.S. This procedure officially authorizes another person to handle a variety of financial and legal matters on your behalf during your stay abroad. A person with power of attorney may do the following on your behalf: cash an income tax check, endorse a loan check, close a bank account in case you lose your checkbook, or order a transcript. Standard forms are available at Off-Campus Studies as well as most banks and large real estate firms. The Human Resources and Treasurer's offices at Whitman both have staff members who are notaries and can notarize these forms for you. If you receive any financial aid or loan checks for your studies, you should leave a copy of your Power of Attorney form with Whitman's Office of Financial Aid Services.

Whitman Mailbox

Before you leave campus, you should stop by the Reid Campus Center Post Office and give them a forwarding address in the United States where you want your mail to be sent while you are abroad. The U.S. Postal Service will not forward mail to foreign addresses due to the expense.

Absentee Ballots

If you would like to vote in a U.S. election while abroad, you can get the application for an absentee ballot via the <http://www.fvap.gov> website. Please follow the instructions listed on this website. This information may also be obtained from U.S. Embassies or Consulates abroad.

U.S. Taxes

Most U.S. citizens and residents abroad are required to file U.S. income tax returns, even if their earned income is exempt from taxes. Persons who are abroad on April 15 are automatically granted an extension for the filing of income tax forms until June 15. For more details, please contact a local office of the Internal Revenue Service or visit their website at www.irs.gov.

Travel Guides and Suggested General Reading

It is highly suggested that you read about the history, politics, current events, and other cultural aspects of the country you plan to visit before arriving there. Knowing as much as you can about where you are going can make your experience even more rewarding. Prepare yourself by watching the International Channel in the Language Learning Center at Whitman, which broadcasts news, film and special cultural programs from around the world. General books such as *The Art of Crossing Cultures* by Craig Storti and *Survival Kit for Overseas Living* by Robert L. Kohls can also be helpful in preparing for your study abroad experience.

There are several different series of guidebooks which are designed for budget travelers and include information about low-priced accommodations and restaurants as well as many practical details such as bus schedules, train stops, student discounts, etc. The following are the most popular guidebooks among college-age travelers:

- *Culture Shock!*

- *Let's Go*
- Lonely Planet Publications
- *Rough Guides*

Useful Internet Sites for Pre-Departure Information

- Bureau of Consular Affairs – <http://www.travel.state.gov>
This site offers passport and visa information; travel warnings and consular information sheets, and travel publications.
- Centers for Disease Control – <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>
This site offers travel information, geographic health and vaccine recommendations.
- Project Visa - <http://projectvisa.com/>
This site offers links to homepages of U.S. and foreign embassies and consulates worldwide.
- World Health Organization – <http://www.who.int/>
- International Calling Codes – <http://www.countrycallingcodes.com/results.php>
- Oanda Currency Converter – <http://www.oanda.com>
This site automatically converts U.S. dollar to foreign currency.
- World Electric Guide – <http://kropla.com/electric.htm>
This site is a guide to using electrical appliances around the world. It includes illustrations of electrical plugs, advice on using your computer abroad, etc.
- World Time Zones – <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/>
- Visa ATM Locator - <http://visa.via.infonow.net/locator/global/>
- Lonely Planet – <http://www.lonelyplanet.com>
This site offers travel information on-line.
- Rick Steves' Europe through the Back Door – <http://www.ricksteves.com>
This site offers travel tips, rail pass guides, and information by country.
- STA Travel – <http://www.statravel.com>
- Student Universe – <http://www.studentuniverse.com>
- *Abroad View* – <http://www.abroadview.com>
- *Glimpse Magazine* – <http://glimpse.org>
- *Transitions Abroad* – <http://www.transitionsabroad.com>

MEDICAL AND INSURANCE INFORMATION

Health Risks and the State of Medical Care

Before you go abroad you should read up on the health conditions and the state of medical care in the countries you intend to travel to. Some destinations may have diseases, pollution and sanitation problems that are not present in the U.S. If you have any medical problems it is important that you make sure that your destination can provide you with the health care you need, should a problem arise, or that any medical problems you have will not be exacerbated by the conditions in the foreign country. Read the pre-departure materials of the study abroad program that you are attending carefully, as they usually include information about health hazards in your destination. For a description of the health conditions and recommendations about specific regions and countries, refer to the Centers for Disease Control homepage available on the web at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>.

Insurance

You must, for your own protection, have adequate medical and accident insurance coverage for the entire period of your stay abroad. All students studying abroad should make sure that their insurance policy will cover them overseas as some plans do not cover overseas medical expenses. You should be sure your policy will cover you both overseas and in the U.S., in the event that you need to return to the U.S. for medical care. Although many programs or countries provide insurance for students, some do not. It is important to remember that, even in countries with socialized medical services, foreign students and visitors may not receive the same medical benefits as citizens and long-term residents. Some study abroad programs will require that you purchase medical insurance from the host country regardless of whether your current policy covers you overseas. Whitman College requires that all students participating in Partner Programs provide proof of medical insurance coverage for their period abroad that covers you both overseas and in the U.S.

If you have purchased the policy offered to students through Whitman College, we recommend you purchase supplemental study abroad insurance because the current Whitman student medical insurance plan does not have any preferred providers outside the U.S. For your convenience, we offer the following list of possible international medical insurance providers, but encourage you to consult with your insurance agent about other options.

- International SOS -- <http://www.internationalsos.com/buymembership/> (Purchase the Optional Medical Insurance.)
- Medex -- <http://www.medexassist.com/>
- CISI -- <http://www.culturalinsurance.com/>
- HTH Worldwide -- <http://hthtravelinsurance.com/>

When researching insurance policies, you should consider a few things. First, many international insurance providers for students cover students only during the dates they are enrolled in their study abroad program and do not include coverage prior to the program beginning or after the program ends when you may wish to travel on your own. **If you plan to travel independently outside of your program's dates, be sure to purchase a policy that includes coverage for that time period.** Some companies offer a separate insurance plan for independent travel periods.

Second, when purchasing international medical insurance, be aware that most companies offer medical evacuation and repatriation with a separate option for regular medical insurance for more routine doctor's visits. Be sure to purchase the regular medical insurance option.

Third, you should recognize that pre-existing conditions are typically not covered by international medical insurance. This is an important reason for a student to maintain their regular U.S.-based medical insurance.

Finally, please note that some international medical insurance plans include some outpatient and inpatient mental health coverage and some do not.

Before leaving for study abroad familiarize yourself with the procedures of your insurance company to ensure speedy reimbursement in case of illness. If possible, request necessary forms to take. Be sure to keep the complete policy number, as well as the name, address, telephone,

fax, and e-mail of your insurance company with your important personal papers when you go abroad. Foreign physicians and hospitals outside the U.S. nearly always require payment at the time of treatment and typically will not be able to bill your insurance company. All students should set aside adequate funds for medical treatments and emergencies to take with them overseas and expect to submit receipts to their insurance for reimbursement of medical expenses.

Whitman College strongly encourages all study abroad students to purchase the International Student Identity Card (ISIC), an internationally recognized student I.D. All students who attend a Partner Program that does not offer comparable medical evacuation insurance will be required to purchase an ISIC through Off-Campus Studies. The ISIC provides basic emergency medical evacuation insurance coverage in the event that a physician recommends that you be evacuated to a different medical facility or return to the U.S. for medical care. The ISIC includes basic emergency medical evacuation insurance coverage in the event that a physician recommends that you be evacuated to a different medical facility or return to the U.S. for medical care. This policy does not, however, replace regular medical insurance, as it only covers basic emergency coverage. Please note that it does not cover services required due to mental health related illnesses.

This card can also be used for reduced fees for transportation, museums, and cultural events and, in some countries, is the only universally recognized student ID card. All Whitman students are eligible for the ISIC, which is available through Off-Campus Studies. The cost for an ISIC is \$22.00. For further information about the benefits of the ISIC, please see their website at www.myisic.com.

Medical Conditions and Disabilities

If you have any serious medical problems, physical disabilities, or learning disabilities, it is in your best interest to notify the study abroad program early on so that they will be aware of your condition and special needs. Because of the stress, change in diet, and different living conditions in a foreign setting, some conditions may worsen when you are abroad. For example, students with respiratory problems may discover that the quality of the air in certain cities affects them adversely. Likewise, students with a history of mental health difficulties, alcohol or drug problems, or an eating disorder may find that the stress of adjusting to a new culture exacerbates their problem. Be sure to inform the staff on your program of your needs and/or concerns so that they can be of assistance if necessary. If you think you may need special accommodation for a physical disability or learning disability, it is very important to inform the study abroad program in a timely manner as it may take a considerable amount of time to arrange. We also recommend that you discuss any concerns you may have about medical conditions or disabilities with Off-Campus Studies staff at Whitman.

Medical Care Before You Go Abroad

Before you go abroad you should be sure to have a complete physical examination, dental check-up and eye examination to ensure that you are in good health. The standards and value orientation of medical care abroad may be quite different from that of the U.S.

If you have recurrent problems which may require medical attention, ask your regular doctor for a typewritten diagnosis which you can give to a physician abroad. You should also be sure that the staff of your study abroad program is informed of any medical problem, physical disability or learning disability that you have so that they can accommodate your needs. Students with medical conditions or problems that may not be immediately apparent to a physician abroad (like

diabetes, allergies, epilepsy, heart condition, etc.) are advised to consider obtaining Medic Alert identification. This internationally recognized emblem will provide all vital information to medical personnel in case of an emergency. Further information may be obtained from: www.medicalert.org or Medic Alert Foundation International, 2323 Colorado Ave., Turlock, CA 95382 (tel. 888-633-4298).

Vaccinations

You should check with your program regarding required or recommended immunizations for your destination, read the Centers for Disease Control recommendations at <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/>. There are also nurses available at the Whitman College Welty Health Center and Walla Walla County Health Department who are familiar with travel immunizations and can be of assistance. Please note that some vaccines require a six-month lead time, so you should look into what immunizations you need well before your study abroad departure date. You should also check with your doctor about whether or not you need to update your immunizations against smallpox, tetanus, typhoid, diphtheria, and polio. If you do receive immunizations before going, you should request an "International Certificate of Vaccination" from your doctor or hospital and keep this with your passport.

Prescriptions

If you are currently taking any prescription medicines, ask your physician whether you can take along a supply adequate for your stay abroad. If so, be sure to keep your medication in its original packaging and take a copy of the prescription with you for custom officials. Since some drugs now commonly prescribed in the US, such as Ritalin, are banned in some countries, it is a good idea to check with your program to make sure that you can bring your prescription medications legally into your host country. If you suffer from allergies, be especially sure to take an adequate supply of medication. Big cities may have even more airborne pollutants than you are used to and may trigger severe reactions.

Physicians Abroad

Students interested in obtaining a free list of English-speaking physicians who have been educated in the U.S. or Canada and who charge fairly reasonable rates may write to the International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers. Information can be obtained from www.iamat.org. English-speaking doctors may also be located through inquiries at U.S. embassies or consulates abroad or at any local American Express office.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS AND DOCUMENTS

Flight Arrangements

Students are responsible for making their own travel arrangements for study abroad. Programs that offer group travel options will inform you of those options after acceptance. Travel discounts are available to students with an [International Student Identity Card \(ISIC\)](#) at the agencies listed below:

- [Student Travel Agency \(STA\)](#)
800-781-4040
- **World Wide Travel Service** (local STA affiliate)
11 S. 1st Avenue
Walla Walla, WA 99362

(800) 321-5334
(509) 525-8040

Please note that most airlines are no longer booking roundtrip international tickets that have an “open” date for return. Therefore, it is wise to make your best guess about the intended date for returning to the U.S. and change the return flight at a later date, if necessary. Most airlines do have a change fee for changing your return date, so it is a good idea to find out how much that fee will be in advance.

Also if you buy an open-ended ticket, make sure to book your return flight as soon as possible because economy seats sell quickly and upgraded tickets can be very expensive. We strongly advise against purchasing a one-way ticket to your study abroad destination because one-way fares are usually extremely expensive compared to round-trip fares and it is helpful to have a return ticket on hand in case you need to return home on short notice.

International Air Travel

Airports in other countries might have two security screening checkpoints that you must pass through before boarding an airplane. Because of this, we suggest you plan accordingly for your international travel and do not wait until the last minute to make your way to your departure gate.

In some countries people dressed in uniform are wandering through the international arrival terminal offering their services, such as a taxi into town, help with your luggage or currency exchange. Please take caution when accepting their services or giving them money. If you need help or have a question in an international airport, be sure to consult with someone behind an official counter in the airport.

Travel Insurance

It is also recommended that students purchase travel insurance, which will cover them while living and traveling overseas. This type of insurance will reimburse you for personal belongings, which may be lost or stolen while abroad.

Youth Hostel Cards

Another card you may consider is a Hostelling International Card, which can be purchased before or after arrival abroad. This card is required for some youth hostels in Europe and Australia and can also get you discounts on travel. More information is available through major travel agencies or on-line at <http://www.hihostels.com>.

Rail Passes

Students interested in traveling by train may want to consider purchasing a Eurailpass, a Eurail Youthpass, a Europass, a BritRail Pass, or a Japan Rail Pass. All passes (except BritRail) must be purchased in the U.S. and are not available abroad. The passes are available at most U.S. travel agencies and must carry your name exactly as it appears on your passport. If you are not sure whether or not you want to purchase such a pass, you can make arrangements with a friend or family member in the U.S. to purchase it later.

Some study abroad alums have suggested that it is sometimes better to wait until you are abroad and know more about the calendar and travel options before you purchase a rail pass. Please note, however, that Eurail prices often increase significantly at the first of the year. Make sure to

send for the rail passes quite a while in advance. Further information about the Eurail pass can be found at www.raileurope.com/us. Further information about the Japan Rail Pass can be found at www.japanrailpass.net.

If you are staying in a European country for six months or more, you will be eligible for an InterRail Pass at the end of the sixth month. It's similar to the Eurail pass, but allows you to pay half-price on train tickets in your country of residence. InterRail is not necessarily cheaper than Eurail, however. For comparative information about European Rail passes, see www.seat61.com/.

LUGGAGE, PACKING, AND SHIPPING

Planning

Packing for a semester or year abroad takes careful planning. Before you start, call the airline(s) you will be using and ask for their luggage limitations. Some airlines limit the number and/or size of the pieces of luggage you are allowed and others have a weight limit. Do not plan on taking excess luggage, because airlines often charge very high rates for extra bags, and some refuse to accept them at all. It is a good idea to start planning what to take several weeks before you are scheduled to leave. This will allow you time to ensure you have only the items you will need. When you choose your bags, keep in mind that overseas flights and the conveyer belts at airports are very hard on luggage. Don't take any expensive bags or bags with attachments which could get caught on the belts. Be aware as well that expensive luggage is a target for theft. For safety reasons, you should never leave your luggage unattended, even when using restrooms or telephones.

Luggage Identification and Insurance

Unfortunately, it is very common for luggage to get separated from its owner so be sure to put address labels on both the outside and the inside of all bags, including handbags. Labels should contain your complete U.S. address and telephone number, as well as the program address and telephone number. This will enable your bags to be sent to the proper place if they do not arrive at the same time you do.

Although overseas flights often include some insurance coverage for the belongings of their passengers, all students are advised to look into acquiring insurance coverage in case their bags are lost or damaged. Your travel agent will have additional information.

How Much Luggage?

The main principle in packing is: "Travel lightly!" Bring as little as you can and never more than you can carry comfortably. Keep eliminating as you pack. If you are in doubt as to whether you will need an article, leave it. You will have to carry your own luggage and may need to go up and down stairs with them. After you have packed everything you feel you need, try carrying all your bags (including your carry-ons) around the block. This little test will help you decide whether or not you really do need everything you packed. Also buy a sturdy backpack (with a lockable zipper) before you leave. This is your best bet for weekend traveling, and they are handy as carry-on luggage. Also, keep in mind that you will undoubtedly accumulate things during your stay that you will want to bring home. Shipping can be very expensive, so it's wise to leave some space in your luggage or bring a small duffle bag that can be empty in your luggage on the way over that you can fill upon your return.

What to Pack

When considering what to pack, be sure to read through the information that your individual program provides and consult with Whitman students who have studied on your program. Some items will be readily available and may even be less expensive in the country where you will be, but other brand name products that are common in the U.S. may not be available where you are going.

Keep in mind that most other countries' homes and classrooms are not heated as warmly as they are in the United States. Even if you are going to be in a location that does not have harsh winters, you may need to bring wool socks and sweaters and long underwear for added warmth indoors. Bringing clothing that can be worn in layers so that you can adjust to varying temperatures will also be more useful than one or two heavy items.

Also remember that most Europeans, Japanese, and Argentines dress more formally on a daily basis than Americans. If you want to blend in some European cities, you should not wear sneakers, sweatshirts, sweat pants, baseball caps, and other clothing that is too informal. Colors are also important to find out about before packing. In Europe, for example, young people rarely wear bright colors.

Books published in the U.S. are generally much more expensive overseas because they are imported. Also, some study abroad libraries have very small collections. Try to anticipate the reference books and academic books that you will need for your studies and take them with you.

You should take condoms and contraceptives with you if you think you might be sexually active abroad, as contraception may not be as readily available in your host country or might be very embarrassing to seek out. Remember that AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases are worldwide problems – if you are sexually active be sure to use a condom.

In many countries there is a smaller variety of feminine hygiene products than in the U.S. For instance, tampons are very expensive or difficult to find in some countries. Check with women who have studied in that country before to find out what is available in your destination.

You should consider taking the following:

- sleeping bag or a sleep sheet (especially good if you'll be staying in hostels)
- warm sleeping attire
- winter coat, gloves, scarf, hat
- waterproof/windproof jacket
- wool socks
- sturdy, comfortable walking shoes
- umbrella
- long underwear
- slippers (being barefoot in a home is inappropriate in some countries)
- towel and wash cloth
- wind-up or battery-operated alarm clock
- contact solution (can be quite expensive abroad)
- over-the-counter medicines (cold remedies, medicine for upset stomach, anti-diarrhea medicine, ibuprofen)

- birth control/condoms (Note: Some students have reported that the quality and/or range of sizes of condoms available in some countries is different than in the U.S.)
- a few favorite recipes from home, if you will be cooking for yourself
- English dictionary and grammar book
- travel guidebook and maps
- memory cards for digital cameras (usually less expensive in the U.S.)
- camera battery recharger
- gifts for friends and host family
- Whitman course catalog
- photos of your family and typical U.S. scenes (comforting when you are homesick)
- money belt or bag
- locks for your luggage for use in hostels and hotels
- Some of your favorite music
- voltage converter and adaptor for equipment (Radio Shack is a good place to find these)

Carry-on Bags

Be sure to check with your airline about the limits on size and number of carry-on bags. Because checked luggage is occasionally lost or delayed in arrival, you should plan to carry any essential items with you in your carry on. We recommend you take the following with you in your wallet or carry-on bag(s):

- passport
- important documents such as letter of admission into the program and fee letter from Whitman (if applicable)
- telephone and address information for your program
- your money including some local currency for your destination, travelers checks and/or ATM card
- prescription medications
- items you will need during the flight such as contact lens case, warm jacket, etc.
- change of clothing

Please remember that no knives or cutting instruments of any sort (including pocket knives, scissors, and some aerosols) are allowed in carry-on bags. Each passenger is permitted to pack in their carry-on luggage containers of 3 ounces or less of liquid or gel, which must all be packed in a 1 quart-sized clear plastic zip-top bag. You may however pack those items in your checked luggage. **To view the list of all prohibited items and other security requirements, visit the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) website at www.tsa.gov.** Security regulations on airlines in foreign countries may be stricter than U.S. TSA regulations. If you have questions, check with your airline.

Appliances

Many foreign countries use 220 volts at 50 cycles, rather than the 110v/60 cycles customary in the U.S. Even though there are appliances available with built-in converters, it is generally recommended not to take any electrical appliances abroad. Converters, whether built-in or not, will only change the voltage and not the number of cycles and may blow a fuse. In most countries you will be able to buy any essential electrical appliances for about the same price as in the U.S., and you may be able to share certain items with other people. You may also find that

bathrooms in many countries with 220 volts do not have any outlets for electrical appliances (especially in Britain).

Shipping Items Overseas

It is usually safest and most convenient to pack all of the things you want to have with you while abroad in your luggage and take them with you on the plane, rather than shipping items to your host country. With a little effort and care when packing, you should be able to pack all that you need for a semester or year abroad within the airline weight limit. One reason to limit how much you take is that airlines charge substantial fees for baggage in excess of the weight limit and shipping items by airmail is very expensive. Please note also that if you ship personal items to your study abroad destination, customs in that country is likely to charge you duty fees and will hold your package until you pay the fees.

However, in some cases (especially if you plan to travel either before or after the program) you may need to ship some of your belongings overseas or back home. If you decide to mail personal belongings from the U.S., plan it so the items arrive at the program site after you do so that you will receive them in person. Many study abroad programs and foreign universities do not have space to store packages and will not do so, so do not assume that they will hold items that arrive before you do. Also remember to pack all items you may need during the first few weeks in the bags traveling with you because it is extremely difficult to predict when packages may arrive. **If you mail any packages from the U.S. before you leave, be sure to keep an accurate record of the packages and their contents to declare when you go through Customs.**

The easiest, and often cheapest, way to send packages is by regular surface mail which takes anywhere from one to four months, depending upon the destination. Both the U.S. and foreign postal services only accept packages which meet very strict requirements in regard to their overall size, weight, the way in which they are sealed, etc. Before you mail anything, contact the local postal service and ask for specifications. Books can be shipped at a much lower rate than other personal effects, and should be marked clearly as "Book Post--Used Personal Books." The specifications for packages with books are usually different from those for other items. All packages mailed overseas must pass customs and, when you mail packages, you need to list all items in the package and declare their value. Packages may be x-rayed, so be sure to list the items correctly. Often times goods mailed from abroad are charged duty, especially items like electronic devices. Duty can be extremely expensive and may even exceed the value of the item. If you mark packages with personal items "Used Personal Effects" or "Used American Goods Returned" and keep the declared value low, you may not have to pay any duty.

If you need anything on short notice, ask your family to send it Express Mail, FedEx or DHL, which usually takes less than a week. Items shipped with FedEx can be tracked with a tracking number over the phone or the Internet. Keep in mind that postal services in foreign countries frequently charge extra for the delivery of packages to your home address, and you may have to pick up certain items at the main post office.

Customs and Duty

Before entering a foreign country, you will be asked to complete customs declaration forms, which must be presented to immigration and customs inspectors abroad, along with your passport and visa. Custom regulations vary from country to country. If you have any specific questions about which articles are prohibited in the countries you plan to enter, you should contact the consulate or embassy of that country. In general, you are allowed to bring personal

effects with obvious wear into a foreign country without paying any duty. Personal effects include items designed for your own use, such as clothing, cameras, MP3 players, laptop computers, sports equipment, etc.

If any of your personal effects (such as cameras) are not made in the U.S., you should register them with U.S. customs before you leave the U.S. Also bring receipts (or copies) for expensive items so you can prove when they were purchased. This will ensure you won't have to pay duties on these items when you return to the U.S. If you ship any personal items from the U.S. before your departure, remember to declare these items at the time of entry into the foreign country. If you do not, you may have to obtain an import permit and pay import duties, which is an expensive and lengthy process.

Upon re-entering the U.S., you are required to declare all items acquired abroad so keep a list of all purchases. Under current law, you may bring \$400 (retail value) worth of goods for personal or household use duty-free into the U.S. You pay 10% duty on the next \$1,000 worth of foreign goods. There are, however, limitations on cigarettes, liquor, and perfume. Be sure to keep all receipts, so you have evidence of the price paid. Remember: items purchased at duty-free shops abroad are only exempt from local taxes in the country of purchase. These items are subject to duties when you enter the U.S., if they cause you to exceed the duty-free limit. Unlike when you leave the U.S., upon returning you can only declare items, which accompany you and not items which are shipped separately. For more details on customs regulations, visit the U.S. Customs website at www.customs.gov/

Gifts

In many societies gifts are an important way of establishing friendships and expressing gratitude. You should plan to take a few small, typically American gifts along with you to give to friends, program staff, or host family members. Local handicrafts, T-shirts, frisbees, American foods and candy, and CDs of American music are a few suggestions. Calendars and photo books with scenes of the U.S. are popular as well.

MONEY MATTERS

Budget and Personal Expenses

One of the most difficult questions asked by all foreign study participants is how much money they will need. Aside from the complications due to the fluctuating value of the dollar, the answer to this question varies greatly from country to country, year to year, and person to person. It depends upon the location of the program (it is usually more expensive to live in larger cities than in smaller towns), the length of the program, the amount of planned travel, and the preferences and needs of individual participants.

Living abroad requires very careful budgeting, because it is frequently difficult and expensive to receive additional funds from the U.S. on short notice. Students also find they have to budget differently abroad than in the U.S. For example, in some countries food is much cheaper than in the U.S., but eating out costs much more. All students need to budget for personal costs like local transportation, laundry, small household items, telephone calls, mailing costs, gifts, souvenirs, personal items, entertainment, key deposits, and library fees, as well as for extra excursions and weekend trips. Books and other study materials may also be more expensive. Students should set money aside for medical expenses and other emergencies as well.

Before making your budget, check the information from your program to learn exactly which costs are your responsibilities. Here are a few items that are often not included in program fees:

- Meals (many programs cover no meals or offer partial board plans)
- Housing and key deposits
- Room and meal expenses during breaks
- Local transportation for commuting to class
- Optional Field trips/excursions
- Residence hall activity fees
- Entertainment
- Laundry
- Fees to use computers or access internet
- Medical Insurance
- Medical Expenses
- Fees to use athletic facilities or join a gym
- Cost of independent travel during breaks/weekends

Most students report they need more money during the first month because there are many one-time expenses (bus passes, household items, library cards, etc.). During the first few weeks, you may be tempted to purchase souvenirs or other local items, which are new and different. But be cautious about your purchases in the beginning, as you will probably not yet be familiar with the inexpensive restaurants, bargain shops, or street markets where local products can be purchased cheaply. You will probably also find that living and eating like the locals usually is less expensive and results in a richer cultural experience than trying to maintain a lifestyle similar to the one you have in the United States.

Travelers Checks, Credit Cards, and Transfer of Funds

The most convenient and reliable way to transport and access your funds while overseas varies a great deal from country to country. It is best to consult the specific information that your program has provided in the predeparture materials regarding the recommended way to handle funds while overseas. There are some general things about foreign banking you should keep in mind. First, many countries still operate more on the basis of a “cash economy” than does the U.S. **Personal checks from U.S. bank accounts are virtually useless overseas and checks drawn on foreign banks, such as student loan checks, usually take several weeks to clear when cashed overseas.** You will probably find that fewer shops accept credit or debit cards compared to the United States. While ATM machines may be available in the city where you will be studying, there will probably be fewer of them and they may not be as reliable as they are in the U.S.

In general, it is a good idea to have several methods to access your funds while overseas in case one method fails. Increasingly students have found ATM cards and VISA debit cards (which can deduct straight from a checking account and be used like an ATM card to obtain cash) to be convenient when abroad. We recommend you check with your bank to find out if there are ATM machines available in your destination that will accept your card and where exactly the machines are located. Also, ask your bank if your PIN can be used internationally and learn your PIN in numbers rather than letters, since most keyboards overseas do not include alphabetical letters. Keep in mind that ATM machines abroad may also charge finance charges. **We do not recommend relying solely on cash machines for your funds as some students have reported**

difficulty in using their ATM cards abroad despite assurances from U.S. banks that there will not be a problem.

Travelers checks are not accepted regularly anymore – in the U.S. or abroad – so unless your program recommends that you bring travelers checks along with credit and debit cards, it is not suggested you take them with you.

We suggest you take at least some of your funds for your stay abroad in the form of travelers checks in U.S. dollars because they are generally a reliable way to obtain ready cash in case your ATM Card does not work. Travelers checks can be cashed into the local currency at most banks and at airport currency exchange windows, but they usually are not accepted in ordinary stores and shops as they are in the U.S. Some banks and the American Automobile Association provide travelers checks free of charge to their customers. They can also be replaced if stolen. One disadvantage of travelers checks is that in some countries there is a percentage commission charged or a per check fee charged to cash them, which sometimes makes them slightly more expensive to use than ATM machines.

We also recommend taking a credit card, such as VISA or Mastercard, in your name to use in the event of an emergency. We have recently learned of a new credit card technology that has been adopted by twenty-two countries, including much of Europe, Brazil, Japan, and Mexico, referred to as chip-and-PIN cards. Because credit cards from the U.S. rely on the magnetic strip and not this smart chip technology, some travelers have been unable to use their credit cards while abroad. This is simply something to be aware of when traveling with a credit card and you should be sure that you carry an alternative method of payment.

We highly recommend that students going abroad obtain a small amount of the local currency (\$50 to \$100 worth) in the U.S. before arriving overseas so that you have pocket money for taxis, buses, phone calls or other miscellaneous expenses when you first arrive.

International terminals of most major U.S. airports have currency exchange windows where you can exchange U.S. dollars for the currency of some foreign countries. If the currency exchange window in the U.S. airport does not carry the currency of the country you are traveling to, you should seek out an ATM machine or a currency exchange window in the international airport you fly into from the U.S. This is especially important if you arrive on the weekend or late at night, as you may not be able to change money easily the first day or two. The easiest way to obtain local currency is at a foreign currency exchange window in the international airport that you fly out of in the U.S. or a major bank. Most airports in major cities abroad will also have a currency exchange window that you could use if you arrive during working hours.

Sending and Receiving Money

There are several methods of sending funds overseas and which method will be most expeditious and least costly will depend on your location. If you run out of funds while abroad and need your family to send money quickly, we suggest you have your family check with the program about the most expeditious way to send funds to you. Most students who are able to use their ATM card abroad find that this is the best way to access funds from home. If this method does not work for you, the other common methods of sending funds are with a bank draft, international money order, or bank to bank transfer. The advantage of an international money order is that, unlike a bank draft, you do not need to wait for the check to clear. In an emergency you may be able to wire money directly from an American Express office in the U.S. to one of their offices overseas in less than 24 hours for a small fee.

Working Abroad

Most countries do not permit foreign students, including US study abroad students, to engage in paid work even on campus. Because you will typically enter the country with a student visa, you will not automatically have the right to work in your study abroad country. This is because most nations want to ensure that their own citizens can get jobs and they have strict limitations on which foreign visitors may work. Without a formal work permit from your host country, you will not be able to work legally there. When planning your budget for study abroad, it is therefore best to assume that you will not be able to earn any extra money by working when you are overseas.

There are a few exceptions. For example, BUNAC offers temporary work permits for a fee for Australia, Britain, Ireland and New Zealand. Since you should be focusing on your studies during your semester or year abroad, we recommend considering work opportunities through BUNAC for the summer before or the summer after study abroad. Please note that BUNAC permits must be obtained prior to departing for the U.S. Details can be found at: www.bunac.org/

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS, GRADES, AND CREDIT

Regardless of whether you will be directly enrolling in a university abroad or studying at a center for U.S. students abroad, you will find academics, facilities, and your lifestyle quite different from that at Whitman College. Large, state universities and non-residential urban campuses are much more typical in other countries than small, residential, private colleges like Whitman.

Classes and Calendar

If you are studying at a foreign university, you'll find that the American system of semesters and quarters, together with the generally-accepted conversion of credits, does not exist in many other countries. In the U.K., Australia and New Zealand, courses are traditionally year-long with major comprehensive exams at the end of the year. Students only received credit for such courses if they attended the entire year and took the final exams. Students were not evaluated throughout the course and grades for courses depended upon the results of the year-end exams. While this system has changed to a semester-style system, assessment is still largely based on final exams and based less on "continuous assessment" than it is in the U.S.

Another practical problem is that the academic calendars of universities abroad are frequently different from those in the U.S. In Europe, most universities do not open until the beginning of October and continue until June or July. Because the classes in the fall start so late, the first "semester" usually does not end until late January or early February, which may be too late for U.S. students who intend to return to their home college for spring semester. In addition, students enrolled in universities, which operate on a three-term system may not receive a full semester's worth of credit for one term because of the term's short duration (about ten weeks). There are many variations, and you should check with Off-Campus Studies concerning your particular program.

Academic Expectations

Another major difference between American and foreign universities is the academic level of many universities abroad and the attitude toward higher education. At American universities and colleges, students tend to explore a variety of subjects and do not begin to really concentrate on a

major until their junior year. In addition, university professors and administrators spend a great deal of time assisting students. Students in other countries usually complete not only all general education requirements in high school but also begin to choose a major during that time. When they apply to a university, they apply for study in a particular department. From the very beginning, these students take courses directly related to their major. Sometimes this means that third-year classes at universities abroad are too advanced for American juniors and that American students should select their courses (even those in their major field) from those normally taken by the local first- and second-year students. You may also discover that the university where you are studying has older students than Whitman, as you might find at a state university in the U.S.

Since students abroad are admitted to a university on the basis of their interest in a particular field, it is the assumption of both students and faculty members that the students are there because they are interested in learning as much as possible about their subject area. At the same time, because of the system of year-end exams, students have a great deal of freedom in deciding how and what they want to study. Professors may not give the students the same kind of attention and guidance they do in the U.S. and the common American schedule of homework assignments, mid-terms, papers, and finals each quarter or semester is not part of the curriculum. In class the professors often cover only a fraction of the materials, which students are expected to study, and students may not receive syllabi or even recommended textbooks. Students are expected to do most of their work on their own, not because it is assigned or because they need a certain grade. Although the actual system of instruction differs from school to school and from country to country, the expectation of independent study and the emphasis upon learning, rather than upon constant assessment and grades is common.

When you go abroad be prepared to take the initiative for your studies, and take advantage of the special resources and options, which are available abroad. Keep in mind most of your professors assume students will be able to find the major books dealing with the subjects covered in the courses and will compare them for different viewpoints on their own. Also, do not be deceived by what seems to be a casual attitude of local students towards their studies. In many countries it is not considered "cool" to talk about how much you study, but the local students are probably studying. **However, if you have trouble adjusting to the academic system and feel unsure about the expectations of the professors or how to approach your studies, contact your advisor or program director or Off-Campus Studies as soon as possible.** Even if faculty do not seem as friendly or accessible as Whitman professors, they are usually quite helpful if you take the initiative to seek assistance.

Some students participating in study abroad programs report they do not work as hard abroad as they do at Whitman. If you find the academic classes abroad less challenging than expected, remember there is more to a semester (or year) abroad than just studying. Living in another country is a major learning experience, which is not available at Whitman. Take advantage of free time to explore museums, visit churches, read new books, etc.

Drop/Add Abroad

One of the most common reasons that Whitman students fail courses abroad is because they did not drop a class in time or did not follow the local "drop" procedures correctly. Many foreign universities have very strict drop/add period, if they have one at all. Most drop/add periods abroad only last a maximum of two weeks, as foreign universities and some program providers typically do not allow as much freedom to try courses as U.S. students might be accustomed to.

Off-Campus Studies recommends that you clarify the final date to drop/add and the process involved at your host university immediately upon arrival abroad. If you fail to drop a course before the period expires and do not attend the course any longer, then you will receive a failing grade on your transcript. Please note that Whitman College cannot "remove" such failing grades from your academic record and all grades (A through F) will be posted on your Whitman transcript if you attend a Partner Program. For students attending Approved or Petitioned Programs, your grades will be part of your permanent record as well because you will need to submit the study abroad transcript to any graduate school or employer who requires transcripts from all colleges attended.

Research Abroad - IRB Requirements

If you plan to do any human subjects research while studying off-campus (including interviewing people in your host country) that you think might possibly be included in your senior thesis, presented at a conference (even Whitman's Undergraduate Conference), or published in any way, you must have approval from either Whitman's Institutional Review Board (IRB) or the IRB of your off-campus study program (if one exists) BEFORE the research begins. Due to federal laws protecting human subjects, any information you gather before getting IRB approval cannot be included in your thesis, conference presentations, or publications.

To apply for IRB approval, please see the guidelines at www.whitman.edu/irb and submit your proposal directly to the IRB committee at irb@whitman.edu.

If you know what your research topic is already, we suggest you apply for IRB approval before you leave campus this semester, in case the Committee has questions for you. If you do not apply to Whitman for IRB approval prior to leaving for your off-campus study program and your program does not have its own IRB process, and you later discover that you want to conduct interviews abroad or engage in other human subjects research, you can still apply to Whitman for IRB approval online or by downloading the forms as a PDF or Microsoft Word document and submitting it via e-mail to irb@whitman.edu. You should apply for IRB approval at least two weeks prior to when your research will begin in order to give the Whitman Committee enough time to review your proposal. (Keep in mind that the IRB Committee will not meet over winter break.)

Students attending SIT (School for International Training), School for Field Studies (SFS), and Pitzer College need not apply to Whitman for IRB approval, because your program provider already has an IRB process in place.

Evaluation of Academic Work

Be aware that the kind of academic work that is evaluated and how it is graded may be different in your host country from what you are accustomed to at Whitman. In many countries mid-term and final exams carry much more weight than they would typically at Whitman. Papers, presentations and class participation may count much less toward your grades than they do here. Moreover, the grading scale may be quite different. For instance, in many countries students receive the equivalent of A grades in only truly exceptional cases and are very satisfied with grades which are considered mediocre in the U.S.

Please note that Whitman requires that you take your final exams overseas on the regular date when they are scheduled. **Many universities abroad have a lengthy reading period abroad,**

but you should plan to remain in your host country until the date of your last final. Whitman will not, for example, proctor make up examinations in Walla Walla for students who wish to return home early because they have booked a flight before their last final.

Also, please be aware that many foreign universities are much more strict about due dates of assignments and examination schedules.

Grade Appeals

Whitman College does not have the authority to change a grade that you received on your study abroad program. If you feel that you have a solid case as to why you should have received a different grade for a course abroad, then you should contact your study abroad program provider directly to inquire about the process to appeal a grade. Although Off-Campus Studies does not have any control as to whether or not your grade appeal is accepted, we would like to meet with you about your grievance before you start your grade appeal process with your program.

University Facilities

When trying to envision your surroundings abroad, keep in mind that facilities may be as strikingly different as the culture is from what you are accustomed to at home. For example, large state universities in other countries may have classroom facilities and residence hall rooms that are spartan or drab compared to what you are used to in the U.S. Because energy is much more expensive in many other countries than it is in the U.S., classroom buildings, residence halls, and homes are generally kept much colder than you will be used to. Residence halls abroad rarely have private telephones in the rooms. On the other hand, if you are at a large university or studying in a major city you may have access to excellent library collections or better scientific labs than are available at Whitman. Or you may find that your residence hall has its own pub.

The books and resources you will need vary greatly from program to program. Students participating in study abroad programs set up especially for foreign students may be required to purchase books and materials just as they do at an American university. Students who are fully matriculated at a foreign university may not have to purchase any books, since it is common for students in other countries to use the books in the library rather than purchasing books.

University libraries abroad are usually not as "user friendly" as libraries in the U.S. Many are open only part of the day and may be closed on weekends. Very few have open stacks where you can peruse books before checking them out. Frequently, you have to request books based upon the descriptions in the card catalog. The library staff will fill such requests, and you receive the books the following day. This system obviously requires an amount of planning in advance. If you attend a program designed for U.S. students such as IES, keep in mind that the library collection at the program will be small. You should plan to take advantage of national, municipal, or university libraries in the city for research projects if you attend a program that has only a small library collection.

Most programs have some computers available for student use, but often students must wait in line to use them because of the high student to computer ratio. You may also be charged fees for computer time or find that e-mail is not available on your program. In many cities you will be able to find an internet café where e-mail can be accessed for a fee, but these environments may be noisy or smoky. Increasingly, students have found it useful to take a laptop abroad but you should check directly with your program about whether or not they recommend this.

Credits and Transcripts

Whitman students participating in any Partner or Approved Program will receive credit for work completed abroad based on the Whitman College guidelines for study abroad credit. It is critical that you understand these guidelines concerning credit and grade expectations before you leave. Be sure to contact Off-Campus Studies if you have any questions.

When you received approval for Off-Campus Study Leave from Whitman, you received a copy of your *Off-Campus Study Course Approval* form that listed the courses you were approved to take overseas. These are the only courses for which you have approval for transfer credit. If you find courses abroad that were not pre-approved by Whitman on your *Off-Campus Study Leave Application* that you wish to enroll in, you must obtain approval for them by emailing an Off-Campus Studies staff. The best way to do this is to email us as soon as you know you might want to enroll in a new course. You should include the course title, course description, and what type of credit you would like to receive for the course. It is best to email us the entire list of classes you intend to take (not just the classes not yet approved). That way, we can look over your academic record to see if you will still graduate on time with the new course schedule. **Please do not wait until the course is half over to ask for permission to obtain transfer credit for it--by then it is too late!**

To avoid problems with transfer credit, you should familiarize yourself with the following guidelines for study abroad transfer credit and consult with an Off-Campus Studies Adviser or your Major Adviser if you have questions:

- You may not earn transfer credit from Whitman for non-liberal arts and sciences courses. This would include business courses and business internships, applied social science courses such as criminal justice, and other more "vocational" fields.
- You must earn a C- or better grade (or equivalent) to apply study abroad credit to your Whitman degree. If you earn less than a C- in any course, you will not obtain transfer credit from Whitman for that course.
- You will not obtain credit for any study abroad course that you have taken on a Pass/Fail basis.
- If you attend a Partner Program, all grades (A through F) are posted on your Whitman transcript.
- If you study in a non-English speaking country, you are required by Whitman to enroll in the language of the host country during your semester abroad (in addition to any language intensives at the beginning of the semester), unless you have already completed the equivalent of two years of college-level coursework in that language.
- You may not earn credit twice for language courses of the same level. If you place into a language class abroad that is designated as the same language level as a course you have already completed at Whitman or elsewhere, you should check with a faculty member of that language at Whitman to make sure that the course you are enrolled in abroad will be considered more advanced than what you have already taken. If you think there may be a question, keep your coursework and bring it to campus with you when you return to demonstrate what material your course covered.
- If you are a language major or minor, remember that only courses designated as language or literature courses may be applied toward the language majors and minors at Whitman. For example, a history course taught in French cannot be applied toward the French major.

- At least two-thirds of the credits for your major must be earned on the Whitman campus. The maximum number of credits from study abroad that can be applied to a major, range from eight to twelve credits depending on the major.
- You may not transfer more than 19 credits per semester and a total of 38 credits from foreign study.

When you arrive abroad, you may discover scheduling conflicts or other problems that result in a change of course selection from the courses you listed on the *Off-Campus Study Course Approval* form. If that is the case, you should e-mail Off-Campus Studies to notify Whitman as soon as possible of the courses you intend to take.

Occasionally, work done abroad must be reviewed by faculty members on campus to determine whether it meets certain standards or can be used to fulfill certain requirements. All students are urged to keep records of all work completed abroad such as notes, syllabi, copies of all papers, etc., together with information on the number of hours spent in class each week and the required assignments in case there is a question about the course content for credit purposes. Professors abroad may not return papers and examinations, so you should keep copies of all papers.

If you attend a Partner Program you are considered enrolled in a Whitman off-campus program and need not take a leave of absence. Courses taken through a Partner Program will appear on the Whitman transcript, and the grade reported by the program also appears on the Whitman transcript. However, those grades will not be calculated into the semester or cumulative grade point average at Whitman.

If you attend an Approved or Petitioned Program you will be considered on leave of absence from Whitman College. Courses taken through an Approved or Petitioned Program will appear on the Whitman transcript as transfer credit. In other words, the course title and number of credits will be on the Whitman transcript but not the grade reported by the program. The grades earned during foreign study will not be calculated into the semester or cumulative grade point average at Whitman.

All students going abroad should make sure that their study abroad program knows to send your study abroad transcript to Whitman College when your semester abroad is completed. It should be sent directly to: Off-Campus Studies, Whitman College, Walla Walla, WA 99362, U.S.A. Without an official transcript, Whitman will not be able to award transfer credit. (Please note that transcripts that are received by students cannot be used for transfer credit purposes. They must be sent directly from the program to Whitman.)

Please note that your study abroad grades are very important, even though the g.p.a. for Partner Programs is not averaged into your cumulative Whitman g.p.a. and grades for Approved Programs do not appear on your Whitman transcript.

Most graduate and professional schools require copies of all transcripts relevant to the applicant's undergraduate studies, so students should order an additional 2 to 3 study abroad transcripts to be mailed to their current address, sealed in individual envelopes.

FEES AND FINANCIAL AID

Financial Aid

If you receive need-based financial aid from Whitman and you attend a Partner Program, your financial aid award will be calculated according to your demonstrated need and the budget for your particular study abroad program. Whitman scholarship funds will automatically be credited to your account after the first day of classes of the given semester at Whitman. For scholarships from sources other than Whitman, you can have the check(s) mailed to you for endorsement or you can arrange for one of your parents to have power of attorney.

If you are expecting any kind of financial aid checks (scholarships or loans from outside sources), you should give one of your parents Power of Attorney. With the power of attorney, your parent can endorse any check rather than sending it to you to sign. This will save a lot of time and creates less chance that your check will be delayed or lost in transit.

For Perkins loan checks, you should check with Judy Arbanas in the Business Office about signing a promissory note before leaving campus. Stafford loans have a Master Promissory Note (MPN) so you just need to request the loan through the Whitman Office of Financial Aid Services. As long as you check "Yes" on item #15 of the application, Whitman can transfer your loan directly to your student account. If you do not check "Yes" on item #15, Whitman will not pay your program fees.

If you are attending an Approved Program and wish to apply federal or state financial aid to that program, you need to check with the Office of Financial Aid Services about the arrangements for completing a consortium agreement. Whitman College need-based aid and merit scholarships will not be applied to non-Partner Programs.

Partner Program Fees

If you are attending a study abroad program which is partnered with Whitman College, the College will be billed for your program fees and you, in turn, will be billed for these fees by Whitman. The College will then pay the fees to the program for you. Information about Partner Program fees is available from Off-Campus Studies. Information about Approved Program fees can be found in program brochures or on their website.

Please note that for some programs, the room and/or board or only partial board is included in the program fees. Be sure that you review the budget sheet that Off-Campus Studies sends to you. It is important that you understand what your program fee covers and what it does not cover when you calculate your personal budget. (For details see "Money Matters.") In these cases, you should plan to bring sufficient money with you to cover other estimated expenses. Check with Off-Campus Studies if you are unsure of your program expenses.

Payment Plan

If you are attending a Partner Program and using the payment plan at Whitman, you should contact the Business Office (509-527-5143) about adjusting the amount of your monthly payments if the cost of the program you are attending is different from your Whitman fees. Your monthly payments will not be automatically adjusted.

Financial Aid for Airfare & Personal Expenses

If you receive financial aid from Whitman in excess of the program's fees, you may ask the Business Office to send you a check for the balance of financial aid left after the program fees are paid. Your financial aid is available to you after the first day of classes at Whitman in the given semester. If you are departing for study abroad before the start of classes, and your account is current, you may request an advance on your financial aid through the Business Office. To receive an advance, you and your parents must sign a promissory note, which will be paid automatically once the financial aid is credited to your account.

LIVING ABROAD

A semester or year abroad is one of the greatest opportunities in your life. You will be able to work on your foreign language skills, visit places you've only studied about in books and meet people who view the world very differently from Americans. For most students it is an extremely rich and rewarding experience. This does not mean, however, that all things will be positive or that all the people you meet will be wonderful and welcoming. There will be times when you will have to motivate yourself both socially and academically.

When you arrive abroad, it helps to be determined about taking advantage of the opportunities that living abroad provides. Go out of your way to get involved, to meet new people, and to avoid spending all of your time with fellow Americans.

Health and Safety

There are some important things that you can do to help ensure that you have a safe and healthy experience overseas. Be aware that there are inherent risks associated with any travel and that neither Whitman College nor the study abroad program you attend can guarantee your safety or eliminate risk. Although most foreign countries have less violent crime than the U.S. and may seem to be relatively "safe", there are certain aspects of living and traveling abroad that make it more risky than being in your home environment.

General

- Read all program information carefully and take seriously recommendations related to safety, health, the physical environment, the law and cultural conditions in the host country.
- Read the State Department's Consular Reports to U.S. travelers for the countries you plan to travel to. The reports highlight risks to Americans abroad. It is accessible at <http://travel.state.gov>.
- Consider your own health and safety needs when accepting a place in a program.
- Make available to the sponsor accurate and complete physical and mental health information about yourself so that they can help you if a problem arises.
- Familiarize yourself with local police, fire and hospital services as soon as you arrive overseas so that you know how to contact help in the event of an emergency.
- Inform program staff promptly if you have any health or safety concerns.
- Do not engage in risky activities such as excessive drinking, involvement with illegal drugs, hitchhiking or exchanging money on the black market.
- Before swimming make sure the body of water you plan to swim in is safe. In the developing world in particular water that may look fine could be severely polluted or contain the parasites that cause the disease Schistosomiasis.

- While programs try to screen host families and other student accommodations carefully, problems can arise. If you feel your housing situation is at all unsafe, you should discuss your concerns with the program staff immediately.
- Use your common sense and instincts--if you feel a situation seems strange or feels inappropriate you should get out of the situation as soon as possible.

Crime and Sexual Harassment

Students who study abroad may assume that they will be less likely to be a victim of crime overseas because many countries have a lower rate of violent crimes than the United States. However, as a visitor from the U.S. you are likely to stand out because of your clothes, the way you walk, your speech, and other factors. Unfortunately, that makes you more likely to be targeted by petty criminals or others with bad intentions. Here are a few tips to help you have a safe experience abroad:

- Try to wear clothing that doesn't make you conspicuous and walk with a confident air. Remember that in many countries Americans are perceived to be quite wealthy and pickpockets won't distinguish between a "poor" college student and a "wealthy" tourist.
- Keep in mind that living in Walla Walla has probably caused you to let down your guard about crime. For example, don't put a purse or luggage in a place where a passerby could walk off with it. Keep your hands on your bags.
- Use a money belt to keep valuables such as money and your passport hidden from view. Be aware that pickpockets often ride buses and subways looking for those with wallets within easy access.
- When you first arrive in country find out from program staff if there are any parts of town that should be avoided and what the safest forms of local transportation are.
- Avoid walking alone or taking taxis alone, especially at night.
- While it is safer to travel with others, be aware that people sometimes let down their guard or do not notice their surroundings as much when they are with friends.
- Incidents have been reported in which strangers at bars or on trains have offered visitors food or drink that was later determined to be laced with drugs so that the perpetrators could rob or molest them. Do not accept drinks or food from individuals who you do not know.
- Purchase locks for your luggage and backpacks and use them.

Sexual harassment of U.S. study abroad students by local men is a significant problem in some countries, especially in Asia, Latin America and some parts of Europe. While the problem tends to be more acute for women, men can be victims of it as well. The problem is partly due to the fact that Americans are perceived to be promiscuous in certain countries, especially in traditional countries that are relatively conservative. This idea that Americans have lax sexual mores is unfortunately reinforced by images in American movies, TV and advertising. These preconceived ideas about Americans are often unwittingly reinforced by the behavior of American students themselves while abroad because their actions and/or style of dress does not conform with local social norms.

It is therefore in your best interest to learn about the local social norms for young women and men as quickly as possible and try to conform to them. Find out what clothing is appropriate for college-aged women and men, and dress accordingly. Find out if it is culturally acceptable to walk alone or if young women need to be accompanied by a male escort when they are walking around town. While it may not be easy to change your behavior and you may find some of the

local norms restrictive, think of learning about these issues and modifying your behavior as part of your cultural experience.

In some countries, men will respond to young women (especially women who look foreign) with hissing, whistling, leering stares, and blatant sexual advances. While some female students become angry and frustrated with this, it is important to remember that you are not going to be able to change the local culture. But there are ways that you can modify your behavior to conform to local culture and this should reduce the problem. Tips that should help reduce harassment are as follows:

- In many societies (Italy, France, Latin America, and some parts of Asia) making any kind of eye contact at all or smiling at local men will be construed as a sexual advance—you'll need to leave your Walla Walla friendliness behind.
- Be aware of how your clothing will send signals. In some societies wearing sleeveless clothing, low necklines, short skirts, shorts, or tank tops will be associated with promiscuous behavior. **You even may need to dress more conservatively than local peers in order to counteract local stereotypes about Americans.**
- In some countries and regions (such as Italy, Greece, the Middle East and Latin America) it may not be appropriate for young women to walk alone on the street unaccompanied even during the day. Women may discover that they need to be accompanied by a friend when walking around town in order to avoid being harassed.
- Watch what local women do to protect themselves and follow suit. In many societies you will see women walking arm and arm huddled together in conversation. This is a tactic for avoiding the unwanted intrusions of men on the street.
- **It is a good idea to find out from your program staff the safest way to respond to unwanted advances in the host culture and what to say, if anything, in the local language.** In some places it is best to ignore comments from men, in others there is a particular phrase in the local language that is the best way to get them to leave you alone.
- In some traditional societies, young people do not travel alone without their family members or friends. In these countries a young person who travels alone and stays alone at a guesthouse, for example, may be harassed for sexual favors because by traveling alone they are sending a message to locals that they have low moral standards.
- It is important to remember that your safety comes first. **If someone is pestering you or you feel uncomfortable with a situation, do not worry about being polite or not offending someone. Follow your intuition and get out of the situation as soon as possible.**
- If you encounter any form of harassment, you should inform your program staff and Off-Campus Studies promptly.

Traffic

- Driving habits, traffic patterns and road conditions may be very different from those in the U.S. Keep in mind that the rate of traffic accidents and fatalities is as much as seven times higher in some countries than it is in the U.S. Even in Europe, the roads are not as safe as in the U.S.
- Exercise extra caution when you are crossing streets especially when you first arrive. The pedestrian "right of way" is non-existent in most places outside the U.S. so you should not assume traffic would watch out for you.
- In some countries drivers consider traffic signals to be recommendations but not obligatory--so they may not necessarily stop at red lights.

- If you go to a country where they drive on the left be especially careful of oncoming traffic when stepping off of the curb.
- Because of differences in driving conditions, we recommend that you do not drive a car, motorcycle or other vehicle while abroad.
- Before taking taxis or buses find out which companies are reputable. In some places, such as Mexico City, it may not be safe to take a taxi alone.

Local Demonstrations/Unrest

- If there are demonstrations or protests in the country where you are living, it is best to avoid the activities even as an onlooker as these types of events can become violent. Be aware that in many countries there is no freedom of speech or freedom of assembly, so being part of such an activity may be illegal.
- Contact program staff for advice about what to do if your country is experiencing popular unrest.

Food

- The change in diet and water can greatly affect your health while overseas. Be sure to find out from the local staff if you need to take any special precautions with foods. For instance, in some developing countries it is unsafe to eat raw vegetables or unpeeled fruits.
- In Latin America, Asia, and Africa it is also not uncommon for the tap water to be undrinkable--in which case you will need to drink bottled water or boil water to drink.
- When trying new foods and getting used to a new diet overseas it is a good idea to take it slowly and not to overindulge in new foods too quickly. This will give your body some time to adjust.
- When eating out, try to frequent establishments that serve foods fresh and piping hot.
- Keep abreast of news reports regarding food contamination. For example, you may wish to avoid eating beef in certain countries that have had outbreaks of “mad cow disease.”

Assistance from American Authorities

U.S. consular officers are available at U.S. Embassies and Consulates in most countries overseas. They are there to advise and assist you, especially if you are in serious trouble. Although consular officers try to be responsive to the needs of U.S. nationals traveling or residing abroad, they are first of all there to help Americans who are in serious legal, medical, or financial difficulties. They do not perform the work of travel agencies, information bureaus, or the local police. They also will not help you search for your missing luggage, get a driver's license or a work permit, or settle disputes with local shopkeepers or business people. **If you run into trouble with the local authorities, remember you are subject to local laws.** Local laws, U.S. laws, and international agreements tie the hands of the American representatives. The U.S. government also has no funds for legal fees or other related expenses for U.S. citizens who get into trouble overseas.

Alcohol Use and Abuse

In your study abroad destination you may be old enough to drink legally. For many study abroad students, this is a different situation than they find on their home campus. Please be aware that customs surrounding alcohol vary significantly from country to country. In many countries of Europe, for example, wine or beer is often consumed with a meal, but it is very uncommon for people to drink until they are drunk. Even college students rarely drink to excess in continental Europe. In more traditional or religious countries, alcohol may be taboo or it may be socially

unacceptable for college-age students to drink even if it is not prohibited by the law. For example, in China it is very uncommon for women to drink alcohol until they reach middle age.

Unfortunately, just as in the U.S., excess use of alcohol overseas often leads to poor judgment and is frequently involved with accidents and other problems. Be aware that if you drink to excess, you may be putting your safety and the safety of those around you at risk and will probably be more vulnerable to crime and accidents abroad. Moreover, irresponsible consumption of alcohol does not enhance the reputation of U.S. students or American students in the eyes of foreigners.

If you do not drink and wish to find out how prevalent alcohol is in your study abroad destination, please consult with your program staff or Off-Campus Studies. In most countries it is perfectly acceptable to decline a drink and ask for a soft drink instead if you do not to drink alcohol.

Drugs

You should not even consider using illegal drugs while abroad. In most countries the authorities consider illegal drug use an extremely serious matter. Even possession of small amounts of some drugs which may receive a light penalty in the U.S. may be considered a very serious crime in your study abroad destination. Some countries even execute those convicted of possession of illegal drugs. Several foreign countries have elaborate drug laws, which involve guilt by association. Penalties for possession or trafficking may be the same. **If you are caught with any illegal drugs, you are subject to local, not U.S., laws.** The U.S. authorities and your study abroad program staff cannot do much more than give your parents a list of lawyers. They will not be able to assist you in any other way. Since local drug laws frequently carry very stiff penalties, many young Americans find themselves in prison for seemingly small offenses. If you are arrested abroad, you will find that:

- few countries provide a jury trial
- most countries do not accept bail
- pretrial detention (which is often solitary confinement) can last for months
- prisons may lack even the minimal comforts of a bed, toilet, or washbasin
- diets are often very poor
- officials may not (or may not want to) speak English
- your personal property may be confiscated
- you may be inhumanely treated

Do not be misguided by the apparent availability of drugs in some countries. The dealer from whom you buy drugs may turn you in and get paid by the police for doing so.

Adjusting to a Different Culture

A good way to understand a foreign culture is to listen to and talk with the local people. Be observant when meeting people and try not to judge people and situations by American standards. Go abroad with an open mind and positive attitude. This will open many doors for you, which remain closed to others. A very good way to meet local people is to become involved in activities other than classes. Soon after arrival, find out what kind of extracurricular activities are available and join some. Again, you have to take the initiative because, although you are usually welcome to join in, locals may not make a special effort to invite foreign students.

An important thing to keep in mind when abroad is that you are there to participate in and experience a culture very different from your own. A common problem among Americans living abroad is that they may want to change the local culture to make it more like the U.S. Try to be open-minded and remember that the institutions, at which you are studying, the landlady, the local merchants, etc., are unlikely to change their ways just because the U.S. students find them difficult or odd. Similarly, the food served during your homestay or in the student dining halls is probably not what you are used to, nor is it likely to change. Remember that there are many different ways to look at things, and try to understand the perspective of the local people. Avoid making harsh judgments about local situations, be sensitive to the people around you, and learn to live with conditions as they are. Try not to compare things constantly with things at home and be careful about verbalizing any comparisons you do make. Americans have the stereotype of being arrogant and spoiled, and you certainly don't want to reinforce that perception. A successful study abroad experience involves many obstacles and adjustments to foreign viewpoints.

Multicultural and GLBTQ Students

Students of color and students with diverse sexual orientations may encounter different responses to their identity from people in their host culture abroad than they are accustomed to in the United States. There are some on-line resources that might help you prepare for the local culture of your study abroad destination listed below. You may also wish to contact your program provider for information specific to your study abroad setting.

- www.DiversityAbroad.com--Information for students of color going abroad
- www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay--Has information and listserv providing support for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students studying abroad
- www.iglhrc.org--International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission
- www.ilga.org--International Lesbian and Gay Association is a federation of national and local groups dedicated to achieving equal rights for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender people
- <http://studyabroad.msu.edu/forms/glb.html> -- Has information on choosing study abroad destinations, scholarships, and links to other resources

Friendship

Friendship is an important factor in determining how you view your study abroad experience. Becoming friends with some of the local people will allow you to become truly immersed in a new country and culture, and it will give you the chance to appreciate and understand its peoples and values. However, making friends abroad may not be easy.

Depending on where you study, you may find the locals more reserved and formal in their relationships. They may not share the American attitude of superficial interest in others and may not invite other people into their lives as easily. They may not share the openness with which many Americans confront problems, and they may not like discussing feelings or expectations as openly and publicly. In other countries it is often more common for people to have a few close, lifelong friends than an array of acquaintances, as is often the case in the U.S. Also, the fact that most students stay abroad for a relatively short period and tend to spend most of their free time traveling is not helpful for developing long-term relationships. On the other hand, once you have made friends with someone abroad, you may find the friendship will last a lifetime.

An additional problem is that there are usually many other Americans abroad, and you may have to overcome a variety of prejudices about Americans. When abroad, try not to be defensive about criticism of the U.S. and try not to take it personally. Even though people may be very critical of the U.S. as a nation, they can still be appreciative of you as an individual.

Dating

Sexual mores vary a great deal from country to country. For example, in more traditional societies just going on a date alone with someone of the opposite sex may be understood as an intention to marry. Sexual involvement may be taboo prior to marriage. Be sure to understand the implications of your actions in the host culture before becoming involved with someone so that you and your friend will not be hurt. Attitudes towards homosexuality vary a great deal from culture to culture. Some countries may be much more accepting of homosexual relationships while others may be much more homophobic than the U.S. If you have questions about the social norms related to dating and sexual orientation in the country you are going to, please contact Off-Campus Studies or the program you are attending.

Standard of Living

Residents in the United States enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world. Many things that we take for granted are considered luxuries abroad, even in other first-world countries such as Europe and Japan. For example, the population density in Europe, Asia, Africa and much of Latin America means that cars and homes are generally much smaller than they are here. Utilities and appliances are often also very expensive abroad. For example, washing machines, telephones, heat and hot water are much more expensive in many other countries than they are in the U.S. If you live in a residence hall abroad, you probably will not have your own telephone and your room will probably be much colder in the winter than it is here at Whitman. If you live with a host family or local "landlord", you may not be permitted to use the telephone, refrigerator or washing machine. You may or may not be permitted to use hot water to shower everyday. When in doubt, check with your program about what the host families/landlords are expected to supply you with or talk to your host directly about your requests.

Very few programs abroad offer students a situation similar to the one found at Whitman, where the classrooms, dormitories, dining halls, student union, etc. are all in close proximity to each other, and where a large number of students live on campus. Most universities abroad are basically commuter schools rather than residential institutions, and students often spend 1-3 hours per day traveling to and from campus. On most programs, students will use public transportation to get to their classes and do a lot of walking or bike riding. Even students who have a room or apartment in the city where the university is located frequently travel an hour or more daily. If university housing is available, it might be located on the outskirts of a city and may well be miles from the school. Living in a large city in a foreign country can be a bit overwhelming with the traffic, pollution, and lack of greenery common to most metropolitan areas. Be prepared for the differences between life in Walla Walla and urban living and take advantage of many opportunities that the city provides.

Living Arrangements

No matter which country you go to remember that living accommodations and meal arrangements abroad are usually very different from those common in the U.S. Keep in mind that your living situation is part of the learning experience of living in a foreign society. Try to enjoy the things that are different from life in Walla Walla, even if some aspects are difficult at first.

The best way to prepare for living abroad is to read your program's predeparture information carefully. Find out whether you will be living with local students or with other American students or with a family. Remember that you will be expected to follow local customs and respect the property and privacy of those you live with, regardless of your housing situation.

What might be some of the differences you encounter in your housing abroad? First, residence halls overseas will probably have different policies than those at Whitman and may be more restrictive. For example, they may have a curfew or visitors may not be allowed. On many study abroad programs overnight guests are not allowed in residence halls, homestays or even in city apartments. **You should not assume that friends and family members can stay with you while you are abroad even if you are going to be living in an apartment with other U.S. students.** Check with your program staff if you have questions about accommodation policies.

Second, utilities are usually very expensive outside the U.S., so many homes and residence halls may be heated only when it turns exceptionally cold and hot water may be available only at certain hours of the day or week. Many students find that they need to wear layers of clothes abroad because indoor room temperatures are 5-10 degrees colder than in the United States. While abroad try to get in the habit of turning off the lights and the heat when you leave a room. Americans have the reputation of being wasteful—try not to reinforce that stereotype.

Also keeping your room and commonly used spaces such as the bathroom and kitchen tidy will go a long way to smoothing your relationships with host families and roommates.

While you may think of your room as your private space, host families may get upset if your room is messy as they consider it part of their home.

If you are living with local students, keep in mind they probably have already spent one or more years at the university and already have close friends. It will take special sensitivity and effort on behalf of American students who come to a local university for a semester or year to establish friendships. Try to take the initiative with making friendships and be patient. You may well find that once you are accepted as a friend, you've laid the foundation for a life-long relationship.

Regardless of your housing arrangements, if you have problems with your housing, be sure to contact the local program staff or Off-Campus Studies right away. It is usually best to deal with housing problems early rather than letting problems grow over time.

Homestays

Homestays can be one of the most rewarding aspects of the study abroad experience, providing invaluable insight into the language, customs, and values of a society. While most programs seek families who are interested in hosting an American for reasons other than their monetary compensation, students should realize that homestay experiences vary widely depending on the expectations of the family and those of the student, and on the local conditions. In some instances, a homestay experience will be more like a tenant-landlord relationship. In other families, the student will be treated like a son or daughter of the family. As in the U.S., families with young children often do not live downtown; so don't be surprised if you are placed with a "non-traditional" family such as an elderly widow or retired couple.

Having a flexible attitude will help if the host family you live with does not conform to your expectations. In all homestays, you should remember that even though you are a guest, you will

be expected to follow the rules of the family. This may include a curfew, asking permission to have a friend visit the house, telling them what time you plan to come home at night, and keeping your room tidy. Remember that host parents may truly worry about it if you do not let them know when you plan to return home late or go out of town, so please be considerate and keep them informed of your schedule. In general, you will not have the freedom you have living in a residence hall at Whitman.

Be aware that notions of privacy and what household items you will have access to as a guest may be quite different from what would be the case in an American home. It is best to err on the side of asking permission, instead of making assumptions. For example, do not take it for granted that you are welcome to read the family's newspaper or use their radio, telephone, or television. Also, you may not have free access to the refrigerator. In some countries, only children eat snacks in between meals. In such situations, you are encouraged not to ask for or take any food except at mealtimes. It is often easiest to ask about your host family's expectations as soon as you arrive.

Cooking

In some programs you will be living in an apartment or a residence hall with kitchen facilities and you will be cooking your own meals. Past study abroad students have suggested taking a few favorite recipes with you or even practicing cooking at home during the winter or summer break before you go abroad.

Use of Telephone

Study abroad students are now using cell phones as a main method of communication while abroad. The cell phones that are used in the U.S. will likely not work abroad, but cell phones are typically inexpensive to purchase once abroad. Most cell phones abroad are usually for communicating with others locally and within your host country. Some program providers, like IES, are equipping program participants with cell phones for the purpose of getting in touch with their students in the case of an emergency. Be aware that if your program provides a cell phone for you that you are responsible for paying for any calls made with that cell phone.

You should check with the cell phone provider to clarify the costs of making international calls to your family and friends back home with your cell phone. Many times, the cell phone is not the cheapest way to call home, so it is recommended that you research what might be the cheapest method.

The cost of telephone calls from land lines can often be much higher abroad than in the U.S. If you are living with a host family, you should never assume it is alright to use the family's phone to either make or receive a call. Families can be very sensitive about phone use by non-family members, so never make any phone calls without the explicit permission of the family.

Computers and E-Mail Abroad

Virtually all programs and universities have computers available for use by study abroad students to type papers and access the internet. (In some cases internet access is limited to "official business" and may not be used for writing to friends and family.) Generally speaking, you will find computer and e-mail facilities abroad not quite as convenient as at Whitman. For example, at centers abroad and foreign universities the student to computer ratio is high, so students must often wait in line to use computers. Moreover, many programs and universities limit computer center hours to weekdays, without evening or weekend hours. For this reason,

especially if you are the type of student who does your work at the last minute, you may want to consider taking a laptop with you. But you will have to weigh the advantages of having your own computer, with the hassle of transporting it and the security risks involved.

Before making a final decision about whether or not to take a laptop, check with your program to see what they recommend and to find out what adapters and converters are necessary. In any case, if you take a laptop you should bring a surge protector with you to protect your equipment. You should also make sure that you have property insurance that would cover your computer if it is lost or stolen while you are overseas.

Many (but not all) study abroad programs have e-mail access. Some provide students with their own accounts, while others have one shared account for all students to use. Some Whitman students have preferred to keep using their Webmail accounts at Whitman. Accessing Webmail is fairly easy, but the connection can be slow, which can eat up costly minutes if you are using an internet café. Some students prefer to use Internet e-mail accounts for this reason. Google, Yahoo and Hotmail have free e-mail. If you choose to use a non-Whitman e-mail address while abroad, please forward your Whitman e-mail to the non-Whitman account. The OCS Office and other campus offices will use your Whitman e-mail account to communicate important information to you.

If you are on campus mailing lists and do not want to be inundated with messages while abroad, remember to unsubscribe from them before leaving campus. Messages piling up in your inbox during your absence clog up the whole campus server and slow Marcus down. To remove yourself from all four lists, you would send a blank e-mail message to the following e-mail addresses.

students-unsubscribe@whitman.edu

rides-unsubscribe@whitman.edu

forsale-unsubscribe@whitman.edu

lostandfound-unsubscribe@whitman.edu

Note - if you were receiving the lists in “Digest” mode, you would send a blank e-mail message to the following e-mail address:

students-digest-unsubscribe@whitman.edu

rides-digest-unsubscribe@whitman.edu

forsale-digest-unsubscribe@whitman.edu

lostandfound-digest-unsubscribe@whitman.edu

Instructions to unsubscribe can also be found at <http://wcts.whitman.edu/docs/>

Access to Penrose Library E-resources

While away from Whitman you may find that access to library and internet resources is somewhat limited. However, as a Whitman student all of the Penrose Library databases, electronic journals and other electronic resources are available to you from any computer with an internet connection. When using the Penrose Library website to locate electronic materials including journal articles and electronic reference titles you will be asked to log in using your Whitman ID and password. You will then be authenticated as a Whitman user and will be able to use all of our electronic resources. If you have any questions or problems once you get abroad, please contact Off-Campus Studies or the Penrose Library for assistance.

Smoking

In many countries a higher percentage of the population smokes than in the U.S. It is also not uncommon for smoking to be allowed in public spaces, on trains and buses, in restaurants and even in classrooms in other countries. (This is not unlike the U.S. about 20 years ago.) In Europe, for example, it is very common for university students to smoke. And you may find that most host families have at least one family member who smokes. For these reasons it is important to specify on your housing preference form whether or not you are willing to live with a host family or roommates who smoke. Also, try not to be overly judgmental about the smoking habits in your host culture, even if you dislike it, because you are, after all, a guest. Please note also that in some traditional cultures, such as India and China, it is considered acceptable for college-aged men to smoke but not women.

Photography

There are some issues with respect to taking photographs overseas that students should be aware of. First, remember that in many countries for security reasons it is not legal to photograph major infrastructure sites such as bridges, airports, harbors or military installations. Even in the U.S. it is not legal to take photographs in the customs areas of airports. Also, in many religions it is considered very disrespectful to photograph religious statuary or deities or take any photos within places of worship. If you are unsure, ask someone knowledgeable before you pull out your camera to snap a shot.

If you want to take photos of strangers on the street or other individuals, you should ask if they mind having their picture taken. Many people will not mind, but some will feel it an invasion of privacy. Also, in some cultures there are serious religious taboos against photographs of people. It is always more polite to ask first. As you take photographs during your trip, you may see yourself as documenting various aspects of the cities or towns you are in. But be aware that many locals will not want you to take pictures of things that they are not proud of such as poor neighborhoods and villages, polluted areas, the homeless, political demonstrations, etc. Your program staff should be able to provide you with guidance about what is and what is not appropriate in your host country.

CULTURE SHOCK

Most people who live abroad for an extended period experience culture shock. In order to understand culture shock, you have to remember that our ability to function in the world depends on our capacity to read hundreds of signs, respond to subtle cues, and behave according to countless explicit and implicit rules. At home we know how to read street signs, how to use the telephone, how much to tip, etc. Much of what we do in our daily lives is automatic and requires little thought. Abroad, the reverse is true and simple tasks become difficult because we don't know how to behave, our actions and words don't get the expected responses, and we don't understand the messages we are getting. We are confronted continuously with new ways of thinking, valuing, and doing things. Sometimes, our common sense is no longer useful. This is culture shock, the disorientation that can cause severe stress. Fortunately, culture shock is predictable and manageable and, if you are prepared for it, you can do a great deal to control it.

Culture shock is a cycle of adjustment that may take quite some time. The cycle is marked by four basic phases, and most people experience at least two low periods during their stay abroad. However, the length and severity of these low periods vary greatly for different individuals. The four basic phases are:

Euphoria. This is the tourist phase. You are excited about living in a new place. At first glance it strikes you that the people and their way of life are not that different from what you are used to.

Irritation and Hostility. After the initial excitement is over, you start noticing more and more dissimilarities between life in the foreign country and life at home. Your initial curiosity and enthusiasm turn into irritation, frustration, anger, and depression. Minor nuisances and inconveniences lead to catastrophic upsets. Symptoms experienced during this phase include homesickness, boredom, withdrawal (i.e. spending excessive amounts of time reading, only seeing other Americans, avoiding contact with local people), need for excessive amounts of sleep, compulsive eating or drinking, irritability, exaggerated cleanliness, stereotyping of or hostility toward local people, loss of ability to work effectively, unexplainable fits of weeping, and physical ailments (psychosomatic illness). This second phase of culture shock is often a difficult period and may last for quite a long time. Fortunately, most people only experience a few of these symptoms, but it is helpful to be aware of the symptoms so you understand what is happening to you or your friends and can take steps to counteract them.

Gradual Adjustment. Over time you will gradually adapt to the new culture. Once you begin to orient yourself and are able to interpret some of the subtle cultural clues and cues, the culture will seem more familiar and more comfortable. You will feel less isolated, and your self-confidence will return.

Adaptation or Bi-Culturalism. Full recovery has occurred when you are able to function in two cultures with confidence. At that time, you will find you enjoy some of the customs, ways of doing and saying things, and personal attitudes that bothered you so much in phase two. You may not realize how well you have adjusted to the new culture until you return to the U.S., at which point you may well experience reverse culture shock.

How to Cope with Culture Shock

Since culture shock is a cycle of adjustment, people who make the effort to learn as much as possible about their temporary home country before they leave and who arrive abroad with an open mind, eager to learn as much as possible, often find it much easier to adjust. To make the transition easier, remember not to wait for others to make the first move but start reaching out right away. Buy a map of the city and become familiar with your own neighborhood. Find out where the closest bank, post office, telephone, grocery store, etc., are located. Your next step might be to familiarize yourself with some of the basic names and phrases, which appear on signs, menus, etc. Even other English-speaking countries use phrases unfamiliar to most Americans. A British or Australian passerby will not know you are looking for a "chemist" if you ask for a drugstore or pharmacy.

The following are other ways of coping with culture shock:

- Find someone who understands the U.S. and the host culture and ask them about some of the things you find frustrating.
- Listen carefully to people and remember they may not be making the same assumptions you are. If you are not sure of what they mean, ask.
- Speak the foreign language as often as possible.
- Maintain regular living patterns--eat and sleep at regular intervals.

- If you have certain hobbies or are involved in sports at home, try to do the same abroad. This is a great way to make friends.
- Keep a journal about your experiences and emotions abroad.
- Set time aside each day to do something special and make sure you do it.
- Find a place you feel comfortable and spend time there.
- Talk to friends or counselors if you feel you have problems coping; try to look at your problems one at a time, and set out to solve them the same way.
- Avoid hanging out with other Americans who are disgruntled with the host culture and spend their time complaining.
- If you feel depressed, ask yourself these questions:
 - "What did I expect?"
 - "Were my expectations reasonable?"
 - "If so, what can I do to make them come true?"
 - "If not, how can I make the best use of my time?"
- If you develop physical problems (i.e. headaches, stomachaches, insomnia), these may be signs of stress. Discuss your symptoms with a counselor or doctor, and learn to reduce/handle the stress.

Understanding Yourself and Your Culture

Adjusting to a new culture requires a re-examination of your personal values and outlook. Many students come back more appreciative of their own customs and culture, as well as those of the host country. One way to prepare yourself for living in a new culture and for dealing with culture shock is to have a clear idea of your own goals and your possible contributions while abroad. What do you hope to do or learn? What are your personal values, and how might they be viewed in the foreign culture? What can you bring to the foreign culture?

It also may be helpful for you to realize how people in foreign countries tend to view Americans and why. Before going abroad, take a look at the recent historical and political developments in the country you will be visiting. Ask yourself how; if you were in their shoes, you would most likely perceive Americans. Because the U.S. is a powerful and wealthy country, you will probably encounter people who resent some U.S. foreign policies that affect them. In fact, people may at first not want to get to know you because you are American. Some stereotypical views you may encounter are beliefs that all Americans are:

- informal and/or disrespectful of authority
- loud, rude, boastful, selfish, and immature
- hard-working
- extravagant and wasteful
- picky eaters
- confident they have all the answers
- lacking in class consciousness
- racially prejudiced
- ignorant of other countries
- wealthy and generous
- always in a hurry

Given the content of American movies and television shows and the behavior of some Americans while abroad, you probably have a good idea of how some of these perceptions may

have originated. Here are a few things to keep in mind. First of all, not all foreigners believe all Americans are this way and there are things you can do to contradict these perceptions. Second, some of these myths are based on cultural differences. For example, in several countries, people speak more softly and at a lower tonal level than in the U.S. Hence, to people in these countries, Americans are loud. Similarly, in many other countries, people are not used to calling each other by first names after a brief acquaintance and they consider Americans disrespectful or informal. Cultural differences also may mean that, while most Americans perceive some of the above-mentioned traits as positive, people in other countries see them negatively. You may also find that people in other countries place less emphasis upon individual achievements and results and are less task-oriented. They may also place less emphasis upon being self-reliant and may be more willing to depend upon others. To Americans, people of other cultures often seem too relaxed (even lazy) and not concerned enough about meeting schedules and deadlines. Keep an open mind, and try to understand why people feel, think, or behave in certain ways.

COMMUNICATING WITH WHITMAN WHILE ABROAD

Contact Information

When you arrive overseas you should send Off-Campus Studies your new address, cell, telephone, and fax numbers as soon as you know them by emailing Natasha Blake at offcampusstudies@whitman.edu. If you do not want your address and other contact information available to the public, please let us know.

E-mail Information

While abroad you should **check your Whitman email account on a regular basis**, as Off-Campus Studies sends important messages about security, course registration, etc. to all students abroad via e-mail.

Registration

A month prior to on-line registration, you will be alerted via e-mail by the Registrar's Office. Web registration for fall semester at Whitman occurs in mid April and registration for spring semester occurs in early November. Please be aware that **WCTS** will send registration directions and information to you via your **Whitman e-mail address only**, so please make sure that you continue to check your Whitman e-mail account. You may access the class schedule by clicking on **search for classes** in the student toolbox, on the student home page at <http://www.whitman.edu/content/students/>, typically several weeks before on-campus registration begins. If you need assistance during registration, please do not hesitate to contact the Whitman Registrar, at registrar@whitman.edu or (509) 527-5983.

Housing

The Office of Residence Life will send you a letter and an e-mail with a housing form concerning the housing selection procedures for on-campus housing the semester before you plan to return to Whitman. If your form is received by the deadline stated in their information, you will be included in the regular housing assignment process.

Please note that the College does not provide services for arranging off-campus housing. If you wish to live off campus the semester you return, we recommend you make arrangements before going abroad. You can, however, reserve a one-bedroom off-campus Whitman-owned apartment in advance through Off-Campus Rentals. Contact Cindy Russell in

the Business Office for details about reservations and deposits. She may be reached at russellc2@whitman.edu.

Financial Aid When Returning to Campus

To reapply for need-based financial aid at Whitman, both the CSS Profile (<https://profileonline.collegeboard.com>) and FAFSA (www.fafsa.ed.gov) are required. If you are overseas both semesters, you will still need to submit both forms online no later than April 15. Also, please send directly to Financial Aid Services a complete, signed copy of your parents' federal income tax returns by May 15. If you filed a tax return, a copy of your forms would be appreciated. Please be sure to complete your financial aid application by the May 15 deadline, or you risk a reduction to your gift aid for the coming school year. Please call (509) 527-5178 or email finaid@whitman.edu if you have any questions about the reapplication process.

BEFORE YOU RETURN

Laying the Groundwork for a Post-Graduation Study Abroad Fellowship

The Office of Fellowships and Grants would like you to know that students who have studied abroad have an advantage in applying for national fellowships that send graduating seniors and alumni abroad—including the Fulbright, Watson, Marshall, Mitchell, Rhodes, and Huntington Public Service Award. The most important thing you can do in preparation for these opportunities is to work closely with faculty and your internship or volunteer supervisors in your study abroad country and discuss with them projects or research areas you might want to pursue were you to return on a fellowship. Fulbright applicants for graduate study or creative projects, for example, can significantly enhance their applications by supplementing them with “Letters of Institutional Affiliation.” These are letters from contacts abroad who are interested in working with you should you return on a Fulbright grant.

Feel free to contact the Office of Fellowships and Grants for more information: fellowships@whitman.edu.

BACK AT WHITMAN

Evaluation Form

All study abroad participants are required to complete a written evaluation of their program(s) and experiences abroad upon their return to campus by completing the Off-Campus Study Program Evaluation. The form is mandatory because it is a vital tool in Whitman's ability to monitor the quality of academic programs abroad. You will receive the form from Off-Campus Studies by e-mail as soon as you return to Whitman, and you should complete the evaluation as soon as possible. You can download the form to your computer from the e-mail or the Office's website or come into the office and fill out a hard copy. With your consent, your evaluation will be made available to students who are exploring their options for study abroad. Students who do not complete the Evaluation will be blocked from web check-in for the semester after they return to Whitman.

Sharing Your Expertise

When you return to Whitman, we expect that you will share some of what you have learned abroad with the campus community or greater Walla Walla. You will gain international understanding while abroad that when shared can help others learn more about the world outside our borders. There are numerous ways that you can contribute to Whitman or to the Walla Walla

community when you return and we hope that you will consider participating in some of the following activities:

- Annual Whitman Off-Campus Studies Fair
- Study Abroad Orientation
- Whitman Undergraduate Conference in April
- Annual Off-Campus Studies Digital Image Contest
- Advising prospective study abroad students
- Events at Interest Houses
- Joining the International Students and Friends Club
- Presentations in public schools about your host country
- Volunteering to assist new immigrants in Walla Walla
- Writing about your experiences for the Pioneer or Blue Moon

Further information about how to get involved when you return to campus will be provided at our *Welcome Back* meeting.