



NDSU INTERNATIONAL
PROGRAMS

www.ndsu.edu/international

Pre-Departure Orientation Handbook

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Congratulations

Congratulations! You have made the decision to study abroad! This handbook is full of helpful information, advice and resources to make your study abroad experience the best it can be.

Each student will have a unique experience because personalities and destinations can vary dramatically. Types of programs and time of year are just a few things that may affect your experience. Nevertheless, remember that the one thing you have in common with everyone else going abroad is the need to plan ahead!

This handbook is divided into easy-to-find headings. In the back, you will find lists of helpful websites and blank pages to make important notes.

Many problems can be avoided by simply being aware and diligent about researching your program and host country. By knowing as much as possible before you go, you can spend less time worrying and more time meeting new people, enjoying the travel and studying your chosen subjects.

You are an ambassador of North Dakota State University, your state and your country. We wish you the best experience possible and look forward to hearing from you while you're abroad!

Bon Voyage!

Office of International Programs
PO Box 6050, Department 4620
North Dakota State University
 Fargo ND 58108
USA
Phone: (701) 231.7895
Fax: (701) 231.1014
ndsu.international@ndsu.edu



www.ndsu.edu/International/studyabroad/



Study Abroad Checklist

- Obtain passport
- Complete your host school application/paperwork
- Obtain student visa from your host country's embassy (if applicable)
- Complete *Study Abroad Financial Aid Worksheet* (if applicable)
- Complete *Study Abroad Course Plan* to finalize course approval. Turn in course plan to your study abroad advisor so OIP can register you for general study abroad credits on *CampusConnection*.
- Attend NDSU pre-departure orientation & complete online pre-departure orientation www.globalscholar.us
- Purchase the *International Student Identity Card (ISIC)* (optional visit www.myisic.com for information) Applications available at OIP
- Verify health insurance coverage abroad
- Obtain necessary medical papers (if applicable)
- Verify *CampusConnection* registration
- Verify flight arrangements
- Confirm money matters
- Photocopy all important documents (passport, prescriptions, insurance, etc.) Leave one set of copies at home and take another set of copies with you. Store the copies you take in a place separate from the originals.
- Prepare for cultural adjustments by speaking to study abroad alumni and international students and by reading about your host country and school.

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Important Documents

Passport

All students studying abroad need a passport. A passport is your proof of citizenship. Passports take about four to six weeks to obtain, so you need to apply several months before you depart. Also, if your destination country requires you to have a visa (more information on next page), allow much more time because you need your passport before you can obtain a visa! Adult passports are valid for ten years, so if your passport will expire while you are abroad, be sure to renew your passport prior to departing. Some countries require that your U.S. passport be valid at least six months or longer beyond the dates of your trip, so plan accordingly so you do not run into any problems on account of an expired passport.

There is a **\$60** fee to expedite passports to arrive within two weeks, along with additional overnight shipping fees. So, apply for your passport as early as possible!

You can obtain a passport application at the following locations in Fargo-Moorhead or print one out from the internet at: <http://travel.state.gov/passport>

Fargo Post Office

657 2nd Ave. N
Fargo, ND 58102
701-241-6100

Moorhead Recorder's Office

807 11th St. N (2nd floor)
Moorhead, MN 56560
218-299-5031

The following items are needed to apply for a passport:

- One of the following:
 - a) A certified copy of your birth certificate
If you were born in ND
www.health.state.nd.us
If you were born in MN
www.health.state.mn.us
If you were born outside ND or MN
travel.state.gov/passport
 - b) Your previous passport
 - c) A certificate of naturalization or citizenship (if born outside the U.S.)



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- Two passport photos – Costs vary by location.
- Your driver's license or military ID
- Fee: **\$100** for first-time applicants. **\$75** for renewal. Adult passports are valid for ten years.

Passport safety: Your passport is your only valid form of international identification. **DO NOT LOSE IT!** Obtaining a new passport overseas can be very complicated. Keep your passport on you at all times when traveling, especially when traveling across borders. In your host country, keep your passport in a secure place. Before you depart from the U.S., make a photocopy of the first two pages in your passport (pages with your identification information) and leave copies with your family and with your study abroad advisor. Make a copy for yourself, too, but store it in a place separate from your passport. Do not flash your passport in public places, as it establishes your identity as an American and may pinpoint you as a target for pickpockets or other crimes. A simple passport wallet can disguise it inconspicuously. American passports are also very valuable on the black market. **TAKE PRECAUTION!**

In order to protect yourself from identity fraud, it is important to report a lost or stolen passport immediately. If you are overseas and your passport is lost or stolen, contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate right away.

OVERSEAS CITIZENS SERVICES: For questions concerning a crisis or death of an American abroad, you can contact the U.S. Bureau of Consular Affairs.

This information is also available on the website <http://travel.state.gov>

Phone: 1-800-407-4747

From overseas: 1-202-501-4444

Student Visa

A visa (or residence permit) is a document that denotes the conditions of entry into a country and usually appears as a stamp or adhesive document in your passport. In most countries, Americans will need permission to enter the country as a student. Summer programs less than 90 days are often (but not always) exempt from this regulation and students may be able to enter as tourists without a visa.

Visas are obtained from the host country's government. The cost, requirements and ease of this process vary from one country to another. This process often requires patience and many phone calls or emails to the embassy or consulate of your host country. ***It is your responsibility to contact the embassy or consulate and submit the proper documents.*** You can be denied entry to your host country if you do not have the proper documents – even if you have been accepted by your study program and have your plane ticket.

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Typical (but not all) visa applications will ask for medical check-ups, proof that you have not committed any felonies (copy of your criminal record), financial support verification for the length of your program, a letter of acceptance from your program or host school, your passport and a processing fee, among other documents. This is the system your host country uses to determine who will be admitted into their country. It is your responsibility to obtain the necessary documents!

The processing time for visas will vary from one country to another. Some visas may require an actual visit to the consulate for your destination country. For example, the nearest consulate may be in Chicago. It might also be possible to use a visa courier service to deliver your passport and visa application to the consulate of your host country. Be advised that you may be required to pick your visa and other documents in person at the consulate.

www.perryvisa.com

www.travisa.com

A list of entry requirements and consulates can be found at:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html

International Student Identity Card (ISIC)

Recognized worldwide, the ISIC offers student discounts on travel, lodging, entertainment and more. Also included are some medical and travel benefits and a 24-hour hotline for medical, financial or legal emergencies. Visit www.myisic.com for discount information and to print off an application or you may pick one up at the OIP.



Note: THE ISIC IS NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR HEALTH INSURANCE. Please see section on Health and Safety for health insurance requirements.

You can apply for and obtain the ISIC card at the NDSU Office of International Programs (OIP).

To apply, you need the following:

- ✓ Passport photo or ID-sized photo
- ✓ Complete application
- ✓ Enrollment verification from NDSU (ask in Registration and Records)
- ✓ Fee of \$22

International Youth Hostels/Lodging

Youth hostels are not only for youth. They are a form of lodging that commonly caters to students and other adventurous travelers. Many hostels ask for a **Hostelling International** membership card available on the web at www.hiayh.org. Another great place to find affordable lodging for your travels is www.goabroad.com or hotels.com.

International Driving Permit

Although certain countries recognize a U.S. driver's license, many do not. If you expect to drive during your stay abroad, you should check with your host country's embassy to see if there are any age restrictions or proof of insurance needed. It is also recommended that you obtain an International Driving Permit at any AAA office. You will need to pay a small fee, present two passport size photos and a valid driver's license. **AAA toll-free number: 800-222-1333.**

Note: It is strongly discouraged for study abroad students to operate motor vehicles during their stay abroad due to safety, legal and insurance issues.

Important Money Matters While Abroad

If you will be out of the country through April, you will need to make appropriate arrangements for filing your federal and state income tax returns. If you choose to file electronically, be sure to obtain all necessary paperwork. Federal forms and instructions can be downloaded at www.irs.gov.



Note: If your parents will be helping to handle your NDSU financial/academic matters while abroad, be sure to sign a FERPA release form so that they can access your NDSU financial and academic records while you are out of the country. If you do not complete this form, no one other than you will be able to obtain your account balance. The FERPA form can be downloaded at:

www.ndsu.edu/bisonconnection/forms/

Academic Concerns

Registering for Credits at NDSU

All NDSU students studying abroad are registered for NDSU general study abroad credits, except faculty-led programs. In addition to the program application fee, students are responsible for paying the Study Abroad Course Fee and NDSU student fees. Students on exchange programs will be charged NDSU tuition and fees and will pay housing and meal costs at their host institution. Students studying through ISEP

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exchange will be charged NDSU tuition, fees and a program fee which includes room/board. Students who are paying an outside or affiliate program will have their NDSU tuition waived, but will still be required to pay student fees. This allows students to retain full-time status, use their NDSU email account, register for classes and retain financial aid. No student can register for study abroad without completing a Study Abroad Course Plan and submitting it to the study abroad advisor. Students will be registered by the study abroad advisor for the proper amount of credits in one of the following courses:

UNIV 492 – semester or year-long programs

UNIV 379 – summer study tours

Study Abroad Course Plan

You must complete the **Study Abroad Course Plan** and return it to the study abroad advisor who will then send it to the Office of Registration and Records. Only then will you will be registered for the appropriate study abroad credits. (Students participating on a faculty-led program should not complete the course plan.)

On the Course Plan, write down the classes you plan to take abroad and any NDSU equivalents that have been approved by a faculty member or the chair of the department for the classes you have chosen. If there are classes you wish to take abroad that have no NDSU equivalent, you can still get free elective credit, but those classes cannot be substituted for classes at NDSU. If you are not concerned about using a class to fulfill a specific component of your degree, simply write “no equivalent” in the middle “NDSU” column of the form. If you are looking to have a class count towards a General Education requirement at NDSU, the class you take abroad must be an equivalent to a course on the current Gen. Ed. list. Study abroad can also help fulfill Cultural Diversity and/or Global Perspectives requirements. www.ndsu.edu/bisonconnection/registration/genedregs

Study Abroad Course Reading

As a student enrolled for NDSU study abroad credits, it is highly recommended that you research and become familiar with your destination country and host culture. Recommended readings include books about your host country and travelling in other countries. You are encouraged to read books that apply to your program and/or destination region.

You can find informational books on travel and culture specific to various regions of the world at most mid-to-large-sized bookstores.

Some travel series to explore are:

Access

Eyewitness

10 *Fodor's Guide*

Frommer's

Insight Guide

Let's Go

Lonely Planet

Michelin

Moon Handbook

Rick Steves

Rough Guide



Placement Tests for Host Schools

Language placement tests are often required and are especially important for those studying in another language at a foreign institution. If you will be taking classes abroad in English, you probably won't need any placement tests unless you also plan to study in the native language and feel you might have adequate previous knowledge of that language. **If you are a language major, you must verify that your language courses abroad are at an advanced level if you want the credits to transfer back for your language degree. If you have any questions, please speak with your academic advisor and language professors.**

Host School Credits and Classes

You will officially be able to register for classes at your host school once you arrive. Although, some schools may allow you to register online before you depart from the U.S. It is important that you have the email address of your NDSU academic advisor in case you have any questions about the classes you are taking at your host institution. You must also be aware that credits at your host school may be measured differently in comparison to NDSU credits. For example, a 2-credit class abroad may transfer back as 1.5 credits at NDSU. Ask the study abroad advisor if in doubt, but the credit equivalencies of some countries can also be found here:

www.ndsu.edu/international/studyabroad/predeparture/credits/

Be aware that the classes you are actually able to enroll in and those you put on your course plan may end up being different. You must be FLEXIBLE! It is best to list more classes than you think you'll be taking.

Transcripts and Transfer Credits

Before you leave your host school, make sure your host university sends your transcripts directly to the NDSU OIP. You will be notified when it arrives in the OIP and a copy will be made for the OIP's records before sending it to Registration and Records for processing.

Have official transcripts sent directly to:
Tanya Kramer, Study Abroad Advisor
Office of International Programs

NDSU Dept. 4620
P.O. Box 6050
Fargo, ND 58108



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Will study abroad affect my GPA?

A: No, transfer credits do not affect your cumulative GPA. Please be advised that study abroad credit is transfer credit, and any policies regarding transfer credit at NDSU also apply to your study abroad credit. See the NDSU Undergraduate Catalog for more information on transfer credit policies. Also, be aware that your overseas transcript will record the classes you took and your actual grades in that foreign university's grading system.



Q: Am I required to earn certain grades while abroad?

A: If you plan to have classes abroad substituted for classes at NDSU, it is important to meet with the chair of your department prior to leaving. Even though study abroad courses will not affect your cumulative GPA, some departments will require students to earn a minimum grade for classes that count towards their degree.

Q: What happens if I fail a class?

A: Some schools may record failed classes on their transcript, but the credits will not transfer back to NDSU. Failing or dropping a class will lessen the amount of credits that transfer back, and this may affect your student status (here and abroad) and likewise your financial aid eligibility at NDSU. If you are considering dropping a class while abroad for any reason, please first consult with your host school, your academic advisor and department, and your study abroad advisor. If you fail the majority of your classes abroad, it is possible to receive an F for your study abroad experience.

Q: How long will it take to get my transcripts?

A: The normal timeframe is 2-3 months, but this may vary from school to school. Your NDSU transcript will show an "I" (incomplete) for the semester(s) you were abroad until the transcript from your host school is received. When transfer credit is granted, the "I" will convert to a "P" (pass) unless you failed the majority of courses, in which case you may receive credits of F. Please note: Any incompletes must be off your record in order for you to graduate.

Q: What will my NDSU transcript look like when I graduate?

A: It will show that you were registered at NDSU for study abroad and that you earned transfer credit from your host institution. On your NDSU transcript, only the name of your host school and the number of credits that transferred back will appear on the transcript. Although the details of your classes and grades abroad are not shown, that information is available on your host school transcript if needed for graduate school or other reasons.

Once the transcript from your host school has been processed by the OIP and Registration and Records, you will need to verify that these credits appear on your NDSU transcript by viewing your unofficial transcript on CampusConnection.

Q: How do I register for my first semester back home?

A: CampusConnection registration is online. You can check CampusConnection for your “appointment time” to see when you can register and to see the updated course schedule. You may want to arrange for a parent or trusted friend at NDSU to register you for classes. Please note that the study abroad advisor cannot register for you. The other alternative is to wait until you are home to register. However, the longer you wait, the more limited your choice of classes will be, and many classes may already be full. If you have problems accessing CampusConnection from abroad, the study abroad advisor cannot help you access your account nor get you your password if it is lost. Please contact the NDUS Help Desk if you have problems with CampusConnection and use the following websites as resources:

NDUS Help Desk: www.help.nodak.edu or help.desk@nodak.edu

****The study abroad advisor will not register you for your next semester back at NDSU****

Money Matters

Paying for Study Abroad

Just as in the United States, there are many costs (apart from tuition and fees) associated with studying while abroad. You are responsible for knowing your costs and ensuring you have enough money. **Make sure you have adequate funds to pay for tuition, housing, food, travel, NDSU student and course fees, any program**



fees and miscellaneous spending money before you leave the United States. Your host institution may have additional program fees for orientations, excursions or other academic and extracurricular activities. Monthly expenses can vary from one country to the next, so plan for your own individual spending habits. During the first month, unexpected costs may arise because of lifestyle change and various fees or deposits.

Financial Aid

The financial aid you receive at NDSU may be applied toward study abroad. Complete the **Financial Aid Questionnaire** which can be found within your study abroad login page. The budget must be approved by the study abroad advisor and afterwards you will make an appointment with a financial aid counselor in Student Financial Services. They may be able to help you apply for additional financial aid or private loans to suit your needs. It takes approximately one month to complete the loan process, so plan ahead if you need funds by a certain date. You will receive your monies when on-campus students normally receive their funds on the designated financial aid disbursement date. While you are abroad, if you have any questions about loans or your eligibility for financial aid, the study abroad advisor cannot help you contact your lenders, fax information for you, or answer any questions specific to your aid eligibility.

For any financial aid-related questions, please contact:

Student Financial Services

Ceres Hall 202
701-231-7533

www.ndsu.edu/bisonconnection/finaid/



Debit or Check Cards

An American debit card or check card usually works abroad, provided you keep track of how much money is in your account. For a fee, you can get cash from most ATM machines abroad just as you can in the U.S. There are several things to check with your bank about before using your ATM card abroad.

- Ask if your card is compatible with the machines in your host country. Most of them will be if they are a part of the Cirrus Network.
- Make sure your bank is aware that you will be using it internationally so they do not close or lock your account as they may believe your card was stolen because of the international activity on your card.
- Call and speak directly to a representative with your bank or credit card companies and let them know when and where you will be using your cards abroad.

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- ❑ Ask what fees are charged to make withdrawals from ATM machines in your host country or if there is an exchange rate conversion fee.
- ❑ Know an emergency number for your credit card company to call and cancel your account/card immediately in the event that a card or number is lost or stolen.
- ❑ Remember your PIN number! Check with your bank before you leave to make sure your pin number and card will work properly abroad.

Note: When you make a withdrawal, remember to punch in the amount of *foreign currency* you want, *not the dollar amount*, and the system will automatically calculate how many U.S. dollars to deduct from your account and will give you foreign currency. Electronic exchange rates at ATMs are generally better than other rates at exchange booths or at a bank.



Also, American checks are NOT accepted outside of the United States, so there is no need for you to bring with any personal checks as they are not recognized abroad.

Credit Cards

In addition to a debit or check card directly linked to your checking account, a credit card can be very useful. Visa, MasterCard and American Express are the most widely known credit cards outside the United States. Be aware that not every merchant accepts credit cards and that you will need to use cash in many places. You can also use your credit card for cash advances from ATM machines, as long as you do not exceed your credit limit. In some countries, you may be able to obtain a cash advance on your credit card at a bank by giving the teller your credit card and passport and having them do the transaction manually. This is useful when there are no ATMs or when your card does not work in an ATM. Shop around for credit cards which do not charge high foreign transaction fees as they are out there.

Be aware of all fees associated with cash advances. In addition to a transaction fee or currency conversion fee (separate from the ATM fee), you will be charged a **high interest rate** from the moment funds are withdrawn. **Use cash advances from credit cards for emergencies only!**

Cash

Keeping a small supply of cash (the equivalent of \$100-\$200) is advised in the event your ATM card does not work or if you need emergency funds. Do not forget that when you return home you will need U.S. dollars again. Only paper currency can be exchanged from one currency to another. **Coins cannot be exchanged.** It is a good idea to spend your coins or keep them for souvenirs.

Travelers Checks

Do some research on how widely accepted Travelers Checks are in your host country. Travelers Checks, which are available at most U.S. banks, provide the most secure form of money while abroad. Always record the serial numbers, denominations and the date of issue of your checks. Leave the record in a secure place separate from the checks. Your bank will likely charge you either a flat rate or a percentage amount when you purchase them. The benefit of Travelers Checks is that they are replaceable while cash is not. The downside is that they only can be exchanged at banks and certain outlets, and there is a small charge for exchanging them. Make sure you ask the person issuing the Travelers Checks about how to use them and to make sure you understand how and where to sign them. If they are lost and you have not followed procedure, you may not be able to get compensation for the lost checks.

Note: A Travelers Cheque Card is also available from American Express that can be used anywhere American Express is accepted. Credit is “loaded” onto your card and you can use it to withdraw cash from ATMs.

Exchanging Currency

Avoid exchanging large amounts of money at one time, and always have some U.S. cash for backup. There are many places you can go to exchange currency once in your host country. You may wish to exchange a small amount of cash when you arrive at the airport so you have money for miscellaneous expenses while in the airport or in transit. Most international airports have exchange counters, although the exchange rates are often not as favorable as other locations. Be sure to carry identification because it is often required when exchanging money. Avoid changing money on the street from private people who claim to give good rates. This is the black market and is illegal in many places.



Exchange rate information is printed in large daily newspapers as well as online. There are many currency converters online, some of which are:

Universal Currency Converter: www.xe.net/ucc

Yahoo Finance: finance.yahoo.com/currency

Oanda, The Currency Site: www.oanda.com

Safeguarding Your Money

At some point during your time abroad, you will likely be in areas of high tourist traffic. Remember that where there are tourists, there may be sneaky pickpockets. Always be wise with where you put your money and how you carry it. You may want to purchase a passport/money pouch that hangs around your neck or an inconspicuous waistband pouch that can be hidden under your clothing. Never keep valuable items in a backpack. Thieves are known to rip backpacks off and run. In addition, zipper pouches may be opened and reached into without your knowledge. Be especially careful on trains, subways and buses. Never fall asleep on a train or bus or leave your seat to use the bathroom without your valuables secured to your body unless a trusted friend can watch them for you.

Always carry your bag in front of you and close to your body if possible. Zippered bags (with a flap that covers the zipper) carried close to you are the best. You could also buy a small padlock to lock the zippers together on your backpack or bag. This might not stop theft of the actual bag, of course, but will help to deter those from pick pocketing something out of your bag while you are walking or using public transportation. In addition, make sure you do not leave your ATM card in a machine!



Health and Safety Issues

Health Insurance

When studying abroad, you *must* have health insurance that covers you overseas.

- ❑ NDSU students are required by NDSU to purchase study abroad health insurance, regardless of their current policy. This insurance is arranged by the study abroad advisor and students will be contacted about the process prior to going abroad. Exceptions to this rule include students participating

on an affiliate provider's study abroad program and are already being provided with insurance as part of their program fees.

- ❑ Check insurance regulations specific for your country and school by speaking to the study abroad advisor.

General Health and Safety Issues

- ❑ **FOOD and WATER:** Be cautious of new food, especially in areas known for questionable water purity. As you are entering new territory, your body may come in contact with bacteria to which you have not previously been exposed. Avoid raw food and street vendors until your body has adjusted. Peel fruits yourself. Drink water from commercially sealed bottles or drink carbonated beverages. You may want to avoid ice. Use bottled water when you brush your teeth. It is not safe and/or acceptable to drink tap water in all areas of the world. Drinking fountains and toilets also may not be as readily available as they are in the United States. If you do get sick, do not automatically assume that it was food poisoning or that the food was bad – your body may just need time to adjust to the new tastes, spices and ingredients that you ingested. See a doctor if you feel it is serious! Do not ignore possible warning signs. Remember that it's always better to be safe than sorry when it comes to your health.
- ❑ **MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS:** Check with your doctor about any healthcare concerns you may have prior to departing. It is advisable to take care of optometrist, dentist and other yearly check-up appointments before you go abroad.
- ❑ **EYEWEAR:** Bring your prescription for corrective lenses and contacts and possibly an extra pair of glasses.
- ❑ **STDs:** Even if you feel this issue does not apply to you, please pay attention and be safe, as you may be able to help a friend or even yourself. Be aware of conditions and potential risks in your host country and any additional countries where you may be traveling. Safety is always a priority and it is better to be well informed and prepared than to be caught in a situation where you feel you have no control or have impaired judgment.
- ❑ **Be Aware and Be Safe:** Being in a foreign country does not make you immune to dangers. One way to think of this is “if you don't do it here, don't do it there.”

CDC: Visit cdc.gov/travel for up-to-date health-related travel information.

Prescription Medications

If you need prescription medicine, find out if it is available (and/or legal) in your host country. Bring a copy of the prescription for the drug's generic name. Unless

traveling to a developing country, you will probably only need to take an initial supply of medicine. When traveling with prescription and non-prescription medications, always use the original container for the medicine. Be aware that some common prescription drugs in the U.S. may be illegal overseas. If you have doubts, please discuss this issue with your pharmacist before you go.

Toilets

In some countries, public toilets may not be as readily available as in the United States. For instance, in the U.S., it is not against cultural norms to stop at a restaurant and use the restroom even if you don't intend to dine there. This is not the case in many other countries. Also, be aware that you may have to pay a small fee for use of a public toilet or for toilet paper. Sometimes, the toilet paper roll may be outside the stall itself, so you may have to take some before you go in the stall.

You may also find that some establishments have attendants working in the restroom to provide you with paper towels, perfume, etc. who will expect a small gratuity for their service to you. Although you will not encounter these aforementioned examples everywhere, it is important to accustom yourself to such cultural differences. If the availability or condition of restrooms concerns you, research this topic before you go – read guide books and magazines, search the internet, and ask people who have been to your destination country.

Physical Disabilities

Unfortunately, many countries may not have strict building access laws when it comes to physical disabilities or mobility impairments. Therefore, there may not be as many elevators and/or wheelchair ramps as you would find in the U.S. If you have a physical disability, check with your host school program provider as early as possible to make sure they are aware of your situation and can accommodate your particular needs.

The Traveler's Medical Kit

We recommend bringing a small supply of over-the-counter items so that you do not have difficulties finding what you need at a pharmacy in a foreign country. Bringing a few over-the-counter remedies can help make the difference between a minor inconvenience and a major problem. The following simple items are very useful:

- Medication or vitamins used regularly
- Antihistamine/decongestant
- Aspirin, acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- Antacid
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Motion sickness remedy



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- Band-aids and antibacterial ointment
- Gauze and adhesive tape
- Athletes foot remedy
- Small scissors
- Thermometer
- Flashlight
- Insect repellent (containing DEET)
- Feminine hygiene products (including over-the-counter infection remedies)
- Pocket-pack tissues or toilet paper
- Razors
- Tweezers
- Eye prescriptions
- Condoms/Birth Control

Immunizations

No matter where you are traveling, it is good to be current on all immunizations. These include:

- Polio boosters
- Tetanus and diphtheria boosters
- Hepatitis B (HBV) vaccine



You may also wish to contact the following clinics to receive specific information on your destination country or countries to which you are planning on travelling:

Fargo Cass Public Health

401 3rd Ave. N
Fargo, ND 58102
701-241-8261

health@ci.fargo.nd.us

www.cityoffargo.com/Health

Clay County Public Health

715 11th St. N Suite 303
Moorhead, MN 56560
218-299-5220

public.health@co.clay.mn.us

www.co.clay.mn.us/depts/Health/Health.htm

Some countries may only recommend specific immunizations, while others may *require* specific shots in order to enter a country. Health information is also available from the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The information hotline number is 404-322-4555. Information is available online at www.cdc.gov or www.cdc.gov/travel.

In Case of Emergency

Should an emergency arise (medical or otherwise) while you are abroad, you should immediately contact the director of your program overseas. This may be the resident director if you are studying through an affiliate provider (i.e.: API, AIFS, etc.) or it

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may be the international office at your host university. You should also contact your family and the NDSU OIP as soon as possible. As part of your pre-departure packet you will receive an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) card. Upon arrival in your host country, you should note the location of the nearest hospital and other important items that should be included on your EAP. Your health insurance provider may have a list of world-wide hospitals and clinics that work with your particular insurance company. Information also exists regarding locating English-speaking physicians around the world:

The International Association for Medical Assistance (IAMAT)

738 Center St.
Lewiston, NY 14092
716-754-4883
www.iamat.org

Knowing Your Host Country

Host School Address

Make sure that your family has an address where they can reach you abroad. This is not always easy to obtain – speak with the study abroad advisor at NDSU or the international student advisor at your host school. Also, please leave the address for the International Office at your host school with us if you are not going on an NDSU program. Mail sent to your host school's international office should eventually reach you. Give your current contact information to the NDSU OIP and to your family as soon as you obtain it. In addition, know whom you should contact at your host institution if there is a problem between your departure in the United States and your arrival in your host country. Be sure to have a contact person and telephone number that can be used for emergencies.

U.S. Consulate/Embassy

The U.S. has Embassies and/or Consulates in almost all foreign countries. These representatives are there to advise and help you, especially in times of trouble.

It is imperative to have the number for the closest U.S. consulate or embassy in your host country should an emergency arise. You can find a list of U.S. consulate locations and phone numbers at: <http://usembassy.state.gov>

The State Department has a secure online travel registration website which allows American citizens to record foreign trip and residence information so that the Department of State can communicate with you and assist you in case of an

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emergency. U.S. citizens around the world who travel or reside abroad can access the site directly at: <https://travelregistration.state.gov>

U.S. officials have the capability to:

- Help you wire money from home
- Visit you if you are in jail, give legal counsel and explain local laws
- Help you receive medical care
- Assist in replacing your passport if lost or stolen

The consulates will NOT do the following for you:

- Help you find work
- Help you get residence
- Act as travel agents
- Search for missing luggage
- Settle disputes with hotel managers

What to Bring

About the time when you are hurriedly dragging your suitcases and bags up a flight of stairs on your way to your final destination, you will realize that you have brought too many things. Most students admit they packed more clothes than were needed. It is wise to bring only the essentials. It is usually smart to bring more socks and underwear and fewer outer clothes. Plan to bring a functional mix and match wardrobe. Dark, conservative clothes will wear longer without laundering. Choose clothes that do not need special care or ironing. Dress in layers so you can adapt to temperature changes.



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It is a good idea to research social norms for the culture in which you will be living. Try to be sensitive to what is considered acceptable dress in your host country. Be advised that university students at most schools outside the U.S. do not dress as nonchalantly as some American students might dress. For example, wearing pajamas to class may be okay at NDSU, but it probably will not be acceptable at your host school. At the same time, it is also nice to have a few favorite things along that make you feel good. While t-shirts, caps and other items bearing college logos or American places can help you feel comfortable, it is advisable not to wear items that easily identify you as an American in public places.

Luggage Advice

Pack light! You will inevitably end up having more items to bring home than what you left with. Believe it or not, even though you may be packing for up to a year, you

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probably will not need as much as you think you do. For your carry-on bag, you might want to bring a small suitcase and/or backpack. This will prove very valuable when you take weekend excursions and don't want to bring your large suitcase on the train or bus. Before returning to the U.S., you may want to consider selling or giving away items you do not want to bring home. If you have any visitors from home while abroad, you can send things back with them if they have space in their luggage.

Most airlines allow only two pieces of checked luggage and one carry-on. There are also weight restrictions for baggage – heavy luggage may require expensive fees to check or you may end up having to leave something at home. Always check with your airline about size and weight restrictions. Make sure that all luggage is clearly labeled on the inside as well as having an identification tag on the outside. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) offers suggestions on checked baggage and carry-on luggage at www.tsa.gov and provides information on the most up-to-date regulations related to air travel.

Packing

The following is a list of recommended items to pack. The actual amount you bring of each item will vary based on your own personal style and needs. Keep in mind, many of the following items can be purchased abroad, if necessary:

Essential Items	Clothing Items
Bilingual dictionary (if applicable)	Underwear
Addresses from home (to send postcards)	Socks
Adapter/converter outlet plugs	Jeans
Camera	Dress slacks/skirts
Small sewing kit	Dress shirts/blouses
Toiletries	Sweaters
Waterproof coat (one that can be rolled up)	Sports jacket/casual dress
Towels and washcloths	Sandals
Miniature flashlight	Dress shoes
Battery alarm clock	Walking shoes
Medications (in carry on luggage)	Extra eyeglasses/contacts
Journal	Sunglasses
Photos from home (one small album)	

Electrical Adapters

Many countries have different electrical currents than in the U.S. Therefore, it is important to take an adapter kit if you bring any electrical appliances. Adapter kits come with voltage adapters (110v/220v) as well as outlet adapters, which can change from country to country, and sometimes for particular types of appliances. These kits are available in the travel/luggage section of department and discount stores.



Changes in Latitude travel store: www.cil.com

For more information go to: www.goabroad.com

Weather Abroad

It is a good idea to research weather conditions that you might expect in your host country. Knowing what kind of climate you will be living in can affect your decisions in what to pack. For example, your host city may have changing seasons (like summer versus winter in North Dakota), or you may be living in a climate that changes very little. It is best to be prepared for a variety of situations.

You can learn more about weather around the World online:

www.worldweather.org

www.weather.com

www.wunderground.com

Culture Shock

Being immersed in new languages, values and behaviors different from those in your culture of origin can be unsettling at times and can lead to culture shock. It usually does not happen suddenly, nor does it have one primary cause. Instead, it may build up gradually. However, not all students experience what they would define as culture shock.

Symptoms of *culture shock* may include:

- ✓ Homesickness
- ✓ Withdrawal from activities and people
- ✓ Not eating
- ✓ Irritability
- ✓ Excessive desire for sleep
- ✓ Relationship stress
- ✓ Compulsive eating or alcohol consumption
- ✓ Headaches
- ✓ Stomach aches or nausea
- ✓ Family conflict
- ✓ Hostility
- ✓ Stereotyping of host country or residents

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- ✓ Fits of crying
- ✓ Loss of ability to work effectively

Expectations

Before you arrive in your host country, you will probably be imagining with excitement what it might be like. The reality of global modernization has spread across the planet and what you find in your host country just may surprise you. It is helpful to learn all you can about your host country before you go and to keep an open mind that the reality you encounter may be different from your initial expectations.

Here are some tips to prevent or alleviate some of the stress of culture shock:

- Learn as much as possible about your host country and its people prior to your departure. Your research may include the language, customs, religions, taboos, holidays, foods, school policies and laws, both local and national.
- Try to look for logical reasons behind the things in your host culture to which you have difficulty adjusting. Keep in mind that *different* isn't necessarily *wrong* or *bad*.
- Do not give in to the temptation to 'bash' or stereotype your host country nor your own country.
- Find a mentor with whom you can share your concerns. Be open and friendly with local students/residents and find a friend in your host country who is willing to listen to your feelings and give you some insight.
- Get involved with your host culture. Join a club. Make friends. It may not be as easy as you anticipated, but it will be worth it!
- Write in a journal. Putting your thoughts on paper will help you clear your mind. By keeping a record of things you do and how you were feeling, you will be better able to remember your experience abroad upon your return to the U.S.
- Make an effort to improve your foreign language skills.
- Explore your new neighborhood and find a favorite spot where you feel comfortable.
- Plan excursions with others.

Advanced Preparations

We urge you to find out as much as you can about your host country and culture before you go abroad. This will help you to better deal with culture shock and the reality of your expectations when you arrive. Research the basic facts of the country: populations, history, politics, geography, religions, sports, entertainment and your particular interests. Reading books or guides about your destination will also help you to understand your host country. Buy a map and familiarize yourself with your

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country's geography. You do not have to be an expert, but showing interest and knowledge in your host culture will make you a better ambassador, make your transition easier and allows you concentrate on meeting people instead of learning about and understanding the customs.

The following are some informational websites for finding information about other countries:

www.world-tourism.org

www.lonelyplanet.com

Parents

It's always a good idea to communicate with your parents and/or other family members about your decision to study abroad and update them often while you are abroad. Talk to them about the reasons why you want to study abroad, what you will gain from it, and the monetary costs involved.

While you are abroad, registration and billing questions can sometimes arise and parents will often receive mailings, as their address may have been designated as your permanent mailing address while you are abroad. It is important to let your parents know that if they contact the NDSU OIP with questions about registration or billing, the study abroad officer will most likely not be able to pass on any information. This is because FERPA regulations and privacy issues dictate that information specific to *you* as a student cannot be given to anyone, even your parents. This means that you will need to contact the appropriate offices at NDSU yourself (International Programs or Study Abroad, Registration and Records, Business Office, etc.).

The OIP is able to offer advice and offer any information that is publicly available regarding particular programs and certain costs associated with studying abroad to your parents, and we welcome their questions in these areas.

Multicultural Issues Abroad

Discrimination and prejudice exists in many forms overseas just as it may in the United States. The type and extent of prejudice you may encounter will depend on the culture you are in, the people you encounter and the socio-economic and political structure of the host country.

Sometimes you may feel discrimination directed at you because of your gender, religion, race, age, sexual orientation, nationality, economic class or disability. You may encounter situations of discrimination against others because of the identities they have or are perceived to have.

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In dealing with such issues, it is important to be aware of your own self-image and expectations. People's actions may reflect their own curiosity about you. Since you have cultural assumptions just as they might have, it is wise to handle these situations with *cultural sensitivity*. However, if you feel threatened or in danger, contact someone who can help immediately and then notify your program coordinator. Keep in mind that some discrimination (such as gender-bias) may be cultural or it may be one particular individual's actions.

If you would like to explore some of these issues before you go, you can check with the NDSU Office of Multicultural Programs located in Memorial Union 178 Check out the following website which deals with multiculturalism on a global level:

www.mcreview.com

LGBT Issues Abroad

Before you leave the U.S., it is a good idea to learn as much as possible about the culture-specific norms of friendship and dating for relationships between people of any sexual orientation. You will find that attitudes and tolerance toward gay, lesbian, bisexual, and trans-gendered issues vary from country to country. Some countries are more welcoming and legally protective than the U.S., while others may be less accepting and more restrictive.

LGBT information and resources:

NDSU Safe Zone: www.ndsu.edu/safezone
<http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/>

Current Events in the United States

It is a very good idea to be up-to-date on current events in the United States. Most people in your host country will be interested to know about life in the U.S. Since the U.S. seems to play such a big role in world politics and economics, don't be surprised to find people asking you questions and challenging you about U.S. policies. You may even find that people seem to know more about U.S. policies than you do. Just be aware of basic issues, read a weekly newsmagazine such as *Time* or *Newsweek*, read the newspaper or watch the evening news. You can incorporate this into your daily routine and then, when you are abroad, you will be able to experience the news from the host country's perspective.

Making Contacts

We do not suggest that you spend all of your time with fellow Americans in your host country. However, you may find a few relationships with other "expatriates" very valuable during your time away from home. You can benefit from American contacts in your host city in many ways. They may introduce you to other international friends

or sympathize with you when you need to talk about frustrations or things you miss from home. It is also important that you reach out to those in your host culture. Many persons from your host country may not naturally seek out friendships with Americans who are passing through for just one semester or a year. However, if you take the initiative and be patient, you will create rich relationships that will make your experience abroad so much more complete. Try to attend student events and social gatherings to help you build a network of friends.

Legal Concerns

Legal Requirements of Your Host Country

Being in a foreign country makes you subject to the laws of that country. Respect your host country's laws and avoid any areas of unrest. Exchange money *only* with authorized outlets. The same is true with purchasing airline tickets and travelers checks. Do not deliver other people's packages unless you are sure they do not contain drugs or other contraband and that you personally have thoroughly inspected the package. In addition, be familiar with local laws before selling personal items such as clothing, cameras, etc. Follow the laws carefully. The penalties may be very severe.



Drugs and Alcohol

Despite many warnings, arrests of U.S. citizens abroad for drug violations are on the rise. Many Americans have the misconception that drug laws are more lenient in other countries than in the U.S. This is not the case. **There are severe penalties for illegal drug use and drug trafficking. Often these penalties are more severe than in the U.S.**

Always be aware that you are under local laws and not U.S. law. If you are arrested, contact the U.S. Consulate immediately. Consular officials can only visit, give advice and contact family or friends for you. They cannot intercede in the legal process, represent you in a trial or pay for any legal fees.

Although some cultures allow the use of drugs that are illegal in the United States, be aware that laws still exist that regulate their use within and outside of the legal usage area. Do not assume that because you were not aware of certain laws that you cannot be held accountable for illegal drug use. The best course of action is to avoid all situations that may be questionable.

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Depending on your age, you may not be able to legally drink alcohol in the United States, but you may be of age to drink in your host country or in the countries you may be traveling through. Please remember that you must abide by the drinking age of the country in which you are when choosing to drink. Only drink legally and be safe. Do not assume that the country's legal drinking age is automatically lower than 21 years of age – countries have varying drinking ages. Always use common sense for your own safety. Never leave a drink unattended and do not accept drinks from people you do not know.

The Office of Orientation and Student Success at NDSU provides some useful information for students related to alcohol and drugs.

www.ndsu.edu/alcoholinfo

NDSU Code of Student Behavior

All students participating in any of NDSU's Study Abroad programs are bound to abide by the NDSU Code of Student Behavior. This applies to both academic *and* social behavior. The Code of Student Behavior is located online at

www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/studentlife/StudentCode.pdf

Alcohol and Illegal Drug Policy

Section 4.3 of the NDSU Code of Student Behavior details the NDSU alcohol and illegal drug policy. NDSU students traveling abroad may be studying in countries where the legal age for alcohol consumption and/or rules regarding the consumption of alcohol are different than in the United State. Thus, while overseas, it is the responsibility of the student to know the relevant country and local laws concerning the possession, use, and abuse of alcohol. If students who are of legal age choose to consume alcohol while abroad, they are expected to drink and behave responsibly.

Illegal drug use in any form is not tolerated by NDSU. "Illegal drugs" mean "illegal drugs in the U.S." in general and "illegal in the state of North Dakota" in particular. NDSU students traveling abroad may be studying in countries where drugs that may be legally possessed and used in the United States are prohibited by law. For example, the drug Adderall is legal in the United States and commonly prescribed to college students but is illegal in the European Union. Thus, while overseas, it is the responsibility of the student to know the relevant country and local laws concerning the possession and use of drugs. Most foreign criminal systems are considerably less accommodating than those within the United States; student possession or use of illegal drugs may be punishable by fine, imprisonment, and/or deportation. Study abroad participants found using or possessing illegal drugs in any form are subject to immediate dismissal from the program and/or follow-up through

the NDSU Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

International Travel

International Airfare Basics

Airline fares are based on several variables, so there is no single method to find the “best” airfare. The following information will help you to make the right decisions when purchasing airline tickets.

Peak season: Times of year when prices tend to be highest – during the summer or before and after major holidays. The cheapest airfares are available during low-traffic seasons.

Days of the week: It is often cheaper to travel during the week (Monday-Thursday) since airlines will raise their prices during holidays and on the weekends.

Length of stay: The amount of time you stay between flights may affect the price, and including a Saturday-night stay sometimes gets you a cheaper option.

Airfare Q and A

Q: When should I buy my tickets?

A: Purchasing your plane ticket 1-2 months or more in advance may save you money. The earlier you set up your flight, the better your opportunity for an advance purchase discount. However, buying too early might get you a more expensive fare. Take your time and shop around. Watch the price trends before you make a final purchase.

Q: Should I buy a round trip or two one-way tickets?

A: Do your research with different airlines and look at several different ticket options. Round trip fares are usually much cheaper than buying two one-way tickets. Sometimes they are even cheaper than buying a single one-way ticket! If you plan on flying into one city or country and out of another, look into “multi-city” or “multi-leg” options, rather than buying separate round-trip tickets.

Q: What restrictions apply to discount fares?

A: Buying a discounted ticket (such as internet specials) may bind you to certain restrictions. Make certain you understand any conditions that apply to a ticket before buying it. Restrictions commonly include:

- Full refunds may not be available if you change your travel plans or if the flight is cancelled.
- Your choice of which days of the week you travel may be limited.

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- You may not be able to change your itinerary (times, dates, destinations)
- The number of reduced fare seats available may be limited.
- The airline may require a certain length of stay.
- You might be charged for additional baggage.
- Advance seating or menu requests may not be available.
- There may be items you do not want included in some ticket packages. These may include car rentals and hotel reservations, or you may be required to buy more than one ticket to get that fare.

Q: Where can I find more information?

A: Local travel agents and student travel agents are great resources.

Local travel agents may have helpful information concerning ticket purchase. Check with multiple agents before purchasing your ticket. Some travel agencies cater especially to the needs of students. They may offer reduced prices, travel advice and may be more flexible with itinerary changes (such as if you decide to return sooner or later from your host country than originally planned). Check around and be flexible with arrival and departure dates as they often affect the price of the plane ticket.

Q: What should I consider when purchasing a discount ticket?

A: Convenience and comfort should be the biggest factors in making your decision regarding which ticket to purchase.

Convenience

Discounted fares and low-priced airlines may affect the convenience of your flight. You should ask about the following things before buying the ticket:

- Late night or other inconvenient departure hours.
- How many transfers are required to reach your destination?
- Is it possible that the airline will change the departure airport, time or date?
- What services are available if my luggage is lost?
- Will I need to change airport terminals at any connection points?
- Are there services such as meals and hotels in case of an unforeseen layover?
- Is it cheaper to fly into a nearby city and then take a train or bus to my final destination?

Some options to look at for searching for and purchasing airfare:

www.statravel.com

www.travelocity.com

www.StudentUniverse.com

www.travelzoo.com

www.orbitz.com

www.kayak.com

Note: Just because you are a student doesn't mean you have to purchase student airfare, nor does the fact a ticket is student-priced mean that it is the cheapest. You

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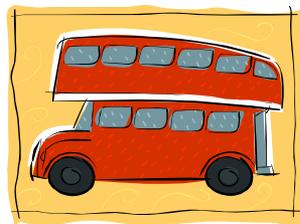
may find the best fares at a travel agent, somewhere online or through calling airlines directly. Compare options before buying.

From the Airport to your Host School

For schools that have an exchange agreement with NDSU, the international office at that school will often assist you from the airport to your school or residence. Before departing from the U.S., forward your travel itinerary to your contact person abroad. If you are not sure who this person is, you may send your itinerary to the NDSU study abroad advisor who will forward it to the appropriate person abroad. If you are traveling on your own, you may want to purchase a travel guide, check the internet, or contact your program overseas so that you know about the available modes of transportation.

Daily Travel

While abroad, you might have to take a different approach to getting around during your time abroad. Expect to walk more often than you do at home. If you are heading to a city with a large student population, purchasing an inexpensive used bicycle should be easy. Most likely, you will use a lot of public transportation. In Latin America, you will probably ride a lot of buses or taxis. In Europe, you will use buses, trains and metro systems. Public transportation is generally affordable and very convenient abroad.



Eurail Passes

If you are studying in Europe, you will hear the term “Eurail” used often. A Eurail pass is an unlimited ticket to ride the trains in Europe for a specified time. This pass must be purchased before you leave the United States. It can be suitable for backpackers that are quite flexible with much time to travel and plan their excursions. Depending on your itinerary while studying abroad, the Eurail pass may not be suitable for study abroad students because of the travel rules and restrictions associated with having a Eurail pass. **Buying individual “point-to-point” tickets on longer trips will often cost less than a Eurail pass.** In addition, many countries allow you to purchase discount cards for train tickets.



Many types of passes are available with various combinations of time and destinations. Even as an American, you are eligible for student discounts and specials

if you are younger than 26. With the Eurail pass, many trains charge additional fees. Some trips are disproportionately more expensive considering their length (Paris-London, for instance). This is due to varying prices in different countries and higher prices for faster train lines. To find out more about Eurail and other public transportation in Europe, visit: www.RailEurope.com

Note: Especially in Europe, many airlines exist that offer very inexpensive fares to and from certain destinations. Sometimes, it may be cheaper to fly somewhere than to take the train or bus! You can always combine transportation methods to get the best value for your budget. Check out all your options.

www.ryanair.com

www.easyjet.com

Communication

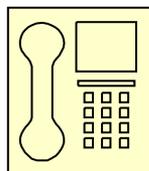
Your NDSU email account

It is extremely important that you check your NDSU email account regularly for time-sensitive announcements from NDSU. Email is an official means for NDSU to contact you, and the university expects students to read their email on a regular basis. This is very important while you are abroad to ensure you get notices from NDSU departments regarding registration, financial aid, your student business account and other crucial information. The OIP also uses email as a primary means to contact study abroad students while they are abroad and you may be requested to respond quickly. Information Technology Services (ITS) does not recommend students rely upon forwarding services by other email providers (like Hotmail, Yahoo) and encourages students to check their NDSU email accounts. More information and the full policy (NDSU Policy 609) can be found here:

<http://www.ndsu.edu/policy/609.htm>

Telephones

Beware of AT&T calling cards while abroad. There are hidden fees for overseas use and you can literally rack up of hundreds of dollars in just minutes.



Pre-paid phone cards from Wal-Mart and Sam's Club are a good choice as the cards work internationally to call from abroad to the U.S. or from the U.S. to a foreign country. The actual minutes on the card will vary however, depending on call origins and destinations. The charge to connect will also deduct a certain number of minutes from your card.

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In many countries, the best option is calling cards that you can purchase in local shops for just pennies a minute. You can then call home from a public phone – this may require the insertion of one of the purchased phone cards in order to make a call.

There are also different calling plans available in the U.S. that can allow your family to call you fairly inexpensively from the U.S. Some places to check are:

www.skype.com

www.1010987.com

www.continentcalls.com

www.pennytalk.com

Upon your arrival in your host country, be sure to ask about the telephone system. In other countries, local calls may not be free like they are in the U.S. and are often charged similar to long distance calls in the U.S. It is best to use personal calling cards whenever possible to avoid disagreements about paying or the risk of offending your hosts.

Many countries also offer pre-paid cell phones at reasonable prices, and this is something you can look into after arriving. Text messaging (or SMS) may be a popular means of communication in your host country and it may even be cheaper than making voice calls. Sometimes, incoming calls on your cell phone are free, which makes it very convenient for your friends and family to reach you. Investigate pre-paid cell phone plans and take notice of the cost per call and text message so you can best use your time and money wisely.

Some people also keep in touch by web phone, which may be free just like instant messaging.

If you have a cell phone with a plan based in the U.S., your phone probably will NOT work overseas. *Some* cell phone providers offer roaming for U.S. phones, depending on the type of service in your destination country and the type of phone you have (CDMA vs. GSM, etc.). But, beware – roaming is expensive and it will not be the best solution to make calls within your country and to the U.S. Be sure to check with your provider about canceling or temporarily freezing your cell phone plan while you are abroad. If you are locked-in to a service contract with your cell phone provider, you may want to consider having a family member be responsible for your phone while you are gone.

Internet Access

The internet is a useful and amazing tool to remain connected at home while abroad. We recommend that you do not overuse internet and email as you may become emotionally dependent on it. **We suggest you limit your time on the internet each**

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week so that you may devote more time to enjoying your host culture. Remember that you don't need to respond to every message you get. It may be helpful to send mass email updates every few weeks to your friends and family.

Many cities have internet cafes where you can pay on the half-hour for internet use. The costs can add up, so it is better to find a place on your school campus where you can connect to the internet. As with universities in the U.S., most schools abroad will have computers for students to use free of charge.



Blog Safety

Internet networking sites can be an easy and convenient method for updating your friends and family back home about your adventures and travels abroad. While some sites have implemented security measures, others are less restricted and allow anyone anywhere to read what you write in your blog. Therefore, it is a good idea to be cautious of what information you write or how many details and photos you provide about your travels and daily activities so that you can protect yourself and your privacy.

Sending Mail Back Home

Letters may take one to two weeks or more to arrive from your host country, depending on the reliability of the postal service in your host country. Letters and postcards should be marked "AIRMAIL" so that they are not shipped by surface means, which could end up taking months. Sending packages internationally is usually expensive, so try to avoid it if possible. Be sure to check regulations for mailing packages home to the U.S.

www.usps.gov

United States Customs will occasionally open packages and check contents, so make sure that you do not falsify this information on the packing slip. Be sure to include the mailing address on both the inside and outside of the package. (You will also need to know what you can and cannot bring into your host country, and likewise, what you should not bring back into the United States).

For more information visit: <http://customs.ustreas.gov>

In case of emergency, there are express mail companies that offer one or two-day services such as DHL, Airborne Express, UPS or FedEx. Although convenient, you will pay a high premium for such service. Information should be available in your host country's phonebook or you can search the internet.



United Parcel Service: www.ups.com
DHL Worldwide Express: www.dhl.com
Federal Express: www.fedex.com

Receiving Mail from Home

If someone is sending packages to you with gifts or necessities, be aware that you as the recipient may be responsible for paying import taxes, duties or other fees before you are allowed to pick up the package from the postal service. Anything with value must be declared. Furthermore, unless you send your packages through an insured carrier, you have little guarantee of its arrival. If you must send valuable items or documents through the mail, be sure it is certified, insured and can be tracked.

Host Families

Expectations

When staying with a host family, not only will you need to become accustomed to a new way of life as you encounter new food, utilities and unfamiliar customs in the home, but you may also have the added stress of relational difficulties that come with living in a home with other people. Be careful to do your part in establishing respect with your host family. Be gracious and patient while you are learning how to live alongside them. Realize that just as you had ideas of what life might be like with your host family, they also had expectations of you, as well. You must learn the norms of the family and try to get along. Host family experiences are generally very positive since families who are willing to host students are normally excited about the opportunity.

Gifts

If you are staying with a host family, it is important that you bring a gift. In fact, if you know the number of people in the family, it would be a nice gesture to bring small gifts for each member of the family. Appropriate gifts include typical items from home such as university memorabilia, sports team articles, sweets, or something unique to your home region like key chains, pens or candy. If you give flowers to your host family, choose an odd number of yellow or pink roses. Avoid red roses, which may represent romantic love. Also, avoid carnations, which are often associated with funerals.



Food

You may experience some trouble at first adjusting to differences in food and eating times in your host country. It is important to be careful the first time you eat in your new environment. Take some time to let your stomach become accustomed to new spices and flavors. This might be especially hard with host families, as they may be encouraging you to eat. Simply politely decline any food that you do not wish to eat.

Vegetarian diets: Vegetarians may fare well in some countries and be left with few choices in others. It is wise to research the food habits of your hosts and politely explain your choices. You may find that some places are accommodating without problem, while others may disregard your requests. Be sure to bring dietary supplements, vitamins, etc. and learn about the foods available in your host country so you maintain good health.

The Return

Re-entry Meeting

It is very important for study abroad participants to attend the re-entry meeting upon return to the United States and NDSU. The meeting is a fun way for you to connect with other students who are also returning from their time abroad, to find out how to become involved with study abroad on campus and to learn tips regarding reverse culture shock.

Reverse Culture Shock

Much like the culture shock you may have experienced when first arriving in your host country, reverse culture shock is the result of changes and growth that may have occurred while you were abroad. There are a variety of feelings associated with reverse culture shock. These may include:

Isolation and loneliness : You may want to be back in your host country where everyone understands how you have changed.

Difficulty communicating: This occurs especially if you studied abroad in a different language. You may continue to think and dream in that language.

Lack of interest: Family and friends may get tired of listening to every detail about your trip and cut you off once you begin telling stories.

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Negative feelings: You may experience guilt, anger or other negative feelings because of your inability to adjust immediately.



Being aware you have changed and knowing that there are people to help you make the adjustment are the first steps to becoming settled upon your return. Some options for combating reverse culture shock are:

- Have newspapers, magazines, newsletters or other literature from your host country sent to you after you return.
- Subscribe to an online news magazine or watch webcasts of news programs from your host country.
- Make contacts with past study abroad participants or with students from your host country that are studying at NDSU.
- Talk to the study abroad advisor about the Study Abroad Peer Mentor Program in which returning study abroad participants volunteer and are trained to assist the study abroad advisor in promoting study abroad on the NDSU campus.
- Speak with the International Student Advisor about the International Student Association (ISA) to make contacts with international students on campus.
- Volunteer in the community with refugees, English Language Learners (ELL) programs, immigrant programs or international service groups like Rotary International.
- Keep in touch with the friends and families you met abroad. Let them know what your experience meant to you and invite them to come and visit you in the United States! Being able to repay the generosity and hospitality you experienced abroad can be a wonderful feeling.

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Metric Conversions

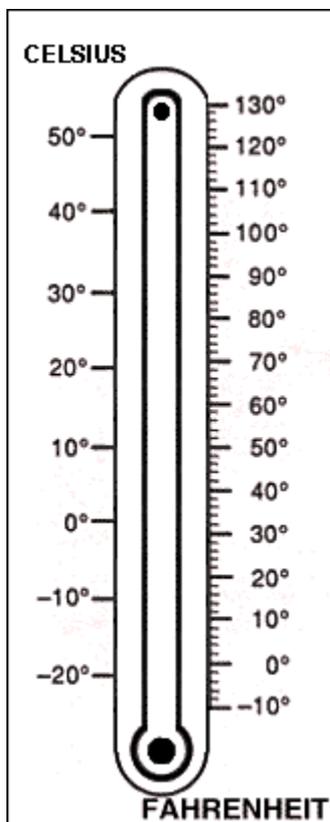
Most countries outside the United States use the metric system for measurements. Therefore, you will need to do some math to understand numbers when it comes to distances, temperatures, weights, areas and amounts. The following chart lists common conversions you may need to compute. Some of the numbers listed have been rounded-off and may not be exact:

Length	
1 inch = 2.54 centimeters	1 millimeter = .03937 inch
1 foot = 30.48 centimeters	1 centimeter = .3937 inch
1 yard = .914 meters	1 meter = 3.2808 ft or 1.0936 yd
1 mile = 1.610 kilometers	1 kilometer = .621 miles
Weight	
1 ounce = 28.3495 grams	1 gram = .0352 ounces
1 pound = .4536 kilograms	1 kilogram = 2.204 pounds
1 ton = 907.18 kilograms	1 metric ton = 1.1023 tons
Volume	
1 ounce = 29.58 milliliters	1 milliliter = .0348 ounces
1 quart = .9464 liters	1 liter = 1.0567 quarts
1 gallon = 3.7854 liters	1 liter = .2642 gallons
1 cubic inch = 16.39 cubic centimeters	1 cubic centimeter = .0610 cubic inches
1 cubic foot = .0283 cubic meters	1 cubic meter = 35.315 cubic feet
1 cubic yard = .7646 cubic meters	1 cubic meter = 1.308 cubic yards
Measuring Spoons	
1 tablespoon = 14.786 milliliters	
1 teaspoon = 4.928 milliliters	
½ teaspoon = 2.464 milliliters	
¼ teaspoon = 1.232 milliliters	
Temperature	
Centigrade to Fahrenheit: Multiply Centigrade degrees by 9, divide by 5, and add 32	Fahrenheit to Centigrade: Subtract 32 degrees from Fahrenheit, multiply by 5, then divide by 9
$[(C \times 9) / 5] + 32$	$[(F - 32) \times 5] / 9$

You also can compute conversions on the internet at:

www.worldmetric.com

www.metric-conversions.org



If you have trouble converting temperatures from Fahrenheit to Celsius, remember this saying:

30 is HOT

20 is NICE

10 wear a COAT

0 is ICE.

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Useful Websites

U.S. Government

State Department: travel.state.gov

Consulates and Embassies: usembassy.state.gov

U.S. Customs: www.customs.ustreas.gov

NDSU

Homepage: www.ndsu.edu

International Programs: www.ndsu.edu/International

NDSU Study Abroad: www.ndsu.edu/International/studyabroad

Course Schedule: www.ndsu.edu/bisonconnection/schedule

CampusConnection: www.ndsu.edu/bisonconnection/connect

Health

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

International Medical Assistance: www.iamat.org

Fargo Cass Public Health: www.ci.fargo.nd.us/Health

Clay County Public Health: www.co.clay.mn.us/depts/Health/Health.htm

Study and Travel Abroad

Study Abroad: www.studyabroad.com

Go Abroad: www.goabroad.com

CIEE Insurance: www.ciee.org

STA Travel: www.statravel.com

Hotel Discount: www.hoteldiscount.com

Students Abroad: www.studentsabroad.com

Trip Prep: www.tripprep.com

Glimpse Abroad: www.glimpseabroad.org

European Railways: www.raileurope.com

Youth Hostelling: www.hihostels.com

Changes in Latitude www.cil.com

Currency converter: www.xe.net/ucc

Time and date: www.timeanddate.com

Travel Guides/Books

www.lonelyplanet.com

www.roughguides.com

www.fodors.com

www.travel.com

www.aglobalworld.com

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Important Addresses and Emails

Office of International Programs Tanya Kramer, Study Abroad Advisor Alicia Kaufmann, Assistant Director Lisa Hauck, Director PO Box 6050 Department 4620 Fargo, ND 58108	Tanya.M.Kramer@ndsu.edu Alicia.Kaufmann@ndsu.edu Lisa.Hauck@ndsu.edu Phone: 701-231-7895 Fax: 701-231-1014
Student Financial Services Financial Aid Counselor Ceres Hall 202, NDSU Fargo, ND 58105-5315	Tara.Thoreson@ndsu.edu Phone: 701-231-7533
Office of Registration and Records Kristi Wold-McCormick Ceres Hall 110 Fargo, ND 58105-5196	K.Wold-McCormick@ndsu.edu Phone: 701-231-7981 Fax: 701-231-8959
<u>My Academic Advisor is –</u> Address:	Email: Phone:
Name: Address	Email: Phone