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# ***STUDY ABROAD***

# ***GUIDE*** →

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**Buckman Center for  
International Education**

*Rhodes College*



Updated Summer 2009

# Study Abroad Guide

Please review the four parts of the Study Abroad Guide prior to leaving for your program. The Guide is intended for use by students whose programs take place abroad, but students on domestic programs may also find many aspects of the Guide helpful. All students participating in programs off-campus are encouraged to review the Study Abroad Guide.

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# Choose to Study Abroad



## Why Study Abroad?

Study abroad is an educational tool that allows for the development of skills—critical, reflective, cross-cultural and intrapersonal—that are integral to a liberal arts education. Studying and living in another culture can also be an exhilarating challenge that, with the proper outlook and preparation, can open windows to the world and to a self you hardly knew existed. In short, by participating in a study abroad program, a student can achieve personal growth and a new perspective on the world. The knowledge and skills acquired by studying abroad is also attractive to prospective employers as well as graduate schools.

## Research!

**Note:** As you read through the following questions, ask yourself, “WHICH of these questions make the most difference to me?”

- How long do you want to study abroad?
- How many times do you want to study abroad?
- What do you want to study?
- In what area, country, or city would you like to study?
- How much money do you have to spend?
- How important is it to receive academic credit?
- How much do you hope to earn?
- What is your comfort level with new situations, flexibility and adaptability?
- What do I want to study?
- Where do I want to go?
- Does it matter to me that my experience counts toward the degree I’m earning at Rhodes?
- Why do I want to go there?
- Is my primary goal to learn a language?
- Is my primary goal to gain experience related to my major or expected career?
- Is my primary goal to earn academic credit toward my Rhodes degree?
- Is my primary goal to learn about the world and how other people live?

## **Questions to Ask About a Program:**

- When is the application deadline?
- Will you be able to contact past participants of the program to get their evaluation of their experience?
- What qualifications does the program or experience require?
- Do I have to have a certain GPA?
- What language ability should I have?
- Are there particular skill or abilities I will need?

### **Study Course Content Questions:**

- What teaching style do I want? (Tutorials, seminars, language labs, lectures, etc.)
- Do I want a study program that includes an internship and/or field research experience?
- Do I want to take my classes with students from the host country, other North American students, and/or other international students?
- What types (content and/or format) of courses are offered on this program?
- Are the courses offered part of the regular courses at the host university or are they special courses (i.e., for visiting international students only)?
- Who are the faculty who will be teaching me? Are they from the North American university that sponsors the program or are they from the host university?
- Who awards the credits earned? In what form will the transcript come and how long will it take to get to Rhodes after the program ends?
- Are the classes taught in English? In the language of the host university? In another language? Do I have the language ability to handle this?
- If I'm interested in other options, are there opportunities for independent research or field projects?

Remember, the final determination of whether or not the program is creditworthy rests with Rhodes Faculty--not with the program.

### **Cost Questions:**

- What financial resources do I need in order to be able to finance this experience?
- Are there additional resources open to me, such as parents, family, friends, extra jobs, scholarships, etc.?
- How much will the total cost be (include tuition, housing, meals, airfare, insurance, fees, money for personal expenses, etc.)?
- What sort of financial aid (loans, grants, scholarships), if any, is available through the program?

### **Basic Living Questions:**

- Do I want to live in on- or off-premise housing?
- Do I want to live with residents of the host country? With other Americans? With international students?
- Do I want to live in a dormitory? Apartment? Rooming house? Or host family?
- Does the program assign housing or do I have to find my own? If I have to find my own housing, does the program provide assistance in finding accommodations? If so, what kind of assistance?
- If my housing placement turns out to be a difficult one, how easy is it to get out of a situation that does not work?
- Is housing near the site of my classes or at least to convenient public transportation?
- To what extent does the program allow and encourage the participants to mix with residents of the host country?
- To what community and/or university activities will I have access?

## **Application Process**

### **1. Meet with a Member of the Buckman Center Staff**

Our Study Abroad Advisors and iPAs (International Peer Advisors) provide information to students from the beginning of the process through their return to Rhodes. This includes deciding to study off-campus, selecting a program, completing the application process, and answering questions along the way. Students may have one-on-one meetings with an iPA, attend group informational meetings on program selection and financial matters, and meet with a professional Study Abroad Advisor. Most students have multiple meetings through the stages of studying off-campus.

Meeting with the Buckman Center Staff can help you:

- Find a program that fits with multiple majors and/or minors
- Request Foundation credit for your coursework taken off-campus
- Find a particular interdisciplinary or sub disciplinary specialty not listed
- Compare the merits of certain programs

### **2. Select a Program**

You must select a program which supports and extends your Rhodes academic program, particularly your major or combination of major(s), minor(s) and degree requirements. If the list of approved programs does not seem to contain a program specific to your need (s), set an appointment with a member of the Buckman Center staff for a personalized list of suggested programs. While you are reviewing programs, remember to investigate the programs' admission criteria and ensure that you meet the applicable eligibility requirements.

### **3. Complete and Submit an Off-Campus Study Application**

You must submit a complete Off-Campus Study Application by the appropriate deadline and be approved by the Director of International Programs. See the "Instructions and Checklists" for application deadlines and instructions.

### **4. Apply Separately to Your Program Sponsor or Host University**

You must submit a separate application to, and be accepted by, the program listed in your Off Campus Study Application. DO NOT WAIT until you have received a reply from the Director of International Programs to complete this step! Note that some programs have "rolling admissions" and close well before the Rhodes deadline, while others may have application deadlines as much as a month after Rhodes. Therefore, you will want to pay special attention to specific program deadline dates as you are considering options.

### **5. Acceptance Details**

Once a student is accepted to study off-campus on either a Rhodes or a non-Rhodes program, the Buckman Center will send the student an electronic acceptance letter (which includes this web-based Study Abroad Guide.)

## **Helpful Links**

Please view the Helpful Links section of The Buckman Center for International Education at <http://www.rhodes.edu/8043.asp>. You will find useful websites with information on topics such as::

- Travel Resources (discount travel, etc).
- Health and Safety
- Money and Exchange
- Governmental Information
- Weather

# **Before You Go**



## **Have You Decided to Study Abroad?**

This Study Abroad Guide can be a very useful tool and should be read before you leave for your program abroad. You will also find the contents of the Study Abroad Guide organized on the Buckman Center webpage.

## **Your Academic Plan**

### **What About Coursework Abroad? When should this be taken care of?**

Students should know, as early as possible in the application process, how their coursework abroad can be incorporated into their overall academic program. Therefore, it is important to discuss your program with your academic advisor.

### **Academic Credit**

Students must consult with their academic advisor(s) to ensure that their proposed courses will enable them to make normal progress toward completion of major and degree requirements in a timely fashion. Seniors wishing to study off-campus must request a waiver of the Senior Year Residency Policy using the Petition for Variance form from Academic Regulations. The Petition for Variance form can be obtained from the Registrar's office or at [www.rhodes.edu/images/content/Registrar\\_Docs](http://www.rhodes.edu/images/content/Registrar_Docs). Credit for courses taken off campus will only be transferred once an official transcript for the work completed has been received by the Rhodes College Registrar and approval for all courses has been given by relevant Rhodes College officials as noted below.

Credit earned through Rhodes programs (all summer programs operated by Rhodes and European Studies) is Rhodes credit. Credit earned through non-Rhodes programs, including exchange programs, is transfer credit. Courses for transfer credit must be passed with a minimum grade of "C-" to be eligible for transfer credit. Please confirm the details of your course credit with a member of the Buckman Center staff. Normally, a student cannot earn more credit while on a full-year study program than could have been earned in a regular academic year at Rhodes.

### **Foundations Credit**

Rhodes students who study abroad on a program that has been pre-approved through the Buckman Center for International Education will normally satisfy the F11 requirement, unless the program has been noted by the Center's Director as particularly unsuitable for this purpose. In addition, students may, through appropriate course work, satisfy up to two additional Foundation requirements while abroad (or up to three additional Foundation requirements for a year-long-program). The Director of International Programs will recommend to the Foundations Curriculum Committee, in consultation with the Faculty Fellow for International Programs and other faculty members as necessary, the appropriateness of the course(s) taken abroad for Foundational credit. This recommendation will

be done in accordance with any guidelines that the Educational Program Committee chooses to provide.

### **Number of Credits to be Earned**

No strict correlation exists between contact hours in courses taken off-campus and credits awarded by Rhodes. The College does not award more credit for a program than that awarded by the host institution, as determined by the host's official transcript. If the host program's transcript does not translate easily to "American" credit (e.g. credits, quarter hours, semester hours, units) or provide a conversion scale, or if the host institution's academic calendar differs significantly from the Rhodes semester calendar, the following statement can act as a general principle:

A student pursuing a fully approved, full-time program of coursework on study abroad for a period roughly equivalent to Rhodes' fall or spring semester will usually receive 16 transfer credits from Rhodes upon the successful completion of all coursework. Success completion is defined as earning a grade equivalent to "C-" or better in each course.

### **Program Approval**

Students seeking to study off-campus for transfer credit must submit an Off-Campus Study Approval Form for Non-Rhodes Programs to the Director of International Programs by the specified deadline for the period in which they plan to be absent from campus. They must enroll in programs which have been approved by the Director and pursue a fulltime course of study as defined by both the host institution and Rhodes. Program approval is based upon precedent, past experience, faculty, departmental and administrative knowledge and recommendation of a program, and/or site visits, whenever possible, to the program by a Rhodes faculty member or administrator. Students and faculty are referred to the Study Abroad area of the Buckman Center for International Education web site for information on programs which are generally approved for Rhodes student use.

### **Course Approvals**

Students who earn transfer credit while enrolled in a non-Rhodes program off-campus may have that credit applied to their major and/or minor requirements or may be given elective credit. If major and/or minor requirements are to be met with courses taken off-campus, students must receive approval of that coursework from the appropriate department or program chairs in consultation with the faculty advisers. Such approval is granted only through the signature of that department or program chair on the student's Off-Campus Study Approval Form for Non-Rhodes Programs. Elective credit will be approved by the appropriate academic officer acting on behalf of the Foundations Curriculum Committee. In most cases, this approval will come from the Director of International Programs, the Registrar, or the chair of the department or program at Rhodes in which the coursework will be pursued.

While credit should be approved prior to enrollment in the courses, in some cases it may be necessary to postpone approval until course descriptions, syllabi, papers, and tests are examined. To be accepted for credit, each course must be judged comparable in terms of content and quality to a course in the curriculum at Rhodes or it must be judged to be con-

sistent with the liberal arts and science curriculum and of a quality comparable to that expected of courses at Rhodes. Students must maintain a full-time load of academic coursework comparable to that at Rhodes in level, nature, and field, applicable to a Rhodes degree program. Course approvals must be secured prior to taking the course(s) so that the student is clear on the transferability of all courses and credits.

Should a student's course selection change for any reason after submission of their application, substituted courses are not transferable unless approved by an appropriate department or program chair, academic advisor, or Academic Officer. Such approval must be sought immediately (i.e., e-mail, fax); copies of any such correspondence should also be directed to the Director of International Programs. Credit will not be transferred for any course for which a student has not obtained pre-approval unless retroactive approval is granted by the appropriate department, program chair, or Academic Officer after the student's return. Such retroactive approval is not guaranteed and must be obtained before the conclusion of the first semester completed by the student upon their return to Rhodes.

### **Registration for Semester of Return**

Registration for the semester of return is completed via the web during the usual registration period on campus. Notification and instructions are sent to students electronically. For those students with little or no e-mail access, contact information **MUST** be provided in order to participate in the registration process.

## **International Insurance**

### **If you are participating in a Rhodes Program**

Health insurance is an important component of study abroad. Students participating on Rhodes programs and Rhodes exchange programs (with the exception of ISEP) will be covered by a comprehensive international insurance plan mandated and paid for by Rhodes. HTH Worldwide handles claims in various languages and from medical providers around the world. A schedule of benefits can be obtained from the Buckman Center for International Education.

### **If you are participating in a non-Rhodes Program**

Students on non-Rhodes programs should check with their program to determine if insurance is provided. If it is not, comprehensive overseas medical coverage that includes medical emergency evacuation and repatriation of remains must be purchased independently.

### **Questions to Consider When Reviewing Insurance Policies**

- Will the plan cover hospitalization for accidents and illnesses for the entire period while I'm abroad?
- Does the policy provide coverage in all countries to be visited?
- Is there a deductible? If yes, how much?
- Is there a dollar limit to the amount of coverage provided?

- What are the procedures for filing a claim for medical expenses abroad? Do I need to pay for expenses and then submit receipts to the insurance company for reimbursement? (Make sure that you get full information from your policy about how to arrange for routine treatment, medical emergency procedures, and what is required to pay for or be reimbursed for a claim. Many overseas health providers will not process American insurance claims and will expect payment at the time of treatment so students should have access to a minimum of \$400 (either by credit card or traveler's checks held in reserve for emergencies) in the event that medical treatment is required abroad. Be sure to obtain receipts, information, and signatures needed by your insurance company to file for reimbursement).
- Will I be required to pay cash in the currency of the host country and seek reimbursement later? What if I don't have enough money to pay cash up front?
- What do I use as proof of international medical coverage (if I need to use the insurance or if the host government requires documentation)?
- If I am not a U.S. Citizen, will I be covered by your plan? (In some instances international students have had to arrange for coverage with a company in their home country).
- Will this insurance cover me in the U.S. for the insured semester if I decide, for medical or other reasons, to return before the end of the program? (If a student has a serious accident or illness abroad, most usually he or she will return to the U.S. for further care; it is therefore important the student carry coverage that applies not only abroad, but in the U.S. during the study abroad period.)
- Does the policy exclude injuries sustained from terrorism and/or acts of war?
- Does it include coverage for medical evacuation/repatriation?
- Does the insurance company require claims to be submitted in U.S. dollars?
- What kind of financial and medical documentation will be required, and is such documentation readily available in the host country?

### **Property and Liability Insurance**

Despite students' best efforts to safeguard their property, it is still possible for it to be lost, stolen or damaged when traveling or living abroad. As Rhodes does not insure students' property while they are overseas, all student participants are urged to purchase property insurance for the entire duration of their stay abroad. Students should investigate their parents' homeowner's insurance to verify if all the items to be brought on the trip will be covered by their policy. It is recommended that all valuable items (e.g., laptop computers) be insured.

### **Trip Cancellation Insurance**

Similarly, the Buckman Center recommends that students consider trip cancellation insurance. Trip cancellation insurance is effective in the case of a sudden illness or injury that necessitates canceling or interrupting a trip. Most policies also provide coverage due to a wide variety of unforeseen events.

## Cultural Learning

### **Basic Things You Should Know Before You Go:**

A little bit of knowledge can go a long way to establish good relations with the host culture (s) of your study abroad country.

- Do you know if you should you bring a gift to your host family?
- How formal should you be with your hosts?
- What should you expect in terms of how to register for your classes?
- What are some major political issues facing your host country?
- Having knowledge about your host country helps you get into conversations and shows your respect for the culture. Take some time to investigate the following topics – use the internet, foreign newspapers, and magazines or ask a person from your host country:
  - Names of political leaders and political parties; type of government
  - Major religion(s)/spiritual beliefs and their effect on the host country
  - Hot topics of the day (e.g., government scandals)
  - Recent conflicts and the role of the U.S. in those conflicts
  - Year of independence and circumstances
  - Economic conditions
  - Cultural diversity (immigration and refugee populations, etc.)
  - Class structure (e.g., what will your status as a student be in this country? What percentage of students in your host country go to college?)

### **Stereotypes & Generalizations:**

**Stereotype:** the unfair, often inaccurate, prediction that a person will be, act, look, feel, or believe a certain way based on one's often incomplete or uncontextualized observations about the person's culture, nationality, race, gender, age, socio-economic status, etc.

Consider carefully whether your assumptions about your host country are based on fact or on stereotypes. Stereotypes, both positive and negative ones, are harmful and can impair your ability to get the most from your study abroad/away experience.

What's the alternative? A **generalization**. This means using initial ideas about a group to form hypotheses. For example, you've been watching British television and note the dry sense of humor that forms the basis for several sitcoms. Then you meet several Brits who also have a dry sense of humor. You begin to form a hypothesis about British humor. Generalizing recognizes there may be a tendency for people within a culture group to share certain values, beliefs, and behaviors.

### **Becoming Familiar with Culture: The Iceberg Analogy**

The tip of the iceberg represents the pieces of culture that we can see. The area below the water represents deeper cultural meaning. The iceberg analogy has some key points for learning about a culture:

- The things we observe almost always have deeper meaning, that is, they represent a more fundamental cultural value. Although the iceberg separates culture into visible and invisible elements, these are almost always interrelated.
- What we think we see is not always what is going on. Even trickier is how a visible aspect of culture, something so seemingly obvious as laughing, can have very different meanings in different cultures. For example, laughing can mean “that’s funny” or “I’m embarrassed.”
- We interpret what we see in the host culture as we would in our own, but the actual meaning may be quite different.

## **Travel Journaling**

Consider changing the structure of your journal from a daily "diary" to a "travel journal", like the one developed by Nancy Taylor Nicodemus, which divides your journal into four different sections: Impressions, Descriptive, Narrative, Expressive

- **The Impressions Section** is for jotting down the places, people, events, concepts, ideas, smells, signs, and other things you remember. You write words, phrases, or sentences that will spark your memory.
- **In the Descriptive Section** you will not elaborate on what you think about what you are writing. Instead, you will use your descriptive abilities to create a vivid picture of what you experienced.
- **The Narrative Section** is to satisfy the storyteller in you. There’s no doubt you will come home with stories – good, bad, funny, and otherwise. Write about them in this section before you forget.
- **In the Expressive Section** you get to vent, debate, praise, hypothesize, and evaluate. Where you may have described an event in one of your descriptive sections, you may then make an entry in this section to record what you thought and felt about that event.

## **Goals and Expectations**

### **What Are Your Goals?**

It is important that you identify goals and objectives before leaving in order to make the most of your experience. The following questions may help you with this self-evaluation.

#### **Personal**

- What are my personal beliefs and attitudes?
- What does it mean to be an American?
- What are our cultural beliefs and customs?
- How do I plan to learn about the cultures, customs, behaviors, and values of the country where I am studying?
- What am I willing to consider?
- Will I be open to doing things differently? Will I take risks?

### **Academic**

- Why am I going: to practice a foreign language, to learn about foreign countries and cultures, to fulfill academic requirements, to explore new areas of study? How does this semester fit into my academic plans? What courses have I already taken to prepare me for the program? Can I use this semester to research directed study or senior paper topics?

### **Professional**

- Can I use this experience in the future? Will I go to graduate school or straight into a career?

### **What Should I Expect Once I Get There?**

- Will a Study Abroad experience require more work?
- You will be expected to be highly motivated in your studies. Intense “academic pressure” is not as common in other pedagogical systems as it is in the U.S.; there will probably be less supervision of your academic work than you are used to here. You have to be independent, well-organized, and self-disciplined in order to do well.

### **Expectations of Studies Abroad**

Often courses abroad are different from courses here: more specialized, few, if any “survey” courses. There may be no quizzes, mid-terms or term papers. Your grade may depend on the final exam (oral or written). In a foreign university, you may be in a lecture hall with 50 to 1,000 other students. In many U.S. college-sponsored programs, courses will be much like those here.

### **Expectations of Campus Life Abroad**

In the U.S. we generally take students out of society for four years and isolate them in a little utopia that we call a campus. Often, everything you need is available on campus, and there is not much reason to ever leave it. Abroad, students are in integral part of society. In foreign universities, there is little of what we call “campus life”. Usually the university buildings are in the heart of the city, but scattered over a considerable area and separated from each other by residences, stores, and factories. You may live in one part of the city, attend class in another part, work in the library somewhere else, and eat your meals in the student restaurant on the opposite side of the city. You will thus participate in the “hassle” of everyday city life: mass transportation, strikes, impersonal attitudes, tourists, etc. So, expect much less “student life”, fewer clubs, fewer social affairs, and fewer organized sports than in America.

### **Expectations of Foreign Students**

Because students you encounter abroad are products of a more specialized system of education, you will probably find them older and better prepared to meet the academic demands of the university situation. Most likely they will have begun studying their major earlier than their American counterparts, so expect them to have a much more extensive knowledge of the subject. You may also find them serious and tending to act, even among their peers, with great formality and reserve. (You could conceivably sit next to a local student in class for a year without ever striking up a conversation.) You will be surprised at

how politically knowledgeable the overseas student is—better bone up on your knowledge of history and politics of the U.S. and of the host country before you go, and don't forget your sense of humor.

### **Expectations of Friendly Relationships**

Contacts in many societies particularly in Europe are not as facile as American social acceptance. For example, the concept of a "friend" is distinct from the concept of an "acquaintance". It takes many months to make a "friend", but once friendship is formed, it will last a lifetime. If you are "living with a family", don't expect to be immediately welcomed to the bosom of the family like another son or daughter. It does happen, but it is the exception. More typically, your relationship will start off as that between boarder and landlord/landlady. Therein lies the challenge: to make the relationship grow into something more than the formal, distant relationship it will initially be.

### **Expectations of Adjusting to Life Abroad**

Be prepared to undergo a fairly typical adjustment cycle during the first few weeks (or months) of your stay. It could be compared to a roller coaster ride. It will have its ups and downs. You'll start out with a great deal of excitement and euphoria; wherever you are studying will be the most fantastic place on earth. You'll be riding high with enthusiasm. After a while, the novelty will wear off, and you may feel lonely, frustrated, disappointed, depressed, homesick, and irritable. You'll complain about everything and everyone; you'll probably wish you hadn't gone there and long to be back at Rhodes. Early feelings of inadaptation will tend to disappear and you'll finally figure out who you are, where you are, and why you are there. As you complete the adjustment cycle, you'll come to accept and then to enjoy everything, including the academics, food, drinks, habits, and customs of the host country. At the end, you won't want to leave. You'll try to figure out a way to stay or get back there very soon.

## **What to Bring**

### **Passports**

When studying on an overseas program, you will need a valid passport. Obtaining a passport is your responsibility. It can take up to six weeks to process a passport application, but please be aware that the process may take longer, especially during peak travel times. Many local post offices will accept applications for passports. Once you receive your passport, make 3 photocopies of the information page of your passport.

- First copy: for you to carry separately in case your passport is lost or stolen.
- Second copy: send to our office for your file.
- Third copy: stays at home with your family.

If your passport is lost or stolen, it is much easier to obtain a replacement with a photocopy of your original.

## **Visas**

- A visa is written permission to visit a country granted by the government of that country. To determine if a visa is necessary, contact the embassy or nearest consulate of the country(ies) you plan to visit. Some countries require transit visas for people to change planes at their airports -- particularly the Schengen countries in Europe. For more information, see: <http://www.schengenvisa.cc/>
- Obtaining a visa can be a long and complicated process. You cannot get your visa until you have a passport, so begin the process as soon as possible.
- Important: If you are traveling on a passport other than a U.S. passport, you should check with the nearest consulate of the country to which you are traveling in order to determine whether a visa will be required. Do this as far in advance as possible, and notify our office of the documentation you will need to apply for your visa. You should check with the local consulate of your home country to determine whether there are any passport or travel regulations of which you need to be aware. You should also investigate whether you will need to apply for a new visa to re-enter the U.S. upon completion of the program.

## **Calling Card**

Check with your U.S. long distance carrier to obtain an international calling card for calls home. Most of the long-distance companies offer these cards or special calling plans for international calls. Also, check <http://www.idt.net> or <http://www.globalcalling.com/NAFSA>.

## **Birth Certificate**

Bring a photocopy of your Birth Certificate. This is handy in the event you have to replace a lost or stolen passport.

## **Insurance Card**

Keep a copy of your medical insurance card in your wallet. If your insurance agency does not provide a card, then write down the name and number of your policy and the address of the insurance company. Bring copies of your insurance claim forms.

## **Airline Ticket**

Before departing make 2 copies of your ticket(s). You may not realize how valuable your airline ticket is-and what a hassle it is to attempt to replace a lost or stolen ticket. It is best to copy the final control page of each ticket, as it contains all the information you need in case your ticket is lost or stolen. One copy stays at home, the second copy stays with you packed separately from your original ticket. If you have an e-ticket, make sure to get a printout of your itinerary and keep track of your confirmation number.

### ***A Special Note About Luggage and Packing***

**Selecting your luggage:** Take only bags that are light, easy to carry, and sturdy. If you are buying luggage for this journey, choose bags that are soft-sided and made of heavy-grade nylon or similar material. Do not invest in expensive luggage; sturdy, mid-priced bags are good enough. If your luggage does not have wheels, you might want to buy a small luggage carrier. Also, divide your load. Remember you can carry some things over your shoulder or on your back, which leaves one hand free for doors, etc. The best set of luggage might include one large suitcase, one smaller bag or backpack, and one shoulder-type bag.

**Packing:** Remember that you will be carrying these bags around with you when you get off the plane and you will be carrying them if you travel after the program. Keep in mind that storage space is limited, so keep packed luggage to a minimum. Be sure to lock all luggage and do not pack valuables (cameras, money, jewelry, items of sentimental value, etc.) in checked baggage.

It is helpful to pack a complete change of clothes inside your carry-on luggage. This is helpful in the event that your checked luggage is lost or delayed or if you have long layovers or extremely long flights. You may also want to bring some sort of snacks and small toiletry items.

**Luggage Restrictions:** All airlines have restrictions on the size, weight, and number of luggage items that you can take without incurring any additional, and significant, expenses. Airlines outside of North America are especially strict. Most airlines allow two checked pieces of luggage and one small carry-on piece, which will be placed under the seat or in the overhead locker. Check with your airline for specific information on luggage restrictions.

## **Housing and Money**

### **Housing**

Housing opportunities vary by program and range from a local household or an apartment to an international dorm or kibbutz. Given that standards of living vary from country to country, you should expect certain fundamental differences with respect to comfort. Electrical systems, heating systems, even the water pressure may be different from what you are accustomed to at home or on campus. Storage room, including closet space, is usually at a premium in the program housing, so keep packed luggage to a minimum. If you are planning to bring electronic equipment, make sure to pack the proper adapters for the system overseas (you can check a travel guide to that country to find out what you'll need). Keep in mind that housing is not the reason you have decided to go abroad.

### **Determine your Budget for the Semester**

You (and your parents) will find it helpful if you put together an estimated budget for your semester abroad. Depending on the program, in which you are enrolled, fees may include tuition, housing, airfare, board, and/or excursions. You should plan to bring additional money to cover personal expenses, textbooks, and course materials, and any other costs not included in your program fee. Also, remember to factor in the possibility of exchange rate fluctuations.

### **Financial Aid Forms**

If you will not be at Rhodes College at the time the application for financial assistance is due for the coming academic year, make arrangements in advance to obtain the forms you need or request the financial aid office to forward the forms to your family for action.

## **Health**

### **Medical Expenses**

Should you incur medical expenses abroad, you and your family may have to meet some of these expenses up front. Be sure to pack several copies of your insurance company's claim forms. Having the necessary claim forms on hand will speed up processing in the event that you have to make a claim, and therefore helps speed reimbursement.

### **Visit Your Doctor**

Please remember that study abroad can be stressful both physically and mentally. If you are experiencing any physical or emotional problems, please address them before leaving the U.S. If you haven't felt well, make an appointment with your doctor for a check-up; if you anticipate any dental work, get it done before departure; if you are experiencing any emotional, eating, or substance abuse problems, seek professional advice and consider deferring your participation in an overseas program until you have the problem well under control. The pressures which lead to eating disorders, emotional, or dependency problems

are only exacerbated when you are coping with adjustment to a new culture, language, and way of life. Leaving the country will not make your problems go away—if anything, it will make them worse. It is important to note that the range of counseling services available to students at Rhodes and other college campuses will not be available overseas.

For your safety and well being, it is vital that you inform us of any physical, emotional, or psychological difficulties or special needs you may have. On the other hand, if you are simply nervous about experiencing a different culture, do not worry. You are not alone. Stop by or call our office to talk about your concerns.

### **Obtain Copies of Your Prescriptions**

You should be sure to bring copies of prescriptions for any medications you may need and for glasses or contact lenses. Since medications tend to be expensive overseas and because it can be difficult to get the appropriate equivalent medication, we recommend that you bring an adequate supply of whatever you may need while abroad. Any medications you bring should be in the original, properly labeled containers. If you wear glasses or contacts, bring an extra pair in case you damage or lose your original pair.

## Take A Quiz

Is This True of You?	Circle One
I have a passport and have made copies to leave at home and take with me.	YES NO
I know how to say 'thank you' in my host country language.	YES NO
I know the entry requirements to my host country for persons of my nationality.	YES NO
I have spoken with a native of my host country.	YES NO
I know what electrical current is standard in my host country.	YES NO
I have read a magazine, newspaper or book from my host country in the last 3-6 months.	YES NO
I can locate my host country and study site on the map.	YES NO
I have had a physical, dental and eye checkups in preparation for going abroad.	YES NO
I have my glasses and medication prescriptions with me and plan to take a supply for my entire stay.	YES NO
I have viewed broadcasts and/or listened to the radio from my host country in the last 3 months.	YES NO
I have familiarized myself with any pre-departure health recommendations for the region I will visit.	YES NO
I know the type of government in my host country.	YES NO
I have checked the exchange rate for my host country and have practiced mental conversions.	YES NO
I know how I'm going to take money overseas, and how I will get emergency funds if necessary.	YES NO
I can sing the national anthem of my host country.	YES NO
I have copied all credit cards and other important documents to leave at home in case of loss or theft.	YES NO
I know the predominant religion of my host country.	YES NO
I can draw freehand a reasonable map of my host country and surrounding countries.	YES NO
I know the time difference between my hometown and my study site.	YES NO
I know how to call the US from my host country.	YES NO
I know the name of the head of government of my host country.	YES NO
I know how much a meal will cost in my host country.	YES NO
I've been to the Financial Aid office to make arrangements for my portable aid, if any.	YES NO
All my payments and forms for study abroad are in and up to date.	YES NO

### HOW MANY YES RESPONSES DID YOU GET?

**20 or more:** You're a regular Marco Polo! Have a great adventure studying abroad!

**15-19:** Almost ready! You just need to polish a few globes before you go.

**10-14:** You have more than just packing to do before departure...

**Less than 10:** Are you sure you know where you are going? Use the time before you go wisely!

# While You're There



You've arrived at your program site! You are probably attempting to recover from jet-lag while adjusting to your new environment. This part of the study abroad experience can be very challenging and may take you by surprise. Remember to give yourself the time and attention you need in order to make a successful transition between studying at Rhodes and studying in your new setting.

## Cultural Differences

### **Coping with Culture Shock**

Experiencing a period of adjustment to a new place and culture is normal. Do not react passively. Try to keep busy taking advantage of the cultural and historic resources around you. Make plans to go somewhere (e.g. local café, or market, a museum, the theater). Set goals for yourself: explore a new part of the city each week, learn ten new foreign phrases a day. Remember that your feelings of confusion will not last forever. While it may be somewhat painful, culture shock can be a very valuable learning experience that will leave you with broader perspectives, deeper insight into yourself, and a wider tolerance for other people.

### **Just Different: Not Better, or Worse**

Americans share certain living habits. When living at home, you take for granted that everyone follows similar cultural norms; but when you go abroad, the local cultural norms may be unfamiliar. Encountering cultural differences is part of the excitement of going abroad, but it also poses a challenge. Upon arrival in a foreign country, you may experience an immediate sense of euphoria as everything that is new seems intriguing and exciting. Inevitably, however, the newness wears off. You may feel frustrated or isolated; what was once an inviting cultural difference may become annoying. Gradually, though, you will adjust to the foreign culture and become comfortable living in it. As your familiarity with the local language and customs increases, you may become so comfortable in your new environment that upon returning to the U.S. you experience "reverse culture shock". There are peaks and valleys in the process of cultural adjustment. Just when you are feeling positive about your adjustment to the new culture, you may suddenly feel uncomfortable again and vice versa. Ultimately, you will adjust.

When the idiosyncrasies of a culture begin to frustrate you, you may notice that at the same time you are wrestling with a bout of homesickness or slight depression. You may blame these problems on the cultural differences to which you are adapting. However, more than likely the root of your problem is something other than adapting to cultural particularities. You may be lonely, missing family gatherings at homes, or having unusual academic difficulties in your new setting. It is important to discover the source of your troubles and not succumb to the temptation to blame and disparage the new culture you are experiencing.

## Take an Active Role

### **Prepare to learn from your experience**

- Clarify why you are going on the program
- Set goals for yourself

### **Learn on-site during your program:**

- Note how you feel about the experience
- Identify the skills you are developing

### **Reflect on what you have learned:**

- Compare what you had expected with what you actually did
- Consider how your semester abroad can lead to other opportunities
- Keep a travel journal (see pg. 10 for more information)

## Cultural Learning In-Country

### **Stages of Adjustment**

No doubt you've heard of culture shock and you may be thinking, "I know enough about the country so the cultural differences won't present a problem for me." It's true the more you know about your host country, including the language, the easier it will be to adjust. Expecting the differences is helpful, but keep in mind it's the actual cultural confrontation that brings about the physical and emotional reactions. In most cases, culture shock is caused less by one single incident and more by a gradual accumulation of anxiety, frustration, and confusion from living in an unfamiliar environment. Some prefer the terms "culture fatigue" or "culture bumps." And while not everyone experiences some kind of "shock," everyone does go through some adjustment to their environment. Many people who have been abroad discuss their experience in terms of stages:

- **Stage 1: Cultural Euphoria.** At the start of your study abroad there is an initial excitement about being in a new culture. This is often called the "honeymoon stage." Everything is new and wonderful, and you are eager to explore it all.
- **Stage 2: Cultural Confrontation.** In the next stage (typically one third to one half the way through an experience), the initial excitement you felt when you arrived diminishes and the process of cultural adjustment begins. This stage is typically characterized by confusion and frustration and, as such, is the most difficult stage. Your feelings can shift from very positive to very negative.
- **Stage 3: Cultural Adjustment.** This stage represents the transition out of culture shock into significant cultural adjustment. You feel increasingly comfortable and competent in the culture, and these feelings prevail over the times you have felt frustrated or out of place.

-

- **Stage 4: Cultural Adaptation.** In this stage, you have reached a point at which you have a great deal of confidence in your ability to communicate and interact effectively. You have a deeper understanding of the influence culture has in peoples' lives. You have acquired considerable cultural knowledge, but you also recognize that there is much you still don't know or understand.

### **Homestay Expectations**

It is a good idea to take some time to think about the homestay in terms of your own expectations, particularly before you meet your host family. Rank from 1 to 5 the following expectations for the homestay, taking into account what you hope to gain from your homestay:

- \_\_\_ Get support in adjusting to the culture
- \_\_\_ Improve my language skills
- \_\_\_ Make new friends
- \_\_\_ Participate in family life and learn the culture
- \_\_\_ Other

What will be your responsibilities as part of the homestay?

## **Conduct and Safety**

### **Student Conduct**

While overseas, you are not only subject to the Rhodes Social Regulations Code and Honor Code, but also to the local laws and sanctions of the particular country in which you are studying. In many countries, the punishment for possession and/or distribution of controlled substances and for driving while under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances is much more severe than in the United States. You should be aware that if arrested for a crime overseas, there is little Rhodes College or the local U.S. Consular authorities can do to intercede on your behalf.

The Buckman Center for International Education also has the authority to establish rules of conduct necessary for the operation of the program and to reserve the right to require a student to withdraw from the program.

### **General Safety in Public Places**

You will soon be entering a city and culture that is probably foreign to you. Because of this, you may miss some of the danger signals that a local person would automatically take into consideration. You should also realize that many cultures may exist within one country. Please be aware of, and sensitive to, the majority culture, as well as the minority cultures in your host country.

Many people's impressions of Americans come from what they see on television shows such as "Friends" and "Frasier." Americans are portrayed as wealthy, particularly in developing countries, and in many locations you really will be more well-off than the local population. The following "American" traits will clearly tell the local residents that you are from the United States:

1. Dressing differently from the local residents
2. Speaking loudly in groups in the unmistakable American accent
3. Carrying backpacks everywhere
4. Wearing tennis shoes
5. Wearing U.S. college or university insignia clothing or heavily patriotic American clothing
6. Wearing baseball caps

By following the suggestions below, you can minimize your exposure to unsafe situations:

- Do not leave bag(s) or belongings unattended at anytime. Security staffs in airports or train stations are instructed to remove or destroy any unattended bag(s). Do not agree to carry or look after packages or suitcases for anyone, under any circumstances. Make sure no one puts anything in your luggage.
- When traveling use a waist pouch to carry your passport, credit cards, and travelers checks. Wear the pouch under your clothes. Keep a separate record of your travelers checks in another part of your belongings so that you will have a record if the checks are lost or stolen. Also, make photocopies of all essential documents and leave them with someone at home.
- Be as inconspicuous in dress and demeanor as possible. Downplay those elements of your appearance and manner that broadcast your nationality.
- Try to speak the local language in public, even with other Americans. Even if you have a heavy accent, you will not attract as much attention, particularly if you take a cue from the locals and speak quietly.
- Use the buddy system (or in the evening, small group), especially in the first few weeks of your stay. Walking with someone helps to deflect approaches by would-be-harassers.
- Be careful how late you come home at night. Try to get home while public transportation is still running or plan to take a taxi. If you visit friends alone in the evening, ask them to escort you to the nearest metro station, or even to escort you home. Do be extremely cautious from whom you accept rides.
- Be careful to observe traffic lights. Stay on sidewalks away from the curb, and walk facing oncoming traffic whenever possible. Drivers in large cities can be aggressive, and often erratic. Never assume a car will stop for you or steer out of your way. For those of you in countries where drivers drive on the left-hand side of the road, you will have to make an extra effort to check before crossing the street.

### **Use Common Sense**

Use common sense and be as cautious as you would in any large city in the United States. Be aware of your surroundings. If you want to visit a new neighborhood, try to go during the day first. Look at a map before you leave, and note the nearest metro stops and bus/trolley routes. Walk at your own pace, but look alert and purposeful. If you find yourself in uncomfortable surroundings, act like you know what you are doing and where you are going, and move to a place where you are comfortable.

## Money

- Keep your cash and other valuables (traveler's checks, passport and visa, airline ticket) in a locked suitcase in your room or a safe in the program's headquarters, if available.
- Do not take jewelry that has sentimental value. It could be lost or stolen. Be aware that it is common in some cities for thieves on motorcycles to pull gold chains off the necks of women. Students have lost jewelry in hotels and dorm rooms. Leave valuables at home.
- Avoid putting things in the back pocket of your pants or backpack. Wear your backpack in front of you in crowded places. It is highly recommended that you bring a money belt to wear concealed around your waist under your clothes.
- Do not handle or display large quantities of money (dollars or local currency) on the street. Only bring as much money with you as you need for the day or night.
- Always keep an eye, and/or hands, on your purse/bag/wallet, especially in crowded public areas (public transportation, crowded sidewalks, markets, and metro stations).
- Be particularly vigilant in areas where there have been numerous reports of pick pocketing and purse snatching, especially tourist areas. Be aware that thieves on mopeds snatch purses, so have your bag face away from the street.
- If working at an internship, do not leave purses or backpacks unattended.
- If you suddenly find yourself being "crowded" in a market, move away from the crowd. Thieves may be slicing open your purse or backpack with a razor.

## Travel

### **Local Transportation and Travel**

- If a package is left unattended near you by someone, in any crowded public place (i.e. airports, train stations, "the tube" in London or on a bus or other public transportation) notify the driver or other authority and get away from it as quickly as possible.
- Be careful with whom you ride in a car. Some countries are less adamant about drinking and driving, therefore driving under the influence of alcohol is more common.
- Most of you will be using public transportation on a regular basis. You may see other passengers who do not appear to be paying for buses or other public transportation. Be careful not to copy them. Many of them have passes that are shown only when asked by an inspector. If you are caught without a bus ticket or pass, you can be pulled off the bus or tram and taken to the police station. Consider a monthly pass if you will have to take the bus or subway every day. In the long run, it is cheaper than fines that can be 50 times the original cost of the ticket.

### **General Travel During Weekend and Breaks**

- Do not travel alone. Always try to travel with at least one other person.
- Be careful whom you allow to join your group. Make sure that anyone who joins your group is well known by someone you know. Terrorists and thieves have used unsuspecting travelers as a cover when traveling.

- Update yourself on your destination and consider postponing a visit to a place if there have been problems there recently. It is better to be safe than sorry. Check for U.S. Consulates near you (commonly found in most large cities), stop and get their safety information bulletins about the country in which you are planning to visit. Knowledge of current events is important. Read the paper and watch some TV to stay informed.

## **Relationships**

Entering a relationship overseas should be approached with the same precautions as at home. It is tempting to be charmed by the idea of a once-in-a-lifetime foreign romance, but you should consider any relationship carefully, particularly when you are overseas. There are different cultural values and rules regarding dating and relationships. Proceed cautiously, realizing that you are only in that country for a short period of time. Evaluate your reasons for entering into a relationship. Are you attracted to the individual or are you struggling with homesickness?

## **Political Conflict**

- Keep in touch with the current political situation by listening daily to the television, radio, or reading the newspaper. In case of an emergency, advisories may be made to the general public through the media. It's a good idea to register with the nearest American Consulate, and to contact the on-site staff should an emergency arise.
- When in large cities and other popular tourist destinations, avoid or spend as little time as possible in potential target areas for terrorist activities. Especially places frequented by Americans: bars, discos, and U.S. fast food restaurants; branches of American banks; American churches; American consulates and embassies.
- Keep away from areas known to have large concentrations of residents with interests unfriendly to the U.S. and its allies. Always consult with the on-site director(s) before traveling to neighboring cities or popular tourist destinations.
- Keep away from political demonstrations, which can easily result in clashes between demonstrators and authorities, particularly those authorities seen as aligned with the U.S. If you see a situation developing, resist the temptation to satisfy your curiosity and investigate what is happening. Walk the other way. Go home and watch it on the news.
- Do not agree to newspaper or other media interviews regarding political conflicts or controversial issues. It is important to remain as inconspicuous as possible. Do not refer to your program group. In such cases, always say "no comment" and hang up or walk the other way.

## **Alcohol and Drugs**

It is important to keep the following in mind so that you do not find yourself in a situation that could lead to violation of the Rhodes Code of Conduct:

- Avoid consuming large quantities of alcohol in public, particularly with people you do not know well, in cafes, bars, or parties. Be careful and constantly aware in public places where alcohol might be consumed, and remember you are in another country with different social customs. Until you are familiar with these customs, you should err on the cautious side.
- If you consume alcohol, please remember that your ability to make sound judgments is impaired, and therefore you may be putting yourself in danger.
- Many drugs are available in other countries over-the-counter that would not normally be available in the U.S. Be certain when purchasing medication that you know the ingredients and understand their effects, especially if you are taking other medications.
- Do not consume alcohol while taking any medication.

## **Sexual Harassment and Assault**

- Be aware of how you carry yourself and dress. Even things as seemingly insignificant as smiling and your stride will mark you as a foreigner. Avoid looking like a stereotypical American; dressing conservatively can possibly help deflect potential harassers. In some countries, particularly Islamic ones, normal American female dress could be viewed as that of a prostitute.
- Try to avoid making eye contact with men in public places. In many parts of the world, meeting a man's gaze is widely viewed as sexually provocative. You may be followed, verbally harassed and, as a result, touched.
- An effective way to avoid stares while on the subway is to read.
- Usually the best response to unwanted stares, comments, or touches, is to ignore the harasser and to remove yourself from the situation quickly and calmly. Although verbal responses often work, cursing your harasser in the local language or English may result in being struck. Avoidance is the safest tactic.
- If you continue to be followed, spoken to, or touched after repeated attempts to get away, try to remove yourself to a very public place. Tell your harasser firmly and calmly to leave you alone. Sometimes threatening to go to the police is effective, but sometimes the police are less than supportive.
- Do not judge the physical appearance of your local friends by American standards. You may be inclined to trust someone because he or she is nicely or fashionably dressed, well groomed, self-confident and outgoing. Sometimes, however, the most fashionable people are those who are the most skilled con-artists, or who make a mission of befriending Americans in order to gain money, goods, passports, or sex from them. Be wary of smooth operators!

## **Advice Especially for Women**

What may be appropriate or friendly behavior in the U.S. may bring you unwanted, even dangerous, attention in another culture. Try not to take offense at whistles and other gestures, regardless of whether they are compliments, invitations, or insults. Realize these gestures are as much a part of the culture as its food, history, and language, but if your intuition tells you a situation is dangerous, then act as if it is. Be extra careful with giving your trust. This applies generally, but is especially important when traveling alone.

## **A Thoughtful Return**

Since time upon re-entry may be scarce, we encourage you to record in your journal your thoughts on these questions to prepare you for returning home: In what ways have I changed? In what ways might my family and friends have changed? How would I like my family and friends to treat me when I return home? What am I looking forward to the most? What are the lessons I have learned that I never want to forget? What are some skills I have learned? Many say the re-entry shock is more challenging than initial culture shock. What are some things I might do to make the transition easier? What have been the important things about this study abroad experience that I want to share with family and friends? What do I want to do with the experiences I've had (e.g., continue studying the language)?

# After You Return



You've been focused on the journey, but returning home is often an equally challenging experience. To make the most of your international education, learn what to expect after your travels.

## Re-Entry Challenges

### **Ten Immediate Re-Entry Challenges**

The following is a list of suggestions for students upon returning home. The list was compiled by Dr. Bruce La Brock from the University of the Pacific.

#### **1. Boredom**

After all the newness and stimulation of your time abroad, a return to family, friends, and old routines (however nice and comforting) can seem very dull. It is natural to miss the excitement and challenges that characterize study in a foreign country, but it is up to you to find ways to overcome such negative reactions.

#### **2. "No One Wants to Hear"**

One thing you can count on upon your return: no one will be as interested in hearing about your adventures and triumphs as you will be in sharing those experiences. This is not a rejection of you or your achievements, but simply the fact that once they have heard the highlights, further interest on your audiences' part is probably unlikely. Be realistic in your expectations of how fascinating your journey is going to be for everyone else.

#### **3. You Can't Explain**

Even when given a chance to explain all the sights you saw and feelings you had while studying abroad, it is unlikely to be able to relay them coherently. It is very difficult to convey this kind of experience to people who do not have similar frames of reference or travel backgrounds, no matter how sympathetic they are as listeners. You can tell people about your trip, but you may fail to make them understand exactly how or why you felt a particular way.

#### **4. Reverse "Homesickness"**

Just as you probably missed home for a time after going abroad, it is just as natural to experience some "reverse" homesickness for the people, places, and things that you grew accustomed to as a student overseas. To an extent it can be reduced by writing letters, telephoning, and generally keeping in contact, but feelings of loss are an integral part of international sojourns and must be anticipated and accepted as a natural result of study abroad.

#### **5. Relationships Have Changed**

It is inevitable that when you return you will notice that some relationships with friends and family will have changed. Just as you have altered some of your ideas and attitudes

while abroad, the people at home are likely to have experienced some changes. These changes may be positive or negative, but expectation that no change will have occurred is unrealistic. The best preparation is flexibility, openness, minimal preconceptions, and tempered optimism.

#### **6. People See the “Wrong” Changes**

Sometimes people may concentrate on small alterations in your behavior or ideas and seem threatened or upset by them. Others may ascribe any “bad” traits to the influence of your time abroad. The incidents may be motivated by jealousy, fear, or feelings of superiority or inferiority. To avoid or minimize them it is necessary to monitor yourself and be aware of the reactions of those around you, especially in the first few weeks following your return. This phase normally passes quickly if you do nothing to confirm their stereotypes.

#### **7. People Misunderstand**

A few people will misinterpret your words or actions in such a way that communication is difficult. For example, what you may have come to think of as humor (particularly sarcasm, banter, etc.) and ways to show affection or establish conversation may not be seen as wit, but aggression or “showing off.” Offers of help in the kitchen can be seen as criticism of food preparation, new clothing styles as provocative or inappropriate, references to your host country or use of a foreign language as boasting. Be aware of how you may look to others and how your behavior is likely to be interpreted.

#### **8. Feelings of Alienation/Critical Eyes**

Sometimes the reality of being back “home” is not as natural or enjoyable as the place you had constructed as your mental image. When real daily life is less enjoyable or more demanding than you had remembered, it is natural to feel some alienation, see faults in the society you never noticed before or even become quite critical of everyone and everything for a time. This is no different than when you first left home. Mental comparisons are fine, but keep them to yourself until you regain both your cultural balance and a balanced perspective.

#### **9. Inability to Apply New Knowledge and Skills**

Many returnees are frustrated by the lack of opportunity to apply newly gained social, linguistic, and practical coping skills that appear to be unnecessary or irrelevant. To avoid ongoing annoyance: adjust to reality as necessary, change what is possible, be creative, be patient, and above all use all the cross-cultural adjustment skills you acquired abroad to assist your own reentry.

#### **10. Loss/Compartmentalization of Experience**

Being home, coupled with the pressures of job, family, and friends, often combine to make returnees worried that somehow they will “lose” the experience; somehow becoming compartmentalized like souvenirs or photo albums kept in a box and only occasionally taken out and looked at. You do not have to let that happen. Maintain your contacts. Talk to people who have experiences similar to yours. Practice your skills. Remember and honor both your hard work and the fun you had while abroad.



## **Reacting to the Changes**

Returning to one's home environment isn't easy for a number of reasons, including how much you have changed, how much you understand these changes, and how much your friends and family accept these changes. It's important to take time to consider what the particular frustrations are for you. Record your reactions to these questions and statements:

- I know that I've changed as a result of my experience because...
- My friends do seem to understand \_\_\_\_\_ about me, but they don't understand...
- My re-entry experience would be better if...
- Now that I am home, I worry most about...
- The one thing I have learned about myself is...
- I wish I could explain to my family and friends that...

## **10 Tips for Returning Home**

(Compiled by Dr. Bruce La Brock from the University of the Pacific.)

### **1. Prepare for the Adjustment Process**

The more you consider your what is to come, and about how returning home is both similar to and different from going abroad, the easier the transition will be. Anticipating is useful.

### **2. Allow Yourself Time**

Reentry is a process that will take time, just like adjusting to a new foreign culture. Give yourself time to relax and reflect upon what is going on around you, how you are reacting to it, and what you might like to change. Give yourself permission to ease into the transition.

### **3. Understand That The Familiar Will Seem Different**

You will have changed, home has changed, and you will be seeing familiar people, places, and behaviors from new perspectives. Some things will seem strange, perhaps even unsettling. Expect to have some new emotional and psychological reactions to being home. Everyone does.

### **4. There Will Be Much "Cultural Catching-up" To Do**

Some linguistic, social, political, economic, entertainment, and current event topics will be unfamiliar to you as new programs, slang and even governmental forms may have emerged since you left. You may have some learning to do about your own culture. (Note: most returnees report that major insights into themselves and their home countries occur during reentry.)

### **5. Reserve Judgments**

Just as you had to keep an open mind when first encountering the culture of a new foreign country, try to resist the natural impulse to make snap decisions and judgments about people and behaviors once back home. Mood swings are common at first and your most

valuable and valid analysis of events is likely to take place after allowing some time for thorough reflection.

### **6. Respond Thoughtfully and Slowly**

Quick answers and impulsive reactions often characterize returnees. Frustration, disorientation, and boredom in the returnee can lead to behavior which is incomprehensible to family and friends. Take some time to rehearse what you want to say and how you will respond to predictable questions and situations: prepare to greet those which are less predictable with a calm, thoughtful approach.

### **7. Cultivate Sensitivity**

Showing an interest in what others have been doing while you have been on your adventure overseas is the surest way to reestablish rapport. Much frustration in returnees stems from what is perceived as disinterest by others in their experience and lack of opportunity to express their feelings and tell their stories. Being as good a listener as a talker is a key ingredient in mutual sharing.

### **8. Beware of Comparisons**

Making comparisons between cultures and nations is natural, particularly after residence abroad; however, a person must be careful not to be seen as too critical of home or too lavish in praise of things foreign. A balance of good and bad features is probably more accurate and certainly less threatening to others. The tendency to be an “instant expert” is to be avoided at all costs.

### **9. Remain Flexible**

Keeping as many options open as possible is an essential aspect of a successful return home. Attempting to re-socialize totally into old patterns and networks can be difficult, but remaining aloof is isolating and counterproductive. What you want to achieve is a balance between maintaining earlier patterns and enhancing your social and intellectual life with new friends and interests.

### **10. Seek Support Networks**

There are lots of people back home who have gone through their own reentry and understand a returnee’s concerns. You might consider talking to: faculty, exchange students, international development staff, diplomatic corps, military personnel, church officials, and/or business people about the concerns you have as a returnee. University study-abroad and foreign student offices are just a few of the places where returnees can seek others who can offer support and country-specific advice.

# **Return the Favor! Become an iPA!**

**You've experienced study abroad in its entirety.  
Want to help the next person?**

There are students at Rhodes who need to hear about your experiences. Consider becoming an iPA (International Peer Advisor) during the semester or year of your return to Rhodes.

This team of past study abroad students meet with future study abroad students to offer their own unique perspective on living and taking courses abroad, transitions to and from the home country, and other intrinsic parts of the study abroad experience.



## **As an iPA, you will do fun things like:**

- Communicate with Rhodes students seeking Study Abroad advice
- Present at and/or attend informational meetings and presentations
- Plan iPA events for encouraging Rhodes students to study abroad
- Host discussion tables, pre-departure events, and returning programs
- Contribute ideas and experiences through mediums such as newspaper articles, interviews, and radio programs

Take a look at the iPA website to view the current iPAs: <http://www.rhodes.edu/13714.asp>