BROWN OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK

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Welcome!

The Brown University Office of International Programs (OIP) provides undergraduate study abroad opportunities to hundreds of students every year through semester and summer opportunities. As part of the Dean of the College, and in close partnership with Brown faculty, the OIP provides advising and resource services to students interested in study abroad.

While you have worked hard to get into your program of study – now you must prepare for life overseas. This handbook contains general information you will need before you leave, during your stay abroad, and as you prepare to return. We encourage you to not only read through this handbook carefully, but to utilize our website (www.brown.edu/OIP) and conduct further research before you leave campus. Study abroad resources provide country-specific information, as well as information on travel, health, finances, and more. You will greatly enhance your experience abroad by learning as much as you can about your destination(s) before you leave.

Congratulations on your decision to study abroad, and best wishes for a rewarding experience!

Janet Kalunian
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Office of International Programs
Section I: Travel and Other Important Documents

Passports

For U.S. citizens
If you do not currently have a valid passport, applying for one immediately! **Some countries require that your U.S. passport be valid not only for the duration of your visit, but also for three to six months after your entry or return from their country. This means you have to check your passport expiration date carefully.**

The process of obtaining or renewing a passport can take awhile, depending on which procedure you follow. You may apply for a passport at most large post offices, such as the one in downtown Providence. You can access passport applications and consult general passport services information online at the U.S. State Department website: http://travel.state.gov/passport.

To get your passport you’ll need:

- a passport application
- proof of citizenship, e.g. a birth certificate with a raised seal and filing date; photocopies are not accepted
- acceptable form of identification (such as a valid driver’s license or current government-issued ID)
- one passport photo (without wearing glasses)
- passport fee, execution fee, and if necessary, fee for expedited service. Please refer to the U.S. State Department website for current fees.

Please do **not** submit your passport application materials to the OIP.

**Remember:** Your passport is the most important document you have when outside the United States. Know where it is at all times. When you receive your passport, make several copies of the front pages and keep the copies separate from your baggage. You should leave a photocopy of your passport with your parents/guardian at home. Once in a foreign country, keep your copies in a safe place and ask your program to keep a copy on hand. This will facilitate replacement if your passport is lost or stolen.

**Non-U.S. citizens**
Please verify that your passport is valid for the amount of time you will be away. You will also need to consult with the international student office at your home institution to ensure that your time abroad is accounted for, and that your leave is compliant with current U.S. immigration policies.

Visas

**U.S. citizens**
U.S. citizens do not need a visa to study on summer programs in Ireland, Italy, or Spain. Students attending the summer program in Russia DO need a visa. Brown University will submit all Russia visa applications on your behalf, so students do not need to apply for their own visas. The OIP will collect passports and they will be returned to students once the visas are obtained.
Non-U.S. Citizens
Please verify visa requirements with the consulate of the country to which you are traveling (or transferring through on a connecting flight) in order to determine whether a visa will be required. Do this as soon as possible, and notify the OIP of documentation you will need to apply for your visa.

Remember to check with the International Students office at your home school to ensure that your I-20 will remain valid upon your return to the U.S., if you plan to do so upon completion of the program.

Parent Passports
We encourage you to discuss with your parents or family members how they would be able to assist you in the event of an emergency while you are abroad. One or both of your parents or guardians may wish to have a valid passport (and visa, if required) for the period you are abroad, in the event of an emergency that would require them to travel to your program site on short notice.

Resources

Embassies and Consulates
• U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs - http://travel.state.gov/
• U.S. Embassies & Consulates Abroad - http://usembassy.state.gov/
• Foreign Consulates and Embassies in the U.S. - http://www.embassy-worldwide.com/country/united-states/
• Entry/exit requirements for U.S. citizens (country list) - http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html

Passports
• U.S. Passport Information Center - http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html
  Covers first-time application procedures, passport renewal, and lost or stolen passport information.

Section II: Health, Travel and other Insurance

Health Insurance Requirements
All students are required to have comprehensive health insurance while enrolled in a Brown or CASA summer program. You may be fully covered under your parents’ policy, or you may choose to use your University insurance. All students must verify that their insurance plan will cover them overseas (see below).

Brown Student Health Insurance Plan
The Brown Student Health Insurance Plan provides limited worldwide coverage, whether studying or traveling abroad. If you are currently enrolled in the Brown plan it will only cover you through August 14 unless you renew the plan for the next academic year. If you are not currently enrolled in the Brown plan, you cannot sign up for Brown coverage for the summer session. The plan provides the same benefits as if you were at Brown University and also includes Medical Evacuation, Return of Mortal Remains, and Global Emergency Medical Assistance Services. You will have access to a 24-hour worldwide assistance network for emergency assistance anywhere in the world, provided through UnitedHealthcare Global. Please refer to the Office of Insurance and Purchasing Services website (www.brown.edu/about/administration/insurance/) for more information about plan coverage; if you have specific questions, please contact their office directly for details.
Non-Brown Health Insurance Plans
If you have insurance coverage through another plan (i.e., through your parent/guardian or a non-Brown institution), contact your health insurance company to verify that you are covered internationally. It is your responsibility to determine if you have suitable coverage, domestically and internationally, and to evaluate the benefits, limitations, and exclusions for your plan. Students going abroad can also purchase short-term insurance through Brown’s Office of Insurance and Purchasing Services website (https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/insurance/international-travel-insurance/additional-health-insurance)

Medical insurance coverage is required for the duration of the program, so verify your plan’s coverage dates if you have any doubts.

Students on Brown/CASA-sponsored programs must provide the Office of International Programs with information regarding their insurance policy via the Horizons database.

Here are some questions to keep in mind as you consider health insurance options for your time abroad:

- Will the plan cover hospitalization for accidents and illnesses for the entire period while I’m abroad? (Some policies provided by a parent’s employer might cover medical expenses for brief stays abroad but not for the full term of a study abroad program.)
- Will the plan cover doctor visits and medication prescribed abroad?
- 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 expenses up front 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.
- When does the plan begin and end?
- 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? (It has been our experience that international students must arrange for coverage with a company in their home country. Most of the policies we have looked at do not cover international students traveling in a country other than the U.S.)
- Will this insurance cover me in the U.S. for the insured term if I decide, for medical or other reasons, to return before the end of the program? (If students have a serious accident or illness abroad, they may need to return to the U.S. for further care; it is therefore important that the student carry coverage that applies not only abroad, but in the U.S. during the study abroad period as well.)
- Does the plan cover pre-existing medical conditions?
- Does the coverage meet the minimum coverage amounts required by the host country?

Health Care Payments and Reimbursement
You should inquire with your insurance company about its international policies prior to leaving for your semester abroad. Carry a few blank claim forms with you in case they should be needed while you are abroad.
Keep in mind that should medical attention be required abroad, it may be necessary for you to have sufficient cash on hand to make payment at the time of treatment. Many overseas health providers will not process U.S. insurance claims and will expect payment at the time of treatment. You and your family must be prepared to meet medical expenses up front, should you incur them. 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 a receipt to submit with your insurance claim for reimbursement upon your return to the U.S.

**Emergency Travel Assistance and Evacuation Services**

All students are covered by International SOS Worldwide Assistance & Emergency Evacuation Services. The services provided by International SOS range from telephone advice and referrals to full-scale evacuation by private air ambulance. The SOS network of multilingual specialists operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year from SOS Alarm Centers around the world.

It is important to understand that although International SOS will offer you travel, medical and security advice and services, as well as on-line access to information which many insurance companies do not offer, **International SOS is not health insurance**. Requests for reimbursement for medical care received while abroad should be submitted to your health insurance provider. International SOS also offers **free emotional support for students abroad**, including a limited number of counseling sessions available either in person or through internet/phone connection. Contact ISOS directly if you wish to use this service.

**When you contact SOS, you must reference the Brown Group membership #:** 11BSGC000031. If you have questions about coverage, please call the Brown University Office of Insurance and Purchasing Services at 401.863.9481 or visit the International SOS website at [www.internationalsos.com](http://www.internationalsos.com). You can access up-to-date reports on more than 170 countries worldwide on health issues, medical care, and vaccination requirements via the International SOS website.

Should an emergency arise while you are abroad, your first contact should always be with your program/faculty leader. If you are traveling, and/or in a situation where you are not able to reach your on-site program contact, you should contact International SOS, who will work to meet your needs immediately and contact the University’s on-call staff in the U.S. while coordinating services with Brown University. You may also contact the Brown University Public Safety Office at 401.863.3322.

**You can find your nearest International SOS Assistance (Alarm) Centers at [https://www.internationalsos.com/locations](https://www.internationalsos.com/locations). Please be aware that some of International SOS’s services carry additional charges. Should you request a service which has an additional charge, International SOS will inform you in advance and will require a credit card number in order to activate the service. If, in the event of an emergency, Brown University provides the financial guarantee to International SOS on your behalf, the University will bill you for this charge upon receipt of the actual amount by ISOS. Please know that such charges may not be billed until after you return from your program abroad.**

**Personal Property Insurance**

Consider obtaining insurance against loss, theft, or damage to your personal possessions while abroad. You may be covered by your family’s homeowner’s policy or rental insurance. The OIP does not insure the personal property of students on a study abroad program,
Section III: Health and Medical Care

Medical Information
Students on a Brown/CASA-sponsored program are required to complete an online Health Information Form and Permission to Share Information/Health Conditions Agreement as part of their pre-departure materials (in Horizons). Should the need arise during your study abroad experience, it is important that the OIP be made aware of any medical or emotional problems, past or current, that might affect you during your time abroad. The information you provide will remain confidential and will be shared with on-site program staff/faculty leaders, and - if pertinent to your safety and well-being - with your parent/guardian, and/or other appropriate professionals.

Students are required to notify the OIP of any relevant changes in their health that occurs prior to the start of the program. Once on site, please notify the program leader(s) or staff of any illness/medical condition so that they are informed and can help you if problems arise.

Chronic or Long-Term Health Problems
If you have a physical or psychological problem that requires constant treatment or surveillance by a doctor, you should consult with your physician about studying abroad. For example, if you are on medication, discuss with your physician the type of care you may need while abroad and the best way to continue your regimen. Seriously consider the consequences of stress from cultural adjustment and relying on different medical practices.

You should realize that the range of health care and counseling and support services available to you at your home campus will not be available overseas. Identifying your health issues prior to studying off campus will help you determine what resources will or will not be available while abroad. If you have questions about the resources available at your program site, please contact the OIP.

Prescriptions and Over-the-Counter Medicine
If you use prescription medication, bring enough with you to last for your time abroad, along with a doctor's note and the original prescription to avoid problems with customs. Keep in mind that some prescriptions are unavailable, or are illegal, in some countries – research this well before departure, discuss alternative medication options with your doctor, and bring supporting documentation from your doctor if needed. If you wear glasses or contact lenses, you may also want to bring an extra pair with you and bring copies of your prescription, in case you lose or damage your original pair. Contact your doctor's office and health insurance providers to find out how to receive extended prescriptions. Mailing prescription drugs abroad is not advisable, as they may be confiscated by customs and require payment for you to obtain them. Bring a downscaled version of your medicine cabinet in addition to a first-aid kit. Stock up on non-prescription drugs you are likely to use, such as antacids, pain relief, anti-diuretics, etc. In certain countries it might make more sense to research the equivalents of non-prescription drugs you are most likely to use and buy them on-site. Visit https://www.brown.edu/academics/college/special-programs/international-study/taking-medication-abroad for further information.

Cultural Adjustment and Stress
Living in a foreign environment can be exhilarating and at the same time, stressful. Adjusting to a new culture and/or communicating in a foreign language require flexibility and the ability to try and fail without much concern. While studying abroad, mild physical or psychological disorders that may be under control at home can be exacerbated under the additional stresses of adjusting to a new culture. If you find the adjustment period to be challenging, please tell the program leader(s) or staff.
Health Care Overseas
The manner in which medical help is obtained, the way patients are treated, the conditions of overseas medical facilities, and how health care is afforded often are very different from U.S. practice. Be prepared for the reality that U.S. health-care values, assumptions, and methods are not universally practiced. Even the notions regarding the onset of illness or points at which expert attention is required will vary from country to country and from culture to culture. If you need a medical attention overseas, ask for a hospital or clinic with English-speaking doctors or staff so that you are better able to receive proper care.

Immunizations
Check your health records to be sure that your childhood immunizations are up to date before any travel abroad. When you entered college, it is likely that your home institution required you to update your childhood immunization. For Brown students, these immunizations would include measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus/diphtheria, Hepatitis B, varicella (chicken pox) and the meningococcal vaccine (recommended). For more information, please see the Brown Health Services at http://brown.edu/Student_Services/Health_Services/services/injections.html. Visiting students should consult their college’s student health center.

You may also need immunizations and health screenings specific to your program location and/or other travel destinations. It may take a quite a while to complete all immunizations for your travel, so plan ahead. The Centers for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov/travel) provides the most recent health information by country. Immunization requirements can change depending on prevailing health conditions, so please recheck those requirements with the CDC before beginning any round of immunizations. As each student’s personal health situation differs, we recommend you consult with your personal physician or campus health services about the advisability of receiving certain medications and immunizations.

Note: It is your responsibility to obtain the necessary immunizations and health screenings for your term abroad. If you plan personal travel to other countries before, during, or after the program, it is also your responsibility to know which immunizations and medical tests are required. Health insurance may not cover the cost of travel immunizations. Please check with your insurance carrier to determine coverage.

HIV/AIDS Testing
Some countries may require an HIV/AIDS test before letting you enter (such as Russia). Please check into this before you arrive at the airport because they will turn you away. For a list of HIV/AIDS testing requirements based on country, and specific entry/exit requirements for U.S. citizens, please see http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html.

Health Advisories
If you are traveling to remote areas, be aware of local health conditions abroad and of any public health service recommendations or advisories. For current health conditions and recommended vaccinations contact local health care providers (such as a travel clinic at a local hospital), the country desk at the State Department (tel. 202.647.4000), or the Centers for Disease Control at http://www.cdc.gov/. For more information on Health and Medical Care issues related to study abroad, see the OIP website.
**Overseas Blood Transfusions and Blood Products**
If you require surgery overseas and need a blood transfusion, remember that not all countries require the same standards for screening HIV antibodies in donated blood. If you are injured or ill while abroad, avoid or postpone any blood transfusion unless it is absolutely necessary. If you do need blood, try to ensure that screened blood is used.

**Food and Water**
One of the most common ailments for travelers is diarrhea caused by contaminated food or drink. Standards for hygiene and health vary by country, and the safety of food and water may differ considerably. You can find CDC information, advice, and precautions to take concerning Safe Food and Water here: [wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/safe-food-water.htm](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/safe-food-water.htm).

**AIDS and other STIs**
AIDS is a serious problem and still spreading throughout the world, but especially in developing countries. If you choose to be sexually active overseas, please be careful. Although most countries sell condoms, they may not be manufactured and/or stored properly so as to provide maximum protection against STIs. Always use a latex condom, preferably treated with a potent spermicide. Both men and women should bring their own supply of condoms and store them in a cool, dry place.

**Malaria, Dengue Fever, Zika and Other Mosquito-related diseases**
Malaria is a serious illness and sometimes a deadly disease. Prevention of malaria involves protecting yourself against mosquito bites and taking antimalarial medicines. Risk of infection varies by country/region, time of year, and duration of stay. However, all travelers to countries where malaria is present may be at risk of infection. The CDC provides references and resources about malaria prevention and treatment at [http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/](http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/).

The dengue virus is a leading cause of illness and death in the tropics and subtropics. The virus is transmitted by mosquitoes. There are not yet any dengue vaccines - the most effective protective measures are those that avoid mosquito bites. When infected, early recognition and prompt supportive treatment can substantially lower the risk of medical complications and death. The CDC provides resources about dengue at [www.cdc.gov/dengue/](http://www.cdc.gov/dengue/).

Zika is a mosquito-borne virus that has no vaccine or cure. Symptoms include fever, rash, joint pain, headache, muscle pain, and conjunctivitis (pink eye). Approximately 80% of those infected may not have symptoms. Women who are, or plan to become, pregnant are most at risk of complications. The virus can also be sexually transmitted from men to their partner(s). Students in areas with active mosquito-borne transmission of Zika should follow mosquito bite prevention tips: use of an EPA-approved bug spray with at least 20% DEET, sleeping under a mosquito net, staying in air-conditioned buildings with window screens, using condoms if sexually active, and wearing long-sleeved shirts and pants. See the CDC website ([www.cdc.gov/zika](http://www.cdc.gov/zika)) for details.

**Health Emergencies**
The Office of Overseas Citizen Services in the State Department’s Bureau of Consular Affairs may be reached for assistance with emergencies at 1.888.407.4747, if calling from the U.S. or Canada, or 202.501.4444, if calling from overseas.

**Health Resources**
- RI Department of Health: Travel Clinic Listings: [http://www.health.ri.gov/for/travelers](http://www.health.ri.gov/for/travelers)
Section IV: Academic Policies & Procedures

Students participating in study abroad programs coordinated through Brown University’s Office of International Programs are subject to the academic policies of the host university (where applicable), Brown/CASA faculty leader(s), and the OIP.

Accommodations/Disability Information
Students who are studying on a Brown/CASA-sponsored program and who may need accommodations or services due to a disability or medical condition should contact Student and Employee Accessibility Services (SEAS) to discuss their needs and begin the registration process. Visit the SEAS website: http://brown.edu/Student_Services/Office_of_Student_Life/dss/. Students should notify the OIP as early as possible in order to allow time to review the specific requests.

Disability-related requests for accommodations and services are evaluated individually, based on documentation and completion of the registration process. Please be aware that the level of accessibility, services, and accommodation to which you have access at your home campus may not be available at the program site and host universities.

Course Enrollment
Brown students participating in Brown summer programs (i.e., Bologna, Comillas, Russia) will receive information on registering for their summer course(s) from the OIP. The OIP handles any course overrides on behalf of the students, but Brown students are expected to register themselves via Banner. For non-Brown students participating in a Brown summer program, the OIP will handle their registration. CASA program (Dublin) students do not need to pre-register for their course(s).

Grading Requirements
Brown students must earn a letter grade of C or higher (a C- grade will not transfer) in order to receive credit for a summer course. You cannot take summer courses abroad S/NC. Grades are submitted by the program leader(s) and placed on the Brown transcript after the program ends. Non-Brown students must take course(s) for a letter grade, and check with their home school regarding their policies and procedures for the transfer of grades and credits.

Visiting students on Brown/CASA programs should work with their home institution to ensure that they are meeting their academic requirements. Brown will ensure that all transcripts from Brown/CASA programs will be sent to the appropriate office at their home institution.

Early Return: Withdrawal or Dismissal from the Program
If you decide to withdraw from a program or return to the U.S. before the completion of the program due to personal, medical or other issues, contact the Office of International Programs as soon as possible so that we may discuss with you the policies and procedures for doing so:

• There is no guarantee that you will receive passing grades or credit for your course work abroad if you withdraw early.
• If a program is officially closed by Brown, faculty will evaluate work completed and a determination of credit transfer will be made.
• In the case of premature departure from a study abroad program, documentation of work completed abroad will be required. Course syllabi, papers, examinations, evaluations from instructors and a recommendation from the director of the program are appropriate forms.
• No refunds are given for withdrawals after the program has started.
Section V: Fees & Financial Matters

Program Charges and Billing
Brown/CASA will bill students for program and housing fees to cover programs costs. These costs vary by program. Students should also budget for other expenses not included in the bill, such as travel, meals not covered in the program fees, and personal expenses. For estimated cost information visit the OIP summer website at www.brown.edu/academics/college/special-programs/international-study/programs/summer.

Bills for Brown programs (Bologna, Comillas, Russia) are issued by the Bursar’s Office and will be sent to students electronically [please contact the Office of the Bursar (401-863-2484) if you have questions about your summer bill]. CASA program (Dublin) students will be billed by CASA directly.

Brown University Office of International Programs Withdrawal and Refund Policy
A $500 non-refundable deposit must be made upon your acceptance to a Brown/CASA-administered summer program. For a withdrawal to be considered official, the student must notify Brown University Office of International Programs in writing. Withdrawal policies and fees are located in the OIP Horizons system and were sent to program participants in their acceptance email message (as a link).

NOTE: For students who leave because of a medical or family emergency, the same refund policy applies. A student who is suspended, dismissed, or withdraws while under investigation for misconduct, will not have payments refunded.

Financial Aid
The OIP must inform the Financial Aid office when a Brown student receives an OIP summer grant, so that the grant can be reflected on the student record. Brown students may also qualify for summer loan(s) – interested students should contact the Brown Financial Aid Office to determine their eligibility for summer loans. Financial aid awards will be based on the program’s cost of attendance, including airfare and living costs. Scholarships from sources other than Brown may be available to undergraduates for study abroad on summer programs. – contact the OIP for details. Non-Brown students should check with their home school about financial aid options.

Money Matters While Abroad
Before you leave, speak with someone who has lived in your country and find out what is the best way of banking. Never send cash or traveler’s checks through the mail.

- **Wire transfer:** U.S. banks can telex money to foreign banks. This process can be complete in a matter of hours/days and there is a fee.
- **American Express:** You don’t need an American Express card to take advantage of their services. American Express can wire money from their American office to one of their overseas offices, where it can be picked up with appropriate identification. Since not all American Express offices can prepare money orders or cable money, you should call your local American Express office for a list of offices abroad that can provide these services.
- **ATM cards:** You may be able to use your ATM card to withdraw money from your bank account in the U.S. This is an easy way to access your money while abroad. Check with your bank to find out where your ATM card can be used, if they have partner banks abroad (which may have reduced fees for withdrawals), what fees are involved, and ensure that your PIN has the appropriate number of digits for ATMs in your country.
- **Credit Cards:** Be sure to acquire a PIN for your credit card before you leave the U.S. Keep in mind that some vendors abroad may no longer accept ’swipe’ type credit cards, as they may
only process transactions with ‘chip’ cards. If your card does not have a ‘chip,’ it is a good idea to have some extra cash on hand. Some banks may charge a fee for each purchase/transaction abroad. Credit cards make foreign currency transactions easy and they are invaluable in a financial emergency. However, use them wisely! With credit cards it is easy to overspend. Also remember that you will be hit with finance charges for cash advances on your credit card. Make a cash advance only if you have no other option for getting money.

- **Travelers Checks:** While travelers checks are a safe option of bringing funds into your study abroad destination, they are becoming increasingly cumbersome for financial transactions.

**Note:** Contact your bank and credit card companies to inform them you will be using your card overseas to make purchases. This ensures they are aware you will be using your credit/ATM card abroad, so that they do not freeze your account. For credit/ATM cards, write down all of your bank contact numbers and keep copies of the cards (back and front) secured in a safe place for reference in case your card(s) are lost or stolen.

**Traveling with Money**
It is recommended that you buy some local currency before you leave the U.S. You want to be prepared for any unforeseen circumstances or in case the banks are closed when you arrive. While traveling, a **money belt** worn under your shirt or pants will allow you to keep your passport, money, and credit cards on your person at all times.

**Budgeting**
Learning how to budget your money while abroad will take some time and careful observation.

- Have a budget and know what you can spend. Keep a daily expense account to be able to plan a budget for your entire stay.
- You will probably spend more money on arrival than at any other point. Be prepared. You are still unfamiliar with where to find the best bargains and with the exchange rate.
- Some small businesses may not accept debit or credit cards, or ‘swipe’ credit cards. Depending on the country, you should be able to take out money from local banks or purchase traveler’s checks in the local currency if still accepted.
- Be alert for special rates and discounts wherever you go and know what is available in terms of youth or student discounts with your ID.
- If you travel before or after your program, consider staying in youth or student hostels. Unlike hotels, which cater to tourists and business travelers, hostels are inexpensive, usually dorm-style hotels for young people found in many countries of the world.

**Currency**
Keep an eye on the exchange rate. Try not to think in terms of dollars, although when you first arrive, it is expected. Never exchange money outside of official banks or exchange offices. You can check exchange rates and currency conversions at [http://www.xe.com/](http://www.xe.com/).
Section VI: Travel Information

Travel Arrangements
Students studying on Brown/CASA programs are responsible for making their own flight arrangements. Some programs have a specified arrival date and place, so that all program participants can be met as a group by program staff. If this is the case, it is essential that you make your flight or other travel arrangements so that you can rendezvous on this designated date and place.

Do not leave travel arrangements to the last minute. Book your travel as soon as you know when and where you have to arrive and when you have a good estimate of your return date. OIP strongly recommends that you book a round-trip, not just a one-way, reservation. In many instances, a round-trip ticket is required either as part of the visa application process or by immigration officials as proof that you are leaving the country at the end of your stay. Check to see if changing a return flight date carries a penalty. One-way return flights are usually very expensive and you may not be able to get a return reservation that suits your needs. Flying stand-by can also be risky.

Travel Resources

Air Travel
Orbitz: www.orbitz.com
Cheap Tickets: www.cheaptickets.com
Travelocity: www.travelocity.com
STA Travel: www.statravel.com
www.studentuniverse.com
www.skyscanner.com

Rail Tickets
• British Rail  www.britrail.net
• IrishRail: www.irishrail.ie
• Eurail: www.eurail.com
• InterRail: www.interrail.eu/

Road Travel
• Association for Safe International Road Travel (ASIRT) - www.asirt.org
Offers road travel reports, seasonal hazards, safety tips and common driver behaviors for various countries. However, it is not recommended that students drive abroad, especially if unfamiliar with the location and driving laws.
• **International Student Identity Card** [www.isic.org/](http://www.isic.org/)
This card is recognized all over Europe and will give you student discounts for museums, hotels, and travel, although some countries offer more student discounts than others. It also provides basic accident and sickness insurance coverage when traveling outside the U.S.

• **Hostelling International Membership Card** [www.hihostels.com/web/membership.en.htm](http://www.hihostels.com/web/membership.en.htm)
This card is honored at most International Youth Hostels.

• **Lonely Planet Online** [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)
Lonely Planet travel guides provide the latest travel information sourced from LP authors, researchers and fellow travelers.

**Travel Advisories**

• **U.S. State Department Travel Information**
[https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html)
Summary information about every country in the world, including travel advisories, crime and safety reports, terrorist activity, political disturbances, and traveler checklists.

**Section VII: Student Conduct & Safety**

**Personal Conduct**

Brown University/CASA reserves the right to rescind admission to, or continuation in, any program if an applicant’s academic or disciplinary record is not satisfactory.

• All participants in study abroad are expected to abide by the tenets of community behavior as stated in the [Brown University Student Code of Conduct](https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Student_Affairs/Code_of_Conduct/).

• The Office of International Programs reserves the right to invoke University procedures to address any alleged student behavior which, if after appropriate review, is found to have violated Brown policies as outlined in the University’s Student Code of Conduct. Similarly, University proceedings will not negate any actions taken by the host institution or country.

• In addition, the Office of International Programs reserves the right to dismiss a student and require that s/he leave immediately if in our judgment the student behaves in a manner which endangers him/herself, others on the program or the program’s continued operations. **Illegal drug use is grounds for immediate dismissal.**

**Safety Precautions**

It is important to know of any safety concerns before you leave for your host country. The U.S. government monitors the political conditions in every country around the world. For current information, advisories, or warnings contact the State Department in Washington, DC. Call 202.647.4000 or consult [https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html).

For information on traffic-related safety conditions abroad, including bus safety information in your host country, please consult the Association for Safe International Road Travel at [www.asirt.org](http://www.asirt.org). However, it is not recommended that students drive abroad, especially if unfamiliar with the location and driving laws.
General Safety Tips
While you are abroad take the same precautions you would take in any large U.S. city you are not familiar with.

- Do not walk in unfamiliar areas of the city at night or accept rides from strangers.
- Be careful with money in public just as you would be in this country.
- Become a professional people watcher. Watching the local residents and their habits is your best guide to safe behavior. The less you stand out the safer you will be.
- Learn about the customs and local laws of your country. Remember that you are subject to their laws and are not protected by U.S. laws.
- Learn to walk the way the locals do. People are able to spot an American immediately by their posture and walk. And, stop carrying your American backpack around the city with you. Wearing a backpack is almost as bad as wearing a red bull's-eye.
- Never leave your bags unattended. Never let a stranger watch your luggage while you go to the bathroom or purchase a ticket.
- Walk away immediately from any suspicious persons or packages and report them to the authorities after you are a safe distance away.
- Make two photocopies of your passport ID page, airlines tickets, and credit/ATM cards. Leave one copy at home. Bring the second copy with you in case something gets lost or stolen abroad. Bring extra passport size photos for obtaining student IDs abroad, acquiring a replacement passport if needed, or for obtaining a visa abroad.
- Beware of pickpockets and con artists. The most common sites for purse or camera snatchings are central train stations, public transportation, tourist sites, or crowded shopping areas. Thieves often strike when people are distracted: making a phone call or checking a train schedule, with a bag left unsecured or casually left at one’s feet.
- If anything is lost or stolen report it to the local police. Keep a copy of the police report for insurance purposes, or in case you need to replace your passport or student visa. Report the loss of travelers checks to the nearest issuing office; passport to both the local police and then to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate to apply for a new one; airline tickets to airline or travel agent.
- Before going to another country, check the country’s travel advisories and read safety, health, and travel recommendations for your destination. The State Department SMART travel section is very useful (http://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en.html). Register your trip with ISOS (https://www.internationalsos.com) before you depart.
- Be sure your program/faculty director has your contact information and knows where/when you will be traveling. Give a relative/friend a copy of your travel itinerary and contact information.
- Be sure your cell phone will work where you are traveling and keep it with you always - fully charged and turned on. Keep your program/faculty leader’s phone number handy in case you need it. Respond immediately to any calls, text, or emails from Brown/CASA and/or your program staff/faculty.

U.S. State Department “Smart Travel Enrollment Program”
The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service provided by the U.S. government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming time abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency. STEP also allows American residing abroad to get routine information from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. Please take a few moments to register for this service at http://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en.html.
The U.S. Embassy or Consulate WILL:

- Issue you a new passport or replace one that is lost/stolen.
- Contact the State Department at their expense for further instructions if you cannot verify your citizenship.
- Help you find medical or legal services in the case of an emergency and help notify friends or family members.
- Tell you what to do if something is stolen and have funds wired on your behalf, if necessary.

The U.S. Embassy or Consulate WILL NOT:

- Give or lend money or cash checks.
- Serve as a travel agent or information bureau.
- Act as interpreters or couriers.
- Provide bail or get you out of jail.
- Arrange for free medical or legal services.

Local Laws

Outside the U.S., you are responsible for obeying all host country laws and penalties, which can be different, and more stringent, than here. Do not assume you will be treated gently because you are an American. Sometimes, punishments for Americans are harsher than for the local population. Be aware that when you are in a foreign country you are subject to its laws and not protected by U.S. laws. Ignorance of the law is not an excuse. It is important that you learn about local laws and regulations and obey them. Approximately 3,000 Americans are arrested abroad each year. One-third are arrested on drug charges. Many countries do not provide a jury trial or accept bail, which could mean a lengthy pre-trial detention. In addition, prison conditions in many countries can be extremely harsh and officials may not speak English. You could face very stiff fines or sentences if found guilty of a crime.

It is unlikely that Brown OIP or any study abroad program will be able to intervene on your behalf if you are arrested or prosecuted for any illegal violation. If you become involved in a legal problem, please contact your program staff/faculty and Brown’s OIP immediately.

Substance Abuse

Alcohol or drug use abroad carries serious consequences. Use and abuse of drugs and alcohol bring increased risks of possible injury, assault, and even death, as well as legal penalties. Alcohol abuse abroad may occur because of a lower drinking age, a mistaken impression of how alcohol is used abroad, or a desire to fit in with the local culture and community. Most countries have very strict drug laws. Long trials, prison sentences, and even the death penalty can result from drug possession. Even if you find yourself somewhere that drugs are available and you are not using the drugs - but others around you are - you could be in big trouble. You should leave immediately if this happens. Please keep in mind that if you violate local alcohol and drug laws, there is very little the U.S. government or your study abroad program can do for you. See the U.S. State Department website for further information. NB: Illegal drug use is grounds for immediate dismissal from your program.

Sexual Harassment and Study Abroad

Cultural difference in interactions on romantic or sexual levels can be a problem area: some behaviors might be very inappropriate in the U.S., but considered perfectly acceptable in the culture in which you are living, and vice-versa. Some of the new behaviors will be relatively easy to adjust to, but others pose more of a problem. Sexual harassment is a particularly difficult area because of the extreme variance in acceptable behavior between cultures. Combined with the different social and
legal responses to such behavior, sexual harassment when abroad can be a difficult scenario to deal with; fortunately there are ways to prevent or lessen the negative consequences.

In the United States many people believe that it is possible for a non-sexual relationship (i.e., friendship, companionship) to exist between men and women. However in many other cultures this belief can be just the opposite; stated simply it is difficult or impossible for non-sexual relationships to exist between men and women. Until one is fully aware of the cultural norms combined with the verbal and non-verbal clues that he or she is sending, one must be very mindful of the emotions and expectations that are evolving. In our society it is not uncommon to rebuff an unwanted sexual encounter by saying, “I’m seeing someone,” or “I have a boyfriend/girlfriend.” While the contextual clues for that type of statement are generally understood in the U.S. to mean, “Leave me alone” or "I’m not interested,” in another cultural context it might actually be understood as an encouraging response rather than a signal of discouragement. Clear, direct, and unambiguous responses may be difficult for many Americans to deliver, but these strong responses are crucial for clear understanding in a cross-cultural situation. “I do not want to go out with you, please do not ask me again” is a much more direct and stronger way of expressing your true thoughts about the situation.

Informal resolution of your sexual harassment problem may be possible. You are encouraged to contact the appropriate person on your program to report any behaviors that you feel are sexually harassing. They should be able to assist you in sorting out the situation in a culturally appropriate way. If these program representatives are unable to assist you, please contact the OIP.

**Interpersonal Violence and Sexual Assault**

Students who have experienced interpersonal violence, sexual assault/harassment, or stalking may seek confidential advocacy and support from Brown’s Sexual Harassment and Assault Response advocates (24 hours a day, every day) at 401-863-6000. They may also seek information about their resource and reporting options from the Title IX Office at 401-863-6000 or brown.edu/titleixoffice.

**Dealing with Personal/Family Tragedy While Abroad**

It is unlikely that your family will experience a tragedy while you are away. However, if such an event occurs, you may feel helpless and alone being so far away from home – that is not the case. Below are some ideas to help you during such a difficult time.

- Report the tragedy to your faculty leader/program staff as soon as possible. They must know if you plan to return home for a short or extended stay.
- Contact the Office of International Programs at Brown so that we know about the tragedy and your plans. We may also be able to assist you if necessary.
- Ask your faculty leader or program staff about counseling services that are available in your local community.
- Share with friends or your host family for support.

**Important Contact Information**

As a precautionary measure, keep emergency contact numbers of various family members in one place (such as in your phone) so that you can access them quickly. In addition, it is always important to keep contact information for your host family, faculty/program director, and the OIP. If you are traveling over weekends or breaks, please be sure to provide the faculty/program staff with your cell phone number and any travel itinerary in case they need to contact you while you are traveling.
Section VIII – Cultural Adjustment

Most people will experience some difficulties adjusting to their new country and culture. This is totally normal, and should be expected. Cultural adjustment, or “culture shock” as it is commonly called, comes from being cut off from things with which you are familiar. Culture shock doesn’t result from one event, and it doesn’t strike suddenly, or with any cause. It builds slowly from a series of small events. It also comes from living and working in an ambiguous situation. Living abroad will make you question your values, which you may have taken as absolutes before. You won’t be able to identify culture shock while you’re struggling through it. But with patience, you’ll be able to overcome it and grow in the process.

Stages of Cultural Adjustment
While people react differently to the changes, studies have shown that there are distinct phases that almost everyone will experience. These stages are:

1. Initial Euphoria
Everyone arrives excited about their new country and the adventures that lie ahead. This is often called the “honeymoon period”. This period may last anywhere from one week to a few months, but it does fade away and a let down is inevitable.

2. Irritability and Hostility
After you’ve been in a country for a while you’ll be taking a more active role in your community. Little differences and problems will seem like huge catastrophes. This is the most difficult part of being abroad. Some people will want to withdraw; others will act aggressively when faced with a situation.

3. Gradual Adjustment
The crisis period will eventually fade too. You’ll be feeling more at home in your surroundings. You’ll begin to interpret some of the cultural cues you hadn’t noticed before. With this sense of familiarity your sense of humor will also return.

4. Adaptation
You now feel at home in your new country and can function in both cultures. You have learned new behaviors and manners, and have shed some of your old ones. You’ve done such a good job of adjusting to your new country that now you can anticipate experiencing “reverse culture shock” once you return to the U.S.

Help for Culture Shock
Since culture shock is inevitable, there is not much you can do to avoid it. But there are things you can do to minimize the impact:

• Remember that culture shock happens to everyone who lives abroad. You’re not the only one who has gone through this.
• Write a journal to keep a record of your first impressions.
• Try to look for logical reasons behind everything in your new culture that seems strange or confusing. Try to look at things from the host country perspective. For every behavior you don’t understand, try to figure out what its underlying value is.
• Write a list of all the positive aspects of your new culture and try concentrating on the positive, and not the negative.
• Avoid making negative comments about the local people. These ideas only reinforce your feelings of superiority, and will prevent you from ever adapting to your host country.
• Avoid Americans or other foreigners who are having a rough time adjusting to the country. Do not join in on rag sessions on your host culture. Instead, find someone who has been there for a while, has successfully gone through culture shock, and has a positive attitude. This person will help you get perspective on the host culture.
• Make friends with host nationals. Having friends will help you learn about your new culture, and give you someone to listen to your problems.
• Keep active, don’t sit at home and feel sorry for yourself. Get out of the house, and you may return refreshed and with a new perspective.
• Have faith in yourself that you will get over culture shock. You will feel better over time.

General Cultural Adjustment Resources

• What’s up with Culture? http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/
  An online cultural training resource for study abroad to equip you with the skills, attitudes, and behaviors you need in order to function in your new and unfamiliar environment.
• The Values Americans Live By, by L. Robert Kohls, http://www.claremontmckenna.edu/pages/faculty/alce/extra/American_values.html
  This article is a good place to start researching your own culture and learn what implications this may have for your experiences abroad.
• Culture Shock
  The Center for Global Education’s online guide to study abroad.

Diversity Considerations Abroad

Students abroad face a new cultural context that includes different historical and cultural understandings of race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability. Customs, beliefs, laws, facilities, and social practices are likely different than in the U.S. Before you depart, think about what it is going to be like to be "you" abroad, the various ways you might identify yourself, and how these identities define you in the U.S. These definitions might change in your host country, and you may encounter stereotypes, questions, and curiosity surrounding your identities. Think about your expectations versus what the reality might be abroad, and be prepared if your experiences lead to feelings of frustration, isolation, and fatigue. However, while you may face challenges, remember that being in a new cultural context is a wonderful opportunity for change and growth - and it will provide you with a new perspective on the structure of different societies.

Below are a few things you can do to prepare yourself for potential culture shock:

• Read about the host country’s history, culture, laws, and demographics
• Reach out to students who have studied abroad in your host culture (OIP can provide names of former study abroad students)
• Make use of online resources that offer advice, personal narratives, and other information
• Visit the OIP website (http://www.brown.edu/academics/college/special-programs/international-study/student-resources/while-abroad/diversity-while-abroad)
Resources

Students of Color; Diversity; Ethnicity and Race Abroad

All Abroad, Helping All Students to Study Abroad, Diversity Resources:
http://www.allabroad.us/diversity-resources.php
Diversity Abroad: http://www.diversityabroad.com/
“Top 10 Reasons for African American Students to go Abroad”:
http://www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/study/articles/studyjul1.shtml
The Project for Learning Abroad, Training and Outreach (PLATO):
http://www.globaled.us/plato/index.html

Accessibility

Mobility International USA, Americans Going Abroad:
http://www.miusa.org/plan/americans-abroad

Access Abroad:
https://umabroad.umn.edu/students/identity/disabilities/

First Generation College Students

How to Figure out Study Abroad as a First-Gen College Student:

LGBTQ

LGBT Student Information for Education Abroad (UC Santa Cruz):
https://studyabroad.ucsc.edu/students/diversity/queers.html

NAFSA: Association of International Educators Rainbow Special Interest Group (SIG):
http://www.rainbowsig.org

Amnesty International Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity:

OutRight Action International:
http://www.iglhrc.org

Women Travelers

JourneyWoman:
http://www.journeywoman.com/

Her Own Way:
Re-entry Shock
One of the greatest challenges of studying abroad is coming back home. Many people expect to have difficulty adjusting when they go abroad, but no one expects to have problems when they get back home. This is what’s called “re-entry shock”. You’ve just had an amazing experience abroad and you want to talk about it. Unfortunately, your parents and your friends may not be as interested as you would prefer. You’ve learned about a new culture and, chances are, you’ve changed some of your old values and ideas, and you may have trouble re-assimilating into American culture.

Life at Brown or at your home college may look completely new to you after spending time abroad. Many students have difficulties readjusting to the hectic schedule and the stress on campus. Again, re-entry shock is inevitable and even the best-prepared students will have some problems getting back into the swing of things. These suggestions might help you during your first few months back:

• Remember what you did when you were abroad and adjusting to your new country. Use those same techniques that helped you cope then to assist you with your readjustment now.
• Play the role of the observer, not a judge. It’s easy to criticize, much more difficult to understand. You are looking at American culture from a very unique standpoint now. Take your time and think about what you see.
• Expect to feel frustration and depression. Knowing this will happen will not prevent these feelings, but it will keep you from feeling overwhelmed.
• Take your time. Don’t rush into big decisions if you’re depressed.
• Become active with the OIP or with the study abroad office at your home school. The OIP sponsors several activities for Brown students, including:

  • **Returned Student Events** are held each semester to welcome you back to campus.
  • **Peer Advisors** are hired to help staff the OIP Resource Library, serve as primary contacts for students interested in study abroad, and to provide administrative support to the OIP staff. Job openings are posted on Brown’s student employment website.
  • Join campus groups or activities with an international focus.
  • Connect with the local international community off-campus through cultural events, volunteering, and community service.
  • Go abroad again – consider other study abroad programs, fellowships, research options, international work opportunities, or internships abroad.
  • Integrate your study abroad experience into your program of study. Take courses that deal with issues you became interested in while abroad, or consider an independent study, senior thesis or research project that builds on your international experience.

Re-entry can be tough, but with time your re-entry shock will fade. Remember, you’re a veteran of culture shock. You’ve faced more difficult and trying situations and came out on top. You will readjust to life in the U.S. and to your home campus, too.
Section IX – Practical Tips

What to Bring
Plan your wardrobe carefully so that you take as few clothes as possible. Remember the golden rule of packing: Lay out everything you want to bring, get rid of half of those things, and bring twice as much money.

- **Don’t pack things that you can buy in your host country.** You will be able to buy toiletries and school supplies almost anywhere. You don’t need to weigh down your suitcase with bottles of your favorite shampoo. Be aware, however, that certain American favorites may not be sold abroad. Check the manufacturer’s website for information regarding where their products are sold.
- **Don’t pack a lot of clothes.** In most countries people wear clothing several times before washing it. You’ll also probably buy clothes while you are abroad so you’ll need to save room in your suitcase.
- Some countries might require more culturally-sensitive clothing. Keep this in mind when packing and aim to buy more clothing once in your host country.
- **Pack clothing that is versatile and sturdy.** You’ll want at least one set of nicer clothing for evenings out, but otherwise make sure your clothing can take a good hand washing. Good walking shoes or hiking boots are a must.
- Pack necessary prescription medicine, contraceptives, tampons, etc. Some of these items are not readily accessible overseas. Bring a copy of your prescription with the generic name of the drug in case you need to buy more (see prescription medication section of handbook).
- **Pack some things from home.** You’ll want to have pictures of your home, family and friends. This will make a big difference when you get homesick. Also, bring small gift(s) to give to your host family (if you will live in a homestay).

Clothing to Consider
Rainproof walking shoes
Flip-flops for the showers in hostels
Poncho/rain jacket
Bathing suit
Hat for protection against the sun, or the cold

Medicine and Toiletries
Prescription medicine (carry copy of prescription)
First aid kit
Contraceptives and condoms
Extra eyeglasses and sunglasses
Extra contact lenses and cleaning solutions
Tweezers, nail files/polish, etc.
Linens (if not provided by program site)
Towel/washcloth
Sunscreen

Gift Suggestions
Clothing and items (pens or pencils) with Brown logo.
Cookbooks with American recipes (pancakes, chocolate chip-cookies, etc.)
Non-perishable foods (maple syrup, peanut butter, etc.)
Baseball caps
CDs of American music (jazz, folk, pop, rock, etc.)
Calendar/book with U.S. scenery
U.S.-style paraphernalia (things from Disney World, Warner Brothers, NBA, NFL, etc.) Notepads with an American logo, or scenery

**Miscellaneous**
Watch (cheap, reliable)
Cell phone (make sure it will work overseas)
Camera and memory card
Flashlight
Address book
Journal
Books, guides, maps, train schedules, handbooks
English-language paperbacks (to read and swap)
Day Pack/small compressible knapsack
Stuff bags/plastic storage bags
Hostel sleepsack (a folded oversheet that is hemmed up the side)
Umbrella
Luggage lock and tags
Pacsafe (www.pac-safe.com): an expandable, lightweight pouch of steel mesh you wrap around your luggage then lock to something secure like a radiator, sink fitting, bed frame or train compartment luggage rack. (Pacsafe also sells other items, such as wallets, luggage, and other accessories)
Battery-operated alarm clock
iPod/MP3
Adapter and voltage converter/appropriate plugs (Note: most other countries use different electric current and plugs)
Small locks for backpacks or locking luggage to overhead train racks
Small sewing kit
Laptop locks

**Documents**
This handbook and OIP/host program documents
Passport and visa(s) and photocopies
Tickets and rail passes
International Student Identity Card and other student identification
Money belt or neck wallet
Cash, travelers checks, ATM/credit cards, calling card, etc.
Copies of the above for reporting lost or stolen cards and travelers checks
International SOS Card
Health insurance card
Staying in Touch
While you are abroad, keeping in touch with people back home will be very important. Trying to place international phone calls or send letters home can be frustrating and expensive. Email and other internet-based options are alternative ways to keep in touch. With patience, and a sense of humor, you will be able to communicate with home.

Postal Services Abroad
Depending on where you are and the quality of the postal service, surface mail can take weeks (in some cases, months) to arrive. Airmail can take up to a week just to arrive in the country, getting it to your local address will add additional days. Sending packages can be expensive, and there is no guarantee you will receive your package “untouched.” There is little you can do to change the postal system in your country. If you live in a city that has a small post office try to get to know your postal workers and make them your friends.

Telephone Services Abroad
Should you or your parents wish to make a direct-dial international call from the U.S. the usual procedure is:
1. Dial the International Access Code: 011
2. Dial the country code (normally a 2- or 3-digit number)
3. Dial the city code (normally a 1- to 5-digit number)
4. Dial the local number abroad

- For an operator-assisted call (i.e. person to person, collect, credit card, or billed to a third number), follow the foregoing instructions but use “01” instead of “011” for the International Access Code. The operator will then come on the line to ask for the information needed (e.g. the name of the person you are calling or your credit card number). Direct-dial calls made with the “011” International Access Code are the equivalent of station-to-station calls. Unless you expect your party to be immediately available, this can be a bit risky. No matter who answers at the other end, you will be billed the minimum charge based on the first few minutes of conversation.
- You can get the country and city codes you need from any long-distance telephone company or directory, or through an internet search for “Country Codes.”
- The subject of finding the cheapest and best ways to phone home while abroad generates a lively exchange on such posting boards as Lonely Planet’s “Thornetree” forum (thornetree.lonelyplanet.com), Rick Steve’s “Travel Forum” (www.ricksteves.com) or the forum at tripadvisor (www.tripadvisor.com/ForumHome). For someone with a specific question—say, “What is the best place to rent a cell phone in Rio?”—these forums are a good place to find up-to-the-minute information.
- Video chat through services like Facetime, Skype, Oovoo, or Google Hangout.
- Cards for Calls: One convenient option is to use an international phone card, such as AT&T cards or GlobalPhone cards from IDT (www.idt.net); with IDT cards, you can also create mailboxes for voicemail.
- Mobile Phones: Newer mobile phones that can operate on any of the three wireless frequencies in place worldwide are becoming more common in the U.S. Global roaming rates still remain high, between 99 cents and $4.99 a minute, so be sure to check with your phone company to learn all of the rules before you go abroad. Some providers offer international calling/texting package plans that may be less expensive, but you need to sign up for them.
- SIM Card: Buying a local SIM card and paying for minutes is a great option. Contact your current wireless carrier to determine if the equipment you currently use is SIM-compatible.
- Phone Rentals: You can rent globally-enabled cell phones from a company like TravelCell at www.travelcell.com or Cellhire at www.cellhire.com. Their long-term plans, for rentals of over
three months, generally cost $20 a month, plus optional insurance of around $8 a month; the
country-to-country rates are usually half of say T-Mobile’s. For those traveling where there is no
cell phone service, the companies offer satellite phone rentals. The cost is significantly more than
a regular cell phone, but incoming calls are usually free from anywhere in the world and outgoing
calls run around $2 a minute.

- **Local Cell Phone Purchase:** consider buying an inexpensive local phone/package on-site, such
  as a local pay-as-you go phone without a contract.
- **Whatever you do, do not use the 800-number posted on public and hotel telephones,**
  whether calling collect or with an ATM credit card number. Charges can be $30 to $50 for calls
  under five minutes.

**Note:** Many host families will not allow their exchange student to make long distance calls from their
family phone because of billing systems that do not itemize each call. If this is the case, you should
make other arrangements to make an international call.

**Remember** that you will most likely be operating in a different time zone while studying abroad.
Keep this in mind when making calls back home!

**Email**
At most sites, you should have an internet connection that will allow you to access your
Brown/home school email, although you may find connectivity less reliable than in the U.S. At
remote sites, email access may not be readily available. If you do not have direct access to a
network or other internet connection at your site, you will need to open an account with a local ISP
(Internet Service Provider) to be able to connect to the web. Once you have established a
connection, you can access your email through Gmail or any other account to which you had
selected to have your university email forwarded.

*Managing your Brown Profile and Email Account*
It’s a good idea to regularly check your Brown profile. You can do this online via myAccounts
(http://brown.edu/myaccount).

This allows you to:
- Change your password;
- Change where your email is delivered;
- Add alternate email addresses;
- Check your quota on the central email service;
- View and change your entry in the campus electronic directory

When you first enter myAccount, you will see your directory information. From this screen, you can
see what your entry will look like from on campus and off and also learn about how to change those
fields that are not editable on-line. Other functions in myAccount are available from the menu along
the left. If you discover irregularities in your profile, have questions or need assistance, please contact
the CIS Help Desk at 401.863.4357 or help@brown.edu.
Brown News
The Brown Daily Herald can be found online at: http://www.browndailyherald.com/

Storage
Brown Student Agencies partnered with College Storage RI to provide storage services to the Brown community; this service is primarily geared to summer storage. If you need to store belongings while you are studying abroad, other storage services like College Boxes provide boxes and supplies, pickup, storage, delivery, and shipping (national and international) services to and from school for college and university students.

International Shipping
If you bought too many things while you were abroad and don’t have the luggage space to bring everything back to the U.S., you should consider international shipping options. You could mail your belongings home through the local post office. Check out the rates on either the postal service’s website or at a local site. A second option is to use a private mailing service, such as UPS or DHL. Be sure to ask your program staff which service they recommend. Lastly, consider purchasing another travel bag to pack your belongings and bring them home with you; with some airlines, the extra baggage fee is relatively low.

Section X: Career Development & Study Abroad

The time spent studying abroad can also be time spent thinking about what you will do after you graduate. If you are thinking about pursuing an international career, you’ll want to plan ahead to best take advantage of opportunities. Check with counselors at your home school career office before you leave, or plan to email them while you are away.

Considering working abroad or is an international career in your future? Some things to think about…

Before you go…

Check with Alumni Relations to find alums who are living in the city/country where you’ll be. Brown students should note that there are Brown clubs in over 60 cities around the world.

Talk with current students who are back from your study site. The OIP can provide a contact list of returned students. Did any of them work or have an internship while there? If yes, did they do it during the program or after? How did they arrange it?

Prepare a resume. You never know when you will need it.

Meet with a counselor at your career development office for other ideas and resources.

While abroad…

- Maintain a “contacts” notebook of every interesting professional you meet. Don’t forget to get an email address.
- Contact alumni. Meet them at their place of business or socially. If you are in a city with a Brown Club, try to attend their events (if this is feasible on your program).
- Interested in teaching English in the future? Look for schools that teach English. Go check
them out. What qualifications do the teachers have?

- **If in a homestay**, talk often with adults in the family about the local economy. Take every opportunity to meet the family's friends and extended family to network.
- **Practice, practice, practice the local language**, if it is not English. Speak with locals in all walks of life. Read newspapers and magazines to learn about opportunities.
- **When you encounter other Americans, of any age**, living in your city/town, introduce yourself. Make note of where they are employed, and ask for tips that might help you obtain a position.
- **Pay attention to the cost of living abroad**. Figure out how much money you would need to live there, or other places you might consider.
- **Become a student ambassador through BRIO**, the Brown International Organization, which is a peer support group for international students.

*When you return...*

- **Make the most of the resources offered by the career center at your home college or university.** Scheduling an appointment with a counselor will help to get going. Brown students should be sure to check with CareerLAB and the Swearer Center.
- **Check out the calendar** and other important information on the OIP website.
- **If you are thinking about going back to the country where you studied**, keep in touch with all the contacts you made. Let them know what you are thinking about for after graduation.
- **Talk to the OIP staff** about your study abroad experience. We love to hear from returned students!

**Volunteer Abroad**

- **International Volunteer Programs Association**
  http://www.volunteerinternational.org/
  An up-to-date search site for international volunteer and internship opportunities.

**Brown University Career LAB**

Hemisphere Building
167 Angell Street, Box 1907
401.863.3326
Careerdevelopment@brown.edu
http://brown.edu/campus-life/support/careerlab/

- **Going Global**
  Going Global is the leading provider of country-specific employment and career information. The online, unlimited access database contains country career guides, corporate profiles and more than 100,000 international internship and job openings updated daily!

- **Handshake at Brown** is your primary online resource for finding internships or jobs anywhere in the world. Once you’ve activated your account, you can access thousands of national and international opportunities. Upload job application materials, sign up for on-campus interviews, and monitor the status of your applications, all in an easy online system. Employer postings are added daily.

- **Brown connect** allows students to search for internship and research opportunities via Brown alumni, parents, and friends.
Brown University Contacts

Office of International Programs (OIP), J. Walter Wilson, 4th Floor, Box 1973, Providence, RI 02912 Phone: 401.863.3555; Fax: 401.863.3311; oip@brown.edu; www.brown.edu/OIP
The OIP will answer any question you have about your Brown/CASA summer program.

Registrar’s Office, J. Walter Wilson, 3rd Floor, Box K, 401.863.2500 registrar@brown.edu
http://www.brown.edu/registrar
The Registrar staff can answer questions about your summer course registration and the online Banner system, as well as tell you whether your summer course grade has been posted. The Registrar’s office can also assist students with transcript requests.

Bursar’s Office (Annex), J Walter Wilson, 2nd Floor, Box 1839, 401.863.2484 bursar@brown.edu
http://www.brown.edu/bursar
The Bursar staff can answer questions about your Brown (not CASA) bill and payment options.

Financial Aid Office, J. Walter Wilson, 2nd Floor, Box 1827, 401.863.2721
Financial_Aid@brown.edu; http://www.brown.edu/financialaid
Financial Aid staff can answer questions about Brown summer aid options (for Brown students only; non-Brown students should check with their home school financial aid office).

Banner Web at https://selfservice.brown.edu
Brown students can update their mailing address and/or permanent address on-line. Make any necessary changes if you forwarded your Brown email to an alternative email address while you were abroad.

You can find additional contact information for Brown university department or staff members at http://directory.brown.edu/search#

Please Note: This study abroad handbook is being provided as a general resource to Brown and visiting students planning to study abroad, and the information provided is subject to change.

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