BROWN OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK

Havana, Cuba

SUMMER 2017
Table of Contents

Welcome 2

Section I: Travel and Other Important Documents 3

Section II: Health, Travel, and Other Insurance 4

Section III: Health and Medical Care 6

Section IV: Academic Policies and Procedures 10

Section V: Fees and Financial Matters 11

Section VI: Travel Information 14

Section VII: Student Conduct and Safety 15

Section VIII: Cultural Adjustment 20

Section IX: Practical Tips 24

Section X: Career Development and Study Abroad 29

CASA/Brown University Contacts 31
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
Associate Director for Operations
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 a while, 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. NB: Cuba Students: It is strongly recommended that you NOT carry your passport with you on an everyday basis in Havana. Leave your passport in a safe place in your residence, and only take it out when you need to change money or if you travel outside of Havana. Also, do NOT pack your passport in your luggage, as you will be required to show it when you check-in for your flight to Cuba and upon your return, and to customs and immigration authorities in Cuba (both entering and exiting).

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 attending the summer program in Cuba need a visa. Brown’s Office of International Programs will procure your visa, and you will get it at the Miami orientation.
NB: All CASA students enter Cuba with a single entry visa for the exact dates of the program. This means that students cannot travel outside of Cuba for the duration of the program. Students are also not allowed to arrive or leave early, or stay after program dates. All students must enter and leave Havana on the program’s group flight.

Non-U.S. Citizens
Your Cuban visa will be procured by the Office of International Programs on your behalf; most nationalities entering Cuba receive the same visa. If you are a Cuban national living in the U.S., please let the OIP know immediately.

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 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
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. For the Cuba program, you must have valid coverage in the U.S. during the entire program timeframe (i.e., from when you arrive in Miami for orientation until you depart on July 1). It is important to have U.S. coverage during the entire program, in case you have a serious medical emergency and need to return to the U.S. (be sure to verify that your U.S. policy will cover you for the duration of the program). You will have Cuban health insurance coverage once you arrive in Havana (see below).

All students on the CASA Cuba summer program will be provided with a local health insurance (ASISTUR) that will allow them to receive health care at the Cira Garcia Clinic in Miramar (see below) and other international health clinics in Cuba. Cuba is known internationally for its well-developed public health system. Even in the most remote areas of the country there are highly trained doctors and
health facilities, so you are never far away from good medical care! Cuba has two healthcare systems: one for Cuban nationals and another for tourists and international visitors/residents. The one for foreign residents does not suffer from the same sort of shortages that the regular public health system suffers, in part due to the US embargo. Unless you are in a remote area, far away from international clinics, we recommend that you seek care in the second system for foreign visitors/residents.

Havana has good doctors who provide excellent care. The main facility for foreigners in Havana is:

Clínica Internacional Cira García
Calle 20 No. 4101 esq. 41
La Habana, Cuba
Tel: + 53 7 204 2811

Cira García is similar to your campus student health center. There is an emergency room and walk-in clinic, and you can also make appointments for seeing specialists. A very good pharmacy is located across the street from the clinic.

Keep a copy of your passport and proof of Cuban insurance (ASISTUR) on hand for emergency room visits, walk-in, or pre-arranged medical appointments. U.S. health insurance is not accepted. To speed up the processing of your insurance we highly recommend sending an e-mail to ASISTUR (asisten@asistur.cu) with your full name, insurance number, passport number, the hospital or clinic that you are going to, and the reason you're seeking treatment. You may also call the ASISTUR before your visit: 7-866-4121, 7-866-8339, 7-866-8527.

To make an appointment at the Cira García clinic, call 7-204-2811 extensions x 445, 666, 429, 400, 496.

In the unlikely event that you experience a medical emergency in a remote area of Cuba in which there is not an international clinic, go to the nearest health center and you will be transferred to the international clinic system once you are stabilized.

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

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 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.

**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 the Brown University Public Safety Office at 401.863.3322 or International SOS, who will work to meet your needs immediately and contact the University’s on-call staff in the United States while coordinating services with Brown University.

**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**
You are required to notify the program of any allergies you have, in particular to medications, as well as dietary restrictions before participating in the program. This information is confidential and has no bearing on your participation in the program. If you have a chronic illness that needs medical attention, have your doctor write a clinical report that can be given to a specialist in Cuba if necessary. In addition, we strongly urge you to have a complete physical and dental checkup before departing.

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 – including mental health and allergies to food/medications - so that they are informed, can ensure that appropriate accommodations are made, and can help you if problems arise. Please inform your faculty leader and local staff if you become ill during the program.
If you suffer from asthma, allergies, or any other medical conditions, you will be expected to take responsibility for your own condition and to keep staff informed in case you need assistance in accessing care. It is very important to seek medical advice and to follow doctor’s orders.

**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. Mental health facilities in Cuba for international visitors are very limited and mostly available in Spanish. Should you need access to mental health facilities, contacts at your home campus are one possibility. CASA can also help you to identify local mental health resources.

**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 (explaining the dosage, why the medication has been prescribed, and why you have a large quantity) and the original prescription and container to avoid problems with customs. Be sure to get a typewritten diagnosis/prescription with the generic name of the prescription in case you lose your prescription or is it misplaced, so that a doctor in Cuba may use it for a valid prescription there. 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.

If you anticipate needing some form of birth control while you are abroad, bring it with you. If you are taking birth control pills, bring a supply to last you the entire time in Cuba, along with a copy of the prescription. Birth control pills are usually available over the counter in Cuba, but sometimes they mysteriously disappear from the market and there are not as many options as in the US. Condoms may be available at international pharmacies, but it is recommended that you stock up before you leave.

Be prepared for the common cold and for stomach and intestinal disorders often caused by changes in diet and drinking water. Bring medications in case these problems arise; your doctor may suggest which drugs to consider. Over the counter cold/flu medications, as well as other common over-the-counter medications, are very hard to come by in Cuba - so bring them with you. Remember, however, to be careful about treating yourself, and be sure to seek professional help when necessary. Bring a downscaled version of your medicine cabinet, and stock up on non-prescription items you are likely to use such as these: antacids, pain relievers, anti-diuretics, vitamins, medication for upset stomach/constipation/diarrhea, sore throat, coughs, colds, cuts/scratches (and bandaids), yeast infection medications, etc. Also be sure to bring medicine for any recent or chronic ailment which might reoccur in Cuba.
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 may include measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus/diphtheria, Hepatitis B, varicella (chicken pox), polio, and the meningococcal vaccine (recommended). Make sure you are up-to-date on routine vaccines, including the flu vaccine. For more information, please see the Brown Health Services at http://brown.edu/Student_Services/Health_Services/services/injections.html. Non-Brown 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.

The Centers for Disease Control lists the following potential vaccines for Cuba, depending on your circumstances. Please refer to the CDC website (https://www.cdc.gov) for detailed recommendations and further information.

Typhoid: you can get typhoid through contaminated food or water.

Hepatitis A: you can get hepatitis A through contaminated food or water.

Hepatitis B: you can get hepatitis B via sexual contact, contaminated needles, and blood products.

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.

**Health Advisories**
Be aware of local health conditions abroad and of any public health service recommendations or advisories. For current health conditions and recommended vaccinations contact your 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.

**Endemic Diseases**
You are living in a tropical environment where everything flourishes, including bacteria and viruses. Hepatitis A, B, C, typhoid, cholera, tuberculosis, are all present and dengue fever is common.

Because you live in a perfect climate for growing germs, you must be particularly careful to practice good hygiene. Drink only bottled, filtered, or boiled water. Avoid food cooked in areas where proper hygiene is not possible. Always wash your hands before eating. We recommend several small units of disinfecting gel. Avoid exposure to the sun, and drink lots of water to avoid dehydration.

**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).

Since the Cholera outbreak in July 2012, most families in Havana boil or treat water. Your residences will boil or chemically treat your drinking water. Safe drinking water is available at the CASA Gallery for all students. We recommend you to fill up a bottle and carry it around with you, and bring a reusable water bottle with you. Bottled water is usually available for purchase throughout the country as well.

**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 and take precautions. 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.

Many U.S. doctors are concerned about needle re-use in some countries. Should you need an injection while in Cuba, make sure the needle comes sealed in a special package and is torn open in front of you. This is normally done in the clinics you would go to in Havana.

**Vaginal Infections**
Women are often prone to vaginal infections in the heat and humidity of the tropics. You can minimize such problems by wearing cotton underwear, which breathes, and by not wearing tight-fitting pants full-time. Talk to your gynecologist about bringing suitable medication in case you do get an infection. These medications can be extremely hard to find in Havana, so it is recommended that you pack them!
Chikungunya, Dengue Fever, Zika and Other Mosquito-related diseases
The chikungunya virus is transmitted by mosquitoes. The most common symptoms of chikungunya infection are fever and joint pain. Other symptoms may include headache, muscle pain, joint swelling, or rash. There is no vaccine for chikungunya. The CDC provides references and resources about prevention and treatment at [https://www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/](https://www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/).

The dengue virus is a leading cause of illness and death in the tropics and subtropics. The virus is transmitted by Aedes mosquitoes, which are most active during the day and are found near human dwellings and are often present indoors. In recent years, dengue fever outbreaks have occurred with increasing frequency in Cuba, and cases are common in Havana. Generally, there is a low risk of acquiring dengue during travel to tropical areas except during periods of epidemic transmission (during or shortly after the rainy season). Cuba’s public health system has a rigorous prevention program in place with regular fumigations in the city of Havana to destroy the larvae of the AedesAgeypti mosquito that spreads dengue. There are not yet any dengue vaccines - the most effective protective measures are those that avoid mosquito bites, such as using insect repellents on skin and clothing and remaining in well-screened or air-conditioned areas. 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.

Smoking
Smoking in Cuba is much more common than it is in the U.S., and the anti-smoking regulations that are common in the U.S. are not common and are not enforced in Cuba. Therefore, if you are allergic to or easily bothered by smoke, be aware that it will be more difficult to avoid in Cuba.

Health Resources
• RI Department of Health: Travel Clinic Listings: [http://www.health.ri.gov/find/vaccinations/](http://www.health.ri.gov/find/vaccinations/)

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/](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**
Students participating in CASA programs 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 directly for program and housing fees to cover programs costs. These costs vary yearly. 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.

**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 also sent to all program participants in their acceptance email message.
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 a summer scholarship, so that the grant can be reflected on the student record. Brown students may 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. There are two types of currency in Cuba, both popularly referred to as the peso (to make things confusing…).

Cuban Peso: MN or Cuban Pesos
The regular Cuban peso (approx. US$.05) is referred to as “moneda nacional” or “pesos cubanos” and identified on signs as MN, or less commonly as CUP.

Cuban Convertible Peso: “CUC” (1.13 USD)
The Cuban Convertible Peso, or CUC (approx. US$.87) is used in tourist places, restaurants, many stores and supermarkets.

Cadecas
Cadecas are the official currency exchange houses (the name comes from: Casa de Cambio).
NEVER change money on the street or with a money changer!!! This can be extremely dangerous and you will probably be given false bills. Euros, Canadian dollars, British pounds sterling or Swiss francs can be exchanged for convertible pesos and there is no service charge. US dollars can be exchanged for convertible pesos, but a charge of 10 percent will be levied that the Cuban state justifies with its extra-costs caused by the US economic sanctions.

If you need to change from CUCs to CUP: There are many Cadecas scattered around the city. The closest Cadeca to the Gallery is on Línea between Paseo and A. There are two other Cadeca close to the University of Havana: one across the street from Copellia ice cream parlor on Calle 23 between J and L, and the other in the Focsa tower on Calle N and 17. In Habana Vieja there is a Cadeca on Obispo Street.

It is possible to exchange any currency for convertible pesos (CUC) at airports, banks and hotels, and re-exchange them when leaving the country. For changing money from foreign currency to CUC you must present your passport. For safety we recommend that you do these transactions in hotels such as the Hotel Nacional and MeliaCohiba. At these places you may only convert from foreign hard currency to the Cuban CUC, not the Peso Cubano. There are ATMs in Cuba, particularly in the larger cities, but they do not accept any U.S. issued debit or credit cards.

Cash/USD (US Dollars)
US cash can be brought to Cuba and changed in the Cadeca for the CUC (and then MN) you will
spend. USD cash (and only USD) is subject to a 10% tax by the Cuban government. The tax is first applied and then the exchange rate. If you change 100 USD you will receive 87.16 CUC.

Cash/Euro and Canadian Dollars
One way to avoid the 10% tax is by changing USD to Euros or Canadian dollars prior to coming to Cuba. These currencies are not subjected to the 10% tax in Cuba. You should decide whether this is the best option for you by checking your local banks for their USD-EUR or USD-CAD exchange rates to see how much you would lose in the transaction. If it is considerably less than 10%, it is probably worth it. Remember, however, that you will have to change the EUR or CAD for CUC in Cuba. These rates fluctuate daily as with any international currency. You can check the exchange for example at xe.com.

Remember that, at the end of your trip, whatever EUR or CAD you have left you will have to trade back into USD when you get back home (or keep for future international trips). It is advised that you calculate a minimum overall budget and convert only that amount from USD to EUR or CAD, and bring some extra cash in USD.

Sometimes changing currencies is worth it, sometimes it is not. It depends on the exchange rates, which are changing. Some students prefer to simply use USD.

Western Union
Your family in the United States may also send money to you via Western Union. The costs are slightly lower than bringing US dollar cash and exchanging it upon arrival in Cuba (Western Union charges between 7% and 10%, depending on the amount). If you decide to use this method for spending money, we recommend that you bring a couple hundred dollars in cash to begin the program in case there are difficulties/delays. It can be a good option should you need more cash toward the end of the program than initially anticipated.

Remittance Cards: Caribbean Transfers, Transcard, Etc.
These services are available online and allow you to create a prepaid debit card which you (or your family) can load online using your US credit card. This process has to be initiated before you go to Cuba. Services charges can be considerable (up to 20%). When you arrive in Havana you can go to the card office to help you pick up your card. If you decide to use this card, we recommend that you also bring a couple hundred dollars in cash in case there are delays with your card or account.

Travelers Checks
Traveler checks can only be exchanged at the Banco Financiero Internacional (BFI), again with a 3% service charge. One BFI is within walking distance of the Gallery.

Credit/ATM/Bank Cards

US CREDIT CARDS AND ATM/BANK CARDS DO NOT WORK IN CUBA!!! Credit Cards and ATM/Bank Cards from NON-US bank accounts usually work in Cuba. American Express credit cards generally do not work in Cuba. Make sure to check with your financial institution to be sure, and bring cash to be safe!

Traveling with Money
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. Also, you should keep an eye on the exchange rate during your stay abroad.

- 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.
- Be alert for special rates and discounts wherever you go and take advantage of those.

How much you spend will depend on how much you integrate into life in Havana the way that most Cubans live. There is a double economy in Havana, the hard currency economy, initially and mostly tied to tourism, and the traditional state economy. If you stay in the tourist economy your expenses will be considerably higher! In the tourist economy the cost of living for a student in the Cuba is comparable to that of a student in the United States, while in the Cuban economy it is considerably lower (remember the nominal average salary is about 30 CUC!).

For example, if you travel like a local in collective taxis and buses, local transportation will cost you about $1-3 CUC ($1.13-3.40) a day. If you travel like a tourist, a one-way cab ride will cost you between $3-15 CUC ($3.40-17 USD). Be sure to budget enough for local transportation. If you like to go out at night, plan to be taking taxis, which will cost you about $5-10 CUC round trip each time you go out.

Section VI: Travel Information

Travel Arrangements

Cuba students are responsible for making their own domestic travel arrangements from their home to Miami, Florida. Do not leave travel arrangements to the last minute. **All students are required to arrive in Miami no later than 3:00 pm, Saturday, June 3, 2017.** Upon arriving in Miami, you should make your way to the Hampton Inn Miami Brickell Downtown. The program will formally begin with a welcome dinner the evening of Saturday, June 3 (program leaders will meet you at the hotel – exact time TBD). The CASA program will cover the cost of hotel accommodations for the nights of June 3 and 4, as well as all meals and the program orientation activities in Miami. There will be a full-day program orientation in Miami on Sunday, June 4.

In Miami, students will be expected to stay with the program group until departure to Cuba on Monday, June 5. On Monday, June 5, students will depart Miami for Havana as a group, accompanied by the CASA-Cuba Associate Director and a summer program faculty leader. The entire summer group is required to travel to/from Cuba together on a flight booked by the CASA program staff; students will not be allowed to fly to/from Havana separately. The flight cost from Miami to Havana will be billed to each student by CASA. At the program's end, on July 1, you will take another group flight back to Miami (departing Havana at 11:45am and arriving in Miami at 1:05pm). You are required to book your own flight home from Miami on July 1, allowing ample time in between your flight from Havana and your particular flight time home. The OIP will NOT book any hotel rooms in Miami on the evening of July 1 - if you choose to stay in Miami that night, you will need to book your own accommodations.
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
Individual airline sites

General Resources

• 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.

• Hostelling International Membership Card www.hihostels.com/web/membership.en.htm
This card is honored at most International Youth Hostels.

• Lonely Planet Online www.lonelyplanet.com
Lonely Planet travel guides provide the latest travel information sourced from LP authors, researchers and fellow travelers.

Travel Warnings
• U.S. State Department Travel Information - http://travel.state.gov
Summary information about every country in the world, including travel warnings, public announcements, terrorist activity, political disturbances, and country entry requirements.

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 Handbook.
• 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 Handbook. 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 and Cross-Cultural Considerations
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 http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings.html.

Just as it is impossible to define a typical American, it is equally impossible to define a typical Cuban.
You will meet many types of people in Cuba who have different opinions, attitudes, and habits. The
more you interact with Cuban people, the better chance you will have of forming relationships and
understanding the culture. During these interactions, use common sense, intelligence, and a sense of
objectivity. Be prepared to discuss your views freely and openly, try to listen with an open mind, and
be respectful of others’ views, no matter how much they may contrast your own.

You may arrive in Cuba with some preconceptions about Cubans, and may encounter some Cubans
with preconceptions about people from the United States. Try to put aside stereotypes and draw your
own conclusions based on real experiences. If you are confronted with what you feel is a false
stereotype about the United States, be frank and truthful, yet tactful in your response. A positive and
serious response from you will help dispel myths about the United States.

Experience has shown that the single most important factor in assuring a safe study abroad
experience is the sensible and cautious behavior of the participants themselves. When traveling
abroad, you should exercise additional caution until you become familiar with your new surroundings.
Always remain alert to what is going on around you, especially in crowded tourist areas and on public
transportation.

Please remember that your safety is in your own hands. Since program staff cannot be with you at all
hours of the day to ensure you remain safe, you must take it upon yourself to practice caution.

**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. Havana, and Cuba more broadly, remains a safe destination for travelers, though
petty crime is on the rise in urban centers. It is important to observe caution when traveling alone
or at night, as many streets are not well-lit.

- Be careful with money in public just as you would be in this country.
- Do not walk in unfamiliar areas of the city or walk alone after dark.
- 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.
- Never leave your bags unattended. Never let a stranger watch your luggage while you go to
  the bathroom or purchase a ticket.
- Within Havana, the only reason you would have to carry your passport would be when you
  need to change USD in the Cadeca. Otherwise LEAVE YOUR PASSPORT AT YOUR
  RESIDENCE! When you must carry your passport, wear it around your neck in a thin
  pouch inside your shirt or in a moneybelt under your clothes. If you must carry it in a bag,
  use one that can be slung diagonally across your chest and that has a sturdy strap that
cannot be easily ripped.
- 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 bank cards. Leave one copy at home. Bring the second copy with you in case something gets lost or stolen 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.

- Never accept rides from strangers, and stick to established collective taxi (also known as máquinas, almendrones, boteros, and colectivos) and bus routes.

- Always be aware of your surroundings and immediately leave the site of arguments. While guns are extremely rare in Cuba, in places where drinking gets out of control (like Tropical on 41 in Marianao or in shady discos - we will tell you more places to avoiding at orientation) things can escalate into knife fights or broken bottles being used as weapons. Leave immediately if things look suspicious!

- 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. 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
Do not bring in or buy illegal drugs of any kind while in Cuba. Penalties for drug violations in the Cuba are often harsher than in the United States. Alcohol or drug use abroad carries serious consequences. Note that possession of marijuana is considered a serious offense in the Cuba, and users are often given the same penalties as sellers (approximately 15 years for simple possession!). 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 “Travel Warning on Drugs Abroad” at http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/drugs.html. NB: Illegal drug use is grounds for immediate dismissal from your program.

Infrastructure Issues in Cuba
Because Cuba is a small developing country, you will find that conditions in general do not compare with those at home. An inadequate infrastructure means that electrical power is irregular at best, and power may disappear for hours at a time. We recommend that you always carry a small flashlight on your keychain.

Most streets and sidewalks in Cuba are in disrepair. You must always be on the lookout for holes, unmarked ditches, etc. Many streets are badly lit.

Although the municipal water in Havana is treated at a modern plant, water and sewage pipes are in disrepair and the water can be contaminated as it travels through them. We recommend that you drink only bottled, boiled, or treated water. All residencies are instructed to provide this for our students, as
well as to use proper hygiene in the preparation of food. Treated water is also available at the gallery.

**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.

**Gender, Race, and Sexuality in Cuba**

Women, both foreign and Cuban, and foreign men are likely to be the object of unwelcome advances. These practices include cat-calls, known in Cuba as piropos. Younger men are less likely than older ones to make such approaches, and recent public campaigns in Cuba have drawn attention to street harassment as a social problem. Nonetheless, the best strategy when confronted with such attention is simply to ignore it.

Public displays of sexuality in Havana occur, ranging from relatively benign kissing and necking among couples to occasional public masturbation. The roots of this phenomenon are complex and multifaceted, but it is best regarded as unpleasant rather than dangerous. Cubans tend to react to instances of public sexual behavior with humor, but the most effective response is to simply avoid and ignore. Anything that feels threatening should be immediately reported. Nevertheless, rape and sexual assault remain quite rare, and all Cubans are aware of the consequences that would arise from a physical attack on a foreigner. In short, women should approach travel to Cuba with the same caution as they would any other major urban center, but without trepidation.

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 and we will assist you in this matter.

**Interpersonal Violence and Sexual Assault**

Students who have experienced interpersonal violence, sexual assault/harassment, or stalking may seek assistance from the Office of International Programs.
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. If you experience sexual assault abroad, let your program leaders know immediately.

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. Here 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 on your own, 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 you are familiar with. Culture shock doesn’t result from just 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 take 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 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 their perspective. For every behavior you don’t understand, try to figure out what its underlying value is.
- Write up a list of all the positive aspects of your new culture and try concentrating on the positive, and not the negative for a change.
- 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/](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/alee/extra/American_values.html](http://www.claremontmckenna.edu/pages/faculty/alee/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**
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 (www.brown.edu/academics/college/special-programs/international-study/student-resources/while-abroad/diversity-while-abroad)

Prejudice and discrimination on the basis of ethnic or racial identification or sexual orientation are not uncommon in Cuba. Especially in everyday life and out on the street, comments and identification based on perceived physical features (negro, rubia, chino, gorda, etc.) are very common. The discourse and terminology on race, gender, and sexual orientation are very different from the United States and some students in the past have perceived this as discriminatory. Over recent years, there has been an increasing awareness about these issues and there are various academics, as well as state and civil society institutions, that address these issues. The program will introduce you to some of them, facilitate debates and awareness of these issues, and will do its best to provide you with a safe learning experience. However, students should be prepared for very different discourses and practices as they relate to gender, racial, and sexual orientation. To understand and navigate these topics can be at times challenging.

Resources

Students of Color; Diversity; Ethnicity and Race Abroad

Michigan State University, Office of Study Abroad, Articles for and by Multicultural Students: http://stud yabroad.isp.msu.edu/people/studentsofcolor/articles.html
All Abroad, Helping All Students to Study Abroad, Diversity Resources: http://www.allabroad.us/diversity-resources.php
Diversity Abroad: http://www.diversityabroad.com/
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/resources/Diversity/queers.html

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

Amnesty International Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity:

International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission:
http://www.iglhr.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’re 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 when 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 and serve as primary contacts for students interested in study abroad and to provide administrative support to the OIP staff.
  • 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**

Year-round daytime temperatures in Havana average 65 – 90 degrees Fahrenheit, so pack for a tropical climate. In the hottest parts of the year (roughly May-October) the heat is intense, often with close to 80% humidity. Lightweight cotton, linen, or cotton-blend shirts, pants and skirts are better breathers than synthetics. In the hottest months you may want to take a cold shower several times a day and change shirts a couple times so pack accordingly! Undershirts are often recommended to avoid the uncomfortable image of being ‘totally sweated.’ In your daily routine, you will be moving between very different settings. Bring light layers and versatile clothing to be able to adapt to different settings and temperatures.

Bring a high SPF sunscreen with you, as well as sunglasses. The sun in the Caribbean will be much stronger than you are used to in the U.S., and sunscreen is rarely available for purchase there. Bring hats and light weight long sleeve cover-ups for the beach and for around town. Bring a beach towel and bathing suit if you plan to go to the beach.

Even though Havana is right on the Caribbean Sea, the atmosphere is far from that of a “beach town.”
Havana is a Latin American capital city; people place a great deal of emphasis on looking their best in public. Cubans generally dress as well as they can afford. People, especially women, “put themselves together” considerably more than U.S. students, even for activities you might think of as informal—going shopping on a Saturday, going to the movies, etc. In addition to dressing well, there is a lot of emphasis placed on grooming, especially for women.

Even though it gets hot, Cubans only wear shorts around the house or in their immediate neighborhood, never to class, to work, or for going about the city. Theatres, hospitals, libraries, and other government institutions or offices usually do not allow visitors wearing shorts or tank tops. For women, lightweight jeans and skirts will be your best clothing options. Skirts of breathable material also work well for the heat. Many young Cuban women wear high heels and trendy footwear, however uncomfortable, for everything. However, for the campus crowd a pair of classic Converse seems to go with anything. Your footwear is very important, especially since you will spend a lot of time away from home. A pair of good-looking but comfortable shoes is essential (past participants have suggested “cute sandals”), as well as dressier shoes (heels are the norm for women) for going out. We recommend four pairs: a pair of sneakers or running/walking shoes, going-out shoes, flip flops, and a sturdy pair of sandals.

For evening events and going out, Cubans dress up to their glamorous best. If you like to go out dancing, be sure to bring some “going-out clothes.”

Some residences do laundry on a near-daily basis, others once a week. Because of the intense Caribbean heat, you will sometimes want to change shirts and bathe several times a day. Bring comfortable walking shoes and bring an umbrella (used to keep off sun as well as protecting from rain)!

Come prepared with everything you need for your stay. Very few quality goods are available in local stores in Cuba. To get an idea of the types of products available in Cuba, you can check classified sites like revolico.com and porlalivre.com, your Cuban version of craigslist and portals into Havana’s black and grey markets!

In general, you should not have trouble using small electrical appliances brought from the U.S. (hairdryer, electric razor, etc.) as the standard electric current in Cuba is the same as the U.S. (110 V). But do remember there are frequent power outages. High voltage surges can occasionally damage electrical devices, so bring a good quality surge protector for your room and your laptop. Remember to disconnect electronic devices when you leave your room/residence.

If you need very specific products you should take a sufficient supply to make it through the semester. Stores carry a very limited supply of basic soaps, toothpastes, and cosmetics. Women should bring all the pads and tampons they will use for the duration of the program as they are rarely available, and when they are it’s usually poor quality. Tampons are unheard of there, so definitely bring a good supply!

Shampoo, toothpaste and all other toilet articles are your responsibility. Black hair care products other than chemical straighteners are not available so if you use them be sure to pack your own. You may want to bring your own water bottle as you will want to carry water with you most of the time. Again, if you wear glasses or contact lenses, bring an extra pair and enough contact lens solution. You may not be able to find items such as saline solution, and if you do find them they will likely be extremely expensive! Also bring mosquito repellent!
It is strongly recommended that you bring a laptop with you, as you will need it for completing course requirements. Bring your electrical adapter and a surge protector. Be advised that if you have a Mac computer, it will be very difficult to have it repaired if necessary. Regarding laptop safety, you will receive a key to either your room or a closet in your host house where you can lock it. Do not pack the laptop or other valuables in your luggage in your checked bags. Be advised you may also be asked to start up your laptop at the airport.

Past participants have suggested bringing your school supplies with you. They are not cheaper in Cuba and the selection, price, and quality is often better in the U.S. The basic spiral bound notebooks and 3-ring binders we are used to virtually do not exist in Cuba. Bring notebooks, folders, whiteout, and anything special you use. Some students prefer to buy these locally because they feel like their US notebooks make them stick out. USB/memory sticks are also recommended to bring.

You won’t need to pack bedding. Your residence will provide you with towels and bed linens for usage at the residence. Cuban pillows are usually huge and hard, and other types of pillows are not available for purchase - so you may want to bring your own.

**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) – see below.

**Gift Suggestions**
- Clothing and items (pens or pencils) with your university logo.
- Cookbooks with American recipes (pancakes, chocolate chip-cookies, etc.)
- Baseball caps
- CDs of American music (jazz, folk, pop, rock, etc.)
- Calendar/book with U.S. scenery
- Notepads with an American logo, or scenery

**Miscellaneous Items to Pack**
- Spanish phrase book
- Watch (cheap, reliable)
- Camera and memory card
- Batteries (rechargeable with charger)
- Flashlight
- Address book
- Journal
- Magazines/books/reading materials
- Books, guides, maps, handbooks
- Toiletries listed above
- English-language paperbacks (to read and swap)
- Day Pack/small compressible knapsack
- Stuff bags/plastic storage bags
- Umbrella/poncho
- Luggage lock and tags
- 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  
Passport and visa(s) and photocopies  
Tickets and rail passes  
Student identification  
Money belt or neck wallet  
Cash, travelers checks, ATM/credit cards, 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. Placing international phone calls or sending 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.

**Telephone Services Abroad**

**Cuban Cellphones**
The program will provide each student with a Cuban cell phone upon arrival. All students must provide a $150 CUC deposit, which will be returned at the end of the semester when the phone and SIM card are returned. CASA will give each student a phone pre-charged with a credit of $10 CUC. It is your responsibility to always maintain a credit balance of $10 CUC for emergencies. The cell phone is the best and most immediate form of communication, and students should always carry it. Cuban cell phones are pre-paid; pre-paid cards for $5, $10 or $20 CUC are available at hotels, most Etecsa offices, and through private resellers. An alternative is to put credit on your cell phone via certain internet platforms, such as ding.com. Incoming international calls are free; you may receive phone calls from the U.S. through your cell phone, but calls within Cuba are $.35 cents CUC a minute, and text messages $.09 cents CUC. If a person calls you from a landline, you as the receiver on the cell phone will bear the costs of the call. Keep this in mind when you call a friend or professor on their cell phones from a landline.

To call the US from your Cuban cellphone:
DIAL [+] + [country code] (US is 1) + area code + phone number
Calls to the USA and the rest of the Americas from your cell are $1.00 CUC/minute. Calls to the rest of the world are $1.80 CUC/minute.

**Cuban Landlines**
Local calling: You may use telephones in your residence for local calls. The phone is generally used as a means of relaying messages and making plans, not for long conversations. Please be respectful of others in the household and don’t monopolize the phone. You can also make these calls from public payphones with a Cuban phone card called “TarjetaPropia” which you can purchase in the ETECSA phone company.
office in Cuban pesos or monedanacional. As a general rule, you shouldn’t call or receive calls at the residence or your homestay after 10:30 pm.

**Long distance calling within Cuba:** These calls are relatively expensive for most Cuban families. You should always use your “TarjetaPropia” when calling from your homestay host’s phone.

International Calling: No calling cards purchased in the United States are currently accepted by Cuban operators. You can buy an international calling card in the ETECSA phone company office in CUC, Cuban Convertible Pesos to call the US or other countries. The best option is to call directly from your Cuban cellphone, or using online applications such as IMO.

**Calling Cards to Call Cuba**

Computer to computer calling via Skype does not work in Cuba without a VPN. Friends and family at home can use it to send you text messages (9.7 cents) to your cell phone or call you ($0.80 a minute with at 8.9 cent connection fee). But you can receive, but not respond with a text message. Skype is NOT the cheapest option for calling you in Cuba.

Students in other programs in the past have recommended Nobel.com, Cuballama and Speedy Pin. They all have pages online where you can find more information. They are all phone cards where you dial an access number in the US, which will be billed to the caller as a local call (if your area does not have an access number it would be billed as a US long distance call). The caller once connected will enter a pin number and then dial your phone.

Recently, several US phone carriers have included Cuba in their international call packages. But calls to Cuba still are considerably more expensive than elsewhere. Check prices before making these calls.

**Tips:** From the US, dial 011 to signal you want to make an international call. Cuba’s country code is 53. Havana’s city code is 7.

To dial a landline in Havana, dial 011 (to get out of US) + 53 (CUBA) + 7 (HAVANA) + the 7 digit phone number. For example, 01-53-7-870-5228.

To call a Cuban cellphone from the US, you would dial: 011 (to get out of US) + 53 (CUBA) + 5 (code for CELL phones) + the 7 digit phone number.

**U.S. Cell Phones in Cuba**

Cell phones operated by U.S. operators can now be used in Cuba, but they charge you considerable roaming charges. Make sure to inform yourself. Past students have used this mostly as an emergency back-up option only, and for occasional texting (also expensive).

**Internet and Email**

Internet access will be limited and not as easily available as students are accustomed. The CASA Gallery space will have Wi-Fi available during its daily operation times (currently 8a.m. to 8p.m. on weekdays and 8am to 4pm Saturday and Sunday), but keep in mind that, even in the best of circumstances, Wi-Fi connections in Cuba are sporadic and, oftentimes, slow. Downloading or updating of software, videos, music etc. will most likely not be possible. Voice- over IP programs and video-chat occasionally work, but are not always reliable. Social media will be restricted during class hours to ensure a more reliable and speedy connection to handle research, work, and email.
You will not be able to access some internet sites restricted on the island, including Skype and many .edu webmails. We encourage you to check to see that your email account is current and learn to access it before you depart the U.S. It is the best way to communicate with academic advisors, friends, and family. More information about email use in Cuba will be provided to students shortly before departure and on-site. We recommend opening a personal Gmail account before departing for Cuba. We also recommend downloading the video application for Gmail before arrival as well as the voice-over IP program IMO, which tends to work relatively well in Cuba. Finally we recommend having an active, usable VPN connection available to you, either through your home university or a commercial service provider.

*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.

*Postal Service*

Postal service between the U.S. and Cuba had been interrupted for almost five decades, and only recently been re-established. It still frequently takes six weeks or more, so you should not count on this as a means to communicate effectively with stateside family and friends. DHL is the most reliable (but very costly option) to send important documents or smaller items. Check their rates on their website. Some other private providers based in Florida also offer the delivery of packages to Cuba.

*Brown News*

The *Brown Daily Herald* can be found online at: [http://www.browndailyherald.com/](http://www.browndailyherald.com/)

*Storage*

*Brown Student Agencies* (http://brownbsa.com) has partnered with College Storage RI to provide storage services to the Brown community. If you need to store belongings while you are studying abroad, storage services like Collegeboxes.com provide boxes and supplies, pickup, storage, delivery, and shipping (national and international) services to and from school for college and university students.

*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.

**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!

- **Brown Student Job & Internship Board** 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.

**On-site Contacts in Cuba**

CASA’s academic center in Havana is located in the historic Galería Haydee Santamaría, a spacious art gallery in the Vedado district of Havana. Built in the early 20th century in the Spanish colonial style, and restored in 2015 for use by CASA, the Galería provides classroom space, two interior patios and administrative office space for the program. It is outfitted with Wi-fi access.

Galería Haydee Santamaría
Casa de las Américas
Avenida de los Presidentes (G) esq. 5
El Vedado, La Habana
Cuba
Tel. + 53 7 8351569

**Dr. Rainer Schultz**
Dr. Rainer Schultz is the Center Director for the Consortium for Advanced Studies Abroad/Cuba Divisional Center. He previously worked with the Cuban Studies Program at Harvard University and the Harvard College Program in Cuba. As a historian, his research focuses on education, development, and nationalism in republican and revolutionary Cuba, with a special attention to American and Soviet influence.

As the Director, he is charged with the overall responsibility for administering the CASA-Cuba program. As an undergraduate at Humboldt University, Berlin, Dr. Schultz was an exchange student in
Bastian was an exchange student in Havana in 2002. In Cuba, he has taught courses and worked for Cuban journals. 

Email: rainer@lahabana.casa.education

Dr. Hope Bastian
Dr. Hope Bastian is the Associate Director for the Consortium for Advanced Studies Abroad/Cuba Divisional Center. Since 2014 she has been a professor at the Colegio Universitario San Gerónimo de La Habana, Universidad de La Habana. Her research looks at social capital, social networks and social mobility and economic and social inequalities in contemporary Havana. As an anthropologist she has done research in Cuba since 2012.

As Associate Director, Dr. Bastian assists in academic programming, extracurricular activities, and private cross-cultural support and overseas housing. Before joining the consortium team she directed study abroad programs for American University and CIEE in Havana. She has also worked in Cuba at the Martin Luther King Center in Marianao, and as a public health reporter for MEDICC Review. Dr. Bastian was an exchange student in Havana in 2002. 

Email: hope@lahabana.casa.education

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
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, Brown Office Building, 2nd Floor, Box 1839, 401.863.2484 Bursar@brown.edu
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
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
Update your mailing address and/or your 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 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.