BROWN OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

“TAKE IT WITH YOU”
STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK 2015-16
Dear Student,

**Take It With You**…While you have worked hard to get into your program of study – you are not done yet. Now start the preparations for life overseas. Let this handbook be your guide – it contains general information you will need before you leave, during your stay abroad, and as you prepare to return to your home campus. We encourage you to not only read through this handbook carefully, but to utilize our website ([www.brown.edu/OIP](http://www.brown.edu/OIP)) and if you are here at Brown, the Resource Library at OIP, to do further research before you leave campus. The resources in the library and on the website provide country-specific information, as well as information on travel, health, nutrition, women’s issues, sexual orientation questions, financial aid, working abroad, and more.

**Be proactive**…you will greatly enhance your experience abroad by learning as much as you can about your destination(s) before you leave.

**Take this handbook abroad with you** (really – we’re not kidding about this)! It will answer many of the questions you will have later about credit transfer, returning to Brown, etc. You will be glad to have it with you.

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

Edward (Ned) B. Quigley
Associate Director
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Checklist for Study Abroad
Welcome!

The Brown University Office of International Programs (OIP) provides undergraduate study abroad opportunities to approximately 500 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, reviews applications and student records, manages Brown Programs worldwide, verifies and processes credit transfer for study abroad students, and sponsors visiting scholars from Brown’s partner institutions abroad.

Address Changes
Please notify the OIP in writing of any changes in your current or permanent addresses and telephone numbers.

Brown University students also should change their address on Banner so their mail can be forwarded. You can choose the option of having your mail held for one term if you'll only be abroad for a semester or for two terms if you'll be abroad for an entire year. If you don't change your address on Banner, your mail will be returned to the sender.

Predeparture Orientation
One of the final steps in preparing for your study abroad semester is to attend the OIP General Pre-Departure Orientation. Peer Advisors from the Office of International Programs present important information regarding study abroad, including some of the realities of being abroad (i.e. health and safety, as well as academic, student conduct, and other study abroad policies.)

Attendance at one of the orientations is required for all Brown students studying abroad, regardless of destination or program.

For students participating in Brown-administered programs, program-specific predeparture meetings are also held. These orientations give you a chance to meet your fellow students, find out more information about your program, and ask questions of program advisors and past participants. Each Brown program begins on-site with an orientation to introduce you to your new location and cultural experience, as well as the academic expectations for the program.

News & Viewpoints
- Council on Foreign Relations - www.cfr.org

*A center for the study and practice of international affairs and US foreign policy.*
Section I: Travel and Other Important Documents

Passports
For US citizens
If you do not currently have a valid passport, start applying for one now! 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 up to three months, depending on which procedure you follow. You may apply for a passport at most large post office, 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;
• passport fee, execution fee, and if necessary, fee for expedited service. Please refer to the US 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 at home. Once in a foreign country, keep your copies in a safe place and ask your program to keep a copy on hand. This will facilitate replacement if your passport is lost or stolen.

Non-US 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 US immigration policies.

Visas
US citizens
Unlike a passport, which proves your citizenship, a visa is your key to enter another country. Visas are issued by a consulate or embassy of that country and must be obtained well in advance before you cross the country’s border. Visa requirements vary from country to country, so check with your program if on an Alternative program or with the OIP if on a Brown-sponsored program about
specific requirements and documentation. Consulates and embassies are located in most large US cities.

**Please note:** Students have been prevented from boarding their flights if they did not have the appropriate visas to enter a country. Please verify that you have the necessary documents for the country you intend to visit.

*Non-US Citizens*

Please verify visa requirements with the consulate of the country to which you are traveling or transferring through on a connecting flight in order to determine whether a visa will be required. Do this as soon as possible and notify the OIP of documentation you will need to apply for your visa.

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

**Insurance Card & Claim Forms**

Be sure to bring your health insurance card and copies of claim forms with you, in the event you need medical attention overseas. Please keep in mind that all health services provided abroad will require immediate payment after you have been seen by the doctor; health care providers will not simply bill your insurance, as they do here in the U.S.

**Voting from Abroad**

If you are interested in voting for elections that take place in US elections (local, state, or federal) while you are abroad, you must request an absentee ballot. Contact your local, city or township clerk or the Federal Voting Assistance Program at [http://www.fvap.gov/](http://www.fvap.gov/)

**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.

**Resources**

**Embassies and Consulates**

- US Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs - [http://travel.state.gov/](http://travel.state.gov/)
- Foreign Consulates and Embassies in the US - [www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/fco](http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/fco)

**Passports**


  *Covers first-time application procedures, passport renewal, and lost or stolen passport information.*
Section II: Health, Travel and other Insurance

Health Insurance Requirements
All students are required to have comprehensive health insurance while enrolled at Brown. You may be fully covered under your parents’ policy, or you may choose to purchase insurance through Brown University. The University’s plan provides domestic and limited international coverage. If you have insurance coverage through another plan (e.g. through your parent or guardian), contact your health insurance company to verify that you are covered internationally.

Students on Brown-sponsored programs must provide the Office of International Programs with information regarding their insurance policy on the Health Information Form. If you are studying on an Alternative Approved or Petition program, please check with your program provider regarding insurance requirements and plan specifics.

Under Brown University policy, you automatically will be enrolled in and charged for the Brown Student Health Insurance Plan unless you complete an online waiver by the deadline established by the Office of Insurance and Purchasing Services; this ensures that all students have adequate medical coverage and access to comprehensive medical care.

Brown Student Health Insurance Plan
The Brown Student Health Insurance Plan provides limited worldwide coverage, whether studying or traveling abroad. The plan provides the same benefits as if you were at Brown University and also includes Medical Evacuation, Return of Mortal Remains, and Global Emergency Medical Assistance Services. You will have access to a 24-hour worldwide assistance network for emergency assistance anywhere in the world, provided through MEDEX. Please refer to the Office of Insurance and Purchasing Services website for more information about plan coverage; if you have specific questions, please contact their office directly for details.

Students previously enrolled in the Brown Student Health Insurance Plan, who intend to go abroad after the end of a school year, may continue with the Brown Student Health Insurance Plan for the following year by contacting the Office of Insurance and Purchasing Services. To enroll in the plan you will need to complete an application form and provide a check to the insurance company for the full premium before August 1. Full-time, matriculated students who go abroad in the spring may retain their coverage for the remainder of the school year if they are already enrolled in the Brown plan. Students not enrolled in the Brown insurance plan at the start of the semester prior to their departure may not enroll in the plan during their time away, and they should discuss with their parents how they will obtain insurance while away. Visiting students who are studying abroad on a Brown program for the spring semester will have the option of purchasing the Brown Student Health Insurance Plan.

Waiver for Students with Other Coverage
If you have alternate insurance coverage comparable to the Brown University plan, you may waive this insurance requirement by completing an online waiver for the Office of Insurance and Risk by the waiver deadline set by that office. For more information on the waiver process, contact the Office of Insurance and Purchasing Services at 401.863.9481 or visit their website.
If you are considering waiving the Brown Student Health Insurance Plan, it is your responsibility to determine if you have comparable coverage, domestically and internationally. Compare the benefits, limitations, and exclusions for your plan and the Brown University plan before filing your health insurance waiver.

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

- Will the plan cover hospitalization for accidents and illnesses for the entire period while I’m abroad? (Some policies provided by a parent’s employer might cover medical expenses for brief stays abroad but not for the full term of a study abroad program.)
- Will the plan cover doctor visits and medication prescribed abroad?
- Is there a deductible? If yes, how much?
- Is there a dollar limit to the amount of coverage provided?
- What are the procedures for filing a claim for medical expenses abroad? Do I need to pay expenses up front and then submit receipts to the insurance company for reimbursement? Make sure that you get full information from your policy about how to arrange for routine treatment, medical emergency procedures, and what is required to pay for or be reimbursed for a claim.
- When does the plan begin and end?
- What do I use as proof of international medical coverage (if I need to use the insurance or if the host government requires documentation)?
- If I am not a US citizen, will I be covered by your plan? (It has been our experience that international students must arrange for coverage with a company in their home country. Most of the policies we have looked at do not cover international students traveling in a country other than the US.)
- Will this insurance cover me in the US for the insured semester if I decide, for medical or other reasons, to return before the end of the program? (If students have a serious accident or illness abroad, they may need to return to the US for further care; it is therefore important that the student carry coverage that applies not only abroad, but in the US during the study abroad period as well.)
- Does the plan cover pre-existing medical conditions?
- Does the coverage meet the minimum coverage amounts required by the host country?

Insurance Coverage and Program Dates
Medical insurance coverage is required for the duration of the program. Students whose medical insurance coverage is through Brown University and who are participating in Brown-sponsored programs that begin before the Brown Student Health Insurance Plan start date must make sure they are covered by insurance for the portion of the program that takes place before that date. If your program falls into this category, you will receive information in your program-specific materials.

Health Care Payments and Reimbursement
You should inquire with your insurance company about its international policies prior to leaving for your semester abroad. Carry a few blank claim forms with you in case they should be needed while you are abroad.
Keep in mind that should medical attention be required abroad, it may be necessary for you
to have sufficient cash on hand to make payment at the time of treatment. Many overseas
health providers will not process US insurance claims and will expect payment at the time of
treatment. You and your family must be prepared to meet medical expenses up front, should you
incur them. Students should have access to a minimum of $400 (either by credit card or traveler’s
checks held in reserve for emergencies) in the event that medical treatment is required abroad. Be
sure to obtain a receipt to submit with your insurance claim for reimbursement upon your return to
the US.

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. 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
sponsoring program. If you are traveling, and/or in a situation where you are not able to reach your
contact for your sponsoring program, 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 will
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
www.internationalsos.com/en/alarm-centers.htm. 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 Forms
Students on a Brown-sponsored program are required to complete an online Health Information Form as part of their predeparture materials. Should the need arise during your study abroad experience, it important that the OIP be made aware of any medical or emotional problems, past or current, that might affect you during your semester(s) abroad. The information you provide will remain confidential and will be shared with on-site program staff, and if pertinent to your safety and well-being, with faculty or 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 director or staff of any illness/medical condition so that they are informed and can help you if problems arise.

Students on Approved and Petition programs should consult with their program providers about health information and other required medical forms.

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 the prospect of studying abroad. For example, if you are on medication, discuss with your physician the type of care you may need while abroad and the best way to continue your regimen. Seriously consider the consequences of stress from cultural adjustment and relying on different medical practices.

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

Prescriptions and Over-the-Counter Medicine
If you use prescription medication, bring enough with you to last for your time abroad, along with a doctor’s note or the original prescription to avoid problems with customs. 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. Bring a downscaled version of your medicine cabinet in addition to a first-aid kit. Stock up on non-prescription drugs you are likely to use, such as antacids, pain relief, anti-diuretics, etc. In certain countries it might make more sense to research the equivalents of non-prescription drugs you are most likely to use and buy them on-site.

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 are finding the adjustment period to be challenging, please let the program director or staff know.
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 US practice. Be prepared for the reality that US health-care values, assumptions, and methods are not universally practiced. Even the notions regarding the onset of illness or points at which expert attention is required will vary from country to country and from culture to culture. If you need a medical attention overseas, ask for a hospital or clinic with English-speaking doctors or staff so that you are better able to receive proper care.

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

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

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

HIV/AIDS Testing
Some countries may require an AIDS test before letting you enter. Please check into this before you arrive at the airport because they will turn you away. For a list of HIV/AIDS testing requirements based on country, please see http://www.thebody.com/content/art2244.html or consult the specific entry/exit requirements for US citizens by country at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_4965.html

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

Food and Water
Probably the most common ailment for all travelers is diarrhea caused by contaminated food or drink. Standards for hygiene and health vary from country to country, and the safety of food and water may differ considerably. You can find detailed information, advice and precautions to take concerning Safe Food and Water on the Centers for Disease Control website at: http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/safe-food-water.htm

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

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

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

Health Resources
• The Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
  http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/
• CIEE Health Check for Travel Abroad
  http://www.ciee.org/study-abroad/why-ciee/health-safety/
• State of Rhode Island Department of Health: Travel Clinic Listings
  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 university, including the study abroad policies established by the OIP. In addition, students are expected to abide by the academic policies of the host university or program sponsor. For programs where courses are offered through a host university, Brown University policies take precedence.

Please visit the OIP website for more detailed information on foreign study guidelines.

Accommodations/Disability Information
Students who are studying on a Brown-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. 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.
http://brown.edu/Student_Services/Office_of_Student_Life/dss/

Extension of Absence from Brown
Study Abroad Leave / Personal Leave
If you wish to extend your study abroad leave or request a personal leave to spend an additional semester abroad, please contact the Office of International Programs by email no later than October 15 to extend from the fall semester to the spring semester. Please include your Banner ID#.

Note: It is important that you contact your concentration advisor to verify that you will receive concentration credit if needed for any course work completed during the extended period. Save all work from abroad for the post-approval process.

Pre-register for your return semester
Visiting students should check with their study abroad office, registrar’s office, and/or faculty advisor to find out how pre-registration is conducted on their home campus for students who are abroad.

Brown students who are studying abroad will use the Banner online system to pre-register for courses, along with Brown students in Providence.

Course Enrollment Changes
If you make changes in your course enrollment while abroad, especially in the courses you plan to take for concentration credit, you should email your concentration adviser with information about the new course.

If you are studying abroad through a U.S. program, your course load must equal the equivalent of a full course load at Brown. A course load of 15-16 semester hour credits is the minimum course load for all Brown study abroad students. A 12-semester hour credit program of study is not considered a full load for study abroad at Brown.
Credit Hour and Course Load Requirements
Due to the difference in credit-counting systems, the number of credits you take in your program abroad may not be equal to the number of credits you will receive for your work at Brown.

Credit earned abroad is not transferred on a course-for-course basis. You must maintain a full course load while studying abroad: the equivalent of four Brown courses per semester. In order to do so, you may need to take five or even six courses on some programs; on others, you may only need to take three courses. **Do not assume that four courses taken abroad will equal four Brown course units.**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>System</th>
<th>1 Brown Credit Equivalent</th>
<th>Total Semester Requirement</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semester</td>
<td>4 semester hour credits</td>
<td>At least 15-16 semester credit hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarter</td>
<td>6 quarter hour credits</td>
<td>At least 24 quarter hour credits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For systems that are not easily comparable, students must demonstrate that they complete full-time course loads in order to receive 4 Brown credits. It is important to note that a “normal course load” may not equal a “full” credit load. Students are encouraged to meet with a study abroad advisor to ensure requirements are met.

Students who complete more than a full credit load abroad will receive only 4 credits per semester on their Brown transcripts, as mandated under the Brown Guidelines for Foreign Study.

**Remember - Being a full-time student is not necessarily the same as taking a full course load.** If you are not sure what constitutes a normal, full course load at your program or university, check with the Resident Director (if on a Brown program) or with the OIP (if on an Alternate or Petition program) **in advance** of making any changes to your course registration overseas.

Grading Requirements
In all cases you must complete a full load of courses as required by the foreign institution with the equivalent of a C or better (a C- grade will not transfer) in order to receive 4 credits per semester or 8 per year. **You cannot take courses abroad S/NC.** If you are on an Alternative or Petition program, your formal transcript must show a grade for each course.

Tuition Credit for Study Abroad
In order to earn a Brown degree, students must accumulate eight semesters of tuition credit, signifying the completion of eight semesters of full-time study. A minimum of three course credits per semester from study abroad will grant a student one semester of tuition credit. A minimum of seven course credits per year will grant a student two semesters of tuition credit.

If you fall below these numbers and do not earn the anticipated number of semesters of tuition credit from study abroad, you should consult with an Academic Dean to determine how this shortage will affect your graduation date and discuss options for completing your degree requirements.
Retroactive Credit for Semester/Academic Year Programs

Students who do not obtain Brown pre-approval of semester or academic year programs before studying abroad will not be eligible for transfer of study abroad credit. You cannot take a personal or medical leave, then study abroad and apply for retroactive academic credit.

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 scheduled instruction and exams due to personal, medical or safety 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.

Obtaining Transfer Credit

In order to obtain credit for your study abroad experience, you must have an official transcript sent to Brown University that lists the courses you have taken and the grade received.

Brown Programs

Check with the International Programs Office at your host institution to verify that a transcript or some official document of evaluation will be sent to the Office of International Programs at Brown University, Box 1973. For students on the Brown in Germany program, Scheine must be obtained from each professor and brought back the OIP.
For Approved and Petition Programs
Students on non-Brown programs must have the host institution send a transcript to Brown’s Registrar:

Attn: Study Abroad Coordinator
Office of the Registrar
Box K, Brown University
Providence, RI 02912 USA

If the institution does not issue transcripts, you must have them send a certificate of attendance or diploma indicating the courses you took and a written evaluation of your work. Example: German universities issue Scheine or course-by-course evaluations upon request. In this case, you would ask for a Schein from each of your professors, and this would serve as your “transcript.”

It is the your responsibility to verify with the Office of the Registrar that the transcript has been received and that the exact number of course and tuition credits are transferred to Brown.

The Course Approval Process for Brown Students

The Mandatory Pre-Approval Process
• Get pre-approval for your proposed academic study abroad plan. As part of the application process, you worked with your concentration advisor and the OIP to have the courses you will take abroad pre-approved. It is important that you understand what requirements a course must meet to count as concentration credit and what documentation you will need to bring back to Brown for post-approval.
• Register for a full load of courses as required by the foreign institution. Please consult with your program and the OIP to determine the full course load.
• Bear in mind that you’ll need to pass each course with the equivalent of a C or better (a C- grade will not transfer) in order to receive 4 Brown credits per semester. You cannot take courses abroad S/NC nor can you audit any courses.
• Save all records from abroad. Keep all syllabi, exams, papers, notes, course reader packets, projects, and portfolios, and bring them back with you. Some departments will indicate that they wish to see your completed work prior to granting credit.

The Mandatory Post-Approval Process
• Students who studied on Brown programs will be notified by the OIP when their study abroad transcript is available. Students on Alternative and Petition programs are responsible for verifying with the Office of the Registrar that their study abroad transcript has arrived.
• Once you receive this notification, you can start the post-approval process. Pick-up a copy of your official transcript from the Registrar’s Office (J. Walter Wilson, 319) and pick-up or download a Post-Approval Form from the OIP or OIP website. You must then get appropriate signatures to secure approvals from academic departments and return the completed post-approval form with a copy of your transcript to the OIP.
• In certain cases, you will need to seek post-approval for courses taken while studying abroad. This applies if you have:
  • Taken courses for which you had no prior approval.
• Taken courses in departments that request to examine completed coursework before granting credit.
• Taken courses that you want to apply as concentration credit that were not previously approved.

Transcripts
For Brown students on Brown programs, all graduation credit will transfer automatically. Transcripts from the Brown-administered programs are sent directly to the OIP. The OIP will notify you when your transcript is available for pick up. The only exception is the Brown in Germany program; participants must bring their Scheine to the OIP.

Visiting students on Brown programs should work with their home institution to ensure that they are meeting academic requirements. Brown will ensure that all transcripts from Brown programs will be sent to the appropriate office, as provided by the student on the Advisor Approval Form, which is part of the online application process.

Transcript Requests
Requests for Brown University transcripts will not be released until all financial requirements to the university have been met. Requests for transcripts generally require 3-5 business days for processing. Please allow additional time (5-10 days) if the request is being sent at the end of an academic semester. All transcript requests must be accompanied by an authorized signature of the requestor in accordance with the Federal Educational Records Privacy Act of 1974.

If you need to order a copy of your Brown University transcript while abroad for graduate school or other reasons, you will need to order it from the Office of the Registrar at www.brown.edu/Administration/Registrar. From there you will obtain information regarding transcript fees and select one of two options for ordering a transcript, either on-line or by printing and mailing a request form.

You will not receive letter grades on your Brown transcript. Graduate schools may wish to see your grades from abroad, in which case you must request an official transcript from the foreign institution and then include it with your graduate application. For students who studied on Brown programs, transcripts from the host university can be obtained from the OIP.
Section V: Fees & Financial Matters

Program Charges and Billing
Although costs vary by site, the basic costs of studying abroad are often about the same as spending a similar period of time at Brown. For current cost information visit the OIP website at http://www.brown.edu/academics/college/special-programs/international-study/home/financial.

Bills are issued by the Bursar’s Office in late June for the fall semester, with a payment date of August 1. Spring semester bills are issued November and must be paid by January 1. Review your current student account to be sure your balance is paid.

Important: If you have received an incorrect bill from Brown University for the regular tuition, room and board for the semester you should be abroad, it could mean:
   a) you have not signed your study abroad leave with the OIP. If this is the case, contact OIP as soon as possible. or
   b) you have recently signed your Study Abroad Leave form, but it has not gone through the computer Banner system yet. If “b,” contact the Bursar’s Office and tell them that you just signed your study abroad leave.

Brown University Office of International Programs Policy on Refunds
A $500 non-refundable deposit must be made upon your acceptance to a Brown-administered program. For a withdrawal to be considered official, the student must notify Brown University Office of International Programs in writing. Upon official withdrawal from the program, a portion of the program fee will be credited to the student’s account based on the schedules below.

Withdrawal Prior to the Start of the Program:
Any expenses that have been incurred by Brown on behalf of the student once the student has made a commitment to the program (in writing and/or by submitting the program deposit), will be the responsibility of the student (i.e., host institution fees, housing, etc.) and charged to the student account.

Withdrawal After the Start of the Program:
If a student withdraws from a study abroad program during the first five weeks of the program, he or she is eligible for a refund of Brown tuition payments based on the schedule below. Brown is not responsible for indirect costs paid directly by the student, including, but not limited to, passport fees, vaccinations, and transportation costs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Withdrawal</th>
<th>Amount of Refund</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>prior to program start</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the first 14 days</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in days 15-21</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in days 22-28</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in days 29-35</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 tuition payments refunded.

For Brown Programs

- Students who choose to withdraw from a program abroad and, subsequently, enroll at Brown during the semester that corresponds to their semester abroad will be responsible for all costs incurred by Brown up to the time they withdrew from the program.

- If a student withdraws from a program, the deposit paid to confirm his or her place on the program is not refundable.

- For housing or fees paid directly to the host institution abroad, the refund policy of that institution will be in effect.

For Alternative and Petition Programs

- It is the student’s responsibility to understand the refund policies of programs sponsored by Brown and the Alternative/Petition program providers.

- In those instances where the cancellation fee charged by the Alternative/Petition program provider exceeds the cancellation fee charged by Brown, the student’s Brown account will be charged for the amount of this difference. Brown will not award a diploma or process a transcript request until outstanding balances are paid in full.

Financial Aid

Brown students eligible for financial aid may use their aid for any study abroad program approved by Brown University. Financial aid awards will be based on the program’s cost of attendance, including airfare and living costs. Student will be eligible for grants and loans as if they were on campus, with the exception of Federal Work Study (FWS) and/or Campus Employment. The normal FWS or Campus Employment component of an aid package will be covered with additional loan funds, upon request. Please note that the amount of scholarship awarded for study abroad can vary depending on the program’s cost.

To apply for financial aid, please follow the Financial Aid guidelines/deadlines and complete all forms as you normally would each year at Brown. In addition to the regular financial aid forms, there are special steps for studying abroad. Students should consult the Office of Financial Aid for more information.
Brown Payment Plan
Students who are not eligible to receive financial aid, but use a Brown payment plan such as the Installment Payment Plan (IPP), will be able to continue to use the plan to cover the costs to Brown. Please refer to the Office of the Bursar for more information concerning this plan.

Fellowships and Scholarships
Scholarships from sources other than Brown may be available to undergraduates for study abroad on specific programs. If you are planning or thinking of applying for any fellowships while you are abroad, it would be wise for you to view the Fellowships page on Dean of the College website for deadline and application information before you leave campus.

- **The Boren Fellowships (graduate) and Scholarships (undergraduate)** -
  www.borenawards.org
  Boren Scholarships and Fellowships provide unique funding opportunities for U.S. undergraduate and graduate students to add an important international and language component to their educations. The Boren awards focus on geographic areas, languages, and fields of study that are critical to U.S. national security, broadly defined, and underrepresented in study abroad.

- **The Critical Language Scholarships**
  http://elscholarship.org/
  A program of United States Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program will offer intensive summer language institutes overseas in designated critical need foreign languages.

- **The Gilman Scholarship Program**
  http://www.iie.org/en/Programs/Gilman-Scholarship-Program
  The Gilman Scholarship Program offers awards for undergraduate study abroad and was established by the International Academic Opportunity Act of 2000. This scholarship provides awards for U.S. undergraduate students who are receiving Federal Pell Grant funding at a two-year or four-year college or university to participate in study abroad programs worldwide.

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

- **Wire transfer:** US banks can telex money to foreign banks. This process can be complete in a matter of hours/days and there is a fee.
- **Bank draft/cashier’s check:** You can request a bank to send a cashier’s check, or bank draft, to your account overseas. Be warned, however, that clearing the check can take some time.
- **Personal checks:** Personal checks from a US bank will be honored in most foreign banks but only after it has cleared the US Bank. This process can take weeks, or months. In some countries personal checks are not honored at all! OIP suggests that you avoid using personal checks.
- **American Express:** You don’t need an American Express card to take advantage of their services. American Express can wire money from their American office to one of their overseas offices, where it can be picked up with appropriate identification. Since not all American Express offices can prepare money orders or cable money, you should call your local American Express office for a list of offices abroad that can provide these services.
• **ATM cards**: You may be able to use your ATM card to withdraw money from your bank account in the US. This is an easy way to access your money while abroad. Check with your bank to find out where your ATM card can be used, what fees are involved, and ensuring your PIN has the appropriate number of digits for ATMs in your country.

• **Credit Cards**: Be sure to acquire a PIN for your credit card before you leave the US. Credit cards make foreign currency transactions easy and they are invaluable in a financial emergency. Use them wisely! With credit cards it is easy to overspend. Also remember that you will be hit with finance charges for cash advances on your credit card. Make a cash advance only if you have no other option for getting money.

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

**Note**: Contact your bank and credit card companies to inform them you will be using your card overseas to make purchases. This ensures they are aware you will be using your credit/ATM card out of the country and will ensure they do not freeze your account. For any credit/ATM card, write down all of your account numbers and contact numbers on a separate piece of paper to be secured in a safe place for reference if needed.

**Traveling with Money**
Depending on where you’re going, travelers’ checks may be the best way to bring large amounts of money over with you. Also, buy about $100 in local currency before you leave the US. You want to be prepared for taxi rides and a night in a hotel in case you arrive and the banks are closed. While traveling, a **money belt** worn under your shirt or pants will allow you to keep your passport, money, and credit cards on your person at all times.

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

• Have a budget and know what you can spend. Keep a daily expense account the first couple of weeks 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 don’t know where to find the best bargains yet and the exchange rate will take some getting used to.

• Some small businesses may not accept debit or credit cards. Depending on the country, you should be able to take out money from local banks or purchase traveler’s checks in the local currency if still accepted.

• Be alert for special rates and discounts wherever you go and know what is available in terms of youth or student discounts with your ID.

• When you travel, consider staying in youth or student hostels. Unlike hotels, which cater to tourists and business travelers, hostels are inexpensive, usually dorm-style hotels for young people found in many countries of the world.

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

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

If you are studying on an Alternative or Petition program, verify your program’s travel policy. Some program providers will arrange group transportation (and in some cases require it).

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

Travel Resources

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

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

Road Travel
• Association for Safe International Road Travel (ASIRT) - www.asirt.org
Offers road travel reports, seasonal hazards, safety tips and common driver behaviors for various countries.

General Resources
• World Youth Student and Educational Confederation - www.wysetc.org
WYSEC is a not-for-profit student organization that sponsors the ISIC card. The site has an interactive search engine to figure out just where your card gets you discounts. Features an “ATM Locator” which might be helpful for those first few days when you don’t know where your bank is or where you can change currency.
• **International Student Identity Card** [www.isic.org/](http://www.isic.org/)
  This card is recognized all over Europe and will give you student discounts for museums, hotels, and travel, although some countries offer more student discounts than others. It also provides basic accident and sickness insurance coverage when traveling outside the US and access to a 24-hour toll-free Help Line.

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

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

**Travel Warnings**

• **U.S. State Department Travel Information** - [http://travel.state.gov](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 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
It is important to know of any safety concerns before you leave for your host country. The US 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/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html

For information on traffic-related safety conditions in countries abroad, including bus safety information in your host country, please consult the Association for Safe International Road Travel at http://www.asirt.org/

General Safety Tips
While you are abroad take the same precautions you would take in any large US city you are not familiar with.

- Do not walk in unfamiliar areas of the city at night or accept rides from strangers.
- Be careful with money in public just as you would be in this country.
- Become a professional people watcher. Watching the local residents and their habits is your best guide to safe behavior. The less you stand out the safer you will be.
- Learn about the customs and local laws of your country. Remember that you are subject to their laws and are not protected by US laws.
- Learn to walk the way the locals do. People are able to spot an American immediately by their posture and walk. And, stop carrying your American backpack around the city with you. Wearing a backpack is almost as bad as wearing a red bull’s-eye.
- Never leave your bags unattended. Never let a stranger watch your luggage while you go to the bathroom or purchase a ticket.
- Make three (3) photocopies of your passport ID page, airlines tickets, and credit cards. Leave one copy at home. Bring the second copy with you in case something gets lost or stolen abroad, and give the third copy to your program resident director. Bring extra passport size photos for student ID's abroad, a replacement passport if needed, or for obtaining a visa abroad.
• Beware of pickpockets and con artists. The most common sites for purse or camera snatchings are central train stations or crowded shopping areas. Thieves often strike when people are distracted: making a phone call or checking a train schedule, with a bag casually left at one’s feet.

• If anything is lost or stolen report it to the local police. Keep a copy of the police report for insurance purposes or in case you need to replace your passport or student visa. Report the loss of travelers check to the nearest issuing office; passport to both the local police and then to the nearest US embassy or consulate to apply for a new one; airline tickets to airline or travel agent.

• Before going to another country to travel, check the travel advisories at the nearest embassy. Also, be sure your program director knows where you will be traveling and when, in case you must be contacted.

US 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 term 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 https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/

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.

Registration with Local Authorities
In many countries, you will be required to register with the local police station upon arrival. Your program director abroad will inform you of local requirements.

Local Laws
Outside the US, 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 study abroad program staff or international student office and Brown’s OIP immediately.

**Substance Abuse**
Alcohol or drug use abroad carries serious consequences. Use and abuse of drugs and alcohol bring increased risks of possible injury, assault, and even death, as well as legal penalties. Alcohol abuse abroad may occur because of a lower drinking age, a mistaken impression of how alcohol is used abroad, or a desire to fit in with the local culture and community. Most countries have very strict drug laws. Long trials, prison sentences and even the death penalty can result from drug possession. Even if you find yourself somewhere that drugs are available and you are not using the drugs, if 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 US government or your study abroad program can do for you. See the US State Department “Travel Warning on Drugs Abroad” at http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/drugs.html.

**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 US, 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 US to mean, “Leave me alone” or “I’m not interested,” in another cultural context it might actually be understood as an encouraging response rather than a signal of discouragement. Clear, direct and unambiguous responses may be difficult for many Americans to deliver, but these strong responses are crucial for clear understanding in a cross-cultural situation. “I do not want to go out with you, please do not ask me again” is a much more direct and stronger way of expressing your true thoughts about the situation.

Informal resolution of your sexual harassment problem may be possible. You are encouraged to contact the appropriate person on your host campus/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 campus/program representatives are unable or unwilling to assist you, please contact the OIP, and we will assist you in this matter.

Sexual Assault

Students who have experienced sexual assault should contact their Resident Director (for Brown programs) or on-site staff (for approved non-Brown programs) and seek immediate medical treatment. They should also inform staff at the Office of International Programs as soon as possible (401-863-3555). Students may also contact Frances Mantak, Director of Health Education at Brown’s Health Services. She provides support, advocacy, and resources for all students affected by sexual assault, including survivors of all gender identities and those who know someone who has been assaulted. She can be reached at frances_mantak@brown.edu or at 401-863-2794.

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 Resident Director or head of the International Office as soon as possible. They may be able to intercede on your behalf with faculty members or other administrative offices if necessary. They must know if you plan to return home for a short or extended stay.
• Contact the Office of International Programs at Brown (specifically if you are on an Alternative program) so that we know about the tragedy and your plans. We may also be able to assist you if necessary.
• Ask your Resident Director or International Office about counseling services that are available in your host 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 at the end of the Study Abroad Handbook) so that you can access them quickly. In addition, it is always important to keep contact information for your host family or roommates, program/resident director, and the OIP. Please be sure you provide the program/resident director with your cell phone number and any travel itinerary if you are traveling over weekends or breaks in the event 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 be taking a more active role in your community. Little differences and problems will seem like huge catastrophes. This is the most difficult part of being abroad. Some people will want to withdraw; others will act aggressively when faced with a situation.

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

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

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 an American who has been there for a while, and has successfully gone through culture shock, and has a positive attitude. This person will help you get perspective on the host culture.
• Make close friends with host nationals. Having close intimate 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. Try taking a weekend trip to get away, 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.

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 a year or semester 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.
  • **OIP “Capture A Broad” Contest** – Students are encouraged to submit creative depictions of their time abroad for this annual contest. Formats may include, but are not limited to, photography, journal entries, blogs, video, and artwork.
  • 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 summer study, fellowship, or 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 US, and to your home campus too.

Cultural Adjustment Resources

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Students Abroad
• NAFSA: Association of International Educators Rainbow Special Interest Group (SIG) http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/student.htm
  This group is comprised of diverse members of NAFSA whose goals are to counsel international students and study abroad students who are gay, lesbian, or bisexual.
• International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission http://www.iglhr.org

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

Diversity, Ethnicity and Race Abroad
• Diversity Abroad http://www.diversityabroad.com/
  A portal with study abroad information for underrepresented students.
• “Top 10 Reasons for African American Students to go Abroad” http://www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/study/articles/studyjul1.shtml
  An article dispelling the myths associated with African Americans studying abroad.
• The Project for Learning Abroad, Training and Outreach (PLATO) http://www.globaled.us/plato/index.html
PLATO Project is an integrated study abroad training, certification, and diversity outreach program. PLATO provides comprehensive support resources for study abroad to all U.S. college and university students with special support for underrepresented students.

Students with Disabilities

- **Mobility International USA**
  
  
  As a US-based national non-profit organization, the mission of Mobility International USA (MIUSA) is to empower people with disabilities around the world through international exchange, information, technical assistance and training, and to ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities in international exchange and development programs.

- **Access Abroad**
  
  
  Access Abroad is a collaborative effort at the University of Minnesota to provide information and guidance on accessibility overseas. The materials on this website are designed to assist students, faculty and staff with the process of identifying and obtaining reasonable accommodations and include planning tools to help prepare students for a successful international experience.

Women Travelers

- **JourneyWoman**
  
  
  Travel tips geared toward women, including everything from personal travel stories to what to wear.

- **Her Own Way**
  
  
  A preventive guide to security, cultural, health and social concerns of women travelers from the Department of Consular Services, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada.
Section IX – Practical Tips

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Documents**
This handbook and other OIP documents
Passport and visa(s) and photocopies
Tickets and rail passes
International Student Identity Card and other student identification
Money belt or neck wallet
Cash, travelers checks, credit cards, calling card, etc.
Copies of the above for reporting lost or stolen cards and travelers checks.
International SOS Card
Staying in Touch
While you are abroad, keeping in touch with people back home will be very important. Trying to place international phone calls, or send letters to the US may be some of your most frustrating and expensive moments abroad. With patience, and a sense of humor, you will be able to communicate with home.

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

Telephone Services Abroad
Should you or your parents wish to make a direct-dial international call from the US the usual procedure is:
1. Dial the International Access Code: 011
2. Dial the country code (normally a 2- or 3-digit number)
3. Dial the city code (normally a 1- to 5-digit number)
4. Dial the local number abroad
- For an operator-assisted call (i.e. person to person, collect, credit card, or billed to a third number), follow the foregoing instructions but use “01” instead of “011” for the International Access Code. The operator will then come on the line to ask for the information needed (e.g. the name of the person you are calling or your credit card number). Direct-dial calls made with the “011” International Access Code are the equivalent of station-to-station calls. Unless you expect your party to be immediately available, this can be a bit risky. No matter who answers at the other end, you will be billed the minimum charge based on the first three minutes of conversation.
- You can get the country and city codes you need from any long-distance telephone company or directory, or through an internet search for “Country Codes”.
- The subject of finding the cheapest and best ways to phone home while abroad generates a lively exchange on such posting boards as Lonely Planet’s “Thorntree” forum (thorntree.lonelyplanet.com), Rick Steve’s “Graffiti Wall” (www.ricksteves.com) or the forum at Virtual Tourist (www.virtualtourist.com). For someone with a specific question—say, “What is the best place to rent a cell phone in Rio?”—these forums are a good place to find up-to-the-minute information.
- Video chat through services like Skype or Oovoo are other options to consider
- **Cards for Calls:** One convenient option is to use an international phone card, such as AT&T cards or GlobalPhone cards from IDT (www.idt.net); with IDT cards, you can also create mailboxes for voicemail.
- **Mobile Phones:** Newer mobile phones that can operate on any of the three wireless frequencies in place worldwide are becoming more common in the US. Global roaming rates still remain high, between 99 cents and $4.99 a minute, so be sure to check with your phone company to learn all of the rules before you go abroad.
- **SIM Card:** Buying local SIM card and paying for minutes is a great option. Contact your current wireless carrier to determine if the equipment you currently using is SIM-compatible
- **Phone Rentals:** You can rent globally-enabled cell phones from a company like TravelCell at www.travelcell.com or Cellhire at www.cellhire.com. Their long-term plan, for rentals of over
three months, generally cost $20 a month, plus optional insurance of around $8 a month; the
country-to-country rates are usually half of say T-Mobile’s. For those traveling where there is no
cell phone service, the companies offer satellite phone rentals. The cost is significantly more than
a regular cell phone but incoming calls are usually free from anywhere in the world and outgoing
calls run around $2 a minute.

- **Whatever you do, do not use** the 800-number posted on public and hotel telephones, whether
calling collect or with an ATM credit card number. Charges can be $30 to $50 for calls under five
minutes.

**Note:** Many host families will not allow their exchange student to make long distance calls from their
family phone because of billing systems that do not itemize each call. If this is the case, in order
to make an international call you should go to the post office, Internet café or to a hotel that has this
service or special telephone offices.

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

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

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

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

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

Storage
Brown Student Agencies (BSA) has partnered with the Storage Center Providence to provide storage services to the Brown community; while this service is primarily geared to summer storage, storage options may also be available for students who will be away from campus for a semester. Please contact Storage Center directly at 866-786-7987. 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.

International Shipping
If you bought too many things while you were abroad and don’t have the luggage space to bring everything back to the US, you should consider international shipping options. You could mail your belongings home through the local post office. Check out the rates on either the postal service’s website or at a local site. A second option is to use a private mailing service, such as UPS or DHL. Be sure to ask your program provider which service they recommend because sometimes they may have arranged for discounted services for students on their programs. Lastly, consider purchasing an another travel bag to pack your belongings and bring them home with you; with some airlines, the extra baggage fee is relatively low.
Section X: Career Development & Study Abroad

The time spent studying abroad can also be time spent thinking about what you will do after your graduate. In order to start or continue to do career exploration, some students arrange an internship while studying abroad to complement their studies. If you are thinking about pursuing an international career, you’ll want to plan ahead to best take advantage of opportunities. Check with counselors at the career development office at your home school before you leave or plan to email with them while you are away.

Considering working abroad while you are studying 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 Resource Library has 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 semester 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.
- 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, 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.
Checklist for Study Abroad

Residential Life, Box 1864; 401.863.3500; reslife@brown.edu; http://reslife.brown.edu/

It is your responsibility to contact the Office of Residential Life regarding any aspects of your current or future residential housing agreements. The website for the Office of Residential Life provides detailed information about the housing lottery, proxy forms, and general information concerning housing procedures for when you return to campus. Be sure to secure your housing plans before leaving for your semester abroad, and make sure to ask about the storage lottery and storage options.

___ Registrar's Office, J. Walter Wilson, 3rd Floor, Campus Box K, 401.863.2500
Your registration status as a study abroad student automatically is adjusted based on the semester(s) of study abroad as designated on your Student Status/Study Abroad Leave form that you submit to OIP. Once processed, this form serves as an indicator to all appropriate University administrative offices (Registrar, Residential Life, Financial Aid, Bursar, etc.) that you will be on a study abroad leave from the University.

Your re-admittance to Brown is automatic and is based on the time of return you designated on your Student Status/Study Abroad Leave form. If you change your plans about the time you plan to re-admit to Brown, you must notify the OIP in writing (email is fine) and include the following information:

- Your name
- Banner ID #
- Name of the program
- The new date of return to Brown and the reason for the change from the original date stated.

While you are abroad, you register for classes online with the online Banner system. You will be notified by email from the Registrar with important details about pre-registration.

___ Parking Office, J. Walter Wilson Bldg, 5th Floor, Suite 511, 401.863.3157
If you will need a parking space when you return, select another student to serve as a proxy in the parking lottery. The parking lottery is held only once a year, in the spring semester. If you will be away during the fall and need a parking space for the spring, be sure to participate in the parking lottery before you leave. You can then choose to use the space only for the spring semester.

___ Physical Education Department
Be sure you return all University athletic equipment, empty your locker and return your keys.

___ Brown University Mail Services, Box 1822, 401.863.2900
Mailboxes are assigned to new and readmitted students during the summer and winter recess. However, due to time constraints, some students may not be assigned a mailbox until they arrive on campus. Students will retain the same assigned mailbox for the duration of their undergraduate studies, provided they do not separate from the University. An effort will be made to reserve mailboxes for students who are on leave of absence from the University.

___ Bursar's Office, Brown Office Building, 2nd Floor, Campus Box 1839, 401.863.2484
Be sure to resolve any unpaid balances to facilitate your readmission. Please note that readmitted undergraduates who were not enrolled at the end of the previous semester (i.e. students who were on
a leave of absence) will be charged a $70 readmission fee. Students returning from study abroad are not subject to the readmission fee. If you are charged this fee, please contact the OIP.

_____ Financial Aid Office, J. Walter Wilson, 2nd Floor, Campus Box 1827, 401.863.2721
Students who are abroad are not exempt from complying with application deadlines and requirements to determine eligibility for financial aid. Application materials will be available on the Financial Aid website in early January for the following academic year.

_____ 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.

_____ Dining Services, 144 Thayer Street, 401.863.3343
When students sign a study abroad leave, their meal plan is automatically canceled. Students are not automatically re-enrolled in the plan unless they make a request through Dining Services. Students who wish to change or cancel their meal plan contract should indicate their preference on the Meal Plan Contract Response Card received in the summer and return it to Dining Services. The Bursar's Office will not process meal plan contract changes or cancellations. Questions concerning the terms of Meal Plan Contracts should be directed to the Dining Services office.

Depending on the timing of your return from your study abroad and when student bills are generated for the upcoming semester at Brown, you may find that you have not been billed for a meal plan. Dining Services assumes that students are no longer on the meal plan when they return to campus. It is your responsibility to inform Dining Services at as soon as possible if you wish to participate in a meal plan when you return from your semester(s) abroad.

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

A list of Brown University Faculty Advisors for Study Abroad Graduation Credit can be found on the OIP website.
Office of International Programs (OIP)
Brown University

Address: OIP, Box 1973
Brown University
Providence, RI 02912-1973

Telephone: 401.863.3555
Fax: 401.863.3311
Email: OIP@brown.edu
Website: http://www.brown.edu/OIP

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

Please contact individual departments and administrative offices for additional information.

Revised 4/15