



Study Abroad Handbook

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Introduction

With the excitement of study abroad comes many to do lists, much planning and reading, many conversations and phone calls, and a host of other responsibilities. This handbook gives you an overview of some important items to consider and prepare for along with information about study abroad policies while abroad. Your time overseas will present many challenges. A careful reading of this handbook will help you anticipate some of the challenges.

Many Hamilton students feel that they truly came into their own while studying in a foreign country. We hope that your experience abroad will support your intellectual curiosity and flexibility, nurture your creative spirit, enhance your skills in communication and expression, allow you to gain a better understanding of cultural diversity, and will support your work as a more ethical, informed, and engaged citizen.

Hamilton Contact Information

In case of an emergency:

1. Contact your program provider first.
2. Follow emergency protocols established by your program.
3. Call Hamilton College if you need assistance. You can reach us at:

Off-Campus Study Office: 315-859-4022

Campus Safety: 315-859-4000

Dean of Students: 315-859-4020

ProtoCall Counseling Service: 315-859-4340

Press Option 2 to speak with a counselor 24/7/365.

If you are calling from off-campus, you can also dial 1-800-372-TALK or text "START" to 741-741

At-a-Glance Pre-Departure Checklist

ON CAMPUS

- Have your courses pre-approved by the appropriate department chairs by completing the Petition for Transferred Credit and turn the petition into the Registrar's Office in Elihu Root by **December 1** for spring study abroad and by **April 15** for fall study abroad.
- Complete and turn in your Housing Proxy Form to the Office of Residential Life in Elihu Root.
- Complete and turn Release and Indemnification form to the Office for Off-Campus Study
- Check your financial aid by seeing Diane Barrett in the Financial Aid Office.
- Make sure your student account is paid in full. Failure to pay your account in full may result in having your study abroad approval revoked. Deposits or any other payments to your program or related to your program may be lost if your approval is revoked. If someone else is handling payments on your behalf, please check in with them to make sure your account is up to date and paid.
- Visit the Career Center in order to plan for internships and jobs when you return from your study abroad experience.
- See Ginny Dosch in the Career Center about post-baccalaureate scholarships. Some deadlines are early in the senior year. Your study abroad experience can be an integral part of your application.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE U.S.

- Read the Hamilton Study Abroad Handbook.
- Have a valid passport. Make sure that it is valid for at least six months past the date of your anticipated return.
- Secure a student visa if required.
- Get any immunizations you might need.
- Make your flight arrangements.
- Register your trip with the U.S. State Department through their Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).
- Consider assigning Power of Attorney to a family member or someone whom you trust who can take care of your financial affairs if needed while you are away.

- Arrange to vote absentee.
- Bring prescription medication with you and make sure that you have enough for your trip. This includes birth control pills. Medication should be carried in their original container. Make sure to have a copy of your physician's prescription.
- Check with your study abroad program provider to verify the insurance requirements of your program. Buy any supplemental insurance if needed.
- Alert credit card companies and your bank of your travel plans. Know how your debit/credit cards will work in your country abroad.
- Bring a supply of contact lenses that will last the entire time you need them.
- Learn about your host country and city. Learn the local laws and customs, including health, safety, and cultural issues.
- Read the news about the region, your host country, your host city.
- Make a budget for any travel while abroad.
- Program important phone numbers into your phone or save them in the cloud.
- Exchange about \$100 in local currency before leaving.
- Photocopy (and save to the cloud) credit cards, ATM cards, insurance cards, prescriptions, passport, visa, information about your sponsoring institution, lodging information, itinerary, airline ticket, driver's license, and any other important documents. Keep one set of copies at home, bring originals and another set of copies with you and keep in separate places.
- Set up a communication plan with friends and family.

INTEGRATING YOUR STUDY ABROAD WITH YOUR ACADEMIC AND CAREER PLANS

- Visit the Career and Life Outcomes Center.
 - Write your resume.
 - Consider your study abroad goals and place them in your resume to be augmented later.
 - Discuss internship opportunities for your return to campus.
- Visit the Fellowship and Scholarship Office.
 - Know your scholarship and post baccalaureate fellowship opportunities.
 - Make a plan to develop and focus your application while you are abroad.

- Think Senior Thesis and use study abroad as a catalyst for a thesis project.
- Consider volunteer engagement or student employment when you return that will value your study abroad experience.
- Consider serving as a campus ambassador for your study abroad program.

International Travel

Obtaining a Passport

In order to go abroad, you will need a valid passport. The State Department website provides U.S. citizens with the necessary forms and can help locate a Passport Acceptance Facility. If you already have a passport, make sure that it is valid for at least six months beyond the date of your return. You may not be granted a visa if the expiration date on your passport is too close to the date of your return or the visa expiration date. For more information about applying for a passport, go to:

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english.html/>.

Locally, the Clinton Post Office in the Village on College Street is a Passport Acceptance Facility. You can also get passport pictures taken there. Another place in Clinton where you can have passport pictures taken is the CVS on Meadow Street in the same shopping complex as Hannafords.

Getting your Visa

A visa is an endorsement in a passport that allows the holder to enter, leave, and stay in a country for a specified amount of time. Countries require students to apply for a visa to enter and reside in the country for the semester or the year. Your program provider will give you instructions about how to apply for a visa. In some cases, be prepared to give up your passport while your visa is being processed. For more information, about visa requirements go to:

<http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/general/americans-traveling-abroad.html>.

Do not delay in applying for your visa. Once your program provider gives you instructions, act quickly in applying for the visa. Consulates and embassies are often overloaded with visa applications which can often cause delays. **Proofread your application carefully and review the visa application instructions and checklists.** Mistakes on your visa application can also cause significant delays.

If you are ***not*** a U.S. citizen, check with the Dean of Students Office to make sure that your visa and other immigration papers are in order for study and re-entry in the U.S. Non-U.S. citizens may have special visa requirements and will not follow instructions for holders of U.S. passports. The embassies and consular offices of your study abroad country can provide guidelines for you. Getting a visa with a non-U.S. passport may require additional time.

Making Flight Arrangements

The program provider will give you information about the start and end dates of your program. In some cases they will arrange a group flight; in other cases they may give you the time and location for meeting

up and it will be up to you to get there on time. Please make sure to check in with your program provider about the dates of your program before purchasing your tickets.

Consider purchasing travel insurance. Travel insurance is different from health insurance and emergency evacuation insurance that is described later. It will often cover some medical expenses, trip cancellation, lost luggage, and other expenses related to trip delays while you are traveling in the U.S. or internationally. Weather often plays a factor when traveling by plane (think hurricane season and winter storms), and travel insurance may cover unexpected costs related to weather delays.

Registering Your Trip with the US Embassy

An important way to ensure that the U.S. State Department can assist you in case of an emergency is to register your trip with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). This program is a free service to U.S. citizens traveling abroad. In the event of an emergency (natural disaster, civil unrest, family emergency), the local U.S. Embassy or Consulate would be able to communicate urgent information to you. This service also keeps you posted about safety conditions and travel alerts and warnings for your destination country. We strongly recommend that you register for this service.

For STEP enrollment information, go to: <https://step.state.gov/step/>.

Pre-Departure Responsibilities

Verify Medical Insurance Coverage

Not all medical insurance policies provide coverage while you are abroad. Place a call to your insurance agent to make sure that you have appropriate medical insurance coverage in case you need medical treatment abroad. Students who have the Hamilton College's student health insurance have coverage worldwide. The plan also includes medical evacuation and repatriation coverage in the rare case that you would have to be flown back to the U.S. (or a different country) for medical treatment. More information about insurance coverage and medical evacuation and repatriation insurance can be found in the "[Staying Healthy](#)" section. Be sure you know how your insurance policy works abroad. Providers of study abroad programs may offer or even require specific insurance. Contact your study abroad program provider to verify their insurance requirements. Most, but not all, study abroad programs provide medical coverage.

Make Appointment for a Checkup and Immunizations

As you prepare for your trip, make sure to set up a visit with your regular physician. Let your physician know that you are traveling abroad and discuss any health issues that you are concerned about.

If you need any immunizations for your trip, it would be a good idea to talk about these immunizations with your physician to make sure there will be no interferences with any medications you may be currently taking. For example, there are malarial prophylactics that decrease the effectiveness of birth control pills.

Consult the Hamilton College Health Center for travel immunizations. The medical staff at the Health Center is prepared to administer these immunizations and can provide travel counseling. If you are at

home, other travel clinics such as Passport Health offer immunizations.

Obtain Necessary Medications

If you currently take a prescribed medication, make arrangements to see your doctor in order to obtain a prescription and enough medication to last for your stay abroad. You should also learn the local name of your medication abroad. Also, ask your doctor to write a letter that you can carry with you, which outlines what medications you have been prescribed. When traveling, bring any prescription medication or over-the-counter medication in their original and labeled containers along with the letter. Travel with the medication in your carry-on luggage.

It is also a good idea to bring a prescription for your eyeglasses in case they get lost or broken and an ample supply of contact lenses.

Your study abroad provider will know of specific prescription medication policies or issues in your study abroad location, and it may be vital for you to consult with officials of your study abroad program for specific advice.

Alert your Bank and Credit Card Companies

Banks and credit card companies monitor your accounts for fraudulent or suspicious spending activity. When you start using your cards outside of your normal spending area, these transactions are often flagged and in some cases may cause your bank or credit card company to put a freeze on your account. Make sure to call these institutions before you travel so that they are aware of your plans. This will prevent frustrating experiences and unexpected lack of access to funds.

Register for Absentee Voting

U.S. citizens can arrange to have an absentee ballot sent to you for elections while you are away. To find out how to get an absentee ballot, go to: <http://www.fvap.gov/>.

Consider Buying Personal Property Insurance

We do not recommend that you bring expensive or irreplaceable items while abroad. Theft, loss, or damage to items while studying abroad or traveling is possible. However, in some case, items like laptops and cameras may be necessary for your time abroad. Consider purchasing personal property insurance for these items. You'll also want to consider purchasing insurance that covers the replacement cost, not just the cash value of the item. Homeowner's and renter's insurance companies offer personal property insurance.

Consider an International Student Identity Card (ISIC)

There are many discounts and special pricing available for students abroad with proper student identification. The ISIC is the most widely recognized proof of student status. You can order an ISIC online for \$25 by going to <http://www.myisic.com/get-a-new-card/>. Note that it takes 3-4 weeks to get an ISIC card by mail, so plan ahead.

Start Packing

Listed below are important items to remember to bring with you. This is by no means a comprehensive list, however you should **pack lightly**. Your program provider can provide you with a more country-specific packing list that you should read closely.

Make sure to bring copies of important documents (i.e. passport, visa, prescriptions) and keep them in a safe place, not in your checked luggage. Keep copies of these documents and credit cards at home as well with someone who can provide you this information if needed.

Keep track of important phone numbers (i.e. doctor, credit card company, insurance provider, off-campus study office) and enter them into your cell phone, on your computer, or in the cloud.

Bring the acceptance letter from the program or host organization. You may need to present this when you go through passport control at your destination.

Bring insurance information and insurance claim forms (or save the link to the claim form online).

Bring extra pair of eyeglasses or extra contact lenses and your prescription with you.

Bring prescription medication or contraceptives in original and labeled container along with the doctor's prescription.

Have some passport-sized pictures taken and bring them with you. These pictures often come in handy when you are registering your stay in country, getting a university ID, or buying public transportation passes. It is an advantage if all your passport and ID photos match.

Communication

Cell Phones

You will find that in many places cell phones are as commonly used as they are in the U.S. However, most U.S. cell phones do not work abroad. If you have an unlocked cell phone, you may be able to buy a SIM card from a local carrier which you can insert in your phone and will allow you to make calls and text in-country. Call your cell phone carrier to find out what options you might have abroad and know the cost.

Most travelers often buy an inexpensive cell phone abroad without a contract. These phones allow you to pay for talk minutes in advance. When you run out of minutes, you reload your phone with additional talk time. These phones will often include the option to text.

Even if you don't use your smartphone for making calls, they can often still be used with WiFi. Depending on your destination and program, it may still be handy to bring your smartphone with you and use it with a WiFi connection.

Video Chat

Students use a variety of video chatting options, such as Skype and FaceTime. Before leaving for your time abroad, it is very helpful to set up regularly scheduled times to video chat with friends and family from back home. Setting up a time to chat on a regular basis helps prevent interruptions during class time, calls at odd hours because of the time difference, and also manages expectations about when you

will be in touch. Scheduling time to video chat will also give you time to yourself as well so that you can feel immersed in your experience abroad. Don't let video chatting get in the way of your time in your host country!

Email

Same advice from video chatting applies to email. Email can be very disruptive to your experience abroad if you are constantly emailing friends and family back home. Let people know ahead of time how you will communicate with them and how often so that you can use your time abroad to make new connections in your host country. Please keep your Hamilton College email account active. You will receive important Hamilton notifications through this account including any emergency notices from the College and information about course registration for your return semester.

Time Zones

Keeping in touch with others will take a little more planning because you will be in different time zones. There are many time zone converters online. One time converter can be found at: <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html>.

Money Matters

Fees for Study Abroad

Hamilton's study abroad fee is \$1500.00 per semester program. A student participating in a single, full year program will be charged \$2000 for the academic year, divided equally each semester. This fee does not apply to the following Hamilton programs: Hamilton in New York, Hamilton in Washington, D.C., New England Center for Children, ACC, HCAYS, HiF.

Hamilton Student Account

Before your off-campus study experience, your student account must be paid in full. You should have no outstanding balances. Failure to pay your account in full may result in having your study abroad approval revoked. Deposits or any other payments to your program or related to your program may be lost if your approval is revoked. If someone else is handling payments on your behalf, please check in with them to make sure your account is up to date and paid. If you need financial assistance, please contact the Financial Aid office so that they can figure out a way to assist you. They can be reached at finaid@hamilton.edu, 315-859-4413.

If you have any questions about your account, please contact the staff in the Student Accounts Office at stuacct@hamilton.edu or by phone at 315-859-4884 or 315-859-4317.

Financial Aid

Eligible students with [demonstrated financial need](#) can have their financial aid "travel" with them as they participate in Hamilton (New York City, Washington, D.C., China, France, Spain, and India) and other

approved off-campus study programs.

All off-campus study programs must be pre-approved by Hamilton College in order to receive institutional financial aid. Should a student choose to attend a program that is not approved, they are only eligible to receive Title IV (federal) aid with the completion of a consortium agreement; institutional or state financial aid is not transferrable for programs unapproved by the College.

Your [expected family contribution](#) will remain the same unless the cost of attendance of the program exceeds Hamilton's cost of attendance for a semester.

The amount of your need-based financial aid is adjusted according to the [cost of attendance](#) of the program.

Any student that owes an outstanding balance from prior semesters on their Hamilton account must have this balance paid before the student leaves for their off-campus study experience.

After prior semester Hamilton balances have been paid and all financial aid disbursed, some students may have a credit balance. Students can contact the Financial Aid Office to request a refund to be used for non-billable off-campus study expenses.

If an international student is studying off-campus on a non-Hamilton program to their home country, the full cost of the program must be funded in its entirety by the student and their family.

For more information about Financial Aid, go to: <http://www.hamilton.edu/finaid/study-abroad>. Please also contact Diane Barrett at dbarrett@hamilton.edu or 315-859-4413. Be sure to consult with her prior to your departure and early in your study abroad planning.

Budgeting

The amount of money needed while abroad will differ for each student and from country to country. Consult with your program provider since they will have a sense of what student expenses are for the program and location. You should also consult with students who are returning from your destination country. Know what expenses are included and not included in your program fee.

The overall cost of living abroad will depend on the types of activities and traveling you wish to do. Eating out, shopping, and going out at night will require a larger budget, as will in-country travel or regional travel. Because of the new environment, students will often be tempted to spend more than they would at home. Make sure that you are mindful of your spending so that you have enough money to do interesting things all the way through the last day of your stay.

You will want to start familiarizing yourself with the currency of your destination country and the exchange rate so that you have a good idea of what you're spending in dollars when you make any transactions.

Many of you may live in self-catering flats or apartments that will require shopping for groceries and preparing meals with flat mates. Know a few recipes before you go!

Cash

Before traveling abroad, it is a good idea to exchange a small amount of money to have on hand when you first arrive, about \$100. You should never carry a large amount of cash with you. You can often put in an order for foreign currency with your bank locally before going abroad. Exchanging money at the airport is possible, but the rates are often unfavorable. Whenever possible exchange money at a bank, instead of exchange counters, hotels, or shops. You should expect to be charged a commission for this service.

When you are in country, you can use your ATM card to withdraw money in the local currency. Be aware that your bank will most likely charge you a non-branch ATM fee and an international withdrawal fee. You may want to call your bank before traveling to see if there is a way to have them waive the international withdrawal fee while you are living abroad or if there is a way to upgrade your account to avoid these charges.

Debit Cards and Credit Cards

Credit cards are important to have on hand in case of a financial emergency. It is a good idea to bring a credit card with you. MasterCard and Visa are the most widely accepted credit cards. Some credit card companies will charge you a fee for every transaction that you make overseas. Make sure to find out if and what fees will be charged so that you are not caught off guard.

The same advice about fees applies to debit cards. Make sure you know your PIN for both your debit card and credit card. Most ATM's abroad accept foreign cards if they have a Cirrus or the Plus logo. Keep in mind that you will not be able to use the debit function through your debit card. Payment will go through as a credit card charge, but will withdraw the funds from your bank account.

Let your credit card company know your study abroad destination well in advance. Some may issue a credit card that is more usable abroad. Many countries now only accept credit cards embedded with a digital chip.

Academic Matters

Course Selection

Study abroad is an enriching educational experience that is most beneficial when it is fully integrated with your overall academic experience. Therefore, the Office of Off Campus Study and the Committee on Academic Standing follow certain principles in recommending and approving study abroad programs and applications. These principles also apply to your course selection abroad.

Study abroad programs should reflect Hamilton's liberal arts curriculum.

- Internships and non-liberal arts courses (ie: business, journalism) will not receive credit.
- Students will not receive credit for language courses below the level of Hamilton's language requirement for the country.
- Programs must be equal in length to a Hamilton semester, including vacations. Year long programs must equal two semesters.
- Students must take final exams at times regularly scheduled by their host school.

- You must take a normal full course load as defined by your host university or institution.

Transfer of Credits

Before you leave for your program, you will need to fill out a Petition for Transfer Credit form. **The Petition for Transfer Credit is due December 1 for spring study abroad and April 15 for fall study abroad. This form should be submitted to the Registrar's Office.** Use the program provider website or the university course catalog to select your courses. If you are enrolling in a program where you have course options, you will want to select a large number of courses (more than you will actually take) and list them on the petition so that you will have back up courses.

For all courses, print the course descriptions and/or course syllabi for every course on the petition. Take the petition and supporting course material to everyone who must sign.

- All courses in the department of your concentration or minor must be approved by the Department Chair, even if you do not intend to use them for the concentration or minor requirements. Obtain signature(s) before submitting the petition to the Registrar.
- The following courses must always be approved by the appropriate Department Chair before you submit the petition to the Registrar's office: All Foreign Language courses, Physics courses, Comparative Literature courses, Math courses, Computer Science courses.
- Your petition must be signed by your Academic Advisor before it is submitted to the Registrar's office.
- Other courses that are not in the department of your major or minor may be approved by the Registrar. You must submit course descriptions with the petition when requesting the Registrar's approval. You do not have to obtain the Study Abroad Approval or CAS Approval signatures. The Registrar's office will do this for you.
- Turn in the form to the Office of the Registrar only after you have obtained all the necessary signatures. **Make sure to submit the form by December 1 for spring study abroad and April 15 for fall study abroad.**
- Check with the Office of the Registrar about how many courses you must take to receive the full complement of Hamilton credits.
- Know your academic plan! Enroll in courses that will keep you on track for graduating on time.

Independent Study Projects

To receive credit for an Independent Study or Research Project, your completed course work must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate department chair for concentration or minor credit, or to the Dean for Off-Campus Study for general credit. You will be expected to submit a copy of your Independent Study or Research, or other appropriate, related materials to the person approving the course. In some cases credit may not be granted until appropriate Hamilton personnel have reviewed

your project and written work. It is advisable to retain copies of your papers.

Library Resources

Around the World Access

Even though you may be miles away from campus, you can still access your library account and most of the library's electronic resources via a computer or mobile device.

Using the seven-digit number on the front of your Hill Card, you can log in to:

- Manage your ALEX search preferences or personal account information
- View or renew checked out items, Interlibrary Loan (ILL) items, course reserves, and more
- Request ILL articles
- Access full-text journal articles
- Access over 200,000 eBook resources

Do you have library fines or overdue books? Clear your account before you go!

Special Requests

Note that students who are studying off campus may request scanned copies of journal articles and book chapters from Burke Library's print collections through Document Delivery. To request articles or book chapters, please contact the Interlibrary Loan Department at askILL@hamilton.edu.

Off-Campus Resource Guide

Whether you need suggestions for subject specific databases, guidance with setting your e-mail to "digest" mode, or help identifying specialized language or news resources, our *Off-Campus Resources Guide* is an excellent place to begin. Discover more at:

<http://libguides.hamilton.edu/offcampusresources>.

Ask Us!

Questions about finding quality resources? Need guidance with citation style? Please contact a Research Librarian at [315-859-4735](tel:315-859-4735) or askref@hamilton.edu for personalized assistance. Does the time difference make it challenging to contact us? For access to our 24/7 chat service, simply click on the "Ask Us 24/7" button found on our subject guides and at: <http://www.hamilton.edu/library/askalibrarian>.

Need assistance with your Hamilton e-mail, listservs or passwords? Call the Help Desk at [\(315\)-859-4181](tel:315-859-4181) or helpdesk@hamilton.edu.

Office of Off-Campus Study Services

Off-Campus Study Assistance Abroad

While we do our best to inform you and connect you to information and resources about your time abroad in order to be well prepared for a variety of situations, you still may find yourself in a situation where you need assistance. We encourage you to resolve issues as best you can on your own, but also recognize that there are times when you might only be able to get so far, and Off-Campus Study can assist and/or advocate for you. Whatever the situation, we want to be able to help you resolve issues as

soon as possible so that you can make the most out of your time abroad. While feedback after the program is always helpful, we would not want you to wait to address a problem that is causing any type of distress. Below are some areas that we can assist you with if you find that you are not getting adequate support or help from your program provider or if you find you need support while navigating through assistance possibilities.

- Academic Issues such as transfer credit or dropping/adding a course
- Housing dilemmas
- Financial issues
- Discrimination of any kind, xenophobia, racism

Staying Healthy

Travel Health Alerts

Before traveling it is important to inform yourself about health alerts that are related to your host country and any other countries to which you are planning to travel. Please read the country-specific information given to you by your program provider. Program provider information is much more detailed and specific to the country and region where you will be studying. In addition to this information, you should also consult the Center for Disease Control website: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>. The CDC website includes information about the risk of exposure to viruses and diseases, such as zika, lyme, malaria, and rabies. Understanding these risks may give you the opportunity to take preventative measures.

Medical Insurance and Medical Treatment

Many study abroad programs include international medical insurance in their program fees. Programs provided by IFSA-Butler, Arcadia University, and SIT for example enroll their students in an international medical plan. If you are unable to verify on the website that your program provides medical coverage, you should give them a call and speak to an admissions counselor or program manager to verify.

Even if your program provides medical coverage, you do not want to drop your domestic insurance. Your domestic medical insurance provides you coverage in case you need to return to the U.S. unexpectedly.

If your program does not provide international medical insurance, we highly recommend that you purchase supplemental medical insurance for you time abroad since these insurance providers are better equipped to provide support for medical care abroad. Some domestic insurance companies may cover medical care abroad, however treatment is often considered out-of-network.

Make sure you understand your health insurance coverage and that you bring your insurance card with you and leave copies of the front and back of the card at home with someone whom you trust. Most study abroad programs require medical evacuation and repatriation coverage. Several program providers include this type of medical coverage in their program fees. **Make sure to inquire with your program provider as this is critical coverage to have in an emergency situation.** If a program provider recommends a specific insurance plan, they usually do so with good reason.

In most cases, hospitals outside of the U.S. will not accept or be able to bill your insurance provider directly. Hospitals and physicians will require payment at the time services are rendered. You should be prepared to pay upfront for treatment by credit card or with cash. Make sure you understand the process for filing an insurance claim for reimbursement of your medical expenses. Save any receipts along with contact information for the physician and hospital.

If your program does not provide medical insurance, below is a list of some insurance providers that offer coverage for travelers and study abroad students. All of these providers also offer medical evacuation and repatriation coverage.

HTH: <http://www.hthtravelinsurance.com/>

CISI: <https://www.culturalinsurance.com/students/>

iNext: <http://www.inext.com>

Disclosing Medical Information

Disclosing information about your health and mental well-being allows a program provider to be prepared to assist you when you are abroad. Disclosing information will NOT cause you to lose a place on the program. Your medical records and forms will remain confidential. The program provider may not disclose any personally identifiable information to third parties without your consent.

It is important to fill out all medical health forms as honestly and accurately as possible. Absence of information may cause delays and in some cases prevent you from getting appropriate treatment or access to appropriate services.

Allergies, physical disabilities, dietary restrictions, mental health issues and conditions, including anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and diagnosed psychiatric conditions should be included in your disclosure. You can choose to disclose at any time in the study abroad process, but disclosing before you go abroad will give the program time to coordinate services. Remember that by letting your program provider know this information, you are advocating for yourself.

Physical Exams and Immunizations

The Health Center on campus can help you get ready for your trip abroad. At the Health Center, you can find Diann Lynch, a registered nurse, who is prepared to counsel students about travel health and administer immunizations. You can set up an appointment with her by calling the 315-859-4111.

Mental Health

Hamilton College subscribes to a phone counseling service called ProtoCall. ProtoCall Counselors are available 24/7/365. You can reach them three ways:

- By calling 315-859-4340 and pressing option 2 to speak to a counselor.
- By calling 1-800-372-TALK
- By texting "START" to 741-741.

This section only briefly addresses mental health. In fact, entire books and handbooks have been written on student mental health while studying abroad. Use this section as a way to begin thinking about maintaining good mental health, and use some of the resources listed below to delve deeper.

The following information about mental health comes from U.S. State Department website:
<http://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en/health/mental-health.html>

Traveling abroad can be stressful and may exacerbate a mental health condition. A student may not have adequate access to their prescribed medication or mental health facilities. In addition, culture shock, language barriers, and homesickness can deepen isolation or depression.

Workable Plan

Before traveling, create a workable plan for managing your mental health while abroad. The availability and quality of mental health services differ widely from country to country. In many countries, students will find it difficult — and sometimes impossible — to find treatment for mental health conditions. With your health services provider or your school, put together a workable mental health plan before you go overseas.

- If you have a medical or psychological condition that may require treatment while you are abroad, discuss this ahead of time with your doctor. Do not experiment with not taking your medicine or mixing alcohol with medicine.
- Research the social culture of your destination to learn about how mental illnesses are viewed. Attitudes toward mental health can greatly vary between countries.
- If you are studying abroad through your university, talk to your university about access to mental health services at overseas programs. Your study abroad office can help you decide what program would be best for you.
- If currently receiving mental health services — including prescription medication — find out if those services and/or medication are available at your destination. Also, check out our [State Department] info about carrying prescriptions abroad.
- Consider the support system you'll have in place while abroad. If possible, know ahead of time who you can consult with about your mental health.

The following information about mental health comes from University of South Florida's handbook "Mental Health Wellness Abroad" (with some notes by Hamilton Off-Campus Study) at:
http://educationabroad.global.usf.edu/_customtags/ct_FileRetrieve.cfm?File_ID=010F767D754F740204030507000B1C700C7B7714737B02036E010303067D070B7603057D047B730676

Making Preparations to Participate in Education Abroad

- Students managing chronic medical, psychiatric, or psychological conditions need to continue treatment while studying abroad.
- Discuss with your healthcare provider whether traveling abroad is appropriate at this time.
- It is important to discuss the potential stresses of traveling abroad with your therapist. Work with a mental health care provider to create a mental health plan for your study abroad. Be sure to identify how you will access social support, engage in self-care behaviors, and cope

with emergencies while you are abroad.

- If you are currently being prescribed medication, find out whether your medication will be available in your destination country and information about carrying prescription medication abroad. Check out <http://www.embassy.org/embassies> to make sure your prescriptions and over-the-counter medications are permissible in the countries you expect to visit.
- Do not plan on sending medications abroad since it will require customs paperwork and may be delayed in delivery. Be aware that your medications may not be available in your host country. They may have a different name or have a different strength.
- Investigate mental health services in your destination country, and consider purchasing insurance that will cover these services, should you have an emergency. Mental health providers may be available locally. You may want to pre-identify an English-speaking provider: <http://www.goodtherapy.org/therapy-international.html>.
- Consider confiding in a “travel buddy” about your health condition in case of an emergency provide that person with emergency contact information for your health care provider in the U.S. so that they can assist you if you become overwhelmed.

Tips from Travelers with Mental Health-Related Disabilities

- Recognize that some of what you may experience overseas as part of the intercultural adjustment cycle (sometimes called “culture shock”) and that it is common to all study abroad participants. The low points are not necessarily attributable to a mental health-related diagnosis (e.g. homesickness, anxiety about understanding/speaking a foreign language, loneliness, fear of being robbed or getting sick from the food, etc.). You may also experience feeling very good and elated on the high point of the cycle, which may make you feel that you no longer need medications if you use them. Keep taking your medication and consult with a doctor first [before changing medications].
- Learn the vocabulary associated with your condition before leaving the United States if you are going to a non-English speaking country. Bring a translated copy of needed medical records and release forms.
- Connect with international mental health-related groups to learn about what types of situations and attitudes exist in the host country and peer/support groups you can contact while there.
- If you are comfortable disclosing your condition to others, ask for a few minutes to talk about your condition during orientation; for some individuals, self-disclosure to others on a group program can reduce anxiety and creates opportunities for others to understand their access needs.
- Another option is to find someone on the program that you can trust to understand your condition and whom you can teach about the support needed if he/she sees changes in your

health or behaviors.

- Be clear and direct with clinical specialists, friends and family at home, if staying in contact (receiving letters, emails, etc.) is important and necessary support for you while abroad.
- Plan in advance for contingencies, such as arranging to talk by phone [or video chat] with a familiar therapist in the United States, planning for more privacy or down time, and consulting with other students with similar disabilities who have studied abroad.
- Consider pre-paying for sessions with your home therapist in case you need to call and have a session over the telephone or video chat while abroad. [Arrange the support in advance that will help you thrive abroad.]
- Many of the problems that you could experience overseas will seem minor compared to the good experiences that you will have. However, if you feel that your health or safety is deteriorating, give yourself an outlet and permission to leave the program.
- Anyone can feel fear or trepidation before traveling abroad, but self-knowledge about what strategies work at home can also help once abroad. Plan ahead when you can. If you are staying with a family in the host country, you may want to communicate with them honestly about your needs before you arrive (if the program can provide this overseas contact information before your arrival).

Staying Safe

In Case of an Emergency

All Hamilton programs and non-Hamilton off campus study programs have emergency protocols. It is important to know what these protocols are and to be ready to follow them. In the event of an emergency, you will need to contact your program provider first. The program will and should give you an emergency contact number, whether it is for the program director, program administrator, or an emergency hotline. Keep this number with you at all times. **Always keep your cell phone charged and make sure you have time on your phone in order to place this call!**

Once you have alerted on-site staff and are following emergency protocols, please call the Hamilton's Off-Campus Study Office (during EST business hours) or Campus Safety (anytime). Please program these numbers into you cell phone as well either manually or by downloading our digital emergency contact card, which you can find by following this link: <https://www.keynect.us/user/HAMOCS>.

In case of an emergency:

- 1. Contact your program provider first.**
- 2. Follow emergency protocols established by your program.**
- 3. Know official emergency numbers in your host country. 911 will not work abroad.**
- 4. Call Hamilton College if you need assistance. You can reach us at:**

Campus Safety: 315-859-4000
Off-Campus Study Office: 315-859-4022
Dean of Students: 315-859-4020

Natural Disasters and Security Incidents Abroad

During a major emergency abroad, Off-Campus Study will contact your program provider to confirm your safety. In some cases, Off-Campus Study will email you directly. It is critical that you respond to this email or any other form of communication we use. The College, your family, and your friends rely on our office to know you are safe and to work with your program provider to assist you.

We strongly encourage you to download our digital emergency contact card, which you can find by texting 444-999 and typing HamOCS in the message. You will be prompted to download the card to your contacts list. Students attending general pre-departure orientation will be guided through the process of downloading the KeynectUp emergency contact card. However, keep in mind that you may need to download the card onto the phone being used abroad if it is different from the one used in the U.S. In addition to downloading emergency contact numbers and links, this emergency contact card will also allow Off-Campus Study to check-in with you via text message if you have the card downloaded to your phone.

Travel Warning Countries

While participating in a study abroad program, Hamilton College does not permit students to travel to countries for which there is a State Department Travel Warning. It is important to check the State Department list, particularly when you are travelling, in order to be up to date with current travel risks. Regional situations can change rapidly and can often not be anticipated. A current list of travel warning countries and regions can be found at the State Department website:
<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings.html>.

Housing Policy

Hamilton College maintains a strict housing policy. Housing options are selected in order to ensure the safety of students studying abroad and give students optimum learning experience and cultural integration. Students must choose from the housing options vetted by the program provider.

Independent housing is not permitted. Hamilton has posed specific limitations on housing for some study abroad programs. These are noted below. Please be aware of these specific housing stipulations as well as the general policy which prohibits independent housing.

DIS-Hamilton Housing Policy: Hamilton College housing policy for DIS-Copenhagen and DIS-Stockholm is developed in consultation with DIS. The DIS-Hamilton policy restricts housing options for Hamilton College students participating in the DIS – Copenhagen program to the following: (1) homestay families, (2) Living Learning Communities, and (3) living in the Kollegium. The policy also restricts housing options for Hamilton College students participating in the DIS – Stockholm program to the following: (1) homestay families, (2) Living Learning Communities, and (3) Residential Community. DIS housing options benefit from services and direct support of DIS staff. Hamilton students are not allowed

to secure independent apartments and must sign and submit the DIS-Hamilton Housing Agreement at the time of application.

Personal Safety

While many of us feel like we know how to keep ourselves safe at home or in the U.S., being a student and a traveler in a foreign country puts you at a higher risk for falling victim to crime and theft. At home we are able to read social and cultural cues pretty well and can sense or notice when a situation doesn't feel safe. As a foreign student away from home, these cues are likely to be different and can be easily misinterpreted.

Therefore, it is particularly important that you be mindful of the decisions you make and that you maintain awareness of your surroundings so that you don't fall victim to crime, theft, scams, or other dangers.

Terrorism no longer is isolated to specific countries. The threat of terrorism exists in all locations. Make sure to carefully listen to and read information about safety protocols. These location-specific protocols will be explained to you by your program provider. In the event of an emergency, knowing what to do will allow you to seek necessary help quickly and keep you mentally focused.

Below are some precautions drawn from "It's Your World: Study Abroad Handbook" written by Bill Hoffa and from the SAFETI Clearinghouse Project with some notes from Hamilton Off-Campus Study. This list was found on: http://www.globaled.us/safeti/151student_guide.asp

Common Sense Precautions

- [Research the country where you will be living], listen and heed the counsel you are given.
- Keep a low profile and try not to make yourself conspicuous by dress, speech, or behavior, in ways that might identify you as a target.
- Do not draw attention to yourself either through expensive dress, personal accessories (cameras, radios, sunglasses, etc.) or careless behavior.
- Avoid crowds, protest groups, or other potentially volatile situations, as well as restaurants and entertainment places where Americans are known to congregate. Keep abreast of local news. Read local newspapers, magazines, etc. and speak with local officials to learn about any potential civil unrest. If there should be any political unrest, do not get involved.
- [Don't go to bars or clubs alone and don't leave anyone behind.]
- Be wary of unexpected packages and stay clear of unattended luggage or parcels in airports, train stations, or other areas of uncontrolled public access.
- Report to the responsible authority any suspicious persons loitering around residence or instructional facilities, or following you; keep your residence area locked; use common sense in divulging information to strangers about your study program and your fellow students. [This

includes things like your travel plans and contact information.]

- If you travel to countries beyond your program site and expect to be there for more than a week, register upon arrival at the U.S. consulate or embassy having jurisdiction over the location. [Also register your travel plans with your program provider.]
- Make sure the resident director, host family, or foreign university official who is assigned the responsibility for your welfare always knows where and how to contact you in an emergency and your schedule and itinerary of you are traveling, even if only overnight.
- Develop with your family a plan for regular telephone or e-mail contact, so that in times of heightened political tension, you will be able to communicate with your parents directly about your safety.
- The U.S. government monitors the political conditions in every country around the world. For current information, advisories, or warnings contact the State Department in Washington DC (202- 647-4000) or the local U.S. embassy or consulate where you are (see the section on U.S. embassies or consulates abroad in this handbook).
- Be aware of local health conditions abroad: especially if you are traveling to remote areas, you should be aware of any public health service recommendations or advisories. For current health conditions abroad contact local officials, contact the country desk at the State Department (202- 647-4000), or the Centers for Disease Control (404-639-3311). [National health and safety information is available in your host country. Know these websites.]
- Know local laws: laws and systems of justice are not universal. Do not assume that just because it is legal in the United States, that it is legal abroad.
- Use banks to exchange your money: do not exchange your money on the black market, on the street. Do not carry on your person more money than you need for the day. Carry your credit cards, etc. in a very safe place.
- Do not impair your judgment due to excessive consumption of alcohol, and do not fall under the influence of drugs.
- Female travelers are sometimes more likely to encounter harassment, but uncomfortable situations can usually be avoided by taking the following precautions: Dress conservatively. While short skirts and tank tops may be comfortable, they may also encourage unwanted attention. Avoid walking along late at night or in questionable neighborhoods. Do not agree to meet a person whom you do not know in a non-public place. Be aware that some men from other countries tend to mistake the friendliness of American women for romantic interest.
- [Be aware that you can be a target for assault, pick pocketing, identity theft because you are American.

Sexual Harassment

The Hamilton College website provides policy information and resources for Harassment and Sexual Misconduct: <https://www.hamilton.edu/offices/hsmb>. As a Hamilton student, Hamilton resources are available to you. Another very important resource for students abroad is Pathways to Safety International. Their website (<https://pathwaystosafety.org/>) provides advice, resources, and access to a crisis line available both in the U.S. and internationally.

This section below on sexual harassment is drawn directly from the Princeton University International Travel Handbook: <http://www.princeton.edu/oip/about/publications/Travel-Handbook.pdf>

Students may find that what is considered sexual harassment in the U.S. is either tolerated or socially acceptable behavior in other countries. In some countries, it is not uncommon for women to be verbally and loudly appraised, honked at, and aggressively addressed in other ways.

Although being culturally sensitive and respectful is an important element of your experience abroad, you should not accept behavior that invades your personal boundaries or makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable. Trust your instincts. Although it may seem rude to be unfriendly to a stranger, creating boundaries to protect yourself is important. Use body language, facial expressions, and a firm voice to fend off unwanted attention. Make sure your body language is congruent with your words—if you say no with a smile, your words lose their force. Avoid eye contact, which can be seen as an invitation in some cultures.

The issue of sexual harassment can become a major stress factor for women and can greatly affect their experience abroad. Harassing behavior is almost always annoying but only occasionally develops into a dangerous situation. Responding aggressively out of exasperation is understandable, but can put you at risk. Engaging in conversation with locals about gender roles and techniques for deflecting unwanted attention can be helpful. If harassment toward you causes increased anxiety or anger, you should seek assistance immediately.

Uncomfortable situations can usually be avoided by taking precautions. Dress conservatively (information about appropriate clothing for women travelers in various countries can be found at <http://www.journeywoman.com>). Do not go out alone late at night or in questionable neighborhoods.

Sexual Assault and Rape

Hamilton students who experience any form of sexual misconduct including sexual assault and rape are covered by Hamilton College's Sexual Misconduct Policy even while they are on a study abroad program: <https://www.hamilton.edu/offices/hsmb/sexual-misconduct-policy>.

If you experience any form of sexual misconduct, it is important to seek safety first and then reach out to on-site staff. The Off-Campus Study Office and the Hamilton Title IX coordinator are also ready to assist, but the resident staff of your program will be able to provide you with the most immediate assistance especially if you need medical attention. Since laws about and attitudes towards rape and sexual assault vary from country to country, the on-site staff will assist you through the choices you have for reporting. Hamilton stands ready to support any person who is a survivor of sexual assault.

Catherine Berryman is the Hamilton Title IX coordinator. She can be reached at cberryman@hamilton.edu and 315-859-4020.

Alcohol and Illegal Drug Use

You will find that the legal drinking age abroad is often less than in the U.S. It is quite common for alcohol to be present at social gatherings and events, however people in countries abroad use it as a way of socializing, and it is not common to drink in order to get drunk. Please be aware of your surroundings and the local views on consuming alcohol. Please remember that you are in a foreign city, and you will stand out more than others. Be cautious and responsible. Be mindful that alcohol increases your risk of injury and accidents. Hundreds of Americans are arrested abroad every year for public intoxication.

Illegal drug use is not acceptable and is against the law. Refrain from using, buying, or possessing illegal drugs while abroad as you will be held to the laws of your host country and neither Hamilton College nor the U.S. government will be able to help you if you are arrested in another country. Don't risk it!

Pick Pocketing

Pick pocketing is one of the most common crimes that a traveler will encounter. You may think that this won't happen to you, however these criminals are professionals and make their living off unsuspecting travelers. Be aware of your surroundings and be conscious of your belongings as well as yourself especially in high traffic areas such as subways, clubs, tourist areas, and on the street. Be aware of distraction tactics that a thief might use to hold your attention

Road Safety

Road culture, road regulations, signage, pedestrian conventions, vehicle conditions, traffic flow, and emergency response are some of the things that will be different in your host country or other countries where you may be traveling. Before departing, make sure to research your destination's road and transportation culture. The U.S. State Department website for international travel provides country-specific guides that offer information about road and transportation safety. YouTube videos can also give you a glimpse of what public transportation, walking, or biking might be like at your destination. The resources below can help you start your research.

Motor vehicle crashes are the #1 cause of death for healthy Americans traveling abroad. Some tips for minimizing risk while on the road (adapted from the CDC website on road safety):

1. Always wear seat belts.
2. Ride only in marked taxis that have seat belts.
3. Be alert when crossing the street, especially in countries where people drive on the left. Look both ways!
4. Don't expect cars and trucks to share the roads with pedestrians, bicycles, rickshaws, animals.
5. Don't ride motorcycles.
6. Know the traffic laws.
7. When possible, avoid riding in a car in a developing country at night.
8. Avoid overcrowded, top-heavy, overweight buses or vans.

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/road-safety>

Driving Warning

The Office of Off-Campus Study strongly advises against owning, renting, and operating a vehicle while abroad. Road accidents are the number one cause of fatality for healthy Americans abroad and, therefore, we strongly advise that you maintain awareness and learn about road and traffic safety in the countries where you plan to live and/or visit as a pedestrian and as a potential passenger in a vehicle.

We discourage driving outside of the United States for the following reasons:

- Road regulations and laws are unfamiliar. While in some countries driving laws may appear to be similar, as foreign drivers we are still not knowledgeable of the details and nuances of the laws that local drivers are following. In other countries, it may be obvious that driving laws are different and, therefore, it increases the risk factors for road accidents.
- Traffic and road culture are unfamiliar. Local drivers understand the driving habits and environment of the roads they regularly drive on, which vary from country to country. Certain cultural factors influence how drivers behave on the road. This includes risk tolerance, driving attitudes, and perceived control of a vehicle. The most common example of road culture is how drivers adhere to red lights or speed limits. Despite having laws in place, the road culture may tolerate non-compliance. Unfamiliarity with the road culture increases the risk of a road accident.
- Vehicle conditions may not meet safety standards or may meet local safety standards which in some cases may not be as rigorous as we are used to in the United States. Differences such as availability of functioning seat belts, adequate mirrors, good tire condition, correctly adjusted headlights, and functioning emergency brakes increase the risk of road accidents.
- Some places may have inadequate emergency care. Rural areas and developing countries may not have the resources to respond quickly to a road crash. Post-accident hospital care is not always consistent across a country and in non-English speaking countries language can be a barrier to receiving proper care.

Cyber Crime

Cybercrime has become much more prevalent these days and many people find themselves victims of online offenses such as fraud, hacking, online stalking, cyber bullying, and phishing scams. It is important to keep your computer current with latest updates and patches. Make sure you use strong passwords and unique passwords for different accounts. Be careful about using public wifi to do online banking, shopping or to deal with sensitive information. Protect your personal information. In addition, publicizing information about yourself and your location on public social media platforms could put you at risk of cybercrime. Be wary of suspicious emails offers. Review your bank and credit card statements often.

Virtual Kidnapping

Virtual kidnapping is a new phenomenon where thieves are tricking families in the U.S. by telling them they have kidnapped their son or daughter. They are able to obtain information about travelers regarding where and when they will be leaving their usual residence, as well as phone numbers, addresses and other personal information. Once they have this information, and the traveler has reached a destination that is unreachable by cell phone, the thief calls the family and demands money

to be wired to an untraceable account. With little time to react and no way of reaching their son or daughter, parents and relatives will give into the threat.

Do not let yourself become a victim of this scam. Be aware that this happens, do not publicize your future travel plans on social media, verify cell reception when traveling, and register your trip with the State Department and with your program provider.

If you are traveling out of cell phone range, have an emergency communication plan, be informed about the region, and don't go alone.

Water Hazards

Drinking Water

Unclean water can cause serious health issues. In some study abroad locations it is not safe to drink the water. If you are in a country where water is unsafe, make sure you are very attentive to what you eat and drink, and how you wash and bathe. Drink only bottled water and make sure the cap or seal is unbroken. Avoid ice cubes or any beverages that contain ice cubes. Eat hot and cooked foods. Peel fruit yourself. These are just a few guidelines.

More information can be found on the Center for Disease Control website:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/food-water-safety>

Swimming

Hundreds of visitors drown each year in international waters. Do not ignore warning signs cautioning of rip tides, poisonous fish and jellyfish, and contaminated waters.

Adjusting to a New Culture

You have chosen to go abroad to experience something "different." Wherever you land, you will be operating under an unfamiliar set of cultural norms. Having some personal awareness about how people will perceive you and a general understanding of and openness to the cultural norms in your host country will help you to engage with others, and allow you to process and learn from some of the situations you will face. Your experiences abroad will hopefully strengthen your flexibility and adaptability, your tolerance for differences and for ambiguity, your ability to empathize, and a host of other skills.

Stereotypes

While abroad you will be perceived in a variety of ways. Some people will resort to stereotypes of Americans to make initial judgments about you. Generally speaking, Americans are often viewed as outgoing and friendly, generous and hardworking, but also loud, boastful, and ignorant of other countries. The way to dispel these stereotypes (both ones people have of you and ones that you have of them) is to make an effort to talk to people from your host country in order to get to know one another on a personal level. Personal connections will reveal more meaningful things about a person and his/her culture.

Cultural Adjustment

Adjustment will take on different forms and feelings and will come at different times for each student. Some students may start their experience with some amount of anxiety, but generally as soon as they touch down, it is possible for many students to start feeling excited about their new environment. The duration of this period of excitement will vary.

At some point, students may start to feel anxious, depressed, irritable, and often frustrated with their host country. Some students may not want to go out exploring as much or will start calling home more often. Again, this stage of cultural adjustment can take on different forms. This is often the hardest period of adjustment and the “shock” portion of culture shock. Awareness of this adjustment period will certainly help get you through this process. However, it is important to continue to communicate with others around you, to continue to engage with the culture, and to find things that you enjoy doing. Eventually many students will feel like they have gotten the hang of things and will perhaps feel a sense of belonging.

Going for a walk, meeting local people, choosing a new place to visit and discover, reading the local news in your host country, journaling, listening to music in the host language are all possible ways to help you adjust to your new surroundings. Keep an open mind and your sense of humor! **Most importantly, seek counsel if you find that you can't get yourself out of the low points.**

Personal Identity

The following information about personal identity is drawn directly from Fordham University's Study Abroad Handbook. It is important to think about these issues as your host country may not define them in the same way Americans do.

http://www.fordham.edu/info/21298/how_to_study_abroad/3826/cross-cultural_issues

Gender

As gender-based treatment in a foreign culture may differ significantly from your native culture, be aware that it can affect your experience abroad. For some individuals, concerns include sexual harassment, safety, and social expectations. To anticipate challenges, it is important to understand the role of gender in the culture in which you are living. Observe how the host country's people dress and behave. Also remember at all times that what may be appropriate or friendly behavior in the U.S. may bring you unwanted, even dangerous, attention in another culture. Your program provider is a good resource for information.

Race, Ethnicity and Class

Be aware that because of your race or ethnicity, you may be accorded different privileges or experience different barriers abroad than those you experience at home. Different cultures define race and ethnicity differently, create different categories and expect different things of people within these categories. The same with class: different cultures have different ideas and perceptions about class, which can also affect your experience abroad. In certain contexts, working class Americans may be considered rich, while in others, upper-middle class Americans may be considered poor. Consider where your program is located, especially in a city: is it in an affluent or middle-class neighborhood? Where will you be living? Once you arrive at your destination, take cues from your surroundings and, as you go

about your everyday routines, determine what is appropriate and prudent.

Sexual Orientation

Depending on your sexual orientation you may be granted different privileges or encounter different challenges abroad than at home. Since many ideas we have about sexual orientation and sexuality are culturally based, students need to be aware of how this will affect their relationships with host nationals, cultural adjustment and the overall study abroad experience. For information regarding sexual orientation issues in countries outside the US, check out NAFSA's Association of International Educator's LesBiGay Special Interest Group. [<http://www.rainbowsig.org/us-students-abroad/>]

Disability

Travel is always a challenge to a person's problem-solving abilities; this is no different for a person with a disability. While overseas, people with disabilities will likely find some things inaccessible, but preparation and persistence can help. Mobility International USA (phone/TTY: 541-343-1284) is an excellent resource on travel for people with physical disabilities.

[It is critical that your program provider be aware of disabilities in advance of your arrival or immediately upon your arrival to ensure that accessibility and learning support can be arranged. Do not assume that you can order support services on demand after you arrive. Be an informed advocate for yourself.]

Preparing for Your Return

The emotional ups and downs continue as you prepare to return home. Some students may feel some anxiety about returning home. Others may find returning home to be bittersweet. Many students will feel much altered by their study abroad experience, and this will affect how they envision their return home. Upon returning home, there may be some initial excitement, but then these feelings may give way to sadness and depression. Many soon find that they are able to pull themselves up and out from these new low points as a more confident and open-minded individual.

However, if you find that you need help during this period of adjustment, other people who have gone abroad and spent time specifically in the same host country will be an important connection for you. Look for Off-Campus Study re-entry workshops, which are meant to provide you with support and will help you reflect on the learning from your experience abroad. **Most importantly, seek advice from a mental health counselor if you are having difficulty readjusting to life back at home.**

Practical Matters

Course Registration

You will have the opportunity to register for next semester's courses while you are away from campus.

Registration times are randomly assigned by the system and will not be changed. The Registrar's Office cannot accommodate all of the various time and location situations for students who are away from campus. You can register any time after your registration until 2 p.m. on the second day. All times are EST. Students who are away will be cleared for registration, but should still consult with their faculty advisor. If you have any other registration holds, you must contact the appropriate office directly.

If the course has the letter "R" at the end, it means that the course is restricted in some way. Students can view the restrictions on the Registrar's Office home page under "Registration Information" and "Registration Restrictions" or by going to Web Advisor and looking at the number of spaces saved for each class year.

The Registrar's Office realizes that students who are away may not have access to the web or might be unavailable during their registration times. Students who are away from campus have two options for registration:

- Register through Web Advisor - Access registration at or any time after your assigned registration time. You have the same access and opportunities as students who are on campus. This is your best option, since you can make decisions about what to do in case of registration problems like close courses or missing prerequisites.
- E-mail your course choices to Diane Brady at dbrady@hamilton.edu to be processed by the Registrar's Office. You MUST provide the Department, Course number, and Section number for each course. In addition, you should have alternate choices listed in case we encounter closed courses or there are registration problems.

Housing

The housing proxy will act on your behalf to handle all aspects of the housing lottery process (signing up if you are participating in the blocking lottery (other lottery sign ups happen online), selecting your room, etc.). Please complete the Housing Proxy form with as much detail as possible to make the process of selecting a room easier for your proxy. The Office of Residential Life will serve as your proxy if you would prefer, but you MUST specify that you would like us to do so in your proxy form.

****Note** Please be aware that your proxy form is not a binding agreement. However, the room selected by your proxy IS binding and cannot be changed, so it is important that you let your proxy know your exact preferences.** Please indicate your housing proxy as well as any specific information about the type of room you would like on your form. If you do not designate a housing proxy and do not attend the housing lottery, you will be placed on the Fall Housing Waitlist.

At Home

Adjusting to Home

The following section comes from the University of Minnesota's Re-Entry Handbook. This information and more can be found at:

<http://www.umabroad.umn.edu/assets/files/PDFs/Career%20Integration/Re-Entry%20Handbook%2013.pdf>

Reverse "Culture Shock": You've had a great experience overseas and are excited about sharing your experiences with others. You've gained great skills and enhanced qualities that you probably never knew you had. With all transitions, however, there are highs, lows, and a need to take time to process how the "new you" will fit in back home and how the experience abroad has affected your future plans. The unsettled feeling that can accompany one's return from abroad is what some refer to as "reverse culture shock" and is a very common reaction for students coming home from studying abroad. Feelings

can range from the sense that nobody understands how you've changed, to feeling panicked that you will lose part of your identity if you don't have an outlet to pursue the new interests that were sparked abroad. Your own reactions to reintegrating to life in the US may vary from your friends.

Here are the top 10 immediate re-entry challenges for students and recommendations for how to overcome them:

1. Boredom—Upon return, life back in the US can seem very dull compared to your experiences abroad. It is up to you to overcome such negative reactions by finding ways to explore home and appreciate your own culture.
2. “No one wants to hear”—You may find that no one will be as interested in hearing about your adventures and triumphs as you will be in sharing those experiences. This is not a rejection of you or your achievements, but simply the fact that since they have heard the highlights, any further interest on your audiences' part is probably unlikely. Be realistic in your expectations of how fascinating your journey is going to be for everyone else. Be brief. Find a confidant.
3. You can't explain—It will be a little difficult to relay coherently all of the sights, feelings, and experiences that you had while abroad. In particular to people who do not have similar frames of reference or travel backgrounds. It is okay so long as you keep in mind that you may not be able to make them completely understand.
4. Reverse homesickness—Just as you missed home upon your arrival overseas, it is just as natural to experience some reverse homesickness for the people, places, and things that you grew accustomed to abroad. To an extent it can be reduced by keeping in contact with those that you met while abroad, and accept that this is a natural result of study abroad for the majority of students.
5. Relationships have changed—You may notice that relationships with some friends and family have changed. Just as you have altered some of your ideas and attitudes while abroad, the people at home are likely to have experienced some changes. The best preparation is flexibility, openness, minimal preconceptions, and tempered optimism.
6. People see “wrong” changes—Sometimes people may concentrate on small alterations in your behavior or ideas and seem threatened or upset by them. Others may ascribe “bad” traits to the influence of your time abroad. To avoid or minimize them, it is necessary to monitor yourself and be aware of the reactions of those around you, especially in the first few weeks following your return.
7. People misunderstand—A few people will misinterpret your words or actions in such a way that communication is difficult. For example, new clothing styles or forms of verbal and non-verbal communications acquired while abroad. Be aware of how you may look to others and how your behavior is likely to be interpreted.
8. Feelings of alienation—Sometimes the reality of being back “home” is not as natural or enjoyable as the place you had constructed as your mental image. Many returnees develop “critical eyes,” a tendency to see faults in the society you never noticed before, this may lead to feelings of alienation. Mental comparisons are fine, but keep them to yourself until you regain both your cultural balance and a balanced perspective.

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

10. Loss or compartmentalization of experience (or “shoeboxing”)—Being home, coupled with the pressures of job, family, and friends, often combine to make returnees worried that somehow they will “lose” the experience. Many fear that it will somehow become compartmentalized like souvenirs or photo albums kept in a box and only occasionally taken out and looked at. To combat this: maintain your contacts abroad, seek out and talk to people that have had similar experiences to yours, practice your cross-cultural skills, and continue language learning.

Focus on you Study Abroad Assets

Senior Thesis

Study abroad can be a catalyst for developing a senior thesis project. Your coursework and other experience abroad may help you begin to frame your thesis topic. A senior thesis project that references what you learned abroad is a creative and constructive way to keep your study abroad experience alive when you return to Hamilton. While abroad you may wish to seek out resources, archives, research topics, and reading suggestions from your professors, or treat your independent study project as an entrée to a larger thesis project.

Post Baccalaureate Grants and Awards

Many Fulbright, Watson, Goldwater, Rhodes, and other scholarship and post-bac fellowship winners find that study abroad inspired the desire to engage in independent research or graduate study abroad. Before you go abroad, meet with Ginny Dosch in the Fellowship and Scholarship Office to learn how to build a strong fellowship proposal while you are abroad. You can reach her at vdosch@hamilton.edu or at 315-859-4467.

SENIOR YEAR APPLICATION – EARLY FALL DEADLINES

Churchill Scholarship

The Churchill Scholarship enables outstanding American students, enrolled at one of the colleges participating in the Churchill program, the opportunity to pursue graduate studies in engineering, mathematics and the sciences at Churchill College, Cambridge University. Scholarships also provide the opportunity to experience life in Britain, to forge friendships with British students and students from around the world, to see something of Europe and lands beyond, to see the United States from a new perspective and to gain personal insights from living and studying abroad and adjusting to new challenges.

Fulbright Grants

As part of the application, the student should demonstrate "affiliation" with a university or laboratory in the country where the academic study or research project is to be carried out; in third world countries appropriate affiliations may include government agencies, international organization, NGO's, or other entities.

Marshall Scholarship

Marshall Scholarship funds 2 or 3 years of study at *any* university in the United Kingdom in *any field*. Competition for the 40 awards annually is highly competitive, with emphasis on academic credentials but also attention to leadership and service. It requires a GPA of 3.7 after the first year. The final application deadline is early October.

Mitchell Scholarship

Mitchell Scholarship offers support for students of any discipline to spend a year at an Irish university (either the Republic or Northern Ireland), time enough to earn an advanced degree. There are 12 awards each year, one for each of the universities in question. The application deadline is early October.

Rhodes Scholarship

Rhodes Scholarship makes possible 2 or 3 years of study at Oxford University in any field. It requires a strong academic record, leadership initiative in community service, extracurricular activities, and athletics. The application deadline is early October.

Watson Fellowship

Watson Fellowship provides \$22,000 (plus a supplement to help with the first year of student loan payments) for a year of travel (outside the U.S.) shaped by a study project of the student's own design. Fifty students receive awards each year, Hamilton may nominate four students.

SENIOR YEAR – LATER APPLICATION DEADLINES

Gates Cambridge Scholarship

Gates Scholarship supports study at Cambridge University in England. Students apply first for admission to Cambridge and, if successful, are invited to apply for support.

National Science Foundation Fellowship

National Science Foundation supports 900 new graduate fellowships each year for study toward an M.S. or Ph.D. in mathematics, engineering, or any of the natural or social sciences supported by the NSF. Tuition is covered and a stipend of \$20,500 per year for 3 years is awarded. The deadline is early November.

Soros Fellowship

Soros Fellowship supports up to two years of graduate study in the United States for "new Americans," defined as either naturalized citizens, students with green cards, or students both of whose parents are naturalized citizens. Study in *any professional field is supported, including medical or law school* and 20 to 30 fellowships are awarded each year. The award is \$20,000 per year plus half of tuition. The deadline is late November. Web address: www.pdsoros.org.

St. Andrews Society of New York

St. Andrews Society of New York offers two \$15,000 scholarships each year for students wanting to study for a year at any Scottish university. The student must have some Scottish ancestry and not have lived or studied before in the United Kingdom. Hamilton may nominate one student.

Your Resume

Do you have a resume? How does study abroad find its way into your resume? Can you identify three goals and three vital insights or benefits you gained from your experience abroad? The Career and Life Outcomes Center can assist you with a resume before you go. A “placeholder” in that resume for your study abroad experience will remind you to reflect on what you are learning and how you are benefitting from study abroad. When you return, the study abroad entry on your resume can be a potent asset. You can make an appointment with the Career Center by contacting them at 315-859-4346.

Internship and Careers

Consider the possibility of an internship when you return from study abroad. Meet with advisors in the career center before you go so you will be on course and prepared for internship opportunities when you return. For an appointment with a career counselor or peer advisor, contact them at 315-859-4346.

Campus Employment and Volunteer Service

Off-Campus Study, Admissions, and other offices on campus may value your services as a student worker when you return. We need students who can inspire others to study abroad. We value stories and profiles of your international experience. Consider seeking campus employment or volunteer service that values your international experience and enables you to serve as a role model to others. Many providers select student ambassadors to represent their programs on campus. Your experience is an important part of the Hamilton story. Help us tell that story by contacting the Off-Campus Study Office at 315-859-4022.

Practical Matters

Independent Study Work or Research

Some of you will have completed an independent study project or research project. You must submit your paper and research back to Hamilton for final approval in order to receive transfer credit. This applies to all SIT programs and other programs like the School for Field Studies with directed research.

Your work must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate department chair for concentration or minor credit, or the Dean for Off-Campus Study for general credit. You will be expected to submit a copy of your independent study or research, or other appropriate, related materials to the person approving the course.

Transcripts

You must have your host institution or program provider send your official transcript directly to the Registrar at Hamilton upon completion of your abroad program. The transcript must be received by the Registrar in a sealed envelope. Copies, faxed transcripts, or transcripts opened by the student will **not** be accepted.

Grades

To be eligible for credit transfer, a course must be completed with a grade of C or higher. Courses earning numeric or other non-letter grades such as “credit” or “pass” will not be accepted for transfer unless the sponsoring institution can provide the Registrar with documentation stating that those grades are equivalent to C or higher. Grades from study abroad are not calculated into the student’s Hamilton

GPA.

Resources Consulted for this Handbook

Center for Disease Control

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>

Center for Global Education: An International Resource Center, SAFETI Clearinghouse

<http://www.globaled.us/safeti/>

Department of State, Students Abroad

<http://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en.html>

Federal Bureau of Investigation, “Safety and Security for U.S. Students Studying Abroad”

<http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/counterintelligence/student-brochure>

Fordham University, How to Study Abroad

http://www.fordham.edu/info/21298/how_to_study_abroad

Gooverseas.com, “9 Major Life Lessons I Learned Studying Abroad as an LGBT”

<http://www.gooverseas.com/blog/what-i-learned-lgbt-studying-abroad>

Middlebury College, Pre-Departure Handbook

http://www.middlebury.edu/media/view/449969/original/non-midd_pdp_handbook_2014-15_final.pdf

NAFSA: Association of International Educators Rainbow Special Interest Group

<http://www.rainbowsig.org/us-students-abroad/>

Princeton University International Travel Handbook

<http://www.princeton.edu/oip/about/publications/Travel-Handbook.pdf>

Sara’s Wish Foundation

<http://www.saraswish.org/>

SASHAA – Sexual Assault Support and Help for Americans Abroad

<http://sashaa.org/>

University of California at San Diego, Go Global! Handbook

http://pao.ucsd.edu/files/pre-departure/oap/Go_Global.PDF

University of Minnesota, Re-Entry Handbook

<http://www.umabroad.umn.edu/assets/files/PDFs/Career%20Integration/Re-Entry%20Handbook%2013.pdf>

University of the Pacific, “What’s Up with Culture”

<http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/>

University of South Florida, Mental Health and Wellness Abroad Handbook

http://educationabroad.global.usf.edu/_customtags/ct_FileRetrieve.cfm?File_ID=010F767D754F740204030507000B1C700C7B7714737B02036E010303067D070B7603057D047B730676

Last Updated: 3/22/2019