PRE-DEPARTURE HANDBOOK
Know Before You Go

More information and this handbook are available at http://www.colby.edu/academics_cs/ocs/students/predeparture-planning.cfm

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Dear Student,

Congratulations on having made the decision to study off-campus! You are about to embark on an experience that will be deeply rewarding and life-changing, sometimes in unexpected ways.

One of the best ways to prepare for your experience is to learn as much as possible about your host country prior to your departure. Advance preparation will help you make the most of your experience.

This handbook is meant to provide some practical information and advice to help you prepare for your transition to another culture, answer questions you will have while abroad, and plan for a smooth return to Colby. Keep in mind that you are expected to be familiar with the information in this handbook. Checklists should help you keep track of the procedures, forms, and other documents you may need to complete. There are more pre-departure resources on our website.

Please review this handbook before you leave campus and bring it with you to your destination.

We look forward to hearing from you while you are abroad and/or when you return. We wish you a successful, rewarding and safe experience.

Off-Campus Study

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*Many thanks to the Wesleyan College, Williams College, Brown University Students, Abroad.com pre-departure materials and other study abroad offices for providing the inspiration and some of the content for this booklet.
PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

Many of these things may need to be done simultaneously depending on the time of your departure

TO DO AT COLBY BEFORE THE END OF THE SEMESTER:

☐ Apply, or finish applying to your fall program/university, if you have not already done so and promptly follow all their pre-departure guidelines.

☐ Get your physician report (if required by your program) and inoculations (if required). This can be done at the Colby Health Center by appointment.

☐ Review, complete, and sign the Agreement for Participation And Release or Assumption of Risk form and return it to OCS by * May 1 (for fall or full year) or * November 1 (for spring) to confirm the program/university you will attend.

☐ Attend mandatory pre-departure meeting (early dec or early may)

☐ Take care of financial aid requirements

☐ Take care of any outstanding financial matters at Colby. Review your student account status with student financial services and check how billing work for off-campus study

☐ Storage (on & off-campus): for on-campus storage contact the Office of Campus Life. Off-campus storage is available from All College Storage

☐ Fill out your change of address in mycolby/campus life and drop off your mail box key at the student post office in cotter union.

☐ Review your plan of study & course approvals with the appropriate faculty member, forward all approvals to OCS

☐ Visit the Career Center to discuss how study abroad fits with your career plans, how to make the most of your experience and/or plan for future internships.

TO DO FOR YOUR OFF-CAMPUS PROGRAM OR UNIVERSITY:

☐ Confirm with OCS the program/university you will be attending and make sure that your application is complete.

☐ Take care of any required pre-departure (medical, academic, housing, financial) things for your program

☐ Read your program’s pre-departure handbook and find out from your program or returned students about the best ways to prepare and to communicate from abroad.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS (Start these early!):

☐ Make sure you have a valid passport: If you already have a passport, make sure it is valid for at least six months beyond the date of your return. If you don’t have one apply for one ASAP. See how to apply or renew your U.S. passport.

☐ Apply for your VISA (if required) for your host country. Apply as early as possible (usually not before 90 days from departure). For visa and consulate information, consult with your program/university.

☐ International Students check with your Dean to ensure your US visa and other immigration papers are in order for leaving and re-entering the U.S.
Consider getting an ISIC card, if it is not already required by your program. In some cases, it may provide some benefits including discounts on travel.

**HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS:**
- Check MDTravelHealth.com or other sources for recommendations.
- Prepare for your medical prescription needs: See your doctor to obtain enough medication to last for your stay abroad or a prescription for the generic version of your meds.
- Take a copy of vision prescriptions, and an extra pair of glasses or contacts.
- Make sure that you have adequate health insurance abroad and that you know the procedures for accessing benefits while you are outside the US.
- Consider purchasing iNext.com supplementary emergency travel insurance with a medical evacuation policy, even if your program/university does not require it.
- Talk to your family about potential safety issues and make sure they know how to contact you in case of emergency.

**FINANCIAL MATTERS:**
- Take care of any financial arrangements for paying required fees to your program or university abroad.
- **Financial aid:** Complete your financial aid Study Away Budget Form and make arrangements with your parents or others to receive funds and pay your program/university bill while you are away.
- Take care of any outstanding financial matters at Colby.
- You may wish to arrange for "power of attorney" for the person handling your financial affairs while you are away.
- Estimate how much money you will need using the off-campus study budget planning worksheet on the OCS Pre-Departure webpage.
- Make arrangements for accessing your money from abroad. Make sure you have valid credit cards, bank cards, traveler’s checks which you can use. Notify your bank(s) that you will be using your cards abroad.
- Arrange to have some local currency with you when you leave (if possible)

**TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS:**
- Follow your program/university’s pre-departure guidelines.
- Make your travel arrangements following your program/university’s guidelines
- Review OCS’s pre-departure planning resources

**HOST COUNTRY INFORMATION:**
- **Educate yourself** on the country in which you will be studying.
- Check with returned students for tips
- The more you know about your host country, the easier your transition will be.
- Buy a guidebook for the country(ies) you are going to.
- Use the resources on the OCS pre-departure webpage.
PREPARING FOR DEPARTURE:

- Make copies of the first page (and visa page) of your passport. Also make copies of your tickets, credit cards and other important info (leave them at home or email them to yourself in case of loss)
- Collect any documents you need to take with you, such as medical records, prescriptions, entry documents, letter of admission from program/university, OCS pre-departure handbook, etc.
- Read your program’s pre-departure handbook and find out from your program or returned students about the best ways to prepare and to communicate from abroad.
- Register with the US Embassy/home country embassy in the country you are going to. (see U.S Dept of State Smart Traveler Enrollment Program)
- Prepare your emergency contact information to take with you.
- Learn how to vote from overseas: Arrange to vote absentee ballot for any elections you will miss while abroad
- Plan to keep a journal/blog/scrapbook.
- Bring some gifts for your host family or new friends you hope to meet.

PACKING:

- Follow suggestions of your program and, generally, bring less than you are tempted to. Here is some packing advice and The Ultimate Packing list and others online can help you think of things you may need.
- Bring some photos and other reminders of home (but don’t bring anything that has a big sentimental value or that you really don’t want to lose)
- Follow your program’s and returned students’ recommendations on what to bring with you
- Bring a plug adapter and/or voltage converter
- Pack your Colby OCS pre-departure handbook
- Keep all of your documents in a safe place for travel
- Pack a small first aid kit
- Check the luggage restrictions of your airline (usually 50 lbs)
- Make sure you can carry your luggage on your own

ACADEMIC ISSUES:

See here for information on:

- Academic Requirements, Procedures For Course Approval, & Policies On Transfer Of Off-Campus Study Credit
- Course Approval guidelines
- Required Course Load

It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with these policies and procedures. If you do not follow these policies and procedures, you may not receive full credit.

OTHER:
TRAVEL, DOCUMENTS & PRE-DEPARTURE FORMALITIES

TRAVEL INFORMATION
Your program/university will give you the information you need to make your travel arrangements or they may have a group flight option. Make sure to coordinate your flight arrangements with your program provider.

Keep in mind all airlines have restrictions on the size, weight, and number of luggage items that you can take without incurring additional, and significant, expense. Visit your airline’s web site for specific information on luggage restrictions.

PASSPORT
You will need a passport, valid for at least six months past your expected return date from your time abroad. You will not be able to apply for your visa until you have your passport in hand.

Your program may need to have a copy of the information pages of your passport and we recommend making an extra copy to leave at home. In the case of a lost or stolen passport, it’s easier to replace if someone has this information on hand.

If you don’t yet have a passport, apply for one as soon as possible. If it is set to expire within the year, renew it, because many countries now enforce the six months’ rule. Consider paying for the rush service as delays are often long. Check the U.S. Passport Service office to learn where and how to apply, download forms, check applications status and more.
(http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html)

VISA
Most countries require students to obtain a student visa in advance in order to enter and study in their country. You cannot apply for a visa until you have a passport (valid until at least six months after your return) and have been accepted to your program or host university. So you must first apply for a passport if you do not have one. Your program provider can help you with information about whether to apply for a visa and how. To find a consulate or embassy to apply for a visa, use the Department of State’s list of foreign embassies and consulates in the U.S.

The visa application process can take some time so don’t leave it until the last minute, and you can minimize problems by applying as early as possible (but not too soon). Requirements and application procedures vary depending on your citizenship, the country to which you are going, and where you will be at the time of application; they may also vary from one consulate to another (For example,
the French consulate in New York may have different procedures from the French consulate in Boston). International students may have additional requirements or limitations. In most cases, you will need to allow 30-90 days for application processing, and there may be a specific window within which you must apply (for example, no less than one month and no more than three months before your program begins). It is your responsibility to determine the requirements and to apply for a visa in a timely fashion. You will usually need proof of admission or enrollment in a program or university in order to apply for the visa so it is important that you follow your program/university’s guidelines on this carefully. In some cases, a personal appointment at the consulate is required and in others the process can be done by mail or online.

U.S. citizens can find some information on visa requirements for many countries on the country specific information page of the U.S. State Department Bureau of Consular Affairs. Or search for the country's consulate in the jurisdiction in which you reside. International students should contact the appropriate consulate in the U.S or in your home country or contact your home country embassy for information.

PASSPORTS/Visas photos
You will need several photos for a passport and any visa. They must be recent, in the “passport format” and cannot be scanned. You can have passport size photos taken in Waterville at:
CVS Pharmacy (207) 873-7161
Rite Aid Pharmacy (207) 877-9004
Elm City photo (207) 873-4780
Wal-Mart (207) 877-8774

Notarizing Documents
If you require notarized documents for your visa, you may take them to any notary public. A notary on campus is Alan LaPan in the student mailroom.

Do NOT sign your documents in advance: you must sign them in the notary’s presence, and you must show identification.

For International Students
Make sure that your passport and F-1 visa will remain valid until your planned return to the US. Stop at your Advising Dean’s office to have your I-20 travel signature updated, and make sure you inform her of your address abroad. Depending on how long you are away, you may need to obtain a new I-20 travel signature before you return to the US.

Physical Exam
Your program/university may require a medical/physician exam, usually after acceptance into the program. This may be done at the Colby Health Center or at
your local doctor at home. Don’t forget to bring any program health forms or other records to the appointment.

Some countries may require proof of health status or certain vaccinations or prophylaxis in order to get a visa or enter the country. Discuss this with the doctor during your visit.

**HOUSING AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE**
You have been placed on **LEAVE OF ABSENCE** for the semester or year in which you plan to study away from Colby.

**Fall off-campus:** Students studying off-campus in fall (i.e., on the OCS list) **WILL NOT participate in room draw**. You will be contacted by housing via e-mail in November regarding housing for the spring semester.

**Spring off-campus:** Students studying off-campus in spring (i.e., on the OCS list) **WILL participate in room draw for fall** semester. If you cancel your spring off-campus plans by October 15th you will not lose your housing for spring semester. If you cancel after that date, you will probably have to move to a different room, as it may have been given away.

**Year off-campus:** Students studying off-campus for the **academic year 2014-15** (i.e., on the OCS list) **WILL NOT go through room draw**. You will be contacted by housing via email in April 2015 for the 2015-16 academic year.

If you **change your plans**, it is **IMPERATIVE** that you contact Off-Campus Study ASAP to have your off-campus study program(s) and/or Leave of Absence adjusted. Be aware that housing and course selection options are limited if you miss key deadlines.

**STORAGE**
- On-campus storage contact the Office of Campus Life.
- Off-campus Storage is available from All College Storage [http://www.allcollegestorage.com/colby-college](http://www.allcollegestorage.com/colby-college)

**MAIL FORWARDING**
Fill out your change of address in MyColby/Campus Life and drop off your mailbox key at the student post office in Cotter Union.

**OTHER OPTIONAL DOCUMENTS**

**International Driving Permit**
While Colby College strongly discourages you from driving while studying abroad (and your program may prohibit it) due to the dangers of driving in unfamiliar conditions, a valid U.S. driver’s license is often NOT recognized in many foreign countries without an accompanying International Driver’s License. You can obtain one from AAA [http://www.aaa.com/vacation/idpf.html](http://www.aaa.com/vacation/idpf.html)
The International Youth Hostel Federation (IYHF) Card
If you plan to stay in a hostel while abroad, you'll want to get an IYHF card, required at most youth hostels. Where not required, it usually entitles the bearer to modest discounts on rates, or at least will earn you a privileged spot on the waiting list. Get on at Hostelling International USA (301-495-1240)
http://www.hiusa.org

The WHO Card
The World Health Organization (WHO) publishes a little yellow card commonly called a WHO card, technically called the "International Certificates of Vaccination," on which one records all one’s vaccines and pertinent medical history. In some developing countries, you’ll be required to show your WHO card before they'll let you in the country. This always applies in countries that require a yellow fever vaccination before granting entry to foreign nationals. The Health Center can set you up with a WHO card, as well as give you information on a yellow fever vaccination if required by your host country.
PREPARATIONS FOR DEPARTURE

LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR DESTINATION
Educate Yourself! Probably the single most important thing you can do before departure, in terms of ensuring that your experience will be the most interesting and rewarding possible, is to learn all you can about your country.

Read and study about your country’s history, political system, and customs. Gather information about economics, industry, education, popular culture, family and social structure, religion, and human and natural resources in your country.

The more you know about your country, the better prepared you’ll be to appreciate your surroundings and make sense of the hustle and bustle of your first few months abroad. Also, having a relatively large base of knowledge prior to departure will put you in a much better position for the colossal amount of synthesis you’ll do as you incorporate yourself into the culture, and incorporate an understanding of the culture into who you are.

• Use the library
• Read the New York Times or a similar paper to get an idea of current goings-on in your country. The Economist is a great way to get a grip on your host country’s political and economic life.
• The Lonely Planet guide, is an excellent way to get some basic background on your country http://www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_links
• Surfing the Internet for references to your host country is an excellent activity. Check out a movie made in your host country from the library.
• US Dept of State- Bureau of Consular Affairs http://travel.state.gov/
• BBC News Country Profiles http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/country_profiles/default.stm
• The World Factbook http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/
• Country Reports http://www.countryreports.org/

Research health conditions at your destination:
Centers for Disease Control (CDC) – Travelers’s Health http://www.cdc.gov/travel/
MD Travel Health.com http://www.mdtravelhealth.com/

See more resources at OCS Predeparture webpage http://www.colby.edu/offcampus/students/pre-departure/

How many of the following questions about your host country can you answer?
? How many people who are prominent in the affairs (politics, athletics religion, the arts, etc.) of your country can you name?
? Who are the country's national heroes and heroines?
Can you recognize the national anthem?

Are other languages spoken besides the dominant language? What are the social and political implications of language usage?

What is the predominant religion? Is it a state religion?

What are the most important religious observances and ceremonies? How regularly do people participate in them?

How do members of the predominant religion feel about other religions?

What are the most common forms of marriage ceremonies and celebrations?

What is the attitude toward divorce? Extra-marital relations? Plural marriages?

What are the common attitudes toward drinking, drugs, smoking, and gambling?

Are merchandise prices fixed or do customers bargain? How is bargaining conducted?

What are the important holidays? How is each observed?

What foods are most popular, and how are they prepared?

What sports are popular?

What are the minority groups in your host country? Are you a minority in that country?

How do men treat local women? Are American and local women treated differently?

How is homosexuality viewed? How are gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and trans-gendered individuals treated? Is it appropriate and safe to be open about sexual identity?

What kind of local public transport is available? Do all classes of people use it?

What is the history of the relationships between this country and the US?

What is the political system of the country? What are its major parties? Who has the right to vote? How are laws made and enforced?

What kinds of health services are available?

Is education free? Compulsory? Who participates, and to what level?

If university education is sought abroad, where do students go? Why?

What are the country’s major imports and exports? What’s the division of wealth?

What economic structures are in place? Who pays taxes? How high is inflation?
WHAT TO BRING

What you will need to bring with you will obviously depend on when and where you are going and what type of program it is.

“Less is more” is the golden rule of packing for traveling abroad. Especially if you plan on traveling once you are in your host country, you want your bags to be as lightweight and portable as possible.

Make note of your airlines’ luggage restrictions and the fact that you will have to carry your luggage yourself during some points of the journey. Some airlines limit checked luggage to one piece weighing 23kg maximum (50 lbs). They charge ($50) for an additional piece of luggage. They may also limit carry-on to one piece plus personal item, the aggregate to weigh a maximum of 12kg - 18kg. Also keep in mind that, although you will likely accumulate new items the same luggage restrictions will be in place for your return trip.

- Check and follow your program’s packing list (if there is one) or ask a returned student. Refer to The Universal Packing list http://upl.codeq.info/index.jsp.
- Clothing: Bring far less than you think you will need and leave room in your suitcase since you will accumulate items during your stay.. Your goal should be to dress in a culturally acceptable way for each occasion. Much will depend on the type of program you are doing and the time of year. There are several things to remember when selecting clothing. Avoid bulky items. It should be easy to wash, be colorfast so it can be laundered together, dry quickly, and be wrinkle-free. You’ll want at least one set of nicer clothing for evenings out. Include good walking shoes, rain gear, hat, etc…
- Medicine and toiletries: RX meds (+ prescription), depending on where you are you can probably buy most everything you need locally except extra eyeglasses, extra contact lenses and cleaning solutions.
- Computers: You should bring a laptop computer or tablet with you. Although this will vary greatly depending on the country, In Europe or many large cities most living situations and most public spaces have wi-fi . Make sure your computer has a power adapter bring a plug adapter. Make sure that your computer is insured under your parent’s home owner’s insurance policy.
- Miscellaneous: camera, charger, extra memory card, flashlight, address book, journal, reading material, day pack/small compressible knapsack, luggage locks and tags, alarm clock, favorite music , plug adapters and/or voltage converter.
• You may wish to purchase a portable, battery operated combination smoke/carbon-monoxide detector to take with you for your residence. You may review this option with both your family and your program.

• Laptop &/or other devices: If you do choose to bring a laptop with you, make sure it works on 220V AC current (almost all of the computers on the market do). Please make sure that they are insured under your parents’ home owner’s insurance policy.

• Pack a few small personal items that will remind you of friends and family. They will make a big difference if you get homesick.

• Bring small gifts to give to host family, roommates, friends and neighbors. You should bring something that represents your specific region of the United States (or your home country) – inexpensive, lightweight, and representative of your home culture, Colby, or your hometown. Consider calendars or postcard books with pictures of your home town, local treats like maple syrup and a pancake recipe, T-shirts or cap from your favorite team or city, or music CDs (consider whether they’ll have the technology to play these). If you’ll be staying with a family that has children, consider baseballs, pickup sticks, Frisbees, jacks, children’s books, or an empty scrapbook to be filled by you and the family together. Also bring some pictures of your (real) family, because your host family is sure to be curious.

• Money: Money belt or neck wallet, cash, ATM card, credit cards, travelers checks, calling card, etc.

• Documents: passport & visa(s) (& photocopies), tickets, letters of admission from your program/university abroad, international certificate of vaccinations, Insurance & travel insurance info, photocopies of credit and ATM cards, and your OCS predeparture handbook.

The Universal Packing list  http://upl.codeq.info/index.jsp

Magellan’s Travel Supplies:  http://www.magellans.com/

WHAT NOT TO BRING
• Do not bring more than you can carry on your own.
• Do not bring anything with you that has great sentimental value—you will most likely not use it, and it may be lost or stolen.
• Avoid bringing unnecessary electrical appliances (hair dryers, etc.) since the electrical current and plugs will be different. If you do need to bring an appliance, make sure it is rated for both 110V (US) and 220V, and that you have a plug adapter.
WHAT’S NEXT?

Don’t forget:
☐ Get your passport and visa and inoculations, if appropriate.
☐ Return any required program information to your program/university
☐ Make a copy or scan of your passport, visa, front and back of your credit card and ATM cards, account numbers and bank contact numbers and any other important documentation to bring with you +/or email to yourself +/or leave a copy at home with a trusted friend or family member as a precaution. Having a copy of the information will be extremely helpful if a document is lost/stolen.
☐ Make sure you keep your passport (with visa) and tickets on your person while you travel and not packed away in your suitcase! Your passport will be required at check-in and several more times as you pass through airport security.
☐ Bring any letters of admission from your program/university to show upon entering the country.
☐ If you are attending a program in a remote area, you may not have easy or timely email access for course registration. You should contact your academic advisor before departure to plan your courses and to make sure that a place is held for you in required courses.
☐ If you receive financial aid, make sure you have informed the financial aid office of the program you will be attending and the date the program begins.
☐ Review with your parents your major medical insurance and confirm that your policy will cover you abroad. Also be sure to review any exclusions and procedures for filing claims.

WHEN YOU LEAVE:

CARRY- do not pack- the following in a safe and secure place on your person:
☐ Airline tickets or E-ticket confirmation
☐ Passport & visa information. For international students, this includes not only your current I-20, but also any earlier ones you may have
☐ Money and cards
☐ Letter of acceptance or other relevant documents from your program/university
☐ Address/directions of where you need to go upon arrival.
☐ Vaccination records, health &/or travel insurance info

Be sure to carry ALL your relevant travel documents in a safe and secure place. All students should also leave copies of their passport pages, visas, and other essential documents with a trusted friend or family member as a precaution. Having a copy of the information will be extremely helpful if a document needs to be replaced.
ALSO

• Do not lock your luggage
• Do not pack valuables (cameras, money, jewelry, items with sentimental value, etc.) in checked baggage.
• Pack essentials in your carry-on. Just in case your bags go astray, pack a few toiletries, any prescription medications you need to take, an extra pair of underwear, change of clothing—anything you can’t live without for a day or two—in your carry-on. If your baggage does not arrive when you do, file a claim with the airline before you leave the airport.
• Know what current airport rules are for carry-on items. Visit www.tsa.dhs.gov for information — Transportation Security Administration.
• Confirm your flight with the airline before heading to the airport. Many airlines now offer text messaging services that will notify you if a flight is delayed, cancelled or on time.
• Watch your bags and do not agree to carry packages/items for anyone else.

FUN PREDEPARTURE EXERCISE TO DO ON THE PLANE!
Here is a fun, short exercise to do on your flight over to your destination. On the flight, when you have time to relax and think, write a letter to yourself addressing the following questions:

✈ Why did I choose to study abroad and what made me choose ….?
✈ What expectations do I have about living in a foreign country? What differences do I expect to see?
✈ What expectations do I have of the courses, professors and housing in a foreign country?
✈ What do I expect to learn and gain from my semester abroad?

Save this letter and read it again on your flight back home. It will certainly prove enlightening, and, hopefully, offer you a glimpse into what impact your semester abroad had on you, academically and personally. You will likely continue to experience and discover many changes in yourself for years to come.
SAFETY AND SECURITY OFF-CAMPUS OR ABROAD

SAFETY & SECURITY
Safety and security of students are always of utmost priority for Colby and all study abroad program providers, particularly given international developments over the past few years. These concerns have been intensified by recent changes in real and perceived threats to US citizens, both at home and abroad. Events since September 2001 have affected many aspects of all overseas programs. National and international security issues necessitate that you respect safety recommendations and security policies established by your sponsoring organization and the US Embassy in the country of your destination. Remain attentive to information provided to you and stay in contact with your program, Colby College, and your family throughout the duration of your study abroad program. You and your family can monitor State Department updates and review Colby College updates and policies at http://www.colby.edu/academics_cs/ocs/students/safety.cfm.

Your program/university will likely go over security policies and advice in depth during their orientation and we advise you to follow these carefully. Always inform your program’s resident director or contact person at the university of any incidents that may arise.

While there is no reason to assume that going abroad will compromise your safety, you must be sure to follow safety guidelines provided by your program at all times. You must also take personal responsibility for informing yourself of risks in locations in which you might study or travel; a good source of basic information is the US Department of State Web site (http://travel.state.gov).

Note: The US State Department has advised Americans traveling anywhere to remain inconspicuous for their own safety, and we strongly support this advice. You are advised to keep a “low profile” wherever you may travel. Pay attention to culturally appropriate dress and behavior. Keep your voice down and avoid congregating in large, noisy groups, and avoid US entities considered symbols of US capitalism. Use restraint in situations that could get out of hand; your personal safety is far more important than your “honor” or your need to express yourself.

In the unusual event that a country goes under U.S. Department of State Travel Warning after a student has been approved, the student will be required to submit a petition to Off-Campus Study, and sign a second waiver in order to proceed as planned. If a country goes under U.S. Department of State Travel Warning while the program is already in session students will not be required to return, as long as the program provider they are with indicates it is safe to remain. For a listing of countries currently under Travel Warning consult the U.S. State Department website: http://travel.state.gov/travel/ cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html.
In times of political conflict involving the United States or the host country, take these additional precautions:

- Stay apprised of the current political situation by listening daily to local television or radio news; this is also a good way to learn more about your host country. Stay in contact with the on-site program staff, who then can contact authorities locally and at home, as well as parents.
- Keep away from political demonstrations, particularly those directed toward (well, against) the US.
- In large cities or popular tourist destinations, avoid possible target areas, especially places frequented by Americans. Avoid using U.S. logos on your belongings or clothing, especially athletic and collegiate wear.
- Spend as little time as possible at potential targets for terrorist activities, especially places frequented by Americans: bars, discos, fast-food restaurants, and stores associated with the US, branches of US banks, American Express, and US consulates and embassies.
- Keep away from areas known to have concentrations of residents aligned with interests unfriendly to the US and its allies. Always consult the program director or other local staff before making travel plans.
- Be inconspicuous in dress and demeanor. Avoid American logos and name brands on clothing and belongings. Avoid large or noisy groups. Do not flash money or bring out documents (especially your passport) in public places. Keep small bills in your pockets to pay for purchases.
- Make a personal communication plan with your family and decide on methods of contact should an emergency arise. Ask your on-site program director about program emergency/contingency plans.

In general, students should be aware of the following reasonable precautions for traveling:

- Always notify family and program leaders of your travel plans and whereabouts.
- Have your cell phone with you and charged at all times.
- In the event of a terrorist attack or other local emergency, confirm your whereabouts and well-being with your family and program leader.
- Have local emergency numbers (program staff and local authorities) programmed in your cell phone.
- Check your email/FB/Text frequently, and respond to messages promptly.
- Avoid demonstrations and protests.
- Monitor local media and follow the advice of authorities.
- Do not put valuables in your backpack, especially in the exterior pocket. If you travel on planes, trains or buses, make sure to take your valuables with you whenever you leave your seat.
- If you have a paper ticket for a train or airplane, treat it like cash. It cannot be replaced if you lose it.
• Make a photocopy of the first two pages of your passport, and keep the photocopy in a safe place (not with the passport).
• Never leave cameras or other personal items on your seat in a train or plane.
• Be aware that pickpockets operate almost everywhere. Keep your wallet in an interior pocket or in a purse worn close to your body.
• Remain alert when using ATM machines and always hide your PIN code (never carry it with you).
• Keep a list of credit card numbers and bank emergency phone numbers. It is a good idea to leave a copy with your parents.

Always inform the Faculty Director of any incidents that may arise. Rumors spread quickly and misinformed students may exaggerate or underestimate an incident. Inform the resident director first, before you call your parents or talk to your friends, so that appropriate immediate action can be taken.

REGISTERING WITH THE LOCAL POLICE AND THE U.S. EMBASSY
In many countries, you will be required to register with the local police station upon arrival. You should also register with your home country’s Embassy or Consulate. To register online with the U.S. Embassy or Consulate visit: https://step.state.gov/step/
VIDEOS TO WATCH BEFORE YOU GO

Culture of safety: A Practical Guide to Safety Abroad
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PjVX7b0ZQ&feature=youtu.be

Know Before You Go: Preparing for Safe Study Abroad
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XgpYhz0awzo

Tricia SWF safety video SD
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1R6yqMfqsOk#t=81
EVERYDAY SAFETY TIPS

While you are abroad, exercise the same safety precautions that you would at home.

• Always be aware of your surroundings. Stay in populated, well-lit areas.
• Be a smart and careful pedestrian. Be mindful about which way traffic circulates in countries where drivers stay to the left.
• Leave your passport in a secure place when you are not traveling and carry a photocopy of it with you at all times.
• Walk confidently as if you know where you are (even when you don’t).
• Always travel with a companion at night.
• Keep your belongings close to you; use a money belt or a pouch that hangs around your neck or purse with a zipper.
• Do not leave your bags or belongings unattended at any time.
• Don’t keep all your documents and money in any one place.
• Use caution when traveling alone. Women especially should not be out alone at night. Be responsible for your safety and well-being. Learn from locals what behavior might put you at risk or call attention to you.
• Keep the on-site program director(s) informed of your whereabouts and any health problems. When you travel, be sure that the program director knows where you are and how to reach you.
• Have cash and credit/ATM card ready for emergencies like illness or an unanticipated need to get home via taxi.
• Be alert to your surroundings and the people with whom you have contact. Be wary of people who seem overly friendly or interested in you. Be cautious with new acquaintances – don’t give out your address or phone number, and always meet in public places. Be discreet in giving out information about other students or group events. Report unusual activity near your classes or home to the program director.
• Don’t hitchhike, even if the locals do, and even if the alternative is staying put.
• Do not wear expensive clothes or jewelry or carry expensive luggage.
• When you go out, bring no more money or credit/ATM cards than you will need.
• Always show respect for the culture and laws of other countries.
• Get to know your city and/or campus and avoid areas that are potentially unsafe.
• Dress conservatively, especially when traveling to new and unfamiliar areas. Shorts and tank tops are not considered appropriate dress in many parts of the world.
• Understand and comply with your program’s guidance relating to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in the host country and follow emergency procedures.
• Try to avoid arriving late at night in cities with which you are not familiar, and take along a reliable guidebook that lists resources and hotels/hostels.
• Take off your luggage tags after arrival.
• Travel light!
• Whenever possible, speak in the local language.
• Avoid impairing your judgment due to excessive consumption of alcohol.
• Be aware of groups of people (even children) who work together to distract or confuse travelers in order to rob them.
• Become familiar with the local emergency number (comparable to 911) and the procedures for obtaining emergency health and law enforcement services in the host country.
• If you have been a victim of a crime, report this immediately to your program leader or resident director.

OTHER RESOURCES ON SAFETY:
• SAFETI (Safety Abroad First – Educational Travel Information)  
  http://globaled.us/SAFETI/index.asp
• Association of Safety International Road Travel (ASIRT)  
  http://www.asirt.org/
• Jasmine Jahanshahi Fire Safety Foundation  
  http://www.firesafetyfoundation.org/  
  (Consider a portable smoke detector)
• OCS Predeparture  http://www.colby.edu/offcampus/students/pre-departure/
ADVICE ON ALCOHOL AND DRUGS
Colby’s policy is to respect the laws of the host countries of its programs. Where it is not legal to use drugs, including marijuana, do not do so. Most programs have a zero tolerance policy concerning drugs. If a student is caught using illegal drugs, either by the police or by the resident director, that student may be sent home immediately, without prior notice, and with no credit or refund of fees. Students caught selling illegal drugs may be dismissed from the program and from Colby College.

If you choose to drink alcoholic beverages, be aware that you must know your limits and be moderate in your use of alcohol. Not only will you heap embarrassment on yourself and your country if you consume excessively, but you will also jeopardize your health and physical safety. Most student incidents that occur are usually alcohol-related. The director of your program will usually have the authority to dismiss students from the program for violation of the alcohol and drug policy. If a student is expelled from the program, the student may be sent home with no credit and no refund of fees. Colby takes the alcohol policy very seriously, and asks students to take it seriously as well.

ALCOHOL POLICY - COLBY PROGRAMS ABROAD
All students studying on Colby programs abroad are subject to the laws of the host country, including those pertaining to alcohol and/or drug purchase and/or consumption. Additionally, Colby College responds to the Drug Free Schools and Campuses Act (DFSCA) by implementing measures to prevent the unlawful possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs by students, faculty, and staff, on campus as well as on College sponsored programs abroad. The following has been excerpted from the Colby College student handbook and clearly states the College's position on alcohol abuse:

"Students are adults and are thus expected to obey the law and to take personal responsibility for their conduct. Colby does not police students' personal lives on or off the campus, but disciplinary action will result if a students' use of alcohol creates disorder, public disturbances, danger to himself or herself and others, or property damage. Similarly, hosts of parties or sponsoring organizations may be held accountable for violations by the College and by civil authorities under Maine law."

Please refer to the Colby College student handbook for complete details of U.S. laws and applicable legal sanctions.

While participating on Colby sponsored programs abroad, adherence to the U.S. and Maine laws shall be interpreted in the following manner:

1. Colby programs abroad will not tolerate abuse of alcohol or drugs. Abusive behavior may be defined as, but not limited to:
   • Excessive consumption of alcohol
• Any use of illegal drugs
• Destruction of property (private or public)
• Harassment
• Disruptive behavior
• Endangerment of self or others
• Public intoxication

2. Intoxication will not be accepted as a defense or an excuse for disorderly conduct and such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action.

3. Students, faculty, and staff who violate Colby programs abroad policy will be subject to disciplinary action by the College. The severity of the imposed sanctions will be appropriate to the violation. Violations of Colby policies concerning illegal drugs and alcohol will result in the imposition of one or more of the following sanctions in accord with established College policies insuring due process:
   • Expulsion from the program (and possible expulsion from Colby College)
   • Official censure or reprimand
   • Participation in a rehabilitation program
   • Probation
   • Referral for prosecution
   • Restitution
   • Suspension
   • Termination of employment
   • Warning
   • Other actions the Resident Director, Office of Off-Campus Study, and/or College deem appropriate.

4. Given that students on Colby programs overseas are legally able to consume alcohol at the age of eighteen, Colby’s policy with respect to program-sponsored activities at the Colby Centers, faculty apartments, public restaurants, student housing, or university facilities, is as follows:
   • Non-alcoholic beverages and food will be available, visible and readily accessible, in quantity appropriate to the number of people attending.
   • Any alcohol will be limited to beer and wine in quantity appropriate to the number of individuals attending the event.
   • Any advertising or gatherings must not emphasize the presence of alcohol.
   • Alcohol cannot be used as a prize for any event, contest or game.
   • Drinking games and/or the active encouragement of people to drink is prohibited.
   • If an event participant becomes visibly intoxicated it is expected that all attendees, including students and staff, will acknowledge responsibility to ensure that the individual stops drinking and arrives home safely.
• Event sponsors and/or hosts may be held responsible for damages and/or medical expenses should an intoxicated attendee cause damages or injury to a third party, property, or to him/herself, either on the premises or after having left the premises.
• The Resident Director or program staff on-site must remain sober and in attendance at any Colby sponsored events until the event has ended and all attendees have departed.
• If a student or staff member becomes intoxicated and non-responsive to physical or verbal stimuli, emergency medical services will be sought immediately.
• Events should preferably be scheduled on evenings preceding non-class days.

THE LAW & JURISDICTION
While you are abroad, you are subject to the laws of the country you are in, not those of the US or your home country. If you are arrested, your home country embassy can only ensure that you receive equal treatment under the terms of local law and procedure. You should always, in all circumstances, treat the police with respect and produce any document they may request, without confrontation. Do not expect that Colby College or your home country’s embassy can exert any pressure to extricate you from a situation which results from your own inattention to, or disrespect for, the laws of another country.

EMERGENCY
In Case Of Emergency
In case of a program-related, health-related, or personal concern or emergency, your first step is to inform your program leader as soon as possible. In addition, you can always phone the Colby emergency number after business hours and they can reach the Dean on Call, 207-859-5911.

Emergency Contacts
Copy down all names, phone numbers, postal and e-mail addresses of people with whom you might need to have contact while abroad. We suggest that you prepare all your emergency contacts and information in one place so it is handy when needed. You may download this Student Emergency Information Card as a tool to help you keep track of all the important numbers you may need.
http://studentsabroad.com/emergencycard.html

PERSONAL TRAVEL
If you choose to travel independently during your semester please follow your program’s guidelines and:
• Inform your resident director or university contact of your itinerary and contact numbers (or cell phone numbers), if available.
• Bring your cell phones if you have one.
• Do not travel to restricted countries without permission.
• Only travel during approved times or you may risk reduced grades.
You should also be aware of the following reasonable precautions for traveling:

• Do not put valuables in your backpack, especially in the exterior pocket. If you travel on planes, trains or buses, make sure to take your valuables with you whenever you leave your seat.

• If you have a paper ticket for a train or airplane, treat it like cash. It cannot be replaced if you lose it.

• Make a photocopy of the first two pages of your passport, and keep the photocopy in a safe place (not with the passport).

• Never leave cameras or other personal items on your seat in a train or plane.

• Be aware that pickpockets operate almost everywhere. Keep your wallet in an interior pocket or in a purse worn close to your body.

• Remain alert when using ATM machines and always hide your PIN code (never carry it with you).

• Keep a list of credit card numbers and bank emergency phone numbers. It is a good idea to leave a copy with your parents.

See CROSS CULTURE for special notes on:

• Women Regarding Harassment
• The Potential for Ethnic Issues Abroad
• The Potential for LGBTQ Issues Abroad
YOUR HEALTH

HEALTH PRECAUTIONS
Study abroad can be physically and mentally challenging and the range of services may vary significantly from location to location and from what you are accustomed here on campus. For your safety and well-being it is vital that you inform your program of any physical or psychological difficulties or special needs you have or may have experienced in the past.

Students are urged to take appropriate health precautions, particularly if going to a developing country. Check with your program sponsors and the Centers for Disease Control to determine what inoculations or special precautions may be needed. Be aware that many of these inoculations must be obtained several weeks prior to departure.

Even if this is not required, consider having a medical exam/physical and bring your vaccinations up to date. Get a dental and vision check-up.

Research health conditions at your destination:
Centers for Disease Control (CDC) – Travelers’s Health
http://www.cdc.gov/travel/
MD Travel Health.com http://www.mdtravelhealth.com/
World Health Organization (http://www.who.org/)
Safety Abroad First Educational Travel Information
(http://www.globaled.us/safeti/)
Center for Global Education Study Abroad Student Handbook
(http://www.studentsabroad.com/)

HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS WHILE ABROAD
Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medicine
It’s a good idea to pack non-prescription drugs you are likely to use, such as antacids, aspirin and ibuprofen, and anti-diuretics. You might also want to include a modest first-aid kit.

If you are taking prescription medication on a regular basis, including birth control pills, please either plan to bring with you a supply for the entire semester or bring a written Doctor’s RX indicating the generic name for the medication. If your condition requires monitoring, please bring a copy of your medical records with you and inform the resident director as soon as possible (before you leave). You should also make a note of any allergies you may have to certain medicines and remember to mention them also to any attending doctor.

If you wear contact lenses, bring supplies. Also bring eyeglasses in case you can’t wear your lenses. Bring a spare pair of eyeglasses in case one gets lost or broken.
**AIDS and Other STDs**
If you choose to be sexually active overseas, it is best to bring a supply of contraceptives from the U.S. Although most countries sell condoms, they may not be manufactured and/or stored properly so as to provide maximum protection against STDs.

**Hepatitis**
Risk of hepatitis A infections is high in the Caribbean, Mexico, Africa, and Central and South America. If you are traveling to any of these areas, ask your doctor about getting immune globulin injections, which provide increased protection against hepatitis A.

**MENTAL HEALTH AND COUNSELING ABROAD**
Studying abroad is an exciting and rich educational experience that can also, at times, be quite stressful and challenging emotionally. A healthy mind and body are essential to a successful study abroad experience. If you are currently in mental health counseling, or for any reason anticipate needing counseling while abroad, there are several important considerations.

Before you go…
- Assess your physical and mental health
- Visit your doctor or counselor
- Investigate what services will be available at your destination by speaking to your program, the Colby counseling center or the off-campus study office
- Prepare to bring any medications you need with you and carry a list of your medications with the copy of your passport in case you need emergency medical help
- Understand how your insurance will work while abroad
- Put a plan in place in case you need it while you are abroad

Mental health services abroad vary greatly and can be quite different from country to country and program to program. You should not assume that the range of services available to you here at Colby will be available while you are abroad. In many countries or cities, psychological health services may be excellent but may only be available in the local language. It may not always be possible to find an American or English speaking counselor.

You should talk with the sponsoring program before you go about what mental health services are available for students, how students go about accessing those services, the associated fees, and how students generally pay for services. Also, do not hesitate to ask for help if you feel the need once you are there. It is normal to feel homesick, sad or lonely while living in a new country and you may experience symptoms of “culture shock” (read about it in the Cross Culture section of this handbook). It can be helpful to push yourself to “get out there” and make new friends. However, if these feelings persist or worsen during your
semester, don’t hesitate to seek out assistance from your program or by reaching out to someone at Colby.

If you are taking medication for your emotional concerns, you will need to talk with the prescribing physician about bringing a sufficient amount with you to get you through your stay, or try to figure out an alternative way of getting them while abroad. It is quite possible that the medication(s) you take will not be available in your host country.

If you are taking a prescription medication,

- Bring an adequate supply in the original container, and a prescription with your physician’s explanation of the condition, as well as the generic and brand names of the medication and dosage information.
- Check with the embassies of the countries you expect to visit to make sure your medications are not illegal there.
- Review potential side effects of your medications with your provider, as your body may react differently because of adjustment to new sleep habits, time zones, activities, and diet.
- Do not plan on sending medications abroad since it will require customs paperwork and may be delayed in delivery.
- Consult with your physician about any necessary adjustments to your dosage due to significant changes in time zones.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the above information, you can talk further with the Colby College Office of Off-Campus Study. You may also want to meet with a professional counselor at Colby’s Counseling Center. Counseling at Colby is free and confidential and appointments can be made by going to myColby and clicking on the Counseling tab.

**DIETARY RESTRICTIONS**

If you have allergies to foods, please inform your program. It is important that your host family know about your allergies. If you are a vegetarian, make sure you let the resident director know early on so that you can be placed in a family that can accommodate you. Vegetarianism is less common in other parts of the world than in the U.S., and it may not be possible to stick to a completely vegetarian diet. You should be prepared to remain as flexible as possible, particularly when dining out and participating in group activities.

**HEALTH INSURANCE**

Most study abroad programs require students to have health insurance abroad and show proof of such coverage. Students attending both Colby and non-Colby programs abroad should review their major medical insurance policy with their parents and confirm that it will provide coverage while abroad. Students on Colby programs will be required to show proof of their insurance policy by submitting a letter from their insurance carrier stating that they are covered abroad.
If you and your parents have determined that your insurance coverage will not extend to the overseas program site and there is no possibility of purchasing a rider to extend coverage, you can consider purchasing a policy with Cross Insurance by contacting 1-800-537-6444 ext. 211 or www.crossagency.com. Be sure to specify that you are a Colby student.

**SUPPLEMENTARY EMERGENCY TRAVEL INSURANCE**

Colby College does not provide for any travel insurance for students studying abroad. Students attending Colby programs in Dijon, Salamanca, and St. Petersburg, however, are required to purchase the iNext Basic card. For all others the College highly recommends that, in addition to your primary insurance, all students studying and travelling abroad purchase supplementary travel insurance through iNext. [https://www.inext.com/policies/supplemental/basic.aspx](https://www.inext.com/policies/supplemental/basic.aspx)

You can purchase an iNext card on-line at [www.iNext.com](http://www.iNext.com). Simply create an account online and follow the prompts to select your level of coverage, complete your profile, upload a digital photograph, and make your purchase. Your card will be sent to you the following business day. You will also be able to print a confirmation of insurance directly from the iNext website.

This supplementary insurance offers benefits such as accident and sickness expenses, emergency medical transportation, 24-hour medical, legal and travel assistance, travel document replacement, and student discounts. Five supplementary policy plans are offered, varying in cost from $36-$215 for one year of coverage. It is important to understand that, as with any travel insurance policy, this coverage is secondary to your primary medical coverage and certain exclusions may apply. If you have any questions about the iNext travel insurance coverage or how to purchase a card online, please feel free to contact (207) 553-4039 or [info@inext.com](mailto:info@inext.com) or check [www.inext.com](http://www.inext.com).
FINANCIAL MATTERS WHILE ABROAD

BILLING

**Colby off-campus programs:** Students on Colby programs (Colby in Salamanca, Dijon, St Petersburg, Bigelow Laboratory, and selected affiliated exchange programs) are billed by Colby in the same way as a semester or year on-campus.

You will be assessed the equivalent of Colby College tuition and fees, which covers tuition, room, board, round-trip transportation and a number of organized excursions. Personal travel and expenses are not included. Please keep in mind that if a student decides not to go on a program excursion, there will be no refund of money either to student or to parents. Please also note that programs have specific policies with regard to possible changes of return dates on the group flight. Please contact us if you have questions regarding travel arrangements.

While some students may choose to stay in the country at their own expense beyond the end of program date, Colby College cannot be responsible for those who choose to extend their visit.

**Non-Colby programs:** When a Colby student attends a non-Colby program for a semester/year, program fees will be paid by the student and directly to the program. Off-campus study program fees vary a lot so please refer to the specific program provider or university. All students studying on non-Colby programs will also be billed by Colby for a $1,000 off-campus study fee for each semester they are away (excluding certain Colby affiliated programs). The charge will be billed to your home address by Colby's Office of Financial Services. For students on financial aid, this charge is built into the aid package.

Exceptions include the AKP and Pomona or Pitzer Colleges exchange programs where you will be billed Colby's comprehensive fee and the $1,000 fee does not apply. For Dartmouth you will be billed by Dartmouth and pay Dartmouth’s fee directly to Dartmouth but the $1,000 off-campus study fee does not apply. Be aware of the refund policy of your program before you send any money for a deposit or payment.

Keep in mind that a non-Colby program will not release your transcript if you have not paid them in full by the time your program is complete.

Please refer to the [Student Financial Services Study Away Financial Information on the SFS webpage](#) for further information.

REFUND POLICIES

**Colby’s Programs Refund Policy** (only Salamanca, Dijon, St Peters burg, Bigelow) Pro rata refunds of the basic charges will be made for students who either withdraw voluntarily or upon advice from the College physician during the enrollment period. The enrollment period is either the fall or spring semester.
(Refunds of basic charges are not granted to full-time students withdrawing during the January Program.) A similar refund policy is in effect for Colby off-campus programs; however, as starting and ending dates vary, the specific dates are determined by individual programs as they correspond to the relevant percentages of the semester’s duration.

In addition to any applicable Colby refund, the College offers an optional tuition refund insurance designed to reduce the financial loss caused by a medical withdrawal. This is handled through DEWAR, and brochures are mailed in June to the student’s home address. For more information, please contact DEWAR at 617-774-1555 or go to www.collegerefund.com.

No refund will be made until the withdrawal/leave process established by the Dean of Students is completed. Federal regulations determine the amount and the order in which federal loans and scholarships are to be refunded.

Non-Colby Programs Refund Policy
For non-Colby programs please refer to the program’s policies for more information.

FINANCIAL AID
Financial aid is portable to both Colby and non-Colby programs as long as your plans have been approved by the Off-Campus Study office. In any of these courses of study, a student’s aid is based on the actual cost of the program up to a maximum of Colby’s student expense budget. The evaluation of the aid application includes consideration of necessary personal and travel expenses, and currency exchange rates. Please keep in mind that Student Financial Services must have the fee information for your program (or at least your expected costs, if exact fees are not yet known) in order to process your financial aid for the academic year in which you are studying abroad.

Financial aid students studying on an approved non-Colby program must have the program complete a Study Away Budget Statement and Agreement in accordance with federal regulations. Students can print the form from the SFS website, complete the student section, and mail it to their program.

Students receiving financial aid from Colby should be aware that students who withdraw during the semester must notify Colby and may be responsible for the refund of College and/or federal funds in accordance with College policy and federal refund regulations. Please remember that, in general, no student may receive more than eight semesters of aid from Colby.

Review the important information and access the required forms on the Student Financial Services (SFS) webpage at http://www.colby.edu/administration_cs/financialservices/sfs/jya.cfm
THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT FINANCIAL AID FOR OFF-CAMPUS STUDY

- Financial aid is portable to both Colby and non-Colby programs as long as a student’s plans have been approved by the Off-Campus Study office.
- A student’s aid is based on the actual cost of the program he/she plans to attend (NOT Colby’s Comprehensive fee) up to a maximum of Colby’s student expense budget.
- Since a student’s aid is based on the actual cost of the program, Student Financial Services must have the fee information for your program (or at least your expected costs, if exact fees are not yet known) in order to process your financial aid for the academic year in which you are studying abroad. Financial aid students studying on an approved non-Colby program must have the program complete a **Study Away Budget Statement and Agreement** in accordance with federal regulations (in addition to the standard aid application documents). Students can print the form from the Student Financial Services website, complete the student section, and mail it to their program.
- If the program away costs less than Colby, financial aid will be reduced accordingly. For higher-cost programs, the budget will be capped at Colby’s for the purpose of determining grant eligibility.
- The $1,000 Off-Campus Study Fee charged by Colby for each semester away is considered part of the budget when determining aid eligibility.
- The evaluation of the aid application includes consideration of necessary personal and travel expenses, and currency exchange rates.
- Students receiving financial aid from Colby should be aware that students who withdraw during the semester must notify Colby and may be responsible for the refund of College and/or federal funds in accordance with College policy and federal refund regulations. Please remember that, in general, no student may receive more than eight semesters of aid from Colby. According to federal regulations, Colby cannot disburse aid funds until within 10 days of Colby’s first day of classes each semester. Aid funds will be released only if the necessary paperwork and electronic processing have been completed.
- Financial aid is disbursed to the student account (not the program) and it is the student’s responsibility to assure that program/university fees are paid.
- Many programs are willing to wait for the portion of the payment covered by financial aid. However it is up to the program so we recommend that students discuss payment arrangements with their program as early as possible in the planning process.
- Student Financial Services may be able to provide a Financial Aid Information Sheet for the student to give to the program. This will list the anticipated aid and disbursement dates.
As you plan for your time away, please keep in mind:

- Term-time earnings are considered part of the student contribution and will not be replaced with Colby Grant.
- Plan for vacation expenses. Financial aid is only available to help with direct educational costs incurred while classes are in session.
- Student Financial Services must be notified of any aid from non-Colby sources, including the study-away program (i.e. scholarships).
- Students withdrawing during the semester, or dropping below full-time status, must notify Colby immediately. They may be responsible for the refund of College and/or federal funds in accordance with College policy and federal refund regulations. Please remember that, in general, no student may receive more than eight semesters of aid from Colby.
- Application fees, incidental expenses for passports, visas, immunizations, gym/club memberships, etc., are not covered by financial aid.
- Colby allows up to $800 Personal and Books for each approved semester of study away.

If your parents or anyone else is involved in paying for your educational costs, we strongly encourage you to share this information with them.

More information and tools are available on the Financial Questions section of the OCS website [http://www.colby.edu/offcampus/students/financial-questions/](http://www.colby.edu/offcampus/students/financial-questions/)

**ACCESSING AND MANAGING YOUR MONEY ABROAD**

Obviously, managing your money, accessing funds, and how much money you will spend while off-campus will vary much depending on where you are, how much you travel and go out, and the local financial systems and cost of living in the country in which you are studying. Your program will provide information on managing these matters safely as well as what may be included in your program fee. We also recommend reading program evaluations or contacting past student participants. Consider costs of personal travel, personal spending, sightseeing and souvenirs in your budget.


We recommend taking your personal spending money in a combination of a credit card, an ATM card, and traveler’s checks (not accepted everywhere). Before leaving inform your bank and verify that your checking account ATM card will work overseas, be aware of what fees they will charge, and have them tag your account so that overseas charges won’t be seen as suspicious. Leave bank deposit slips with your parents, if they will be “feeding” your account while you are abroad.
TRAVEL RESOURCES
Of course you will travel, whether it is organized through your program/university or independently! Do try to travel within the country in which you are living in order to explore its diversity and practice your host country language as much as possible. Also keep in mind that your academics takes precedence over travel and you may not miss classes for personal travel. You should inform your program/university contact and your family back home of your travel plans as much as possible. You will find many travel resources, many with student discounts online, and we recommend asking returned students for tips.

Here are a few selected resources:
see Pre-Departure Resources http://www.colby.edu/offcampus/students/pre-departure/resources/
• Student Travel (STA) (800) 781-4040 www.statravel.com
• Student Universe http://www.studentuniverse.com/
• AESU (800-638-7640 or www.aesu.com)
• In Europe, it is generally not recommended to purchase Eurail passes because many trains have a very limited number of places for Eurail customers on weekends and many national railway systems have good discounts for youth and students if purchased in advance.
• Many countries have special discounts for students. You may want to get an International Student Identity Card http://www.isic.org/.
• Atlapedia Online: full color physical and political maps as well as key facts and statistics on countries of the world
• Computer-Equipped Travel: resources for everything from roaming Internet access providers to the correct plug adapter for computers
• Finding ATMs Abroad: Mastercard; Visa
• International Calling Codes http://www.countrycallingcodes.com/
• Let’s Go: online travel information written by college students
• Lonely Planet: online information from one of the leading publishers of guidebooks
• Travel Library: travellers’ tips and stories – air travel, bicycling, trains, tourist offices worldwide, and more.
• Travlang: useful tools for travellers, especially those interested in learning a foreign language
• Virtual Tourist: maps, currency converter, time converter, driving directions, weather forecasts
• The Universal Currency Converter http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/ or http://www.xe.com/ucc/
• Internet Guide to International Hostelling
• Suggestions for women traveling abroad
• Hosteling International
Suggestions for women traveling abroad:

- [Journeywoman](#) provides a wider array of information of interest to women travelers.
- [Travelgrrl](#)
- [Journeywoman](#)
- Tips for women travelers [http://www.goin2travel.com/articles/tips-for-women-travelers.html](http://www.goin2travel.com/articles/tips-for-women-travelers.html)
ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS ABROAD

The educational system where you will be studying may be very different from what you are used to at Colby. It is difficult to generalize about different educational systems around the world but here are some common areas of difference that may help you anticipate what will be expected of you, and what questions to ask:

• In many countries, students complete 13 years of education (instead of 12) before entering university, and a broad-based liberal-arts type of program exists only at the high school level. Students often begin their major in their first year at university, and they may be more advanced in their studies than a typical first-year student here; in addition, they generally study only one subject (or two, if they are doing a “joint degree” or interdisciplinary program).

• Although it may not be explicitly stated in the syllabus, attendance is important. Expectations about the style and form of essays may be different from what you are used to. Students’ progress toward a degree often depends on exams given at the end of each year, or at the end of their program, rather than on work completed for individual classes. Degree candidates therefore may put less emphasis on attendance at lectures and more on the work they are doing outside of class to prepare for exams. As a non-degree student, your work may be assessed differently, perhaps with more emphasis on class essays and attendance.

• Students often are expected to take much more responsibility for shaping their academic program, and instructors provide relatively little guidance (for example, students may be expected to read widely from a long list of resources, with no specific assignments, and faculty may not be readily accessible outside of the classroom).

• In many cases, the professor may be expecting you to be reading on your own and ask you for original research and thought in the exam essays. You will be expected to provide your own motivation and to assume responsibility for your own education and learning, and not to simply wait to be taught the course material. Generally speaking, emphasis is put on reading widely and making use of what you have read in essays and during seminars. Your reading will not usually be based on a textbook or directed in the detailed way that is common at Colby. If you are told: "You may wish to have a look at these specific titles," that implies strong advice that these books should be read! Don’t rely on being told exactly what to do or when to do it.

• You may attend lectures, but a larger share of the classroom time may be spent in small tutorial and seminar groups. You may be asked to be an equal contributor to these discussions.

• It is likely that exams will be essay-type. Before you take your first exam, ask for clarification of the grading system. This will help alleviate any surprises when you receive your results!
• All grades you receive will be translated into U.S. grades on your Colby transcript (but will not factor into your Colby GPA).
• Remember that you are required to complete all your assignments and stay until the end of your program (or until you have taken your last exam).

**ADJUSTING TO A DIFFERENT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

**Academic Expectations and Study Abroad**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>American students most likely:</th>
<th>Host-country students most likely:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Base their expectations for the classroom on previous academic experiences in the US</td>
<td>Base their expectations for the classroom on previous academic experiences in the home country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expect the instructor to welcome and value student questions and opinions, even when these challenge what the instructor is saying</td>
<td>Expect the instructor to stand at the front of the classroom and lecture, considering it their job as students to connect the lectures to the readings on their own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assume that the instructor will define the main course themes, connect out-of-class readings to the themes, and provide detailed syllabi and visual aids (e.g., PowerPoint presentations, overhead projections, handouts)</td>
<td>EITHER assume they will have to figure out for themselves what the instructor expects, and that it is best to take copious notes, read every assignment, and memorize everything, OR skip class and ignore readings until the last two weeks of class (this is most common in countries where grades have no relevance to the job search process, so don’t get sucked in)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrive when the instructor provides clear, precise guidelines on assignments and expectations, and encourages them to do their best</td>
<td>Regard the instructor as the authority, and would never consider challenging the instructor’s point of view, especially not in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assume grading criteria will be spelled out clearly so that students who apply themselves and follow those criteria will be assured a good grade</td>
<td>Understand that it is their job to keep themselves motivated and on task. If they are good students, they will know what needs to be done and do it independently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expect to be tested and evaluated regularly so that they can monitor their performance throughout the semester</td>
<td>Know there will be 1-2 exam(s)/project(s) that will cover everything, and that they probably won’t have a real idea of how well they did until grades are final</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blame (or share blame with) the instructor if the student does not earn an excellent grade</td>
<td>Would never fault the instructor if the entire student body failed the course</td>
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• Treat learning another academic culture like learning a new language. Ask: What are the rules? Can I translate what I am experiencing into something I can understand? Observe.
• Be independent in your learning. If the lecture doesn’t match the readings, ask yourself why. Make a connection, think about it on your own, or talk about it with your local peers or resident director. If you need more input in order to understand the material, take the initiative: go to the library – in itself a valuable cross-cultural experience.
• Don’t expect a syllabus – at least, not the step-by-step syllabus you receive from professors in the US. You may get one, or you may receive a list of 40 or 100 books that are somehow relevant to the general discipline of the course you’re taking, in which case it’s up to you to figure out which, and how many, to read, and how to locate them.
• Ask your instructors for what you need. They may not know they’re teaching across a cultural divide. If you need clarification or extra help, speak up.
• Don’t be afraid to ask questions; just be diplomatic. Socratic teaching is not the norm abroad, so instructors won’t automatically steer the class back to a point or thread.
• Try, for just this semester or year, to focus more on learning than on your GPA. Students who work hard, do the readings and homework, and consistently attend class nearly always do very well.
• Remember that your program staff or international students’ office is available to help you with the transition and ‘translation’ process. They are both your support and your advocates, but they can help only if you let them know what’s going on.

LEARNING DIFFERENCES
Many OCS programs and foreign universities can usually accommodate learning differences to the extent that local regulations allow and within the constraints of the host culture. You may need to bring documentation with you from your file in Colby’s Dean of Students Office. Please check with your program director or the OCS office as soon as possible if you have further questions, and in order for us to look into available resources and accommodations where you are going.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS FOR OFF-CAMPUS STUDY
It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with these policies and procedures. If you do not follow these procedures, you may not receive full credit.

Required Course Load:
• **Course Load - Credit Enrollment**
  Students must register for a full course load, equivalent to 15-16 Colby credits per semester. Depending upon program, full enrollment could be as many as six courses per semester or as few as two.
  Required Course Load for Programs/Universities with Variable Credit
  [http://www.colby.edu/offcampus/students/how-to-apply/course-approval-course-load-and-academic-requirements-2/](http://www.colby.edu/offcampus/students/how-to-apply/course-approval-course-load-and-academic-requirements-2/)

• **Course selection**: Course selection should generally be made in consultation with your Colby academic advisor and OCS prior to departure. In some cases, this is not possible and course selections may change upon arrival in country. You should always notify OCS ([offcamp@colby.edu](mailto:offcamp@colby.edu)) of any curricular changes. Otherwise, you may not receive complete credit for your semester or year abroad.
• **Language requirement abroad:** When studying in a non-English speaking country, you must take at least **one course each semester in the language of the host country** for the duration of the program. This course may be either an academic subject course taught in the language of the country or an appropriate language/grammar course. This includes both languages taught at Colby and those that are not. In some programs, such as DIS (Denmark), the Danish language and culture course will be in addition to 4 other courses for a total of 5 courses.

• **Number of Credits:** For most programs you will receive, upon successful completion, the number of credits (or their U.S. equivalent) indicated on your OCS transcript, usually 15-16 Colby credits per semester.

• **Maximum credits:** You may transfer a maximum of **20 credits for a semester and 32 for a full year** back to Colby. You may be granted more than 16 credits for work that exceeds the normal course load of the program, upon petition to the Registrar.

**Credit Requirements:**

• **Pass/Fail:** You MAY NOT take a course on a pass/fail (or equivalent) basis unless this is the only grading option available for that particular course.

• **Audit:** No credit will be given for **audited courses**.

• **Repeat:** You will not receive credit for a class you have **already taken** at Colby.

• No credit will be given for **physical education**

• You will receive credit for only those courses for which you **receive a grade** on your transcript (including internships, independent study, and research).

• **Credit for internship:** International or domestic internship programs are encouraged, but to receive academic credit the internship must be non-paid, include considerable academic work, and not exceed 4 credit hours. It should be part of a credited study abroad program. Typically, an internship is one of four 4-credit courses. Please consult with OCS to ensure that your internship will receive credit.

• **Credit for courses in subjects not taught at Colby:** In the case of disciplines such as agriculture, archeology, architecture, business, engineering, law, or veterinary studies, please ask OCS for advice on approving these courses in advance.

• **Not all of the courses** on an approved program will automatically be approved for all students.

• **Academic rigor:** Please be aware that Colby may not approve full credit for certain courses taken abroad that do not meet Colby’s standards of academic rigor, even when these courses are marketed to you during your program orientation. For example, courses about sports or certain service-learning courses often do not qualify for full credit. When in doubt, please consult with OCS by email and include a full course syllabus to allow us to evaluate the course content.
• **Jan Plan Credit**: Jan Plan credit for that year will be awarded in the case of
a) students who study off campus for a full academic year in 1 or 2 sites;
b) a fall program which is in session through most of January;
c) a spring program which is in session for most of January and whose total
duration is at least eighteen weeks. Holidays and vacation periods are
deducted from the 18 weeks.

Programs that qualify for exemption include:
**Fall**: Hamilton in Paris (if Fall only), Wellesley in Aix, American University in
Beirut. Some other programs in Spain and France which finish in January may
also qualify; the student must provide the program’s academic calendar.

**Spring**: Arcadia in Granada, Colby in Salamanca (integrated and language
programs), Columbia-Penn in Paris, EDUCA, King’s College, Pitzer in Ecuador,
Queen Mary- Univ of London, Royal Holloway, SOAS, University College
London, University of Bristol, University of Cambridge, University of East
Anglia, University of Edinburgh, University of Oxford, University of Sussex,
University of the Arts- London, University of York, Washington University in
Chile, Wellesley in Aix, VWW in Regensburg.

The exemption will be reflected on the Colby record at the completion of the
program.

Note: If you believe that your program qualifies for Jan Plan exemption and is
not listed here, submit a program calendar to the OCS Office for review.

**Course Approval Policies And Procedures**

All courses taken abroad must be pre-approved to guarantee transfer credit.

Course Approval Contacts and Instructions 2015-16:
[http://www.colby.edu/offcampus/students/how-to-apply/course-
approval-course-load-and-academic-requirements-2/](http://www.colby.edu/offcampus/students/how-to-apply/course-
approval-course-load-and-academic-requirements-2/)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Credit</th>
<th>Approved by</th>
<th>Number or Limit</th>
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</table>
| Major or Minor credit                 | Departmental representative (see *Course Approval
Contacts & Instructions*)                        | Varies by department                |
| Distribution or Diversity Requirement | Relevant Departmental representative (see *Course Approval
Contacts & Instructions*)                        | No limit                            |
| General Credit                        | Off-Campus Study                                 | **Full course-load local equivalent** (variable depending on credit) |
See policies & requirements for your department or program here http://www.colby.edu/offcampus/students/pre-departure/

Transmit all course information + approvals to the OCS office either by delivering the form to Eustis 103 or forwarding an email to offcamp@colby.edu.

Grades and Exams:
• **on a Colby program** (Salamanca, Dijon, St Petersburg, or Bigelow) will appear on your transcript and will count in your Colby GPA. This includes passing and non-passing grades. You may elect to take a course satisfactory/unsatisfactory prior to a specific deadline, which will be announced once you arrive on site. Resident directors of Colby programs submit the grades for students in their program directly to the Colby Registrar.

• **on a Non-Colby program** appear on your Colby transcript but do not figure into your Colby GPA. (It is, however, legitimate for you to include them when you are asked to compute your own GPA for the purpose of employment or graduate school.) The policy of factoring grades earned on our own programs into the GPA, but not those of other institutions and providers, is quite standard among our peer institutions. It stems from the inherent impossibility of controlling the curricula, faculty and staff, course content, and grading practices of other institutions’ programs.

• **Minimum Grade:** Grades below a C- will not receive any credit but will appear on your Colby transcript.

• You will receive credit only for those courses for which you **receive a grade** on your transcript (including internships, independent study, and research).

• **Attendance and exam requirements:** You are expected to attend classes regularly and to comply with all the requirements of your program. If you are studying at a foreign university or institution, you are required to take the regular final examinations for all courses in which you are enrolled, or to have an alternative assessment of your work if you are not allowed to take the final examinations. Otherwise, you will receive no Colby credit for the course. If you leave your program early or for extended periods of travel while classes are in session, the amount of credit you receive will be reduced. In extreme cases, you will receive no Colby credit for your period abroad.

At the London School of Economics students must take exams in all courses and half-courses in which the student is enrolled. At other UK universities, degree exams must be taken except in the following situations:
• When graduating students do not sit an exam.
• When a student’s work is of high enough quality during the term to be excused from the exam using the same standards applied to the UK students receiving exemption.
• When a student joins a year-long course part way through the course. This situation would apply most frequently to spring semester students.
• When the degree exam covers materials not covered by the class taken by the student.

NOTE: Please take these exam policies into account as you plan your stay abroad. Students attending approved fall semester programs which continue into January should expect to stay into January to complete their courses and exams, unless there is an early start program in September.

**Extension of stay while off-campus:** It will not be possible to extend your stay once you are already abroad as a junior; the request for more than one semester off-campus must be made as part of the sophomore-year application process.
While study abroad may seem like a break from your “real” life, it can be a valuable part of your career exploration and development. Whether or not you hope to work abroad in the future, being able to articulate your international competencies can be extremely valuable to a potential employer. During your sophomore year, we encourage you to work with a Career Center advisor to prepare for making the most of your upcoming experience. Below are some things you can do to enhance your career development.

**Before you leave Colby**

- During the semester before you are away, meet with a Career Center advisor to identify and clarify your career goals, discuss future plans (e.g., internships, jobs, graduate school) and review and discuss your resume and cover letter.
- Students who will be away for all or part of their junior year, particularly in the spring, should plan ahead for graduate school, internship, and employment application procedures and timelines so that they don’t miss any important deadlines and will be fully prepared for senior year.
- Network with personal and family contacts, alumni and other professionals in your field of interest, and search and establish contact with any individuals living where you will be studying.
- Talk with students who are back from your study site. Did they do an internship while there? Was it during the semester or after? How did they arrange it?
- Explore opportunities for interning, working, or volunteering in the country where you will be studying during your term abroad or for the summer or JanPlan before or after. Going Global, linked from CareerLink, is a great place to start.

**While you are abroad**

- Make career awareness part of your experience. Conduct informational interviews and explore other career resources. Talk with local faculty members and get suggestions for other potential contacts in the community.
- If you are going abroad: talk to alumni living and working in this part of the world. What do you observe about the cultural aspects of work habits, business attire and supervisor-employee relationships? What appears to be most “valued” in the business community? What can you observe about gender-based aspects of the working environment, job assignments and corporate culture?
- If you are studying in another U.S. location: talk to alumni living and working in this community. Explore the local economy. Which businesses/industries are dominant in the area? What are some local concerns of employees?
What are the cost of living and the average salary? If this is an area you would consider relocating to, what are the resources available and the lifestyle issues you want to consider?

- Establish contacts in your new location as networking resources and to obtain internships for the following summer (or January Term), or to search from abroad for an internship in the U.S.
- Contact any alumni that are living or working where you are, and maintain a record of all interesting professionals you meet. Get business cards, email addresses. In addition to alumni, other references could be a professor from the country you studied in, a host family member, or a supervisor where you volunteered, worked or interned.
- Explore opportunities for post study experiences in the country, including assessing the local economy and cost of living.
- Ensure you have not disabled emails from the Career Center. You may receive emails not relevant to your current situation away; however, you do not want to miss any important announcements, including sessions via WebEx.
- Continue to maintain contact with the Career Center. Despite the distance, a career advisor will assist you with resumes, cover letters, interviews and job and internship searches, and can talk with you via WebEx.

When you return to Colby

- Attend the “Marketing your Study Abroad Experiences” workshop offered by OCS and Career Center in September or February.
- Meet with a Career Center advisor to discuss your study-abroad experience, how it has impacted your career direction, and how you can communicate the value of the experience in your written and verbal communications.
- Update your resume summarizing your experience abroad, and plan ahead for senior year and your life after graduation.
- Make plans for an internship or independent study off-campus in the summer or JanPlan, including taking advantage of the contacts you made abroad. Be sure to keep in touch with new contacts on a regular basis.
- You can access lots of great employment, cultural, work permit information and much more on Going Global via CareerLink.

Visit the Career Center for more information.
COMMUNICATING ACROSS CULTURES
Effective intercultural communicators are open-minded, flexible, and curious. They tolerate differences and ambiguity, they maintain a sense of humor, and they allow themselves to fail. These are capabilities that can be cultivated and that will make cross-cultural experiences more satisfying and rewarding. A number of mental habits may interfere with a person’s ability to communicate well with people from other cultures. Recognizing that one’s own cultural assumptions and experiences may obstruct effective cross-cultural communication is a first step toward finding ways to lessen the likelihood of miscommunication and to increase the likelihood of greater understanding.

FITTING IN WITHOUT GOING COMPLETELY NATIVE
• Make every effort to immerse yourself in your new culture. Adapt to their way of life; don’t try to change it. (That doesn’t mean you need to compromise your own moral standards, but you might want to think about how something like, say, vegetarianism will appear to people for whom meat is a sign of health, wealth, or welcome.)
• Be attentive to how people behave around you to learn about cultural expectations.
• Try not to wear clothing that identifies you as a US college student.
• Don’t be insulted or make a judgment until you have had time to think the situation over and discuss it with someone, preferably someone local.
• Keep a journal, blog, or vlog while you are abroad. Journals provide a wonderful opportunity to record all of your adventures overseas and reflect upon them as you learn to interpret local actions and reactions. If you’ll be blogging, be sure to print it out; technology is not forever.
• Expect the unexpected. (So you get off the plane and your luggage isn’t there! Have a day’s necessities in your carry-on bag, and try to roll with the punches.)
• Flexibility, a sense of humor, patience, and counting to ten before you speak are all keys to a successful international experience.
• Finally, think of yourself as representing Colby and the United States. You may not have asked for that role, but people will see you as a spokesperson for both your home country and your institution, and will respond accordingly. Take it seriously and act responsibly.

PHOTOGRAPHY ETIQUETTE
PLEASE ask permission before photographing people, and make an attempt at preserving the dignity of those you’re photographing. Also, for your own good, don’t take pictures of government buildings, police or military installations, airports, or other potentially sensitive areas. A good rule is, if there’s a policeman or a soldier in front of the building, it’s not a good one to photograph—at least not without first asking permission. Such photos can be interpreted as acts of
Also, be alert to your surroundings before exposing your camera. Cameras are great targets for thieves, as well as dead give always that you’re a tourist. In countries with sub-standard living and travel conditions, consider taking disposable cameras—they often take excellent pictures, fit in your pocket, are fairly water-resistant, don't require batteries, can be developed in most major cities, and are certainly cheaper to replace when they’re stolen.

CULTURE SHOCK & CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT
It is common to experience culture shock when you are transplanted into a foreign setting. This is a normal reaction to a new environment where you are no longer ‘in control’ as you have been at home. People can experience a range of emotions when adapting to a foreign culture, from excitement and interest to frustration, depression and fear of the unknown. Culture shock is a term used to describe what happens to people when they encounter unfamiliar surroundings and conditions and feel a sense of isolation.

Symptoms of culture shock:
People differ greatly in the degree to which culture shock affects them, but almost everyone is affected by it in one way or another. Symptoms vary, but can include:
• boredom
• withdrawal (e.g. spending excessive amounts of time reading; avoiding contact with host nationals)
• feeling isolated or helpless
• sleeping a lot or tiring easily
• irritation over delays and other minor frustrations
• suffering from various body pains and aches
• longing to be back home
• unduly criticizing local customs or ways of doing things

The five stages of culture shock:
1. The Honeymoon Stage - You are very positive, curious, and anticipate new exciting experiences. You even idealize the host culture.
2. Irritability & Hostility - You may start to feel that what is different is actually inferior. The host culture is confusing or the systems are frustrating. It is a small step from saying that they do things in a different way to saying that they do things in a stupid way. You will often blame your frustrations and emotions on the new culture (and its shortcomings) rather than on the process of your adaptation to the new culture.
3. Gradual Adjustment - You feel more relaxed and develop a more balanced, objective view of your experience.
4. Adaptation of Biculturalism - There is a new sense of belonging and sensitivity to the host culture.
5. Re-entry Shock - You go home and it is not what you expected it to be.

Homesickness and culture shock are a difficult, but natural part of international travel. Culture shock is the "psychological disorientation most people experience when they move for an extended period of time into a culture markedly different from their own" (L. Robert Kohls, Survival Kit for Overseas Living, 1979; p. 62). You may find yourself missing family and friends, hating your new host culture, and wanting nothing more than to return home. Though difficult, these feelings are normal and will pass if you hang in there. Just remember that it will get better.

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*Adapted from “What’s Up With Culture” by Bruce LaBrack, University of the Pacific.*
Riding the roller coaster of culture shock, a student actually follows a natural pattern of hitting peaks and valleys. The high points of excitement and interest are succeeded by lower points of depression, disorientation, or frustration. Each student will experience these ups and downs in different degrees of intensity and for different lengths of time. The process is necessary in order to make the transition from one culture to another; it helps a student or traveler to balance out and adjust (from: http://www.studentsabroad.com/cultureshock.html).

This is a normal part of the integration process, and you should realize that everyone else is going, has been, or will go through the same thing, every time they go to a new culture. Usually, most people experience several of these symptoms before they begin to adjust. If you recognize these symptoms and become concerned, it's sometimes helpful to talk it out with other members of your program who are probably going through the same thing, or your program director, who probably has some ideas on how to help the adjustment process along.

Gradual adjustment occurs, as one would probably suspect, over a period of time. Some students will more easily adapt to a new culture with a minimal amount of anxiety and discomfort. Others will need more time. Generally speaking, your ability to gradually adjust will depend on how much you really want to understand and adapt to the culture, and make a concerted effort to do so. As gradual adjustment occurs, your perspective begins to change as you learn to adapt to your surroundings. You start to pick up on cultural cues and clues that you may have missed before, and start to feel more comfortable and at ease with your culture. You gain self-confidence and begin to realize that you do indeed have some control over your situation.

This adaptation is by far one of the most wonderful things about studying abroad—words are not enough to describe it, but it is definitely worth the hardships and effort that come with the working-through of culture shock.

**How To Prepare Before You Go**

- Learn as much as possible about your host culture’s values, customs, and popular culture before departure and throughout your stay.
- Learn to understand the process of cultural adjustment. The **What’s Up With Culture** (http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/) will help you understand and prepare for the important cultural issues you will encounter.
- Keep working on your language skills, both by speaking and by making a conscious effort to study on your own.
UPS & DOWNS OF INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL
Managing your mental health while studying abroad – whether or not you have a history of anxiety, depression, or other mental health conditions – is something every person must think about when going abroad.

Being away from usual stress at home can sometimes be a relief when abroad; experiencing new adventures can be a useful distraction. You will also have times when you feel confused, uncomfortable, annoyed, and many of the same emotions that you manage in your daily life at home.

Here's some suggestions for understanding what is going on.

1. Recognize that some of what you will experience overseas is just part of the intercultural adjustment cycle (sometimes called “culture shock”), and it is common to all study abroad participants.

2. Realize the low points are not necessarily attributable to a mental health diagnosis (e.g. home sickness, anxiety about understanding or speaking a foreign language, loneliness, fear of being robbed, etc.)

3. Be aware that feeling very good is often just the high point of the cycle, which may make you feel that you no longer need medications (if you use them). Keep taking your meds and consult with a doctor first.

4. Set benchmarks to see how you are feeling as time goes on (mobile phone apps can help track your feelings); the first days and weeks can be stressful for some and these can be normal feelings but if you are feeling down or overwhelmed at any point in the program, reach out to others.

5. Give it time; 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.

From: MIUSA Mobility International USA

STRATEGIES FOR COPING: REACHING OUT & INTEGRATION
For most of us, there’s really nothing more important to an overseas experience than reaching out to others and integrating oneself into one’s host culture. Breaking out of your safe, secure world and meeting the people of your host country, though difficult at first, will undoubtedly be the most enlightening and rewarding part of your stay abroad. As with many aspects of your study-abroad experience, it will be up to you to take the initiative. Introductions will be rare, and
almost never to the people with whom you really want to connect, and no one will force you to integrate.

Especially in programs with a lot of Americans, overriding the desire to stay with the group and within the safety of an American community abroad can be both frightening and difficult. But if you branch out and spend time in social settings away from other Americans, the rewards in meeting and establishing relationships with host nationals, as well as improving your language skills, will absolutely outweigh the emotional and physical effort involved. So, find an activity or a sport or SOMETHING that’ll help you meet the locals, and do what you set out to do when you applied to study abroad—get away from America!

• Keep an open mind. Notice differences. Try to understand the reasons behind things in your host culture that seems strange or confusing. Try to look at things from the local perspective.
• Maintain a sense of humor.
• Reach out and find someone from your host country who is sympathetic and understanding, and talk with that person about specific situations and about your feelings related to them.
• Keep a journal. Writing about your experiences will help you measure your adjustment to the host culture and your progress in a foreign language. Your journal will be an invaluable record of your experiences for years to come.
• Avoid Americans or other foreigners who habitually criticize the host culture. Foster friendships with people who will help you learn about the host culture, who will listen to your problems, and who will help you develop a positive attitude about your experiences.
• Remember your strengths! Maintain confidence in yourself. Remind yourself of your talents and abilities.
• Keep active and avoid feeling sorry for yourself. Get involved in a hobby (also a great way to meet people in the local community). Some students find that taking a short trip to a neighboring area provides some relief and enables them to return refreshed and with a new perspective on their host culture.
• Above all, have a positive attitude and have faith in yourself, in the essential good will of your hosts, and in the positive outcome of the experience.

GENDER & ETHNIC ISSUES
As you will soon discover, gender relationship are different in many parts of the world than in the US. Your program may have a discussion of gender issues and cultural behaviors as part of your on-site orientation. Try to keep in mind during your adjustment to your host community that you do not have to accept an attitude to be able to adapt to it in everyday life.

Note: If you believe that you are experiencing something more than cultural differences, such as harassment, be sure to speak immediately with the resident director.
A Special Note to Women Regarding Harassment
Many issues that concern women concern men as well. Because you'll be living in a different culture, understand that perceptions and assumptions regarding men and women (especially Americans) will often be significantly different from what you’re used to, or what you expected to find. Again, a basic awareness of the cultural differences you may encounter can help you avoid misunderstandings and potentially dangerous or embarrassing situations. It is important to respect these differences, both to avoid harassment and to assist in your assimilation into the culture. You should be aware of and be respectful of local customs regarding dress, relationships between men and women and realize that you may not understand the signals and cultural innuendoes in your host country like you do at home. However, if you feel in any way that a line may have been crossed, speak with your program director (or whomever is in charge of your program).

A Special Note for Bisexuals, Gays, Lesbians, and Transsexuals
Acceptance of queer lifestyles and queer values varies greatly from country to country. More importantly, however, it also varies greatly within a given country or culture. Therefore, sweeping generalizations about the queer experience abroad are often misleading and can lead to stereotyping and presumptuous summary judgments about the host culture that can be counter-productive to the study-abroad experience. Keeping an open mind is essential to overcoming cultural stereotypes and creating a uniquely personal experience in which you can relate to your host culture as an individual, as yourself, rather than as a member of a faceless mass such as "a gay" or "a lesbian," etc.

That said, there are a few things to keep in mind to make your experience abroad more comfortable and more compatible with a queer identity. Keep in mind that studying abroad is a time of great personal change and development, in which many personal values and beliefs—including one’s sexual identity—are questioned and reconsidered. This time of self-questioning and self-discovery can encompass all facets of the coming-out experience. It’s important, then, to identify resources available to you while abroad which can help you deal with the stresses involved in coming out or living in an environment which may not be welcoming of queer culture. Your program should be able to help you locate such resources, as well as provide information regarding queer meeting places, queer organizations, laws, behavioral norms, queer media, and general attitudes toward queer people. Additional resources can sometimes be sought through queer travel guides (available on the OCS website).

In many cultural settings, it’s extremely important that queer individuals be attuned to how their behavior will be interpreted by members of the host culture. Keep in mind that you probably won’t be familiar with the body language, subconscious cues, and behavioral signals that are considered acceptable, flirtatious, or downright objectionable in your new culture. It’s a good idea, then, to play it safe until you’re sure of how to interpret the gross and, eventually, more
subtle cues of host nationals. Once again, consulting queer resources within your host country can be beneficial.

Safety abroad is a highly complex issue for the queer student. In some more conservative countries, homosexual acts may be outlawed, resulting in stiff prison terms. In more liberal countries, however, the queer lifestyle may be much more readily accepted than in the United States. It is essential, then, that you learn all you can about the legal and social aspects and consequences of assuming a queer identity in your host culture before leaving the States.

**A Special Note Regarding the Potential for Ethnic Issues Abroad**

Students of color expecting to leave a racist American environment for a more accepting environment abroad will quickly discover that the issue is—no pun intended—hardly black-and-white. At the same time, Caucasian students traveling to certain countries may unexpectedly find themselves victims of racial harassment and even, potentially, outright racism.

Therefore, expect issues of race, ethnicity, religion, and class to continue to be present, but potentially be significantly different abroad from what you’re used to at home. These issues are extremely complex, and you’ll be at a disadvantage in understanding them within the context of your host culture, as you won’t know the rules or the dialogue. So, general advice is to be prepared for anything, and resist making judgments. Once again, keeping an open mind is essential to overcoming cultural stereotypes and creating a uniquely personal experience in which you can relate to your host culture as an individual, as yourself, rather than as a member of a faceless mass.

Educating yourself about ethnic issues in your host country before leaving the States is an excellent idea. Also review some of the resources available on the OCS predeparture website.
Going Abroad: Some helpful hints from students...

1. Get out there!
   • Living in a foreign country is difficult at first, give yourself a chance to adapt. Feeling worried, nervous, or homesick at the beginning, or anytime, during your program is normal.
   • You really just need to laugh at yourself sometimes, whether it is not being able to understand things at first or saying a wrong word for something, getting lost, or just feeling out of place.
   • Orientate yourself to the city or other area you are living in, find out about local events/fun things to do.
   • Start a quasi-journal or blog at the beginning of your trip and track cool things you do, how you’re feeling; it will be interesting to look back at what you’ve accomplished.

2. Work/Play
   • True, you can learn a whole lot in a library, but some of the best learning experiences you will have while abroad are getting outside your comfort zones, traveling, going out with friends, having NEW experiences you would not have in the U.S.
   • Although we are all proud to be American in our different ways, try to avoid speaking English really loudly with your friends or traveling in large groups of Americans, this can make you a serious target for theft or anti-American sentiment.
   • Don’t flash your valuables around, be aware of people and things going on around you, especially at night.

3. Homestay Families
   • Can sometimes be the trickiest part of living in a foreign country at the beginning, try to engage in family life (i.e., don’t stay in your room or be out all the time), and be respectful!
   • Even if you’re nervous about your language ability, keep speaking, most families are very understanding, act things out if you don’t know a word.
   • Bring lots of photos of family, friends, Colby, hometown; it will make for great conversation.

4. Friends
   • Make them not only in your program with other Americans, but ALSO in the local culture. Homestay brothers and sisters are a great resource. This is key in getting to know the ins and outs of a city, your learning experience, and developing better LANGUAGE SKILLS
   • Bring small gifts with you from the U.S. (CDs, candy, Frisbees) that you can give to a child, or special person you meet.
COMMUNICATION

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH HOME
Keeping in contact with friends and family while studying abroad can be challenging in some ways, because it will be a change from how you normally communicate.

You want to be sure to maintain a balance between keeping in touch with folks at home and interacting with your host culture, including new friends, new classmates or roommates, and possibly a host family.

• Stay in touch with your family on a regular basis and reassure them of your safety.
• If you tell your family/loved ones that you will call, please call them.
• Please do not tell your parents/loved ones that you will call them when you first arrive: you need time to settle down and get oriented. Tell them that you will call them as soon as you settle down. However, sending a quick e-mail note or text message letting them know that you have arrived and are ok will help ease anxieties.

Remember: We cannot release your contact information without your written permission. If someone from home needs to know where you are, please provide them with those details.

Set reasonable expectations with your loved ones before you leave. How often will you be able to talk on the phone? Email? Video chat? Are you likely to have limited access to the internet?

HOMESICKNESS AND COMMUNICATION
Homesickness when you are far away from friends and family and trying to speak a different language can be very real and difficult to deal with. For most students the first two weeks are typically the hardest but it will get easier, especially if you try to focus on adjusting to your new life, making new friends, and staying busy. Remember that you are not alone and don’t hesitate to reach out to someone in your group or the program staff.

Of course, you will keep in touch with home, but too much contact with home can have negative effects on your experience abroad. The temptation to reach out to your friends and family at home on Skype, Facebook, chats etc... is great but if your mind is always thinking of your family and friends in the U.S., you will scarcely have time to absorb your new life in a new country. If your mind is always back in America, if you withdraw from engaging with your current environment, or you spend all your time with Americans you will stay stuck in the “irritation and hostility stage” of culture shock. Try to restrict calling your parents and friends to once or twice a week, rather than every day (or multiple times a day). You can catch up on other news by e-mail.
Your experience is what you make of it and there’s really nothing more important to an overseas experience than reaching out to others and integrating oneself into one’s host culture. Breaking out of your safe, secure world and meeting the people of your host country, though difficult at first, will undoubtedly be the most enlightening and rewarding part of your stay abroad. As with many aspects of your study-abroad experience, it will be up to you to take the initiative. Introductions will be rare, and almost never to the people with whom you really want to connect, and no one will force you to integrate. But if you branch out and spend time in social settings away from other Americans, the rewards in meeting and establishing relationships with host nationals, as well as improving your language skills, will absolutely outweigh the emotional and physical effort involved. Try to make connections with host nationals who are interested in you and your views on certain issues and situations. So, reach out and find an activity or a sport or SOMETHING that’ll help you meet the locals, and do what you set out to do when you applied to study abroad—get away from America!

If one of your reasons for being in a new country is to make solid improvement in your language skills, realize that communication technology, and your use of it, may greatly hinder your linguistic progress while abroad. Spending time communicating in English (Skype, Facebook, chats etc..) will reduce your language immersion and will work against your own linguistic progress.

“We loved Tuscany. The cell reception was fantastic and the Wi-Fi was to die for.”
METHODS OF COMMUNICATION ABROAD
The easiest and most economical way to contact home will vary from country to country. For tips on the best ways to communicate abroad, check your program materials, ask your program provider, or recent study abroad alumni. Some common methods include:

- Cell phones (US or local)
- Calling cards, public pay phones and in-home phones
- Email, internet cafes, wifi
- Postal service
- Texting
- Video chat
- Blogging, vlogging
- Other social media

Phones
As you know, deciding what mobile phone to use will depend on the systems in your destination country, the cost, and what type of cell phone you already have. The www.chronicunlocks.com website has been recommended for help with unlocking your phone. Whether or not your cell phone is or can be “unlocked” many students find that it may still be cheaper to rent or buy a phone in country. These issues will usually be addressed during your program’s orientation or ask returned students for advice.

Internet Access
In many countries, most public places and university spaces will have wifi, if not the place where you are living.

CHECKING YOUR COLBY EMAIL
Review your Colby email account during your semester abroad via Colby Web mail:
www.colby.edu/webmail.

- Since registration and housing information will be sent by email it is very important that you check your Colby e-mail account while you are away, even if you are in a remote location.
- Registration is completed on the Internet and the Registrar (registr@colby.edu) will try to contact you via e-mail to determine if you are able to register on the Web. The curriculum, course descriptions from the catalogue, and registration materials will be on the Web.
- Housing information will be sent directly from the Dean of Housing at Colby College via email to your Colby account. If you have questions regarding housing procedures, please contact the Office of Campus Life at housing@colby.edu.
- The Colby Echo is available on-line for all Colby students abroad at http://www.colbyecho.com.
IN CASE OF EMERGENCY
In case of a program-related, health-related, or personal concern or emergency, your first step is to inform your local program coordinator. Please also notify OCS so that we may assist in any way we can on our end.

In addition, you can always phone the Colby emergency number after business hours and they can reach the Dean on Call, 207-859-5911.

In the event that you decide to leave your program before completion, it is important that you confer with both your local program staff and OCS about the options available to you. Depending on the timing of your departure, we cannot guarantee what your options will be nor how many (if any) credits may be transferred.

Students receiving financial aid from Colby should be aware that students who withdraw during the semester must notify Colby and may be responsible for the refund of College and/or federal funds in accordance with College policy and federal refund regulations. Please remember that, in general, no student may receive more than eight semesters of aid from Colby.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS
Copy down all names, phone numbers, postal and e-mail addresses of people with whom you might need to have contact while abroad.

We suggest that you prepare all your emergency contacts and information in one place so it is handy when needed. You may download this Student Emergency Information Card as a tool to help you keep track of all the important numbers you may need.
http://studentsabroad.com/emergencycard.html
IMPORTANT COLBY CONTACT INFORMATION

Colby College Office of Off-Campus Study
4500 Mayflower Hill
Waterville, ME 04901

Tel: (207) 859-4500
Fax: (207) 859-4502
Email: offcamp@colby.edu

SKYPE: colbyocs

Facebook: Off-Campus Study at Colby College

Off-Campus Study Staff
Nancy Downey, Director - (207) 859-4503
Juliette Monet, Associate Director - (207) 859-4505
Sue Forbes, Administrative Secretary - (207) 859-4500

Other Important Colby Contacts

Colby switchboard (207) 859-4000
Dean of Students dosoffice@colby.edu (207) 859-4250
Office of Campus Life housing@colby.edu (207) 859-4280
Colby Dean on Call (outside of business hours) 207-859-5911
Registrar registr@colby.edu (207) 859-4620
Student Financial Services sfs@colby.edu (207) 859-4120
or 800 723-4033
GOING HOME: WHAT TO EXPECT

RE-ENTRY AND REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK AND READJUSTMENT

While many students anticipate feeling culture shock when entering a new country for the first time, many don’t realize that similar feelings can be felt upon return to your own country after being gone for an extended period of time. Understanding that you will likely face some re-entry and reverse culture shock frustrations when you return is important; and even more important is to know that you are not alone in these feelings. These feelings are often more difficult because they are unexpected.

The following 10 steps of cultural adjustment outlined by Steven Rhinesmith show how culture shock can be like a roller coaster ride of emotions:

1. initial anxiety
2. initial elation
3. initial culture shock
4. superficial adjustment
5. depression–frustration
6. acceptance of host culture
7. return anxiety
8. return elation
9. re-entry shock
10. reintegration

As a student becomes integrated to the ways of the country of your choice’s culture, the more difficult it may be to re–adapt to the United States upon return home. The United States just won’t look the same way it did before leaving to study abroad in the country of your choice; a student may see home with new eyes and may also be more critical of U.S. cultural traditions once thought to be "normal". This is called reverse culture shock.

Fear of experiencing reverse culture shock should not deter students from trying to integrate as fully as possible while in the country of your choice. No matter how integrated a student becomes while abroad, he or she will probably still be "shocked" by differences noted at home after so much time spent in the country of your choice and the other countries to which you will be traveling. However, over time, a student will learn to re–adapt and reintegrate into his or her home culture.

Often students who are experiencing reverse culture shock have a disparity in what they expected to find when they returned home and what they actually found; you may idealize home when you are abroad, and when you return, you may be disappointed by what you find. Students also often expect nothing to have changed while they were gone, but just like they have, the places and people from
home will have changed in the time they were gone. You also may be irritated with American culture and longing for parts of your host country’s culture that you can’t find here.

To combat this, seek out exciting activities here, just like you did abroad. Colby’s OCS reentry handbook The Journey of Reentry: The Good, The Bad, and The Confusing: Being Back at Colby has lots of ideas on ways you can get involved and keep your abroad experience alive. There will be events on campus to welcome you back and resources to help you get involved and go abroad again. The Counseling Center is always available to help you through this process of readjustment.

More reentry resources available on the OCS Returning to Colby webpage http://www.colby.edu/offcampus/students/welcome-back/

3 IMPORTANT STEPS TO TIMELY CREDIT TRANSFER UPON COMPLETION

Credits from OCS (and grades) will only appear on your Colby record once these steps are complete:

1. Submit Your OCS Program Evaluation online. https://www.colby.edu/academics_cs/ocs/evals/takeeval.cfm Transcripts for non-Colby programs and grades for Colby programs will not be released to the registrar until student log-ins to the evaluation site have been documented.

2. Official OCS Transcript from your program/university: Have your OCS Transcript sent to the Colby Off-Campus Study office at 4500 Mayflower Hill, Waterville ME 04901. In some cases, the student must request it from the provider or university and indicate that it should be sent to Colby. (This may take 1-6 months depending on the country.)

3. Apply or request Course Approvals for Major, Minor, Distribution or Distribution Credit http://www.colby.edu/offcampus/students/pre-departure/

Credits will be posted by the Registrar once you have completed a program evaluation and an official transcript has been received from the program/university you attended.
Get out there!

Stay safe!

Keep in touch!
Bon Voyage