



Study Abroad Handbook

2022-2023





Hello!

Do you have questions about studying abroad? Great!

You're in the right place.

This handbook includes information on health & safety, academic details, culture shock, cultural etiquette, packing tips and preparing to come home.

We hope that you will contribute to your own orientation by joining live sessions or meetings or reaching out to our staff – but however you do it, ask the questions you have about going overseas. There must be something you want to know, right? There are no ridiculous questions, only *real* questions. You never know – another student might also want the same information but be too afraid to ask!

The folks you've been talking with in the Loughheed Center for Applied Learning will continue to be your contacts at SUNY Potsdam for your entire experience. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions or concerns. We can be reached by email at international@potsdam.edu or telephone at +1 (315) 267-2507.

Good luck, and we can't wait to hear about your experience!

Sincerely,
Jenica Rogers
Dorf Endowed Director for Applied Learning

Drafted: May 2019
Updated: April 2022

Table of Contents

ACADEMIC INFORMATION	4
EARNING ACADEMIC CREDITS ABROAD	4
COURSE APPROVALS, EQUIVALENTS, AND DESCRIPTIONS.....	5
REGISTERING FOR STUDY ABROAD	6
CHANGING THE LENGTH OF YOUR STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM	7
WITHDRAWAL FROM A STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM.....	8
CANCELLATION OF A PROGRAM	8
REGISTERING FOR CLASSES FOR YOUR FIRST SEMESTER BACK HOME	9
GRADES AND TRANSCRIPTS FOR STUDY ABROAD	9
WHEN WILL YOUR GRADES BE PROCESSED?	11
ISSUING YOUR TRANSCRIPT AND TRANSCRIPT SUPPLEMENT	12
STUDENT CONDUCT AND INTERNATIONAL LAWS.....	13
HEALTH, HEALTH CARE, AND HEALTH INSURANCE	14
HEALTH BASICS OVERSEAS	14
IMMUNIZATIONS	14
PLANNING AHEAD FOR HEALTH NEEDS OVERSEAS.....	15
HEALTH INSURANCE	15
FILING HEALTH INSURANCE CLAIMS.....	16
OBTAINING MEDICAL TREATMENT OVERSEAS	16
EMERGENCIES, HEALTH OR OTHER	16
AMERICAN EMBASSIES OVERSEAS	17
SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND TITLE IX	17
UNDERSTANDING TITLE IX GUIDELINES WHEN ABROAD: A STUDENT GUIDE	17
SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS.....	18
MONEY MANAGEMENT OVERSEAS	19
CURRENCY EXCHANGE	19
SPENDING MONEY	19
LOST OR STOLEN WALLETS	20
CULTURE SHOCK AND HOMESICKNESS.....	21
PACKING AND SHIPPING	22
GOING AWAY AND COMING HOME	23

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Academic Checklist



- Apply to the program of your choice
- Submit all program acceptance materials from your program to the LoCAL
- Fill out the Acceptance Form For Registration in an Overseas Program
- Fill out the SUNY Potsdam Demographics survey
- Fill out the SUNY Potsdam Contact Information survey
- Sign the Agreement and Acceptance of Risk Waiver
- Submit all international health insurance forms to the LoCAL
- Connect with the Senior International Officer's What'sApp account
- Plan your finances with Financial Aid
- Fill out the SUNY Potsdam Financial Aid Arrangement Form
- Apply for SUNY Potsdam Scholarships
- Meet with your academic advisor to obtain course approvals and determine the impact of your time abroad on your degree progress

Earning Academic Credits Abroad

All SUNY students on any SUNY program administered by a 4-year SUNY College or University Center automatically get credit toward their degree for the work they do overseas. However, if you are not traveling on a SUNY Potsdam hosted program (like a travel course, or JAFSP), you still have to negotiate what your international courses are equivalent to at Potsdam. This means that there are procedures – and important complex details to manage – that get the courses you have taken overseas to show up on your degree audit at your home campus.

Number of Credits Earned

The number of credits you register for overseas does not always translate into the same number of credits at SUNY Potsdam. For all programs, the administering SUNY campus will determine the **number of credits** each overseas course will carry based on conversion rules that apply to your specific program. Be sure that you understand the conversion rules so that you do not drop below 12 SUNY credits per semester – the administering campus can help you with this, and so can the staff in the Loughheed Center for Applied Learning.

We repeat: the SUNY Potsdam credits will not necessarily equal the number assigned by the host university. Your transcript supplement will reflect the number of credits SUNY has assigned to each course. That means some may be the same, others may be more, and others may be less than the number given by the overseas university. **This means you need to be sure to register overseas for the correct number of credits to equal a minimum of 12 SUNY Potsdam credits.**

Minimum Course Load

All participants in semester-length study abroad programs are required to register as full-time students at SUNY Potsdam (or their home SUNY campus). To ensure you are registered, you must submit all required forms to the LoCAL. All students must also take a full-time load of courses overseas (minimum of 12 SUNY credits per semester, or 6 credits for a summer program). If you do not complete a full-time load each semester, your financial aid will be jeopardized.

The number of **courses** that you will need to take to reach full-time status varies from program to program. Consult the academic information provided for your program. The number of credits a course carries at the host university is subject to change by SUNY. Be sure you know if there is a ratio for converting the host university credits to SUNY credits so that you are not under-enrolled.

Maximum Course Load

SUNY Potsdam allows students to take up to 38 credits overseas for the entire academic year (19 credits maximum per semester). In a few cases where a pre-session is involved, additional credits can be awarded. A decision to award over 19 credits can also be made by the Dean of your school at SUNY Potsdam after your grades have been received.

Required Grade Point Average for Participation

Before you applied to your program, you learned that students must be in “good academic standing” **and** not on academic or social probation at their home campus in order to participate in any SUNY study abroad program. Students with cumulative grade point averages of less than 2.0 or whose grades fall below 2.0 during the semester immediately prior to the one when they expect to study abroad will be blocked from participating. Therefore, be sure your grades during the semester prior to participating meet this requirement. If your letter of acceptance contained any conditions, you must prove that you have met them prior to the start of your study abroad program. This may include submitting a copy of your transcript and current grades to the administering campus.



Course Approvals, Equivalents, and Descriptions

It is very important for you to talk with your academic adviser before you go overseas to see what kinds of courses you should try to take and which courses will be most beneficial to you.

You will want to integrate your study abroad courses into your overall program for your degree, and your adviser is critical in this process. You may decide that it will be easier for you to take an extra course in your major when you come back rather than trying to get a particular course overseas. You may find out that you have room for a lot of electives in your program anyway, and that you can take what you like. You may find, however, that you will be off schedule if you do not take a certain kind of course while you are overseas, and if this is the case, you want to be sure that your study abroad program is going to offer that course. Basically, you want to have as much flexibility as possible to select the most interesting courses overseas, but you also must be aware of what you must do to graduate on schedule.

Usually, if you have detailed information about the courses offered overseas, you can have course equivalents determined by your home campus before you begin your program. However, course descriptions are often hard to obtain in advance. For some programs, specific information on the courses that will be available will be enclosed in your acceptance packet or given to you at an orientation meeting. Some may be made available online. For others it may not be possible to obtain course listings and full descriptions or know your exact course schedule until you have reached the program site. Since information is often complicated to get, be sure to keep all course descriptions and syllabi from classes you take overseas. These will be very valuable when determining credits at your home campus!

SUNY Potsdam knows that course descriptions are often not available in advance. Other SUNY schools should also know this. That is why we say that you will earn credits toward your degree, but that equivalents may have to be determined some time after you have begun your program or even after you have completed your study overseas.



Registering for Study Abroad

Students on study abroad programs register **TWICE**:

1. **Once for study abroad in general.** You must register for study abroad at your home SUNY campus (or through SUNY Potsdam if you are a non-SUNY student) before you leave.
2. **Once for the exact classes you are going to take overseas** – this will occur at the institution you are attending. This registration might take place before you leave or, more likely, once you arrive overseas.

You must register for study abroad before you leave. SUNY Potsdam students register at SUNY Potsdam for study abroad. Other SUNY students register at their home SUNY campus for study abroad, but also are entered on the computer at SUNY Potsdam. Non-SUNY students on Potsdam programs are registered at Potsdam by the Office of Extended Education, but should also check their home campus for requirements there.

Registration before departing varies according to who you are:

- **SUNY Potsdam students** should all complete the “Acceptance for Study Abroad” form.
 - Students on any program who are unsure about whether they will go overseas at the time of early registration should register for on-campus classes and then follow the drop-add procedures once they are certain of their plans.
 - SUNY Potsdam students who are going on programs that are administered by other SUNY 4-year campuses should submit a copy of their acceptance letter to the Office of International Education so that we can register you in an OVS (overseas study) course that will keep you at full-time status.
 - SUNY Potsdam students going on programs administered by SUNY Community Colleges or FIT, or on any non-SUNY programs, should come to the LoCAL to receive information about transfer credits procedures for study abroad.
- **Other SUNY students** on a Potsdam-administered program should report to the Office of International Education at their home campus and register there for study abroad.
- **Non-SUNY students** on a Potsdam program will be registered at Potsdam by the Loughheed Center for Applied Learning (LoCAL).
 - Potsdam will arrange for you to be admitted and registered at Potsdam as a non-matriculated student for the duration of the program.
 - You must complete all registration forms in your acceptance packet and submit them to the LoCAL.
- **Any students who will have graduated before the start of their program** should consult with SUNY Potsdam staff in the LoCAL about how to register. Special paperwork may be required.

Registering for Exact Classes

You register for the classes you are taking overseas according to the rules of your particular study abroad program. In some cases, that means choosing specific classes in advance, but usually students make up their schedule when they arrive overseas. Your program-specific materials should give instructions for your overseas site.

Staying a full year? Registering for your second semester overseas

Potsdam students who originally applied and were accepted for study abroad for the academic year will automatically be registered by Potsdam for their second semester of study. Other SUNY students, who originally applied and were accepted for the academic year, should automatically be registered by their home campus for their second semester of study. However, it is a good idea to confirm your registration status with your home campus anyway.

If you originally applied for only one semester and want to extend your stay for a second term, you must obtain permission from the SUNY campus that administers your program and from the overseas site. If you do get permission to extend your stay, make sure that your home campus knows so that your registration can be updated. The LoCAL only deals with changes in registration for you; if you decide to extend your study period from one semester to a full year, you must take full responsibility for notifying the Office of Residential Life of your plans.

Holds on Registration

If you have any holds at your home campus, you will not be able to register for study abroad, and if you have any holds added while you are overseas, no one will be able to register you for the second semester you are away or for classes after you return. Therefore, be certain that all your library books have been returned and that you have no outstanding bills or fines of any kind before you go away. If you cannot be registered, you cannot officially do your study abroad program, and your financial aid may be canceled, so this really matters.

This policy also applies to the SUNY health insurance premium for coverage while you are overseas. It should be paid in full before you leave or covered by your financial aid if you arrange for it to be paid in that way. Remember that if you do not specifically decline this coverage, you will be billed for it.

Changing the Length of Your Study Abroad Program

Extending Your Enrollment in a Program

Sometimes students wish to participate in their program for an additional semester. To do this:

1. obtain permission from the director or appropriate official at your overseas site, **and**
2. request an extension by writing to the sponsoring SUNY campus' Office of International Education.

Explain what you expect to accomplish by studying in your program for an additional term. The overseas program director must also write to Potsdam with an approval. Approvals from Potsdam are contingent upon satisfactory completion of your work overseas and space availability in the program. In addition, full payment for the previous term must have been made.

Changing from Academic Year to One Semester Only

If you have been admitted for a full academic year and you decide to leave the program at the end of the first semester, you must notify:

1. Potsdam, and
2. your **home campus** if it is not Potsdam, **and**
3. the **administering SUNY campus**, if it is not Potsdam, **and**
4. the **appropriate authorities overseas** before the start of the next semester.

Adjustments in program charges will be made, but are program specific. A withdrawal charge may be charged for some programs. Scholarships may be affected and be subject to repayment.

Withdrawal from a Study Abroad Program

Because study abroad is an opportunity for profoundly enriching experiences that may not be available later in life, we hope that no student will withdraw from a program unless it is absolutely necessary. If you are even contemplating dropping out of a program, please discuss this decision with your program adviser in Potsdam before you do anything. We may be able to help find solutions to academic, financial, or personal problems that will enable you to participate on the program after all.

If you are overseas and contemplating withdrawal from a program, we strongly urge you to discuss your situation with the overseas director or responsible university official. You should also feel free to contact the program adviser in Potsdam. There may be moments when you may be discouraged about your academic program or your progress with a foreign language, when you experience disappointments or unexpected financial difficulties, or when you really find living in another culture difficult. Program advisers here and abroad can often help ease such pressures.

If you withdraw from an overseas program once the semester has begun, you may lose your credits for that semester. You will probably lose some money because of non-refundable charges and air fares, and you may also jeopardize your financial aid. SUNY Potsdam reserves the right to charge any student who withdraws from a SUNY Potsdam program after it has begun for unrecoverable expenses and tuition charges. The charge will be an amount equal to the expenses incurred or the deposit, whichever is greater. This charge will be in addition to any non-refundable program costs incurred at the program site and any non-refundable SUNY tuition.

If you do have to withdraw, YOU must inform the SUNY Potsdam Office of International Education of your decision in writing. If you are already overseas, you must inform the overseas director or university official of your decision as soon as it has been made, but it is not their job to tell SUNY Potsdam for you. SUNY Potsdam will use the date that **you** have notified us as the actual date of withdrawal. At the SUNY Potsdam campus, a percentage of your SUNY tuition might be refunded up to the fourth week of the semester (calculated using the academic calendar of the overseas institution) but it is subject to the decision of the overseas host university. If you withdraw or notify SUNY Potsdam after the fourth week, you will be held liable for the entire tuition charge. Tuition refunds for other SUNY students are granted according to the rules and regulations of the campus on which the student is registered.

Your permanent record will reflect your withdrawal. If you drop out of a study abroad program and cannot come back to your home campus in time to participate in courses that same semester, you will probably have to withdraw from your home campus entirely and then apply to be readmitted. A SUNY Potsdam student who withdraws at any time must follow processes established by the Student Success Center. Students from other campuses must contact their home campus for instructions.

Cancellation of a Program

SUNY Potsdam reserves the right to cancel a program at any time for the following (or other) reasons: insufficient enrollment; advice from the U.S. Department of State that travel to or residence in a host site is NOT ADVISED for U.S. citizens and nationals; the inability of the host institution to provide or support the program adequately. If a program is canceled before the start of the semester, all payments that have been made to SUNY Potsdam will be refunded. In the unlikely event that it becomes necessary to cancel a program already in progress, refunds will be made to the extent possible.

Registering for Classes for your First Semester Back Home

SUNY Potsdam cannot register you for classes for the semester following your study abroad program. SUNY Potsdam or your home SUNY campus' Office of International Education can only register you for study abroad. Like any other semester at your home campus, **you must register yourself for the courses you wish to take, either doing so from overseas if you can or after you return from overseas.** You are encouraged to pre-register using the procedures in place at your home campus. SUNY Potsdam students do not **have** to pre-register but are **strongly** advised to do so. You may register online in BearPAWS during the registration period or at any time permitted by the Registrar.

Pre-Registering (SUNY Potsdam Students)

To pre-register, you will need your Advisor release your advising hold in BearPAWS for the coming semester. This takes some advance planning on your part. The Office of International Education & Programs cannot do this for you. You must make arrangements to be advised and get your hold removed by contacting your adviser, likely via emails or video call.

Once you have your advising hold removed, access the on-line schedule of classes in BearPAWS and register yourself from overseas during the early registration period. **You should register yourself from overseas so that you have maximum control of your schedule.**

Paying Attention to the Starting Date of Classes at your Home Campus

Some study abroad programs (in particular, fall programs) may end after classes for the next semester have already started at your home campus. If your program is like this and you are going to miss a few days at the start of the semester, find out what procedures your own campus recommends that you follow. At SUNY Potsdam, professors must be notified so that they do not de-register students after the fifth class day of the term (not the sixth meeting of a particular course) and give their seats to other students.

Grades and Transcripts for Study Abroad

SUNY Potsdam Students will see their grades from overseas in two places: The official transcript, and the transcript supplement.

Official Transcript: If you are registered at SUNY Potsdam for a SUNY study abroad program and if we have received and processed your grades, you will find an entry for the **total number of credits** you have earned, graded **S**. As a SUNY Potsdam student, these credits will not be factored into your GPA.

Transcript Supplement: The **actual courses** you have taken will be listed on a Transcript Supplement in full detail, including course numbers used by the host university, credits awarded by Potsdam, and the actual letter grade (converted to the SUNY Potsdam system as necessary). These grades are not factored into your GPA at Potsdam. However, whenever your official transcript is issued, the Transcript Supplement will be included. Therefore, others (graduate schools) may re-compute your GPA. So everyone should realize that **the grades you earn overseas appear on your permanent record and may eventually count in your GPA!**

Although everyone who participates on a SUNY study abroad program will get a Transcript Supplement prepared by the administering campus, each SUNY campus has its own rules about how the credits will appear. If you are a non-SUNY Potsdam student participating on a SUNY Potsdam program, check with the Office of International Education at your home campus for details.

In addition to the “S” grades, the following grades might appear on your transcript:

- **Failing Grades (U)**
 - If you fail any courses overseas and do not complete at least 12 credits with passing grades, you will have some credits with a grade of U on your transcript.
 - Completing fewer than 12 credits per semester will negatively affect your financial aid: you may have to repay it.
 - All courses which receive failing grades on the host university’s transcript will appear with failing grades on the Transcript Supplement.
- **Incompletes (INC)**
 - Most overseas universities do not give a grade of INC (incomplete) for courses that you did not complete. However, if you are awarded such a grade, it will appear on your Official Transcript and on your Transcript Supplement. It will be entered in an OVS course with a grade of "INC" if you have earned fewer than 12 credits.
 - These grades will be changed when a new grade from overseas is received.
 - If you have gotten any “INC” grades, be sure to meet the deadlines you have been given by your professor and keep a copy of any materials you submit to your host university.
 - You cannot graduate from SUNY Potsdam if you have any unresolved OVS INC grades on your transcript.
- **Withdrawals (W)**
 - If you drop courses in accordance with the rules and deadlines of your host university, you may have some W credits when your grades are processed.
 - If you are a SUNY Potsdam or a non-SUNY student who did not finish at least 12 credits with a grade of S, you will see another entry for overseas study on your transcript to bring your total credits for the semester to 12. These credits are for administrative purposes only and will not count as credits you have earned toward your degree. They will, however, prevent you from obtaining a tuition refund – you must pay for the full tuition for your program, regardless of the number of credits you ultimately earn.
 - Completing fewer than 12 credits per semester will also negatively affect your financial aid: you may have to repay it.
- **Not Recorded (NR)**
 - Often students’ grade reports are sent out by automatic processes before the overseas grades have been processed. If this happens, you will see a grade of NR (not recorded) for some number of credits, probably 15. This grade and the number of credits will be changed when your grades come in.
 - It is normal for a grade report to be generated by automatic processes at SUNY Potsdam before your grades have been fully processed, so don’t worry!

Letter Grades and Pass/Fail Courses

Your overseas program may use letter grades or numbers or even have each professor write a paragraph about your work, but all your work will be reported on your SUNY Transcript Supplement with letter grades only. You cannot elect S/U (satisfactory/unsatisfactory or pass/fail) grading for courses graded on a letter or number basis overseas, but you may enroll in courses that are graded only S/U by the host institution. If the host institution gives you a satisfactory grade in an S/U graded course, then that grade will also be used on your Transcript Supplement.

You should expect to be graded according to the same standards used by the host university for its own students. You are expected to do all the work required of local students and are usually not allowed to arrange for early examinations or alternate examinations.

Other SUNY Students

If you are a student from another SUNY school, as soon as we have received your grades from overseas, we will prepare a Transcript Supplement. Unless there is a hold on your records, we will automatically send it to the Office of International Education of your home campus. We will also send an **unofficial copy** of the Transcript Supplement to you at your permanent address. The Transcript Supplement prepared by SUNY Potsdam will show the actual courses you have taken overseas in full detail, including course numbers used by the host university, credits awarded by SUNY Potsdam, and the actual letter grade (converted to the SUNY Potsdam system as necessary). If you have any questions about the Transcript Supplement, contact SUNY Potsdam, Office of International Education & Programs; we are the only ones who can make changes. But check with the Director of International Education on your home campus to see how these grades will be incorporated into your official records as each SUNY campus makes its own rules.

Non-SUNY Students

Please read the section describing Transcripts and Transcript Supplements for SUNY Potsdam students, as your grades will be prepared in the same way. Your grades will be filed with the Registrar at SUNY Potsdam and you will receive an **unofficial copy** of your Transcript Supplement. If you have any questions about how your courses or grades appear on the Transcript Supplement, contact SUNY Potsdam. You should also find out from your home campuses how they incorporate transfer credit into your records.

When Will Your Grades Be Processed?

All students should be aware that there is often a **delay of at least two months** before grades from overseas programs reach SUNY Potsdam. Although we cannot make any guarantees to provide your grades by a particular date, we do process grade reports as quickly as possible. Please be certain that you have completed any necessary authorizations to have your grades sent to SUNY Potsdam by the host university and that you have no holds (possibly due to unpaid charges or missing library books, etc.) at the overseas site before you return home.

While we are awaiting your grades from overseas, SUNY Potsdam may be issuing its official grade reports as the Registrar's office does so automatically. Therefore, if SUNY Potsdam or your home SUNY campus has not processed your grades from overseas, the grade report for the semester will show a grade of NR (not recorded) OR INC (incomplete) for the OVS course you have registered for. This is normal and not a cause for alarm. **There is no need to call us! This grade will be changed later.** All students will know that their grades have been forwarded to their home campus when they receive their unofficial copy of the Transcript Supplement from SUNY Potsdam.

Attention Graduating Seniors:

Students who will be graduating during the semester following their period of study abroad should contact SUNY Potsdam. We will do our best to obtain your grades so that there is sufficient time for you to be cleared for graduation on schedule. However, we can never guarantee that we will receive your grades from overseas in a timely manner. Patience is necessary. Please read the section in this book called "Graduating Seniors" for more details.

Again, regardless of how quickly SUNY Potsdam receives your grades from overseas, you should be aware that Potsdam will place holds on the records of any students who have not paid in full for their overseas program or who have incurred unresolved debts overseas. Please be sensitive to this fact and take care of any debts right away.

Issuing Your Transcript and Transcript Supplement

By law, SUNY Potsdam cannot send your official transcript to anyone without your written authorization. This includes non-SUNY students who want us to send their transcript directly to their home campus. **For non-SUNY students, you must complete the “Request for Transcript” process and submit to the SUNY Potsdam Registrar.** (<http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/registrar> - click on “Official Transcripts” If your home campus or a graduate school or an employer or anyone else needs to see your official transcript, you must arrange for one to be sent by the Registrar at SUNY Potsdam. (<http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/registrar>). They will not release your grades if you have any holds.

Authorizing Your Grades to be sent by Your Host University

Many universities overseas require your specific authorization before sending your grades to SUNY Potsdam. Check with the overseas staff and review the information specific to your program for details. **Be sure to specify that your grades are to be sent to the SUNY campus administering your overseas program, not to your home campus!** Only the SUNY campus administering your program can produce a Transcript Supplement for you and it slows things down if your grades are sent to the wrong school.

ALL students on SUNY Potsdam’s programs should have their grades from overseas sent to:

The Office of International Education & Programs, SUNY Potsdam, Loughheed Learning Commons 107, 44 Pierrepont Avenue, Potsdam NY, 13676.

SUNY Potsdam students on programs run by other SUNYs should have their grades sent to the Office of International Education at the SUNY that sponsors their particular program, NOT SUNY Potsdam.

Transcript Problems and Grade Appeals

The Transcript Supplement is an important part of your permanent record, and its accuracy is important to you and us. We send you an unofficial copy of your transcript supplement in order to ensure that the classes and grades you receive are those you believe you should receive. After reviewing the unofficial transcript supplement, if you think your credits or grades are wrong, you must discuss your situation with the administering SUNY campus that issued the Transcript Supplement. If you think the wrong *equivalents* have been assigned, discuss this with your home campus adviser who made that decision. It is possible for mistakes to be corrected and changes will be made if there is a valid reason.

Appeal Process for Grades Earned on a Study Abroad Program

All students have the right to appeal grades, just as they do at their home campus, but the procedure for study abroad grades is different. In general, grades will only be changed if the host university so recommends.

If the issue is with the actual grade awarded, the appeal for reconsideration must first be made in accordance with the established procedures of the host university. If the professor of record at the host university agrees that a grade should be changed, then the proper officials of the host university convey the new grade to the administering SUNY which in turn revises the Transcript Supplement. The home campus then revises its own records accordingly.

If there are special circumstances related to the assignment of a grade (such as when a student’s religious observances conflict with examination policies, or in other situations where students would expect redress or special accommodation in the U.S.) for which an accommodation was not or will not be granted by the host university, the matter should be discussed with the study abroad office at the administering SUNY campus as soon as possible, in advance of the actual relevant date if possible.

This timeliness is important since if the reason cited by the student is not considered a sufficient excuse, the student will need to know this as soon as possible. Even if the reason warrants granting the excuse, a student’s

delay in contacting the instructor or the administering SUNY campus may make it more difficult for the University to assist the student with acceptable options of making up the work that was missed.

With the consent of the Dean of Undergraduate Education or the faculty on the Advisory Committee to the Office of International Education, a grade earned overseas may be changed.

- *Appeal Procedures for Study Abroad Credits Awarded:* If a student believes that an incorrect number of credits was assigned to a course taken overseas, the appeal for reconsideration must be made to the SUNY campus which administered the program. If the administering SUNY agrees that the number of credits awarded should be changed, the administering SUNY will revise the Transcript Supplement. The home campus will then revise its own records accordingly.
- *Appeal Procedures for Study Abroad Course Equivalent:* Course equivalents are only determined by the student's home campus. If a student wishes a course equivalent to be reconsidered, the appeal should be addressed to the Office of International Education at the student's home campus. As long as the faculty in the academic department where the credits will ultimately be credited agree, equivalents can be changed. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies can approve a course for General Education.

If you are studying on a SUNY program that is not run by SUNY Potsdam, be sure to follow the procedures that you are given so that your grades go to the administering SUNY campus as they are the ones who have to prepare your Transcript Supplement.

STUDENT CONDUCT AND INTERNATIONAL LAWS

When you study abroad, you are a guest in a foreign country. When you enter a country, you become subject to all its laws, even if you don't know what they are. For your own safety, it is extremely important that your dress and behavior be appropriate to the norms of the country, the policies and regulations of the institution where you are studying, and the laws of the country.

If you are involved in an activity that is illegal in a foreign country, the United States government cannot offer you any protection. Penalties for conviction on drug charges can be very severe. Additionally, you should not become involved in political activities or demonstrations. Should you encounter legal difficulties, however, you should contact the nearest consulate for assistance. The U.S. consulate can provide you with a list of local attorneys and contact your family. Consular officials cannot intercede with local authorities on your behalf.

You are also subject to the regulations of the university where you are taking classes. Attendance requirements, course requirements, and grading criteria are determined entirely by the host university. **Regular class attendance is mandatory, and travel should be restricted to authorized vacations and periods before and after the academic sessions.** The host university takes responsibility for any disciplinary action in connection with violations of its rules and regulations.

You should also be aware that SUNY insurance may not cover you if you are injured while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

HEALTH, HEALTH CARE, AND HEALTH INSURANCE



Health Checklist

- Discuss your health needs with your doctors
- Research medical and health issues in your destination location
- Check to see if you need any immunizations
- Communicate with overseas program administrators about your health needs
- Get printed copies of your prescriptions and medical diagnoses to carry with you
- Figure out whether you will be able to refill prescriptions abroad, or need to fill a large supply before leaving
- Decide what over-the-counter medications you want to have with you
- Prepare for all physical needs that require disposable care products – menstruation, contact lens care, etc.
- Consider bringing extra glasses, contacts, and any other necessary sensory aids
- Confirm your coverage with your current health insurance
- Submit all materials for the required SUNY international health insurance
- Read the information provided with the SUNY international health insurance on services for routine care and in emergencies
- Follow the registration instructions provided for the SUNY International health insurance
- Visit www.uhscr.com or access the United Healthcare Student Resources (UHSCR) mobile app.
- Study up on the healthcare resources available at your destination, for routine care and emergencies
- Talk with your mental health care providers in advance about your needs and plans while overseas
- Pack current medications and essential items in your carryon luggage

Health Basics Overseas

SUNY Potsdam cannot give you medical advice. We strongly suggest that you discuss your health needs with your doctors prior to departure and that you look on the web for information about the health issues in the parts of the world you are going to visit. Check now to see if you need any immunizations that take a long time to become effective. Check again later for last minute updates about health issues worldwide.

If you have any medical issues that program administrators overseas should be aware of, please make sure that they learn of them. If you require special medication, make sure that you can bring it into the countries you will visit. Some HMOs will not let you fill a prescription for more than one month. Look into how you will get the medication you need before you go.

It is important for you to carry **copies of your prescriptions and medical diagnoses in addition to your actual medications** if you must take medicine overseas. Ask your doctor or pharmacist to list the generic compounds in addition to the brand name, if any. You may need such documentation to have your prescriptions filled overseas. Also be sure to pack several days' doses of your medication in your carry-on luggage.

Immunizations

Since your doctor may not have in-depth knowledge of medical needs in the parts of the world you are going to visit, you should check the Center for Disease Control's web site <http://cdc.gov/> and print out the relevant information for your doctor before you go to your appointment. Next, you should consult a physician for any type

of immunization that may be recommended. Since some vaccinations require a sequence of shots, check with your family physician or the Student Health Office about recommended inoculations as soon as you are accepted into a program.

Some countries will not let you enter unless you can show proof of medical immunity. If this is so for the country where you are going, your program-specific materials will give you details.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention now recommend the **Hepatitis A vaccine** for anyone going to any country other than Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, and countries in Western Europe and Scandinavia. Your physician may also recommend a Hepatitis B series.

Planning ahead for health needs overseas

Things to consider:

- You will probably want to bring along a supply of your favorite medications for gastrointestinal disorders, sore throats, headaches, and colds.
- People who menstruate should plan for their hygienic needs during their time abroad and should make sure they have something with them in their carry-on bag on the day of their departure for overseas. Flying and the excitement of a trip sometimes affect you in unexpected ways.
- If you wear glasses or contact lenses, it is a good idea to take an extra pair and the prescription.
- Bring sufficient supplies of contact lens cleaning and wetting solutions for the duration of your stay abroad. Read up about the safety of drinking water in the countries you plan to visit, because if you can't drink it without boiling it, you're not going to want to clean your lenses with it either.
- If you anticipate using a **prescription**, you should try to get enough for your entire overseas stay and take it with you.
 - Check now with your health plan: it may be difficult to get permission to obtain a large supply if your plan only permits you to get one month's worth at a time.
 - If your medication is perishable, find out how you will be able to obtain it overseas or have it sent to you. This can be quite complicated.
 - Also **take a copy of the diagnosis and the prescription** with a description of the drugs contained in the medication so that you can have it filled abroad.
- Check that any prescriptions you plan to carry are legal in the countries you plan to enter. In some countries, asthma inhalers or injectable medicines may not be allowed through customs.

HEALTH INSURANCE

All students who are studying overseas must have health insurance. This is a SUNY policy and SUNY has partnered with an insurance company to cover you under a comprehensive health insurance policy that covers students studying abroad. The policy provides for general and major medical expenses in any country outside the country you are a citizen of, medical evacuation, repatriation, and an accidental death benefit.

Your SUNY insurance will cover you for the duration of your program, although you will be billed for your coverage each semester. If you wish to extend this coverage, contact SUNY Potsdam to see if this can be arranged. If you have any questions about the SUNY insurance policy, please contact the Office of International Education at SUNY Potsdam. Think carefully before canceling other health insurance you may have when you purchase coverage for study abroad. **NOTE: the SUNY policy is not in effect if you are in the country where you are a citizen.**

DISCLAIMER: Neither the State of New York, through its agents, nor the State University of New York through its agents and employees, is responsible in any manner whatsoever for the payment of any claim for health-related services provided to individuals covered under this insurance policy. The State of New York and the State University of New York are not responsible for obligations incurred by individuals who are not covered by this

insurance policy. All individuals participating in the State University's health insurance program described herein are responsible for reviewing all descriptions of the scope and level of coverage offered by this policy. Such participants will be solely responsible for obtaining additional coverage not provided under this program if such is deemed necessary by the participant.

Filing Health Insurance Claims

The SUNY policy is a **reimbursement** policy, so you will have to pay your own medical charges and then submit claims for reimbursement, unless the hospital or clinic that you go to will accept your proof of insurance and treat you without payment up front. Therefore, you should put aside some money to pay for any emergency medical expenses while overseas. Keeping \$300 in reserve would be prudent. Your directors or advisers overseas will not be able to pay for these expenses on your behalf.

Policy information and claim forms are available from the insurance specialist in the Office of International Education or online. If you are also insured under a parent's policy, you should submit claims to both insurance companies and allow the companies themselves to work out a claim adjustment. To file a claim, follow the instructions you have received with your policy.

To obtain a claim form online, go to www.uhscr.com or access the United Healthcare Student Resources (UHSCR) mobile app.

Obtaining Medical Treatment Overseas

If you have a medical emergency, get help any way you can!! Go to the nearest hospital or clinic. If you need medical attention but are not in a super-urgent situation – you think you have the flu, for example – you will be able to get treatment, but how this will happen will depend on where you are. If you are living on campus, someone in your dormitory will be able to advise you on finding care. If you are living with a host family, they will help. If you are living on your own, you will have to contact the international office personnel at your host university for advice.

Health care is different in every country. There might be a health clinic at your host university for non-urgent situations. There might be a director who can suggest doctors or clinics for you. Either way, unless you are covered under the host country's national insurance plan, expect to pay at the time of treatment. In some countries, it is common for pharmacists to furnish antibiotics and other medicines which require a prescription in the U.S. Be cautious! Also, home remedies may be offered to you. Here too, caution is advised.

Emergencies, Health or Other

While we hope that you will be able to deal with unpredictable events on your own or with the assistance of others in the host country, the Office of International Education at SUNY Potsdam is here to help you in the event of an emergency. If you encounter problems and need assistance, we will do our best to assist you from SUNY Potsdam.

If you are overseas and must reach us by phone during non-working hours because of an emergency, the SUNY Potsdam staff can be located by calling +1 315-267-2222 to reach University Police. In any emergency, you may call us collect at +1 315-267-2507 during business hours. In order to help us keep in touch with you, please send us your local address, telephone number, and e-mail address to international@potdam.edu as soon as possible after you settle in overseas.



AMERICAN EMBASSIES OVERSEAS

If you are a citizen of the United States, you can enroll your trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate of your program site using the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). This will help you in the case of an international emergency. If you are not a U.S. citizen, register at the Embassy of your own country. U.S. citizens can register even before you travel at <https://step.state.gov/step/>

SEXUAL HARASSMENT and TITLE IX

Understanding Title IX Guidelines When Abroad: A Student Guide

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a comprehensive federal law that protects people from and prohibits discrimination based on sex in any federally-funded education program or activity. The College must take immediate action to known instances of sexual discrimination, which includes all forms of sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking, in a way that (1) ends it, (2) prevents its recurrence, and (3) addresses its effects. Title IX policies apply equally to all employees, students, and third parties regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

SUNY Potsdam prohibits all forms of sexual discrimination – even while participating on a SUNY-sponsored study abroad program. Incidents should be reported immediately to ensure that the victim/survivor gets the help, resources, and services that they need. They are in full control of what happens next, if anything. They decide if they want to file an official Title IX complaint, if a Title IX investigation happens, and/or if criminal charges will be filed. Even if they don't wish to pursue a Title IX investigation or criminal charges, they are able to use the resources/services that are available to them such as medical assistance, counseling, advocacy services, safe housing/room change, no contact order, academic support services, safety escorts, etc.

If you feel you have been subjected to, witnessed, or heard of an incident, please contact the [Title IX Coordinator immediately](#). **If you are in immediate danger, contact University Police at + 1 (315) 267-2222 or x2222.**

If you are a SUNY student who experiences sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, or sexual violence, including sexual assault, stalking, domestic violence, intimate partner violence or dating violence, while on a SUNY study abroad program, you are entitled to the following rights:

- To make a complaint to the program director, who will notify the Campus Title IX Coordinator.
- To have your complaint investigated in a prompt, impartial and thorough manner, to the extent possible abroad.
- To have the investigation of your complaint continued upon your return to campus by individuals who have received appropriate training in conducting investigations and the issues related to sexual misconduct.
- To have any allegations of retaliation investigated in a prompt, impartial and thorough manner upon your return to campus.
- To report incidents of sexual harassment or sexual violence that you experience while under the influence of alcohol or drugs without receiving discipline for the alcohol and drug use.
- To work with your program director to determine whether or not to continue the with the program. If you decide to leave the program, you can receive alternative assignments to allow you to earn program credit.
- While abroad, you have the right to advise form local consular personnel with knowledge of the local criminal justice system to help you understand your options as a potential complainant. However, laws regarding sexual violence vary substantially from country to country, and options may be limited by local

law and local authorities' expectations that complainants remain in or return to the country to support a prosecution.

- Upon return to campus, to be provided with confidential on-campus counseling, and to be notified of other available services on and off-campus.
- To obtain, where appropriate, changes with respect to academic and living arrangements, no-contact orders, and other interim remedial measures, including security measures. Some interim measures may only be implemented upon return to campus.
- Upon return to campus, if a disciplinary hearing is held, to have the same opportunity as the accused to participate in a student disciplinary hearing before a faculty-student disciplinary committee, including the right to be present, to be represented by a person of your choice, including an attorney, to present evidence, call witnesses, cross-examine witnesses, receive notice of the outcome of the hearing, and to appeal the decision.
- To file a complaint against assailants, and (if they are U.S. based) to seek an Order of Protection, with the assistance of the College, if you so choose.

As a participant in a SUNY study abroad program, you also have responsibilities:

- To participate in all pre-departure orientation sessions and to read all materials distributed by the program director, study abroad office, and (if applicable) other entities involved in your study abroad experience, such as the study abroad program provider.
- To complete the College's study abroad pre-departure orientation that will include information about different cultural customs, norms and laws within the destination country, etc. You will be advised that different norms abroad may affect your safety and/or the safety of other program participants.
- To follow all program rules.
- If you go to a bar or party abroad, to arrive and leave with friends.
- If you or a friend are impaired by alcohol or drugs, to seek help from a trip leader. A student who reports experiences of sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, or sexual violence will not be disciplined by the College for any violation of student policies against drugs or alcohol in connection with the reported incident subject to the conditions of SUNY Potsdam's Student Code of Conduct.
- If you are participating in a program not run by SUNY Potsdam, including other SUNY-affiliated study abroad programs, it is your responsibility to ask the program director to provide information on its policies and practices regarding sexual misconduct.

Support for victims

If you are the victim of sexual assault while on a program that does not have SUNY staff or faculty on site (affiliated programs, exchange programs, etc.):

- You should work with your local program director to access support and resources while on the program
- You have the right to on-campus counseling and support services upon your return to campus.
- If you have enrolled in the program through a SUNY college, please inform the Study Abroad Office at the College that helped you enroll of any incidents of sexual misconduct.

If you wish to discuss this or any other matter of concern, please do so by calling us at 315-267-2507 or emailing us at international@potdam.edu

MONEY MANAGEMENT OVERSEAS

It may not look like money you're accustomed to, but the currency you are going to be using overseas is very real. Before you go overseas, you should find out how easy it will be able to use ATMs at your destinations. You should also read this section to understand how currency exchanges, ATMs, banking, and credit cards work internationally. You should pay particular attention to the information concerning money management that is included in the materials specific to your program. There are so many on-going changes in the banking world that we don't really know what will be available by the time you arrive at your program site. It is worth your time to look into the possibilities.

Currency Exchange

During the time you are overseas, you will need local currency. There are two things to consider when you change cash or get money via your ATM card: the **exchange rate** and the **fee for any transaction**. Basically, if you are exchanging a small amount of money, you will be better off with a low transaction fee, even if the exchange rate is unfavorable, since the fee will consume a large percentage of the money you are exchanging. If you are exchanging a large amount of money, then the transaction fee will be less important than the exchange rate itself.

Exchanging U.S. dollars for foreign currency is really purchasing currency. The seller will charge you a fee and exchange your United States dollars according to the exchange rate, which fluctuates daily. In general, the fees charged by the seller are less at banks and official "Change Bureaus" than at other places, although sometimes guests at hotels are not charged fees at all.

In most countries, you cannot exchange money without showing your passport as identification. Money can be exchanged at banks, hotels, restaurants, shops, airports, railroad stations, American Express Offices, and travel agencies. If you are traveling to more than one country, plan your exchanges to avoid double or triple exchanges, such as dollars to yen to the euro.

Usually, only paper money can be exchanged for other currencies, so any coins you have left when you are leaving a country are not going to be usable for purchases any place else. Unlike the United States, there are many countries that use coins that are worth \$10 or more. These make nice souvenirs, but expensive ones!

You might want to get some foreign money before you leave for overseas but usually you can change money when you land overseas and get a better rate. You can get foreign currency at the international department of major American banks, at AAA, or at international airports during normal business hours. Having some local currency beforehand is a good idea; you will then have some to use right away for taxis, local transportation, tips, and unexpected purchases. However, it's usually a very expensive choice: you get both high fees and an unfavorable exchange rate! That means that if you are exchanging a small amount of money such as \$25, you might be charged a minimum transaction fee of \$5 and the poor rate may cost you another dollar or so of value so that your \$25 is only worth \$19 when you are done.

It is also a good idea to keep a small amount of money (\$50) in U.S. dollars in denominations of \$1 and \$5. The dollars can probably be used for taxis, tips, and airport transfers when you arrive in a new country and when you return home.

Spending money

Debit and ATM Cards

Most students prefer to use their **Debit and ATM cards** in local machines in the country where they are studying and only convert US currency when they cannot use an ATM. In many countries you can use an ATM card to access cash from your own accounts at home. Funds can usually be withdrawn in either U.S. dollars or local

currency. Most ATMs allow a maximum withdrawal of \$250 at a time and your bank or credit card company may have its own regulations concerning the weekly maximum.

If you plan to use an ATM card overseas, find out if you can use your current card. Start the process of getting a usable ATM card by asking your own bank about their services overseas. You may need a different card and/or a different PIN. Also try to find out how much it is going to cost you to make withdrawals because these fees can be quite high. If your current bank does not offer overseas service, you will have to open an account at a bank in the U.S. where you do not currently have an account. Contact the central office of any major bank where you have an account for more information. When you have a usable ATM card, someone at home can deposit funds for your use while you are away.

In some parts of the world, **debit cards** are widely used, but in others they may not work as you expect or as widely as you expect. Ask your bank if there is a possibility of using a debit card in the country you will be going to, and whether you need any special pre-authorizations to use your card abroad.

Credit Cards

You may want to have a credit card (Visa, MasterCard, American Express) with you while you are overseas, but you may also discover that you will need to use cash for most of your daily expenses. In some countries, you can only use credit cards for large purchases in shops, restaurants, and hotels. You may also be able to use your credit card for cash advances at affiliate banks in foreign countries up to the credit balance, but the fees and interest charges will probably be very high. You should check with your own credit card company for details and then decide how you will use your cards.

Lost or Stolen Wallets

If your wallet is stolen, you will need to contact your credit card providers as soon as possible. Before you leave for overseas, photocopy the fronts and backs of all the cards and papers in your wallet and leave copies with your family. If your wallet is stolen, you or they will have the emergency numbers needed to report the theft right away. For more information on what to do when if your credit, ATM and Debit Card are lost or stolen please visit the U.S. Federal Trade Commission's website at <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/credit/cre04.shtm>.

If your passport is stolen, report it immediately and begin the process of having it replaced.

CULTURE SHOCK and HOMESICKNESS

Culture shock is the disorientation that may result from a myriad of new and ambiguous stimuli in the overseas environment. In our own culture we know what to expect when we go shopping, apply for a driver's license or attend a college class. We understand both the words and the nonverbal signals of the people with whom we come in contact without consciously paying attention to their meaning. In another culture, even an English-speaking one, words, intonation and "body language" may not have the exact same meaning that we would normally assign to them. Everyday acts such as shopping, banking and driving require much greater attention and energy and involve a much higher degree of uncertainty. Is this the right line to be in? Am I on the right side of the road? What did he mean by that peculiar intonation of voice? Obviously when the language is different, much greater ambiguity arises. Frequently you may not understand all that was said, or if you do, you may not know what the appropriate response is.

One result of this uncertainty is fatigue. The constant need to pay attention to things that we take for granted in our own culture is very tiring. Frequently sojourners in another country react by temporarily withdrawing from contact with the people or by becoming hostile. In extreme cases there can be physical symptoms. Culture shock varies with each individual. Some may feel it very mildly or not at all while others may feel quite tired, irritable and withdrawn.

There is, however, a somewhat predictable cycle that people living in a foreign culture experience. For the first few weeks there may be a sense of euphoria because everything is so new and exciting. This is usually followed by a period of decline where the effort of trying to understand everything seems overwhelming and you may feel fatigued, perhaps depressed or hostile toward the host country culture. As the stay progresses and you begin to understand the language, customs and behavior better, spirits rise and you will begin to feel more at home. Often, shortly before leaving for home, there is once again a euphoric feeling and even a reluctance to leave.

What can you do to minimize culture shock? First of all, simply recognizing your feelings for what they are can help. If you realize that your reluctance to go out and meet people is a predictable phase of cultural adjustment, it is somehow easier to cope with. Secondly, when you pack for your trip, take along one or two things that remind you of home: a favorite tape, a stuffed toy, peanut butter or some other favorite food, photographs or anything else that can give you comfort. Thirdly, plan to rest more. Taking naps or going to bed earlier can help combat the fatigue. Talk about your feelings with other students who may be experiencing the same thing. Lastly, make an effort to learn at least one thing useful about the language or culture each day. The more you know, the more you will feel at home.

PACKING AND SHIPPING

Everyone says they over-packed! When you pack, think situations rather than variety. Make sure you have something to wear that would be appropriate at a job interview. That will be fine for most dressy occasions. Have something nice looking to wear when you go out at night. Have some basic clothes for school. Plan for rain. Don't bring ten bars of soap – things like that can be purchased overseas. But do be sure to pack photos of the important people staying behind and some small items that bring you comfort or joy. Beyond these suggestions, **follow the advice of your program** because what you need to bring really depends on where you are going and what you'll be doing.

The best advice is to travel light. For your emotional comfort, you may want to pack one or two items you feel are personal necessities, but by and large, you will find excessive amounts of clothing, gadgets and books to be an unnecessary burden. Among bulky clothing items, take only the essential coats and sweaters that are appropriate for the climate. You can acquire other, inexpensive items in your host country that will have the advantage of fitting in with current trends in fashion and make you stick out less as a foreigner.

LAPTOP COMPUTERS

Students often question whether there will be access to computers while studying abroad, and if not, should they take along a laptop computer. Be sure to talk to your program manager to find out about computer use where you are going. Also talk to past participants who can tell you about their own experiences with computer access and the need for laptops abroad.

For those who own a laptop computer, who feel they simply cannot function without it, and who are willing to take the considerable risk of transporting and storing it safely, you should inquire from a reliable source if your computer is set up, or can be set up, for use in the country in which you will study with the use of an adapter for the wall socket. Don't forget to mention that the voltage and cycles may be different than in the U.S. Be sure to always use a surge protector.

Shipping Things Overseas

You should avoid shipping things to your overseas site unless it is really necessary. Even if you are going to places where seasonal temperatures vary greatly, you should try to take all you need with you. If you do have to ship things, it will be an expensive nuisance.

You can mail parcels of personal belongings overseas via the U.S. Postal Service, professional freight forwarders, or the cargo service of an international airline, but your parcels will not be delivered to a particular address. You will have to claim your package in person at a main post office branch or a customs station and then get it to your home by taxi or other means.

Think about it this way:

Would these students all need the same things with them?

- A student working at an internship in Mombasa
- A student doing archaeological field research at the Olorgesailie Prehistoric Site
- A student studying at the University of Nairobi
- A student studying ecology in the Maasai Mara conservancies

Obviously, they'd all need different kinds of clothing, shoes, and equipment – but they'd all be studying in Kenya. Focus on what you'll be doing, not what you think you should want!

You will need to inquire about the restrictions for each country, and you may have to fill out a Customs Declaration Form. You may have to pay a duty fee at customs as well. Altogether the shipping and duty costs may exceed the cost of purchasing the same items at the program site. Air mail service is very expensive; surface mail is less expensive but the shipment may take three months or more to arrive. If you do mail anything, use very sturdy packing material.

Plan your shipment so that it will arrive **after** you do. **You** will have to pick up the items at the airport, dock, or main post office. Program officials cannot claim any of your belongings for you, and you cannot be certain that the local post office deliver them to your residence or to the program site, even if they were addressed to be sent there.

GOING AWAY AND COMING HOME

Although the information in this handbook is directed toward planning for your overseas experience and issues that may arise while you are away, we would like you to be aware that coming home again is often more stressful than going away. As you read this and plan for your study abroad, you are unlikely to think that this is the case, but experience has shown that "reverse culture shock" exists. Because you expect to find differences while you are away, you are generally receptive to them, although it is normal to feel "down" a few weeks into your program, after an initial euphoria. Try to be gentle with your parents during this time: they are worried about you anyway, and by the time they receive your letter describing your unhappy state, you will probably already have found your equilibrium. After you reconcile yourself to the way things are and even begin to enjoy them, you have adjusted and will make the best of the situation.

The difficult part of returning home is that everyone expects you to readjust instantly, while you find yourself not only jet lagged but also feeling out of place, missing parts of your overseas life very much, and unable to discuss your feelings with anyone who hasn't already been there. As you have missed out on the happenings in the U.S., *you* need to be brought up to date. Meanwhile, both your friends and your family are likely to show only minimal interest in your experiences overseas, which can be frustrating. Often even your parents, who may have listened to every adventure while you were away, are now relieved that you are home safely and turn their thoughts to other matters. Therefore, make a point of seeking others who have been away or who will want to hear you recount your travels (or even look at your pictures!). The staff in Potsdam will be happy to do so, and we encourage you to contact us at international@potdam.edu or (315) 267-2507

Your study abroad experience doesn't have to end when you come back to the US. Getting involved in local international activities can help you adjust to being back and help you integrate your study abroad experience into your academic life. Some suggestions: volunteer in the study abroad office on your home campus; write an article for a study abroad newsletter or campus newspaper about your experiences; mentor a student interested in studying abroad; join international student activities; and consider studying abroad again!