



FRAMINGHAM STATE UNIVERSITY



PRE-DEPARTURE PLANNING GUIDE

Your window into new worlds



Table of Contents (Revised 10/12)

Introduction	
Emergency Contact.....	4
Before You Leave Campus	
Academic Advising.....	5
Deadlines for Graduate Tests.....	5
Plan for Housing Upon Return.....	5
Update Addresses.....	5
Academics	
Overview.....	5
Transfer Credit.....	6
Academic Standards	
Attendance.....	7
Intellectual Honesty.....	7
Financial	
Billing and Fees.....	7
Financial Aid.....	8
Additional Resources.....	9
Refunds.....	10
Medical Issues & Health Insurance	
Health Insurance.....	10
Framingham State University Health Plan.....	10
Outside Health Insurance.....	11
Insurance Providers.....	12
Medical Emergencies.....	13
Immunizations.....	13
General Medical Recommendations.....	13
Prescriptions.....	14
First Aid Kit.....	14
HIV/AIDS.....	15
Common Precautions.....	15
Travel Documents	
Passports.....	16
Visas.....	17
International Students on F-1 visas.....	18
International Student Identity Card.....	18
Pre-Departure Preparation	
Organizing a Flight.....	19
Early Arrivals/Late Departures.....	19
Baggage.....	19
Electrical Appliances.....	20
What to Pack.....	21
Summer Programs.....	24
Books and Supplies.....	24

Introduction

You are about to begin one of the most exciting and challenging periods of your life! After taking more photographs than you will ever persuade your family to look at, you will return home more tolerant, more independent, and better informed about the world in which we live. The friends you make will be friends for life. Every detail of your stay, from classes to travel adventures, will remain in your mind long after the “reverse culture shock” of adjusting to life back in the States.

This booklet contains information regarding some of the many details for your stay abroad. Of course, it will not prepare you for everything. That would take away the fun of your individual overseas experience. This is intended as a supplement to the orientation you will receive when you arrive at your program site. We strongly recommend that you take it with you whatever your destination! It will be very helpful during your first few weeks.

Emergency Contacts:

As a student on a study abroad program, you should first contact your Program Director or the on-site emergency staff member for your program; however, if this individual is not available or is otherwise incapacitated, you may need to respond on your own.

Make certain your family have all emergency numbers provided to you by your program before you leave the United States.

During Business Hours you may also contact:

Jane Decatur
Director of International Education
508-626-4585
Email: jdecat@framingham.edu

BEFORE YOU LEAVE CAMPUS

If you are unsure about something: ASK, don't guess!

Academic Advising: It is essential that you meet with your academic advisor(s) before leaving. Bring with you the name and contact information (e-mail address, etc.) for all your advisors. Know what your time abroad will mean to your graduation and major/minor requirements.

Framingham students will be registering for the following semester back in the U.S. while still abroad. You should plan a tentative schedule before leaving the U.S. and make certain you are up-to-date in knowing how to register online.

Check deadlines: For any graduate school and other exams, e.g. LSAT, GRE, and MCAT, if you will be registering for any exams while you are away, be sure to take all needed information with you abroad. Some graduate school exams (Foreign Service, LSAT, GRE, etc.) can be taken in abroad. Check where and when before leaving the States.

Plan Housing: Students enrolled in Framingham State University coursework away from campus for the Spring semester, and who want Fall housing upon their return should submit their housing reservation deposit to Student Accounts by mid-March and submit a letter to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs/Director of Residence Life by the end of March requesting Fall housing and outlining hall preferences. For more information, contact the Office of Residence Life directly at 508-626-4636.

Update Addresses: Leave an address with the International Programs Office where you may be contacted before you leave. This is part of the Confirmation form you will submit when you have accepted an offer of admission.

ACADEMICS

Overview

We want to emphasize that the program in which you will be participating is, first and foremost, a serious academic enterprise. **The expectations for your academic work on the part of the faculty are high**, and they and we assume you are going abroad intending to study. This, however, does not preclude the possibility for travel and cultural tourism activities on weekends.

Transfer Credit

Bring your work (reading lists, syllabi, papers, etc.) back with you in case there are questions about credit or the level of the work you have done. This can be an incredibly important item to remember!

IMPORTANT: In order to receive credit for classes taken while abroad, you must complete the Off-Campus Course Approval Forms and submit them to the Registrar's Office by November 30 for study abroad during the spring semester and May 1 for fall semester or full-year study.

To receive credit for courses to be taken at other regionally accredited institutions after matriculation, students must obtain approval in advance from appropriate department chairs. Retroactive approval will not be given.

Off-campus course approval forms are available online or in the Registrar's Office. Applications for approval of a course should be accompanied by the appropriate catalog description from that institution. After obtaining the appropriate signatures for approval of the course, the student must return the completed form to the Office of the Registrar. The form will then be reviewed for course credit transferability.

Transcripts of these approved courses must be submitted to the Registrar's Office within six weeks after the completion of the course. It is the student's responsibility to have official transcripts sent directly by the institution to the Office of the Registrar.

All approved courses transferred into Framingham State University after matriculation will be awarded Framingham course credit in an amount equal to the cumulative total number of semester hour credits transferred divided by four and rounded to the nearest whole number. For example, if students take four 3-credit courses, they will be awarded three Framingham State University course credits.

Transfer credit is given only for courses in which the student received a grade of C- or better. Courses must extend for at least a three-week period and meet a minimum of forty-five hours. Although credit is awarded for all approved transfer courses, the grades will not be recorded on the student's Framingham State University transcripts nor be counted in computing the quality point average.

Students may inquire further when seeking approval of courses to be taken at other institutions, and they will be notified of the total number of course credits they have earned from such courses whenever additional approved courses are transferred.

The key to arranging transfer credit is careful planning. Some students are concerned that a semester or a year spent on study away may prevent them from fulfilling the various undergraduate requirements at Framingham State University. However, it is

quite likely that you will be able to earn credit for many of these requirements while you are studying away.

As soon as possible after making a definite decision to study abroad on a particular program, confer with your faculty adviser and your department chairperson about your choice of courses. Your faculty adviser must sign your *Off-Campus Course Approval Forms* (available in the Registrar's Office). You may wish to have 4 or even 5 alternate courses approved, as courses at foreign universities are subject to frequent changes. **It will be helpful to have alternate courses approved before you go away just in case there are changes in course offerings or scheduling conflicts.**

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Attendance

As defined in the Framingham State University Undergraduate Catalog, Framingham expects students to attend all classes. There is also the understanding that individual instructors may further define attendance requirements for their specific courses. This same expectation holds true for programs of study undertaken abroad. Depending upon the particular program, loss of credit may result from a violation of the program guidelines, so be sure you know what is expected of you.

Intellectual Honesty

Integrity is essential to academic life. Consequently, students who enroll at Framingham State University agree to maintain high standards of academic honesty and scholarly practice. They agree to abide by the Policy on Academic Honesty during their term of study. Whatever program you attend will also have similar standards which you will be expected to observe and infractions such as plagiarism, cheating, dishonest procedures, etc. will be treated in much the same way as if they occurred at Framingham State University. Each program will have its own penalties, but can range from expulsion to loss of credit for the course(s).

FINANCIAL

Billing and Fees

Program fees: The bills for programs are generated by the institution attended; they should not be sent to Framingham State University.

You are responsible for paying program bills directly to the program. Do make sure that you understand your program's billing procedure. Many programs and universities will require that you send a deposit of several hundred dollars to secure your place. Due dates for both deposits and fees may differ significantly from those to which you are accustomed at Framingham. This is especially so at institutions in the southern hemisphere, where semesters start in early July and payment is normally expected several weeks before that. Some institutions require full payment before you can register for classes, and confirmation of payment is often necessary for a visa application. If you are enrolling directly in a foreign university, you will need to make arrangements to pay the bill in the currency of that country. Note that some universities bill for tuition and accommodation on separate invoices.

Some overseas programs are comparably priced to a semester living on campus at Framingham, but at some, often those run by U.S. institutions overseas, the total cost of attendance is much higher. Direct enrollment in foreign universities is usually cheaper than attending through an American third-party provider; but the third-party providers may offer financial assistance (awards typically range from \$500 to \$1500) through merit- or need-based scholarships, for which you are strongly encouraged to apply, whether or not you receive aid through Framingham State University. In the UK, university fees and the cost of living are in general substantially higher in London; there are some excellent universities in lively locations that will cost a great deal less.

You will find information on fees in the printed or on-line materials provided by your program. Read your program's materials closely to find out whether costs such as airfare, meals, and vacation housing are included. How many of your daily meals are covered in your meal plan? Will you have additional food and housing expenses during breaks? Are organized excursions included in your fee, or are they an additional cost? Does the program estimate personal costs that are not covered by the fees? Many students find that a weak U.S. dollar makes their personal expenses greater than they expected. Travel during breaks, eating out, and other entertainment are often mentioned as adding a lot to the overall cost.

Financial Aid

Do make an appointment with the Office of Financial Aid. Students who receive financial aid are normally able to use that aid for a study abroad program. It is important that you make an appointment with the Office of Financial Aid in order to determine how your aid will be calculated for your chosen program.

Also, do apply for financial aid directly from your program sponsor, many have scholarship awards up to \$1500 per semester. Also, see the Director of International

Education for information on scholarships from program providers that may be available to FSU students through our affiliation agreements.

Power of Attorney Form

Someone at your permanent U.S. address (parent, guardian, sibling other), must be designated to handle your Framingham State University financial affairs while you are abroad. This person should be informed of your overseas program fee payment deadlines, so that your financial obligations can be promptly met in your absence. In the event that you are owed a refund on your student account a check will be mailed to the person who has the power of attorney for you. You will need to return the Power of Attorney Form to the Financial Aid office before you leave. The form is available on the web and in the Office of International Education.

The Office of Financial Aid phone is 508-626-4535, in McCarthy Center.

Additional Financial Aid Resources for Studying Abroad:

International Education Financial Aid (IEFA) - This is a scholarship search specifically for students who want to study abroad. www.iefaf.org

U.S. Department of Education - Information on receiving financial aid through the U.S. Department of Education. www.ed.gov/fund/landing.jhtml?src=ln

Rotary International - The world's largest privately funded scholarships for students studying abroad in operation since 1947.
www.rotary.org/foundation/educational/amb_scho/

International Student - A free scholarship search, specifically for students wishing to study abroad. www.internationalstudent.com/scholarships/

Study Abroad Financial Aid - A listing of several sources and suggestions for receiving financial aid for studying abroad. www.studyabroad.com/forum/financial_aid.html

International Education Finance Corporation - One of the top providers in financial aid for the growing number of students who wish to study abroad. www.iefc.com

Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarships - This program provides students with limited financial means, scholarship opportunities to study abroad.
www.iie.org/programs/gilman/index.html

[The General Federation of Women's Clubs](#) of Massachusetts offer up to \$800 in scholarships to residents of Massachusetts who will study abroad. Students must enroll

in a least 12 credits per summer/semester while abroad. Applications are usually due March 1.

Refunds

Refunds due students who withdraw or leave a program early are specified by the particular program. You and your parents should know what the program refund policies are in case of an emergency situation. You should know when, if, and under what conditions you would be eligible for any kind of refund

Students who are expelled from a program for any reason should not expect to receive any refund of monies paid to their program provider.

MEDICAL ISSUES & HEALTH INSURANCE

Health Insurance

Students are required to have adequate health insurance while studying abroad and we **STRONGLY** recommend that you review your policy benefits carefully. You may wish to purchase additional study abroad insurance after this review. Doctors and hospitalization fees can be as costly abroad as in the U.S. Normally, you will be expected to pay up front for any medical services rendered and claim reimbursement from your medical insurance. If you have medical coverage through your parents, you must verify the amount and type of coverage, which will be provided outside of the U.S., as this can vary considerably. Be sure to bring your insurance ID card abroad with you!

Framingham State University Health Plan

If you are enrolled in the Framingham State University Health Insurance Plan, the policy benefits will extend to your period of study away. Be sure you understand what kind of payment will be expected of you for various situations. Information from the Aetna website lists the following as benefits:

Travel Assistance - Every day, all day, all year, you will be covered for travel-related emergencies. Highlights of the program include coordinated travel services and transporting family members.

- Pre-trip planning
- Unlimited emergency medical evacuation

- Unlimited medical repatriation Unlimited return of mortal remains
- Transportation of family member to join patient
- \$2,500 Emergency Return Home in the event of death or life-threatening illness of a parent or sibling
- \$1,000 return of personal effects in cases where a student is evacuated
- \$10,000 Accident Death & Dismemberment Coverage
- Medical monitoring
- Coordination of air and ground ambulance
- Prescription drug replacement assistance
- Emergency trauma counseling
- Travel assistance services
- 24/7 Emergency Travel Arrangements
- Translation Assistance
- Emergency Travel Funds Assistance
- \$1,000 bail bond benefit by international legal representative
- Legal Hot Line
- Lost Travel Documents Assistance
- Assistance with Replacement of Credit Card/Travelers Checks
- Operation Centers with worldwide response capabilities
- Hospital deposit arrangements
- Staffed with trained multi-lingual personnel

ON CALL INTERNATIONAL is the travel assistance vendor for Aetna Student Health members. If you require medical assistance and are more than 100 miles from home or campus, call the On Call Operation Center at:

866-525-1956

Within the United States

603-328-1956

Outside the United States

Further information about benefits can be found at:

http://www.aetnastudenthealth.com/stu_conn/student_connection.aspx?groupID=812818 and you may print a worldwide info and assistance card to take with you.

Outside Health Insurance

If you are covered under your parent's health insurance policy, you will need to verify the amount of coverage that extends to services outside of the United States. You will normally be expected to pay up front for any medical services rendered abroad and file a claim for reimbursement from your insurance carrier. **If your insurance carrier won't cover you outside the U.S.** and doesn't have a supplemental policy you can purchase through them, there are other sources to consider. Check with the company that provides your auto or renter/ homeowner insurance to see whether they have a policy that will meet your needs. Brochures are available in the Office of International Education from several companies that offer health insurance on a short-term basis to students who will be studying abroad. Be aware, however, that most of these companies only offer basic coverage for accidents and health emergencies and that you will have to

pay the doctor's or hospital's bill and then submit a claim and wait to be reimbursed. You should ask the following questions when checking your personal insurance coverage:

- Does the insurance cover study abroad students while outside their home country?
- What is the maximum sickness and injury benefit?
- Are pre-existing conditions covered?
- What is the maximum coverage for accidental death?
- Is there coverage for Emergency Medical Transportation/Evacuation? What is the maximum payable?
- Does the policy cover Repatriation of Remains? What is the maximum payable?
- How does the policy work overseas?
- Do policy holders need to pay up front for medical services and submit receipts for reimbursement, or is the policy accepted in the host country in lieu of payment?

Insurance Providers

Below is a list of insurance providers that you may wish to contact. Framingham does not endorse any of the programs in particular, and offers this list as a courtesy only.

Some of the plans are medical coverage, and some are noted as assistance and/or evacuation plans only (emergency evacuation coverage is very important and is not always covered by normal US insurance carriers).

Framingham strongly recommends that you purchase an International Student ID Card (ISIC), which is described elsewhere in the handbook. (The ISIC card benefits include basic emergency evacuation insurance

Cultural Insurance Services International
1-800-303-8120
www.culturalinsurance.com

Gateway International Plan
Administered by Marsh
1-800-282-4495
www.gatewayplans.com

HTH Worldwide Insurance Services
"US Study Abroad Health Plan"
1-877-424-4325
www.hthstudents.com

International SOS
For emergency evacuation
& repatriation
1-800-523-8662

www.internationalsos.com

On Call International
“Overseas Protection Program Scholastic”
Medical evacuation and travel assistance
1-800-407-7307
www.oncallinternational.com

Wallach & Company
“HealthCare Global 2000 plan”
1-800-237-6615
www.wallach.com

Medical Emergencies

In case of accident or illness requiring immediate medical treatment, inform your Director or the resident administrator/faculty member. Know who to contact and how to contact them before you need them.

Immunizations

No special immunizations are needed for travel to many places in the world, but you should check to make certain that all your shots are up-to-date. If you expect to travel outside Western Europe, you should contact the Center for Disease Control at (404) 332-4559 for recorded messages on health precautions and immunization requirements for travel to other countries.

General Medical Recommendations

It is advisable to have routine medical and dental examinations before you go to make sure you are in good health. It is also important to check that your vaccinations for measles, meningitis, mumps, rubella, polio, diphtheria, tetanus are current.

You should consult the Centers for Disease Control for information concerning recommendations for additional inoculations and treatments (such as for malaria) at www.cdc.gov or call (404) 639-3311.

Be aware that the manner in which medical help is obtained, the way patients are treated, the conditions of overseas medical facilities, and how health care is afforded often present marked differences from U.S. practices. U.S. health care values, assumptions, and methods are not universally practiced. Indeed, even the notions regarding the onset of illness or points at which expert attention is required are to some degree cultural phenomena.

Going abroad is not a magic cure for issues at home. Both physical and emotional health issues will follow you wherever you go. In particular, if you are concerned about your use of alcohol and/or other controlled drugs, or if you have an emotional health concern, you should address it honestly before making plans to travel. Contrary to many people’s expectations, travel does not minimize these problems; in fact, it often exacerbates them to a crisis stage when you are away from home and support systems.

If you have a physical or psychological problem that requires ongoing treatment by a doctor, you should consult with your physician or mental health professional about the prospect of studying

abroad. Most programs do not employ mental health professionals, nor is mental health treatment widely accessible or comparable to mental health treatment in the U.S. Programs do not discriminate against individuals who have had any type of emotional or psychological problem. However, for your own welfare, you should consult with a mental health professional in this country to discuss the potential stress of study abroad, and to provide your program with specific information concerning your psychological health (i.e., if you ever experience anxiety, depression, etc.), and to be aware that English-speaking counselors are not readily available to program participants in most locations.

Prescription Medications

If you are on medication, discuss with your physician the type of care you may need while abroad and the best way to continue your regimen. You will need to bring enough medication to cover the duration of your program. You should consult with your health insurance provider about obtaining enough medication for your entire stay. **DO NOT** try to secure the medication abroad. The medications abroad may seem to have the same name, but you cannot be certain, and some medications may not be distributed in your host country. You will need a written note from your doctor in order to bring a full semester's worth of medication into the country with you. Please note: it is difficult, if not impossible to ship medications internationally. If even legal, the shipment must clear customs and that may take weeks. You must also determine if your medication is legal to bring into your destination country, and if you will be able to obtain additional medication. For example, it is illegal to bring certain medications for ADHD into Japan. Check with your program!

First Aid Kit

When traveling, bring your own basic drugstore supplies, such as ibuprofen or Tylenol, motion sickness medication, laxatives, antacids, antihistamines, decongestants, antiseptics, and band-aids. Depending on where you are going and how long you are staying, your family doctor may recommend that you take antibiotics with you in the event that you become ill overseas. Make sure all medications are in their labeled bottles, and carry a copy of the written prescription with the generic names. Do the same with glasses and contact lenses. Bring an extra pair of glasses and/or contact lenses; also be sure to bring contact lens solution. You may not find the kind that you use abroad. If you have a health condition that could be serious (such as diabetes, an allergy to penicillin, etc.), wear a Medic Alert bracelet.

HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS remains a serious health threat to millions of people worldwide. Advances in treatments in the U.S. have led to a complacency and reckless behavior among many college-aged Americans. *ALL* travelers should protect themselves when engaging in sexual activity. Latex condoms (used with a water-based lubricant) are the most effective form of protection should you choose to be sexually active. *WOMEN* are at greatest risk, but safe-sex precautions must apply to

everyone studying away, regardless of gender or sexual orientation. AIDS (and other STDs) do not discriminate.

Common Precautions

Probably the most common ailment for all international travelers is diarrhea caused by contaminated food or drink. It is important to exercise caution with the food and water that you consume. Find out if tap water is safe to drink before trying it. If in doubt, boil water for at least 5 minutes or use a water filter or iodine tablet to purify it. You can also use bottled water. Remember that if the tap water is not safe to drink, you should not use ice made from tap water or use tap water to brush your teeth. Do not avoid drinking fluids, however, because you do not want to become dehydrated. Eat only meat and fish that have been thoroughly and recently cooked. Avoid raw or undercooked eggs and vegetables and eat peeled fruit. Avoid street vendor food or food that has been left outside for a long time. Insure that dairy products are fresh before you consume them. Do not drink non-pasteurized milk. Finally, try to get adequate rest and maintain a healthy, well-balanced diet.

For current health conditions abroad, contact your program provider for further information, or contact the country desk at the U.S. State Department, www.state.gov, or the CDC (Center for Disease Control) at www.cdc.gov. The US State Department has an Overseas Citizens' Emergency Center. Also, remember that with the purchase of an International Student ID Card, you have access to health information and assistance with locating English-speaking doctors abroad.

In summary;

- You should try to arrange for a physical checkup, eye examination, and dental work to be done before you depart for your destination.
- Recurring or chronic health problems: If you have any long-term medical problems about which the program staff should be made aware, bring a legible doctor's record with you. Also, if you are allergic to certain medications, let them know.
- Medications: If you take prescription drugs, bring what you will need while you are away from home. Be sure to have the medication in its original container. Bring a legible (preferably typed) letter explaining what your medicine is for. This is especially important if you are bringing syringes with you.
- Please note that women's health concerns are much more difficult to address in a foreign country, most notably in the area of pregnancy (testing, morning after pills, etc.)
- Contact lenses, eyeglasses: Consider bringing an extra pair of contacts or glasses and/or their prescriptions with you. Remember also to bring plenty of your cleaning and other lens fluids. The solutions sold in Europe are not always the same and are very expensive.

- Bring a small first aid kit: with medications for headache, motion sickness, cold/cough, first aid crème and band-aids. While there is a first aid kit in the Director's office, having one available for your travels is highly desirable.
- Please note that Tylenol is NOT available AT ALL in Europe. Please be sure to bring some, if you desire.

Some additional resources for health information are:

- Health Check for Study, Work, and Travel Abroad, published by the Council on International Educational Exchange, and available on their website (www.ciee.org/healthcheck.cfm)
- "Health Information for International Travel," available from the US Government Printing Office.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Passport

If you already have a passport, **make sure it is valid for at least six months beyond the last day of the program**

- Your passport is the only universally accepted form of identification. If you lose it, you've lost all means of travel internationally and the means to register with the authorities in your study location. Without your passport you cannot leave any country (not even to go back to your host country from another country or the US from abroad).
- If you do not yet have a passport, **you must apply immediately**. We cannot stress this enough! Processing time for all applications can be 1-2 months. If you already have a passport, make sure it is valid for at least six months beyond the last day of the program. The host country government, not Framingham University, requires this.
- You will not be allowed to leave the US with a passport that will expire sooner than six months following your program end date.
- Passport applications may be obtained at your local United States Post Office. The current fee is \$100.00 for adults 16 years and older. For more information, please go to: http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html.

- Leave a photocopy of your passport and your passport number at home and also carry one with you. This saves a lot of time and hassle if you ever lose your passport.

Visa

All students attending study abroad programs must secure a study visa from the country where they will study. A visa is applied for through the foreign country consular offices located here in the United States. The visa is a consular stamp that is affixed to a blank page in your passport, and requirements for securing it will vary from country to country. Please read your specific program information carefully for detailed directions. Failure to secure a visa will result in your removal from the program.

When to Begin the Process of Obtaining a Visa:

The difficulty or ease of obtaining a visa depends upon the laws of the country you have chosen and processing times can vary from one week to more than 3 months. Your program will supply detailed instructions for applying for the visa and you will need to follow the instructions very closely. You may need to book an appointment at the consulate immediately after receiving your acceptance materials in order to get an appointment that will allow you to appear at the consulate with enough time for them to process and visa before your departure date.

Please do not leave the securing of a visa until the last minute! **It is very important to begin the visa application process as soon as possible to ensure you will have sufficient time to complete the required paperwork. Failure to obtain a visa will prevent you from study abroad, as you will be denied entry into the country.**

A few of you may be citizens of countries outside of the United States. If so, you will need to contact the foreign consulate in your home country to check on visa requirements. You may also call any one of the U.S. consulates (you may want to start with the New York or Boston consulate) for information on reaching the consulate in your home country. **If you are not a permanent U.S. resident, it is especially critical that you begin working on your visa early.** Normally, students who are citizens of a country within the European Union will not need visa materials when studying in the EU.

International Students on F-1 Visas

A few of you may be residents from countries other than the United States. You should check with the appropriate consulate in your home country on visa requirements, or you may telephone one of the consulates to inquire about visa requirements for non-U.S. citizens. Please do this as soon as possible, so we may provide you with any additional information you may need to secure your visa (if you need one).

- If you will be outside the U.S. for five (5) months or more, you will need a **new** I-20 to re-enter the U.S. at the end of your studies, even if your current I-20 appears to still be valid.
- Please consult the Director of International Education with whom you work on immigration requirements for complete details and answers to other questions.

List of Consulates

For a list of foreign countries which have embassies/consulates in the United States, please see the following website. <http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/dpl/32122.htm>.

International Student Identity Card (ISIC)

The International Student Identity Card (ISIC) is an identification card certifying that you are a full-time student at an institution of higher learning and is recognized in most areas of the world as proof of student status. We strongly recommend all students purchase the card. In addition to providing students with travel discounts, the card provides extra travel insurance, including a set amount toward emergency medical evacuation. Student who purchase the card have access to an emergency help line that can assist you if you lose your passport, need an English-speaking doctor, etc. If you wish to obtain the card, you may find a place near you that issues the cards, by going to: www.isic.org or www.statravel.com

PRE-DEPARTURE PREPARATION

Organizing a flight

Unless your program provides a flight, shop around for the best prices. (If your program fee does include transportation, find out if it is mandatory; most programs obtain competitive group rates, but you might find a cheaper fare, or prefer a later return date.) When booking your flights be certain to check on the date and time you are expected to arrive and depart, especially as changes to a reservation can be costly. Remember, the later you book your flight, the more you will pay, so don't wait too long to make your reservations.

If you are looking for inexpensive flights we advise you to look at www.statravel.com or 1-800-781-4040, www.studyabroad.com, www.studentuniverse.com, www.isic.org, or call your local travel agent. Contacting airlines directly will likely result in higher priced flights due to the fact you will be staying longer than 91 days abroad. (Except summer students)

Early Arrivals/Late Departures- most programs CANNOT accommodate:

Students participating in study abroad programs are expected to arrive promptly on the scheduled start date of the program and to depart by the agreed-upon ending date of the semester. Many programs offer airport pick-ups, but only on the specified arrival day, so that is another reason to book a flight early, as flights will fill with other program participants to your destination. The programs usually offer **no** assistance or make provision for a student's care, lodging, meals, or well-being, should the student arrive early or remain longer at the program. If you arrive early, or depart late, you will be expected to find and pay for your own lodging.

They are generally NOT able to store belongings before the term. Please contact your arrival airport for their "left luggage" facilities if you plan to arrive early or stay late.

Baggage:

Suitcases:

International Air Travel Agreements allow you to check two (2) pieces of baggage. Check with your airline for baggage limitations and requirements. Due to airport security restrictions currently in place in the UK, only **ONE** piece of Hand Baggage will be permitted when departing from or transferring through the UK. Check with your airline to verify current regulations!

Carry-on:

ONE carry-on plus a pocketbook are allowed (not for flights connecting in the UK) in addition to the two pieces of checked luggage. The carry-on can be your weekend bag, but don't fill it too full for the flight over or it won't fit into the carry on space. Leave yourself legroom! It's a long time to be cramped up in your seat. Consider packing a basic change of clothes and overnight toiletries in your carry-on bag in case your checked suitcases are temporarily lost.

Extra Baggage/Overweight Baggage:

If you exceed the size, quantity, or weight limits for bags, the airline has the right to charge you for the extra baggage. EXTRA bags can cost up to \$300 per piece ONE WAY. According to Delta Airlines: **"You'll be charged an excess baggage fee each time you go over any one of the free allowances. For example, if you have an extra piece of baggage that goes over the weight limit and the size limit, then you'll be charged 3 times—once for the extra bag, once for going over the size limit, and once for going over the weight limit."**

Please note: If you ship personal items, do NOT declare the value to be more than \$10, otherwise you will pay a customs fee commensurate to the total value declared. Also, be aware that shipping items can take up to almost 2 months to receive, so plan ahead if you decide you need to ship something.

- Hang on to your baggage claim tickets! They are essential for tracing lost bags. This usually happens to someone in the group every year, but most luggage is found by the next day (see above regarding what to pack in your carry-on bag).

Electrical Appliances

Appliances such as hairdryers run on a certain voltage of electrical current. There are two standard voltages in the world: 110 (used in the U.S.) and 220. An appliance designed for 110 voltages cannot run on 220 without a **converter** (or may run for a while and then burn up). In addition, plug-in (outlet) types vary the world over and require an **adapter**. If you must take an appliance, be sure to take the proper converter and adapters. If you will be abroad for a while, consider buying the necessary appliances abroad. Better yet, consider living without your appliances altogether.

- Appliances can only be used if they are battery-run or can be converted to run on 220 volts, 50 cycles. A useful website for explanations is <http://kropla.com/electric.htm>.
- You may wish to purchase a **voltage transformer**. Transformers cost approx. \$20-\$40. A transformer converts 220 volts into 110 volts, which is what the U.S. operates on. The transformers must be paired with a socket adapter, or else it won't plug into the wall.

- Bring a **socket adapter**. Usually the adapters will come in sets, with a variety of plug configurations for various countries. Be sure any adapters you buy match the appliance plugs for which you buy them. (i.e. 3 prong plug on your laptop cord).
- Since socket and plug sizes vary from country to country, some students prefer to buy cheap appliances (hair dryers, alarm clocks, etc.) in country, although it may be cheaper to bring the item from home and use with a transformer and adapter.
- If you need a hairdryer, it is a great idea to bring a dual voltage model .
- **Your laptop**: Virtually all recent laptops conform to the necessary voltage, but you should check the power pack on your laptop computer or printer. It should read:"INPUT 100-240V - 50/60HZ". If it doesn't, order one that does. **DO NOT COUNT ON USING A TRANSFORMER! GET A PROPER POWER PACK TO BEGIN WITH!** It may also be helpful to bring the adapter that turns your plug into a two-prong plug.

Packing

Above all else, **pack lightly**. You'll be lifting your bag out of the trunk of the car, through the airport, off the luggage carousel, to the train station, to the bus stop, onto the bus, off the bus, back a few kilometers because you missed your stop, up six flights of stairs, and onto the dresser. If you can't carry your luggage around the block three times, you're taking too much. When in doubt, leave it out!

Take durable clothes that require minimum care. We advise **NOT** taking valuable jewelry, heirlooms, or items you would be heartbroken to lose. Do not overpack, but remember that clothes, especially major items like jackets and coats, are very expensive. Check out the climate for your location. Remember, if you are going to the southern hemisphere, the season there will be the opposite of what you are experiencing here at home. Try for as many waterproof things as possible.

Clothes (vary according to individual tastes and needs): Think basic black whenever possible. You will have more flexibility and blend in more easily!

___2-3 prs. jeans; consider having one lighter pair

___1 pr. nicer pants or skirt (for internships especially)

___1 pair dress pants/dress outfit

___1-2 pairs dress-type shorts (i.e. not just sport shorts). Used only in early fall or late spring or when traveling south. Shorts are not appropriate for many situations, and visits to churches. For women, a dress or skirt is a better option, esp. in warm weather

___3-4 sweaters of various weights, e.g., 1-2 cotton, 2 wool or fleece

___4-5 T-shirts and 2-3 long sleeved shirts

___2-3 turtlenecks

___12-14 pairs of socks

___long underwear for winter if you tend to always be cold; good for layering and sleeping. Silk long underwear is great warm and compact

___warm pajamas for winter; Europeans keep their homes **MUCH** cooler than ours

___underwear; two weeks worth

___1 durable winter coat; it will be worn and worn so dark colors better! (ski jackets w. zip in layers are great although you will look American)

___1 rainproof spring jacket or rain coat; lined, layerable, preferably with hood (will also be worn to death!)

___1-2 pairs gloves or mittens. A hat and scarf are also good. (not for summer!)

___slippers; most people don't wear street shoes in the house!

___1 pair better shoes

___comfortable, sturdy walking shoes for warm and cold weather

___sturdy athletic shoes.

___**SHOWER SHOES (FLIP FLOPS)** to wear in hostel showers

___swim suit if traveling to resort, beach areas

Other Necessities:

___basic toiletries and medical supplies. Most US brands are available in developed countries, bring enough to last a short while.

___anti-perspirant; you will find lots of deodorant in country, but not much anti-perspirant

___small bag of travel-sized toiletries for weekend travel, plus ear plugs - overnight trains are noisy

___liquid/powder soap for washing while traveling (packets of Woolite, etc.).

___your own supply of contact lens solutions; you may not find the equivalent of your brand

___ Swiss Army knife always comes in handy. Can buy in Switzerland too! (Don't pack in carry-on bag!)

___ MP3 player or iPod.

___ batteries for camera, alarm clock, and other appliances you are bringing; you can also get these in country, but they are more expensive there. You might consider rechargeable ones

___ camera + BAG (consider insuring it as an individual item)

___ outdoor/hiking backpack for weekend excursions, internal frame is easiest **or** some bag that is easy to maneuver on public transportation.

___ Backpack is essential (see above).

___ Travel log/journal; Keep it up for posterity; you'll be glad you did. You may even consider two or more, depending on how much you write. (Can buy in country)

___ paperbacks, playing cards, travel scrabble, etc., fun for train rides.

___ 1 cable lock for securing your pack/luggage in hostels on trips if you plan to stay in hostels

___ 1 collapsible umbrella

___ One or more travel/guide books: indispensable! See, "Info on Travel and Tourism" section. If you plan on spending a lot of time in one area or country, look for a guide book to that specific place.

___ 1 sleep sheet (a sort of sleeping bag made out of a sheet, optional but saves renting sheets at hostels) or sleeping bag, if you plan to do some camping

___ mini flashlight

___ **everyone should get a small document pouch to wear inside clothes** to put passport and credit cards, etc. in when traveling. Either a belt-type pouch or around the neck, not a 'fanny pack'.

___ battery-operated or wind-up travel alarm clock - cheaper in the U.S.

___ **electrical converter and adapters** (MUCH cheaper and MUCH easier to find in the US than in Europe)

___ **School supplies** are readily available, although they are more expensive and different in format, size, etc. Past students recommend you to **bring US type notebooks** with you!!

___ Bring any extra passport photos. Great for certain extra IDs or for replacement purposes (hopefully you won't need them for this, but...!)

Summer Programs

If you will be going to where it is summer for your term abroad, consult the list above, but obviously, you won't be bringing cold weather clothes. Women will do well to bring skirts and cool summer dresses to wear around the city. Bring comfortable clothes, at least one warm sweater, and a windbreaker or raincoat.

Please keep in mind that in most countries Bermuda-style shorts are useful at school, but natives do not wear them around town. Women must cover their shoulders when entering churches around the world, so tank tops are considered inappropriate.

Books and Supplies

Books and other materials required for your courses will be available once you arrive, unless you are told specifically to purchase a book and bring it with you. Most foreign university students do not purchase books for the semester, rather, they will utilize the texts at the library, so do not be surprised if you are expected to do the same.

Past participants recommend you bring a few notebooks with you (esp. spiral bound), as American style notebooks are hard to find and all notebooks tend to be much more expensive.

MONEY-HOW TO PLAN

Currency: The Euro is the currency for all members of the European Union and the symbol for the Euro is €. The currency in the UK is the pound, £. Australian currency is the Australian dollar A\$. (See sample currencies on the next page) You may check current exchange rate information at www.oanda.com/convert/classic.

Take several forms of money: When arriving abroad and while traveling, you should always carry several forms of money—in case of difficulties with ATMs, credit cards, etc. Have a few traveler's checks, a few dollars in the local currency, or US dollars as back-ups in case your credit card fails or there's no ATM! After you arrive, a local ATM is the most convenient way to get cash. Just be certain you know how much your bank is going to charge for each ATM transaction abroad!

Notify your bank and credit card companies you will be using the cards internationally for 4 months! Check with your bank and credit card company regarding their foreign currency surcharges. Anti-fraud programs may activate after several international transactions if you have not alerted your bank/credit cards and the machine will "eat"

your card and you will be facing a complicated process to get a new card or your existing card returned to you.

Credit Cards: It is a good idea to have a credit card along – 2 credit cards would be even better. A credit card is good for emergency cash and large purchases. Visa and Mastercard are most widely accepted. Using a credit card at the end of your stay can be handy. If you time your purchases correctly, you will be home in time to pay the bill!

Debit Cards: Cirrus or Plus ATM machines are easy to find all over westernized countries. Most students advise an ATM card (or two). You can use them to withdraw money directly from your checking account. Discover and American Express cards are not widely used in Europe. Notify your bank about your study abroad, and check on transaction fees. Also check on any overseas fees for withdrawals. Banks vary widely in their fees, so be sure you know what your bank charges. Also, be sure you know your per day limit on withdrawals. Know your P.I.N. number numerically as well as alphabetically, since many ATMs have no letters. Make sure your P.I.N. is only 4 digits, not 6, as most European ATMs will not accept a 6 digit P.I.N!

American Express: While the AmEx card is not as widely accepted, it does offer certain valuable conveniences. It pays for itself in terms of convenience and security for traveler's checks and for cash withdrawals on your home checking account. You can cash traveler's checks without a service charge in their offices in major cities only. With other types of traveler's checks, a fee is always required to cash each check. There are other advantages as well such as this one: you may cash personal checks up to \$1000 every 21 days with no service charge. If interested, ask the company for details. (Personal checks sent to students cannot be cashed at banks, though they can be cashed at American Express offices).

Know a local Tel. No. (and person, if possible) to call if you do have a problem with your credit or debit cards!

SAMPLES OF EURO CURRENCY



Samples of British Pounds Sterling



Samples of Australian dollar, denoted by AUD or A\$



So, how much money should I take?

This is obviously a very popular question and the answer varies according to what kind of person you are. The amount of spending money to take with you will depend on your individual tastes and spending habits. The information below will help you gauge how much you will need to have available. Additionally, the currency exchange rate will impact your final budget. If your currency is very expensive to buy with US dollars, then you will have to factor in additional funds, perhaps as much as \$500. All programs will provide you with a budget worksheet to determine your additional spending requirements. Be certain that you know exactly what is included in your program fees: how many meals, extra charges for certain types of housing, etc.

Not included in most program estimates:

Additional funds of approx \$175-200 per weekend of travel outside of your study country will be needed. London and Paris can be double this amount, whereas Prague and Budapest are cheaper. Hostels are cheaper than hotel rooms. A decent hotel double room in a bed and breakfast hotel could range from 50 euro to 75 euro per night. (We are not talking about 3 or 4 star hotels!) A good fixed-price meal can still be had for 12 euro to 15 euro. Some students will travel extensively around Europe or Australia or other destination, and others will explore their study country more. Also, some students buy lots of souvenirs and clothes, others don't, so estimates vary widely. Also, travel by bus can be far less expensive than an air ticket, or even a rail ticket.

Banking in your study country

As indicated previously, we recommend that you carry traveler's checks and cash, as well as an ATM card as means of money while abroad. Nevertheless, students and their parents do sometimes ask about the establishment of personal bank accounts. While we do **not** recommend

these to you, you are of course free to try to make arrangements for such if you wish. Your program will be able to advise you regarding the feasibility of doing this at your destination. In most instances, there are minimum deposits, identification requirements, etc. that can make trying to set up a bank account difficult if not impossible. Notify your bank and credit cards that you will be using them internationally so that automated fraud detection systems do not shut your card down, leaving you stranded!

STUDYING AND LIVING ABROAD

Arrival

If your program does not arrange airport pick-ups, you will be expected to make your way from the airport to your check-in location. You will need local currency to either take local public transportation or a taxi. You may find a number of ATM's in the airport terminal to get local funds, if you didn't bring any with you. If you choose to use a taxi, go outside the airport terminal to the taxi queue in order to engage a legitimate taxi. Many "gypsy" taxi drivers will attempt to engage you while in the terminal, so head straight for the queue of taxis. ASK how much the fare will be to your destination. If you are in a non-English speaking country, have the address written down on a piece of paper to show the driver. You will arrive jet lagged and tired, so don't depend on trying to use your language skills right away.

Computers

Many programs will have some PCs available for student use and a network printer, but students may be encouraged to bring their own laptops. Check with your program to see what they recommend. Do NOT ship your computer, as you will incur customs charges that may come close to the value of your laptop.

Taking advantage of cybercafés can be an alternative to carrying your computer with you. Remember to bring memory sticks and to take them with you when you leave the café. Books that can provide you with a wealth of information on how to stay connected include:

- *The Rough Guide to the Internet*, Angus Kennedy, Rough Guides
- *Cybercafés: A Worldwide Guide for Travelers*, Kath Stanton (Ten Speed Press)
- *Internet Café Guide*, Ernst Larsen

Safe Computing While Studying Abroad

Using public computers at Internet cafes, airports, libraries, and other public facilities is not without risk. Some may have keystroke loggers or other software installed on them to capture information. If you must use public computers, try to find a reputable location and keep the following in mind:

- Never leave the computer unattended. Watch out for people looking over your shoulder who might be trying to discover account names and passwords.
- Don't enter sensitive information when using a public computer. It is not recommended to do any kind of banking or purchasing with these machines. If you use your e-mail accounts at these locations, change your passwords regularly.
- Delete all files you have created on hard drives.
- Always logout of all applications. Logout of Web sites by pressing logout instead of just closing the browser. Close down all applications and reboot the system when you are finished.
- Remember to remove CDs, memory sticks and other personal belongings as you leave. If you are taking a computer with you and plan to use networking resources available to you while you are abroad, do the following before you leave:
 - Update your operating system with the latest patches. Also apply the latest updates to any application programs that you'll be using.
 - Verify that you have installed and are running a current antivirus program. Make sure that the virus definition files are up-to-date.
 - Many machines become compromised because there are poor passwords on the machine accounts. Check to see that all accounts have complex, hard to- guess passwords. Do not share your passwords with anybody.
 - Close down any file sharing that might allow a hacker into your system.
 - Install an anti-spyware program that will regularly check for spyware on your machine.

Staying Connected with friends and family

Telephone Communications

- Check out World Wide Clocks at www.timeanddate.com/worldclock to stay in the know about local time wherever you are. It is easy to forget time differences around the world.
- Try to pre-arrange phone calls from home. Calls originating in the US are **much** cheaper than calls originating in foreign countries.
- Cell phones are quite popular and may be purchased for approximately \$100 in Europe then students purchase pre-paid cards to operate them. These will work throughout Europe and cards are easily obtainable anywhere in Europe. Your program may in fact provide you with a cell phone, so be sure to check.
- An increasingly popular option is the Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP), one service that is widely used is www.skype.com. You can converse computer to computer with either a built-in microphone or by one purchased at your local electronics store for about \$20.00. These calls are FREE.

- **Beware of purchasing “international” prepaid phone cards here in the states:** most of these only works for calling **FROM the U.S.** to locations overseas.
- International calling cards are a bit more convenient, but more expensive, working on a flat rate with no reduction for the time of day you call. They may still be worth having with you for emergencies. AT&T, MCI or Sprint are all choices. Be careful, however, not to use the AT&T card for calls within Europe, since the company would charge you to route the call back to your country **by way of the US**. This limitation probably applies to MCI and Sprint cards too. You cannot call a US 1-800 free from Europe either, it will be charged as a normal long-distance phone call.
- The fastest and easiest way to keep in contact with family and friends is through email.
- One of the most economical ways to call home is to use local phone cards in varying denominations, which may be purchased at the local cafes or tobacco shops. These can be purchased usually for the equivalent of about \$5.00 per card.

Obviously, in case of emergency, students will be allowed to make supervised collect international calls from the office telephone at their program location.

Parents should not expect their sons or daughters to telephone home on the day of their arrival abroad! On that day and the first few days following, all students are extremely occupied with orientation activities. Please make plans with your son or daughter about when to expect to “check-in” with one another.

Mail from Home

On average, mail from the U.S. arrives in Europe or the UK in 14 days. Do inform your family and friends that they may not hear from you promptly or regularly and therefore ought not to worry. Nor should you worry if you do not receive mail from home with regularity. Any package sent from the U.S. is taxed at delivery (on a proportionate scale) if the value of the package or its insured amount exceeds \$10.00. Sometimes it has cost students more to receive a package than to purchase the contents abroad. Do not mail a computer!

E-mail

The fastest and easiest way to keep in contact with family and friends is through email. Framingham students will be able to continue to access their Framingham e-mail accounts abroad.

Many students may also prefer to have an account with hotmail.com, yahoo.com, etc., and they may access that, in addition to their home school accounts.

Visits by Family and Friends

Family and friends may wish to take advantage of your time abroad to plan a visit. To make their time with you rewarding and enjoyable, be certain to check with your program before you set a time to visit. Be sure to consider:

- Where will they stay? Most programs have limits or prohibitions on guests staying with you in your room. Homestays do not allow guests.
- When will they visit? Most programs recommend visits during local holidays or scheduled vacations in order to not interfere with your academics. Check to see what your program allows.
- How will they get their meals? Some programs that include meals will allow guests, if reserved and paid for ahead of time. Local university cafeterias may allow non-students to use the facility at any time. If you are in a home stay, you will not be allowed guests, so plan accordingly.

Local Transportation

Your comprehensive fee for the semester program may include the cost of a monthly public transit pass for the duration of your participation on the Program. You will want to make sure you know if your program covers this, or if you will need to budget funds to purchase this on your own. Student discounts are always available with your ISIC card.

Throughout the world, public transportation is the most efficient method of movement around your location. You will soon get to know the network of subways, buses, and rails to get you throughout the city and region.

Conduct and Disciplinary Rules

You are reminded that you are expected to behave as a guest, a somewhat privileged guest, but a guest nonetheless. For essentially that is what you are -- there by permission of government authorities and that of your immediate hosts. Your relationship to your living environment therefore requires a little adjustment in your thinking. Serious misbehavior by students studying abroad is uncommon. When it does occur, too much alcohol is generally the culprit; and the thoughtlessness of a few jeopardizes the whole program. Such lack of consideration for others is simply not acceptable. Your program Director has the authority to impose appropriate sanctions. In an extreme case, the program may require a student to withdraw altogether.

You will likely have signed an agreement or conduct code for your program, please take the time to read it carefully, as you will be held to the standards in that document.

Some of the more common rules and regulations you may encounter are:

- Late night noise is prohibited, as foreign standards and expectations differ from what you may be used to on campus. Students who make excessive noise on the premises at night or who otherwise disturb their peers or their hosts may be required to find their own off campus housing or be dismissed from the Program.
- Smoking is not allowed in tour buses or classrooms.
- You are **not** allowed to have alcoholic beverages on the property. Any drug use is grounds for immediate dismissal.
- You are not allowed to bring spouses, significant others, or children with you for the semester.
- You are reminded that you are expected to behave as a guest, as you are guests of the country and must comply with their laws, rules, and customs
- You will be expected to act in a responsible and considerate way, not only toward your host, but towards your peers as well.

General Statement on Drugs and Alcohol

In a foreign country, you are subject to the laws of that country and are not protected by U.S. laws. Ignorance of the law is not an excuse for non-compliance. It is important that you learn about local laws and regulations and obey them. Approximately 3,000 Americans are arrested abroad each year. One-third is arrested on drug charges. Many countries do not provide a jury trial or accept bail, which could mean a lengthy pre-trial detention. In addition, prison conditions in many countries can be extremely harsh and officials may not speak English. You could face very stiff fines or sentences if found guilty of a crime.

If you violate a nation's laws, neither the program nor the U.S. Embassy will be able to help you.

Local rules and customs regarding alcohol are much different than in the U.S., and public drunkenness is very much frowned upon abroad. Students can, and in fact frequently are, arrested for being intoxicated in public areas, and for drunk driving. Please conduct yourself accordingly.

Culture and Getting Oriented

No amount of planning can prepare you for the cultural adjustment period that takes place after you first arrive. Living in a new culture can be exhilarating, personally rewarding, and intellectually stimulating. It can also be frustrating. It is one thing to visit a country, and it is quite another to live

there and function according to a different and sometimes mysterious set of norms. Don't be surprised when you find yourself experiencing some aspects of Culture Shock, as outlined below.

Preliminary stage: this stage includes awareness of the host culture, preparation for the journey and farewell activities.

Initial euphoria: The initial euphoria stage begins with the arrival in the new country and ends when this excitement wears off.

Irritability: During this stage you will be acclimating to your setting. This will produce frustration because of the difficulty in coping with the elementary aspects of everyday life when things still appear so foreign to you. Your focus will likely turn to the differences between the host culture and your home, and these differences can be troubling. Sometimes insignificant difficulties can seem like major problems. One typical reaction against culture shock is to associate mainly with other North Americans, but remember, you are going abroad to get to know the host country, its people, culture, and language. If you avoid contact with nationals of the host country, you cheat yourself and lengthen the process of adaptation.

Gradual adjustment: When you become more used to the new culture, you will slip into the gradual adjustment stage. You may not even be aware that this is happening. You will begin to orient yourself and be able to interpret subtle cultural clues. The culture will become familiar to you.

Adaptation and biculturalism: Eventually you will develop the ability to function in the new culture. Your sense of "foreignness" diminishes significantly. Not only will you be more comfortable with the host culture, but you may also feel a part of it. Once abroad, establish routines that incorporate both the difficult and enjoyable tasks of the day or week. Treat yourself to an occasional indulgence such as an American magazine or newspaper, a favorite meal or beverage, or a long talk with other Americans experiencing the same challenges. Keep yourself healthy through regular exercise and eating habits. Accept invitations to activities that will allow you to see areas of the host culture outside the university and meet new people. Above all, try to maintain your sense of humor.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Remember that you will be representing Framingham University and the United States abroad. Whether you wish to take on the role or not, people will watch your behavior and associate you with your home institution. Inappropriate, dangerous, or illegal activity abroad may result in disciplinary sanctions at your program and/or your return to campus.

Most of the places where students will be studying and traveling are as safe as, or safer than, large urban areas of the United States. In some regions of the world you may need to exercise extra caution, but be reassured that physical assault of tourists in most countries is rare. Remember that the possibility for non-violent crime exists everywhere and *no one* can guarantee your immunity.

General Precautions

Take responsibility for your own safety and security by carefully reading the information, advice, and resources provided, including the following websites:

www.state.gov and www.cdc.gov

You should also do the following:

- Check to make sure emergency contact information is current (provided on the original program application).
- Check to make sure the Program Director has a photocopy of your passport (or, if not in a group program, leave a copy with your emergency contact person).
- Leave an itinerary and contact information with your Program Director or onsite staff for all additional travel not associated with the program.
- Carry an emergency telephone contact list.
- Know the local equivalent of 911 for your program site.
- If you have a cell phone, store your emergency contact's phone number under ICE (In Case of Emergency) so that emergency/medical personnel can contact your family.

When you are traveling abroad, here are the top 10 tips to make your trip easier:

- Make sure you have a signed, valid passport (and visas, if required). Before you go, fill in the emergency information page of your passport.
- Read the Consular Information Sheets (and Public Announcements or Travel Warnings, if applicable) for the countries you plan to visit.
- Familiarize yourself with local laws and customs of the countries to which you are traveling. Remember, the U.S. Constitution does not follow you! While in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws.
- Make two copies of your passport identification page. This will facilitate replacement if your passport is lost or stolen. Leave one copy at home with friends or relatives. Carry the other with you in a place separate from your passport.
- Leave a copy of your itinerary with family or friends at home so that you can be contacted in case of an emergency.
- Do not leave your luggage unattended in public areas. Do not accept packages from strangers.
- Prior to your departure, you should register with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate through the State Department's travel registration website (www.state.gov). Registration will make your presence and whereabouts known in case it is necessary to contact you in an emergency. In accordance with the Privacy Act, information on your welfare and whereabouts may not be released without your express authorization.

- To avoid being a target of crime, do not wear conspicuous clothing and expensive jewelry and do not carry excessive amounts of money or unnecessary credit cards.
- In order to avoid violating local laws, deal only with authorized agents when you exchange money or purchase art or antiques.
- If you get into trouble, contact the nearest U.S. embassy.

Since some countries and areas may be experiencing political and social instability, it is important to use good judgment while abroad to avoid situations that may put you in danger. If you see demonstrations, for example, walk the other way; you have no way of knowing whether the gathering is legal or whether it will remain peaceful or erupt into violence. Listen carefully to all advice about health and safety issues given to you by your on-site staff. Do not engage in behavior that you would consider dangerous or foolhardy at home.

It is recommended that U.S. students abroad keep a low profile because of the current political climate. Try to blend into the local culture in terms of dress and behaviors (i.e., do not wear baseball caps or sweatshirts with American logos; do not wear your camera around your neck). Avoid sites abroad that are typically associated with the United States (such as U.S. restaurant chains, nightclubs, or large tourist hotels that cater to Americans).

As a U.S. citizen in a foreign country, you are subject to the laws of that country. You should conduct yourself in a manner that will comply with the regulations of the host university and of the program. Please be aware that customs regarding alcohol and drug use are different in other countries; laws controlling drugs and alcohol may be more strict than those in the U.S., and penalties can be severe. The on-site director/coordinator of your program has the authority to discontinue your participation on the program if your conduct is determined to be unacceptable.

Do your research and know where you should not go:

- Check the U.S. State Department Travel Advisories. Call (202)647-5225 or go to www.travel.state.gov
- Talk to study abroad alumni and your program faculty sponsor(s)
- Read newspapers, magazines, and travel books (Lonely Planet, Rough Guide, Frommers' guides and Let's Go).
- Research general travel and safety information on the Internet.

Because the number of violent crimes committed against travelers is relatively low, you mainly need to be concerned about nonviolent theft. Often groups of people – even children – work

together to distract or confuse student travelers so that they can rob them. Coat pockets, handbags, and back pockets are particularly susceptible to theft. Ploys may include creating a disturbance, spilling something on your clothing, or even handing you something to hold. Travelers are inviting targets unless they are alert, know what to expect, and are prepared to avoid or respond to any problems.

Money and valuables

- Wear a money belt when traveling and never carry all of your money in one place. Carry as little cash as possible.
- Men - If you carry a wallet, **carry it in your front pocket**.
- Women - Carry your purse slung over the shoulder and under the opposite arm. Do not carry anything you could not stand to lose.
- Never count your money in public.
- Do not wear expensive jewelry.

Out in public

- Be aware of your surroundings and your belongings at all times.
- If you feel nervous or are lost, walk purposefully into a café or shop, and check your map there rather than on the street.
- Walk confidently and as if you know where you are.
- Try to fit in and to dress like the locals (do not wear super bright colors, sneakers, and T-shirts with the names of American cities or universities).
- Avoid eye contact with strangers.
- Travel with a companion at night and stay in populated, well-lit areas.
- Avoid arguments and confrontations, and avoid demonstrations, especially in politically volatile countries.
- Act conservatively and keep a low profile.
- Ask locals you trust where you should go and not go for general safety and travel tips.

Traveling

- Be careful when driving or riding in vehicles.
- When traveling, be especially cautious in a large crowd.

- Use only sturdy luggage that locks. Do not carry expensive luggage. Make sure that your luggage is easy to identify.
- Never leave your bags unattended.
- On buses and trains, put your arm through the strap on your bags. If you decide to sleep on public transportation, make sure your bag is secure.

Hotels and Hostels

- If staying in a youth hostel, try to carry your valuables with you if there is not a safe. Lock your suitcase and, if possible, strap it to your bed when you go out. You may want to sleep with your valuables under your pillow.
- Do not leave your valuables in your hotel or hostel room. Use a safe or safety deposit box or consider storing some items in a locker at a train station or airport.

If you find yourself in a potentially dangerous situation, try to get out of trouble by running or walking away. If this is not possible, try to seek assistance or attract attention to yourself. If you are mugged, do not struggle – give up your money and valuables. Your safety is more important than the loss of your belongings. If something does happen, be sure to notify your program director/coordinator and get a police report documenting any losses for insurance purposes.

Special considerations for women

Since figures show that women going on study abroad programs outnumber men 2 to 1, there is the necessity to discuss some special considerations for women when traveling abroad. It is widely recognized in our society that women are capable, independent, and that it is our right to do anything and go anywhere. However, this American attitude toward women is not necessarily found or accepted in other countries. Around the world attitudes toward women vary tremendously, and awareness of this is an important aspect in preparation for entering a new culture.

Women and men who travel alone have different insights and gain different perspectives than they might if traveling in a group. More can perhaps be learned, seen, experienced, and gained by traveling alone. Nevertheless, women should be aware of the position they may be in upon traveling alone, or traveling with other women. A good suggestion is to speak with women who have experienced traveling and living abroad, or to read about the position of women in different countries.

A woman traveling on her own may encounter more difficulties than a man by himself. Some of the best ways to avoid hassle are to fit in and try to understand the roles of the sexes in the culture in which you are traveling. Flexibility means observing how the host country's women dress and

behave, and following their example. What may be appropriate or friendly behavior in the US may bring you unwanted, even dangerous, attention in another culture. You should try to always make your intentions clear and pay your own way. Mention your “husband” or “boyfriend,” whether you have one or not. Be alert and do not go out alone after dark. Learn the customs of the country you are visiting. In some cultures, the position of women in society differs drastically from the situation in the United States. Be aware of this and keep in mind as you encounter situations that may seem unfair or discriminatory.

Below are some direct quotes from students who traveled and lived abroad on the subject of women abroad. They offer a range of experiences:

“Exercise caution.”

“Women alone are not safe from harassment. Pretend you don’t hear. Pretend you are preoccupied.”

“Dress conservatively and never sit in empty areas.”

“Be as aware when traveling abroad as you are when you travel at home. Just be aware of yourself and your surroundings and make smart decisions.”

Try not to take offense at whistles and other gestures of appreciation, regardless of whether they are compliments, invitations, or insults. Realize that, in many countries, these gestures are as much a part of the culture as is the food, history and language.

But if a situation is dangerous – if you are made to feel uncomfortable – then act as if it is. Be extra careful when giving your trust. This applies generally, but is especially important when traveling alone. Avoid being out alone at night in unfamiliar territory – on the street, in parks, on trams, on trains. If, for example, at night you suddenly find yourself alone in a train car, move to another one where other people are sitting. Be alert and do not go out alone after dark. Discuss any situations which make you feel uncomfortable with the on-site director, or other staff member. Some recommended titles for women abroad are: [More Women Travel](#), [Safety and Security for Women Who Travel](#), and [Going Solo: A Guide for Women Traveling Alone](#).

Sexual Violence Information and Resources

Consistent with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendment of 1972, Framingham State University is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy learning environment that is free from all forms of sexual violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. However, when our students are studying abroad, they will be at institutions that do not abide by Title IX and where attitudes towards sexual harassment and sexual assault may differ dramatically from those in the US. For more information about FSU’s commitment to prevent and address sexual violence, visit www.framingham.edu/shape.

If you experience any form of sexual violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking while studying abroad, administrators at FSU are available to assist you.

At any time, 24/7/365, you may contact Framingham State University Police at +1 508-626-4911 who will connect you with an administrator. During US business hours, you may also contact:

Jane Decatur
Executive Director of International Education
+1 508-626-4585
jdecatur@framingham.edu

Melinda Stoops
Dean of Students
Title IX Coordinator for Students
+1 508-626-4596
mstoops@framingham.edu

Kimberly Dexter
Director of Equal Opportunity, Title IX, and ADA Compliance
University Title IX Coordinator
+1 508-215-5859
kdexter@framingham.edu

FSU administrators may be able to assist you with:

- obtaining local emergency medical attention and/or support
- arranging for travel and repatriation
- academic accommodations for study disrupted by sexual violence
- identifying options for reporting the incident to local school or law enforcement
- arranging for other assistance based on the individual circumstances of the victim
- providing access to support resources upon return to the US.

We hope that your time abroad will be safe and enjoyable, but please consider the following:

1. Know the policies of the institution where you are studying, support resources offered by the institution, and emergency contact information for designated administrators at the institution. Not all institutions will provide some or all of these.

2. Write down the emergency number(s) for your country. Go to www.state.gov and look under "Students Abroad". You can enter the emergency number(s) as well as other helpful numbers on the Tips To Go Wallet Card.
<http://travel.state.gov/content/dam/studentsabroad/pdfs/TipsToGoWalletCard.pdf>.

3. The State Department is committed to assisting U.S. citizens who become victims of crime while abroad. Consular officers are available for emergency assistance 24 hours/day, 7 days/week.

- Contact information for U.S. Embassies and Consulates overseas can be found [here](http://www.state.gov) or by going to individual Country Specific Information pages on www.state.gov.

- To contact the Department of State in the U.S. call 1-888-407-4747 (from the U.S. or Canada) or (202) 501-4444 (from overseas).

Consular officers, consular agents, and local employees at overseas posts know local government agencies and resources in the country where they work. Consular officers can help:

- Replace a stolen passport
- Contact family, friends, or employers
- Obtain appropriate medical care
- Address emergency needs that arise as a result of the crime
- Explain the local criminal justice process
- Obtain information about your case
- Connect you to local and U.S.-based resources to assist victims of crime
- Obtain information about any local and U.S. victim compensation programs available
- Provide a list of local lawyers who speak English

4. Victim Assistance Programs for those experiencing sexual violence, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking are available in the US and Abroad, some of which include:

- RAINN (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network) – Toll-free 24/7 hotline for sexual assault counseling and referrals: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673). RAINN also offers a hotline that provides live, secure, anonymous crisis support for victims of sexual violence, their friends, and families over RAINN's website. The Online Hotline is free of charge and is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week!
- National Domestic Violence Hotline – Toll-free 24/7 hotline for crisis counseling and referrals: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233).
- National Coalition Against Domestic Violence - The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence offers a safe home and shelter programs, public education, and technical assistance. They also have a list of state and international organizations that can assist domestic violence victims. 303-839-1852
- Americans Overseas Domestic Violence Crisis Center - The center serves abused Americans, mostly women and children, in both civilian and military populations overseas. The 24/7 international crisis hotline 1-866-USWOMEN (1-866-879-6636) can be called toll free from overseas.
- International Directory of Domestic Violence Agencies - Global list of abuse hotlines, shelters, refuges, crisis centers and women's organizations, plus domestic violence information in over 90 languages. NOTE: The agencies and organizations listed on this international directory have not been vetted by the U.S. Department of State or other federal agency.

Other Resources for Safe Travel

Other resources to review before your departure are:

- Travel information on the below topics may be found at (<http://studentsabroad.state.gov/index.php>):
- [Crisis Abroad](#)
- [Overseas Citizens Services](#)
- [Travel Warning on Drugs Abroad](#)
- [Sending Money Overseas to a U.S. Citizen in an Emergency](#)
- [Your Trip Abroad](#)
- [A Safe Trip Abroad](#)
- [Tips for Women Traveling Alone](#)
- [Safety Tips for Students](#)
- [Tips for Americans Residing Abroad](#)
- [Foreign Entry Requirements](#)
- [Medical Information for Americans Traveling Abroad](#)

GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER ISSUES ABROAD

Customs, attitudes, laws, and social practices relating to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people vary throughout the world. Some countries are more progressive than the United States in their perspectives on GLBT issues. Many other countries are far more conservative and restrictive in their policies and practices. GLBT students will want to inform themselves about relevant issues in their host countries and all their travel destinations.

Most travel guides (especially those geared towards students) will have a section on GLBT issues. Use these and other books to become informed. The Internet is a great source of information. The following are some good sites to start with:

ILGA: The International Lesbian and Gay Association

- Very comprehensive, worldwide, GLBT resources at www.ilga.org

IGLHRC: International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission

- Worldwide resources and references for GLBT issues, great content and links at www.iglhrc.org

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ABROAD

Resources and facilities for access for students with disabilities may not be the same abroad as they are in the United States. Students with concerns related to disabilities should meet with the Office of International Education staff prior to planning for study abroad. Students should also consult with Mobility International USA (MIUSA). Call (541)343-1284 or visit their site at www.miusa.org.

REGISTER WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Travel registration is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. Registration allows you to record information about your upcoming trip abroad that the Department of State can use to assist you in case of an emergency. Americans residing abroad can also get routine information from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. You should go to: <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/home.asp>

Why should I register?

Millions of Americans travel abroad every year and encounter no difficulties. However, U.S. embassies and consulates assist nearly 200,000 Americans each year who are victims of crime, accident, or illness, or whose family and friends need to contact them in an emergency. When an emergency happens, or if natural disaster, terrorism, or civil unrest strikes during your foreign travel, the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate can be your source of assistance and information. By registering your trip, you help the embassy or consulate locate you when you might need them the most. Registration is voluntary and costs nothing, but it should be part of your travel planning and security.

The Embassy or Consulate WILL:

- Issue you a new passport or replace one that is lost/stolen.
- Contact the State Department at their expense for further instructions, if you cannot verify your citizenship.
- Help you find medical or legal services in the case of an emergency and help notify friends or family members.
- Tell you what to do if something is stolen and have funds wired on your behalf, if necessary.

The Embassy or Consulate WILL NOT:

- Give or lend money or cash checks.
- Serve as a travel agent or an information bureau.
- Act as interpreters or couriers.
- Arrange for free medical or legal services.

PERSONAL PROPERTY AND LIABILITY INSURANCE

Protecting your personal possessions while you are away from your home country is something you should carefully consider, especially if you will be taking a laptop, digital camera, or other expensive equipment.

Your program is not responsible for the loss of or damage to personal property. Check to see if you might be eligible for personal property and liability coverage through your parent's homeowner policy. If you are not, there are several companies that offer personal property and liability policies that cover students studying abroad.

Please note that Framingham does not endorse either company listed below, and offers this information as a courtesy only.

"GatewayPlus"
Administered by Marsh
1-800-282-4495
www.gatewayplans.com

National Student Services, Inc.
1-800-256-6774
www.nssinc.com

INFORMATION ON TOURISM AND TRAVEL

It's important to learn BEFORE YOU GO about the countries you want to visit. This preparation helps you talk to local residents and makes for effective time management when traveling. You are more polite and informed as a foreign guest and, on the practical level, are less likely to miss seeing or doing something worthwhile in a city. As you plan your travels, you will note that the rest of the world will list departure and arrival times using the 24-hour clock. It is a good idea to prepare a reminder card so you don't miss any connections. For example, 2:00PM is 14.00 on a 24-hr. clock, which can be confusing when you first arrive.

Travel Books

Many of the following books are regularly stocked at local bookstores, but check early so that they can be ordered if necessary. All cost approx. \$25 or less. Buy a good map for any areas you plan to visit. Students may wish to purchase a *StreetWise* map of your city, which is small and easy to carry, although maps of the city will likely be available to you during orientation as well as directions to many of the key points within the city. Also recommended, especially if you have never studied the language of your country, is a PHRASE BOOK. Most bookstores have several to choose from. Basic words and phrases are not difficult, and citizens are generally gracious and helpful when you make the effort to use their language.

LET'S GO series is a popular guidebook with student travelers. It is not perfect, but is good. It comes in paperback and is regularly updated, so be sure you get the most recent edition.

EUROPE THROUGH THE BACK DOOR, by Rick Steves, profiles some of the out-of-the-way spots in Europe and also gives helpful travel hints and advice.

FROMMER'S GUIDES have good cost-cutting tips and budget savers.

FODOR'S GUIDES have a good touring section for the cities, but lists higher priced attractions, accommodations, and restaurants.

SURVIVAL KIT FOR OVERSEAS LIVING, by Robert Kohls, is short and helps ease the culture shock in both directions.

THE LONELY PLANET guides are usually written by people who lived in these places and this series is highly recommended. This is an extremely popular series with student travelers.

MICHELIN GUIDES to various countries are excellent. One version is for hotels, restaurants, etc., and the other is for cultural sites, etc.

BERLITZ, guides to different countries.

ROME FROM THE GROUND UP, James H.S. McGregor, is very informative for Rome for anyone planning to study in Rome.

Travel Abroad

Rail Passes:

Individuals under 26 years of age are eligible for a train pass valid on nearly all trains in Europe excluding Britain and many of the Eastern European countries. The countries included in the Eurail network are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Ireland, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. Eurails are a bonus because most of Europe is accessible by train and you can make last minute travel plans and will not have major problems if you get on the wrong train. With the Eurail, you may still have to pay some supplements on certain trains, and you will also have to pay for sleeping cars and overnight trains and reservations. Most youth passes are for second class, which simply means you do not have carpeted compartments and your seats may be a bit smaller.

As you decide when to activate your Eurailpass, consider when your winter and/or Easter breaks are, when you have midterms and finals, and your health and stamina. With all travel card purchases, count days carefully and consider combinations of passes. Most train passes are only available for purchase in the U.S., not in Europe.

Passes come in a variety of configurations, valid for time periods of from 15 days to 3 months. Go to www.raileurope.com for a complete listing of all available rail pass options. Also, many travel agents can sell Eurailpasses.

The most popular are:

Eurail Global Pass Youth: 2nd class travel valid in 20 countries. All the various options for time are for *consecutive* days of travel. Consecutive day passes are offered for 15 days, 21 days, 1 month, 2 months or 3 months. This is the most expensive option.

Eurail Global Pass Youth Flexi: gives you unlimited train travel in 20 countries. Choice of two pass durations: any 10 or 15 days unlimited train travel in a 2 month period. 2nd class train travel.

Eurail Selectpass Youth: This pass offers unlimited travel on the national rail networks of any 3 to 5 bordering countries out of 22 European countries that are connected by train or ship. Choose between 5 different pass durations: 5, 6, 8, 10 or 15 days of rail travel within any 2-month period. Travel days may be used consecutively or non-consecutively. (This can be a very popular choice if you are not planning a grand tour of Europe during or after the program.)

Additional Rail Pass Options

There are a variety of rail passes through England, Scotland and Wales, both single and multiple country choices. For travel throughout Europe there are additional options for single country passes from Austria, Croatia, or the Czech Republic to Slovenia, Sweden or Switzerland. Also you will find passes for travel in two neighboring countries, such as Italy and Spain, or France and Spain.

Depending upon your goals for exploration, you should find a plan that fits your needs. Check the website carefully for complete information.

For rail travel throughout Australia you will want to research the following websites:

www.railaustralia.com.au/

www.traveltrain.com.au/2/default.asp

www.countrylink.info/

www.131500.info/realtime/default.asp - Greater Sydney Transport Information

Air Travel within Europe and Elsewhere:

Currently, various airlines offer very inexpensive tickets to a variety of destinations and you may wish to investigate these as an alternative to a rail pass. Visit www.ryanair.com, www.easyjet.com, www.virgin.com, and www.travelocity.com for ideas. Excellent websites for Europe's no-frills airline tickets include www.skyscanner.net, www.floogie.com, www.dohop.com, and www.flycheapo.com, but you should be aware that the airlines often use small airports farther from town, and tickets must be booked online or by phone. In many instances the cost savings will more than offset the inconvenience, but be sure to check the airport and transportation into your final destination in figuring the actual costs.

Good websites for inexpensive travel in Australia are www.attitudetravel.com/australia/lowcostairlines/ and www.webjet.com.au/

Youth Hostel Passes:

Youth hostels are inexpensive student accommodations found around the world. Membership is **not** required in order to stay in a hostel, and you should explore the benefits before deciding to join. You can join the Youth Hostel Association in the US for about \$25. It's easier to join before you depart, but you can join the Association once you arrive. Be forewarned that membership rates may vary between countries. For further information contact:

American Youth Hostels ,
Administrative Offices, 733 15th Street, N.W., Suite 840
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 783-6161

Or:

Another organization is Hostelworld.com, an online reservation system for booking confirmed reservations in hostels all over the world. Membership is not required, but a \$10 membership will eliminate a \$2 booking fee for each reservation. For more information, go to www.hostelworld.com.

DEVELOP YOUR OWN FOCUS: GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR TIME ABROAD

To get the most out of your experience: a main theme of the orientation process is that "being there is not enough." If the experience is to pay off for you in the full sense, you will have to take charge of your life in new ways. You will find, for example, that you will have to supply much of the "rhythm and pace" to your life abroad. Many of your normal habits and obligations will simply have not relevance outside the US and you will have to build new daily patterns. Similarly, you will almost surely want to meet local residents as quickly as you can, but this won't just "happen." You will have to develop a strategy to maximize your social contacts. This may mean involving yourself in all kinds of things that would not normally attract you. In short, people become something of an end in themselves and you have to find different ways of breaking into their already established lives.

Above all, you must develop new intellectual and cultural interests. If you do not have projects to pursue—interests to cultivate—time will drift and you will constantly be "waiting" for

something to happen to you. It probably won't. The direction, the force, the interest and the independence in your life will have to be supplied by you.

This section is written to the students who ask: Well, fine, but how specifically do you go about developing “rhythm and pace” in your life? How do you make social contacts outside your ordinary pattern? How in the world do you actually pursue a so-called “intellectual and cultural interest” to get the results of which we are speaking? There are many answers to these questions and they will be different for each individual. You must ask yourself what kinds of things you feel most comfortable with – what sort of person you might like to become.

By way of example, we offer the following ideas in order to suggest the kind of things that we are talking about. The details are variable, and you may not share the interests mentioned below. Fine. But do find something – some key – which will unlock Italy for you in an interesting way that is meaningful for you as an individual. You have a semester in Rome. What exactly are you going to do with it?

Example A: Cultivating Fluency in the language of your host country

Whether you are a whiz at languages, or not, you will have a golden opportunity to achieve fluency (or something near to it). So, some of you may decide it is a great idea to use this as a key to discovering Italy. Some suggestions – make it a point to:

- Attend local films once or twice a week
- Attend local plays
- Attend lectures locally
- Ask the faculty to alert you to important lecturers
- Watch local TV
- Read local newspapers and magazines

Example B: Become an Art Lover

You may know nothing about art/architecture now, but it is another key that unlocks many avenues in the cultural history of your country. Here you just have to pick your main interests. It might be church art; contemporary design; or art of a particular region.

- Expand on what you learn in your Art class
- Attend all gallery shows (commercial and museum)
- Read the art section of the Herald Tribune
- Exhaust (if possible) the art of your city doing day trips
- Develop a program of private reading and studying
- Keep a journal of experiences and impressions for future reference

Example C: Become an Amateur Environmentalist

If cities and landscape and quality of life excite you, you might want to focus in a conscious way upon the urban environment, the rural environment, etc. How is it managed? What makes it what it is? What is different?

- How is the city planned? How is pollution controlled?
- Study the geography of cities or towns elsewhere in the country
- Photograph and catalogue important environmental details and patterns.
- Enlarge your comparisons to the nearby cities and countryside. Visit outlying areas of the city
- Try to discover the methods by which different environments keep their special character, i.e. preservation and restoration.

Some additional ideas that may be treated the same way:

- Try to meet local residents as you travel. Such conversations will also help your language. You are more likely to meet locals if you travel in smaller groups
- Take ballet lessons taught by local teachers, not taught in English
- Join a rugby or soccer club
- Join a local drama group.

As you can see the possibilities are endless. The whole point is that you should take the initiative! And, of course, while you are busy doing whatever it is that you choose to do, other things will happen to you. Try it!

On a final note, we hope you found this booklet informative and we welcome any suggestions for additions. **Best of luck to all of you and safe travels!**