

Handbook for Non-Credit Programs Abroad



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Chapter 1: Preparing for Overseas Travel



Check List

(before departure)



1. Complete your application or travel registration through the UK International Center
2. Meet with University Health Services/your physician
3. Photocopy important documents—passport, credit/debit cards, health insurance information, etc. Take one set with you and leave another with family/someone at home.
4. Contact your bank and credit/debit card companies to let them know when and where you're traveling
5. Learn the details of your international travel medical insurance.
6. Set up a communication plan with family and friends
7. Learn as much as you can about the culture, history, language, customs, and traditions of your host country.

Essentials

Passport

A valid passport is required to enter and leave foreign countries, and only the U.S. Department of State has the authority to grant, issue, or verify United States passports. If you do not have a passport, apply for one immediately, as it can take approximately 4-6 weeks to obtain one.

More information on how to apply for or renew a passport, as well as timelines for processing, expedited services, etc. can be found at [this link](#), or on campus at the WildCard UK ID Center.

To avoid immigration problems, passports should be valid for at least six months after your planned return date to the U.S.

Visa

A visa is a stamp placed in the passport which authorizes entry into a particular country for a specific period of time. Some countries may require a visa for entry, while others may not. Without a visa, you could be turned away at the border and not permitted to enter.

To determine whether or not you need a visa for your host country, check with the [U.S. Department of State](#). Visa information is located under the Entry/Exit requirements section of the each country's specific information sheets. Travelers who are not American citizens must check with their country's consulate/embassy to determine visa requirements. You are responsible for ensuring you comply with all of your host country's visa requirements, as well as any those of any countries you may pass through while traveling.

Should you need a visa, apply for it early, as the processing time can take up to three months to complete, and you may have to travel to the nearest consulate/embassy to obtain it.

You MUST have your passport before you can apply for a visa.

Some travelers use visa processing services to process their visas. These organizations provide support services and expedited processing, if needed. One such visa processing organization is [A Briggs](#), but there are many others available as well.

International Student Identity Card (ISIC)

This card is internationally recognized and, in addition to serving as a student ID, can provide these benefits :

- Travel discounts for air, rail, bus, and/or ferry
- Reduced rates on some accommodations and admission to various attractions
- 24-hour assistance hotline staffed by multilingual representatives who can help with various emergencies

The ISIC card can be purchased either in the [WildCard UK ID Center](#) or online at [www.myisic.com](#).

State Department Registration

All travelers should register with the State Department for their time abroad, in order to receive various updates with important information

specific to their host country/region. Registering may also help the U.S. government contact you in an emergency.

You can register at <https://step.state.gov/step/>. The STEP program also has a smart phone app which you can download to receive important updates while you are overseas.

International Students

If you are considered an international student at UK:

- It is your responsibility to find out if you will need a visa to enter your destination country or countries. Allow yourself time to apply for the visa before you depart. Visa agreements are made between countries, so you may need a visa even if individuals traveling on U.S. passports do not.
- Remember that you need a travel signature on your I-20 or DS-2019 from within a year of the date of re-entry to the US and a valid F-1 or J-1 visa stamp to reenter the US in your student status.
- If your US visa stamp has expired, you will need to renew it outside the US before you return. You may be able to renew the visa stamp in your host country, or you may need to make plans to visit





an embassy in another country where you are eligible to apply for the US visa. It is always best to renew in your home country, but it is also possible to renew the visa stamp in countries that accept third country national visa applications. You can check embassy websites for eligibility. Make sure that your passport is valid for at least six months after your return to the U.S.

Always travel with your original documents. Only carrying copies of the documents can cause delays, and you could even be denied entry to the US at the border if you don't have your original, current documents.

Please review the information about travel on our [website](#) as you prepare for your time abroad.

Travel Arrangements

In many cases, you will be required to make your own travel arrangements for getting to and from your host country. While neither the International Center nor UK endorses any of the following companies or websites, past students have recommended them, in addition to consulting individual airlines or travel agents:

- [Expedia](#)

- [Kayak](#)
- [Orbitz](#)
- [STA Travel](#)
- [Student Universe](#)

Always read the fine print to understand any restrictions on your travel. Check with the [Transportation Security Administration \(TSA\) website](#) to obtain the latest information about air travel, such as travel regulations and security measures.

If you plan to travel while abroad, make sure to think about what airlines, trains, or other transportation options might be available to you, before you leave the U.S.

Communication While Abroad

How will you communicate with friends and family back home? What about with your contacts in-country? In most countries there are a variety of ways in which you can stay in touch. Think about the following and which might be the best for you and your particular situation:

Cell Phone

In many cases, American cell phones work overseas. Check with your cellular service provider to learn more about available international calling, texting and data plans. Keep in mind, though, that international cellular

service plans can be expensive depending on your host country. If you choose to use a smart phone abroad (e.g., iPhone, etc.) watch out for data charges if not using internet in WiFi zones. These charges can be exorbitant.

If you have a smart phone and access to WiFi, explore available apps that allow for free calls and messages, like [Viber](#) and [Line](#).

First time flying?

You may have a mix of emotions from excitement to apprehension. Flying internationally can be different than flying within the U.S., so it is important to read about how you can prepare for your flight experience.

Visit www.ifly.com/airport-tips for first-time flyer tips and more information about various topics like customs, security, and more.



Another option might be to rent a cell phone or buy a pay-as-you-go phone once you arrive in-country. Advantages to doing so may include:

- Minutes are often not deducted for in-coming calls.
- Still being able to receive calls even after you have run out of minutes.
- Saving money if the majority of your calls/texts are between other individuals in-country, at a local rate instead of an international rate.

While not the only ones, some phone rental options include:

- [World Cellular Rentals](#)
- [Telestial](#)
- [PicCell Wireless](#)

Online Communication

Many students rely on [Skype](#), FaceTime (for iPhones) or similar technologies to make free phone/video calls. Some may require a headset and/or microphone to use, though many can be operated using WiFi and a smartphone or laptop computer.

Other Options

If you choose not to bring a cell phone or use Skype or similar technologies via a laptop computer, you may be able to take advantage of other communication options abroad such as:

- Using phone cards
- Using phone booths/call centers
- Using an internet café
- Email, Facebook, Twitter
- Letters and Postcards
- Blogging

No matter how you choose to communicate with people both in-country and back at home, make sure they know how they can get in touch with you, especially in case of emergencies. Also, make sure to set expectations with friends and family back home about communication. You will likely not be able to talk with them as much as you do now. Also, think about how you might be able to reach a larger group of people back home at one time, giving you more time to enjoy your experience abroad.

When thinking about how you communicate with people back home, consider the tone you use and what you say. For example, if you are experiencing cultural adjustment you may not want to communicate all that you are going through, particularly if it passes quickly, as it could spark panic or concern among those at home. You wouldn't want to worry anyone unnecessarily, would you?

Packing

Students that have already traveled overseas usually laugh when thinking about packing—the majority of them say that they packed way too much for their time abroad.

To avoid being in that situation, think about the following tips:

- A week or so before you depart, pack your bag like normal. A day or so later, take out about half of what's in your suitcase. Then carry your suitcase up and down a flight of stairs. If it is too heavy, then perhaps you remove some additional items. Think about this:

many places around the world do not have elevators or escalators as much as the U.S., so you would have to carry your own things up stairs and down streets.

- Double check what types and how many pieces of luggage you are allowed to carry with you. Keep in mind that not all methods of transportation abroad allow for the size and amount of luggage that may be standard in the U.S. Typically, travelers are able to carry one large suitcase (up to 50 lbs.), one carry-on bag and one personal item with them when flying (e.g., purse, laptop, etc.). Check with your airline for the most accurate information.
- Think about what liquids you may need to take with you (e.g., medications, hygiene products, etc.), and understand the 3-1-1 rule should you wish to carry them on the plane with you. For more information about liquids and the 3-1-1 rule visit the [Transportation Security Administration \(TSA\) website](#).
- Bring comfortable shoes with you, as you may be walking much more than you are used to in the U.S. Choose a pair that may work for nicer occasions as well as everyday use, so as to cut down on the weight of your luggage.
- Invest in a raincoat or small umbrella, as weather can be very unpredictable and greatly affect your emotions while abroad—for better or worse.

- Pack lightweight clothing that you can wear in layers and with multiple outfits. You may not have access to laundry facilities and have to wear some pieces more than once. Consider clothing that may be easy to clean should you have to clean it yourself.
- Think about the climate and weather in your host country and pack clothes that are both functionally AND culturally appropriate. Check the weather just before you leave to see what it may be like while you are there.
- Do not bring large quantities of things like toiletries or bed linens, as these can often be purchased abroad. Unless there's a specific brand that you need, try packing sample/travel-size toiletries instead and purchase larger-sized ones abroad. Your destination may provide bed linens, though if not you can purchase them abroad. Think about donating them before you leave to help lighten your luggage for the trip home.
- Do not take valuables that you would not want to lose. Petty crime, like pickpocketing, can be more common in some countries and students have been known to be victims of pickpocketing in the past.
- Bring some sort of money pouch or belt with you that you can put your money/valuable documents in and hide while abroad. This can help prevent theft or pickpocketing.
- Do not pack many electronic items that require a lot of energy when plugged in (e.g., hair dryers, straighteners, etc.) as they may blow a fuse or voltage converter. If you need such items, think about purchasing them abroad or see if they may be provided in your accommodation.
- Make copies of ALL your important documents, like your passport, travel medical insurance information, debit & credit cards, driver's license (front and back of cards), emergency contact information, etc. Put one set in your luggage and give another to someone to keep in the U.S.





WHAT SHOULD I PACK???

Don't know what to pack? Take a look at the sample list below to think about what you might need for your experience abroad.

Remember to consider how long you will be abroad, what you will be doing, and your host country's culture. Start packing well in advance and don't pack what you cannot carry! Don't forget that you will bring items back from abroad, so don't overpack your luggage.

CLOTHING

- 1-2 pairs of walking shoes
- 1 pair of shower shoes
- 3-5 pairs of socks
- 5-7 pairs of underwear
- 1-2 pairs of shorts
- 1-2 pairs of slacks or skirts
- 2 shirts/blouses
- 1 sweater/sweatshirt
- 1 poncho/rain jacket
- 1 jacket (the weight depends on the climate; be sure you know what season you will be there. Note: the seasons are opposite below the equator)
- 1 bathing suit
- 1 dressy outfit, including shoes, for going out
- Other: _____
- _____

MEDICINE

(Pack in your CARRY-ON Luggage)

- prescription medicine (keep it in the original bottle & carry a copy of the prescription)
- eyeglasses and prescription (an extra pair of glasses)
- contact lenses and prescription (an extra pair of contacts)
- lens cleaning solution
- contraceptives/condoms
- Aspirin/Tylenol/Advil
- any other over the counter medications you use.
- Other: _____
- _____

TOILETRIES

- take small amounts of personal care items unless you have a favorite brand you can't live without
- toothbrush/toothpaste
- soap/body wash
- shampoo/conditioner
- sunscreen
- cosmetics
- deodorant
- first-aid kit
- tissue/toilet paper
- feminine hygiene products
- razors for shaving (cannot be packed in carry-on luggage)
- sunglasses
- brush/comb
- washcloth
- Other: _____

DOCUMENTS

- Money belt or neck wallet inclusive of the following:
 - passport
 - tickets and rail passes
 - student ID card
 - cash, debit/credit card
 - traveler's checks
 - emergency contact info
 - travel medical insurance information
 - on-site contact info
 - Other: _____
 - _____

MISCELLANEOUS

- camera, film or storage cards
- cell phone
- flashlight
- books, guides, maps
- small amount of laundry soap and line
- plastic storage bag for wet clothes
- change purse
- umbrella
- luggage tags/locks on your luggage
- battery-operated alarm clock
- power adapter (for sockets)
- power converter (for sockets)
- photos of family and significant people in your life
- Other: _____

ENGAGE ABROAD WITH YOUR SMART PHONE

Thinking about taking your smart phone (iPhone or Android) abroad? If so, prior to departure take a look at the app store because there are a variety of apps that you can download to help you while abroad.

Here is just a brief sampling of helpful apps that are either free or very affordable to download. Please note that some apps may not be available for both iPhone and Android users.



[Google Maps](#)

Find out where things are



[Viber](#)

Free calls/ texts to Viber members



[Skype](#)

Call/video chat with people back home



[Around Me](#)

Find out what's around you



[Blogger](#)

Manage your blog from your phone



[Trip Boss](#)

Expense and budget app



[Lonely Planet](#)

Find guides for your host country



[Instagram](#)

Take pictures and videos with this app



[Associated Press](#)

Stay up to date with the news



[iTranslate](#)

Translate into other languages



[Snapseed](#)

Enhance your photos



[WiFi Finder](#)

Find the closest WiFi near you



[Word Lens](#)

Translates printed words between languages



[Vine](#)

Take short video clips



[UK Mobile App](#)

Access myUK & other resources



[iPronunciation](#)

Practice pronunciation in another language



[XE Currency](#)

Covert dollars to other currencies



[Dropbox](#)

Store files & access them anywhere



[Mint](#)

Personal finance and budget app



[Smart Traveler](#)

Take State Dept. travel resources with you

Keep in mind that using data abroad can be extremely expensive. Thus, you may only want to use these apps when you can connect to Wi-Fi, to avoid such high data charges.

MONEY & FINANCES

UK International Center Fees

Keep in mind that all students going abroad under UK auspices will be assessed one or more various fees, depending on their specific situation. All students will be billed \$10.50 per week (billed in weekly increments) to cover the cost of international travel medical insurance and evacuation coverage. Participants on group international travel programs comprised of five or more students will also be charged a non-refundable \$50 risk management fee.

In some cases, your department or unit may cover these fees on your behalf. Make sure that you check with the appropriate individuals setting up your travel to see how billing will be handled.

Local Currency—

How many dollars is that?

Before departing the US, you should familiarize yourself with the currency and exchange rate in your host country. The [XE Currency Converter](#) offers up-to-date conversion rates for many global currencies. You may also wish to look up pictures of your host country's currency to familiarize yourself with the notes and coins you'll encounter.

How much is _____ abroad? One of the most common questions asked is how much certain things cost abroad. The answer is really "It depends," as prices vary for many reasons around the world.

However, once you know your host country's currency and exchange rate, research how much certain items of interest might be such as:

An average meal: _____

A bus/train ticket: _____

A bottle of water: _____

Ask other individuals who have already traveled to your host country for feedback. Doing so will help you better budget your money and be prepared for what to expect.

Changing Money

If you wish, you can change dollars into your host country's local currency before departure. Check first with your bank and call in advance to ensure they have the appropriate currency on hand or can get it in time for you. You can also often exchange money at the airport, however, you may not receive as much host-country currency for your dollars due to higher rates. Once abroad, ask to see if the best exchange rates are available at banks or exchange kiosks.

Credit and Debit Cards

Debit and Credit cards are increasingly common in many countries around the world. Students are recommended to take one of each type of card if possible. Master Card and Visa are more widely accepted than other cards. Keep in mind that various rates or fees may be applied, such as a transaction fee, when using debit and/or credit cards.

Check with your bank and or credit card company to learn more about how to use debit and/or credit cards abroad and what fees may be involved in doing so. Also make sure to tell them everywhere you will be visiting while abroad and the dates of your time abroad so that your cards do not get deactivated, leaving you without a way to access money.

Remember that many countries are much more cash-based than the United States, and it may not always be possible to pay for goods and services using a card.

Always have cash on hand for unexpected expenses.

ATMs

ATMs can be found in many countries around the world. Make sure to learn which ATMs are acceptable to use in your host country, as not all ATMs are safe. Check with your on-site contacts to learn which ATMs are safe to use, as identify theft may be more common in some countries than others.

When using your debit or credit card at an overseas ATM, you should receive the exchange rate for that day. As with purchases with credit and debit cards, you should also be aware of any fees you may be charged for cash withdrawals overseas.

You may wish to withdraw larger sums of cash at once to use over the course of a week or two, rather than make cash withdrawals on a daily basis, because you will likely be charged the same rate no matter how much you take out. When carrying large sums of money, be particularly vigilant of your surroundings so as to not become a target for theft or other petty crime.

Check with your bank before departure to learn if they are able to waive part of some of any transaction fees or charges that may be assessed when withdrawing money abroad.

Cash

Cash in the local currency is the easiest and most-accepted form of payment throughout the world. If you have a large amount of cash with you, try to divide it up so that some is in your money belt, some in your bag, and/or some in your front pocket. That way, if you are pickpocketed, the perpetrator is less likely to get away with all of

your money. Keep in mind that your host country's cash and coins may look different from those in the U.S., and it may be more frequently used than cards. You should always have some cash on you in case of emergencies when cards are not usable.

Travelers Checks

Travelers checks can be one of the most secure ways to transport funds overseas. They can be exchanged for cash in the local currency either at banks or at exchange kiosks/bureaus, though often at a less-favorable exchange rate than you might get using a credit or debit card at an ATM. If you plan to carry travelers checks, make sure to research which banks/exchange bureaus where you will be accept them, and the hours of those establishments. Do NOT use travelers checks as a main form of payment or accessing cash abroad. Most local businesses or stores will not accept them.

Wire Transfer

Banks, AMEX, and commercial agencies can wire money to a bank account or agent abroad. They take some time to process, 3 – 4 days, and may incur large fees for both the sender and the recipient. It may or may not be a good option for your location.

Always take at least TWO forms of currency with you abroad!! That way, in case something happens to one form of currency, you still have access to funds with the other.

Identity Theft

Identity theft, a crime in which a person pretends to be someone else in order to access their finances, is becoming increasingly common. Travelers should be especially wary of the risks of identity theft that they may face overseas.

If you believe that your credit or debit cards have been stolen, contact your bank in the United States as soon as possible to let them know. This may help you avoid being responsible for fraudulent charges or withdrawals.

If you need to purchase or pay for anything over the internet while you are abroad, make sure never to do so on an unsecured network. WiFi is often widely available overseas, and can be a tempting way to quickly take care of minor financial matters on your smart phone or laptop. But remember—any public network should NOT be trusted as a secure network. Using unsecured networks could result in your sensitive information being stolen.

Finances Checklist

1. Know how you will pay for your program and travel expenses
2. Know what currency is used in your host country and its equivalent in U.S. dollars
3. Research how much certain things cost in your host country
4. Plan for what methods of payment you will use abroad (i.e. cash, card, etc.). Think about how often cards are used in your host country, and whether or not they are a reliable option.
5. Make sure your bank, credit/debit card companies know when you will be abroad and where
6. Make copies of any financial documents needed and have a safe place to store them



DID YOU KNOW?

Petty theft is one of the most common crimes that Americans experience abroad. Make sure to keep close tabs on your cards, cash and valuables while you are overseas.

Don't become a victim!



STAYING HEALTHY

When preparing for your time abroad, it is extremely important that you be current on all medical and dental exams and vaccinations. Visit www.cdc.gov to learn about any health risks that are specific to your host country.

If you know you have a condition (such as allergies or a chronic illness) or have seen a physician for treatment of a medical or psychological condition, contact UK's travel medical insurance provider (AXA Assistance) *wcerell* before departure so that appropriate preparations can be made to support you as much as possible. Talk with your physician about a plan of action should to manage your condition or illness, should it manifest itself overseas.

Medical Practices

Healthcare values, assumptions, and methods are not the same around the world. If you have questions about the healthcare standards in your host country, be sure to conduct research on the topic before you depart.

Medications

Take a full supply of any prescription medication(s) you take. Make sure they are in their original packaging and you have a note from your doctor indicating that they've been prescribed to you. Take enough medication for your entire time abroad.

Some medications you take in the U.S. may be illegal in other countries. Therefore, research to determine if the country or countries to which you will be traveling have any restrictions governing the use of medications.

You can always check with the foreign embassy of the country(ies)

you are visiting to make sure any medications are not considered illegal. [Here is a listing](#) of those embassies and consulates.

Immunizations

Some countries may require or suggest that you have certain immunizations or tests conducted before crossing their borders.

Visit www.cdc.gov to learn about specific immunizations and inoculations for your particular travel destinations. Consult with your physician or the [UK Travel Clinic](#) to learn more about how you can obtain any required immunizations.

Any immunizations administered should be recorded in a small, yellow "International Certificate of Vaccination" booklet. This booklet should be available where passport applications are accepted, or from a healthcare provider.

Travel Medical Insurance

All travelers going abroad in the course and scope of their status as an employee or student at UK are eligible for coverage under UK's international travel medical insurance and evacuation policy, provided by AXA Assistance.

The submission of your travel registration or application through the International Center will guarantee your coverage under this plan. All students are billed \$10.50 per week (billed in weekly increments) for this coverage. These charges will be assessed to their student billing accounts.

AXA Assistance

Detailed information about AXA's services can be found on the [IHSS website](#).

As soon as you complete your travel registration in the UKIC system, you will receive an email

containing information about your policy, and will be instructed to create an account through AXA's online portal in order to access the various resources available to you.

Once you have created an account, you will have access to a variety of resources on AXA's portal, including a search function to find doctors and hospitals in countries throughout the world, country- and city-specific health and security information.

Make sure you take a look at the website and familiarize yourself with it before your departure!

At a glance, AXA Assistance's Insurance benefits include:

- \$0 deductible
- Various levels of coverage for things like medical expenses, medical evacuation, repatriation of remains, etc.
- Coverage for evacuation in the event of a political or natural disaster.

University Health Services

Students are encouraged to schedule an appointment with University Health Services (UHS) or their physician at least one month prior to departing the United States. If traveling to a country where immunizations are recommended, you may need to schedule your appointment earlier, as they may require several doses spread out over a period of weeks.

University Health Services
859-323-5823

AXA Assistance
Email: medassist-usa@axa-assistance.us
1-855-327-1469 or,
1-312-935-3542 outside the U.S.

Medical Professional Malpractice Coverage

Students, faculty, staff, or non-University individuals who provide patient care in clinical international programs sponsored by the University of Kentucky, whether credit-bearing or non-credit bearing, shall also provide evidence of malpractice insurance that meets or exceeds the University coverage.

The coverage afforded under the UK Plan does not extend to medical services provided abroad. The UK Healthcare Department of Risk Management has identified International Helpers (Guernsey) Trust as a potential source for acceptable coverage. The international traveler is not limited to this source, but it has been approved as providing acceptable coverage.

If you have questions regarding your coverage options, please contact the UK Hospital Risk Management Office at 859-257-6212.

Political Security & Natural Disaster Evacuation Services

Participants enrolled in UK's international insurance plan are also covered for evacuation in the event of a natural or political disaster.

Should a Covered Event occur, the insurer will arrange and pay for your evacuation while you are on a covered journey outside the U.S. at the time of the Covered Event to the nearest place of safety or your Country of Residence.

Psychological Counseling Resources

If you are currently seek professional help for psychological conditions, please consult your psychologist or psychiatrist before making the final decision to go abroad. It is important for you and your therapist to have a plan of action regarding how you will respond should you feel your condition manifests itself. If you experience any difficulties and feel as though you need to talk, consult your family, friends, advisors and others. They will listen and can put you in touch with other professionals who can help. Resources are available at the [UK Counseling Center](#):

106 Frazee Hall
1-859- 257-8701
Hours: M-F: 8:00 am – 5:00 PM.

Online Disability Resources

The University of Kentucky Disability Resource Center can be a great place to start looking for advice on managing a disability overseas. Their website can be found at [this link](#).

HIV/AIDS & Sexually Transmitted Diseases

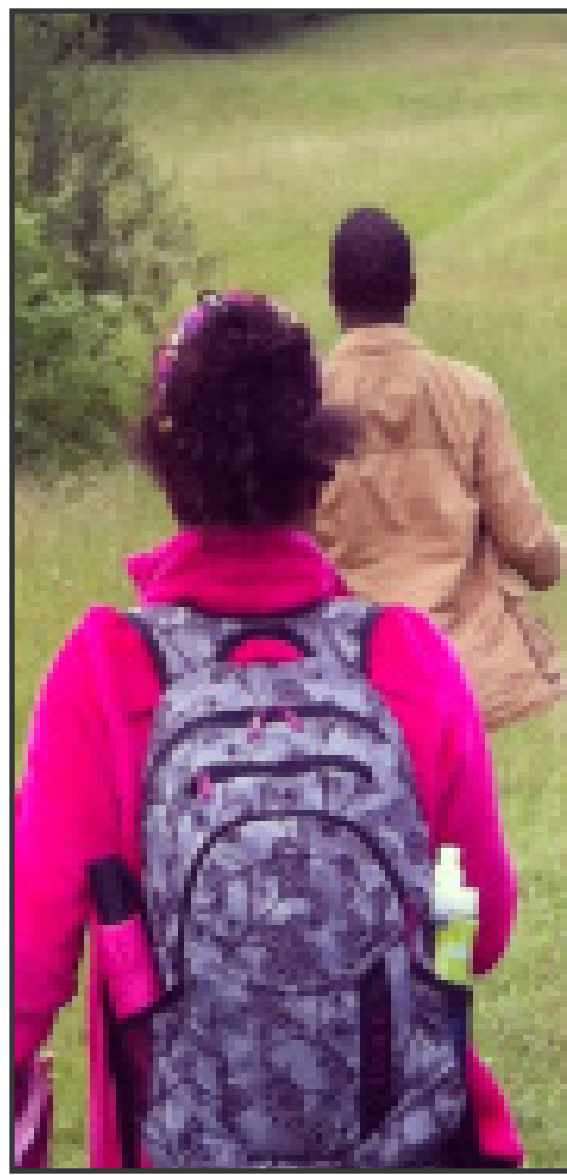
As with any other preparations you may make with regard to your health abroad, please take the necessary precautions to avoid exposure to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, regardless of where you may be going, or for how long. The [Centers for Disease Control](#) and [World Health Organization](#) can be great sources of information.

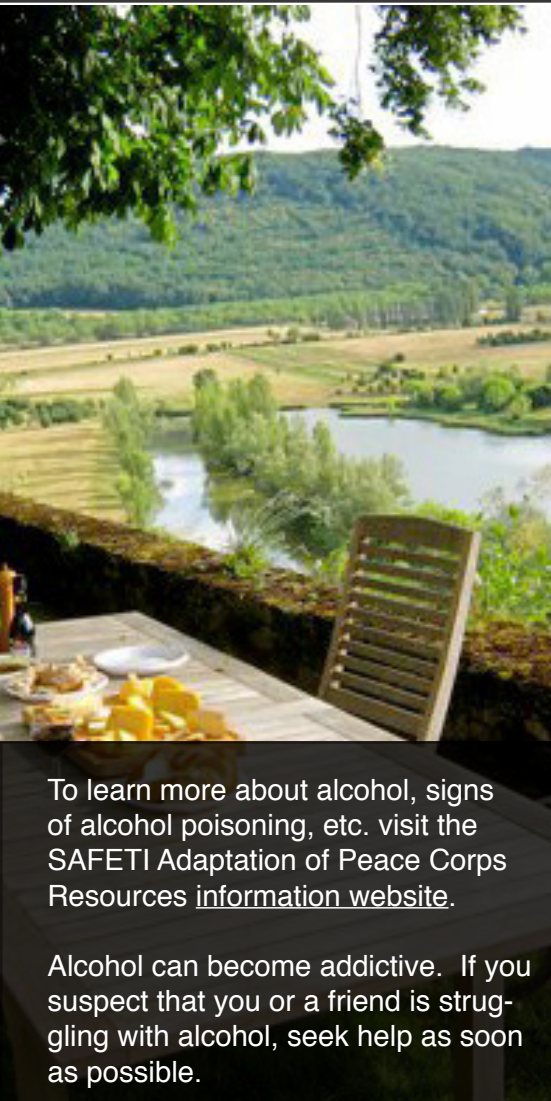
Do not use intravenous drugs or share needles. If you choose to be sexually active, use latex condoms or barriers during vaginal, anal, or oral sex. Before leaving the U.S., purchase condoms and a spermicide/ water-based lubricant.

Never engage in unprotected oral sex, particularly after brushing or flossing, or if you have cold/canker sores. Consult with your healthcare provider or UK University Health Service to obtain information on how to protect yourself from HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases.

Some countries require HIV antibody tests, and there may be constraints on which countries you may be able to enter, should you already be HIV-positive. Contact the Consulate or Embassy of your primary destination country and any others you plan to visit.

Some medications are not universally available; discuss with your healthcare provider the availability of medications you may need at your destination.





To learn more about alcohol, signs of alcohol poisoning, etc. visit the SAFETI Adaptation of Peace Corps Resources [information website](#).

Alcohol can become addictive. If you suspect that you or a friend is struggling with alcohol, seek help as soon as possible.

Food, Water and Diet

While your particular host country or region may require more specific knowledge of do's and don'ts surrounding food and water, refer below for a few general tips:

- Consult the Centers for Disease Control's [website](#) for information on safe food and water practices in your country.
- If you can't drink the tap water in your host country, then avoid raw fruits and vegetables, except those that you can peel. Also avoid ice in your drinks.
- Before indulging in foods from street vendors, pay attention: Does the vendor have access to running water (for food preparation & hygiene)? How is the food stored?

If you require special accommodations regarding your diet, (e.g., gluten intolerance, vegetarian, allergies, etc.), understand that these needs may not be easily met in some locations. Speak to your in-country contacts or your advisors about these needs so that they can assist you in locating suitable food options.

Keep in mind that there may be cultural differences in the notions of food and standards of body image in other cultures. If you have an eating disorder or feel you might, you may perceive these differences in culture to come with additional challenges. Keep in mind that these differences are often customary, and they are dictated by the host culture.

If you have or have had an eating disorder, discuss your plans to go abroad with your physician. Also share this information with your advisors, or others who may be making preparations on your behalf.

Rest and Stress

Being over-stressed and/or under-rested can tax your immune system and mental well-being. Make sure to get enough sleep every night. As you adjust to the stimulation of being in another country, you might need occasional naps. Pace yourself with social activities so that you can manage your time and fulfill your goals.

Jet lag can also affect your stress level and sleeping pattern. When traveling across time zones, drink water to stay hydrated, avoid caffeine or alcohol, and exercise your muscles as much as you can on the plane.

You may also wish to stay up until the local bed time in order to better adjust to a regular sleeping pattern in the host country

Alcohol

In most of the countries where UK students travel, the legal drinking age is lower than in the U.S. If you choose to consume alcohol, think about the following:

- In many cultures, alcohol is very common (wine in France, sake in Japan, beer in Germany, etc.), while in others it may be prohibited. Watch how and when drinks are taken by host nationals-- usually part of a meal and rarely just to get drunk. Binge drinking will attract unwanted negative attention, make you stand out, and could subject you to being a victim of crime.
- Make a plan—know how many drinks you plan to consume, if any at all. Know how you plan to get home, and familiarize yourself with the transportation system in your host country.
- Many health and safety issues abroad occur when the victim is inebriated. Being drunk impairs your ability to make sound decisions and makes you less aware of your surroundings.
- Health issues are compounded with continued use of alcohol. If you are in a higher elevation, refrain from drinking until you've acclimated. If you are sick or having stomach trouble, eliminate alcoholic beverages until you recover. Don't use alcohol if you are also taking any over-the-counter or prescription medications.
- Always keep your personal and emergency contact information on your person in case it should be needed at any point if you have passed out or injured yourself and need assistance.

STAYING SAFE

Going abroad is not necessarily dangerous in itself. However, standing out as a “tourist” or “visitor” can sometimes attract the wrong kind of attention— even though many countries are safer than the U.S. You cannot always rely on your instincts and common sense in a different place, so it’s best to be informed about your host country and safety considerations there. You might want to learn about things like the transportation system, the local authorities, common customs, and even equivalents for the emergency number 911.

General Safety Tips

- If you feel uncomfortable in a situation, remove yourself
- Do not go out alone, particularly after dark, and avoid drinking to excess.
- Know how to navigate the local transportation at all times of the day
- ALWAYS carry your emergency contact information on you
- Dress conservatively and in line with local norms so as not to be labeled as American--do not wear overly obvious American clothing (e.g., things with large American symbols, etc.).
- Avoid rallies, protests or demonstrations. These events can become volatile very quickly, and could be dangerous.
- Know where you can get help if needed (e.g., police station, store, hospital, etc.)
- Understand that non-verbal communication (e.g., eye contact, gestures, etc.) that may not mean anything in the U.S. may be offensive in other countries

Situational Awareness

Be aware of your surroundings and the people around you at all times.

Give the impression that you know where you are going and are determined to get there. If you need to consult a map, step into a café to look it over. Cell phones and personal music devices are not only coveted by would-be thieves, but they also prevent you from knowing what’s happening around you. Use these items once you reach your destination, and not en route to it.

Avoiding Theft

Petty theft and pick-pocketing are by far the most frequent crimes that students are subject to overseas. To help prevent theft consider these tips:

- Before you leave the U.S., clean out your wallet or purse. Don’t take anything you won’t need!
- Don’t carry cash, credit cards, or valuables conspicuously. Use a money belt or neck pouch to conceal them.
- Don’t carry large amounts of cash with you.
- Keep your handbag/bookbag in front of you when using public transportation.
- Don’t carry your passport with you on a daily basis. Carry a copy and leave the original in a safe place. Stow other valuable items in a safe location as well.

Leave valuables, expensive jewelry, and similar items at home so you do not risk them being lost or stolen.

Sexual Harassment

Incidents involving sexual harassment or assault can occur abroad just as they do here in the U.S. and may have cultural undertones attached to them in your host country. Both men and women may be victims. Research to find out what cultural norms may exist wherever you’re going. If you feel hostile

ity towards you, are offended or experience repeated intimidation, it could be harassment. Contact your advisor, program director, or on-site contacts if you find yourself in such a situation.

Attitudes surrounding gender abroad can vary widely and may be different from what you expect at home. If you are a victim of an assault, reporting this incident to an administrator is important because:

- You may need medical attention or choose to talk with someone about what happened
- You may want or need assistance in working with local authorities
- UK will make the same resources available to you abroad as if you were on campus.

You should be aware of whether or not the discussion is confidential. University policy and Title IX [prohibit hostile environments](#) from existing, and they provide resources for students who may experience such environments. **Remember: being a victim is never your fault.**

Transportation Safety

Did you know that car accidents are by far the most common cause of death among Americans abroad? Carefully consider your transportation options whenever you are overseas:

- Only use trusted, licensed taxis. **NEVER** use Uber, Lyft or any other ridesharing service
- Be aware of your surroundings on public transportation
- If you are traveling by air, make sure the airline you choose has a good safety record. The [EU Airline Blacklist](#) is a good resource for checking this information!

Local Law

Americans abroad are subject to the laws of their host country. Students are also subject to the [University of Kentucky Student Code of Conduct](#) when overseas. If you violate local law, you may have to face legal proceedings in the local judicial system, which may not provide the same safeguards for those accused of crime in the U.S. system.

If convicted of a crime, you will face punishment according to local law. Many countries have laws regarding the use and distribution of illegal drugs- many more severe than in the U.S.

Remember—if you hear of, witness, or are a victim of any crime during your time abroad, report it as soon as possible to any on-site UK personnel, or to the UK International Center.

Natural Disasters & Political Unrest

While traveling overseas, you may encounter natural disasters unlike those you may be familiar with (e.g., volcano, earthquake, etc). Should one occur during your trip, consult with on-site UK personnel, your advisor, or the UK International Center to determine the proper safety protocol. Please also contact your family and UK's office of International Health, Safety & Security to let them know you are okay.

Not all countries around the world are as politically stable as the U.S., and sometimes conditions can quickly deteriorate in seemingly stable countries. Should things like protests, demonstrations or gatherings occur, don't participate in them. You could put yourself in danger, as often these events can turn dangerous and responses to

them can vary by country.

The UK International Center monitors the conditions in countries abroad through various vehicles and will contact you as conditions warrant. You, too, should stay abreast of goings on in your host country. The [U.S. Department of State](#) is a great first resource to consult.

Should the natural disaster or political instability be considered a Covered Event during a covered journey, AXA Assistance can help coordinate and pay for your evacuation.

Cultural Considerations

Culture can be defined as the sum total of what a certain group of people has created together and transmits. While it may seem straightforward, it can be quite complex and is generally passed down from generation to generation. We as individuals may identify with more than one culture.

There are many aspects of culture. Some are easy to see or pick out, like clothing, food, and architecture. Others, however, may be harder to identify, such as how people in the host country view friendship, or their beliefs on gender or equality. Think about your own culture. How would you define it? What has shaped who you are? Your upbringing? Your beliefs? Now think about these questions in the context of your host culture. Make the time and effort to really get to know your host culture and which of its characteristics lie below the "surface."





While abroad, you will likely notice differences between your host culture and your own. How do you think your own cultural beliefs and perceptions will affect your opinions and interactions in the host culture? How do you think you will be perceived by others?

When thinking about these ideas and encountering them in real-life, it's helpful to conduct preliminary research on the culture in your host country and to keep an open mind, free of judgment. Here are some ways you can research your host country:

- Travel Guides like Lonely Planet or Frommers. Check the internet or a local bookstore to find other options
- Talk to people from the host country, like a faculty member or international student on campus
- Talk to travelers who have previously gone to that country
- Access various media sources in the host country, such as newspapers, radio or TV programs, or movie
- Search the web! Websites like the [U.S. Department of State](#) and the [World Factbook](#) can be great resources.

- T.V. stations like the Travel Channel and National Geographic may have programming about your host destination.

Language: Learn it! Use it!

While you may not need to learn a language to enjoy your time abroad, it is definitely advisable to learn at least a few helpful phrases if your host country does not use English as its primary tongue.

Many travelers return saying that they wished they would have learned more about their host language before leaving the U.S. because it would have made things easier while abroad. Just being able to say please, thank you, hello, and goodbye can really help how positively people view you.

If you already have some knowledge of the host language, brush up on it before you go, whether that be through movies, news, or practicing with friends.

While abroad, use the host language as much as possible and don't worry about making mistakes. Set expectations for when you will use English, and talk to your friends about which language

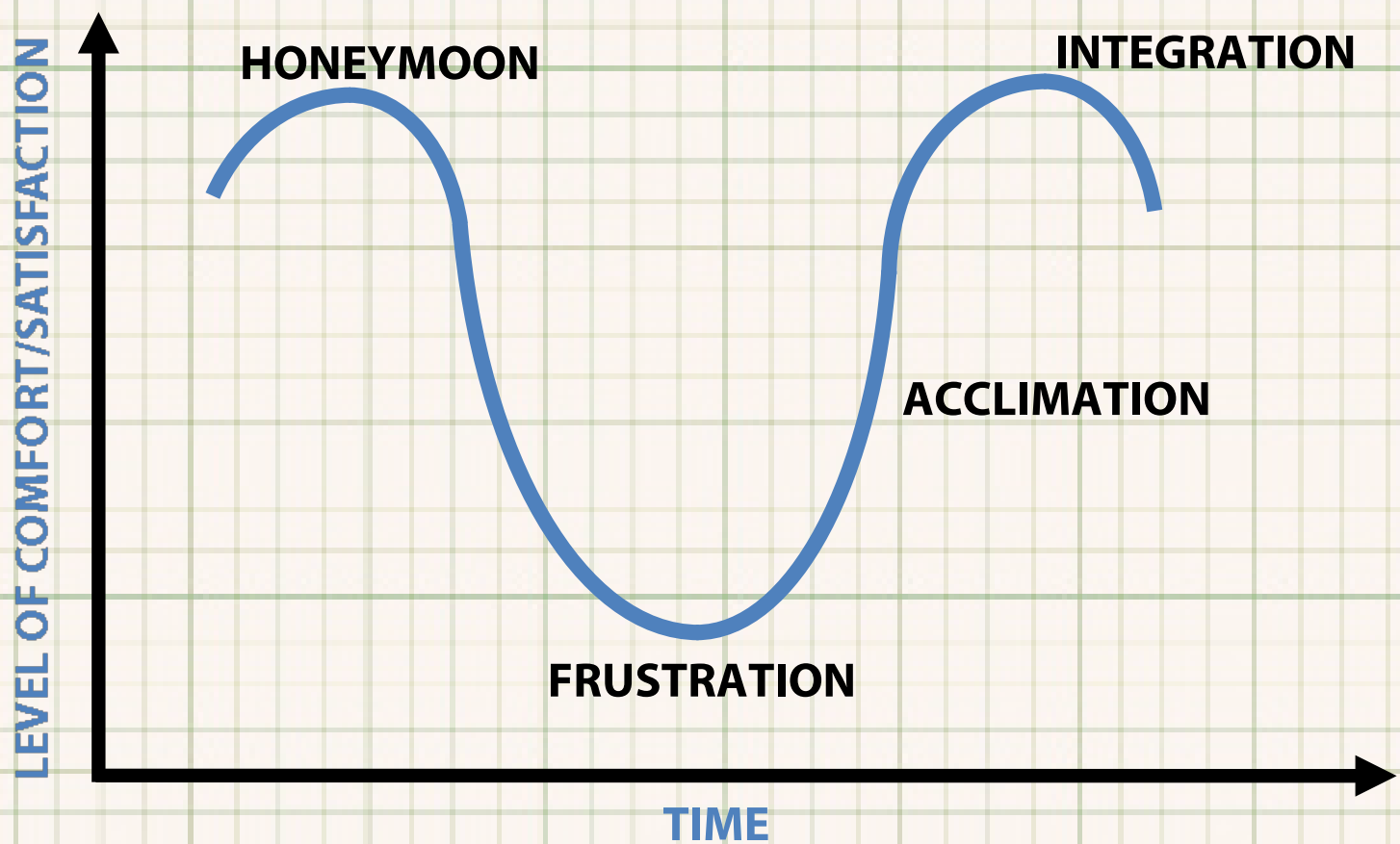
you want to use.

There are many free apps out there for smart phones and tablets to help you learn phrases in foreign languages or translate on the go—some that even teach you correct pronunciation:

- [Duolingo](#)
- [Byki](#)
- [Google Translate](#)

Cultural Adjustment

Whether going abroad for two weeks or ten months, you'll likely go through some sort of cultural adjustment when faced with various cultural differences and similarities in your host country. You may experience a variety of emotions, from extreme excitement to perhaps even anxiety or frustration. Understand that it is completely normal to experience a range of emotions as you get used to living and interacting in your host culture. Everyone encounters some sort of adjustment, no matter if it is a first experience abroad or the 20th one, and it usually passes with time.



The intensity and duration of your adjustment is often related to the amount of time you will spend abroad, your expectations about your host culture, the similarity of your host culture to your home culture, and how immersed you are in the host culture. Thus, if you will only be overseas for a week or two, you may not even experience cultural adjustment.

Cultural adjustment is a process, and often involves a series of ups and downs that usually occur somewhat sequentially. You may experience many ups and downs or only a few of each. Everyone is different.

Honeymoon

In this first phase of cultural adjustment, you may have feelings of anticipation and excitement for your time abroad. While you may have some sadness leaving friends and family, you step off the plane and see and hear and smell the differences. You may feel like you've landed in paradise- like you're on a honeymoon.

Everything is so new and exciting! Keep in mind, though, that you may still be viewing your host country and culture through your own cultural lens and expectations of how you want things to be.

Frustration

After a few days or weeks, you may come to view the initially wonderful cultural differences as frustrations and feel like they are becoming more of a challenge to you than anything else. You might grow homesick or wish things worked like they did at home where it is easier, because it may not feel right to you.

Acclimation

With time, you begin to get used to the differences in culture, though some frustration may not have gone away. You begin to understand how and why things work the way they do and you acclimate the host culture, feeling more comfortable and confident in your behaviors. You are starting to adapt.

Integration

At this point you feel you have the confidence to live successfully in both your home culture and your host country's. You can integrate into both of them.

Navigating Cultural Adjustment

It is important to remember that cultural adjustment can be a challenge. You will likely be affected one way or another during your time abroad. Knowing that challenges related to cultural adjustment will not last forever is comforting, but it is important to have certain strategies in mind to more successfully minimize their impact. Above all, take time to actively reflect about your experience so as to gain better perspective as to what is happening and why it may be happening. This may help you to develop your own strategies to successfully navigate cultural adjustment.

BEING YOU ABROAD - DIVERSE STUDENT CONSIDERATIONS

Going abroad can have a life-long impact on an individual. As with anything new, traveling overseas evokes a change in the way you see yourself, the world, and most importantly, your place in the world. Placing yourself in a different context is an eye opening and enlightening experience.

How you identify yourself here may not be how people abroad identify and see you. They may see you as just another “American,” where you may see yourself quite differently. Perhaps you define yourself in part by your ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, etc. What does it mean to be ‘you’ abroad?

Be sure to check out UK Education Abroad’s [Diversity Series brochures](#) for additional information and resources for diverse individuals traveling overseas.

Gender

Acceptable treatment of women in your host country may be very different from the kind of treatment acceptable in the United States. Also, the way women interact with men in the U.S. may not be socially acceptable in other countries. For example, what we might consider being friendly in the U.S. may be considered flirting or a sexual invitation in some countries. Both male and female travelers should keep this in mind.

Behaviors that are quite commonplace in the U.S., such as smiling or saying hello to a member of the opposite sex, may have different cultural connotations abroad. Additionally, you may unknowingly find yourself the object of unwanted attention abroad, whether it be through whistles and stares, or through more direct propositions.

If able, talk to women from the host culture before leaving the U.S. Ask them what it is like to be a woman in their country. What are their perspectives on women’s issues and rights? Upon arrival, ask local women and your on-site program staff about what is considered “appropriate” behavior and dress for each gender, and attempt to respect and adapt to these cultural norms. However, do not feel you must compromise your own sense of security or values to do so.

There is a wealth of resources that have information specifically for the female traveler. One such site is Journeywoman at www.journeywoman.com. This site is dedicated to giving women a space to share their thoughts, experiences and advice about world travel.

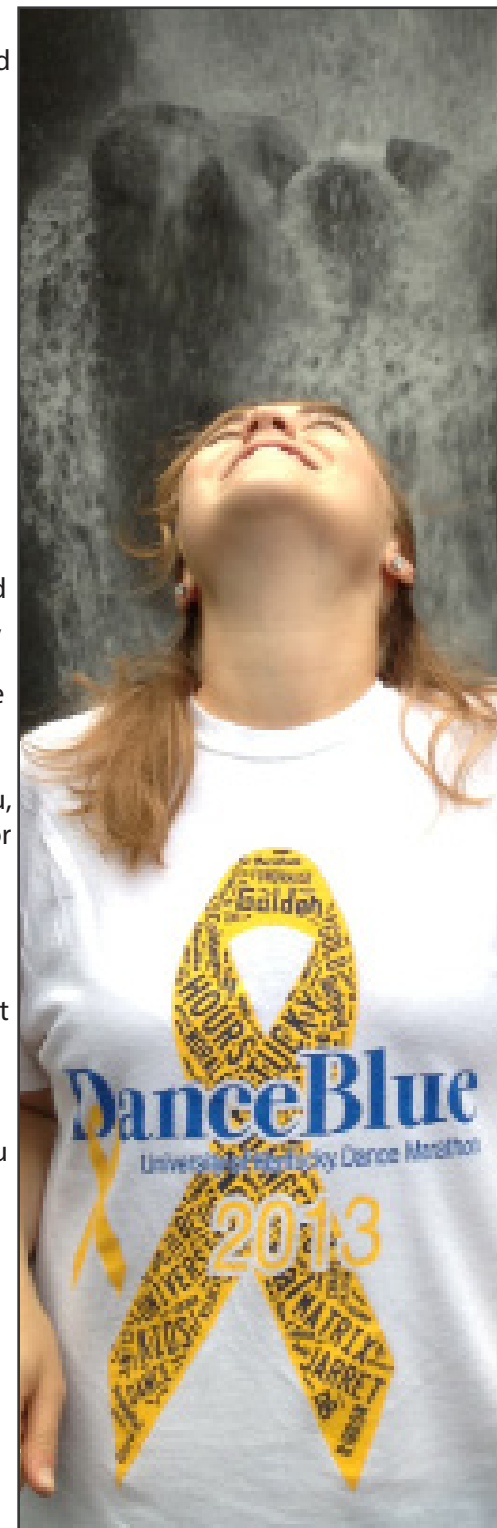
Ethnicity, Race and Religion

Ethnic, racial or religious issues should not be a negative factor of time abroad. That is why it is important to do a little research ahead of time to survey the national sentiment and current events of your host country. Contact the UK International Center if you have specific questions related to ethnic, racial or religious conflict in your host country.

Also, keep in mind that while you might be considered an ethnic, racial or religious majority in the U.S., by going abroad you may become a minority. In some cases, your outward appearance may make you stand out, especially if the country’s population is very homogeneous. Sometimes the locals’ curiosity, interest, ignorance or misunderstanding of you can be unpleasant. If a comment offends you, try to be tactful with your response, or if you are very upset, leave the room. Remember that cultural and ethnic sensitivity is not as strong abroad as it is in the U.S., and some comments are simply made out of ignorance, not malice.

Visit these sites for more information about support on campus to help you prepare for and reflect on your upcoming experience abroad:

[Office for institutional Diversity](#)
[Martin Luther King Center](#)





LGBTQ* Students

It is important for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students to be aware that the way sexual identities are defined and understood will vary by country and culture. Generally, acceptance and tolerance of LGBTQ* issues is increasing around the world, but some countries and individuals remain intolerant. In some countries, homosexual acts or even the use of gay dating apps may be illegal. Make sure to research the prevailing sentiment toward LGBTQ* issues abroad, as well as the laws related to them, and consider how you will address this challenge before you leave the U.S. If you do not want to compromise on your lifestyle, or if you are concerned that your sexual orientation may be an issue, then you may have to be more selective in where you travel.

UK's Office of LGBTQ* resources has a website which may direct you to helpful information and resources to consider before your departure. You can visit it at [this link](#).

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities can occasionally be the victims of prejudice and stereotyping while abroad. The disabled report being stared at, ignored, unassisted, and/or talked down to more frequently abroad than they tend to be in the U.S. In many countries, there are no standards or requirements for providing access for the disabled. Wheelchair ramps, handicapped parking spaces, Braille signs, and other aides may be non-existent in parts of the host country, especially rural areas. Additionally, there may also be a lack of services provided to those with a learning disability, those with a psychological or emotional need, or those who are mentally challenged. Before departure, travelers who use prescription medications should always check to see if their medicine is restricted or illegal in their destination country, because regulations vary throughout the world.

With adequate preparation and precaution, though, much of the world is accessible to students with disabilities. Disclose your needs early to the UK International Center so that possible accommodations can be explored.

UK's Disability Resource Center has a website which may direct you to helpful information and resources to consider before your departure. You can visit it at [this link](#).

Information adapted from "Diverse Students and Study Abroad" found in the Colorado State University Study Abroad Pre-Departure Guide

Helpful Phone Numbers & Resources

Emergency Contacts

AXA Assistance

1-855-327-1469 (from inside the US)

1-312-935-3542 (from outside the US)

medassist-usa@axa-assistance.us

University of Kentucky Police Department

1-859-257-8573 (answered 24/7)

Jason Hope, Manager of International Health, Safety & Security

1-859-218-4961 (office)

1-502-657-9998 (cell)

jasonhope@uky.edu

In an emergency, first contact AXA Assistance and the UK Police Department. AXA should be able to help you seek emergency medical treatment or, if necessary, help to evacuate you. The UK Police Department will transfer your call to the proper officials on UK's campus.

Other Contact Information

UK Travel Clinic

1-859-323-5823

UK Disability Resource Center

725 Rose St., Ste. 407

1-859-257-2754

UK Counseling Center

106 Frazee Hall

1-859-257-8701

International Student & Scholar Services

2nd Floor, Bradley Hall

1-859-323-2106

UK Education Abroad

3rd Floor, Bradley Hall

1-859-257-4067

educationabroad@uky.edu

VIP Center

If you (or someone you know) experience some kind of power-based personal violence while overseas, the [VIP Center's website](#) and [resource page](#) can be great sources of information. Additional resources are available [here](#). Power-based personal violence includes dating/partner violence, sexual assault and stalking. Know that you are cared for, believed and have support!

001-859-257-3189

Hours: M-F 8:30-5:00

More information on sexual assault, as well as international resources, can be found on the [website](#) for the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network. They offer a toll-free 24/7 hotline for sexual assault crisis counseling and referrals.