

THE UNIVERSITY *of*
TULSA
Center for
Global Education

2011

Parent Handbook



Photo by Allison Beeman Spring 2010

Contents

Why Study Abroad?.....	1
General Information About Programs.....	2
CGE Policies and Procedures.....	3
Application Process/Documents Needed.....	11
Financing Time Abroad.....	12
Money Overseas.....	16
Safety and Health.....	20
Communication.....	28
How You Can Help.....	30
Re-entry.....	37
Appendices.....	39

Why Study Abroad?

Sometimes the most valuable skills students learn in college come not from their classes, but from the life experiences that take place during these years. Little can benefit your son or daughter during their college years like the experience of studying abroad—going new places, trying new things, and having the time of their life all while earning academic credit towards their degree back home!

Studying abroad can increase self reliance and confidence, speed up maturity, influence students' world views, enhance their academic interest, heighten foreign language skills, promote open-mindedness, encourage diversity, and influence their entire life for the better. Think about how much your son or daughter has grown and matured since heading to college, and how much more your student will while experiencing a different way of life.

When the time comes to apply for a job or graduate school, a study abroad experience is invaluable. On a résumé and in an interview, the fact that a person studied abroad shows not only that they are culturally and globally aware, but also that they are ambitious, show initiative, and have the ability to adapt. The qualities that students gain when they study abroad are very applicable in the workplace, and employers know this and keep an eye out for global experience. After students return to the University of Tulsa, the Center for Global Education will assist them in marketing their international experience to future employers.

For more information about the benefits of studying abroad, check out these websites:

The Benefits of Study Abroad: New Study Confirms Significant Gains by Mary M. Dwyer, Ph.D. and Courtney K. Peters

http://www.transitionsabroad.com/publications/magazine/0403/benefits_study_abroad.shtml

Study Abroad: A Lifetime of Benefits by Amy Ruhter McMillan and Gayly Opem

http://www.abroadview.org/going/planning/studyabroadbenefits_ies.htm

Effective Marketing of International Experience to Employers by Cheryl Matherly, Ed.D. (in Impact of Education Abroad on Career Development)

http://www.aifsabroad.com/advisors/pdf/impact_of_education_abroadl.pdf

General Information About Programs

There are many different kind of study abroad programs and models to fit students' interests, major, time available and budgets. Choosing a program is a very individualized process and students have the CGE and their academic advisor to help with this process.

Reciprocal Exchange Programs

TU has twelve reciprocal exchange agreements with partner universities around the world. The nature of a reciprocal exchange program allows TU students to remain enrolled at TU while studying at one of our partner universities abroad while at the same time TU receives students from a partner university on our campus. The CGE maintains a balance of students 'exchanged' over a period of time. These programs allow students to attend courses with local students at the host university and fully integrate into the host country. Participation on an exchange program will require students to be more independent as support services they are accustomed to here in the U.S. may be limited at the host university. While on an exchange program, students are expected to be an ambassador and represent the University of Tulsa to further promote the exchange collaboration between the two universities. All students on an exchange of at least a semester will receive a \$1000 Exchange Ambassador Scholarship from the CGE.

Affiliated Study Abroad Programs

The University of Tulsa currently has 10 affiliate program partners which facilitate many programs abroad for university students. The types of programs offered through our affiliations allow students many diverse options in study abroad. In addition to a traditional classroom setting at a host university or program abroad, a number of affiliate programs offer internships, field based experiences, and experiential learning. The diversity of these programs allows students various options for a program abroad as well. For students who may require more support while abroad, there are programs designed such that they take classes with other American students in a more structured environment. For a student who has never traveled abroad and is somewhat uncertain about his or her ability to be successful, this option may be suitable. For students who are more independent and/or have advanced language skills and have previously traveled abroad, there are affiliate programs designed to fully immerse them in the host country by directly enrolling in courses with local students.

Faculty-Led Programs

Members of TU's faculty sometimes take students on trips abroad as part of a course, normally for a week or two. Recent trips have included Ghana with a Sociology class, the Costa Rican rainforest with a Biology professor, and France for a Business course. Faculty-led programs are great for students who want to go abroad but don't feel comfortable going off on their own for a long period of time.

CGE Policies and Procedures

The CGE has developed a list of requirements, processes and policies designed to make the study abroad experience go as smoothly as possible.

Eligibility

1. ***Class standing:*** Students who have completed at least one academic year as a full-time TU student are eligible to study abroad. Students who transfer from another institution must complete one full year at TU before they may apply to study abroad, regardless of their number of credits. Students must have successfully completed the previous semester at TU as a full-time student.
2. ***GPA and academic progress:***
 - a. Undergraduate students must have a cumulative GPA of 2.75 at the time of application and demonstrate that they are making satisfactory academic progress towards their degree.
 - b. Graduate students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 at the time of application and demonstrate that they are making satisfactory academic progress towards their degree.
3. ***Language requirements:*** Students intending to participate in a study abroad program that has a minimum language requirement or in which all of the courses will be taught in a foreign language must satisfy one of the following criteria in order to be approved for study abroad by the CGE:
 - a. Students must meet or exceed the minimum language requirement during the semester immediately preceding participation in the desired program.
 - b. Students who are required to take an intensive language course prior to participation in a program with a language requirement will be conditionally accepted, pending their performance in the course. Students who do not satisfactorily complete the intensive language course will have their tuition and fees refunded as per the TU study abroad withdrawal policy.
 - c. Students may complete an assessment of their language skills, such as an Oral Proficiency Interview, to determine whether they meet the minimum language requirements. Assessments may be conducted by the TU language department or the study abroad program provider, and the CGE will evaluate students' readiness in consultation with the TU language faculty.
4. ***Disciplinary status:*** Students who are currently on disciplinary probation may not participate in study abroad programs. The Center for Global Education reviews the disciplinary records of all program applicants and reserves the right to deny participation to students who have problematic disciplinary histories.

5. **Insurance:** Students must demonstrate that they meet the minimum TU insurance requirements for students participating in international education programs or purchase the requisite coverage. The insurance requirements are explained in the safety and health section of this handbook.
6. **Approval for participation:** All students seeking to study abroad must be approved by the Center for Global Education. Students must complete the study abroad application process as outlined in the study abroad application materials, information sessions, and CGE website. The CGE reserves the right to deny or withdraw approval of a student's application to study abroad for any appropriate reason, including a student's failure to submit the requisite paperwork in a timely manner. All denials will be accompanied by a letter explaining the reason the application was rejected.
7. **Program specific requirements:** Specific study abroad programs may have requirements that exceed TU's. Students who are accepted to study abroad by the CGE are not guaranteed that they will be accepted by an overseas university or study abroad program provider. Students are responsible for determining whether they meet the minimum requirements for the programs to which they have applied.
8. **Appeals:** Any student seeking to appeal a decision regarding their eligibility to participate in TU's study abroad program should follow the academic appeals process as outlined in the TU Student Handbook, available from the Dean of Students and online.

Credit for Study Abroad

1. **Affiliated programs:** Credit for study abroad will only be awarded to students who have been accepted to study abroad by the Center for Global Education with affiliated programs, universities, or exchange institutions (hosting organizations/institutions). Students seeking to study with unaffiliated programs or institutions must complete a separate application process. Information about this process can be found at http://www.utulsa.edu/globaleducation/resource_unaffiliatedprog.php.
2. **Course Approval:** In order to receive credit for courses taken abroad, students must submit a course approval form, signed by their faculty advisor, college academic advisor, and college associate dean or designee. Classes may be approved as being substantially equivalent to a TU course and will satisfy the same curriculum requirements. Courses for which there is no TU equivalent, but which are appropriate or desirable for the student's degree plan, must be indicated and authorized on the Course Approval Form.
3. **Grading Policies:** The CGE assumes that students' work will be assessed by the same rigorous, discriminating grading criteria that is used on the TU campus and evaluates affiliate organizations and institutions to ensure that this standard is maintained.
 - a. For undergraduates, letter grades earned in study abroad programs will be calculated as part of a student's cumulative GPA. Courses taken on a Pass/No

Credit basis (see next section) do not have numeric equivalents and will not be calculated as part of a student's GPA.

- b. For graduate students, all grades will be placed on the transcript as pass/fail.
 - c. Grades that are issued using the host country's grading scale will be translated to TU grades according to accepted equivalency scales. These scales are not a mere adaptation to the US percentage or letter grade system, but aim to match the spirit and rigor of the host country grading system with the US system.
 - d. Grade appeals regarding study abroad courses will be considered in accordance with procedures applicable to appeals in other TU courses and as outlined by the study abroad program provider.
4. **Pass/No Credit option:** Students may elect to take study abroad courses for a letter grade or on a pass/no credit (P/N) basis, subject to the following conditions:
- a. A student must choose on a course-by-course basis whether to receive a letter grade or P/N, subject to approval by his or her faculty advisor, college academic advisor, and college associate dean or designee. A student may not change his or her grading option after he or she has left campus.
 - b. All courses taken on a P/N basis must be taken for a grade from the host institution, and a student must receive a grade of "C" (or equivalent) or better in order to earn study abroad credit. Students' transcripts will list the course titles, designation of the foreign university or program, the number of credits earned, and either a "P" for pass or "NC" for no-credit.
 - c. The CGE, in consultation with the student's faculty advisor, major advisor, and/or associate dean, will report a student's grade as P/N to the registrar. This report will be accompanied by the transcript received by the overseas institution.
5. **Internships and Independent Study:** Students may enroll in a TU internship or independent study course as part of their study abroad program only with prior approval by their TU faculty advisor, college academic advisor, and college associate dean.
6. **Withdrawal from an Overseas Study Program:** Students who voluntarily or involuntarily withdraw from their study abroad program will be accountable to both TU's and the hosting organization/institution's withdrawal policies. The study abroad fee is non-refundable, except according to the terms described in this document. Tuition will be refunded according to the terms outlined in TU's regular tuition refund policies. Students participating in programs that begin on a schedule different from TU's academic calendar will still follow the withdrawal timeline as outlined in TU's policies for the main campus. Students withdrawing from a program for any reason will be responsible for expenses that were made on their behalf and that are non-refundable, such as airline tickets or deposits on housing. In addition, students may be subject to the refund policies of any study abroad program provider or overseas institution to which he or she has applied.

7. ***Adding and Dropping Classes:*** The CGE strongly recommends that students seek approval for more courses than they intend to take prior to departing campus in order to minimize problems with changing classes while abroad. Students choosing to add or drop courses while abroad must obtain approval from the CGE, their faculty advisor, college academic advisor, and college associate dean or designee. Approvals must be obtained no later than two weeks into the host institution's semester or one week into the host institution's summer term. Students are responsible for maintaining minimum enrollment required by the university or to maintain their financial aid. Students who fail to obtain approval for changes in their study abroad courses, even when the changes occur at the recommendation of the hosting organization/institution, cannot be guaranteed that they will receive academic credit for classes taken as part of their study abroad program.

8. ***Course load:***
 - a. Undergraduate students participating in study abroad must maintain a full-time course load during each semester as defined by the host institution/organization, or a minimum of 12 TU credit hours. Student seeking to enroll in more than 15 TU equivalent credit hours while abroad must request special permission from the CGE and the associate dean of their college.
 - b. Undergraduate students may not enroll during the summer for more than 6 hours of study abroad credit. Students seeking to enroll in more than 6 TU equivalent credit hours during a summer study abroad program must request special permission from the CGE and the associate dean of their college.
 - c. Graduate students participating in study abroad must maintain full-time enrollment of 9 credit hours. Enrollment in more or less than 9 hours must receive the approval of the student's academic program advisor and the Dean of the Graduate School.

9. ***Maximum length for study abroad:*** The maximum length that a student may study abroad is one academic year plus one summer term or three summer terms. Students receiving financial aid are responsible for knowing the length of program that their specific award will cover.

Financial Policies for Study Abroad

1. ***Program Costs/ Student Budgets:*** The Center for Global Education is committed to making study abroad affordable for all TU students and has adopted policies and practices that ensure that a semester abroad will not substantially exceed the costs of a semester on campus. Students preparing to study abroad will be advised by staff in the CGE about the costs of the program in which they will be enrolling and related travel and living expenses so that students can accurately anticipate their financial needs for the semester abroad. Students are required to submit a budget sheet, the primary tool for accurately estimating the costs associated with participation in study abroad, to the

CGE prior to their departure from campus; failure to submit a budget sheet may impact a student's ability to access his or her financial aid for the study abroad program and result in the CGE withdrawing approval of his or her study abroad application.

2. **Tuition:** Students participating in study abroad programs, other than the exceptions listed below, will pay the regular TU tuition, room and board. **The CGE will directly pay program fees on behalf of the student**, which include foreign tuition, room, board, insurance, and excursions directly related to the academic program. **Students are responsible for expenses that are not part of the advertised program fee**, including international airfare, personal expenses, ground travel, optional excursions, deposits, application fees, entertainment, visa and passport fees, and upgrades in housing or meal plans. The following are exceptions to this policy;
 - a. Students who are participating in an approved exchange or University Studies Abroad Consortium (USAC) program will pay only the regular TU tuition, and the CGE will pay directly the foreign tuition or program fee. Students will be responsible for their own room, board, and insurance, in addition to the student expenses listed above.
 - b. Students who participate in programs with fees that exceed the price of the regular TU tuition, room, and board by 15 percent will pay the difference to TU. The CGE will directly pay the program fees on behalf of the student, as per the conditions outlined above.
3. **Financial Aid and Scholarships:** Students studying abroad with approved programs will remain eligible for all of their current financial aid and scholarships. Students must submit an approved CGE budget form to the Office of Financial Aid in order to have financial awards released to cover study abroad expenses. Students may apply multiple financial awards to cover the estimated program expenses, including tuition and related travel and living costs, as approved on their CGE budget form. Students must disclose any additional awards they have received for support of study abroad to the financial aid office, such as travel scholarships provided by the program provider; failure to disclose these awards may result in the cancellation of a student's program and disciplinary action. Graduate assistantships have work requirements and so students may not hold an assistantship while they are participating in study abroad, with the exception of Woobank assistantships. Students on Woobank assistantships and fellowships awarded through the Graduate School are required to obtain the written approval of the Dean of the Graduate School to participate in study abroad while they are on a fellowship.
4. **Study Abroad Fee:** All students applying to study abroad for a semester, year, or summer term are responsible for a one time **\$160 study abroad fee** that is charged in addition to **application fees** required by the study abroad program provider. Students participating in a short-term credit bearing program (spring break, 1-2 weeks) will pay a fee determined by their faculty leader.

This fee should be paid directly to the CGE at the time the student submits his or her application to study abroad. This fee is **non-refundable** unless the student's application is denied by the CGE. Students whose application was denied by the program provider will be refunded their fee minus a \$50 processing fee only when the CGE has not successfully identified an alternative study abroad program.

The study abroad fee is an administrative fee to cover services provided by the CGE and includes an International Student Identification Card (ISIC), courier handling of documents that must be submitted to foreign universities, and a commencement sash indicating the country in which the student studied (Commencement sashes will be given to all students who have completed at least one full, credit-bearing term through the CGE).

5. **Insurance:** Students must demonstrate that they meet the minimum TU insurance requirements for students participating in international education programs or purchase the requisite coverage. The insurance requirements are explained in the separate policy regarding insurance for students going abroad. The CGE will make available insurance through an approved vendor that specializes in providing coverage for students participating in international education programs, but students will be responsible for purchasing the requisite insurance themselves.
6. **Summer Sessions:** Students studying abroad for a summer term will pay TU tuition based on the number of credits taken or the program cost, whichever is greater. The CGE will directly pay program fees on behalf of the student, which include foreign tuition, room, board, insurance, and excursions directly related to the academic program. Students are responsible for expenses that are not part of the advertised program fee, including international airfare, personal expenses, ground travel, optional excursions, deposits, application fees, entertainment, visa and passport fees, and upgrades in housing or meal plans.
7. **Spring Break/Summer Field Experiences/Internships:** Students participating in any short, credit-bearing, TU approved program are responsible for the study abroad fee and any fees associated with purchasing required insurance. Students will pay TU tuition on the basis of the number of actual credits associated with the program, as per the tuition policies outlined in this document. Students are responsible for all related costs, including but not limited to foreign application fees, airfare, optional tours, damage deposits, student activity or facilities fees, excursions, entertainment, books, ground transportation, additional meals, and personal expenses.
8. **Exchanges:** Exchanges are special relationships between TU and specific foreign universities and are intended to promote international cooperation and collaboration. Participating students are responsible for paying the tuition to their home institution and the room, board, and related fees to the hosting institution. Students participating in an exchange program will pay their regular TU tuition and will be responsible for

paying all related costs, including but not limited to foreign application fees, airfare, room and board at the foreign location, optional tours, damage deposits, student activity or facilities fees, excursions, entertainment, books, ground transportation, and personal expenses, unless otherwise specified by the negotiated billing agreement between TU and the program provider. The CGE will maintain records to monitor the balance of exchange students with individual exchange institutions. In order to encourage students to participate in an exchange, the CGE offers a \$1000 TU Exchange Ambassador Scholarship for students participating in an exchange of at least one semester.

9. **Presidential Scholars:** Presidential Scholars may apply their entire award, equivalent to current TU tuition plus room and board on campus, to the expenses associated with study abroad. The balance after the payment of the TU tuition, room, and board charges as per the policies outlined in this document, will be deposited in the student's US bank account to pay for any related program fees. Presidential Scholars may study abroad for a maximum of one academic year plus one summer.
10. **Tuition Reduction Dependents:** Students who are dependents of a TU employee and receive a tuition reduction benefit may apply their award to one study abroad term only (summer or semester), and will be responsible for the room and board charges as outlined in this document. Students who receive the tuition reduction benefit and desire to spend more than one term abroad will be responsible for the associated tuition and fees. Students are responsible for all related costs, including but not limited to foreign application fees, airfare, optional tours, damage deposits, student activity or facilities fees, excursions, entertainment, books, ground transportation, and personal expenses.
11. **Refunds:** The study abroad fee is non-refundable, except according to the terms described in this document. Tuition will be refunded according to the terms outlined in TU's regular tuition refund policies. Students participating in programs that begin on a schedule different from TU's academic calendar will still follow the withdrawal timeline as outlined in TU's policies for the main campus. Students withdrawing from a program for any reason will be responsible for expenses that were made on their behalf and that are non-refundable, such as airline tickets or deposits on housing. In addition, students may be subject to the refund policies of any study abroad program provider or overseas institution to which he or she has applied.
12. **Pioneer Scholarship:** To encourage students to explore new regions of the world, the CGE awards Pioneer Scholarships in the amount of \$750 (one semester OR one academic year) or \$500 (summer program) to students accepted to study abroad on an approved TU study abroad program location not previously attended by a TU student. Upon their return, students are expected to assist the CGE in promoting programs abroad in diverse countries around the world, by participating in the Pioneer Program.

Application Process/Documents Needed

Students have to complete an application both for the CGE and for the program which they want to attend. Students are given a checklist when they first come in to the CGE of everything they need to do as part of the application process. The CGE's role is to guide them through every step of the process. The checklist can be found at http://www.utulsa.edu/globaleducation/resource_beforegochecklist.php.

If your son or daughter does not have a passport or has an expired one, acquiring a valid passport is one of the first things to do, as it can take up to 8 weeks for a new one to be issued. The passport must be valid for at least 6 months past the date of return. For more information on passports please visit the U.S. Department of State website at www.travel.state.gov.

Applying for a passport for the FIRST time

Students must appear in person at the Passport agency in your hometown. In Tulsa County, this is located in the Tulsa County Clerk's office; in other places, the passport office may be located in the post office or in a self-contained office usually in the local federal office building. Students can check for the location nearest to them at www.travel.state.gov.

For making a first time application for a passport, students must present the following four materials with the application form DS-11 (available at www.travel.state.gov):

1. **Proof of U.S. citizenship:** a certified birth certificate OR a Naturalization Certificate (students may call the Department of Vital Statistics in their birth state to obtain a certified copy of their birth certificate if they do not already have one. In Oklahoma, the telephone number of the Department is 405-271-4040).
2. **Proof of identity:** driver's license or government (Federal, State, municipal) employee identification card or pass.
3. **Two recent identical passport identification color photographs**
4. **Fees:** check here for the current fee

For an additional fee, passport applications may be expedited. Please check with the passport agency. The Tulsa County Court Clerk's office is located on the 2nd floor of the Tulsa County Courthouse, at 500 South Denver Avenue, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74103. Telephone number is 918-596-5000. Office hours are between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Renewing a passport

If your student's most recent passport was issued less than 15 years ago, they were over 16 years of age at the time of issuance, and their recent passport is not mutilated or torn, they may be eligible to use form DS-82, the mail-in application form at www.travel.state.gov.

1. Renewal mail-in application: send in most recent passport (they will receive it back with their new passport), two identical recent passport photographs, and a fee payable to the Department of State.
2. If they do not qualify for a mail-in application for renewal they will need to take in: proof of U.S. citizenship (recent passport or certified birth certificate), proof of U.S. identity (driver's license or government identification card), two identical passport photographs, and a fee payable to the U.S. Department of State.

To receive a renewal application by mail in Tulsa, mail a self-addressed stamped envelope to Sally Howe Smith, Court Clerk, Passport Division, 500 South Denver Avenue, Room 200, Tulsa, OK 74103, or go to the website at www.travel.state.gov to download an application. For those outside of Tulsa, please inquire at your local passport agency or www.travel.state.gov.

The CGE will request a scanned copy of your son or daughter's passport as part of the application process. We will keep this copy on file in the event of an emergency while abroad.

Student Visas/Study Permits

For some countries, students will be required to apply for and obtain a student visa (or study permit) in order to legally study and reside in that particular country for a longer period of time. Arrangements for student visa applications should be made directly with the host country's consulate in the U.S.

Applying for a student visa does not automatically entitle students to receive one. **It is their responsibility to obtain and pay for one.** The process can be long and somewhat complicated, so it is important that they begin the process soon after their acceptance into a study abroad program. **PLEASE NOTE:** Some destinations (currently – Spain and France) will require travel to the host country's U.S. consulate (which could be Houston, Chicago, or otherwise, depending on the student's home residency) for a personal interview when applying for the student visa. They must make travel plans and budget accordingly.

After acceptance into a study abroad program, the host program/university typically provides details and instructions on how to begin the student visa process.

It is really important for the student to start working on your visa as soon as they have their program acceptance letter! They should contact the CGE if they need any help.

Financing Time Abroad

One of the essential steps when preparing to study abroad is to develop a realistic estimate of what it will cost your son or daughter for a summer, semester, or year at a foreign institution. The CGE aims to keep the cost of studying abroad from substantially exceeding the cost of attending TU. This does not mean, however, that the cost will be the same. The cost of living in the destination country, program tuition, currency exchange rates, and your son or daughter's own spending patterns will impact the actual costs for study abroad. The CGE, however, is committed to making sure that study abroad is affordable for every TU student. We have developed a guide to assist students and parents with determining the actual cost of their time abroad and to understand how scholarships and financial aid can be used towards expenses.

How much will it cost and how does billing work?

This question is probably in the forefront of your mind, especially since cost may influence your son or daughter's choice of study abroad programs. The cost of a study abroad program will depend on many factors, including the **destination country**, the type and **length of the program**, and what is included in the **program cost**. You will want to consider costs that typically are not included in the program fee, such as passport fees, student visa fees, application fees, confirmation enrollment deposits, airfare, immunizations, local transportation, additional meals, books, health insurance, excursions and incidentals.

Paying for study abroad at TU works like this: students continue to pay their regular TU tuition and room and board as they normally would for the semester(s) they are abroad. The TU Business Office will bill the students (or their parents) TU tuition, room and board which is then applied to the cost of attending the program abroad. The CGE takes care of paying the program fees directly on the students' behalf. You may be billed directly by the program for expenses **not included** in the program fee, which will typically include application fees, confirmation enrollment deposits, travel to and from the host country, local transportation, personal expenses, and cultural travel. Most study abroad programs provide an explanation of what is and is not included in their program fees on their websites or in their printed literature.

For students who are studying abroad for the summer, they are responsible for paying for regular TU tuition per credit hour for the number of credits they will receive for study abroad (typically between 3 – 6 credits). Since most summer programs lump all expenses, such as tuition, health insurance, room, and board, into a single program fee, TU will pay these charges directly to your program. Students will be responsible for additional expenses not included in their program fee, typically their airline ticket, additional excursions, books, insurance, etc. If the cost of their program exceeds the regular TU tuition for summer, they will be responsible for paying the difference which is charged to their TU student account.

Students are required to pay program confirmation and enrollment deposits directly to their program provider upon acceptance. Essentially, this deposit holds their place in the program.

TU will adjust their TU tuition charges to reflect the deposit and the amount will be credited to their TU student account.

There are three exceptions to the billing policy:

- If your son or daughter is applying to an exchange program or to a USAC program they will only pay the TU tuition. They will pay their room and board directly to their host institution or to USAC.
- If their total program cost exceeds the regular TU tuition, room and board costs by 15%, roughly \$2500, they will be charged the difference on their TU bill. The CGE makes available a list of these programs that substantially exceed the TU costs.
- If the program fee (including room and board) is substantially less than TU tuition, students only pay tuition and not room and board.

The billing process can often be confusing so the CGE staff will assist students to explain it further if necessary. We will review their program costs and estimated expenses closely during their individual study abroad budget meeting. The CGE's financial policy, stated earlier in this handbook, can also help to clear up this process.

Here are a few other issues that will affect the total price of a program:

- **Destination:** The cost of living will vary tremendously depending on the country or city in which your son or daughter will be studying. Keep in mind that Oklahoma has a very low cost of living, so it is possible that their expenses for housing, meals, etc. will exceed what they spend in Tulsa, especially if they are studying in a major urban center. Their study abroad advisor and program provider should discuss this with them during the application process.
- **Exchange rate:** Currency exchange rates fluctuate constantly. It is a good idea to regularly check online currency converters to stay abreast of the latest rates. One useful converter is FX Converter (<http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic>).
- **Program duration/timing:** While short-term programs may be less expensive, you may find that there are more resources available to your son or daughter for semester- or year-long study. Some costs do not change according to the length of time they are abroad.

A CGE requirement for your student will be to meet with a CGE staff member after their acceptance and complete the study abroad budget process. The CGE budget worksheet is a guide to help your son or daughter estimate their costs for study abroad. They will be asked to submit this to the CGE (all students) and the Financial Aid Office (if they are receiving aid and/or scholarships) once they have been accepted to study abroad, so it is important that they accurately complete this information. In addition to giving your family an idea of what to

anticipate for program expenses, this form will be used by the Financial Aid Office to determine the amount of your child's awards that can be applied towards study abroad. It is best for them to be reasonable and not low-ball their estimates. Part of the experience of studying abroad is being able to travel on some weekends and eat in local restaurants, and it is very frustrating not to have enough funds to participate in these activities.

So where does the information about program costs come from? First, your son or daughter needs to make sure they have a good idea of what they actually spend at TU. They should estimate their cost of living, including housing, meals, transportation, entertainment, and personal items so that they can determine these expenses while abroad. Second, they should check the website for their program provider for what they recommend for estimated expenses. Many of the study abroad programs will provide information based on what their participants report that they actually spend. Your child can contact the program directly if this information is not on its website or in its program literature. Third, they can talk with students who previously participated in the program. The CGE can put them in touch with returnees so that they can get actual information from other TU students. Finally, they will meet with a CGE staff member to review your budget, during a mandatory budget meeting. While their CGE advisor may not know the exact cost of every study abroad program, they will make sure that the student's estimates are reasonable and that they have taken into account most of the hidden expenses that can drive their costs.

Applying Financial Aid and TU Scholarships

Here is some good news: students may apply their federal financial aid and TU scholarships to their participation in an approved study abroad program. And here is more good news: their federal financial aid award can be used for all of the expenses associated with studying abroad, not just tuition. This means that they can use their aid for the total cost of attendance for their study abroad program, including their airline ticket, travel costs associated with obtaining their visa, their books, and even organized program excursions. TU scholarship awards will vary and may be limited to covering tuition only or a portion thereof on a study abroad program. It is advisable for students to check with their financial aid advisor for further details and ask about any specific restrictions their scholarship award may carry.

Students receiving federal financial aid will need to work closely with the TU Financial Aid Office to determine a financial aid package that is specific to their study abroad plans. They will be expected to provide the financial aid advisor their completed budget worksheet that has been approved and signed by a staff member from the CGE. Keep in mind that most loan and grant programs have a maximum amount that students can receive during their college career, and federal financial aid for their study abroad is included within that maximum. This would be a matter for them to discuss with their financial aid advisor. After TU tuition has been paid, the Business Office will release the balance of their financial aid award to their private bank account so that they can pay for other program related expenses abroad.

After acceptance into a study abroad program, students receiving aid will need to work directly with the TU Business Office to make arrangements for awards to be dispersed so that they can cover program costs and other travel related expenses not already paid by TU.

If they receive any TU scholarships they will be required to submit an approved budget form to the Financial Aid Office also in order for their awards to be applied to their study abroad program.

Additional Scholarships

In addition to TU awards and aid, there are additional scholarships to which students can apply to support study abroad. Visit

http://www.utulsa.edu/globaleducation/resource_scholarships_undergrad.php for a list of scholarships to support study abroad. Announcements about new program scholarships and grants will be distributed to students via the GoGlobal listserv email.

Most program providers make available scholarships specific to their programs which we strongly encourage students to consider applying for. The CGE also provides scholarships for students going to designated study abroad locations. Students should see the information sheet provided in their application packet or visit the CGE website for a complete list of these scholarships and instructions on how to apply.

Money Overseas

Having access to money overseas is a topic of great concern to every study abroad participant and his or her parents. Here are a few guidelines for dealing with money while abroad. Your son or daughter's program will provide them with detailed information prior to travel to assist with planning their budget.

Safety with Money

Students will always want to remain careful with their money when traveling abroad. They will need to use extreme caution while using public transportation, waiting for trains, buses or the subways, at ATM machines, or in crowded or tourist areas where pick-pocketing may be prevalent. A money belt worn inside their clothing or a money pouch worn around their neck is recommended for safekeeping of money, their passport, credit cards, or anything they can't afford to lose.

Budget Management

Students should prepare a daily budget before they leave so their money will last the duration of their stay. They need to consider all potential money-items and expenses not included in their room and board (i.e. entertainment, snacks, toiletries, travel, etc). They should build in a "cushion" to avoid problems and find out what exactly the program fees cover (i.e. meals or excursions), so that they may budget for incidental costs accordingly. Keep in mind that costs may vary a great deal from those in the U.S. It is advisable that students talk with previous study abroad participants about their expenses and study abroad costs. Some expenses related to study abroad you and your son or daughter may not have considered include:

- **Travel:** transportation, lodging, food, and extracurricular expenses inside and outside the host country. Bus or subway passes.
- **Local Transportation:** day-to-day travel including getting to and from school.
- **Meals:** if some are provided, obtain a cost estimate for the others. Are meals provided during orientation period? Remember to budget for meals & food when doing independent travel as well.
- **Housing:** are students required to pay a deposit or pay separately for utilities?
- **Health Insurance:** may or may not be included in Program Fee. If not, student MUST make sure to be adequately covered while abroad. The CGE offers comprehensive health insurance coverage through CISI (<http://www.culturalinsurance.com/>) that students may purchase. In most countries, they need to pay cash or use a credit card for medical treatment and then submit claims to their insurance company. They should familiarize themselves with these procedures, as well as the documentation required by

their insurer. Additionally, they should consider insuring valuables they may be taking (e.g. camera, laptop computer, etc).

- **Books, school supplies, lab & studio art fees.**
- **Immunizations:** some may be required depending on the country.
- **Student Visa/Study Permit:** consider cost of the visa and potential travel to U.S. consulate to apply plus mailing expenses.
- **Personal Expenses:** toiletries, clothing, entertainment, excursions, local events, and souvenirs.
- **Additional Fees:** students need to obtain thorough information about who is responsible for costs involved with visa applications, airport taxes, entry fees, administrative & student fees at host universities, internship placements, etc.

Emergency Funds

Students should discuss recommendations for getting access to emergency funds with their program provider before choosing the method: cash, credit cards or traveler's checks, to determine which work best in their host country. Also, they should find out whether the program temporarily covers costs incurred in a medical emergency, allowing them time to have funds wired from home (See Transferring Money from Home). It is likely they will be advised to reserve \$50 - \$300 in cash dollars for emergencies. Any time anyone travels, they must prepare for things getting lost or stolen. Because of this, we recommend that students not carry large amounts of money on them and not keep all of their cash, credit cards, and/or traveler's checks in one place. Traveler's checks can be a good way to keep an emergency store of money, as they can be replaced if they are lost or stolen. Also, they are easily obtainable at a home bank and fairly easy to cash abroad. Students must be sure to keep multiple records of the serial numbers separate from the checks as they will need these numbers for a refund if the checks are lost or stolen. In some countries, however, traveler's checks are not very easy to use, so it is recommended that students also take a credit card with them for access to emergency funds.

Saving Money

Students can buy a travel guidebook for information on inexpensive travel options, low cost restaurants and grocery stores, cheap entertainment, and transportation ideas (i.e. local travel passes, rail passes, etc). Some popular guidebooks are: 'Lonely Planet', 'Let's Go', and Rick Steves' Travel Guides. Note "free days" at local tourist sites like museums and art galleries. The International Student Identification (ISIC) card, which is included in the CGE study abroad fee, can be used to get student discounts at restaurants, hostels, museums, and for transportation. Going out to dinner and clubs will be more expensive abroad than students are

accustomed to here in Tulsa. It is suggested that they limit themselves if they are on a tight budget.

Getting and Having Cash When Students Arrive

Students should have a small amount of cash in local currency with them upon arrival for snacks, drinks, public transportation and/or for taxi service if necessary. They can check with their local bank for how to purchase currency of the country they are going to before leaving. It is best for students to pre-determine their daily budget and take that amount with them. They should only put what they can afford to lose in a pocket, wallet or a purse.

Credit Cards

Students should take only the credit cards they plan to use. Typically, credit cards allow for the best exchange rate; however, someone at home must pay the bill while they are away or students must repay it upon their return. They may also access their account via the internet with most credit cards, and set them up to accept transfers from their bank account as an easy way of dealing with payments. They **must** be sure to alert their credit card company before leaving the U.S. to make them aware that they are going abroad. Sometimes if companies are unaware of the possibility of students' international transactions, they may suspect fraud and place a hold on the account, thus not allowing students the ability to use the card. Suggestions for students using credit cards:

- When using a credit card to obtain cash from an ATM abroad, the PIN must be numeric in most overseas countries.
- Always keep credit card receipts, especially if your number is printed on them.
- While Visa and MasterCard are typically widely accepted, Amex and Discover cards are not.
- Keep a separate list of cards and numbers in case of loss/theft.
- Review your company's policy for transaction fees and surcharges on purchases abroad.

Transferring Money

If students run out of money or an emergency comes up while they're abroad, there are several options for getting money from home. Cash or traveler's checks can be wired to them through companies such as Western Union or an American Express office (located in major cities). This service is fast but expensive. Postal money orders are another option. A family member or friend can buy a money order from a U.S. post office and send it to the student. They'll be paid the amount of the money order at their local post office. Postal money orders have the

advantage of being inexpensive, but are slow: they take as long to get to students as an airmail letter which may take up to 2 weeks depending on the host country.

Traveler's Checks

These may be difficult to cash in some countries, but are subject to lower exchange rates. They are a safe source of emergency money, but students will need to show their passport to cash them and not all shops will accept them. Students should keep their receipts and copies of their checks separate from the checks. Typically banks have the best rates, but the worst hours. Hotel rates are the very worst for cashing traveler's checks.

ATMs

ATMs are relatively easy to find in most places, but in some areas may not always work or may be out of cash. They generally have the best exchange rates and students can use them to withdraw money from their personal bank account at home. They should make sure the ATM network is global (Cirrus or PLUS Network) and review transaction fees. ATMs have a maximum allowable amount of cash withdrawal per day and/or per transaction. They should keep a running tally of funds that they withdraw and have someone at home who can put additional funds into their account if necessary. Before students go abroad, they should check with their local bank to see if it is possible to use their ATM card in their host country and if there are any added fees for withdrawing money overseas. They should make sure they have a 4-digit PIN and that it will work in ATMs abroad. Again, they must alert their bank that they intend to travel abroad so they are aware of the foreign transactions being made.

Local Bank Accounts

It may be a good option for students to consider opening a bank account once they've settled in overseas, particularly if they are staying a full year. This will keep things simple for them and they can avoid ATM transaction charges as the local bank will issue them an ATM for use. If they plan to open an account overseas, they should make their deposit in traveler's checks. Personal checks or money orders can take weeks to clear and will only delay students' ability to open a bank account.

Safety and Health

The Center for Global Education (CGE) takes seriously issues affecting your son or daughter's health and safety while abroad. It is a reality that international travel is risky, and it is impossible for us to foresee or prevent every emergency. We are committed, however, to providing students accurate and timely information about ways to minimize risks when they study abroad so that they can make informed choices about their participation abroad.

We have several ways in which we communicate about health and safety concerns abroad, and we expect that all of our program participants will be responsible for the information distributed through each of these methods:

- **Pre-Departure Orientation:** The CGE sponsors a mandatory Pre-Departure Orientation session each semester for outgoing study abroad participants in which we review how they should prepare for their time abroad.
- **CGE International Programs Handbook:** The CGE International Programs Handbook (http://www.utulsa.edu/globaleducation/resource_handbook.php) is distributed to all outgoing students along with their TU acceptance letter during the advising process.
- **CGE 'globalnow' Listserv:** All students who are currently participating in an approved CGE program will be added to the 'globalnow' listserv. The CGE uses this list to provide general announcements to outbound TU students.
- **Emergency Contact Lists:** We maintain records with contact information for all our students who are currently out of the country. Once they know their travel plans and have their on-site contact information, they should log into their CGE account and provide their local contact information. Students will be asked to provide their address, phone/cell number, and flight information. It is their responsibility to provide this information to the CGE.

Students with Disabilities

The CGE encourages students with disabilities to explore opportunities abroad. Students can consult with the CGE staff and the Center for Student Academic Support to determine reasonable accommodations and plan for a successful study abroad experience. If your son or daughter has a condition that will require accommodation, it is important that they disclose this information early in the advising process so that we can assist them with identifying a location that can provide the appropriate support.

Visit <http://www.miusa.org/ncde/tipsheets> for additional tips for students with disabilities who are seeking to go abroad.

Staying Safe While Abroad—advice given to students

International travel is risky, and travel overseas introduces Americans to new types of threats. When incidents occur while you are abroad, ranging from motor vehicle accidents, sexual harassment, or theft, they can be especially difficult to cope with because you are in an unfamiliar situation.

There are steps that you can take to minimize risks while you are abroad, but they can be easily summed up like this: **Trust your common sense!**

- ***Don't be an obvious foreigner:*** make an effort to blend in as much as possible and respect local norms and customs. Loud or boisterous behavior also advertises your presence in a very negative way. Display confidence. By looking and acting as if you know where you are going you may be able to ward off danger.
- ***Dress conservatively and leave jewelry at home:*** fashion makes a statement, though it is not always interpreted the same way you would. What you may consider casual clothing (shorts, sleeveless tops) might be seen as provocative or inappropriate in another culture. Additionally, flashy clothes or a lot of jewelry may signal to potential criminals that you will make a good target. It is often best to dress conservatively – by local standards. Take cues from locals. Most good travel guides will give you tips about appropriate dress in the country in which you are traveling.
- ***Keep copies of your passport and hide the original:*** make three copies of your passport: one to put in your suitcase, one to carry on your body, and one to leave with a family member or trusted person in the US. Don't carry your passport with you on a daily basis. Rather, put the original in the safest place you can find, which will depend upon your living and traveling arrangements. Passports are the hottest commodities in the world, so be mindful of where yours is at all times.
- ***Listen to your gut:*** never ignore your sixth sense! When you get alarmed or spooked, there is probably a good reason for it. Stop and calmly think for a few seconds: observe and assess the situation around you, decide what your options are for getting to a safer place-- then make a decision and act.

- ***Drink only in moderation:*** alcohol is a major contributor to many of the problems in which students find themselves when abroad. Drinking to excess can lead to you making bad decisions and winding up in dangerous situations. Act responsibly and don't put yourself in an unnecessarily risky situation.
- ***Know how to contact the local embassy or consulate:*** the local embassy or consulate provides many services for its citizens abroad. US citizens should register with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate through the State Department's travel registration website. Know the location of your nearest embassy or consulate.
- ***Read local English-language newspapers and websites:*** it is important that you not ignore the news while you are abroad. Be aware of the news, especially as it relates to foreigners, so that you can make appropriate choices while abroad.
- ***Avoid unexpectedly amorous men and women:*** attractive as you may be, it is strongly advisable to be wary of people who approach and try to woo you the moment you arrive. Most of the time the real motive is gaining a foreign passport or your wallet or taking you to a gift shop where you'll be pressured to buy.
- ***Be aware of real security threats:*** before you ever set foot out of your home, you should do some research. What is the political climate in the country you'll be visiting? Might there be strong anti-American sentiment? Most countries have some type of English-language media outlets on the Internet that publish local news; wire services such as Reuters often cover such developments (check their archives), or the U.S. State Department. Check them out! It is always better to enter a foreign country with your eyes open. It might take keen eyes and ears to detect rumblings of civil unrest that can increase dangers to foreign visitors. Not only will a heightened awareness shorten your response time to potential warning signs, but also gaining an education in local or national politics will demonstrate to those you meet that you have a greater depth of interest in your host country than sampling the local pastries. Watch local news programs, read local papers and talk with the locals.

- ***Avoid known hotspots, political conversations, and political rallies:*** avoid political conversations and rallies, which may increase tensions and emotions or breed angry mobs for which a U.S. citizen may serve as a scapegoat. Political issues with host nations may escalate and provoke retaliation by hostile or bigoted remarks concerning Americans. The CGE will not approve travel to countries currently under a travel warning issued by the US State Department.

Visit http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html to read the current list of State Department Travel Advisories.

- ***Control only the things you can control and don't panic:*** the most important advice is to control your own situations. Controllable factors that can place you at risk are often the same things that will put you in danger in the US:
 - Being under the influence of alcohol and drugs
 - Being out after midnight
 - Being alone at night in an isolated area
 - Being in a known high crime area
 - Sleeping in an unlocked area
 - Being out after local curfew, if any
- ***Don't use recreational drugs:*** with very few exceptions, other countries are extremely intolerant of recreational drug use and make no distinction between "hard" and "soft" drugs. Being caught with even a tiny amount of a controlled substance can result in arrest, deportation, and/or imprisonment. If this happens, there is nothing that the US State Department can do to help you. Do not take this risk.

Visit http://www.ciee.org/program_resources/knowledge/safety.aspx?type=part for more tips for maintaining your personal safety when going abroad.

Register At an Embassy

The CGE strongly recommends that all participants in international education programs register with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate through the State Department's travel registration website.

This will ensure that they can be reached in case of an international emergency. If you need to reach your son or daughter because of an emergency, you can pass a message to them through the Office of Overseas Citizens Services at 202-647-5225. This office will contact the embassy or consulate in the country in which your child is traveling and pass your message to them.

Visit <http://usembassy.state.gov/> to find a list of US embassy and consulate locations.

Health Considerations

These are potential issues affecting overseas study participants. Which ones concern your son or daughter? Have they made necessary preparations to avoid these problems?

- Ability/Disability Issues
- Allergies
- Contraceptives
- Culture Shock
- Dental Care
- Dietary Concerns
- Emergency Resources
- Exercise
- Eyeglass Prescription
- Gender-Sensitive Health Care
- Health Advisories
- Hepatitis Protection
- Immunizations
- Insurance
- Medications/Medical Supplies
- Psychological Issues
- Reverse Culture Shock
- Regional Health Issues
- Sexuality
- Sleep Patterns
- Smoking
- Support Networks/Friends & Family
- Value

The best way for your child to stay healthy while they're overseas is the same way they stay healthy when they are at home: eat healthy foods, stay hydrated, get plenty of exercise, and get enough sleep.

- **Physicals and Check-Ups:** students must get a complete physical, eye exam, and dental check-up before going abroad. They should talk to their doctor about any specific health concerns or conditions they may have before they travel.
- **Mental and Physical Health:** students should be clear about their health needs when applying for a program and when making housing arrangements. Describe allergies, disabilities, psychological treatments, dietary requirements, and medical needs so that adequate arrangements can be made. Resources and services for people with

disabilities vary widely by country and region; if your son or daughter has a disability or special need, they should identify it and understand ahead of time exactly what accommodations can and will be made.

- **Allergies/Medical Conditions:** if your son or daughter is allergic to penicillin, or has any other medical conditions that require emergency care, they should carry some kind of identification, card, tag, or bracelet on their person at all times indicating the specific nature of the problem, spelling out clearly what must or must not be done, should they be unable to communicate (e.g. in case of unconsciousness).
- **Infections Diseases and Immunizations:** students should find out about the infectious disease epidemic in the countries to which they will be traveling, and get appropriate shots and pills. If immunizations are required, they need to get those before they leave. Keep in mind that many immunizations require that they be administered as a series in order to be effective, and many vaccinations are not routinely administered by their family physician. They may be expected to go to a clinic that specializes in travel medicine. Students should give themselves plenty of time to complete the necessary immunizations.

Check the Center for Disease Control website at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/> for current information about health considerations that will affect your son or daughter's time abroad.

- **Food/Water Safety:** poor refrigeration, undercooked meat, poor water supply, and outdoor vendors could pose problems related to food contamination. If your son or daughter gets diarrhea or food poisoning they must remember to drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated. It is a good idea for them to take an over-the-counter anti-diarrhea medication with them just in case. They should see a doctor if their condition worsens.
- **Prescriptions:** if students currently take prescription medications, they should make sure to have enough with them to last the duration of their trip. It's a good idea to include an extra supply in case of an unexpected delay getting home. They should get a doctor's signed prescription for any medication they have to take abroad and may need to have refilled. Some prescriptions may need to be translated if students wish to fill them abroad. Carry prescriptions in their labeled containers as many countries have strict narcotic trafficking laws and may be suspicious of pills in an unlabeled bottle. Include a glasses or contact lenses prescription, but bring an extra pair of glasses just in case.

Students should plan to take any over-the-counter medications they might normally use at home since these items are readily available to them now and might not always be overseas. They will then have a supply in case they need some allergy or headache relief on a weekend or when pharmacies are closed. The 24/7 drug store is a U.S. phenomenon and doesn't usually

exist overseas! These items could include: pain relievers, cold/flu/allergy medications, anti-diarrhea or upset stomach treatments.

- **Getting Medical Care:** medical care will vary from country to country. In some places, it will be very similar to the type of care students can receive in the US. In other countries, finding an English speaking doctor or medical facility can be difficult. If your son or daughter needs medical care overseas, they should ask their program administrator for recommended physicians, hospitals and dentists. This is usually covered in the on site orientation once abroad. They must make clear that they expect high standards of hygiene and care. Keep in mind that most medical services and doctors will require advance payments for consultation and services, so students may need a credit card for emergencies. They should keep receipts for submitting a re-imbusement claim upon their return to the U.S.

This information was drawn from resources prepared by the Council on International Educational Exchange. Visit http://www.ciee.org/program_resources/knowledge/health.aspx?type=part for additional information.

Insurance Coverage

There is a mandatory health and accident insurance requirement for all TU students who participate on a program abroad. Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI) administers the plan for TU students and provides supplemental insurance for students whose individual coverage does not meet the minimum levels required by the university or whose program does not otherwise provide insurance.

Visit http://www.utulsa.edu/globaleducation/resource_forms.php for the Insurance Application Form.

Here are some general guidelines regarding insurance as it applies to going abroad:

- **Know what your insurance will cover:** for example, high-risk sports injuries, dental care, and optical care are sometimes not covered by basic medical insurance. Also, if certain pre-existing conditions are excluded, check on the exact definition of "pre-existing."
- **Familiarize yourself with the insurance options provided by your program provider:** some programs include insurance as part of their program fee and have pre-planned insurance arrangements for their participants. Purchasing their insurance may make it easier for the program staff to assist you while abroad. However, you should still look closely at the limitations in its coverage. If the program does not offer insurance, and/or the program insurance is not sufficient to meet the minimum amounts recommended

by TU, you should purchase additional travel/study abroad insurance.

- **Other considerations:** when considering your insurance options, look at the financial limits of coverage, whether your insurance applies during independent travel or vacation, what countries it includes, whether evacuation and repatriation is included, the policy's start and end dates, and whether you will have to pay first for treatment and be reimbursed later by your insurance company.

Visit <http://www.studentsabroad.com/insurance.html> to find additional information about insurance considerations for students planning to study or work abroad.

Communication

Once your child is abroad, it is a wonderful treat to receive emails or postcards in which he or she describes the experience. It is also stressful when those emails and postcards arrive more slowly than you would like.

Here are a few tips on staying in touch with your son or daughter while studying abroad:

- Maintain communication with reasonable frequency but not on a daily basis.
- Keep the program calendar in mind — if you haven't heard from your son or daughter, it may be because he or she is on a program excursion or traveling during a break.
- Understand that culture shock is a normal reaction when going abroad, and that his or her complaints may be part of the normal adjustment process. (Visit http://www.utulsa.edu/globaleducation/students_cultureshock.php for more information on culture shock.)
- Monitor online information and advisories from the Bureau of Consular Affairs (<http://travel.state.gov/>).
- Contact the Center for Global Education (http://www.utulsa.edu/globaleducation/about_contact.php) should you or your son or daughter need assistance with any aspect of the program abroad or matters on campus.
- Keep a journal of events and celebrations that occur during the semester or year to share with your son or daughter when he or she returns home.
- Consider a visit during the program break, when classes are not in session.

Visit <http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/parents/articles/recommendations.shtml> to read one parent's experiences with study abroad.

Email and webcam services, such as Skype, are the most convenient ways to keep in touch with your son or daughter while they are abroad. Their TU email account will still be active while they are abroad. In most cases, the program or university will provide them with an email address as well. Most programs and universities provide either computer facilities or will have wireless internet available for your child's use. They will also find, in most countries, Cyber-cafes which, for a small fee, allow them to use computers to access email.

Calling Home

Making calls from abroad means attempting to master a whole new phone system which can be quite frustrating! The best advice for students is to buy a local phone card for the host country phone system and learn how to use it and/or get a cell phone. Many programs require students to have a local cell phone and will assist them to purchase one. Your U.S. long distance carrier will usually be more expensive. To call from the U.S. to most countries overseas, you can call your son or daughter by using calling cards purchased at Wal-Mart or

Sam's for example. There are also inexpensive virtual telephone cards which can be found on the internet so it is advisable to shop around. Using a computer to call home from abroad or anywhere in the world through Skype is increasingly becoming more popular among study abroad students. For more details on this service, check out the website:

<http://www.skype.com>

One thing to keep in mind is that overuse of communication with family and friends at home can undermine the intercultural experience for which your son or daughter is abroad in the first place. It's important for them to hear from home, but you should not expect to communicate with them as much as you do in the United States.

How You Can Help

One of the hardest things for parents to do, when their son or daughter decides to study abroad, is to step back and let the student make the decisions and take responsibility for all of the things that need to be done before they go. As parents, you should be available and ready to lend your son or daughter help, advice, and support, but the primary responsibility for planning the experience needs to fall to the student.

There are ways for you to remain involved in the process without making decisions for your son or daughter, however. There are so many resources online about studying abroad, and about individual countries. You can do some reading and research about the location to which your child will be going. You can look up information on the culture, current events, and health and safety in the specific country. The more you and your child know, the less you will feel the need to worry.

While your son or daughter is abroad, they will almost certainly feel culture shock and/or homesickness shortly after they arrive in the host country. It's more likely for them to inform you of the bad times than the good, so it's important for you to keep in mind that not every day will be a good day. The same is true of life in the United States; it just seems like a bigger deal in a foreign country. Most of the time students just need time to integrate into the host culture, and you simply have to be patient until they do. Students have a support system of program staff members in country that can usually help them out more than you can too, since they know the customs of the country and have probably assisted students feeling the same way before. In most cases, everything will sort itself out, but if you are concerned about your son or daughter, urge them to talk to a staff member about the problem.

Common Scenarios

The following situations and suggested parent responses are taken from NAFSA's guide *What Parents Need to Know!*, available by request from the CGE.

How can parents recognize, and best help their children deal with, the symptoms of culture shock?

Culture shock is rarely identified as such by a student who is experiencing it: he is much more likely to **perceive** the problem as something wrong with the country he is in, the program he is participating in, the teachers at his host institution, his program advisers, his roommates, the food, the “peculiar/disgusting/annoying” habits and ways of the local population, and so on.

Culture shock can be especially intense in situations where the child is dealing with a foreign language in addition to all the other cultural differences. He may have the irrational feeling that he wishes he never had to hear another word of the language he went there to learn! This too is a very natural part of the process of immersing oneself in a foreign culture and language. Listen sympathetically, and let him know that he is not alone in feeling this way at least occasionally. Many times a good night’s sleep, or simply a more satisfactory day the next day, will make all the difference in the world.

Your child may express the feeling that he made a big mistake in deciding to study abroad. Or he may express regret at leaving behind loved ones, activities, or opportunities he passed up in favor of this experience, all of which look much more attractive now than they did at the time he made his decision to study abroad. In fact, ***very often what the student is experiencing when he describes these problems and his unhappiness in the new environment is the discomfort and orientation that accompanies living in a place that has different values, expectations, standards, and practices than those that exist at home: in short, many of the cultural differences that students going abroad are seeking to explore.*** That he is having to deal with this adjustment without his customary support system of family, friends, and teachers makes the challenge more difficult, but certainly not impossible. Meeting this challenge helps him develop more independence, self-confidence, and maturity—all hallmarks of a good study abroad experience.

How should parents respond to a student’s complaints while she is abroad? How can you tell from across the ocean, whether she is being overly demanding; whether she is experiencing culture shock; or if there is something truly unacceptable, or even dangerous, in the situation she is describing to you?

Of course there is no one answer that can apply to all situations in which parents are in the worrisome position of receiving unhappy reports from their children who are abroad. But the following may help in sorting out the normal ups and downs in the process of cultural adjustment from a situation that is more serious and should be referred to the on-site support staff.

Wait and see.

Remember the popular song back in the 1960s, about a homesick kid at summer camp who writes home, listing all the reasons he hates where he is and begging his parents to come and bring him home ***immediately***? By the end of the song, the sun has come out, (“guys are swimmin’, guys are sailin’”), and the parents are being urged to “disregard this letter.”

Parents of students abroad are much more likely to hear about what’s going wrong than what’s going right. The instant nature of e-mail and cell phone communications make it very easy for students to turn to parents with petty concerns and problems that, in an earlier day, they would have worked out on their own in short order. Avoid the temptation to immediately step into your child’s problem-solving process. (This is one good reason for avoiding a 24/7 pattern of communication in the first place.) Many routine problems will have resolved themselves, or students will have found a resolution on their own, within 24 hours.

Urge your child to be the one to find a solution to the problem, and to consult with the resident or on-site director for advice and assistance if necessary.

Be responsive and sympathetic to your child’s remarks without becoming overly involved in the details. Try not to instantly leap to negative conclusions, express regret that the student chose to study abroad, or otherwise emphasize the difficult aspects of this process. ***Do*** follow up in a day or two, and ask whether the issue was resolved. Often it will have ceased to be an issue.

Remind your child that he went abroad to experience something different: and that sometimes “different” is uncomfortable.

Part of what he’s there for is to learn to deal with a new and different place on his own—let him have a successful experience, and the growing confidence that can come from such success.

Staying in touch: Creating your family's communications plan

Many of today's students (and parents) are used to the wonderful convenience of 24/7, instant communications available through cell phones, e-mail, instant messaging, etc. (And now there is VoIP that lets you make calls through your computer, sometimes for free.) While these forms of instant communication are invaluable, especially in emergency situations, allowing us to stay in touch with our children, they can have an unfortunate effect on students' ability to become fully immersed in a foreign culture.

It's important to talk with your child about how, and how often, you will communicate with each other while he is abroad so that you will not worry, and he will not be overly focused on matters at home. Most study abroad advisers encourage students to touch base with their parents as soon as possible after they have arrived in their new location, to assure them that they have safely arrived and are settled in. After that it's best to maintain regular but not overly frequent communication with them, and to find ways to use your communications to support and encourage their immersion into the culture rather than distracting them from it. It's not a bad idea to have a prearranged system for getting in touch with each other in the case of a national or international emergency or communications breakdown: for example, designated relatives or close family friends to call in the U.S. and if possible, in the part of the world where she is staying in the event you have trouble contacting each other.

The cost of telephone communications is usually less expensive when calling from the U.S. than from abroad. Check with your long-distance telephone provider to see if they have an international plan: you may want to have it activated during the period your child is abroad. (Ask if there are higher rates for making calls to a cell phone.) In most places, international calling cards purchased abroad offer the best value and greatest convenience for students calling home. Cell phones are a mixed blessing: some programs offer them to all student participants. In other programs, they are strongly discouraged and/or may be prohibitively expensive to use. In any case, ***overuse of cell phone communication with family and friends at home is one major way of undermining the intercultural experience your child is seeking to gain in studying abroad.***

If your child is busy and fully engaged in the study abroad experience, he will have less time to spend e-mailing or calling you and his friends back home. (It may also be a fairly costly expense to be online while abroad, or the Internet may not be easily accessible.) This is a positive thing, and should be viewed as such by you. Encourage your child to communicate with you when she can, and to tell you about all the new sights she is seeing and things she is learning. This will help her make the most of her experience abroad.

My daughter hasn't even come home yet, and she's already talking about going back. Is this just pie-in-the sky fantasizing? Or have we lost her forever? How should I respond to this kind of talk?

If your daughter begins talking about wanting to spend more time where she is studying, rather than dismiss it as idle talk or fantasy, or become worried about if and when you will ever see her again, appreciate the fact that she is thoroughly engaged in the experience and enjoying it. Encourage her to look into what possibilities are available for additional study, work, or internship possibilities while she is still there. While much information is now available on the Internet, there is no substitute for on-the-ground research and face-to-face interaction. It would be better for her to look into these plans while she's there and learn how best to prepare for them, or realize they're not such a good idea after all, than to find out later the hard way.

Many students go through a period of thinking they want to stay in the study abroad location, or return to it. Most of them don't follow through, at least not while they're still in school. But for those who do, additional study or work abroad can be a very positive outcome of an international experience, and good preparation for a future career. Don't nip her plans in the bud: encourage her to find out where they may lead. Whether her plans come to fruition or not, she's learning how to explore her options and maximize her possibilities. This is a good thing!

What if my son calls home and says he hates where he is and he wants to come home?

When those “I hate X-country” days hit (and they will!), remind him that “something different” was what he signed up for when he signed up for study abroad. Urge him to exercise patience and to keep his sense of humor and perspective.

Here are a few things students abroad ***should not*** expect:

Every day will be a good day. Is every day at home a good day? Of course not. Why should it be any different in a foreign country where your child doesn’t speak the language, doesn’t understand many of the most basic customs, doesn’t know how to complete the simplest errands, and has to make all new friends? Tell her to remember that sometimes volatile ups and downs are a natural and normal fact of life, especially on study abroad, and especially in the beginning. (It can become a bigger factor again later in the stay, as the end approaches and the prospect of returning home, where life is “reasonable,” nears.) Urge her to hang in there and get the most of every day until she is home again.

Accommodations/food/academic expectations will be similar to what is available on the home campus. Some students are shocked to find out just how different life in another country can be. They may be distressed when they find that certain comforts and facilities—television in every room, and ubiquitous, cheap (or free) computer and Internet access, etc., are less available than what they are accustomed to. They may find themselves in a place where people find the notion of vegetarianism (especially veganism) to be puzzling to say the least. (Some vegetarians may want to take a hiatus while they are abroad, for reasons of practicality and health, as well as the desire to fully experience the host culture.) Female students may be appalled at sexist attitudes they encounter or aggressive and unwelcome attention in the streets. Students may be disoriented to find that professors in foreign universities expect much more of them and are far less available to them than professors on their home campuses. All of these things may be part of the reality of life abroad: they may also be part of the reason your child will come to appreciate life in the U.S. more when she has returned. Urge her not to be constantly comparing conditions in the host country to life at home, and judging the host culture as lacking. There are benefits and drawbacks to nearly every difference she will experience: encourage her to make the most of the benefits and minimize the drawbacks.

My child seems to be spending all her time with the other Americans in her program. How do I encourage her to make new international friends while she is away?

Some very short programs may offer very little possibility for students to have meaningful interactions with foreign students. In that case, there's probably not much to be done, although in these circumstances, occasionally separating from the group (during the day, in a safe area) for some alone time in a café, museum, or park is a good idea and a way for students to at least be better able to **observe** the foreign culture. Encourage your child to remember that she should make the most of the foreign experience, without minimizing the importance of friendships she may be developing with other American students, or dismissing the importance of her moving about with the group if that is what makes her feel more comfortable and safe.

Students who are away for a longer time will quite naturally have more opportunity to get to know foreign students. This is obviously a good thing, but it's also important for students to take cultural differences into account and exercise even more caution in planning social activities with people they don't know very well in a foreign country.

Encouraging your child to be cautious and prudent without encouraging prejudice or undue fear on the one hand, or making her think you are overly protective on the other, can be a delicate matter. But remember that just as when she is at home, rather than a lecture, she needs the benefit of your advice, your greater life experience, and your perspective. Recognize that she probably knows more about the specifics of the situation she's in than you do; but don't be too hesitant to share your concerns and your wisdom with her either. She still needs your advice!

Re-entry

As parents, your first reaction when your son or daughter returns to the United States is likely to be relief and happiness. It's important to remember that students don't always feel the same way. When they come back home, they are likely to feel a mixture of excitement to be home and sadness to have left another country where they had also begun to feel at home. Many students go through a period of "reverse culture shock" upon returning to the United States and readjusting to their old lives. The difficulty and length of time of the readjustment process, just like adjusting to the foreign culture, can vary greatly from student to student, and there is no way of predicting just how much their experience will affect them. It's important for you to keep in mind that studying abroad would not benefit students as much as it does if it did not change them. For some students, this change is simply maturity and confidence, but some may come back with a different set of values. Your son or daughter will likely come back a different person than the one you sent away. "Reverse culture shock" is typically marked by four stages:

1. **Disengagement:** This stage usually begins before you leave your host country. You realize it is time to say good-bye to your overseas friends and to the place you've called home. The hustle and bustle of finals, good-bye parties, and packing can intensify your feelings of sadness and frustration. You already miss the friends you have made and you are reluctant to leave.
2. **Initial Euphoria:** Usually begins shortly before departure with feelings of excitement and anticipation. You may be very happy to see your family and friends again, and they are happy to see you. It ends with the realizations that people are not as interested in your experiences abroad as you had hoped and they soon grown tired of hearing your stories and seeing your photo albums or slideshows.
3. **Irritability and Hostility:** This may occur sooner than it did when you first went overseas. You may experience feelings of frustration, anger, alienation, loneliness, and disorientation, and not understand exactly why. You might quickly become irritated and critical of others and American culture. You may also feel less independent than you were before. You may feel like a "stranger" in your own country.
4. **Readjustment and Adaptation:** This is a gradual readjustment to life at home. Things will start to look more normal again, but they won't be exactly the same as how you left them. You have developed new attitudes, beliefs, and habits, as well as personal and professional goals. The important thing is to try to incorporate the positive aspects of your international experience with your life at home.

Here are just a few areas to which your son or daughter may experience difficulties in readjusting:

- Relationships with family and friends, including boyfriends or girlfriends
- Returning to TU and their regular "routine"
- Readjusting to the US lifestyle

- Incorporating personal growth and changes into life in the U.S.
- Keeping alive their friendships and other connections made while studying abroad.

Many parents report that the most difficult part of their student's study abroad experience is the re-entry. The School for International Training has prepared a very useful guide for families about what to expect when their son or daughter returns from studying abroad. Visit http://www.worldlearning.org/SSA_other_documents/parent_reentry_handbook.pdf to download a copy of their publication, *Surviving Re-Entry: A Readjustment Manual*.

Here are a few tips for helping your son or daughter with the re-entry phase of study abroad:

- Expect your son or daughter to have a period of transition upon return, sometimes as long as the period he or she was abroad.
- Consult the CGE's information for students on reverse culture shock (http://www.utulsa.edu/globaleducation/students_reversecultureshock.php).
- Continue your enthusiasm for your son or daughter's experience in the months after he or she returns home. Students often report that they find it difficult when their friends and family lose interest in their experience!
- Encourage your son or daughter to participate in the Center for Global Education's International Leadership Program (http://www.utulsa.edu/globaleducation/students_intleadershipprog.php) as a Globetrekker or a Peer Advisor.
- Support them with their desire to continue their involvement with the international education community at TU. It is not uncommon for returnees to go abroad again, as part of an internship, a full-time job, or with assistance of a major scholarship.
- Contact the CGE if you have additional concerns about your child's readjustment from studying abroad.

Appendices

NAFSA Guidelines for Safety Abroad

The Association of International Educators (NAFSA) has composed safety guidelines for program providers, participants, and the families of participants.

If your son or daughter is working with a program, it is the sponsor's responsibility to:

- Conduct periodic assessments of health and safety conditions for the chosen program, and develop and maintain emergency processes and a crisis response plan.
- Provide health and safety information for prospective participants so that they and their parents / guardians / families can make informed decisions concerning preparation, participation and behavior while on the program.
- Provide clear information concerning aspects of home campus services and conditions that cannot be replicated at overseas locations.
- Provide orientation to participants prior to the program and as needed on site, which includes information on safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in the host country, dealing with health and safety issues, potential health and safety risks, and appropriate emergency response measures.
- Consider health and safety issues in evaluating the appropriateness of an individual's participation in a study abroad program.
- Either provide appropriate health and travel accident (emergency evacuation, repatriation) insurance to participants, or provide information about how to obtain appropriate coverage. Require participants to show evidence of appropriate coverage.
- Conduct appropriate inquiry regarding the potential health and safety risks of the local environment of the program, including program-sponsored accommodation, events, excursions and other activities, on an ongoing basis and provide information and assistance to participants and their parents / guardians / families as needed.
- Conduct appropriate inquiry regarding available medical and professional services; provide information for participants and their parents / guardians / families; and help participants obtain the services they may need.
- Provide appropriate and ongoing health and safety training for program directors and staff, including guidelines with respect to intervention and referral, and working within the limitations of their own competencies.
- Communicate applicable codes of conduct and the consequences of noncompliance to participants. Take appropriate action when aware that participants are in violation.
- Obtain current and reliable information concerning health and safety risks, and provide that information to program administrators and participants.
- In cases of serious health problems, injury, or other significant health and safety circumstances, maintain good communication among all program sponsors and others who need to know.

- In the participant screening process, consider factors, such as disciplinary history, that may impact on the safety of the individual or the group.
- Provide information for participants and their parents / guardians / families regarding when and where the sponsor's responsibility ends, and the range of aspects of participants' overseas experiences that are beyond the sponsor's control.

In particular, program sponsors generally:

- Cannot guarantee or assure the safety of participants or eliminate all risks from the study abroad environments.
- Cannot monitor or control all of the daily personal decisions, choices, and activities of individual participants.
- Cannot prevent participants from engaging in illegal, dangerous or unwise activities.
- Cannot assure that U.S. standards of due process apply in overseas legal proceedings or provide or pay for legal representation for participants.
- Cannot assume responsibility for the actions of persons not employed or otherwise engaged by the program sponsor, for events that are not part of the program, or that are beyond the control of the sponsor and its subcontractors, or for situations that may arise due to the failure of a participant to disclose pertinent information.
- Cannot assure that home-country cultural values and norms will apply in the host country.

It is the responsibility of the participant to:

- Read and carefully consider all materials issued by the sponsor that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in host countries.
- Consider their health and other personal circumstances when choosing to go abroad.
- Make available to the sponsor accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary in planning for a safe and healthy international experience.
- Assume responsibility for all the elements necessary for their personal preparation for the program and participate fully in orientations.
- Obtain and maintain appropriate insurance coverage and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers.
- Inform parents / guardians / families, and any others who may need to know, about their participation in the work abroad program, provide them with emergency contact information, and keep them informed on an ongoing basis.
- Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct, and emergency procedures of the program, and obey host-country laws.

- Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to the appropriate individuals.
- Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well-being of others, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
- Accept responsibility for their decisions and actions.
- Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining emergency health and law enforcement services in the host country.
- Follow the program policies for keeping program staff informed of your whereabouts and well-being.

Additional resources

Parents' Frequently Asked Questions

http://www.utulsa.edu/globaleducation/parents_faqs.php

Surviving Re-Entry: A Readjustment Manual

http://www.worldlearning.org/SSA_other_documents/parent_reentry_handbook.pdf

Diversityabroad.com - Parent's Guide to study abroad

http://www.diversityabroad.com/study_abroad_guide/parents_benefits.php

Studyabroad.com - Study Abroad Parent Guide

<http://www.studyabroad.com/guides/parentsguide/index.html>

Emergencies—Information in a National or International Crisis

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1212.html

For other online resources available to students, visit:

<http://www.utulsa.edu/globaleducation/resourcecenter.php>

For other questions you might have, contact TU's Center for Global Education.

TELEPHONE: 918-631-3229

E-MAIL: globaleducation@utulsa.edu