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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

About This Handbook

This handbook has been developed by the Office of Academic Programs Abroad for students who will be participating in an Eastern Michigan University-sponsored study abroad program. Participants are expected to read the handbook thoroughly and return the completed agreement form (attached at the end of the handbook) to the Office of Academic Programs Abroad, 103 Boone Hall, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197. In addition to this handbook, you will receive other materials specific to the program you are attending, which you will also be expected to read.

About APA

The Office of Academic Programs Abroad (APA) is part of Extended Programs at Eastern Michigan University. APA staff members work with your program director to help plan, coordinate and direct EMU-sponsored study abroad programs, perform administrative responsibilities connected with programs and advise students on study abroad opportunities.

Pre-Program Requirements

All students must complete the required forms and paperwork in order to be allowed to attend their program. This includes the handbook sign off sheet, the ISIC (International Student ID Card) form, the Health Form and the Agreement and Release form. See the information for your specific program for any other requirements.

Eastern Michigan University students with any outstanding holds on their student account will not be permitted into the program. Having a hold on your account will prevent you from being registered for your study abroad classes, thus making you ineligible for our programs.

Pre-Departure Orientation

Attendance at a pre-departure orientation session is required for all EMU students who are studying abroad, whether on an EMU or non-EMU program. Your questions are expected and welcomed. The orientation will cover general topics regarding studying abroad with which all students must be familiar. In addition to this general orientation, a program-specific orientation may also be arranged for you by your program director.

SECTION 2: ACADEMIC PROCEDURES

Course Grading

Letter grades will be awarded for course work completed. Your program director may or may not permit a pass/fail option. The grading scale is as follows:

A..... 4.0	C..... 2.0
A-.... 3.7	C-.... 1.7
B+.... 3.3	D+.... 1.3
B..... 3.0	D..... 1.0
B-.... 2.7	D-.... 0.7
C+.... 2.3	E..... 0.0

In some Fall and Winter programs, a different grading scale may be used by your overseas institution. Those grades will be converted to the letter grades above, using the grading conversion table that is recommended by the overseas institution.

Drop-Add Policies: Spring and Summer Programs

Your director will advise you regarding the drop-add policy for your program. Added classes will generate a charge on your EMU student account. You are responsible for payment of the additional charges.

It is possible to drop a course with the permission of the course professor, but students may not drop below the minimum credit hour requirement.

Drop-Add Policies: Fall and Winter Programs

Fall and Winter programs follow the drop/add schedule that you will find in the corresponding EMU Course Schedule booklet for that semester. All students must retain full-time status throughout the semester, which is defined as a minimum of 12 credit hours. Added classes will generate a charge on your EMU student account. You are responsible for payment of additional charges.

It is possible to drop a course with the permission of the course professor, but students may not drop below the minimum credit hour requirement. In most cases classes dropped on or before the tenth (10th) day of the program will generate a 100 percent tuition credit. Classes dropped after the tenth (10th) day will not generate any refund and will result in a grade of "W" (withdrawn).

Complete withdrawal from all classes will generate a full or partial refund of EMU tuition and fees, depending on your date of withdrawal; please see the EMU Class Schedule booklet for the dates and amounts. Your program fee, however, will usually not be refundable after the start of the program. Remember also, if you completely withdraw from your classes, you can no longer be a part of the program, and you must leave your program accommodation.

Grade of "Incomplete"

Students are expected to complete all academic work before leaving the program site. Only in cases of medical or family emergency should any course work be left incomplete.

A grade of "I" (incomplete) is awarded only when a student has completed the majority of the work in a course and the work has been of acceptable quality ("C" or better). An "I" grade must be removed within one year from the end of the semester or session in which the grade was given. The initiative for the conversion of an "I" to a letter grade rests with the student. It is the student's responsibility to submit outstanding work and request a grade conversion. If not converted to a letter grade, the "I" will become a permanent part of the academic record after one year.

SECTION 3: STUDENT CONDUCT

Drug and Alcohol Violations

Eastern Michigan University has a zero-tolerance policy regarding the use, manufacture, production, sale, exchange or distribution of illegal drugs by study abroad program participants. A student who violates this policy at any time during the program will be disciplined under the Student Conduct Code, which may result in immediate dismissal from the program and academic withdrawal. In addition to the program discipline, a student using illegal drugs abroad runs the risk of being severely dealt with by the host country. For a further discussion of these risks see "Controlled Substances" under the Health and Safety section of this handbook.

Any student who chooses to use alcohol is expected to behave in a mature and responsible manner, obeying all program rules and laws of the host country. A student who abuses alcohol or violates any rule or law while under the influence of alcohol will be dealt with by the Program Director, who may refer the student for discipline under the Student Conduct Code.

Student Conduct Code

The following behaviors and acts will be considered violations of the Student Conduct Code for program participants and will subject the student to discipline under the Code:

- Drugs: As defined above.
- Improper Use of Alcohol: As defined above.
- Property: Theft, damage, destruction, defacement or wrongful appropriation of any program property or property of a member of the program or host country.
- Disruptive Conduct
- Physical Abuse:

a) Physical abuse or threat of physical abuse or unwarranted inflammatory provocation to physical abuse against any person or conduct that threatens or endangers the mental or physical health or safety of any such person.

b) Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment means unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature, unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical abuse that is not consensual.

- Discrimination and Discriminatory Harassment:

Speech or other expression constitutes discriminatory harassment under any of the following circumstances if it:

1. is intended to insult or otherwise injure an individual on the basis of personal characteristics such as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, creed, religion, ancestry, age, handicap or sexual orientation, and

2. is addressed directly to the individual whom it insults, and

3. amounts to "fighting words." "Fighting words" are those personally abusive epithets which, when directly addressed to any ordinary person, are, in the context used and as a matter of common knowledge, inherently likely to provoke a violent reaction, whether or not they actually do. Such words include, but are not limited to, derogatory references to the personal characteristics described in the section above.

- Falsification of records

- Firearms, weapons and explosives:

- a) Possession or use of firearms and other weapons

- b) Possession or use of firecrackers, gunpowder, explosives or incendiary devices, or other materials that endanger health or safety.

- Fires or fire alarm systems and equipment:

- a) Tampering with or misuse of fire alarm systems or fire fighting equipment.

- b) Intentionally setting fires in any building.

- Academic Dishonesty: Students are not to engage in any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, plagiarism, alteration of records, substitution of another's work by representing it as the student's own, and knowingly assisting another student in engaging in any such activity. For the purpose of this section, plagiarism is defined as the knowing use, without appropriate approval, of published materials, expressions or works of another with intent to represent the materials(s) as one's own.

• Other Regulations:

- a) Violation of any other provision of the Student Handbook.
- b) Violation of any law or statute in the host country.
- c) Commission of an act that would be considered a felony under any US federal, state or local law.

Disciplinary Process

An allegation that a student has violated the Student Conduct Code will be handled in the following manner:

The Program Director will be responsible for handling the case and will inform the student(s), in writing, of the alleged violation and will set up a meeting with the student(s).

For a minor violation (one that will not result in the student's dismissal from the program or in exclusion from any activities and/or programs), the Program Director will discuss the incident with the student. If the student admits the violation, the Program Director will recommend a penalty. If the student accepts the proposed penalty, the Program Director will put the violation and the penalty in writing and have the student sign the document. This will end the disciplinary process in the matter.

In the following instances, the Program Director will convene a disciplinary hearing:

1. If the student denies the violation
2. If the student admits the violation but rejects the proposed penalty, or
3. If the student is charged with a major violation (one that may result in the student's dismissal from the program or in exclusion from any activities and/or programs)

The hearing board will be composed of the Program Director and program staff members. At the hearing, the student will be allowed to present any witnesses presented by the complainant and/or program staff. After this presentation, and with approval from the Office of Academic Programs Abroad, the Program Director will render a decision about the violation and what penalty, if any, will be assigned. The student will be notified of the decision in writing. This will be the final decision in the matter.

Emergency Suspension

The Program Director, in consultation with EMU's Office of Academic Programs Abroad (in a timely manner, if possible), is authorized to immediately suspend a student from any or all program activities if the Program Director reasonably believes that the student's continued presence threatens the future viability of the program.

As soon as possible, the Program Director will give the student the opportunity to present his/her case, as per the steps outlined in the above Disciplinary Process section. The emergency suspension shall not create a presumption of guilt in the subsequent disciplinary process.

Penalties

Penalties for students found in violation of the conduct code may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Letter of Warning-issued for lesser offenses.
- Probation-issued for more serious offenses. The student may be excluded from some program activities and/or programs for a specified length of time, or until certain conditions are met by the student.
- Dismissal from the program, including academic withdrawal.

Note: A student who is dismissed from the program for disciplinary reasons will not receive a refund of any program fees. The student may contact EMU's Records and Registration Office to see if she/he is entitled to a refund of any of the academic fees and tuition paid.

Upon the student's dismissal, the student will not be allowed to continue traveling or staying with the program group or participate in any further activities. The student is responsible for making travel arrangements home and paying all expenses incurred subsequent to the dismissal.

SECTION 4: HEALTH AND SAFETY

Insurance

All students studying abroad on EMU programs are enrolled in our Premier Group health insurance policy, administered by CMI Insurance Specialists and underwritten by ACE American Insurance. The plan includes access to a 24/7 Worldwide Assistance Network for emergency assistance, anywhere in the world. This service provides referrals to the nearest medical facility or provider, as well as help relaying messages to family members. A full description of coverage is provided during the pre-departure orientation session, or it may be downloaded at the CMI Insurance Specialists website, <www.studyabroadinsurance.com/>.

In addition, as part of the program, every student will receive an International Student Identity Card (ISIC). This card provides basic medical coverage, including emergency medical evacuation and repatriation of remains.

For more information check: <www.counciltravel.com> or call 1.800.551.0824.

Health Recommendations

A general physical exam, particularly for those with prior known conditions, is recommended before leaving the United States. It is also advisable for you to schedule an appointment to visit your dentist. If you need prescription medication while traveling, be sure to bring an adequate supply with your physician's explanation of the generic and brand names of the medication and dosage information. Always carry prescription medication in its original container. It is also a good idea to carry an extra copy of your eyeglass prescription.

It is absolutely essential that participants with known conditions alert their program directors of these conditions. This information will remain confidential, but it is necessary in the event of a medical emergency.

Travel clinics provide immunizations and consultation to international travelers and are a good source of information. Generally speaking, no shots or immunizations are required for Europe, Australia/New Zealand, Japan or Mexico, but your program director will inform you if there are any exceptions or recommendations that apply to your particular destination.

Travelers from the US to Latin America sometimes experience stomach distress at first. Ask your doctor about taking some daily Pepto Bismol or equivalent tablets throughout the trip as a preventive, and about bringing an antibiotic such as Cipro (with a prescription) in case of gastrointestinal infection.

Water is considered safe to drink from the tap in most European cities and in Japan. The exceptions are Venice and all of Turkey and Russia. Bottled water is readily available in all of these places, as it is in Mexico, where we strongly recommend that you not drink any tap water. Another important thing to remember about places with unsafe drinking water is to refrain from eating fruits and vegetables that have not been washed with bottled water.

Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

Although discrimination against minorities is illegal in many countries, it still occurs. If you believe you are being discriminated against, please discuss it with the Program Director, Manager or another member of the faculty. Discrimination is built on negative stereotypes that are influenced by a variety of factors, including the media. Although these attitudes may be frustrating at times, remember that one of the main reasons for your participation in study abroad is to learn about other cultures. This includes both the positive and negative experiences. Misunderstandings do occur, however, so remember that what you may perceive as a discriminatory act or remark may not necessarily be one in the context of the host culture, but rather a cultural or linguistic difference.

The legal definition of sexual harassment is any unwanted sexual gesture, physical contact or statement that is offensive, humiliating, or an interference with required tasks or career opportunities. Again, if you believe you have been a victim of sexual harassment, please discuss the matter with the Program Director, Manager or another member of the faculty.

Any form of discrimination or sexual harassment within the group will not be tolerated and will be dealt with appropriately.

Diversity

Students should be aware that, as in the United States, some societies and groups are more open to accepting diversity than others. People react differently to things they are not accustomed to, or things that appear different from the usual. Regretfully, you may have to deal with the possibility of outright racism abroad, the likelihood of insensitive attitudes and inadequate facilities for disabled students, and the presence of homophobia towards gay students.

You may find that your "Americanness" is a more important factor in determining your treatment abroad than your racial or ethnic heritage or physical abilities. You will find that the United States is not the only country with a complex of minority cultures. It is best to be aware of the attitudes and customs that you may encounter.

Dating and Sex

It is important to note that different cultures have different norms in regard to gender. Women and men should both be aware that the ways people interact vary widely by region and country. Observing interpersonal interactions within a culture can be useful in helping you choose the way you communicate verbally and non-verbally with others in that country.

Issues around dating and sexuality can be particularly difficult on a cross-cultural basis. Such things as eye contact, the way one dresses and body language can send very different messages by region and culture.

Don't be foolish in assuming that you are invulnerable because you are a visitor in the country and no one is judging your behavior. If you choose to be sexually active, use safe sex and protect yourself and your partner against unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and misunderstandings about the meaning of the relationship. Also remember to be responsible using alcohol or other drugs because they can effect your behavior and ability to make decisions.

Use of Controlled Substances

As stated in the section titled Drug and Alcohol Violations, Eastern Michigan University has a zero-tolerance policy toward drugs. If you choose to use drugs abroad, there is very little that anyone can do to help you if you are caught. You are operating under the laws of the host country, and neither the US government nor Eastern Michigan University will be able to secure your release should you be caught.

It is your responsibility to know what the drug laws are in a foreign country before you go, because "I didn't know it was illegal" will not get you out of jail. Some laws may be applied more strictly to foreigners than to local citizens; therefore, don't assume that just because local people are using drugs, it's acceptable for you to use drugs.

A number of Americans arrested abroad on drug charges have possessed marijuana; many of them possessed one ounce or less. The risk of being put in jail for just one marijuana cigarette or for other illegal substances is not worth it. You may not only endanger yourself, you may actually endanger your roommates or the program as a whole.

If you are caught using illegal drugs, it could mean:

- Immediate dismissal from Eastern Michigan University.
- Interrogation and delays before trial, including mistreatment and solitary confinement for up to one year under very primitive conditions.

- Lengthy trials conducted in a foreign language, possibly with delays and postponements.
- Two years to life in prison (some places include hard labor and heavy fines), if found guilty.
- Death penalty in a growing number of countries, including Malaysia, Turkey and Thailand.

Safety

Large cities in Europe and Asia are generally much safer in terms of violent crime than large cities in the United States. This does not mean that there is no danger. As a foreigner, you are more of a target for pickpockets and thieves. The highest risk areas for this sort of petty theft tend to be crowded market areas and train/metro/bus stations. Travelers in Latin America should be particularly careful in Guatemala City, San Salvador and Managua, where crime has increased in recent years. For all program participants it is advisable to keep your money and passport in a pouch hidden under your clothes, and do not let your bag out of sight.

Although it may be impossible to completely hide the fact that you're a foreigner, there is no need to advertise this fact. The best policy when traveling abroad is to keep a low profile. This is particularly important for US citizens, since not all countries in the world share the political beliefs of our government. We recommend that you don't bring t-shirts or patches with American flags or other potentially sensitive words or symbols.

Remember that it is the traveler's responsibility to know the local laws. Just because something is legal in one place does not necessarily mean that it's legal somewhere else; laws are not static or universal.

Alcohol consumption can affect your judgment and responses and can increase your chances of becoming a target of crime.

Female travelers should be aware that they may be at greater risk for harassment, particularly when walking alone at night. To help avoid this, always travel in groups and consider dressing more conservatively.

The Academic Programs Abroad office closely follows the US State Department advisories regarding possible terrorist risks or activities in the countries where we have programs. Take precautions, but remember also that your chances of being directly affected are extremely minimal.

All of these issues are things to be wary of, but not overly concerned. Use common sense, and follow the same strategies you would if you were visiting another city in the US.

SECTION 5: PREPARATION

Documents

Here is basic list of important documents that you should bring with you:

- Passport
- Plane tickets

Traveler's Checks and receipts
Cash
Credit Card/ATM
Insurance card
Prescriptions for eyewear and medications
List of program addresses and phone numbers

Make two sets of photocopies of all of the above documents, especially your airline ticket, passport, traveler's checks, and the credit cards you take abroad. Leave one set of copies at home and keep the other with you in a separate place from your actual documents.

NEVER pack your passport or any other important documents in your checked-in luggage or your carry-on luggage. Passports, credit cards and money should be worn in a pouch or a money belt, as close to your body as possible.

Packing

Most travelers pack too much clothing. Take only what you expect to wear. On most programs it is also recommended that you bring dark colors that will not as readily show dirt. Your clothing should be hand washable and not require much care or drying time. Concentrate on coordinated outfits that you can mix and match and that are easy to layer if needed. You may want to have a set of clothes that look nicer for evening concerts or performances.

Europe can be chilly in late spring and early summer, particularly in the northern and western regions. In the Mediterranean the weather is generally pleasant and dry. Latin America can be very hot and rainy in the summer. Europe in the fall is often cold and rainy. In Scandinavia and Russia don't be surprised if you see light snow. In Asia, it is usually warm in most places, but Japan and Nepal can be cold. For all programs, you should be prepared to travel and walk around outside on rainy days.

Remember, if you take it, you have to carry it, so the basic rule is less is more. Lay out everything you think you have to take and then put back half of that. The following list is a helpful guide and should be adjusted according to the seasonal weather you will experience during your time abroad.

Packing List Suggestions:

1 Backpack

1 Day backpack or similar style bag

1 Lightweight jacket: It should be water and wind proof. A poncho can also be useful, as it can cover both you and your large backpack. A warmer jacket may be needed for the fall Europe trip.

1 Hat

5 Shirts: It is a good idea to take both long and short sleeved varieties.

1 Sweater/Sweatshirt: Good for layering on cold days. A fleece, flannel or turtleneck will also work.

2 Pairs of pants: Make sure they are comfortable, durable, versatile and easy to wash, as you will be spending a lot of time in them.

1 Pair of shorts: Be forewarned that some cultures find shorts to be unacceptable apparel, so be careful where and when you wear them. Longer shorts are recommended. In Latin America, men should opt for lightweight pants rather than shorts.

1 Bathing suit

6 Pairs of underwear: A pair of long underwear is recommended in colder climates.

6 Pairs of socks: If your feet get cold easily, a pair of wool socks is recommended.

2 Pairs of shoes: Make sure they are good for walking and very comfortable. Break them in at least two weeks before you leave.

1 Pair of sandals/flip flops: Good for shower rooms or hot days.

1 Money belt or neck pouch: For your passport and money. Keep your money belt or neck pouch under your clothes. Do not use a fanny pack for valuables.

Miscellaneous Items

Soap: either bar form in a plastic case or liquid in a plastic bottle

Toothbrush and toothpaste

Deodorant

Shampoo and conditioner

Razor and shaving cream

Comb or brush

Kleenex or moist towelettes

Hand sanitizer

Nail clippers

Band-Aids or small first-aid kit

Sunscreen

Over the counter medication, as needed: aspirin, Pepto, Tums, Monistat, allergy or cold medication, etc.

Motion sickness medication

Any prescription medications needed

Water bottle and iodine tablets

Tampons or sanitary pads: hard to find in certain places

Insect repellent

Durable wristwatch

Portable alarm clock: A wristwatch with a good (loud) alarm could double as an alarm clock.

Pocket knife: A Swiss Army-style knife with a blade, bottle and can opener, and scissors is recommended (but don't pack any blades in your hand luggage!)

Small flashlight

Sunglasses

School supplies: You will need a durable notebook and pen or pencil for taking notes while in class and on-site.

Pocket-sized dictionary or phrase book for the country you are visiting: People appreciate an attempt to say "please," "thank you," "excuse me" and "hello" in their own language.

Optional Items

Camera and film: Normal film is readily available, but can be expensive. Certain films are hard to find.

Walkman: nice for long travel days

Batteries: available in most cities, but can be expensive

Travel sewing kit: not a necessity, but useful.

Phone card: Check with your phone company for international access numbers that are necessary for making calls from overseas.

Umbrella: compact size is best

Calculator: helpful for money exchanges and price conversions.

Vitamins: Vitamin C and Zinc, in particular, may help to prevent colds.

Breakable or expensive items: Always transport breakable or expensive items (like your camera) in your daypack.

Toiletry kit: Purchase a small bag to group all your toiletry items together.

Ziplock bags: Ziplock bags are very useful for protecting and storing your belongings within your backpack. It is always a good idea to put any items that could leak, such as shampoo, in a ziplock so the rest of your pack doesn't get wet and disgusting. Some students pack all of their clothes into different sized ziplock bags to ease packing and to protect them from dampness. In any case it is nice to have a supply with you for multiple uses.

Bag for your backpack: It is a good idea to purchase a large sack to put your backpack in when you check it during flights. This protects your straps from being damaged. Many camping stores sell such bags, or else a large cloth laundry bag will do. This bag can also prove useful in separating your dirty clothes from clean laundry during the trip.

Sample sizes: Many stores sell sample-size items like deodorant and shampoo. Some students find these useful because they are light and don't take up much room and can be replenished on the road.

Money Issues

The amount of spending money required varies with each student. Students should consider their spending patterns at home and take comparable funds for personal expenses. See the cost sheet for your particular program for a list of estimated costs. For conversion tables, consult the foreign exchange listings in a financial newspaper such as the Wall Street Journal or <www.oanda.com>.

Traveler's Checks

In many cases, unless your program director advises you otherwise, it may be easiest to bring with you all or most of the funds you will need for the trip in the form of traveler's checks. American Express traveler's checks are recognized and accepted by all major banks in the world (to a lesser extent in South America and Asia). You will not be able to cash US personal checks unless you are at an American Express office—and only then if you have a specific type of American Express Card. You should inquire as to the services your American Express Card offers overseas. Leave a copy of the serial numbers of your traveler's checks at home and take another with you, separate from the checks themselves. As you cash in the checks, keep a tally of which ones remain unredeemed.

ATMs

Some students access home funds through automated teller machines (ATMs), and they can be very useful, but should not be used as a primary source of funds. Since most ATMs abroad will only access a checking account, do not leave your funds in a savings account before departure.

Otherwise, ATMs are used the same as they are here: your home checking account is debited for your withdrawal, and you secure local currency. You are charged a service charge, and the current exchange rate is used in the transaction. Check with your local bank concerning use of ATMs abroad. Remember: In some places it may be difficult to find ATMs, and some machines may not accept your card, so you don't want to rely on them as your sole source of money. Also, if your PIN number is in the form of letters, make sure to memorize the corresponding numbers, since the keypads of most international ATMs only include numbers.

Credit Cards

Credit cards such as VISA, MasterCard and American Express (to a lesser extent) are honored abroad. We suggest you carry a major credit card for making purchases and in case of emergencies. If you have a different credit card, seek advice from the issuing company as to the card's applicability abroad and the billing rate for converting the amount of purchases abroad into dollars. Find out from your credit card company your credit limit, and be sure not to charge over that amount on your trip. Please be aware that many small stores, restaurants and street vendors do not accept credit cards, so you still need a supply of traveler's checks and cash.

As with an ATM, you can take your credit card to a foreign bank for a cash advance. You may also be able to withdraw foreign cash from some ATM machines with your credit card. To do this, you will need to know your PIN number, which is issued to you by your credit card company. Beware that credit card companies usually charge higher interest fees for a cash advance than they do for purchases.

Cash

You should also bring some cash in US dollars (\$150-\$250) in small denominations. Carrying American singles, fives and tens is very convenient for changing money in airports and train stations, where high commissions on traveler's checks can be a problem. You don't want to carry too much cash, however. Traveler's checks and credit cards are replaceable, but cash is not.

Please Take Sufficient Funds

The best way to assure yourself of adequate funds is to take more than your proposed budget, in order to allow for unexpected expenses. If your money runs out and you do not have an ATM card or credit cards to access funds, you have several alternatives, all based on the assumption that someone at home can send you money. Funds can be transferred or wired from home, but this process is very costly, time consuming and complicated. If you have a bank account abroad (not always easy to set up), money can be wired there from any US bank, which takes about two weeks. Using the local American Express office, you can receive funds in about a day, but high fees may apply. Avoid the expense and hassle by bringing the necessary funds and sticking to a budget.

Communications

Mail

Not surprisingly, mail sent internationally takes longer to reach its destination than mail within the United States. Letters should be marked "Air Mail" to ensure prompt delivery (usually 2-4 weeks). If not marked, mail may get sent by ship and can take up to three months to be delivered. When sending letters back to the US, don't forget to include "USA" or "United States" as the final line in the address to ensure delivery.

E-mail

If you don't have access to a computer room at your program site, then chances are that there will be at least one internet café in the same city. At these establishments, it is possible to pay a fee and access the internet. For this reason we recommend that all participants get a free internet e-mail address, such as yahoo or hotmail. This is a less expensive alternative to telephoning as a means of keeping in touch, but it can still be pricey, inconvenient and time consuming, so don't rely on it as a sole means of communication with home.

Tips on Telephoning

Before you leave you may want to get a phone card from a US telecommunications company that has access numbers abroad, which includes all of the major companies. This is very convenient in most places. Your home number will simply be billed, but be warned; these calls are not cheap.

In many countries there is the alternative of using a prepaid phone card. The cards are inserted into a phone slot and debited as you place calls. Many students report that this method is often less expensive, but you will have to pay the money up front. You can purchase these types of cards at local post offices and other locations for a fixed price.

There are also international prepaid phone cards available in the US. Check with your telephone company regarding usage.

Avoid calling from hotel phones, whenever possible; there is usually a surcharge.

Departure

Arrive at the airport about three hours before departure. Call the airline before you leave for the airport to check how soon you need to get there and to learn about any flight schedule changes. Don't leave your luggage unattended. It is a good idea to have a luggage tag with your name and address on your baggage, as well as having a patch or other identifying markings on your big pack to make it easier to locate it on the other end. However, you don't want to have any American flags or other markings that will easily identify you as an American (see section on safety).

You will have to carry your own luggage. It is a good idea to pack your bags a few days early and try to carry them when you are tired. Eliminate items that are not essential. Don't take anything you

would hate to lose. Leave at home all unnecessary credit cards, expensive jewelry or irreplaceable family objects! It is also a good idea to leave some extra room in your pack for souvenirs that you may want to bring home.

NEVER pack your passport or any other important documents in your checked-in luggage or your carry-on luggage. Passports, credit cards and money should be worn in a pouch or a money belt as close to your body as possible.

SECTION 6: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

This section is for non-US citizens, for whom there are special considerations when participating in a study abroad program. US students may skip to Section 7.

Immigration Status

International students studying in the United States with F-1 or J-1 visa status must secure permission from the Responsible Officer for international students at their primary U.S. host institution. It is likely that you will need to ask the Responsible Officer to "update" your I-20 or DS-2019 form before you depart the US, in order to ensure that you won't have any difficulty returning to the US at the conclusion of your study abroad program.

Health Insurance

It is MANDATORY that international students studying in the United States with F-1 or J-1 visa status have health insurance that meets specific criteria. Whether you are enrolled as a degree candidate or as a "guest student" at Eastern Michigan University, EMU provides mandatory health insurance that is automatically charged to your account. The cost of the health insurance provided by EMU is, as of 2005-06, \$359.00 per term for the Fall or Winter semesters; and \$359.00 for the Spring and/or Summer terms, even if you are only registered for one of those terms. If a program extends across multiple academic terms, insurance will be billed for all applicable terms. The details of the policy and costs are available each term; please request them from the Snow Health Center.

If you already have insurance that meets the federal requirements and you do not want to purchase the student health insurance provided by EMU, you may request a waiver. Again, please contact the Snow Health Center for instructions and deadlines for application. There are ten (10) criteria that must be met to waive the EMU mandatory health insurance requirement (see WAIVER APPLICATION for Student Health Insurance). The statement of compliance and the policy description must be in English and should be sent directly to the Snow Health Center.

If you do not apply for a waiver and provide a statement of compliance from your insurance provider (as outlined in the WAIVER APPLICATION for Student Health Insurance) on or before the waiver deadline, the EMU mandatory insurance will be assigned automatically. The appropriate charges will appear on your student account; charges are not reversible.

Acquiring Visas

If you are not a U.S. citizen, you are responsible for obtaining all required visas yourself.

SECTION 7: STUDY ABROAD, THE CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

Adjustments

Studying abroad is an invaluable experience: a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to live in foreign countries, to learn about their customs and cultures, and to adapt to new surroundings. The success of your experience depends partly upon your own efforts to acclimate yourself to living and studying abroad. You will have moments of exhilaration and moments of real frustration. Gradually, as you come to terms with the cultural differences, the frustrations will become fewer and fewer. One of the greatest benefits from living in a foreign country is an added depth of appreciation and understanding of culture. The insights into yourself will be of immeasurable value.

Some Key Resources

These are some of the timeless tips for speedy acclimatization and a more meaningful stay abroad:

- Learn about your destinations before you leave.
- Learn some of the local languages (or, if English is the language spoken at your destination country, learn some of the "lingo" or different words that are used there to mean the same thing).
- Plunge into the cultures you are visiting as soon as you arrive.
- Ignore complaints about the countries.
- Don't allow initial negative experiences to sour you.
- Accept the challenge of adjusting to new cultures and work hard at enjoying your stay.

Survival Strategies

Going abroad requires that you adjust to the same sorts of things as if you were moving to another part of the United States: being away from family and friends, living in an unfamiliar environment, meeting new people, adjusting to a different climate and so on. These changes alone could cause high stress levels, but you will also be going through cultural adjustments. At some point during your time abroad, you may experience what is called "culture shock."

While living abroad, you will often find that your everyday "normal" behavior becomes "abnormal" within another cultural context. Unspoken rules of social interaction have been changed, and the attitudes and behavior that characterize life in the United States are not necessarily appropriate in the host country. These "rules" concern not only language differences, but also such wide-ranging matters as family structure, faculty-student relationships, friendships, gender and personal relations.

One way to handle these social and personal changes is to understand the cycle of adjustment that occurs. The initial period is filled with details of getting used to the way the program works and meeting new friends.

As the time abroad goes on, some students will go through a stage of unhappiness or even depression. They often write letters, send e-mails or call home indicating that they are having a terrible time. Most students weather the initial adjustment period and begin to make greater personal and academic adjustments as the weeks or months pass.

Knowing that culture shock can happen to you will certainly ease some of the strain, but there are also several short-term strategies you can use when you recognize culture shock and are faced with the challenge of adjustment.

- Examine your motives for going

Remember that your study abroad program is not an extended vacation. Strong academic motivations for studying abroad are critical, since much of your time will be spent studying.

- Expect to feel depressed sometimes

Homesickness is natural, especially if you have never been away from home. Remember that your family and friends would not have encouraged you to go if they did not want you to gain the most from this experience. Don't let thoughts of home occupy you to the point that you are incapable of enjoying the exciting new cultures that surround you. Think of all you will share with your family and friends when you return home.

- Expect to feel frustrated and angry at times

You are bound to have communication problems when you are not using your native language or dialect. Moreover, people will do things differently in other countries, and you will not always think their way is better than yours. Once you accept that nothing you do is going to change the different cultural practices, you will save yourself real frustration. Remember that you are the foreigner and a guest in the other culture.

- Keep a Journal

One of the best ways to deal with cultural adjustments and to reflect thoughtfully on the differences between US culture and foreign cultures is to regularly write in a journal. As you write, you'll think your way out of the negative reactions that may result from your unfamiliarity with language and cultural behavior. Keeping a journal will force you to make meaningful comparisons between your own culture and the host country. When you return home, you'll have more than just memories, souvenirs and photos of your time abroad, you'll have a written record of your changing attitudes and process of learning about the foreign culture.

Coming Home

Customs Information

The US Government may require you to pay duty on goods purchased abroad and brought into the United States. You should know and understand these requirements before leaving so there are no problems when you return. You must declare expensive and/or foreign goods before leaving the United States so that you are not charged duty on them when you return. If you are taking foreign-made articles, such as cameras, binoculars, watches, computers, etc., you may want to register these articles with US Customs (before leaving the US) to avoid extra duty charges upon re-entry.

Upon your return, pack purchases together and keep receipts for them ready for US Customs inspection. Should you bring back foreign pharmaceuticals, have the prescriptions ready to present. You must declare everything acquired abroad, at the price paid, including gifts given to you and articles worn or used. If you fail to declare or understate the value, penalties may be severe. You cannot bring any meat, fruits, vegetables or Cuban cigars into the US.

Read *Know Before You Go*, a free pamphlet available online at:
<www.customs.ustreas.gov/travel/travel.htm>.

Culture Shock Revisited

As difficult as it is to adapt to an entirely new culture, it can be just as challenging to come back home after being away for a period of time. It is best to know what you might encounter in order to prepare for this adjustment period.

Expect to experience some measure of reverse culture shock. Remember that the world at home hasn't stopped for you while you were gone. Upon your return home, you may find you aren't the only one who has changed during your absence. Everyone and everything else will have changed, too. Remember to take time for yourself to readjust slowly.

You'll notice that you think differently about the US. You'll spend time reflecting on the differences between the US and the countries you visited. Friends and family may be interested in stories or pictures for a while, but they often "really don't understand." It may be difficult to express your feelings in words. Remember that many people may have difficulty relating to what you are saying because it hasn't been a part of their experience.

We strongly urge you to maintain contact with friends you've made abroad. You might find it helpful to volunteer to advise others who are thinking about studying abroad by joining the "World Scholars" program, organized by Academic Programs Abroad. And of course you can start thinking about when and how you'll return abroad. Some students have applied to graduate schools in a country in which they visited, have found employment possibilities abroad or have just returned to visit places and friends they encountered. Keep Academic Programs Abroad in the loop, and let us know when you change your e-mail address or move. We love to keep in touch with our alumni and welcome your e-mails!

STUDENT HANDBOOK AGREEMENT FORM

All Eastern Michigan University and non-Eastern Michigan University students participating in an Eastern Michigan University program abroad are required to read and understand the Student Handbook. You must complete this form and send it to the Office of Academic Programs Abroad, 103 Boone Hall, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197, or else drop it off at the front desk.

Program Name: _____

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Student Number: _____

1. I have read and understand the following sections of the Student Handbook. Please initial in the spaces provided.

_____ Introduction

_____ Academic Procedures

_____ Drug and Alcohol Violations

_____ Student Conduct

_____ Disciplinary Process

_____ Health and Safety

_____ Preparation

_____ Study Abroad: The Cultural Experience

2. I have read and understand the following statements concerning the Student Conduct Code. Please initial in the spaces provided.

_____ I understand that if my conduct violates any provisions of the Student Conduct Code, I may be subject to the provisions of the Disciplinary Process described in the Code. I further understand that a serious violation of the Code could result in my dismissal from the program (without financial reimbursement) and to academic penalties, as well.

_____ I understand that the penalties for using or trafficking in illegal drugs can be very severe in foreign countries and that neither Eastern Michigan University nor the US Government can or will shield me from prosecution. I further understand that there are program penalties for these offenses, which are also very serious.

3. I have read and agree to the following policies. Please initial in the spaces provided.

_____ I agree to abide by the host country's laws, host university's policies, and the Program Director's policies governing the use of alcohol, and if I use alcohol, I agree to use it in a responsible manner.

_____ I agree not to abuse any property belonging to the program university dormitories or host families. If damages are incurred, and I am identified as being responsible, I will be liable for any repairs to or replacement of property, and/or for payment for damages, and may be subject to disciplinary procedures as outlined in the Student Conduct Code.

_____ I agree to abide by all local and national laws in my host country/countries. I understand that neither Eastern Michigan University nor the US Government can or will shield me from prosecution.

_____ I agree to treat the local customs, behavior and people of the host country with respect at all times.

_____ I agree to attend all required classes and other program related activities, and to abide by the Program Director's rules concerning attendance and punctuality.

By submitting this form, I agree that I have read, understood and will comply with the provisions of the Student Conduct Code, the Student Handbook, and the other policies agreed to above.

Signature _____

Date _____

If you have any questions about this document, contact the office of ACADEMIC PROGRAMS ABROAD.

Academic Programs Abroad
Eastern Michigan University
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