

**Brown University**  
**Office of International Programs**



**STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK**

**Fall 2021**

Dear Student,

Congratulations on your plans to study abroad this upcoming semester.

The Brown University Office of International Programs (OIP) provides undergraduate study abroad opportunities to approximately 500 students every year through semester and summer opportunities. As part of the College, and in close partnership with Brown faculty, the OIP provides advising and resource services to students interested in study abroad, reviews applications and student records, and manages Brown-sponsored programs worldwide.

We thank our Brown students for attending the required pre-departure orientation. We have posted the [slide presentation to our website](#) for your reference. We hope that information along with this handbook and resources on the OIP website will assist you in planning for your time abroad.

This handbook contains information which will help you as you make your final preparations, as well as address key considerations during your program abroad. Upon arrival, you will find the on-site staff and host universities will have many additional resources and support services you may wish to consider. While we encourage you to utilize resources on-site, you are always welcome to reach out to your study abroad advisor here for assistance.

We wish you all the best for a rewarding experience this semester,

The OIP Staff

*updated August 2021*

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# Section I: Travel and Other Important Documents

## Passports

### *For U.S. citizens*

Some countries require that your U.S. passport be valid not only for the duration of your visit, but also for **three to six months after your entry or return from their country**. This means you have to check your passport expiration date carefully.

The process of obtaining or renewing a passport can take up to three months, depending on which procedure you follow. You may apply for a passport at most large post offices, such as the one in downtown Providence. You can access passport applications and consult general passport services information online at the [U.S. State Department website](#)

To get your passport you'll need:

- a passport application
- proof of citizenship, e.g. a birth certificate with a raised seal and filing date; photocopies are not accepted
- acceptable form of identification (such as a valid driver's license or current government-issued ID)
- one passport photo (without wearing glasses)
- passport fee, execution fee, and if necessary, fee for expedited service. Please refer to the U.S. State Department website for current fees.

Please do not submit your passport application materials to the OIP.

**Remember:** Your passport is the most important document you have when outside the United States. Know where it is at all times. When you receive your passport, make several copies of the front pages and keep the copies separate from your baggage. You should leave a photocopy of your passport with your parents/guardian at home, and save a copy in a secure cloud-based drive. Once in a foreign country, keep your copies in a safe place and ask your program to keep a copy on hand. This will facilitate replacement if your passport is lost or stolen.

### *Non-U.S. citizens*

Please verify that your passport is valid for the amount of time you will be away. You will also need to consult with the international student office at your home institution to ensure that your time abroad is accounted for, and that your leave is compliant with current U.S. immigration policies.

## Visas

### *U.S. citizens*

Unlike a passport, which proves your citizenship, a visa is your key to enter another country. Visas are issued by the consulate or embassy of that country and must be obtained well in

advance before you cross the country's border. Visa requirements vary from country to country, so check with your program if on an Approved or Petition program or with the OIP if on a Brown-sponsored program about specific requirements and documentation. Consulates and embassies are located in most large U.S. cities.

**Please note:** Students have been prevented from boarding their flights if they did not have the appropriate visas to enter a country. Please verify that you have the necessary documents for the country you intend to visit, as well as for those countries you pass through on a connecting flight.

### *International Students*

Please verify visa requirements with the consulate of the country to which you are traveling (and transferring through on a connecting flight) in order to determine whether a visa will be required. Do this as soon as possible and notify the OIP of documentation you will need to apply for your visa. Remember to check with the International Students office at your home school to ensure that your I-20 will remain valid upon your return to the U.S., if you plan to do so upon completion of the program.

### **Insurance Card & Claim Forms**

Be sure to download the Assistance App from International SOS prior to your departure. International SOS will act as the coordinator for any accident or sickness insurance claims. You should contact ISOS directly should you need to seek medical attention or need a referral. In addition, we recommend you have access to your health insurance card and claim forms in the event you file a claim under your personal insurance policy. Please keep in mind that all health services provided abroad will usually require immediate payment after you have been seen by the doctor; healthcare providers will not simply bill your insurance, as they do here in the U.S.

### **Voting from Abroad**

If you are interested in voting for elections that take place in U.S. elections (local, state, or federal) while you are abroad, you must request an absentee ballot. Contact your local, city, or township clerk or visit the [Federal Voting Assistance Program](#) or [Vote from Abroad](#) websites.

### **Parent Passports**

We encourage you to discuss with your parents or family members how they would be able to assist you in the event of an emergency while you are abroad. One or both of your parents or guardians may wish to have a valid passport for the period you are abroad, in the event of an emergency that would require them to travel to your program site on short notice.

## Resources

### Embassies and Consulates

- [U.S. Department of State](#), Bureau of Consular Affairs
- [U.S. Embassies & Consulates](#) Abroad
- [Foreign Consulates and Embassies](#) in the U.S.
- [Entry/exit requirements](#) for U.S. citizens (and destination information/country list)

**Passports:** [U.S. State Department](#) provides information for lost/stolen passports as well as general application resources.

## Section II: Health, Travel and other Insurance

### Health Insurance Requirements

**All students are required to have comprehensive health insurance while enrolled at Brown.** You may be fully covered under your parent or guardian's policy, or you may choose to purchase insurance through Brown University. If you have insurance coverage through another plan (e.g., through your parent or guardian), contact your health insurance company to verify that you are covered internationally. Under Brown University policy, **students will automatically be enrolled in and charged for the Brown Student Health Insurance Plan unless they complete an online insurance waiver** by the deadline established by the [Office of Insurance and Purchasing Services](#); this ensures that all students have adequate medical coverage and access to comprehensive medical care.

Students must provide the Office of International Programs with information regarding their insurance policy in the Health Insurance section of the OIP ViaTRM application system. If you are studying on an Approved or Petition program, please check with your program provider regarding insurance requirements and plan specifics.

#### *Brown Student Health Insurance Plan*

The Brown Student Health Insurance Plan provides domestic and limited worldwide coverage. The plan provides the same benefits as if you were at Brown University and also includes Medical Evacuation, Return of Mortal Remains, and Global Emergency Medical Assistance Services. Students have access to a 24-hour worldwide assistance network for emergency assistance anywhere in the world, provided through United Healthcare Global. Please refer to the [Brown's Insurance Office website](#) for more information about plan coverage; if you have specific questions, please contact their office directly for details.



Students previously enrolled in the Brown Student Health Insurance Plan, but who were on a leave of absence during the semester before going abroad, will automatically be enrolled and charged the premium once they are an active student again. Full-time, matriculated students who go abroad in the spring may retain their coverage for the remainder of the school year if they are already enrolled in the Brown plan. Students not enrolled in the Brown insurance plan at the start of the semester prior to their departure may not enroll in the plan during their time away, and they should discuss with their parent/guardian how they will obtain insurance while away. Visiting students who are studying abroad on a Brown-sponsored program for the spring semester will automatically be enrolled in, but have the option of waiving, the Brown Student Health Insurance Plan.

### *Waiver for Students with Other Insurance Coverage*

For more information on the insurance waiver process, contact the Office of Insurance and Purchasing Services at 401.863.9481 or visit [their website](#). If you have alternate insurance coverage comparable to the Brown University plan, **it is your responsibility to determine if you have comparable coverage, domestically and internationally**. Compare the benefits, limitations, and exclusions for your plan and the Brown University plan before filing your health insurance waiver. Below are some questions to keep in mind as you consider health insurance options for your time abroad:

- Will the plan cover me for the entire period while I'm abroad? (Some policies provided by a parent's employer might cover medical expenses for brief stays abroad but not for the full term of a study abroad program.)
- Will the plan cover doctor visits and medication prescribed abroad?
- Is there a deductible? If yes, how much?
- Is there a dollar limit to the amount of coverage provided?
- What are the procedures for filing a claim for medical expenses abroad? Do I need to pay expenses up front and then submit receipts to the insurance company for reimbursement? Make sure that you get full information from your policy about how to arrange for routine treatment, medical emergency procedures, and what is required to pay for or be reimbursed for a claim.
- When does the plan begin and end?
- What do I use as proof of international medical coverage (if I need to use the insurance or if the host government requires documentation)?  
If I am not a U.S. citizen, will I be covered by your plan? (It has been our experience that international students must arrange for coverage with a company in their home country. Most of the policies we have looked at do not cover international students traveling in a country other than the U.S.)
- Will this insurance cover me in the U.S. for the insured semester if I decide, for medical or other reasons, to return before the end of the program? (If students have a serious accident or illness abroad, they may need to return to the U.S. for further care; it is therefore important that the student carry coverage that applies not only abroad, but in the U.S. during the study abroad period as well.)

- Does the plan cover pre-existing medical conditions? Are there other exclusions?
- Does the plan cover psychological conditions and counseling services?
- Does the coverage meet the minimum coverage amounts required by the host country?

### **Insurance Coverage and Program Dates**

Medical insurance coverage is required for the program duration. Students whose medical insurance coverage is through Brown University and who are participating in Brown-sponsored programs that begin before the Brown Student Health Insurance Plan start date must make sure they are covered by insurance for the portion of the program that takes place before that date. If your program falls into this category, you will get information in your program-specific materials.

### **Healthcare Payments and Reimbursement**

Inquire with your insurance company about its international policies prior to leaving for your semester abroad. Carry a few blank claim forms with you in case they should be needed while you are abroad. **Keep in mind that should medical attention be required abroad, it may be necessary for you to have sufficient cash on hand to make payment at the time of treatment.** Many overseas health providers will not process U.S. insurance claims and will expect payment at the time of treatment. You and your family must be prepared to meet medical expenses up front, should you incur them. Students should have access to a minimum of \$400 (either by cash or credit card) in the event that medical treatment is required abroad. Requests for reimbursement for medical care received while abroad should be submitted to your health insurance provider. Be sure to obtain a receipt to submit with your insurance claim for reimbursement upon your return to the U.S.

### **Brown Accident & Sickness Insurance Plan**

In addition to the coverage provided by their own health insurance, all students are automatically covered by an accident/sickness insurance plan available for students studying abroad. The plan covers students during their program dates only (leisure travel before or after program is not covered), and it is **NOT** designed to replace the regular health insurance (students will not be able to waive the regular student health insurance plan with this accident/sickness policy). If a student experiences an illness or accident abroad and wishes to utilize the plan, they should contact <https://www.internationalsos.com/MasterPortal/default.aspx?content=home> directly (referencing Brown's group membership ID #11BSGC000031). Please refer to the [Office of Insurance and Purchasing Services](#) web page for further information, including a brief [description](#) of the plan's coverage and benefits. Interested students may also purchase a supplemental leisure coverage plan if they anticipate travelling before/after their study abroad program dates.

## **ISOS Emergency Travel Assistance and Evacuation Services**

All students are covered by International SOS (ISOS) Worldwide Assistance & Emergency Evacuation Services — including travel, medical, and security advice and services. The services provided by ISOS range from telephone advice and referrals to full-scale evacuation by private air ambulance. They also offer an **emotional support plan for students abroad**, which includes a limited number of counseling sessions at no cost (available either in person or via internet/phone). The ISOS network of multilingual specialists operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year from [ISOS Assistance Centers](#) around the world. You can access up-to-date reports on more than 170 countries on health issues, medical care, and vaccination requirements via the [International SOS website](#).

**\*When you contact ISOS, you must reference the Brown Group membership #: 11BSGC000031.**

Be aware that some of ISOS's services carry additional charges. Should you request a service which has an additional charge, ISOS will inform you in advance and will require a credit card number in order to activate the service. If, in the event of an emergency, Brown University provides the financial guarantee to ISOS on your behalf, the University will bill you for this charge upon receipt of the actual amount by ISOS. Please know that such charges may not be billed until after you return from your program abroad.

Should an emergency arise while you are abroad, your first contact should always be with your sponsoring program. If you are traveling, and/or in a situation where you are not able to reach your contact for your sponsoring program, you should contact International SOS, who will work to meet your needs immediately and will contact the University's on-call staff in the U.S. while coordinating services with Brown University.

## **Personal Property Insurance**

It is important to purchase insurance against loss, theft, or damage to your personal possessions while abroad. You may also be covered by your family's homeowner's policy or rental insurance. The OIP does not insure the personal property of students on a study abroad program.

## **Section III: Health and Medical Care**

### **Medical Forms**

Students on a Brown-sponsored program are required to complete an online Health Information Form and Permission to Share Information/Health Conditions Agreement as part of their pre-departure materials in *ViaTRM*. It is important that the OIP be made aware of any medical or emotional problems, past or current, that might affect you during your time abroad. The information you provide will be treated confidentially and only be shared with on-site Brown-sponsored program staff, and – if pertinent to your safety/well-being – with your parent/guardian and/or other professionals.

Students are required to notify the OIP of any relevant changes in their health that occur prior to the start of the program. Once on site, please notify the program director or staff of any illness/medical condition so that they are informed and can help you if problems arise. Students on Approved and Petition programs should also consult with their program providers about health information and other required medical forms.

### **Chronic or Long-Term Health Problems**

If you have a physical or psychological problem that requires constant treatment or surveillance by a doctor, you should consult with your physician about the prospect of studying abroad. For example, if you are on medication, discuss with your physician the type of care you may need while abroad and the best way to continue your regimen. Seriously consider the consequences of stress from cultural adjustment and relying on different medical practices.

You should realize that the range of healthcare and counseling and support services available to you at your home campus will not be available overseas. Identifying your health issues prior to studying off campus will help you determine what resources will or will not be available while abroad. If you have questions about the resources available at your program site, please contact the OIP.

### **Prescriptions and Over-the-Counter Medicine**

If you use prescription medication, bring enough with you to last for your time abroad, with a doctor's note or the original prescription to avoid problems with customs. Some prescriptions are unavailable, or are illegal, in some countries – research this well before departure, discuss alternative medication options with your doctor, and bring supporting documentation from your doctor if needed (see the OIP website).

If you wear glasses/contact lenses, bring an extra pair and copies of your prescription, in case you lose/damage your original pair. Contact your doctor's office and health insurance providers to find out how to receive extended prescriptions. Mailing prescription drugs abroad is not

advisable, as they may be confiscated by customs and require payment for you to obtain them. Bring a downscaled version of your medicine cabinet in addition to a first-aid kit. Stock up on non-prescription drugs you are likely to use, such as antacids, pain relief, anti-diuretics, etc. In certain countries it might make more sense to research the equivalents of non-prescription drugs you are most likely to use and buy them on-site.

### **Cultural Adjustment and Stress**

Living in a foreign environment can be exhilarating, but also stressful. Adjusting to a new culture and/or communicating in a foreign language requires flexibility and the ability to try and fail without much concern. While studying abroad, mild physical or psychological disorders that may be under control at home can be exacerbated under the additional stresses of adjusting to a new culture. If you are finding the adjustment period to be challenging, please let the program director or staff know.

### **Healthcare Overseas**

The manner in which medical help is obtained, the way patients are treated, the condition of overseas medical facilities, and how healthcare is afforded often are very different from U.S. practice. Be prepared for the reality that U.S. healthcare values, assumptions, and methods are not universally practiced. Even the notions regarding the onset of illness or points at which expert attention is required will vary from country to country and from culture to culture. If you need medical attention overseas, ask for a hospital or clinic with English-speaking doctors or staff so that you are better able to receive proper care.

### **Immunizations**

Check your health records to be sure that your childhood immunizations are up to date before any travel abroad. When you entered college, it is likely that your home institution required you to update your childhood immunization. For Brown students, these immunizations would include measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus/diphtheria, Hepatitis B, varicella (chicken pox) and the meningococcal vaccine (recommended). For more information, please see the [Brown Health Services](#). Visiting students should consult their college's student health center.

**You may also need immunizations and health screenings specific to your program location and/or personal travel destinations.** It may take a minimum of two months to complete all immunizations for your travel, so plan ahead. The [Centers for Disease Control](#) provides the most recent health information by country. Immunization requirements can change depending on prevailing health conditions, so please recheck those requirements with the CDC before beginning any round of immunizations. As each student's personal health situation differs, we recommend you consult with your personal physician or campus health services about the advisability of receiving certain medications and immunizations.

**Note: It is your responsibility to obtain the necessary immunizations and health screenings for your term abroad.** If you plan personal travel to other countries before, during, or after the program, it is also your responsibility to know which immunizations and medical tests are required. Health insurance may not cover the cost of travel immunizations. Please check with your insurance carrier to determine coverage.

### **HIV/AIDS Testing**

Some countries may require an AIDS test before letting you enter. Please check into this before you arrive at the airport because they will turn you away. For a list of HIV/AIDS testing requirements and specific entry/exit requirements for U.S. citizens based on country, please see the [US Department of State](#) website.

### **Health Advisories**

If you are traveling to remote areas, be aware of local health conditions abroad and of any public health service recommendations or advisories. For current health conditions and recommended vaccinations contact local healthcare providers (such as a travel clinic at a local hospital), the country desk at the State Department (tel. 202.647.4000), or the [Centers for Disease Control](#). For more information on Health and Medical Care issues related to study abroad, see the OIP website.

### **Overseas Blood Transfusions and Blood Products**

If you require surgery overseas and need a blood transfusion, remember that not all countries require the same standards for screening HIV-antibodies in donated blood. If you are injured or ill while abroad, avoid or postpone any blood transfusion unless it is absolutely necessary. If you do need blood, try to ensure that screened blood is used.

### **Food and Water**

One of the most common ailments for travelers is diarrhea caused by contaminated food or drink. Standards for hygiene and health vary by country, and the safety of food and water may differ considerably. You can find information, advice, and precautions to take concerning safe food and water on the [CDC Website](#).

### **AIDS and other STIs**

AIDS is a serious problem and still spreading throughout the world, but especially in developing countries. If you choose to be sexually active overseas, please be careful. Although most countries sell condoms, they may not be manufactured and/or stored properly so as to provide maximum protection against STIs. Always use a latex condom, preferably treated with a potent spermicide. Both men *and* women should bring their own supply of condoms and store them in a cool, dry place.

## **Malaria, Dengue Fever, Zika, and Other Mosquito-related diseases**

**Malaria** is a serious illness and sometimes a deadly disease. Prevention of malaria involves protecting yourself against mosquito bites and taking antimalarial medicines. Risk of infection varies by country/region, time of year, and duration of stay. However, all travelers to countries where malaria is present may be at risk of infection. The [CDC website](#) provides references and resources about malaria prevention and treatment.

The **dengue** virus is a leading cause of illness and death in the tropics and subtropics. The virus is transmitted by mosquitoes. There are not yet any dengue vaccines - the most effective protective measures are those that avoid mosquito bites. When infected, early recognition and prompt supportive treatment can substantially lower the risk of medical complications and death. You can find resources about dengue at the [CDC website](#).

**Zika** is a mosquito-borne virus that has no vaccine or cure. Symptoms include fever, rash, joint pain, headache, muscle pain, and conjunctivitis (pink eye). Approximately 80% of those infected may not have symptoms. Women who are, or plan to become, pregnant are most at risk of complications. The virus can also be sexually transmitted from men to their partner(s). Students in areas with active mosquito-borne transmission of Zika should follow mosquito bite prevention tips: use of an EPA-approved bug spray with at least 20% DEET, sleeping under a mosquito net, staying in air-conditioned buildings with window screens, using condoms if sexually active, and wearing long-sleeved shirts and pants. See the [CDC website](#) for details.

## **Health Emergencies**

The Office of Overseas Citizen Services in the State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs may be reached for [assistance with emergencies](#) at 1.888.407.4747 (if calling from the U.S. or Canada), or 202.501.4444 (if calling from overseas).

## **Health Resources**

- The [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC) Travelers' Health resources
- [RI Department of Health](#): Travel/Immunization Clinic Listings

## Section IV: Academic Policies & Procedures

Students participating in study abroad programs coordinated through Brown University's Office of International Programs are subject to the academic policies of the university, including the study abroad policies established by the OIP. In addition, students are expected to abide by the academic policies of the host university or program sponsor. For programs where courses are offered through a host university, Brown University policies take precedence.

**Please visit the OIP website for more detailed information on foreign study guidelines.**

### Accommodations/Disability Information

Students who are studying on a Brown-sponsored program and who may need accommodations or services due to a disability or medical condition should contact [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#) to discuss their needs and begin the registration process. Students should notify the OIP as early as possible in order to allow time to review the specific requests.

Disability-related requests for accommodations and services are evaluated individually, based on documentation and completion of the registration process. Please be aware that the level of accessibility, services, and accommodation to which you have access at your home campus may not be available at the program site and host universities.

### Extension of Absence from Brown: Study Abroad Leave/Personal Leave

If you wish to extend your study abroad leave or request a personal leave to spend an additional semester abroad, please **email** the Office of International Programs ([qip@brown.edu](mailto:qip@brown.edu)) no later than October 15 to extend from the fall semester to the spring semester. Please include your Banner ID#.

**Note:** It is important that you contact your concentration advisor to verify that you will receive concentration credit if needed for any course work completed during the extended period. Save all academic course work from abroad (i.e., tests, quizzes, essays, syllabi for all courses) for the post-approval process.

### Pre-register for your return semester

Brown students who are studying abroad will use the Banner online system to pre-register for courses, along with Brown students in Providence.

Visiting students should check with their study abroad office, Registrar's office, and/or faculty advisor to ask how pre-registration is conducted on their home campus for students abroad.

### Course Enrollment Changes

If you make changes in your course enrollment while abroad, especially in the courses you plan to take for concentration credit, you should email your concentration advisor with information about the new course(s).



## **Credit Hour and Course Load Requirements**

Students studying abroad must register for a full course load at the foreign institution. See more information on the [OIP website](#). You must enroll in a minimum of 12 semester hours of credit abroad in order to be considered a full-time student (minimum 3 Brown credits) at Brown.

**Remember - Being a full-time student is not necessarily the same as taking a full course load.** If you are not sure what constitutes a normal, full course load at your program or university, check with the Resident Director (if on a Brown or CASA program) or with the OIP (if on an Approved or Petition program) in advance of making any changes to your course registration overseas.

Due to the difference in credit-counting systems, the number of credits you take in your program abroad may not be equal to the number of credits you will receive for your work at Brown. Credit earned abroad is not transferred on a course-for-course basis. See the [Graduation Credit from Study Abroad](#) section on the OIP website for more detailed information.

Students may receive a maximum of 4 Brown credits for a semester abroad, as mandated under the Brown Guidelines for Foreign Study (with the exception of 1 additional credit for completing a GLISP). **NB:** Please note that Brown University **does not grant credit** for practicums or internships, or for non-academic courses such as yoga, sports, or sailing.

## **Grading Requirements**

All abroad courses must be taken for a letter grade; credit will not be granted for any courses taken S/NC (pass/fail) or for any courses which are audited. Students must earn a grade of C or better (a C- will not transfer) in order to transfer a course back to Brown.

## **Tuition Credit for Study Abroad**

In order to earn a Brown degree, students must accumulate eight semesters of tuition credit, signifying the completion of eight semesters of full-time study. If, for any reason, you do not earn the anticipated number of semesters of tuition credit from study abroad, you should consult with an Academic Dean to determine how this shortage will affect your graduation date and discuss options for completing your degree requirements.

## **Retroactive Credit for Semester/Academic Year Programs**

Students who do not obtain Brown pre-approval of semester or academic year programs before studying abroad will not be eligible for transfer of study abroad credit. You cannot take a personal or medical leave, then study abroad and apply for retroactive academic credit.

### **Early Return: Withdrawal or Dismissal from the Program**

Students are expected to stay abroad until the end of the academic program (as defined by the host university, program, or American sponsor) and may not ask for early submission of papers, early presentation of papers, or early dates for exams in order to leave the program early. If you need to withdraw from a program or return to the U.S. before the completion of scheduled instruction and exams due to unforeseen circumstances, contact the Office of International Programs as soon as possible so that we may discuss the relevant policies and procedures:

- There is no guarantee that you will receive passing grades or credit for your course work abroad if you withdraw early.
- If a program is officially closed by Brown, faculty will evaluate work completed and a determination of credit transfer will be made.
- In the case of premature departure from a study abroad program, documentation of work completed abroad will be required. Course syllabi, papers, examinations, evaluations from instructors, and a recommendation from the director of the program are appropriate forms.

### **Obtaining Transfer Credit**

In order to obtain credit for your study abroad experience, you must have an official transcript sent to Brown University that lists the courses you have taken and the passing grade received.

#### ***Brown-Sponsored & CASA Programs***

Transcripts from Brown/CASA programs are sent directly to the OIP. The OIP will notify you when your transcript is available for pick up.

Non-Brown students on Brown/CASA programs should work with their home institution to ensure that they are meeting requirements. Brown will ensure that all transcripts from Brown programs are sent to the appropriate office, as directed by the student or home institution.

#### **Non-Brown Programs (Approved and Petition)**

It is essential that you have your official transcript for your study abroad semester(s) sent to the Office of the Registrar at Brown; otherwise, your credit will not transfer and your courses taken while studying abroad will not count toward your Brown degree. Please see the [Credit Transfer Process for Semester/Year Programs](#) section on the OIP website.

**If the institution does not issue a standard transcript**, you should obtain a grade report, diploma, certificate of attendance, or other documentation indicating the courses you took and a written evaluation of your work. It is **your responsibility** to verify with the Office of the Registrar that the transcript or necessary documentation has been received and that the exact number of course and tuition credits are transferred to Brown.

## The Course Approval Process

### *Pre-Approval and On-Site Requirements*

- It is your responsibility to meet with your concentration advisor about the courses you plan to take while abroad and how these may fit into your degree planning. It is important that you understand what requirements a course must meet to count as concentration credit and what documentation you will need for post-approval.
- Save all records from abroad. Keep all syllabi, exams, papers, notes, course reader packets, projects, and portfolios, and bring them back with you. Some departments will indicate that they wish to see your completed work prior to granting credit.

### *The Post-Approval Process*

*Brown and CASA Programs:* students who studied on these programs will be notified by the OIP when their study abroad transcript is available. Brown students who wish to obtain concentration credit for study abroad course(s) must complete the concentration approval process through the Declaration section in the ASK/Advising Sidekick system at Brown. Non-Brown students should follow their home institution's protocol for obtaining transfer credit.

*Non-Brown Programs:* Students will receive notification from the Office of the Registrar after the transcript has been received from their study abroad program. Once the Office of the Registrar receives your transcript, they will forward it to the OIP for credit evaluation. Keep in mind that non-academic courses and internships/practicums will not earn Brown credit. When the OIP completes the credit evaluation process, your transcript will then be sent back to the Registrar so that they can post your course titles and credits on your record. Students who wish to obtain concentration credit for study abroad course(s) must complete the concentration approval process through the Declaration section in the ASK/Advising system at Brown.

## Transcript Requests

Requests for Brown University transcripts will not be released until all financial requirements to the university have been met. Requests for transcripts generally require 3-5 business days for processing. Please allow additional time (5-10 days) if the request is being sent at the end of an academic semester. All transcript requests must be accompanied by an authorized signature of the requestor in accordance with the Federal Educational Records Privacy Act of 1974.

**If you need to order a copy of your Brown University transcript while abroad** for graduate school or other reasons, you will need to order it from the [Office of the Registrar](#). From there you will obtain information regarding transcript fees and how to order a transcript online. You will not receive letter grades on your Brown transcript. Graduate schools may wish to see your grades from abroad, in which case you must request an official transcript from the foreign institution and then include it with your graduate application. For students who studied on Brown-sponsored programs, transcripts from the host university can be obtained from the OIP.

## Section V: Fees & Financial Matters

### Program Charges and Billing

Although costs vary by site, the basic costs of studying abroad are often about the same as spending a similar period of time at Brown. Bills are typically issued by the Bursar's Office in late June for the fall semester, with a payment date of August 1. Spring semester bills are typically issued in November and with a payment date of January 1. Please note that these dates are subject to change and you should review your current student account to be sure your balance is paid.

**Important:** If you are a Brown student and have received an incorrect bill from Brown University for the regular tuition, room and board for the semester abroad, it could mean:

- a) You have not signed your Study Abroad Campus Leave/Commitment Form with the OIP. If this is the case, contact OIP as soon as possible. **or**
- b) You have recently signed your Study Abroad Campus Leave/Commitment Form, but it has not gone through the computer Banner system yet. If "b," contact the Bursar's Office and tell them that you just signed your study abroad leave form.

Non-Brown students will have their Brown bill generated after they have turned in their Commitment Form to the OIP.

### Brown University Office of International Programs Policy on Refunds

All students must submit a Commitment Form upon their acceptance to a study abroad program. For a withdrawal to be considered official, the student must notify Brown University Office of International Programs in writing. Upon official withdrawal from the program, a portion of the program fee will be credited to the student's account based on the schedules below.

#### Withdrawal Prior to the Start of the Program

Any expenses (i.e., host institution fees, housing, etc.) incurred by Brown on behalf of the student once the student has made a commitment to the program (via the OIP Commitment form) will be the responsibility of the student, and charged to the student's account.

#### Withdrawal After the Start of the Program:

If a student withdraws from a study abroad program during the first five weeks of the program, he or she is eligible for a refund of Brown tuition payments based on the schedule below. Brown is not responsible for indirect costs paid directly by the student, including, but not limited to, housing, passport fees, vaccinations, and transportation costs.

- prior to program start: 100%
- in the first 14 days: 80%
- in days 15-21: 60%
- in days 22-28: 40%
- in days 29-35: 20%
- after day 35: no refund

**NOTE:** For students who leave because of a medical or family emergency, the same refund policy applies. A student who is suspended, dismissed, or withdraws while under investigation for misconduct will not have tuition payments refunded.

### **For Approved and Petition Programs**

It is the student's responsibility to understand the refund policies of programs sponsored by petition program providers.

In those instances where the cancellation fee charged by the Approved or Petition program provider exceeds the cancellation fee charged by Brown, the student's Brown account will be charged for the amount of this difference. Brown will not award a diploma or process a transcript request until outstanding balances are paid in full.

### **Financial Aid**

Brown students eligible for financial aid may use their aid for any study abroad program approved by Brown University. Financial aid awards will be based on the program's cost of attendance, including airfare and living costs. Students will be eligible for grants and loans as if they were on campus, with the exception of Federal Work Study (FWS) and/or Campus Employment. The normal FWS or Campus Employment component of an aid package will be covered with additional loan funds, upon request. Please note that the amount of scholarship awarded for study abroad can vary depending on the program's cost.

To apply for financial aid, please follow the Financial Aid guidelines/deadlines and complete all forms as you normally would each year at Brown. In addition to the regular financial aid forms, there are special steps for studying abroad. Students should consult the Office of Financial Aid for more information.

### **Brown Payment Plan**

Students who are not eligible to receive financial aid, but use a Brown payment plan such as the [Installment Payment Plan](#) can continue to use the plan to cover Brown costs. Please contact the Office of the Bursar (401-863-2484) for more information concerning this plan.

## Fellowships and Scholarships

Scholarships from sources other than Brown may be available to undergraduates for study abroad on specific programs. If you are thinking of applying for any fellowships while abroad, view the Brown [Fellowships page](#) for deadline and application information before you leave campus.

- **[The Boren Fellowship \(graduate\) and Scholarships \(undergraduate\)](#)**  
Boren Scholarships and Fellowships provide unique funding opportunities for U.S. undergraduate and graduate students to add an important international and language component to their education. The Boren awards focus on geographic areas, languages, and fields of study that are critical to U.S. national security, broadly defined, and under-represented in study abroad.
- **[The Critical Language Scholarship](#)**  
A program of United States Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program offers intensive summer language overseas institutes in designated critical-need foreign languages.
- **[The Gilman Scholarship Program](#)**  
The Gilman Scholarship Program was established by the International Academic Opportunity Act of 2000 and offers awards for undergraduate study abroad. This scholarship provides awards for U.S. undergraduate students who are receiving Federal Pell Grant funding at a two-year or four-year college/university to participate in study abroad programs worldwide.

## Money Matters While Abroad

Before you leave, talk with someone who has lived in your country and find out what is the best way of banking for an extended period of time. Never send cash or traveler's checks through the mail.

- **Wire transfer:** U.S. banks may be able to wire money to foreign banks. This process can be completed in a matter of hours/days and there is typically a fee. In addition, services such as Western Union or American Express can prepare money orders or wire funds, also with a fee associated.
- **Bank draft/cashier's check:** You can request a bank to send a cashier's check, or bank draft, to your account overseas. Be warned that clearing the check can take some time.
- **ATM cards:** You may be able to use your ATM card to withdraw money from your bank account in the U.S. This is an easy way to access your money while abroad. Check with your bank to find out where your ATM card can be used, if they have partner banks abroad (which may have reduced fees for withdrawals), what fees are involved, and ensure that your PIN has the appropriate number of digits for ATMs in your country.
- **Credit Cards:** Be sure to acquire a PIN for your credit card before you leave the U.S. Keep in mind that some vendors abroad may no longer accept 'swipe' type credit cards,

as they may only process transactions with ‘chip’ cards. It is a good idea to have some extra cash on hand if your card does not have a ‘chip,’ or if a vendor will not take credit cards. Some banks may charge a fee for each purchase/transaction abroad. Credit cards make foreign currency transactions easy and they are invaluable in a financial emergency. However, use them wisely! With credit cards it is easy to overspend. Also remember that you will be hit with finance charges for cash advances on your credit card. Make a cash advance only if you have no other option for getting money.

**Note:** Contact your bank and credit card companies to inform them you will be using your card overseas. This ensures they are aware you will be using your credit/ATM card abroad, so that they do not freeze your account. For any credit/ATM card, keep all of your account numbers/contact numbers in a separate, secure place for reference.

### **Traveling with Money**

In the event that you arrive in-country and banks are closed, it may be helpful to have local currency on hand in advance. We recommend you consider acquiring \$100-\$200 USD in local currency before you depart for your program for use in case of emergency.

### **Budgeting**

Learning how to budget your money while abroad will take some time and careful observation.

- Have a budget and know what you can spend. Keep a daily expense account the first couple of weeks to be able to plan a budget for your entire stay.
- You will probably spend more money on arrival than at any other point. Be prepared. You are still unfamiliar with where to find the best bargains and with the exchange rate.
- Know that some businesses may not accept debit/credit cards, ‘swipe’ credit cards, or credit cards without a PIN number.
- Be alert for special rates and discounts wherever you go, and know what is available in terms of youth or student discounts with your ID.
- When you travel, consider staying in youth or student hostels. Unlike hotels, which cater to tourists and business travelers, hostels are inexpensive, usually dorm-style hotels for young people found in many countries of the world.

### **Currency**

Keep an eye on the exchange rate. Try not to think in terms of dollars, although when you first arrive, it is expected. Never exchange money outside of official banks or exchange offices. You can check exchange rates and currency conversions [Xe Currency Converter](#).

## Section VI: Travel Information

### Travel Arrangements

Students studying in the Fall 2021 Brown and CASA programs are responsible for making their own international flight arrangements. Some programs have a specified arrival time and place, so that all program participants can be met as a group by program staff. If this is the case, it is essential that you make your flight or other travel arrangements so that you can rendezvous at this designated time and place.

If you are studying on an Approved or Petition program, verify your program's travel policy. Some program providers will arrange group transportation (and in some cases require it). Do not leave travel arrangements to the last minute. Book your travel as soon as you know when and where you have to arrive and when you have a good estimate of your return date. OIP strongly recommends that you book a round-trip (not just a one-way) reservation. In many instances, a round-trip ticket is required either as part of the visa application process or by immigration officials as proof that you are leaving the country at the end of your stay. Check to see if changing a return flight date carries a penalty. One-way return flights are usually very expensive, and you may not be able to get a return reservation that suits your needs. Flying stand-by can also be risky.

### Travel Resources

#### *Air Travel*

- Orbitz: [www.orbitz.com](http://www.orbitz.com)
- Cheap Tickets: [www.cheaptickets.com](http://www.cheaptickets.com)
- Travelocity: [www.travelocity.com](http://www.travelocity.com)
- Student Universe: [www.studentuniverse.com](http://www.studentuniverse.com)
- Skyscanner: [www.skyscanner.com](http://www.skyscanner.com)
- Kayak: [www.kayak.com](http://www.kayak.com)

#### *Rail Tickets*

- British Rail: [www.britrail.net](http://www.britrail.net)
- IrishRail: [www.irishrail.ie](http://www.irishrail.ie)
- Eurail: [www.eurail.com](http://www.eurail.com)
- InterRail: [www.interrail.eu/](http://www.interrail.eu/)

### General Resources

#### • [International Student Identity Card](#)

This card is recognized all over Europe and will give you student discounts for museums, hotels, and travel, although some countries offer more student discounts than others. It also offers basic accident and sickness insurance coverage when traveling outside the U.S.



- [Hostelling International Membership Card](#)

This card is honored at most International Youth Hostels.

- [Lonely Planet Online](#)

Lonely Planet travel guides provide the latest travel information sourced from LP authors, researchers, and fellow travelers.

### Travel Advisories

- [U.S. State Department Travel Information](#)

Summary information about every country in the world, including travel advisories, public announcements, terrorist activity, political disturbances, and country entry requirements.

### News & Viewpoints

- [Council on Foreign Relations](#)

A center for the study and practice of international affairs and U.S. foreign policy.

## Section VII: Student Conduct & Safety

### Personal Conduct

**Brown University reserves the right to rescind admission to, or continuation in, any program if an applicant's academic or disciplinary record is not satisfactory.**

- All participants in study abroad are expected to abide by the tenets of community behavior as stated in the [Brown University Student Code of Conduct](#). Students violating the Code of Conduct at any time — prior to departure and while abroad — risk dismissal from their study abroad program.
- The Office of International Programs reserves the right to invoke University procedures to address any alleged student behavior which, if after appropriate review, is found to have violated Brown policies as outlined in the University's Student Code of Conduct. Similarly, University proceedings will not negate any actions taken by the host institution or country.
- In addition, the Office of International Programs reserves the right to dismiss a student and require that they leave immediately if in our judgment the student behaves in a manner which endangers them, others on the program, or the program's continued operations. **For example, illegal drug use is grounds for immediate dismissal.**
- If a student is dismissed from their study abroad program due to misconduct, the student is responsible for any financial losses incurred (i.e., airfare costs and other program expenses).

## Safety Precautions

It is important to know of any safety concerns before you leave for your host country. The U.S. government monitors the political conditions in every country around the world. For current information, advisories, or warnings contact the State Department in Washington, DC. Call 202.647.4000 or consult [their website](#).

For information on traffic-related safety conditions abroad, including bus safety information, road travel reports, seasonal hazards, and safety tips, please consult the [Association for Safe International Road Travel](#) (ASIRT). Please note students are strongly discouraged from driving while abroad, especially if unfamiliar with the location and driving laws.

## General Safety Tips

Take the same precautions abroad that you would in any large U.S. city you are not familiar with.

- Do not walk in unfamiliar areas of the city at night or accept rides from strangers.
- Be careful with money in public just as you would be in this country.
- Become a professional people watcher. Watching the local residents and their habits is your best guide to safe behavior. The less you stand out the safer you will be.
- Learn about the customs and local laws of your country. Remember that you are subject to their laws and are not protected by U.S. laws.
- Never leave your bags unattended. Never let a stranger watch your luggage while you go to the bathroom or purchase a ticket.
- Walk away immediately from any suspicious persons or packages and report them to the authorities after you are a safe distance away.
- Beware of pickpockets and con artists. The most common sites for purse/wallet, phone, or camera snatchings are central train stations, public transportation, tourist sites, or crowded shopping areas. Thieves often strike when people are distracted: making a phone call or checking a train schedule, with a bag left unsecured or casually left at one's feet.
- If anything is lost/stolen, report it to the local police. Keep your police report copy for insurance purposes or in case you need to replace your passport or student visa. Report the loss of traveler's checks to the nearest issuing office; passport to the local police and nearest U.S. embassy or consulate to apply for a new one; airline tickets to airline or travel agent.
- Before going to another country, check the country's travel advisories and read safety, health, and travel recommendations for your destination. The State Department's [US Students Abroad](#) travel section is very useful. Register your trip with [International SOS](#) before you depart.

- Be sure your program director has your contact information and knows where/when you will be traveling. Give a relative and/or friend a copy of your travel itinerary and contact information.
- Be sure your cell phone will work where you are traveling and keep it with you always - fully charged and turned on. Keep your program/resident director's phone numbers handy in case you need them. Respond immediately to any calls, texts, or emails from Brown/CASA or your host program staff.
- Beware of date rape drugs, particularly when out in nightclubs. Sex trafficking is also a worldwide problem – take precautions and be vigilant, especially when out alone.

### **U.S. State Department “Smart Traveler Enrollment Program”**

The [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) is a free service provided by the U.S. government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming term abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency. STEP also allows Americans residing abroad to get routine information from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. Please take a few moments to register for this service through the website above.

*The U.S. Embassy or Consulate WILL:*

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

*The U.S. Embassy or Consulate WILL NOT:*

- Give or lend money or cash checks.
- Serve as a travel agent or information bureau.
- Act as interpreters or couriers.
- Provide bail or get you out of jail.
- Arrange for free medical or legal services.

### **Registration with Local Authorities**

In many countries, you will be required to register with the local police station upon arrival. Your program director abroad will inform you of local requirements.

## **Local Laws**

**Outside the U.S., you are responsible for obeying all host country laws and penalties, which can be different, and more stringent, than here.** Do not assume you will be treated gently because you are an American. Sometimes, punishments for Americans are harsher than for the local population. Be aware that when you are in a foreign country you are subject to its laws and not protected by U.S. laws. Ignorance of the law is not an excuse. It is important that you learn about local laws and regulations and obey them. Approximately 3,000 Americans are arrested abroad each year. One-third is arrested on drug charges. Many countries do not provide a jury trial or accept bail, which could mean a lengthy pre-trial detention. In addition, prison conditions in many countries can be extremely harsh and officials may not speak English. You could face very stiff fines or sentences if found guilty of a crime.

It is unlikely that Brown OIP or any study abroad program will be able to intervene on your behalf if you are arrested or prosecuted for any illegal violation. If you become involved in a legal problem, please contact your study abroad program staff, international student office, and Brown's OIP immediately.

## **Substance Abuse**

Alcohol or drug use abroad carries serious consequences. Use and abuse of drugs and alcohol bring increased risks of possible injury, assault, and even death, as well as legal penalties.

Alcohol abuse abroad may occur because of a lower drinking age, a mistaken impression of how alcohol is used abroad, or a desire to fit in with the local culture and community. Most countries have very strict drug laws. Long trials, prison sentences, and even the death penalty can result from drug possession. Even if you find yourself somewhere that drugs are available and you are not using the drugs - but others around you are - you could be in big trouble. You should leave immediately if this happens. Please keep in mind that if you violate local alcohol and drug laws, there is very little the U.S. government or your study abroad program can do for you. See the U.S. State Department website for further information. **NB: Illegal drug use is grounds for immediate dismissal from your program.**

## **Sexual Harassment and Study Abroad**

Cultural differences in interactions on romantic or sexual levels can be a problem area: some behaviors might be very inappropriate in the U.S., but considered perfectly acceptable in the culture in which you are living, and vice-versa. Some of the new behaviors will be relatively easy to adjust to, but others pose more of a problem. Sexual harassment is a particularly difficult area because of the extreme variance in acceptable behavior between cultures. Combined with the different social and legal responses to such behavior, sexual harassment when abroad can be a difficult scenario to deal with; fortunately, there are ways to prevent or lessen the negative consequences.

In the United States many people believe that it is possible for a non-sexual relationship (i.e., friendship, companionship) to exist between men and women. However, in many other cultures this belief can be just the *opposite*; stated simply it is difficult or impossible for non-sexual relationships to exist between men and women. Until one is fully aware of the cultural norms combined with the verbal and non-verbal clues that he or she is sending, one must be very mindful of the emotions and expectations that are evolving. In our society it is not uncommon to rebuff an unwanted sexual encounter by saying, “I’m seeing someone,” or “I have a boyfriend/girlfriend.” While the contextual clues for that type of statement are generally understood in the U.S. to mean, “Leave me alone” or “I’m not interested,” in another cultural context it might actually be understood as an encouraging response rather than a signal of discouragement. Clear, direct, and unambiguous responses may be difficult for many Americans to deliver, but these strong responses are crucial for clear understanding in a cross-cultural situation. “I do not want to go out with you, please do not ask me again” is a much more direct and stronger way of expressing your true thoughts about the situation.

You are encouraged to contact the appropriate person on your host campus/program to report any behaviors that you feel are sexually harassing. They should be able to assist you in resolving the situation and/or provide you with additional resources. If these campus/program representatives are unable or unwilling to assist you, please contact the OIP, and we will assist you in this matter.

### **Interpersonal Violence and Sexual Assault**

Students who have experienced interpersonal violence, sexual assault/harassment, or stalking may seek confidential advocacy and support from Brown advocates via the Sexual Assault Response Line that is available 24 hours per day, every day: 00-1-401-863-6000. Students may also seek information about their resources and reporting options from the Brown [Title IX Office](#). If you experience sexual assault abroad, your on-site program staff and OIP advisor may also serve as additional resources.

### **Dealing with Personal/Family Tragedy While Abroad**

Should you or your family experience a tragedy while you are away, there are resources available to help. Since you are far away from home, you may feel helpless and alone – but that is not the case. Below are some ideas to assist you during such a difficult time.

- Report the situation to your Resident Director or head of the International Office as soon as possible. They may be able to intercede on your behalf with faculty members or other administrative offices if necessary. They must know if you plan to return home for a short or extended stay.
- Contact the Office of International Programs at Brown (especially if you are on an Approved or Petition program) so that we know about the situation and your plans. We may also be able to assist you if necessary.

- Ask your Resident Director or International Office about counseling services that are available in your host community.
- Share with friends or your host family for support.

### **Important Contact Information**

As a precautionary measure, keep emergency contact numbers of various family members in one place (such as in your phone and at the end of the Study Abroad Handbook) so that you can access them quickly. In addition, it is always important to keep contact information for your host family or roommates, program/resident director, and the OIP. If you are traveling over weekends or breaks, please be sure to provide the program/resident director with your cell phone number and any travel itinerary in case they need to contact you while you are traveling.

## **Section VIII – Cultural Adjustment**

Most people will experience some difficulties adjusting to their new country and culture. This is totally normal, and should be expected. Cultural adjustment, or “culture shock” as it is commonly called, comes from being cut off from things you are familiar with. Culture shock doesn’t result from just one event, and it doesn’t strike suddenly, or with any cause. It builds slowly from a series of small events. It also comes from living and working in an ambiguous situation. Living abroad will make you question your values, which you may have taken as absolutes before. You won’t be able to identify culture shock while you’re struggling through it. But with patience, you’ll be able to overcome it and grow in the process.

### **Stages of Cultural Adjustment**

While people react differently to the changes, studies have shown that there are distinct phases that almost everyone will experience. These stages are:

- 1. Initial Euphoria:** Everyone arrives excited about their new country and the adventures that lie ahead. This is often called the “honeymoon period”. This period may last anywhere from one week to a few months, but it does fade away and a letdown is inevitable.
- 2. Irritability and Hostility:** After you’ve been in a country for awhile, you’ll be taking a more active role in your community. Little differences and problems will seem like huge catastrophes. This is the most difficult part of being abroad. Some people will want to withdraw; others will act aggressively when faced with a situation.
- 3. Gradual Adjustment:** The crisis period will eventually fade too. You’ll be feeling more at home in your surroundings. You’ll begin to interpret some of the cultural cues you hadn’t noticed before. With this sense of familiarity your sense of humor may also return.

**4. Adaptation:** You now feel at home in your new country and can function in both cultures. You have learned new behaviors and manners, and have shed some of your old ones. You've done such a good job of adjusting to your new country that now you can anticipate experiencing "reverse culture shock" once you return to the U.S.

### **Help for Culture Shock**

Since culture shock is inevitable there is not much you can do to avoid it. But there are things you can do to minimize the impact:

- Remember that culture shock happens to everyone who lives abroad. You're not the only one who has gone through this.
- Write a journal to keep a record of your first impressions.
- Try to look for logical reasons behind everything in your new culture that seems strange or confusing. Try to look at things from their perspective. For every behavior you don't understand, try to figure out what its underlying value is.
- Write up a list of all the positive aspects of your host country culture and try concentrating on the positive, and not the negative.
- Avoid making negative comments about the local people. These ideas only reinforce your feelings of superiority, and will prevent you from ever adapting to your host country.
- Avoid Americans or other foreigners who are having a rough time adjusting to the country. Do not join in on rag sessions on your host culture. Instead, find an American who has been there for a while, has successfully gone through culture shock, and has a positive attitude. This person will help you get perspective on the host culture.
- Make close friends with host nationals. Having close intimate friends will help you learn about your new culture, and give you someone to listen to your problems.
- Keep active, don't sit at home and feel sorry for yourself. Try taking a weekend trip to get away, you may return refreshed and with a new perspective.
- Have faith in yourself that you will get over culture shock. You will feel better over time.

## General Cultural Adjustment Resources

- [What's up with Culture?](#)  
An online cultural training resource for study abroad to equip you with the skills, attitudes, and behaviors you need in order to function in your new and unfamiliar environment.
- [The Values Americans Live By](#), by L. Robert Kohls  
This article is a good place to start researching American culture and learn what implications this may have for your experiences abroad.
- [Culture Shock](#)  
The Center for Global Education's online guide to study abroad.

## Diversity Considerations Abroad

Students abroad face a new cultural context that includes different historical and cultural understandings of race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability. Customs, beliefs, laws, facilities, and social practices are likely different than in the U.S. Before you depart, think about what it is going to be like to be "you" abroad, the various ways you might identify yourself, and how these identities define you in the U.S. These definitions might change in your host country, and you may encounter stereotypes, questions, and curiosity surrounding your identities. Think about your expectations versus what the reality might be abroad, and be prepared if your experiences lead to feelings of frustration, isolation, and fatigue. However, while you may face challenges, remember that being in a new cultural context is a wonderful opportunity for change and growth - and it will provide you with a new perspective on the structure of different societies.

Below are a few things you can do to prepare yourself for potential culture shock:

- Read about the host country's history, culture, laws, and demographics
- Reach out to students who have studied abroad in your host culture (OIP can provide names of former study abroad students)
- Make use of online resources that offer advice, personal narratives, and other information
- Visit the OIP's [Identity & Culture Abroad](#) section of our website

## Resources

### Students of Color; Diversity; Ethnicity and Race Abroad

[Brown Center for Students of Color \(BCSC\)](#)

[Michigan State University, Office of Study Abroad, Articles for and by Multicultural Students](#)

[All Abroad, Helping All Students to Study Abroad, Diversity Resources](#) maintains a broad range of resources to help students of color find study abroad programs that meet their needs, including reasons to study abroad, information to support diversity in study abroad, and information about discrimination abroad.



[Diversity Abroad](#) provides tips for students of color on how to best prepare for studying abroad; includes [advice](#), scholarship information, student testimonials, and more.

Transitions Abroad, [“Top 10 Reasons for African American Students to go Abroad”](#)

The Center for Global Education [Project for Learning Abroad, Training and Outreach \(PLATO\)](#) offers links to organizations, resources, and scholarships that support academic advancement for underrepresented groups.

[CIA World Factbook](#): The “People and Society” section on each country's page provides demographic information (ethnic group, religion, and race)

### **Accessibility**

Brown [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#)

[Mobility International USA, Americans Going Abroad](#)

[University of Minnesota Access Abroad](#)

[Mobility International USA, Traveling Internationally with a Guide Dog or Service Animal](#)

### **First Generation College Students**

[Undocumented, First-Generation College, and Low-Income Student Center](#) (U-FLi)

[Ufunds](#): UFunds coordinates applications for funding from offices at Brown. For Brown students studying abroad, it can be a resource in case unexpected costs arise while abroad.

[All Abroad](#): A great resource for funding advice, outreach materials, and study abroad advice specifically written with first-generation students in mind.

[Diversity Abroad](#): Provides tips for first generation students on how to best prepare for studying abroad; includes [advice](#), scholarship information, student testimonials, and more.

[imfirst.org Student Blogs](#): First-generation student bloggers share their perspective on studying abroad, including some [from Brown](#).

### **LGBTQ+**

Brown University [LGBTQ Resource Center](#)

[The Sarah Doyle Women’s Center](#) (SDWC)

[NAFSA's Rainbow Special Interest Group](#) offers resources for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered study abroad students run by an interest group from the National Association of Foreign Study Advisors (the national professional association for international education).

[International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission](#) is a US-based non-profit, non-governmental organization (NGO). IGLHRC effects their mission through advocacy, documentation, coalition building, public education, and technical assistance.

[LGBT Student Information for Education Abroad](#) from the University of Santa Cruz

[Amnesty International Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#)

[International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission](#)

[LGBTQ Rights Around the World](#)

## **Women Travelers**

[Why do more U.S. women study abroad than men?](#) - article from *The Washington Post*.

[University of Michigan International Center Women Abroad Guide](#) provides suggestions for women to be informed, prepared, and safe abroad, with student comments, tips, and written resources.

[Her Own Way](#) is filled with practical tips specifically of interest to the female traveler (from the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade).

[JourneyWoman](#) - Travel tips geared toward women, including everything from personal travel stories to what to wear.

[What Women Need to Know Abroad](#) from the Council on International Education Exchange/CIEE.

[Gender Abroad](#) from the Study Abroad Office at Northwestern University

## **Re-entry Shock**

One of the greatest challenges of studying abroad is coming back home. Many people expect to have difficulty adjusting when they go abroad, but no one expects to have problems when they get back home. This is what's called "re-entry shock". You've just had an amazing experience abroad and you want to talk about it. Unfortunately, your family and your friends may not be as interested as you would prefer. You've learned about a new culture and, chances are, you've changed some of your old values and ideas, and you may have trouble re-assimilating into American culture.

Life at Brown or at your home college may look completely new to you after spending a year or semester abroad. Many students have difficulties readjusting to the hectic schedule and the stress on campus. Again, re-entry shock is inevitable and even the best-prepared students will have some problems getting back into the swing of things. These suggestions might help you during your first few months back:

- Remember what you did when you were abroad and adjusting to your new country. Use those same techniques that helped you cope then to assist you with your readjustment now.
- Play the role of the observer, not a judge. It's easy to criticize, much more difficult to understand. You're looking at American culture from a very unique standpoint now. Take your time and think about what you see.
- Expect to feel frustration and depression. Knowing this will happen will not prevent these feelings, but it will keep you from feeling overwhelmed.
- Take your time. Don't rush into big decisions if you're depressed.
- Become active with the Brown OIP or with the study abroad office at your home school.

The OIP sponsors several activities for Brown students, including:

- **Returned Student Events** are held each semester to welcome you back to campus.
- **Peer Advisors** are hired to help staff the OIP Resource Library, serve as primary contacts for students interested in study abroad, and provide administrative support to the OIP staff. Job openings are posted on Brown's student employment website.
- Join campus groups or activities with an international focus. Connect with the local international community through cultural events, volunteering and community service. See the [Returned Students section](#) on the OIP website for some ideas.
- Go abroad again – consider summer study, fellowships, or research your options for international work opportunities or internships abroad.
- Integrate your study abroad experience into your program of study. Take courses that deal with
- issues you became interested in while abroad, or consider an independent study, senior thesis or research project that builds on your international experience.

Re-entry can be tough, but with time your re-entry shock will fade. Remember, you're a veteran of culture shock. You've faced more difficult and trying situations and came out on top. You will readjust to life in the U.S. and to your home campus, too.

## Section IX – Practical Tips

### What to Bring

Plan your wardrobe carefully so that you take as few clothes as possible. Remember the golden rule of packing: **Lay out everything you want to bring, get rid of half of those things.**

- **Don't pack things that you can buy in your host country.** You will be able to buy toiletries and school supplies almost anywhere. You don't need to weigh down your suitcase with bottles of your favorite shampoo. Be aware, however, that certain American favorites may not be sold abroad. Check the manufacturer's website for information regarding where their products are sold.
- **Don't pack a lot of clothes.** In most countries people wear clothing several times before washing it. You'll also probably buy clothes while you are abroad so you'll need to save room in your suitcase.
- Some countries might require more culturally-sensitive clothing. Keep this in mind when packing and plan to buy more clothing once in your host country if necessary.
- **Pack clothing that is versatile and sturdy.** You'll want at least one set of nicer clothing for evenings out, but otherwise make sure your clothing can take a good hand washing. Good walking shoes or hiking boots are a must.

- Pack necessary prescription medicine, contraceptives, tampons, etc. Some of these items are not readily accessible overseas. Bring a copy of your prescription with the generic name of the drug in case you need to buy more (see prescription medication section of handbook).
- **Pack some things from home.** You'll want to have pictures of your home, family and friends. This will make a big difference when you get homesick. Also, bring some small gifts for new friends, neighbors, and host families, such as key chains, pens, and postcards.

### **Clothing to Consider**

Rainproof walking shoes  
 Flip-flops for the showers in hostels  
 Poncho/rain jacket  
 Bathing suit  
 Hat for protection against the sun, or the cold

### **Medicine and Toiletries**

Prescription medicine (carry copy of prescription)  
 First aid kit  
 Contraceptives and condoms  
 Extra eyeglasses and sunglasses  
 Extra contact lenses and cleaning solutions  
 Tweezers, nail files, etc.  
 Linens (if not provided by program site) Towel/washcloth  
 Sunscreen

### **Gift Suggestions**

Clothing and items (pens or pencils) with Brown logo  
 Cookbooks with American recipes (pancakes, chocolate chip-cookies, etc.)  
 Calendar/book with U.S. scenery  
 Notepads with an American logo, or scenery

### **Miscellaneous**

Watch (cheap, reliable)  
 Cell phone (make sure it will work overseas)  
 Laptop; laptop locks  
 Camera and memory card  
 Flashlight  
 Journal  
 Books, guides, maps, train schedules, handbooks

English-language paperbacks (to read and swap)  
Day Pack/small compressible knapsack  
Stuff bags/plastic storage bags  
Hostel sleep sack (a folded over sheet that is hemmed up the side)  
Umbrella  
Luggage lock and tags  
Battery-operated alarm clock  
Adapter and voltage converter/appropriate plugs (Note: most other countries use different electric current and plugs)  
Small locks for backpacks or locking luggage to overhead train racks  
Small sewing kit

### **Documents**

This handbook and OIP/host program documents  
Passport and visa(s) and photocopies  
Tickets and rail passes  
International Student Identity Card and other student identification  
Money belt or neck wallet  
Cash, ATM/credit cards, calling card, etc.  
Copies of the above for reporting lost or stolen cards and International SOS Card  
Health insurance card

### **Postal Services Abroad**

Depending on where you are and the quality of the postal service, surface mail can take weeks (in some cases, months) to arrive. Airmail can take up to a week just to arrive in the country, getting it to your local address will add additional days.

### **Telephone Services Abroad**

Should you or your family wish to make a direct-dial international call from the U.S. the usual procedure is:

1. Dial the International Access Code: 011
  2. Dial the country code (normally a 2- or 3-digit number)
  3. Dial the city code (normally a 1- to 5-digit number)
  4. Dial the local number abroad
- For an operator-assisted call (i.e., person to person, collect, credit card, or billed to a third number), follow the foregoing instructions but use “01” instead of “011” for the International Access Code. The operator will then come on the line to ask for the information needed (e.g., the name of the person you are calling or your credit card number). Direct-dial calls made with the “011” International Access Code are the equivalent of station-to-station calls. Unless you expect your party to be immediately

available, this can be a bit risky. No matter who answers at the other end, you will be billed the minimum charge based on the first three minutes of conversation.

- You can get the country and city codes you need from any long-distance telephone company or directory, or through an internet search for “Country Codes.”
- The subject of finding the cheapest and best ways to phone home while abroad generates a lively exchange on such posting boards as Lonely Planet’s [“Thorntree”](#) forum, Rick Steve’s [“Travel Forum”](#) or the [Forum at Trip Advisor](#). For a specific question, e.g., “What is the best place to rent a cell phone in Barcelona?” these forums are a good place to find up-to-the-minute information.
- Video chat through **services like Facetime, Skype, Oovoo, or Google Hangout.**
- **Cards for Calls:** One convenient option is to use an international phone card, such as AT&T cards or Global Phone cards from IDT ([www.idt.net](#)); with IDT cards, you can also create mailboxes for voicemail.
- **Mobile Phones:** Newer mobile phones that can operate on any of the three wireless frequencies in place worldwide are becoming more common in the U.S. Global roaming rates still remain high, between 99 cents and \$4.99 a minute, so be sure to check with your phone company to learn all of the rules before you go abroad. Some providers offer international calling/texting package plans that may be less expensive, but you need to sign up for them.
- **SIM Card:** Buying a local SIM card and paying for minutes is a great option. Contact your current wireless carrier to determine if the equipment you currently use is SIM-compatible.
- **Phone Rentals:** You can rent globally-enabled cell phones from a company like [TravelCell](#) or [Cellhire](#). For those traveling where there is no cell phone service, the companies offer satellite phone rentals. The cost is significantly more than a regular cell phone, but incoming calls are usually free from anywhere in the world and outgoing calls cost approximately \$2 per minute.
- **Local Cell Phone Purchase:** consider buying an inexpensive local phone/package on-site, such as a local pay-as-you go phone without a contract.
- **Whatever you do, do not use the 800-number posted on public and hotel telephones,** whether calling collect or with an ATM credit card number. Charges can be \$30 to \$50 for calls under five minutes.

**Note:** Many host families will not allow their exchange student to make long distance calls from their family phone because of billing systems that do not itemize each call. If this is the case, you should make other arrangements to make an international call.

**Remember** that you will most likely be operating in a different time zone while studying abroad. Keep this in mind when making calls back home!

## **Email**

At most sites, you should have an Internet connection that will allow you to access your Brown/home email, although you may find connectivity less reliable than in the U.S. At remote sites, email access may not be readily available. If you do not have direct access to a network or other internet connection at your site, you will need to open an account with a local ISP (Internet Service Provider) to be able to connect to the web. Once you have established a connection, you can access your email through Gmail or any other account to which you had selected to have your university email forwarded.

### ***Managing your Brown Profile and Email Account***

It's a good idea to regularly check your Brown profile. You can do this online via [myAccounts](#)

This allows you to:

- Change your password;
- Change where your email is delivered;
- Add alternate email addresses;
- Check your quota on the central email service;
- View and change your entry in the campus electronic directory

If you discover irregularities in your profile, have questions or need assistance, please contact the CIS Help Desk at 401.863.4357 or [help@brown.edu](mailto:help@brown.edu).

### ***\*Duo Mobile***

Pre-generate backup codes to use instead of your phone. **We recommend doing this right away** in case you lose your device or are out of the range of service.

There are two ways to generate Bypass Codes:

**Method 1:** In *MyAccount*, click the button that says Generate New Bypass Codes. Click the printer icon above the codes to print a wallet-sized card.

**Method 2:** When on a Duo Prompt, click Send Codes (you probably haven't seen one of these yet if you're going through the instructions the first time)

Although a code can be used multiple times, every time you generate new codes through either of these methods, your previously generated codes become invalid. You can print these codes from MyAccount and keep them in your wallet - we recommend duplicating them somewhere besides your phone in case you lose your phone.

## **Brown News**

The *Brown Daily Herald* can be found online at: <http://www.browndailyherald.com/>.

## **Storage**

Brown Student Agencies partnered with College Storage RI to provide storage services to the Brown community; while this service is primarily geared to summer storage, storage options

may also be available for students who will be away from campus for a semester. If you need to store belongings while you are studying abroad, other storage services like College Boxes provide boxes and supplies, pickup, storage, delivery, and shipping (national and international) services to and from school for college and university students.

### **International Shipping**

If you bought too many things while you were abroad and don't have the luggage space to bring everything back to the U.S., you should consider international shipping options. You could mail your belongings home through the local post office. Check out the rates on either the postal service's website or at a local site. A second option is to use a private mailing service, such as UPS or DHL. Be sure to ask your program provider which service they recommend because sometimes they may have arranged for discounted services for students on their programs. Finally, consider purchasing another travel bag to pack your belongings and bring them home with you; with some airlines, the extra baggage fee is relatively low.

## **Section X: Career Development & Study Abroad**

The time spent studying abroad can also be time spent thinking about what you will do after you graduate. In order to start or continue career exploration, some students arrange an internship while studying abroad to complement their studies. If you are thinking about pursuing an international career, you'll want to plan ahead to best take advantage of opportunities. Check with counselors at the career development office at your home school before you leave or plan to email with them while you are away.

### **Considering working abroad while you are studying or is an international career in your future? Some things to think about...**

*Before you go...*

- **Contact Alumni Relations** to find alums who are living in the city/country where you'll be. Brown students should note that there are Brown clubs in over 60 cities around the world.
- **Talk with current students who are back from your study site.** Did any of them work or have an internship while there? If yes, did they do it during the semester or after? How did they arrange it?
- **Prepare a resume.** You never know when you will need it.
- **Meet with a counselor** at your career development office for other ideas and resources.

*While abroad...*

- **Maintain a "contacts" notebook** of every interesting professional you meet. Don't forget to get an email address.



- **Contact alumni.** Meet them at their place of business or socially. If you are in a city with a Brown Club, try to attend their events.
- **Interested in teaching English in the future?** Look for schools that teach English. Go check them out. What qualifications do the teachers have?
- **If in a homestay,** talk often with adults in the family about the local economy. Take every opportunity to meet the family's friends and extended family to network.
- **Practice, practice, practice the local language,** if it is not English. Speak with locals in all walks of life. Read newspapers and magazines to learn about opportunities.
- **When you encounter other Americans, of any age,** living in your city, introduce yourself. Make note of where they are employed, and ask for tips that might help you obtain a position.
- **Pay attention to the cost of living abroad.** Figure out how much money you would need to live there, or other places you might consider.
- **Become a student ambassador through BRIO,** the Brown International Organization, which is a peer support group for international students.
- **Volunteer Abroad:** [International Volunteer Programs Association](#): an up-to-date search site for international volunteer and internship opportunities.

*When you return...*

- **Make the most of the resources offered by the career center at your home college or university.** Scheduling an appointment with a counselor will help to get going. Brown students should check with CareerLAB and the Swearer Center.
- **Check out the calendar** and other important information on the OIP website.
- If you are thinking about going back to the country where you studied, **keep in touch with all the contacts** you made. Let them know what you are thinking about for after graduation.
- **Talk to the OIP staff** about your study abroad experience. We love to hear from returned students!

### **Career Development Resources**

- [Brown University CareerLAB](#)  
Hemisphere Building, 167 Angell Street, Box 1907, 401.863.3326 [careerlab@brown.edu](mailto:careerlab@brown.edu)
- [GoinGlobal](#)  
A leading provider of country-specific employment and career information. The online, unlimited access database contains country career guides, corporate profiles and more than 100,000 international internship and job openings updated daily!
- [Handshake at Brown](#)  
Your primary online resource for finding internships or jobs anywhere in the world. Once you've activated your account, you can access thousands of national and international opportunities. Upload job application materials, sign up for on-campus interviews, and

monitor the status of your applications, all in an easy online system. Employer postings are added daily.

- **BrownConnect**

Allows students to search for internship and research opportunities via Brown alumni, family, and friends.

## **Brown Administrative Office Reminders**

### **Residential Life**

*Grad Center E, 42 Charlesfield Street; Box 1864; 401.863.3500; [reslife@brown.edu](mailto:reslife@brown.edu)*

- It is your responsibility to be in touch with Residential Life about all issues related to your Brown housing. Be sure to investigate storage options for your belongings while you are away.
- If you are returning to Brown in spring, be sure to submit your Housing Preference Form, which is due in mid-December. Room assignments will be sent out via email in January.
- To partake in the annual housing lottery, you must enter/register an anticipated fall return date in Banner prior to March. Housing applications must be completed online at <http://reslife.brown.edu> in March. A lottery proxy will need to select your housing on the Lottery Night. Students not partaking in the lottery must submit a fall Housing Preference Form. Housing assignments will be sent out via email in August.
- Vacancy Pull-in forms (if your friends have a vacant room) are due in November (for spring housing) or June (for students returning in fall).
- See the Res Life and OIP websites for further information. The Residential Life website provides detailed information on the housing lottery, proxy forms, etc.

### **Registrar's Office**

*Page-Robinson Hall, 3rd Floor; Box K; 401.863.2500; [registrar@brown.edu](mailto:registrar@brown.edu)*

- A Brown student's registration status as a study abroad student is automatically adjusted based on the semester of study abroad indicated on their Campus Leave Form. This form serves as an indicator to all appropriate Administrative Offices (Registrar, Residential Life, Financial Aid, Bursar, etc.) that you will be on a study abroad leave from Brown.
- Your re-admittance to Brown is automatic, based on the return date you designated on your Campus Leave Form. If you change your study abroad plans and need to be re-admitted to Brown on a different date, you must notify the OIP in writing and include your name, Banner ID, study abroad program name, reason for the change, and new date of your return to Brown.
- While abroad, you should register for your future Brown classes online using the Banner system. You will get an email notification from the Registrar with important details about pre-registration.

## Dining Services

144 Thayer Street, Sharpe Refectory; Box 1936; 401.863.3343

- **When you study abroad, your meal plan is automatically cancelled.** *Students are not automatically re-enrolled in the plan unless they make a request through Banner or Dining Services.* If you need a meal plan when you return, re-enroll through Banner. If you have questions, contact Dining Services (401/863-3343 or [dining\\_services@brown.edu](mailto:dining_services@brown.edu)).
- It is recommended that you re-enroll in a meal plan well before your Brown bill is generated, so that your bill includes the meal plan charge. Otherwise, your bill will not reflect the full cost of attendance, which can impact your Brown semester expense planning.
- Meal plan info can be found at <http://brown.cafebonappetit.com/meal-plans/>.

## Financial Aid Office

Page-Robinson Hall, 2nd Floor; Box 1827; 401.863.2721; [financial\\_aid@brown.edu](mailto:financial_aid@brown.edu)

- Students who are abroad are not exempt from complying with application deadlines and requirements to determine eligibility for financial aid.
- Application materials are normally available on the Office of Financial Aid's website in early January for the following academic year. For the following academic year, the **renewal application deadline is usually in early May.**
- While you are away, pay close attention to any communication coming from the Office of Financial Aid, the Loan Office, or the Bursar.
- Visit the Office of Financial Aid website for more info: [www.brown.edu/financialaid](http://www.brown.edu/financialaid).

## Bursar's Office

Page-Robinson Hall, 2nd floor (their Annex); Box 1839; 401.863.2484; [bursar@brown.edu](mailto:bursar@brown.edu)

- Be sure to resolve any unpaid balances to facilitate your readmission to Brown.
- Please note: readmitted students who were not enrolled at the end of the previous semester (i.e., on a leave of absence) will be charged a readmission fee. Students returning from study abroad are NOT charged this fee. If you were charged this fee, please contact the OIP.

## Transportation and Parking Services

Page-Robinson Hall, 5th Floor (Ste 511); Box 1865; 401.863.3157; [transportation@brown.edu](mailto:transportation@brown.edu)

The Transportation office will contact juniors and seniors in April about their parking options for the fall semester. For more information on parking, please see the Transportation website or call/email the Transportation office.

### Department of Athletics & Physical Education

235 Hope Street; Box 1932; 401.863.5100 (main Recreation number);

Be sure you return all University athletic equipment, empty your locker, and return your keys before you go abroad.

### Banner Web/Address Changes

Brown University students should update their mailing address and/or permanent address online. You can choose the option of having your mail held for one term if you'll only be abroad for a semester, or for two terms if you'll be abroad for an entire year. If you don't change your address in Banner, your mail will be returned to the sender. Once you return from study abroad, be sure to make any necessary changes for your return to the U.S./Brown.

**You can find additional contact information for university departments or staff members through the [Brown University Directory](#).**

### **Office of International Programs (OIP) Brown University**

Office of International Programs

Brown University

Box 1973

Page-Robinson Hall, Suite 420

Providence, RI 02912-1973

401.863.3555

401.863.3311

OIP@brown.edu

www.brown.edu/OIP

**Please Note:** This study abroad handbook is being provided as a general resource to Brown students planning to study abroad, and the information provided is subject to change.

Please contact individual departments and administrative offices for additional information.

*Revised August 2021*