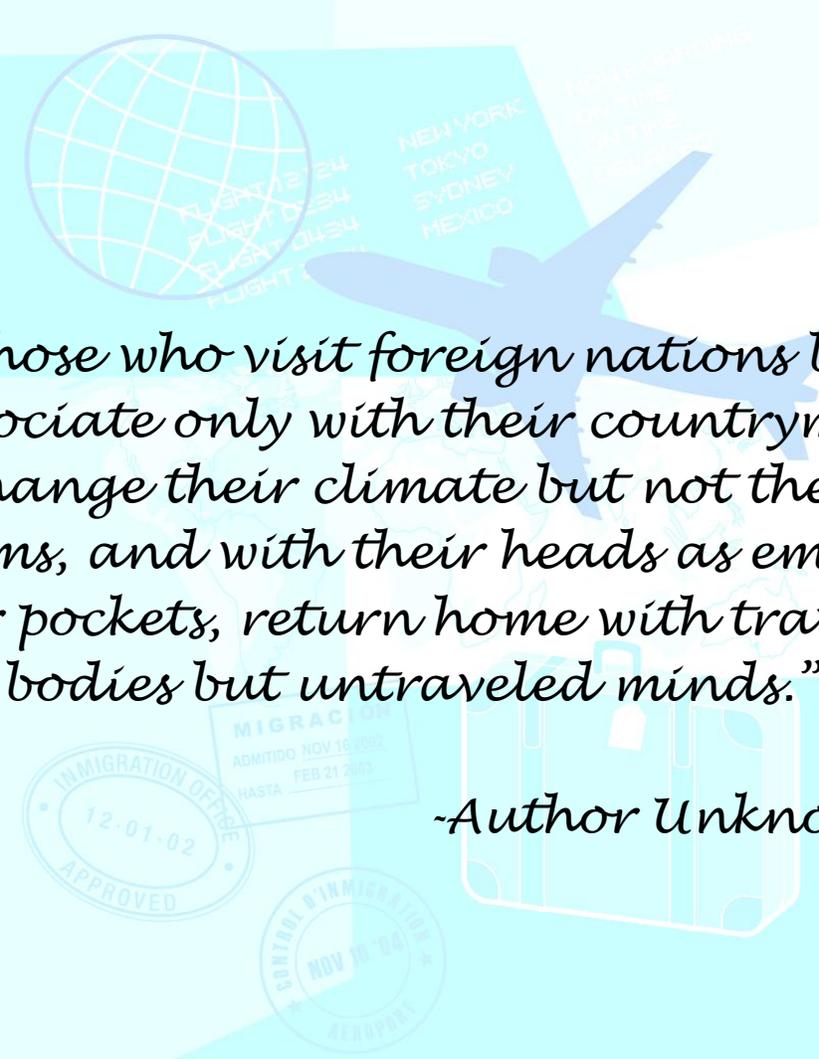


Study Abroad Pre-Departure Manual



“Those who visit foreign nations but associate only with their countrymen change their climate but not their customs, and with their heads as empty as their pockets, return home with traveled bodies but untraveled minds.”

-Author Unknown

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Center for International Programs and Activities
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Introduction

Congratulations on being chosen to represent Shawnee State University abroad! Studying abroad is likely to be the defining moment in your education that will change the rest of your life. Nothing will ever be the same after you have studied abroad. Your attitudes will be international, your perspectives global, and you will have memories that will last a lifetime. Not only will your resume be more attractive, but in many cases your foreign language proficiency will have increased and you will have developed lifelong friendships because of time spent abroad.

It all sounds so wonderful, and we are glad that you have decided to take this life-changing step. Before you step on that airplane and fly away to far off locales, however, there are a few things that you need to know and take care of here in the United States, and more specifically at Shawnee State University.

Preparing to Depart

Passport

U.S. citizens must have a passport to enter other countries (now including Canada and Mexico) and, more importantly, to re-enter the United States. If you already possess a passport, make sure that it is valid until at least six months after your scheduled return date. If you do not have a passport, you will need to get one. It now takes around five weeks for passport applications to be processed, not including time in the mail, so allow yourself plenty of time to receive yours. Also, remember that many countries require a visa or residence permit, which needs to be affixed in your passport. The time it takes to obtain these visas differs for each country. When planning to apply for a passport, please keep in mind the amount of time it will take to secure your visa also.

For more information about passports visit:

http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/first/first_832.html

Passport forms are available at most post offices (including the one here in Portsmouth) and in most federal and state courts. Forms usually can either be picked up in these offices or printed offline. You can apply electronically for a passport from this website:

http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/forms_847.html

To apply for a passport in person, you will need the following:

1. Completed, but not signed, *Application for Passport*
2. Present Proof of U.S. Citizenship (can be a previous U.S. Passport or certified copy of your birth certificate)
3. Current Proof of Identity (can include a valid driver's license or valid government issued I.D.)

4. Two Identical Photographs (2"x 2" photos with white background -- there are many places that take passport photos)
5. Social Security Number
6. Application Fee (fee rates can be obtained from this website, http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/fees/fees_837.html)

If you have any questions regarding obtaining a passport, please visit the U.S. Department of State's travel website at <http://travel.state.gov/>.

International Student I.D. Card

Some programs require students to have an International Student I.D. Card (even if your program does not require the card, we encourage all students to purchase the card). The card costs \$22 and can easily be obtained from STA Travel Services. They also offer discounted airfares, access to 33,000 discounts in over 100 countries, 24-hour help line emergency service, and basic medical and accident travel insurance. You can access more information by visiting STA's website, http://www.statravel.com/cps/rde/xchg/us_division_web_live/hs.xsl/Student-Discount-Card.htm.

Photocopies

Before you leave, it will be in your best interest to make photocopies of several important documents. One copy should be left with your family, you should keep one copy with you (separate from the originals), and then scan a copy to email to yourself and to us here in the CIPA office.

1. The information page from your passport
2. Your visa (if you needed one)
3. Certified copy of your birth certificate
4. Traveler's check numbers
5. International Student I.D. Card
6. Insurance policies and cards
7. Airline ticket
8. Driver's license
9. Credit cards and the toll free numbers for their replacement
10. Prescription medications

Vaccinations

The Center for International Programs and Activities at Shawnee State University requires all students who plan to study abroad to have a physical examination. You should check on your own to see what vaccinations are required before you leave. Some vaccinations must be administered over an extended period of time, so check on this soon. Information for suggested vaccinations can be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx>. You can also call the Scioto County Health Department (740-354-3241) for a list of vaccinations. The nearest Travel Health Site approved by the CDC is the Cabell-

Huntington Health Department in Huntington, WV (304-523-6483), where they can assist if you need vaccinations that the Scioto County Health Department cannot order.

Prescriptions

If you take a medication every day, it is wise not only to take enough of that medication, but to take extra. Remember to pack your medication in your carry-on bag, just in case your checked baggage doesn't arrive when you do. Keep all medication in its original labeled bottle; this will help prevent any confusion in customs. To be even more prepared, have your doctor make a list of the medications you are taking and why you need them. Keep that list with you, in case of an emergency.

Medical Insurance

We require you to have medical insurance that will cover you while abroad. It is crucial that you check with your own insurance provider before you leave to see if your policy covers you outside the United States. If you will not be covered by your medical insurance, it is vital that you get insurance that will cover you while traveling abroad. The insurance provided by your International Student I.D. Card should be viewed as only supplemental insurance. The U.S. Dept. of State website provides a list of U.S. based companies that provide travel insurance, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1470.html.

Register Your Trip

Before you leave, it is important to register your trip abroad with the U.S. Department of State. This can be done by visiting <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/index.aspx>. From this website you can also register for travel updates and travel warnings about the country you will be visiting.

Airfares

Some programs like for students to fly as a group (if other Shawnee students are flying to the same location), making airport pickups cheaper and easier for the host school. Check with your program for specific instructions. Here are some ideas to assist you with finding the best airfare.

- While the internet is wonderful for searching for airfare, it is wise to contact a travel agent as well. They frequently have access to information that can expedite your search.
- Airfares are normally determined by "high" and "low" travel seasons. Purchasing your ticket with at least one flight date in the "low" season can greatly reduce your ticket price.
- Student fares can sometimes save you big bucks. Besides the low fares, sometimes student tickets offer other advantages, like changing your return date with little to no penalty. Your International Student I.D. Card (remember the one we told you about earlier) qualifies you for many of these student fares. Often

student fares are available only through certain travel agents, like STA Travel www.statravel.com or www.StudentUniverse.com.

The best time to search for airfare is approximately 4-12 weeks before your departure date. If you search too soon, the bargain fares haven't been determined yet; if you wait too late, the bargain fares have sold out.

The best advice we can give is when making travel arrangements, be sure to ask for their ticketing policy in writing. Before purchasing your ticket, read the contract.

Luggage Allowance

Every airline has a different policy. Before you get to the airport, make sure you know what your airline's policy is on the amount of luggage you may take with you. Airlines will charge you a hefty fee if your baggage is over the size or weight limit. In 2008, some airlines began charging for having more than one checked bag. Again, make sure you know your airline's policy. Also keep in mind that if you will have connecting flights through different carriers, they may have conflicting policies. Make sure you know those policies as well.

Packing Tips

Make sure you have a luggage tag on both the outside and the inside of **every** piece of luggage you are taking with you, even your carry-on.

What you should pack will greatly depend on where you are going and what time of year you will be there. Refer to your program for specific information on what they suggest you bring. Remember, you have to be able to carry, push, or pull all of your luggage at the same time. Once you pack everything, carry it all up and down a flight of stairs and around the block to see if you may need to rethink the amount of luggage you are taking. The following are some suggested items to pack:

- Backpack for school books and packing for weekend trips
- Clothes that are light and quick-drying
- Clothes that mix and match well
- Layering pieces
- "Dress-Up" outfit
- Decongestant
- Dental Floss
- Deodorant
- Ear plugs & "swimmer's ear" medication (if you are prone to earaches)
- Extra contact solution
- Extra passport size photographs
- Travel sized shampoo

Small flashlight and extra batteries
Journal and pens/pencils
Guidebook(s)
Pictures of family and friends
Small battery powered alarm clock
First aid & sewing kits
Sunglasses
Sunscreen
Umbrella
Sealable plastic baggies
Tampons
Hand sanitizer
Converters and adapters*
An extra pair of eyeglasses or contacts
Towels, blanket, bed sheets (check with your program)

Don't Bring:

Expensive jewelry
Flashy clothes
What you can buy cheaply there
Dry clean only clothing

*Foreign Electricity

If you are planning on using American electronics and/or small appliances (i.e. hairdryer, flat iron, cell phone charger, camera charger etc.) you need to know what voltage the country you are traveling to uses. Americans use 110 volt alternating current (110V AC). Check the electrical information for your host country to determine if/what converter and adapter you will need. Also, be sure to check the devices you are taking, because some will require both a converter and adapter while others will require only an adapter. You may even want to think about taking two adapters with you so that you can use two things at once.

You can also check out the U.S. Department of Customs' website for additional information about what to take with you.

<http://cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/kbyg/>

While You Are Gone

Family Emergencies

It is important to know who to contact and how to reach them in case of a family emergency, either with you abroad, or back home. If a family emergency arises at home, you and your family should have a plan of action as far as contacting one another. Family here in the U.S. should have a copy of the emergency contact sheet

that was given to you along with this packet. That card has important numbers on it and information on how to contact us here at Shawnee State University and also who and how to contact the government if their assistance becomes necessary.

If an emergency arises with you while abroad, it is imperative that your family be able to reach you. If you have not registered your trip online with the U.S. Dept. of State or given your itinerary to your family or your program director abroad, this may be very difficult. It is important to let as many people as possible know when and where you will be traveling while abroad, even if it is just for a couple of days. It may seem a bit of a headache to always let everyone know where you will be, but if you have an emergency and cannot contact anyone, they will at least have a starting point on where to find you.

Welfare/Whereabouts Services Abroad

Each year thousands of U.S. citizens are thought to be missing. If your family has concerns about your whereabouts or welfare, they can contact Overseas Citizens Services (OCS) at 1-888-407-4747. OCS can also be contacted if there is an emergency at home and your family needs to locate you to get a message to you. Information about OCS can also be found at their website,

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

Please note that your family at home needs to try to contact you through the program you are affiliated with abroad **before** contacting OCS.

It is very important to note that the Privacy Act prohibits the U.S. Government from giving out information about you if you are over the age of 18, even if there is thought to be an emergency. **If you are over 18 and traveling abroad, it is crucial that you fill out a Privacy Act waiver before you leave so that information about you can be released to third parties.**

In order to assist Overseas Citizens Services in locating the U.S. citizen abroad, it will be helpful to have the following information ready before making the call (remember all of those copies we told you to make and leave with your family?):

1. Caller's full name, address, phone number, and relationship to citizen abroad
2. Name of citizen abroad
3. Date and place of birth
4. Passport number
5. Last known address and phone number; itinerary
6. Date of last contact

Other Travel

It is inevitable that while abroad you will want to travel. Whether it be on short weekends or long holidays, it is important that you let people know where and with whom you will be traveling. Make sure that you notify your program director abroad and family or friends back home, as well as peers in your program, where you will be

going and when to expect your return. It may seem a bit of a headache, or even overkill, to always let people know where you are going, but if an emergency arises, either with you or back home, you will be thankful that people know where you are and how to reach you.

Most important while traveling abroad -- use common sense. If something seems dangerous or a bad idea, don't do it! Do not keep yourself from having a good time while traveling, or from trying new things that seem weird and different, just remember to make smart choices.

Voting

The official U.S. Government web site for overseas absentee voting assistance is the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) web site at www.fvap.gov.

Taxes

If you will be out of the country between January 1 and April 15 and have earnings which require you to file federal and/or state income taxes, you can normally ask for an extension. This can easily be done online. Visit www.irs.gov

Writing

A special, and often not too expensive, way to keep in touch with family and friends at home is through written mail. People at home will love to see letters and notes that you have written to them. These items will become quite special to them and perhaps even special to you upon return, because they may serve as almost an additional travel diary.

Phoning

While it is important to keep in contact with family and friends back home, it is also important to get the most out of your time abroad. Remember that while calling home is okay, it should be a limited activity. Not only does calling home take away from the time that you could spend exploring your home abroad, it can also be very expensive. Electronic communication is now fairly accessible and much cheaper than conventional phone lines for keeping in touch. If you must phone home, there are several things to keep in mind. When planning a first phone call home, do not set an exact time. Be prepared for the unexpected; flights are late, taxis break down, and phone lines do not always work, so not having a set time to talk can save people here at home from worrying.

If you decide to phone home, here are some things to keep in mind:

- Before you go, check around for different phone plans and credit card phone plans and/or calling card rates. These can vary greatly by providers, and it will be in your best interest to find the cheapest. Make sure that whichever method you decide on you understand all of the charges that you and your family will incur.

- Think about waiting until you arrive in your host country to purchase a calling card. By doing this you will ensure that the card you have purchased will work in your host country, and often these cards are cheaper to use than cards brought from the U.S.
- To make an international call
 - **from** the U.S. – first dial international access code 0-1-1, followed by the country code and then the local phone number
 - for information on international calling codes:
<http://www.countrycallingcodes.com>
 - **to** the U.S. – dial 0-0-1 and then your area code followed by the local number

Cell Phones

It is important to note that some American cell phones do work in international settings; however, the cost to use them is often very high. Check with your provider about service and pricing in your host country. Students often choose to get a cell phone once they arrive in their host country, which is usually a fairly cheap option. Normally these cell phones work like calling cards, paying as you go. It is usually free to receive calls, which is nice for keeping in touch with family.

Other Phoning Options

Cheaper alternatives to international cell phones and expensive calling cards include net-based calling and voice services. Both Skype and MSN Messenger offer voice calling as well as video calling, so both parties can see one another while talking. It will be in your interest to take advantage of these cheap, and sometimes free, services.

International Driver's License

It is important to know that many countries DO NOT recognize a U.S. driver's license. If you are planning on driving while abroad, you should invest in an International Driver's Permit (IDP). More information about IDPs and how to get them can be obtained from http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1179.html.

Money Matters

Not too long ago, if you were traveling abroad, the best way to have access money was with traveler's checks. Unfortunately, this is no longer the case. Actually, traveler's checks are one of the more difficult ways to access cash. It is important to check the money information section of the pre-departure guide specific for your program to determine the best way to handle your finances while abroad. If your program does not have a section like this anywhere for their incoming students, you should contact the program director or office staff by email and ask them. Many programs suggest using credit cards, debit cards, and ATMs instead.

Even though we just suggested you not take multiple traveler's checks, it may be wise to take *a single* traveler's check with you. In some countries banks go on strike. If this happens, you should still be able to find a location to cash in your single traveler's check (usually for a small fee). This access to a small amount of cash could be critical. Before departing the U.S., you may also find it useful to obtain a small amount of the currency used in your host country. Sometimes this can take several weeks, so plan ahead. If you are unable to access foreign currency in your hometown, you may call this toll free number, 1-877-627-4817 or visit this website, <http://www.currencysource.com/buy-foreign-currency.html>.

Debit/Credit Cards

There are many advantages to using debit/credit cards:

- Major credit cards are almost universally accepted around the world. Visa and MasterCard are the most widely accepted, followed by American Express and Discover. It would be wise to take more than one card (perhaps one Visa and one MasterCard).
- If you lose your cards or they are stolen, you generally are not held responsible for fraudulent charges. Sometimes credit card companies will replace your lost or stolen card overnight.
- Credit card currency conversion rates are usually very accurate and offer a better rate than an individual will receive. It may also be handy to have your receipt as a reference if something were to be broken or lost.
- If you are using your **debit** card to make cash withdrawals from ATMs abroad, then you will not be charged for a "cash advance" (just like here in the States); however, you most likely *will* be charged for a "cash advance" if you use your **credit** card for a cash withdrawal.
- Make sure that YOUR name is on the card(s), not a parent's name. Make sure that the name on your card matches the name on your passport.

The best advice we can give is to personally check with your bank. Ask them their policy on charges for using foreign ATMs, currency conversion charges, and limits on daily amounts. Each bank will have a different policy. Your bank is the best place to get specific answers about your card(s) and account(s).

Money from Home

There are numerous ways to get money from the U.S. www.currencysource.com is a great source for sending money internationally from the U.S. Their toll free number is 1-877-627-4817.

Culture Shock

Leaving home and traveling to a new country to study can be a stressful experience. Even though it may be something you have planned and prepared for, the extent of the

change and the effects it has on you may take you by surprise. If you find yourself surprised by the effects of this change, it may be helpful to realize that your experience is quite normal. This applies to whichever country you come from and wherever you are going to study, even though some cultures are more alike than others because of geographic, historic, demographic, and other connections.

“Culture Shock” describes the impact of moving from a familiar culture to one which is unfamiliar. It is an experience that is felt by people who travel abroad to work, live or study. It can affect anyone, even those who have traveled abroad before. Culture shock includes the shock of being away from family, friends, being in a new environment, meeting new people, and trying to learn new cultures and customs. When familiar sights, sounds, smells, or tastes are no longer present in your everyday life, you can miss them very much. If you are tired and jet-lagged when you arrive, small things can be upsetting and out of all proportion to their real significance. Climate, food, language, dress, social roles, ‘rules’ of behavior, and values are all elements that contribute to culture shock.

Elements of Culture Shock

- **Climate:** Many students find that the climate when they travel abroad is quite different from the climate here in Portsmouth. It is best to be prepared for whatever climate you will be living in. The internet is a great place to research this topic.
- **Food:** Most likely you will find the food in your host country strange. It probably looks different and definitely tastes different. If you are not eating on campus and are unused to cooking for yourself, you may find yourself relying on “fast” food instead of your usual diet. Try to find items in the store that are similar to what you eat at home and make sure to eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- **Language:** Constantly listening to, speaking, and trying to comprehend a new language can be exhausting. If the language of your host country is not your first language, you will probably find that you miss your native language, which at home would have been a part of your everyday environment. Even if you are fluent in the language of the land, you may find that the different regional accents you discover on campus and the surrounding areas will make the language harder to understand. People may also speak quickly, and you may feel embarrassed, although you should not, to ask them to repeat what they have said.
- **Dress:** People dress according to likes and dislikes, norms, climate, and values. The people you meet, especially non-students, will probably dress different than you. Understanding that this is normal will help alleviate worry.
- **Social Roles:** Social behaviors may confuse, surprise, or offend you. For example, you may find people appear cold and distant, overly friendly, always in a hurry, or never in a hurry. You may be surprised to witness couples holding hands or kissing in public. The relationships between men and women may be

more or less formal than what you are used to, and you'll notice differences in same sex social contact and relationships as well.

- **'Rules' of Behavior:** In addition to the obvious things that hit you immediately when you arrive, such as sights, sounds, smells and tastes, every culture has unspoken rules which affect the way people treat one another. These will probably be less obvious, but eventually you will encounter them and the effect may be disorienting. For example, there will be differences in the way people decide what is important, how tasks are allocated, and how time is observed. In business and academic life, punctuality is important. You should always be on time for lectures, classes, work, and meetings with academic and administrative staff.
- **Values:** At first you will probably become aware of cultural differences in your environment (food, clothing, dress, behavior). You will also begin to notice that people from other cultures may have very different views of the world from yours. Cultures are built on deeply embedded sets of values, norms, assumptions, and beliefs. It can be surprising and sometimes upsetting to find that people do not share some of your most deeply held ideas (e.g. religious values and beliefs), as most of us take our core values and beliefs for granted and assume that they are universally held. To the best of your ability, try to suspend judgment until you understand how parts of a culture fit together into a coherent whole. Try to see what people say or do in the context of their own culture's norms. This will help you to understand how people see your behavior, and hopefully how to understand theirs. When you understand both cultures, you will probably find some aspects of both that you like and others that you do not.

Stages of Culture Shock

- **The "honeymoon" stage:** When you first arrive in a new culture, differences are interesting, exciting, and stimulating. At this stage you are still protected by the close memory of your home culture.
- **The "distress" stage:** A little into your journey, differences create an impact and you may feel a bit confused, isolated, or inadequate as cultural differences intrude and familiar supports, like your family and/or friends, are not immediately available.
- **"Re-integration" stage:** Next, you may begin to reject the differences you encounter. The differences you once found interesting and exciting may become frustrating, even to the point of anger. At this stage you will most likely be conscious of how much you dislike your new surroundings compared to home.
- **"Autonomy" stage:** You begin to accept differences and similarities. You will feel more relaxed and confident with your surroundings and you will be able to cope with new situations based on your growing experience.
- **"Independence" stage:** Differences and similarities are valued and important. You may feel full of potential and able to trust yourself in all kinds of situations.

Most situations become enjoyable and you are able to make choices according to your preferences and values.

Effects of Culture Shock

Culture shock itself brings about worry, but sometimes more worrying is a symptom of culture shock. You may find your health is affected; you may get stomach aches or headaches. Perhaps you may start worrying about your health more than previously. You may find it harder to concentrate, and therefore your schoolwork may seem more difficult. Others may find that they seem to be more irritable or emotional. All of these effects can increase your anxiety.

How to Help Yourself

Though culture shock is normally just a temporary phase, it is very important that you recognize that it is normal and that there are ways to decrease its effects. It is also important to realize that this can happen to anyone. No matter what culture you are from or where you are going, everyone can experience culture shock. Here are ways to help ease yourself through it:

- Understand that this is a normal experience.
- Keep in touch with home, but make these contact times short and meaningful.
- Have familiar things around you, such as trinkets or photos.
- Find where to purchase foods that are familiar to you. Your program advisor may have helpful information as to where to begin this search.
- Make friends with other International Students. Most likely they will be able to understand what you are going through and may offer some insight on helping you get through this tough time.
- Making friends with local students may help you to understand more clearly the things about their culture that you may find frustrating.
- Take advantage of all the help that is offered by your institution. Orientation programs are often a great way to meet other International Students.
- Some students may find that linking with a faith community will help them feel more familiar in new surroundings. Many institutions offer a chaplaincy in which several faiths may be represented. Contact your program director for information specific to your needs.
- Most importantly, find someone to talk with who will listen uncritically and with understanding, rather than isolating yourself.

It is important to keep in mind that culture shock is very normal, usually unavoidable, and not a sign that you have made a mistake or that you aren't able to manage. The experience can actually be quite beneficial in that it can be a great learning experience, making you more aware of aspects of your own culture as well as the new culture you have entered. It will give you valuable skills that will serve you both now and in your future endeavors.

Be aware that reverse culture shock can occur once you return to the United States. It may be hard for your family and friends to know what you are going through. Sharing information with them about culture shock may help them understand your situation and hopefully be able to help you through this difficult time.

Coming Home

Transcripts

Make sure that your program will be sending your official transcripts to Shawnee State University. We here at SSU need an “official” transcript to be able to give you proper grades for the courses you complete while abroad. If they do not automatically supply a transcript, you need to make arrangements for one to be sent as soon as possible.

Customs

You can check the U.S. Department of Customs’ website about information concerning what to know and have ready upon re-entry through customs.

<http://cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/>

Saying Goodbye

Saying goodbye to the new friends you’ve made abroad often is harder than when you said goodbye to your friends and family to go abroad. The experiences you’ve shared with these new friends will forever be the bond that holds you to one another. One tip about saying goodbye is not to wait until the end. Anything can happen, and by waiting until the last minute to say goodbye you may miss the opportunity altogether. Write a letter, make a card, or draw a picture of something that will be special to both of you as a creative keepsake for your new friend. Being creative with goodbyes will help you feel more at ease with the situation.

Keeping in touch with your new friends, whether they are American or international, will help you feel like the experience was real and not just a dream.

Please leave page 16 with a parent or guardian.

EMERGENCY CONTACT SHEET

If you have attempted to contact your child and are unable to do so, follow this procedure:

Programs Contacts:

- Contact the on-site program director. This number should be provided to you prior to departure by your child.
- If you are unable to reach the on-site program director then contact the program office at Shawnee.
- If you are unable to reach anyone via the first two methods, reference the lower portion of this page for ways to request assistance from the U.S. Government.

General Contacts

State Department: Overseas Citizens Services p.m.	202-647-5225 M –F 8:15 a.m. – 10:00
Emergency after hours or week-ends	202-647-4000 (request the duty officer)
Shawnee State University Contacts	
Center for International Programs and Activities business hours	740-351-3127 or 740-351-3223,
SSU Security	740-351-3243, 24 hours

How to Request a Welfare/Whereabouts Check

Welfare whereabouts requests may be directed to the appropriate office in the U.S. Department of State, Directorate of Overseas Citizens Services (CA/OCS). For Missing and Sick Adults, Emergency Family Messages, and Child Abuse, Neglect, Abandonment or Exploitation cases, and child welfare in cases not/not involving parental child abduction or custody disputes , contact of the Office of American Citizens Services at (202) 647-5225/5226.

What Information to Have Available Before You Call: In order to assist us in locating the U.S. citizen abroad, it is helpful to have the following information available:

- Caller's full name, address, phone number and relationship
- Name of the Person abroad
- Date and place of birth of the person abroad
- Passport number (if known)
- Last known address and phone number; itinerary
- Reason for their travel/residence abroad (business, tourism, etc.)
- Date of last contact
- Other points of contact abroad (friends, business associates, hotel, etc.)
- If ill, where hospitalized and, if relevant to current hospitalization, the name and phone number of -attending physician in the U.S.
- You may also be asked to provide a photo of the missing person
- It may also be useful for you to contact credit card companies, telephone companies, etc. to try to determine if the missing individual's accounts have been used recently and where those transactions occurred. _

For Emergency Family Messages also include:

- Nature of the emergency
- What you want the person told about the emergency
- Name, address and telephone number and relationship of person you wish subject to call after the emergency family message is relayed to them by the U.S. embassy or consulate.