

Study Abroad
Lamar University

2018

HANDBOOK



STUDY ABROAD
LAMAR UNIVERSITY

Office of Study Abroad
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<http://www.lamar.edu/studyabroad>



Congratulations on your decision to study abroad!

You will soon embark on what might be the most challenging, exciting, and rewarding experience of your life. The Office of Study Abroad at Lamar University is excited to get you ready for your journey. Of course, studying abroad is academically rewarding and a great way to boost your resume, but it also gives you the opportunity to learn about a new culture and challenge yourself in new ways. Don't be afraid of the unfamiliar!

This handbook contains information that will help you prepare to make the most of your study abroad experience. If you are looking for specific information, use the Table of Contents to direct you. For further information on study abroad, come to the Office of Study Abroad and we will be happy to help.

~ The Office of Study Abroad ~

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Office of Study Abroad Contact Information

Feel free to come by, email, or call us. We will be happy to answer any questions or talk to you (and your family!) about any concerns you may have.

Office of Study Abroad: John Gray Center, Herman Iles Building, 108A

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I've Decided to Study Abroad, Now What?

Here's a checklist of what you'll need to do first:

1. Choose a [program](#)
2. Fill out an [Application Form](#) online
3. Pay your [deposit](#)
4. Apply for a passport

Passports and Visas

Do you have a passport?

If you do not, then you'll need to apply for one. This process can take around 6-8 weeks, so it is recommended that you apply once you have decided to study abroad.

If you do have a passport, but it is going to expire within 6 months of the end date of your travels, you will need to renew it. Most countries require your passport to not expire within 6 months of your travel to that country.

Everyone who travels is required to have a passport, whether you are going to Mexico, China, or anywhere else. For more passport information check out travel.state.gov.

What is a visa and do I need one?

Visas are given as a sign of permission for a person to enter a country and are generated by the host country. There are different types of visas depending on what your purpose is for going to another country: tourism, study, or work. Visas also depend on how long you will be in the country. Usually, you are required to get a visa in advance, not at the airport upon arrival. **However, most countries do not require a visa for U.S. citizens going on short-term study abroad.**

If you are travelling on a Lamar University short-term faculty-led program, and a visa is required for your host country, we will help you get your visa. However, if you are going for a semester or on a non-LU program, you will have to get a visa on your own, but we will help you get the information you need to apply for one. In this case, you are responsible for applying for and obtaining your own visa.



Will my credits transfer back?

If you are going abroad on a LU short-term faculty-led program, the credits on the program have already been approved and you will register and receive those credits as if you were taking a class on campus. If you are going abroad on a semester exchange or on a non-LU program, you will need to fill out a credit transfer approval form, which can be obtained from the Office of Study Abroad.

Who can Study Abroad?

All full-time LU students in good academic standing with at least a 2.0 GPA are able to study abroad. Students from other universities are also able to attend LU faculty-led programs, but must enroll at LU for the term in which they are to go abroad. Family members and spouses are not allowed to participate on the program with you unless they register for the class(es).

**Are International Students Allowed to Study Abroad?**

Yes! You are allowed to study abroad, however where you can go depends on your U.S. visa type, which country you are from, and where you want to travel to. It is possible that you will not need an additional visa to enter your host country. ALL international students will need to acquire travel authorization on their I-20/DS-2019 prior to exiting the United States.

For more information on studying abroad as an international student, please speak with the Office of Study Abroad.

Financing Your Study Abroad Experience

Lamar University Scholarships

LU is proud to offer several funding opportunities specifically to study abroad students.

Study Abroad Fee Grant: Available to all LU students who pay the \$2/semester study abroad fee and have been accepted on an approved study abroad program.

Carter Innovation Fund/Steinhagen Fellowship: Funding is available through the College of Business for business majors studying abroad.

McMaster Grant (Honors College): Honors students can apply for additional funding through the Honors College

Other Study Abroad Scholarships

There are many scholarships you can apply for depending on where you are going, what you will be studying, and how long you will be abroad. For a complete list of scholarships see our [Scholarship Information](#) page on our website.

Some of the most well-known scholarships are the Gilman, Boren, and Fulbright. If you are interested in applying for any of these three, please come and talk to the Office of Study Abroad for information specific to each of these scholarships.

Also, if you receive any other scholarships from Lamar University, talk to the Scholarship Office to find out if/what will apply to study abroad (Ex: Some scholarships may cover your semester or summer tuition costs).

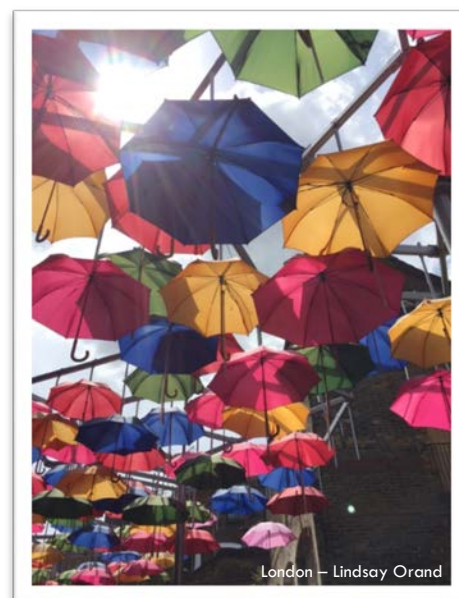
Fundraising

Students are strongly encouraged to fundraise on their own or with their fellow study abroad participants. Many students choose to start GoFundMe's or sell baked goods or small items. The Office of Study Abroad recommends students interested in fundraising to speak to their program faculty and organize a group effort to fundraise.

Pre-Departure Orientation

All students going on a LU study abroad program are required to attend the pre-departure orientation. This orientation will provide you with important information regarding studying abroad. This includes: financial matters/banking, what to pack, safety measures, information about international medical insurance, and much more.

Orientations will take place on specified dates before you travel. Students will be notified of when and where the orientation will take place via the email address provided on your application. If your contact information has changed since the time of your application, please inform the Office of Study Abroad.

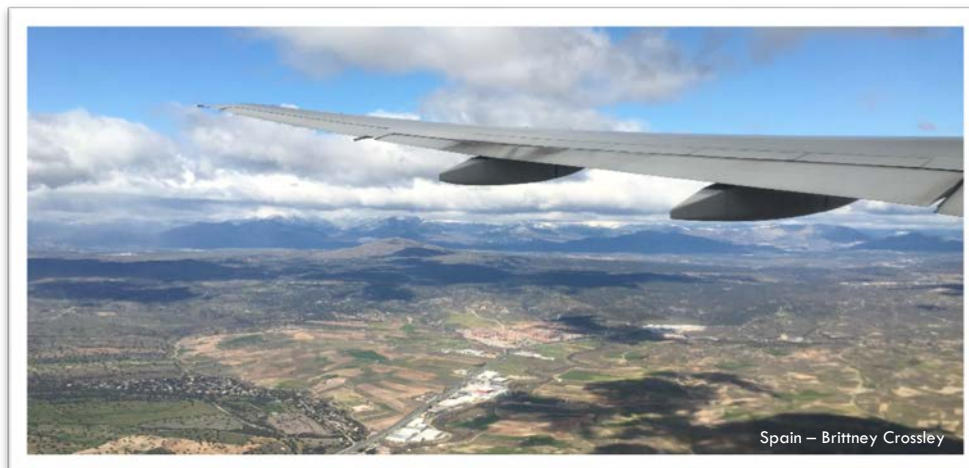


London – Lindsay Orand

Air Travel and Arrangements

Many of our short-term faculty-led programs include airfare in the program. For these programs, the Office of Study Abroad will handle all flight arrangements for the students. However, if you are going on a semester exchange or on a program that does not have airfare included in the program fee, you will have to arrange your own international airfare. Here are some things to remember when booking your own international flight:

- ❖ Know which airport you should be arriving at. If you are meeting a representative or group for your program, you need to know where you will be meeting them once you land. Some big cities have more than one airport in the vicinity.
- ❖ Know what day you have to arrive on. Some international flights arrive a day later than when you leave and some arrive on the same day. It depends on which direction you are going and how far you are traveling.
- ❖ Know your baggage allowance. You will have to check with the airline you are using in order to know how many checked or carry-on bags you are allowed, as well as their weight and dimensions.
- ❖ Give yourself enough time to make your connections. If you have a connection/layover, remember to give yourself at least an hour to make your connecting flight. Especially when flying internationally it is important to give yourself time to go through customs and immigration – think 2+ hours to make your connection. There are often long lines when arriving in a country because multiple international flights arrive around the same time every day.
- ❖ Keep your passport/visa with you at all times during travel. Everyone is required to pass through customs and immigration when entering a foreign country and again upon arrival back into the U.S..
- ❖ Don't pack your valuables in your checked luggage. You should never pack important things in your checked luggage. Your phone, money, laptop, camera, prescription medications, and any other important items should always go with you in your carry-on.



Note: If a group flight is included in your program, but you prefer to book your flight separately, this may be possible in certain situations. You will need to put your intent to fly separately in writing to the Director of Study Abroad at least 4 months prior to departure and submit an itinerary for your travel plans after you receive permission to book.

What to Pack

You'll need to pack sensibly and light, especially if you will be moving around and not staying in one location while you are abroad. Carrying around a heavy suitcase as you take buses or trains is never fun. Don't take too much stuff, you will want room for souvenirs.

- ❖ Airlines have specific weight restrictions and size limitations on all baggage. You'll have to check with your airline to find out the specifics.
- ❖ If you take prescription medications, make sure you bring enough for the duration of your program. Keep the medication in its original packaging and carry the prescription or a letter from your doctor explaining your condition and medication. Remember to bring your medication with you in your carry-on in case your checked luggage is lost or delayed.
- ❖ If you wear contact lenses or glasses, bring an extra pair as well as your eye prescription in case they are lost or broken.
- ❖ If you are bringing an electronic device, remember that the electrical currents and plugs in a foreign country may be different than at home. Check before traveling and if it is different, get a converter/adaptor. A converter is used to change the electrical current and an adaptor changes the plug.
- ❖ Make sure not to pack your money, camera, laptop, tablet, or other important items in your checked bag.
- ❖ You should always bring a spare set of clothing in your carry-on. Sometimes luggage may not arrive on time or gets lost in transit. Having a spare set of clothing in your carry-on is a good way to make sure you will be prepared upon arrival
- ❖ Valuables should be left at home.

Your program faculty will be able to provide you with a sample packing list for your program. You can also find a general recommended packing list at the end of the handbook. Remember to check the weather before you depart so that you bring appropriate clothing with you.



Cultural Adjustment, Culture Shock, & Stereotypes

What is culture?

Culture is a difficult concept to understand. It can be broadly described as the beliefs, values, ideas, and customs of a society. As a study abroad student, you will have the opportunity to explore a new culture or cultures by meeting and interacting with people from your host country.

Why is cultural adjustment important?

Adjusting to a new culture and country can often be very difficult and stressful. By finding ways to adjust and understand your host culture, you will be able to make the most of your experience abroad.

Whether it is your first time abroad or your hundredth, you will have to be aware of the fact that every country is different and has its own unique culture. What is normal for you in your home country may be strange and unusual in your host country and vice versa. Try not to focus on the bad things or challenges you face. Instead, try to find the humor in embarrassing situations (those make the best stories) or try to find a way to overcome those challenges. You also need to be aware that you might be put in situations you are not used to and must understand that this is a part of living and studying in a different country.

Avoid being judgmental and consider that there is more than one way to accomplish things. Try to be understanding of your host country and take this experience as an opportunity to find new ways of looking at the world, as well as a chance to try something new.

What is culture shock? Will it really happen to me?

Culture shock is something that can happen to anyone, regardless of whether they have been abroad many times or if this is their first time. You might experience a variety of different emotions and recognizing it will help you cope.

Some symptoms of culture shock include:

- ❖ Loneliness or sadness
- ❖ Anger, irritability, resentment, depression, or feeling vulnerable
- ❖ Lack of confidence
- ❖ Developing stereotypes about the new culture
- ❖ Longing for family
- ❖ Identifying with your home culture or idealizing your home country
- ❖ Loss of identity
- ❖ Insomnia, desire to sleep too much or too little
- ❖ Unable to solve simple problems

It is normal to feel this way and many people experience a roller coaster of emotions while studying, traveling, working, and living abroad. If you need someone to talk to, your faculty leading the program, as well as the Office of Study Abroad, are here to help you.



How can I prepare myself for culture shock/adjustment?

It's important to learn about your host country before you go. There are several ways of doing this:

- Read books, articles, and blogs about your host country
- Watch movies or tv shows about or made in your host country (these give you a better idea of culture and many can be found with English subtitles online if your host country's native language is not English)
- Consult travel books, blogs, or podcasts
- Try to meet with international students from your host country on campus
- Find out if you can contact returned study abroad students to find out what their experiences were like in your host country

You should also consider how locals view time, the roles of family and gender in society, privacy and personal space, elders, alcohol, and personal relationships. These are all aspects of culture and different countries have different views on these things. In some cultures it is acceptable to be late and in others it is expected that everyone should arrive early.

What is a cultural stereotype?

Stereotyping is a strong tendency to characterize people of other cultures unfairly, collectively, and often negatively. This uniformed generalization is applied to every individual in a cultural group ('All British are reserved' or 'All Americans are materialistic'), or used to generalize based on experience with only a few people from the group ('All British are reserved like Margaret Thatcher' or 'All Americans must be materialistic like Beyonce').

Stereotypes are often based on race, religion, ethnic origin, nationality, gender, socio-economic status, or affiliation. Stereotypes are often employed by a dominant group to denigrate or stigmatize less powerful groups, stereotyping substitutes 'a prejudiced attitude' for 'an objective analysis'.

How are Americans perceived abroad?

While you need to be cautious not to stereotype cultural values of others, you may also face stereotyping of your cultural values as a U.S. American. You also need to be aware that you may experience anti-American sentiment during your trip abroad. It is important not to be naïve about the conditions you may encounter. You should be careful not to confuse critique, opinion, or fact with knee-jerk disdain for your country. Most people are not anti-American and you should not experience any obvious threats to you because you are American. Nevertheless, you may encounter individuals who are politically opposed to our government or military activity.

Remember that if you encounter someone who has a stereotype about Americans that you do not agree with, you have the opportunity to represent not only Lamar University, but also your country. Also recognize that having a different opinion does not make you or another person wrong. Sharing your ideas and opinions are great ways to gain an understanding of the way others perceive your country – just take caution not to mistake critique of your government for a personal attack on yourself.



Make the Most of It

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity. There are a few ways to make sure you get the most out of this experience and create amazing memories:

Prepare. Where are you going and what will you be doing? What is going on in the country you are visiting? Any major news? By learning as much as you can before you go, you will prepare yourself to experience the country you will be staying in. Buy a travel book or read a blog. Not only do they give you a perspective of what it is like to be in that country, but they will also give you insight into places you may wish to visit or great restaurants in the area.

Explore. Take the time to learn about the city/cities you are staying in. If you can, participate in local cultural events. Explore museums, find a favorite restaurant, attend a festival or parade, try on traditional clothing or eat some traditional food. Make sure you explore and experience what your host country has to offer.

Connect. One of the best things you can get out of your experience is making friends. Whether you become friends with your fellow study abroad participants or the locals, often times these

friendships last a lifetime. Go out of your comfort zone and try going to places that are not primarily American or expat hangouts. You will meet and connect with many amazing and different people.

Communicate. If you are studying abroad to learn a language or know a bit of the local language, this is the best way to practice and learn new things. While you will often find people speak English overseas, do not expect everyone to know English. If you are going to a country where the primary language is not English, try to learn a few words, such as ‘hello’, ‘thank you’, ‘where is the bathroom?’, or ‘how much is this?’. Not only will people be surprised you have taken the time to learn some of their language, they are likely to be more friendly and welcoming because this shows you are interested in their country and culture.

Capture. Try to take as many pictures or videos as you can. Maybe you like to journal or blog. You will want to remember as much as you can when you get home so you can tell your friends and family about your experience. The time you spend abroad is full of memories and stories that you will remember and look back on for the rest of your life.



Housing and Homestays

While studying abroad, there are several different types of housing students will have. Depending on your program you will either be in a hotel, dormitory, or home stay.

Hotel/hostel. Students going on short-term faculty-led programs that are traveling to several different places in their host country will most likely be staying in a hotel or hostel. These arrangements are made by the Office of Study Abroad. Some programs offer students the option of paying more for a single occupancy room rather than sharing with other students. You will need to contact the Office of Study Abroad for more information.

Dormitory. For students studying abroad for a semester or on some longer programs that are in a single city, their housing is likely to be dormitory style. Semester exchange and some short-term program students will have the chance to live on campus at a university overseas. This is a great way to meet other students from your host country. Semester exchange students will have to confer

with their host institution in regards to dormitory arrangements. Short-term program students will have their housing arranged for by the Office of Study Abroad.

Homestay. A great way to immerse yourself in a culture is to have a homestay. If your program is providing you with a homestay housing arrangement you will get the chance to live with a local family in your host country. You should remember that you are a guest in their home and should be respectful of your host family's property and lifestyle. In some cultures it is nice to give a gift to your homestay as a means to thank them for letting you stay with them. Some common gift ideas are t-shirts, magnets, or small knick-knacks. Avoid giving gifts with a religious or political affiliation.

Money Matters

How much money should I take?

It depends on your personal spending habits and what expenditures you expect in your host country. You need to determine which meals are covered by the program and which are not. Another consideration is the cost of living in your host country, is it cheaper or more expensive. Also decide how much you want to spend on souvenirs.

How do I exchange money?

If you plan on exchanging money (see below about using an ATM instead), it is recommended to exchange money before you go abroad. You can do this at your local bank. Call before you go to make sure they have your host country currency available. While you will be able to exchange money at the airport or a bank in country, it may be harder once you arrive to find a place to exchange your money. Always keep in mind the current exchange rate so you get a fair deal with converting your USD into the local currency.



Cardholder Tips for Travelers

Debit and credit card fraud can cause major problems for you as a consumer if you are traveling abroad. Here are some tips to prevent becoming a victim of fraud:

1. Contact your bank/credit union before traveling abroad
2. Ask your bank/credit union about potential fraud block in other countries
3. Test your cards before leaving
4. Always bring an alternative payment method. Never bring just one debit or credit card
5. Make sure you hide your debit/credit cards, cash, or travelers checks in different places
6. Be aware of Pick Pockets
7. Have contact information for your bank/credit union and your credit card companies in the event your card(s) are lost or stolen

Traveling is an enjoyable experience but precautions should be taken to protect your accounts.

How do I access money while abroad, and keep my money safe?

While abroad, use the same precautions you would while in any large city in the United States. Be aware of the potential for pickpocketing. Many ATM/debit cards can be used outside the U.S. at ATMs and you will be able to withdraw the cash in the host country's currency. However, be careful when using an ATM. Avoid using ATMs on the street and try to use one inside of a bank. Also consider carrying a money pouch inside of your clothing. Avoid putting your wallet or money in a place that is easily accessible.

Make sure you notify your bank that you will be traveling internationally and where you will be going. This way your card will not be frozen and you will be able to make withdrawals abroad.

What if I run out of money?

Remember to manage your finances while abroad and keep to your budget. In the event that you do need money transferred to you, consider the following:

- ❖ **ATM:** If you have an ATM card, a family member can transfer funds to you and you can withdraw them abroad.
- ❖ **Western Union or MoneyGram:** these are immediate cash transfer stations used to transfer money around the world. Depending on the amount of money sent, a small service fee is charged.



Traveling While Abroad

If you are spending a semester abroad, you may decide to travel within or outside of your host country. These costs fall on the student and it is up to the student to make arrangements. You will be required to notify the Office of Study Abroad of any out of host country travel.

You can opt to travel by air, train, or bus and you will have to find the respective information for each of these modes of transportation in the location of where you will be traveling to. Some things to keep in mind are different currencies, visa regulations, and safety. Avoid places where your safety might be in question. Here are some helpful resources.



Kayak: www.kayak.com
 Student Universe: www.studentuniverse.com
 Ryanair: www.ryanair.com
 Eurail: www.eurail.com
 STA Travel: www.statravel.com
 U.S. Department of State: travel.state.gov

Contacting Home

Whether you are going for a week or a year, you will want to contact family and friends to let them know you have arrived safely and to check in. Here are some ways to get in touch with those still in the U.S.:

- ❖ **Skype.** Allows for free computer-to-computer calling; also offers regular long-distance rates starting at about \$0.02/minute. You can also use Skype's webcam communication and chat/instant messenger.
- ❖ **Pre-paid calling cards.** Fairly economical and easy to purchase, especially in Europe. You can buy a card for any number of denominations, with a correlating number of minutes available.
- ❖ **Cellphone.** Depending on how long you will be abroad, you may be interested in getting a prepaid cell or setting up your current phone (some cellphones do not work in different countries due to the frequency used). You can also talk to your local phone provider in the U.S. Some text-only plans are very affordable and give you easy access to your friends and family back home. Check out <http://roadpost.com> for some information on international cellphone plans.
- ❖ **Host family phone.** If you live with a host family, they may only allow you to use their phone with an international calling card or they may ask you not to use it for international calls at all. You should discuss it with them before making any phone calls.
- ❖ **Free Apps.** There are a variety of free applications you can download onto your phone or tablet to use overseas such as What's App and Kakaotalk. Wi-fi is often available for your use while abroad.

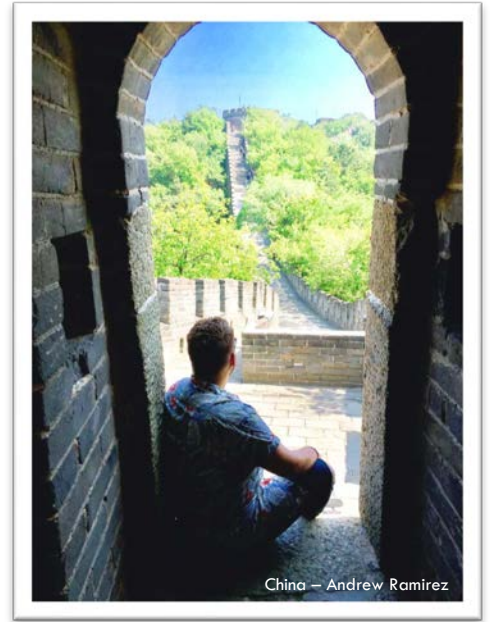


Health & Safety While Abroad

General Safety

It is important to apply the same common sense while traveling overseas as you would at home.

- ❖ Enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#)
- ❖ Create and carry a list of emergency phone numbers with you at all times
- ❖ Pay attention to warnings and follow the directives issued by program administrators regarding safety and security issues
- ❖ Stay updated and informed on current news and events around the world
- ❖ Keep copies of your passport or other forms of identification on you
- ❖ Avoid poorly lit places and walking alone. Stick to well-traveled streets and walk in a group at night
- ❖ Do not leave your bags or personal belongings unattended
- ❖ Be aware that dating norms and gender roles may be different in your host culture
- ❖ Have sufficient funds and/or a credit card on hand for emergencies
- ❖ Avoid political demonstrations, large crowds and gatherings
- ❖ Be aware of your surroundings
- ❖ Act responsibly. Avoid substance abuse and use alcohol sparingly (it increases your vulnerability to crime)



Medications and Inoculations

Before you go...

Try to take care of any foreseeable medical, dental, gynecological, or optical needs. You should take an adequate supply of any prescription medications you may need with you and be sure to transport the medication in the original containers. If you are being treated for any pre-existing medical problems and/or have to carry a large supply of medication, be sure to have a letter from your doctor describing your medical condition and any prescribed medications, including their generic name and that the medication is for personal use.

If you wear glasses or contact lenses, take an extra pair or a copy of your prescription. Contact lens wearers are advised to take cleaning and wetting solutions, which may be unavailable or expensive overseas.

Make sure you have the recommended immunizations for the country you will live in and any countries you plan to visit while abroad. You should try to make sure you are up to date on all routine immunizations (including Tetanus, Hepatitis A & B). Information about health conditions abroad and inoculations is available from the Center for Disease Control Traveler's Health Hotline at (877) 394-8747 or www.cdc.gov.

Consider travelling with any over-the-counter medicines you may need, as they may be difficult to find in your host country. Medicines such as: painkillers (aspirin/ibuprofen), antacids, motion sickness pills, allergy medications, etc.

Health Insurance

All Lamar University students and faculty approved to participate on a study abroad program will receive international emergency insurance coverage through International SOS. You **MUST** download the International SOS app to your smart phone prior to departure. The International SOS app can provide you with detailed information about health and security risks in your destination country. You can also call the dedicated International SOS phone number (+44-20-8762-8394) before departure to receive a country briefing about your destination.

Think of International SOS as your 24/7 911 call while you are studying abroad. You can connect to International SOS through phone or your app to speak with a medical professional or get emergency assistance. Also remember to communicate any health matters with your program director or host university.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who may need accommodations for international travel should contact the Disability Resource Center by calling (409) 880-8347, or e-mailing drc@lamar.edu.

Kyle J. Mutz
 Director - Disability Resource Center (DRC)
 Lamar University
 P O Box 10087
 Beaumont, TX 77710
 Communication Building, Room 105
 409-880-8347 (Phone)



LGBTQ Students

Living in another culture tends to be a time of self-exploration. Whether you find yourself questioning your sexual identity for the first time or already identify yourself as LGBTQ, you should keep in mind that many of the ideas regarding sexuality and orientation in the U.S. may not translate easily into the culture you are entering. Educate yourself about the social culture and laws of your host country before you go.

Check out the U.S. Department of State's [LGBTI Travel Information](#) for more information. If you have concerns about any of these issues, don't hesitate to contact the Office of Study Abroad and we will be more than happy to speak with you about your concerns.

Alcohol and Drugs

Students are expected to adhere to the same code of conduct as if you were on campus at LU, as well as your host country's laws and regulations regarding alcohol and drug use. Under no circumstances are LU students to engage in drug use while on the program and if caught engaging in such activities, will be subject to strict punishment with the possibility of ending the student's program at the student's expense. Students are responsible for making sure they follow the rules and guidelines set forth for their safety and well-being and to follow the laws and regulations of their host country.

Water Safety

In some locations, it may be unsafe to drink tap water. When in doubt, drink sealed, bottled water. Do not drink water from a bottle that is not sealed because you do not know if it is contaminated. Water is often easily acquired at convenience stores abroad.

If you plan to swim while abroad, be mindful that certain hazards, such as a strong current or undertow, may not be marked. Do not swim alone or unaccompanied.



Fire Hazards

Fire regulations vary by country and in some places smoke alarms, sprinklers, and fire exits may not exist. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of safety conditions and what to do in case of an emergency.

Road and Travel Safety

We strongly advise students against operating a motor vehicle while abroad or riding in cars driven by people not affiliated with your program. Traffic laws and regulations vary by country and can make driving a motor vehicle in a foreign country extremely hazardous. Insurance requirements and other responsibilities also vary by country. LU is not responsible for any direct or indirect expenses incurred as a result of a student's decision to operate a motor vehicle while abroad.

Sexual Harassment and Assault Issues

In the event that you, or someone you know, experiences relationship, or sexual harassment/violence while abroad, you are strongly encouraged to seek the support of resources within your host country. Seek safety first, then speak with your faculty leader or contact the Office of Study Abroad.

Sexual assault is any sexual contact made without consent. Consent must always be freely given with words or actions that clearly communicate an individual's desire to engage in sexual activities. Consent is a clear 'yes', not the absence of a 'no'. Sexual assault is always the fault of the perpetrator and not the fault of the victim. Whether or not the victim has been drinking is irrelevant. No one deserves to be a victim of sexual assault.

Tips for Female Travelers

Students should understand that other countries have varying cultural, social, and legal issues regarding gender roles, social relationships, and dating practices. Women, in particular, may receive unsolicited attention in certain regions. Before traveling to your host country, research gender norms and expectations. Some countries require women to cover their shoulders (if they are wearing a tank top) when entering buildings or religious places. Here are some more tips:

- ❖ Dress conservatively, in a less obviously American fashion. Pay attention to how local women dress and interact with strangers.
- ❖ Avoid eye contact or smiling at men you do not know. It may seem rude, but being friendly with strangers may garner unwanted attention.
- ❖ Be firm and assertive in your language and posture.
- ❖ Pay attention to your instincts. If you have a bad feeling about a place or situation, avoid it.
- ❖ Travel in groups, especially at night. If you find yourself alone while waiting for a bus or train, stand near groups of other people.
- ❖ Speak with your faculty-leader or with the Office of Study Abroad if you have any questions or concerns.

In an Emergency

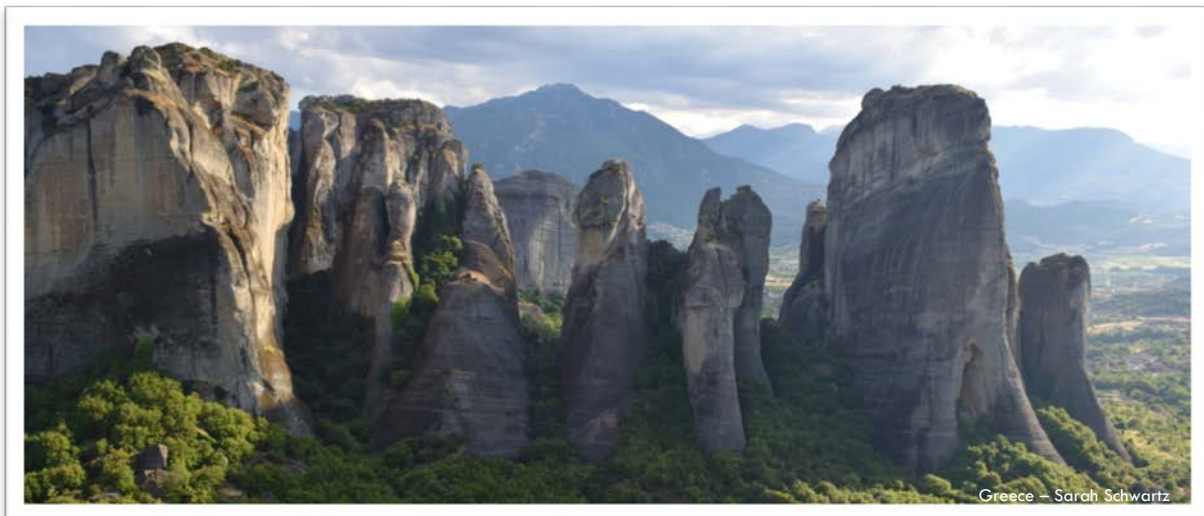
In the event of a political, social, or natural emergency, the Office of Study Abroad will be in contact with the on-site faculty leader(s) for the program.



Stay Involved – Getting the Most out of your Experience

There are a few ways to make the most of your experience when you return to Lamar.

- ❖ **Welcome Back Reception.** All returning students are invited to attend our annual Welcome Back Reception which usually takes place in August. Students will have the opportunity to reconnect with friends from abroad, share experiences, and plan another trip abroad while enjoying free food. Information will be sent to students at the start of the Fall semester.
- ❖ **Join a club or student organization.** Lamar University has a variety of clubs on campus for students interested in different cultures and countries. If there is not a club already, consider starting one.
- ❖ **International Education Week & International Culture Festival.** International Education Week usually takes place in November. The Office of Study Abroad hosts various events around campus for students to learn about how to use your study abroad experience to help you get a job, listen to international lecturers, and find out where students can study abroad the next year.
- ❖ **Join the Cardinals Beyond Borders Program.** International and domestic students are invited to join the buddy program, [Cardinals Beyond Borders](#). Students meet once a week for the first 6 weeks of the semester and engage in a variety of fun cross-cultural activities. Events often include game night, bowling, food night, and more.
- ❖ **Study Abroad Photo & Video Contest.** All LU students who studied abroad in the previous academic year are invited to submit up to 5 photos to the Study Abroad Photo Contest and one 3-5 minute video. There are usually three categories: Best Selfie/Photo of Self, School Spirit, and Best Overall Photo. Winners from each category will receive prizes from the Office of Study Abroad. Past prizes include international/travel books of the student's choice.
- ❖ **Become a Global Ambassador.** Do you want to tell others how amazing your study abroad experience was? Take the opportunity to join the [Global Ambassadors Program](#). You will gain valuable experience by helping out at events around campus, such as the Study Abroad Fair. Ambassadors can help reassure students who have never been abroad before and serve as a resource for future students who want to talk to someone who has studied abroad.

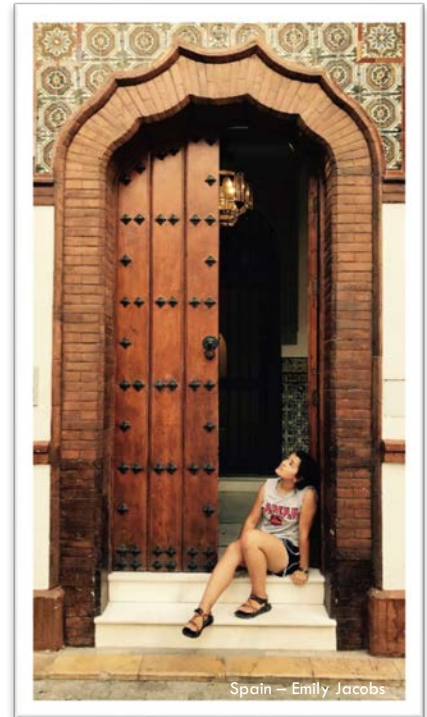


Readjustment & Reverse Culture Shock

We try to prepare students as best we can for the life-changing experience of study abroad, but coming home can be just as hard as going abroad. The combination of exhaustion and excitement when coming back home can feel similar to when you first arrived in your host country. You may find that you have changed while living abroad and it might be difficult to find people who seem to understand your new perspective. These feelings are normal and many people experience this when they return from spending time abroad.

Take a look at some of these strategies that may ease your readjustment process:

- ❖ Change happens. You may have changed, your friends may have changed, and your perspective may have changed. Take this time to think about what you have experienced. What did you learn about yourself? What is most important to you?
- ❖ Keep in touch with your fellow students from your program and share your experiences. They may be feeling the same as you.
- ❖ Talk with us in the Office of Study Abroad about your experience. We want to know how your experience was; whether it was amazing, okay, or horrible. Everyone has different experiences, expectations, and outcomes.
- ❖ Participate in our events we host around campus throughout the semester. It will give you an opportunity to meet up with other students and tell others about your experiences.
- ❖ Be patient with your friends and family. They are trying to understand your experiences while you were abroad. Being as good a listener as a talker is key to a mutual relationship and a good way to keep friendships and relationships going.
- ❖ If you miss the food or culture of your host country, try to find a restaurant, film, or international student that would like to meet and talk with you about life in your host country.



Frequently Asked Questions

What happens if my passport gets lost or stolen while I'm abroad?

If your passport gets lost or stolen, you will need to contact the local authorities and make a police report. Once you make a report, you should take it to the nearest U.S. consulate or embassy. You will have to file a replacement request in person.

In most foreign countries, you cannot continue your journey or return to the U.S. without a new passport. In other words, guard your passport carefully! You should know where your passport is at all times. Avoid keeping it in easy to reach places where pickpockets might be able to get to it.

I'm a graduating before the start of the program, can I still study abroad?

Yes. You will either need to push your graduation date back (i.e. instead of graduating in the spring, graduate in the summer) or you will need to apply for post-bac status. This can be done by speaking with the Admissions Office.

Do I have to take courses specifically for my major?

No. While many of our programs offer credit that students can earn towards their degree, it is not required for a student to be an Art major to go on one of our Art programs, for instance. Most of LU's short-term, faculty-led programs are open to students in any major. However, some programs (such as those through the College of Business) do require students to major in that field in order to participate. Students will need to consult with the faculty leading the program to determine if there are pre-requisites for the courses offered.

How much should I save for my program or bring with me?

The sooner you start saving for your program, the more you will have to pay for your program fee or buy souvenirs. Most programs are all-inclusive and cover airfare, accommodations, meals, and activities. You will need to check the program flyer to see what costs are covered and which ones are not. Students will sometimes have to book their own flight or pay for their meals. We go over how much students should bring with them at orientation.

Will study abroad slow me down on the road to graduation?

No. The majority of students who study abroad are not hindered in any way. In fact, students who study abroad are more likely to graduate on time and graduate with a higher GPA than those that do not. However, in some cases students who choose to study abroad for a semester may delay their graduation in order to take a variety of courses which interest them rather than ones they may need for graduation. This is very uncommon but can sometimes occur.

What if I don't know the language?

Unless you are going on a language program for Spanish or French, all Lamar University faculty-led programs are taught in English. Furthermore, almost all of our semester exchange partners offer courses in English for a variety of majors. The other universities allow students to take language courses while attending during the semester. Even our regular semester exchange partners who offer classes in English also allow students to study the local language while abroad.

What if I want to study abroad somewhere but Lamar University does not have a program there?

Every year several students embark on independent study abroad programs. These students choose to attend a non-Lamar University program and then transfer their credits back after the completion of their studies. If you wish to participate in such a program, you will be required to meet with the Office of Study Abroad and get your courses approved before you go abroad. In the past, Lamar University students have gone on independent programs for a summer in Iceland, a summer in Canada, a semester in Wales, and many more.

Traveler's Checklist

Remember to pack light and leave room for any souvenirs you may want to bring home. Keep in mind the climate and type of program you are going on: Will there be a lot of outdoor activities? Will it be cold or hot? What is appropriate dress for some of the places you will be visiting? Also keep in mind the local culture and remember some countries dress more conservatively.

Before you go:

- Passport
- Visa (if required)
- Immunizations/medical check-up
- Health documentation
- Credit & ATM cards (with PIN numbers)
- Host country currency
- U.S. cash (for before you leave & when you return)
- Plane tickets
- Extra ID
- Extra passport photos
- Emergency info (medical, itinerary, contacts)

Health Care Needs:

- Prescriptions
- Contacts/eye glasses (+ extra pair)
- Band Aids
- Antiseptic cream
- Sunscreen
- Tweezers
- Aspirin, Tylenol, Ibuprofen
- Cough or cold medicine
- Antacid
- Diarrhea medicine
- Malaria pills (if needed)
- Toiletries/grooming supplies

Important Basics:

- Adapter/Converter
- Alarm clock
- Batteries
- Camera & accessories
- Cell phone/smart phone
- Dictionary (of host language)
- Lock/keys for suitcase
- Laptop/tablet
- Money belt/neck pouch
- Travel pack/backpack
- Watch

Clothing:

- Drip-dry, no-iron, minimal care
- Layerable clothes for weather changes
- Gloves/scarf
- Formal outfit (if needed)
- Hat
- Shirts/T-shirts
- Shoes (casual, dress, hiking)
- Socks
- Sweaters
- Pants/Bottoms
- Underwear
- Waterproof jacket/poncho

Miscellaneous:

- MP3 Player/e-book reader
- Cards/games
- Sewing kit/super glue
- Towel or washcloth
- International calling card
- Small gifts for host family
- Umbrella
- Sunglasses
- Ear plugs
- Plastic zip-lock bags
- Insect repellent
- Travel guide
- Maps
- Journal
- Small flashlight

Country Profiles

Canada

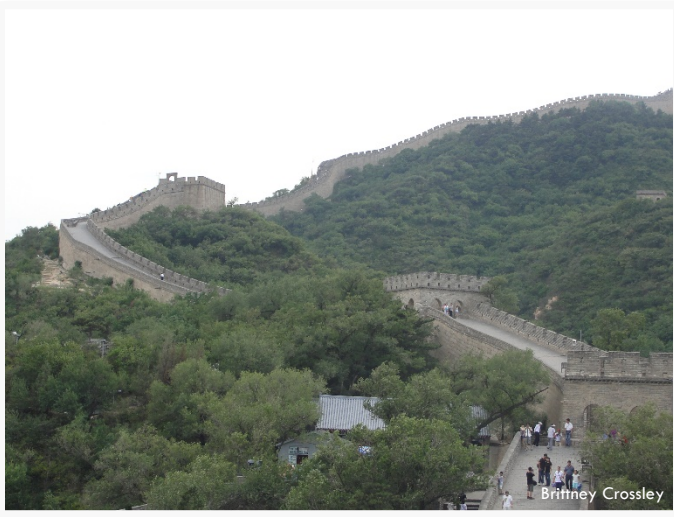
Capital: Ottawa

Population: 36.29 million

Currency: Canadian Dollar

Language: English and French

Interesting Facts: Is the world's most educated country with over half its residents holding college degrees. Canada also has more lakes than the rest of the world's lake combined.



China

Capital: Beijing

Population: 1.357 billion

Currency: Renminbi (Yuan)

Language: Mandarin Chinese

Interesting Facts: Ancient China is responsible for the creation of papermaking, gunpowder, printing, and the compass. Red is considered a symbol of happiness. All of China is in one time zone.

Costa Rica

Capital: San Jose

Population: 4.872 million

Currency: Costa Rican Colón

Languages: Spanish and English

Interesting Facts: Costa Rica is the only country in the Western Hemisphere without an army or military of any kind. There are over 50 species of hummingbirds. Costa Rica is the 2nd largest exporter of bananas in the world.



France

Capital: Paris

Population: 66.03 million

Currency: Euro

Language: French

Interesting Facts: France is the world's largest producer of wines. There are over 400 kinds of cheese made in France. The Louvre is the most visited art museum in the world.



Ireland

Capital: Dublin

Population: 4.595 million

Currency: Euro

Languages: English and Irish

Interesting Facts: Halloween traces back its origins to the Gaelic harvest festival of Samhain. The Titanic was built in Ireland. An Irishman designed the White House. The last time Ireland had snakes on it was before the Ice Age.

Italy

Capital: Rome

Population: 59.83 million

Currency: Euro

Language: Italian

Interesting Facts: Italy has the most UNESCO world heritage sites (50). San Marino and Vatican City are small, independent states located within Italy. Leonardo DaVinci and Galileo were born in Italy.





Japan

Capital: Tokyo

Population: 127.3 million

Currency: Japanese Yen

Language: Japanese

Interesting Facts: Japan is made up of 6,852 islands. Slurping your food is considered a sign that it is delicious and a compliment to the cook. Fortune cookies were first made in Kyoto in the 19th century.

Russia

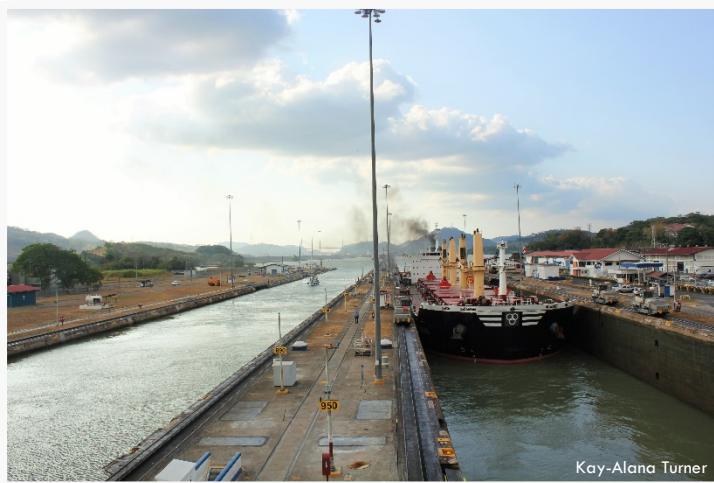
Capital: Moscow

Population: 144.3 million

Currency: Russian Ruble

Language: Russian

Interesting Facts: In terms of land area, Russia is the largest country in the world and spans nine time zones. St. Petersburg was the former capital of Russia for over 200 years and has changed names three times.



Panama

Capital: Panama City

Population: 3.864 million

Currency: USD and Panamanian balboa

Language: Spanish

Interesting Facts: Panama is the only place in the world where you can see the sun rise on the Pacific and set on the Atlantic. The Panama Canal generates 1/3 of Panama's entire economy. Panama City is the only capital city that has a rain forest within the city limits.

South Africa

Capital: Pretoria, Cape Town, Bloemfontein

Population: 52.98 million

Currency: South African Rand

Language: English, Afrikaans, Zulu, Xhosa, Tswana, Northern Sotho, Venda, Tsonga, Swati, Ndebele

Interesting Facts: Most South Africans are multilingual. The Tugela Falls are the 2nd highest waterfalls in the world. South Africa moves about 2 inches farther from South America every year as a result of continental drift.



South Korea

Capital: Seoul

Population: 50.22 million

Currency: South Korean Won

Language: Korean

Interesting Facts: There are 250 different kinds of kimchi. Koreans believe that blood-types influence personality. There are only 275 different surnames in Korea; the most popular being Kim, Park, Ji, and Song. Babies are considered one year old at birth and this continues throughout life, so if someone tells you their age is 30, they are most likely 29.

Spain

Capital: Madrid

Population: 46.77 million

Currency: Euro

Language: Spanish

Interesting Facts: Almost half of the world's olive oil is produced in Spain. Spain is a constitutional monarchy. The world's largest tomato fight takes place in Spain every year. Madrid is in the physical center of the country.





United Kingdom

Capital: London

Population: 53.01 million

Currency: British Pound

Language: English

Interesting Facts: The English consume more tea per capita than anyone else in the world (2.5 times more than the Japanese and 22 times more than the Americans or French). Big Ben is actually the name of the bell within the clock tower. There are more chickens than people.

Emergency Contact Information

Office of Study Abroad

Brittney Crossley: 409-880-7013

Emergency Contact:

LU Public Safety

409-880-8311

Mailing Address:

Office of Study Abroad

P.O. Box 10078

Lamar University

Beaumont, Tx 77710

US Embassies Contact Information:

US Embassy in Canada (Ottawa):

Tel: +1-613-688-5335

Fax: +1-613-688-3082

Website: ca.usembassy.gov

US Embassy in China (Beijing):

Tel: (86-10) 6532-3831

Fax: (86-10) 6532-4153

Email: AmCitBeijing@state.gov

US Embassy in France (Paris):

Tel: (+) 33 (1) 43-12-22-22

Fax: (+) 33 (1) 42-66-978

Email: citizeninfo@state.gov

US Embassy in Germany (Berlin):

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Fax: +43-030-8305-1215

Email: ConsBerlin@state.gov

US Embassy in Greece (Athens):

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Email: athensconsul@state.gov

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Email: reykjavikpublicaffairs@state.gov

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Tel: +353-1-668-8777

Email: ACSDublin@state.gov

US Embassy in Italy (Rome):

Tel: (+39) 06-46741

Website: Italy.usembassy.gov

US Embassy in Japan (Tokyo):

Tel: +81-3-3224-5000 / 011-81-3-3224-5000

Fax: +81-3-3505-1862 / 011-81-3-3505-1862

Email: <http://japan.usembassy.gov/e/info/tinfo-email.html>

US Embassy in Mexico (Mexico City):

Tel: (01-55) 5080-2000 / 011-52-55-5080-2000

Fax: (01-55) 5080-2834 / 011-52-55-5080-2834

Email: acsmexicocity@state.gov

US Embassy in New Zealand (Wellington):

Tel: +64-4-462-6000

Fax: +64-4-499-0490

Website: nz.usembassy.gov

US Embassy in Russia (Moscow):

Tel: +7-495-728-5000

Fax: 728-5090

Website: <http://moscow.usembassy.gov/index.html>

US Embassy in South Africa (Pretoria):

Tel: +27-12-431-4000

Fax: +27-12-342-2299

Website: <https://za.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/embassy/>

US Embassy in South Korea (Seoul):

Tel: 011-82-2-397-4114

Email: seoulinfoacs@state.gov

US Embassy in Spain (Madrid):

Tel: 1-888-407-4747 / (34) 91-587-2200

Fax: 91-587-2303

Email: askACS@state.gov

US Embassy in the UK (London):

Tel: [44] (20) 7499-9000

Fax: [44] (20) 7495-5012

Email: SCSLondon@state.gov