



**Student Handbook for
Study Abroad and Study Away
Courses**

International Education Program

[Visit Website Here](#)

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Welcome

We hope you will find the information in this handbook to be a useful tool as you prepare to travel abroad on one of Delaware Technical Community College's faculty-led study abroad courses.

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I. General Information about Study Abroad and Study Away Courses

Why Study Abroad?

Students report that studying off-campus is a life-changing, rewarding experience - but deciding whether to do so can be a huge decision! Your experience abroad can result in a new perspective, friends, educational and career goals, and a passion for different cultures. Many of today's companies conduct global business, and having interactive experience with people from diverse cultures on your resume is a great tool for competing in today's workforce.

Examine the reasons why you want to study off-campus and what you hope to gain from the experience. Do you want to?

- Explore your career field?
- See historic sites or landmarks?
- Experience a new culture?
- Rediscover your heritage?
- Practice speaking or learn to speak a foreign language?

Asking yourself these questions can help you choose the best destination and course for your goals:

- Do you understand the itinerary and the academic requirements of the course?
- How much interaction is there with the local community or colleges abroad?
- What type of accommodations will be used for housing?
- What degree of physical activity is required?

Study Abroad and Away Application and Interview Process

All Delaware Tech students who meet the eligibility requirements listed on the application and are in good academic standing may apply to participate in a faculty-led study abroad or away course. Delaware Tech faculty, staff, or individuals from the community who also meet the application requirements are also eligible to apply. Currently, all faculty-led study abroad and away courses are offered for academic credit.

All students interested in applying to these courses should contact the course faculty leader listed on the program brochure to schedule an interview. The faculty leader will use the interview as an opportunity to meet applicants and discuss course information, academic requirements and expectations, program itinerary, and risks associated with participation. In addition, the faculty leader will evaluate the student on the following:

- Academic preparedness and achievement
- Demonstrated interest in the host country and course
- Ability to participate in small groups
- Ability to exercise good judgment and maintain a good attitude
- Ability to acknowledge and adapt to group and cultural diversity
- Ability to comply with post-acceptance requirements for participation

Students who want to apply must complete the course application and study abroad/away health information form. On this form, students will be able to provide information on pre-existing conditions, prescription medications, or other health-related services required while overseas for the duration of the course.

Once students complete the application they must schedule an advising session with their campus International Education Coordinator (IEC). Advising session appointments can be made by telephone or email. The advising session ensures that each student has reviewed the program information and eligibility criteria, understands all rules and requirements, and can ask any questions regarding enrolling and participating in a study abroad course. In addition, the IEC will review information about scholarships, financial aid, international travel, passports and visas, and health insurance. Once the IEC accepts the application, they will register the student for the course and provide direction on making payments via Business Services.

Students with Disabilities: It is the student's responsibility to notify the campus disabilities support counselor, international education director, coordinator, and faculty leader if he or she requires accommodation for any disability. Accommodations available in the U.S. may differ in the host country or destination. Additional information regarding study abroad for students with disabilities can be found at Mobility International USA. [Click here](#) to access the website.

Academic Issues

Study abroad and away courses are designed to take full advantage of the unique geographical location of the site. These courses are designed and taught by Delaware Tech faculty, in cooperation with partner institutions/organizations, and offered as cultural or program-specific courses. Most study abroad courses are offered in a "hybrid" format, with part of the instruction conducted on-campus or online and the other part in-person while abroad in the host destination.

Faculty Roles: Each course is designed and facilitated by a lead faculty member who acts as the official college representative for the group. The lead faculty is responsible for overseeing the academic as well as the logistical aspects of the overall course and itinerary and is the primary resource for students regarding all academic and non-academic matters, including emergencies. The support faculty member assists the lead faculty with the academics and logistics of the course and observes for the following year.

Attendance Policy: Delaware Tech study abroad courses are intensive educational and cultural experiences. Attendance is mandatory at all scheduled events and activities. Pre-travel class times are listed on the program brochures. If a student foresees a scheduling conflict with the in-person class meeting dates or times, they should contact the faculty leader to discuss this immediately. Students who have not completed or passed course assignments at the time of travel jeopardize their ability to participate in the travel abroad portion of the course. Students are encouraged to use free time to experience the local culture in groups or through activities organized by faculty. Absence from a class or scheduled event is not acceptable.

Academic Credits and Grades: Students are encouraged to consult their advisor or department chair concerning their selection of any course offerings and the extent to which these courses satisfy individual academic requirements and transfer credits to other institutions.

Textbooks and Materials: The course faculty leader will instruct students on how to obtain and purchase required textbooks and other materials listed in the syllabus.

Evaluations: At the end of each travel program, all participants complete an online evaluation of the course. Participants are encouraged to provide honest, constructive feedback on all evaluations.

Graduating Students: For study abroad courses with travel dates departing in May or June, students will receive an “I” for the course at the end of spring semester and will be awarded their grade after travel and all coursework is completed. Note: students who need this course credit in order to graduate will not be certified to receive their diplomas, but will be able to walk in May graduation ceremonies of that respective year. After all graduation requirements are met, students will be certified as having completed all graduation requirements the following August, December, or May.

Study Abroad Travel Expense, Payments, and Refunds

Study Abroad/Away Travel Expense: The costs for Delaware Tech study abroad courses vary. The cost for a study abroad courses in addition to the tuition and registration fee is referred to as the “study abroad travel expense.” It will be listed on the student bill under that title. While there are some exceptions, the study abroad travel expense typically includes the following:

- Airfare
- Housing at the designated program facility
- Some group meals (varies by course and is noted in the itinerary)
- Academic field visits
- Cultural excursions
- Transportation within the host destination(s)

Other Expenses: The costs of study abroad often extend beyond the study abroad travel expense and tuition and registration fee. It is important for students to determine what they can afford and to budget accordingly. Some students find it helpful to have a daily or weekly budget for items not covered, including:

- Passport fees, passport photos. See fees [here](#).
- Travel visas
- Textbooks, class-related materials, notebooks, etc.
- Meals or activities not included in the itinerary
- Pre-departure medical costs (such as vaccinations)
- Toiletries and/or laundry
- Guidebooks or travel guides
- Exchange fees, ATM fees, credit card fees
- Phone and internet fees
- Souvenirs and entertainment expenses

Students should bring sufficient funds to cover personal expenses, and budget money so that they have enough for the duration their time abroad.

Withdrawal and Refunds: In cases where individual participants wish to withdraw from a scheduled course, they should note that the initial deposit is non-refundable. Students should refer to the financial information in the specific course application for further details on the refund policy.

Should personal illness or family emergency require a student to withdraw from the course prior to travel or while abroad, a written request must be submitted to the International Education Director with a complete explanation of the circumstances. (**Note:** the cost of an early return is the sole responsibility of the participant and will not be reimbursed by Delaware Tech.) Exceptions to the refund policy will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the college's legal counsel. Students who drop a course or are dismissed from the course for academic or disciplinary reasons are not entitled to a refund and may be required to reimburse any scholarship funds received.

Settlement of Accounts: Delaware Tech will not issue a grade report or transcript until all financial obligations incurred by a participant in a study abroad course are met. This includes financial obligations to the host institution or entities abroad.

Cancellation of Programs: In the event that the college cancels a program due to insufficient enrollment, participants will receive a refund limited to only the amount of the payments that have been received by Delaware Tech from a participant. The College reserves the right to cancel a program at any time due to safety concerns and other factors. It is strongly encouraged that students purchase trip cancellation insurance for the travel portion of the course. This insurance may be available to students at a discounted rate through iNext. Please see the below section for details on the College's study abroad risk assessment protocol.

Study Abroad and Away Risk Assessment Protocol

The Study Abroad Risk Assessment Advisory Council will monitor the security situation in countries where DTCC sponsors study abroad programs. Appropriate information sources for general monitoring include:

- US Department of State
- Overseas Security Advisory Council
- Centers for Disease Control

A risk assessment may be triggered by one or more of the following:

- State Department Travel Warning or Travel Alert
- Changes in State Department language that indicate increased risk to travelers
- A terrorist attack, sociopolitical changes, or physical (e.g. seismic activity, flooding) changes in the host country that indicate an increased risk to travelers
- World Health Organization (WHO) warning of a pandemic or epidemic
- Centers for Disease Control Warning Level 3 (direction to avoid non-essential travel)
- A specific and ongoing crisis situation involving faculty, staff, or students currently traveling on a study abroad program
- Decisions made by other sending entities (e.g. study abroad providers, Peace Corps)
- Recommendation by member(s) of President's Council or the International Education Committee

If a risk assessment is triggered, the process is as follows:

The International Education Director collects detailed information regarding current risks associated with travel to the host location. Included will be documentation from the following:

- Current US Department of State warnings, alerts and emergency messages

- Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC)
- Centers for Disease Control
- On-site contacts

The following are examples of additional appropriate resources that may be utilized in conducting analyses:

- State of Delaware Department of Safety and Homeland Security
- NAFSA: Association of International Educators
- FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force
- Delaware Congressional Delegation
- Local embassy
- Faculty or staff experts and/or host-country nationals on campus as available and appropriate
- Colleagues at institutions with active programs in the region
- Sources from governments of other countries
- Physicians

A written analysis evaluating potential risks and benefits of running the program is prepared by and should include:

International Education Director

- Detailed data regarding current risks associated with travel to the host location
- Program and list of students involved
- Potential risk mitigation, including any suggestions for program modifications to minimize risk, in consultation with faculty leader, OSAC, and other resources from those listed above

Faculty Leader

- Logistical information, e.g. excursion sites, method of transportation, housing, addressing how it pertains to the potential risk
- Consideration of the academic purpose of the program, including if the educational goals of the program can be achieved elsewhere
- Feedback from on-site contacts
- Program history and on-the-ground infrastructure
- Value to collaborative partners and communities

The International Education Director will present the report to the Council. The Council discusses and determines whether to recommend that the program- affiliated travel move forward or not (or continue if program travel is in progress). The Council will also vote on recommended modifications to the program. A copy of the report and recommendation will be provided to the remaining Vice Presidents for informational purposes.

Members of the council include but are not limited to:

- International Education Director
- Director of Public Safety
- Director of Strategic Communications
- Vice President for Academic Affairs (Chair)
- Vice President for Finance
- Chief Legal Counsel

- Vice President for Human Resources

The recommendation, along with suggested modifications, is then provided to the President by the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Scholarships, Financial Aid, and Fundraising

Scholarships: The majority of Delaware Tech students utilize scholarship monies to fund their study abroad experience. Available scholarships for faculty-led study abroad courses include:

- Presidential Scholarship for Study Abroad
- Global Understanding Campus Scholarships
- Susan and Anis Saliba Scholarship for Study Abroad

Students may apply for these scholarships online through the Academic Works system by logging on to the MyDTCC portal.

Financial Aid: Delaware Tech students receiving financial aid may be able to apply funds towards the cost of the study abroad course. Interested students should make an appointment with a financial aid representative at the financial aid office on their home campus.

Fundraising: Fundraising is a great way to help pay for part of the study abroad travel expense. Don't be afraid to be creative. Also, be sure to inform the faculty leader and campus IEC that you are interested in fundraising.

- Feel free to ask family and friends for fundraising contributions.
- Approach a service club (Rotary Club, Lions Club, etc.) where you or a family member is associated for contributions or sponsorship.
- Fundraising projects on-campus must be initiated through student clubs. See the respective club advisor for more information on hosting a fundraiser.

Tips for successful fundraising:

- Plan ahead and start early.
- Be polite and courteous.
- Reach out to as many people as possible.
- Suggest a specific amount to each donor.
- Tell people about the positive responses you have already received.
- Be enthusiastic. Make your passion for study abroad come through.
- Make it clear to donors how much you are personally contributing to your goal as well (working a part time job, using funds from a savings account, etc.).
- Make sure you can describe the course content and how participating will add to your educational experience. Refrain from using the word "trip" to describe the academic experience.

Student Conduct

Students are bound by and expected to follow the same norms of behavior required on the Delaware Tech campus. Students agree to adhere to all applicable standards of student conduct and academic and disciplinary rules while participating in faculty-led study abroad programs. Should a student engage in unacceptable conduct during the program abroad, the faculty leader will follow the study abroad disciplinary policy.

All study abroad program participants will be required to complete mandatory signature forms and waivers as issued by the International Education Director. Students need to understand that study abroad is an academic experience, not a vacation, and that academic responsibilities take priority over personal interests during the program. Perhaps most important, Delaware Tech students in study abroad courses serve as “cultural ambassadors” and your conduct may be seen as representative of the U.S. and of the college. While inappropriate behavior on college premises may reflect solely on the student, their individual misconduct abroad could be attributed to the entire group. All study abroad participants must abide by the laws of the program country.

It is also important to understand that study abroad programs take place in a group setting, and that group priorities take precedence over individual preferences. Students must be willing to participate in group activities and class discussions. You should expect that you will receive additional house rules at each host destination site.

Misconduct includes any behavior which jeopardizes the participant’s welfare, that of his/her fellow students, or that of the program. This includes violations of local laws, disruptive behavior, vandalism, theft, possession or use of illegal drugs, and endangering the health and safety of others. Excessive absence from course activities and a lack of cooperation are also grounds for termination from the course. Delaware Tech reserves the right to terminate the participation of any individual in a given program upon the recommendation of the faculty leader.

In all cases of termination, the participant is responsible for all expenses incurred in his/her return to the United States, and will not receive refunds for expenses paid to the college.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

Delaware Tech prohibits the use of alcohol or illegal drugs on the college premises and at college-sponsored student events. Students may not use alcohol or drugs during all required or scheduled study abroad course events, and activities, whether in country or in Delaware.

Students of drinking age in the host country should use good judgment when consuming alcohol during free time. Alcohol intoxication that may cause disruptive or destructive behavior and jeopardize health and safety will not be tolerated. Participants are subject to disciplinary action, and/or, eviction by the host institution for alcohol or drug intoxication. If evicted by the host institution or program site, Delaware Tech will terminate the student’s participation in the course and he or she is responsible for returning home at his or her own expense.

Students should remember that once out of U.S. territory he or she is bound by local and national laws. Ignorance of the law is not accepted as an excuse. Drug enforcement and punishment in some countries can be particularly severe. The possession, use, or sale of controlled substances (including marijuana) is a criminal offense in most countries. Violation of the program’s host country’s laws on drugs will result in immediate termination of participation in the program.

Air Travel Requirements

Delaware Tech faculty-led study abroad programs include a group flight, in which students travel as a group to and from the destination country with the faculty leader, who will assist with flight connections and airport procedures. Airfare is typically included in the study abroad travel expense. Flight information will always be included in the specific study abroad program information packet.

Study abroad courses that require students to travel on a group flight to the host destination may allow participants flexibility for the return flight. Students who wish to remain in country or continue with independent travel will be responsible for making any changes to their flights and paying for any additional fees and expenses. Students must inform international education director and faculty leader at the time of enrollment, and sign a release from liability waiver.

Student Housing and Accommodations

Students will be accommodated in facilities that meet the requirements of the course. The default housing option for study abroad courses is double occupancy, same-sex accommodations that include, but are not limited to, residence halls, hotels, hostels, bed and breakfasts, host families, and apartments.

International education program staff and faculty leaders will decide on appropriate student accommodations for the course during planning based on availability, budget, and safety and security. A host institution in the destination country or a third-party provider may also be involved in assigning student housing and overseeing housing-related issues.

Single occupancy accommodations may be an option for students depending on availability. In addition, in cases of non-traditional students (e.g., retirees or older participants), separate but co-located accommodations may be an option. In each option, the participant may pay an additional fee for these accommodations.

While the default option for study abroad is same-sex accommodations, participants who are married or partners can request to share accommodations. In addition, students do not have the option of changing accommodations prior to or after arrival in country. Please note that accommodations in host countries will be different compared to one's personal home in the U.S. or other accommodations you may have stayed in during personal vacations. It is important that roommates respect each other's space, study habits, and sleep patterns while abroad.

Student Complaints

The faculty leader serves as spokesperson for the group while in country. One of the faculty leader's responsibilities is to evaluate student concerns and handle complaints. Faculty leaders will communicate students' needs and desires as appropriate to the responsible party, e.g., international education director/coordinator, staff of a third-party provider or a drive. All reasonable efforts will be made to resolve student complaints regarding program logistics, including with a third-party provider or institutional partner.

II. Preparing for Departure

Passports, Visas, and Entry Requirements

Passports: Your passport is one's most important document and key to international travel while abroad. If you have never applied for a passport before, it is important to start the application process as soon as possible. Apply for a passport immediately after enrolling in the study abroad course, if not before. The average wait time is 6-8 weeks for standard processing, sometimes longer during peak travel season. Please visit the U.S. State Department [website](#) for detailed instructions on how to apply for a new or renewal passport.

If you have a valid passport, check the expiration date and make sure it meets entry requirements for your host destination. Some countries require that your passport is valid for at least six months after your arrival date.

Leave a photocopy of your passport with a family member or friend at home and bring another photocopy with you to be stored in a locked suitcase or hotel safe. In the event of passport loss, you will need to go to the nearest US Embassy or Consulate. Providing a copy of the passport will be helpful in getting a replacement to return home and expedite the replacement process.

Visas: A visa is an entry permit granted by the authorities of the countries where you will study and travel. Not all countries require visas, so it is best to check with your Faculty Leader. Please note: You will need a passport before applying for a visa and you will need to allow adequate time to apply for the visa. Application requirements and costs vary from country to country.

U.S. Department of State Travel Information

The U.S. Department of State [website](#) for students studying abroad has a wealth of information about traveling and living overseas. Both websites provide information on preparing to travel abroad and dealing with medical, financial, and legal emergencies while abroad. In addition, you can research the latest country updates, travel warnings, travel alerts, and consular information sheets issued by the U.S. Department of State.

As part of its emergency and crisis preparedness protocol, Delaware Tech registers all study abroad participants in the U.S. Department of State's [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) (STEP), a free service provided to U.S. citizens who are travelling to or living in a foreign country to better assist participants in an emergency. It is the College's policy to suspend travel to countries where a U.S. State Department Travel Warning exists. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by College stakeholders.

Medical Insurance, Prescriptions, and Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medications

Delaware Tech requires and purchases short-term travel medical insurance for all students traveling abroad in addition to personal primary insurance. This insurance will be purchased for students and is included in the study abroad travel expense. Participants will receive information on details of coverage and access to the agency's website under the College's policy.

The following chart lists the main medical-related "to-do's" to prepare for your travel experience:

To Do	Description
Contact your personal health insurance carrier to inquire about your coverage abroad.	You may find that your coverage varies once you leave U.S. borders.
Make sure all prescription and over-the-counter medications are in their original containers.	All medicine should be kept in the original containers, clearly labeled, in order to avoid potential delays through customs. If you take prescription medications, consult your doctor about the amount needed for your stay. Bring a copy of the generic prescription for emergencies. Place all essential medications in your carry-on luggage. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that people who require routine injections carry a supply of syringes and needles sufficient to last their stay abroad. Be aware that carrying needles and syringes without a prescription may be illegal in some countries, so take along a letter from your health care provider.
Schedule an appointment with your doctor to discuss your personal health in relation to your upcoming travel.	Be sure to discuss physical concerns you have about traveling, medications, precautions, vaccinations, and review your personal medical history. You may also want to discuss your sleep patterns and strategies to help you adjust to a new time zone.
Check the CDC website for your host destination's immunization requirements/recommendations.	The requirements for immunizations vary depending on the country you are visiting. The CDC lists immunization requirements and recommendations per country on their website. If the host destination does not have any extra vaccination requirements, make sure you are up-to-date on routine vaccinations.
Identify local hospitals or doctors and local emergency numbers in case of emergency.	Your health insurance carrier may also have a list of hospitals and doctors that are within their insurance plan. Requesting a copy of this list can help you select a preferred provider and save you money later on.

Health and Safety Orientation

Preparing for your overseas experience before departure is critical to the success of a program and attendance at all pre-departure sessions is required.

Health and safety orientations will be organized on each campus prior to travel. It is required that participants attend all scheduled classes and orientation sessions. The sessions allow for participants to have the opportunity to meet each other, the faculty leaders, and key faculty or staff who will be participating in the program. Specific details of the program that will be covered include: standards of conduct, air travel, safety and health requirements, site and housing facilities, international and local transportation, itinerary, packing and travel tips, plus a question and answer period.

Students will receive information sheets regarding each particular program from faculty leaders. Close to the departure date, and most programs will have a follow-up orientation meeting to address destination-related details and answer last-minute questions. Students who are not able to attend due to an excused conflict must contact the international education director well in advance of the scheduled date to schedule an alternative meeting.

Packing and Luggage

Packing for your trip will greatly depend on the country and climate you will be visiting. Your Faculty Leader will provide you with an idea of the dress code for your specific program at the on-campus orientation. It is advisable to study your itinerary and be realistic about the items you will need.

The items listed below are suggestions. Ask your faculty leader if laundry facilities or services will be available to you during your program. In addition, please take your personal needs into account when packing. Be sure that your suitcase meets weight requirements to avoid overage fees and the embarrassment of frantically removing items in the airport check-in line. It is absolutely critical that you can lift your bag. Even if it has wheels, your destination may not have reliable sidewalks and pedestrian walkways. A great test to determine if you've packed too much is to carry your bag around the block and up a flight of stairs.

Sample Packing List **

- Comfortable walking shoes
- Shower shoes/flip-flops
- 5-7 pairs of socks
- 5-7 pairs of underwear
- 1-2 pairs of shorts
- 1-2 skirts/pants
- 3-4 shirts
- 1-2 Sweaters, Sweatshirts
- 1 hat
- 1 Rain Jacket
- 1 light jacket
- Pajamas
- Swim suit

- A “special occasion” outfit (for dinners, shows, etc.)
- Backpack for day trips
- Dictionary or phrase book of the destination country
- Voltage converter and plug adapter
- Mobile charger
- Journal to record your daily activities and thoughts

When abroad, you can often find similar toiletry products to the ones you use in the United States. However, there is no guarantee you will find the exact match. Items to pack:

- Replacement pair(s) of contacts, contact solution and case, glasses
- Deodorant/antiperspirant
- Hair products: shampoo, conditioner, comb, gel, hair spray, etc.
- Soap
- Small packet of laundry detergent/stain pen
- Razor (in checked luggage)
- Feminine hygiene products
- Lotion, facial cleaners, cosmetics
- Toothbrush, floss, toothpaste, mouthwash
- Sunscreen
- Sewing kit (in checked luggage)
- Tweezers, nail clippers, scissors, nail files (in checked luggage)
- First-Aid items: Bandages, antibiotic ointment, hydrocortisone, bug repellent, aspirin, pain-killers, anti-histamines, antacids, anti-diarrhea, cold and flu medicine, motion sickness medication, etc.

***The above list is a sample list. Sometimes programs have very specific clothing requirements- check with your Faculty Leader to ensure you bring the appropriate items for your destination.*

When packing your luggage, make sure to respect the weight limits. If you plan on buying a great deal of souvenirs, make sure to compensate accordingly. Excess luggage fees are your responsibility. It is advisable not to travel with irreplaceable items such as expensive jewelry, family heirlooms, etc. Please see the TSA [website](#) for current security screening rules and regulations related to carry-on and checked luggage.

Immigration and Customs Inspections: Upon entry to any country, you must show your passport with required visas as well as any additional required entry documents. At an airport, this usually occurs just after you deplane, but before you claim your luggage. Remember that admission to the country is entirely at the discretion of the immigration officer. It is wise to be polite and to dress neatly. The immigration officer, who determines the length of stay to be authorized and stamped into your passport, will normally ask you about the purpose of your visit and how long you plan to remain in the country.

After your passport has been stamped and you have collected your luggage, you must pass through a customs inspection. You will probably receive a customs declaration form to complete prior to arrival, and customs officials will examine it when they look at your luggage. Your bags may be carefully examined, and you may be detained or asked to pay duties if there are any irregularities or violations of customs regulations. You may also be waved through with no special attention.

Currency Exchange

While abroad, it is best to have multiple ways to access money. Bring one or two credit cards, an ATM/Debit card, and cash. In addition, make two copies of your credit cards and ATM/Debit card. Leave one set of copies with a trusted friend/family member at home, and bring one set of the copies with you to be stored in the hotel safe or locked suitcase.

You may want to exchange \$100.00 prior to departure in order to have cash on hand when you arrive at your destination. U.S. currency can be exchanged for foreign currency at most U.S. banks, international airports, banks in the program country, and currency exchange kiosks.

When you exchange currency abroad and in the United States, your passport will usually be required for identification. Pay careful attention to exchange rates at different locations. Remember that you will pay a transaction fee each time you change U.S. dollars into a local currency, so it may be best to exchange several days of spending money at once. You lose money each time you change from one currency to another.

Each country has strict laws pertaining to foreign exchange. Exchanging U.S. currency with unauthorized individuals is a serious offense in most countries. Students should be wary of anyone who offers a rate for dollars higher than the official one, regardless of the reason.

In general, it is wise to exchange money at banks and not at hotels, restaurants, or retail shops, where the exchange rates are unfavorable. Banks abroad afford you the fairest exchange rate available, but you can expect to pay a commission every time you exchange currency. In some countries, the commission is based on a percentage of the amount you exchange, while in others there is a flat fee regardless of the transaction amount. Often, you can use your ATM card to withdraw money and avoid a commission charge, although your bank may charge you a withdrawal fee. Currency exchange rates can be easily found online.

Participants are never encouraged to carry large amounts of cash at one time.

Credit/Debit Cards

Credit and debit cards are accepted at most hotels, restaurants, and souvenir stores. Visa and MasterCard tend to be more widely accepted than American Express and Discover. Credit cards may not be accepted at smaller vendors, sidewalk stands, or open-air grocery markets - often the more colorful and enjoyable places to shop. You should bring some cash and have a way to access cash for shopping.

Credit cards make foreign currency transactions easy and are invaluable in financial emergencies. Do take a credit card along, but use it wisely. Interest charges can be costly, and the loss or theft of a card abroad is a serious inconvenience. Some banks charge fees for overseas credit card use. Make sure you find out what your bank's credit card and/or debit card policies are before you depart. The amount charged to your credit card bill is based on the exchange rate on the day that your bank or credit card company processes the transaction. Before you leave the U.S., sure make your bank and credit card companies know about your travel plans. Sudden changes in your account activity, such as frequent withdrawals in a foreign country, can trigger a fraud alert and cause your bank to freeze your account. You should also make a list of international contact numbers for your financial institutions, as well as your account, credit card, and ATM card numbers. Keep this information in a safe location, or with a trusted friend or relative in case any of your cards are stolen.

Transferring Money Overseas

Should you run short of cash while abroad, money can be sent from home in a variety of ways. The quickest (and perhaps most expensive) way is by Western Union. Cable transfer from your U.S. bank to a bank abroad is another safe and fast way of sending money, although it can take several days to process. In addition, U.S. Consular Services can assist you in having money transferred to you. In all cases, you will require an official form of identification (e.g., your passport) to pick up any funds.

Phone and Email

Communicating can be very important while studying abroad. It is important that you take responsibility and inform your friends and family of your safe arrival and travel to different locations while abroad. They will be anxious to hear that you've arrived safely and to hear updates from you.

Choosing in advance how to communicate will save you money and frustration while on your trip. It is best to research the country you will be visiting and determine how you will be able to access the phone and internet.

Cellular/Mobile Phones: Smart phones are used in most countries to call overseas and communicate within the country. Keep in mind that most standard U.S. cellular phones do not work in foreign countries unless it is a GSM (tri-band) enabled phone. We recommend that you learn about international cellular phones generally and cellular phone use in your destination country before you leave.

Cellular phone charges abroad can be more expensive than in the U.S. Use your phone wisely, or be prepared to pay! Check with your current cellular service provider to see if you have international service or can temporarily upgrade your service to use your current phone number. Be sure to discuss rates and fees, as they are likely to be much higher than what you pay for domestic service and have more restrictions.

To make a direct international phone call, you need:

- The country code of the country you are calling. For example, the U.S. country code is 1. The country code is dialed after the international direct dialing code and before the city/area code.
- Country and city codes can be obtained [here](#).
- The city/area code (if any) for the number you are dialing and the local number.

E-mail: You may have Internet access abroad, although Internet service in your program country may not be as prevalent as it is in the U.S. For example, Wi-Fi service may not be available everywhere. It is important not to overdo e-mail and other online communication with friends and family at home. Online communication can become a crutch, interfering with immersion in the host culture.

Time Zones: When making phone calls to or from the U.S., keep the time difference in mind, and be sure to remind friends and relatives. The time zone of every country in the world can be found online. You may find it helpful to research the time difference ahead of time and let friends and family know when it will be okay to call you.

Pre-Departure Checklist

- Make sure to follow all instructions from International Programs regarding pre-departure requirements.
- Apply for your passport if you do not have one. If you already have a passport, make sure that it is valid for at least six months past the date of your anticipated return.
- Collect documents required for your visa (if the country you are going to requires one for entry).
- Apply for and obtain the visa. Please note you must present your passport with a valid visa to International Programs no later than the scheduled pre-departure information session.
- Collect other required entry documents if needed (e.g., financial statements, program acceptance letter, vaccination record, etc.).
- Make a travel planning appointment with your health care provider. If necessary, have a physical, dental, eye examination, etc., and make sure you have enough prescription medication for your time abroad. Completed study abroad health information forms must be submitted to International Programs no later than the scheduled pre-departure information session.
- Learn about your destination country and city, including health and safety issues by reading all information provided by International Programs and attending the mandatory pre-departure information session.
- Make sure you understand what your health insurance plan covers and how it works.
- Consider purchasing insurance for personal liability, property loss, trip cancellation, etc.
- Photocopy important documents such as your passport and itinerary and provide to family members/emergency contacts. Keep copies with you, but separate from your original documents.
- Bring a list of international contact numbers for your bank and your credit card company.
- Exchange \$100 for the currency of your program country before you depart. Make sure you have credit/debit cards, phone cards, etc., that you are planning to use. Have a back-up plan in case your debit/credit cards do not work in your host country.
- Make a communication plan with your family and friends for arrival and during your time abroad.
- Take this handbook with you.

III. Health and Safety

Jet Lag

Jet lag refers to the physical and mental effects the body suffers when traveling rapidly across time zones and the resulting disruption of the traveler’s normal sleep-wake cycle. As a result, the traveler may experience indigestion, daytime sleepiness, headache, changes in blood pressure, fatigue, and poor concentration. Symptoms typically increase with the number of time zones crossed. Things you can do to combat jet lag are:

- Simulate your schedule before you leave
- Stay hydrated
- Move around while on board the plane
- Assimilate to the host country’s schedule when you get there (don’t go to sleep early)
- Avoid sleep distractions or interruptions

Food and Water Safety

Be careful when choosing foods to eat. In areas of the world where hygiene and sanitation are poor, fresh fruit and vegetables should always be selected with care and should be properly rinsed with clean water before eating, if they can be eaten without peeling, and eat only fruit that you have peeled yourself. Avoid unpasteurized milk and milk products such as cheese. For further resources, please visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention [website](#).

Personal Safety and Responsibility

As a traveler, your safety and security depends to a large degree upon being prepared and exercising situational awareness in new and unfamiliar surroundings. The host destination you are traveling to may have a higher or lower level of crime than your local area in the United States. It is important to take an active role in ensuring your safety. Here are some essential guidelines to follow:

Be aware of how others will perceive you.	Try not to make yourself conspicuous by dress, speech, behavior, expensive personal accessories, or careless behavior.
Leave valuables at home.	Do not take or wear expensive and/or flashy jewelry during your travel. Upon arrival in your destination country, make sure all official documents and valuables are safely secured.
Become familiar with your local surroundings.	Become familiar with the area where your accommodation is located, including surrounding buildings, streets, alleys, businesses, and public spaces. Do not leave the door to your room propped open when talking with friends, and always keep it locked.
Always be aware of your surroundings and who is near you.	Watch out for pick-pockets. Do not keep your wallet in a back pocket or carry a purse with easily accessible zippers. Looking lost and confused can make you an easy target. Be aware of suspicious persons loitering around residences or instructional facilities, or anyone following you.
Only use safe modes of transportation.	Do not hitchhike, use non-official taxis, or accept/share rides with strangers.

Avoid crowds, protests, rallies, or any potentially volatile situations.	If you witness or suspect there is public unrest, avoid it when possible and move to a safer location. Be aware of your surroundings when in places where Americans are known to congregate.
Keep informed of local news and events.	Read local newspapers and stay connected. Most hotels have at least one channel in English, or you can check local news online.
Never walk alone – bring a buddy.	While traveling in a large group isn't advised, being alone isn't either – especially at night. Avoid short cuts, dark alleys, deserted areas, and poorly lit streets. Be careful when using ATMs on the street and avoid using them in isolated places, at night, or at times when you are likely to be the only person around.
Do not impair your judgment because of excessive consumption of alcohol, and do not use illegal drugs.	Don't provide information regarding yourself or your fellow students to strangers or tourists you meet in-country. Be cautious when asked personal questions from strangers, and do not bring strangers back to your residence or hotel- even the lobby!
Let your faculty leader know about your plans.	Keep faculty informed of your free-time plans. If something goes wrong, they will at least have a general idea of your planned destination.
Don't carry items or luggage for anyone else.	The luggage may contain drugs, weapons, and/or other illicit items and you may bear the consequences if they are found in your possession.

Local Laws: As the U.S. Department of States advises, “obey the local laws of the country you’re visiting.” Many of the legal protections you may take for granted are left behind when you leave the U.S. Avoid involvement with drugs and all other illegal substances. Buying or carrying even small amounts of drugs can result in your arrest. Drug laws vary, but in many countries they are extremely severe, regardless of whether the drug in your possession is for personal use or for sale to others. Bail provisions such as those in the U.S. are rare in many countries, and pretrial detention without bail is not uncommon.

The principle of “innocent until proven guilty” is not necessarily a tenet of legal systems abroad. Bail is often not granted for drug-trafficking cases. Pre-trial detention, often in solitary confinement, can last for months. Many countries do not provide a jury trial, and in some cases you may not even be present at your trial. You could be in a country where prison and law enforcement officials do not speak English, the significance of which you may not fully appreciate until you are confined and feeling helpless.

Medical Issues and Emergencies

Delaware Tech has a medical policy and protocol in place that faculty will follow when students become ill on a faculty-led study abroad course. Delaware Tech employees are not medical professionals, and cannot recommend or prescribe treatments to study abroad participants. Participants who feel ill will be given the following options:

1. Rest for a determined time.
2. See a doctor/visit a clinic.
3. Go to the pharmacy.
4. Go to a hospital.

If there is a medical emergency or your life is thought to be in danger, 911 or the equivalent emergency medical services will be called immediately. When visiting a hospital or doctor's office abroad, be sure to expect to pay for the service when rendered. Filing insurance claims is solely the participant's responsibility. It is recommended that participants use their primary insurance first and confirm they have the necessary documents from the visit to file with the insurance carrier.

Sexual Health

Many sexually transmitted infections and diseases (STDs such HIV/AIDS, gonorrhea, hepatitis, herpes, etc.) are primarily contracted through unsafe sexual activity. Everything you already know about sexually transmitted diseases and how they are contracted is as true overseas as it is at home.

You can educate yourself and be prepared before going abroad by reviewing the following online resources. Click the titles to access the website:

- [CDC Control and Prevention of STDs](#)
- [CDC Sexual Health](#)
- [CDC Women's Health](#)
- [CDC Sexual Violence](#)

U.S. Embassies and Consulates

U.S. Embassies and Consulates exist to represent the interests of the United States and to provide assistance to U.S. citizens while traveling or living abroad, including providing information about social and political events, health and safety concerns, and educational and cultural affairs. Embassy and consular personnel know the national government, local governments, and other relevant resources in the host destination.

If you are a U.S. citizen and encounter serious social, political, health, or economic problems, the embassy and/or consulate can offer limited assistance. For U.S. citizens, emergency assistance is available through the Department of State's Office of American Citizens Services and Crisis Management. Consular officials are available for non-emergency and emergency assistance 24 hours a day, and can assist with:

- Lost or stolen passports
- Death of a U.S. citizen abroad
- Obtaining medical care
- Arrest/detention of a U.S. citizen abroad
- Providing a list of local English-speaking attorneys
- Providing help for U.S. victims of crimes overseas
- Explaining the local criminal justice process and obtaining information about your case

Adjusting to a New Culture

Setting Expectations

Immersion in a foreign culture forces one to challenge his or her own beliefs and to look at the world in new ways, and can be a powerful, eye-opening experience! However, it may also include frustrating experiences such as homesickness, lost luggage, or getting lost. You can prepare to make the most of your time abroad by following a few suggestions:

- **Prepare for the Unexpected:** Review suggestions for personal safety abroad and plan what to do in the event of lost luggage, a robbery, illness, etc. The faculty leader will gladly assist with emergencies; however, take the time to make sure you know how to get help in an emergency.
- **Expect the Unusual:** Every aspect of life - food, housing, weather, friends, and the language - may be different from your expectations. Look at those differences as exciting learning experiences, rather than hurdles or frustrations. Remember that culture is often like an iceberg- you can only see the top layer when additional traditions and reasoning exist underneath.
- **Assume Responsibility:** Learning how to solve problems independently is a skill which is valued throughout life. From the earliest stages of preparation, assume responsibility for your actions and requirements. When problems come up, look for steps to be helpful and supportive of the group.

In addition, it is expected that students participating on Delaware Tech study abroad courses:

- Make safe decisions
- Listen and follow instructions of faculty at all times
- Are on-time and accountable for your own actions
- Are observant and respectful of the host culture and fellow participants
- Are adaptable, flexible, and considerate of others
- Consider group needs before individual needs
- Think about the “big picture” in terms of the experience
- Look beyond the surface to explore the host culture

Culture Shock and Fitting In

While abroad, you will experience many differences (big and small) in your daily routine. Being away from your friends and family, adjusting to the climate, cuisine, culture, and learning a new language can trigger stress and anxiety. Depending on the details of your course, you will be exposed to different levels of cultural immersion and will thus experience varying levels culture shock.

Culture shock can be mitigated by following the below recommendations:

- **Learn key phrases in the local language.**
- **Communicate with home and make friends with students** on your course.
- **View culture shock as a positive growing experience.**
- **Expect to feel frustrated or sad.** You may have a frustrating experience communicating or finding things familiar to you. Being in a different country can mean an entirely different lifestyle. This frustration and homesickness is a normal part of adjustment.
- **Understand that your habits and routine in the United States may not apply to your new environment.** Traveling in a group requires patience and understanding. Review your itinerary each day to know what to expect in terms of travel time, meals, and free time.

IV. Returning Home

Reverse Culture Shock and Sharing Your Experience

Just as you experienced culture shock when you traveled abroad, you can expect to experience similar feelings when you return to your daily life in the United States. You may come home from your study abroad course wanting to share your new experiences and knowledge. You might find friends and family may not be as excited and interested in your stories from abroad. You may come home to find that life has gone on without you, things have changed, or **you** have changed. Reverse culture shock is commonly experienced in the following areas:

- Food
- Language
- Entertainment (TV, movies, magazines)
- Relating to friends and family back home
- Questioning your own cultural norms
- Wanting to share your experience

You can access resources and articles regarding reverse culture shock to help you adjust on the “Life after Study Abroad” [website](#). Also, try the following to stay connected with your experience:

- Attend the Returnee Session- Where Do I Go From Here? Making the Most of Your Study Abroad Experience” to learn how to feature study abroad in your resume and job interview process!
- Volunteer on campus for the Global Understanding Series and International Education Fundraisers. Study abroad alumni volunteers are needed for the study abroad fairs in October and January.
- Enter your photos to win in the International Education Week Photo Contest! Make a photo album or scrap book with pictures, museum tickets, and mementos you picked up along the way.
- Keep in touch with your instructors and fellow students from your course. Reflecting on experiences with your new friends can prevent you from feeling isolated about your study abroad experience.
- Write a summary of how study abroad has shaped you as an individual. This summary can be used when applying to a 4-year institution and beyond.
- Consider going abroad again. There are additional short-term and semester-long programs you can explore down the road as you further your education. Contact your campus IEC for further information.

Fulfilling Scholarship Commitments

In exchange for scholarships, recipients agree to complete a determined number of hours of volunteer service. Opportunities to fulfill this requirement include:

- Study Abroad Fairs (mid-October)
- Campus Fundraisers for Study Abroad Scholarships:
 - Stanton/Wilmington, Georgetown: 30 Prizes, 30 Days (November)
 - Dover: Chocolate Lovers 5k (February)
- Global Understanding Series: Postcards from Abroad, help with event execution
- Other speaking engagements as requested

The campus IEC will contact scholarship recipients to schedule volunteer service. Contact your campus IEC if you have a conflict with a volunteer request or need additional hours.