

CONGRATULATIONS!

You are about to embark on an adventure guaranteed to change your life. Each year, more and more WMU students study abroad, and we continue to be excited for each and every one. By choosing to study abroad, you have shown your desire to experience a culture completely different from your own. In this upcoming semester, you'll have the opportunity to see many places and meet a variety of new people. Take full advantage of this opportunity and experience all you can!

This handbook is a collection of resources. It will provide you with useful information for planning and spending your time abroad, and we urge you to read it carefully. We strongly recommend you use this collection and also consult other recommended resources in preparation for your study abroad. Talk with students who have already studied abroad as well as natives of your respective host country. Acquaint yourself with current issues in the part of the world you will be visiting. Read books by the country's native authors. Listen to the traditional music. In other words, BE INFORMED.

Remember, *accept.* Do not *expect.* You will naturally compare the country you visit to the United States, but do not be judgmental. Life in other parts of the world is not necessarily better or worse than life here: it's just *different.*

Enjoy your time abroad and your travels!

-Your WMU Study Abroad Office

Table of Contents

Student Responsibilities Checklist	1
Stages in the Cultural Adjustment Process	3
Culture Shock	4
Intensity Factors	5
Cultural Conflict Resolution Styles	6
Anticipation and Expectation Exercise	12
Living and Traveling Abroad Safely	15
Health and Safety Information	19
LGBT Resources	21
Time Saving Tips	23
Helpful websites	24
What can I do when I return?	25
Statement of Responsibility	26

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES CHECKLIST

WMU Study Abroad, Western Michigan University | Kalamazoo MI 49008-5245 USA | (269) 387-5890

Diether H. Haenicke Institute for Global Education

The completion of the following items are your responsibility as per your Program Agreement. WMU Study Abroad is available to address your concerns; however, it is up to you to complete these tasks.

AFTER ACCEPTANCE

☐ **1. PASSPORT, VISAS & AIRFARE**

If you don't already have a passport, APPLY. Processing can take six to eight weeks, though expedited service is available at an extra charge. Passport information: http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html. Apply for a student visa if one is required for your host country(ies). (NOTE: You are responsible for obtaining your student visa within the appropriate time frame. For the most up-to-date information on visas for your host country, visit http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa_1750.html). If you know the dates of your study abroad program and have received an acceptance letter from your host institution, you may want to buy your tickets—or, at least begin to investigate your options.

☐ **2. HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSULTATION**

Schedule an appointment with your physician or the Sindecuse Health Center at least six to eight weeks prior to departure to receive any recommended/required immunizations and medications for the country(ies) in which you will be traveling. Sindecuse offers individual travel consultations as well as important information. Visit http://www.wmich.edu/shc/clinic/travelimmunize.htm for instructions on how to schedule your appointment and documents required for your appointment. WMU Study Abroad does not provide health information.

☐ **3. COMPLETE FINANCIAL AID FORM (Financial Aid Recipients Only)**

Please visit the Financial Aid website for more information: http://www.wmich.edu/finaid/undergrad/study-abroad.html

Complete a new direct deposit form (revised in 2010 and available on GoWMU portal) in order to receive electronic refunds into your personal bank account.

For WMU programs, if you receive financial aid, please make an appointment with an advisor in the Student Financial Aid office at (269) 387-6000 to process your aid for study abroad. WMU study abroad program budgets are available on WMU Study Abroad website: www.wmich.edu/studyabroad.

For Non-WMU programs, schedule an appointment with a study abroad specialist to complete a financial aid budget prior to meeting with your financial aid advisor. Bring all cost information with you to this appointment, including estimated cost of airfare. Complete a Single Student Financial Aid Agreement.

☐ **4. DROP ANY NON-STUDY ABROAD COURSES** for which you are currently registered during the semester(s) of study abroad. In addition, make sure that your account is free of any "holds" that could prevent the study abroad specialist from completing your registration.

☐ **5. REGISTER WITH THE U.S. EMBASSY**

We recommend that you register with the U.S. Embassy in the country or countries in which you are studying. For more information, go to: https://travelregistration.state.gov.

☐ **6. SUBMIT FINAL MATERIALS**

If you do not submit these materials, you will not be registered for study abroad at WMU.

- ☐ Submit Study Abroad Commitment Form
- ☐ Copy of the first page of your passport (with clear photo and passport number)
- ☐ Copy of your travel itinerary (departure from/return to the U.S.)
- ☐ Copy of your acceptance letter from host university or study abroad provider
- ☐ Single Student Financial Aid Agreement (Non-WMU program only)

☐ **7. ATTEND MANDATORY PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION**

You are required to attend the group Pre-Departure Orientation(s) as specified by the WMU Study Abroad office and the faculty director of your program. Dates of orientation session(s):

_____.

DURING STUDY ABROAD

☐ **8. CONTACT VERIFICATION FORM**

Within two weeks of the start date of your classes abroad for fall or spring semesters or within one week of the start date for summer I or II you must complete this form or submit the information in writing via fax, e-mail. The online form can be accessed here: www.wmich.edu/studyabroad/forms/contactverification.html.

☐ **9. COURSE PRE-APPROVALS (if applicable)**

If you need to get approvals for additional or alternative courses, please log back into your online application platform at www.international.wmich.edu/cms/appsystem/ and e-mail the appropriate advisor(s) with your ID, application ID, and link (at bottom of course pre-approval page) to assign new approvals.

☐ **10. CREDIT CHANGE FORM (if applicable)**

You will need to maintain the equivalent of full-time student status as defined in the WMU Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs for the duration of the study abroad program (unless special permission is granted) or the minimum number of credits specified for a short-term program. You must contact your study abroad specialist when your enrolled credit hours fall below full-time student status. Failure to maintain full-time status or complete a full load of coursework may affect your financial aid package at WMU.

If you need to change how your credits will be transferred (i.e. from graded to credit/no credit) only permissible with ELECTIVE courses that will NOT count for WMU major, minor, or general education requirements), you must complete this form within two weeks of the start date _____of your classes abroad for fall or spring semesters or within one week of the start date _____for summer I or II. You may also submit the required information in writing via fax, e-mail, postal mail. The online form can be accessed here: www.wmich.edu/studyabroad/forms/creditchange.html.

☐ **11. REGISTRATION FOR UPCOMING CLASSES**

It is your responsibility to register for the WMU classes you want to take during the semester following your return from your study abroad program. Register online at GoWMU.

☐ **12. MAINTAIN WMU E-MAIL ACCOUNT**

While abroad you must check your WMU e-mail account a minimum of three times per week so WMU Study Abroad can reach you with important announcements while you are overseas.

UPON RETURN

☐ **13. TRANSCRIPT**

Upon your return, the sponsoring/host institution must submit an official transcript to the WMU Study Abroad office. It is your responsibility to ensure that the courses for which you receive credit have been approved for WMU equivalency in the online *Course Pre-Approval Form* (which you should have completed prior to departure). Courses taken without prior approval will transfer as graded, elective WMU credit. If you secure course approval during your stay abroad, you must inform WMU Study Abroad. Course approval cannot be obtained upon your return. *Note: A transcript from a host institution is not necessary for short-term faculty-led programs that have WMU course numbers*.

The official transcript from the sponsoring/host institution must indicate a grade for every course, even courses that will count for credit/no credit (CR/NC). Any course appearing on the transcript without a grade will not transfer to WMU.

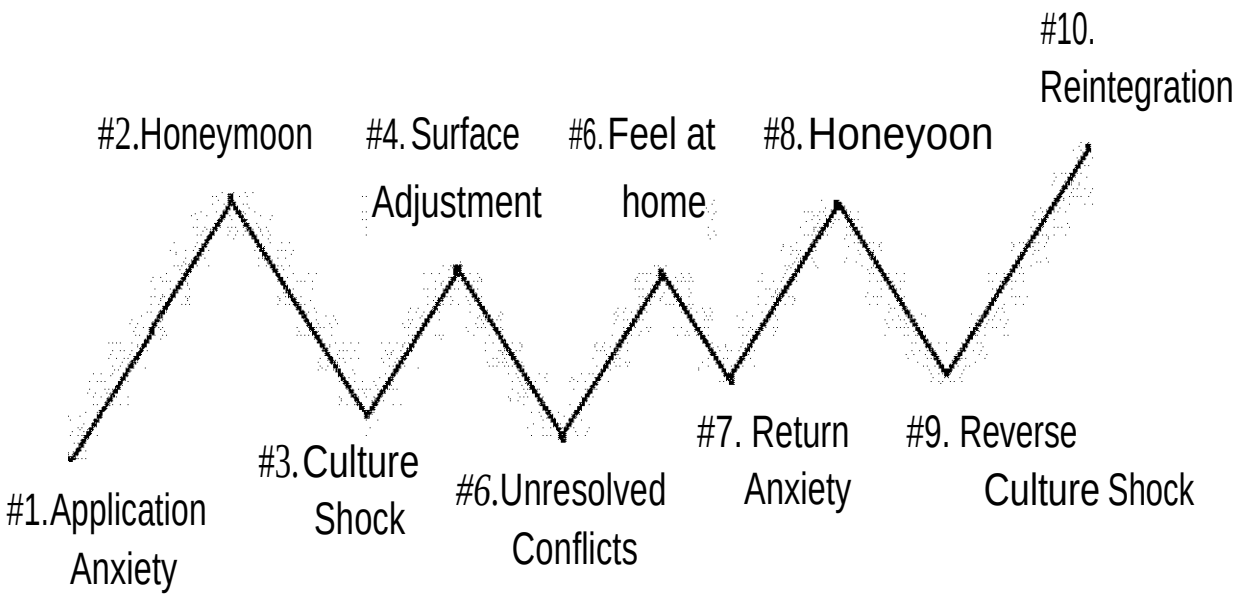
☐ **14. EVALUATION FORM**

This form must be submitted to the WMU Study Abroad office before we can process your grades. It can be accessed online at www.wmich.edu/studyabroad/forms/evaluation.pdf.

☐ **15. SCHOLARSHIP (if applicable)**

Complete scholarship requirements.

Stages in the Cultural Adjustment Process:



Culture Shock: Process of Cultural Adjustment

The process of cultural adjustment goes through various stages and at different rates for people. Becoming completely bilingual and bicultural does not happen overnight; it is a long, on-going process.

Stage	Situation	Approaches	Reactions
Honeymoon	First contact with the new culture	Observe, use preconceptions, stereotypes to understand the new culture.	Excitement; curiosity; slight anxiety.
Initial Confrontation	First intensive interaction with the culture, must solve some basic survival problems.	Respond behaviorally as one would in own culture, solve problems in familiar ways.	Surprise and confusion; concern that we don't have an answer for new problems; can't understand why our own behavior doesn't produce the desired results; puzzled about others behavior.
Adjustment Crisis	Ongoing confrontation with the new culture; problems intensify.	Respond now with a mix of old and new ways of doing things; some tentative experimentation with new behaviors.	Becoming judgmental about new culture; feelings of anxiety, embarrassment, frustration, anger; confusion about own identity.
Recovery	Accommodation with the new culture replaces confrontation; sense of belonging to culture emerges.	Creative use of a variety coping strategies (see above) to help one function effectively.	Regain confidence; feeling that the culture is understandable; very positive sense of personal accomplishment; enjoy many aspects of this culture.

Coping Strategy Chart

The following coping strategies may help you accommodate to the culture:

Coping Strategy	Effective Form	Ineffective Form
Avoidance	Temporary, occasional withdrawal to overcome "cultural fatigue."	Frequent or complete withdrawal; no interaction with the culture.
Participation	Working to learn the ways of the culture (assertive behavior).	Fighting against the culture (aggressive behavior).
Utilizing Resources	Using resources to promote learning and self-reliance.	Becoming totally dependent on resources.
Utilizing Stereotypes	Using only as tentative guide to the culture; constantly challenging them.	Using as a complete guide to the culture; never testing them.
Studying the Culture	Striving to acquire cultural insights; learning new perspectives.	Fitting new culture into own framework; rejecting new insights, perspectives.
Utilizing the Culture	Developing effective coping strategies; enlarging skills; maintaining own identity.	"Going native" - totally adopting the culture as one's own; losing own identity. Most cultures don't want you to "go native" - they want you to learn and respect their culture.

INTENSITY FACTORS

Issues that can make the experience in a new culture more intense:

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES: The degree of actual difference between two cultures and how negatively the sojourner evaluates those differences influences the sojourner's attitude and the ability to adapt.

ETHNOCENTRISM: The more ethnocentric the sojourner is, the more difficulty he or she will have in accepting the other culture, and, conversely, the less accepting of difference the host culture is – the more ethnocentric it is – the more difficult it will be to become engaged with natives of the culture.

LANGUAGE: The less language ability one has and the more essential language is to functioning well in the host culture, the more difficult it will be to function in the culture.

CULTURAL IMMERSION: The more the sojourner is immersed in the culture, the high the anxiety.

PRIOR INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCE: If this is the first time the sojourner has been out of his or her own culture, the intensity of the experience will be higher.

EXPECTATIONS: If the sojourner's expectations are unrealistically positive – disappointment can be a serious factor.

VISIBILITY AND INVISIBILITY: Being physically different from the host nationals and thus being very visible can make the experience more intense. Conversely, having to keep parts of one's identity, such as homosexual, hidden, can also increase the intensity.

STATUS: Feeling that one is not getting appropriate respect can raise the intensity. Conversely, receiving attention that does not seem warranted is equally distressing.

POWER AND CONTROL: When sojourners feel they have no power and control in intercultural situations, especially over their own circumstances, the intensity of the experience rises. This consistently emerges from the research as a major problem.

Source: Paige, R. Michael. "On the Nature of Intercultural Experience and Intercultural Education, in Education for the Intercultural Experience (Michael Paige, Ed.) Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press. Inc., 1993

Figure 2
Direct/Indirect Conflict Style

Direct Conflict Style Patterns	Indirect Conflict Style Patterns
Meaning "inside" the verbal message Direct culture patterns focus attention on the words that people use (the verbal message), as the primary p[lace in which individual's interpret what one another actually means. In direct culture systems, it is important to verbalize what you want or need to the other person.	**Meaning "outside" the verbal message** Indirect cultures determine what someone means in terms of what is communicated "outside" the verbal message. For example, paying close attention to nonverbal behavior and saying what is expected in the situation rather than what you really believe are common strategies in direct cultural systems. In indirect cultures, words are more often used to meet social or situational expectations and less to communicate what you actually believe or want.
Precise, explicit language use Direct culture patterns for dealing with substantive disagreements place greater emphasis on using precise and explicit language. It is the responsibility of the person speaking to clear up misunderstanding or confusion when talking about ares of disagreement. In this sense verbal fluency is associated with linguistic precision in word choice.	**Ambiguity and vagueness in language use** Indirect culture patterns place greater emphasis on using ambiguity and vagueness in language to communicate disagreements. Such indirect language strategies include greater use of analogies, stories, and metaphors compare to more technical and precise language used by direct cultures. Indirect cultures expect the *listener,* not the speaker, to assume responsibility for clearing up misunderstandings or confusion when discussing disagreements
Reliance on face-to-face resolution of disagreements Direct cultures are most comfortable with face-to-face interaction between the parties. From this viewpoint, when both parties can "sit down together," a process of conflict resolution is initiated and maintained.	**Reliance on third parties for resolution of disagreements** Indirect cultures place greater reliance on third parties to mediate a conflict situation between individuals. From an indirect culture perspective, meeting face-to-face with the other person increases discomfort by appearing too confrontational and therefore, may actually escalate tensions.
Speaking your mind Direct culture systems view progress in resolving conflict in terms of how clearly and accurately individuals state their own goals, needs and concerns. From a direct culture perspective, "if you do not tell me what you want, how can we ever begin to make progress in resolving this conflict situation?"	**Discretion in voicing goals** Indirect cultures emphasize discretion and caution in voicing goals, needs, and concerns for fear that the act of verbalizing these differences may fracture the harmony that needs to be maintained throughout a conflict situation .

"Say what you mean and mean what you say" ***American Proverb***



"Nothing done with intelligence is done without speech" ***Greek Proverb***

Figure 2 Continued

Direct Conflict Style Patterns	Indirect Conflict Style Patterns
Verbally assert difference of opinion Direct cultures value verbally assertive strategies for voicing disagreements. Further, direct culture systems positively evaluate verbal defense of a position or opinion in the face of opposition.	**"Talk around" disagreements** Indirect cultures are less comfortable with verbally assertive strategies and therefore value strategies that "talk around" disagreements. When faced with verbal confrontation, indirect culture systems tend to verbally "yield" in order to maintain relational harmony
Persuasion through reasoned argument Direct cultures base influence on the speaker's ability to support his/her position through logically ordered arguments that are based on factual evidence. With direct cultures, it is felt that the "facts can speak for themselves." In this sense, direct cultures employ a more "linear" form of argument in which major points are supported with evidence that leads logically to specific recommendations.	**Persuasion through facework** Indirect cultures frame logical arguments and evidence in terms of "facework"—publicly supporting the reputation of the other party. Thus, influence is wielded in indirect cultures relationally and incrementally rather than by overtly presenting "factual" evidence. Indirect cultures tend to use a "nonlinear" form of argument, whereby major points may be hinted at, evidence suggested, relational connections reinforced, and conclusions "adjusted" depending on the response of the other party.
Substantive disagreement focus Direct cultures are particularly sensitive to dealing with substantive disagreements through a problem-solving process in which the basic issue or problem articulated, causes are indentified, solutions generated and the "best" solution selected based on an agreed upon set of criteria. Compromise on substantive disagreements is a common solution in direct culture problem-solving efforts.	**Relationship repair focus** Indirect cultures facilitate resolution of substantive disagreements through an emphasis on relational repair strategies. This is often done, for example by reviewing and reinforcing the cooperative history between the disputing parties and taking on deeper relational commitments that involve increased obligation toward on another.

"It is good to know the truth, but it is better to speak of palm trees"
Arab Proverb



"Hear one and understand ten." Japanese Proverb

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Four Conflict Styles

What are the strengths and perceived weaknesses of the Discussion, Engagement, Accommodation and Dynamic intercultural conflict styles? Below are listed "strengths" and "weaknesses" of each conflict style. The "strengths" reflect the viewpoint of the conflict style "insider." That is, the strengths represent self-perceived characteristics. The "weaknesses" reflect perspective of the "outsider," people whose intercultural conflict style is different from the style being described.

Discussion Conflict Style *Self-Perceived Strengths:* ❖ Confronts problems ❖ Elaborates arguments ❖ Maintains Calm Atmosphere *Weaknesses as Perceived by Other Styles:* ❖ Difficulty in reading "between the lines" ❖ Appears logical but unfeeling ❖ Appears uncomfortable with emotional arguments	**Engagement Conflict Style** *Self- Perceived Strengths:* ❖ Provides detailed explanations, instructions & information ❖ Expresses opinions ❖ Shows feeling *Weaknesses as Perceived by Other Styles:* ❖ Appears unconcerned with the views & feelings of others ❖ Appears Dominating & rude ❖ Appears uncomfortable with viewpoints that are separated from emotion
Accommodation Conflict Style *Self Perceived Strengths:* ❖ Considers alternative meanings to ambiguous messages ❖ Able to control emotional outburst ❖ Sensitive to feelings of the other party *Weaknesses as Perceived by Other Styles:* ❖ Difficulty in voicing own opinion ❖ Appears uncommitted & dishonest ❖ Difficulty in providing elaborated explanations	**Dynamic Conflict Style** *Self- Perceived Strengths:* ❖ Uses third parties to gather information and resolve conflicts ❖ Skilled at observing changes in nonverbal behavior ❖ Comfortable with strong emotional displays *Weaknesses as Perceived by Other Styles:* ❖ Rarely "gets to the point" ❖ Appears unreasonable and devious ❖ Appears "too emotional"

Cultural Conflict Resolution Styles

"Understanding cultural differences is the first step in effectively resolving conflicts."



Figure 4 presents a summary of how disagreements are managed and emotions expressed across cultures based on intercultural research and writings. This information is presented with the intent to stimulate discussion rather than rigidly categorize particular cultural systems in terms of the four conflict styles. Further research is currently underway that specifically examines cultural differences in direct and indirect approaches and emotionally expressive and emotionally restrained styles for resolving conflicts across particular cultural communities.

Cultural Difference in Conflict Style

The identified regions and countries presented in Figure 4 are not intended to be comprehensive. Selected countries within specific regions are highlighted only. It should be noted tht some regions are more represented in the literature while other regions (e.g., Africa) are far less examined in terms of the two dimensions of direct/indirect and emotionally expressive/restrained cultural patterns. In general, the following regional cultural differences have been indentified in previous literature. However, specific countries and specific ethnic groups within countries may evidence different conflict resolution styles than indicated below.

- *North American* (United States, Canada) cultural patterns are predominantly within Discussion style.
- *European* patterns are located in the Discussion style and the Engagement style.
- *Central and Latin American* cultural patterns are predominantly found within the Accommodation style and the Engagement style.
- *Asian* cultural patterns are found within the Accommodation style (e.g. Japan, Cambodia), Dynamic or Discussion style (e.g. Pakistan, India), and Engagement style (e.g. Russian).
- *Arab Middle East* cultural patterns are primarily located within the dynamic style while Israeli cultural patterns are characteristic of the Engagement style.
- *African* cultural patterns are found in the Engagement style, Accomodation style, and the Dynamic style. However, some African cultural groups are more Discussion style, depending on the influence of colonization.

Cultural Variability

Intercultural conflict resolution style differences between and within regions arise due to a number of factors including: (1) whether specific cultural communities have historically remained fairly homogenous and isolated from other cultures, (2) the influence of colonization and/or other culture contact, and (3) the historical and recent immigration of culturally different groups. For example, the relatively greater historical influence of African cultural patterns in the Caribbean compared to Central and Latin American has resulted in Caribbean countries such as Cuba developing more direct and emotionally expressive approach to resolving conflict (Engagement style) compared, for instance, to Mexico which has maintained a more indirect and emotionally restrained approach (Accommodation style). This is certainly applicable to a great variety of cultures within the African continent, thus accounting for a tremendous range of cultural conflict resolution styles within that region of the world.

Figure 4

Cultural Patterns across Conflict Styles

Discussion Style

- **North America**
  e.g., United States (European American), Canada
- **Europe**
  e.g., Mexico, Costa Rica, Peru
- **Asia Pacific**
  e.g., Australia, New Zealand

Engagement Style

- **North America**
  e.g., United Stated (African American)
  (African American)
- **Europe**
  e.g., France, Greece, Italy, Spain
- **Central &Latin America**
  e.g., Cuba, Puerto Rico
- **Asia**
  e.g. Russia
- **Middle East**
  e.g., Israel

Accommodation Style

- **North America**
  e.g., Native American
- **Latin America**
  e.g., Mexico, Costa Rica, Peru
- **Asia**
  e.g., China, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia

Dynamic Style

- **Arab Middle East**
  e.g., Kuwait, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon
- **Asia**
  e.g., Pakistan

"All cultural patterns exist in all cultures-but some are preferred more than others."



Intercultural Conflict Styles

The intercultural conflict style model presented earlier identifies four cross cultural conflict resolution styles.

Discussion style*.* The *Discussion style* describes an approach to conflict resolution that emphasizes a verbally direct approach for dealing with disagreements and a more emotionally restrained or controlled manner for communicating with one another. The *Discussion style* emphasizes precision in language use and generally follows the maxim, "say what you mean and mean what you say." Further, this style views more intense expressions of emotion as potentially dangerous and generally inhibitory toward "effective" conflict resolution processes. Talking about the disagreement directly to one another is a comfortable approach for this style, yes this "discussion" should be based on objective facts if possible and each person should be cautious in injecting their own personal feelings into the process.

Engagement Style*.* The *Engagement* style emphasizes a verbally direct and confrontational approach toward resolving conflict that is accompanied by an emotionally expressive demeanor. This style views the overall sincerity of each person toward resolving disagreements as grounded in the concern that is demonstrated through more intense, verbal and nonverbal expression of emotion. This style is more comfortable than the *Discussion* style with personal confrontation between the parties where disagreements are directly addressed and emotion is "put on the table."

Accommodation **Style**. The *Accommodation* style emphasizes an indirect approach for dealing with areas of disagreement and a more emotionally restrained or controlled manner for dealing with each party's emotional response to conflict. This style emphasizes ambiguity and circumlocution in language use in order to insure that a conflict does not "get out of control." Maintaining emotional calm and reserve is essential to this style because it enables interpersonal harmony to counter relationally damaging disagreements among the parties. This style views intense expressions of emotion as potentially dangerous and generally inhibitory toward "effective" conflict resolution processes. Indirect speech, use of stories and metaphors, reliance on third party intermediaries, and minimizing the level of conflict present among the parties are all specific *Accommodation* style strategies.

Dynamic **style**. The *Dynamic* style involves the use of indirect strategies for dealing with substantive disagreements coupled with more emotionally intense expression. This style may involve such linguistic devices as hyperbole, repetitions of one's message, a more "associative" argument structure, ambiguity, stories and metaphors, humor, and use of third party intermediaries. The *Dynamic* style is comfortable with more emotionally confrontational discourse and expression. The credibility of each party is grounded in the degree of emotional expressiveness toward the other party.

Anticipation and Expectation Exercise



We believe taking this exercise seriously will eventually assist you to better gauge how the process of overseas adaptation has played out for you personally. It will also facilitate your understanding about how expectations, realistic and unrealistic, play a role in how well you adapt and how you feel about it in retrospect. So take a few minutes and fill out the following questions and put your answers in a safe place. We promise it will be worth your effort as you work through your experience and do your post study abroad evaluation.

a. What are the five things that you are ***most looking forward to*** about studying abroad?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

b. What are the five things that currently worry you ***most*** about going overseas?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

c. What are the five things you believe you will miss ***most*** from home when you are abroad?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

d. What are the five things (people, places, activities, etc.) you believe you will miss ***least*** from home when you are abroad?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

e. My greatest single challenge overseas will be:

_____

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Living and Traveling Abroad Safely

We want you to be aware of some basic precautions for your traveling safety and convenience. As we have said before, travel to another country is not inherently dangerous. However, no matter where you go, you inevitably stand out as a stranger and therefore could be target of local criminal. You cannot rely on you instinctual knowledge of danger as you do at home. You don't know enough yet about the new environment. Keeping this in mind, we offer some thoughts and advice. Most of these consist of using common sense and staying alert.

The more useful things you can do are:



Be Informed. Read current newspapers and listen to TV or radio news; know what is going on in the world. Check with program staff before you travel regarding possible travel advisories and read up on the customs and political situation of every country you plan to visit. Talk to international students and program alumni from the place you intend to visit before you go. Their insights will prove very helpful. Camouflage

Watch and Learn from the Locals. If they do not go out after 9p.m. without an escort, then you shouldn't either. Ask questions of your host family, fellow dormitory residents, or your program director. If they do not make eye contact with strangers, then you shouldn't either. Talk to hostel or hotel owners, program staff, tour guides, and fellow travelers to find out which scams are in vogue with local thieves.

Be Inconspicuous. Don't look too "North American." Don't speak loudly and draw attention to yourself. Learn a few basic language phrases for each country where you plan to travel. To avoid looking like an American tourist, don't wear t-shirts, sweatshirts, or baseball caps with North American logos. Don't wear your camera or passport around your neck. Remember that your map can also give you away. Especially in heavily touristed cities, look at city maps and metro guides before you leave your hotel.

Be Aware of your surroundings at all times. Use the precautions that are customary in any major city in the world today. Travel with a friend. Plan your route and walk confidently. If you are being followed, feel threatened, or you are lost, go into a store, restaurant, or other public area. You know what feels comfortable and what doesn't. If your instincts tell you a situation is "not right", trust them and move along.

Use common sense. Use your common sense and your street skills. If you wouldn't camp out in a city park at home, then don't consider doing this abroad. Avoid walking alone at night. Stay in well-populated, well-trafficked areas. Be especially cautious if you have been drinking. Avoid arguments. Be streetwise and you'll encourage thieves to pick another target.

Stay Healthy. Eat well and get sufficient rest. If you become ill, get proper care. Don't hesitate to tell your host family or onsite director if you are ill and don't be afraid to visit a doctor or hospital just because you don't speak the language fluently.



Guard Personal Belongings. Pickpockets can be extremely adept. Don't carry your passport or money in a hip pocket, open purse, or outside pocket on your backpack. Pickpockets mingle widely in tourist crowds, especially in airports, travel agencies, and American Express offices. A money belt or neck pouch is a good idea. If you need to sleep while in transit, use your pack as your pillow. On crowded city subways, always carry your daypack in front of you. Always have a hand or foot in a loop or strap of your luggage when you set it down to avoid having it snatched away while you're not looking.



Packing Valuables. Don't carry valuables in a backpack, never leave bags unattended, and never carry large amounts of cash. Take and use a lock. Take only as much luggage as you can carry and never let it out of your sight. Do not pack valuables (passports, documents, contact lenses, medications, and electrical equipment) in checked luggage.

Organize Your Funds. Organize your funds into two separate packs each consisting of a credit card and currency. When in-country, one of these packs should usually be left at your residence as a back-up. Keep the cash you are using separate from the rest of your money. Try to avoid reaching into your money-belt in public places.

Copy Documents. Before leaving, make two copies of all your important documents (passport, visa, traveler's checks, and travel itinerary). Keep these in a safe place, leaving a copy at home in the U.S. When you don't need your passport, carry the copy. Get a police report documenting any losses. Bring four extra photos in the even that you need to replace your passport or obtain visas.



Airport security. At airports, you should be prepared for lengthy check-ins since thorough security checks can take time. Carry-on luggage will be X-rayed and possibly hand-searched. Do not accept packages from people you do not know well or carry packages for other travelers.



Jet Lag. You should expect to feel jet lag on arrival overseas. It will take a few days for your system to adjust to the time and climate changes, so pace yourself. Get plenty of sleep before your trip and drink lots of fluids before and during the flight to prevent dehydration. Avoid caffeine and alcohol and eat light meals on the plane.

Traffic and the Road. According to the Association for Safe International Road Travel (ASIRT), statistics indicate that the single greatest cause of death and serious injury abroad is road accidents. These far exceed the number of deaths resulting from disease, violence, or terrorism. Avoid car or bus travel at night. Use a seatbelt.



We strongly recommend that you not own or operate a motor vehicle of any kind during your time abroad. Driving regulations and habits in many countries are different from those in the U.S. and driving overseas can be potentially dangerous. Your family's

liability insurance may not be valid abroad. Pedestrians are also at risk, so be especially careful in crossing the street. Never assume that you have the right of way.

Pay particular attention to all of the following, which are common on the roads of many countries:
• Passing on the right and cutting in front of other vehicles from the right side.
Unexpected stops or turns without signaling for any apparent reason.
• Stopping in unexpected locations to pick up or let off passengers, including main highway entrance ramps, intersections and along major highways.
• Trucks parked at night without lights on the highway rather than on the side of the road.
• Disabled vehicles parked without warning signs.

Do Not Hitchhike

Caution to Women. Lean quickly those situations where you might be harassed or molested. You have not only the normal burden of sexism, but in many places you also have to contend with the notion that as a Western woman, you might be considered promiscuous. Observe the behavior or the local women. Find out about non-verbal messages (eye contact, tone, gestures, and dress) to avoid or adopt. If you are verbally harassed on the street, the best path is to ignore it unless you are touched or your safety is threatened. Again, be very careful about alcohol consumption, Women who have been drinking leave themselves more vulnerable to sexual assault.



Learn the Word for Help

Avoid Demonstrations, especially in politically volatile countries. What appears to be a peaceful situation could suddenly become dangerous and you could become caught in the middle.

Leave Your Travel Itinerary with Friends. Provide a copy of your travel itinerary to your family or friends while traveling. Always tell someone where you are going. Draft a list of important telephone numbers and addresses of the locations you are to visit and the telephone number of your nearest embassy or consulate. Leave a copy with your contact person.



Cellular Telephone. In some locations, you might be able to sign up for cellular telephone service. This can be very useful and can save a great deal of trouble.

<u>Socializing Safely</u>

One of the truly wonderful aspects of study abroad is making friends with people who have grown up in a different culture. It can be exhilarating to be able to exchange ideas and find common ground with people who speak a different native language and come from a different background.

Socializing abroad can be risky, however, because of cultural differences and misperceptions about North Americans. Some North American behavior that is acceptable at home may be viewed as provocative overseas. On the other hand, foreign tones of voice, gestures and perception of personal space may cause North Americans to

feel threatened by people who mean them no harm. What is seen in the U.S. as casual dating may be seen in some countries as one step way from a lifetime commitment.

Take time to learn about cultural norms regarding relationship roles and dating. Use discretion and common sense in your behavior and in the clothing that you wear. Strive to blend in and thus avoid becoming a target for harassment. It is usually best to avoid making eye contact with strangers on the street. Above all, be aware of the unconscious messages you may give out through your posture, gestures, tone of voice, clothing, and eye contact.

If you find yourself in an encounter that makes you nervous, don't worry about being the ugly American. State your views clearly and get out of the situation. Ignore catcalls and move purposefully.

As for relationships (both male/female and same sex), you may not know enough at first about appropriate behavior. Given the additional handicap of possible language problems, or unfair stereotypes, you could unwittingly set yourself up for trouble. Adding alcohol to this could cloud your judgment and you could find yourself in a dangerous situation, including the potential for sexual assault. Keep the sexual picture in focus. Remain in control and watch your alcohol intake.

Talk with locals who you trust to find out more about appropriate behavior. To quote a student writing in Transitions Abroad, "The fact is that sex and love are problematic in every culture, but how they are problematic varies greatly from country to country. And when you throw in linguistic challenges, the potential for disappointment or disaster goes off the charts."

The bottom line is that you should enjoy your time abroad, but always use your head. If you temper curiousity with good sense, your trip will be a safe and enriching experience.

Health and Safety Information

Haenicke Institute Study Abroad Office does not provide health-related information to students. You must consult with the WMU Sindecuse Health Center Travel Clinic or your personal physician for required or suggested vaccinations and other health-related information and warnings pertaining to your travel and study abroad destinations. To complete all necessary preventive vaccinations before your trip, please visit the Sindecuse Health Center 8 weeks prior to your departure. Call 387-3290 or go online at www.sindecuse.com/travel to make an appointment for a travel consultation.

Travel Warnings/Consular Information Sheets and Public Announcements
travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html

When you get the opportunity, and at least two weeks before your departure, go to the above website and print out the information sheets for the countries to which you will be traveling. This information is put out by the Department of State.

- Travel Warnings are issued when the State Department decides, based on all relevant information, to recommend that Americans avoid travel to a certain country. Countries where avoidance of travel is recommended will have Travel Warnings as well as Consular Information Sheets.
- Public Announcements are a means to disseminate information about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term and/or transnational conditions posing significant risks to the security of American travelers. They are made any time there is a perceived threat and usually have Americans as a particular target group. In the past, Public Announcements have been issued to deal with short-term coups, bomb threats to airlines, violence by terrorists and anniversary dates of specific terrorist events.
- Consular Information Sheets are available for every country of the world. They include such information as location of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in the subject country, unusual immigration practices, health conditions, minor political disturbances, unusual currency and entry regulations, crime and security information, and drug penalties. If an unstable condition exists in a country that is not severe enough to warrant a Travel Warning, a description of the condition(s) may be included under an optional section entitled "Safety/Security." On limited occasions, we also restate in this section any U.S. Embassy advice given to official employees. Consular Information Sheets generally do not include advice, but present information in a factual manner so the traveler can make her or his own decisions concerning travel to a particular country.

CDC Travelers' Health
http://www.cdc.gov/travel

This site is the number one source for travelers' health information for the region to which you will be traveling. Go to this site to find recommended immunizations as well. Just select the region of the world on the drop down menu and print the information.

For more information on personal safety abroad, here are a few useful websites:

U.S. State Department Background Notes:
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/

U.S. State Department "Tips for Students":
http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html#student_travel

Latin American Travel Advisor:
http://www.amerispan.com/latc/

Journeywoman Online Magazine:
http://www.journeywoman.com/

Global Access, a Network for Disabled Travelers:
http://www.globalaccessnews.com/

Gay and Lesbian Travel Guide and Resources:
http://www.gaymart.com/5persorg/6city/targ.html

European Road Signs and Conventions:
http://www.travlang.com/signs/

WMU Student Code of Conduct:

http://www.wmich.edu/conduct/docs/WMU_studentcode.pdf

For more information on international laws:

State's Travel Warning on Drugs Abroad:
http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/drugs/drugs_1237.html

International Travel Safety Information for Students:
http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/safety/safety_2836.html

World Law Index: http://www.worldlii.org/

International Constitutional Law Country Index:
http://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/

Being Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgendered Abroad

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) people experience oppression everywhere in the world, though there are different levels of acceptance in different countries. Before you go, it is important to reflect on the culturally based ideas and definitions of sexual identity and consider carefully how your identity as a LGBT person may affect your relationships with host nationals, your cultural adjustment and your overall education abroad experience. Part of your pre-departure preparations should include reflecting on the larger context of acting on your LGBT identity while abroad. What role as a visitor do you/ should you have in the host culture? Does your right to be LGBT in the foreign country conflict with your host country's religious or cultural values and traditions? How will you reconcile your human rights with the cultural values of your host society? Are there safety considerations which you should be aware of?

Before leaving, consider the following:

- Cultures vary in terms of what is considered appropriate behavior and how sexual identities are defined and understood. Learn as much as possible before you leave about the culture-specific norms of friendship and dating, styles of behavior and general attitudes. Behavioral signals (such as eye contact, a smile, touching) may lead us astray in a foreign culture. For example, in several Middle Eastern countries hand-holding among males is a custom of special friendship and respect and does not imply homosexuality. Is it possible for you to contact (through email, etc.) other LGBT folks from the host country to ask them specific questions?
- Obtain country specific information on the support systems (meeting places, organizations, etc.) available in your host country. Are these appropriate for you? Do you visit similar places in your home community?
- Familiarize yourself with the laws of your host country. Homosexuality is illegal in many countries, and carries the death penalty in some. In some countries, safety may require you to hide your sexual identity. Inform yourself about country-specific laws on age of consent, traveling with print or other materials on sexual orientation, etc. If necessary, are you willing to hide your sexual orientation? Finding out about the laws of the host country, would you re-consider your options? See Resources.
- If you are "out" in USA, reflect on what it means to leave behind a support system of friends and family. Being LGBT abroad has been described as some as a second coming out. How will you re-establish your identity overseas?
- For further information, talk with other people who have been in your situation abroad, preferably in your host country. See the resources section for books that pertain to LGBT travel

A sojourn abroad is a time of personal growth and discovery. Many transformations in personal development and self-awareness can occur, prompted by the fact that the restrictions of the home culture have been removed. Returning home is therefore a time of transition that can be difficult.

Before re-entering, consider:

- If you chose to come out while abroad, how will this affect your return to friends and family? Will you be able to re-integrate these relationships upon your return or will you need to find a different supportive community?
- Be aware before you come back home of the ways in which you may have changed both independent and as a result of your coming out.

  Consider the implications of coming out when back home. Often family and friends may want to dismiss your sexual orientation as a temporary due to the experience abroad, rather than acknowledge a lifelong identity.

Resources

Resources recommended by the Department of Gender and Women's' Studies, Western Michigan University:

International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission: http://www.iglhrc.org/cgi-bin/iowa/home/index.html

NGLTF – National Gay and Lesbian Task Force –National progressive organization working for the civil rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. http://www.thetaskforce.org/

Other resources: Organizations

Amnesty International
www.ai-lgbt.org

Amnesty International – USA www.aiusa.org/outfront

International Lesbian and Gay Association – ILGA
www.ilga.org

New Internationalist
www.newint.org

http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/student.htm

Networks

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Returned Peace Corps
http://lgbrpcv.org/

Time Saving Tips

Before the Airport:

Do NOT pack or bring prohibited items to the airport. Visit www.TSATravelTips.us for a complete list.

Leave gifts unwrapped. They may need to be opened for inspection.

Avoid wearing clothing, jewelry, and accessories that contain metal. Metal items may set off the alarm on the metal detector.

Put all undeveloped film and cameras with film in your carry-on baggage. Checked baggage screening equipment will damage the undeveloped film.

Carry-on baggage is limited to one carry-on bag plus one personal item. Personal items include laptops, purses, backpacks, briefcases, or camera cases. *Remember 1 + 1*

Place identification tags in and on all of your baggage. Don't forget your laptop computer.

At the Airport:

Before you get in line…

Do NOT bring drinks or other liquids to the security checkpoint unless they are in paper or polystyrene (e.g. Styrofoam), sealed of seal-able/spill-proof containers

Once you get in line…In, Out, Off

Put metal IN your carry-on bag. This includes jewelry, loose change, keys, mobile phones, papers, and PDAs.

Take OUT your laptop computer. Place it in a bin, separate from its carrying case.

Take OFF your outer coat. Place it in a bin. Suit Jackets and blazers do not have to be removed, unless requested by the screener.



This information brought to you courtesy of Transportation Security Administration
www.TSATravelTips.us

Study Abroad Resources WMU Study Abroad Office Website: www.wmich.edu/studyabroad

Useful Travel-Related Websites

AESU Travel Information:	www.aesu.com
BusAbout Europe:	www.busabout.com
Dept. of State Travel:	www.travel.state.gov
Embassies:	www.embassy.org
RailEurope:	www.raileurope.com/us
Currency Exchange Transactions:	www.travelexbusiness.com
Foreign Entry Requirements:	www.travel.state.gov/foreignentryreqs.html
ISIC Cards:	www.isic.org
Lonely Planet Online:	www.lonelyplanet.com
Medicine/Health:	www.who.int/ith/en/
Mobility International:	www.miusa.org
STA Travel:	www.statravel.com
Student Universe:	www.studentuniverse.com
Travel Documents:	www.traveldocs.com

Useful Books

Getting the Most from Study Abroad (Students Helping Students) by Michael Gallant, Natavi Guides

Study Abroad 101 by Wendy Williamson

Study Abroad: A Parent's Guide: For Parents of College and University Students Contemplating a Study Abroad Experience by William Hoffa

Study Away: the Unauthorized Guide to College Abroad by Mariah Balaban, Jennifer Shields

Study Abroad: How to Get the Most Out of Your Experience by Michele-Marie Dowell, Kelly P. Mirsky

The Insider's Guide to Study Abroad by Ann M. Moore

Health and Safety/Logistics

Promoting Health and Safety in Study Abroad	www.nafsa.org/students.sec
SAFETI Clearinghouse	www.globaled.us/safeti
Safety Monitoring Websites	www.nafsa.org/students.sec
Electronic Embassy	www.embassy.org/embassies/index.html
Travelers' Health	www.cdc.gov/travel

What can I do when I come back?

Be a returnee contact. Prospective students enjoy having someone to talk to about the way things really are abroad. Please indicate your name, e-mail and/or phone number in your evaluation if you would be willing to receive e-mails and/or phone calls from students.

Make a Study Abroad Spotlight. Write a testimonial article and submit photos for an online feature. We will be happy to share your experience on our website (see other published spotlights). Please review the testimonial guide and send your testimonial with a few photographs to study-abroad@wmich.edu**.** Please make sure to include a good photograph of yourself to accompany your spotlight.

Share your photos. We rely on students' photos to help us publicize our study abroad programs. We will put your photos on the program online profile album and use them for our promotional materials. You can e-mail your photos, burn them on a CD or give us access to an online photo album. Study Abroad also has a Facebook page (WMU Study Abroad) where you can become a fan and upload your photos and tag your friends so that they can see them, too! We also have an annual Study Abroad Photo Contest.

Volunteer. We participate in many outreach events throughout the year, such as classroom presentations, Bronco Bash, and the Study Abroad Fair. We rely on volunteers to help us not only promote our programs but also to show the WMU community what studying abroad is really like from the expert perspective of returnees like you. If you are interested in volunteering, please send an e-mail to study-abroad@wmich.edu. Type "Volunteer" in the subject line of the e-mail.

Participate in the Pre-Departure Orientation. The Haenicke Institute Study Abroad office has several pre-departure orientations at the end of the fall and spring semesters for programs that are leaving in the following terms. We encourage past students to participate in these orientations so that you can share your wisdom with the students who will be studying at the same site. Please send an e-mail to study-abroad@wmich.edu if you are interested. Type "Pre-Departure Orientation" in the subject line of the e-mail.

Become a conversation partner. The Haenicke Institute's Career English Language Center for International Students (CELCIS) office has established the Conversation Partner Program to help CELCIS international students better understand the American college experience, as well as make connections with WMU students.

Statement of Responsibility

If I am accepted to participate in the given program, I am fully aware that participating in the program listed above is completely voluntary and will expose me to situations over which and people over whom Western Michigan University has no control. While a goal of international education is to give me an opportunity for cultural immersion, I understand that I will be exposed to risks including illness, loss, and death. I have agreed to participate in the above program during the specified semester, and accept the following responsibilities:

1. I understand and will abide by the rules governing student responsibility and behavior as stated in the WMU Student Code and all other applicable policies established by WMU and the program/institution/country. I agree to comply with standards of good behavior, maturity, responsibility, and courtesy at all times. I agree to respect cultural differences between the United States and the host culture(s) and abide by social and cultural norms of the host country.

2. I understand that I am required to attend all orientations and pre-departure meetings as scheduled by the program director/independent and/or the WMU Study Abroad Office. It is my responsibility to make arrangements to attend these meetings. Failure to participate in the required pre-departure and orientation meetings and coursework may result in dismissal from the program and forfeiture of all program fees.

3. I will become informed about and will comply with the laws, rules and regulations of my host country, community, institution and program as administered by the faculty or resident director(s), or other representative(s) of Western Michigan University. I understand that I will be subject to the laws of the host country and that WMU and the host institution/program provider will not assist me and will not exert any pressure on the host country's authorities for leniency for any action that violates the host country's laws.

4. I understand and agree that I, the student, am solely responsible for my behavior, health, and safety while abroad and do not expect WMU to carry any responsibility in this respect. I understand that I will engage in independent activities while studying abroad and that WMU representatives will not be in a position to supervise those activities. I understand that the study abroad office at WMU, the international office at the host institution, or the staff of the program provider will offer advice and assistance to a reasonable degree before departure from the United States and during the study abroad experience. However, WMU has no duty or liability for such advice and assistance or lack thereof.

5. The WMU study abroad office shall have the right to dismiss me from any international education/independent study program at any time if (i) my conduct violates the WMU Student Code; (ii) I violate laws, rules and regulations, or customs of my host country, community, institution and program; or (iii) the study abroad office has reasonable cause to believe that my continued presence in the program constitutes a danger to the health or safety of persons or property or threatens the future viability of the program. The following behaviors are among those that may result in immediate dismissal from a program: alcohol abuse (as defined in the WMU

Student Code); physical or sexual assault; harassment; possession, use or distribution of illegal drugs; setting a fire or possession of explosives; possession of a weapon, including BB guns and knives; theft. The WMU study abroad office may suspend me pending final resolution of any alleged violation(s) of these provisions.

6. I understand that basic medical, hospitalization, and evacuation/repatriation insurance is a requirement for participation in study abroad. All students studying abroad through Western Michigan University are required to enroll in the WMU study abroad insurance plan, unless you are studying abroad through an intermediary company (provider) whose insurance is accepted by WMU (currently Arcadia, Australearn, CIEE, CEA, IES, and IFSA Butler; subject to change, see website for updates to this list). Unless you have approval for an exemption, during your Study Abroad program, you will be enrolled in a comprehensive insurance program called HTH Worldwide which provides health and emergency insurance, travel intelligence, and security / political evacuation. Health and emergency insurance is provided through:

HTH Worldwide
One Radnor Corporate Center
Suite 100
Radnor, PA 19087 USA
Phone: +1-888-243-2358
www.hthstudents.com

See detailed information at www.wmich.edu/studyabroad. The period of coverage starts shortly before the program's start date and ends shortly after the program's end date. I understand that insurance coverage prior to and following the official program dates is my own responsibility. I understand that I may extend coverage of HTH insurance by contacting HTH at the address above. This additional period of coverage does not constitute approval of my travel plans or any other form of responsibility or liability for Western Michigan University. Coverage as a dependent on parents' health insurance is not accepted by WMU for study abroad. However, I understand that the WMU study abroad insurance plan covers health expenses outside the United States only. I will maintain my current insurance coverage for coverage in the United States in the event I need to return home for medical care. If I am accompanying a participant, I understand that my health insurance coverage is my own responsibility and not that of WMU. In the event of serious illness, accident or emergency, my designated emergency contact, provided on the Health Emergency Treatment Authorization, may be notified. I shall inform the faculty member-in-residence, on-site director(s), or program assistant(s) representing the host institution and the study abroad office of any problems that arise during my stay abroad so that assistance can be provided. I understand that study abroad staff will provide me with an emergency assistance card explaining how to seek emergency assistance from the study abroad office.

7. I have consulted or will consult with the WMU Sindecuse Health Center or my personal physician, for required or suggested vaccinations and other health related information and warnings pertaining to my travel and study abroad destinations. I have accurately and thoroughly informed the study abroad office of any disability as defined by law, which requires reasonable accommodation, and any pre-existing

medical condition that may impact my study abroad experience. I understand that failure to disclose medical conditions or ongoing medications that affect my ability to participate in the study abroad program may be grounds for dismissal from the program. I understand that Western Michigan University cannot guarantee the same level of access and accommodation of physical or medical concerns as what may be available on the home campus. I understand that study abroad staff may consult other university offices, such as Disabled Student Services, for assistance. I understand that in certain circumstances the study abroad office may require written certification from the appropriate medical expert of my aptitude to participate in a given study abroad program and that my participation in the program may be conditional to such certification. I agree to continue my current medications for any ongoing conditions during the period of my study abroad program. I authorize appropriate study abroad staff and the WMU faculty director of my program, if applicable, to review the health information and emergency assistance authorization form I submitted with my application. I agree to be responsible for all my own medical costs (including transportation/evacuation and repatriation) not covered by my insurance and to pay such costs in a timely manner.

8. I understand that I am responsible for my own travel arrangements to and from the study abroad site, and for any other personal travel during or following the study abroad program. The University assumes no responsibility or liability, in whole or in part, for any delays, delayed or changed departure or arrival times, fare changes, dishonors of hotel or transportation reservations, missed carrier connections, sickness, injuries (including death), losses, damages, weather, strikes, acts of God, public health risks, criminal activity, terrorism, act of war, expense, accident or damage to property, inconveniences, failure or negligence of any nature in connection with any accommodations, restaurant, transportation, or other service or for any substitution of hotels or common carrier beyond the University's control, with or without notice, or for any additional expenses occasioned by any of the foregoing. If due to weather, flight schedules or other factors I am required to spend additional nights, the University will not be responsible for my hotel, transfers, meal costs or other expenses. It is my responsibility to confirm departure and arrival times and locations with my program leader. Should I incur a delayed arrival, I will notify my program leader or study abroad office to advise them of this., I will be responsible for any inconvenience, cost, lost reservations, lost class time and assignments, etc. associated with not arriving at the time and place designated by my program leader. My baggage and personal property is transported at my risk entirely. No compensation, monetary or otherwise, will be granted by WMU under any of these circumstances.

9. The University, in its sole discretion, may alter, change, or cancel any of its own programs or any aspect of its programs prior to departure and, in its discretion, the University may cancel its programs or any aspect of its programs after departure, requiring that all participants return to the United States, if the University believes that any person is or likely will be in danger if a program or any aspect of a program is continued. In the event of such change, alteration, or cancellation WMU shall not be responsible for any costs, expense, charges, or fees incurred by me as a result of said change, alteration or cancellation.

10. The University will not provide any administrative support (housing, childcare,

etc) or assume any responsibility for accompanying non- participants (spouses, partners, children, etc.). I understand that I am responsible for obtaining health insurance for any accompanying non-participants. I understand that if such individuals become disruptive to the program, it may be grounds for my dismissal.

11. I agree that I shall be solely responsible for all financial obligations or liabilities that I may incur while participating in a study abroad program, including living and transportation expenses. I shall be solely responsible for any and all costs arising out of my voluntary or involuntary withdrawal or dismissal from the program after departure, including but not limited to withdrawal or dismissal for reasons of health, family emergency, illegal drug use or alcohol abuse, legal detention, or disciplinary action by a representative(s) of the University. Costs incurred on my behalf include, but are not limited to, full program fee, tuition and matriculation fees, airfare and other transportation, legal documents, visa and application fees, and housing. If I withdraw, depart or am dismissed from a program for any reason prior to its formal completion, I may not be eligible for any academic credits. Should I receive permission to return home early, I may be eligible to receive a grade of "W" on my University academic transcript if withdrawal is approved within the appropriate time frame pursuant to university policy as stated on the registrar's website, www.wmich.edu/registrar. I will inform the study abroad office if I wish to drop any classes during my study abroad program. I understand that the official registration drop/add period on study abroad extends ten business days into a semester or five business days for a summer session. Drop/add requests for WMU enrollment during your study abroad program must be sent to the study abroad office who will provide documentation of the drop/add period relative to your program.

12. I understand and acknowledge that the study abroad program fees are set 6 to 18 months in advance of the program commencement date. The study abroad office uses its best effort to set the fees so that they will correspond to the actual cost of the program on the commencement date. However, events and circumstances beyond the control of Western Michigan University, including but not limited to fluctuation in exchange rates, civil unrest, curricular changes in host country or institution, changes in service providers, etc. may render it necessary to adjust the actual program fee charged to my student account. Thus, the program fees are subject to adjustment due to changes in the condition at the time of program commencement or at the time of receipt of billing for services provided. However, in the event the fees are increased by more than 20%, I will be offered the opportunity to withdraw from the program with no cancellation fees.

13. I, individually, and on behalf of my heirs, successors, assigns, and personal representatives, hereby indemnify, defend and hold harmless the University and its employees, agents, officers, trustees and representatives (in their official and individual capacities) from any and all liability whatsoever for any and all injuries, illnesses, damages, losses (including death) I sustain to my person or property or both, including but not limited to any claims, actions, damages, expenses, and costs, including attorney fees, which arise out of, result from, occur during or are connected in any manner with my participation in the program and/or any related travel.

14. I will submit all completed and signed materials, forms and payments by the due date specified. Failure to do so by the date indicated may result in me not being

registered at WMU for the semester(s) in which I study abroad, and I will not be considered enrolled at WMU during this time, and/or will prevent me from participating in the intended study abroad program. I will comply with the steps outlined on the WMU study abroad website and application instructions, including course pre-approval and pre-departure procedures. I will maintain the equivalent of full-time student status as defined in the WMU Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs for the duration of the study abroad program (unless special permission is granted) or the minimum number of credits specified for my short-term program or independent study. I understand that failure to maintain full-time status or complete a full load of coursework may affect my financial aid package at WMU, if applicable. I understand that all courses taken during an approved study abroad program will transfer to WMU. Courses that are not pre-approved will transfer as elective credit. The number of credit hours taken and grades received at a foreign educational institution is not necessarily equal to the number of credit hours and grades which will be posted to my transcript at WMU. I understand that I should check with my study abroad advisor if I have questions about how foreign credit hours and grades are evaluated at WMU. Study abroad courses cannot be evaluated or processed without an official transcript from the sponsoring program/institution. It is my responsibility to request this transcript from the host institution and ensure that it is sent to the study abroad office. I understand that I will receive a grade at WMU for each course taken during a study abroad program unless I request the credit/no-credit option in writing or by completing the Credit Change Form online within the allotted time period.

15. If I do not return this statement in a timely manner to the study abroad office, I will not be registered at WMU for the semester(s) in which I intend to study abroad and will not be considered enrolled at WMU during this time. If I am a non-WMU student/participant who is studying abroad through a WMU-sponsored program and do not complete this form in a timely manner, I will not be allowed to participate in the program.

16. This agreement is to be construed under the laws of the State of Michigan, USA; and if any portion of this agreement is held invalid, the balance of this agreement shall, notwithstanding, continue in full legal force and effect.

17. I authorize the study abroad office to release information contained in my documents and university records related to study abroad to my parents(s)/legal guardians(s).

By accepting this document, I acknowledge that I have read this entire document, have had an opportunity to ask questions, understand its terms, agree to the terms stated, am giving up substantial legal rights I might otherwise have, and have signed it knowingly and voluntarily.

I certify that I am older than 18 years OR I have had my parent(s)/legal guardian(s) contact the WMU Study Abroad advisor.

Revised and approved by WMU general counsel on 4/22/2009