Pre-Departure Handbook

International Programs in Engineering (IPENG)
210 Engineering Hall
1308 West Green Street
Urbana, Illinois 61801
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QUESTIONNAIRE & MATERIAL DEADLINES

Students participating in International Programs in Engineering (IPENG) sponsored study/work should submit all documents to the IPENG Office in 210 Engineering Hall. Failure to submit the documents by the deadlines will affect your IPENG Travel Fellowship. Deadlines are indicated on the ENGR Dates of Submission form which is a signature document in the Pre-Decision phase of your on-line application.

REGISTRATION AT UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

All students who have been accepted to study abroad and have signed the “Study Abroad Placeholder Course Registration” signature document will automatically be registered for the appropriate “299” course based on student department.

This registration allows University of Illinois students who are studying abroad to maintain their current student status so that they can earn University of Illinois credit, register for their returning semester, as well as allowing study abroad students access to University of Illinois Financial Aid awards and University of Illinois Health Insurance. The cost of registering in 299 is equivalent to the cost of Range IV tuition, Engineering tuition, and General Fee.

Please note the following:

- Academic holds will prohibit you from participating in early registration and MUST be cleared before you leave the country. Failure to resolve your encumbrances or holds prior to 5:00 P.M. on the first day of instruction at the University of Illinois will result in cancellation of your registration and financial aid for the term. You are responsible for clearing your encumbrances and holds.

- Students are not allowed to register for on-campus courses for the term you will be abroad. If you are registered for any courses, the registrar will not be able to complete the “299” registration.

PAYING FOR STUDY ABROAD

All University of Illinois @ Urbana-Champaign students participating in study abroad programs must pay the following fees to the University of Illinois (other fees may be required):

1. University of Illinois Range IV Tuition, Engineering tuition and General Fee

2. IPENG Program Fee and International Insurance

The Program Fees Contract, outlining specific program expenses, are available in student applications and need to be signed by each participant.
University of Illinois Range IV Tuition and General Fee
Students who will receive academic credit for their study abroad and must be registered as a full-time student at the University of Illinois for the term(s) they are abroad (registration in 299). They must pay Range IV tuition, engineering tuition and general fee. Students who expect to receive financial aid including fellowships and scholarships are required to maintain their University of Illinois student status. For a listing of Range IV tuition and general fees, please visit http://registrar.illinois.edu/financial/tuition.html. Please note that tuition and fee rates are revised annually.

Study Abroad Program Fee and Processing Fee
Program fees vary according to program, but all include a non-refundable advance payment.

Programs sponsored by IPENG require a non-refundable processing fee after the student has committed to studying abroad. At the beginning of the term you are abroad, IPENG will bill your study abroad program fee to your student account.

Unlike University of Illinois tuition, there is no installment plan for your study abroad program fees. The program fee must be paid in full at the time of billing. Please be aware that you will be delinquent on your student account for any amount not paid. A delinquent account will not allow the release of your transcript and will prohibit you from registration for any future terms. Finance charges on any unpaid balance are 1.5%.

Paying for Non-Billable Costs
As outlined on your program fee contract, there are non-billable costs associated with your study abroad program. Such costs may include visas, airline tickets, room and board, local transportation, and additional in country miscellaneous expenses.

If the charges come from an international partner or company, you should follow the instructions given to you. In most cases, you should be able to pay by one of the following methods:

- Using a regular credit card (this is typically the most convenient way, with the least amount of transaction fees, and you are able to track the transaction)

- Arranging for an international wire transfer of funds (this is the easiest method to track the transaction and is usually secure, but can be expensive relative to the amount being wired)

- Obtaining a banker's draft, international money order, or cashier's order in your host country's currency (you will pay a fee for purchasing the draft/money order, and will need to mail the draft/money order overseas after purchasing it, but you will be able to track the transaction once the money order/draft is deposited).

Since payment methods can vary according to program, please consult your study abroad adviser if you are unclear about the appropriate payment method.
**Billing**

Your student account bill is available online as an electronic bill (E-Bill). To access your E-Bill, please log on at: [https://apps.uillinois.edu/selfservice/index.html](https://apps.uillinois.edu/selfservice/index.html).

- The Office of Student Accounts will send you an email notification about your electronic bill (E-Bill). This bill will include Range IV tuition, engineering tuition, general fee, your program fee and International Insurance. If you view your student bill before you receive the email notification, it is likely not correct because it has not been coded to indicate you are studying abroad.

- The Office of Student Accounts cannot release any information concerning your student account to anyone other than you without your permission. On your on-line application at [www.studyabroad.illinois.edu](http://www.studyabroad.illinois.edu), you will complete the Student Request to Release Account Information questionnaire, which enables you to designate a person in charge of your financial matters while you are abroad. Should questions arise about your student account and your study abroad expenses, the IPENG office will be able to discuss this with the person you designate.

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**FINANCIAL AID**

If you anticipate using financial aid (including grants, scholarships, fellowships, loans, etc.) to pay for study abroad, the Office of Student Financial Aid (OSFA) will download the most recent study abroad budget on file. The OSFA has access to the updated budget and will notify the appropriate study abroad office of any discrepancies. If you are going on a faculty-led trip, you must still submit a paper copy of your signed budget to OSFA the semester prior to going abroad.

The amount of financial aid that is applicable to study abroad will depend on your financial aid package. Since there are many variables that determine how your financial aid package applies to study abroad, it is best that you consult with a financial aid adviser in OSFA to discuss your individual financial aid package.

Your Illinois financial aid and/or Illinois study abroad scholarships will be applied to your Illinois Student Account shortly before the beginning of the semester at the University of Illinois and around the same time that you will be billed your study abroad program fees and Illinois tuition and fees.

If you still owe money after your financial aid and scholarships are applied to your Student Account, your Student Account will reflect the balance owed. If you receive financial aid (grants, scholarships, fellowships, loans, etc.), the Office of Student Financial Aid will credit these funds directly to your University of Illinois student account at the beginning of the term you are abroad. The costs of Range IV tuition, engineering tuition, general fee, and study abroad program fee will be deducted from those funds. If there is a credit balance on the transaction you will receive a refund. To set up direct deposit, visit [https://paymybill.uillinois.edu/DirectDeposit](https://paymybill.uillinois.edu/DirectDeposit).
VISA REQUIREMENTS

It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to check if you need a visa.

For immigration purposes, a visa is a form of permission that allows you to legally enter a country. It can be in the form of a stamp or sticker in your passport. In addition to your passport, many countries require you to obtain a visa before entering the country.

For some countries, you will need to obtain a visa prior to your departure. For others, you may obtain your visa upon arrival. In other cases, you might first enter your host country as a tourist, register for your classes, and then convert your tourist status to that of a student. Each country has its own requirements and application procedures. Given the differences for each country, it is impossible for us to cover the steps and requirements for each and every country, or for each and every possible situation. Therefore, we recommend that you work directly with your host country’s embassy or consulate, or obtain the services of a visa specialist. Visa applications may take two weeks to process, while others may take up to several months depending on where you are going and your citizenship. DO NOT PURCHASE AIRLINE TICKETS UNTIL YOU RECEIVE YOUR VISA!

• Start investigating the process early to allow enough time to apply and receive your visa.
• Complete the visa application and gather required documentation.
• Once you receive your official acceptance letter from the host university, you can submit your visa application. Some consulates require that you submit your application in person, while others will accept them by mail.
• Once your visa is processed, you can purchase your airline ticket.

Below is a list of visa agents and consultants that our office has compiled. You should explore the services that each company or consultant provides, ask them questions, and decide if you would like to work with one of them. Of course, you are also at liberty to identify another visa agent to work through.

• A Briggs http://www.abriggs.com/
• de Prey Consulting (for UK visas) http://www.depreyconsulting.com/
• Passport Visa Express http://www.passportvisasexpress.com/
• Perry International http://perryvisa.com/
• Travisa http://www.travisa.com/
• TDS http://www.traveldocs.com/
• VisaHQ https://www.visahq.com/

Be sure to adhere to the format specifications for all supporting documents. Do not argue with visa consultants or embassy/consulate visa officers about the requirements. If you are interacting with an embassy/consulate visa officer, please be respectful.

In addition to the visa requirements for your host country, you should also look into the entry and exit requirements of the other countries that you may visit beyond your host country. For instance, if you are studying abroad in Spain and you decide to travel to Morocco on your own, or if you are studying abroad in Australia and you decide to visit Fiji, you should look up the entry and exit requirements for Morocco or Fiji.
If you are a US citizen, you may use the advice provided through the U.S. State Department's Country Specific Information found [https://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en/visa.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en/visa.html). For entry into your host country, please make sure that you look at requirements for entry as a student, unless you are permitted to or have been advised to enter as a tourist.

Besides your passport and visa, you may need to provide additional documents for entry into a country. Examples of these additional documents include:

- Your letter of acceptance from your host university;
- Proof of departure, usually in the form of a return flight;
- Proof of sufficient finances; and/or,
- Proof of insurance, letter available at [https://www.gallagherstudent.com/](https://www.gallagherstudent.com/)

Again, each country will have its own requirements and a country's border control agency could require more documents than what is mentioned above. Please refer to the acceptance packet from your host university or study abroad program for details. Remember, you should also check with your host country's consulate or embassy to find out the exact documents you will need to produce upon arrival to gain entry into your host country.

**If you are not a U.S. citizen and need to return to the U.S.** to continue your studies after studying abroad, please make sure that you pack and carry all necessary documents and authorizations to re-enter the U.S. after your program ends. For more information, please contact the Office of International Student and Scholar Services, isss@illinois.edu.

**Embassies**

Embassies are the headquarters for ambassadors from foreign countries. They are involved in country relations, consular affairs (such as issuing travel and student visas), and all matters related to citizens of their own country residing or traveling in a foreign country. Most embassy websites have a consular affairs section.

Embassies have different sets of criteria for obtaining a visa. Make sure to follow their instructions very carefully. Please remember that you are asking for permission to stay in their country. Embassies are not required to give you the visa. View a list of foreign embassies in the US at: [https://www.state.gov/s/cpr/32122.htm](https://www.state.gov/s/cpr/32122.htm).

**Consulates**

Consulates are branch offices of an embassy. One of their purposes is to handle visa matters for a given geographical area. Many but not all countries will have both an embassy and one or more consulates in a foreign country.

For U.S. citizens residing in Illinois or surrounding states, there may be a consulate of your host country represented in Chicago. You may be able to apply for your visa through their consulate in Chicago.
HEALTH INFORMATION FOR STUDY ABROAD

Anyone taking PRESCRIPTION medication:
- Take an ample and complete supply for the time out of the country
- Leave in originally labeled bottles
- Take a month’s supply in your carry-on luggage
- Divide the remainder in separate luggage if possible

Anyone with a CHRONIC MEDICAL CONDITION:
- Take with you a treatment plan as outlined by your doctor
- This should include current medications, allergies, treatment to be used in case of a medical crisis, and any other tips for another doctor to use to help manage your care if there is a problem
- Also include your doctor’s phone number, fax number and how to contact the answering service
- Please consider telling your program director about any medical conditions as they may be able to assist you in finding resources in your host country

Anyone using any OVER-THE-COUNTER medication:
- This includes anything used on a regular basis, even if just used seasonally
- Be sure and take a supply with you (e.g. ibuprofen, Tylenol, antihistamines)
- Remember that some medications available over-the-counter here may be prescription in your host country, thus difficult to obtain when you need them
- Do NOT assume that, for example, headaches or allergies that you have here will go away when you travel

STUDY ABROAD HEALTH INSURANCE

For the safety of its students, the University of Illinois requires that all students participating in study abroad programs have international study-abroad insurance coverage. Since most U.S. health insurance carriers do not adequately cover the range of issues facing students who study abroad, the University of Illinois has selected an excellent international health insurance provider and negotiated bulk rates for all its students.

The University of Illinois requires that all study abroad students purchase international health insurance coverage through Arthur J Gallagher. This fee is billed to your student account at the beginning of your term abroad:

- Semester (76-195 days) = $200
- Academic Year (196-315 days) = $365
- Annual (316-397 days) = $420
- Other
  - Up to 2 wks (1-16)=$75
  - Month (17-45 days)=$90
  - Short Term (46-75 days)=$140
Your insurance policy, insurance card, and verification of coverage letter is available at https://www.gallagherstudent.com/. Please refer to the email you received regarding international insurance for more information.

In addition, you will have either your parent’s or University of Illinois’ health insurance. Please be aware that you may not drop this insurance. It is better to have extra coverage than not have something covered. Also the University of Illinois will not allow you to drop its insurance during your time abroad.

Please note that some host schools may require you to purchase their health insurance during your study abroad program.

Insurance Coverage for Students Extending Their Stay Abroad for Personal Reasons
The University of Illinois has arranged with Arthur J. Gallagher to allow students to purchase an additional month of coverage for pleasure travel. We believe this is a natural part of their study abroad cultural experience and we would like to support such activity. Arthur J. Gallagher is not; however, in the “pleasure travel” insurance market. Therefore, additional coverage is limited to one month, prior to or immediately following, the study abroad program.

Prior to their overseas departure, each student should directly contact Arthur J. Gallagher (or another company) and purchase such coverage. If you choose to use Arthur J. Gallagher, you can enroll in the additional coverage at: https://www.gallagherstudent.com/.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Every year we receive telephone calls from parents concerned about the safety of their children, and this year was no exception given the present uneasy situations around the world.

Students are advised to register with the US Consulate Abroad at https://step.state.gov prior to their departure. By enrolling, students will receive important information from the Embassy about safety conditions in the destination country; help the U.S. Embassy contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency; help family and friends get in touch with you in an emergency.

While not wishing to alarm you unduly, we urge you to exercise caution in any international travel during periods of tension, and to pay attention to any travel advisory information provided to you by program directors and US government officials.

If family members have any questions concerning their student’s safety overseas they can call the Illinois International Safety and Security Office 24 hours a day, any day.

ILLINOIS INTERNATIONAL SAFETY AND SECURITY OFFICE (24-HOUR): (217) 333-1216

For more information from the Illinois International Safety and Security Office, please visit http://international.illinois.edu/resources/safety-security/index.html.
In the event that you or your family wishes to contact the US State Department in Washington, DC to obtain information about travel advisories, the following phone numbers and web addresses will be useful. You can call these numbers prior to departure or during your term abroad.

STATE DEPARTMENT MAIN NUMBER: (202) 647-4000
To be dispatched to a specific country’s desk officer

OVERSEAS CITIZENS SERVICE: (888) 407-4747
Emergencies, travel safety, travel warnings or advisories, judicial assistance

US DEPARTMENT OF STATE: https://www.state.gov/
Travel warnings/consular information sheets, travel publications passport information

**ADDITIONAL SAFETY INFORMATION**

The decision to study in a particular region of the world must be made by each student and his or her family in light of their own interpretation of world events. It is regrettable, but true, that nowhere in the world, including many of our own cities, can one expect a completely safe environment. It is impossible for anyone to predict future events or give guarantees about the course of events in the world.

The University of Illinois requires that students register with the nearest United States Embassy or United States Consulate. Ask these officials if there are any precautions that they consider necessary for general travel and day-to-day operations at your study site. Ask also about any official State Department “travel advisories” which restrict travel to certain areas. It is especially important that the Embassy knows how to get in touch with you in the event of a real emergency.

The University of Illinois follows the recommendations of the State Department in Washington concerning international travel advisories. As long as the State Department does not restrict travel to a particular place, University of Illinois does not recommend limitations on student plans for study abroad or vacation travel while overseas. The International Safety and Security Office will try to notify students immediately, should such travel restrictions be issued.

In accordance with State Department’s advice on safe travel, we would advise you of the following standard safety precautions:

- Dress conservatively; avoid flashy dress and obviously American-style clothing, particularly American sweatshirts, T-shirts and jeans. Avoid American logos on your belongings and clothing.

- Keep a low profile; try to blend in with the host country’s surroundings as much as possible, by speaking the language, etc. Don’t stand out as a group or individual. Please avoid being drawn into political exchanges, debates or even conversations that might become incendiary or overly emotional. Be wary of people who seem over-friendly or interested in you. Please be cautious when you meet new people; don’t give out your address or phone number. Be
alert to your surroundings and the people with whom you have contact. Be alert to anyone who might appear to be following you, or any unusual activity around your place of residence.

- In large cities and other popular tourist destinations, avoid or spend as little time as possible in potential target areas for terrorist activity, especially places frequented by Americans; bars, discos, and fast-food restaurants associated with the US; branches of American banks; American churches; American Embassies and Consulates. Avoid American military installations or bases as well as national military bases and personnel.

- In train stations and airports, do not hang around ticket offices or airline counters; go quickly to your train or the lounges beyond passport controls. When traveling outside your home base, leave a daily itinerary of your whereabouts with the host university liaison person and in the itinerary section of your study abroad application, so that you can be contacted immediately in the case of an emergency. If you leave town for a couple of days, take airline tickets, passport and credit cards with you, for use in an emergency.

- When traveling outside the program location, select your accommodations carefully. The most inexpensive lodging may not provide adequate security and it may be located in an unsafe area.

- Do not agree to carry or look after packages or suitcases for anyone. Do not borrow suitcases and make sure nobody puts anything in your luggage. Do not leave your bags or belongings unattended at any time.

- Keep in touch with the current political situations by listening daily to the television or radio. In the event of an emergency, advisories may be made to the general public through the media.

In the case of an emergency, remain in contact with the Program Coordinator at the host university. Have sufficient funds on hand or a credit card if necessary to purchase a return ticket to the US.

**MONEY ABROAD**

**How much money should I take?**
Your personal spending habits, the cost of living in your host country, and fluctuating exchange rates should be taken into consideration when figuring out your study abroad budget. Your program fees contract should help you estimate the amount of money you need to finance your study abroad program.

**How do I exchange money?**
Research the current exchange rate of your host country online prior to departure. Cash can be exchanged abroad at a variety of locations: airports, banks, hotel lobbies, currency exchange centers, etc. Your passport is often needed for identification when exchanging money and there will be a fee assessed that is based on the amount of money being exchanged. While in the U.S., some foreign currencies can be purchased at banks or currency exchange centers in international airports. While we
advise a reasonable amount of cash in local currency to pay for incidentals and transportation costs upon arrival, we recommend you avoid carrying large amounts of cash at one time.

How do I keep my money safe?
Use the same precautions you would use in the U.S. Be aware of pickpockets in crowded areas and on public transportation. Carry your money and other documents in a money pouch worn inside your clothing. Maintain a copy of all credit card numbers in a safe place and do not carry these items on you. Leave a copy of these documents with someone you trust at home who can assist you should your credit cards get lost or stolen.

Debit & Credit Cards
Debit and Credit cards are easily used in destinations all around the world at favorable exchange rates. Arrange with your U.S. bank for internationally accepted debit and credit cards before your departure. Be sure to check on the withdrawal limits and fees imposed for international transactions. Regardless, always notify your bank before departure that you are studying abroad so they do not stop processing on any of your transactions due to the belief that your cards have been stolen.

Bank Accounts Abroad
If you are studying for a semester or longer, opening a bank account may be an option. If you plan to open an account, make your initial deposit with traveler’s checks. Personal checks are extremely difficult to cash overseas. In most cases, you will receive a debit card for your bank account abroad.

COMMUNICATION ABROAD

Calling the United States
Anytime you need to make an international call, you will need to know the host country’s international access code (exit code) and the country code of the country you are calling. For example if you are in Spain and calling the IPENG Office in the United State you must dial, 00+1+217-244-0054. 00 is the exit code for Spain and 1 is the country code for the United States. Visit http://www.howtocallabroad.com/codes.html for a list of international country codes and exit codes.

Cell Phones
Many Students choose to purchase a cell phone while abroad. Most foreign cell phone companies do not require contracts as companies often do in the U.S. Instead, foreign cell phone companies most often function with SIM cards which are pre-paid calling cards that insert into the phone. Shop around and find out the respective costs to make and receive calls with your foreign cell phone (both in-country and internationally). Sometimes because of the high costs of making or receiving calls with foreign cell phones, students will use the more affordable option of text messaging. Some U.S. cell phones can be used abroad, so research this carefully with your cell phone provider before departure. Please refer to your country specific guidebook for recommendations from previous participants.

When entering numbers in your phone, always add the plus (+) sign and the country code; that way, the number can be dialed automatically no matter what country you are calling from.
Store your GSM phone’s numbers in the phone itself, rather than the SIM card. Then the numbers will still be available to you when you use an overseas SIM card. To transfer them to a new phone easily, store them on a device like Backup-Pal (www.backup-pal.com), an external U.S.B. memory unit.

While you will not pay any charges for incoming calls when you use a foreign SIM card, tell your American callers to get an overseas calling plan from their phone company before you ask them to call you. If they do not, they could be paying the same sky-high rates that you just avoided.

If you take your American phone overseas, make sure that its battery charger is dual voltage; without one, all the effort to get your phone to work in other countries may go up in smoke the first time you plug it in.

**Voice Over Internet/Video Chat**

It is also possible to make international calls over the internet. Past participants have recommended using Skype, an internet phone software. Skype allows you to place free calls to anyone else who also has the service as well as low cost rates to regular phones. To use Skype, you will need to download and install Skype software to your phone or computer. GoogleVoice also has a low-cost international rates available.

**PREPARING FOR ANOTHER CULTURE**

Much about culture is learned while in the host country. Adapting to a different culture can be exciting, frustrating, and challenging. No two students adapt at the same pace or in the same manner. Cultural adjustment occurs in several phases and students may experience the various phases with differing levels of intensity. Students can also prepare for cultural adjustment before going abroad by reading books about the culture, travel guide books, local magazines or newspapers, and by meeting people from the country you will be visiting.

- **Preliminary stage:** This phase includes awareness of the host culture, planning and packing for the journey, farewell activities and orientations. It is accompanied by anticipation and nervousness.

- **Initial euphoria:** The initial euphoria phase begins with the arrival in the new country, attending welcome receptions and exploring your new surroundings.

- **Increasing Participation:** Now that you are settling in and the responsibilities of going to class, finding your way around, and settling in your day-to-day life, you may find yourself becoming irritable and less enthusiastic. This will produce frustration because of the difficulty in coping with the elementary aspects of everyday life when things still appear so foreign to you. Your focus will likely turn to the differences between the host culture and your home, and these differences can be troubling. Sometimes insignificant difficulties can seem like major problems. One typical reaction against culture shock is to associate mainly with other North Americans, but remember, you are going abroad to get to know the host country, its people, culture, and language. If you avoid contact with nationals of the host country, you cheat yourself and lengthen the process of adaptation. Search for security in familiar activities such as participating in sports and planning activities that involve getting out and interacting with people aside from going to class.
• **Gradual adjustment**: When you become more used to the new culture, you will slip into the gradual adjustment stage. You may not even be aware that this is happening. You will begin to orient yourself and to be able to interpret subtle cultural clues. The culture will become familiar to you.

• **Adaptation**: Eventually you will develop the ability to function in the new culture. Your sense of "foreignness" diminishes significantly. And not only will you be more comfortable with the host culture, but you may also feel a part of it. Once abroad, you can take some steps to minimize emotional and physical ups and downs. Try to establish routines that incorporate both the difficult and enjoyable tasks of the day or week. Treat yourself to an occasional indulgence such as a USA magazine or newspaper, a favorite meal or beverage, or a long talk with other Americans experiencing the same challenges. Keep yourself healthy through regular exercise and eating habits. Accept invitations to activities that will allow you to see areas of the host culture outside the university and meet new people. Above all try to maintain your sense of humor.

• **Re-entry phase**: The re-entry phase occurs when you return to your homeland. For some, this can be the most painful phase of all. You will be excited about sharing your experiences, and you will realize that you have changed and home isn't how you remember it, although you may not be able to explain how. One set of values has long been instilled in you, another you have acquired in the host country. Both may seem equally valid. Just as you adjusted to your life in a host country, you will have to become reoriented with your life in the US. Be patient with yourself and those around you!

**Dealing with Culture Shock**

• Learn as much as you can about the new location before you go. This means the good, the bad, and the simply different — from time zones, to what side of the street people drive on, to climate/temperature, to foods, political system, culture, customs and religion(s), to "Can you drink the water?" and "What type of electrical outlets do they have?", and more. If there's a language difference, try to pick up a few simple phrases, e.g., hello, thanks, etc.

• Be open-minded and willing to learn. Ask questions..

• Maintain a sense of humor. (Perhaps the most important!) Try not to focus on the bad things…things that go wrong often make the best stories.

• Keep a daily journal or blog. Not only does help you keep a detailed record of your journey, it will also help you cope with your culture adjustment.

• Knowing that the move will be a challenge, give yourself time. Don't be hard on yourself.

• Don't withdraw! Continue to experience the new culture. Travel within the country, and visit cultural events and locations, such as museums or historic sites.

• Build new friendships and associate with positive people.

• Remember your motives for studying abroad.

• Stay active, eat well, and get enough sleep.

• Bring a few touches of home with you, such as photos of favorite locations and family members, your favorite music, or favored knickknacks.
- Keep in touch with people at home via Skype, email, phone. This can give you some comfort while away, and it will help you to minimize reverse culture shock when you get back home. Remember to stay positive and not focus on how miserable you might be feeling. Tomorrow you may be feeling much better, but your family and friends are left thinking the worst.

**UIUC CREDIT TRANSFERS**

The University of Illinois is the final authority on how your study abroad credit/grades will be transferred from the foreign university's transcript to your University of Illinois transcript.

**How Grades will Transfer**

All courses must be taken for a grade at the foreign institution regardless of how they will transfer back. Courses not offering grades (i.e., only offered as pass/fail) must have explanation on the foreign institutions transcript that no grade is given for that course. When your foreign institution transcript is received at UIUC and your study abroad credit is processed, College of Engineering students will receive CR/NC on their UIUC transcript for all study abroad courses (unless the course is being taken for a major or minor offered outside the College of Engineering). Following the same rules that apply when taking a course on campus for CR/NC, students must receive the equivalent of a UIUC C- in order to receive credit for a study abroad course.

Students who are not in the College of Engineering should make sure they understand the rules regarding study abroad grading options for their particular College.

Please refer to the [Credit-Grade Conversion Chart](#) online for credit/grade conversion details.

Classes abroad need to be approved prior to your program departure. Refer to the [Course Approval](#) information on the IPENG website.

**Your Foreign Transcript**

You MUST request from the foreign institution you attended that your paper transcript be sent DIRECTLY TO IPENG. Electronic transcripts and paper transcripts submitted from students cannot be accepted.

**Transcript Transfer Process**

Please allow 10 weeks for credit processing **once your transcript has been received**. The basic steps that are completed in processing your credit from abroad are:

1. Transcript received by IPENG
2. IPENG reviews transcript and confirms whether all courses have been approved.
3. IPENG verifies completion of fellowship project (if applicable) then forwards the final Credit Recommendation form to Admissions to be entered into the BANNER system.
4. Once credit is placed into Banner, the Undergraduate Programs Advising Office inputs the codes for course usage (206 Engineering Hall) into the Engineering and Grad Check system (DARS).

**DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Students whose conduct while on the study abroad program is deemed undesirable and whose actions are in violation of the University of Illinois Code of Policies and Regulations Applying to All Students [http://admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/](http://admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/) will be dismissed from the program and will be subject to campus disciplinary reviews. Students who fail to meet the responsibilities of the program and/or are involved in unlawful acts, such as possession or distribution of drugs, destruction of property or disobedience of the local laws, will be dropped immediately from the program with no refund of fees.

**CHANGE-WITHDRAWAL-REFUND POLICY**

Should you decide to change your program selection or withdraw from participating in a program, please be sure to refer to the Change-Withdrawal-Refund Policy that is a signature document in your online application at [www.studyabroad.illinois.edu](http://www.studyabroad.illinois.edu). This document will explain the procedure for changing/withdrawing and your monetary obligations.

**THINGS TO DO BEFORE LEAVING**

- Read and understand this Pre-Departure Handbook
- Complete & sign the appropriate forms on your study abroad application checklist
- Be sure you take LAS291 the term before your study abroad experience. LAS291 is a second eight week course required for all students studying abroad.
- Go to [https://www.gallagherstudent.com/](https://www.gallagherstudent.com/) to set up your account and access your study abroad insurance documents
- Check with the McKinley Health Center regarding suggested inoculations for your specific country
- Once accepted by the host university, purchase your airline tickets
- Apply for visa, if required by the country of your program
- Check visa requirements if you plan on visiting additional countries while you are abroad
- Check out the host university website
- Know a little about your host country
- Learn courtesy phrases in host language, such as hello, good bye, and especially thank you
- Be familiar with laws in host country
- Set goals to accomplish while in host country
- Figure out your height, weight, and clothes size in metric
- Review directions on how to call the U.S.
- Talk to someone who has gone on the program in the past
- Meet at least one person also going on your program
- Let your friends at home know you are going
• Put your contact info in your carry-on, as well as anything else you might need if your bags get lost
• Take a deep breath and don’t worry