

TO: Non-GT Study Abroad Program Participant

FROM: Stephanie Bullard
Education Abroad Assistant, Office of International Education

RE: Preparatory documents and forms

I understand from you, a faculty member, or some other source that you will soon travel abroad to participate in a Non-GT Study Abroad Program.

What is a Non-GT Program?

A non-GT Program is one that is available through another university or an organization/company that sets up programs abroad. These programs are not affiliated officially with GT, but may offer locations or courses that GT programs do not currently sponsor. If you intend to transfer credit back to GT for courses you take while participating in a non-GT Program, there are certain steps you must follow. Please bear in mind that your choice to study abroad through an organization other than Georgia Tech is a highly independent venture and the responsibility for completing all the necessary steps is yours.

What do I need to do?

The following packet of materials has been gathered to help you prepare for your stay abroad. Please read and review all of the documents carefully. Three documents in the packet must be completed and returned to the Office of International Education (OIE) before your departure. Failure to submit these documents will prevent the transferring of your foreign credit.

Before you leave

- 1) Study Abroad Participant Profile
- 2) Acknowledgement of Policies and Procedures
- 3) Completed Foreign Credit Approval Form for Non-GT Programs
 - a. For further instructions on completing the FCA, please see the "Non-GT Credit Transfer Instructions" packet available from an advisor or at www.oie.gatech.edu
- 4) Proof of Accreditation
 - a. If the Non-GT Program host university is not well-known, you must also submit proof of accreditation

After you return

- 5) An official transcript sent to OIE from your program's host institution.
 - a. Transcripts sent to other departments, such as Undergraduate Admissions or the Registrar, may not be recognized as foreign credit and will not be processed correctly. *Send ALL forms and documents to OIE.*

Should you have any questions or concerns about the enclosed documents or about other matters related to your non-GT study abroad program, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of International Education so that I or someone else on our staff may try to assist you:

Phone: 404-894-7475
E-mail : stephanie.bullard@oie.gatech.edu

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

GOVERNING GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS WHO ELECT TO PARTICIPATE IN NON-GT OVERSEAS PROGRAMS

Georgia Institute of Technology (GT) advises all students to purchase health, evacuation and repatriation insurance coverage for the duration of their time abroad. I understand that it is my responsibility to purchase what I deem to be adequate insurance coverage for my stay abroad.

I understand that I am responsible for contacting the appropriate offices regarding my financial aid and scholarships, readmission, course registration, and housing at GT.

If I am not a citizen of the United States, I understand that the services of the U.S. government may not be available to me while abroad, including assistance in an emergency. I further understand that I should contact the embassy of my home country in the country (-ies) where I will study to notify them of my study there and to obtain information about my government's services for citizens in foreign countries.

I understand that Georgia Institute of Technology does not endorse this or any other non-GT program. By agreeing to transfer credits, grant financial aid, or in any other way assist me in the process of participating in a non-GT program, GT is not endorsing the quality of the program or guaranteeing financial aid or financial assistance. Further, I understand that GT assumes no responsibility for the safety, academic quality or any other aspect of or related to the program.

I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the information, policies and procedures in the booklet for students participating in non-GT overseas programs prepared by the GT Office of International Education and I acknowledge that I understand all of the GT terms and conditions, including those stated above, for participation in a non-GT overseas program.

Name of Overseas Program _____

Name of University/Organization Sponsoring Program _____

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

If the participant is under the age of 18, a parent or legal guardian must also sign below:

Printed name of parent or legal guardian

Signature of parent or legal guardian

Date

This form must be returned to the Office of International Education.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Submit Pages 1 AND 2 of the Participant Profile

All Students Participating in International Academic Projects

GT students participating in an International Academic Project (students engaging in independent study, a conference, or research that will be partially or wholly completed outside the US and are not part of a standard group program abroad are “International Academic Project” participants) should submit this form and an “Assumption of Risk and Release” to the Office of International Education.

All Students Participating in non-GT Programs

GT students participating in non-GT programs (e.g. programs sponsored by another university or organization) should submit this form, an “Acknowledgement of Policies and Procedures” form, and the “Foreign Credit Approval Form” to the Office of International Education.

Personal Information

Your Full Name _____

GT Student ID #: _____ - _____ - _____ (begins with a ‘9’)

Major: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

E-Mail: _____

Telephone: _____

Program Details

Name of Program or Description of Project: _____

Location (city and/or country) _____

If non-GT program, name of university or organization sponsoring program:

When will you be abroad? (Semester/Year) _____

How many credit hours (if any) will you take as part of this program? _____

Please list all financial aid, loans and/or scholarships that you receive: _____

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Are you enrolled in the International Plan? Yes No

(If yes, and you would like to count this program towards the IP, please fill out the IP Approval form (enter "Non-GT" or "IAP" and the location of your program under *Program Applied For*). The form can be found on-line: <http://www.internationalplan.gatech.edu>.)

Biographical Data

Gender:

- Male
 Female

Citizenship:

- C - U.S. Citizen
 R - U.S. Resident Alien
 A - Nonresident Alien/Intl Student

Racial/Ethnic Group:

- A – Asian/Pacific Islander
 B - Black (Non-Hispanic)
 H - Hispanic
 I – Amer Indian/Alaskan Native
 M – Multiracial
 W – White (Non-Hispanic)

Academic Year at time you will be abroad:

- FR - Freshman
 SO - Sophomore
 JR - Junior
 SR - Senior
 MS - Graduate student

How did you learn about your study abroad program?

- Class presentation E-mail
 Friend Professor (name) _____
 Study Abroad Fair Other (please specify) _____

Are you a resident of Georgia? Yes No

Have you studied abroad before? Yes No *If yes, as part of what program?

Emergency Contact Information

Please provide information on how to contact the person Georgia Tech should call in case of an emergency:

Emergency Contact Name: _____

Relationship to you: _____

His/her primary phone #: _____ Secondary phone #: _____

His/her email: _____

Return this form and other required documents to:
Georgia Tech Office of International Education
Savant Building, Suite 211
Atlanta, GA 30332-0284
404.984.7475

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

Credit Transfer

If you will be studying at a foreign university and wish to transfer credit back to GT from a non-partner institution, this is not the packet for you. Please refer to the Non-GT Programs portion of the website: http://www.oie.gatech.edu/sa/programs/#3_5

The 36-Hour Rule

GT policy states, no student may be considered a candidate for a degree unless the final 36 credit hours required for the degree are earned in residence at GT and approved by the major school (GT General Catalogue, p. 394, Section XIII. B). Students who are within the last 36 hours of their degree from GT and wish to take classes at another institution that does not participate in the cross registration program, must submit a petition for an exception to the 36-hour rule. For additional information on the petition procedures, contact the Registrar's Office: <http://www.registrar.gatech.edu/students/formlanding/petofac.php>

Readmission

If you will not be enrolled at GT for more than one semester (summer counts as a semester), you must submit an application for readmission for the term you expect to return to GT. Readmission applications are available from and must be submitted to the Readmission Office in the Office of the Registrar (Administration Building, Room 103). More information on the policy and deadlines can be found here: <http://www.registrar.gatech.edu>. It is highly recommended that you fill out the readmission application BEFORE you leave GT to go abroad.

Housing at GT

If you live in campus housing now and will leave to go abroad before the end of your housing contract, be sure to inform the Housing Office of your plans to study abroad before you leave. If you do not inform them, you can be held accountable (financially) for your contractual obligations. If you would like to live in campus housing when you return from abroad, you must abide by the standard housing application deadlines. Contact information for the Department of Housing:

Phone: 404-894-2470, E-mail: information@housing.gatech.edu

Website: <http://www.housing.gatech.edu>

GT Post Office Box

You should have mail sent to your GT mailbox forwarded to another address. You may complete the document requesting a forward on your mail at the GT Post Office. Please note that if you are not enrolled for more than one semester, you will lose your GT Box after the first semester you are not enrolled in GT courses or official internship. The GT Post Office will assign you a new GT Box when you apply for readmission.

GT E-mail Account

Please note that if you are not enrolled for more than one semester, you will lose your GT e-mail account after the first semester you are not enrolled in GT courses or official internship. The GT Office of Information Technology will assign you a new e-mail account when you apply for readmission.

Class Registration for the Semester You Will Return to GT

If you are away from GT for just one semester (summer counts as a semester), you will register for classes during regular registration periods (just as if you had stayed on campus). Information on registration periods, time tickets, etc. is available on-line: <http://oscar.gatech.edu>. If you are away from GT for two semesters or more (summer counts as a semester), you will have to apply for readmission before returning to GT. As a readmitted student, you may not be able to register until the last phase of registration (which is just before classes begin). Contact the Readmission Office at 404-894-0997 if you have questions about how readmission will affect your ability to register for classes the first semester of your return to GT.

HEALTH AND INSURANCE INFO

Health Information

It is important to know as much as you can about health issues in the country you'll be visiting. You can and should access this information prior to your departure. As a study abroad student, you are advised to consult the web site for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>. The CDC provides extensive information for travelers, including health information for specific destinations and information on outbreaks, vaccinations, and safe food and water.

You should also review the U.S. State Department's "Health: What You Need to Know in Advance of Travel": http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health_1185.html

If you are taking any prescription medications with you, we advise you to take enough for the duration of your stay. Be sure to take them in their original containers so that if you are asked about them as you go through customs, you will be able to show what the drugs are and that they were prescribed by a physician.

Immunizations Clinic

It is important for you to make sure that you have all necessary immunizations and/or vaccinations for your overseas experience. Georgia Tech's Health Services has an Immunizations Clinic that provides all required and recommended immunizations needed for world travel. You will need to make a travel appointment to meet with a doctor well in advance of your trip to find out what, if any, immunizations and/or vaccinations you will need before you begin your travels.

Georgia Tech Stamps Health Services, Phone: (404)894-1420 or online at <http://www.health.gatech.edu/>

Insurance

Georgia Institute of Technology (GT) does not provide non-GT participants with any insurance. As a participant in a non-GT study abroad program, you are advised to carry health, evacuation (for medical emergencies, political unrest or natural disasters), and repatriation insurance for the duration of your stay abroad. You are also advised to review the other types of insurance available for purchase and determine whether or not you should purchase any of those types.

GT is not responsible in any way for the financial risks associated with participation in a non-GT study abroad.

In an effort to help participants understand the types of insurance available for purchase and then make decisions about whether or not to purchase these types of insurance, here are brief explanations of the most common types:

- Health/Medical insurance usually provides coverage for medical conditions.
- Repatriation insurance provides coverage for repatriation of remains.
- Evacuation insurance varies and could include medical emergency coverage, natural disaster coverage and/or coverage for political unrest.
- Theft insurance usually provides coverage to reimburse you for expenses associated with replacing a stolen passport, camera, or other items stolen while abroad.
- Baggage insurance usually provides a reimbursement for loss, theft, or damage to baggage or personal effects. Some baggage insurance policies also provide reimbursement of expenses incurred if your baggage is delayed and you have to buy clothes and other personal items.

- Trip cancellation and trip interruption insurance usually provide a reimbursement for unused, non-refundable expenses that were prepaid.
- Trip delay insurance generally provides funding to help cover costs you incur if your trip is delayed substantially (usually by 12 hours or more).
- Accidental death and dismemberment insurance usually provides funds to the insured in the case of injury while traveling and funds to a beneficiary in the case of accidental death while traveling.

Detailed information on the terms, limitations and costs of these types of insurance is available from the companies that sell such policies. Information on some companies that offer policies with these types of coverage is listed below. Georgia Institute of Technology in no way endorses any of the companies listed below, but provides this for informational purposes only.

CSA Travel Protection
1-800-711-1197
<http://www.csatravelprotection.com>

T. W. Lord Associates
International Benefits Division
770-427-2461

Insurance Services of America
Phone: 1-800-647-4589
<http://www.insurancefortrips.com/>

MedJet Assistance
1-800-527-7478
<http://www.medjetassistance.com>

STA Travel
<http://www.statravel.com>

Travel Guard
1-800-826-4919
<http://www.travel-guard.com/>

Travel Insurance Center
1-866-979-6753
<http://www.worldtravelcenter.com>

Cultural Insurance Services International
<http://www.culturalinsurance.com/>

HTH Worldwide
610-254-8700
<http://www.hthworldwide.com/>

International SOS
<http://www.internationalsos.com/en/>

Also, phone numbers and web links to several travel insurance companies are listed in the U.S. State Department's "Health: What You Need to Know in Advance of Travel":
http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health_4971.html

PASSPORT AND VISA INFO

Don't put it off! It takes 4-6 weeks to obtain a passport!

U.S. Passport Information

The U.S. Passport Services Office provides information and services to American citizens about how to obtain, replace or change a passport.

A passport is an internationally recognized travel document that verifies the identity and nationality of the bearer. A valid U.S. passport is required to enter and leave most foreign countries. Only the U.S. Department of State has the authority to grant, issue, or verify United States passports.

Application for a U.S. Passport

To obtain a passport for the first time, you need to go in person to one of 7,000 passport acceptance facilities located throughout the United States with two photographs of yourself, proof of U.S. citizenship, and a valid form of photo identification such as a driver's license.

Acceptance facilities include many Federal, state and probate courts, post offices, some public libraries and a number of county and municipal offices. There are also 13 regional passport agencies, which serve customers who are traveling within 2 weeks (14 days), or who need foreign visas for travel. Appointments are required in such cases.

You'll need to apply in person IF:

- you are applying for a U.S. passport for the first time;
- your expired U.S. passport is not in your possession;
- your previous U.S. passport has expired and was issued more than 15 years ago;
- your previous U.S. passport was issued when you were under 16, or your currently valid U.S. passport has been lost or stolen.

For more information on getting a new passport, please go to <http://www.travel.state.gov/passport>

Renewal of a U.S. Passport

You can renew by mail IF:

- your most recent passport is available to submit and it is not damaged;
- you received the passport within the past 15 years;
- you were over age 16 when it was issued; you still have the same name, or you can legally document your name change.

If your passport has been, altered or damaged, you cannot apply by mail. You must apply in person. For more information on how to renew a passport, please go to:

<http://www.travel.state.gov/passport>

U.S. Citizen Visa Information

Information on visa requirements for U.S. citizens is available online:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html If you are participating in a GT Summer Program, the Architecture Senior Year in Paris Program, the Pacific Study Abroad Program, or GTL, your Program Director/Coordinator will provide you with information on visa requirements, if any are required.

Non-U.S. Citizens

Because passport and visa requirements vary according to the country of citizenship, Non-U.S. citizens are required to contact the foreign embassy directly to get information on visas. Furthermore, non-U.S. citizens are responsible for applying for the required visas on their own. Please visit http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html for foreign embassy contact information.

Failure to obtain the proper visas is grounds for dismissal from GT programs, and therefore, students who do not acquire visas are not entitled to any refunds of program fees. GT International Students should make an appointment with an International Student Advisor in the OIE to ensure that they maintain their F-1/J-1 visa status in the U.S. while participating in GT study abroad; please e-mail info@oie.gatech.edu to schedule an appointment.

ALL INFORMATION SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.

PLEASE NOTE THAT VISA REQUIREMENTS MAY CHANGE AT ANY TIME. YOU MUST ALWAYS TRAVEL WITH YOUR PASSPORT WHEN CROSSING BORDERS; THIS INCLUDES ALL COUNTRIES IN THE E.U.

SAFETY ABROAD

Emergency Procedures

Fortunately, true emergencies are actually quite rare. You may lose your luggage, your plane ticket, or even your passport while you are abroad. While any of those occurrences would certainly be inconvenient, none is an emergency. Emergencies are situations in which there is an immediate threat to a student or staff member's health and/or safety. Following are procedures to follow in the event of an emergency.

Emergencies/Crises Abroad

Before you leave the United States, International Academic Project participants should obtain the address and phone number of the consulate or embassy closest to your host city. U.S. citizens can find the U.S. embassy locations here: <http://www.usembassy.gov/>. Non-U.S. citizens should contact the embassy of their country of citizenship.

U.S. citizens should register with the U.S. Embassy or Consulate by providing them the length of your stay and contact information abroad. You may register online via: <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/>. Non-U.S. citizens should register with their passport country's embassy in the country(-ies) in which they are traveling or studying. Non-U.S. citizens should understand that the services of the U.S. government provides to U.S. citizens while abroad (including assistance in an emergency) will not be available to them, even though they are hosted by a U.S. program. Therefore, it is imperative that you register with your home embassy.

Once you arrive in-country, you should ask what emergency procedures and resources will be available to you in the location of your stay (e.g. institution, company, hotel, etc). If you witness an emergency or are in an emergency situation yourself, your first call (after you have attended to any life-threatening matters) should be to your on-site contact or faculty leader. If you are on an independent study, contact the Georgia Institute of Technology by calling the GT Police Department at +1 (404) 894-2500. The GT Police Department can contact the Dean of Students 24 hours per day. The Dean of Students' Office will activate GT's Emergency Response Plan.

Emergencies Back Home While You're Abroad

While abroad, you should communicate with family/friends directly about your safety and well-being. People need to know how to get in touch with you, especially if you are away from your program city or traveling on your own before or after the program. If there is a serious illness or death in your family, your family will want to be able to reach you. Or even if there is a crisis in the U.S. or elsewhere in the world, loved ones will often want at least to hear your voice and make sure you are okay.

We advise you to:

- Develop a plan for regular telephone calls and/or e-mail contact with your family and others with whom you wish to stay in contact. Develop your plan before your departure.
- If there is an emergency that requires you to leave your program and return to the U.S. for any length of time, you should notify your on-site contact BEFORE you leave. Also be sure to inform your faculty advisor and the GT Office of International Education.

- Make sure that someone always knows where and how to contact you in an emergency and knows your schedule and itinerary when you are traveling. If your emergency contact changes at any time during your trip abroad, please update that information with the GT Office of International Education.

If you have any questions or concerns about safety or emergencies before your departure or during your program abroad, you should contact the Office of International Education.

Take Charge of your Personal Safety While Abroad

- Remember that there are things that increase your risk of being the victim of crime. Some of the things that increase your risk are:
 - Being intoxicated or under the influence of drugs
 - Being alone at night
 - Being in an isolated area
 - Being asleep in an unlocked or public place
 - Being new to the country
 - Being unable to speak the local language
- Do not think, "It can't or won't happen to me." It's very unpleasant to consider the possibility of danger when thinking about how exciting it is to be in a new place. The fact remains, however, that consequences can be *more* severe and unpleasant *because* this is a new place and should, therefore, be more seriously considered. Our advice to you is to try to think, "It CAN happen to me" and then act even *more* responsibly than you would at home.
- Students are most often victims of petty crime shortly after they arrive in the foreign country while they are still somewhat disoriented and uncertain of themselves and their surroundings. You may forget to lock your room, your purse or backpack may be snatched, or, in the confusion and newness, you may simply become careless. Be particularly vigilant of your personal possessions the first week or two after your arrival.

Before You Go

- Make copies of your travel documents – Passport and visas. Keep copies in a safe place (separated from the original documents) and leave a copy in the U.S. with someone you trust.
- Make a copy of your travel itinerary and leave it with your parents and/or emergency contact.
- Fill out the emergency info section of your Passport. Do not list someone who will be traveling with you as an emergency contact.
- Carry extra Passport photos – this can help to ease the process of replacing a lost or stolen passport once you are overseas.

- Be sure that a parent or legal guardian also has a valid passport in case of an emergency. He/she should be prepared to be able to get to your foreign location in less than 24 hours if necessary.
- Make copies of your traveler's cheques and credit cards (customer service phone numbers and account numbers); keep copies in a safe place (separated from the originals) and leave a copy in the U.S. with someone you trust. If these are stolen you will be able to call companies to put a hold on your accounts and replace them. Many have numbers that you can call collect from abroad so check with your providers before you leave.
- Become familiar with the basic laws and customs of the country you plan to visit before you travel. Do not assume that because it is legal in the U.S., it is legal everywhere. Remember, while in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws.
- If you are taking a Laptop computer, please make sure to go to the following link and read the Safeguarding Information on Laptop Computers document: <http://www.oit.gatech.edu/service/desktop-laptop-security/desktop-laptop-security>

Once You Arrive

- Call home as soon as possible to confirm your safe arrival.
- Make sure you know how to use the telephone and have a calling card or other means of using the telephone in the country(-ies) that you visit as part of the program or on your own.
- Carry your insurance card with you at all times!
- Avoid public demonstrations, even peaceful ones. If there should be any political unrest, don't get involved. Unsuspecting guests sometimes find themselves in downtown areas during protests. If this occurs, you should leave the area immediately.
- Try to act like you know what you are doing and where you are going so that you are less easily identified as a newcomer.
- Whether you are on foot or in a car, be aware of everyone around you and assess their probable intentions. This means occasionally looking behind you.
- If you're being approached by a potentially threatening person, make some radical or abrupt change in your speed or direction, or cross the street.
- Try to walk in groups of four or more, especially at night or in areas with high crime rates. In most cases, the bigger your group, the safer you are.
- Avoid places where someone could be hidden (bushes, recessed doorways, "back alleys", etc.), especially if you are alone.
- As you walk, especially at night, be aware of good "escape routes."
- Avoid wearing conspicuous clothing and expensive jewelry.

- Remember that your life is more valuable than any of your possessions.
- Learn the transport system so you'll know how to get home.
- Do not hitchhike.
- Do not ride bikes in the city, or on crowded streets – you could be hit by a car.
- Taxis are not safe everywhere, especially late at night. Read guidebooks and ask locals about the taxis.
- Avoid being alone on trains. If, for example, you suddenly find yourself alone in a train car, move to another one where other people are sitting.
- Do not leave your bags or belongings unattended at any time. Security personnel in airports and train stations are instructed to remove or destroy any unattended luggage. Do not agree to carry or look after packages or suitcases for anyone.
- Never keep all of your important documents and money together in one place or in only one suitcase.
- Have sufficient funds or a credit card on hand to purchase emergency items. At the same time, don't carry excessive amounts of cash or any unnecessary credit cards.
- Keep informed of current political situations. In an emergency, advisories may be made to the general public through the media.
- Learn what the locals do to protect themselves (neighborhoods to avoid, places that are known to be safe, where to walk, where to shop, etc.)
- Take nothing of great value with you when you go out, and try to carry as little cash as possible.
- There are many on-line resources that provide safety information for travelers in general or specifically for study abroad students. Some of those resources, which we advise you to consult, are listed below:

Association for International Road Safety	http://www.asirt.org/
Federal Aviation Administration: Site has security tips for travelers as well as information on a variety of aviation safety topics	http://www.faa.gov/
GT's Emergency Preparedness office can provide region-specific information	http://www.gatech.edu/emergency/
<i>Studyabroad.com Handbook for Students</i>	http://www.studyabroad.com/handbook/handbook.html
<i>The Center for Global Education, SAFETI INFO</i>	http://www.globaled.us/safeti/
U.S. Embassies' Recommendations to Americans Abroad	http://usembassy.state.gov/

U.S. State Department booklet "A Safe Trip Abroad"	http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1747.html
U.S. State Department General Site	http://travel.state.gov/
U.S. State Department Travel Advisories and Warnings	http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_patw/tw/tw_1764.html
OSAC – Overseas Security Advisory Council	http://www.osac.gov/
International Emergency Contact Phone Numbers	http://www.sccfd.org/travel.html
Department of State website for US students abroad	http://studentsabroad.state.gov

STAYING IN TOUCH

Communicating with your friends & family while abroad

In order to reduce the anxiety level of your friends and family back home and to keep yourself from getting homesick, it's important to stay in touch. Be sure to take an address list containing your friends' and family's phone numbers, fax numbers, and e-mail addresses. If possible, give **your** contact information to as many people as you can **before** you leave. Make sure that your family knows how often you plan to contact them. If they know that it is difficult for you to phone or e-mail, or that you will be traveling on certain days, then they will be less likely to panic when they have not heard from you in a while.

Phone Calls

Phone calls can be **VERY** expensive, so make sure you research your options *before* you leave the U.S. (In general, calling directly from a hotel phone, without a calling card, is the most expensive way to phone home. It can end up costing more for one phone call than for your hotel room itself!)

Ask your Program Director what past participants have found to be the most convenient way to phone from the country(-ies) where you are going. Exchange students can ask the coordinator at their host institution, or ask GT students who have already participated in your program. Some countries might have cheap pre-paid phone cards; others may rent cell phones once you are there, etc.

Don't forget to consider the **time difference** when calling the U.S., and tell the people calling you to remember too.

Calling Cards

An easy way to call home from overseas is to use a calling card from a U.S. carrier (e.g. AT&T, Sprint or MCI). When using one of these services, you will not usually need foreign coins and will not have to talk to an international operator. Special access codes in each country connect you directly to the AT&T, MCI, or Sprint network for potentially lower rates than going through the local telephone company. Be sure to ask your long-distance carrier for a list of the special access codes needed to get the network while you are abroad. Also, make sure you understand what the rates and surcharges are before you go. Ask the carrier(s) if they have special international calling plans. In some cases you may be able to get cheap rates on calls to one particular number (for instance, your parents' number in the U.S.).

Tell your friends and family to check their phone rates as well if they will be calling you so that they can sign up for the international calling plan that makes the most sense for their calling needs. Many phone cards are available to call from the U.S. to other countries at websites like www.callingcards.com

Skype

You should also check out www.skype.com to find out about making **free** calls over the internet to anyone else who also has Skype. It can also be used to make calls to landline telephones and cell phones at **very discounted rates**. Make sure to investigate this option before you leave!

Cell Phones

Most U.S. cellular phones do not work overseas, unless you have international service, but you can check with your cellular phone company to be sure. In some cases, you can rent a cell phone to use while you are overseas.

There are organizations that provide such services:

- *Planet Fone* offers rental cell phones at www.planetfone.com that can be used in the U.S. and while you are abroad.

- *Cell Hire* is a new company that also offers rental services. Visit www.cellhire.com

Check with your Program Director and/or with past participants to find out if they used cell phones when they were on your program. Be sure to investigate all of the costs so that you don't get an expensive surprise when you get the bills!

E-MAIL

Ask your Program Director or past participants about e-mail access on your particular program. GT webmail is now very accessible through the Zimbra system. You should be able to check your GT account regularly while abroad. If you intend to use an alternate e-mail while abroad, then be sure to forward your GT e-mail account to your personal account since you are responsible for checking your GT e-mail at all times. Once you have forwarded your GT account, **test it before leaving** the country! Many students in the past thought that they had forwarded their GT accounts, but did not check to make sure it worked.

CUSTOMS INFORMATION

Can I bring back anything I buy while I'm abroad?
Are there limits on how much I can bring back into the U.S.?
Will I have to pay duty (tax) on the things I bring back?

Answers to these questions and many others are included in "Know Before You Go," a booklet written by the U.S. Customs Service. "Know Before You Go" gives detailed information on what you can and cannot bring back to the U.S. Before your departure, be sure to read "Know Before You Go," which is available on-line: <http://www.customs.ustreas.gov>.

PARENTS

Do your parents have questions about study abroad or are they questioning your decision to go abroad? If so, we have a recommendation for you.

William Hoffa, a well-known international educator, wrote *Study Abroad: A Parent's Guide* to inform parents of the important role of international education in today's world. Hoffa's book touches on the fact that studying abroad is more than an extended vacation, and can, in fact, enrich academics and allow students to gain an understanding of other cultures and backgrounds. More practically, he points out that study abroad experience can also significantly enhance a resume. Hoffa's intent is to set parents' minds at ease as they assist their students in the study abroad process.

This book was published by NAFSA Publishers and is no longer in print. It can be found on Amazon.com for approximately \$15.

MONEY MATTERS

Financial Considerations while Abroad

You will need to make some decisions before your departure about how you will handle money while overseas. We suggest that you carry money in a variety of ways so that if one mode fails you'll always have a back-up.

First, you need to know what the currency of your host country is and what your dollars will be worth in the host country. An online source of information about currencies and currency exchange rates is: www.oanda.com This web site has a currency converter that you can use to check currency exchange rates. Another helpful online resource is www.smartertravel.com. This site provides information on money and insurance topics for travel abroad.

NOTE: In 2001, many European countries began using a new currency, the **Euro**. Not all member states in the European Union use the Euro as their currency. For information on which countries now use the Euro, please visit: <http://europa.eu>

FINANCIAL OPTIONS WHILE ABROAD

ATM/Debit Card (convenient and easy, but charge fees)

The proliferation of Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) around the world provides one of the best ways of transferring money and exchanging currency. Many ATMs in the United States and abroad are connected to international networks such as Cirrus or the Plus System. This means that you can get cash in the local currency directly from your bank account in the U.S, and you will usually get a very favorable rate of exchange. Some countries have more ATMs that accept U.S. cards than others, so check with your Program Director/Coordinator about the particular country(-ies) where you will study. A debit card (with a MasterCard or Visa logo on front) is more useful abroad than a regular ATM card because the Visa or MasterCard logo allows the card to work at more machines.

NOTE: Be aware that most U.S. banks charge fees every time you use an ATM card, and sometimes these are high on international withdrawals. Check with your bank about fees associated with making cash withdrawals abroad.

Tips for Debit/ATM Card Use

Contact your bank before going abroad.

- ✓ Inform them of your dates of travel. Many banks will freeze your account if you have not informed them of your international travel.
- ✓ Inquire about fees associated with international transactions.
- ✓ Ask for details and restrictions about your account and about accessing funds from abroad (i.e. daily withdrawal limits).

Credit Card (convenient, but watch out for fees)

Major credit cards such as MasterCard and Visa can usually be used all over the world. American Express is also widely accepted abroad. When you make a purchase in Mexican Pesos, Australian Dollars, or any other foreign currency, the money is charged to your credit card in American Dollars. In

other words, when you receive your statement or do an inquiry on your account, the amount that you spent in a foreign location will automatically be reflected in U.S. dollars. You usually get a better exchange rate when using a credit card than you would when exchanging cash or traveler's checks. You can also get a *cash advance* with your credit card, but be sure to look into fees and interest rates, as these are typically very high. Even if you don't plan to use a credit card regularly, we suggest that you carry at least one major card to use for emergencies. Ideally, we suggest that you carry one Visa and one MasterCard it may be easier to use one or the other in your particular country.

NOTE: Beware of fees that most credit card companies charge on international transactions. Contact your credit card company to find out their policies before you go abroad!

Tips for Credit Card Use

- **Contact your credit card company before you go abroad.**
 - Ask for a customer service telephone number that you can use to contact them while you are abroad. Most companies have a collect telephone number that clients may use to call for reporting lost/stolen cards while abroad.
 - Register your dates of travel so that their fraud services do not freeze your accounts when they notice unusual international transactions.
 - For safety purposes, keep a list of your credit card numbers or make photocopies of the cards. Leave this information with someone at home and carry it with you (in a place different from the location of the cards themselves) in case your cards are lost or stolen.
 - Be sure to have someone at home paying the monthly minimum for you if you're away for more than one month...you don't want to come home to bad credit!

Traveler's Cheques (the "old school" method)

You can purchase Traveler's Cheques in U.S. Dollars to be converted to a foreign currency OR you can buy them in foreign currencies. If you choose to buy some traveler's cheques in a foreign currency, you will pay the conversion fees here in the U.S. at the time of purchase and the exchange rate used will be the rate offered by your financial institution on the date of purchase. If you buy traveler's cheques in U.S. Dollars, you will pay the conversion fees where you redeem/cash the checks and they will be cashed at the exchange rate of the entity redeeming/cashing your cheque on the date of use.

Traveler's Cheques are probably the safest way to carry money. Since cheques can be replaced if you lose them, this guarantees that you can get money even if your cheques are misplaced or stolen (ask for details where you buy your cheques).

Many companies now also offer traveler's cheques in the form of a cash card. This is convenient and safe since it is not connected to your bank account.

Traveler's Cheques are available through American Express, Thomas Cook, Visa, AAA Travel Services, and usually through your bank. You may need to order traveler's cheques a week or two ahead of time, especially if you are ordering in a foreign currency.

Tips for Traveler's Cheque Use

- If your traveler's cheques are lost or stolen, you'll have to report their identification numbers. So, write down the check numbers and leave them with someone at home and keep another copy of this information with you (separate from your cheques).
- Most companies that sell traveler's cheques have a collect telephone number that you can use to contact them in case you need assistance while abroad. If you purchase American Express Traveler's Cheques, you should know that they have many travel service office locations throughout the world. Among other services, they should be able to assist you in the event that your cheques are lost or stolen.

Cash (a small amount as a back-up)

For safety reasons, you should never carry large amounts of cash in any currency. If you choose to take U.S. Dollars in cash, be aware that they usually net the worst exchange rates when changed for foreign currency. You may wish to have a small amount of the local currency on hand when you arrive in the host country. If so, you can "buy" most major world currencies here in Atlanta at major banks or at a currency exchange service such as Thomas Cook. The bank will usually have to order the currency for you so allow up to a week for processing your request. Whatever bank you use, ask about fees associated with buying foreign currency and about the exchange rate the bank will use.

Tips for Using Cash

- Travel with the equivalent of \$50 - \$100 in local currency so you will not be empty-handed upon arrival. This can be helpful for buses, taxis, phone calls, tips, and other incidentals.
- We suggest that you travel with a little U.S. currency. It will not get you a good exchange rate, but past study abroad participants have said it is sometimes useful.

Money Transfers

iKobo is an online service which allows money to be transferred to someone anywhere in the world. Transactions are done online and a Visa debit card is mailed (via FedEx or a similar shipping company) to the recipient. The Visa debit card can be used at any Visa ATM to withdraw cash or to make purchases anywhere Visa is accepted. More funds can be added to the same card later via the iKobo website. A small fee is charged. Visit www.ikobo.com to learn more.

International Money Orders

International money orders (up to \$700) can be purchased at any US Post Office and mailed to a recipient. The money orders can be cashed at post offices in 30 different countries. For more info, visit www.usps.com/money/sendingmoney/sendmoneyinternationally.htm

GENERAL REMINDERS

Every time you change money from one currency to another, U.S. Dollars to Hong Kong Dollars or Swiss Francs to Euros, you **lose money in the exchange**. If you are traveling from one country to another, this means you should try to get only as much of a particular currency as you think you'll use.

When changing money, keep in mind that **banks** usually give much better exchange rates than the currency exchange services found in railway stations and airports. Hotels and restaurants usually offer the **worst rates** of exchange and have high service charges.

THE STEREOTYPED AMERICAN

The following list is of some of the most common stereotypes of Americans held by people in other countries. Go through it quickly and underline those attributes that you personally think are positive and put an X beside those attributes that you personally think are negative.

*Do **NOT** mark according to what people you know think, or about what you think you are supposed to believe. Instead, put an X or underline according to how **you** perceive these attributes.*

U.S. Americans are:

- Optimistic
- Outgoing, Friendly
- Informal
- Loud, Rude, Boastful, Immature
- Naïve
- Hard Working
- Aggressive
- Judgemental, Moralistic
- Superficial
- Extravagant, Wasteful
- Confident they have all the answers
- Politically naïve and/or Uninformed
- Ignorant of other countries
- Lacking in Class Consciousness
- Disrespectful of Authority
- Racially Prejudiced
- Wealthy
- Generous
- Impatient, always in a hurry

It's also widely believed that the

- *Women are promiscuous*

While most Americans clearly perceive some of these as positive and others as negative, they are not viewed the same everywhere in the world.

For example, most Americans think that being informal is positive because it puts everyone on the same level and makes people feel comfortable and “at home”. This is definitely not the point of view of all cultures. Try to learn how the culture of the country you are visiting perceives these traits and values. Then, think about how your own attachment to some of these traits might make it either difficult or easy for you to adjust to the host culture.

Do you think these stereotypes are accurate? If not, then which ones do you think are inaccurate?

It's important to realize that some of the people you encounter will attribute these traits and values to you before knowing you, because of the stereotypes they formed before meeting you. How will you react? We suggest that you try to remain calm rather than becoming angry or defensive and that you try, if possible, to break the negative stereotypes people have of Americans.

What ideas (stereotypes) do you have about the people from the host country? What ideas do other Americans have about them? Where do these ideas come from?

Most likely, you have stereotypes about non-Americans in general and about those who live in the country where you will study. Though not necessarily wrong, stereotypes do prevent us from moving to the deeper level of understanding that is beyond them. Hence, educate yourself about your host country and its culture before you leave. Also, learn about current events and try to talk to people who are from the host country or who have extensive experience there. Once you're in the country, you will hopefully be able to go beyond the stereotypes and come to understand why things are different

PACKING TIPS FOR OVERSEAS PROGRAMS

Go light, wash frequently, minimize weight and volume

Travel with no more baggage than you can easily carry. Be sure to check with your airline for their weight and size restrictions.

THINGS TO PUT IN YOUR CARRY-ON

- Passport
- Health Insurance Card
- Ball Point Pen (to complete forms when you arrive in your host country; write down information)
- Credit and ATM cards, US cash (suggested: \$50) and some currency of the host country (suggested: equivalent of \$50 US)
- Copy of Travel itinerary; names and phone numbers of ground transportation (taxi, bus, metro) and final destination (hotel, university). If possible, print copies of public transportation maps, and a map detailing the area around your final destination before you leave.
- Access numbers for your U.S. phone company and the company's long distance calling card. Alternately, you can use a phone service local to your host country, using either a prepaid SIM card or cell phone.
- Ear plugs and/or eye shades, headphones
- Jacket/Sweater
- Time-Passers (books/magazines, mp3 player, handheld games, snacks, etc)
 - Laptop with appropriate plug adapters for the country(-ies) you are travelling to
- Change of clothes or two (with toiletries for about 24 hours) in case of lost luggage
NOTE: Please abide by airline standards for allowable items (1 qt size bag holding liquids/gels, etc. of less than 3 oz.)

HOW TO PICK/PACK YOUR SUITCASE

You should plan to pack in only one suitcase for your outward journey; the best are rolling duffel bags, the kind with retractable wheels, or "Travel Packs" that can convert from suitcase to backpack. Leave as much room as possible for souvenirs on your return, or pack a second soft-sided, collapsible bag simply for that purpose.

Clothing

Be sure to take clothes that are easily washed and dried and require minimal ironing. You may not have access to a washer/dryer at some points on your trip and will have to wash clothes (for example) in a hotel bathroom and hang dry. Work around a basic scheme of mixing, matching, and layering (do not restrict any one clothing item to a single outfit). We suggest you take a waterproof jacket. You should also read up on the country(-ies) you will visit to be sure your clothing will be appropriate for the temperature as well as for the culture. You want to be comfortable, but you definitely don't want to stand out as a tourist...that will make you much more susceptible to theft and robbery.

Numbers for packing light:

- For a semester exchange program:
 - 5-6 bottoms, 10-12 tops (allow for layering and seasonal changes)
 - 2 jackets (one waterproof, other climate appropriate)
 - Enough undergarments to last a week

- For a summer program
 - 2-3 bottoms, 5-6 tops (allow for layering)
 - 2 jackets (one waterproof, one light)
 - Enough undergarments to last 3-4 days (plan to wash frequently)

Shoes

You **must** have a comfortable pair of walking shoes. Make sure you have casual shoes as well as a pair of dress shoes. If you're going to use a hall shower, think about taking a pair of flip-flops.

Personal Hygiene, Toiletries, Etc. (some of this can be bought upon arrival)

- Toiletries: toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, soap, face wash, deodorant, razor (non-electric), comb/brush, dental floss, etc.
- Washcloth/ Towel
- Any prescription drugs you might need for the duration of your trip (talk to your doctor about getting them ahead of time)
- Small collapsible umbrella
- Small flash light
- Personal First Aid kit: Band-Aids, antiseptic, pain reliever, tweezers, lip balm, cold medicine, etc.
- Spare pair eye glasses/contacts, contact solution

School Supplies (some of this can be bought upon arrival)

- Textbooks
- Notebook and paper (You may find that American notebook paper doesn't fit into notebooks purchased in other countries and vice versa.)
- Pens and pencils
- Calculator
- Anything you're accustomed to using to organize yourself academically

Miscellaneous Items

- Map of host country/city and/or guidebook with local listings, cultural info, etc.
- Camera with extra memory
- Small sewing kit
- Swiss army knife (pack this in the bag that you check, NOT your carry-on!)
- Combination lock for suitcase, especially for traveling on weekends or staying in hostels
- Converter and adapter (U.S. electrical devices will not work abroad without an adapter and/or converter so this is a "must" if you need to take electrical devices with you. Country specific travel guides/books usually indicate the voltage & AC frequency needed.)
- Chargers or spare batteries for any electronics you are taking
- Travel journal

MORE PACKING TIPS

- If possible, avoid pressurized containers since they are more likely to leak or “explode” during the flight.
- Pack all containers of liquids in zip lock bags.
- Do not take expensive jewelry items.
- Be sure you have a list of the phone numbers for all of your credit and ATM cards so that you can call to have them replaced if they are lost or stolen. Also, leave a copy of this list in the U.S. with someone you trust.
- Keep a copy of your passport in a different place than your actual passport. Leave a copy of your passport in the U.S. with someone you trust.
- Keep prescription drugs in their original containers so that if your luggage is checked it will be easy for the Customs official to know which kind of medicines you have.
- There are lots of web sites that give detailed lists of what to pack and/or packing tips. A few we suggest you check out are:
 - www.onebag.com**
 - www.studyabroaddomain.com/packing.aspx**
 - www.independenttraveler.com/resources/article.cfm?AID=96&category=9**
- Remember that your luggage may be subject to inspection by the Customs Officials at your foreign destination. You may wish to contact the foreign embassy/consul of the country that you will be visiting. Contact information can be found at: **<http://travel.state.gov>**