STUDENT HANDBOOK FOR OVERSEAS STUDY
GLOSSARY
For the purposes of this Handbook, the terms and acronyms listed below are defined as follows:

**FPC:** Faculty Program Coordinator, the faculty member who coordinates and leads a VU international summer program.

**HOST UNIVERSITY:** accredited, 4-year, non-US institution that provides the infrastructure and courses for overseas study.

**NON-VU SUMMER PROGRAM:** any international summer program sponsored by a university, organization, or program provider other than Villanova University.

**OIS:** Office of International Studies

**PROGRAM PROVIDER:** university, university consortium, or non-profit organization that places students in academic programs overseas and provides student support.

MISSION STATEMENT
The Office of International Studies and Overseas Programs (OIS) seeks to fulfill the Villanova University promise "to add its influence to the search for world peace and justice by means of its academic programs and the pastoral ministry it provides for the members of the community." In seeking to fulfill this promise, the OIS views its mission as one that enhances and strengthens the University's commitment to diversity, intellectual growth, and a global perspective. Thus, the OIS is committed to ensuring that an international educational perspective is an integral part of a Villanova University education.

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Congratulations both on your decision to study overseas and your acceptance into your respective program. By the time you receive this, you will have completed the (often tedious) application process and been accepted by a program provider or overseas university and will now be preparing to spend at least a semester away from the Villanova University community. In addition to the normal anxiety associated with the end of the semester, you are dealing simultaneously with the fear and excitement of an eminent life-changing experience.

This manual has been created to help deal with some of that anxiety. In the various sections of this handbook you will find (among other things) information on general overseas study policy at VU; registration and course approval; resources for traveling overseas; and suggestions for dealing with culture shock. Every piece of information in this handbook has been carefully selected from sources within the field of international education and from colleagues at other institutions. (Our thanks to the University of Richmond and NC State University for allowing us to incorporate materials they developed.) At this point in the semester your "to-do" list probably stretches for miles. However, please take the time to read this material carefully. It will not only better prepare you for your time overseas, but also will make that time more meaningful.

Of the many sections in this handbook, I especially want to draw your attention to the sections on health and safety. It has been said that 'travel is aphrodisiac,' meaning that oftentimes people suspend their "common sense" because of the euphoria of being in a different culture. However, the overseas educational experience is not one where you can afford to suspend your common sense. Those “safety rules" which are a norm for you here at the University (and in metropolitan Philadelphia) still apply while you are overseas (walking alone at night, flashing money, drinking habits, locking doors, choice of friends, etc.). Further, the better informed you are the more secure you are. Read the health/safety resources included here in addition to the others that are referenced throughout the handbook (particularly the State Department's Consular Information Sheets). Do independent research on your host country/town/community: read local newspapers online, check out travel guides, look at world almanac entries. Your cultural integration is not just a philosophical goal of this Office, it is also a goal that facilitates your safe immersion into another society. This is not to say that the Office of International Studies or Villanova University as a whole can assure your personal safety while you are overseas any more than the University can assure you of your safety when you are here on campus. However, following the advice presented in this
handbook hopefully reduces your susceptibility to those negative incidents which might cloud your experience.

Two final quotes: Samuel Johnson said that in traveling, "A man must carry knowledge with him if he would bring home knowledge." And Clifton Fadiman wrote that, "When you travel, remember that a foreign country is not designed to make you comfortable. It is designed to make its own people comfortable." Taking these two statements together, these authors may just be saying "you will get out of it what you put in to it." Still, it is an important reminder. Whether you are conscious of it or not, you will be bringing to this experience a host of expectations. When these expectations are challenged or not met, remember that it is an opportunity to learn, not just about another culture or another academic approach, but about yourself and your own culture. If you really wanted things to be just like they are here, you would not have taken the energy to pursue study abroad opportunities in the first place. I commend you for that energy, and hope to hear about your learning experiences upon your return.

Best wishes to you from the entire staff of the Office of International Studies.

Lance M. Kenney
Director
ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

TIMELINE
In order to ensure that appropriate information is disseminated to all offices on campus, program providers, and overseas institutions and coordinators, it is imperative that you keep the OIS informed of any changes in your plans and adhere to the following timeline. Individual programs may require earlier applications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FALL BREAK</th>
<th>DEADLINE for overseas study in the Spring</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Late October</td>
<td>Information Sessions on VU International Summer Programs - watch the OIS website for specific dates and times</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early December</td>
<td>Mandatory Orientation for all students studying overseas in the Spring - watch the OIS website for specific dates &amp; times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 December</td>
<td>Documents for students departing in the Spring due to the OIS</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>SPRING BREAK</th>
<th>DEADLINE for overseas study in the Summer or Fall</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April - early May</td>
<td>Mandatory Orientation for all students studying overseas in the Fall and on non-VU summer programs - watch the OIS website for dates &amp; times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 April</td>
<td>VU International Summer program participants: Final payments due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 May</td>
<td>Documents for students departing in June or July due to the OIS</td>
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Others may advertise later deadlines. It is your responsibility to comply with all deadlines. VU students will not be considered eligible for overseas study after the deadlines stated above. Please also note that most programs utilize a process of "rolling admissions" through which applications are evaluated as they are received. Qualified students are admitted until the program reaches capacity. In some cases, programs will fill prior to stated deadlines. The OIS cannot guarantee acceptance into any program.

COMMUNICATION

E-mail: Internet access will vary according to program and location. All electronic communication from VU while you are abroad will be sent to your VU e-mail address. If you prefer to use another account, please be sure to have your VU e-mail forwarded so that you don’t miss any vital information.

Phone: A period of study overseas is an exciting time for students. It can also be a stressful time for their families back at home. Please be considerate and call your parents once you arrive overseas to let them know that you have arrived safely and provide phone numbers to contact you while you are away. Cell phone usage varies from country to country but many students find plans overseas to be an economical way to keep in touch. You may want to look into acquiring a cell phone overseas if one is not provided for you by your program. You may also want to consider establishing a set time to call your family (or to have them call you) once a week or so.
All students studying overseas must submit the following documents to the OIS in accordance with the Timeline. Failure to submit the appropriate supporting documents may jeopardize your eligibility for overseas study.

- International Studies Prior Approval Form (N/A for VU international summer programs)
- Copy of Acceptance Letter (will be automatically submitted for students on VU international summer programs)
- Signed Release Form
- Copy of the photo page of Passport
- Copy of Visa (if applicable)
- Copy of Flight Itinerary

A checklist has been provided for you in Appendix 1.

Students participating in VU international summer programs are also required to submit:

- Medical Form
- Two passport sized ID photos
- Transcript (non-VU students only)

ORIENTATION

Orientation is mandatory for all students studying overseas. Failure to attend will jeopardize your eligibility to participate in overseas study.

Fall/Spring semester and non-VU Summer program participants: The OIS has created a 4-part Pre-Departure Orientation program.

PART I - Logistics (on-line)
PART II - Health & Safety (on-line)
PART III – Introduction to Culture & Culture Shock (on-line)
PART IV - Face-to-Face with FAQs and Friends (in person)

Parts I-III are available on the OIS website. You are required to view all 3 parts prior to attending Part IV. Part IV is also mandatory and dates, times, and locations will be posted on the OIS website.

VU International Summer program participants: Faculty Program Coordinators (FPC’s) will hold program-specific orientation sessions prior to departure. Information on dates, times, and locations can be obtained from your FPC.

Topics that will be covered at Orientation:

- Packing
- Transportation arrangements
- Accommodations
- Academic Information (class format, how grades will appear on transcripts…)
- Health & Safety
  - Emergency contact details
  - Safety Issues in the area you will visiting
  - Health issues in the area you will be visiting
  - General safety tips for travelers
  - Specific safety concerns (i.e., women out alone, etc.)
- Passport/Visa information
- Learning Goals & Objectives
- Behavioral & Conduct Expectations
  - Alcohol
  - Drugs
- Cultural Issues & Adjustment
  - American Cultural Traits
  - U.S. role in politics as it relates to the areas you are visiting
  - Political/Economic issues in the host country/region
  - Communication Patterns, social structure, religious beliefs, & cultural practices of the host country
  - Gender roles in the host country
- Suggested reading and individual preparation for the upcoming time abroad
REGISTRATION & GRADE REPORTS

Fall/Spring semester and non-VU Summer program participants: In consultation with the OIS, you are required to complete a Prior Approval Form during the application process. Through the completion of this form, you receive approval from appropriate VU faculty members to transfer credit for specific courses you plan to take overseas. This form does not constitute registration at an overseas institution but is, rather, an internal VU document meant to assist in the smooth transfer of credit. You are required to complete any additional registration as necessary through your program provider or host institution.

When signing up for classes overseas, schedule conflicts, course cancellations, and schedule changes may prohibit you from strictly adhering to the courses you had approved via the VU Prior Approval Form. Additional approvals must be obtained via e-mail for any courses not originally listed on the Prior Approval Form. For assistance with additional approvals, please contact the OIS. Once you have completed registration with your overseas program, you should confirm your course schedule with the OIS so that your records can be updated.

Credit for work completed overseas will appear on the VU transcript. A minimum grade equivalent to a "C" must be earned in order for credit to transfer. In place of a letter grade, the designation "T" will be assigned for all courses in which you receive a "C" or higher. A maximum of 60 credits are transferable. This includes Advanced Placement, Overseas Study, and summer credits earned at another institution.

It is your responsibility to request that an official transcript from your program provider or overseas institution be sent directly to the OIS. As overseas institutions are usually on different academic calendars and have different internal systems for recording and disseminating grades and transcripts than VU, you should not anticipate having your overseas credit reflected on your VU transcript in the same timeframe that it would have been had you studied on campus. Usually, the OIS receives overseas transcripts within 8-12 weeks of the program’s conclusion but it can take even longer. If you have a problem with your transcript, please contact your program provider or overseas institution directly. Transcripts are your own private documents and, as such, the OIS cannot request transcripts or challenge grades on your behalf. You must give permission for transcripts to be released to the OIS. Transcripts are processed by the OIS as soon as they are received. Grades are generally applied to your VU transcript within two weeks of receipt of your overseas transcript.

Instructions on How to Register from Overseas for the semester following your time abroad can be found in Appendix 3.

VU International Summer program participants: Students accepted into VU International Summer programs are automatically registered for summer school when the registrar
receives the participant list from the OIS in April. Final grades will be submitted to the Registrar's Office by your FPC. If you have specific questions regarding grading policies, please consult with your FPC.

TRAVEL COORDINATION
Traveling requires organization and coordination. Schedules for trips, movement at airports, and other areas concerning travel arrangements will often necessitate certain regimentation. You are required to cooperate, realizing that it is imperative to follow the directions of your FPC or overseas representatives at such times.

It is of utmost importance that you adhere to all program deadlines as deposits and payments for transportation, accommodations, and facilities overseas are often made well in advance. With this in mind, your cooperation is needed in order to provide accurate participant lists to companies and organizations that will provide services to your group throughout your trip. Should your plans to study overseas change, please inform the OIS and any outside program provider immediately so that all necessary parties involved can be informed and your space offered to another interested student.

TRANSPORTATION
Traffic accidents kill more Americans overseas than anything else. Know where you are going and know about the safety of the route. Additional information on road and driving conditions overseas can be found in the State Department's Consular Information Sheets <http://travel.state.gov/> as well as on the Association for Safe International Road Travel (ASIRT) website: <http://www.asirt.org/>.

VU International Summer program participants: You do not have permission to operate a motorized vehicle while on a VU International Summer program.

Fall/Spring semester and non-VU Summer program participants: You are strongly discouraged from operating a motor vehicle while overseas. If you choose to, you do so at your own risk and the OIS recommends verification of appropriate vehicle and medical insurance.

ATTENDANCE
It is essential for you to be in attendance in all classes and other scheduled activities. The future of our programs depends on the good will of our overseas coordinators, professors, and staff. VU must protect that good will by requiring that you attend all scheduled classes and activities.

VISITORS
Fall/Spring semester and non-VU Summer program participants: Visitation policies are determined by your program provider and/or overseas institution. Please check with them directly regarding visitation rules.

VU International Summer program participants: Students cannot offer housing/accommodations or meals or allow participation in classes and/or field trips to non-participants.
DISCIPLINARY ISSUES
By signing the Release Form, you agree to continue to be subject to the University's Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity Code. Action, including (but not limited to) expulsion from the program and disciplinary probation upon your return, may be taken for any infraction.

CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT
The Code of Student Conduct exists for three distinct purposes. First, the Code helps to motivate good behavior, create community, and enhance respect for individual differences while emphasizing a commitment to the common good. Second, the Code represents limits, a description of behaviors that contradict the purpose and nature of Villanova University. Such behaviors violate presumptions of membership and cannot be tolerated in an academic community. Third, the Code and its implementation recognize the basic student composition of the community and its corresponding behavioral dynamic. To this end, the Code's most important purpose is to facilitate personal growth through values education so that members of the student community are made ready to assume public responsibilities beyond the campus and in society.

The Code of Student Conduct applies to all students enrolled at Villanova University. The University has a vital interest in the character of its students and may regard their behavior as a reflection of a student's character and fitness to be a member of the student body. Accordingly, the Code of Student Conduct applies to conduct that occurs both on and off the Villanova University campus and the University reserves the right to discipline any student responsible for violating the Code. To review the Code of Student Conduct in its entirety, please see the Villanova University Student Handbook.

FINANCIAL POLICIES
Fall/Spring semester program participants:
Villanova University will charge current students full tuition for all Fall and Spring term international studies programs. Villanova University students will be eligible to use VU financial aid (i.e. grants and scholarships) to assist with study abroad tuition costs as long as those funds do not carry policy constraints or conditions which would restrict their use for this purpose.

If a recipient institution's tuition exceeds VU's, the University is obligated to pay a maximum amount equal to that of the normal Villanova University tuition for that academic term's undergraduate tuition. Villanova University will not pay for room, board, travel, books, brokerage or associated non-academic fees of an international studies experience, all of which are the student's obligation.

For information regarding tuition remission program policies and overseas study, please contact the Bursar's Office.

If you withdraw from an overseas program, any penalties or fees imposed by program providers or overseas institutions will be your responsibility. The OIS cannot guarantee immediate re-admittance to Villanova University if you
withdraw from an overseas program after the start of the VU academic semester.

Additional financial aid may be available. For more information on aid, contact the Financial Assistance Office at x94012. Information on scholarships is available on the OIS website. Some program providers offer additional scholarships so be mindful of deadlines and application dates to ensure eligibility. A complete copy of this policy can be requested through the Academic Affairs Office. The University reserves the right to change this policy at any time without prior notice.

**VU International Summer program participants:** Program costs are determined in September of every year. A Non-Refundable Deposit is due upon acceptance into a VU International Summer Program. The balance is due by 30 April.

**Refund policy:** The deposit is not refundable under any circumstances after your application has been accepted.

If you withdraw from the Program by notifying the OIS in writing on or before March 1, the University will refund all fees paid except the deposit.

If you withdraw from the Program for medical reasons after March 1, and if you provide evidence of medical necessity from a physician, the OIS will refund all fees paid except the deposit.

If you withdraw from the Program for non-medical reasons after March 1, but before April 1, the University will refund all fees paid except the deposit and those expenses that have been paid on your behalf.

After April 1, no refunds of fees will be made for any reason. In addition, no refunds will be made for meals, accommodations, tuition or transportation you miss.

If a Program is cancelled, or if in the sole judgment of the University, a Program has been so radically changed in itinerary or curriculum that you are given the option to withdraw and you elect in writing to do so, the University will refund all fees paid. Under these circumstances, the University will have no additional responsibility or liability to you or your parents or guardian.

All issues related to outstanding debts, collection of fees, and receipt issuance will be handled by the Office of the Bursar. Students with an outstanding balance or unpaid fees will have their transcripts held pending clearance of their accounts.

Some scholarships are available for VU International Summer Programs.

**Non-VU Summer program participants:** You are responsible for paying all costs directly to your program provider. Financial Aid may be available. Contact the Financial Assistance Office at x94012 for more information.

**PROGRAM SURVEYS & EVALUATIONS**

**Fall/Spring semester and non-VU Summer program participants:** In an effort to monitor both the services of the OIS and the quality of programs available to students, program
evaluations are required. They can be downloaded from the OIS website and submitted electronically or through campus mail upon return from overseas. VU transcripts will not be released until the evaluation is submitted.

**HEALTH ISSUES**

Many places you will go have no special health concerns. Health-care systems and facilities in many overseas locations are quite similar to what we have in the United States. In other regions, however, there are differences and specifically recommended health procedures. You will need to take appropriate health measures as dictated by your overseas location. The OIS will make certain recommendations. However, students must take responsibility for educating themselves on health issues. It is important to talk with your FPC or program provider to receive the most up to date information about medical facilities at the site where you will study. Some programs, especially those that travel to developing countries, require extra immunizations. It is important for all students to update their basic immunizations.

**INSURANCE**

By signing the Release Form, you agree to procure adequate insurance to cover emergency medical needs, evacuations, or repatriation if necessary. At a minimum, the OIS recommends a policy that includes 24-hour emergency assistance worldwide, basic medical, emergency evacuation, accidental death & dismemberment, and repatriation coverage.

**INSURANCE PROVIDERS:**

The following is not an exhaustive list of insurance carriers but rather a representative list. Inclusion in the list below does not imply endorsement by Villanova University or the Office of International Studies of any particular insurance carrier.

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**Questions to consider when selecting Insurance:**

- Will the plan cover hospitalization for accidents and illnesses for the entire period you're abroad?
- Will the plan cover doctor's visits and prescription medication abroad?
- Is there a deductible? If yes, how much?
- Is there a dollar limit to the amount of coverage provided?
- What are the procedures for filing a claim for medical expenses abroad? Do you need to pay for expenses up front and then submit receipts to the insurance company for reimbursement? Be sure to get full information from the insurance company.
- What if you don't have enough money to pay cash up front?
- When does the plan begin and end?
- What do you use as proof of international medical coverage if documentation is required?

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**VU International Summer program participants:** Students are required to complete a program survey. These will be distributed to you during your last meeting with your FPC.
ASSESS YOUR HEALTH

Going abroad is not a magic "geographic cure" for concerns and problems at home. Both physical and emotional health issues will follow you wherever you go. In particular, if you are concerned about the use of alcohol and other controlled drugs, or if you have an emotional health concern, you should address it honestly before making plans to travel. Contrary to many people's expectations, travel does not minimize these problems; in fact, it often brings them to a crisis stage while you are away from home.

Be clear about your health needs when applying for a program and when making housing arrangements. It is recommended that you describe allergies, disabilities, psychological treatments, dietary requirements and medical needs so that adequate arrangements can be made. Resources and services for people with disabilities vary widely by country and region; if you have a disability or special need, identify it and understand ahead of time exactly what accommodations can reasonably be made. All students should have a check up prior to going abroad.

MEDICAL FORMS

VU International Summer program participants: If you are participating in VU International Summer program, you must submit a Medical Form completed by your family physician prior to departure. These can be downloaded from the OIS website. Completed forms should be sent directly to the OIS.

HOSPITALIZATION OR EMERGENCY CARE

It is to your advantage to provide information about current or past medical problems of which the University and/or program provider should be aware. In cases of illness, the FPC or program provider will consult with local medical authorities regarding hospitalization and treatment. In emergency situations the FPC or program provider will authorize required surgery, but in non-emergency situations will only order surgery upon receipt of parental/spousal authority.

If, in the judgment of local medical staff, serious illness warrants return to your home, the FPC or program provider will assist in making the
necessary arrangements and advance funds for return travel, if needed.

In the case of medical withdrawal, you will receive a refund of recoverable room and board charges only. You must submit a physician’s statement to VU along with a request for the return of funds.

DIET AND ROUTINE

Food overseas may be quite different from what you are used to at home. It may be “healthier” in some instance (more vegetables and fruits) or "less healthy" in others (more fried foods than you may usually eat), but most often it will just be different from your norm. Eat nutritiously, which may mean trying some new foods. Make sure to take special dietary needs and/or allergies into account and make arrangements in advance.

Despite the change in your environment, you can still keep some of your daily routines. Get enough rest, especially the first few days. Get plenty of exercise to keep your mind and body working. Don’t isolate yourself. You will probably have to make the first move in developing friendships, but they are an essential part of any overseas experience and, more importantly, your emotional well being.

IMMUNIZATIONS

You should have your tetanus immunizations updated. Immunization guidelines for specific countries and regions can be obtained from the Center for Disease Control at <http://www.cdc.gov>.

PRESCRIPTIONS & MEDICATION

Before departure, update your health records, eyeglass and contact lens prescriptions, and prescriptions for any medications you routinely take. Carry your prescription medications in their original containers and carry written prescriptions using generic names to facilitate getting them filled overseas should this be necessary.

It may also be helpful to have a letter from your physician, which includes a description of the problem, the dosage prescribed, and the generic name of the medicine. This information can assist medical authorities during an emergency.

Some common medicines that are prescribed in the US, even some that are sold over the counter, are considered controlled substances in other countries. You should plan ahead to take care of your pharmaceutical needs.

Consult with your physician on this matter.

If there is any question as to the legality of a medication, the host country’s Department or Ministry of Health should be consulted.

If you are allergic to anything, it is important to wear a medical alert bracelet or necklace and carry an identification card to inform overseas health care personnel in the event of an accident or injury.

You may want to make up your own first aid kit as well. This could contain such items as: Band-Aids, ace bandages, thermometer, adhesive tape, gauze, sterile cleansers, antibacterial ointment and antiseptic cream, sunscreen, sunburn ointment, aspirin or
other painkillers, and anti-diarrhea medicine. Depending on the region, take antihistamines for allergy relief, salt tablets, skin moisturizers, and insect repellents.

**ANTIDEPRESSANTS OR ANTI-ANXIETY MEDICATIONS**

Please consult with your physician on this matter. Be aware that some medications that are legal in the US may be illegal in a foreign country. If you are taking medication, it is best to consult with the embassy/consulate of the country you will be visiting about any special arrangements that must be made in order to bring your medication into the country.

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

Alcohol and drug use is the major cause of health problems and death overseas, particularly in overseas programs. This includes serious injuries, sexual assault, date rape and drowning. You need to be aware that you are in a different culture with different laws governing drinking and drugs. Alcohol and drug use can affect your ability to comprehend dangerous situations. This can be compounded by language and cultural differences.

If you are a recovering alcoholic, you should be aware of the stress of going overseas. There is an AA World Service located in New York (212-870-3400). Members of AA who are going overseas may write to obtain an *International AA Directory* (for $1.80) at PO Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163.

**Drugs:**

All U.S. legal restrictions on the use of drugs apply to all VU program participants. American visitors abroad are particularly vulnerable when it concerns violations -- intentional or unintentional -- of local rules and regulations concerning alcohol and, in particular, drugs. The process of law and punishment can be far more arbitrary overseas.

**Alcohol:**

Responsible use of alcohol occurs when:

- You abide by the laws of the country or state in which you are living.
- You do not miss any scheduled event because of the effects of alcohol consumption.
- You do not become ill due to the effects of alcohol consumption.
- You do not engage in inappropriate behavior toward other individuals as a result of alcohol consumption.
- You do not engage in destructive behavior toward property as a result of alcohol consumption.
- You do not engage in behavior that causes embarrassment to the other members of your group, the faculty member(s) or the in-country host(s) as a result of alcohol consumption.
- You do not facilitate or encourage or ignore a fellow student who is abusing alcohol.
- You refrain from transporting quantities of alcohol to program sites with the intent of sharing the alcohol with members of the group. This action is considered to be an irresponsible use of alcohol and subject to disciplinary action.
- You utilize good judgment when consuming alcohol at private homes or other accommodations during non-program hours.
than within the United States and more often than not may lead to prolonged imprisonment under substandard conditions. Consequently, it is of utmost importance for the welfare of the individual that extreme caution and prudence be applied when it concerns these matters.

The use, purchase, or sale of illegal drugs (hallucinogens, narcotics, stimulants, or depressants) is a critical issue. Any student who uses, buys, or sells illegal drugs will be expelled from the program by the FPC or program provider and immediately returned to the United States at his/her own expense. One violation will be cause for removal from the program. Separation from the program will result in loss of academic credit. The costs of legal advice, fines, and return travel must be borne by the violator.

VU prohibits the unlawful possession, distribution, or use of illicit drugs and/or controlled substances on any property owned or rented by the University or in any program or activity sponsored by the University in any location. Any student violating policy regarding illicit drugs, and/or controlled substances will be subject to disciplinary action and may face additional actions by the courts.

MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Stress is the number one cause of exacerbation of pre-existing mental illness and adjusting to another culture typically involves stress for any program participant.

Behavioral warning signs include (but are not limited to) an inability to communicate clearly, an unusual or markedly changed pattern of interaction (such as totally avoiding participation, becoming excessively anxious when called upon, or dominating discussions when this was previously not the case), extreme behavior fluctuation within a relatively short time span, a depressed or lethargic mood, being excessively active and talkative (very rapid speech), swollen or red eyes, a marked change in personal dress and hygiene, being sweaty (when the room is not hot), or falling asleep inappropriately. Even if unusual behavior is due to more transient culture shock, it is important to ask for help.

If you have a mental health concern, the OIS strongly encourages you to discuss your program participation with your doctor. Among other things, you need to be well-informed about the consequences of going off medication and potential interactions with alcohol.

You may want to consider requesting a release for your medical records in advance so that you can bring them along. If desired, many insurance carriers that work with overseas programs have services that can help identify a counselor abroad in advance. Your medical records could be released directly to an overseas counselor. Upon arrival, you could meet with the overseas doctor and become acquainted, so that a support system is in place if needed.

HIV/AIDS/HEPATITIS B AND C

Everything you already know about HIV, AIDS, and Hepatitis concerning how it is contracted is as true overseas as it is at home. Taking the advised precautions is the only way to protect yourself.

The World Health Organization states: "AIDS and
Hepatitis are not spread by daily and routine activities such as sitting next to someone or shaking hands, or working with people. Nor is it spread by insects or insect bites. AIDS and Hepatitis are not spread by swimming pools, public transportation, food, cups, glasses, plates, toilets, water, air, touch or hugging, coughing or sneezing.

Many developing nations do not have resources for mandatory blood screening. Thus, if you are in a developing country, it is important to avoid or postpone any blood transfusion unless absolutely necessary. If you do need blood, try to ensure that screened blood is used.

If you are sexually active, it is very important to ALWAYS use a latex condom. Take them with you as condition, manufacturing, and storage in other countries may be poor.

Many foreign countries reuse syringes, even disposable ones. It is best to avoid injections unless absolutely necessary. If an injection is required, verify that the needles and syringes come directly from the package or are properly sterilized. If the situation arises that you need extensive treatment or surgery, medical evacuation should be carefully considered.

If you are HIV or Hepatitis B/C positive, contact the consulate or the embassy of the country(ies) you plan to visit. Each country may have specific entry requirements or requirements regarding carrying medicines that you should know about before leaving.

HEALTH ADVISORIES

It is important to be aware of health issues in the country(ies) where you will travel. Remember to ask such questions of your FPC or program provider or check on the CDC website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/> and the US State Department website at: <http://travel.state.gov/travel_warnings.html>.

Important questions to ask:

- What illnesses, if any, are specific or endemic to the region?
- What medications should be brought to prevent these illnesses?
- What precautions are recommended for sexual or health practices?
- What kind of insurance do you need and how much coverage?
- What are the customs, beliefs and laws in the host country concerning sexual behavior and the use of alcohol and tobacco?
- What is the water quality in the host country/countries?
- What are the laws governing import of medications, medical supplies and contraceptives?

ILLNESS UPON RETURN

If you become sick when you return from your overseas experience, it is important to contact your doctor. Sometimes illnesses first appear weeks after your initial exposure. Also inform medical personnel of what countries you have visited. There are many diseases which are indigenous to foreign countries with which U.S. trained doctors may not be familiar.

SWIMMING & WALKING BAREFOOT

Swimming carries a high level of risk unless you are in a well-chlorinated pool. Those in tropical...
or developing areas can be at risk of disease from contaminated water which can cause intestinal infections. Tides and undertows can be deadly to the uninformed swimmers. Beaches and coastlines, which are marked with the international code for no swimming, should be avoided. Walking barefoot should be avoided in all circumstances.

**SAFETY ISSUES**

Faculty and staff at VU have extensive experience in all aspects of operating international programs. Students study in many locations around the world for one month to one year. In planning these programs, the concern for the safety of our students and faculty is given careful attention. We know that there are risks involved in travel. It is therefore important to prepare for both known and unknown circumstances. The goal is to "manage risk" to the greatest extent possible and to communicate this to you in all materials.

It is important to have a comparative perspective of the United States and the world. The United States is known around the world as a comparatively dangerous country. Our street crime statistics uphold this view. No other country has as many guns or gun-related injuries and deaths. U.S. drug and alcohol abuse is among the highest in the world. Although international visitors come in great numbers to visit the United States, many arrive concerned about what they think they will find.

The excitement of travel and the newness of the environment you are in make it easy to become careless or distracted. The following suggestions offer no guarantee of safety and are mostly

**HEALTH & MEDICAL RESOURCES**

Learn how to find medical assistance, whether routine or emergency, before the need arises. Is there a 911-style emergency number and, if so, what services does it access? Who will provide routine medical care and how can you reach that provider? If you need any special resources, find out how to get them. How will you reach your FPC or program provider in case of emergency.

**GENERAL ADVICE**

- **Safety begins with packing.** Dress conservatively. Short skirts and tank tops may be comfortable, but they may also encourage unwanted attention. Also, avoid the appearance of affluence.

- **Travel light.** This enables you to move quickly. You will be less tired and less likely to set your bags down. Never leave your baggage unattended; everything you own is in it. A thief knows this and will take advantage of even a few seconds of your inattention. This holds true no matter where you are--in a hotel, at the train station, in the train or bus, at a restaurant or resting in a park.

- **Protect your valuable documents.** Carry these in a money belt or neck wallet at all times. Wear them under your clothing.

- **Do not agree to meet a person whom you do not know in a secluded place.** Be aware that sometimes people from other cultures tend to mistake the friendliness of Americans for romantic interest.
The perception is often that life at home is safer than life "over there." U.S. media coverage of the rest of the world focuses on overseas political upheavals, violent strife and natural disasters, rather than on positive political and social developments or on the richness and human warmth of life as it is actually lived. Students who study overseas often comment on how "normal" life seems abroad, in spite of cultural differences. This discovery comes when you can look past the stereotypes and misperceptions and see people and cultures with your own eyes.

It is required that all students accepted on overseas programs attend all scheduled orientation sessions. Orientation provides practical information about the cultures and countries in which you will study. It teaches attitudes and skills which will aid in under-

- **Do not use illegal drugs.** You are subject to the laws of the country in which you are traveling. Hundreds of American travelers end up in foreign jails each year as a result of carrying, using, or being suspected of using drugs. There is little the American embassy can do on your behalf in these cases and the laws in many countries are more severe than at home. It isn’t worth the risk.

- **Think and act confidently and self-assured.** Try to seem purposeful when you move about. Do not look like a victim. Avoid flashy dress, jewelry, luggage, or conspicuous behavior, which would draw attention to you.

- **Avoid demonstrations, especially in politically volatile countries.** Read the local newspaper and learn about potential civil unrest. What appears peaceful can suddenly become a dangerous situation, and you could be caught in the middle.

- **Use the buddy system while traveling.** Try to travel with at least one other person at all times. If leaving your program location for a side trip, be sure to let your FPC or program provider know where you are going and how to reach you. Use common sense if confronted with a dangerous situation. At times it may be best to attract attention by screaming or running. In some countries it will be important to have a male companion in the group.

- **Plan where you are going in advance and be aware of your surroundings.** This is not paranoia -- it's good commonsense. You know what feels comfortable and what doesn't. If your instincts tell you a situation is uncomfortable, trust them and move along. If you become lost, ask directions, if possible, from individuals in authority.

- **Use banks and authorized money exchanges.** Do not exchange on the black market or on the streets. Learn currency prior to your arrival in a country. This will keep you from being a target as you use money. Be aware of your surroundings when using ATMs and don't let yourself be distracted.

- **Taking photos of police or military installations is usually prohibited - your camera can be confiscated and you may be jailed.** Watch for the sign of a camera with a line through it, which means "Don't take pictures."

- **Stay healthy by eating well and getting sufficient rest.** If you become ill, take care of yourself by getting the proper care. Don’t be afraid to visit a doctor or hospital because you don’t speak the local language. Usually there is someone who speaks English.
standing and interacting. Personal safety is increased when you are sensitive to the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behavior in a different culture, including the areas of traffic and public transportation (trains, buses, cars). Danger more often lies in personal confrontations or accidents than in international political instability.

FPC's for VU International Summer programs and program providers for all other programs are in regular contact with the OIS. In case of a crisis, re-arrangement of travel plans may be necessary and steps would be taken to act accordingly. Informed on-campus personnel, State Department personnel, and course faculty would be included in the decision-making. The OIS has access to international information over the Web and through colleagues around the world.

VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY

• Cannot guarantee or assure the safety of participants or eliminate all risks.
• Cannot monitor or control all the daily personal decisions, choices and activities of individual participants.
• Cannot prevent participants from engaging in illegal, dangerous or unwise activities.
• Cannot assure that U.S. standards of due process apply in overseas legal proceedings or provide or pay for legal representation for participants.
• Cannot assume responsibility for the actions of persons not employed or otherwise engaged by VU for events that are not part of the program or that are beyond VU's and its subcontractors' control, or for situations that may arise due to failure of a participant to disclose pertinent information.
• Cannot assure that US cultural values and norms will apply in the host country.

• Cannot assure that participants will be free of illness or injury during the program.
• Cannot assume responsibility for acts and events that are beyond our control or ensure local adherence to US norms of due process.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

The OIS believes that you have a major impact on your own health and safety through the decisions you make before and during the program. Participants on international programs need to:

• Read all materials issued or recommended by the OIS, FPC's, and your program provider/overseas institution that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural and religious conditions in host countries prior to departure.
• Consider personal, emotional, physical, and mental health and safety needs when accepting a place in a program.
• Make available to the OIS or program provider/overseas institution accurate physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary in planning for a safe and healthy overseas study experience.
• Assume responsibility for personal preparation for the program and participate fully in orientations.
• Obtain and maintain appropriate insurance policies and abide by any conditions.
• Inform your parents, guardians and any others who may need to know about participation in the international program. Provide them with emergency contact information and keep them informed on an ongoing basis.
• Learn the culture and laws of the country in which you will study. Comply with local codes of conduct and obey host-country laws. Americans are NOT immune to local laws in the host country.
• Be aware of local conditions when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to the program staff or other appropriate individuals.
• If you travel independently during your program, for any length of time, inform the FPC or your program provider and your host family (if applicable) as to how to contact you in an emergency.

AIRPORT SAFETY

• Arrive early (check with your airline for details), check in with your airline as soon as possible, and proceed immediately through security clearance. All shops and services available in the non-secure area will also be available once you have passed through the security check.

• Put your name and address inside and outside each piece of luggage; bright or fluorescent string or tape around your luggage will make it easier to find. Make sure you receive a claim check for EACH piece of luggage you check.

• Do not make jokes about terrorism or hijacking, or you may find that you are the object of unwanted attention. Respond to all questions asked by security personnel seriously and honestly. Be aware of what you discuss with strangers or what others may overhear about your travel plans.

• NEVER carry packages or letters for strangers or agree to watch a stranger’s luggage. Be watchful for suspicious abandoned packages and briefcases. Report them to airport security and leave the area.

• Do not carry on your person, or in your hand luggage, anything that could be regarded as a weapon. Matches and lighters are forbidden in baggage as are nail clippers, metal nail files and scissors. If you need these items, it might be a good idea to purchase them once you are on foreign soil. Metal objects in your suitcase may activate security devices, causing delays in the arrival of your luggage.

• Be sure to carry all important documents and any medication you may need upon arrival in your carry-on baggage. This includes your passport, visa (if applicable), copy of acceptance letter, return air ticket, and prescriptions. You may also be asked by Immigration to produce proof of financial viability. A bank statement or letter of financial support from your parents normally suffices. When going through Customs & Immigration, be polite and do not offer any documents or information that you are not asked to produce.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

• Many countries drive on the opposite side of the road than the U.S. Be aware of our natural reaction to look to the left and then right. This is reversed in the countries which drive on the other side.

• Take only taxis clearly identified with official markings. Beware of unmarked cabs. Agree on a fare before departing. Lock taxi doors if possible, especially at night in strange cities. Don’t share personal information.

Pay for the ride while in the car. Do not sit up front with the driver.

• There is risk involved in operating any motor vehicle abroad. You are strongly discouraged from operating a motor vehicle in another country. VU International Summer Program participants are not allowed to operate a motor vehicle overseas while a participant on the Program.

• Well-organized, systematic robbery of passengers on trains along popular tourist routes is a serious problem. It is most common at night and especially on overnight trains. If you see your way being blocked by a stranger and another person is very close to you from behind, move away.

• Where possible, lock your compartment, especially at night. If it cannot be locked securely, take turns sleeping. If you must sleep unprotected, tie down your luggage, put your valuables in your hidden money belt and sleep on top of your belongings.

• Do not accept food or drink from strangers. Criminals have been known to drug food or drink offered to passengers.

SAFETY IN CITIES

When possible, avoid places frequented by large numbers of Americans. Major restaurants and other premises clearly identified as American are best avoided. You may also want to avoid places frequented by military personnel. Many students dress in a way that
immediately identifies them as American. It's important to realize that this can bring you unwanted attention. Fraternity or college t-shirts, baseball hats, and white athletic shoes worn for non-athletic events will highlight the fact that you are American - and some people will resent you for that fact. You may decide to wear a sweatshirt with hopes that other Americans will introduce themselves - but you can always meet Americans in America.

**RESIDENCE SAFETY**

- Keep your hotel/residence doors locked when you are there and when you leave.
- Do not open your door to people you don’t know and don’t give your room number to persons you don't know well. Meet visitors in the lobby. Let someone know when you expect to return, especially if you will be out late at night.
- Keep valuables in a safe place - this may be different for each place you stay. When in doubt carry money and valuables with you.
- Close curtains after dark and lock ground floor windows and those accessible from balconies.
- Know the exit routes.

**CRIME PREVENTION**

- While you may not directly encounter thieves, they will have their eyes on travelers like you. Some students use money belts or neck safes to hold their passports, cash and other valuables.
- Beggars may approach you with children. We recommend you do not give them money and remove yourself from the situation.
- Pickpockets usually do not work alone. Be aware of distractions by strangers, as the "lift" often follows.
- If any of your possessions are lost or stolen, report the loss immediately to the police. Keep a copy of the police report for insurance claims and an explanation of your plight.
- It is important to be aware that some people make a living of preying upon honest people. Follow your instincts with casual friendships -- they are not always what they seem to be.
- If someone tries to take your purse, backpack, or other property by force, let them have it. Your personal safety is far more important than any property.
- A camera is the most often lost or stolen item on off-campus programs. Be especially careful to not leave the camera in a taxi, hotel room, or on a bus. Carry the camera inconspicuously.
- Do not bring anything with you overseas that you are not prepared to lose. Think carefully before bringing any valuable or irreplaceable jewelry or other possessions.
- When using ATMs, do not allow yourself to be distracted until you are finished your transaction and have collected your card and cash. Thieves working in pairs have been known to distract a person using an ATM, with one thief often asking for directions or other polite inquiries while the other removes the person’s card from the ATM.
PREPARING FOR THE TRIP

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

**Passport:** Apply for a passport right away if you do not have one. Processing time can take up to eight weeks, so start today. You will not be able to acquire a visa without a valid passport. If you need information on how to obtain a passport or how to renew one, it is available on the State Department's website at [http://www.travel.state.gov/passport_services](http://www.travel.state.gov/passport_services). You will need a passport that is valid for at least six months after your program officially ends.

Be sure to make a copy of your passport and leave it at home. You must also give a copy to the OIS.

**Visas:** While passports give you permission from your own government to travel abroad, visas give you permission from a foreign government to enter their country. Not all countries require a visa. Visa requirements can be obtained from the consulate or embassy of the country you will be visiting. For a list of Foreign Entry Requirements and links to embassy/consulate websites, see: [http://travel.state.gov/foreignentryreqs.html](http://travel.state.gov/foreignentryreqs.html). FPC's and program providers will provide information about visas as well. Be sure to apply for a visa early as regulations frequently change and it can be a time consuming process. You must also give a copy of your visa to the OIS.

**Youth Hostel Card:** If you intend to stay in Youth Hostels, you might want to buy a Youth Hostel Membership Card. You will save money if you purchase your membership here in the States. You may order a card by calling 202-783-6161 or on the web at [www.hiayh.org](http://www.hiayh.org).

PACKING

Our favorite two pieces of packing advice:

"Pack your bags, then take out half of the stuff and put it away. You can live very comfortably with very little."

"If you can't carry everything you're taking up and down a flight of stairs by yourself, you're taking too much."

Remember, the airline will limit your checked and carry-on luggage by weight and dimensions. Check with your individual carrier for specific limitations. Some students use a backpack as one piece of luggage because it comes in handy on side trips.

The best advice about packing is to take only what you will need. Another comment we hear over and over from past participants: "I took too many clothes!" No matter how much clothing you take, you will be tired of it after the first few weeks, so pack basic wardrobe items that can be mixed and matched, layered, and worn again and again. Casual clothes are appropriate for classes, but you may need at least one dressy outfit for special occasions.
It is a good idea to take a complete supply of any prescription medication as well as a note from your doctor giving the generic name of the drug that is prescribed. Keep the medication in its regular container in case custom officials have any questions about the type of drugs that you are carrying. If you wear glasses or contact lenses, it is a good idea to have a copy of that prescription as well.

Please do not take extremely valuable jewelry or watches with you when you travel. It is difficult to keep track of while you are away, and you’ll have less to worry about if you leave it home.

Be sure to pack your passport, return plane ticket, a copy of your acceptance letter, a change of clothes & essential toiletries, and any medication you may need on the plane or within the first couple of days upon arrival in your carry-on bag! You will need the documents to clear immigration prior to picking up your checked bags. The other items will be handy if your luggage is temporarily lost.

**Electrical appliances:** Bring only appliances with dual voltage. You will also need a plug adapter, which may be purchased at most hardware stores, Target, or Wal-Mart. Your electrical appliances will not work well abroad, even with an adapter, and there is always the risk that they will burn out. It’s often easier to buy small appliances abroad.

**Gift for your hosts (if applicable):** It is courteous to take along a small gift, perhaps something typical of the region in which you live, for your host family. Keep in mind, however, that customs officials will confiscate organic materials such as fruits, cheese, or even wicker baskets.

Take along photographs of your family, friends and home since your hosts and new friends will be curious about your life in the States. One former participant suggests taking a map of the U.S. because questions about geography often come up. Another student said that he met people from all over the world while traveling after the program ended, and the pocket world atlas he carried was very useful when he and his new friends talked about their homelands.

**LAPTOPS**

All students are allowed to bring their laptops overseas. You will need to purchase a converter in order to plug your power chord into outlets overseas. You are responsible for the care of your computer and it is recommended that, if you plan to take your computer overseas, you secure appropriate insurance.

**C & F students participating in the Laptop Program:** You are responsible for any loss, damage or theft of the computer up to $1,000.00 for the first incident. It is recommended that you check with your parent’s homeowner’s insurance to get coverage for the laptop in case of loss, damage or theft. Some homeowner’s insurance companies will want a "bill of sale" for the laptop. Since the machine is leased through the University, there is no bill of sale for the computer. The Laptop Program Manager can, however, provide you with a letter stating the make, model,
serial number and cost you are responsible for in case of loss, damage or theft of the computer. C & F Laptop Program participants who encounter problems with their computers will need to contact Villanova University by email at: support@villanova.edu or by phone at 610-519-7777. You will need to provide a full description of the problem(s) that you are experiencing. The Laptop Program Manager will receive this information and get back to you on the steps you will need to take to have the machine be serviced. The laptop can only be repaired through the Villanova University repair program, therefore you should NOT take the machine to be repaired anywhere else without the permission of the Villanova University Laptop Program Manager.

All sophomore students participating in the C & F Laptop Program will be sent communication via e-mail in April and May with information regarding the laptop return process. Sophomore students who are studying abroad through the middle of May will have until May 31st to mail their laptops to the address below. Failure to return the computer will result in a tuition charge for the residual value of the machine. You will be required to send back only the laptop and power adapter to: The Computer Support Center, Vasey Hall, Rm. 101, 800 Lancaster Avenue, Villanova, PA 19085.

For more information regarding the laptop programs, please visit:

<http://www.unit.villanova.edu/support/menu/required/>.

**MONEY**

The best way to manage your money, particularly for short-term programs, is to use your account at home. Your ATM card should work in most banks abroad so you will be able to access your US account and withdraw the local currency. If you don't wish to take a lot of traveler's checks, you could arrange for your family to deposit money to your US account on an agreed-upon basis. Keep in mind that traveler's checks will be useful during the break and after the term, when you may be out of reach of ATM's. Your bank will assess a fee for every ATM withdrawal, usually about $3.00 per transaction.

Another easy way to obtain money while abroad is to use a major credit card such as Visa or MasterCard. You can get a cash advance on one of these cards in an emergency, and your family can pay money into the account to take care of the money that you have withdrawn. This enables you to make use of the worldwide communication network of these major credit cards and saves you the expense of sending money by wire transfer.

For longer stays (semester to a year), you may want to consider opening a local bank account upon arrival. The easiest way to do this is to open an account and either deposit travelers' checks into it or have a family member in the States wire money into the new overseas account.
You should take a small amount of local currency ($25 - 50, available at banks or at the airport) to tide you over until you can either withdraw money abroad from an ATM or cash your travelers checks.

**Spending money:** The amount of money you’ll spend per week varies greatly depending on your lifestyle, spending habits, and location. One suggested formula for determining the amount of spending money you will need is to add 25% to the amount you usually spend per week here in the States. It is wise to monitor the exchange rate for a period leading up to your trip.

**JETLAG**

To avoid some of the problems of jetlag (adjusting to the difference in time at your new location), there are a few simple rules to follow on the airplane:

- **Drink liquids to avoid dehydration.** Water and fruit juices are the best to drink. Alcohol will further dehydrate you during your flight and hits you stronger and faster on a plane. It can also cause joint swelling and make it harder to adjust to time changes.

- **Exercise.** Stretch during your flight. If possible, sit in a bulkhead or aisle seat to stretch your legs. Some planes have extra legroom in the emergency exit seat over the wing.

- **Sleep.** If at all possible, sleep on the flight. If you can find an empty row, lift the armrests and stretch out. This will help you to be awake when you arrive at your destination.

- **Set your watch.** Change your watch to the new time when your flight departs. Attempt to eat meals on the "new" time. This will help your body’s adjustment to the new time zone.

- **Don’t sleep on arrival.** When you arrive at your destination, it is important to adjust to the local time. If you arrive in the morning, attempt to stay awake until a usual bedtime (or at least until 8:00 or 9:00 p.m.). If you arrive later in the evening, force yourself to go to sleep early. Usually, if you get a regular night’s sleep, you will wake at the normal time the next morning and be able to function normally. Try to establish a regular sleeping pattern as soon as possible.

**CULTURE SHOCK**

"Culture Shock" is the term used to describe the more pronounced reactions to the psychological disorientation most people experience when they move for an extended period of time into a culture markedly different from their own. It can cause intense discomfort, often accompanied by irritability, bitterness, resentment, homesickness and depression. In some cases, distinct physical symptoms of psychosomatic illness occur.

For some people, the bout with culture shock is brief and hardly noticeable. These are usually people whose personalities provide them with a kind of natural immunity. For most of us, however, culture shock is something we have to deal with at the beginning of our stay abroad. It may surprise you that culture shock is a real health issue when traveling abroad. Traveling through time zones and for long periods of time, facing new values, habits, and methods of daily life can leave travelers impatient, bewildered, and depressed.

You may find yourself alternately exhilarated and exasperated, thrilled at the experiences the new culture offers you and frustrated with the culture’s differences.
from your own. Early in your experience, you will likely have ups and downs. The feelings you experience are natural. If you are angry, impatient, homesick, or depressed your first few days, remind yourself that these things should pass once you have rested and are eating normally. If depression persists, however, do seek professional assistance from a counselor or doctor. If you are not sure about something, whether it is a simple question about where a service can be found, or a more complex matter, such as expectations about friendship and dating, ask someone you trust.

In a sense, culture shock is the occupational hazard of overseas living through which one has to be willing to go in order to have the pleasures of experiencing other countries and cultures in depth. All of us have known frustration at one time or another. Although related, and similar in emotional content, culture shock is different from frustration. Frustration is always traceable to a specific action or cause and goes away when the situation is remedied or the cause is removed. Some of the common causes of frustration are: the ambiguity of a particular situation; the actual situation not matching preconceived ideas of what it would be like; unrealistic goals; not being able to see results; using the wrong methods to achieve objectives (i.e., methods which are inappropriate to the new culture).

Frustration may be uncomfortable, but it is generally short-lived as compared to culture shock. Culture shock has two quite distinctive features: First, it does not result from a specific event or series of events. It comes instead from the experience of encountering ways of doing, organizing, perceiving or valuing things which are different from yours and which threaten your basic, unconscious belief that your own customs, assumptions, values and behaviors are "right." Second, it does not strike suddenly or have a single principal cause. Instead, it is cumulative. It builds up slowly, from a series of small events that are difficult to identify.

**Culture shock comes from:**

- Being cut off from the cultural clues and known patterns with which you are familiar; especially the subtle, indirect ways you normally have of expressing feelings. All the nuances and shades of meaning that you understand instinctively and use to make your life comprehensible are suddenly taken from you.

- Living and/or studying (working) over an extended period of time in a situation that is ambiguous.

- Having your own values (which you had heretofore considered as absolutes) brought into question - which yanks your moral rug out from under you.

- Being continually put into positions in which you are expected to function with maximum skill and speed, but where the rules have not been adequately explained.

As indicated earlier, culture shock progresses slowly. One’s first reaction to different ways of doing things may be "How quaint!" When it becomes clear that the differences are not simply quaint, an effort is frequently made to dismiss them by pointing out the fundamental sameness of human nature. After all, people are really basically the same under the skin, aren’t they?
Eventually, the focus shifts to the differences themselves, sometimes to such an extent that they seem to be overwhelming. The final stage comes when the differences are narrowed down to a few of the most troubling, and then are blown up out of all proportion. (For Americans, standards of cleanliness, attitudes toward punctuality, and the value of human life tend to loom especially large.) By now, you may be in an acute state of distress. The host culture has become the scapegoat for the natural difficulties inherent in the cross-cultural encounter. Culture shock has set in. Here is a list of some of the symptoms you may encounter in relatively severe cases of culture shock:

- Homesickness
- Boredom
- Withdrawal
- Need for excessive amounts of sleep
- Compulsive eating
- Compulsive drinking
- Irritability
- Exaggerated cleanliness
- Stereotyping of host nationals
- Hostility toward host nationals
- Loss of ability to work effectively
- Unexplainable fits of weeping
- Physical ailments (psychosomatic illnesses)

Not everyone will experience this severe a case of culture shock nor will all these symptoms be observed. Many people ride through culture shock with some ease, only now and again experiencing the more serious reactions. But many others don’t. It is important to know

1. *that the above responses can occur,*
2. *that culture shock is in some degree inevitable,* and
3. *that your reactions are emotional and not easily subject to rational management.* This knowledge should give you a better understanding of what is happening to you and buttress your resolve to work at hastening your recovery.

**HOMESICKNESS**

We tend to think of being homesick as something associated with being young and at summer camp. But, anyone can be homesick at any time. It can come from just missing the familiarity of home surroundings, the regularity of classes, the inexplicable fear of new places and just being outside your normal routine. It may not happen at all, it may be a fleeting experience, or it may stay awhile. It may take a call home or talking to a friend or faculty coordinator to sort out these feelings. One of the surest remedies for homesickness is to plunge into the experience and immerse yourself into new places, sights and people. It is important to know that many have experienced homesickness and recovered.

**FACTORS IMPORTANT TO SUCCESSFUL INTERCULTURAL ADJUSTMENT**

**Open Mindedness:** The ability to keep your opinions flexible and receptive to new stimuli is extremely important.

**Sense of Humor:** In another culture, there are many things which may lead you to weep, get angry, be annoyed, embarrassed, or discouraged. The ability to laugh things off will help guard against despair.
Ability to Cope with Failure: This is critical because everyone fails at something overseas. Those students willing to go overseas for study are often those who have been the most successful in their home environments and have rarely experienced failure. It is important for you to develop ways of coping with failure.

Communicativeness: The ability and willingness to communicate your feelings and thoughts to others, verbally and non-verbally, is an important skill for successful intercultural communication.

Flexibility & Adaptability: The ability to respond to or tolerate the ambiguity of new situations is essential. Keep options open and judgmental behavior to a minimum.

Curiosity: Demonstrate a desire to know about other people, places, ideas, etc. You will need to learn many things to adapt to a new culture.

Positive and Realistic Expectations: Think positively yet keep your expectations realistic. Everything won't be as you anticipate and some days, you will encounter difficulties. Keep things in perspective.

Tolerance for Differences and Ambiguities: Cultivate sympathetic understanding for beliefs and practices differing from your own.

Positive Regard for Others: Expressing warmth, empathy, respect, and positive regard for others helps to foster intercultural relationships.

A Strong Sense of Self: A clear, secure feeling about yourself results in good relations with others. People with a strong sense of themselves are able to stand up for what they believe in without being overbearing and don't cling to beliefs regardless of new information, perspectives, or understandings they may encounter.

SUGGESTED READING


Be sure to leave a copy of all important documents (passport, visa, travelers' checks, credit card numbers & phone numbers for cancellation, plane tickets...) along with your overseas contact information and emergency numbers with your family.

An Emergency Wallet Card will be distributed at orientation. You should fill in the blanks and carry this card with you along with identification at all times.

Should you find yourself in an emergency situation overseas, your FPC and on-site program providers are your first point of contact. They will keep in touch with the OIS. If you are unable to contact your FPC or need assistance from those of us back in the States, the following information is provided for your reference:

**CAMPUS RESOURCES**
*(During Office Hours: 9:00am - 5:00pm EST)*

**Office of International Studies**

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<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>610/519-6412</td>
<td>Main line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610/519-7649</td>
<td>Fax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610/519-6066</td>
<td>Lance Kenney, Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610/519-5832</td>
<td>Susan Masson, Asst. Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610/519-5910</td>
<td>Levi Brautigan, Overseas Study Coordinator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Associate Vice-President of Academic Affairs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>610/519-4522</td>
<td>John Immerwahr</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Vice-President of Academic Affairs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Name</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>610/519-4521</td>
<td>Jack Johannes</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Assistant Vice-President of Student Life**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>610/519-4550</td>
<td>Kathy Byrnes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Vice-President of Student Life**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>610/519-4550</td>
<td>Fr. John Stack</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CAMPUS RESOURCES**
*(After Office Hours)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>610/519-4444</td>
<td>VU Public Safety</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VU Public Safety has the home phone numbers for all OIS staff and can contact us on your behalf in case of a real after hours emergency.

**OFF CAMPUS RESOURCES**

**U.S. Department of State**

**Overseas Citizens Services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>202/647-5225</td>
<td>Monday-Friday (8:15am -10:00pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Saturday (9:00am - 3:00pm)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**After hours Emergencies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Info</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>202/647-4000</td>
<td>ask for the Overseas Citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service desk officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>202/647-5225</td>
<td>24-hour hotline</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AT&T Language Assistance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ext</th>
<th>Info</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>196</td>
<td>Translators are available 24 hours in most languages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Center for Disease Control**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Info</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>404/639-3311</td>
<td>(CDC Operator)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-800-311-3435</td>
<td>(Public Inquiries)</td>
</tr>
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**U.S. Federal Legislators**

**Senator Arlen Specter**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Info</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DC: 202/224-4254</td>
<td>Philadelphia 215/597-7200</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Senator Richard J. ‘Rick’ Santorum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Info</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DC: 202/224-6324</td>
<td>Philadelphia 215/864-6900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Representative W. Curtis ‘Curt’ Weldon**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Info</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**U.S. Consulates & Embassies Overseas**

[<http://usembassy.state.gov/>](http://usembassy.state.gov/)

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USEFUL WEBSITES

RESOURCES FOR PREPARING FOR OVERSEAS STUDY

VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY - OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
<http://www.internationalstudies.villanova.edu>

STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK

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

HEALTH AND SAFETY SOURCES

NAFSA: ASSOCIATION OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATORS
<www.nafsa.org>

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES
<http://www.embassyweb.com>
<http://embassyworld.com>

STATE DEPARTMENT
<http://travel.state.gov>

CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL
<http://www.cdc.gov>

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
<http://www.who.int/en/>

ASSOCIATION FOR SAFE INTERNATIONAL ROAD TRAVEL
<www.asirt.org>

AUSTRALIAN DEPARTMENT FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE

CANADIAN DEPARTMENT FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE
<www.voyage.gc.ca/consular_home-e.htm>

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM
<www.fco.gov.uk/travel/default.asp>

SAFETY ABROAD FIRST - EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL INFORMATION [SAFETI]
<http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/globaled/safeti/about-safeti.html>

NEWS SOURCES

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER
<http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/>

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE
<http://www.iht.com/frontpage.html>

BBC NEWS
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/shared/hi/interstitial-news.stm>

TRAVEL GUIDES AND AIDES

LET'S GO
<http://www.letsgo.com/>

INTERNATIONAL WEATHER INFO
<http://www.weather.com/>

HOSTELING INTERNATIONAL
<http://www.hiayh.org/>

INTERNATIONAL WEATHER INFO
<http://www.weather.com/>

HOSTELING INTERNATIONAL
<http://www.hiayh.org/>

CURRENCY CONVERTER
<http://www.xe.net/ucc>

HOSTEL WORLD
<http://www.hostelworld.com/>

VOLUNTEER & WORK ABROAD OPPORTUNITIES

WORLDTEACH
<www.worldteach.org>

CROSS-CULTURAL SOLUTIONS
<www.crossculturalsolutions.org/ta>

ADDITIONAL WEB RESOURCES

A listing of Web Resources for Overseas Employment, Internships, Volunteer Opportunities, and Scholarships is available on the OIS website.
DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

ALL STUDENTS studying overseas must submit the following documents PRIOR TO DEPARTURE:

[ ] International Studies Prior Approval Form (N/A for VU International Summer programs)
[ ] Copy of Acceptance Letter (will be automatically submitted for students on VU International Summer programs)
[ ] Signed Release
[ ] Copy of the photo page of Passport
[ ] Copy of Visa (if applicable)
[ ] Copy of Flight Itinerary

Students participating in VU INTERNATIONAL SUMMER PROGRAMS are also required to submit:

[ ] Completed Application Form
[ ] [ ] Reference(s): 1 for VU students, 2 for non-VU students
[ ] Medical Form
[ ] Two 2x2 inch passport sized ID photos (no photocopies or candid snapshots will be accepted)
[ ] Transcript (non-VU students only)

UPON RETURNING TO THE US:

[ ] Program Evaluation (semester & non-VU summer programs)
or
[ ] Student Survey (VU International Summer programs)
1. Make sure you have a signed, valid passport and visas, if required. Also, before you go, fill in the emergency information page of your passport!

2. Read the Consular Information Sheets (and Public Announcements or Travel Warnings, if applicable) for the countries you plan to visit.

3. Leave copies of your itinerary, passport data page and visas with family or friends at home, so that you can be contacted in case of an emergency. Keep your host program informed of your whereabouts.

4. Make sure you have insurance that will cover your emergency medical needs (including medical evacuation) while you are overseas.

5. Familiarize yourself with local laws and customs of the countries to which you are traveling. Remember, while in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws!

6. Do not leave your luggage unattended in public areas and never accept packages from strangers.

7. While abroad, avoid using illicit drugs or drinking excessive amounts of alcoholic beverages, and associating with people who do.

8. Do not become a target for thieves by wearing conspicuous clothing and expensive jewelry and do not carry excessive amounts of cash or unnecessary credit cards.

9. Deal only with authorized agents when you exchange money to avoid violating local laws.

10. When overseas, avoid demonstrations and other situations that may become unruly or where anti-American sentiments may be expressed.
Your registration appointment will be made available in NOVASIS [Watch your Villanova e-mail for availability information]. Check your time appointment in NOVASIS by choosing "Student Services" under Main Menu, then "Registration", then "Check your registration status."

You will need your NOVASIS PIN but not your Advisor Approval Code to check your appointment time.

You will be able to register for classes on-line just as of you were on the VU campus

I. Advisement. Academic advisement precedes registration and should occur well in advance of your time appointment. This is the time to consult with your academic advisor and to give careful consideration to the courses you should be taking for the upcoming semester. Each college has its own advisement procedures, so please check with your Dean's Office or Department for specific details about advisement for your college or major. The name of your academic advisor can be viewed by accessing NOVASIS with your PIN and then entering the "Student Records Information Window". Your academic advisor will issue an "Advisor Approval Code" that will allow you to register on the Web at or after your time appointment. You must meet with your advisor regarding course selection prior to your departure for overseas study. If the Advisor Approval Code is not available prior to departure, you can obtain it via e-mail from your advisor while you are overseas.

II. Check the Master Schedule for Open Sections. Before your time appointment for registration, you should check the Web for open sections of the courses that you would like to register for. The Search for Schedule of Classes can be viewed in NOVASIS for the most updated information on courses, times and faculty.

III. Registration After consulting with your academic advisor and checking the availability of open sections, you are ready to register for the upcoming semester. At or after your time appointment you will:

- Access novasis.villanova.edu and Enter your login (usually your social security number), and your NOVASIS PIN
- Choose "student services", then "registration", then "Log into registration" you must have your "Advisor Approval Code" issued by your academic advisor to be able to enter the "registration" form
- Follow the instructions to register for the appropriate semester
- Remember to check your schedule carefully