GUIDE TO STUDY ABROAD IN FREIBURG (IES), GERMANY
Prepared by the Center for Global Education

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SECTION 1: Nuts and Bolts

1.1 CONTACT INFORMATION

ADDRESS, PHONES AND FAX OF AFFILIATE HOST INSTITUTION

Contact in the U.S.

IES Abroad
33 West Monroe Street, Suite 2300 | Chicago, IL 60603-5405

Hours: 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM CST
Phone: 800.995.2300 or 312.944.1750
Fax: 312.944.1448
Email: info@IESabroad.org
Emergencies: 800.953.0171 or 812.355.3099

Contact in Freiburg

Dr. Ullrich Lohrmann
Director
European Union Center
IES Abroad (Institute for the International Education of Students)
Villa Gleichenstein
Werthmannstraße 11
79098 Freiburg
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Phone: +49-761-383-7780
Fax: +49-761-383-77899

www.IESabroad.org | blogs.iesabroad.org

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFO FOR DR LOHRMANN will be provided to you, directly by IES, about one week before your departure for Freiburg.

CENTER FOR GLOBAL EDUCATION

EMERGENCY NUMBER AFTER HOURS/WEEKENDS: 315-781-3333

Thomas D’Agostino, Director
Trinity Hall, 3rd Floor
Hobart and William Smith Colleges
Geneva, New York 14456
315-781-3307 (tel) 315-781-3023 (fax)
e-mail: tdagostino@hws.edu
Contact for: Emergencies and other critical issues

Amy S. Teel, Programs Operations Manager
(same address, tel, fax)
e-mail: teel@hws.edu
Contact for: Program details, flight information, etc.

Doug Reilly, Programming Coordinator
e-mail: dreilly@hws.edu
Contact for: Orientation questions, return issues, SIIF grants, the Aleph, etc.
1.2 TERM CALENDAR AND OFFICIAL PROGRAM WEBSITE

**European Union Track**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Departure from U.S.</td>
<td>September 1, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrival in Freiburg</td>
<td>September 2, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam week</td>
<td>Dec 15-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fly home</td>
<td>December 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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IES will release the schedule for any breaks, required excursions, academic activities and the like about two weeks prior to your scheduled departure. The excursion schedule may be subject to change until orientation so you shouldn’t book any personal travel in Europe until after you know all the term dates are firm. Then you can begin planning your leisure time. Excursions will be planned to Berlin and Prague early in the semester. There will be an extended excursion to Brussels, Frankfurt, Luxembourg, Paris and Strasbourg later in the semester focusing on the structure of the EU and its key cities. Finally, you will have a third excursion to two or three other European Cities (specifics to be announced soon) that tie into the final content of the academic program.

These excursions will be mandatory.

1.3 PASSPORTS AND VISAS

By now, you should have your passport firmly in hand. Be sure to keep your acceptance letter from Freiburg IES with it as you might need to show this when clearing customs and immigration in Germany. U.S. citizens do not need a visa to enter Germany but you will need to register for a residence permit soon after arrival. This will cost approximately $135 and you will be able to cover this with your Blocker Funds. The Freiburg IES office will advise you on what you need to do to register **but be aware that you need to bring with you to Germany proof of sufficient financial resources**, which can be in the form of a bank statement or a letter from your bank or your parents’ bank stating that you have sufficient funds for each month of your stay. If you do not have the funds (you need to document $4000, or $1000 per month), please ask the CGE to give you a letter of financial sponsorship from our colleges. We can send this to you once you have paid your HWS bill - around August 1 for fall semester or mid January for spring semester students, well before departure. You will also need **proof of medical insurance** but since both IES and HWS provide students with medical coverage, IES will provide you with a letter confirming this coverage in compliance with German requirements on your arrival. Or, ask Amy Teel to send you an insurance confirmation letter for your HTH insurance.

If you are a student who is NOT from the E.U., the United States or Canada, you may also need a visa to enter Germany. PLEASE CHECK WITH the Center for Global Education ASAP if you are uncertain about whether you need a German visa.

One recommendation we have remains consistent and universal: **make copies of your passport’s identification page (with the photo on it), any pages with entry stamps, your visa if you are not a U.S. citizen and your acceptance letter.** Make copies of your residency permit once it is
issued. Put these copies in various locations. Leave one at home with your parents. Put them in
different pieces of luggage/locations. Here’s why: if you lose your passport, having a copy of it will
make getting a new one much, much easier.

For more information the registration (for foreigners) process and for international students in
general, please go to: www.auswaertiges-amt.de and download a copy.

1.4 POWER OF ATTORNEY/MEDICAL RELEASE

Sometimes, after students have departed the U.S., important issues arise that require legal signatures
or procedures. An example is a student loan or financial aid document that requires a student
signature – but you will be gone and generally a fax or photocopy is not considered ‘legal’ in lieu of
an original signature. We recommend that you consider signing Power of Attorney over to your
parent(s) to cover such eventuality. Since the form and process varies from state to state, we cannot
cover all options here but you can easily find Power of Attorney information on the internet through
search engines like Google.

In a similar vein, we encourage you to prepare and sign a general release giving permission for
insurance companies and medical practitioners to speak with your parents in the case of emergencies
and so that they can help you make medical decisions and/or file claims on your behalf. You can
bring a copy of this with you and leave one with your parent(s). If you are uncomfortable with
signing a general release, you can also sign more limited or specific releases to control or release
specific sorts of information. Keep in mind that if you are over 18, medical providers may refuse to
share any information at all about your condition without such written consent which will limit your
parents’ ability to assist you.

1.5 IES and HTH STUDENT INSURANCE PLAN

IES will provide health insurance for all program participants. This is included for all students as part
of the program fees. You will find the IES insurance card/program the most convenient to use
if/as you need to seek medical care in Freiburg. In addition, HWS has secured a medical
insurance, medical evacuation and security evacuation plan for you, through HTH
Worldwide insurance. Your HTH insurance will cover you while you are studying on any pre-
agreed intensive German language program and also if you travel independently anywhere in Europe.

Details of your plan have already been sent to you by HTH in care of your HWS student email
account. Co-pays and deductibles are minimal. If you seek care from an HTH approved provider by
calling the HTH customer service number in advance of treatment for a referral, often HTH will pay
the provider directly, eliminating the need for reimbursement. In cases where you have to pay
yourself upfront, you will also find claims instructions and forms online on their website. If you have
a chronic physical or mental illness and know even before departure that you will need care abroad,
you can also call HTH customer service (confidential service) to get connected to the appropriate
provider or specialist even before you get on the plane. Please be sure to print off your insurance
ID card as soon as you receive the email from HTH and keep it in your wallet/money belt with
your other most important documents (passport, credit cards, etc.). To reach HTH customer
service call: 888.243.2358 FREE from inside the U.S. OR collect from outside the U.S. at +1-
610.254.5850. HTH will accept your collect international call. For more routine service or to
check on the status of a claim you may also contact them by e-mail:
customerservice@hthworldwide.com
HWS students also will be sent information from the HWS student accounts office about the year-long school plan this summer. Students have the option of purchasing the HWS Gallagher Student Health & Special Risk policy for just the spring semester at half the full year rate since you do not need the Gallagher plan while you are abroad. You can/will be given the opportunity to do that before spring semester bills are due. If you normally waive the HWS student insurance plan because you have a family plan covering you while you are in the States, then **MAKE SURE TO WAIVE THE GALLAGHER PLAN THIS SUMMER!** You will get the international coverage for your semester abroad with HTH even if you waive the regular HWS student plan! To waive go to: [https://www.gallagherstudent.com/students/student-home.php?idField=1192](https://www.gallagherstudent.com/students/student-home.php?idField=1192) and click on “student waive/enroll”. If you do not waive the coverage, then the year-long policy will be purchased for you automatically and will appear on your tuition bill.

### 1.6 REGISTER TO VOTE ABROAD

If you are not already registered as a voter in your home state (or in Geneva, NY), you can register before you leave the U.S. so that you are able to vote by absentee ballot while abroad. Most states now offer voter registration at the local Department of Motor Vehicles. You can register **EVEN if you can’t drive!** Please see section 2.11 of this guide for more information on obtaining an absentee ballot once you are a registered voter.

### 1.7 TRAVEL DATES/GROUP ARRIVAL

All students are expected to arrive in Freiburg on the scheduled arrival day. If you arrive early, you are on your own until the ‘official’ arrival date. If you are going over early for an intensive German language class arranged by the Colleges as a “Blocker Grant” benefit, your stipend should be adequate to cover hostel or temporary housing costs for any small date gap between a Goethe program end and the beginning of the IES program. You may **NOT** arrive late to IES, no matter what your arrangements. You are free to depart on the date mentioned above that says “fly home”. Some students choose to stay on in Germany or Europe for personal travel which is just fine so long as you understand that your IES program housing ends on the “fly home” date and that the program cannot accept responsibility for you after the official end date.

The number of students originating from HWS for this program are clearly too small for us to have arranged a “group” flight and IES does not send staff to meet you at the airport. However, if you are interested in working with a travel agent specializing in student travel to make the arrangements for you, you may work directly with Advantage Travel, HWS’ travel agency at 1-315-471-2222. You must report to the IES Freiburg Center by 5 pm on September 2 so we recommend you schedule a flight arriving into Frankfurt, Germany or Basel or Zurich Switzerland, the three nearest international airports, no later than noon. While you may fly into ANY of these airports, if pricing is much the same, we suggest Frankfurt airport as that has such excellent train links into Freiburg and IES, where you will head upon your arrival. IES will give you advice about the best way to reach them from the airport(s) and how to get there by taxi or public transit. Once your flight is booked, please make sure you provide the details to IES. You will also find that there are excellent information services at all German and Swiss airports, staffed by fluent speakers of English.
1.8 ORIENTATION

Students will have a 3-day orientation upon arrival in Freiburg. IES will provide you with more detail about the program but the key is to take advantage of this opportunity to meet other students, to meet the staff who will be providing support for you for the semester, and to start exploring the city. Orientation programs cover everything you need to know about academics, housing, transportation, and health and safety, navigating the city, etc. However, it is normal to feel a little overwhelmed and confused at first. You may not be able to take in everything you are told at first. So don’t hesitate to ASK if there is anything you do not understand! Expect to be patient and give yourself and the program time to get used to one another!

1.9 WHAT TO BRING

PACKING
How much to pack is our concern here, or rather: *How little to pack!* The rule of thumb is: pack light. Most students abroad do more walking than they do in several years in the United States, and often you are carrying your luggage, or a subset of it, around with you. Students who pack three suitcases are often sorry for it. There are several ideas out there about how not to overpack:

1. Pack up what you think you’ll need, and walk around the block with it. Chances are you will decide on taking about half of that.
2. Or, trust the experience behind the above piece of advice, put what you planned to take abroad on your bed, and then remove half of it.

WHAT TO BRING
Each individual will have her or his own tastes and habits, but the following is a suggested list of items to include:

- Warm coat/jacket
- Light windbreaker
- Lined raincoat
- Two skirts, dress pants for formal events or clubs for women
- One sport coat and tie for formal events or clubs for men
- Jean/trousers (3-4)
- Sweaters (2-3)
- Shirts (5-7)
- T-shirts
- Underwear/socks (7)
- Sturdy walking shoes (most important item)
- One pair of dressier shoes
- Warm sleep wear and slippers (important!)
- Bath towels/washcloths
- Travel alarm clock (battery operated)
- Earplugs (spongy ones are best)
- Enough prescription medication for the term with your doctor’s prescription
- An umbrella
- An extra pair of glasses or contacts
- Camera and film or extra memory card
- Laptop computer and memory stick (optional, see below)
Money belt or pouch to wear under your clothes
Cosmetics, toothbrush, etc. (if you have brand favorites, bring them)
The essentials—passport and visa, traveler’s checks, airline ticket (photocopies of these), credit cards
This handbook
A journal or diary

WHAT NOT TO BRING
More luggage than you can carry on your own
Expensive jewelry
Expensive electronics that you are afraid will be stolen (petty theft is the most common crime affecting students abroad).

Other things to keep in mind:

Point 1: Germany has stores! All countries have shops that sell things like toothpaste and socks. The brands might be unfamiliar, but they will get the job done. Also, you’re going to want to do some shopping abroad for souvenirs, art, clothes, etc…so leave some empty space in your luggage.

Point 2: Bring a day pack large enough for a weekend away but not so large you break your back. You’ll need a day pack to get your books/things back and forth around the city, and a 4000 cubic inch frame backpack is quite inconvenient for this! A lot of people forget this basic necessity. (If you do, see point 1!)

Point 3: Choose your luggage carefully. Many students find the internal frame backpacks efficient for getting around since they can be worn instead of being dragged or wheeled (not nice on cobblestones or dirt roads!) But there are options for all kinds of people and all kinds of travel. You know what you like best…we really just want to you to bring less.

Point 4: Bring some nice clothes. Check with the faculty director, a guidebook, or students, and they’ll all likely tell you U.S. Americans are some of the most informal folks around. That means that for most students going abroad, you’ll be diving into a more formal culture with a more formal standard of attire. Shorts are great for hot weather, but (in Europe and Latin America, for example) are reserved for sport and certainly not for visiting cathedrals! In general, bring at least some dressy clothes with you. It never hurts to look “good”—just remember that this is culturally defined. (See the section on fitting in, as well.)

PRESCRIPTIONS
If you have any medication you must take while you are abroad, please be sure that you have enough for the entire time you are away as it may be difficult to have prescriptions filled. Be sure to bring the written prescription (no photocopies) and a signed statement from your doctor if you have a particular medical requirement. Also, please notify the Center for Global Education before departure if you haven’t done so already. Immigration authorities may question medications in your possession and you should have proper documentation. Finally, it would be advisable to verify that a particular drug is not restricted in the host country (or others that you may plan to visit). Some countries ban certain drugs, even when prescribed by a doctor (for example, the drug Ritalin cannot be legally brought into some countries). The best advice is to be prepared and check either through your personal physician or through official government sources (such as the US State Department www.state.gov/travel/ or the Center for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov/travel/)
LAPTOPS AND ELECTRONICS
As would be the case at HWS, you may find it convenient to have your own computer, but this is not required as the programs do their best to provide computer access to students. You may use the IES Study Center for computers or use internet cafes. If you do bring your own computer, most laptops/tablets are dual voltage so they will work on European current. These only need a European plug adapter to allow you to plug them in.

Please note that petty theft is the most common crime affecting travelers. Please do not bring anything without first considering the impact of it getting stolen, or the reality of having to worry about the safety of these possessions all the time.

Two general rules for all electronics: 1) bring copies of your receipts. If your equipment looks new, upon return to the U.S., you may be asked to pay customs duties if you don’t have a receipt to prove that you didn’t purchase it abroad. 2) we recommend you investigate insurance coverage for your electronic devices and other expensive items. They might be covered by parents’ homeowners’ insurance policies.

JOURNALS
Have you thought about keeping a journal abroad? Many students write journals as a way of capturing and reflecting upon their experiences, even though some may have never kept a “diary” before. A journal (or diary) is a book of dated entries. The author can record experiences, dialogues, feelings, dreams, describe sights, make lists, take notes, whatever the writer wants to leave as documentation of his or her passage through time. Journals are tools for recording and interpreting the process of our lives.

Why should you keep a journal? Because a journal…
- is a keepsake that will record memories that you’d otherwise forget.
- is a keepsake that will record the person you are now—and how you’ll change abroad.
- is a way to interpret what you’re seeing/experiencing.
- gives you something to do on long plane/bus/train rides or alone in cafes.
- helps you become a better writer.
- is a good remedy for homesickness.
- is a space where you can express yourself with total freedom.
- is a powerful tool of exploration and reflection.

For more about keeping journals, download the CGE’s Writing to Explore Journal Handbook at www.hws.edu/academics/enrichment/studyabroad/, from the ‘downloads’ page.

DON’T BOTHER BRINGING…
Expectations: “Don’t expect, accept,” is a good attitude for students crossing cultures to have. How you set your expectations now will impact how positive of an experience you will have abroad. This means that you can do a lot now to help ensure you will get the most out of your program. Simply put, examine your expectations and be realistic. You are going to a different country. Expect that things will be different. You have no idea how many things will differ or in what ways, and of course you may well be surprised at how many things are similar. But for now expect that everything will be different.

How you set your expectations now will impact how positive of an experience you will have abroad.
Believe it or not, notions of the “right way of doing things” are entirely cultural and relative. Efficiency, manners, punctuality, customer service and “the rules” do not mean the same thing in different countries. Germans might be meticulously punctual. Italians might operate under a different conception of time (and being “on-time”). The point here is not to draw national stereotypes but to understand that different countries organize things differently, and not all of them work well from the U.S. American’s point of view. So don’t expect people in your host country to define these terms in the same way as you do. Expect to run into bureaucracy, but do look at how the people around you react to these things, and follow their lead. If they’re not throwing a temper tantrum and lecturing the mail clerk/waiter/train conductor, then neither should you.

You’d be surprised how ingrained our expectations are. We don’t see them as culturally-determined; rather, we see them as part of “the right way of doing things.” So you will get frustrated. Expect that too. But keep telling yourself that things are different, and remember that it’s not the local people’s duty to meet your expectations—it’s your duty to adjust yours to what is considered right and reasonable locally. “Don’t expect, accept.”

SECTION 2: Studying and Living Abroad

2.1 ACADEMICS ABROAD

There is much to learn outside of the classroom. Nevertheless, study abroad is also fundamentally an academic endeavor. No matter what your goals and expectations might be, the Colleges also have expectations of you. These include the expectation that you will take all of your academics abroad seriously and that you will come prepared, meet deadlines, read assignments, write papers or exams with care, etc. Having said that, as study abroad programs are uniquely well-suited to non-traditional learning (i.e. experiential learning such as field-trips, internships, or field research), you will likely find that you have never had so much “fun” working so hard. The key, however, is to realize that if the fun comes at the expense of learning, you will likely be very dissatisfied with the final results. The sections that follow are designed to answer the most commonly asked questions about academics and study abroad.

COURSES

Classes are held at the IES Abroad Freiburg Center located in an historic 19th century building near the center city. The IES Center includes classrooms, a student lounge, a small library, high-speed internet and printer access and an outdoor garden space. You will take 5 classes, one in German language, and the rest in English (unless you are doing the language program). Students enrolled in this program automatically are approved for the fifth course (overload) and no extra tuition is charged. Your courses will be taught by German, American and international faculty who are experts in their fields. In many cases, the courses will ‘feel’ like American courses, i.e. be interactive, encourage student participation and discussion. You will have regular exams and essays, as you would here. Your German language class will be ‘intensive’ during the first weeks to ensure that you have the necessary vocabulary for getting around. Then the number of hours will drop once your other IES classes begin.

GRADES AND CREDITS

If you are studying on any HWS program at any destination, you will be required to carry a full course-load and you will receive letter grades for your work which will be computed into your HWS gpa on your HWS transcript.
Students in the IES Freiburg Center programs will earn an extra credit (5.0 courses) as you must take four content based IES classes plus German language. Under no circumstances may you exceed this load of 5.0 classes.

As on the home campus, you may request to take any course OUTSIDE your major or minor on a Credit/No credit basis so long as you do so no later than two-thirds of the way into your course term abroad. Note that the deadlines for students abroad for exercising CR/NC are based on the “host” program’s calendar, not on the HWS calendar. You must contact the HWS Registrar’s office no later than two-thirds through your term abroad if you wish to take a course CR/NC. Think hard before doing this for more than one class, however. It may well be that future graduate programs and employers will think worse of a semester of CR/NC than one poor grade in something really outside your element.

WITHDRAWAL FROM A PROGRAM
A student participating in an HWS off-campus program who withdraws from that program after arrival at the program site may not return to campus to take classes that semester except under extraordinary circumstances, as determined by the student’s Dean’s office, the Center for Global Education and the Vice President for Student Affairs.

ACADEMIC CULTURE AND STANDARDS
As is the case on campus, there is no single “standard” or classroom culture abroad; each professor will run his/her own classroom his/her own way and your job, as the student, is to adapt to his/her expectations and teaching style. This having been said, there are some general statements that can be applied to most classroom settings outside the United States. Here are some of the most prevalent and most pressing that are likely to affect the classroom “culture” you will experience and to which you must adapt if you will have any professors from the host country.

1) Learning is YOUR responsibility, not your professor’s. It is much less common abroad for a faculty member to seek you out if your work is deficient, your attendance is unsatisfactory or your understanding of content inadequate. Faculty abroad expect that you will ask for help if you need it – and if you don’t then you should be prepared for the consequences.

2) Assessment (i.e. graded papers or exams) is less frequent and therefore each grade counts – a lot. In the U.S., we’re accustomed to frequent assessment and feedback. You normally receive a paper back with lots of comments. A first exam is usually returned before the second exam is given. This is NOT always true abroad. If you feel uncertain about how you are doing, make a point of sitting down with the professor to ask where you stand. For some classes the ONLY assessment may be in the form of a final paper or exam. Be sure you are prepared!

3) Unlike here where assigned readings are often discussed in class, faculty abroad frequently provide students with a list of required readings and also some supplemental “recommended” readings to further illuminate some of the themes emerging in class. However, these readings may never be discussed explicitly nor are you assigned homework designed to demonstrate your understanding of the readings. Be forewarned: whether or not readings are discussed, if they are assigned they are fair game for exams. You are expected to do the readings, to understand them and to incorporate them into your thinking about a particular topic. If you feel that you’re not “getting” something, ask questions.

4) Grading standards may vary from those you’ve experienced in the U.S. In some countries, an “A” is reserved for only the most outstanding or original work with “B”s or “C”s being more of the norm for students who have clearly learned the material but aren’t going the extra mile. Similarly, you may find that you are rewarded or penalized for different skills than are normally measured here. Some cultures place a higher premium than others on rote memorization, others want you to think independently, and in others you might be expected...
to draw upon a basic factual foundation that is assumed rather than explicitly taught. If you aren’t certain what a professor expects of you or what you can expect from him or her, ask for clarification. The Center for Global Education and its staff CANNOT change a grade once it’s been assigned nor intervene in its determination.

5) In most societies, classrooms are run more formally than in the U.S. (there are a handful of exceptions) and the division between student and professor is more marked. Unless/until you are told otherwise, here are a few basic “don’ts” about classroom etiquette:

- Don’t eat or drink in class.
- Don’t dress more casually than is acceptable for the culture.
- Don’t shout out an answer without being called upon.
- Do not interrupt another student while s/he is talking, even if you disagree.
- Don’t put your feet up on desks or other chairs.
- Don’t address your professors by their first names without being invited to do so.
- Don’t enter a faculty member’s classroom or office (other than for the scheduled class time) without knocking first.
- Don’t challenge a professor’s grade or assignment. (You can and should ask for an explanation of how a grade was determined and what you can do to improve your performance.)
- Don’t assume that “dissenting” or original opinions are equally rewarded on exams and papers. Find out whether you are free to develop your own ideas or if you must demonstrate understanding and ability to apply the faculty member’s own ideas or themes.

STUDENTS WITH LEARNING OR PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

Both the law and the custom abroad with regard to accommodation for special student needs are different than the law and custom here. If you have a physical or learning difference that requires accommodation, you should: 1) disclose this prior to embarking on the program abroad to find out about the accommodation that is available and how to gain access and 2) be prepared to find arrangements more ad hoc than they would be here on campus. If you are attending a program led by an HWS faculty member, you can normally expect to receive similar accommodations as you would here for his/her particular class(es) (such as extended time on exams or access to a note-taker, etc.) but may not receive the same accommodation from host country faculty unless this is arranged and agreed to well in advance. Start by disclosing; release your accommodations records to the CGE at http://www.hws.edu/academics/ctl/disability_services.aspx

2.2 MONEY AND BANKING

The most important general advice we have regarding money is to **make sure you can access money in several different forms.** That way, if for some reason your debit card doesn’t work at a particular ATM, you can use a credit card or traveler’s checks. You will likely rely on your cash (ATM) card – linked to a U.S. checking account – as your primary source of money in Germany.

We recommend that you carry a credit card as a source of emergency cash and credit. Visa is the most widely used in Europe. You may also use your ATM card or Visa/MC debit card if it has the Cirrus or Plus logos--don’t forget that you will need your PIN number. Consult the information provided by ASE on banking. It is very detailed and perhaps even more helpful than the general rules we provide below:
Do your homework. Here are some things you’re likely to need to learn about each way to access money:

CREDIT CARDS
Credit cards are useful in many countries now, and one of the advantages is that by using them, you’ll be getting a competitive exchange rate. But, if you’re going to be using a credit card abroad, make sure your card company knows about your trip. It’s possible that they may cancel your card if they see lots of foreign charges all of a sudden. Also please read the ‘important new development’ section for information about the chip and pin card. While you’ve got your bank on the phone, ask about any fees for using the card abroad for purchases or cash advances. Also, make sure you have your pin number memorized before you go. This will enable you to get a cash advance from many ATM machines. NOTE: You can often get a credit card cash advance inside a bank, though they may wonder why you are not using the machine outside. Just make sure you have your passport for identification purposes. This process may take a while, but can be a saving grace in a financial pinch.

DEBIT CARDS
Make sure your card is on one or both of the big international ATM systems, Cirrus or Plus, by looking at the back of the card. Make sure you contact your bank to let them know you’ll be abroad and ask about any fees for using ATMs overseas. In the past, we recommended using Debit/ATM cards as the best way to get your money abroad. Recently however, a lot of banks have begun levying hefty fees each time a card is used at an ATM abroad – one student told us of fees of $25 per transaction! We strongly recommend that you ask about the fees and see if there is any way to have these reduced or waived. If your bank is charging more than $5 per transaction, consider shopping around and changing your bank. Small banks, credit unions, and savings and loans tend to be (but not always) less punitive than the large commercials banks. Wherever you bank, please be aware of your surroundings when you take out money from an ATM. This is a common place for theft so stay alert.

Some students have found it useful to sign up for online banking before they leave home so they can keep track of their balance and the fees charged for overseas transactions – and to help ensure that they don’t go overdrawn.

Important new development! Most European countries have transitioned to chip and PIN technology in their credit and debit cards. This means the bank card has a computer chip embedded into it and it also has a PIN (personal identification number). It also means that credit cards are no longer “swiped” on a magnetic strip as we do in the USA, the card goes through a chip reader instead and the cardholder must enter his or her PIN to complete the sale. This technology does not have to be in place in the USA until late 2015, and US banks are adapting to the change very slowly. As of this writing, less than half of Americans have such a card in their possession.

We recommend getting a chip and pin credit card before your departure – be sure to ask your own bank as well or consider opening an account through one of the methods recommended below..

Below are a few articles to help you begin your research:

Unfortunately, as quickly as banks and financial service offices develop new technologies to minimize theft and fraud, crooks and hackers find new ways around these. The latest scam which is reported in Europe and to some extent in Asia is an “RFID” (radio frequency ID reader) that a crook points at your wallet when you are in a crowd to pull the data from your credit/debit card. You can purchase an RFID guard card or scanner guard card to put in your wallet. These are metal cards that you put in the front and back of your wallet, protecting the cards in between them. Or you can consider purchasing a stainless steel wallet.

TRAVELER’S CHECKS
These are used less and less as credit and debit cards become more popular, but they are still useful in some countries and are far safer than carrying cash. You can also get them issued in pounds sterling which will save you the hassle (and cost) of having to exchange currency first. Traveler’s checks have tracking numbers on them that will allow you to easily cancel them and recoup your losses in case they are lost or stolen. You must keep these tracking numbers separate from the checks and several copies in different locations are recommended. You can sometimes pay establishments directly with these checks, but most often you must change them at a change office or bank. There is often a fee involved in cashing them, expressed as a percentage of the total or a flat fee.

We really recommend traveler’s checks ONLY as a backup source of funds in the event that international money networks are down or your cash/credit card is lost or stolen. You will find them inconvenient to use on a regular basis. However, it’s not a bad idea to bring along about $200 (in relatively small denominations) in traveler’s checks – just in case. If you don’t use them while abroad, they’re still “good” here in the U.S. upon your return.

HOW MUCH MONEY DO YOU NEED?
Students and families always ask us to estimate the amount of funds that they’ll need for personal spending in Germany. This is VERY difficult for us to estimate as “typical” student spending ranges vary so widely depending upon resources available and personal spending habits. Given the fact that most of your basic needs are provided for in Freiburg and/or should have been pre-budgeted (see meals, housing below), you actually NEED (as opposed to will want) very little personal spending money. Freiburg students will all be in receipt of a Blocker Fellowship. Blocker funds are intended to defray essential expenses including international airfare, food, local transport, books, and residence permit expenses. (Note: since Blocker funds are considered taxable income, you should save any receipts for these expenses for tax purposes.) If you are a power shopper, expect to jet off to a new country every weekend, or tend to consume large amounts of alcohol or food at night, you will need to have extra funds with you. You’ll also need more if you expect to stay on in Europe through weeks or months following the end of the program. Most students tend to spend however much they have (we seldom hear of students bringing money back home with them), whether this is $500 or $5,000 or even more. Our best advice is for you to sit down as a family and decide what you can afford and what you think is reasonable. Most students report spending somewhere between $800-$1000 of their own non-Blocker money for the semester if they are not staying after the program ends for extended personal travel. This estimate includes paying for your Russian visitor visa (required for the Russia excursion), going out at night, late night snacks and other personal spending. Given that it is very easy to get money to you quickly if you underestimate (mom or dad can make a deposit at the ATM in the U.S.; you have access to the funds within 24 hours), it’s better to bring less and ask for more in a pinch than to re-mortgage the home up front. If you’re on a tight budget and need tips, ASK us!

Note about financial aid and the Blocker Grant
Many students manage the cost of their education through grants, scholarships and loans. If the total of these items exceed the total amount that HWS bills you for your term abroad, you will be eligible for a refund. Further, your Blocker grant is covering all of your housing costs and provides a cash stipend to be used towards your meals and personal spending. You can use any excess Blocker funds to pay for travel, books, and your German residence permit while abroad. Talk with the Student Accounts Office at HWS about how much your cash grant will be and when you will receive it. The number is 315-781-3343.

2.3 HOUSING AND MEALS ABROAD

U.S. Americans are used to large living spaces, lots of privacy, endless hot water and access to the telephone. Most people in the world do not have the same expectations and get by with (sometimes much) smaller spaces, have less privacy, take very quick showers, often turning off the water between getting wet and rinsing off, and use the telephone for only very brief communications. Often there are economic and ecological reasons for these differences.

Students will reside in a residence hall arranged by IES and your housing will be pre-paid by HWS. You will find out the hall address, whether you have a roommate and the names of those with whom you’ll share your flat upon arrival (at orientation) and the orientation session will address how to live successfully with German and European flat-mates. **Note that meals are not included in your rent and students will typically prepare their own meals at home or take meals in affordable student cafeterias or local restaurants.** IES estimates that students should need around $2500 for meals for the semester (slightly less than for the full basic meal plan here). You may use your Blocker funds towards the cost of meals.

Expect it will take time to feel ‘at home’ in your residence hall. Germans tend to be very respectful of other people’s privacy so if you tend to go into your bedroom and close the door, expect that your flat-mates will leave you alone. This is nice if you WISH to be left alone but not a very good strategy if you are hoping to be included in social activities. So be prepared to make yourself available. Be prepared to adapt. Be friendly, patient, flexible. Do your share to keep apartment common areas clean. If you cook, clean up after yourself. If you wash your dirty socks in the sink, hang them somewhere neatly to dry and then put them away promptly. When you come home late at night be as quiet as you can so that sleeping flatmates are not awakened. Do not invite friends (or family) to spend the night on your common area couch without clearing this with your apartment mates.

If you are unhappy, if you need something or just feel at sea, don’t be afraid to speak up! Let IES staff know if you are feeling homesick or having a problem at the residence.

2.4 SERVICE ABROAD

U.S. Americans live in a service-oriented economy. We expect a certain level of service for our money. Many other countries have no similar service culture. Store clerks don’t have to be polite and warm. Wait-staff in most European countries do not make their money from tips and so therefore do not feel the need to give you a lot of attention or deference. Remember that you expect what is normal, and what is normal for you is not necessarily normal for the local culture. The good side to this different definition of service is that you can often stay for as long as you would like at a café and the waiter won’t bother you too often or urge you to leave. Europeans are clearly okay with the quality of service at cafes and restaurants—they would have a different system if they were not. So
accept it and look to the local people to help you figure out how to get your check. Tipping is still appreciated, of course.

2.5 EMAIL ACCESS

Depending on your location, email/internet access may not be as universally available as it is in the U.S. You may not have reliable wifi at your residence. You will certainly have access at the school. You will also find many internet cafes and other wifi locations throughout the city.

Be sure to check your HWS email regularly because that is how we will be in touch with you. Make sure you clean out your mailbox before you go – otherwise it could fill up and you could be unable to receive any new mail.

2.6 CELL PHONES

Many students and families worry about having easy access to telephone or other easy communication home. At your home stay you will be provided with a telephone number for emergency use and your parents(s)/loved ones can reach you there should a pressing issue arise.

IES also requires all students to have a cell phone while enrolled in their programs. It is your responsibility to acquire a cell phone either in Germany within the first week of arrival or in the U.S. prior to departure. IES will give you more information about this.

For people to call YOU cheaply, we encourage them to download “skype” or “messenger” onto their computers at home or the office. The caller pays only a small amount per minute and if you are using your cell phone those minutes are free for you to receive.

Finally, more and more students have blackberries, iphones or other digital devices that run off the internet rather than off of cell phone towers. All such devices will work in Germany although we understand that their international roaming rates are high.

ONE WORD OF CAUTION about cell phones and computer ‘skyping’ or ‘messaging’: Both here in the office and in the study abroad field in general, many of us have noticed an increase in the number of U.S. students abroad who experience prolonged difficult periods of cultural adjustment. This appears to correlate in part with excessive cell phone or internet use. Although it might seem intuitive that calling home daily to check in or having constant email communication will ease the transition and help you feel at home, in fact it connects you ONLY to home and really inhibits normal integration with the host culture. You never leave your U.S. mindset and so the local culture continues to feel ‘weird’ or uncomfortable. The more frequent your communication with the people at home you miss, the less likely you are to establish meaningful relationships with the wonderful new people around you. So, students, THINK SERIOUSLY about limiting the frequency of your use. You might want to establish a ‘check-in’ schedule (say once or twice a week, on Sunday and Wednesday evenings at such and such a time) when you know your parents or significant other will be available and they know that you will be around and ready to talk. And then really try to stick to that schedule. Keep a journal to record all the many new things happening to you so you won’t forget them when you next chat with people at home!
2.7 TRAVEL TIPS

For some of you, your term abroad represents your first excursion out of the country and your first real travel experience. Some of you are already seasoned travelers, or at least seasoned tourists. A term abroad will open up to you many opportunities for further travel. Sometimes there are so many choices it can be difficult to make decisions. It’s worth thinking about what you’d like to do, and how you’d like to do it, before you go. Develop a strategy or philosophy to guide your travels. Perhaps you have two weeks to travel after your program. Do you plan a whirlwind tour of 10 countries? Or do you choose one or two places to get to know well? Do you put the well-known cities and sites on your itinerary, or do you choose lesser-known, out of the way places? This is a good time to do some homework, too, reading guidebooks about the country you are going to and the surrounding region. Consider what is important to you, what kinds of things you think would make the best memories later on. You might want to make a list of things you hope to see and experience while abroad, or maybe you even want to make a detailed plan; or maybe you want to leave it entirely open and be spontaneous. But thinking about how you want to explore now will enable you to make better use of your time.

AROUND THE CITY

The city you are studying in is your major entry-point into the study of the nation as a whole. This is one of the reasons we tend to name programs by both city and country (Bath, England; Hanoi, Vietnam). Students abroad can choose between two extremes, spending a lot of time getting to know every corner and nook the city has to offer, or traveling most weekends to other cities or even other countries. Recognize that there’s a balance to be struck between these two extremes. But also recognize that weekend visits to other cities or countries will not offer the level of in-depth access you will get by regularly exploring the city you live in while abroad. One of the writers of this guide was struck when, at the end of his study abroad term in Seville, Spain (a gem of a city by all accounts) a fellow student asked him “what’s there to do in this town?”

FAMILIARITY AND TIME

Remember that around the world, most people don’t move as often as U.S. Americans do. We’re a very mobile society. Globally it is much more common for a person to spend his/her entire life in one city of one country. A result of this difference in mobility is that in general, people abroad spend much more time building relationships and friendships than U.S. Americans do. What this means for you abroad is that you might need to spend more time getting to know a place and its people before you become a “regular” at a café or life-long friends with your host family or local classmates.

AROUND THE COUNTRY

If you do travel during weekends outside of the excursions may be built into your program, consider limiting yourself to your country, especially if you’re on a language immersion program. Taking a break entirely from the language for a weekend will delay or even push back the progress you’ve already made. Traveling around a country and visiting its different regions and cities can give you a fascinating comparative view and a sense of the diversity of the place. Also, traveling in a country where you speak the language (even not very well) will always be a more in-depth experience than traveling through countries where you speak none of the language.

2.8 STUDYING ABROAD DURING AN ELECTION YEAR

It is easy to forget about your own country when you are abroad, but you will find that the people in your local city and country are quite interested in following the U.S. national elections, particularly the election of the President. For many of you, this will be the first time when you are legal to vote,
so it would be a shame to miss out on exercising your rights of citizenship. To obtain an absentee ballot and ensure that you have a voice in the election, go to: www.longdistancevoter.org. Please note that procedures, deadlines, forms, and instructions vary by State. To ensure that you do not miss the deadlines for your own state, we recommend that you start the process of requesting a ballot by September 1 at the latest.

SECTION 3: All About Culture

If you think back to your first year of college, you might remember both apprehension and anticipation. You were quickly hit with what you did not know—how to do your laundry, how to navigate the cafeteria, the necessity of having your I.D. card on you at all times, where to buy books, how to succeed in a new kind of study…the list goes on. What you were going through was a process of cultural adjustment. You were learning the rules of a very new game; it took time, patience, and a willingness to watch, listen and learn. What you are about to experience abroad is roughly comparable in character to the transition you went through coming to HWS, but it will be far more intense, challenging and rewarding. It’s the next step. Congratulations on choosing it.

How long will you be abroad? About four months? That’s really not all that much time to fit in what many returned students would call the most significant and amazing experience of their college careers (if not their lives). Although many students experience homesickness and/or culture shock and have good days and bad days, you want to try to maximize what little time you have abroad. This section will help you understand what intercultural adjustment is all about, what you should expect to experience, and how you can actively work to make this process a vibrant learning experience.

You are about to encounter a culture that is typically much different from that with which you are familiar. The rules of the game will not be the same. Researchers of cross-cultural communication use several models to describe various aspects of the study abroad experience; this packet will guide you through them. You may not think you need this information now, but many students who have crossed cultures—and come back again—say that they are glad they knew about these ideas beforehand. Take this packet with you…our bet is that at some point in your time abroad, you’ll pick it up again.

3.1 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Much of the value of your study abroad program lies in the experiences of day-to-day living, the encounters and relationships you build with the people of your host country. The experiential learning model depicted to the left contains several key ideas that, if you keep them in mind, can help you get the most from your time abroad.

The experience of living amidst a totally new culture can be at turns exhilarating and frustrating. These frustrations can add up as you run into more and more differences between the culture you carry around with you and the host culture. One of the benefits of study abroad is this realization—that you actually carry America around with you. It’s your comfort zone, a set of values, ideas, and manners, a language and a set of products. You’ve got to step out of this comfort zone if you want to truly have a great experience.
There’s no way around this: If you want to really learn, you’ll have to go outside of your comfort zone. And going outside of your comfort zone means taking a social risk.

A good rule of thumb for students abroad; if you’re not feeling uncomfortable, you’re not in much of a position to learn anything. You haven’t felt confident enough in your language to talk to the newspaper seller you pass every day, even though he looks like a character. You’ve felt too shy to go into that corner pub. You’re lost—but rather than ask someone for directions, you fumble with a map. You pass the town square and people are dancing in traditional costume—what’s the occasion? Your host family invites you to a familiar gathering—but your American friends have planned a day away at the beach. You’re in class all day with foreign students and many of them look very interesting but they haven’t introduced themselves to you.

Stepping up to these challenges involves social risk and possible feelings of discomfort. But they all offer opportunity as well. There’s much to gain, so take a chance!

TOURISM VS. STUDY ABROAD

Most cities have their tourist attractions and these are great things to take in during your time abroad. But remember that most local people don’t frequent these places. And remember too that the spaces where the local people live aren’t frequented by tourists. There is a name for this: tourist infrastructure. Tourism is the largest economy on the planet. This infrastructure (with multi-lingual tour guides, menus in 12 languages, museums and historic sites, and boutiques) is designed to do three things: make you feel comfortable, show you what most tourists want to see, and separate you from your money.

If you understand the experiential foundation of study abroad, then you realize that this is not the optimal space for students studying abroad to spend their time. Tourist infrastructures in fact insulate the traveler from the daily life of the country (and the citizens that don’t speak the tourist’s language) and this is exactly what you should want to experience while abroad. So, as a student abroad and not a tourist, take delight in the simple pleasures of daily existence and really get to know your neighborhood and your city. Find a local hangout. Become a regular. Go to restaurants without menus out front in five languages (they’re also often less expensive). Get to know the merchants, waiters, and neighbors you bump into every day. Play basketball or football (soccer to us) with the local kids. These experiences often have as much (or maybe more) to say than every city’s “tall thing to climb” or sanitized “attractions”.

BREAKING AWAY

If you’re abroad for a language immersion experience, hanging out all the time with other Americans will keep you from advancing your language skills. So too will missing out on activities because you have to wait around for your boyfriend/girlfriend to call for the second time that week. And: did you really travel halfway around the world to spend all your time with people you already know or talking to people at home? So take advantage of invitations from your host family, your language partner, or a foreign classmate. Go off exploring on your own or with one good friend.

It’s okay to explore with an American buddy, but beware of the pack! Large groups of Americans (along with being immediately recognizable and off-putting) will keep you from really getting to know the local culture and people.
Going abroad is about *breaking away* from what you know, so make sure you actually do that and don’t live abroad in “Island America”. There are two other related things that will keep you from actually experiencing what is going on around you: one is the easy accessibility of internet cafes, and the other is cell phones. Technology allows us to be connected with people far away with great ease, but remember that is often at the expense of connections with those immediately around us (not to mention actual monetary expense!)

“OH YEAH, YOU BLEND”

It’s a famous line from My Cousin Vinny, a film about culture clash right here in our own country. But blending is what the characters try to do, and it’s what you should do. Why should you try to blend? First and foremost, it’s a great way to learn about the culture. To blend in first requires you to actually look at the people around you. You must become an ardent and keen observer of people’s behavior, language, etiquette, dress and, in more general terms, the way people carry themselves and treat each other. Local people will appreciate your efforts to understand and adopt some of these behaviors. It will show them that you respect and want to understand their customs and values. And therefore they’ll trust you more, share more with you, and feel more of an immediate bond of commonality with you. You’ll learn even more. Another reason you should try to blend in is *safety*. The reality is that foreigners are often the targets of petty crime or unwanted attention from the wrong kinds of people. Not sticking out in the crowd will keep you safer, and that bond of commonality will mean that local people will be more likely to look out for you.

**3.2 ADJUSTING TO A NEW CULTURE**

Just as you did when you entered college, you will go through a process of cultural adjustment abroad where you will learn to operate in a different cultural system, with different signals, rules, meanings, values and ideas. Your experience living in this host culture will change over time. Once the immediate sensations of excitement subside (*the honeymoon phase*), the experience of adjustment will likely be characterized by feelings of anxiety, stress, sadness, and fatigue, as things begin to seem very...*foreign*. This process of intercultural adjustment is often represented by the “u-curve”, plotted below:

![u-curve diagram]

If you’re studying in a non-English speaking country, your language skills will be quickly tested to their limit. You might not understand the local accent. You might not be able to communicate with the bus driver. Your host family’s behavior may confuse you. You may feel fatigued at having to use the language so much, and finding it so difficult. This is normal and to be expected.

Many students who study in English-speaking countries go abroad with the mistaken belief that they will have no cultural adjustment to make. Beware! Don’t mistake the superficial similarities of the
countries for sameness. While the differences may seem subtle at first glance, closer examination often reveals very different attitudes, values and “norms”. Unfamiliar social customs (etiquette), and colloquial expressions (“tube” for subway, “mate” for friend, “craic” for good conversation) are just a few of the possible differences between countries that share the “same” language!

The truth is living in a culture different from your own is challenging and exhausting, especially early on in the process where almost everything is a mystery. What is happening is simple: you are realizing how different this new culture really is! And you are realizing that what you knew from before, what was familiar and comfortable to you, may not help you at all now. Some people call this “culture shock”.

You may react to “culture shock” in a number of ways: you may find yourself favoring time alone, preferring contact with friends or family at home over contact with foreigners or fellow students, and perhaps as a sense of rejection of the host culture (hopefully, for your sake, temporarily!). Don’t let this phase of adjustment forfeit an amazing opportunity to learn and grow! It is important to bear in mind that the initial difficulties do wear off, and get much easier with active immersion in the culture that surrounds you. As shown on the U-curve, the initial low subsides as you become accustomed to the norms and custom of your host-country. This is called adjustment. Another note of good news: there are concrete strategies you can use to minimize emotional and social difficulties:

* **Take time to re-energize with your friends.** Don’t feel guilty about hanging out and comparing experiences...you can do a lot of processing in these sessions. Just don’t isolate yourself from the culture in that group.
* **Get out and explore.** Don’t waste your time abroad in a mob of U.S. Americans! Strike off on your own, or pair up with a friend, be it another American on your program, your host brother or sister, or a local acquaintance you’ve cultivated. It’s good to have someone to experience things with, bounce ideas off of, help out with language—but it’s also good to explore on your own and see what life throws your way.
* **Narrow your world**—focus your efforts on a neighborhood, street or even a single place, and try to get to know that, using it as a window onto the rest of the culture.
* **Widen your world**—wander around the city or take trips to places you’ve never really heard of. Be curious and open to the possibilities around you. View unfamiliar things as mysteries to be investigated.
* **If you have a hobby or interest you pursued at home, pursue it abroad.** If you sang in a choir or played soccer, do those things abroad, too. You’ll meet local people who share that interest! One student we know of brought her tennis racket to France; every other day she’d play tennis at the nearby university, and this social sport became her doorway into French culture, introducing her to many local people she would never otherwise have encountered.
* **Keep a journal.** Journals are powerful tools for becoming aware. You can focus on the changes going on within yourself, or you can focus your writing on what is going on around you, the weird and wonderful details of that culture, or both.
* **Write letters.** Letters can help you formulate your impressions and communicate your experience with others; just be careful, you could alarm family and friends unnecessarily if you write about your difficulties only and not your successes!
* **Set small goals for yourself every day.** “Today I’m going to buy a newspaper and conduct the transaction in the local language.” “This evening I’ll accompany my host parents to their relative’s home and see what happens.”
* **Read.**...reading a book about the culture and civilization, be it a popular history or the musings of another traveler, can be relaxing and informative. It’s great when what you read sheds light on what you see or experience every day.
* Find a conversation partner. In non-English speaking countries, many local people are seeking to practice their English. Set up meetings and spend half the time conversing in English and the local language. In English-speaking countries, take advantage of the shared language to really engage people in dialogue about local history and contemporary issues.

* Be open to invitations! One student reported back to us that she never felt like she had successfully lived in a place unless she had had dinner in a family’s home and seen how normal people lived. In some countries inviting foreigners into one’s house is an honor—for both the guest and the hosts!

You may have your down moments, but if you persist in trying, eventually the daily victories—when you have successfully adapted to one or another aspect of the culture—will start to outweigh the setbacks and frustrations. Over time, as you gain confidence in your ability to navigate through a different cultural system, as your familiarity with local norms, values, and attitudes grows, and as you start to see things from different perspectives, your adjustment will enhance the exciting and happy time you originally anticipated your experience abroad to be.

One final note: everyone experiences cultural adjustment differently. This is just a general model to help you visualize the fact that you will go through a process of cultural adjustment, and that this process will include ups and downs, good days and bad, and moments of alternating homesickness and elation at the new culture that is all around you.

3.3 CULTURE LEARNING: CUSTOMS AND VALUES

Before you go abroad, it’s a good idea to start thinking about culture as being one part customs and one part values. As a person going abroad to immerse yourself in a different culture, you should be extremely flexible about your customs, that is, the little things that make up your daily routine, the way you do things, the level of service or quality of life you expect. You should, however, be more reserved about your values, that is, the core beliefs that are important to you. It won’t hurt you to eat a food you are not accustomed to (notice the word “accustomed”? but say, for example, your host-father makes a racist comment about the recent wave of North African immigrants. You shouldn't feel like you have to agree with him just for the sake of fitting in. Be respectful, but be true to your values, too.

There’s a connection between customs and values, however; the values of a culture are often expressed in its customs. The café society of many Mediterranean countries suggests a certain value for comfortable social interaction, a relaxed view of time, and the idea that life should be savored teaspoon by teaspoon. So as you adopt new customs, take time to reflect on the values that underlie them, and examine your own values as well. Is there something in this culture worth taking back with you, making part of your own core values?

LOCAL CUSTOMS

EATING AND DRINKING

Food is one of the most important parts of any culture. Although we may have pushed eating aside in the United States, trying to make it fast and unobtrusive on the red concerns of our lives, for many cultures across the world, eating and food are still of central importance to family and social life. Be aware that many countries frown upon eating on-the-go and it is considered rude to eat food while you’re walking across campus or down the street. Follow the examples of the locals: if you never see anyone else eating food as they walk, you can assume it is not appropriate. Following the logic above, a country’s eating habits and customs suggest its values. Note the café example above; a simple cup of coffee has many facets of Mediterranean culture encoded in it. In Africa, to take another example,
meals may be eaten with hands from a central bowl. Encoded in this is a statement about community, family and sharing.

As a guest in another culture, you should be open to trying as many different new customs as you can, and this means kinds of food and modes of eating. But be realistic: don’t expect yourself to eat beef if you’re a vegetarian or down tripe soup for the fourth time if you really hate it. If you’re in a home-stay, first and foremost, be honest on your application for housing. If you’re a vegetarian, say so. If you can’t handle cigarette smoke, write that. The programs we work with abroad will try to meet your needs as best as they can. But expect some compromises! Also, be honest and polite with your host families; probably not every family member likes the same kinds of food there, too. It should be a process of mutual discovery. But also try new foods. Experiment with menu items you can’t necessarily identify. You never know what you’ll discover. Bon appetit!

While alcohol consumption varies in degree and social context from country to country, it is safe to say that, in general, few countries consider the kind of drinking prevalent on American college campuses to be socially acceptable. Many countries do not have strict drinking ages and therefore alcohol, not being illegal or taboo, isn’t considered novel, and binge drinking is relatively rare. Many other cultures appear to have a much healthier relationship to alcohol than does society in the U.S..

Many English- and German-speaking nations, for example, have lively pub or beer hall scenes where people drink quite a bit; but the careful observer will note that 1) people drink more slowly than in the U.S. and 2) people are expected to hold their liquor. To be seen stumbling drunk is embarrassing, not funny. In these cultures, you may also note that, with the exception of pubs that are explicitly for the student population, there is a broader mix of people who socialize together. It is quite common in England and Germany, for example, for young adults to go to the pub with dad and grandma or even with a young sibling in tow. So, conduct yourself in a way that is appropriate for a mixed age crowd.

A common practice in Britain and Ireland and occasionally in Germany is to “buy rounds”. If you go to a pub with a group, one member of the group will ask everyone else what s/he is drinking and will then pay for all the drinks for everyone. Be prepared! If you accept the offer of a drink in such a scenario, YOU are expected to buy the next round for all. If your budget cannot handle this and/or if you know that you need to limit the total amount you consume, buy your own.

Mediterranean cultures value alcohol as a social lubricant and as an intrinsic part of meals. People will socialize in bars, but the careful observer will notice that the local people will space their drinking out over a large stretch of time, and eat small snacks in-between drinks. In this environment, it is not uncommon to leave drinks half-finished as there will be a lot of sampling over the course of the evening. If you finish everything, you’ll normally drink quite a bit more than you might here.

Although you are all “legal” abroad, we strongly encourage you to drink responsibly and carefully abroad. Drinking too much leaves you more vulnerable to pick-pocketing and other petty crime and, in excess, will lead you to display behavior that may fuel anti-American sentiment. If you choose to drink, be very aware of the quantities you consume. Also note that alcoholic drinks in other countries, beer and hard cider in particular, tend to have a higher alcohol content per volume than their U.S. counterparts.

TIME and TIMELINESS, INDIVIDUAL VS GROUP NEEDS

While it is a common U.S. stereotype that Germans are very prompt, it is nevertheless true of most Germans. Without question, it is true of German academic culture! If you are told to attend a meeting at a particular date and time, you need to be at that meeting precisely at that time, or even a
little early. Being late is rude and many people will be offended by this behavior. In the context of a class, if you arrive late it is possible that you will not be allowed to enter. Similarly, the buses and trains throughout Germany tend to run on time. If you arrive late or even exactly on time, you will have missed it!

Along these same lines, Germans are also very conscientious about following rules and social norms. If someone tells you that something is dangerous or forbidden, this means don’t do it. Similarly, if a faculty member or someone on staff offers advice, they really do expect that you will take it! You will certainly be given information from the IES staff about meetings and information sessions that are set for the first days of the term. When they tell you that “orientation is at such and such a time or place” or that “information will be provided about course registration in x location” what they mean is that YOU MUST BE THERE to get this information. American students are sometimes inclined to skip such meetings and then ask for help later on an individual basis. Be forewarned – if you choose not to attend an event that was specifically designed to assist you, then in German culture you are stating that you intend to figure it out alone. And they will leave you to do so! If you really have a legitimate excuse for missing a session (i.e. you are ill, rather than you’d rather go to the museum or nightclub than attend a meeting), make sure you call the person in charge of the event to let them know why you are missing and to ask how you might get the information. Good communication is essential to creating a positive study abroad experience.

SECTION 4: Safety and Health

4.1 SAFETY ABROAD: A FRAMEWORK

Take a look at the experiential learning model again. Notice that there’s “social discomfort”, and there’s danger. Taking social risks doesn’t mean putting yourself in harm’s way. What you “risk” should only be embarrassment and a wounded ego, temporary feelings that wear off. You can rely on your good judgment to tell the difference between risk and danger much of the time: for instance, there’s talking to the newspaper seller, and there’s wandering through a seedy part of town alone in the middle of the night. One poses the kind of social risk we’re encouraging, and one poses danger to your well-being.

Recognize, however, that there are instances when you can't sense the line between social risk and danger simply because you don’t understand the culture. Sellers in the open market place follow you around. They seem aggressive. Are you in danger, or is this simply the normal way of doing things in your host country? Is there some kind of body language you can use to communicate that you’re not interested? You can’t know this unless you know the culture well. And to know the culture well, you need to get out there, learn, ask questions, and take social risks!

The best way to stay safe abroad is to be more aware and learn as much as you can about your host-country.

Statistically the crime rate in most overseas locations where we send students is lower than the typical US city. However, because there is often a large student population in many of the locations, students can be lulled into a false sense of security. Remember that with your American accent and clothing you will stand out and could be a target. Given that you will be in unfamiliar surroundings while you are abroad it is particularly important that you use your best judgment. Above all, be street smart: if you are going out at night try to go in groups and be aware of your surroundings. Look out for one another. You will be spending a lot of time in an urban environment so act accordingly. If something doesn’t feel right, listen to your instincts.
Regarding your personal belongings, be sure to secure your important items (passports, traveler’s checks, valuables) in your own bedroom at your host family and to close the door to your room when you are not in it and LOCK the door to your family’s house/apartment at all times. This protects both you and your host family.

DANGEROUS BEHAVIOR
The following is behavior you should avoid while abroad:

1.) Don’t give out the names, numbers, and addresses of other program participants.
2.) Don’t invite new friends back to your quarters; meet in a public place until you know them better.
3.) Don’t do drugs abroad (see below for why).
4.) Avoid American hang-outs (McDonald’s, Hard Rock Cafés, etc.) and avoid being in large groups of Americans.
5.) Don’t wander alone in an unfamiliar city where you don’t know the good areas from the bad.
6.) Don’t drink too much in public; it may make you look foolish and you’ll be more susceptible.
7.) Don’t attend political demonstrations. You do not know when a ‘polite’ protest will turn ugly or violent if you will be welcome as a cultural outsider.

Keep in mind that Berlin is a BIG city and a very multinational, multicultural city. While it is safe by U.S. standards, it does pose many of the security risks one normally finds in dense, impersonal settings including higher rates of both petty and violent crime than is experienced in quieter, more rural environments. Use your ‘street’ smarts. Be aware of your surroundings. If people are lurking by the ATM machine, consider waiting before you make your withdrawal or use a different machine around the corner. Don’t take your wallet out while you’re walking down a crowded street. Take a taxi rather than the bus or subway if you are returning home LATE at night (IES staff will give you guidelines as to what is ‘late’ and about any neighborhoods that you might want to avoid.) Use the buddy system when going out and take care of one another!

4.2 IF THINGS GO WRONG: HOW TO GET HELP

Despite all preparations and precautions that you might take, sometimes things just go wrong. Just as it’s possible on campus at HWS, while abroad you could become ill, get hurt in an accident, be the victim of an assault or other crime, or become overwhelmed by a personal or academic problem. Should this happen to you, please ask for help! You do not have to handle it alone. The first page of this handbook provides emergency contact information. Your program director and/or 24-hour on call number that you are given during orientation should be the first call that you make in an emergency situation. Keep that phone number in your wallet or on your person at all times and program it into the cell phone that you will be using on your program. In small programs, the director may be the only person on site to provide support. In larger programs, usually those based at a foreign university, you may be given multiple phone numbers (i.e. call this number for a medical emergency, that one for the police or a security issue, and a third for academic issues).

But whatever the circumstance, please use the staff on site when you are ill, vulnerable or upset. Your emergency contact will either be able to help you directly or can and will connect you to outside local services (such as the police, a therapist or medical provider, a legal advisor, etc.) and will deal with the matter competently, professionally and with discretion. We understand that when you are upset or vulnerable, talking to a stranger (i.e. a police officer or a medical practitioner) might be difficult. You are encouraged to ask your faculty or on-site director for his/her assistance in making the initial connection and explaining to you what to expect. Everyone is different and some students
might prefer to receive advice and then follow up with resources independently. Others might feel overwhelmed and would appreciate if the faculty director, another student, or a host institution student welfare coordinator takes a more active role and accompanies you to the police station, or helps you make a medical appointment, etc. Some staff members/faculty directors will make that offer to you but others might not simply because they wish to respect your privacy and independence. So, if you feel you would like more help and it isn’t volunteered, do ask for support and assistance in taking any next steps.

In all cases, we suggest you also encourage reach out via phone or e-mail to the staff at CGE. Amy Teel (Teel@hws.edu) is the point person for semester and year-long programs, although you are welcome to make any staff member with whom you are most comfortable your first point of contact. While CGE staff cannot deliver services immediately when an incident happens (i.e. we cannot accompany you to the hospital or police abroad), we can be helpful in coordinating services between you, the host institution, your parents/guardians (with your permission) and various HWS offices. In short, let the CGE know you have a problem so we can assist. If you are able to contact us directly via phone, Skype, or e-mail, we ask that you do so. Messages or problems relayed to us through third parties such as parents or roommates tend to slow down and confuse the services that you could or should be receiving.

You can also call Campus Safety at +1 315-781-3000/Emergency Line +1 315-781-3333 (they will accept collect calls!) and they can help connect you to CGE. If you prefer confidential assistance, you can call the Center for Counseling and Student Wellness (CCSA) at +1 315 781-3388. An on-call counselor is available after hours for emergencies by calling Campus Safety at + 1 315-781-3000/Emergency Line +1 315-781-3333.

4.3 HEALTHCARE AND INSURANCE

You can anticipate that health care will be of high quality in Germany. The IES staff will assist you in case you need to seek medical care. Students on the Freiburg program will be provided with accident and health insurance by the program provider IES as part of the program. If you want to check the coverage provided in the IES policy to determine whether this is sufficient for you, we suggest that you call the IES office in Chicago directly. Their telephone number is (312) 261-5051. Use your HTH insurance to pick up any costs that might not be covered by IES policy and use it whenever you travel independently outside of Germany.

English speaking doctors are abundant in Germany for routine office visits, minor illnesses and prescriptions. But if you need to be referred to a specialist for any reason who does not have English, don’t be afraid to request help from the international office to be accompanied by a German speaker.

4.4 HIV and other STDs

HIV and other STDs are equally or more prevalent abroad and just as unpleasant and lethal as they can be here. Sometimes Americans abroad lower their guard and engage in activities that they never would back at home, feeling somehow “immune” or “invincible”. Resist these thoughts! Also, in a different context, many Americans are unsure of the cultural cues involved or are unsure of how (or whether it is appropriate) to talk about sex. Don’t let this uncertainty get in the way of your safety: get to know your partners, use a condom, and be aware of safer sex practices.
4.5 GENDER ROLES, SEXUALITY AND SOCIAL NORMS ABROAD

In many of the locations where HWS offers study abroad programs, Berlin included, social norms and local customs around drinking, dating, sexuality and sexual orientation, responsibility for contraception, and other important issues affecting social life can be confusing. On the one hand, a superficial glance at the behavior of people on the street or at a night club might not seem very different from a similar setting in the U.S. On the other hand, people’s beliefs and expectations might, in fact, be quite different. It can be easy to misread social cues in this context. What you perceive to be friendly, welcoming behavior could really be a sexual come-on. Or you might misconstrue a sincere inquiry into your well-being as pushiness or nosiness. You may also be surprised that local perceptions of Americans in general and American students in particular are quite different than you might expect. A common stereotype about American students held abroad and certainly in Western Europe is that we are loud and boisterous, tend to drink too much, have and spend a lot of money freely and are sexually promiscuous. Of course, you know that some American students might fit this description, but far more do not. It is easy to see, however, that without having the cultural know-how to recognize a come-on as such or if others may see you unfairly, miscommunication can easily occur. We STRONGLY suggest that you keep the following in mind:

- Germans enjoy drinking beer (or wine) with meals. Drinking while eating is considered normal social behavior. JUST drinking (perhaps with a few beer nuts) is considered to be more risky or marginal behavior. If you are seen to be a risk-taker people are more likely to take advantage of you.

- Local people like to meet new folks, socialize casually and/or socialize romantically just as you do. However, they have a different sense of what space is used for what. It is very common to see heterosexual couples holding hands, embracing or giving light kisses in public. It is rarer to see couples engage in any more serious displays of physical affection in public and it could attract some unwelcome attention.

- Freiburg is relatively tolerant and welcoming to same-sex couples. Unfortunately, there is not yet total acceptance, and for safety reasons we encourage same-sex couples to be more discrete about overtly sexual behavior in public or in bars that are not explicitly welcoming to all.

- Whether heterosexual or homosexual, Germans, for the most part, reserve explicit sexual behavior for the private sphere. Most Germans go OUT with friends when they want to socialize. They meet at restaurants, cafes and nightclubs to dance, drink, eat, etc. It is rare to be invited into someone’s home unless you know them very well. Thus, if you are invited to someone’s house or apartment, you might be getting an invitation for sex and NOT just for that offered drink. Please understand that if you accept such an invitation in this context, the host might perceive that you are giving consent for something other than a shared drink. To be safe, get to know new people in public.

- Whistling, cat-calling, and other behavior that American women might find obnoxious is, unfortunately, not all that uncommon on public streets, particularly in neighborhoods with large immigrant populations. You are more likely to be targeted if you make eye contact or smile at strangers. Revealing clothing is also more likely to invite cat-calling. While this can be annoying, it is virtually never dangerous. However, if you feel that someone has crossed a line and is harassing you, note the location where the behavior occurs and the perpetrator’s appearance and report the incident to a staff member at IES who can then advise you about whether and how to take other action.

- German culture holds adults (you are considered adults) fully accountable for their actions or decisions whether or not they are alcohol or drug-impaired. In the U.S., we are increasingly moving toward a culture of affirmative consent and the belief that if someone is impaired by alcohol or other

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drugs they are not capable of controlling their behavior. This puts more responsibility on others for the safety and well-being of the person who is drinking heavily (or using other substances). This will NOT be the case in Europe. If you drink and begin to engage in sexual behavior, unless you are clearly being forced, your conduct may be construed as consensual. It is critical that you understand this before you become impaired and so that you can remain safe. We also encourage all of our students to use the buddy system and look out for one another when you are socializing together.

4.6 DRUGS

Each year, 2,500 U.S. Americans are arrested abroad, 1/3 of these arrests for possession of illegal drugs. So here it is in simple terms: don’t do drugs abroad. If you get caught doing drugs in another country you are fully subject to their laws (which are often more stringent than our own) and chances are good that you will spend time in prison, or worse: some nations have the death penalty for those found guilty of drug trafficking. Being a U.S. citizen gives you no special privileges. The U.S. embassy will not go out of its way to help you out. The Marines will not execute a daring amphibious landing to rescue you. And, HWS can do nothing to intervene other than to call your parents and advise them to hire an international lawyer – fast and at their own expense.

There are three key things to understand about this issue (drawn from a study of U.S. Americans in prison abroad by journalist Peter Laufer):

1. Most nations adhere to the Napoleonic code, which presumes the accused to be guilty until proven innocent.
2. Few nations grant bail between arrest and trial.
3. The State Department will rarely intervene to aid an accused or convicted American for fear of upsetting relations with the host country.

DON’T DO DRUGS ABROAD! Use of illegal drugs is, on top of everything noted above, grounds for being returned home to the US (to your parents’ home – not to your college) at your own expense and normally at the forfeit of academic credit (and tuition dollars) for the term. If you are caught using drugs abroad by the authorities, the only assistance the Faculty Directors and your home campuses will provide is to refer you (and your parents) to legal counsel. We cannot and will not intervene in matters between you and the local authorities. Breaking the law there is simply unacceptable and could be a decision you will spend a lifetime regretting.

4.7 TRAFFIC

Look both ways before you cross, cross in the crosswalk, obey the right-of-way rules. Traffic safety and the roles of drivers and pedestrians are deeply engrained in a car-oriented culture such as the U.S. When going abroad, it’s important—essential—to understand that like everything else, traffic rules differ from country to country. For students studying in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Japan, Australia or New Zealand or South Africa, you have to remember to look right first because that’s where the cars are coming from. This takes some getting used to! For students studying in the Germanic nations of Denmark, Germany and Austria, you have to understand that people in general follow the rules. Pedestrians do not jay-walk; they wait for the walk signal—even if there isn’t a car in sight. In contrast to this are Italy, Spain, and France where general chaos often rules and pedestrians are expected to make way for cars—in the crosswalk, in the middle of the street, even sometimes on the sidewalk. And remember, in all countries, look out for bike traffic!
A final word about traffic: given the differences in the traffic rules but also patterns and driving customs, we strongly advise AGAINST ever renting a vehicle and driving yourself while abroad. Public transportation in most nations is far better and more accessible than it is here. Use it!

4.8 POLITICS

Don’t read the newspaper? Unfamiliar with what’s happening in Washington or New York, let alone the events shaking Paris or Moscow or Delhi? You’re in the minority. People around the world, by and large, know a lot about politics and spend a lot of time talking about it. Not just their politics, our politics. So it is very important to read up on what’s going on in the country you’re going to, and what’s going on here, too. We can pretty much guarantee you that people will press you for your opinion of the current U.S. administration or the next stop on the globe-trotting war on terror.

You can learn a lot from talking politics with surprisingly well-informed foreigners. Some of you might, however, be on the receiving end of angry talk against the United States (or China, for our international students). Second to the surprise over how knowledgeable people around the world are about politics is how angry many of them are over U.S. and non-E.U. policies. Many people are good at distinguishing between U.S. people and the U.S. government (or the Chinese people vs the Chinese government), but in sometimes you might remind them of this distinction and to diffuse some of the anger if you admit you don’t support the policy either. Use your judgment. As you re-examine some of your values over time, you might also find yourself questioning some of your political beliefs. And you might change other’s minds as well. Eventually people all around the world will have to come to the table and talk out their differences…you might as well be in on it early.

SECTION 5: STUDENT CONDUCT AND JUDICIAL POLICIES ABROAD

5.1 YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AND BEHAVIOR ABROAD

As an HWS student, you are required to follow the laws of the city and country where you are studying. In addition, you are required by HWS and by your program to sign a Behavior Agreement before going abroad and this is a binding document between you, HWS, and your program provider (if we also work with an international partner at your site). For students whose program is based at a large study abroad program or at a foreign university, you will also be bound by the student conduct code of that institution. Conduct guidelines and expectations will be laid out clearly as part of your orientation to the site and are also found on program provider or host university websites. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR READING AND UNDERSTANDING THESE! If you are unclear about expectations, whether relating to academic issues such as plagiarism or social issues such as theft or substance use, please ask for a copy of the written policy and for clarification of any topics that confuse you.

Should you be accused of conduct violations during your semester abroad, you might be subject to simultaneous disciplinary action by the HWS program director, by the HWS home campus, by the host institution’s own judicial system and/or by local, city or national law enforcement at your site. Sanctions could range from a verbal or written warning or demand for a written apology to social probation, dismissal from the program abroad, suspension from HWS or even jail time abroad, depending upon the circumstances. Generally, the party or institution responsible for determining disciplinary action will depend upon the nature and severity of the infraction, where the infraction takes place and who reports it (i.e. if you assault someone in a public square and a bystander reports
it to the local police you might experience a different response than if you took your roommate’s belongings without permission and he/she reports it to the resident director). While we can’t anticipate all the ways that such events could play out, we can tell you that whether you are the victim or the accused, you can always turn to the CGE for advice about your options and for the process that will follow. When CGE staff do not know, they will find out and direct you to the individuals who may be directly responsible for adjudicating an issue and for providing you with guidance and support as the process itself unfolds.

5.2 IF YOU ARE A VICTIM

Just as you are bound by HWS, host institution, and local city/country rules and subject to disciplinary action and/or law enforcement action, you are also entitled to certain protections and services as an HWS student studying abroad. You can and should expect to live and study in a clean and safe environment (i.e. buildings with doors that lock, meet local fire and other safety standards), with a host family or in a building facility that was vetted by program staff, and with access to medical, legal, and counseling services as needed.

Should a fellow student on the program violate any of your rights, report the violation to your program director AND to the Center for Global Education as soon as possible. You may lodge a formal complaint in writing, in person, or via e-mail by detailing the time, date, and description of the event and the name(s) of the individual(s) whose behavior is problematic. This will initiate investigation and other judicial proceedings as appropriate. If you are uncertain whether you wish to make a formal complaint or are uncertain of the process, request a consultation with Amy Teel at the CGE and your program director on site just to ask more questions and to decide if and how to proceed. Should you be the victim of a crime perpetrated by a student from another college or university, then your program director can inform you of your rights and the process to take action within that institution and/or with the police or other law enforcement officials on site. Please note that if you have a complaint against a non-HWS student or someone who is not a student at all, the CGE can still advise you about your own options and facilitate support services (such as counseling, medical care) for you as a student in need. While we cannot take judicial action against the perpetrator, we will work with you to determine the reporting options available to you on site. In all instances, if you would like fully confidential assistance, you can call the Center for Counseling and Student Wellness (CCSA) at +1 315 781-3388. An on-call counselor is available after hours for emergencies by calling Campus Safety at +1 315-781-3000/Emergency Line +1 315-781-3333.

5.3 FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about sexual misconduct, Title IX complaints (definitions, reporting, judicial processes, etc) HWS students should go to:

http://www.hws.edu/studentlife/sexual_misconduct_resources.aspx

SECTION 6: Coming Back

6.1 REGISTRATION & HOUSING

HWS Registration for the fall semester

The Office of the Registrar will email instructions to you on how to register when you’re abroad. You will be directed to the Registrar’s webpage for the registration dates and course catalog, which is
available online. You should not be at any registration disadvantage due to your off-campus status. Be aware of time differences and plan your registration time accordingly. If you will be on a required excursion or break during your registration dates and will not have access to email, you may contact the Registrar’s office in advance to register for you but this option is ONLY for those who will not have internet access. Keep in mind that you can only register for classes for which you have met the pre-requisite(s), are open to students in your class year, and do not require special permission of instructor. If special permissions are required, you can email the instructor BEFORE registration day, tell him/her you are abroad, state your case and ask him/her to issue the permit. **Be sure to check that you do not have a financial or administrative hold or you may not register.**

**HWS Housing Preferences**

**Fall students**

Students who will be abroad for Fall do not participate in the general room selection process. They do not pre-select a space. Instead, they have two options:

- **Co-sign with a student who will be abroad for the following Spring:** This is a formal contract allowing them to swap spaces when the other goes/returns from abroad.
- **Participate in the online selection process in November of the semester they will be away:** For students returning to the colleges for the following Spring, an online room selection process takes place in November. Students abroad participate in this process.

There are some exceptions where Fall abroad students are allowed to participate:

- If the student wishes to live off-campus for the Spring semester, they should participate in the off-campus approval process which occurs in the semester before they leave.
- If the student wishes to be considered for a theme house opening when they return, they may participate in the theme house selection process. If they are accepted into the house, they will automatically be waitlisted and invited into the house if a space becomes available. They may also attend the house’s room selection meeting and try to identify someone to co-sign with at the meeting.

**Spring students**

Students who will be abroad for the Spring will be sent, electronically, all pertinent information about opportunities and procedures for the following Fall. Before you depart for your term abroad, you will be sent an email from Residential Education spelling out the housing selection process for rooms on campus (or off-campus approvals) for the fall. Room selection will be done online and you will be able to participate in the process exactly at the same time and through the same medium as everyone else on campus.

Please note that only rising seniors will be considered for off-campus housing status and you must apply for off-campus approval by the same process as students on campus. **DO NOT SIGN A LEASE UNTIL YOU RECEIVE WRITTEN APPROVAL FROM RESIDENTIAL EDUCATION**

**6.2 REENTRY AND READJUSTMENT**

This information is designed to help you prepare for the transition back “home”. It is organized into two themes: **Closing the Circle** looks at a few things you can do now to prepare for the next phase of your international experience, coming home (or reentry). **Opening New Doors** suggests ways you can
keep your international experience alive and relevant, including information about some of the programs the CGE offers for returning students.

CLOSING THE CIRCLE
Are you ready to leave this place? Have you wrapped up all your academic work? Think back to all the times over the last few months (or in those months of planning and anticipation) that you said “before I leave I’d really like to…” Now’s the time to review this list and see if there’s any way to fit a few more of these things in before you go. We hope this will ignite a lifetime passion of travel and intercultural endeavor on your part, but although many students say they will return to their host country again, in reality most do not. So get out there while you can and have as few regrets as possible.

Think about all the photographs you’ve taken over the last few months. Did you really photograph everything that’s important to you? How about what you see on your walk to class every day? Or your host-family? Do you have a photograph of your favorite café or restaurant, or your host-country friends? Don’t end up with a thousand pictures of churches, temples or castles and none of the things that make up your day-to-day life, because it’s those commonplace details you’ll think-and talk-about most when you’re back.

An idea: do a “day in the life of” photo-shoot. Photograph your whole day from morning till night, so you can visually answer the question “what was a typical day like?”

PACKING UP
Remember the airline weight limits you worried about before you left? They still apply. Check with your airline if you don’t remember what they are. Now might also be a good time to pack up some things you wouldn’t have thought about bringing home otherwise. Think of the food you’ve (hopefully) grown to love over the last couple of months. Is there anything you’d like to share with your family, or just have at home for a taste of your host-country on those days when you’re missing it? (Remember you can only bring back dry or canned/jarred food, not fresh meat, agricultural products or cheese.) Are there any recipes you’d like to have? Now’s the time to ask about them and write them down.

Other things you might want to pack up include memories. If you’ve been keeping a journal, the last few weeks are a great time to reflect on your experience. The times in peoples’ lives that are characterized by change often have a crisper quality to them; every experience seems to be imbued with a deeper meaning. Try to capture this in your writing.

Ask yourself some questions:

What did I accomplish while abroad?
What did I learn about myself?
What did I learn about this country?
What friends did I make, and what did they teach me?
What will I miss the most?
What am I most looking forward to?
What does this experience mean for my future? Will I live differently now?
What did I learn about my own country and culture while abroad?
Do I want to return to this place? What have I left undone?
You’ll want to ask yourself these questions again after you’ve been home for a while, but thinking about them now can be rewarding and can help you put a little closure on your experience.

COMING HOME
The first (and often surprising) thing to know about coming home is that in many ways you will feel like you did when you arrived in your host country a few months ago: exhausted and excited. Probably it will feel as great to be home as it felt to be in your host country for the first few days, though for different reasons. You’ll enjoy some home cooking, calls from old friends, and telling your family about your experiences.

But, just as your initial elation at being in a new and excited place was tempered by a realization at how foreign and unfamiliar it felt, your honeymoon period at home may also start to not seem totally right. Things that you expected to be familiar may now seem quite alien. Your ears might find it weird to hear English being spoken everywhere. You might think your family throws too much away. You may balk at spending $50 for a meal out when you know your host family lived off that much for a month. The abundance in the supermarket may stop you in your tracks, as you have become used to getting by with less. You may be dismayed at how fast-paced US culture is, or frustrated at how little people actually want to hear about all your experiences (or look at all your pictures). You may not experience every single one of these things, but most of you will experience some of them. The most important thing to realize is that this is totally normal, and the ups and downs you’re experiencing constitute what is frequently called “reverse culture shock”. It actually often gets mapped just like the U-curve:

The most important step in being ready for reverse culture shock is to expect it, and to realize that most of it is caused not by changes in home, but changes in you. You won’t know how far you’ve come until you can reflect on the journey from the place you call(ed) home. This is actually a great time to not only learn about yourself and how you’ve grown while abroad, it’s also a great time to learn about home from a far more objective perspective than you’ve ever had before. Lots of students come back saying that they never felt more American than when they were abroad, and never more foreign than when they were back in the US.

The first thing to do is relax. Like culture shock the first time around, you’ll get through this, and end up stronger for the experience. You’ll have your ups and downs, good days and bad. Some of the same coping skills you used to get yourself through the low points while abroad will serve you well here—reflect in your journals, keep active, rest and eat well, explore your surroundings with new eyes. Soon you will have adjusted, though we hope that you’re never quite the same as you were before your experience abroad!
OPENING NEW DOORS
This section examines your life when you return to home and campus. While we encouraged you to put some closure on your experience abroad, now we’re going to suggest you take the next step—figuring out what doors have opened to you as a result of your experiences. We’ve posed a series of questions below with some information as well as suggestions where you can find out more.

DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE COUNTRY YOU STUDIED IN?
Talk to your advisor, the faculty director of the program or anyone at the CGE; we’ll help you find courses that may build upon your experiences. You can also consider an independent study; talk to your academic advisor to find out more. Some students focus their honor’s thesis on their country of study as well.

DO YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT INTERNATIONAL CAREERS?
Maybe you think you’d like to make travel a part of the rest of your life, and not just for vacations. Maybe you’d like to spend a few years after graduation traveling or working abroad before settling down. Career Services and the Center for Global Education present an International Career Workshop every semester. In addition, please visit Career Services and the CGE and learn about some of the many options!

DO YOU WANT TO PUBLISH YOUR WRITING, ART OR PHOTOGRAPHY?
There are several opportunities available to you. There’s a yearly photo contest, usually held in the Spring semester. There’s also The Aleph: a journal of global perspectives, published every Spring by the Center for Global Education. To submit your work to the Aleph, or learn more about it, email Doug Reilly at the CGE at dreilly@hws.edu. You can submit things at any time.

For photographers and artists, the CGE has opened a gallery space at their location on the 3rd floor of Trinity Hall. The Global Visions Gallery hosts individual and group shows, with the goal of opening a new show each semester. If you have an idea for a show, see Doug Reilly.

DO YOU WANT TO SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH FELLOW STUDENTS?
Learn about becoming a Programming Assistant (PA) with the CGE and help orient other students going abroad, help the CGE develop on-campus programs aimed at making HWS a more culturally-diverse place, and help us out with programs like the photo contest, The Aleph, and International Week. Consider becoming a Study Abroad Ambassador. Ambassador’s help the CGE represent programs to prospective students at admissions events, general information sessions for study abroad programs, and general and program-specific orientations, as well as tabling, and talking to classes. Contact Doug Reilly at dreilly@hws.edu.

DO YOU WANT TO WRITE ABOUT YOUR STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE?
The Center for Global Education, working with Stephen Senders in the Writing and Rhetoric Department, has started an informal writing group for students who studied abroad and want to explore their experiences through reflective or creative writing. The Away Café Group meets every other week; they eat dinner, write and share their stories. Contact Doug Reilly at dreilly@hws.edu for more information.

DO YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT YOUR REENTRY EXPERIENCE?
The staff of the CGE love to talk about study abroad. We’ve all studied abroad, and that’s why we do the work we do today. Make an appointment with one of us or just drop in - if we’re available, we’d be more than happy to hear about your experiences. It helps us learn how students perceive our programs, and it gives you a chance to talk to someone who understands.

Our hope is that you’ll take advantage of one or more of these opportunities.

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