

Dear Prospective Study-Abroad Student:

This handbook has been developed to help you participate in one of St. Mary's College of Maryland's international education programs or to choose a program with another college or university. The Office of International Education is committed to encouraging all SMCM students to study abroad as an integral part of their college experience. All undergraduates, regardless of their major, may apply to study abroad. Students must have two semesters of coursework at SMCM before applying to study abroad for a semester, and they must have a cumulative GPA (SMCM courses only) of at least 2.5. Students may participate at any time in one of SMCM's study tour programs affiliated with a course taught here at the College.

There are many benefits to studying abroad, ranging from improving foreign language proficiency to gaining global competence and intercultural understanding; from making international friendships to developing leadership skills. These benefits are useful not only for foreign language majors or those interested in international studies, but also for students of history, art, economics, business, music, and the physical sciences. A student who studies abroad returns from his/her experience a more mature, empowered individual with a perspective on the world (and oneself) that cannot be learned in the classroom here at St. Mary's. I urge you to take advantage of the opportunity to live and travel abroad while studying at a foreign institution!

To learn more about studying abroad, please attend one of the information sessions held at the beginning of each semester and then make an appointment in the Office of International Education to review your study-abroad objectives.

We look forward to meeting each one of you!

Office of International Education
Anne Arundel Hall 100
18952 E. Fisher Rd.
St. Mary's City, MD 20686
Phone: 240-895-4202
Fax: 240-895-4463
www.smcm.edu/academics/internationaleled

NOTE: *The College retains the right to refuse to grant credit for study-abroad courses, regardless of the program in which the credits were taken, if the student does not fulfill College requirements and procedures for study abroad. Credits earned in study-abroad courses and programs offered by another institution and approved by SMCM will be transferred to the student's transcript when an official transcript is received from the other institution. These credits will be applied toward the 128 semester-hours needed for graduation. A maximum of 32 semester-hours, 16 per semester, may be earned in study-abroad programs.*

Table of Contents

SMCM Alumni Success Stories.....	1
St. Mary's College of Maryland Programs	3
Planning and Approval Process for Study Abroad.....	8
Seven Easy Steps to Get You on Your Way to Studying Abroad	
More on Financing Your Program.....	10
Pre-Departure	11
Health and Safety Precautions	14
Personal Preparation	19
Appendices	
A. A Safe Trip Abroad	
B. Applying for Your U. S. Passport	
C. Vaccine Recommendations for Travelers: Health-Care Provider Information	
D. Medical Information for American Traveling Abroad	

St. Mary's College of Maryland

Study-Abroad Alumni Success Stories

Study Abroad has provided invaluable experience for St. Mary's students in four areas: 1) global competence and foreign language proficiency, 2) leadership, 3) employment, and 4) intercultural understanding.

Global Competence and Foreign Language Proficiency

Tina Jackson Quesada studied abroad years ago in Costa Rica and now lives there with her family. She teaches at a school and helps SMCM professor Dian Dudderar with the College's first student teacher program in Costa Rica that began in October 1998 where students teach English as a Second Language (ESL).

Kiri Johnson studied abroad in Heidelberg, Germany through an exchange agreement with St. Mary's College of Maryland. She improved her German language speaking skills and has just been hired as a German teacher in Virginia.

Lisa Carlson studied abroad at the University of Maryland, University College Schwabisch Gmund and improved her German language proficiency tremendously.

Experience for Future International Leaders

Katie Painter, (B.A. Biology and Spanish) studied in Ecuador at the Universidad San Francisco de Quito in the spring of 1999. As a result of her experiences in Ecuador she has accepted a position with the Peace Corps working in Paraguay. During her two years of service Katie will be developing environmentally friendly agricultural practices and teaching environmental education to young Paraguayans. Katie had this to say of her study-abroad experience, "The cultural adaptation and Spanish language skills that I acquired in Ecuador qualified me for this position and will be invaluable during my time in Paraguay."

Erin Anastasi was nominated by St. Mary's College for a Fulbright Scholarship to study in Bangladesh with the Grameen Bank, Microcredit poverty reduction program. She then was hired by Catholic Relief Services to work in Benin, West Africa and earned an International Public Health degree from Johns Hopkins University. She is now pursuing development work in Washington, D.C.

Tom Arnold (B.S., Biology), is working on his Ph.D. at the University of Delaware on tropical chemical ecology. He went on two study-abroad trips with Chris Tanner and Walter Hatch to Tobago and the Bahamas when he was a student at St. Mary's College of Maryland. Now he is conducting his own tropical marine research in the Bahamas and Bermuda.

Employment Opportunities

Alumna Larissa Sliwinski studied abroad at Strasbourg University in France in 1998 and was then offered a four-year job with a company in Paris because of her language proficiency.

Alumna Patty Feeney studied abroad in Mexico, developed excellent Spanish speaking skills and was hired by ITESM Instituto Tecnológico y de estudios superiores de Monterrey as a Study Abroad director. In Mexico, she takes economics and business courses at the University to prepare for an international business career.

Alumna Michelle Nestlerode (B.S., Biology) participated in the Tropical Marine Biology Study Tour to Belize. While there, Michelle conducted research on sea fans (corals). Michelle is currently a research assistant at the Smithsonian Institution, Natural History Museum, working on the Caribbean Coral Reef Ecosystem Program.

Intercultural Understanding

Alumnus Matt Spurgeon studied abroad in The Gambia, West Africa, and the experience opened his eyes and helped him understand another culture. Matt said, "Personally, international travel does more than just broaden one's perspective. It helps to increase the respect one has for new ideas and cultures. Traveling to The Gambia is a wonderful lesson in the St. Mary's College experience, an experience which seeks to broaden our horizons and help us understand each other."

Alumna Julie Ross completed an international internship and studied abroad in Senegal, West Africa. There she immersed herself in development work and in the Senegalese culture. In Julie's words: "The Senegal internship immersed me not only in development work within West African society, but also in the lives of my friends and family. It was incredible."

St. Mary's College of Maryland Programs

Semester or Year-long Exchange Opportunities

To learn more about the programs below, consult the faculty director or the International Education Office.

CHINA: Fudan University, Shanghai

St. Mary's College of Maryland and Fudan University sponsor a faculty/student exchange program. Fudan University faculty teach and conduct research at SMCM, and students from SMCM and other American colleges study at Fudan for a semester or a full academic year. At Fudan, students take courses in Chinese language and other subjects such as history and philosophy (in Chinese). The program includes a ten-day study trip each semester to a site of major historical interest. The Fudan program also has a resident director who is familiar with SMCM and its students.

Cost: Approximately \$4,500/semester (includes tuition, room, board, study trip, and health services).

Prerequisites: Applicants must be at least a sophomore and have taken two semesters of Chinese or the equivalent.

Faculty Director: Professor Jingqi Fu, 240-895-4232.

CHINA: Lingnan University, Hong Kong

Students of all majors who wish to study in Asia for a summer, semester, or year, and need to take classes in English, may study at Lingnan University. Lingnan is Hong Kong's premier liberal arts university on its own residential campus. The university offers a broad selection of classes in the humanities, social sciences, and business and is set in one of Asia's most dynamic cities.

Cost: SMCM tuition, fees and room costs. Students are responsible for paying for meals in Hong Kong (approximately \$250 per month).

Prerequisites: Applicants must be at least second semester sophomores with a 3.00 GPA or higher.

Faculty Director: Assistant Professor John Schroeder, 240-895-4456.

ENGLAND: Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at Keble College, Oxford University, Oxford

This program offers SMCM students the opportunity to study at the Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (affiliated with Keble College of Oxford University) for a year, a semester, or a summer term. While the Centre focuses on the Middle Ages and the Renaissance in England, it also offers tutorial courses in archaeology, art history, studio art, history, languages, literature, law, philosophy, theology, and writing.

Cost: £5,500/semester or £2,650/summer (includes tuition, room, activity/facility fee).

Students are responsible for paying for meals in Oxford.

Prerequisites: Applicants must be at least second semester sophomores, with a 3.5 GPA.

Students with a lower GPA may be accepted.

Faculty Director: Professor Michael Glaser, 240-895-4239.

St. Mary's College of Maryland Programs *continued*

Semester or Year-long Exchange Opportunities *continued*

FRANCE: Sciences Politiques, Paris

SMCM students can enroll in the undergraduate International Program at Europe's premier institution for the social sciences. The program consists of a choice each semester of two courses (conducted in French) in history, economics, political science, or international relations; a special topics seminar called Comparative Societies; and a seminar on French language study. Upon completion of the year-long program, students receive the International Program Diploma.

Cost: SMCM tuition. Students are responsible for room and board expenses in Paris (approximately \$1,500-\$3,000 per semester).

Prerequisites: Applicants must have at least a 3.0 GPA, be at least juniors, and complete the French advanced-level courses before departure.

Faculty Director: Professor Jacqueline Paskow, 240-895-4491.

GERMANY: Heidelberg University, Heidelberg

SMCM students may study for a semester or an academic year at Heidelberg University. Students are eligible to take a broad range of classes (in German) offered by the University, enabling them to further their language skills while they work within their academic fields. Students eligible for selection include sophomores, juniors, and seniors, as well as students who will have received the Bachelor of Arts degree from SMCM at the commencement immediately prior to entering Heidelberg.

Cost: SMCM tuition. Students are responsible for room and board expenses in Heidelberg (approximately \$1,900-\$2,400 per semester).

Prerequisites: FLGR 203 and advanced proficiency in German.

Faculty Director: Professor Anne LeBlans, 240-895-4514.

THAILAND: Payap University, Chiang Mai

Payap University offers SMCM students the opportunity to explore and appreciate the languages, cultures, and peoples of Southeast Asia. Students are required to take Thai Language and Thai History and Culture courses, and may select remaining courses from offerings in fine arts, history, religious studies, and sociology/anthropology.

Cost: SMCM tuition, fees, room, and board.

Prerequisites: Students must have completed two semesters at SMCM and have a GPA of 2.5 or higher.

Faculty Director: Professor Ho Nguyen, 240-895-4401

St. Mary's College of Maryland Programs *continued*

Study Tour Programs

To learn more about the programs below, consult the faculty director or the International Education Office.

BRITIAN: Shakespearean Studies Summer Program *NEW*

This program is offered as ENGL 230/355: Literary Miscellany/Studies in British Literature and includes three weeks of on-site instruction in Stratford-upon-Avon and London, England. Prerequisites for all SMCM students are ENGL 102 and ENGL 106. English majors should also have completed ENGL 280. Participants will study the relevance of Shakespeare's work to modern audiences, emphasizing the unique thematic and cultural interpretations. The course includes pre-departure seminars; attendance at eight Royal Shakespeare Theatre (RST) productions; participation in workshops, lectures, and tours conducted by the Shakespeare Centre staff and RST actors/directors; and visits to Shakespeare Trust properties. This study tour is offered for the first time in Summer 2003.

Cost: Approximately \$3,425 (includes tuition, room, board, transportation, admission to productions, all fees, and health/repatriation insurance).

Prerequisites: ENGL 102 and ENGL 106.

Faculty Director: Assistant Professor Jennifer Cognard-Black, 240-895-4233.

BELIZE: Tropical Marine Biology Study Program to Belize

This study tour is offered in conjunction with Tropical Marine Biology 316. Participants develop research projects to be conducted during an extended spring break trip to the Caribbean. The study tour is offered every other spring. The next trip is planned for spring 2004.

Cost: \$1,300 (includes room, board, airfare, emergency medical insurance, and some tours).

Prerequisites: Core biology courses, as well as one ecological methods laboratory and either one marine biology or one invertebrate zoology course.

Faculty Directors: Professors Walter Hatch, 240-895-4368 and Chris Tanner, 240-895-4374.

GERMANY: Berlin Study Tour

This ten-day study tour is offered in conjunction with FLTR 302, 20th Century Berlin. The course is taught entirely in English and is open to all students, although some priority is given to students who have studied German. Students will receive four credits for the course, which meets two hours a week during the semester, and begin the ten-day trip to Germany just prior to spring break. During the eight weeks before spring break, students are initiated into the history of 20th Century Berlin. After the trip the class will further elaborate on certain topics. This study tour is offered every other spring. The next trip is planned for 2004.

Cost: \$1,500 (all inclusive)

Prerequisites: None.

Faculty Director: Professor Anne LeBlans, 240-895-4514.

St. Mary's College of Maryland Programs *continued*

Study Tour Programs *continued*

GERMANY: International Summer Program on the Holocaust

This program brings together students from American and German colleges and universities for one month of study and personal reflection on the Holocaust. Students first live and study at SMCM with some trips to Washington, D.C., and then travel to Berlin, Germany and Auschwitz and Cracow, Poland. The next program is planned for summer 2004.

Cost: See faculty director Bjorn Krondorfer for details.

Faculty Director: Associate Professor Bjorn Krondorfer, 240-895-4219.

GREECE: Historical Archeology Summer Program

This study tour offers participants an opportunity to gain firsthand knowledge of methods of historical archeology as applied to the classical world and develop an understanding of the intellectual and cultural context of that world. The tour consists of class preparation at SMCM during the summer session, followed by a four-week trip to Greece. Participants spend 2-3 weeks at the Ohio State University excavations at Isthmia near Ancient Korinth and then travel to ancient sites around Greece. This study tour is offered every other summer. The next trip is planned for 2003.

Cost: \$3,500 (includes tuition, room, partial board, airfare, and emergency medical insurance).

Prerequisites: None; HIST 381 is recommended.

Faculty Directors: Professors Linda Hall, 240-895-4434 or Michael Taber, 240-895-4900.

THE GAMBIA: The Gambia, West Africa Field Study Program

This program aims to increase participants' understanding of and appreciation for the contributions of African civilizations to global society and culture. Participants have the opportunity to observe firsthand African institutions such as the family, religion, economy, science, and expressive arts. Taught entirely in The Gambia and Senegal during a six-week summer session, participants take lessons in local African languages (Mandinka or Wolof) and then select a short-term research project (with the assistance of faculty). This program is offered every other summer. The next trip is planned for summer 2004.

Cost: \$3,500 (includes tuition, room, board, airfare, emergency medical insurance, visa, research and instruction expenses, and entrance to museums and parks on itinerary).

Prerequisites: None.

Faculty Director: Professor Bill Roberts, 240-895-4387.

St. Mary's College of Maryland Programs *continued*

International Internships

To learn more about the programs below, consult the faculty director or the International Education Office.

COSTA RICA: Teaching Internship

Students enrolled in the Education Program are encouraged to participate in a teaching internship in Costa Rica. The program, hosted by Santa Cecilia College, offers participants the opportunity to immerse themselves in the Spanish language while instructing young children in an English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) Program.

Cost: \$1,500 (all inclusive)

Prerequisites: Students must be in the Teacher Education Program entering their student-teaching semester.

Faculty Director: Professor Dian Dudderar, 240-895-4465.

Additional international internship opportunities are available through Career Services.

Planning and Approval Process for Study Abroad

The following outlines how an SMCM student would go about planning and applying for approval to study abroad. It is recommended that a student begin his or her inquiries about a program a year in advance of proposed study. The Office of International Education is here to support students throughout the process.

Seven Easy Steps to Get You on Your Way to Studying Abroad

STEP ONE

Attend a Study Abroad Information Session

Information sessions are offered at the beginning of each semester. These sessions will provide you with up-to-date information on how to find a study abroad program that is right for you, how to pay for that program, and what steps you need to take to make studying abroad a reality.

STEP TWO

Make an Appointment with a Study Abroad Advisor

To make an appointment with a study abroad advisor, call the Office of International Education at 240.895.4202. This meeting will assess both your eligibility to participate in a study abroad program and your international education objectives. This meeting will also provide you with the opportunity to ask specific questions about your study abroad plans.

STEP THREE

Research a Program that is Right for You

Research various programs available for your destination or field of study by searching such study abroad search engines as studyabroad.com or goabroad.com; by visiting the International Education Library; by reviewing the list of *Where Have Other SMCM Students Studied Abroad?*; or by talking with your advisor, faculty members, study abroad advisor, parents or classmates.

The USC Center for Education Abroad has published an online *Study Abroad Safety Handbook* designed to provide resources and preparation tips for students considering study abroad. This handbook outlines helpful questions to ask, preparation checklists and in-depth information about study and travel abroad. The *Study Abroad Safety Handbook* can be found at <http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/globaled/studentsabroad/>.

St. Mary's College of Maryland offers international exchange programs in China, England, France, Germany, and Thailand. If these programs do not fulfill your goals, you may study abroad through any outside program provider that the International Education Office approves.

STEP FOUR

Assess Safety (more details are provided in the section, Health and Safety Precautions)

Before applying to a study abroad program, it is important for you to assess the current safety environment of the destination you are considering. Discuss potential hazards and risks with

Planning and Approval Process for Study Abroad *continued*

STEP FOUR *continued*

Assess Safety (more details are provided in the section, Health and Safety Precautions)

your parents, guardians, or significant others so that you can make informed decisions about safety and the level of risk associated with your potential study abroad destinations.

The following resources may be helpful in researching regional safety issues. Please consult the International Education Handbook for additional resources.

- **The Department of State** -- DOS issues travel advisories and consular information pages on every country.
- **The Federal Aviation Administration** -- The FAA provides information regarding airport safety, airline safety, and traveling overseas.
- **The Association for Safe International Road Travel** -- ASIRT asserts that motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of serious injury and deaths for all travelers. ASIRT also provides international travel reports.
- *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Christian Science Monitor* offer coverage of international affairs. Foreign local newspapers also provide important access to information. Many countries offer English-language daily or weekly newspapers. Print media resources can often be accessed on the Web.

STEP FIVE

Arrange the Financing (more details are provided in following section)

Meet with Tim Wolfe in the Financial Aid Office (x3000) to discuss financial aid opportunities and how your current aid will transfer. Research scholarship, fellowship, or grant opportunities and apply accordingly. You may also discuss financing with the study abroad advisor at your initial assessment meeting.

STEP SIX

Complete Application Forms

Complete all application forms for St. Mary's College of Maryland AND your chosen study abroad program. Submit SMCM study abroad application forms (Application for Approved Study Abroad, Pre-Approval of Transfer Credit, and Financial Aid Consortium Agreement) to Peggy Carlton in the International Education Office, Anne Arundel 100. Send non-SMCM program applications **directly** to the outside program provider. Follow the application instructions carefully. Submit all applications by appropriate deadlines.

More about SMCM forms:

- **Application for Approved Study Abroad:** This form provides SMCM with personal information about you and serves as your application to study abroad.
- **Pre-Approval of Transfer Credit:** This form requests approval to transfer course credit from your study abroad program provider to SMCM. You must attached official documentation from your program provider with course descriptions to this form for transfer credit consideration. You may list more classes than you intend to take so that you have more flexibility to adjust your registration once you arrive at the program.
- **Financial Aid Consortium Agreement:** This form notifies the Financial Aid Office of your intention to study abroad and serves to provide accurate cost figures for your study abroad program for awarding aid.

STEP SEVEN

Attend a Health and Safety Briefing

Health and safety briefings are offered every semester. Students who wish to study abroad are required to attend the Health and Safety briefing offered during the semester prior to studying abroad. Exact dates for briefings are available from the Office of International Education. They are offered in early April and November.

More on Financing Your Program

Financing Your International Education Program

Many study abroad programs will cost approximately the same as what it costs to attend SMCM for a semester. Programs to Western Europe and Australia, however, can cost \$2,000-\$3,000 more than attending SMCM.

SMCM study tour programs (Belize, The Gambia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Shakespearean Studies in Britain, and the International Summer Program on the Holocaust) are offered during winter break, spring break, or summer and require that students pay program fees. (See descriptions in this handbook.)

If you chose to enroll in a program sponsored by another college or university, you do not pay tuition to SMCM for that semester or year. Instead, you would pay the program provider directly.

If you receive federal financial aid (any combination of scholarships, grants, or loans) most can be applied towards your chosen study abroad program (whether you enroll in an SMCM program or an outside provider's program). There may be some restrictions on state and college scholarships. You are strongly advised to make an appointment with the Director of Financial Aid (240.895.3000) three to six months before you plan to study abroad to review your individual financial aid package and to discuss financing options.

Scholarships for studying abroad are available. SMCM offers multiple scholarships each semester ranging from \$500-\$1000 each. In addition, the federal government and the state of Maryland currently offer scholarships for students who qualify for financial aid. Students are strongly encouraged to apply for these scholarships.

About Scholarships, Fellowships, and Grants

Annually, St. Mary's College of Maryland, a number of foundations, government agencies, and other organizations offer scholarships, fellowships, and grants for eligible students. Scholarship opportunities, eligibility requirements, and contact information are summarized on our Web site at www.smcm.edu/academics/internationalead. Students are strongly encouraged to apply for scholarships. Some scholarships and grants are highly competitive and require careful thought and planning for completion of an effective application.

Scholarships are also offered by many study abroad providers, such as American Institute of Foreign Study (AIFS), Council for International Education Exchange (CIEE), or The International Partnership for Service Learning, to name a few. These scholarships vary from semester to semester. Students are advised to ask their program providers if they are currently offering scholarship opportunities.

Finding Additional Financial Resources

There are many places that you can look for financial assistance to help make studying abroad a reality. One source is the book ***Financial Resources for International Study: A Guide for U.S. Students and Professionals*** (published by the Institute of International Education). This book is available for use in the Office of International Education. The Web sites listed below may also be helpful in researching scholarships and applying for additional financial aid.

- SMCM Academic Services, Scholarship Information
- The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

More on Financing Your Program *continued*

Finding Additional Financial Resources *continued*

- Financial Aid Information Page

Even if you have filed a FAFSA before, you should file again if your study abroad program costs more than your expenses at St. Mary's. The additional cost may make an important difference in what you can be awarded.

Other Ways to Save Money

Purchasing an International Student Identity Card (ISIC) from STA Travel is a popular way to save money. ISIC provides international recognition of your full-time student status, access to discount student airfares, a network of student travel organizations who can provide information on local ISIC discounts in over 90 countries, basic sickness and accident travel insurance, a 24-hour Help Line emergency service, and a Student Travel Handbook. To learn more about the ISIC, visit <http://www.statravel.com/planyourtrip/isiccard.asp>.

Pre-Departure

Once you have completed your applications to study abroad, you are now ready to make final preparations!

Applying for a Passport

Visit http://www.travel.state.gov/passport_easy.html to learn about how to apply for a U.S. passport. The Department of State advises individuals to allow six weeks for passport processing. Note, some countries require that your passport be valid for at least six months beyond the dates of your trip. Check with the embassy or consulate of the countries that you plan to visit to find out about their entry requirements.

Applying for a Visa

Some countries require that you obtain a visa (an endorsement stamp in your passport) in order to enter their country or to remain in their country for an extended period of time. Review the State Department's Consular Information Pages to learn about "Entry Requirements" for each of the countries you plan to visit.

Immunizations

The Center for Disease Control provides individuals with health and safety travel information, including required and recommended vaccinations for every area of the world. We advise that you also make a private appointment with Health Services to review your individual medical needs at least two months in advance of your departure.

Insurance

Verify the medical coverage your insurance provides while you are overseas. In particular, check to see if your plan pays the medical provider in your host country directly or if you must pay the provider yourself and seek reimbursement later. Also, ask about policies regarding repatriation. In most cases, it is strongly recommended that you purchase additional emergency medical insurance for the length of time you are abroad.

Pre-Departure *continued*

Insurance *continued*

The International Student Identity Card (ISIC) provides its holders with a toll-free Help Line staffed by multilingual representatives who are prepared to advise travelers on issues ranging from required immunizations to medical, financial, or legal emergencies while abroad. The ISIC also provides students with emergency medical insurance options.

Register for Study Abroad during Pre-Registration

If you are participating in an **SMCM exchange program** (CMRS, Fudan, Heidelberg, Lingnan, Payap or Sciences Po), register for the following appropriate course listed below. You do not need to register for individual courses.

CMRS	IDIS 352	Lingnan	IDIS 357
Fudan	IDIS 354	Payap	IDIS 358
Heidelberg	IDIS 353	Sciences Po	IDIS 355

If you are participating in a **non-SMCM exchange program**, register for the study abroad course **IDIS STA**. You do not need to register for individual courses.

If you are participating in an **SMCM summer program or study tour**, register for the course that corresponds directly with that course or program.

Mandatory Health and Safety Briefing

All students (study tour participants, exchange program students, summer program students and students choosing to study with a outside program provider) **are required to attend a** pre-departure health and safety briefing. Briefings are held in April for those students studying abroad during the summer or fall, and in November for those studying abroad during the spring.

Review, Complete, Sign and Return Remaining Forms

The International Education Office needs the following forms completed by the end of the semester **prior** to studying abroad:

- Assumption of Risk and Release Form (legal form)
- Participation Form (legal form)
- Emergency Contact Form (if participating in SMCM study tour)
- Check-Off Sheet (This form serves to alert other offices on campus, i.e. housing, business, and registrar, that you will not be taking classes at SMCM, but that you remain a matriculated student. This form also prompts you to pay your housing deposit in advance to guarantee housing upon your return, identify a proxy to represent you during registration and room draw, etc. While you visit offices around campus to complete this form, verify that your active address is your *permanent address* to avoid misdirected mail to your Campus Box.)

It is important that your proxy understands his/her responsibilities (to represent you at registration and room draw) while you are studying abroad. It is important for you to remember to communicate with your proxy as registration and room draw approach.

Pre-Departure *continued*

Update Contact Information

Confirm with the registrar that your active mailing address during the time that you are abroad is your **permanent address**. This will ensure that financial aid checks and important mail gets directed to your family instead of your campus mail box.

Also, confirm that the International Education Office has your **e-mail address** for the account you will be checking while abroad. Some students continue to use their SMCM accounts, while others prefer to use an outside provider's account.

Get to Know Your Destination!

Research the country where you will be studying abroad! A travel guidebook may be a good place to start to learn more about where you can go, what you can see, and much, much more!

Pre-Departure Check List

REQUIRED	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Passport and visa(s) (Leave copy with parents/guardians)• Vaccination records• Transportation documents (airline tickets, train tickets, etc.)• Money (cash, traveler's checks, credit card, information on how to access emergency funds while overseas)• Luggage (consult current airline restrictions regarding both checked and carry-on luggage, number of items allowed, size and weight)• SMCM catalog (to help you select courses and register for the semester you return to SMCM)
STRONGLY RECOMMENDED	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Insurance (health/accident, trip cancellation/interruption, property)• Medications for duration of stay (keep in official containers)• Prescriptions for medications, eyeglasses, and contact lenses• Guidebooks with maps (<i>Lonely Planet</i> and <i>Let's Go</i> are popular)• Foreign language phrase or reference books• Camera with plenty of film• Youth hostel card (allows students to stay in a vast network of low-cost accommodations)• Rail passes and tickets (Eurail passes must be purchased in U.S. before departure)• International Driver's License (if planning to rent a car)• Security money belt• Travel backpack• Extra photographs (useful for obtaining additional visas, bus passes, identity cards, or to replace a lost/stolen passport)• Travel diary

Health and Safety Precautions

The decisions you make before and during your time abroad will have a great impact on your health and safety. The following information provides you with issues to consider and reputable resources that can help you to make informed decisions.

Immunizations and Health Care

At least two months before departure, it is important to identify if you will need any immunizations for your trip. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) Travel Medicine Page at www.cdc.gov/travel/ lists useful health information for regions throughout the world. The section in each regional advisory “**Recommended vaccinations**” outlines those the CDC recommends for American travelers. Additional helpful information can be found on the CDC’s Web site about the following:

- Food and water precautions
- Health recommendations by geographic area and in some cases individual countries
- Disease outbreaks, AND
- Practical information on everything from the common flu to malaria.

Important questions to ask:

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

Where to find the answers:

Talk to your family doctor or see Dwight Schafer in the Health Services. Immunizations can be obtained from your family doctor or local medical offices; a limited number of immunizations are available from SMC’s Health Services. Immunizations may need to be ordered, so consult with your health care provider in advance so that necessary preparations can be made. You may also consult the CDC publication *Health Information for International Travel*, available in the Office of International Education, for more information.

Medical and Repatriation Insurance

It is very important to understand your medical coverage and insurance needs while studying abroad. First, verify the coverage your insurance will provide while you are overseas. In particular, check to see if your plan pays the provider in your host country directly or if you must pay yourself and seek reimbursement later. Many countries will require payment directly upon rendering services.

In addition to medical coverage, it is strongly recommended that you purchase additional emergency repatriation insurance for the length of your time abroad. This insurance provides additional coverage for bringing you back to the U.S. for health care needs. The Department of State provides a listing of insurance companies for your consideration in their publication “Medical Information for Americans Traveling Abroad” (see Appendix).

Health and Safety Precautions *continued*

Medical and Repatriation Insurance *continued*

The International Student Identity Card provides its holders with a toll-free Help Line staffed by multilingual representatives who are prepared to advise travelers on required immunizations for travel abroad. They also help travelers in case of medical, financial, or legal emergencies while abroad.

To learn more about medical insurance and to compare offerings, consult your current insurance provider or conduct research using such resources as the Department of State, CDC, or various insurance providers.

The Traveler's Health Kit

You may find it helpful to bring a traveler's health kit with you that includes basic first aid items, non-prescription and prescription drugs.

First Aid Items	Non- Prescription Drugs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cotton swabs/balls • Gauze pads (2x2, 4x4) • 1-inch roll bandage • Adhesive tape • Bandages • Scissors • Tweezers • Elastic (Ace) Bandage • Thermometer • Safety Pins • Alcohol wipes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspirin or Tylenol • Sunscreen (SPF 15) • Antacid • Mild laxative • Antimicrobial skin ointment • Decongestant/cold medicine • Benadryl 25 mg. tablets • Pepto Bismol tabs/liquid • Cough syrup
Additional Items	Prescription Drugs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immunization record (international certificate or vaccination records) • Insect repellent • Extra pair of eyeglasses or contact lens • Contact lens solution • Sunglasses • Record of current medications (generic) and their dosages. Record of your medical history, drug allergies, blood type, and phone number of health care provider. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular maintenance medication • If appropriate: motion sickness medication high altitude medicine anti-malaria prophylaxis

Important notes regarding prescription medicine

First, if you plan to take a supply of prescription medicine to last the duration of your stay, have your doctor write a note explaining the medical purposes for this medication. Also, keep all medication in marked containers from the pharmacy. If you plan to obtain more medication while abroad, foreign pharmacies do not usually honor U.S. prescriptions. Therefore, it will be helpful if you know the generic name of your medication so that a foreign doctor will know what to prescribe for you.

Health and Safety Precautions *continued*

Importance of Safety Considerations

Safety is a prime concern of all who are involved in study abroad ventures – participants, their families, advisers, institutions that send students abroad, those that host them, and the staff of all organizations that operate programs. There are unique risks to overseas travel, and when incidents occur, the impact on participants and their families is often more profound because of the unfamiliarity of the context and the distance that separates participants from their primary sources of consolation and support.¹

There are many resources that can help travelers assess the levels of risk associated with travel and study abroad. The following information is provided to introduce you to these resources and to encourage you to consult them on a regular basis while you travel – not only now as a study abroad student, but also as an American traveler throughout your life. Understanding potential hazards and risks and maintaining a high level of safety awareness can lead to avoiding becoming a victim of a crime.

Sharing this information with parents, guardians, or significant others in your life can help you to assess the level of risk associated with your chosen study-abroad program and associated travel.

Responsibilities of Participants

The following outlines responsibilities of participants that can contribute to a safe travel experience.

- Read and carefully consider all materials issued by the sponsor that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in host countries.
- Consider health and other personal circumstances when applying for or accepting a place in a program.
- Make available to the sponsor accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary in planning for a safe and healthy study abroad experience.
- Assume responsibility for all the elements necessary for their personal preparation for the program and participate fully in orientations.
- Obtain and maintain appropriate insurance coverage and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers.
- Inform parents/guardians/families, and any others who may need to know, about participation in the study abroad program and provide them with emergency contact information. Keep them informed about your plans on an ongoing basis.
- Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct, and emergency procedures of the program, and obey host-country laws.
- Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to the program staff or other appropriate individuals.
- Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well-being of others, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
- Accept responsibility for your own decisions and actions.
- Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining emergency health and law enforcement services in the host country.
- Follow the program policies for keeping program staff informed of their whereabouts and well-being.

¹“Responsible Study Abroad: Health and Safety Guidelines,” Interorganizational Task Force on Safety and Responsibility in Study Abroad

Health and Safety Precautions *continued*

Recommendations to Parents, Guardians, Families

In study abroad as in other settings, parents, guardians, and families can play an important role in the health and safety of participants by helping them make decisions and by influencing their behavior overseas. The following list recommends ways parents, guardians, and families can help.

- Obtain and carefully evaluate health and safety information related to the program, as provided by the sponsor and other sources.
- Be involved in the decision of the participant to enroll in a particular program.
- Engage the participant in a thorough discussion of safety and behavior issues, insurance needs, and emergency procedures related to living abroad.
- Be responsive to requests from the program sponsor for information regarding the participant.
- Keep in touch with the participant.
- Be aware that some information may most appropriately be provided by the participant rather than the program.

Sources to Evaluate Risk

- The State Department issues travel advisories and consular information for every country. These publications provide American travelers with current assessments from the State Department regarding safety and security, entrance requirements, access to medical care, and much more. Their recommendations for each country are easily accessible on the DOS Web site at <http://travel.state.gov>. Before traveling to any country, you are advised to review the State Department's Consular Information Sheet for each country you plan to visit, as well as any Public Announcements or Travel Warnings also issued for each country.
- The State Department also issues the following travel publications, accessible on the Web at www.travel.state.gov/travel_pubs.html. Hard copies of these documents may be purchased.
 - A Safe Trip Abroad
 - Your Trip Abroad
 - U.S. Consuls Help Americans Abroad
 - Crisis Abroad
 - Overseas Citizens Services
 - Travel Warning on Drugs Abroad
 - Sending Money Overseas to a U.S. Citizen in an Emergency
 - Tips for Older Americans
 - Foreign Entry Requirements
 - Medical Information for Americans Traveling Abroad
 - Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Testing Requirements for Entry into Foreign Countries
 - Tips for Students
 - Tips for Women Traveling Alone
 - Tips for Americans Residing Abroad
 - Tips for Travelers to Canada
 - Tips for Travelers to the Caribbean
 - Tips for Travelers to Central and South America
 - Tips for Travelers to Mexico
 - Tips for Business Travelers to Nigeria
 - Tips for Travelers to Sub-Saharan Africa
 - Tips for Travelers to the Middle East & North Africa
 - Tips for Travelers to Russia
 - Tips for Travelers to China
 - Tips for Travelers to South Asia

Health and Safety Precautions *continued*

Sources to Evaluate Risk *continued*

- According to the Association for Safe International Road Travel, motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of serious injury and deaths for all travelers. SMCM is a member of ASIRT, and the IE Office has travel reports for a number of countries. Additional country reports can be ordered for a fee. To learn more, visit the ASIRT Web page at <http://www.asirt.org>.
- The Federal Aviation Administration, <http://www.faa.gov/>, also offers helpful information on such topics as aviation safety, traveler briefings, security tips for air travelers, and more.
- Newspapers are also good sources for current information. Such newspapers as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Christian Science Monitor* have reputable coverage of international affairs and are available on the Web. English-language daily or weekly *local* newspapers are also available in many countries.

Other Safety Resources

Web Sites

USC Center for Global Education www.usc.edu/dept/education/globaled/studentsabroad/
Their Study Abroad Safety Handbook provides resources and preparation tips for students considering studying abroad and parents trying to help them. The handbook aims to help students ask the right questions and find helpful resources for international study and travel.

Air Security International: Hot Spots www.airsecurity.com/hotspots/HotSpots.asp
Provides up-to-date information on various situations throughout the world, including important reminders of anniversary dates that may indicate an increased risk.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade—Canada
www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/travelreport/menu_e.htm Travel information and advisory reports from the Canadian government.

Foreign & Commonwealth Office—London www.fco.gov.uk/travel
This service offered by the foreign affairs office of the British government provides hints for travelers and consular information by country.

Foreign Affairs and Trade/Australia www.dfat.gov.au/travel/index.html
This service offered by the foreign affairs office of Australia provides hints for travelers and consular information by country.

Subscription Services

Consumer Reports Travel Letter: A publication of Consumers Union
A monthly newsletter containing domestic and international travel information, including sections titled “news flashes” and “avoid trouble.”

Travel Alert Bulletin

A monthly newsletter that provides “strategic information to business travelers” both domestic and international. For more information, contact National Intelligence, P.O. Box 1922 Saginaw, MI 48605.

Health and Safety Precautions *continued*

Other Safety Resources *continued*

Subscription Services *continued*

Travel Smart

A monthly newsletter with mostly domestic and international vacation and tourist travel information, as well as warnings and practical advice when traveling. For more information, contact Communications House, 40 Beechdale Rd., Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522.

Risk Consultant

Pinkerton Global Intelligence www.pinkertons.com/pgis/

Pinkerton is a private global intelligence company that provides risk assessments for countries, usually to business executives. Their Web site contains information on country profiles, world status maps, and recent world events. For more information, contact Pinkerton Global Intelligence, 200 North Glebe Rd., Suite 1011, Arlington, VA 22204, (703) 525-6111, Kent Brown.

Personal Preparation

This section reviews such topics as Culture Shock, Homestays, Academic Concerns, Personal Growth and Re-Entry. Some fun suggestions for personal preparation also include:

- Buy a travel guide to learn about the city and country you will be living in! Plan out the “must see” activities while you are abroad. You may also want to read local newspapers from your host country on the Web.
- Bring your camera, a lot of film, and a journal! Taking pictures and keeping a journal is a wonderful way to look back at your exciting experiences abroad! Ticket stubs, postcards, maps, and mementos are also great to collect to put in your album when you return home.
- Bring mementos from the College or your hometown to give to friends you make abroad or to your homestay family.

Culture Shock

What is it?

Culture shock is a name given to the feeling of confusion that often occurs when a person leaves a familiar place and moves to an unfamiliar one. By going abroad you will encounter many new things – the food, landscape, and language might all be completely different. Your foreign language classes may not serve you as well as you expected. You may not be able to convey your full personality in the language of your host country. Your family and friends are far away. There may be academic anxieties: Will you do well in an educational system different from the one you are used to? Will you live up to the hopes and expectations of your family and sponsor? Will you be able to make friends? All these things can be part of culture shock. Culture shock can make you feel confused, unsure of yourself, and doubtful about the wisdom of your decision to come here.

Personal Preparation *continued*

Symptoms of Culture Shock

People experience culture shock in varying degrees. Some people are more affected by it than others. Those who do experience it tend to become nervous and unusually tired. They want to sleep a lot. They write many letters home. They may feel frustrated and hostile toward their host country. They may become excessively angry over minor irritations. It is not unusual for them to become very dependent on fellow nationals who are also students there. All these feelings may make it difficult to deal with locals in your host country and to feel comfortable about speaking their language.

Coping with Culture Shock

People react differently to culture shock, but almost all foreign students must cope with it to some degree. Here are some suggestions that may be helpful:

- **Evaluate your expectations.** Your reactions to your host country, city, and college campus are products of the way things are here and the way you expected them to be. If you find yourself being confused or disappointed about something, ask yourself: “What did I expect?” “Why?” “Were my expectations reasonable?” If you determine that your expectations were unreasonable, you can do much to reduce the amount of dissatisfaction and unhappiness that you feel.
- **Keep an open mind.** People abroad might do things very differently than we do at home. Try to understand that they are acting according to their own set of values, and these are born of a culture different from ours. Avoid judging foreign cultures, simply live in them.
- **Learn from the experience.** Moving to a new culture can be the most fascinating and educational experience of your life. It is an opportunity to explore an entirely new way of living and to compare it to your own. There is no better way to become aware of your own values and attitudes and to broaden your point of view.

“Living in a foreign culture is like playing a game you’ve never played before and for which the rules haven’t been explained very well. The challenge is to enjoy the game without missing too many plays, learning the rules and developing the skills as you go along.” (L. Robert Kohls from *Survival Kit for Overseas Living*)

Homestays

A homestay can be an integral component of the immersion process for a student overseas. Extra effort put forth in communication and consideration can make a homestay a favorite part of your international experience. The following recommendations may help to facilitate good relations between you and your host family.

- When you arrive, have a discussion about such issues as dietary needs; smoking; allergies; logistics of showering, laundry, and transportation; and how and when you can use the telephone. Open communication about these issues up front will help to avoid frustration later. You will probably have to adjust to less personal space in your new home.
- Communicate your schedule to your family daily, so that they know when you will be home or away. Keep them informed about any change in plans.
- Your presence may be extremely important to your host family. Find a balance between your social life and spending time with them.
- Your family’s English could be very elementary, so be as patient with them as you would like them to be with you speaking their language.

Personal Preparation *continued*

Homestays *continued*

- Make an effort to keep your room somewhat clean and tidy. Remember that you are a guest in someone's home.
- Write thank you notes or communicate thanks to your host family.

If any major problems arise between you and your host family, do not hesitate to talk about it to your program adviser.

Academic Concerns

It may be tempting to leave five days out of the week to travel, but if you want academic credit for your time abroad you should go to class and complete assignments. This is not to say you should pass up a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity in the name of academic virtue, but remember that academics are part of the program, too. Also, don't let your assignments pile up on you. That way when a great trip or opportunity does pop up, you won't have to worry so much about your work load.

Personal Growth

Your sense of yourself and the world will most likely be challenged during your time abroad. It is important to remember that you do not have to adopt the native culture, but simply adapt to it. You don't have to change, but try and understand. Know that foreign culture is not good or bad but simply different.

Re-Entry

Re-entry, or reverse culture shock, is sometimes the greatest hardship of going overseas because it takes you completely by surprise. You are going to change as a result of your time abroad. These changes are often much more apparent when you return home. The United States may not feel as welcoming as you thought it would. Perhaps your parents are adjusting too, reacting to the changes in you. During this time, it is important to know how you are feeling. You may find it helpful to keep in touch with other students on your program or friends you made abroad. Knowing that they are going through the same things will be helpful in the re-entry process.

When you return, the Office of International Education will invite you to attend a "Study Abroad Returnee Party." We will discuss your experiences during your time away and since your return. Bring your photos and stories! We'll talk about how to integrate your positive experiences into your life back here in the U.S. and how to understand and recuperate from any negative ones.

Appendices

- A. A Safe Trip Abroad (DOS publication)
- B. Applying for Your U.S. Passport (DOS publication)
- C. Vaccine Recommendations for Travelers: Health-Care Provider Information (CDC publication)
- D. Medical Information for Americans Traveling Abroad (DOS publication)