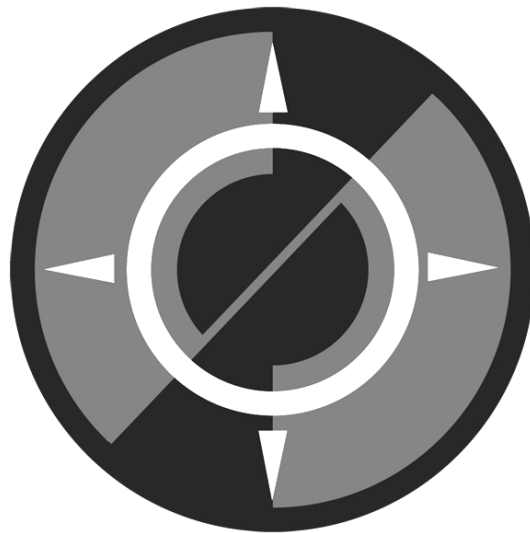


OFF-CAMPUS STUDY & EXCHANGES

PRE-DEPARTURE STUDENT HANDBOOK

**Off-Campus Study
2014-2015**



SKIDMORE
C O L L E G E

IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING OFF-CAMPUS STUDY!

PLEASE READ!

Studying off campus is a privilege that is available to students who have demonstrated the ability to adjust academically and emotionally to college, and who are ready to benefit from the challenges of off-campus study. Only students in good academic, financial, and social standing are eligible to study abroad. The Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges (OCSE) reserves the right to withdraw students from their respective programs if they do not meet these conditions.

Students studying off campus on Approved Programs, either Skidmore or non-Skidmore Programs, are expected to adhere to the same social and academic policies in place at Skidmore College. Students who break Skidmore's Code of Conduct, Skidmore's Honor Code and/or the code of conduct in place abroad may face disciplinary action by their study abroad program and Skidmore College. Students who face disciplinary action may be responsible for sanctions imposed by Skidmore College in addition to those applied by the study abroad program. In the case of conflict among policies the more stringent policy shall apply. Students are responsible for understanding Skidmore College's Honor Code, Code of Conduct, social and academic policies as well as any Code of Conduct in place by their study abroad provider.



Photo taken in Segovia, Spain.
Submitted by Hannah Miller, 2014.
Hannah studied in Spain in spring 2013.

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PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLISTS

Before you leave campus

- ☐ Confirm your off-campus study participation with Skidmore by submitting your \$500 non-refundable confirmation deposit, acceptance of offer form, and your General Agreement and Release form to the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges. Make your check payable to Skidmore College. Skidmore will also need to receive the parent copy of the General Agreement and Release Form before we consider you a participant in an abroad program. This will be sent directly to the Parent/Legal Guardian listed on your application.
- ☐ Apply to and confirm participation directly with the program provider within their deadline (only for Non-Skidmore Approved Programs). Students do not submit a non-refundable confirmation deposit to the provider. Please indicate that Skidmore will be responsible for this payment. **Students are responsible for any refundable deposits.** For example, Globalinks and SACI require refundable deposits at the time of acceptance. Because these deposits are refundable, they are not paid by Skidmore.
- ☐ Read thoroughly all the materials sent to you by your off-campus study program and Skidmore's OCSE.
- ☐ Complete all forms and paperwork as required by your program provider and Skidmore, including the Residential Life **Housing Preference Form** for semester you return to campus.
- ☐ Meet with your faculty advisor to discuss the courses you will take the semester you return to campus. Make a list of these classes and take it with you to your program abroad.
- ☐ Provide OCSE with your primary email address (if it's not your @skidmore.edu email).
- ☐ Provide the mailroom with a forwarding address in the U.S.
- ☐ Move everything out of your residence hall room or apartment at the end of the term prior to studying abroad. Return all library books, pay all phone bills, parking tickets, and library fines and settle all outstanding matters on campus before you leave.
- ☐ Maintain good academic, social, and financial standing. OCSE reserves the right to withdraw a student from a study abroad program if they do not meet preset policies and procedures, including a 3.0 GPA and good social standing.

Before you leave the U.S.

- ☐ Make sure your passport is valid for **at least six months beyond** the end of your program.
- ☐ Obtain all the required visas for your program and the countries you plan to visit. **This process can take months to complete, so do not wait until the last minute!** Contact your program provider for information about applying for a visa. You can also visit the State Department's website for U.S. Passports and International Travel at <http://travel.state.gov/content/travel/english.html>. You are solely responsible for meeting the visa requirements for the country or countries you will be studying in. Keep in mind that visa requirements may differ for non-US citizens.
- ☐ Make sure that you have information on your international medical insurance and that you share that information with your parents. Skidmore College provides limited, supplemental international health insurance to all students participating on Skidmore and Approved Programs. All claims should be submitted to your primary insurance first. Direct any specific questions regarding your international health insurance coverage to your primary insurance or to Skidmore's international health insurance provider.
- ☐ Check with the Center for Disease Control to see which immunizations are recommended for your program site. Check out their website at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>.
- ☐ Research the culture, history, customs and politics of your host country.
- ☐ Know how you will handle other money related matters. Exchange a small amount of currency (\$100 to \$200) so that you have some funds when you arrive in country.

PREPARING TO GO

As you have probably realized, there is quite a bit to do before you depart. Aside from the different issues you need to consider (health, safety, finances), there are some very practical items you need to handle as well.

PASSPORTS

All students must have a valid passport in order to study outside of the U.S. **Your passport should remain valid for at least 6 months after the end date of your program.** Passport application forms are available from any post office that serves as a passport agent or online at <http://passports.state.gov/content/travel/english.html>.

For students here at Skidmore, the Saratoga Springs Post Office at 245 Washington St. offers passport services (phone: 518-584-1545). If you are outside of Saratoga Springs, check <http://www.usps.com/> to see where the nearest passport office is located. The application process typically takes 4-6 weeks. For an extra fee, you can have your application expedited. Passport applications, instructions, and approximate processing times are available online at <http://passports.state.gov/content/travel/english.html>.

It is recommended to make several photocopies of your passport and keep them in separate locations. This way, if you lose your passport, you will have a record of your passport number and other information that will help to expedite replacement. Leave one copy of your passport with someone in the U.S. and keep another copy with you but separate from your actual passport. You should register your passport at the local American embassy or consulate upon arrival if your program doesn't provide this service for you.

VISAS

In addition to a passport, some countries may require you to obtain a student visa to study in the country. A visa is an official authorization, appended to a passport, permitting entry into and travel within a particular country or region for a specific purpose and timeframe. Typically, the actual visa will be a stamp in your passport although some countries will have electronic visas. **We cannot stress enough that the visa process varies from country to country.** Your program sponsor should inform you about visa requirements and application procedures. Without a visa, you could be turned away at the border and/or withdrawn from your program.

The application process for a visa can be long and unpredictable so it is a good idea plan ahead and to start the application process early. Do not forget that you must submit a valid passport along with your visa application that the consulate may keep until your visa is ready. This could be a day or three months. If you do not already have a passport, you will need to apply for a passport first! Please check with your program provider or the consulate of the country you will be studying in for detailed and accurate information. Please follow all instructions carefully and completely. The consulate can reject your application for a visa and there is not anything OCSE or your off-campus study program provider can do to help if this happens.

Independent Travel Prior to the Start of a Study Abroad Program: Please be aware that the visa application process for some countries may require students to surrender their passport for *several weeks* prior to the start of the study abroad program. These requirements may impact your independent travel plans. You are advised to determine visa requirements as early as possible for your program, and especially in advance of planning independent travel. Students will only be permitted to study on their chosen program if they have obtained proper visa documentation. Independent travel abroad is best done over semester breaks during the course of your program and/or after your program ends.

If you will travel to other countries while you are abroad, you should find out about visa requirements before you leave the U.S. In general, Western European countries do not require visas for stays of less than 3 months for U.S. citizens. However, many other countries will require a tourist visa, in addition to a passport for any length of stay. Many countries now have their visa requirements online. Check out the Embassy Page at <http://www.projectvisa.com> for a list of foreign consulates and embassies world-wide. Also, look on <http://travel.state.gov/content/travel/english.html> for the latest overseas visa requirements.

ENTERING THE COUNTRY

When you arrive at your destination, you will pass through Customs and Immigration. Customs is a country's method of regulating the goods and currency brought into or taken out of that country. Immigration establishes that you are legally entitled to reside in that country for a period of time. At many airports, customs and immigration are handled simultaneously, but occasionally you may be asked to go through immigration procedures separately. Remember, honesty is still the best policy in the customs business – do not try to bring items into a country that are forbidden, such as fruits and vegetables.

When you leave a country, you will go through customs and immigration again. Your visa will be canceled and you will declare what goods you have purchased while abroad. When you reenter the U.S., you will go through U.S. customs at your port of entry. Typically, each person is entitled to transport \$800 worth of goods into the United States duty free, although it does vary depending on which countries you have travelled to. Purchases exceeding that amount are subject to duty taxes. If you plan to buy a lot of items while abroad, you should retain all of your receipts as proof of what you paid.



Photo taken in Sydney, Australia.
Submitted by Yaomingxin Lu, 2014.
Yaomingxin studied in Sydney, Australia in spring 2013.

ACADEMICS

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Studying off campus is a privilege that is available to students who have demonstrated the ability to adjust academically and emotionally to college, and who are ready to benefit from the challenges of off-campus study.

While studying off campus, all students must adhere to the Honor Code and Academic Policies in place at Skidmore College. Students are responsible for understanding Skidmore College's academic policies. The Skidmore College Academic Policies can be found in the Skidmore College student handbook at http://www.skidmore.edu/student_handbook/.

Students must also follow OCSE's academic policies as well as any academic policies in place by their off-campus study provider. OCSE's academic policies can be found at <http://www.skidmore.edu/ocse/policies/academic.php>.

Skidmore College Honor Code

The Skidmore Honor Code defines the guiding principles of honesty, respect, and integrity that should inform all choices and behavior patterns in the Skidmore academic and social communities. Each student, in matriculating at Skidmore College (or engaging in any Skidmore-sponsored activity or program, such as off-campus study, as a non-matriculated student), agrees to the following code:

I hereby accept membership in the Skidmore College community and, with full realization of the responsibilities inherent in membership, do agree to adhere to honesty and integrity in all relationships, to be considerate of the rights of others, and to abide by the College regulations.

It is the responsibility of every student and every member of the faculty and staff, both by example and by instruction, to encourage students to embrace the standards of the Honor Code. If a student is aware of a violation, he or she is honor-bound to speak to the student, and if necessary, to report the student to the Dean of Student Affairs or other appropriate member of the staff or faculty. If a member of the faculty is aware that someone has committed an academic violation, faculty legislation requires that the faculty member report the violation to the Dean of Studies. It is only through a combination of ethical commitment, guidance, and sanctions that the Honor code can become a living set of principles for our community.

Maintaining Off-Campus Study Eligibility

Only students in good academic, financial, and social standing are eligible to study abroad. Participation in an off-campus study program is contingent upon maintaining a good academic, financial, and social standing at Skidmore College. **If your cumulative GPA falls below a 3.0 or if your social standing changes dramatically, OCSE reserves the right to withdraw you from your program.**

CREDITS AND GRADES

Skidmore students may participate in two types of programs – Skidmore Programs or Non-Skidmore Approved Programs. Each has a different process as far as credits and grades are concerned. Please read the section below that applies to the specific type of program you will be participating on next semester.

If you are a non-Skidmore student participating on a Skidmore program, you will receive a Skidmore College transcript at the end of your program. Please check with your home campus for details regarding transfer of credits and grades.

A note about transcripts: Many students find they need official transcripts from their overseas universities when they apply for graduate or law schools or any number of other things. Skidmore **cannot** get you an official transcript from your host university. Therefore, we suggest that you request – at the end of your program, before you depart for the U.S. – a number of official, sealed transcripts from the host university. (They will send them to you in the States after the program ends.) These documents are very difficult to get after you return to the States, and, again, OCSE cannot get them for you.

You may not receive credit for any cultural cuisine or food and wine courses taken off campus. You also must be mindful of the level of language course you are taking abroad. You may not repeat the same level of language abroad, if you have already completed coursework at that level toward your degree at Skidmore. Be sure to have your courses pre-approved by the relevant department at Skidmore before registering for any courses onsite.

Skidmore Programs (except Skidmore in London)

Skidmore in Paris (Advanced Studies and Arts & Business), Paris Fall Seminar, Skidmore in Spain (Alcalá and Madrid), and the Shakespeare Programme

Credits earned on Skidmore programs are treated as Skidmore courses and credits and may be applied towards major, minor, and distribution requirements. You must receive pre-approval for all courses you would like to count toward any of these requirements. All credit for 300-level courses will be counted toward meeting Skidmore's general maturity-level credit requirement. You must receive pre-approval from the department chair for all courses you would like to count toward your major or minor, including courses at the maturity-level. All grades will appear on your transcript and be counted towards your Skidmore grade point average.

Non-Skidmore Approved Programs and Skidmore in London

Credits earned on approved programs are pre-approved for transfer as elective credits and may be applied towards major, minor, and distribution requirements. You must receive pre-approval for all courses you would like to count toward any of these requirements. All credit for 300-level courses will be counted toward meeting Skidmore's general maturity-level credit requirement. If you would like any courses to count toward major or minor maturity-level requirements, you must receive prior approval from the department chair. Students cannot take courses graded pass/fail or satisfactory/unsatisfactory. All courses must be taken for a grade. Credit will be transferred only for courses in which you have earned a grade of 'C' or better. The grades you earn on an approved program **will** appear on your Skidmore transcript but will not be computed in your Skidmore GPA.

REGISTERING FOR COURSES ABROAD

Course Load

Each program will have its own policies and procedures for registering for courses abroad. What all Skidmore students must keep in mind is that Skidmore expects you to register for a **full course load**. This is different from having full-time status. A full course load means that you must take the same number of classes that a student at your host university would be expected to take, which is generally equivalent to 15 credits at Skidmore. If the local students take 5 courses, you must take 5 courses. You must also take enough classes to maintain the equivalent of at least 12 credits for your semester abroad. This is typically not a problem. However, you must be sure you understand how half-credits and non-US credit system conversions work. Please check with your program provider to be sure you understand the exact number of credits that are expected.

Course Changes

No matter what type of program you are on, all of your courses must be pre-approved. **If your course selections change while you are studying off campus – especially courses going toward your major, minor or other requirements – you MUST complete the Change of Status form in Appendix IV.**

If there are changes from the courses that were originally approved at the time of application, you should write to (e-mail) the **Chair** of the major/minor department in order to get approval for the new course. Include the name of the class and a course description. Course descriptions are sometimes available on line. If so, send the website for the course descriptions to the department chair. If the description is not available online, you should fax a copy to the department chair.

Ask the department Chair: Would the department be willing to accept the course for major or minor credit? Is it equivalent to a specific Skidmore course or a general elective within the major/minor? Would it be considered 200 or 300 level credit?

The Chair's response back to you indicating he/she will accept the credits toward the major/minor will serve as the chair's signature. With this in mind, please be sure your OCSE advisor is copied in on the message and the response. We will keep copies for your OCSE file and forward the change to the Registrar's office. You are welcome to contact the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges with any questions.

If the courses you have changed are **NOT** for major/minor credit, you should simply send a list of new courses to OCSE. We will keep the list in your file. The only exception would be foreign language courses. All foreign language courses must be approved by the Chair of Foreign Languages & Literature even if you have already fulfilled the foreign language requirement.

Dropping a course

If you are considering dropping or withdrawing from a course, you should contact OCSE (ocse@skidmore.edu) immediately. You must have permission from OCSE and your program provider to drop a course while studying off campus.

Students will not be permitted to drop a course if the total enrollment falls below the required course load. Students must also adhere to the onsite deadlines for dropping or withdrawing from a course.

Students should not follow the published deadlines on the Skidmore campus when studying off campus.

If there is a personal or medical reason that forces you to drop below a full course load, you **MUST** receive approval from Skidmore's Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges in advance. **You must contact OCSE before dropping any courses to ensure you maintain the proper number of credits.**

Withdrawal from your off-campus study program

No student should withdraw from a program without first consulting Off-Campus Study & Exchanges (ocse@skidmore.edu) and the program provider or coordinator of your program. If you do decide to withdraw from a program, it is your responsibility to submit a Change of Status form to OCSE, outlining the reason for your withdrawal and explaining whatever arrangements you have made with the onsite administration for finalizing your participation.

Based on your reasons and the date of your withdrawal, OCSE will consult the onsite staff and/or the program provider before determining whether how the credit for the semester will appear on your record (no credit, L, W, or F). Please contact OCSE regarding the refund policy, if applicable. Should you remain in the host city after you have withdrawn from the program, you will not have the privilege of program services and staff support.

If there is a personal or medical reason that forces you to withdraw from your program, you **MUST** receive approval from Skidmore's Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges and Office of Academic Advising in advance.

ACADEMICS ABROAD

It is a good idea to make yourself aware of the academic system of your host country before you immerse yourself in it. Do you understand how you will go about registering for classes at your program site? Will there be someone on site to assist you in choosing classes appropriate to your background? What about the academic calendar? Is it similar to the U.S. academic calendar (September to May)? Are there semesters or other types of terms? When are classes and how long do they last daily? If you know what to expect, you can better prepare yourself to succeed in the new academic culture.

Learning how to adapt to a new academic system is one of the first challenges you may face once you begin classes. Professor/student relationships are not always what they are in the U.S. Try to discover what is expected of you early on. It may appear that students from the host country are not doing much work, and the time spent in class may be less than what you are used to. Do not let this fool you. There could be the expectation that you will conduct more independent research, and students may simply be used to studying during the day.

Do not be upset if you find that your grades are not what you are used to, either. In many other parts of the world, it is rare for students to receive a grade of A. To receive the equivalent of an A, one would have to obtain superior knowledge of a subject matter. Therefore, it is more common to receive Bs and Cs if you are being graded by foreign faculty. (Please remember that you must receive a grade of 'C' or above in order to receive transfer credit on Non-Skidmore Approved Programs and Skidmore in London.)

Finally, foreign libraries offer another adaptive challenge to U.S. students. Library systems vary from country to country. For example, in some countries, libraries are only open during daylight hours and closed in the evening. Some libraries may not allow books to leave the building. Likewise, computer and Internet access may not be as available or as widely used as they are in the United States. Learning to adjust to such differences is part of the study abroad experience.

Your off-campus study program most likely has provided you with detailed information on academics; please read this information thoroughly. We would like to reiterate that you should learn as much as possible before you go. Here are some of the questions you should be able to answer about your program before you arrive on site:

- What is the academic calendar? Do all classes begin at the same time or do starting dates vary by department? Are some courses only available to year-long students?
- Where are classes held? Will you be in class alongside host nationals or will you be in special courses for foreign students? Is there a traditional campus or are classes spread across the city?
- What do you know about the academic system of your host country? What type of work will you be expected to do – class presentations, research papers, essay exams? How will these be evaluated? Will your grade be based on one assignment or many?
- Are the standards for grading different than what you are used to in the U.S.?
- Do you know if you will have to purchase textbooks or will they be provided by the program? Will you even have textbooks? Are there particular reference books that you should bring from home?

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Skidmore College cultivates an inclusive and supportive learning community and values the diverse learning styles of our students. We are committed to providing students with disabilities meaningful access to off campus study and strive to provide individualized accommodations necessary for students when possible. Students are strongly encouraged to contact an OCSE Program Manager and Skidmore's Coordinator for Students with Disabilities as early as possible to discuss their needs for studying off campus.

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need academic accommodation when studying off campus, you must formally request accommodation from Meg Hegener, Coordinator for Student Access Services, at Skidmore College and provide documentation which verifies the existence of a disability that supports your request. The application form and documentation requirements are also available online at http://www.skidmore.edu/academic_services/. For further information, stop by the office of Student Academic Services in Starbuck Center or call 518-580-8150.

Commonly requested academic accommodations include:

- Extended test time
- Test taking in a distraction reduced location
- Books in alternative format (electronic)
- Supplemental note taking
- Test reading
- Converted class and test materials (enlarged, audio-taped etc.)

If the student's documentation is conclusive, the Coordinator will work with the student to determine which accommodations requested are reasonable for the college setting and, in turn, off campus study. The Coordinator will prepare a Memo of Academic Accommodations, which identifies the student as disabled (but does not state the type of disability) and lists the accommodations s/he is entitled to receive for the semester. The student should share this Memo of Academic Accommodations with OCSE (for Skidmore programs) or directly with their program provider (for Non-Skidmore Approved Programs) when requesting accommodations for their off campus study. Some Non-Skidmore Approved Programs may request specific documentation of the disability in addition to Skidmore's Memo of Academic Accommodations.

As it is on campus, the success of disabilities support abroad depends significantly on the student's willingness and ability to seek the help he/she needs and to follow through with academic and other recommendations. Requests for accommodations and documentation of the disability should be provided to your off-campus study program as early as possible. Each situation will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and every effort will be made to work collaboratively with eligible students to facilitate an accommodation. However, please keep in mind that in-country conditions and resources do vary by site, and specific program locations have limited accessibility.

REGISTERING FOR YOUR NEXT SEMESTER ON CAMPUS

All students studying off campus will register online just as if they were on campus. As soon as the schedule of classes has been finalized for next semester, you will receive an email at your Skidmore email address from the Registrar's office with instructions and reminders for the registration process. You can email any questions or concerns to registrar@skidmore.edu. You may also access all of the information you need to register by logging on to the Registrar's home page at <http://cms.skidmore.edu/registrar>. Updated schedule information is normally available in mid-March for the fall term and mid-October for the spring term.

If you will not have access to the internet during your registration time slot, please contact the Registrar's office ahead of time to request they administratively register you for classes. This only applies to programs where there is no internet access. This does not apply to independent travel.

Don't forget to meet with your faculty advisor before you depart to discuss the courses you will need to take upon your return to campus. Bring this list with you during your semester abroad and leave a copy behind with your parents/guardians. This will help refresh your memory when it is actually time to register. As a handy reference, it's helpful to access the *Skidmore Catalog* at <http://catalog.skidmore.edu>. With this information if any registration questions or problems arise while you are abroad you will be equipped to handle them.

HOUSING AT SKIDMORE UPON YOUR RETURN

Prior to departure all Skidmore students must complete the "Housing Preference Form" (See appendix VI) and return it to the Office of Residential Life. All off-campus study students go through the Skidmore Room Selection Process for their return semester, just as if they were on campus.

Students who have studied off campus are **NOT** guaranteed off-campus housing. Off-campus housing is available for a limited number of students. If you have further questions, please contact the Office of Residential Life.

EXTENDING YOUR STAY

Many students who plan to study abroad for only one semester enjoy it so much that they decide to stay for a second. If you'd like to extend your off-campus study, please contact OCSE immediately. We are always pleased to help a student extend their stay. Next, talk with your program provider to be sure that you understand their policies and procedures. You will then want to contact your faculty advisor at Skidmore to talk about the courses you will take during your second semester abroad. OCSE also suggests that you discuss your decision with your family at home.

If you wish to extend your off-campus study, you must seek approval from Skidmore College by completing the Change of Status form that is provided in Appendix VI or the OCSE website. Of particular importance to the process is that you receive course pre-approval for the courses you plan to take. It's important to get your courses pre-approved so you can continue to graduate on time. Please contact the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges if you have any questions regarding an extension or the Change of Status form. Once we receive the Change of Status form and copies of the course descriptions, we will process the form with your department and other administrative areas, and submit your extension of stay.



Photo taken in Tierra del Fuego National Park, Ushuaia, Argentina
Submitted by Miranda Brock, 2014.
Miranda studied in Buenos, Aires in spring 2013.

MONEY MATTERS

PROGRAM COSTS & BILLING

Students on Skidmore and Non-Skidmore Approved Programs will be charged a program fee comparable to the Skidmore comprehensive fee for their semester or year off campus. This fee is equal to Skidmore tuition, room at the on campus apartment rate, board (if applicable), and mandatory college fees. Students will be billed by Skidmore's Bursar directly for the comprehensive fee. **Students are required to use program arranged room and board where available.** Additionally, if provided a housing option, students are required to select a homestay. Students desiring an alternative to program housing or a homestay should consult with an OCSE Program Manager about submitting an OCSE housing petition. If the program does not include room and/or board, or only partial board, the comprehensive fee will be adjusted accordingly. Students are responsible for paying any refundable deposits and non-included fees directly on-site.

Skidmore will cover: program tuition and mandatory academic fees, room (double occupancy), board* if applicable, international medical insurance, and any other mandatory program fees.

**Note: Unlimited meal plans are not available on Skidmore or non-Skidmore approved programs.*

Students are responsible for: airfare, passport, visa, and immigration costs if applicable, onsite transportation if not included in the Skidmore or provider's program fee, books, accommodation upgrades, board where applicable, voluntary field trips and excursions, refundable deposits, and personal expenses. Students are also responsible for their housing and board when participating in programs do not include those items. The Skidmore Comprehensive fee will be adjusted accordingly in these cases.

For Non-Skidmore Approved Programs, Skidmore will handle payments to the program providers on behalf of students. However some providers will submit invoices directly to students via mail, email or their proprietary online system. **Students that receive invoices for expenses which are covered under Skidmore's comprehensive fee must submit the invoice(s) to OCSE for payment.** Do not disregard invoices that you receive, doing so may jeopardize your enrollment in the program. Additionally, failure to submit the invoices in a timely fashion to OCSE may lead some providers to impose late fees which will be the students' responsibility.

More detail about program fees and billing is located at <http://www.skidmore.edu/ocse/finance/index.php>.

OCSE's financial policies are available at <http://www.skidmore.edu/ocse/policies/financial.php>.

PARTICIPANT FEES

Students on Skidmore and Non-Skidmore Approved Programs will be charged the Skidmore comprehensive fee for their semester or year off campus. This fee is equal to Skidmore tuition, on campus apartment rate, board if applicable, and mandatory college fees. Students will be billed by

Skidmore's Bursar directly for the comprehensive fee. If your program does not include room and/or board, or only includes partial board, the fee will be adjusted accordingly.

The fees listed below are for the 2013-14 academic year. Skidmore College will finalize the fees for 2014-15 in May 2014. We expect the fees to increase slightly from 2013-14. Please use the 2013-14 fees as a guide until the 2014-15 fees have been finalized. Once the fees have been finalized for 2014-15, the information will be posted online at <http://www.skidmore.edu/ocse/finance/index.php>.

Fall '13 or Spring '14 Semester

Tuition -	\$22,410
Room -	\$4,636
Board -	\$2,494
Required Fees -	*\$452
Total:	\$29,992

Academic Year 2013-2014

Tuition -	\$44,820
Room -	\$9,272
Board -	\$4,988
Required Fees -	*\$904
Total:	\$59,984

** Visiting students participating on the Shakespeare Programme and Skidmore students on an Approved Program are not charged the required fees.*

What does the Comprehensive Fee include?

The Skidmore comprehensive fee covers costs for tuition and mandatory fees, room (double occupancy), board if applicable, supplemental international medical insurance, and any other mandatory program fees. Please note that unlimited meal plans are not available on Skidmore or non-Skidmore approved programs.

Students are responsible for: airfare, passport, visa and immigration costs if applicable, onsite transportation if not included in the Skidmore or provider's program fee, books, accommodation upgrades, board if not included in the provider's program fee, voluntary field trips and excursions, refundable deposits, and personal expenses. Students are also responsible for their housing and board when participating in programs that do not include those items. The Skidmore Comprehensive fee will be adjusted accordingly in these cases.

How is payment handled?

Students will be billed by Skidmore's Bursar for the comprehensive fee. The bill will show one charge for the tuition portion of the program, a second charge titled Study Abroad Accommodation Fees for the room and board portion, and any additional mandatory Skidmore College fees. Payments are to be made to Skidmore College. Off-Campus Study & Exchanges will handle payments to the off-campus study program providers on the student's behalf.

What are program deposits and to who are they sent?

Most programs require two deposits upon acceptance - a confirmation deposit to secure a spot in the program and a housing deposit. For Skidmore and non-Skidmore approved programs, a non-refundable confirmation deposit of \$500.00 is to be paid to Off-Campus Study & Exchanges, not to the provider.

Skidmore Programs

Students on a Skidmore Program will submit a \$500.00 non-refundable confirmation fee within two weeks after acceptance into their chosen Skidmore Program. \$400 of the deposit will be credited to your Skidmore College account and the remaining \$100 constitutes a processing fee.

Non-Skidmore Approved Programs

Students on an Approved Program will submit a \$500 non-refundable confirmation deposit to OCSE (not the program provider), payable to Skidmore College, within two weeks after receiving CAS approval for off-campus study. This deposit will be credited to the student's Skidmore College account. Students are responsible for paying any refundable deposits and non-included fees directly on-site or to the program provider. Any housing deposits need to be sent directly to the provider, not to Off-Campus Study & Exchanges. The majority of the housing deposits are refundable to the student at the end of the program. Please check with the program provider for its policy.

The student should note on his/her acceptance paperwork to the provider that the deposit was paid directly to Skidmore, and Skidmore will arrange to pay the confirmation deposit to the program provider. Checks should be made payable to Skidmore College.

FINANCIAL AID

Skidmore students participating on Skidmore and non-Skidmore approved programs can typically use all of their financial aid toward the costs of their program. If you currently receive financial aid, you should make an appointment with the Financial Aid office to review the use of your financial aid package. You must do this before you leave campus for your off-campus study program. In addition to Skidmore financial aid, some programs offer merit or need-based scholarships for particular programs they sponsor. Please be sure to contact the program sponsor about possible scholarships. Also check for national scholarship funds for study abroad. Although limited, there are some organizations that offer grants to students studying overseas. For links to scholarship opportunities, see <http://www.skidmore.edu/ocse/finance/scholarships.php>.

If you are a non-Skidmore student participating on a Skidmore program, please check with your home campus for details regarding financial aid.

EXPENSES WHILE TRAVELING

Money Management Overseas

One of the most frequently asked questions is, "How do I handle my money once I'm studying off campus?" There are many answers to that question. The best way to handle money varies depending upon your site and your preferences. However, there are some general rules to keep in mind when planning for expenses. We **strongly** encourage you to discuss your budget and money management with your parents or guardians before you depart. It is important to understand how these matters will be handled and to have a support person at home to assist you in case of an emergency.

Foreign Currency

Although it seems obvious, please remember you will be dealing with a foreign currency while abroad. The money will look different from U.S. money and it will take some time to get used to a new currency. Some countries deal mainly in coins and may have coins worth almost \$10. Once you

arrive you may be tempted to exchange all of your money into foreign currency and then start to spend. Please wait! It will take you a few weeks to really figure out how the exchange rate works and what things are really worth. Students can find themselves broke after only a month or two because they didn't understand how the new currency really works. Whatever you "need" to buy will be available within a few weeks after your arrival. Take the time to get to know the currency and city before you spend all your cash.

Cash & Travelers Cheques

One of the most important things to remember: **do not travel with a lot of cash.** Cash is impossible to replace if lost or stolen. If you must travel with a lot of money, make sure it is in the form of American Express Travelers Cheques or Pre-Paid Card such as Visa TravelMoney Card or MasterCard Prepaid. Travelers Cheques are insured and can be replaced if lost or stolen; however, the use of Travelers Cheques has been in decline as alternatives, such as credit cards, debit cards, prepaid cards and ATMs have become more widely available and are easier and more convenient.

Although you can obtain traveler's cheques in other currencies, we recommend only carrying traveler's checks in U.S. dollars. You must purchase them yourself in the U.S. as you will be the only person allowed to sign them once abroad. Travelers Cheques can be exchanged for local currency at accepting banks, foreign exchange locations, and some American Express Travel Services Offices for a small fee. Travelers Cheques cannot be used to make purchases in stores in most countries, and must be exchanged for cash.

While you should not carry a lot of cash, you should exchange a small amount of U.S. dollars into the local currency of your country of destination before you depart, enough local currency to cover the first few days in your new country. Your program sponsor should be able to give you an idea of how much local currency to bring. With advance notice, currency can be exchanged at some of the larger banks in Saratoga Springs and Albany. (If you are going to a lesser-traveled country, you may not be able to obtain currency until your arrival.) Be aware that you will be charged a fee for the service. Currency can also be exchanged at the airport prior to your departure. It is also a good idea to keep a small amount of U.S. dollars (\$50) for your return trip. Again, this will cover expenses when you return home.

ATMs & Credit Cards

The availability of **ATM** machines has facilitated the ease of money transactions abroad. Most countries now offer ATM service on a wide scale basis. However, be sure to check with your program sponsor before planning to use ATMs as your sole means of obtaining money. Also check with your home bank to be sure you understand any fees or surcharges applicable to overseas use of your ATM card. These charges can be steep and will determine how you budget your money.

If ATM machines are widely available where you will be studying, you may want to look into obtaining a debit card that takes money directly from your account. This way, if you need additional funds, your family can deposit them directly into your account in the U.S. and you can have access to them almost immediately. Again make sure that your card has international withdrawal privileges, that you understand the fees associated with the use of an ATM card, and that you have a numerical PIN number. (Some machines don't have the alphabet written above the numbers.)

Credit cards are another source of money which is widely accepted throughout the world. As in the US, credit cards can be used in most shops, restaurants, and hotels. If you do decide to get a credit card for your trip, Visa, American Express, and MasterCard are the most widely accepted names.

Credit cards can also be used for cash advances in case of an emergency. We do not, however, recommend that you use them for this purpose unless it is truly an emergency! Cash advances carry tremendous fees and interest charges, which, if not paid immediately, add up to huge expenses. It is a good idea to check with your credit card carrier for details before you depart. Remember to leave your credit card numbers with someone at home in case they are stolen or lost while you are abroad.

Prepaid Credit Cards are another option to access funds while abroad. Both Visa and MasterCard offer prepaid cards including some that are reloadable. Prepaid cards are a nice alternative to cash or Travelers Cheques and are widely accepted (just like credit cards) with the Visa or MasterCard logo as long as credit cards are accepted in your place of study. Also, some prepaid cards allow the user to withdraw cash from the card at an ATM.

Suggestions

You should notify your bank and credit card company that you will be traveling abroad, the dates and the countries you plan to visit. This will help to prevent any disruption in usage due to a fear on the bank or credit card company's part of fraudulent charges.

Make a copy of the front and back of your ATM and credit cards and keep it in a safe place (i.e. with your passport). This will give you the necessary contact information and numbers in the event your card is either lost or stolen.

Other Options

If you will be in a country without good ATM and credit card access, there are other options for your money. As mentioned, travelers' cheques are commonly accepted in most countries. If funds get tight and you need emergency cash, money can be sent as a bank draft in the foreign currency. This costs about \$25 and takes at least one week. It can also be wired directly to a foreign bank via telex, which costs about \$30 and takes from 1 to 5 days. Funds can also be transferred via American Express or Western Union. It is a good idea to have your parents or guardian look into this before you depart so that you have an emergency plan in place. In a true emergency, the local U.S. Embassy or Consulate can assist you.

POWER OF ATTORNEY

You may want to consider obtaining a Power of Attorney for financial matters that will allow another individual (preferably your parent or guardian) to sign on your behalf. Granting a Power of Attorney is a legal process that involves the drafting of a document which assigns to another person the power to act as your legal representative (Attorney in Fact) in specific situations. You may restrict signatory authority to only being able to endorse checks or expand it to include permission to take care of all your financial matters while you are out of the country. The choice is yours. However, by all means **do not** have your family or friends mail checks or other important paperwork to be signed to you abroad. You take great risk at having the check lost in the mail.

YOUR BUDGET

It is important to understand the total out-of-pocket expenses you will incur so that you can budget appropriately; otherwise, you could end up running out of money half way through the semester. Your program provider should be able to provide you with a detailed estimate of all costs you will be expected to cover while abroad. You should discuss this information with your parents or guardian in order to establish a realistic budget. Be sure to include expenses such as airfare, daily transportation, passport, visa and immigration fees, books and instructional materials, extra meals, entertainment, laundry, travel during breaks, etc. Before you leave, talk with students who have participated in the program to learn more about realistic budgeting. (Your program sponsor can provide you with the name of program alumni.)

Budget Worksheet

Students often are concerned about the “hidden” costs of study abroad. The Budget Worksheet in Appendix I is designed to assist you in thinking about all the possible expenditures that can come up prior to and during your study abroad program. Not all categories will apply for every student. Spend some time working on this yourself and share it with your parents.



Photo taken on the Great Wall in China (near Beijing).
Submitted by Emily Ferguson, 2014.
Emily studied in Beijing, China in fall 2012.

SAFETY MATTERS

SAFETY WHILE ABROAD

In choosing to study off campus you have demonstrated that you are a risk taker of the very best kind. We here in the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges hope that you'll continue to challenge yourself and take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves to you while abroad. Your safety and security are always important when traveling and living overseas. Although we hope that during your time abroad you will not have to concern yourself with global crisis, we know that the world situation is constantly changing. Therefore, we offer the following safety precautions for Americans studying abroad. These precautions make good sense at all times; however, they are even more critical during any time of conflict. In addition to these guidelines, please rely on your on-site support staff to guide you as needed.

- Avoid traveling in large groups and always check the Department of State website before traveling outside of your host country.
(<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html>)
- Avoid speaking English in public if that is not the native language of the country you are visiting.
- Do not stand out by wearing typical American clothing (college sweatshirts, clothes with American symbols, shorts, etc.); try to dress as the locals do.
- Avoid highly trafficked tourist attractions and American establishments such as fast food chains and American-style bars.
- Be aware that anti-American sentiments do exist and do not get drawn into arguments. Avoid all conflicts.
- Be constantly aware of your surroundings and those around you. Remove yourself immediately from situations you suspect may be dangerous.
- Use caution when talking about yourself and other members of your program. Do not offer information freely regarding your program or anything that might link you to an American organization.
- Communicate regularly with your family in the States and with your program provider.
- Register yourself at the local United States Consulate or Embassy and know how to contact them in an emergency.
- If you travel away from your program site, leave a detailed itinerary with your family and your program provider. Be sure to stick with your itinerary.
- Formulate a plan for what you will do in an emergency. Know the direct numbers of whoever is supervising your program abroad and keep them on you at all times.

Remember that your health and safety are your responsibility. Pay attention to your surroundings, keep your head on straight, and don't place yourself in situations that could be potentially dangerous. Above all, remember to use common sense. Pay attention to the advice from your program director or sponsor. If he or she recommends that you not travel alone or in a particular part of the country, pay attention. Any restrictions on travel are only made with your safety in mind. Also, please take a look at the SAFETI Clearinghouse website, which covers many safety issues for students abroad:

<http://www.globaled.us/safeti>.

RESOURCES IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY

You should always know whom to contact in case of an emergency, medical or otherwise. Your first contact should be the resident director of your program. Please keep this person's phone number on you at all times. If you are living with a host family, they will be an important resource for you as well.

In addition to your onsite support system, the U.S. Department of State offers important information in case of a global emergency. Country Specific Information and travel advisories are issued by the U.S. State Department to inform U.S. citizens of unsafe travel conditions due to terrorist threats, civil or political unrest, overt anti-American attitudes, or specific health hazards. You have direct access to these advisories online at <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html>. The Bureau of Consular Affairs, a branch of the State Department, is responsible for protecting the interests of U.S. citizens abroad. They can assist in locating travelers in case of emergencies back home. They can also help you find medical treatment, legal counsel, or financial assistance in emergency situations. Their advice: In an extreme medical emergency, first get medical treatment from local sources. If immediate medical treatment is not necessary, call the nearest Embassy or Consulate to get advice about what to do next, including notifying local police or finding English-speaking doctors. Of course you should always contact your resident director first and always keep that person informed of your health and well-being.

OCSE EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

The Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges (OCSE) at Skidmore College maintains an emergency preparedness plan. You can find this plan in Appendix VI and on our website at: <http://www.skidmore.edu/ocse/safety/index.php>.

The Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges will post updates to this site as events change throughout the world.

DRUGS & ALCOHOL

As a visitor of your host country, you are subject to the laws and regulations of their judicial system. Refusing to obey local laws, especially those that concern the use of illicit drugs, will get you expelled from your program and could get you thrown into jail. Do not assume that laws are more lenient abroad or that foreign governments are more tolerant. Do not assume you are protected as an American. If you are arrested, there is very little your program, Skidmore College, or the U.S. Embassy can do for you. In fact, the U.S. Embassy has absolutely no jurisdiction to intercede in the host country's judicial system. There are currently hundreds of Americans under detention for drug violations in countries throughout Europe, the Middle East, Latin America and Asia. In some of these countries, prisons are primitive and overcrowded, lack sanitation facilities and bedding, offer limited quantities of substandard food, and provide little or no heat or light. Again, there is little anyone can do to assist you if you find yourself arrested for drug use overseas. **Therefore, we cannot reiterate strongly enough, do not use, possess, or distribute illegal drugs of any kind, including marijuana, while you are abroad.**

In addition to the legal concerns surrounding drug use, you must strongly consider the safety issues involved. Although students think they are not at risk and that they can handle themselves in any situation, this is just not the reality of studying overseas. You do not know the culture. You do not know how to read natives' behavior. You do not know who is dangerous and who is not. **Do not under any circumstances put yourself at risk by participating in drug-related activities.**

Alcohol use varies country to country. In some cultures, alcohol may be more a part of everyday life than it is in the US. In other cultures, alcohol use may not be common due to religious beliefs. Regardless of where you study, citizens of the country where you will be studying will most likely have a very different attitude toward alcohol than is typically seen here. It is unlikely that binge drinking and getting drunk are widely accepted. Again concerning your safety, you are much more at risk if you have been drinking, by becoming an easy target for less desirable people and by impairing your judgment. You will have to decide what to do for yourself, but be sure that alcohol does not interfere with your studies and you are acting within the laws and social norms of your place of study.

PERSONAL CONDUCT

Students studying off campus, either on a Skidmore or a Non-Skidmore Approved program, are expected to adhere to the same social and academic policies in place at Skidmore College. Students who break Skidmore's Code of Conduct and/or the code of conduct in place abroad may face disciplinary action by their study abroad program and Skidmore College (or their home institution). Students who face disciplinary action may be responsible for sanctions imposed by Skidmore College in addition to those applied by the study abroad program. In the case of conflict among policies the more stringent policy shall apply. Students are responsible for understanding both Skidmore College's Code of Conduct as well as any Code of Conduct in place by their study abroad provider. Skidmore College's Code of Conduct policy is available at http://www.skidmore.edu/student_handbook/#Conduct.



Photo taken in Tshabo, Eastern Cape, South Africa.
Submitted by Brenna Goldstein, 2014.
Brenna studied in South Africa in spring 2013.

HEALTH MATTERS

HEALTHY LIVING ABROAD

Staying healthy while abroad is important to having a successful off-campus study experience. We strongly recommend that you read all the information your program provides on health issues in your host country. Also, look online for information about health issues in the parts of the world you are going to visit. Visit the Centers for Disease Control at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>. We suggest you discuss your health needs with your doctors to ensure you understand if there are any restrictions to your activities while abroad.

Please be aware that the stress of travel and adjusting to a new culture can exacerbate physical or emotional conditions that may be under control at home. Therefore, if you have a physical or emotional condition it is important that you meet with the staff at Skidmore's Health Services or Counseling Center to discuss how studying off campus could affect your situation. Addressing your health issues prior to studying off campus will help you to identify those resources that will and will not be available at your program site.

If you need certain onsite accommodations during your off campus study program, please discuss your program selection with a Program Manager in OCSE and fully disclose your health history to your program provider. Some programs may be located in remote regions where certain medical services are not available or the programs may include physically demanding components; and, therefore, may not be suitable for all students due to lack of support services or the structure of the program.

SIT and IHP programs: *Students with medical issues that have not been "resolved" or "stable" for at least six months prior to the review of the program provider's medical form are **not eligible to participate** on the SIT or IHP program. SIT and IHP reserve the right to reconsider a student's acceptance status based on support available at the program site.*

It is critical that your program provider is aware of any special needs you have. Only with this knowledge can they be prepared to deal with any health emergencies that might arise.

BEFORE YOU GO

Before you leave for your program you should have a routine physical (a dental checkup is also recommended). Some programs will require you to complete a health assessment with a physician prior to departure.

Prescriptions

If you plan on taking any medicine or prescription drug while abroad, you should consult with your physician prior to departure regarding any need for monitoring. You may also consult with your doctor regarding onsite referrals in your host country. The program staff may also be able to assist you in finding a local physician for consultation as well.

If there are any **prescription medications** that you need to take while abroad, we recommend bringing enough medication to last the duration of your stay, if possible. You should consult your physician and/or insurance company immediately in regards to obtaining enough medication for the duration of your program. It can sometimes take weeks or months to get authorization from your insurance company to get prescriptions in advance.

Prescriptions should be kept in **their original, labeled containers and pack them in your carry-on luggage, not in checked luggage. If possible, bring enough medication for the duration of your stay. Take the actual written prescription or a letter from your doctor with the drug name (and generic name), dosage of the drug, and instructions for use with you in case you need to show the prescription at Customs or if you have an emergency and need additional medication.** (If you regularly take medicine with codeine, speak to your physician about using an alternative while abroad because codeine is considered a narcotic in many parts of the world.) Syringes and needles necessary for medications must be accompanied by a doctor's letter. Students with a chronic medical condition will want to consider wearing a medical alert style bracelet. If you wear glasses or contacts, it is a good idea to get your eyes checked and your prescription updated. Take extra eyeglasses or contacts and contact solution in case you cannot purchase your regular brand abroad. Also, contraceptives may be in short supply or of poor quality in certain countries.

Immunizations

You should be sure that all of your routine immunizations are up to date. Students who have not received the meningococcal vaccine should consider this vaccination. Consult with your program sponsor about any needed vaccinations or medications particular to your program's location. Other immunizations are rarely required for travel to most of Europe, Australia, or New Zealand. However, travelers to other regions may need immunizations against yellow fever, typhoid, cholera, or other diseases including malaria and hepatitis. If you will need immunizations, **start your immunizations early.** Some immunizations cannot be given at the same time as others or may require a series of shots over several months. For information about immunizations specific to your destination contact your program provider or the Centers for Disease Control at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel> or (800) 232-4636. You can also want to also contact Skidmore's Health Services to discuss health concerns in your host country, the pros and cons of receiving certain immunizations, and to plan the administration of any vaccinations you choose to receive. Please be aware that some vaccinations can be are expensive and may not be available from Skidmore's Health Services. No matter where you are going, make sure your immunizations for tetanus, polio and measles, mumps, rubella, are up to date.

Pandemic Illnesses

Pandemic illnesses such as the H1N1 or avian flu can impact your off-campus study experience. While symptoms may vary, you are advised to take extreme caution if you experience any symptoms reported to be associated with any current pandemic illnesses or outbreaks. Some countries have instituted monitoring techniques of travelers arriving from areas affected by a pandemic outbreak, which may delay travel. Please consult the embassy of the country, or countries, in the travel itinerary for information about entry screening procedures.

Students are encouraged to take the following precautions to stay healthy before and during their off-campus study:

- Before you go, see a doctor.
- Receive all required immunizations and discuss optional vaccines with your health care provider.
- Travel only when you feel well
- Follow basic health tips while you are abroad.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing.
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
 - Clean your living area.
 - Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

If you become sick with symptoms of a pandemic illness while abroad, contact your onsite program staff as soon as possible to locate medical services. The onsite program staff can also contact a U.S. consular officer if necessary.

After you return to the U.S., you should:

- Monitor your health for 10 days.
- If you become ill with symptoms associated to a pandemic illness during this 10-day period, consult a health-care provider. ***Before visiting a health-care setting, tell the provider the following: 1) symptoms, 2) travel location, and 3) if you had direct contact with a severely ill person or animal.***
- Do not travel while ill, unless you are seeking medical care. Limit contact with others as much as possible can help prevent the spread of an infectious illness.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Health Insurance Information

Skidmore College requires all students studying abroad on Skidmore Programs or Approved Programs to have international health insurance that covers them while abroad. Skidmore College students are covered for the term of their program through the Gallagher Koster/ACE American Insurance Company *Study Abroad Accident & Sickness Insurance Program*. Non-Skidmore students, studying abroad on Skidmore programs, are covered for the term of their program through the Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI) *World Class Study Abroad Plan*. Each policy will be purchased and paid for by Skidmore College and is considered secondary to your primary insurance. Information on both of these policies is available through Off-Campus Study & Exchanges. Insurance cards and policy brochures will be sent to each student by email prior to the start of the program.

It is important to also consider if your current U.S.-based health insurance will cover you while you are abroad. It is very important that you understand **HOW** your insurance coverage works overseas, **WHAT** types of illness and emergency care your insurance covers, **WHERE** you will go to receive your health care abroad, and **WHY** you should have coverage that provides for medical evacuation and repatriation.

Skidmore students participating on a non-Skidmore Approved program are advised to check with their program provider for details concerning additional insurance coverage. Some providers will require coverage by a specific plan or require that you find your own plan using the provider's coverage guidelines, while other providers will depend on you to decide for yourself what will be sufficient coverage. No matter the circumstances with your program provider, you will be covered by Skidmore's policy with Gallagher Koster/ACE American Insurance Company. (Please note that Skidmore will not cover the charge for additional insurance coverage unless it is mandatory through the program provider.)

When reviewing Skidmore's policy with Gallagher Koster/ACE American Insurance Company or the program provider's health insurance coverage, you should be sure you understand the extent of your coverage abroad. Pay special attention to the restrictions that may apply to overseas living.

The insurance policy provided by Skidmore College through Gallagher Koster/ACE American Insurance Company is secondary to your primary insurance. You must submit any claims to your primary insurance first. If your primary insurance does not cover claim, you can then submit a claim to the Gallagher Koster/ACE American Insurance Company as your secondary insurer. Any specific questions regarding your health insurance coverage should be directed to Gallagher Koster prior to your departure.

You can find information for the insurance provided by Skidmore through Gallagher Koster/ACE American Insurance Company at <http://www.skidmore.edu/ocse/safety/index.php>. The menu on the right-side of the page include links to the policy brochure and insurance FAQs.

At a minimum you should understand the following about the insurance **before** you leave the United States:

- Will you be covered for an office visit if you get sick and need to see a physician while you are abroad? Will the cost of any prescription medicine be covered? What information do you need to provide to your health insurance provider to be reimbursed?
- What happens if you require emergency care or need to be hospitalized? Does overseas hospitalization need to be pre-approved? If pre-approval is not required, when does the insurer need to be notified about the hospitalization and by whom?
- Will your insurance cover medical evacuation? What about repatriation in the event of death? (This last question can be very difficult for students and parents to address, but is necessary. In the event you are involved in a serious accident, the cost of evacuation can be in the tens-of-thousands of dollars.)
- Will your insurance cover you if you travel independent of your study abroad program?
- If you intend to travel before or after your program, does your health insurance cover you while you are not formally registered for the program? (IMPORTANT)

Note: The Skidmore international health insurance policy only provides coverage for students while they are pursuing educational activities for the term of the program. Students are **not** covered by Skidmore's policy during extended program breaks (i.e., winter and spring break) or prior to the official start date of their program or after the official end date of the program.

Some students will be covered internationally by their primary, U.S.-based insurance; other students may be covered by the insurance provided by their program directly. These policies may or may not

cover the non-academic periods of the program. In addition, some student international identification cards, such as the International Student Identification Card (ISIC), offer basic international medical insurance. These cards, available online, are fairly inexpensive and may be an option if your personal health insurance policy does not cover you abroad. **It is the students' responsibility to determine what coverage, they will have during these break periods.**

If students are not covered by their own insurance, by the program's insurance or through a student ID card, they will need to purchase additional insurance to cover them outside of the program dates and during extended breaks. The following is a list of insurance companies that offer short-term, leisure travel insurance. Please feel free to visit their website to obtain a quote.

CIEE INext - <http://www.inext.com/plans/supplemental/basic.aspx>

CISI - <http://www.culturalinsurance.com/students/>

Gallagher Koster - <https://www.gallagherkoster.com/students/leisure-travel/>

HTH Worldwide - http://www.hthworldwide.com/insurance_families.html

PROPERTY INSURANCE

If you will be traveling with a laptop, digital camera, smart phone, iPod, iPad or other valuable equipment, make sure it is properly insured **in case of loss, theft or damage.**

Check your parent/guardian's **homeowner's** insurance policy. Coverage for such valuables typically extends from the homeowners policy when travelling. If coverage isn't available under your parents/guardians' current homeowners insurance policy, there may be an option to add a rider to provide for such coverage. Have them check with their insurance agent/company. Purchase a personal articles insurance policy.

Here are a few companies that offer plans. You should research companies that will fit your specific needs.

Gallagher Koster (<https://www.gallagherkoster.com/students/student-personal-property/>)

State Farm (<http://www.statefarm.com/insurance/other/personal.asp>)

College Student Insurance (<http://www.collegestudentinsurance.com>)

RELATIONSHIPS ABROAD

While abroad, we hope you will have the opportunity to make friends and form lasting relationships with your host country citizens. This is one of the most enriching experiences you can have. Your friends will help you learn about the culture and discover the city and country where you are studying. Therefore, we encourage you to be courageous and meet people while you are overseas.

Having said that, we should warn that not all of the people you meet will offer the positive relationships we hope you will form. Just as in the U.S., there are people abroad whom you should

avoid. Learning to distinguish between culturally acceptable behavior and culturally inappropriate behavior abroad can be difficult. This becomes especially difficult when it comes to dating and sexual relationships. Unfortunately, there is no easy answer for ways to deal with this incongruity. Being aware of the interactions between men and women in the host culture is a good place to start. Before leaving the United States, talk to others who have lived and traveled in the country you will be visiting. Ask what types of relationships exist between men and women. Are platonic friendships even possible? In some countries, culture prohibits men and women from developing friendships. How do people date? Do students usually go out in groups? How are couples viewed if they go out by themselves? What is the perception of Americans as far as social relationships are concerned? Are there preconceived ideas about American women that would make it difficult for a female to be friends with a male? By educating yourself ahead of time you will be better equipped to deal with the realities facing you once you arrive overseas. Hopefully, this will help you distinguish between true friendship and relationships you'd be better off without.

Sexual Harassment

Another topic that becomes difficult to interpret once you are in another culture is sexual harassment. Again it is hard to know what behavior is culturally acceptable and what behavior is sexual harassment. If you are ever in doubt, **seek assistance immediately**. Should you ever find yourself receiving unwanted sexual advances from another student on your program, from a member of your host family, or even from the program staff and are unable to resolve the problem yourself, seek help right away. Your off-campus study program should have an individual or office responsible for assisting you in such situations, usually a Resident Director or Student Life Office. Do not feel you

need to accept behavior that makes you uncomfortable simply because it might be part of the "cultural experience." Most of the time, these problems arise due to misunderstandings of cultural cues on both sides. However, this should not stop you from speaking up. While we encourage you to learn to accept and respect cultural differences, the desire to be culturally sensitive should never be at the expense of your personal safety.

STDs & AIDS

No place in the world is immune from sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) or the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) virus. Despite what you may hear expressed by locals in your host country, AIDS exists everywhere. In some parts of the world, particularly in East Africa, the occurrence of the AIDS virus in the heterosexual population is extreme. If you choose to be sexually active while abroad (and we are not encouraging you to do so), do not assume that your sexual partner will be free of sexually transmitted diseases. Always use a condom; but remember that abstinence is the only way to be certain that you will not contract the AIDS virus or other STD through sexual activity.



Photo taken in El Cope, Panama.
Submitted by Casey Jade Ruybal, 2014.
Casey Jade studied in Panama in spring 2013.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

GETTING THERE AND BACK

Please check with your program provider for specific instructions regarding flights to and from your program site. All programs will have a scheduled arrival date. OCSE encourages you to arrive at your program site on the scheduled arrival date. If you arrive prior to your program's arrival date, you will have to make your own arrangements (transportation from the airport, housing, etc.) before the start of your program.

Independent Travel Prior to the Start of a Study Abroad Program: Please be aware that the visa application process for some countries may require students to surrender their passport for *several weeks* prior to the start of the study abroad program. These requirements may impact your independent travel plans. You are advised to determine visa requirements as early as possible for your program, and especially in advance of planning independent travel. Students will only be permitted to study on their chosen program if they have obtained proper visa documentation. Independent travel abroad is best done over semester breaks during the course of your programs and/or after your program ends.

Some programs will offer a group flight. In most cases, these flights are **NOT** required; check with the program provider to be sure you know whether or not you must take the group flight. They are offered as a benefit to participants and are usually a good idea. However, you may be able to find better fares through your own travel agent or through one of the many on-line travel sites.

If there is a group flight and you decide to make your own individual arrangements, always let your program provider know your final itinerary (including airline carrier, flight number, date, and time of arrival). Also, always talk to your program provider about the program calendar (and make plans accordingly) and what you should do when you arrive. With some programs, the resident director will meet the group flight at the airport. If you are not on the group flight, you may have to find your own way to your family or to the orientation site or program center. All of this can be overwhelming after a long flight. Therefore, make sure you have clear instructions concerning how to proceed upon arrival.

Other programs will not have group flights and will expect all participants to arrive on-site by a specific date and time. These programs will provide you with detailed information about how and when the group should meet up in country. Read these instructions carefully and be sure to have them with you in your carry-on luggage when you arrive. Also, always carry emergency contact information, even on your flight over to the program site. Should anything happen to change your travel plans or arrival time, you will be able to contact the program director for additional instructions.

Whether or not you travel with a group flight, reservations for international flights should be made well in advance of your departure date. Since many programs travel to popular destinations at the same time of year, inexpensive flights to certain cities might be difficult to obtain. Also, inexpensive flights very often have severe restrictions regarding changes in flight dates or cancellations. It is

important to understand the restrictions of your ticket before buying it. Once the ticket is paid for, you will be responsible for working within those rules.

There are several types of tickets available: one way, round trip with a fixed return date, and round trip with an open return date. Usually, the round trip ticket with a fixed return date is the least expensive type. In most cases, the return date may be changed for a fee and within a certain window of dates (i.e. within two weeks of travel or before a certain date). If you are taking regular classes at a foreign university, you will probably need some flexibility in your return date. Exam schedules are not normally published until a few weeks into the semester and will affect the date on which you may fly home. Again, be sure you understand what you need to do to change your return date and how much it will cost you. Some countries will require proof of a round trip ticket or round trip flight itinerary when applying for a student visa (if applicable) or when entering the country. Be sure to review your visa application requirements and information about flights from your program provider.

TRAVEL WHILE ABROAD

Although travel within each country of destination will vary according to services available when you arrive, there are some questions that many of you will have when trying to plan your personal travel while studying off campus. Refer to information provided by your program provider about independent travel.

When booking independent travel, you should pay close attention to your program calendar, schedule of classes, and final exam schedule. You should only plan to travel independently from your program site on weekends and breaks that do not conflict with classes or mandatory program activities.

Students can plan ahead by reviewing travel guidebooks or websites. The following resources might be useful as you plan your independent travel:

<http://www.letsgo.com> (Let's Go Travel Guides specific to your country of destination)

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/> (Lonely Planet)

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis_pa_tw_1168.html
(U.S. State Dept. Travel Alerts, Travel Warnings and Country Specific Information)

<http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/student.htm>
(LGBTQ resource guide for the international student community and study abroad students)

<http://www.roughguides.com>
(Destination specific information designed for more adventurous and independent travelers)

<http://www.towd.com> (Tourism offices worldwide directory)

PACKING

Packing for an entire semester or year can be baffling. You want to pack everything you need but don't want to arrive at the airport with bags that are over the weight limit. Know the weight and size limits for luggage on your flights. You can find this out by contacting each airline directly. Also, you should realize that you may be carrying your entire luggage through subway and train stations so don't over pack. Try this test before you leave. Pack everything you would like to bring and then take a walk around the block. Can you manage it alone or do you need to repack? A general rule is to take only half the amount you would like to bring.

The best way to figure out what you really need is to talk to the program sponsor or to someone who has participated on the program in the past. It is important to consider what clothing and other items will be necessary, acceptable and appropriate in your new environment.

Some items (excluding clothing) that have been recommended by past students follow:

- gifts for your host family (if applicable)
- photos of family, school and home
- waterproof storage bags
- collapsible umbrella
- extra batteries
- plug adapter and voltage converter (multi-country)
- personal first aid kit
- mini sewing kit
- flashlight
- journal
- personal music player
- TSA-approved locks for luggage
- money belt

Please note that while toiletries are available most everywhere, particular brand names may not be readily available. If you must have a certain brand, you should plan to bring it from home.

These may include:

- over-the-counter pain relievers
- deodorant and/or body soap
- antacids and digestive aids
- sunscreen
- feminine hygiene products
- condoms/contraceptives
- dental floss
- facial tissues



Photos from Skidmore in Paris, spring 2013

CULTURE SHOCK: FACT OR FICTION?

BEYOND PAPERWORK & PACKING

Preparing for your off campus study is more than taking care of visas, passports, immunizations and packing your bags. It is important to prepare yourself mentally. Take some time to refresh yourself on the current U.S. political scene. How familiar are you with your own cultural heritage? What are the values you live by personally and culturally? If you were raised in the U.S., you might want to think about the way in which US culture values the following:

Cleanliness
Thriftiness
Time Management
Practicality
Frugality
Diligence
Initiative
Good Sportsmanship
Privacy

Work Ethic
Responsibility
Aggressiveness
Physical Power
Originality
Timeliness of Action
Wariness
Physical Appearance
Persistence

One of the greatest challenges to studying off campus is that it invokes change. Have you given any thought as to how you might change as a result of studying abroad? Take some time to think about what you hope to get out of your experience. Write down a list of goals. You may want to talk to other students who have been on your program to see if your goals are realistic. Realize that your goals can be revised once you're at your program site, but without a clear understanding of why you're studying abroad, it can be difficult to make it through those difficult times.

Prepare yourself intellectually as well. Take time to learn as much as you can about where you will be studying. Sure, you've seen films about India, France, and Japan, and you have read about ancient ruins, but what do you really know about your host country? Perhaps you've been told that you'll be in an urban (or rural) environment - but what does that mean in the context of your host country? Before you leave the U.S., get down to the nitty-gritty details of life in your new culture. Ask lots of questions. Appendix II has a list of Fifty Culture Questions that you might want to answer about your host country. Learn about their cultural and political history, about day-to-day living, about student life, and general expectations. A visit to your local bookstore or library will provide you with a variety of books and videos on traveling to your host country. In particular, the "Let's Go" and "Lonely Planet" travel guides are good sources for budget travel. Contemporary literature and films are also a good (and fun) way to learn more about the country and culture you'll be visiting.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS

Even if you feel prepared, every student will experience some level of cultural adjustment when studying in a new place. First and foremost, please know that culture shock is real and it is normal. You may become very tired four to eight weeks into a semester-long program – physically, from trying to understand language, customs and a unfamiliar daily tasks, and emotionally, because as

hard as you try to reach out and connect, you realize that you will never really be one of the locals. Disappointment can set in. Suddenly you may feel that the food is inadequate, the facilities aren't clean enough, people are abrupt, and the bureaucracy is relentless.

These symptoms are signs that you know enough about the culture to recognize the differences. Now is the time to use some proven techniques to help you through culture shock and into the next stage of full participation and enjoyment:

- acknowledge that **culture shock is normal** and that "this too shall pass";
- write about your concerns in your journal and sleep on them before you call home or act on your grievances;
- talk with other study abroad participants and staff, and provide support for other students;
- keep busy and set some concrete goals;
- resist withdrawing into yourself or surrounding yourself with other US citizens;
- avoid being judgmental – look on the positive side of diversity and difference;
- take care of yourself with enough sleep, etc. and revive your sense of humor.
- remember why you decided to study off campus in the first place

Above all, get involved in activities you enjoy and don't succumb to the temptation to withdraw – remember, you're a risk taker! If you wanted to do the same thing, you would have stayed on campus. Before long, you will find that you're enjoying your new life and that there actually are things that are better abroad (gasp!). Also, don't take yourself too seriously. Laughter is the best medicine. In fact, it will be the most embarrassing moments that will make the best stories when you return home.



Photo taken in Morocco.
Submitted by Karin Obaid, 2013.
Karin studied in South Africa in spring 2012.

LIVING ABROAD

Students are required to use program arranged housing where available. Additionally, it is policy that Skidmore students are required to stay in a homestay if available. Students desiring an alternative to program housing or a homestay should consult with an OCSE Program Manager.

Knowing the details about your study abroad program is just as important as knowing where you'll be going. Your program sponsor should provide you with detailed information about your day-to-day living arrangements while you are studying off campus. Hopefully, you found out most of this information before choosing your final program. However, ask specific questions about your living situation, housing and meals, on-site support, excursions and activities, opportunity to travel independently, etc. Ask any questions that might affect your everyday life.

HOUSING

Living with a Host Family

Living with a host family is your chance to transcend the tourist's visit and become a participating guest and member in a family and neighborhood community. Home stays often can be the most meaningful part of an international living experience. The success of your home stay depends a great deal on how you approach the situation. Consider the hospitality of your host family and some of the adjustments all of you must make in order to live together amicably. Offer to help with household chores. Find out what their daily routines are and how you will fit into them. Communicate with your family. Talk in the beginning with your family about everyone's expectations. Inform the family of your intentions to be out late, to bring someone else home, or to miss a meal. Avail yourself of their offers to visit relatives, join in local celebrations, sight-see points of interest, etc. Share yourself – tell them about your own family, your school, and your interests. Photos of family and friends are particularly appreciated. Most families will take their cues from you. If you are withdrawn, they will think you want your space. If you are open and friendly, they will think you want to belong and will respond accordingly.

Most students find that a good way to break the ice is to bring gifts from home for your host family. Local jams or jellies, coffee-table books, and other regional items (e.g. maple syrup) are always a good idea. If you're going to a country where gift giving is an important part of the culture, you may want to stock up on small items like novelty pencils, pens, or other college-logo items to give as "friendship" gifts. Before giving flowers in a foreign country, be sure to find out if they hold any cultural significance. For example, you wouldn't want to present your host with chrysanthemums in France, as they are associated with mourning and funerals.

Other Living Situations

In some cases, living with a host family is not an option. Instead, you may be in an apartment or dormitory, with other students from your program or with students from your host culture. Living on your own comes with a unique set of pros and cons. While it lends to a great amount of independence, it places greater responsibility upon you to take care of your daily needs and integrate yourself in the host culture (especially if you are sharing an apartment with other students from the U.S.). Paying utility bills, grocery shopping, doing laundry, and cleaning can be a challenge and are

time-consuming. Discuss how these things will be handled with your roommates early on. Things that you take for granted (like using an electric clothes dryer to dry your laundry) may become a big deal if you have roommates from the host culture. For example, because the cost of electricity is quite high in New Zealand, Kiwi students forego using the dryer in favor of air-drying clothes outside – even in the middle of winter. You can imagine how our casual use of a dryer would be perceived (and cause some friction) in this situation. Communication is always critical and can help to fix or avoid any conflict that might occur.

COMMUNICATING WITH HOME

Most students will use a variety of methods to stay in touch with family and friends in the U.S. either by email, phone, video chat, blogs, or social networking sites.

Calling the United States

Calling the U.S. from abroad can be expensive, but there are some inexpensive ways to keep in touch. We suggest that you consider the following options for calling the U.S. from abroad: (1) international calling cards, (2) internet-based phone service, and (3) cell phones.

Contact your phone company for information on how to get a calling card with international access. All major carriers offer international calling cards. Rates on U.S. calling cards can be less expensive than dialing direct. When you're traveling, AT&T USA Direct Service is one of the easiest ways to call directly to the U.S. via an English-speaking operator anywhere in the world. See <http://www.usa.att.com/traveler> for details. You can also find prepaid calling cards at many retailers in the US or abroad.

Internet-based phone services such as Skype or Vonage allow users to make phone or video calls for free or at low rates. If you are bringing a laptop, have access to the internet, and have a microphone or webcam, you may want to use a service like Skype. You can download Skype for free at Skype's website at <http://www.skype.com>.

Cell phones are becoming very accessible in most countries. They are a good way to ensure you have access to a phone at all times. Also, they are a good way to receive calls from your family and friends. It allows them to call you direct rather than on the family phone. Imagine how difficult it might be to receive calls on the family phone in the middle of the night because of the time difference! It is a good idea to find out about cells phones once you arrive.

Other tips for calling the U.S.:

- Try to avoid long-distance calls from hotels; they sometimes have an expensive surcharge.
- In many countries public phones are no longer coin operated. You must purchase a local telephone card to make them work. Find out from your program provider the specifics of your country.
- If you live in a home-stay, always ask permission to use the phone and offer to pay for your call. If you decide to use your host family's phone, please realize that local calls often are not free and may be charged by both time and distance. Don't be offended if they ask you to use a pay phone or only allow you to receive but not place calls. In some countries itemized bills are not available making it impossible to know the actual cost of your call.

Internet Access

The availability of the internet has made it easier than ever to stay in touch with family and friends at home via the internet. Although access to the internet has increased throughout the world, it is likely that you will be studying off campus in a location that does not have internet access to the extent that you are used to in the U.S. Some foreign universities may charge a fee to students for internet access and/or have limited hours when computers are available. Other students find that their best internet availability is at an Internet Café. Please remember that one of the reasons you chose to study abroad is to experience a different culture. This means adapting to the use of technology as it is used in the host culture.

While internet applications such as e-mail, online blogs, or social networking sites, like Facebook, have proven to be an inexpensive and convenient way to stay connected with family and friends back home, beware of the temptation to spend too much time online chatting with friends or posting updates. Although your time online will expose family and friends in the U.S. to the new culture you are experiencing, the time you spend online is time that you are not interacting with the new culture. (Isn't this why you are studying off campus?) A suggestion that we would make in response to this situation is that you consider how you use the internet as part of your cultural experience. If local students only use e-mail for 15-minutes once a week, you should too. It will be a challenge, but will provide you with a richer understanding of the culture and its approach to technology in comparison to the United States.

If you have Internet access, you can access your Skidmore email at <http://outlook.com/skidmore.edu>, just as you would from on campus or at home. Some of your programs may also provide you with a university-issued e-mail address, or you can set up an account on a free server like Gmail, Yahoo! or Hotmail.

Staying In Touch With Your Family

It is understandable that your family will have questions or concerns about the fact that you are studying off campus. Here are some suggestions about how to work with your family and friends to help put them at ease as you study off campus:

- Communicate openly. Tell your parents, family and friends your own feelings, hopes, and fears. Don't hide what you're experiencing to try to "protect" them. This will help them realize that you too are feeling a flurry of emotions. By opening up to them, you will then allow them to open up to you. This type of communication will then give you the opportunity to educate them about the realities of the country and situation you will be part of. It will also show them you have thought hard about this decision and are prepared to take on this challenge.
- Studying off campus also includes a significant social aspect. Although your parents might want to hear that study abroad is an entirely academic pursuit, and academics are a key piece of the puzzle, it is important that they understand that you will be pursuing other interests also. Off-campus study is about the whole experience and the social interactions lead to other learning that is essential as well.
- They can't believe everything they read or hear through the news and other media. The media has a tendency to sensationalize the news. On the other hand, there is some truth in what the media reports. The problem is that your parents are not in England or India or any other country with you and do not know what is really happening where you are. With this in mind, always make sure you stay in touch with your family and friends during times of trouble. You

are the one who can explain that the bombing they heard about was actually five hours drive away from where you are living.

- Safety is an issue that is real but manageable. Some parents believe students are in more danger while overseas than they are while in the U.S. This misconception can be difficult for you to work against. The truth is that, in most countries, theft, assault, and violent crimes are far less frequent than they are here in the U.S. Many people living overseas consider the States to be a very dangerous country and have trouble coming to terms with the idea of worrying about the types of personal crimes we encounter here on a regular basis. Make sure you take appropriate precautions to protect yourself against crime and violence. We have given you suggestions in the section on safety. Share this information with your family and provide them with the OCSE and onsite contact information in case of an emergency.
- Reassure your parents that you have chosen a program that offers on-site support in the form of a director or staff who will be available to help you with any personal or academic issues.



Photo taken in Fiordlands, New Zealand.
Submitted by Elise Finnerty, 2014.
Elise studied in Christchurch, New Zealand in spring 2013.

DIVERSITY AND OFF-CAMPUS STUDY

Skidmore's off-campus study programs are critical to achieving the College's goal of increased intercultural and global understanding for students and the campus at large.

Diversity and Inclusion at Skidmore College

Skidmore College is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive community in which members develop their abilities to live in a complex and interconnected world. Consistent with our educational mission, we recognize ourselves as a community that respects individual identities based on varying sociocultural characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, national origin, first language, religious and spiritual tradition, age, ability, socioeconomic status, and learning style. We strive to create a socially just world that honors the dignity and worth of each individual, and we seek to build a community centered on mutual respect and openness to ideas—one in which individuals value cultural and intellectual diversity and share the responsibility for creating a welcoming, safe, and inclusive environment. We recognize that our community is most inclusive when all members participate to their full capacity in the spirited, and sometimes challenging, conversations that are at the center of the College's educational mission.

Special Diversity Concerns Abroad

Students with distinct ethnic backgrounds and those of distinct sexual orientation are sometimes more concerned about where they will fit within their new environment. In some cases their background will provide a challenge, in others it will not. In many situations, regardless of your gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, you will find you need to adjust to accommodate your host culture. You can neither expect nor demand that others adjust to yours. This is true for all students and should be kept in the back of your mind when dealing with the challenges of living abroad.

Some Questions to Ask

The following questions will help those students with special concerns think about their upcoming experience. However, all students should read them and consider the answers.

- What are the minority groups in your host country? Will you be a minority in that country?
- What are men's, women's and minorities' roles (social, professional, religious, etc.) in your host country?
- Do men, women and minorities have equal opportunities and protection under law? Equal educational and professional opportunities?
- Do women and minorities serve in the military?
- Do women work outside the home?
- What type of leadership roles do women and minorities hold?
- How do men treat local women? How do they treat American women?
- How does the host country population view minorities within the country and elsewhere?
- Is there a women's rights movement or a civil rights movement?
- Are there special concerns or issues that women and minorities should be aware of before they study abroad in this country?
- Where do women and minorities fall within the social hierarchy?

*Questions taken from: The Center for Study Abroad, University of Rochester,
Pre-departure Orientation Materials*

Ethnic Background

Study abroad can have a life-long impact on an individual. As with anything new, study abroad evokes a change in the way you see yourself, the world, and most importantly, your place in the world. Placing yourself in a different context from what is “normal” is an eye opening and enlightening experience.

If you are studying abroad in search of your cultural roots, you may find that your expectation of acceptance and understanding from your host culture on the basis of having a shared ethnic background is not met. For example, if you are Vietnamese American, do not assume that the Vietnamese will treat you as “one of their own”. Likewise, if you are an African-American studying in South Africa, do not expect your hosts to see you as an African. Granted, not all people of color will have the same experience abroad for they are as diverse as the countries they will visit. However, your ethnicity may play a role in defining the expectations you have or your study abroad experience and is something to consider before you leave.

If you are an American of European descent, studying abroad may also be the first time you are labeled as an “American”, or the first time you become conscious of having an identity based upon your nationality. This is a unique opportunity for Caucasian students in the United States to begin to understand, if even in a small way, the experiences of minority groups in the U.S. It’s a chance to walk in another’s shoes, and we encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity as much as possible.

Sexual Orientation and Identity

While some countries are known for their wide acceptance of homosexuality, the intolerance of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and queer students (LGBTQ) may be extreme in other locations around the world. Please understand these cultural views before you leave and consider how you will address this challenge. In some countries, it may be dangerous to be “out.” Don’t be afraid to discuss your concerns with your program sponsor. They can assist you in learning as much as you can about the resources in your host country that exist for the LGBTQ community. For information and resources for LGBTQ students studying abroad, please see the website for the Rainbow Special Interest Group (Rainbow SIG) at <http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/student.htm>. (*The Rainbow SIG is made up of LGBTQ professionals from NAFSA: Association of International Educators.*) There are also several online publications and travel books out there where you can find useful information about LGBTQ international travel.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities abroad can also be the victims of prejudice and stereotyping while abroad. The disabled report being stared at, ignored, un-assisted, and/or talked down to more frequently abroad than they tend to be in the United States. In many countries, there are no standards or requirements for providing access for the disabled. Wheelchair ramps, handicapped parking spaces, Braille signs, and other aides may be non-existent in parts of the host country, especially rural areas.

In addition to a lack of services provided to the physically disabled, there may also be a lack of services provided to those with a learning disability, those with a psychological or emotional need, or those who are mentally challenged. If you need to make special arrangements abroad, it is a good idea to inquire far in advance. Your program's staff abroad may require some time in order to facilitate your needs. Skidmore will help facilitate accommodations through the host university, but

even though you request that your special needs be met, it may be difficult or impossible for your program's staff abroad to assist you.

*-Information provided by Center for International Studies, University of Missouri –St. Louis'
Pre-departure Handbook*

Women's Issues Abroad

Unfortunately, due to popular films and television, American women are commonly stereotyped as sexually promiscuous throughout much of the world. Because of this misconception, you may unwittingly find yourself the object of unwanted attention abroad, whether it is through whistles and stares or more direct propositions. It is important to be aware that in some countries, behavior that could be defined as sexual harassment in the U.S. may actually be perceived as a compliment by both men and women in your host country. This is especially true in Southern European, Latin American and African countries, where whistles and comments about a woman's looks as she walks by can be considered a sign of admiration rather than a demeaning objectification of women.

If possible, talk to women from the host culture before leaving the U.S. What are their perspectives of women's issues and rights? Depending on the culture, some women may feel more or less comfortable talking about gender issues. Try to respect the situation they are coming from, but don't feel that you have to put aside your beliefs and embrace their cultural values. Also, be aware of the stereotypes held of American women before you go so you know what to expect and have some understanding of why you are treated a certain way. There is a wealth of books and websites that have information specifically for the woman traveler. *Journeywoman* is an on-line magazine for women who love to travel (<http://www.journeywoman.com/>). It is dedicated to giving women a space to share their thoughts, experiences, and advice about world travel.



Photo taken in Fuerteventura, Canary Islands, Spain.
Submitted by Jasmine Lai, 2014.
Elise studied in Florence, Italy in spring 2013.

COMING HOME

"Coming home?" You must be thinking, "But I haven't even left yet!" While this may be true, we'd still like highlight a few things for you to consider before leaving that can help to make your eventual journey back to the United States a smooth one.

Returning to the United States and Skidmore College can be a huge adjustment from the life you have experienced abroad. For some students, returning home is more difficult than going abroad because they don't anticipate that coming home would be a challenge. You probably won't return to the U.S. the same person you were when you left. This can be a surprise to your unsuspecting family and friends. The extent of the changes you've gone through abroad probably won't be as apparent to you until you return home and realize that you're seeing things through a new set of eyes, and maybe even a new set of values.

The signs of re-entry adjustment are similar to what you will go through adapting to your new culture. You may become critical of home and friends and their apparent disinterest in foreign affairs or international activities. You may feel disconnected with those closest to you or become irritable for no reason. Or you may simply experience a feeling of homesickness for your study abroad location. Just like culture shock, the re-entry adjustment period will pass. Be patient and give yourself time to adjust. Keep your journal handy and continue to record your reflections and ideas. Much of the impact of study abroad comes after you return home and have had time to reflect upon your experiences and the insights you have gained. And, don't forget that sense of humor!

Study abroad doesn't have to be a singular experience for you. Instead, look at it as just the start of a lifetime of international experiences. When you get back to Skidmore, there will be a re-entry events held to help you keep your off-campus study experience alive. The following suggestions are ways that you can integrate your international experiences into your life at Skidmore.

- Volunteer through the OCSE to tell other Skidmore students about your host country.
- Volunteer with the Office of Student Academic Services to help with international students at Skidmore.
- Stay in touch with your friends and host family abroad.
- Become involved with student groups at Skidmore (like the Model U.N or E.U., Asian Cultural Awareness) related to international issues.
- Participate in a foreign language group.
- Look for community service activities to teach English to local refugees.
- Write about your international adventures for the *Skidmore News*.
- Become a returnee contact or attend information meetings/pre-departure orientation for your program

Finally, when you get back, please complete the **off-campus study program evaluation** that will be sent to you and volunteer to talk to students who are interested in participating in the program you've just experienced. Your feedback is absolutely vital in helping prospective study abroad students make an educated decision when choosing a program. Stop in and say "hello" and be sure to bring your pictures by the OCSE. We love hearing about your adventures – of which we're certain there will be many.

Appendix I: Budget Worksheet

BUDGET WORKSHEET

PROGRAM COSTS

Application Fee: _____
 Program confirmation deposit*: _____
 Tuition: paid by Skidmore
 Room: paid by Skidmore
 Board: paid by Skidmore

OR

Board (if not included in provider's program fee): _____
 Fees for special program options: _____
Sub-total: _____

TRANSPORTATION

Round-trip airfare to the program site:
 (be sure to include all stages of transport) _____

On-site transportation
 (metro, bus, etc. – if not included in provider's program fee): _____

Sub-total: _____

TRAVEL

In-country weekend travel

Food: _____
 Transportation (train, taxi, subway): _____
 Accommodations: _____
 Entrance Fees: _____

Travel over breaks and/or pre-post programs

Food: _____
 Transportation (train, taxi, subway): _____
 Accommodations: _____
 Entrance Fees: _____

Sub-total: _____

PERSONAL EXPENSES

Books and supplies: _____
 Passport and visa: _____
 Photos, student ID card, etc.: _____
 Personal incidentals (laundry, toiletries): _____
 Telephone/postal stamps: _____
 Inoculations (if applicable): _____
 Medical Exam (required by some countries): _____
 Additional Food/Entertainment: _____
 Cultural Entertainment
 (museums, theatre, clubs): _____
 Souvenirs and gifts: _____
 (for family and friends in host country and at home)

Sub-total: _____

OTHER EXPENSES:

Sub-total: _____

TOTAL ESTIMATED COST OF STUDY ABROAD:

** ALL program confirmation deposits are paid to Skidmore's Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges.*

Appendix II: Fifty Culture Questions

FIFTY CULTURE QUESTIONS

Here are fifty basic questions about your host country and culture. They are not intended to be an exhaustive list; many more will arise as you attempt to answer these. Take a minute to answer the questions you can now, then spend some time researching your host country to answer others. While in your host country, look through the questions periodically to see if you can answer more questions, or refine your current answers.

1. How many people can you name who are prominent in the affairs of your host country (politics, athletics, religion, the arts, etc.)?
2. Who are the country's national heroes and heroines?
3. Can you recognize the national anthem?
4. Are other languages spoken besides the dominant language? What are the social and political implications of language usage?
5. What is the dominant religion? Is it a state religion? Have you read any of its sacred writings?
6. What are the most important religious observances and ceremonies? How regularly do people participate in them?
7. How do members of the predominant religion feel about other religions?
8. What are the most common forms of marriage ceremonies and celebrations?
9. What is the attitude towards divorce? extra-marital relations? plural marriage?
10. What is the attitude toward gambling?
11. What is the attitude toward drinking?
12. Is the price asked for merchandise fixed or are customers expected to bargain? How is the bargaining conducted?
13. If, as a customer, you touch or handle merchandise for sale, will the storekeeper think you are knowledgeable, inconsiderate, within your rights, completely outside your rights? Other?
14. How do people organize their daily activities? What is the normal meal schedule? Is there a daytime rest period? What is the customary time for visiting friends?
15. What foods are most popular and how are they prepared?
16. What things are taboos in this society?
17. What is the usual dress for women? for men? for students? Are slacks or shorts worn? If so, on what occasions?
18. Do hairdressers use techniques similar to those used by hairdressers in the US? How much time do you need to allow for an appointment at the hairdresser?
19. What are the special privileges of age and/or sex?
20. If you are invited to dinner, should you arrive early? on time? late? If so, by how much?
21. On what occasions would you present (or accept) gifts from people in the country? What kind of gifts would you exchange?
22. Do some flowers have a particular significance?
23. How do people greet one another? shake hands? embrace or kiss? How do they leave one another? What does any variation from the usual greeting or leave-taking signify?

24. If you are invited to a cocktail party, would you expect to find among the guests: foreign business people? men only? men and women? local business people? local politicians? national politicians? politicians' spouses? teachers or professors? bankers? doctors? lawyers? intellectuals such as writers, composers, poets, philosophers, religious clerics? members of the host's family (including in-laws)? movie stars? ambassadors or consular officials from other countries?
25. What are the important holidays? How is each observed?
26. What are the favorite leisure and recreational activities of adults? teenagers?
27. What sports are popular?
28. What kinds of television programs are shown? What social purposes do they serve?
29. What is the normal work schedule? How does it accommodate environmental or other conditions?
30. How will your financial position and living conditions compare with those of the majority of people living in this country?
31. What games do children play? Where do children congregate?
32. How are children disciplined at home?
33. Are children usually present at social occasions? at ceremonial occasions? If they are not present, how are they cared for in the absence of their parents?
34. How does this society observe a child's "coming of age?"
35. What kind of local public transportation is available? Do all classes of people use it?
36. Who has the right of way in traffic; vehicles, animals, pedestrians?
37. Is military training compulsory?
38. Are the largest circulation newspapers generally friendly in their attitude toward the United States?
39. What is the history of the relationships between this country and the United States?
40. How many people have emigrated from this country to the United States? Other countries? Are many doing so at present?
41. Are there many American expatriates living in this country?
42. What kinds of options do foreigners have in choosing a place to live?
43. What kinds of health services are available? Where are they located?
44. What are the common home remedies for minor ailments? Where can medicines be purchased?
45. Is education free? compulsory?
46. In schools, are children segregated by race? by caste or class? by sex?
47. What kinds of schools are considered best: public, private, or parochial?
48. In schools, how important is learning by rote?
49. How are children disciplined in school?
50. Where are the important universities of the country? If university education is sought abroad, to what countries and universities do students go?

Appendix III: Travel Resources

USEFUL TRAVEL RESOURCES

Readings

Maximizing Study Abroad, Michael Paige, Andrew D. Cohen, Barbara Kappler, Julie C. Chi and James P. Lassegard

Survival Kit for Overseas Living, Robert Kohl

Safety and Health Abroad, John Giordano and Mary Shea

Lonely Planet Travel Guides (specific to your country of destination)

MESA: Minority Experience of Study Abroad, edited by Pamela Dudzik and Samantha Phillips

American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective, Edward Stewart

Glimpse Magazine (study abroad stories/resource) <http://glimpse.org/>

Websites (Sites subject to change)

Travel Information

<http://www.statravel.com>

<http://www.travel.state.gov/content/travel/english.html>

- information about US passports, visas, end entry requirements, including HIV tests
- guide to US embassies: hours, locations, services
- country specific travel warnings and consular information sheets

<http://www.travlang.com>

<http://www.studentuniverse.com>

Money Matters

Oanda Currency Converter <http://www.oanda.com/>

<http://www.x-rates.com>

Health Issues

<http://www.who.int/en>

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>

- comprehensive site for world travelers, more tourist oriented
- advice and insight on a wide variety of travel health issues
- info about insurance and medical evacuation
- travel stories, photos and audio

<http://travmed.com/>

- products and information for safe travel worldwide
- general travel health information
- international travel clinic directory

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/thorntree/forum.jspa?forumID=29>

Geographic/Cultural Information

http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes

Safety and Security Issues

http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

<http://www.armchair.com/info/netinfo.html>

Appendix IV: OCSE Change of Status form

OFF-CAMPUS CHANGE OF STATUS REQUEST FORM

Please complete this form as soon as you are aware of any changes to your off-campus study plans. This includes a change in program, location, term, courses, etc. **If you have applied to more than one program**, this form must be completed as soon as you choose your final program. Until OCSE receives this form, you are not confirmed to study abroad. Use the reverse side for any changes in your proposed course of study. Changes in program location or a request for an extension require approval of the Committee on Academic Standing. **PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY.**

Name: _____ Class Year: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____ Advisor: _____

Current off-campus study period: _____

Current off-campus program (Program Sponsor, Program Title, City, Country): _____

MARK ALL THAT APPLY AND PROVIDE THE REQUESTED INFORMATION:

- ☐ **Decision of program participation:**
Name of program in which you will participate (include Program Sponsor, Program Title, City, Country): _____

Name(s) of program from which you are withdrawing (include Program Sponsor, Program Title, City, Country): _____

- ☐ **Change in term:** Requesting approval for _____ term of 20____ – _____ academic year.
* NOTE: Approval is contingent upon achieving minimum GPA of 3.0 for the current term.

- ☐ **Termination of all study off-campus plans:**
Reason: [] Finances [] Course availability [] Major credit issues
[] Maturity level credit issues [] Medical reasons
[] Other (please explain) _____

- ☐ **Change in course selections for current program:**
Indicate new course selections on reverse side and **attach course descriptions.**

- ☐ **Request for change of program location** (Indicate Program Sponsor, Program Title, City, Country):
New location: _____
You must include changes in course selections on reverse side and **attach course descriptions.**

- ☐ **Request for Extension of study off-campus plans:**
Program extension is requested for (give semester): _____
Indicate new course selections on reverse side and attach course descriptions.

- ☐ **Request for Extension to study in new location (if you are already off-campus)**
Program extension and new location (give location and semester): _____
* NOTE: Approval is contingent upon achieving minimum GPA of 3.0 for the current term.

Student Signature _____

Date _____

- ☐ Please check this box and confirm that your contact and legal guardian information is the same as that on your original application. Attach new information with this form if applicable.

ATTACH COURSE DESCRIPTIONS AS APPLICABLE AND SUBMIT FORM TO:

Skidmore College ~ Off-Campus Study & Exchanges

Starbuck Center 202

Fax: 1-518-580-5359

E-mail: ocse@skidmore.edu

Web: www.skidmore.edu/ocse

Off-Campus Study Proposed Course of Study Form

Name: _____

Program: _____

Term: _____

Please report your intended off-campus course enrollment below in the "To Be Completed by Student" section. Course availability off campus may be limited, so be sure to include alternate course selections for approval. You must obtain approvals for all courses *except* those you expect to use as general electives. Please note: all foreign language courses, even those counting as general electives, must receive departmental approval from the Chair of Foreign Languages.

TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT <i>List all courses you plan to take while studying off campus. You may also include alternate courses.</i>			TO BE COMPLETED BY DEPARTMENT CHAIRS / PROGRAM DIRECTORS		
Off-campus course title and number <i>(attach all course descriptions or syllabi)</i>	Credits <i>(per course description)</i>	General Elective Credit Only*	Skidmore equivalent course number	Counts for Maturity/ 300-level credit	Chair's or Director's Signature
		Y N		Y N	
		N		Y N	
		Y N		Y N	
		Y N		Y N	
		Y N		Y N	
		Y N		Y N	
		Y N		Y N	
		Y N		Y N	
		Y N		Y N	
		Y N		Y N	

**By selecting "Y" under the General Elective Credit column, you will only receive general transfer credit according to the transfer credit guidelines.*

To be completed by applicant's FACULTY ADVISOR in major department: Please check the appropriate boxes.

- ☐ I am familiar with the applicant's academic progress and believe that his or her training and intellectual interests are such as to qualify the student to profit by participating in this study abroad program.
- ☐ I recommend the applicant with respect to character and maturity for admission to this study abroad program.

Comments: _____

Faculty Advisor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix V: Housing Preference form

SKIDMORE COLLEGE OFFICE OF RESIDENTIAL LIFE HOUSING PREFERENCE FORM

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Leave Location _____

Cell Phone and Skidmore Email Address _____

Home Address _____

I am returning _____ Year

PLEASE NOTE: To be eligible to participate in the room selection process (this includes the Off Campus Drawing), you must pay your Returning Student Deposit.

I prefer (list at least 3 residence hall choices):

_____ Single _____ Double

Residence Halls _____

_____ Apartments _____

_____ Off Campus (Off campus living is available for a limited number of students.)

I am a smoker _____ Yes _____ No

I prefer: _____ Women's Floor _____ Gender Neutral

Fall returners, please complete the following to aid us in room selection for the next academic year:

_____ I have arranged for a friend to draw for me _____
Name

_____ I would like Residential Life to draw for me.

All residence halls (not apartments) are substance free. All residence halls and apartments are smoke free.

If we are unable to house you in a single room, you will be placed in a double room. Please list any information which should be considered in this placement.

Residential Life will attempt to house you in one of the residence halls you have indicated. However, it cannot be guaranteed that your preference will be accommodated.

This form must be returned to the Office of Residential Life when your leave is approved.

Appendix VI: OCSE Emergency Response Plan

Off-Campus Study & Exchanges EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Disclaimer

This document describes the efforts made by Skidmore College to help participants enhance their safety and to help them respond to emergency situations. Nothing in this plan is a guarantee that any specific action will be taken in any given situation, nor is anything in this document a contract or part of a contract between Skidmore College and any other party, nor is any statement in this document intended to sell a service to a student, nor to attempt to persuade any party to avail themselves of any program or service provided by Skidmore College. Skidmore College will make every reasonable effort to ensure each student's safety and well-being in an emergency situation. However, it should be understood that some events are beyond Skidmore College's control and therefore the College cannot be held responsible for the outcomes of decisions made during a crisis situation.

Emergency Contacts

The number for the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges is 1-518-580-5355. This number is answered from 8:30-12:00 and 1:00-4:30 pm, Monday through Friday.

Outside of office hours students and parents are advised to contact Campus Safety at 518-580-5566. Campus Safety has contact information for the staff. Our resident staff has home and cell numbers for appropriate contact people within the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges.

International Emergency Response Team

The International Emergency Response Team is made up of members of the Office of the Dean of Faculty, the Office of the President, and the Director and staff of the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges. These individuals work together to assess an emergency and determine the emergency protocol to implement. Implementation of the emergency protocol will fall to resident directors and Off-Campus Study & Exchanges staff. For non-Skidmore Approved Programs the program provider will handle the implementation of any protocol; however, Off-Campus Study & Exchanges will facilitate communication among the providers and the various contacts on campus.

Public Announcements

In the event of a major crisis, Skidmore will:

- Post a message on our website: <http://www.skidmore.edu/ocse/safety/updates.php>
- Attempt to send email messages to all participants and their guardians/emergency contacts within 48 hours of the event.
- The Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges may call students and their guardians/emergency contacts depending upon the severity of the emergency.

Risk Assessment

All decisions regarding program operations are made with reference to data from a number of sources. In addition to the consular information sheets and advisory messages posted by the U.S. Department of State (<http://www.travel.state.gov/content/travel/english.html>), the World Health

Organization (www.who.int/en), and the CDC (www.cdc.gov), our resident directors, program directors, and partner institutions use information gathered locally and through conversations with other providers in the city or country. The U.S. based staff also uses national and international sources to stay abreast of the progress of any situation and uses this information to determine the appropriate course of action. In making individual decisions concerning participation, we suggest that participants and their parents carefully review the State Department Travel Advisories website listed above.

The current Skidmore policy does not allow students to participate in any program located in a country in which there is a current Department of State Travel Warning. We also use the Department of State Travel Warnings as a means for determining when to consider canceling a program or bringing students home from a program.

Monitoring

Resident Directors make every reasonable effort to keep abreast of local conditions and changes in local health and safety risks and to inform participants and the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges of these changes. Resident Directors and staff of the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges subscribe to the U.S. State Department's service and thus automatically receive any Travel Warnings and Advisories as soon as they are issued. In addition, as all programs are registered with the American Embassy or Interest Section the RDs receive Warden notices that provide regular updates on safety issues pertinent to the country or city in which the program takes place.

The following websites serve as ongoing resources for the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges:

- U.S. Department of State <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html>
- Center for Disease Control <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>
- World Health Organization <http://www.who.int/en>
- SAFETI Clearinghouse <http://www.globaled.us/safeti>
- US embassy or consulate in your country of residence or visit.
- Australian Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade <http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo>
- Canadian Department for Foreign Affairs and International Trade http://www.voyage.gc.ca/consular_home-en.asp
- Ireland Department of Foreign Affairs <http://foreignaffairs.gov.ie/home/index.aspx?id=275>
- New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs <http://www.safetravel.govt.nz/index.php>
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom. <http://www.fco.gov.uk>

Response Plans: Local and Worldwide

Skidmore Program Contingency Plans

Each Skidmore program is developing contingency plans which will be activated in case there is a known local condition that requires (a) extra caution, (b) removal of the program to a different site in the same city or country or a nearby country, or (c) suspension of a program and evacuation of participants. For security reasons these local contingency plans are not available to anyone except the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges and the International Emergency Response Team.

Protocol In the Event of a Local Emergency

1. The Resident Director contacts participants as soon as possible to ascertain participants' well-being, and to provide information, instructions, and advice.

2. The Resident Director contacts the local U.S. embassy, consulate, or Interest Section, and also confers with other study abroad providers and/or U.S. enterprises in the area.
3. Depending on the situation, the RD may or may not gather the participants together in a group.
4. Participants are advised to contact their parents, guardians, or emergency contacts as soon as possible.
5. The Resident Director reports to the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges within 36 hours.
6. The Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges reports to any institutions with students in the program within 48 hours.
7. The Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges may report to participants' emergency contacts depending upon the severity of the emergency.

Protocol In the Event of a Worldwide Crisis Such as Armed Conflict Involving U.S. Forces

In addition to the measures in the previous section:

1. Each Resident Director consults local government, local US consulate, local professional organizations, other study abroad programs, and advises the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges as to what action should be taken, if any, to modify or suspend the program.
2. The Director or Program Manager consults the U.S. State Department and other sources of information and confers with other study abroad providers.
3. The Director or Senior Program Coordinator consults the Dean of Faculty to determine specific actions to be taken, both worldwide and at specific locations.
4. The Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges posts notices on its website, communicates with institutions sending students on Skidmore Programs, and communicates with participants' emergency contacts within 48 hours or as soon as accurate information is available.

In the Event that Skidmore College is unable to Open or Communicate

The Director and Program Manager have direct access from their homes to computer files with all critical data regarding participants, insurance provider information, worldwide staff contact information, contact information for institutions with students on Skidmore Programs, emergency contact information for participants, and other safety and crisis resources.

Orientation and Training for Participants

Every Skidmore student studying abroad attends a mandatory pre-departure orientation and receives a pre-departure handbook. Health and Safety issues are addressed during the orientation and are found in the handbook.

In addition, every Skidmore Program begins on-site with a comprehensive orientation to the country, city, university, and program, which includes, among other information, an explanation of any local risks that the Resident Director (RD) has identified and tips for enhancing personal safety. In addition, each RD distributes a local emergency contact information card to each participant. Finally, the RD registers the program and each participant with the local U.S. Consulate or Interest Section.

Providers of non-Skidmore Approved Programs also have comprehensive orientations that include explanations of local risks identified by their local staff. Skidmore College is in contact with those program providers. In the course of an emergency, many of those providers will contact parents directly. Students on non-Skidmore programs are advised to register with the United States embassy in the country where they will be studying. This can be done on-line prior to departure.

On-Site Care and Insurance

Each RD maintains lists of recommended health and mental health providers. All students studying abroad through Skidmore College have emergency medical, repatriation, and evacuation insurance.

Each RD is asked to establish an emergency phone tree to be activated in order to contact all participants quickly. Skidmore and the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges is working with each Skidmore on-site director to establish protocols to be used in the event of health emergency, serious accident, political crisis, natural disaster, crime, rape, or death of a participant. For security reasons these documents are not public.

Advice for Participants and their Families

The Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges will share the following advice with students and their families:

- Skidmore College strongly recommends that unless specific situations dictate otherwise, participants should designate their parents as emergency contact persons.
- Participants and their emergency contacts should keep in touch with each other throughout the participants' time out of the U.S.
- Participants should make sure their parents and/or emergency contacts have their accurate and up-to-date local contact information at all times.
- Participants should immediately notify their emergency contacts in the event of any emergency, accident, serious health problem, or other serious mishap.
- Participants are required to notify the RD in the event of any health condition that lasts longer than a day or two.

Skidmore College advises participants and their families that communication between Skidmore College and any non-Skidmore participants' sending institution is considered "internal communication" in terms of the Family Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and that Skidmore College has the right and the obligation to communicate all relevant information concerning participants' health and safety, academic progress, behavior, etc. to appropriate officers at the home institution on a need-to-know basis. In addition, the Skidmore application to study abroad specifically authorizes the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges to communicate any relevant information to participants' emergency contacts during an emergency.

The Department of State's Office of American Citizens Services and Crisis Management assists in all matters involving protective services for Americans abroad, including arrests, death cases, financial or medical emergencies, and welfare and whereabouts inquiries. If the student's family needs to contact him/her for an emergency at home or if the family needs to reach the student during a crisis because they are worried about his/her welfare they should call the State Department's Overseas Citizens Services at 1-888-407-4747. The State Department will relay the message to the consular officers in the country in which the student is located. Consular officers will attempt to locate the student, pass on urgent messages, and, consistent with the Privacy Act, report back to the family.

Participants and their families need to be aware of the fact that the U.S. Department of State Office of American Citizens Services and Crisis Management will generally not release information about specific individuals to Skidmore College or to other third parties.

Resources

Facts and circumstances regarding health and safety in each program locale are constantly changing. To monitor the latest available information for a program location, please consult the following websites:

- U.S. Department of State Travel Warnings <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html>
- U.S. Department of State Traveler's Checklist <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/checklist.html>
- Center for Disease Control <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>
- World Health Organization <http://www.who.int/en>
- SAFETI Clearinghouse <http://www.globaled.us/safeti>
- US embassy or consulate in your country of residence or visit.
- Australian Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade <http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo>
- Canadian Department for Foreign Affairs and International Trade <http://www.voyage.gc.ca/index-eng.asp>
- Ireland Department of Foreign Affairs <http://foreignaffairs.gov.ie/home/index.aspx?id=275>
- New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs <http://www.safetravel.govt.nz/index.php>
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom. <http://www.fco.gov.uk>

This document is adapted from the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) Emergency Preparedness Plan.