

Study Abroad

Step Program

So you want to study abroad but can't find the right program for you? Make your own! It may take some extra effort and work on your part, but it is worth it in the long run!

Scholarships:

In all this there is a study abroad scholarship available through Sam Houston State University as for details at the International Programs Office.!!!

Also places for scholarships are available (sometimes) through the government depending on what area you are studying, where you are studying, and how high a level. Do the homework on this...there are Fulbright Scholarships, etc.

Once you know where to go, there are usually funds available to help you on your way.

Step 1: Do the Research!

This is the fun part, but also the most difficult.

1. Look through the SHSU website, the travel abroad section, there are a number of programs to go overseas with various areas of study and emphasis. This is a great idea for it goes through SHSU and not a lot of hassle to go through.
 - a. **Check with your department to see if they have any study abroad programs available.**
 - b. SHSU Study Abroad website www.shsu.edu/~int_www/abroad/ (this website is full of opportunities to go overseas, with your university, with your department, all the following (Step 2) is taken care of through your department)
 - c. If this still doesn't help you, do your research, fill in the information sheet on the study abroad website, and bring it with you to the International Programs Office)
2. Look through our associated websites. These are sites we are affiliated with SHSU and it is easier to obtain the "blessing" of the University to go to these programs.
 - a. AIFS www.aifs.com
 - b. CIEE www.ciee.org
 - c. NAFSA www.nafsa.org
 - d. IIE www.iie.org
 - e. At a later date (hopefully soon): www.isep.org
3. If these don't tickle your fancy, and you are looking for a longer, more intensive/less insensitive/language study, then...you have a long but very rewarding road ahead of you (worth every moment)! Good for you!
 - a. A great place to start here is Study Abroad. com www.studyabroad.com get your feet wet and see what possible programs are out there.
 - b. If you know what country you want to go through, and still cant find a program, go through the country's Google, or yahoo and search for universities available. Examples follow:
Australia: www.google.com.au <http://au.yahoo.com/>

- c. If you are looking for a specific language and are semi fluent then look up websites in the language spoken there....Example: Germany www.google.de (you can always translate websites too these days)
 - d. Look at study abroad programs from other American universities, start with Texas and grow. You will be able to get credit through their university (for instance I studied with Wayne State University at Ludwig Maximillians Universität in Munich, Germany)
 - e. Check out the university's website you want to go to!
4. If you still can't find what you are looking for, venture to the **International Programs Office at SHSU** to see what other opportunities are available.

Step 2: SHSU Homework- BEFORE YOU GO!

SHSU Ok so, now you know where you want to go, what program, university, country, etc. now what?!

- a. Do your homework here at SHSU....before continuing
- b. SHSU wants from you before you go...get together info and present it to your advisor:
 - 1) The run down of the program you are going with, what university, where, for how long, if it is accredited...
 - 2) what the credit system at the other university is
 - 3) what courses you are planning on taking at the new university, a description of these courses and how you would like them to be (possibly, on THEIR approval) transferred
- c. Ask your advisor to state on a letter head that they approve your program, have them include what courses you are taking and what they transfer as (you can use this to apply for the SHSU International Scholarship and keep it handy for your return to SHSU, to make sure they *stay* transferable!)
- d. GRADUATE: Advisor Approval
- e. UNDERGRADUATE: Advisor Approval and Chairs of Each Department (Example: If you are a French Major going to France to take French courses, but are also taking French History and want it to count for a history credit, then History must approve the course and your French Advisor)

Step 3: WORLD: Now what?

- a. Go through your program and get to know what they have available to you, study it, know it in and out, the following list is to help complete this transition for you:
- b. Get 8 **passport pictures** to start off with (student ids, passports, visas, etc.) several places in town process these (try Walgreen's)
- c. Get your **passport** http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/first/first_832.html and take it to the Huntsville Courthouse http://ci.huntsville.tx.us/passport/passport_info.pdf can take up to a month to process

- d. Get your **visa** (sometimes programs cover this) look up by country to see what is required of you before you go, and information on **student visas** (two different things) (sometimes programs cover this) if you cannot find the information you are looking for contact the university to are applying to http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/brochures/brochures_1229.html
- e. Get your **health insurance** (sometimes programs cover this) insurance protection is a very important component when interested in studying overseas. It's always good to be prepared with medical insurance in case of an emergency, such as a mild sickness or accident. The following sites are various insurance companies that offer International Health Insurance for U.S. students studying abroad. Explore each company and see their requirements and apply for the one that best suits you.
 - i. Health Care Global 2000 (Global Reach) www.walach.com
 - ii. Health Insurance for U.S. Students Studying Abroad www.studyabroadinsurance.com or www.psafinancial.com
 - iii. International Insurance Plans www.InternationalPlans.com
- f. Study Abroad Program Student Medical Insurance Plan www.renaissance-inc.com http://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/us_students/
- g. Make sure you give your **medical information** to your sponsor before departure. Make available all your health information to the program's administration so that they can assist you with any special needs, or advise you on the risks you might face.
- h. Get your **international student identity card** (so you don't have to continuously flash your passport) <http://www.myisic.com/MyISIC/> NEW!! Now available in the International Programs Office at SHSU.
- i. Get **youth hostel cards** if you wish to travel around from station country: <http://www.hostelz.com/hi-usa.php>
- j. Get your **Airline Tickets**: try going through a website from your new country or cheap tickets (sometimes programs cover this) or http://www.statravel.com/cps/rde/xchg/us_division_web_live/ look around, there may be other avenues for cheap student flights on travel abroad websites, or your organization may wish you to go through them.
- k. Start looking for **places to stay** (once again programs may cover this) are there host families available? International housing? Student housing? Apartments for rent? Is it nearby the institution you will be attending? (Suggestion: find out where to take your trash to on arrival)
- l. What about **transportation during your stay**? Is there a bus system, subway system, train system? Is there a way to rent or purchase a bicycle during your stay? Start thinking about these things to be semi prepared on your arrival....
- m. Possibly exchange some money before you go: Some larger **banks** in larger cities will exchange a limited amount of money for you before you go so you don't have to pay the skyrocket prices for exchange at the airports when you get to your new host country...Also check with your bank and tell them you will be using your atm/credit card internationally (is this service available for your bank? etc. if you have a smaller bank

- you may consider finding a new bank to obtain an account that you can draw from internationally or set up a new account in the country you are going to)
- n. Start studying up on the language, culture, etc. of the place to which you are going.
 - o. Research the **Safety and Security** about your country. Learn all you can about the safety and security issues of the countries you plan to visit. This includes reading about the cultural and political climate of those countries, as well as learning about how others view people from your country, race, ethnic group, religion, gender and sexual orientation.
 - i. Make yourself aware of both the rules and regulations of the study abroad program sponsor, and the local laws and customs of the countries which you will be visiting.
 - ii. Inform yourself as much as possible about your new environment, either through - online, in the library, on television, radio news programs, and in the paper.
 - ii. Find out about the infectious diseases endemic in countries to which you will be traveling. Get the appropriate shots and pills, and take the appropriate medications with you if your doctor thinks it's necessary.
 - iv. Can You Drink the Water? Find out if water is safe to drink in the countries to which you will be traveling. Purify unsafe water before you drink it. Make sure water bottles come sealed when you buy them. Remember that ice can also be unsafe, as well as the water you use to brush your teeth.
 - p. Other websites: for travel safety
http://www.istc.org/sisp/index.htm?fx=static&page=%2Ftravel_advice%2Ftravel_advice_health_safety_safety_tips.html

Additional websites for travel info: <http://www.istc.org/sisp/index.htm> and for the Official Student Handbook: www.studentsabroad.com

*Go to the International Programs Office at SHSU, they will be more than happy to help you!

ONCE OVERSEAS:

Step 1: Here's a **checklist to ask** on your arrival, just a start of ideas, the rest is up to you!

1. Mental checklist before you go: where do you go from the airport, what address? Are you to go to a bus terminal, train terminal, your advisor, a hotel, a hostel etc.? Try not to go to a foreign country and not know where to go at least initially (unless this idea thrills you) for you will be most likely very jetlagged, excited and disoriented on your arrival.
2. What is my new address?
3. What is my new phone number/ How do I access a phone?
4. Where do I take out my trash?

5. What is the local transportation? How do I purchase a ticket? What stop is my university at?
6. Where do I go if I want internet access?
7. Where do I go for a doctor, a drug store?
8. Where is the local grocery store?
9. Where is the nearest US Embassy?

Step 2: Be sure to **keep a low profile**. Upon arrival, especially those having just arrived abroad, are often targets of crime. Become aware of your surroundings to reduce your risks.

- 1.) Do not look lost
- 2.) Do not look like a tourist
- 3.) Do not raise your voice to attract attention
- 4.) Know which areas are considered more dangerous
- 5.) Be conscious when you walk (never be alone, don't be out after midnight in an isolated area, or being out after a local curfew.)
- 6.) Know where to get help (phones, police and fire stations, stores, etc.)
- 7.) Know what is "normal" and "not-normal" in the areas that you visit most frequently.

Step 3: Make an **Emergency Action Plan** to carry at all times.

- i. Your EAP could be as simple as a list of emergency phone numbers of people to call in case you are hurt or become a victim of theft, along with copies of your insurance papers, passport, and names of any medications to which you are allergic.
- ii. Make sure you leave photocopies of all your documents (passport, visa, insurance papers, etc.) at home, and as well as a safety place where you are staying, in case they get stolen or you lose them.

Step 4: When **meeting other people** or **dating**:

- 1.) Non-verbal communication (like body language and hand gestures) considered harmless in the U.S. may be offensive to people in other countries. The list of gestures and phrases considered rude in other countries can grow beyond the obvious. Be careful with how you reach to others!!!!!!
- 2.) Keep yourself free from sexually transmitted diseases by using protection (like condoms or abstinence). Also, remember that "no" may not always be interpreted as "no" in other countries. Inform yourself about the types of diseases prevalent in the area in which you are traveling.
- 3.) How should I dress? It is often best to dress conservatively - so you won't be identified on sight as a tourist or a U.S. citizen. Be cautious with how you display valuables (does it look like you're flaunting wealth?). Leave your good jewelry at home, and keep money in a safe place like a money belt or hidden pouch under your clothes. Also, try to avoid wearing any t-shirts displaying U.S. logos or the American flag.

- 4.) Be cautious about accepting drinks (alcoholic or non-alcoholic) from a stranger. Use the same caution you would have about accepting a drink from a stranger in the United States while you are overseas. Also be cautious about accepting food from a stranger.

Step 5: Be careful with the use and abuse of **alcohol** and **drugs** abroad. It usually increases the risk of accident and injury. Many study abroad accidents and injury are related to the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs abroad. Violating drug laws abroad may result in very serious consequences. In some countries, being found guilty of violating drug laws can result in consequences as serious as death.

Step 6: What should I do in case of a **Political Rally** or **Conversation**?

At all times avoid political rallies which can increase tensions and emotions or breed angry mobs for which a U.S. citizen may serve as a scapegoat. As well, try not to engage in conversations about contentious political issues with locals and avoid retaliating against hostile or bigoted remarks about Americans.

Step 7: Remember to **Set an Example!!!!** Remember you are like an ambassador for your U.S. college or university. Behave in a way that is respectful of others' rights and well-being and to encourage others to do the same. Remember that you are representing your country at all times!