



The Office of Study Away Guide and Handbook Part II: Post-Decision

For pre-decision information on choosing a program and the application process, see Part I.

Globally engaged at home and away!



The Walter Commons for Global Study and Engagement
CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

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INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL LOGISTICS

Travel Documents

Passports

International travel requires a valid passport. If you already have one, check the expiration date and be sure that it will be valid for a minimum of 6 months after your semester ends. If you do not have a passport, you must apply in person at a passport agency, a designated courthouse, or a designated US post office. This process can take up to three months, so plan ahead! You will need:

- A certified copy of your birth certificate stamped with a raised seal
- Your social security card
- A valid photo ID
- Two 2x2" passport photos
- A check or money order (cash and credit cards are not accepted.)

See the state department website at www.travel.state.gov for more details.

Visas

A visa is a stamp in a passport given by a foreign government allowing the passport holder to remain in the country for a specified period of time for a specific reason. As soon as you are accepted to your study away program you will need to find out if you need a student visa. Obtaining a student visa can be very complicated, so research the specific student visa requirements and make your appointment online as early as possible.

Depending on the specific requirements of the Embassy or Consulate, you will submit your visa application either via mail or in person. Typically, when you apply in person, you must make an appointment in advance and apply at the Embassy or Consulate of that country nearest to your home.

Please note that your study away program will provide a letter confirming your study away status, which is required for applying for a visa. Therefore, it is essential that you read all correspondence sent to you by your program, act quickly upon any instruction they give, and take the initiative to promptly ask questions if you are confused about any part of the instructions or the application process.

Be aware that non-US citizens typically apply for student visas within their home country and not in the US. In addition, the process for applying for a student visa may differ compared to the instructions given to US students. Be sure to ask questions and act promptly upon any instructions given to you by your study away program.

Some students may need additional letters from the Office of Study Away as part of their visa application. Students should check their visa requirements carefully and contact the Office of Study Away in a timely manner.

Health

Medical Recommendation

Connecticut College requires that all students complete a health screening through Student Health Services prior to their study away semester. Instructions for completing the health screening form are on the Connecticut College online application under post-decision forms.

Immunizations

Be aware of local health conditions abroad. You should especially be aware of any public health service recommendations or advisories. For current health conditions and recommended vaccinations check the Centers for Disease Control website. www.cdc.gov

Insurance

Medical insurance is extremely important. Students studying away may elect the Connecticut College Student Health Plan, which offers international medical coverage, or choose another plan with comparable international coverage. Please note that students have access to On Call International, a Global Assistance and Insurance Program that provides services and benefits to prepare for international travel and help with critical emergencies such as medical and travel or safety related problems or crises. Students will be given the insurance card at the mandatory pre-departure meeting.

Keep in mind that should medical attention be required abroad, it may be necessary for you to have sufficient funds accessible to make payment at the time of treatment since the foreign physician and/or hospital may not be able to process medical bills through an American insurance company. In such cases, be sure to obtain a receipt to submit with your insurance claim for reimbursement upon return to the US.

Prescription Medication

If you are traveling with prescription drugs make sure you take enough for your entire stay overseas. You may have to ask for a “prescription override”. Carry all prescription drugs in their original containers in your carry-on luggage and have a copy of the prescription (including the generic name and dosage) handy. If your baggage is searched by Customs, these precautions will make the process easier.

Money Abroad

Cash

US currency can be exchanged for foreign currency at most international airports prior to your departure, at the international airport of your destination, and at most major banks and railroad stations abroad. It might be wise to exchange a small amount of money prior to your departure in order to have some cash-on-hand upon arrival at your study abroad location. Check with your program for advice as well.

ATM Cards

A quick and painless way to access your money while abroad is by using your ATM card to withdraw money in the local currency from your bank account in the US. Before you leave, check with your bank to find out where your ATM card can be used and what fees are involved. Notify your bank the dates you will be out of the country, so your account will not be closed while you are away.

Credit Cards

First, contact your credit card company prior to departure to let them know that you will be overseas. This will prevent your card from being canceled while abroad. Credit cards make foreign currency transactions easy and they are invaluable in a financial emergency. But remember that you will incur finance charges for cash advances on your credit card. Make a cash advance only if you have no other option for getting money. Also, making copies of both sides of your credit cards can be helpful if you lose them. Leave one copy with someone at home and take one copy with you. Take a photo of both sides of your credit card and keep on your phone, along with your Passport, Visa and any other cards you are taking with you.

Travelers Checks

Traveler's checks are insured and can be replaced if lost or stolen. In order to make a claim for lost or stolen traveler's checks it is essential to know the numbers of the missing checks. You should keep a good record of your check numbers and keep this separate from your checks. You should also leave a copy at home in the US with someone you trust. Traveler's checks or the traveler's check card may be purchased at any bank, through American Express or AAA.

Research

It is very important to do some research before you depart. This is important for tips on living in a new place including things to do and places to eat. It is also important to become familiar with the local country laws, politics, and leaders. Previous students have used a variety of guide books and websites to help them prepare. Some suggestions include:

- **Let's Go:** Written and published by students at Harvard University, the information in "Let's Go" is directed toward budget and student travelers. They publish books on 21 countries, cities, and regions. These books contain very good practical information, such as locating a hostel or hotel. They provide general overviews of cities and list major tourist attractions. You can obtain information at www.letsgo.com.
- **Lonely Planet:** These guides are popular with student travelers and provide detailed, complete information on places to visit, history, and culture. For more information, visit www.lonelyplanet.com.

Don't forget to read all country specific pre-departure materials that you will receive from your study away provider. The Office of Study Away can also give you names of past students to contact. We also encourage you to contact Connecticut College faculty who are familiar with the country you are going to.

What to Pack

Plan your wardrobe carefully so that you take as few clothes as possible. Remember the golden rule of packing: Lay out everything you want to bring, get rid of half of those things, and bring twice as much money than you expect to use.

Don't pack things that you can buy in your host country. You will be able to buy toiletries and school supplies almost anywhere.

Pack clothing that is versatile and sturdy. You'll want at least one set of nicer clothing for evenings out, but otherwise make sure your clothing can take a good hand washing. Good walking shoes, or hiking boots are a must.

Pack some things from home. You'll want to have pictures of your home, family and friends. This will make a big difference if you feel homesick.

Before you pack, check for baggage weight allowances and packing restrictions with your airlines or travel agent. Visit the TSA website for an up-to-date list of permitted and prohibited items. <https://www.tsa.gov/>

Voltage

Most appliances purchased in the US are designed to work on 120 volts, while most of the world operates on 220 volts. To convert the 220V to 120V (for your appliance to function), you will need to purchase a travel voltage converter (or, if the appliance is relatively inexpensive, purchase a new one in the host country).

Voltage isn't the only thing that varies from country to country. Electrical wall outlets also differ in shape, assortment and arrangement of holes. To be prepared, make sure you get an adapter set to go with the converter.

CULTURAL ADAPTATION

Living and learning overseas means learning to adjust to a different culture, lifestyle, language, food, climate, and time zone. The adjustment to new surroundings can be exciting, stressful, frustrating, amusing, or just plain confusing! It is normal to experience feelings associated with culture shock. Reading about your host country ahead of time and talking to other students, faculty, and staff who have traveled abroad can help you better understand feelings of cultural adjustment. Another way to prepare yourself is to understand the stages of cultural adjustment and be able to identify your emotional state according to these adjustment phases:

The Honeymoon Stage

Shortly after arriving in a new place people may feel giddy and elated. This "honeymoon" stage is characterized by feelings of excitement, exhilaration and anticipation. The new and different things students see around them will be thrilling and fascinating. People in the "honeymoon" stage exhibit an eagerness to please and take an active interest in what they can learn from their new environment. Unfortunately, this eagerness to accept their new surrounding may mean that the person does not gain a complete understanding of cultural differences between their own and the new culture, and may be unwilling to ask for assistance. Cultural misunderstandings may accumulate, making the traveler more likely to experience the second, less pleasant stage of cultural adjustment.

The Hostility Stage

The hostility stage is characterized by frustration, anger, anxiety, fear, and often depression. The strains of living in an unfamiliar environment and speaking a non-native language can lead to feelings of isolation. This is a distressing stage that fortunately does not last very long for most people. As new situations are

encountered and dealt with, the visitor gains a more complete understanding of his/her environment and the hostility stage gives way to the integration stage.

The Integration/Acceptance Stage

Humor is a sign that a visitor has moved from the hostility stage toward the integration stage. Cultural mistakes that would have caused frustration during the previous stage are more easily laughed off. The visitor begins to feel more functional in his/her new environment. Integration is accomplished by making new friends, finding recreational outlets, accomplishing minor tasks, and being willing to ask questions when something is uncertain.

The Home Stage

This stage occurs when the visitor strikes a balance between retaining his/her own culture and being functional and happy in the new culture. This person has successfully adjusted to the norms and standards of their environment, a valuable, life-enriching skill. Reaching this stage takes time and work on the part of the visitor; there may be many times when it seems unattainable, but perseverance and flexibility ensure success.

SAFETY & COMMUNICATION

Safety Tips

While abroad, you should take the same common-sense safety precautions that you would at home: be aware of your surroundings and keep your valuables concealed. Many travelers fall victim to crimes because it is assumed they are carrying cash, and in a foreign environment, they are often easy to distract. Be prudent when meeting strangers, and listen to safety advice from your study abroad director and local residents. Remember, most incidents happen when you are careless. Some important safety tips include:

- Stay alert. Be aware of your surroundings.
- Trust your intuition.
- Avoid secluded or unknown places.
- Don't be afraid to call attention to yourself or to ask for assistance.
- Make sure someone else knows your itinerary.
- Do not go off with someone you don't know well or who makes you feel uncomfortable. Suggest staying with a group or going to a well-lit public place.
- Keep your eyes and hands on your bags at all times. When you're distracted, you're an easy target for thieves. Do not leave your bags unattended. When you're on the telephone or reading a sign or train schedule, do not forget to keep an eye on your bags.
- Be especially alert in crowds at train stations, airports, crowded shopping areas and tourist spots.
- Plan your trip so that you do not arrive at an unknown town late at night without having made arrangements for spending the night.
- When you stay at a hotel, make use of the safety deposit boxes that many hotels have. Leave your passport and any money you don't expect to need that day safely locked away.
- Dress to blend in with the local population.
- Find out which parts of town are considered risky by the locals. As at home, always stay in well-lit and well-traveled areas. Don't take short cuts through alleys or unsafe areas.
- Be aware of the effects of alcohol and drugs. Alcohol and drugs impair judgment and increase

- violent behavior and also make you a target for predators.
- Always, Always, Always keep your dorm room doors and windows locked! Never give out your dorm room key!
- When walking, use a steady, confident pace.
- When walking, lower the volume or remove your headphones so you can hear what is happening around you.
- Wear comfortable shoes and don't overload yourself with books or bags.

For updated travel warnings and country specific information, be sure to visit the [US State Department International Travel](#) website.

In Case of an Emergency

Follow the emergency protocol outlined by your study away program, which will be discussed during your specific program's on-site orientation and also within your program's pre-departure materials.

If possible, after you have reported the incident to your on-site program staff and/or the local authorities and you are in a safe location, you may contact your parents/guardians/loved ones. As calmly as possible, provide them with as much detailed information about the incident.

Also, provide them the best way to remain in contact with you (this may be an international cell phone number, a friend's cell phone number, Skype account number, or email, etc.) within the next 48 hours following the incident.

Your study away program staff, your parents, or yourself may contact Connecticut College at any time to let us know how we can best support you.

You can reach the Office of Study Away at 001-860-439-5390 (from overseas) during our office hours. In addition, Conn Campus Safety can be reached by calling 001-860-439-2222. Campus safety officers are available 24-hours a day, 7-days a week. They will facilitate emergency situations and contact the appropriate Conn staff members during off-hours/weekends.

And again, calmly provide as much detailed information as possible so that all parties involved can help you as promptly and as efficiently as possible.

American Embassy/Consulate Services

Should you encounter serious social, political, health, or economic problems, the American Embassies and/or Consulates can offer some, but limited assistance. They can, for example, provide you with a list of local attorneys and physicians; they can contact next of kin in the event of an emergency or serious illness; they can contact friends or relatives on your behalf to request funds or guidance; they can provide assistance during civil unrest or natural disaster; they can replace a lost or stolen passport. Please understand that they are the contact for information on where to get advice but they do not give advice.

Remember, when you are in a foreign country, you are subject to that country's laws. Because you are subject to local laws abroad, there is little that a US consular officer can do for you, if you encounter legal difficulties. A consular officer cannot get you out of jail. They can provide a list of local attorneys and help you find adequate legal representation. If you are arrested, you should ask the authorities to notify a

consular officer at the nearest US embassy or consulate.

On Call International

Please note that students have access to On Call International. On Call International is a Global Assistance and Insurance Program that provides services and benefits to plan and prepare for international travel and help with critical emergencies such as medical and travel or safety related problems or crises. Students will be given the insurance card at the mandatory pre-departure meeting.

Communication

While you are away, you are expected to keep in contact with Conn. It is important to keep in mind that the College will only use your Conn email address to communicate with you. Therefore, be absolutely sure that you are checking your email on a regular basis. It is a good idea to change your Password, so it does not expire while you are away. During a possible crisis in your home country (natural disaster, civil unrest), the Office of Study Away may reach out to check on your safety. It is imperative that you respond to these outreach efforts.

Internet Cafés

Internet cafés are prevalent in many parts of the world. For a few dollars you can access the Internet via the computers in the café.

Telephone

Should you or your family and friends wish to make a direct-dial international call from inside the US the usual procedure is:

1. Dial the US Exit Code: 011
2. Dial the country code (normally a 2- or 3-digit number)
3. Dial the city code (normally a 1- to 5-digit number)
4. Dial the local number abroad

To call the US from anywhere in the world, you will have to first dial 001, and then regular area code and telephone number.

We do recommend that students and parents attempt to schedule in advance specific days and times when they will “check-in” with one another. Keep in mind that time differences, as well as class and travel schedules, may limit the amount of communication you are currently used to. So, to help facilitate personal growth and to encourage a smoother adjustment to your new country, we suggest not calling home too often.

Cell Phones

Many students simply choose to add an international calling plan to their current cell phone provider. Prices for this service vary by company. In addition, students often find that once they arrive in their host country they can easily purchase or rent a cell phone from a local company. Most study abroad programs will facilitate purchasing a pre-paid cell phone wherever this service is possible (not available in all countries), or require that students purchase one to be on the program.

Skype

Skype is a free program for using the Internet to make phone calls.

WhatsApp

WhatsApp is an app that can be downloaded to a phone that uses wifi to send messages and make phone calls. This is a popular app used by students in many countries.

COMING HOME

Some students go through a readjustment period when they return home. Re-entry shock is a term that describes the reverse cultural adaptation people go through when returning home after an extended stay abroad. Although re-entry shock is normal, it affects everyone differently.

Are you experiencing Re-Entry Shock?

Feeling a little off? If you've just returned home and are experiencing a range of feelings you may be going through re-entry shock. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you feel like friends and family lack significant interest in your study abroad experience?
- Do you spend a great deal of your time thinking about and planning for a return trip to your study abroad destination?
- Do you feel like you do not have much in common with your old friends?
- Have you experienced any of the following symptoms: restlessness, boredom, uncertainty, self-imposed isolation, changes in goals and priorities, homesickness for your host country, depression, and/or negative thoughts, attitudes or behavior towards your native country?

If you answered yes to any of these questions you are more than likely experiencing re-entry shock.

What can you do to alleviate Re-Entry Shock?

Some tips to help alleviate culture shock include:

- Stay Connected: Keep in touch with the friends you made overseas. Write letters, emails or even plan a reunion.
- Recognize that this re-entry process is part of the study abroad experience and anticipate that you will experience some issues regarding adjusting to life back home. Educate your friends and family about this adjustment phase.
- Come visit our office!!! We want to see your photos and talk about your travels!
- Rent movies from the country where you studied abroad, and keep up with the news and sports by buying magazines or newspapers from your host country.
- Join an international club or look into providing assistance to international students who are studying at the College. Remember, you have been in their shoes and you understand their feelings about living in a foreign country!
- Reflect Often: If you kept a journal while abroad, continue to write your "post-abroad" experiences in it. It will be interesting to go back a year, two years, or even a decade from now to remember the experience as a whole and how it changed your life.
- Speak with a counselor at Student Counseling Services. They are knowledgeable about the complexities that "coming home" may bring.

- Read "[Coming Home: Relationships, Roots, and Unpacking](#)" by Jim Citron and Vija Medelson

HELPFUL WEBSITES

[BBC News: Country Profiles](#)

[STA Travel](#)

[Student Universe](#)

[World Health Organization](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[US State Department](#)

E-mail Addresses to Conn Offices

Office of the Registrar
registrar@conncoll.edu

Office of Residential Education & Living
housing@conncoll.edu

Accounting Office
Bursar - Billing
donna.scott@conncoll.edu

Financial Aid Services
finaid@conncoll.edu

Computer Help Desk
(Passwords, CamelWeb, etc.)
help@conncoll.edu

Reference Librarian Services
libref@conncoll.edu

Student Health Services
shs@conncoll.edu