

Parent Guide to Study Abroad

PARENTS/GUARDIANS/FAMILIES SHOULD:

- Be informed about and involved in the decision of the student to enroll in a particular program.
- Obtain and carefully evaluate participant program materials, as well as related health, safety and security information.
- Discuss with the participant any travel plans and activities that may be independent of the program.
- Engage the student in a thorough discussion of safety and behavior issues, insurance needs, and emergency procedures related to their time abroad.
- Encourage the student to be responsive to requests from the program sponsor for information regarding the student.
- Keep in touch with the student while abroad but also allow the student time to adapt and manage themselves in the foreign environment.

WHY YOUR STUDENT SHOULD STUDY ABROAD?

- Adds to full UWG experience -- can satisfy Experiential Learning requirement!
- Encourages student to become more comfortable with ambiguity
- Expands one's global network
- Increases cross-cultural competencies
- Fulfills academic, personal, and professional goals

THE OFFICE OF EDUCATION ABROAD CAN ASSIST BY:

- Offering regular information sessions about study abroad
- Professionally advising students about international activities while attending UWG
- Helping your student prepare to go – shared responsibility, your student has homework too!
- Offering Passport advice and assistance

THE PROGRAM MANAGER CAN ASSIST BY:

- Providing specific program details
- Acting as the main point of contact after program selection

FINANCING STUDY ABROAD:

- Students can use financial aid and scholarships toward credit-bearing experiences
- HOPE/Zell Miller works like regular UWG courses
- Program fees vary by program
- Scholarships are available, visit the Office of Education Abroad [scholarship](#) website for more information

MITIGATING RISK ABROAD:

- Faculty-led programs hold pre-departure orientation meetings
- All students registered in UWG programs are automatically enrolled into robust insurance policies through CISI
- UWG does not sponsor programs or activities in countries with a Travel Warning issued by the U.S. Department of State (Travel only to regions of level 2 threat grade and lower)

YOUR STUDENT'S PROGRAM:

- Course offerings, grades and credits, financial costs, academic and program structure, housing type, requirements, etc. all vary based your student's program type:
 - UWG Faculty-Led
 - Exchange Abroad
 - UWG Independent Experience
 - Non-UWG Program
- Ask your student what program they are interested in or attending, and work with them to familiarize yourself and them on the specifics of their experience.

PRE-STUDY ABROAD:

- Students can be excited, anxious, overwhelmed, stressed – talk to them about how they are feeling
- If desired, join them for an advising appointment
- Check-in with them about their requirements/budget – are they fully prepared to go?
- Determine what your level of communication with your student will be while they are abroad
- Will you be visiting your student? If so, discuss your expectations for the trip
- Research the destination culture and location with your student
- Assist the student in obtaining a passport...and visa, if necessary.
- Discuss health and safety proactively – what precautions should your student take?
- Ask what their goals are for the experience!

WHILE YOUR STUDENT IS ABROAD:

- Allow time for your student to get settled – travel is exhausting, don't worry if they aren't in communication right away!
- Find a level of communication that works for you both, but give them their space – over communication with home can make it difficult for students to adjust to their present situation.
- Encourage them to engage with their host culture
- For longer duration programs, send letters or care packages
- Culture shock is an on-going process – listen to their frustrations, but remain positive and supportive, be patient with them, and remind them of their goals
- Remind your student to provide updates on their travel itinerary, especially for any side travel – this will help us to reach out to them in case of emergency!

SUPPORT FOR THE PARENTS/FAMILIES OF STUDENTS:

- Know that your student's safety is UWG's #1 priority with international activities
- Due to Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA), UWG employees may not discuss a student's information – encourage your student to be in contact with us
- In an emergency, UWG will reach out to emergency contacts as allowed by student
- Ask your student about Pre-Study Abroad Orientation and whether parents are invited to attend

UPON RETURN FROM ABROAD:

- Students can be excited to come home, but may have difficulty readjusting
- Listen to their stories and ask to see pictures
- Your student's interests, habits, and world outlook may have changed – and that's okay!
- Encourage your student to integrate their new hobbies/interests into their pre-study abroad life
- Take an interest in their new interests, ask questions
- Be patient with your student – they are trying to process a meaningful experience, and may experience extreme emotions during this transition period.