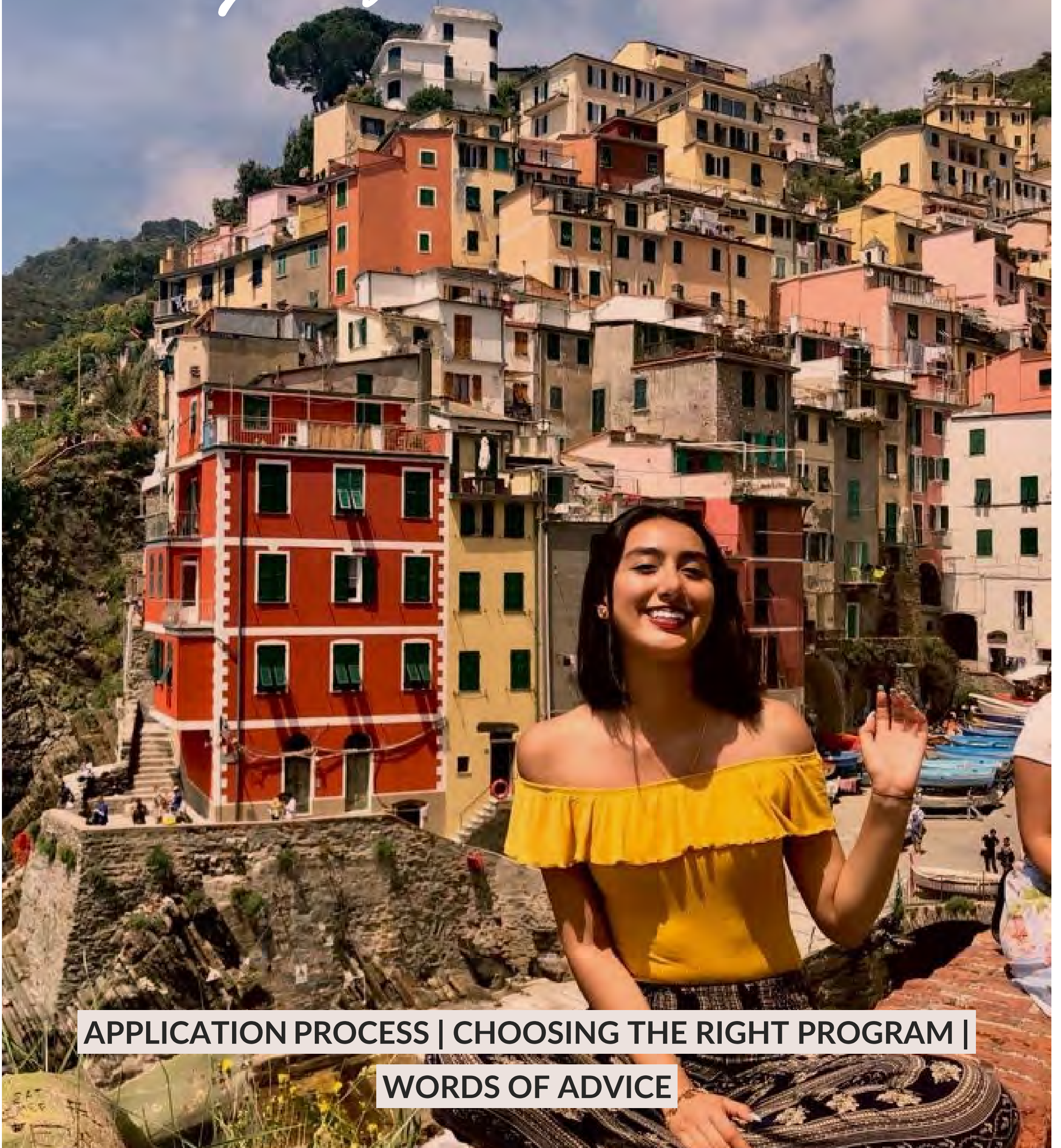


EXPLORE

a guide for studying abroad



APPLICATION PROCESS | CHOOSING THE RIGHT PROGRAM |

WORDS OF ADVICE

CONTENTS

Office of International Engagement

A SPECIAL NOTE

Hello! We're the Office of International Engagement and we're excited to know that you are interested in studying abroad. We firmly believe that international experiences lead to personal growth and expanded perspectives. Use this handbook as a guide for your upcoming journey. If you have any questions or concerns, we're here for you - every step of the way.

Visit us in Student Center 124 or contact us via phone at 956-326-2282.

ON THE COVER

Nancy Garza spent her summer in Italy learning about language and culture.

MAKING THE CHOICE TO STUDY ABROAD

THE BEGINNING

02 The study abroad process at a glance

03 ATTENDING AN INFORMATION SESSION

04 SELECTING THE 'RIGHT' PROGRAM

Explore from the available options: affiliate, exchange or faculty-led

05 THE SA APPLICATION PROCESS

Learn about admissions requirements and supporting documents

CONSIDER THIS

06 FINANCIAL PLANNING

NOW THAT YOU'VE BEEN ADMITTED

AT A GLANCE

07 The study abroad checklist

08 PROGRAM MEETING

09 TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Learn about essential documents needed for travel

10 HOUSING

10 INTERNATIONAL AIRFARE

Information about selecting & booking flights

11 HEALTH & SAFETY

KEEP IN MIND

12 PENDING REQUIREMENTS

Before departing submit and complete all needed materials

13 PREPARING FOR DEPARTURE

Prepare for your upcoming departure: packing, money & more

WHILE YOU'RE ABROAD

14 STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Abiding by: student requirements, rules and Title IX

15 ACADEMICS

16 CHECKING IN

Reporting arrival & maintaining communication

17 MANAGING EMERGENCIES

18 SAFETY ABROAD

19 CULTURE SHOCK

Navigating through cultural differences

COMING BACK HOME

20 COURSE TRANSFERS

Submitting coursework and syllabi

20 REINTEGRATION TO TAMU

21 SERVICE HOURS

JUST IN CASE

22 WITHDRAWALS & MORE

THE BEGINNING

The study abroad process at a glance

01

FINDING THE PROGRAM THAT FITS

Before beginning your journey, you must choose a program - this is the first step. The program you select depends on several factors: country of interest, program length, course availability and more. Attend an information session to learn about the programs that are currently available.

02

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION & MORE

Submitting a study abroad application means that you're committed to experiencing your upcoming journey. Some programs may require that you submit more than one application. Though not required at the time of submission, each application will require supporting documents. This can include: counseling modules, a passport and more.

03

SCHOLARSHIPS & BUDGETING

Creating a financial plan early can ensure that this experience is as affordable as possible. Meet with one of our advisors to create a budget that fits your program. There are countless scholarships designed specifically for study abroad students. Attend our 'Funding Your Study Abroad' workshop for more information and tips.

04

PREPARING FOR DEPARTURE

Preparing for your departure means: purchasing airfare, confirming housing, packing accordingly, verifying health insurance and more. This time can be overwhelming, reference our checklist to help you get organized. Our advisors are here every step of the way and can even facilitate the purchase of airfare.



BEHIND THE SCENE

This photo was taken by Nadia Tabbara. She participated in an affiliate program during the summer where she studied in Jordan.

INFO SESSION

Learn about the study abroad process in detail

AN INFORMATION SESSION IS

Designed to give you an overview of the study abroad process from beginning to end. This session is available Monday through Thursday by appointment and typically lasts about 45 minutes. With an online version available any time.

WHAT SHOULD YOU BE WRITING DOWN?

Programs of Interest	Study Abroad Week Date
Application Deadline	Funding Your SA Experience
Available Scholarships	Scholarship Workshops
Additional Deadlines	Pre-Departure Orientation

WHAT SHOULD YOU BE ASKING?

What does this program include?
Will I be required to apply for a visa?
What internal scholarships or grants can I apply for?
Does this program have separate deadlines?
When is the deadline to withdraw from a program?
How can I set up a follow up meeting?



BEHIND THE SCENE

Cecilia Martinez spent her winter break in China studying business & management through a faculty led program.

KEEP IN MIND

These sessions are designed for a group. If you have additional questions, set up a meeting with one of our advisors.

CHOOSING A PROGRAM

Which program is the best for you?



AFFILIATE

Affiliate programs are hosted by third party company providers. Students must complete two study abroad applications. One with the affiliate program and the second with TAMIU. If you are participating in this type of program, the cost will be paid directly to the provider.

EXCHANGE

Exchange programs feature universities that have established academic agreements. This allows students from both institutions to participate in an academic exchange. Students participating in this program pay TAMIU tuition and fees. Two study abroad applications must be completed.

FACULTY LED

Faculty led programs are organized with TAMIU faculty and take place during the winter, summer or spring break. There is only one study abroad application to complete. Students participating in this program pay TAMIU tuition and fees. The program cost is due to TAMIU prior to departure.

BEHIND THE SCENE

Alan Garcia spent the summer in Italy studying the Italian language & culture.

WHAT SHOULD YOU LOOK FOR IN A PROGRAM?

When selecting a program, doing your research is of the utmost importance. Consider the program type, duration, dates, cost and inclusions. Also, take into consideration what courses you will be taking, the location, language requirements and housing options.



THE APPLICATION

Once you have selected your program, submit an application

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Be in good academic standing
- Be in good disciplinary standing
- Have a TAMIU GPA
- Be 18 years or older
- Completed an academic year
- Or in the process of completing
- Receive approval from academic advisor
- Receive approval from college
- Apply to a valid, credit offering program
- Approval from International Engagement

SPECIAL CASES

Students that do not meet study abroad requirements may be reviewed on case by case basis for admissions.

01

READY TO STUDY ABROAD?

Studying abroad is a commitment. When you submit an application, it is because you intend to experience a new journey that will lead to growth and enrichment.

02

REQUIRED INFO

When applying, have the following available: TAMIU GPA, program name, program location, program term, student photo and passport (if available).

03

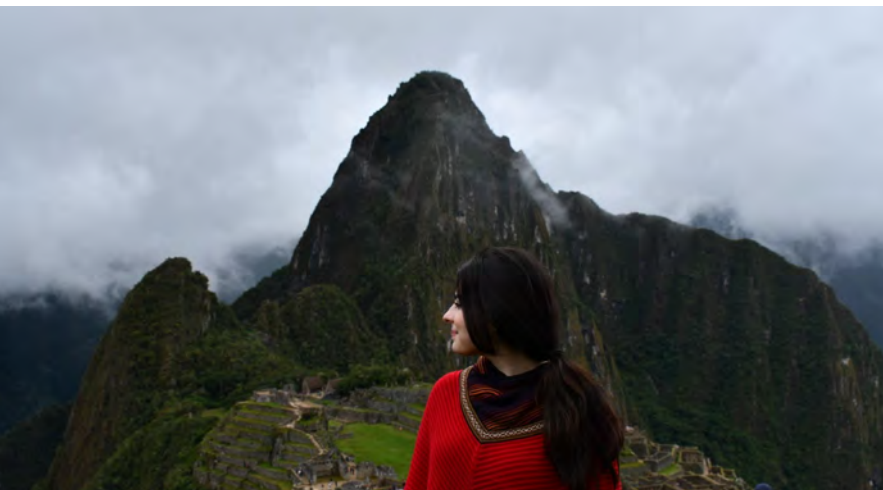
APPLICATION FEE

There is a \$200.00 non-refundable application fee. This fee will be added to your University account after you have applied. It is not due at the time of application.

04

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

After submitting an application, you will need to complete counseling modules, meet with an academic advisor and visit health services. In addition, copies of the following need to be submitted: travel documents (passport or visa), waiver form, flight itinerary, emergency form and housing information.



BEHIND THE SCENE

Elizabeth Rodriguez spent the winter in Peru studying travel photography through a faculty led program.

FINANCIAL PLANNING

Getting your finances in order is important

**WITH PROPER PLANNING
A STUDENT CAN
SUCCESSFULLY FINANCE
THEIR EXPERIENCE.**



BEHIND THE SCENE

Julio Reyes studied leadership during the winter in Italy through a faculty led program.

BUDGETING

When planning to go abroad students must have a realistic budget in mind. Students must know the actual program cost and be aware of additional expenses. Although scholarships are available, students should not rely on scholarship funds at the moment of planning their study abroad program budget.

It is the responsibility of the student to make sure they have enough funds to pay for their program by the deadline and make payment arrangements with the business office if needed. Students have the option to meet with an international advisor for a one on one budgeting session.

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is a great opportunity that is available to students and can help achieve your goals. Fundraising will help make your study abroad experience more affordable and can even serve as a way to educate others.

It can initially be an overwhelming task, but it does not have to be! Keep in mind that anyone can contribute to your goal – local, regional and national groups, as well as individuals.



FINANCIAL AID

Your financial aid can be applied to your study abroad program. Students should inquire with financial aid in regards to additional funds available. Students must also be aware of financial aid disbursement dates and complete any required forms.

SCHOLARSHIPS

TAMIU offers institutional scholarships solely for study abroad students. External scholarships are also available. Students must be cautious of eligibility requirements and deadlines. A list of scholarships can be found on the TAMIU study abroad webpage.

THE CHECKLIST

What to do once you've been admitted



BEHIND THE SCENE

Christian Manriquez studied abroad for a semester as an exchange student in France.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Though not due at the time of application, you will need to complete additional requirements prior to your departure. These include counseling modules, academic advisement, waiver form, visiting health services and more. TAMIU scholarship funds will not be released until all requirements have been completed.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Some countries will require that you apply for a visa; the length of this process can vary. Prior to this, you will need a valid passport. Avoid additional fees by applying for one early.

BEGIN PREPARING BY

- Completing additional requirements
- Understanding participation rules
- Applying for housing
- Submit health information
- Applying for a passport
- Applying for a visa (if needed)
- Purchase airfare
- Obtaining health insurance
- Attend Pre-Departure Orientation
- Register for courses
- Research host country
- Apply for scholarships
- Set up a budget meeting
- Create a packing list



PROGRAM MEETING

A mandatory meeting with your departing group

THIS MEETING WILL

Allow you to meet other Dustdevils that will be studying abroad in the same program. Program meetings provide the opportunity for you to connect with other students who will be alongside you through this journey. Often times the faculty (if available) will create additional meetings.

Program meeting information will be released to students after they have been admitted into their program. Attendance is required. During this meeting, you will discuss: program details, course registration, scholarships, payment deadlines, travel documents, airfare and more.

This meeting may be your first thorough and detailed introduction to your program. Though designed for students, family members are welcome to attend (should they choose to). Many students mention that the information discussed during the meeting make the experience 'real'.

MAKE UP SESSIONS

If you're unable to attend your designated meeting, alternate sessions will be available.



BEHIND THE SCENE

Gabriela Chapa spent her winter break in Peru studying travel photography.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Getting in and out of a country

DO I NEED A VISA?

Some countries require entry visas or residency permits. The student needs to research the entry requirements of the country(ies) he/she is visiting by checking with the appropriate consulate or embassy.

Visit the U.S. Department of State Consular Information Sheets, to obtain details of visa requirements and links to foreign embassies and consulates in the U.S, by typing in your destination country. (www.travel.state.gov)

YOU NEED A PASSPORT

All students must have a valid passport in order to travel abroad. Students can apply for a passport at IE or go to the U.S. Department of State website to see passport facilities by city.

If the student already has a passport, they must make sure it will be valid for the duration of their program. Some countries require that the passport be valid for 6 months after the program end date.

Students must submit a copy of the identification page of their passport to IE. It is recommended to leave a copy at home. If the passport is lost while abroad, the student needs to report it to the local police and get written confirmation of the report.

The following documents must be taken to the nearest embassy/consulate to get a new passport: two passport photos, passport number, date and place of issue, and a certified copy of your birth certificate or an expired passport. Cost varies.



BEHIND THE SCENE

These photos were taken by Ashley Cantu. She participated in a faculty-led program during the winter where she studied social movements in Argentina.

HOUSING & AIRFARE

A mandatory meeting with your departing group

HOUSING OPTIONS

Accommodations vary depending on the program and host institution. Housing options include: homestays, residence halls, apartments, hotels or hostels. It is important that the student is aware of the housing option for their program.

Faculty led programs will always include housing within the cost and have the housing option decided by the faculty. Other programs (exchange/affiliate) may require that the student submit a separate housing application and deposit.

LET'S TALK HOMESTAYS

This option provides students with the opportunity to fully immerse in the culture by living with a family from their host country. The student will hopefully learn more about the host language, culture, traditions, food and daily life.



BEHIND THE SCENE

Erick Flores spent the summer in London studying English Literature through a faculty led program.



INTERNATIONAL AIRFARE

Students must make their travel arrangements ahead of time. Once accepted into the program and all entry requirements have been completed, the student should book their flight. IE will purchase flights for programs including airfare.

It is encouraged for the student to purchase trip cancellation/interruption insurance when buying airfare. When purchasing the flight, the student must keep in mind the program start and end date. Students must send IE their complete flight itinerary.

It is important to keep in mind the travel time and carefully analyze layovers and airports. Should students need assistance with purchasing airfare, an international student advisor can provide general guidance and information regarding airfare.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Maintaining good health and staying safe

SMART TRAVELER ENROLLMENT PROGRAM

The Department of State has STEP available for all U.S. citizens traveling abroad. Once registered the traveler is sent information about current events going on at the country they are visiting.

Enrollment in this program makes it easier for the US Embassy or Consulate to contact and assist the student in case of an emergency or crisis.

HOW TO ENROLL

Register your program online via <https://step.state.gov>

HEALTH INFORMATION

All students studying abroad are required to visit Student Health Services and Student Counseling and Disability Services before their travels. During their visits they will be informed of recommended vaccines, health issues related to the area, traveling with medications/prescriptions, environmental and relational stressors and helpful tips to stay healthy while abroad.

To further prepare for the program abroad the student should visit their physician for a check-up. The student should describe allergies, disabilities, psychological treatments, dietary requirements, and medical needs so that adequate arrangements can be made. This information should also be shared with IE.

Resources and services for people with disabilities vary widely by country and region; therefore, it is important to know ahead of time what accommodations can and will be made to assist the student. If a student has a medical condition, they should take a copy of their medical or dental records. With advanced notice, the program may be able to provide contact information for appropriate medical specialists.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Students are required to have health insurance during their study abroad programs and it is highly recommended that they have health insurance for their entire stay abroad. IE will enroll students in the Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI) plan. The student will then be assessed the insurance fee unless fee is already included in program cost.

Depending of the program location, the student might need to pay the hospital or physician directly and then file a request for reimbursement from the insurance company. For more information visit CISI - <http://www.culturalinsurance.com/>.

PENDING REQUIREMENTS

What needs to be completed before your departure?



REQUIREMENT CHECKLIST

- Counseling Modules
- Travel Health 101
- Passport Copy
- Waiver Form
- Visa Copy (if needed)
- Flight Itinerary
- Advisement Form
- STEP Registration
- Purchase Insurance
- Program Acceptance Letter
- Emergency and Travel Form

BEHIND THE SCENE

Elizabeth Alejandro studied business in China during the winter through a faculty led program.

PENDING DOCUMENTS

Students must visit IE to ensure all required documentation has been received and that no other documents are pending. Other offices that students should visit are: Financial Aid, Bursars, Registrars and their academic advisor.

PRE-DEPARTURE

All students participating in a study abroad experience are required to attend this orientation. During this session students will be educated on safety, health, travel, academics, rules, emergency procedures and other related topics.

PROGRAM PAYMENT

All program payments should be done before departing on the program. It is important that tuition is paid before or by the deadline, to avoid being dropped. If the student is dropped from the program course for non-payment, they will be automatically reinstated and charged the reinstatement fee in addition to the tuition. The reinstatement fee is dependent on the credit hours the student is registered for.

Students should also be aware of financial aid refund disbursement dates and plan how the funds will be transferred into their bank account being used abroad. The student must verify their debit/credit card works in their host country. The BankMobile card or bank account transfer for the refund should be set up prior to departure to avoid not being able to access the funds.

PREPARE FOR DEPARTURE

Getting your finances in order is important



BEHIND THE SCENE

Marianna Canales studied in Australia during the summer through a faculty led program.

PACKING

When packing it is important to have knowledge of the type of weather in the location the program will take place. Knowing the program itinerary will assist in the packing of appropriate attire. Other countries may dress more formally or conservatively than Americans. Research the norms of the destination and pack lightly.

Pack a medical kit. Included in the kit should be: band aids, alcohol pads, sunburn ointment, anti-diarrhea medication, antibacterial ointment, and pain reliever. Depending on the region, it can be recommended to take antihistamines and insect repellent. Packing regular medications and other routine health and medical products is very important. Student should research what medications or medical items are allowed in the country.

KNOW HOST COUNTRY

It is important to research the country and location the program will take place. Knowledge of the host country will assist with reducing culture shock. It will also educate the student about politics, history, laws, religion, language, social norms and more.

MONEY MATTERS

Students should inform their banks of their foreign travel to avoid having security holds placed on their accounts. They should also see if the bank charges foreign transaction fees. It is recommended for students to have more than one source of funding. Students must research what credit/debit cards work in the host country. Having host country currency upon arrival is important. Local banks can assist with exchanging U.S. dollars for the currency needed.

PERSONAL DOCUMENTS

Students should make copies or scan to their emails the following documents: passport, visa, insurance cards, credit card information and identifications. A copy should also be left at home in case of an emergency.

ELECTRICITY

Electrical current in countries may be different from the U.S. Research the electricity, voltage and the adapters/converters that can be used by visiting www.voltagevalet.com. Converter and adapter plugs can be bought at drug stores, electronic stores, online, and department stores.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The student code of conduct and program responsibilities

TITLE IX

SEX DISCRIMINATION & HARASSMENT

Title IX of the Education Amendments and TAMIU rules prohibit discrimination in educational programs and activities offered by the University based upon sex. Sexual harassment, including sexual violence, is a form of sex discrimination and is therefore prohibited under Title IX.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when this conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it unreasonably interferes with a person's work or educational performance or creates an intimidating or hostile environment.

The following are examples of types of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment: inappropriate touching, patting, or hugging, non consensual sexual activity, invasion of sexual privacy, obscene phone calls, texts, emails, photographs, or gestures.

Any person (student, faculty, staff, or guest) who believes that discriminatory practices have been engaged in based upon sex may discuss their concerns and file a complaint of possible violations of Title IX with the TAMIU Office of Compliance:

Lorissa M. Cortez
Dir. of Equal Opportunity & Diversity
Title IX Coordinator
5201 University Blvd. – KL159B
Laredo, TX 78041
956.326.2857
lorissam.cortez@tamiu.edu

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

Study abroad programs are University-sponsored activities and, as such, all of the terms and conditions of student conduct as outlined in the Student Handbook apply to study abroad students. By accepting admission to a TAMIU study abroad program, students agree to be responsible for their own health, safety and behavior while participating in the program.

In addition, students commit to observing and obeying the TAMIU Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct, the laws of the State of Texas and the United States of America, as well as the laws of the host country and host institution. Violations of any of the conditions set forth by TAMIU may result in expulsion from the program and forfeiture of program fees.

If for just reason, the faculty and/or program coordinator considers the student to be continually disruptive, or in violation of university rules and regulations, disciplinary action will be taken and the student may be dismissed from the program. Just reason includes violations of student responsibilities, conditions set forth in the Student Handbook/Code of Conduct, and/or the laws of the United States and host country.

Student will be afforded due process (in accordance with the Student Post-Acceptance Handbook), which includes an opportunity to respond to charges. Prior to taking action which adversely impacts a student's participation or status in a study abroad program, the faculty and/or program coordinator must: provide notice to the student about the nature of the problem, give the student an opportunity to respond and correct the problem, and communicate the consequences of failing to correct the problem.

Arrest for violations of host country laws may result in immediate dismissal from the program. TAMIU will assume no responsibility for finding the student legal counsel. The faculty and/or program coordinator will contact TAMIU Police Department or IE. TAMIU will then alert the US Embassy, and notify the student's family of the arrest, in accordance with FERPA Guidelines.

Each student enrolled at TAMIU is responsible for being fully acquainted and complying with TAMIU's Student Handbook. You can find this handbook online, [here](#).

ACADEMICS

Studying abroad is an academic program

EDUCATION ABROAD

The systems and traditions of higher education can vary greatly around the world and in the universities where we have programs. It is important that the student gets familiar with the host institution's grading and credit system.

In most countries, students begin choosing their academic focuses in secondary school. Thus at the time students enter college, they already possess an extensive background in the subject they plan to study.

Each region has a different credit system than the U.S.. Students should take the time prior to departing and registering to learn the numbering and credit system for their home country.

Continual assessment is rare. At most universities, all or most of class grade is based on the final exam or one large essay. Multiple-choice tests are unusual, with even science courses requiring essay exams.

Professors do not usually monitor a student's individual academic progress. It is the student's responsibility to keep up with the class work and to approach the professor with any problems or concerns.



BEHIND THE SCENE

Emily Estrada studied communication disorders in Costa Rica during spring break.

CHECKING IN

Reporting your arrival and staying in touch



COMMUNICATION CHECKLIST

- Update Phone Service
- Download Communication Apps
- Report Arrival
- Update Foreign Address
- Check In Monthly
- Notify In Case of Emergency
- Report Departure
- Notify Re-entry to Home Country

BEHIND THE SCENE

Lizeth Aguilar studied abroad for a semester as an exchange student in the Universidad de Guadalajara.

COMMUNICATION

Setting up a communication plan is crucial prior to departure. Students can search for international phone plans, ask providers for charges while abroad and/or download communication applications. Applications should be set up and tested before departing.

Having consistent communication with your family and friends is necessary. Family and friends should be informed of the time difference in the location of the program. Plan accordingly and with sufficient time in advance.

ARRIVAL CHECK IN

Students are required to inform IE of their arrival to their host country. Students must provide their foreign address and phone number to IE. They should also inform IE of the courses they have registered for and submit a copy of the course syllabus. Students should constantly check their university email accounts to see if any notifications have been sent from TAMIU or IE.

IE will be sending monthly emails to check the status of the students. Students must reply to the email so that IE confirms the status of the student. In case of a natural disaster or unfortunate event, it is of extreme importance that the student checks in with IE to confirm they are well. Be informed of important dates at TAMIU (i.e. registration, financial aid deadlines).

EMERGENCIES

Having a plan in case of an emergency



U.S. EMBASSY

Students need to familiarize themselves with the location of the nearest U.S. Embassy. It is also beneficial to follow the embassy on social media to stay informed of current issues and events. To find embassy locations visit - www.usembassy.gov

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact information for program coordinators and advisors should be requested upon arrival and be kept handy in case of a situation. They should be notified in case of an emergency.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

Knowing the location of hospitals and pharmacies abroad is of importance in case of an emergency. During the program on-site orientation students should be provided with this information or they can ask for it. Students can also look for the information with their insurance.

In case of an emergency, it is important to notify TAMIU PD at 956-326-2911 and IE at 956-326-2282. Family and relatives should be informed of who to contact in case of an emergency at home. Provide the contact information for IE and TAMIU PD, in addition to the contact information of the study abroad program or host university.

For sexual misconduct such as sexual assault, sexual exploitation, stalking, domestic violence and dating violence, UPD may not be the appropriate first point of contact. In accordance with the Violence Against Women Act, the victim of the sexual misconduct has the right to decide whether to contact US law enforcement.

All students participating in an international experience need to have health insurance during the duration of their stay abroad. In case of an emergency, they should contact their insurance provider. Most students will receive their coverage from Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI).

It is important to note that CISI is able to pay foreign providers directly. However, many foreign providers prefer payment from the patient when services are rendered. Students should be prepared to pay for any medical expenses. A claim can be submitted to CISI for reimbursement.



BEHIND THE SCENE

Andrea Gonzalez studied leadership in Ireland during the winter through a faculty led program

SAFETY ABROAD

Remaining safe during your time abroad

PERSONAL SAFETY

Be aware of your surroundings and keep valuables concealed. Be prudent when meeting strangers and listen to safety advice from program coordinator and local residents. Contact the embassy in case of an incident. Every embassy has a duty officer on call around the clock.

WHEN TRAVELING

If students are planning on additional travel outside of their program, they should inform their coordinator, classmates and/or family of their plans. Keep an eye on bags and personal belongings. Be alert in crowds and tourist spots. Make sure when planning trips the arrival is during the day.

When staying at a hotel, make use of the safety deposit boxes that many hotels have. If driving, keep car doors locked and suitcases out of sight. It is not recommended to drive in foreign countries due to having no knowledge of traffic laws. Do not leave valuables in parked cars.

MONEY & VALUABLES

It is recommended not to carry large amounts of cash around and instead carry major credit cards. Keep money safe in a money belt or small purse that can be worn underneath clothing. If wearing a travel bag, ensure the pockets are secured by a zipper or clasp.

ALCOHOL ABROAD

The official legal drinking age in the United States is 21. Attitudes towards alcohol consumption vary greatly from country to country. Know the local rules and customs, use moderation and good judgment. Remember that drinking may place a person at risk because it reduces awareness.

AVOIDING SEXUAL ASSAULT

Most sexual assaults involve people who know each other. These tips can help identify danger and protect during a dangerous situation. Remember to stay alert and trust intuition. Avoid secluded or unknown places. If a person feels in danger, they most probably are in danger.

Know the emergency number for your country/area. Be aware of the effects of alcohol and drugs. Alcohol and drugs impair judgement and increase violent behavior. Don't be afraid to call attention for assistance.

SELF DEFENSE

Always keep your windows and doors locked. Don't let strangers into your room or apartment. Notify the police immediately of anyone that might be suspicious. At night, close drapes, shades or blinds. Be cautious about posting personal information on the internet.

While walking, use a steady and confident pace. Lower the volume or remove headphones to hear what is happening around. Carry keys on hand to get inside home quickly. Keys can also serve as a defense weapon if attacked.

LAW/BEHAVIOR

Police represent the authority of the government directly in many countries. Be respectful of authority and local laws. Alcohol and drinking are treated very differently abroad generally. In some countries wine and beer are served as a part of meals regularly.

For these reasons drinking does not represent a 'right of passage' abroad as it often does in the US. Remember, drinking is usually part of festivities, but not the object of festivities. Excessive drinking may result in penalization. Driving under the influence can be met with stiff penalties.

Some Americans travel with the illusion that they are under special rules or that the American consulate can take care of things for them. The consulate can assist with getting a lawyer and notify family and school. They cannot get someone out of jail. Students are a representation of TAMIU and the United States.

CULTURE SHOCK

Navigating through cultural differences

HOMESICKNESS

When you are studying abroad, new people and experiences will surround you. This exciting time can bring forth both challenges and opportunities. Many students experience a difficult time adjusting, mostly due to homesickness. Homesickness is distress caused by being separated from home and loved ones.

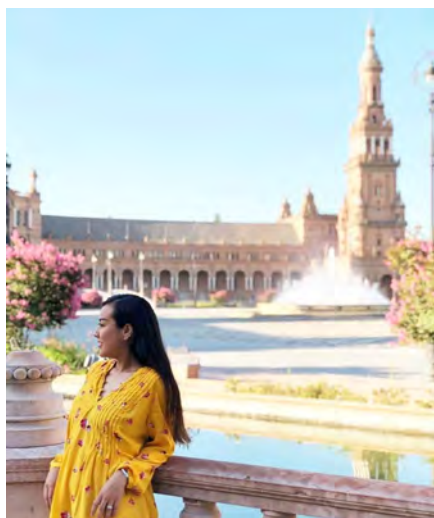
Tips for dealing with homesickness: keep yourself busy, get involved with your host university, keep in touch with people back home, and do not hesitate to ask for help. This experience brings forth a lot of change, some days may be daunting but there are available resources.

WHAT IS CULTURE SHOCK?

Culture shock is experienced by most travelers. It is a sense of personal disorientation due to experiencing an unfamiliar way of life or environment. Students may experience culture shock through cultural gaps, language barriers, food, customs, homesickness and other factors.

In order to reduce culture shock, try the following: read and talk with others who have traveled about dealing with culture shock and homesickness, think about the strategies already used to deal with stress, talk with friends and family about how to stay in touch

When experiencing culture shock it is recommended to: go out and explore, go on local tours, observe (get a sense of norms of behavior), talk to people, make connections (make friends), ask a local questions, be slow to judge and don't forget to have a sense of humor.



BEHIND THE SCENE

Nelly Perez spent her summer in Spain studying Spanish literature through a faculty led program.

COMING BACK HOME

Submitting coursework and returning home

COURSE TRANSFERS

Students must submit course syllabi and unofficial transcript to IE upon return if they have not done so during their program. Once the coursework is submitted IE will work with academic advisors and the Office of the University Registrar to properly transfer the coursework done abroad.

Coursework will not be transferred until the official transcript is received. Failure to submit coursework and syllabi within a month of program completion will result in the student receiving an 'F' for every course taken abroad until coursework is submitted.

REINTEGRATION TO TAMU

Reverse culture shock is distress suffered by some people when they return home after spending time abroad. Initially, students may feel slightly disoriented or out of place. This may be similar to what was experienced arriving at your host country. These feelings are temporary and completely normal.

One of the best ways to help you overcome reverse culture shock is to talk to someone about it. Some tips that can help you get reintegrated are: visiting family, eating favorite foods and seeing familiar places. Gradually readjust yourself by getting back into old routines and habits.

REPORTING ARRIVAL

Contact IE upon arrival to notify us that you are back in Laredo or in your home country. After being abroad, there must be many exciting stories that you are waiting to share. Meet with us to discuss your program and your experience.



BEHIND THE SCENE

Priscilla Rangel spent a year in Hong Kong studying at City U, an exchange partner school.

SERVICE HOURS

Did you receive a study abroad scholarship?

STUDY ABROAD SERVICE HOURS

Students that received TAMIU study abroad scholarships are required to complete service hours. A hold will be placed on the student's account and will remain active until the hours are completed. This hold will not allow the student to obtain a transcript or get their diploma.

These hours are to be completed before graduation. Students are required to submit their study abroad hours for approval through Trailblazers and complete the study abroad service hours form. Submission through Trailblazers will facilitate the tracking of hours completed.

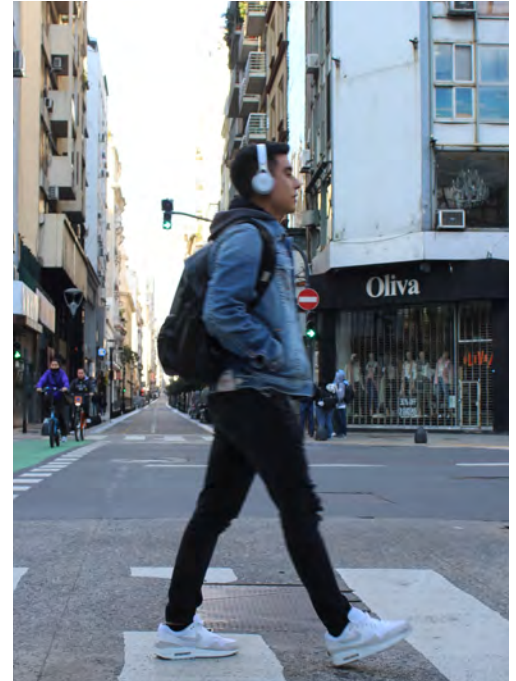
HOW TO COMPLETE SA SERVICE HOURS?

Students can complete their service hours by completing the following:

- Post photos/videos on IE Social Media
- Become an International Student Mentor
- Complete Instagram Challenges
- Assist in the IE Office
- Volunteer at IE events
- Submit photos for the GLM Photobook
- Complete a Student Testimonial

KEEP IN MIND

The study abroad service hour hold may be waived for registration purposes. It will not be waived if the student is no longer enrolled at TAMIU.



BEHIND THE SCENE

Raul Zapata participated in a student exchange centered on engineering in Argentina.

WITHDRAWALS & MORE

In case things don't go as planned



BEHIND THE SCENE

Barbara Atilano studied business during the winter in France through an affiliate program.

HOW TO WITHDRAW

If at any point in the study abroad process a student wishes to withdraw from participating in the program it is important they notify IE and submit the Study Abroad Withdrawal form. The withdrawal form is found online. The student must submit this form in order to be officially withdrawn from the program.

The student will be responsible for any program charges depending on the stage of the study abroad process and/or dates listed on the study abroad payment agreement. The student must return any study abroad scholarships awarded to their account. It is the responsibility of the student to make sure they are dropped from the study abroad course(s).

If a program is cancelled by TAMIU the students will be notified via email and given guidance towards the necessary steps. If the program is cancelled, the student will be returned the study abroad application fee.

EARLY PROGRAM TERMINATION

In the event that a student voluntarily/involuntarily terminates their program participation early the following will be affected: course completion/ final grade, scholarship funds and program cost. Early program terminations will be reviewed on a case by case basis by IE.

24-HOUR CANCELLATION POLICY

You have 24 hours to cancel your TAMIU study abroad application with no penalty. If canceling within the 24-hour grace period, you must submit the Study Abroad Withdrawal Form online. Grace period begins at the time you submit application.