



# Find Yourself Abroad

## Pre-Departure Worksheet and Checklist

### Program Registration:

Be sure that you have completed the steps to confirm your acceptance. As requested in your acceptance letter, you should have done the following:

- Completed the online general pre-departure forms (located on your online application).
- Paid the \$450 non-refundable deposit.
- Completed any program specific forms (if applicable).

What is your program-specific pre-departure meeting date?

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- Discuss financial aid and billing with your home institution or study abroad office.
- Put together a personal budget for your time abroad (see the 'Cost of Each Program' section of the our website)

### Academics:

- Discuss your course selection abroad with your academic advisor, school or college.
- Do you need to fill out any additional paperwork for this process?
  - Yes / No
- Do you require reasonable disability accommodations?
  - Yes / No
 If yes, contact the Boston University Office of Disability Services, [access@bu.edu](mailto:access@bu.edu)
- Make a plan for returning to your home campus. This may include (but is not limited to) graduation, registration, housing, etc.

BU students only: Review the "Leaving and Returning" section of the BU Study Abroad website (can also be found as part of your pre-departure checklist).

### Health And Safety:

See your medical and mental healthcare practitioner(s). Address any conditions and complete any necessary procedures prior to departure.

Obtain an adequate supply of any medications you normally take to last for your entire time abroad (for most destinations).

Do you need any new immunizations for your program?  
 Yes / No

If yes, they are: \_\_\_\_\_

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What are your normal stress-management habits/activities?

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Do you think you can continue these activities while abroad?  
 Yes / No

If no, have you discussed alternatives with your program manager or on-site staff?  
 Yes / No

Do you know how to access your HTH online profile? (1-2 weeks prior to departure)  
 Yes / No

Keep BU Study Abroad updated. Notify your Program Manager of any important address or medical changes.

### Travel Logistics:

- Do you have a passport valid for up to 180 days (about 6 months) past your program end date?  
 Yes /  No

If no, apply for or renew your passport immediately and request expedited service.

- Does your program require a visa to attend?  
 Yes /  No

If yes, have you read the visa instructions and began the application process?  
 Yes /  No

\* NOTE: In most cases you need to submit a valid, original passport to apply for a visa\*

- If you are an international student, speak with your institution's International Student and Scholar office (ISSO)

- Book your flight: Is the cost included in your program fee?  
 Yes /  No

Is there a group flight?  
 Yes /  No

By what date and time do you need to arrive at your program site?

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Where do you need to arrive once you land? How will you get there?

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- Have you arranged for a local cell phone?  
 Yes /  No

How will you obtain it?

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- Contact your bank and credit card companies and notify them of your travel dates.

- Read your program-specific materials (this might be a handbook or program website).

### Pack the following essential items:

- Passport and 1 photocopy of the information page.
- Visa (if applicable)
- Airline ticket/itinerary
- Any medications in their original packaging and copies of prescriptions.
- Hard copy or offline access to important site contacts, phone numbers and addresses.

### Cultural Adjustment:

In order to make the most of your experience, it is important to identify goals and objectives before you depart. Whether you will be studying in the US or overseas, the following questions regarding personal, professional and academic matters may help you with this self-evaluation.

#### Personal:

What does it mean to be an American (or your nationality)?

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What are my cultural beliefs and customs?

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What do I already know about the cultures, customs, behaviors, and values of my host country? How do I plan to learn more?

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How open will I be to different ways of doing things? How willing am I to take risks?

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How are Americans perceived in my host country?

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### Professional:

How can I use my program experience in the future?

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Am I planning to go to graduate school or straight into a career?

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### Academic:

Why am I going abroad? To practice a foreign language? To learn about foreign countries and cultures? To fulfill academic requirements? To explore new areas of study?

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How does this semester fit into my academic plans? What courses have I already taken to prepare? Can I use this semester to research directed study or senior thesis topics?

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We highly recommend that you revisit these questions while you're abroad. Your answers may change as you reflect on your new experiences and what you have learned.

### Tips for Cultural Integration

Here are some tips for integrating yourself into your new culture, and easing your cultural adjustment process, both before your departure as well as while you're in your host city.

Discuss communication expectations with your friends and loved ones before you leave, and challenge yourself to fully engage in your host culture. This may mean spending less time on your computer or smart phone. If you are constantly in touch with those you left behind, you will not be fully present in your host culture, and you will benefit less from your time abroad.

Ask questions. Don't be shy—conversations are a great way to engage with your host culture and meet locals, as well as learn a lot, and avoid possible misunderstandings. Plus, in a non-English speaking country, it's a great way to practice your target language!

Learn and practice the local language. Keep a journal of words and phrases you learn, and make an effort to speak in the target language with your fellow students. Even in English-speaking countries, you'll be hearing lots of new vocabulary!

Read! Local newspapers, magazines, books by local authors, or novels that take place in your host culture can be a great way to supplement your time abroad. It can be really exciting to read about a place as you're actually living there, and will help you to better understand its culture and history.

Keep a journal or blog. It's a great way to stay in the moment, and you'll have a record of your time abroad to look back and reflect upon. A blog can be a great way to keep in touch regularly with those at home, without having to distance yourself from your experience.

Check out your sites' or other local Facebook pages, blogs, newsletters, etc. for fun, cool things to do that might not come up in your average guidebook...You may even want to research some of these things before you go.

### Cultural Resources:

This is a place where you can start listing some resources you might have found, through your own research, to help inform your cultural adjustment and begin planning your time abroad. Again, you should feel free to revisit and add to this list, even while you're abroad!

Books/Journals:

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Websites:

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Local Social Media:

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