OFF-CAMPUS STUDY
STUDENT
PRE-DEPARTURE HANDBOOK

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

READ NOW
TAKE WITH YOU
REFER TO OFTEN

International Programs and Off-Campus Study
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**Note:** References to commercial services in these pages do not indicate any form of official endorsement by Bowdoin College.
YOUR OFF-CAMPUS STUDY STUDENT HANDBOOK

This handbook expands on the planning advice you have received from the OCS Office prior to and since approval of your off-campus study application. Please read it carefully right away, discuss it with your family, keep an electronic or paper copy handy, and use it regularly as a reference, from predeparture through reentry. Most of it is relevant whether you are studying abroad or in the U.S.

In the semester before you leave, you will also receive from OCS various separate pieces of information in PDF, including the US State Department’s Consular Notes and Background Information for the country where you intend to study; a list of Bowdoin students approved to study away in the same period as you; and our record of your Bowdoin application, showing your provisional choice of courses, major approval, etc. Please keep everything in one place so that you can easily refer to it at any point while you are away. Of course, the OCS website <bowdoin.edu/ocs> has links to yet more.

Read on, and we wish you a happy and stimulating time away!

FORMS TO COMPLETE

Follow the instructions below for all forms relevant to your circumstances.

Mail Forwarding (yellow card). Return to Bowdoin Mailroom (S.U.), before you leave campus, to redirect mail while you are away. Give your home or US address, as the USPS will forward overseas only first-class mail (not parcels or magazines). Consult the mailroom if you have a non-US home address.

Housing Application (green or pink form). Return to Residential Life (Dudley Coe), before leaving campus, whether or not you want Bowdoin housing, so that Bowdoin is clear about your housing needs and billing.

Course and Emergency Contact Notification (webform). Submit your on-site address/contact info and your updated course registration by completing the online forms (http://www.bowdoin.edu/ocs/leaving-bowdoin-living-away/resources-and-required-forms.shtml)

Off-Campus Study Budget form (online, only for those applying for financial aid or loans). If you receive student aid, OCS will have sent an on-line budget survey to the program/university on your behalf. The program/university will complete the survey, which will be forwarded to SAO automatically. Deadline for receipt by SAO is November 15th for spring and June 1st for fall/year.
**Off-Campus Study Disbursement Worksheet** (online, only for student aid or loan recipients). If you receive a student aid award or loan, you need to complete and submit an OCS disbursement on-line survey to the Bursar’s office. This survey will be sent to you electronically. Surveys are due September 1st for fall and full-year programs, and February 1st for spring programs.

**I-20 form** (international students only). International students with F-1 visas need to have their I-20 signed before they leave the US for off-campus study. The signature by Bowdoin’s designated official (Assistant Dean Khoa Khuong) is valid for one year. Please email Assistant Dean Khuong (kkhuong@bowdoin.edu) and let him know the date you plan to leave the US and the date you expect to return to the US.

An international student attending a college or university in the US may not work on that institution’s campus without Department of Homeland Security employment authorization. If you are applying for summer off-campus work in the US, you must be in the US during February or March, and may not apply for employment authorization from overseas. Employment authorization is not needed for work at Bowdoin during the summer following off-campus study.

**Confirming or Changing your Plans**

**Approval of your plans.** We have sent you a PDF list of all the students who will be studying away next semester. Please inform OCS immediately if your program and period appear to be recorded incorrectly.

**Agreement of participation.** In submitting your online Agreement of Participation and Release, you confirmed that you will observe Bowdoin’s rules relating to off-campus study while attending the program for which you are approved. If you have not submitted the form, you do not have Bowdoin’s approval for off-campus study, and will have received an urgent reminder.

**Remaining at Bowdoin and other changes of status.** If you decide to remain at Bowdoin rather than study off campus, notify OCS in writing at once (email to <offcamp@bowdoin.edu> is fine). Make clear both that you will not participate in your program, and that you wish to be at Bowdoin for the semester in question. As such changes are not reversible, you should be sure that your decision is final. Your change of status will be processed in a day or so. Other Bowdoin offices will be notified, but you should contact Residential Life directly if you would like College housing, which may be hard to obtain after housing registration. If the change of status is completed before class registration (in April or November) you will be able to register for Bowdoin
classes; after registration period, you will need to wait to register until the start of the semester. Obviously, it is hard to return to Bowdoin after the semester has begun, and not possible after the end of the add-drop period.

As noted in your approval email letter and Bowdoin’s Student Handbook, students placed on academic or social probation for the period of their intended off-campus study may not study away, and must remain at Bowdoin.

To take a leave of absence rather than return to Bowdoin, consult your dean in Student Affairs. In the unlikely event of an emergency that compels you to leave after you have already started your program, be sure to keep OCS informed.

If you were approved for study away in the fall but wish to remain on your program for the spring semester, please email a request to OCS <offcamp@bowdoin.edu>, giving your reasons in full and listing the courses you want to take. You should also email your major advisor(s) to make sure the department has no objection. Permission is not automatic, and requests will need to be approved by the Curriculum Implementation Committee.

Off-campus study students occasionally wish to visit Bowdoin when their program dates permit. Though welcome to visit as guests of current Bowdoin students, they should conduct themselves in accordance with the guest policy and should not expect access to services that are for registered Bowdoin students, such as residence hall assignments and dining service meal plans, among others. Stays of more than three nights are discouraged and should occur only with permission from the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs.

**Predeparture Planning and Reading**

Your off-campus study experience will be richer and more coherent if you plan for it carefully. As well as dealing with the necessary logistical details, you should also identify challenging but realistic goals, both academic (e.g., perfecting a foreign language, acquiring a new regional perspective in your subject area) and non-academic (e.g., volunteering for community service, navigating the public transportation system like a local). If you write these goals down, you can revisit them periodically in the course of your time away and if necessary reappraise them, taking into account any unexpected obstacles.

**Working with your program.** Your program or host university is your primary source of information on such matters as visas, immunizations, course registration, housing, and packing, and will also provide you with preparatory materials and, when you arrive, orientation sessions on cultural adjustment,
health and safety, etc. Their US offices and host-country staff are in a much better position than OCS at Bowdoin to be up to date with visa regulations and conditions in the host country. Read their materials promptly and carefully, as you may need to act fast to apply for a visa, for example. You will probably have the name of a contact whom you can email with questions. But do not be surprised if your housing assignment and course registration are not made final until you are at your program’s site; many resident directors will want to talk to you in person about your academic background and housing preferences.

**Preparatory reading.** As well as your program’s suggestions on reading, preparation, packing, and adjustment to a new culture, please read the State Department’s useful “Background Notes” on the country’s history, political system, economics, and culture <www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/>; you will receive a PDF copy from the OCS office. In the Bowdoin Library, look for books on the country, or periodicals published there, and on-line publications accessible from the Language Media Center <library.bowdoin.edu/lmc/>. Bowdoin students who have been on your program are a wonderful resource. If you want a guidebook, look for one that is strong on the history and social system of the region.

For a more detailed discussion of the cultural adjustment issues that are very typical in study abroad, see the “Cultural Adaptation” section of this handbook.

**TRAVEL**

**International flights.** Most programs allow you to book your own flight, but some have a group flight, which can be mandatory or optional. If you are booking your own flight, you can use Hewins/Carlson Wagonlit Travel in Brunswick (729 6261), or an online service (see “Useful Websites” below for some major names). In booking the return leg, allow plenty of time for final exams, which Bowdoin requires you to take if they are open to you; note that exam dates may not be finally set. If you might decide to stay on for any reason, look into the cost of changing a return date; fees vary considerably.

**Passports and visas.** Have a valid passport well in advance, especially if you will need a visa as well. For US passport application information, go to <travel.state.gov/travel/>. Applications are accepted at the Post Office in Brunswick, and State Department offices in large cities. You must have proof of citizenship (expired passport, certified copy of a birth certificate — not a hospital birth certificate or photocopy — with the embossed seal of the city or town in which you were born, or naturalization certificate); identification (a valid driver’s license, expired passport, or naturalization certificate); and two
passport-type photographs. Passports usually take four to six weeks to arrive, possibly longer in the run-up to the high travel season. U.S. passports for adults are valid for ten years; note that some countries require that a passport be valid for six months beyond the intended return date to the U.S. (Most of what follows is valid for non-US citizens too, but if you do not hold US citizenship it is essential that you check the regulations with the consulate of the country in which you will be traveling, with your own consulate, and with your program.)

You will probably need to pay a fee for a visa, usually a seal or stamp in your passport permitting entry into the country on or after a certain date for a defined period and purpose, such as study or tourism. In the UK, a student visa is needed for visits over six months. Some countries do not require a visa, but you will need to show airport immigration officers your university’s confirmation of enrollment letter.

Carefully read your program’s instructions on your country’s entry requirements, and the visa application process. It is also worth visiting the appropriate embassy or consulate website; for addresses, use Embassy World <embassyworld.com> or the list of foreign consular offices in the US at <www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/fco/>. Allow plenty of time: you may need to send your passport to the consulate as much as ninety days before the start of your program. For countries with several consulates in various large U.S. cities, you can generally apply at the consulate that has jurisdiction over either your home state or Maine. There is much variation among countries (even among the same country’s consulates), and regulations often change. Some countries require an appointment at the consulate; some take biometric data like a fingerprint scan; some have a preliminary online application. To enter a country, with or without a visa, or to obtain a visa, you may be required to present the following:

- proof of sufficient funds for your entire stay, and of payment of any fees due to your program or university
- letter of acceptance from your program or university
- proof of medical insurance and required immunizations (and HIV/AIDS test for certain countries)
- FBI or state police background check (FBI reports take up to 13 weeks!)

It is also common to have to provide confirmation of full-time enrollment and good standing at Bowdoin; ask the Registrar’s Office for this letter several days in advance if you need it, with exact details of what the letter needs to state.

You will probably also need some identical passport photos, obtainable at a number of Brunswick businesses; Rite Aid is conveniently close. If you do not need the official passport size, see if you can get a set of smaller photos, as you
will be surprised at how many you will need for various forms and cards.

If you are applying in person at a consulate, bring the phone number for your provider so that you can call them if necessary. If you are not applying in person, send your passport by certified mail or other delivery service that is trackable and requires a signature. Note that the visa application process may make it impossible to travel abroad before your program begins, and that US citizens may usually not apply for a visa at foreign consulates outside the US.

Remember that in many countries holders of a student visa may not take paid employment, or only under special conditions. Also consider the possible consequences of any personal travel, which would make it necessary to obtain a new visa to reenter the country, or extend your stay.

If you need a notary public for OCS-related paperwork, go to the list of Bowdoin administrators at <bowdoin.edu/administration/notaries.shtml>.

For entry into any country, have the following handy to show to immigration authorities: a copy of your program or university admission letter; your round-trip plane ticket; and proof of sufficient funding (bank account information, financial aid documentation, etc.) to support you while in the country.

**International Student Card.** You might find it helpful to buy an International Student Identity Card (ISIC) <myisic.com>, a card that entitles holders to various discounts (e.g., museum and theater tickets, air fares), and provides basic health and accident insurance for travel abroad, as well as a 24-hour toll-free emergency phone line. How widely the card is recognized for discounts depends partly on your destination country; ask students who studied there. Alternatively, CIEE sells the iNext card, which carries similar benefits <inext.com>; and some foreign universities issue their own student IDs. Before you purchase an ISIC or iNext, make sure that you will not receive one at no charge through your program.

**Packing.** If you cannot carry your entire luggage for a block or so, you have packed too much. You almost certainly do not need to ship anything. (Packages shipped from the US may also be liable for customs duty, or not arrive at all.) If you buy clothes locally, you are more likely to blend in. To make space for souvenirs or purchases when you return, it is a good idea to pack some clothes and shoes that you will not mind throwing or giving away at the end of the program. (See below under “Planning your Return” for U.S. Customs Service rules on duty-free merchandise.) If you are flying, check current security and weight restrictions for carry-on and checked baggage. If you have to change flights in your destination country, your baggage allowance might go down.
People you meet almost anywhere will like to see photos of your family and home. If you will be living with a family, your program might recommend that you bring some small presents that are characteristic of your region (picture calendars or books and local food products are usually safe bets).

Most students who take a laptop do not regret it, and most programs recommend it; there are generally fewer public computers at foreign universities. In some locations, however, it is hard to locate a compatible printer. Whether you take your own computer or not, be flexible, and do not expect to use a computer for writing, research, and particularly email as much as at Bowdoin. Protect your computer, camera and all expensive equipment from theft; carry them inconspicuously, and have adequate insurance.

In many parts of the world the electrical supply is 220 volts, 50 Hz (110v, 60 Hz in the USA). Find out the system in the country to which you are going, and make sure that your equipment, including a laptop computer if you bring one, is compatible. (Most laptops have dual-voltage capacity.) Note that voltage converters will not work with ordinary computers and stereo equipment. There is a useful table of voltages, cycles, and plug shapes used throughout the world at the Voltage Valet website <voltagevalet.com/country/all.html>.

**Health**

Your medical needs will depend largely on your destination. To find out what is currently recommended or required, see the information provided by your program, and that available from the Centers for Disease Control <cdc.gov/travel>, World Health Organization <who.int/ith/>, and Bowdoin’s Health Services (a licensed travel vaccination site). You may also find <tripprep.com> useful. Some countries require vaccination or negative-HIV certificates. Most programs will require you to provide a medical report, consisting of a doctor’s physical exam and additional information from you on your medical history and any disabilities for which you are requesting reasonable accommodations. Be candid about any physical or mental health issues, as this information helps administrators inform you about the resources you are likely to find at your destination. Facilities and attitudes vary widely, even within countries apparently similar to the U.S.

**Appointments at the Health Center.** *Provided that you make an appointment in good time,* Bowdoin’s Health Center can assist you in completing health and insurance forms; give physical exams and TB skin tests (no charge); administer HIV-antibody tests (no charge); give vaccinations (at cost); and
arrange for chest x-rays. The travel clinic can help with needed vaccinations, and a travel clinic consultation can also help you decide about preventive medications for malaria, altitude sickness, allergies, diarrhea, etc. (When making an appointment, please say whether it is for a physical exam and completion of a program’s health form, or for a travel clinic consultation.) Note that the Bowdoin College Plan and many other insurance plans do not cover preventive travel medicine, nor are such costs included in program fees. You should not delay your visit to the Health Center until the last few days of the semester: all appointment slots are likely to be taken; it may be too late to start a required course of immunization and medication; and test results are probably needed in order to obtain a visa and final entry to your program.

**Prescription medication.** Bring sufficient prescription medication for your entire time away; the Health Center can help you get a waiver from the insurance company to obtain more than the usual one-month supply. Carry prescription medication in its original container, and have a copy of the written prescription that gives the drug’s generic, not U.S. brand, name. Some countries restrict the importation or supply of certain medications commonly prescribed in the U.S.; check with the consulate or embassy. If you take such a controlled medication, it will help to bring a copy of your medical records and a doctor’s note in case you need to seek a prescription in the host country. Do not mail any kind of medicine. The Health Center can advise on birth control pills, emergency contraceptives, and the use of condoms in preventing STDs.

**Mental health.** Going abroad and venturing out of one’s comfort zone can be emotionally challenging. Anticipate potential sources of stress. If you are currently seeing a therapist, arrange to continue with an in-country therapist if that would be beneficial. Do not discontinue any prescription medication that you may be taking for depression, anxiety or other mental health conditions.

**Food and nutrition.** Learn about the regional diet, as it is an integral part of the culture. Be prepared to alter your eating habits, both in timing of meals and kinds of food. If you have dietary restrictions or food allergies, learn how to communicate them in the local language and in a culturally sensitive way. Note any food and water precautions recommended by the CDC.

**General health issues.** If a regular health-care visit will be due while you are away (e.g., a Pap smear or dental exam), you might try to take care of it before you leave. If you have chronic medical problems or conditions, visit the Health Center to discuss your care and needs while away. If you have significant allergies or chronic medical needs, consider a MedicAlert bracelet. If you wear glasses or contact lenses, bring the written prescription, and consider bringing an extra pair. Depending on the country, you may also want to bring
some over-the-counter drugstore items, such as pain relievers, stomach upset medicine, and tampons, which can be expensive or harder to find elsewhere.

**Sexual Health Abroad**

When studying abroad it is important to look at all aspects of your experience and be educated on resources available in your host country. Sexual health abroad is increasingly important and understanding where to obtain resources as well as learning about the specificities of sexual health in your host country are crucial. Throughout your introduction to your new home, think about the following questions (and for non-English speaking countries, think about how you might translate or phrase them):

**Where to go?**
- Birth control/Contraceptives
  - What are the options for contraceptives in my host country?
  - How do I obtain Plan B?
  - Where are condoms, birth control, plan b, and pregnancy tests sold?
  - Do I need a prescription?
- Physician visits
  - What is available to me on my health insurance plan?
  - Where is the closest doctor/gynecologist?
    - How do I make an appointment?
    - When are they available?
  - How/where do I get tested for STDs?

Thinking of these questions ahead of time will give you an opportunity to be aware of options and further prepare you for life and wellness in a new country.

**Sexual Assault**

In the case that you, or someone you know, has been assaulted, there are a number of different resources available both abroad, and at Bowdoin. Your safety, health and well-being are extremely important and in any situation you should follow the in-case-of-emergency guidelines provided by the on site staff.

- Your program director and the on-site staff can be good resources to give you support while in your host country. (You may want to ask the on site staff about local resources that can provide area specific information about sexual health.)
- Whether you are a survivor of sexual assault, or a friend of a survivor,
Bowdoin is committed to providing resources and foster healing for all students while abroad and back on campus.

- Students are encouraged to reach out to any of the confidential resources on campus including the Counseling Center for support in dealing with an assault.
- To receive support while off-campus, contact: COUNSELING SERVICE 3145-CS@bowdoin.edu and you will be connected with a counselor. You can also connect with the Campus Title IX Coordinator and learn more about support options on campus at www.bowdoin.edu/title-ix.

**SAFETY**

Conditions are unsettled in many parts of the world, particularly with conflict continuing in the Middle East. The impact on Bowdoin students’ safety in very diverse locations should not be overstated, but it remains extremely important for you to keep yourself well informed about your host country. Although there are no guarantees of safety for study anywhere in the world, including the U.S., there are some simple precautions to take, and some useful sources of information. The U.S. State Department issues consular information sheets and travel warnings, summarizing entry requirements and health and safety issues, for all foreign countries. Read them at the State Department website <travel.state.gov>, and check the website for up-to-date information shortly before you leave. You can view another useful collection of information on health and safety issues, assembled by the SAFETI clearinghouse, at the Center for Global Education website at <studentsabroad.com>.

Study abroad programs are in regular touch with their host-country sources, monitor U.S. State Department and local embassy recommendations, and maintain their own emergency plans.

**TIP:**
Register your time abroad online through the State Department’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at the following website: <https://step.state.gov/step/>.

Program staff will inform you about safety measures; ask if you still have questions about their procedures or conditions in the host country. In the event of an international or local emergency, if their sources indicate that the safety of their students is likely to be threatened, they will of course take whatever measures they decide to be necessary and prudent, including cancellation, relocation, or even evacuation in the most extreme circumstances. Only rarely in the past has it proved necessary, because of State Department
recommendations and the imminence of war in the immediate area, to cancel any programs.

If there is a current State Department Travel Warning for the country where you plan to study, Bowdoin asks you and a parent to sign a second waiver acknowledging awareness of the warning and of your responsibilities in electing to travel there. Countries for which warnings have recently been in force include Israel, Egypt, and Kenya.

**Safety precautions that you can take.** During your program orientation you will learn about potential hazards, and about the importance for your safety of your own responsible and intelligent behavior. Few places have the crime rates of large U.S. cities, and you should resist viewing what is strange or new to you as inevitably dangerous or hostile, but it will take a while for you to be able to interpret signs of danger in an unfamiliar country. The continuing hostilities in the Middle East and elsewhere have colored international attitudes. Americans can be seen as wealthy (even if they are not) and a target for robbery, and as representatives of U.S. foreign policy and a target for retaliation (even if they oppose that policy). Be sensible about what you wear (avoid obviously American clothing and display of expensive electronics), and how you act in public. Keep your voice low, speak the local language as much as possible, and avoid American hang-outs. Stay away from political demonstrations. Finally, be especially careful about alcohol use. Most misadventures that students have while studying abroad, especially accidental injuries and brushes with crime, occur in conjunction with unwise drinking.

When you go out, bring no more money or credit/ATM cards than you will need. A wallet or passport in a backpack is vulnerable to theft in crowded places (and backpacks look American). If you do not need valuables with you, store them in a safe place. Leave expensive watches or jewelry in the US. Before you leave, photcopy or scan your passport’s photo and data pages and other important cards; keep a copy separate from other valuables, in the care of a program administrator or other responsible person.

You have special responsibilities in any independent travel during breaks. Your program may ask you to leave emergency contact information with staff, but you alone are responsible for the safety of your actions if they are not part of a program-sponsored activity. Remember that in many parts of the world road travel is much less safe than in the U.S., because of road conditions, the general quality of driving and observation of road laws, or vehicle safety standards. Wear seat belts and helmets as you would at home. You are strongly advised not to drive a car while abroad. For information on traffic-related safety conditions, including bus safety, in countries abroad, consult the Association for
Safe International Road Travel at <asirt.org>.

**Gender and sexuality.** Cultural norms related to gender and sexuality vary widely, and misunderstandings in this area are common. Behavior that is perfectly acceptable in the U.S. can be highly inappropriate in a different cultural context. For example, most Americans think that men and women can have non-sexual relationships with one another — they can be friends and companions without being physically intimate. In some other cultures, people believe it is difficult or impossible for such relationships to exist. Understanding your host country’s social mores and gender norms will help you make informed choices. Modifying your behavior is not capitulation but a prudent course of action that demonstrates respect for cultural differences.

Sexual harassment is a particularly difficult area to deal with because of the variation among cultures in socially and legally acceptable behavior. But if you conclude that the behavior of somebody with whom you come into contact on your program is making you feel threatened or uncomfortable, you should not hesitate to report it to a staff member of your program, who should be able to assist you in sorting out the situation in a culturally appropriate manner.

**Emergency plans.** It is wise to compile a personal emergency action plan that includes important numbers and contact information (911 equivalent, consulate/embassy, program administrators, other emergency contacts). You can find a good sample emergency plan at the Center for Global Education website <studentsabroad.com/planning.html>. Keep your plan in a safe place along with other items that you would need in an emergency, and share a copy with your parents or listed emergency contact at Bowdoin.

At the start of your program, review the emergency procedures to be followed in the event of fire, earthquake, civil unrest, or terrorist attack. There will probably be emergency phone numbers, and perhaps a common assembly point if it is impossible or unsafe to meet at the program office; keep the numbers handy in your wallet. Some programs issue cell phones so that they can reach students quickly in an emergency. In such circumstances, you are unlikely to need to contact Bowdoin’s Office of the Dean of Student Affairs right away, but a dean is always on call if you need follow-up assistance or advice (207-725-3879). Outside normal Bowdoin office hours, call Security at 207-725-3314.

**Executive Assistance Program.** Bowdoin students abroad have access to the Executive Assistance Program, an emergency assistance service designed to assist with extraordinary needs. It is not an insurance policy and does not provide medical payments; rather it is designed to work in tandem with your existing insurance and provide assurance of benefit availability. Call collect 1-
202-657-7777 and provide Plan No. 01 SP 585 and Policy No. PHFD 36846616 and inform the agent that you require assistance. List of services below provided by the Executive Assistance Program.

- Emergency medical or political evacuation
- Referral to doctor or hospital
- Hospital admission deposit
- Assistance while you are hospitalized
- Emergency prescription medication replacement
- Emergency travel arrangements
- Language assistance or translation services
- Legal referral
- Critical travel document replacement (passport, credit card)
- Embassy or consulate contact information

**Insurance**

Be sure that you have sufficient health and accident insurance, including travel before, during and after your program. Students' needs and preferences for insurance depend on the location and facilities of their program and host country, and whether they are covered by the Bowdoin College Plan, family insurance, or program insurance. Many private optional plans (including one by Gallagher Koster) exist for those who desire additional medical.

All Bowdoin students must be enrolled in a health insurance plan. OCS students will be automatically enrolled in the Bowdoin College Student Accident and Sickness Insurance Plan, unless they show that they have comparable coverage for both emergency and non-emergency services. Families may choose to maintain private insurance or purchase the study away program’s insurance in addition to the Bowdoin Plan; in such cases, Bowdoin’s Plan will be secondary to any other insurance plan. Bowdoin’s student health insurance service agency mails more detailed information, including information for financial aid students without comparable coverage, and instructions for the on-line waiver process. Read it carefully and compare the coverage with are offered through your program or your family’s private insurance to determine what is best for you. Direct more general questions to the Bowdoin Health Services Office by email (chayes@bowdoin.edu) or phone (207 798 4284).

**Legal Matters**

While overseas, you are subject to the laws of your host country, without the
protections of American law and legal procedure. This applies to everything from drug possession and alcohol laws to currency exchanges, dress codes, and drunk driving, for all of which the penalties can be severe. If you are arrested, the U.S. Embassy (or that of your country if you are not a U.S. citizen) can only notify your family and help arrange for legal representation, within the laws of the host country. Your program and home college cannot extricate you.

**Alcohol.** In most countries it is legal to drink alcohol under the age of 21, but there are often subtle but firm social rules regarding the context (public or private, gender, class, type of beverage). Where moderate drinking is generally acceptable, most American students adjust in a mature way, and, if they choose to drink, do so responsibly. Some do not, and have embarrassed themselves and their program, or put themselves in danger. In some countries young Americans have a poor image as a result. If you do choose to drink, do so in moderation, for your health and safety as well as your reputation and budget.

**Drugs.** It would be very foolish to break laws on drug use, for which in many countries the penalties are strict. Do not buy, carry, sell, or use an illegal drug while abroad. For a description of what can happen to foreigners who find themselves in foreign jails for drug use or possession, watch the videos: Doing Time, Doing Vipassana; Brokedown Palace; or Return to Paradise.

**Taxes.** Arrange to file your income tax if you will be abroad on 15 April. File for an extension, have a parent file on your behalf, or file before you go.

**Cultural Adaptation**

When you are living in a culture that is different — even slightly — from your own, you are likely to experience at least some difficulty in adjusting to it. The initial novelty might feel liberating, but frustration and irritation can set in as you realize that the host culture’s assumptions and rules are quite unfamiliar: in, for example, the rights of the group versus those of the individual, privacy, social structure and hierarchy, behavior in public, gender roles, and attitudes to time, as well as in more obvious areas such as food, dress, and forms of greeting. When you are detached from your own culture, simple transactions or social contact can make you feel helpless and awkward.

Such feelings, rarely experienced by tourists, are part of coming to grips with a different culture. Employ what you learn in classes about your host culture to help you understand its implicit social rules; explore and analyze the unfamiliar with an open mind; avoid the temptation to retreat into the company of other Americans; and remember that just as you would resent being regarded as
representative of everything American, so too should you not generalize about your host culture from your first experiences. It can be very helpful to keep a journal in which to analyze your reactions and monitor your progress in understanding. Many students find the most difficult time comes after about two or three weeks in the new country: homesickness, fatigue, depression, and hostility are among the possible symptoms. In time, however, nearly all no longer notice once intimidating features of the host culture, incorporate new habits as their own, and look at themselves and their own culture in a fresh light. It may be hard to observe and diagnose this kind of difficulty in oneself, but if you suspect that you are experiencing it, ask the advice of the staff of your program or university’s international office, who will be quite used to dealing with such matters, and can refer you to professional help if necessary.

As noted above, women might encounter some cultural expectations that they find restrictive, and those who because of racial origin, sexual orientation, or religious affiliation do not fit others’ stereotype of U.S. students may experience discrimination in certain situations (though they might also find a liberating lack of the stereotyping typical here). In some countries, students exploring their own heritage may be surprised to find that they are viewed primarily as Americans; in others, they may have to meet high expectations of their understanding of local language and custom, based on their appearance. Mobility International <miusa.org> is an excellent resource for people with disabilities, as is the NAFSA Rainbow page <indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay> for GLBT issues. Whatever your own circumstances, be sensitive to all such issues within your group or community. Past participants are a good source of advice.

You will probably find more smokers than in the U.S., and fewer non-smoking areas. In a few countries, however, smoking is somewhat frowned upon, especially for women. For attitudes on alcohol, see “Legal Matters” above.

You may see things abroad that strike you as unjust, restrictive, or irrational. It is your responsibility as a student and guest abroad, however, to treat with respect and strive to comprehend the host culture, its complexities, and the many shades of opinion that it embraces. You are not expected to overturn your fundamental convictions, though many students do report that their experience abroad changed them in some respects, and made them open to other ideas. Just do not assume or imply that your way, or the American way, of doing things is superior or more rational. Ignoring local custom by insisting on wearing or eating what you want, and going where you want, whenever you want, will not change anything, except local good will towards Americans.

**Integrated housing.** Surveys indicate that your chances of adapting to your host country are much improved if you live in a homestay, or are able, through
community service or similar activities, to live and work alongside the people of the host country. The homestay can be a little demanding at first, and it is important to be sensitive to the rhythms and expectations of the family’s daily life: waste of expensive heat, water, and electricity, unexplained absences, snacking from the refrigerator, and failure to understand that local phone calls are not free are among the sources of friction. But almost all students who live with families love the experience, cite it as one of the most rewarding parts of their time away, and often stay in touch with their host families long afterwards. Similarly, volunteer work can greatly strengthen your engagement in the community. Many programs will offer such opportunities, some in a more structured format than others; returned students and Bowdoin’s McKeen Center are excellent resources to help you set realistic goals and get a better sense of the theory, issues and challenges in community-based work.

**A sensible approach to personal travel.** The common experience is that personal travel outside the program’s location hinders understanding of the host culture. It is wise to wait until you are fully settled in before thinking about travel, and to restrict extensive travel to official program breaks rather than weekends. Your first responsibility is to determine the academic requirements of your courses (easily underestimated in an unfamiliar system) and to put serious effort into meeting them. Travel should *never* interfere with class attendance or other program requirements. When you do travel, focus on developing a more profound understanding of the culture of the region in which you are studying. Finally, if family or friends intend to visit you, remember that it will be much more enjoyable and less awkward for everyone if they do not come while your program is in session.

**Sustainability.** Few countries have been unaffected by concerns about the impact of the human use of resources on the environment, and the lifestyle that is still common in the US is often viewed abroad as extremely wasteful of energy, water, food, and other resources; but the debate will take a different shape in other countries, depending on societal priorities. Do use the opportunity to reexamine your own habits and preconceptions in this new light, and make every effort to reduce your impact on the environment.

**General Financial Arrangements**

Your Bowdoin account must be in good standing for you to be eligible to study off campus, and to have your student aid transferred to your program or university. If uncertain of your account status, call the Bursar’s Office (x3249).

**Billing and payment.** (See also “Transfer of financial aid,” below.) You and
your family are responsible for paying tuition and fees directly to the program or university, as well as for any travel, and other personal costs.

Bowdoin bills only for the ISLE (Sri Lanka), SITA (South India), and CHP (Prague) programs. Bills for all other programs, including Twelve College Exchange, are generated by the program or university. You are responsible for paying those bills to the program, including any deposits, by their specified due date(s), which may differ significantly from those at Bowdoin. Note that tuition and accommodation charges may be billed separately, and be payable to separate offices. Bowdoin cannot perform banking services for you or monitor your account at the program.

If you receive an aid package from Bowdoin, or a student or parent loan, you should inform your program’s business office of your award sources and amounts so that they are aware that part of your fees will be coming to them from Bowdoin. You may also need to ask the program for a deferment of the portion of your bill covered by financial aid, so that you are able to enroll and otherwise participate fully in the program. Students will be sent the Off-Campus Study Disbursement Form by the Bursar’s Office in June for the coming fall semester and in November for the spring semester. Any student who is an aid recipient or who has student/parent loans should submit the form no later than September 1 for fall and year programs, and by February 1 for spring programs. Aid is transferred to OCS programs and institutions by the Bursar’s Office on or about September 15 for fall programs and February 15 for spring programs. You should be prepared to pay the program, by its due date, any balance which your student aid does not cover.

If you are enrolling directly in a university, you may have to convert dollars to the preferred currency to pay your bill before arrival. Contact the university well ahead so that you are prepared to make the proper transactions.

If you have questions about financial aspects of a program or university, the Bursar’s Office (725 3249) will be glad to share its experience. Except for the Bowdoin Sciences Po, Lyon Exchange in France, ISLE, SITA, and CHP programs, however, any conclusive discussion of payment should be held with the business office of your program or university.

In 2013-2014 Bowdoin’s off-campus study fee is $1,000 a program. The cost of the fee is taken into account in calculating Bowdoin financial aid. The Bursar bills for the fee in July and December.

**Education Tax Credit Filing.** Tuition charged by an abroad program or foreign university may be claimed on your federal education tax credit filing if
the school is approved to participate in the Direct Loan program (Stafford and PLUS loans). Students or parents should inquire with the program.

**Banking arrangements.** Look into banking arrangements beforehand. Check with your program or university for country-specific information. For example, in some countries single-semester visiting students cannot establish a checking account. If you do set up a foreign account, direct wire transfer of funds from your U.S. bank is fast and reasonably economical. Having funds in the local currency at your destination is useful in meeting immediate cash needs for books, room and other deposits, food, and personal expenses.

Before leaving, find out the exchange rate of the local currency against the U.S. dollar. In some countries the rate is volatile, and wiring or exchanging large sums at the wrong time can cost money. For currency rates, check the on-line converters at <x-rates.com> or <oanda.com>.

ATMs are common in most countries, and the most convenient way to make a withdrawal from a U.S. checking account. (There is usually a foreign transaction fee, as for purchases on credit cards.) Before leaving, confirm with your card’s issuer that you will be able to use the card and PIN overseas. Banks sometimes interpret an attempted overseas ATM withdrawal as fraud, and block the account. You can locate foreign ATMs at the websites for Mastercard <mastercard.com/cardholderservices/atm/> and Visa <visa.com>. In case you have problems, it is a good idea to let a family member in the U.S. have access to your account. Take the precaution before you leave of making a secure but accessible written record of your bank account numbers and contact numbers. Scan or photocopy the front and back of all bank cards you will take with you.

In general, carry as little cash as possible (in some places it is wise to wear a moneybelt). As an alternative to travelers checks, which are less commonly used nowadays, consider electronic check/money cards, which are like credit cards but pre-loaded with a set amount. A credit card in your own name can be very useful, and sometimes the best way to obtain cash in an emergency; but a high interest rate is charged immediately on cash advances. You may need to exchange some money in the airport at your destination, but you may get a better rate if you wait to find a bank or local currency exchange.

Credit/debit cards and electronic banking have simplified the remote handling of financial matters. If you have complex needs, look into giving a parent Power of Attorney, so that he or she can sign documents, write and endorse checks, etc., in your name. A standard form is available at stationery stores.

**Expenses.** Study your program materials to be sure you understand what is
included in the fees. Which daily meals are covered? Will you have additional food and housing expenses during breaks? Are organized trips included? Most students find that travel during breaks, the allure of new experiences, and the purchase of gifts and souvenirs make their personal expenses considerably higher than they expected. Keep some funds available for an emergency. In calculating your budget, remember that visa regulations and your workload together make it unlikely that you will be able to earn money while away.

**Departure Tax.** Find out if your host country is one of those that charges a departure tax; you might need to be prepared to pay this in cash at the airport.

**Customs duty.** When you return to the U.S., you must declare all items purchased abroad. U.S. citizens and permanent residents returning from most countries are allowed a personal exemption of $800 on merchandise; beyond that, duty is charged. For more information, refer to the Customs Service website at <customs.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/kbyg>.

**FINANCIAL AID**

**Application for aid.** Aid for off-campus study, including loans, is adjusted for total costs associated with off-campus study. If you receive student aid, OCS will have sent an on-line budget survey to the program/university on your behalf. The program/university will complete the survey, which will be forwarded to SAO automatically. If you are filing for financial aid for the first time, contact the Student Aid Office. *Your aid application remains incomplete until Student Aid receives the budget form.* Deadline for receipt by SAO is November 15th for spring and June 1st for fall/year.

For study at English-speaking universities, Bowdoin awards are based on the cost of direct enrollment. The additional cost of enrollment through third-party providers is not covered, except for Cambridge and universities in South Africa, in which direct enrollment is tricky to manage without assistance.

Off-campus study students are still enrolled at Bowdoin and thus not permitted to apply for or accept federal funds, including federal Stafford Loans, at any institution other than Bowdoin. The same is true for FPLUS Loans to parents.

**Determining your award.** You may use your financial-aid award for any College-approved program, in the U.S. or abroad. If the program costs more than Bowdoin, your aid award will not increase; if you will be studying abroad (*not* in the U.S.), however, you and your parents may be eligible for additional federal Stafford or FPLUS loans to make up the difference. You must apply for
all federal aid, including Stafford and FPLUS loans, through Bowdoin.

Bowdoin does not provide aid to or reduce the summer earnings expectation of students attending summer programs.

Air travel, health insurance, books and personal expenses (equivalent to what you would be offered at Bowdoin), 19 meals a week, and the off-campus study fee are all included in your cost of attendance. In choosing housing, please be aware that your award will be based on the cost of the program’s basic housing, not the more expensive options. Application fees, incidental expenses for passports, visas, immunizations, etc., and additional vacation-period expenses are not covered by financial-aid awards.

Bowdoin has some limited loan funds to help extremely needy students with program or university deposits. Ordinarily, however, you should plan for such advance payments when you apply to your off-campus study program or university. Such deposits or early payments range from about $300 to $2,000 and may be required at the time of admission. Check carefully to determine whether deposits are refundable or not. Late withdrawal can also make you liable to charges for housing, travel and other costs already incurred.

**Transfer of aid.** Awards are announced around July 1st for students away for the fall or full year, and around January 2nd for students away for the spring.

When Student Aid has notified you of your aid award, you should send to the Bursar’s Office the Off-Campus Study Disbursement Worksheet at <bowdoin.edu/bursar/ocs-finance/index.shtml>. Distribution of funds begins around September 15th for the fall semester and around February 15th for the spring; accounts are reviewed monthly thereafter for any new sources posted.

Awards cannot be confirmed earlier, or disbursed earlier than scheduled. You and your family will have to make your own arrangements if there is a conflict. The sole exception to the September disbursement date given above is made for students attending fall semester programs in the southern hemisphere, since the academic calendars of these programs do not usually coincide with Bowdoin’s. In such cases, the aid awarded for the fall would be released to the program in July. You should make the necessary arrangements with the Student Aid and Bursar’s Offices as soon as your aid has been awarded.

If you will be away for the full year, half of your aid award will be available for use each semester. When costs differ substantially between semesters, the aid will be prorated in relation to the cost each semester.
If you are enrolling directly in a foreign university, wire transfer to the university can send your aid if you provide the information requested on the Disbursement Worksheet pertaining to wires.

Stafford and FPLUS loans are disbursed to Bowdoin by federal law half each semester. Most loans arrive at Bowdoin via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). There is no check to be endorsed. Be sure to include these types of loans when completing the Disbursement Worksheet.

Grant or scholarship funds are not available directly to you unless you have prepaid the program and provide a receipt with the Disbursement Worksheet.

**ACADEMICS**

**Understanding a new system.** Please be certain that you properly understand the teaching and credit system at your program or university, and what is expected of you; there are many different systems, and very few are just like Bowdoin’s. Each year a handful of Bowdoin students come back short of credit because they misunderstand their program’s credit system, or Bowdoin’s rules on the transfer of credit. The academic system in other countries can differ a great deal from Bowdoin’s, not only in how credit is awarded, but also in the amount of reading and number of assignments that are explicitly assigned and tested in class; in the number of hours students have to attend classes or lectures; in the accessibility of instructors or tutors for additional help; in the proportion of the grade assigned to exams; in the quality of writing expected; and in the host-country students’ depth of background. Bowdoin’s courses may initially seem more demanding because the expectations are so clearly laid out, but you should not assume that standards are less rigorous on your program or at your university. Host-country students are often misleading guides to how hard they work and how much they already know. Think of your country’s academic system as part of its culture, which it is your job to understand, and adapt your study methods so that you make the most in academic terms out of your time there, earning grades that you are not ashamed of when potential employers or graduate schools see your transcript.

**Types of program.** What is generally called a study abroad program might involve simply enrollment in university classes (directly or through a third-party provider); or a set of classes designed exclusively for visiting US students; or, commonly, a hybrid model that mixes some provider-run classes with some at affiliated universities. Each model has its own advantages. If you are in a hybrid program in a non-English-speaking country, do not miss the chance to take at least one university class, depending on your level of language, because such
classes tend to be more demanding and characteristic of the style of instruction in the host country. At English-speaking universities, be careful in choosing the level of your classes, as some first-year classes can be rather elementary.

**Credit.** On nearly all programs it is the number of credits, not courses, that is significant, since courses are assigned varying amounts of credits or points. It is not unusual, and quite manageable, to take courses that total to slightly over the required minimum number of credits. Do not be misled by the fact that you are technically a full-time student even if taking a reduced course-load (just as at Bowdoin you are enrolled full-time even if you have permission to take only three courses). Some US schools allow their students to take a reduced load abroad, but Bowdoin and similar institutions have higher standards!

Students attending institutions on the semester-credit system should complete 15–16 semester credits per semester; you could take 5 courses of 3 semester credits, or 4x4, or, say, 6+4+3+3. (Institutions using semester credits include CIEE, DIS, IES, NYU, SIT, and Temple.) Students at institutions on a trimester or quarter system must complete either three terms to constitute a full year, or two terms (usually January to June) to constitute a semester, since a single quarter or trimester is not equivalent to a semester at Bowdoin. Be particularly careful in the case of programs such as Trinity in Rome or Vassar-Wesleyan in Paris where you might need to take slightly more than 4.0 course credits.

The normal UK system awards 120 credit units a year; so over two trimesters or one semester a minimum of 60 units must be taken. Universities in Australia and New Zealand use various systems: for example, the semester load is 50 points at Melbourne; 24 at Sydney; 12 at James Cook; and 60 at Otago.

As soon as you start or register for courses at your program or university, you are required to notify the OCS Office if you have had to change the courses for which you were approved on your Bowdoin application, or have fuller relevant details to add. It remains your responsibility to choose your courses sensibly and in accordance with the rules set out here; we cannot guarantee that we will spot all problems. Bowdoin’s rules take precedence over those of the program or instructor, if there is any difference over, for example, the acceptability of a particular course, course load, or exam arrangements.

If you receive accommodation at Bowdoin for a documented learning disability, you should establish beforehand with your program or university whether it can make similar accommodations. While some foreign universities and programs can do so, remember that assessment in many university courses remains heavily weighted towards final examinations.
Here are the important rules to follow in order to transfer non-Bowdoin credits for a full semester (4 course credits) or year (8 course credits):

A. Credit is transferable only for liberal arts courses compatible with the Bowdoin curriculum. No credit is transferred for courses with a professional focus such as accounting, business, marketing, communications, journalism, or physical education; or for distance-learning courses. A few courses in “outdoor education” and similar field-study areas are specifically identified as unacceptable if required assignments consist of only reports or reflective summaries. If you are at all uncertain of the acceptability of a particular course, please email the Associate Registrar <jbedard@bowdoin.edu> with a syllabus or equivalent information.

B. You may not take a reduced load. The number of courses in which you enroll each term must constitute the normal (not minimum) full-time load at that institution, and all the courses should be in areas for which Bowdoin credit is transferable. (You are free to take an extra non-transferable course as an overload, if the program permits.)

C. Credit will not be awarded for courses that to a large extent cover ground that you have already covered at Bowdoin.

D. Courses may not be taken pass/fail, and you must receive a minimum grade of C- (or the equivalent) in a course in order to transfer the credit.

E. All examinations must be taken, if required of host-country students and open to visiting students; alternative assessments are not acceptable.

F. No extra credit is awarded for courses above the normal course load; a maximum of 4 credits per semester or 8 credits per year is transferable.

G. Bowdoin distribution/division requirements must be taken at Bowdoin, and should be taken in the first two years, before off-campus study. In no circumstances will distribution/division requirement credit be given for off-campus study courses.

H. Bring papers, syllabi, and other course materials back to Bowdoin in case they are needed for evaluation of general or major credit. Approval for you to go on a program does not constitute automatic approval for either general or departmental credit for courses taken on that program.

I. If you wish to receive credit for a course in your major or minor, it is your responsibility to check with the department chair to determine whether the course will satisfy departmental requirements.
J. With very few exceptions, Bowdoin does not award credit for internships or similar courses in which a student works several hours a week for a business, NGO, or service organization, whether or not an internship seminar or written assignments are required. Students who take an internship may take it as an overload; sometimes the experience becomes the foundation for a later independent study at Bowdoin. Occasionally language students are permitted to take a maximum of one internship for credit, provided that the work of the internship is in the foreign language and prior authorization is obtained from the appropriate language department at Bowdoin. Students who take the A.U. Washington Semester internship must upon return promptly submit a substantial research paper to Professor Janet Martin for approval; failure to submit the research paper will result in no credit at all for the entire semester.

Human and animal research policy. All students who might while studying away undertake research involving human or animal subjects should meet federal and relevant professional standards. This may include the independent study project that constitutes part of many programs in which Bowdoin students participate. Programs are likely to require their own procedures for research approval, but affected students should in any event submit a proposal in advance of starting the project to Bowdoin’s Research Oversight Committee; this is particularly important if there is any possibility that the research performed become part of an independent study or honors project upon return to Bowdoin. For details, see <bowdoin.edu/academic-affairs/forms-policies/policies/research-policy.shtml>. Questions as to whether a project requires prior approval may be directed to the chair of ROC at roc@bowdoin.edu. Online training in research policy is available from the ROC website; students who will be undertaking human or animal research should obtain certification of completing that training before departure.

Library resources. Use the libraries affiliated with your program as your primary resource, but with your Bowdoin username and password you also have access to the online databases and full-text journal articles available through the Bowdoin Library Gateway <library.bowdoin.edu>. Use the Ask a Librarian service <library.bowdoin.edu/reference/aska.shtml> for research questions, or directly contact the librarian liaison from your field of study.

If the Library owns a journal only in print format, you can use the Interlibrary Loan (ILL) form at <illiad.bowdoin.edu> to request a periodical article to be scanned and sent to your Bowdoin email account. The Request a Book Chapter form can be used to obtain a scanned chapter of a book from the Bowdoin collection. The Library cannot send whole books or other printed sources.
Because the ILL service is programmed to reject requests for items owned at Bowdoin, it is important that you contact ILL <ill@bowdoin.edu> in advance of your request so that you can be flagged as an off-campus student.

**Transcripts.** Your program or university will send your official transcript to Bowdoin. It is usually part of a program’s application process to have you sign a form authorizing release of your academic records to the Registrar’s Office. Most programs will also send you your own copy; a transcript is **not**, however, official for Bowdoin’s purposes unless received by the Office of the Registrar in the original sealed envelope. The official transcript (not grade report) should be sent by your program or university to the Office of the Registrar, Bowdoin College, 4500 College Station, Brunswick ME 04011-8436, USA. Transcripts received in OCS will be forwarded to the Registrar.

If you ever need further copies of your transcript, you will have to submit a request in writing to your program. There is usually a small fee. It may be convenient to ask for extra copies while you are still in the country. Bowdoin may not legally copy a transcript received from another institution.

It usually takes several weeks for a transcript to reach Bowdoin. (Note that a program will not release the transcript until all bills are paid.) Credit is usually posted within two weeks of receipt of the official transcript at the Registrar’s Office. Once your transcript has been received and reviewed, the associate registrar will send email confirmation of credit awarded. The amount of credit awarded is dependent on the courses and grades on the host institution’s transcript, subject to the rules noted above. You may inquire at the Registrar’s Office at any time to confirm that your official transcript has been received. If you will need a transcript early in your first semester back at Bowdoin, for a scholarship or other application, make your program or university aware of the urgency (though it is not always possible to accelerate the process).

Your Bowdoin official transcript will reflect the program name, semester, and total credits awarded. (See <bowdoin.edu/registrar/ocstranscript.shtml> for a detailed explanation.) The course titles will appear on Bearings, accessible to advisors and department chairs, but, by vote of the Recording Committee, non-Bowdoin course titles and grades do not appear on the Bowdoin transcript, and are **not** calculated into the GPA. Do not assume, however, that your grades do not matter; when you apply to graduate schools or for jobs, you will need both your Bowdoin and university or program transcript.

**Bowdoin Course and Housing Registration**
Bowdoin course registration while away. The on-line process is simple, with access to course information and a registration through Polaris. Registration instructions are emailed to all OCS students at their Bowdoin email address. A printed packet is mailed only to the very rare student who has no web access at all and specifically requests one.

The Registrar’s Office posts the Schedule of Course Offerings and registration directions at <bowdoin.edu/registrar> before registration opens. Follow the online instructions to send your selections; alternatively, email them to registrar@bowdoin.edu; or fax to +1 207 725 3338. The initial course schedule is a draft; look for corrections before submitting your final selections.

Bowdoin housing. Before leaving Bowdoin, return a housing application form to Residential Life in Dudley Coe. Submit a form even if you do not want College housing, to avoid incorrect billing. To apply for housing, name a proxy for the lottery and give your preferences for housing and roommates. Residential Life does its best to accommodate such requests, but a specific assignment cannot be guaranteed. For updates on Residential Life and the lottery, go to <bowdoin.edu/reslife/index.shtml>.

Dining board plans. Returning students will be automatically assigned the 14 meal per week board plan. If this plan meets your needs, no action on your part is required. You will receive information by email from the OneCard office explaining how to request a different plan, in mid-November (for spring meal plans) or mid-April (for fall plans). Reminders will be sent about one month later, before the late fee deadline. Please be on the lookout for these important messages regarding meal plan costs, change requests, deadlines and late change fees. If you have any questions, feel free to email <onecard@bowdoin.edu>.

PUTTING YOUR EXPERIENCE TO USE

Many students say that off-campus study changed their lives. When you return to the U.S., the process of learning and change is not over; although the immediate excitement of new experiences is past, you are just starting on analyzing what you have learned, and incorporating fresh areas of inquiry into your studies and further pursuits. New ideas and resources might lead to a Bowdoin honors project, graduate school in the U.S. or overseas, a nationally competitive scholarship, or a career opportunity. Use your time away to cultivate contacts and investigate resources; it will be expensive and time-consuming to do this from the U.S. At the conclusion of your experience abroad, consider whether and how you met the goals you set for yourself, and what existing or new skills you drew on to do so. Communicating these skills in
writing and orally will make your study abroad experience meaningful to you and your family, peers, professors, graduate schools, and future employers.

**Scholarships and fellowships.** Even though you may be studying away when the applications are due, you are still eligible to apply for the national fellowships open to juniors (Beinecke, Goldwater, Truman, and Udall) and for the summer research fellowships awarded by Bowdoin each March (visit <bowdoin.edu/student-fellowships/index.shtml> for more details). Some applications require original documents or signatures; familiarize yourself with the requirements well ahead of the submission deadline and plan accordingly.

Prior to departure, consider how your experience could enhance your candidacy for many of the nationally competitive fellowships that you may wish to apply for as a senior (e.g., Fulbright, Gates-Cambridge, Marshall, Rhodes, Mitchell, and Watson). Consult with your advisor and the director of Student Fellowships and Research before you leave to discuss what steps you might take. For example, you could learn about the educational system of the country where you are studying, begin to delve into an area of research, and make connections with academics who might write a recommendation for you.

The Office of Student Fellowships and Research holds information sessions on national fellowships during the first week of fall classes, in December, and each spring. Interested students should attend a session, arrange an appointment, and visit <bowdoin.edu/student-fellowships/index.shtml> to learn more. Most deadlines are in September or early October of the senior year, and you are highly encouraged to contact the office in the preceding spring.

**Forum on Education Abroad undergraduate research award.** Two students each year from among the Forum’s member institutions (including Bowdoin) receive an award for research completed during study abroad. The winners present a summary of their research at the Forum annual conference, and their research papers are published in *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*. Bowdoin may nominate up to two applicants, in June. Contact the OCS office if you are interested.

**Career planning, internships, and jobs.** While away, you’ll be learning a great deal about yourself and will continue to develop your ambitions for the future. Your international experiences may open your eyes to new career possibilities. Bowdoin Career Planning urges you to focus first and foremost on your experience abroad; your advising team is available, however, via email and phone at <cpc@bowdoin.edu> and 207-725-3717.

You are encouraged to connect with a career advisor before going abroad, so
that you have a contact person in place with whom you can communicate and who can help you begin your internship or job search, develop your resume and cover letters, hone your interviewing and networking skills, and address many other aspects of the career exploration process.

Before you leave, register at <careerplanning.bowdoin.edu> for the Bowdoin Career Connection, which offers online access to extensive databases of internships and job postings (e.g., eBear, LACN, Going Global), and other useful career planning tools. You can also access funded internship grant applications with late March deadlines that might fund a summer project of your design, domestically or abroad. If you do not yet have a Bowdoin Career Connection account, email <cpc@bowdoin.edu> and a staff member will send you an email invitation to join.

While studying abroad, you are strongly encouraged to continue to access eBear to search and apply for internship and job positions. Some employers are able to accommodate students studying internationally by offering off-campus interview methods such as Skype. Additionally, the Bowdoin Career Advisory Network (BCAN) is a network of over 2,000 alumni in the US and abroad who are willing to serve as contacts for career and internship information.

Do take advantage of any volunteer, networking, or community service opportunities that you may have while abroad. These will help define your future internship and job possibilities, as well as your professional interests.

Upon your return, stop in at the Career Planning Center for help translating your international experiences into future career opportunities.

**Health professions advising.** Check in with Dr. Seth Ramus, Director of Health Professions Advising, before departure if you are considering applying to medical, dental, veterinary or other health professions or allied health programs. In selecting courses, keep in mind that the prerequisites for any health professions program should be fulfilled in the U.S. The allopathic medical schools (M.D. programs) will not accept transcripts issued by foreign universities; so the courses you take will not be officially recognized as meeting specific requirements, nor will the grades be factored into your GPA on your application. (You will need to list your courses and grades on the application, however, so do not take them lightly!) If your transcript is issued through a degree-granting U.S. institution such as Butler University, it will be an official part of your application, and your courses and grades will be included as a formal part of your record. Even so, taking the prerequisites in a foreign institution is discouraged.
With very few exceptions, students who study outside the U.S. as juniors are advised to complete their senior year on campus before applying to a program in the health professions. Enjoy your time overseas without having to worry about the MCAT and preliminary application materials; take the opportunity to emerge from the lab and gain an appreciation of another culture.

**Community engagement.** While abroad, students often engage locally through community service or volunteer projects. The McKeen Center for the Common Good [<bowdoin.edu/mckeen-center>](http://bowdoin.edu/mckeen-center) and the OCS office together offer orientation sessions to prepare students for international community engagement work. Also, when you return, the McKeen Center can help you continue to explore global issues by connecting you with international communities in Maine, or guide you to further opportunities to lead and participate in local, national or international community service initiatives such as Alternative Spring Break, Alternative Winter Break, a Student-Run Service Group, Weekend Service Trips or the Global Citizens Grant.

**Reentry**

“Cultural Adaptation” above discusses the adjustment phases that many students go through. It is perfectly natural for you to pass through a similar phase when you return to the U.S, and then to Bowdoin. In adjusting to a new culture you will have changed, and you should be prepared for the possibility that you will take a few weeks to recover your equilibrium. You might feel bored without the stimulation of constant new experiences; you will no longer have any special, “exotic” status as a foreigner abroad; you will be separated from the friends and support structure of your program; and you might be struck as never before by the wealth and consumerism of the U.S. You may find it hard to express to your friends or family how much your time away meant to you, and how much you have changed. Some of them will have changed, too; or they may resist acknowledging the differences in you, especially if you seem to be judging U.S. culture, and them, with an air of superiority! Just as you may have gone through homesickness while away, so now you will probably miss the friends, customs, foods, and places you came to know so well, and be irritated by features of American society that did not exist or that you had not noticed before you left.

You should allow yourself time, but also recognize these changes in yourself as positive, and your experiences upon return as offering new opportunities for learning. For example, you might record your changing perspectives in a journal; maintain contacts in your host country, and seek out others who studied there, or Bowdoin students from there; incorporate your new skills
and knowledge into Bowdoin coursework; write for a print or online publication like the Orient, AbroadView <abroadviewmagazine.com> or Glimpse <glimpse.org>; use web, print, and film resources to keep up your language and cultural skills; look into new international opportunities through other Bowdoin offices such as the McKeen Center for the Common Good; and become involved in peer-advising of students who are planning to study in the same country. You probably went through a similar period of adjustment when you went away, and can call on the skills you picked up then. Don’t hesitate to talk to the Counseling Service staff, who are experienced in dealing with this.

**Program evaluation.** It is a requirement of participation in off-campus study to complete an online evaluation of your program for OCS. But we hope and expect that the few minutes needed to complete the form will also help you reflect on the significance of the experience for your academic interests and, more broadly, for the way you look at the world. Please complete the evaluation as promptly and thoughtfully as possible. The success of Bowdoin’s off-campus study program depends on the quality of information gathered, and the students who make heavy use of the filed evaluations will be grateful.

**Reentry activities at Bowdoin.** There will be opportunities for you to share your experience with students and others, on panels, through blogs, at predeparture sessions, and in more informal meetings. Watch out for email from OCS.

**STAYING IN TOUCH**

Let your family know that you have arrived safely at your destination — but do not promise to do so at once if you are not certain that you can! For the same reason, get in touch to reassure them that you are safe if a major accident or emergency occurs in your study-away location that is likely to be publicized in the U.S., however clear it may seem to you that you could not possibly have been affected. Also warn them if you will be out of cellphone range for a while.

The ease with which students abroad can communicate with family, friends, and Bowdoin varies. Many enjoy simple and free access to the Internet, as well as a good postal service; others may find that computer use is restricted or unreliable; some have to rely on a slow postal service and an occasional phonecall. Whatever facilities you have, do not expect them to be exactly comparable with those at Bowdoin and in the U.S.; in this area as in others you should be prepared to adjust your expectations if you are not to be frustrated.

Get your mailing address from your program. Many programs ask that mail be
addressed to you at their center, where you will probably have a mailbox.

Bowdoin alumni/ae live and work in many cities overseas (mostly in Europe). In particular, members of BASIC, Bowdoin’s Alumni Schools and Interviewing Committee, interview prospective students and attend college fairs in their home areas. You might hear from a local Bowdoin alum while you are away; do let OCS know if you want the names of any in your location.

**Internet.** Use <webmail.bowdoin.edu> to check your Bowdoin email. Keep tabs on other accounts you have through your program or a provider like gmail. If you don’t have Internet access through your program, there is likely to be an Internet cafe nearby; see <cybercaptive.com> for listings.

If you keep a blog about your off-campus study experience that you think would be informative and interesting to others in the Bowdoin community, please pass the link on to OCS, and we will post it. (We do not monitor content regularly, but the standard expectations of appropriate content apply.)

While you are away, you will not be on the recipient list for official Bowdoin email messages to all students in residence. For campus news, take a look at the Bowdoin website. We no longer mail printed copies of the Orient, because the electronic edition <orient.bowdoin.edu/orient/> is so easily accessible; this saves a lot on paper and mailing costs, but you can ask us to mail you a paper copy if it is very hard for you to access the online edition.

**Telephone.** Research the most efficient way to phone home. Calling cards and cell phones (purchased or rented) work well for most travelers. Your US cell phone will not work overseas unless it has roaming capacity in the appropriate zone or can take a new SIM card. Local and international phone cards are also widely available in many countries. ISIC holders can sign up for an ISIConnect global phone card. See the FCC guide to prepaid phone cards at <fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/prepaidcards.html>; for a comparison of calling card and personal voicemail services, try <comfi.com>. This is a field in which the services and technology are changing very fast, and if you are not careful you can end up with huge bills. Look into whether Skype, for phone calls over the Internet, is available in your location. You can post questions about phone services abroad on Internet forums like Rick Steves’ Graffiti Wall <ricksteves.com>, Lonely Planet’s Thorntree <thorntree.lonelyplanet.com>, and Virtual Tourist <virtualtourist.com>. Globally-enabled cell phones can be rented from TravelCell <travelcell.com> or Cellhire <cellhire.com>.

Carrying a cell phone can be a safety measure, and some programs loan or rent them to students; but remember that the phones are a common target of theft.
Make sure that you and your family and friends know the time zone difference if you intend to call each other. But try not to depend too heavily on calling home, as it can exacerbate homesickness and adjustment difficulties. It is a common trap for students overseas, especially if they are lucky enough to have easy email or phone access, to spend so much time communicating with their college friends, family, faculty and staff that they never integrate with their host community or rely on their own decisions. The OCS staff are always happy to help if you need advice; but before you fire off that email message make sure that you don’t already have the answer you need, in this booklet or elsewhere.

**Bowdoin Contact Information**

If you have questions that this booklet does not answer, or want to send us updated information about yourself or your program, do contact OCS. For a quick response, email the office account <offcamp@bowdoin.edu>; apart from a few days in the summer and winter breaks, the office is staffed through vacations. For specialized questions, use the list below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Phone/Fax/E-mail/WWW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General OCS issues</td>
<td>Christine Wintersteen, Director</td>
<td>Tel: +1 207 725 3473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address notification</td>
<td>Kate Myall, Assistant Director</td>
<td>Fax: +1 207 725 3473, <a href="mailto:offcamp@bowdoin.edu">offcamp@bowdoin.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course notification</td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;bowdoin.edu/ocs&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Withdrawal from OCS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduation credit</td>
<td>Julie Bedard, Associate Registrar, Office of the Registrar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution requirements</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tel: +1 207 725 3872, Fax: +1 207 725 3338, <a href="mailto:registrar@bowdoin.edu">registrar@bowdoin.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major/minor academic credit</td>
<td>The appropriate Bowdoin academic department(s)</td>
<td>Note important addresses before you leave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration</td>
<td>Office of the Registrar</td>
<td>Tel: +1 207 725 3521, Fax: +1 207 725 3338, <a href="mailto:registrar@bowdoin.edu">registrar@bowdoin.edu</a> &lt;bowdoin.edu/registrar&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowdoin Library Interlibrary Loans</td>
<td>Leanne Pander, Public Services Librarian</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lpander@bowdoin.edu">lpander@bowdoin.edu</a>, <a href="mailto:ill@bowdoin.edu">ill@bowdoin.edu</a>, &lt;library.bowdoin.edu&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowdoin housing</td>
<td>Lisa Rendall, Associate Director, Residential Life</td>
<td>Tel: +1 207 725 3225, Fax: +1 207 725 3555, <a href="mailto:lrendall@bowdoin.edu">lrendall@bowdoin.edu</a>, &lt;bowdoin.edu/reslife/index.shtml&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General student affairs issues</td>
<td>Beth Levesque, Administrative Manager, Dean of Student Affairs</td>
<td>Tel: +1 207 725 3149, Fax: +1 207 725 3555, <a href="mailto:blevesqu@bowdoin.edu">blevesqu@bowdoin.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Contact</td>
<td>Tel:</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Financial aid</strong></td>
<td>Michael Bartini</td>
<td>+1 207 725 3144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Office</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:studentaid@bowdoin.edu">studentaid@bowdoin.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transfer of financial aid</strong></td>
<td>Michelle McDonough</td>
<td>+1 207 725 3267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Payment of bills</strong></td>
<td>Bursar, Controller's Office</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Travel clinic</strong></td>
<td>Health Services</td>
<td>+1 207 725 3770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health insurance</strong></td>
<td>Cathy Hayes</td>
<td>+1 207 798.4284</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Internships</strong></td>
<td>Career Planning Center</td>
<td>++1 207 725 3717</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Graduate study</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:cpc@bowdoin.edu">cpc@bowdoin.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-law advising</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>National Scholarships</strong></td>
<td>Student Fellowships and Research</td>
<td>++1 207 725 3809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health professions advising</strong></td>
<td>Seth Ramus</td>
<td>+1 207 725 3624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Director of Health Professions Advising</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:sramus@bowdoin.edu">sramus@bowdoin.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Community Engagement</strong></td>
<td>McKeen Center for the Common Good</td>
<td>++1 207 798 4133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emergency advice and follow-up</strong></td>
<td>Dean on call</td>
<td>+1 207 725 3149 or (Security) 3314/3500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dean of Student Affairs</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
USEFUL WEBSITES

Air and Rail Tickets
  - <cheaptickets.com>
  - <orbitz.com>
  - <studentuniverse.com>
  - <travelocity.com>
  - <cheapflights.com>
  - <kayak.com>
  - <statravel.com>
  - <travelcuts.com>

Disabilities and International Travel
  - http://www.miusa.org Mobility International USA

Embassies, Consulates, Passports and Visas
  - http://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en.html U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs
  - http://usembassy.state.gov U.S. embassies and consulates abroad
  - http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports.html procedures for first-time application, passport renewal, and reporting a lost or stolen passport

Health and Safety
  - http://www.cdc.gov Centers for Disease Control
  - https://step.state.gov/step/ Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) — allows you to enter information about your travel so that the State Department can better assist you in an emergency
  - http://www.asirt.org Association for Safe International Road Travel
  - http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html U.S. State Department Country-Specific Information, Travel Alerts and Travel Warnings
  - http://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en.html US State Department Information to Students Abroad

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Queer Travelers
  - www.rainbowsig.org resources for LGBT students
  - https://www.outrightinternational.org fact sheets on conditions in various countries from the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission

Money Matters

Travel Guides, News & Viewpoints
  - http://www.lonelyplanet.com Lonely Planet Online
  - http://www.theglimpse.com Glimpse Magazine Online, with articles by students

Voting from Abroad

Women Travelers
  - http://www.journeywoman.com/BestTravelTips/default.htm travel tips geared toward women