

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL HANDBOOK

*A GENERAL RESOURCE
FOR
BOWDOIN STUDENTS TRAVELING ABROAD*

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INTRODUCTION

This International Travel Handbook is designed to assist any Bowdoin student who will be traveling overseas, whether independently or for a College-sponsored activity, outside the framework of semester-long or year-long off-campus study. You should find the handbook useful if you will be traveling abroad for an independent research project, an internship, volunteer work with the McKean Center or on your own, a short-term study abroad program, or a trip with a Bowdoin-sponsored club, team or organization. Whatever your own purpose in going abroad, this handbook is intended to help you plan for your departure, equip yourself to handle new situations, make a transition into your host country, navigate the practicalities, and assist you with your eventual return to the US.

The handbook is intended to supplement, not replace, any information that you will receive from the program or organization through which you will be traveling abroad. That should be your primary resource on such matters as visas, immunizations, housing, and general preparation. Its US or host-country staff are in a good position to be up to date with visa regulations and conditions in the host country. Depending on the type of organization and its aims, it is likely in addition to provide you with background materials and, when you arrive, an orientation on cultural adjustment, health and safety, etc. Do be sure to read all its information promptly and carefully, as you may need to act fast, for example, to apply for a visa. You will probably receive the name of a contact whom you can email with questions.

The Bowdoin International Travel Handbook has been compiled by the staff of the Off-Campus Study Office; it is based on the Off-Campus Study Handbook that we give to all OCS students (who will therefore not need this additional publication), with grateful acknowledgement of content adapted from similar handbooks issued by Brown and Harvard Universities.

This handbook is provided as a general resource for travel abroad by Bowdoin students, including activities that do not involve Bowdoin-sponsored academic study or research. Bowdoin College and its representatives assume no liability based on the information contained herein in the event of accident or illness, or for damage or injury to person or property of any nature whatsoever.

References to commercial services in these pages do not indicate any form of official endorsement by Bowdoin College.

PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

Before embarking on your trip, you should have gone through the checklist of points below, to make sure that you have not missed something important. The topics will be covered in more detail in separate sections of this handbook.

- ✓ Ensure your passport is up to date, obtain a visa or other required entry documents, and book flights. Photocopy important documents, with one set to be left with family in the US and one to take with you, separate from the originals.
- ✓ Learn about the local currency in the country you will be visiting, and plan a budget. Consider how you will access funds abroad, including in an emergency such as if your wallet is lost or stolen.
- ✓ Inform yourself about health and safety issues in your destination country. Find out what medical facilities will be available, and whether your medical insurance will cover you for your entire time abroad. Discuss your health and your trip abroad with your health practitioners. Arrange for necessary immunizations or boosters, and for any prescription medications.
- ✓ Learn about your destination country and its culture. How will you need to adjust your habits, behavior, dress, etc?
- ✓ Find out what sort of support you will have on site. If you are going abroad through a program, what sort of assistance will it provide? Is housing arranged, or will you have to find it for yourself upon arrival?
- ✓ Research phone and Internet communication options in the host country, for domestic and international calls.
- ✓ Develop a packing list, based on advice from your sponsor, your essential needs, and your research into the country and its weather.
- ✓ Find out your program's safety and emergency policies and guidelines. Create your own emergency/contingency plan, including emergency contact information to use locally and for Bowdoin.
- ✓ Summarize and examine realistically your goals and expectations for your experience abroad.

TRAVEL

International flights. 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). It is recommended that you book a round-trip ticket, because you might need to show that you have a return flight for a visa application. If there is any chance that you will stay beyond your intended return date, check to see if changing the return date carries a penalty; airlines’ change fees vary considerably. Once you have your tickets, make copies. Leave one copy at home and carry one with you when you travel.

Passports. Have a valid passport well in advance, especially if you will need a visa as well. For US passport requirements and application forms, go to travel.state.gov/travel/. Applications are accepted at the Brunswick Post Office and at 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 (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. Passports for adults are valid for ten years; note that some countries require that a passport be valid for as much as 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.)

Passport-type photos are obtainable at a number of Brunswick businesses. Rite Aid on Maine Street is conveniently close. If you do not need the official passport size, see if you can get a sheet of smaller photos, as you will be surprised at how many you will need for various forms and cards.

Visas. A visa is a stamp or document from a foreign government that is affixed to your passport, granting permission to enter that country on or after a certain date for a defined length of time and purpose, such as work, tourism, or study. Visas are usually issued by the foreign government’s consulate or embassy in the US, and require that you submit your passport. Allow plenty of time: you may need to send your passport to the consulate over two months before the start of your program. To learn about the visa requirements for your host country, visit Embassy World www.embassyworld.com or the list of foreign consular offices in the US at www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/fco/.

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 (and even among the same country's consulates), and rules 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 need to present the following documentation:

- 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 vaccinations (including HIV/AIDS test for certain countries)
- background check by local police department

Some countries require that such documents be notarized; if this is the case, go to www.bowdoin.edu/about/admin/notaries.shtml for a list of Bowdoin administrators who are authorized to notarize travel-related paperwork.

International Student Identity Card (ISIC). You may find it helpful to get an ISIC, an internationally recognized card that entitles holders to various student discounts. Discounts vary quite a lot from country to country, but typically include museum entries, theater tickets, and air fares. The ISIC also provides basic health and accident insurance for travel outside the U.S. and access to a 24-hour toll-free help line. The card is valid for 12 months from the date of issue. Go to the ISIC website www.myisic.com for further details of benefits and the application process. You will need to show proof of your birthdate and current full-time student status. The cost is approximately \$22.00, exclusive of postage. Before purchasing, make sure that you will not receive a card at no charge through your program. A lost card cannot be replaced, but the insurance coverage remains valid.

Packing. If you cannot carry all your luggage for a block or so, you have packed too much. You almost certainly do not need to ship anything. (Note also that packages shipped from the US may be liable for customs duty, or not arrive at all.) If you buy clothes locally, you are more likely to blend in. Bear in mind that you may want to bring back to the U.S. objects you have acquired while away; to make space, 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 the current security and weight restrictions on carry-on and checked baggage. If you have to change flights in your destination country, be aware that your baggage allowance may 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 organization might recommend that you bring some small presents that are characteristic of your region (picture calendars or books, maple syrup, and local preserves are usually safe bets).

Electricity. In many parts of the world the electrical supply is 220 volts, 50 Hz (110v, 60 Hz in the USA). Even if the current is the same, a different shape of plug and socket may be used, requiring an adaptor. 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 <www.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 or sponsoring organization, and that available from the Centers for Disease Control <www.cdc.gov>, World Health Organization <www.who.int/ith/>, and Coe Health Center (a licensed travel vaccination site). You may also find <www.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. Note that 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. They can help you decide about preventive medications for malaria, altitude sickness, allergies, diarrhea, etc. 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 immunizations 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 also provide advice 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 often 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 to you. 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 change your eating habits, both in terms of timing of meals and kinds of food, to adjust to the local culture. If you have dietary restrictions or food allergies, learn how to communicate them in the local language and in a culturally sensitive way. Take note of 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 any 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 a supply of over-the-counter drugstore items, which can be more expensive or harder to find elsewhere, such as pain relievers, medicine for stomach upsets, and tampons.

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 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 <www.studentsabroad.com>. The Overseas Security Advisory Council provides global security news and daily reports at <www.ds-osac.org>.

If you are working with an organization in your destination country, staff will inform you about safety measures; ask if you still have any questions about their procedures or conditions in the host country.

Safety precautions that you can take. Your own responsible and intelligent behavior is important for your safety. Few places have the violent 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 are reminders of the complexity of international attitudes. Americans can be seen as wealthy (even if they do not regard themselves as such) and a target for robbery, and as representatives of U.S. foreign policy and a target for political retaliation (even if they oppose that policy). Be sensible about what you wear (avoid obviously American clothing and display of expensive cameras or electronic equipment), 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, whether you agree with them or not.

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 them with you, store valuables in a safe place. Leave expensive watches or jewelry in the US. Before you leave, photocopy or scan your passport's photo and data pages and other important cards; keep a copy separate from other valuables.

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. For information on traffic-related safety conditions in countries abroad, including bus safety information in your host country, consult the Association for Safe International Road Travel at <www.asirt.org>.

Gender and sexuality. Cultural norms related to gender and sexuality vary widely, and misunderstandings in this area are a source of confusion. Behaviors that are perfectly acceptable in one culture might be highly inappropriate in another. Educate yourself about gender norms in your host country and be mindful of how behavior that would be unremarkable in the United States might be interpreted in a different cultural context. For example, most people in the U.S. believe 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 non-sexual relationships to exist between men and women. Understanding your host country's social mores will help you make informed choices about where you go, with whom you interact, and what behaviors you choose. Modifying your behavior when you are living in a cultural context different from your own is not capitulating to the values of that culture. Rather, it is 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 host program, who should be able to assist you in sorting out the situation in a culturally appropriate manner.

Students who are sexually assaulted should seek immediate medical treatment. The nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate can help you find support to deal with the emotional, social, medical, and legal consequences of the assault.

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 Loyola Marymount Center for Global Education website <www.studentsabroad.com/planning.html>. Keep your plan in a safe place along with other items that you would need in an emergency.

If you are on an organized program, it may register you with the local US embassy or consulate, but you can do this simple process online yourself; see <travel.state.gov/travel/tips/registration/registration_1186.html>. In the event of an international or local emergency, if your host-country organization's sources indicate that the safety of their participants 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. As soon as you arrive, you should 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 (+1 207 725 3149). Outside normal Bowdoin office hours, call Security at +1 207 725 3314.

Executive Assistance Program. Bowdoin students abroad have access to the Executive Assistance Program. This is 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. Further details and a wallet card with emergency numbers are available at www.bowdoin.edu/ocs/pdf/eap-summary.pdf.

INSURANCE

Be sure that you have sufficient health and accident insurance for your entire time away, including travel before and after your program. Students' needs and preferences for insurance depend on the location and facilities of their host country, and whether they are covered by the Bowdoin College Plan, family insurance, program insurance, and optional supplementary insurance. A wide range of private optional plans (including one from Bowdoin's agency, Gallagher Koster Insurance) exists for those who desire additional medical coverage or, for example, insurance for lost or stolen property and baggage, and trip cancellation or interruption.

If you need international health insurance, consider questions such as these:

- When does the plan begin and end?
- Does the plan cover hospitalization for accidents and illnesses for your entire time abroad?
- Does the plan cover doctor visits and medication prescribed abroad?
- Does the plan cover pre-existing medical conditions?
- Are there treatments or types of treatment centers that are not covered?
- Is there a deductible? If so, how much?
- Is there a dollar limit to the amount of coverage provided?
- How do you file a claim for medical expenses abroad? Do you pay bills yourself and submit receipts for reimbursement?

The website www.insuremytrip.com helps compare various insurance

providers. The State Department also maintains a list of travel insurance companies, at <travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health_1185.html>.

As supplements to a full plan, the International Student Identity Card (see “Travel” above) and the iNext Card (from CIEE), offer basic insurance for accident medical expenses, sickness and hospital expenses, emergency evacuation, repatriation of remains, accidental death and dismemberment, lost document replacement, baggage delay, and travel delay.

LEGAL MATTERS

When you are 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 serious social rules regarding the context (type of beverage, public or private, gender, class). Where moderate drinking is generally acceptable, most American students have the maturity to adjust well, 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*.

Driving. It is strongly recommended that students not rent or operate any motor vehicles while abroad.

Taxes. Arrange to file your income tax return 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

Even if your time abroad is somewhat brief, you should make every effort to acquire an understanding of the host culture. Whether that culture is similar to or very different from your own, you are likely to experience at least some difficulty in adjusting to it. The initial novelty might feel euphoric and liberating, but frustration can set in as you realize that the assumptions and rules by which the host culture operates are not at all those to which you are accustomed: 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 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 you should 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. Most 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 symptoms that can be experienced. In time, however, nearly all find that they don't even notice features of the host culture that seemed so intimidating at first, that they incorporate new habits as their own, and that they look at themselves and their own culture in a fresh light.

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 <www.miusa.org> is an excellent resource for people with disabilities, as is the NAFSA Rainbow page <www.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 may see things during your stay that strike you as unjust or restrictive or irrational. Part of your responsibility as a student and guest abroad, however, is to treat with respect and endeavor 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, although many students do report that their experience abroad changed them inwardly 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 in stubbornly insisting on wearing what you want, eating what you want, and going where you want, whenever you want, is not going to change anything, except perhaps local good will towards Americans.

Surveys indicate that your chances of adapting to your host country are much improved if you have chosen homestay accommodation, or will be able through community service or similar activities to live and work alongside the people of the host country. The homestay can be a little intimidating and 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 common 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 whole time away, and often remain in touch with their host families long after return to the US.

You will probably find more smokers in your host country than in the U.S., and fewer designated non-smoking areas. In a few countries, however, smoking is somewhat frowned upon, especially for women.

Advance reading will give you insight into the challenges and rewards of living abroad. Your program will have suggestions on reading, preparation, packing, and adjustment to a new culture. You can find the State Department's useful "Background Notes" on the country's history, political system, economics, and culture at www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/, as well as on file in the OCS office. In the Bowdoin Library you will find books on the country, or magazines and newspapers published there; a wealth of on-line publications is accessible from the Language Media Center webpage library.bowdoin.edu/lmc/. You can also view foreign-language TV in the OCS Office. Bowdoin students who have previously gone to your destination are a wonderful resource. A good guidebook, though mainly aimed at tourists, can help in your preparation. The best-known series are Lonely Planet, Let's Go, Insight, Rough Guides, and Blue Guides (strong on art, architecture, and archaeology). For advice specifically on study abroad, the following publications are available in the OCS library:

B. Hansel, *The Exchange Student Survival Kit*
L. Kohls, *Survival Kit for Overseas Living*
T. Lewis & R. Jungman, *On Being Foreign: Culture Shock in Short Fiction*
R. Paige and others, *Maximizing Study Abroad*
K. Wagner & T. Magistrale, *Writing Across Culture*
CET Academic Programs, *Journeying Home* (DVD)
Glimpse Study Abroad Acclimation Guides: *Culture Shock; American Identity Abroad; Language Learning; Traveling to Developing Countries; Gender Roles Abroad; Race Abroad*

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Look into banking arrangements before you travel. In most countries, short-term visiting students cannot establish a checking account. If you can 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 supplies, 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 <www.x-rates.com> or <www.oanda.com>. Start thinking in the local currency as soon as possible.

ATMs are common in most countries, and the most convenient way to make a withdrawal from a U.S. checking account. 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 <www.mastercard.com/cardholderservices/atm/> and Visa <www.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. 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 look and are used like credit cards but are 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, but if you have complex needs look into whether it would be useful for a parent to have your Power of Attorney; he or she can then sign documents, write and endorse checks, etc., in your name. A standard form is available at stationery stores.

Most students find that travel, 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 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 <www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/kbyg>.

ACADEMICS

Most of those reading this handbook will not be participating in an experience for which they will receive academic credit at Bowdoin. Nevertheless, we hope that any experience abroad will be intellectually stimulating, and that you will be able to draw on it in your continuing studies at Bowdoin. For students who will be participating in a short-term academic program abroad, and have submitted an Application for Transfer of Credit to the Off-Campus Study Office, here is a summary of the conditions under which credit will be awarded by Bowdoin upon your return.

If prior approval has not been obtained through submission of the Application for Transfer of Credit, transfer of credit is possible only by petition to the Recording Committee. Before the Registrar gives final approval of credit for any course, you may be asked to submit supporting documents, such as syllabi and all papers and exams, after the course has been completed. The Registrar may decline to grant credit if the course or the student's work in the course does not satisfy Bowdoin academic standards.

Credit is awarded only for liberal arts courses compatible with the Bowdoin

curriculum, in which the grade earned is C- or above. 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. Courses may not be taken Credit/Fail, but grades are not transferred.

You may transfer a cumulative total of no more than four credits from study in any type of summer school program. One Bowdoin course is considered to equal four semester hours (six quarter hours). Typically, if a student takes a course at another institution worth three semester hours, it will transfer into Bowdoin College as 0.75 transfer credits (three semester hours/four semester hours = 0.75 transfer credits). While some exceptions may occur, no course taken elsewhere will be worth more than 1.00 Bowdoin credits. Thus, students will not receive ‘extra’ credit for courses that have accompanying laboratory credits. For example, a course taken elsewhere is worth 3 credits with an accompanying lab that is worth 2 credits will only transfer to Bowdoin as 1.00 course-unit.

PUTTING YOUR EXPERIENCE TO USE

Your experience abroad can open up new areas of academic inquiry that will enhance the remainder of your undergraduate career and beyond. You may find ideas and resources that lead to a Bowdoin honors project, graduate school in the U.S. or overseas, a nationally competitive scholarship or fellowship, or a particular career opportunity. Use your time away to cultivate contacts and investigate resources; it will be expensive and time-consuming to do this once you are back in the U.S. Think seriously about how you will summarize the central aspects of your experience for faculty advisors and in your resume.

Nationally competitive scholarships and fellowships. Seniors can apply for numerous national scholarships/fellowships that support graduate study and research-based travel experiences (e.g., Fulbright, Gates Cambridge, Churchill, Keasbey, Madison, Marshall, Mitchell, Mellon, National Science Foundation, Rhodes, Rotary, Soros, St. Andrews, Truman, Watson). Consult with your advisor and the Director of Student Fellowships & Research *before* you leave to learn how your experience abroad can enhance your candidacy for these prestigious awards. For example, you can learn about the educational system of the country where you are studying, establish an area of research, and make connections with academics who might write a recommendation for you.

The Office of Student Fellowships and Research holds informational sessions on national scholarships/fellowships each spring and during the first week of fall

classes. Interested students are encouraged to attend, to arrange an appointment at any point during the year, and to visit the Student Fellowships and Research website <www.bowdoin.edu/academics/students/fellowships/index.shtml> to learn more. Most deadlines are in September or early October of the senior year, and students are highly encouraged to contact the Director of Student Fellowships and Research the preceding spring. The Truman and the Beinecke Scholarships require applications during the junior year.

Internships and career planning. A visit to the Career Planning Center *before you leave* will help you learn about and plan for internships and career options. Funded Summer Internships such as the Thomas A. McKinley '06 Grant, the Robert S. Goodfriend Preston Public Interest Career Fund, and Nikuradse-Matthews have February deadlines and will support a summer project of your design. The CPC <www.bowdoin.edu/cpc> has a Career Advisory Network (BCAN) of over 1,400 volunteer alumni, both in the US and abroad, who are willing to be contacts for career and internship information.

Connect with the CPC before departure if you are looking for summer internships. A CPC advisor will help you search eBEAR and other internship databases for opportunities, and lead you to helpful resources. Starting early and contacting organizations before you leave will help in securing an internship before you return. Register with eBEAR at <www.bowdoin.edu/cpc>: your initial username is your full Bowdoin email address (jdoe@bowdoin.edu), and your password is your Bowdoin ID number. Email cpc@bowdoin.edu if you need log-in help. After registering with eBEAR and entering your preferences, you will also receive email about internships, fellowships, and programs in which you have indicated possible career interest. If you don't want eBEAR email abroad, ask the CPC to deactivate your account temporarily; remember to reactivate when you are ready to receive email again.

REENTRY

We discussed under "Cultural Adaptation" the adjustment phases that many students go through. Sometimes students experience another phase when they 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.

Allow yourself time to adjust, but also try these techniques: record your changing perspectives and intellectual development 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 about your experience for a print or online publication like the *Orient, AbroadView* <www.abroadviewmagazine.com> or *Glimpse* <www.TheGlimpse.com>; use web, print, and film resources to keep up your language and cultural skills; 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.

STAYING IN TOUCH

If you are participating in an experience that has a funding or organizational connection with Bowdoin, you must before departure submit the requested information on the duration of your trip, your location in the host country, phone and other contact information, emergency contacts, and passport information.

Let your family know that you have arrived safely at your destination — though it is also not a good idea to 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 host 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 let them know of any travel that will take you out of town and cell phone 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.

Email. Internet access is now widely available around the globe. To find Internet cafés in your host country, visit <cybercaptive.com> or look in a guide-book for your destination.

Telephone. Research the most efficient way to phone home while away. Calling cards and cell phones (either purchased or rented) tend to work well for most travelers. Your US cell phone will not work overseas unless it has roaming capacity in the appropriate zone (preferably not at a prohibitive price) or can take a new SIM card. Local and international phone cards are also widely available in many countries. Holders of an ISIC can sign up for an ISICConnect global phone card. The FCC publishes a guide to prepaid phone cards at <www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/prepaidcards.html>; for a comparison of calling card and personal voicemail services, try <www.comfi.com>. This is a field in which the services and technology are changing very fast. Don't forget to look into whether Skype, for phonecalls over the Internet, is available in your location. You can post questions about phone services abroad on Internet forums: Rick Steves' Graffiti Wall <www.ricksteves.com>; Virtual Tourist <www.virtualtourist.com>; and Lonely Planet's Thorntree <thorntree.lonelyplanet.com>. Globally-enabled cell phones may be rented from TravelCell <www.travelcell.com> or Cellhire <www.cellhire.com>.

Make sure that you and your family and friends know the time-zone difference if you intend to call each other. But do try not to become too dependent on calling home, as it can exacerbate homesickness and adjustment difficulties. And it will usually be cheaper to have your family and friends call you from the U.S., and certainly to rely on letters and email. It is a common trap for American students overseas, especially if they are fortunate 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 develop much self-reliance.

BOWDOIN CONTACT INFORMATION

<u>Question</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Phone/Fax/E-mail/WWW</u>
<u>General study abroad questions</u>	Stephen Hall, Director Melissa Quinby, Assistant Director Off-Campus Study	Tel: +1 207 725 3473 Fax: +1 207 725 3988 offcamp@bowdoin.edu <www.bowdoin.edu/ocs>
<u>Graduation credit Distribution requirements</u>	Julie Bedard Associate Registrar Office of the Registrar	Tel: +1 207 725 3872 Fax: +1 207 725 3338 registrar@bowdoin.edu
<u>Major/minor academic credit</u>	The appropriate Bowdoin academic department(s)	<i>Note important addresses before you leave.</i>
<u>Bowdoin Library Interlibrary Loans</u>	Leanne Pander, Public Services Librarian	lpander@bowdoin.edu ill@bowdoin.edu <library.bowdoin.edu>
<u>Bowdoin housing</u>	Lisa Rendall Associate Director, Residential Life	Tel: +1 207 725 3225 Fax: +1 207 725 3555 lrendall@bowdoin.edu
<u>Dean of Student Affairs issues</u>	Beth Levesque Office Manager, Dean of Student Affairs	Tel: +1 207 725 3149 Fax: +1 207 725 3555 blevesqu@bowdoin.edu
<u>Financial aid</u>	Gary Weaver Associate Director, Student Aid Office	Tel: +1 207 725 3144 Fax: +1 207 725 3864 studentaid@bowdoin.edu <www.bowdoin.edu/studentaid>
<u>Travel clinic</u>	Health Services	Tel: +1 207 725 3770 Fax: 207 725 3905 <www.bowdoin.edu/health/>
<u>Health insurance</u>	Leslie Nuccio Health Services	Tel: +1 207 798 4284 Fax: +1 207 725 3905 lnuccio@bowdoin.edu
<u>Internships Graduate study Pre-law advising</u>	Career Planning Center	Tel: +1 207 725 3717 Fax: +1 207 725 3757 cpc@bowdoin.edu <www.bowdoin.edu/cpc>
<u>National Scholarships</u>	Student Fellowships and Research	Tel: +1 207 725 3607 Fax: +1 207.798.4120 cstocks@bowdoin.edu <www.bowdoin.edu/academics/students /fellowships/national- scholarships.shtml>
<u>Health professions advising</u>	Sue Livesay Director of Health Professions Advising	Tel: +1 207 725 3627 Fax: +1 207 798 7072 slivesay@bowdoin.edu <www.bowdoin.edu/healthprofessions>
<u>Emergency advice and follow-up</u>	Dean on call Dean of Student Affairs	Tel: +1 207 725 3149 or (Security) 3314 Fax: +1 207 725 3555

USEFUL WEBSITES

Air and Rail Tickets

- <www.cheaptickets.com>
- <www.orbitz.com>
- <www.studentuniverse.com>
- <www.travelocity.com>
- <www.kayak.com>
- <www.statravel.com>
- <www.travelcuts.com>
- <www.travelzoo.com>

Disabilities and International Travel

- <www.miusa.org>: Mobility International USA

Embassies, Consulates, Passports and Visas

- <travel.state.gov>: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs
- <usembassy.state.gov>: U.S. embassies and consulates abroad
- <www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/fco>: foreign consulates and embassies in U.S.
- <travel.state.gov/travel/tips/brochures/brochures_1229.html>: foreign entry requirements and contact information for embassies in the U.S.
- <travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html>: procedures for first-time application, passport renewal, and reporting a lost or stolen passport

Health and Safety

- <www.cdc.gov/travel>: Centers for Disease Control
- <travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html#health>: State Department, travel health
- <www.ciee.org/health_safety/health/AIDS_intl_travel.aspx>: information on HIV transmission and HIV testing requirements for various countries
- <www.asirt.org>: Association for Safe International Road Travel
- <travel.state.gov/travel/warnings_current.html>: U.S. State Department Travel Warnings and Consular Information Sheets

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Queer Travelers

- <www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay>: resources for LGBT students
- <www.iglhrc.org>: fact sheets on conditions in various countries from the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission

Money Matters

- <www.xe.com/ict>: Currency Converter
- <www.istc.org>: search engine for discounts for ISIC-carrying students, and an ATM locator, from the International Student Travel Confederation

Travel Guides, News & Viewpoints

- <www.lonelyplanet.com/index.cfm>: Lonely Planet Online
- <www.glimpseabroad.org>: Glimpse Magazine Online, with articles by students
- <www.cfr.org>: Council on Foreign Relations — international affairs and U.S. foreign policy

Voting from Abroad

- <www.nafsa.org/public_policy.sec/grassroots_advocacy/absentee_ballot_procedures>
- <www.fvap.gov>: Information on U.S. absentee voting

Women Travelers

- <www.journeywoman.com>: travel tips geared toward women
- <www.voyage.gc.ca/main/pubs/her_own_way-en.asp>: Her Own Way: A Woman's Guide to Safe and Successful Travel