Part I: Introduction

- Mission Statement
- Why Study Abroad?

Part II: Requirements for International Study

- Preparing for Cultural Adjustment
- Applications Process Checklist
- Getting Your Passport
- Getting a Foreign Visa

Part III: Health and Safety Guidelines for Studying Abroad

- The University's Role
- Guidelines for Participants
- Guidelines for Parents
- Terms and Conditions of Participation—Waiver of Liability and Hold Harmless Agreement
- Respecting Robert Morris University Policies and Procedures While Abroad
- Study Abroad Grading Policy
- Personal Conduct Code
- Health Insurance Options and Insurer Verification Form
- Using the Internet

Part IV: On the Road—Travel Tips for Making Education into an Adventure

- Getting Ready to Go
- Living Wisely on the Road
- Dealing with "Culture Shock"

Part V: Coming Home Again — How to Make the Most of the International Experience

- Dealing with "Reverse Culture Shock"
- Making the International Experience Part of a Life-Long Path Learning
- Preparing a Resume that Highlights the International Experience
Mission Statement
Robert Morris University is committed to preparing our students to become global citizens and to increase the marketability of these students to international organizations. To achieve this, RMU strongly encourages its students to participate in international programs designed to develop and enhance each student's position as a global citizen through studying and participating in other cultures. The priorities of the International Exchange Programs Office at Robert Morris University are as follows:

1. To provide opportunities for students to gain a deeper understanding of other cultures.
2. To encourage students to participate in a study abroad experience during their tenure at Robert Morris University.
3. To focus the energy of the office on developing opportunities for students to gain practical experience and/or intensive language training during the study abroad experience.
4. To offer a wide variety of programs designed to attract students interested in diverse places around the world.
5. To encourage strong faculty involvement with international student experiences.
6. To provide these opportunities at a cost that is comparable to tuition, room and board charges during a regular semester.

Why Study Abroad?

Study Abroad: Fun, Adventure and Other Great Opportunities
Study abroad is a great opportunity for students to learn and grow. It is filled with adventure and new things to do every day. It is a challenging and exciting journey that helps students enhance their personality. It helps you to know about other people's culture and how to be a part of it.

Studying Abroad Can Make a Difference
In the last decade, calls for internationalization of higher education have increasingly turned universities' attention to study abroad programs because they appear to offer an ideal means for the development of students' foreign language skills, cultural knowledge and international awareness. Through surveys, researchers have identified the improvement of foreign language skills, the acquisition of cultural knowledge, and a desire to travel as salient reasons students cite for choosing to study abroad. What now motivates many US students to go abroad is the desire to acquire international knowledge and experience that will give them an advantage in their careers. Today, about five percent of American college graduates have studied or worked abroad, double the number who did so 10 years ago. Research from the Institute of International Education shows that the number of U.S. college students in study abroad programs rose 11.4% in the year ending June 1997 (latest available).

The American People Have Not Gone Global
In the past three decades, every aspect of U.S. business and society has gone global except one -- the American people. At the very time that vast networks of communication, transportation, trade, finance, technology transfer, and politics have made the world a single community, the American people have remained largely monolingual, monocultural, and unaware of what is going on in the rest of the world. This is creating one of the most serious and most costly problems that leaders in business, industry, and government face. Consider the facts:
Only about 7% of American college graduates take at least one course in a foreign language. This is less than half of the number of college students who studied foreign languages thirty years ago.

Americans often assume that the rest of the world is learning English. Therefore many feel that they do not need to learn a foreign language. In reality, although English is the second most spoken language on Earth, only 8.5% of the world's people speak it. This includes native speakers and those who have learned English as a second language.

Americans are three to four times more likely to fail in overseas assignments than Asian or European workers. Experts in international employee training have found that this high failure rate (25% of all U. S. workers sent abroad) is due to the inability of Americans to adapt to new cultures.

It can cost a company up to $1 million in wasted resources and other expenses when an employee comes home prematurely from an overseas assignment. It can be even more costly if the employee does not come home prematurely but rather stays on the job abroad and regularly offends overseas clients and partners through ignorance, personal frustrations and negative attitudes towards the host culture that accompany the lack of cultural adaptation.

Study Abroad is as much a journey across an ocean as it is a journey into yourself

Students who choose to study overseas can start now to develop the essential language and intercultural communication skills that will make them leaders in their fields in the years ahead. As students, they have both the time and the institutional support of well-developed educational systems to help them focus on learning how to cross cultures successfully. Furthermore, they are still young and much more flexible in their personal habits and cultural attitudes than they will be later when established in their careers.

A student who takes seriously the opportunity to study in a foreign land can expect to develop the following kinds of understandings and skills:

1. The ability to communicate in at least one foreign language.

2. A better understanding of how different one culture can be from another and how deeply we are limited if we only know one way of living, thinking, feeling, and behaving.

3. The ability to set aside one's "home" culture and to bridge to new cultures in your attitudes, behaviors, and ways of productively seeing and solving problems.

4. The ability to lead America with greater understanding and confidence into the 21st century through successful day-to-day interactions in the global workplace that has become a reality in every field and every discipline.

5. A deeper understanding of the human experience in all its varieties and global diversity.

The five qualities above are marketable skills in the corporate world, and are at the heart of what employers in the U. S. and around the world are most looking for in new hires as we enter what many are calling the "global" century. Students who study abroad can turn lack of international awareness, currently
one of the greatest weaknesses in America, into one of their greatest personal strengths as they launch careers in their chosen fields. On a personal level, these students will have the human understanding and global awareness that will help them to live meaningful lives as informed citizens of the global community.
Preparing for Cultural Adjustment
In his manual *Studying Abroad/Learning Abroad* (1997), J. Daniel Hess discusses the character traits that are most correlated with success in intercultural adaptation.

Where do you rank? Test yourself (1-5, with 5 being the highest):

1. A **curious rather than a passive** person. This leads you to be adventurous, to try new things, to reach out and learn about new cultures.

2. A **trusting rather than a suspicious** person. In a journey to another culture, you must entrust yourself to others - sometimes others who are very different from anyone you've known. There's no other way to get through the journey!

3. A **brave rather than a fearful** person. Exploring a new world takes boldness and courage, and is not for the weak at heart.

4. A **self-confident rather than an insecure** person. Having a strong self-concept enables you to face new situations with anticipation, not fear.

5. A **laid-back and relaxed rather than an impatient** person. This has to do with time--some people can bend easily to accommodate the pace of the local environment, while others can't.

6. A **teachable rather than a finished** person. It's easy to detect the difference. One person has already closed the book. The other is ready for new experiences and new understandings, ready to change and grow.

7. A **friendly rather than a diligent** person. The latter has a list of things to accomplish, while the former gives first place to people.


9. A **compassionate or empathetic rather than an insensitive** person. Hess is not talking here about the do-gooder, but about the person with the capacity and the will to identify with the circumstances of others.

10. A person with a **sense of humor** rather than a humorless one. Yes, Hess says, laughter is the best medicine overseas also--and, I might add, especially being able to laugh at yourself.

In his *Survival Kit for Overseas Living* (1996), Robert Kohls identifies a number of traits that contribute to cultural adjustment. These include:

1. **Non-judgmentalness**: being able to "roll with the punches" and having a high tolerance for differences in people and the way things are done.
2. **Flexibility, adaptability**: being able to make basic changes in thought patterns, experience new ways of feeling, and adopt behavioral changes.

3. **Communicativeness**: verbal and nonverbal communication skills (listening, observing, responding): being perceptive and insightful.

4. **Warmth in human relationships**: a particular kind of personality that encourages comfortable interaction with others.

5. **Self Motivation**: wanting to be there and wanting to experience new things.

6. **Self-reliance**: having a positive self-concept, integrity, and courage helps you adapt most easily to new cultural situations.

7. **Ability to fail**: one of the most important traits, Kohls believes that the person who is tolerant of his or her own mistakes, and who tries to learn from them, has the greatest potential for rapid and effective cultural adaptation to new situations.

So, how well do you fit this profile?

Remember: each of us has the capacity to grow and change, and few of us are born with the character traits that we end up developing as we mature throughout our lives. If you feel that you have most of these traits, you are already in good shape. If there are some of these that you, on honest self-reflection, believe you would have trouble with, you should take some time to think deeply about the type of experiences you might encounter while studying abroad and your willingness to cope with them. These are good issues to discuss with your parents, your advisors, and the Director of International Exchange Programs prior to making a commitment.

**Applications Process Checklist**

Congratulations on your decision to study abroad! Below is a list of items that you need to complete before you leave for your study abroad experience. You must follow all procedures here at Robert Morris University and while abroad and let us know about any changes (phone number, address, etc.) or we will not take responsibility for your study abroad experience.

- Submit the **Study Abroad Application and Responsibility Form** (they are usually together, but make sure you have both) by the appropriate deadline. For Spring, applications are due September 1st of the previous semester. For Summer or Fall, applications are due February 1st of the previous semester.

- Maintain a QPA of 2.5 or above, be at least a second semester sophomore, and be in good academic and financial standing at the University.

- Download and read the General Study Abroad Handbook, and the handbook of your specific country if available.
- **Attend the 2 mandatory training sessions, no excuses accepted.** An e-mail will be sent to you informing you about the mandatory meeting dates. You can also call the Study Abroad Office for the dates. If you do not attend the meetings you risk the possibility of not being able to study abroad for the upcoming semester.

- Make sure we have your correct RMU e-mail. You can check your RMU account from anywhere in the world. If you choose to use another e-mail, you must forward your RMU e-mail to that account. If we have problems contacting you, you may not be allowed to go abroad. If you fail to stay in touch with us from overseas, we will not take responsibility for your study abroad experience.

- Submit your **Parents Information Form** to the International Exchange Programs Office.

- Submit 2 **Reference forms** by the deadline to the International Exchange Programs Office. (Note: one must be a faculty member, the other is a mentor from your community).

- Complete the **Course Substitution Form** and bring it to the second training session (or the International Exchange Programs Office). Select courses you plan to take abroad and clear these courses with the appropriate RMU Department Head and the Director of Study Abroad Programs. Course Substitution Forms can be picked up at the International Exchange Programs Office or printed off of the Study Abroad website.

- Read, sign, and submit the **Waiver of Liability and Hold Harmless Agreement.** This is a legal document explaining liability.

- Fill out, sign, and submit the **Study Abroad Student Information Form.** This form includes the Code of Personal Conduct, Health and Safety Information, and Insurance Verification.

- Meet with your financial aid advisor to review your situation. Have him or her sign the **Financial Aid Appointment Form** and you can return it to the office by the second training session.

- Submit a copy of your current checksheet.

- If you are an athlete, you must meet with your coach before the second training meeting. Turn in a **signed copy** of the **Department of Intercollegiate Athletics Authorization for a Student-Athlete to Study Overseas Form** to the International Exchange Programs Office.

- When all forms are completed, you will be informed by the Director of International Exchange Programs if you are approved for the program or not. We may ask for an interview as well.

- Get your passport (please use the handout for getting a passport as your guide). Allow 3-4 weeks to get your passport. Once you receive your passport, please submit a copy to the International Exchange Programs Office.

- Complete the application/enrollment forms provided by the foreign educational institution as soon
as possible. Be sure to include an official transcript. Applications, when completed, will be mailed by the International Exchange Programs Office. Once you receive your acceptance letter, please submit a copy to the International Exchange Programs Office.

- Check if the country you will go to needs a visa (See the Study Abroad Handbook or visit the website of the country's embassy: www.embassy.org). A Visa cannot be obtained until you receive your acceptance letter for the foreign institution. The International Exchange Programs Office can also provide you with information on obtaining a visa. It is your responsibility to be familiar with all legal requirements. Passport size photos may be needed for the visa. Note for students going to Australia: the International Exchange Programs Office can supply you with information on how to apply for a visa. The Internet application for Australia is approximately $180 US Dollars (11/02).

- Reserve flight ticket only after receiving approval from the International Exchange Programs Office. If others are going to the same location, it is recommended to coordinate flight dates and arrival times. Please submit a copy of your travel itinerary to the International Exchange Programs Office.

- Arrange housing. This varies by location. For more information, contact the International Exchange Programs Office.

Summary of items to submit:

- Study Abroad Application (and Responsibility Form) - check deadlines!
- Parents Information Form
- Student Information Form (includes health and insurance information)
- A copy of your checksheet
- Waiver of Liability and Hold Harmless Agreement
- Financial Aid Appointment Form
- Course Substitution Form
- 2 References - Personal and Faculty
- An official transcript
- Submit a copy of your acceptance letter received from the foreign school to the International Exchange Programs Office when you receive it.
- A copy of flight arrangements
- A copy of your passport and visa verification (if possible)
- Department of Intercollegiate Athletics Authorization for a Student-Athlete to Study Overseas Form (if applicable)

Getting Your Passport
One of the most important documents you must obtain before entering a foreign country is your passport. This is a relatively simple task, but it must be taken care of immediately. We have prepared a checklist to assist you in obtaining your passport.

Where should I go to get my passport and pictures?
Passports are issued at Allegheny County Court House in Pittsburgh. The Court House is located downtown at 436 Grant Street. (8:30 am - 4:30 pm, Monday - Friday) Some post offices (i.e. Moon) also have applications and can process your passport. Passport photos can be taken at many locations such
as AAA, Kinko's, K-Mart, Eckerd Drugs, and the Allegheny County Court House.

What should I bring when I apply for my passport?

- An official copy of your birth certificate (If you do not have one, see below.)
- One form of picture identification
- Checks and money orders only; cash not accepted
- Two passport photos (if taken at another location)

The Passport Office (or post office) will take care of the processing and you will receive your passport in 20 business days or less.

To Obtain Your Birth Certificate

Birth Certificates are issued at the Pittsburgh State Office Building located at 300 Liberty Avenue near Point Park in downtown Pittsburgh. Upon your arrival in the office you will be required to present:

- your full name and date of birth
- the city and county in which you were born
- your parents' names
- reason for request of certificate

You will have an official copy of your birth certificate in about 20 minutes. The cost is only $4.00.

Getting a Foreign Visa

Your passport identifies you as a citizen of a specific country and allows you to travel in other countries. A visa is official permission by a foreign country for you to reside there for a certain length of time. Each country has a different set of forms and different requirements for obtaining a visa. Some countries do not require a visa for stays of less than 3 or 6 months. Visa information and the appropriate application process are covered in the regular pre-departure orientation meetings for each RMU program abroad. Below are the visa requirements for each of the study abroad programs sponsored by the University.

1. Melbourne, Australia: Student visa required for any length of stay as a student. You can apply for a Visa on the website: www.immi.gov.au Confirmation usually takes about 24 hours. For further information, contact the Australian Embassy in Washington, D. C., Phone: (202) 797-3000; Fax: (202) 797-3168; e-mail: library.washington@dfat.gov.au

2. Athens, Greece: Student visa required for a stay of longer than 90 days. For further information, contact the Greek Embassy; Phone: (202) 939-5800; Fax: (202) 939-5284; website: www.greekembassy.org

3. Mexico: Student visa required only for stays of 6 months or more. For further information, contact the Mexican Embassy; Phone: (215) 922-3834 - Philadelphia; (202) 728-1600 - Washington DC. E-mail mexembusa@sre.gob.mx

4. London, England: Student visas are not required to study in the UK. If you would like any other information, contact the UK Embassy: Phone: (202) 588-6500; Fax: (202) 588-7870; website: www.
5. Rome, Italy: Student visa required, but will be processed here through PCHE (Pennsylvania Council on Higher Education) if the student is going on the RMU Program to Italy.

6. Ireland: Study abroad students are not required to obtain a visa for semester or year long studies. For other legal information, contact the Ireland Embassy - Phone: (202) 462-3939; Fax: (202) 232-5993; e-mail: ireland@irelandemb.org; website: www.irelandemb.org

7. Other locations: Visit www.embassy.org and click your country of interest, or ask the International Exchange Programs Office for further information.
Robert Morris University is committed to making overseas study a positive and rewarding educational experience for every student who participates. This goal can only be reached if all the people directly or indirectly involved in the experience understand and fulfill their roles. The three groups that play essential roles in assuring the success of the international learning experience include the University, individual students, and parents.

**The University's Role**
The International Exchange Programs Office at Robert Morris University works with partner schools around the world to assure the quality of the study abroad programs we sponsor. Listed below are the services we provide to students, as recommended by the Task Force on Health and Safety Guidelines for Study Abroad, a group sponsored by the U. S. Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE). Robert Morris University will:

1. Assure that there is always an on-site Program Advisor for each of the formal Study Abroad Programs who is properly trained to orient RMU students to their new surroundings, to advise and direct them in their academic work, and to be available 24 hours per day to handle any problems or emergencies that may arise. This contact person is usually a contact person at the foreign university.
2. Conduct periodic assessments of health and safety conditions for each overseas program, and develop and maintain an emergency preparedness and crisis response plan.
3. Provide health and safety information for prospective participants so that they can make informed decisions concerning participation in the program.
4. Notify prospective participants that home campus services and conditions are not replicated at the overseas site.
5. Provide orientation to participants prior to the program and, as needed, on site, which includes information on how to deal with health and safety issues, potential risks, and appropriate emergency responses.
6. Consider health and safety issues in evaluating the appropriateness of an individual's participation in a study abroad program.
7. Provide participants with information about how to obtain coverage.
8. Evaluate the local environment of the program, including program-sponsored events, excursions and other activities, on an ongoing basis and provide information and assistance to participants as needed. Use reasonable care when selecting any third party to provide products and services.
9. Provide information on how to find and to access medical and professional services available at the overseas site.
10. Provide appropriate and ongoing training on health and safety guidelines and practices for program directors and staff.
11. Communicate applicable codes of conduct and the consequences of noncompliance to participants. Take appropriate action when aware that students are in violation.
12. Inform participants when and where the responsibility of Robert Morris University ends, and what aspects of their overseas experiences are beyond the University's control.

**Guidelines for Participants**
It is very important for students to understand and to accept that the quality of their overseas experience depends, above all, upon themselves. International study should not be seen as a sponsored vacation from the day-to-day routine of life at the home institution. Study abroad is a challenging and difficult
undertaking. It requires students to take responsibility for their decisions and behaviors in ways that often bring personal growth and maturity in areas that are left undeveloped while living at home. Participant decisions and behaviors not only determine the quality of the experience abroad, but they have a major impact on health and safety as well. To assure a healthy, safe, and rewarding study abroad experience, students must take responsibility in the following areas:

- Assume responsibility for preparing themselves to go abroad. Students who do not attend the scheduled Pre-departure Training Sessions will not be permitted to go abroad.

- Read and carefully consider all materials issued or recommended by Robert Morris University that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in host countries.

- Consider their personal health and safety needs when accepting a place in a program.

- Make available to RMU accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary in planning for a safe and healthy study abroad experience.

- Obtain and maintain appropriate insurance policies and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers.

- Inform parents, guardians, and any others who may need to know about their participation in the study abroad program, provide them with emergency contact information, and keep them informed on an ongoing basis while abroad.

- Understand and comply with the terms of participation and codes of conduct of the program, and obey host country laws.

- Be aware of local conditions, norms, and cultural expectations when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to the program staff on site or other appropriate individuals.

- Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well-being of others, representing Robert Morris University and their nation proudly and with dignity.

- Accept the consequences of their own decisions and actions.

- Upon return, participate in sessions for returning study abroad students, evaluate your experiences while abroad, and provide feedback to assist the Robert Morris University International Exchange Programs Office in future program planning.

Guidelines for Parents
Parents, guardians, and family members are often left out of the preparation for study abroad. This is unfortunate. Persons close to students who choose to go overseas play an important role in the health and
safety of the participants by helping them make good decisions and by influencing their behavior overseas. Parents, guardians, and family members can help and support the student abroad by carrying out the following activities:

1. Obtain and carefully evaluate health and safety information related to the program that is provided by Robert Morris University or by other sources.

2. Be involved in the decision of the participant to enroll in a particular program.

3. Engage the participant in a thorough discussion of safety and behavior issues related to the program.

4. Be responsive to requests from RMU for accurate information about the participant.

5. Keep in touch with the participant during his or her time abroad and alert the Director of International Exchange Programs at RMU should serious problems arise.

Terms and Conditions of Participation--Waiver of Liability and Hold Harmless Agreement

Fees and Payments: If I am admitted to the Robert Morris University Study Abroad Program, I, the undersigned student, understand that I will be charged by RMU for tuition at a rate equivalent to tuition and the general fees charged on campus for the corresponding time period. I also understand that I will be charged the institution's published private room rate for accommodations except in those specific programs that require me to pay housing on site. When asked to pay housing directly to RMU, I agree to make payment in accordance with the published schedule for payment of tuition, fees and other charges. I understand that RMU's tuition does not cover the costs of meals, transportation, personal expenses, medical insurance, passport and visa fees. I understand that participation in the program does not include any right to register at other institutions in the same location and that no fees will be paid on my behalf except to the designated host institution.

Course load: I understand that as a participant in the Robert Morris University Study Abroad Program, I am required to register for a full course load (as defined by the host institution) for which grades will be awarded unless advance written permission is obtained to take a specific course on a pass/fail basis.

Withdrawal: I understand that if I am offered and accept admission to the Robert Morris University Study Abroad Program and subsequently I decide to withdraw from participation, I must notify the International Exchange Programs Office in writing. I further understand that if I accept an offer of admission to a Study Abroad Program, deposits and/or advance payments related to my participation may be made to affiliated institutions. I authorize the institution to make such deposits and/or advance payments, and I understand that should I withdraw voluntarily at any time or if my acceptance to the program is rescinded, I will be charged for any deposits and/or advanced payments made on my behalf via my RMU student account. I further understand that if I withdraw, I remain individually responsible for any unpaid balance.
I accept that decisions made after the Study Abroad Program has begun and while the program is in operation are personal and that I am individually responsible for decisions to withdraw from the program, courses or return home early. I understand that there can be no guarantee of credit hours or refund should I withdraw from the program before the completion of scheduled instruction and examinations. I further understand that if I withdraw, I remain individually responsible for any unpaid balance due an affiliated institution.

Cancellation: I understand that all decisions concerning the cancellation or modification of the Robert Morris University Study Abroad Programs are made by the International Exchange Programs Office in consultation with responsible authorities abroad and that RMU's established policies on refunds will apply only after all financial obligations to affiliated institutions have been settled. The institution's policies on refunds may be modified only if a decision is made by the International Exchange Programs Office to cancel a study abroad program.

Emergency Medical Treatment: If I am admitted to the Robert Morris University Study Abroad Program, and as a protection in case of medical emergency occurring during my participation, I authorize in advance the representative of the RMU Study Abroad Program to secure whatever treatment is necessary, including the administration of an anesthetic and surgery.

Insurance: I am hereby informed that the institution strongly recommends that students studying abroad obtain valid overseas insurance coverage to protect against the costs of hospitalization and physician care in the event of sickness, accident, disability, and death, and to offset expenses of unexpected emergency evacuation and repatriation, trip cancellation, or loss of property. I understand that I am solely responsible for obtaining said insurance. I acknowledge that I am aware that there may be risks associated with foreign travel and I am voluntarily participating in this program.

Conduct: If I am admitted to the Robert Morris University Study Abroad Program, I understand and accept that as a participant, I am required to observe the laws of the country in which I will be residing and all academic and disciplinary regulations in effect at the host institution. I further understand and accept that while participating in the program I will remain enrolled concurrently as a degree candidate at RMU and, as such, I agree to adhere to the institution's Statement on General Conduct and Code of Academic Integrity. I realize that violation of the foregoing and/or academic failure or disciplinary disturbances may constitute grounds for my expulsion from the program and referral of any violations to RMU's Office of Student Affairs.

Limits of responsibility: I understand that the institution in no way acts as an agent for the affiliated or host institution, transportation carriers, hotels or other suppliers of services connected with this program. Accordingly, I understand and agree that Robert Morris University, its Board of Trustees and employees, are not responsible or liable for any injury, damage, loss, accident, delay or other irregularity which may be caused by any vehicle, or the negligence or default of the host institution, or any company or person engaged in providing or performing any of the services for the host institution involved in this academic program. Further, I acknowledge and agree to accept all responsibility for loss or additional expenses due to delay or other changes in the means of transportation, other services or sickness, weather, strikes, or other unforeseen causes. I further acknowledge and understand that the institution assumes no liability whatsoever for any loss, damage, destruction or
theft, or the like, to my luggage or personal belongings, and that I have retained or have been advised to retain adequate insurance, or I have sufficient funds to replace such belongings, and will hold RMU harmless from all liability therefore.

I understand and acknowledge there are certain dangers, hazards, and risks associated with foreign travel and study abroad, and in consideration of being permitted to participate in such program, I, on behalf of myself, my family, heirs and personal representatives, agree to assume all risks and responsibilities surrounding my participation in the program, the transportation, and in any other activities undertaken, either personally or as an adjunct to the program, and in advance release, discharge, waive and covenant not to sue Robert Morris University, its Board of Trustees, officers, agents and employees. This Release and Waiver is for any incident whatsoever which may involve me arising out of or related to any loss, damage or injury, including, but not limited to, bodily injury and death, that may be sustained by me or my property while in, on, upon or my transit to the host country, the host institution, or any other place where I may travel while participating in this program.

Signature: I indicate by my signature below that I have read the terms and conditions of participation and agree to abide by them. I certify that all statements and responses I have made in this application are correct. I agree that the confidential supporting documents relating to this application shall not be disclosed to anyone other than to authorized faculty and administrators of RMU and of the host institution abroad, persons hired to make local arrangements and/or persons otherwise permitted or required by law. I understand that the appropriate RMU offices will be informed of my intention to study abroad. I further authorize the release of my name and local and permanent addresses/telephone numbers to fellow participants.

I have read the above and understand the same and am signing this Terms and Conditions of Participation, Release and Waiver of Liability, and intend to be legally bound by it.

__________________________________________    ________________
Student Signature                                            Date

Respecting Robert Morris University Policies and Procedures While Abroad

During their time abroad in established RMU Study Abroad Programs, students remain officially registered at RMU. As such, they are still subject to RMU's standard policies and procedures. Students who behave in a manner that disrupts the program and the lives of their fellow participants may face: 1) dismissal from the program and premature return home, and 2) appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with Student Judiciary System guidelines as presented in the RMU Guide to Undergraduate and Graduate Programs and Student Life. Students should especially be mindful of the following RMU policies that are enforced at home and abroad.

1. General Standards of Conduct. The student is obligated to behave in a manner which is not disruptive or destructive to the academic, living/learning, and social goals of Robert Morris University.

2. Alcohol Policy. Resident students who are of legal age are permitted to consume alcohol.
3. Public drunkenness or disorderly behavior while under the influence will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

4. **Drug Policy.** Individuals charged with use, possession or distribution of narcotics or other controlled substances can be disciplined under the University's conduct code and may be prosecuted under criminal statutes. Even if the criminal justice authorities choose not to prosecute, RMU can pursue disciplinary action which may result in dismissal from the University.

5. **Sexual Harassment.** RMU is committed to a work and academic environment that encourages excellence in all aspects of collegiate life. This environment includes freedom from all forms of sexual harassment for all students, faculty, staff, and applicants who seek to join Robert Morris in some capacity.

6. **Firearms Policy.** Individuals charged with possession of firearms can be disciplined under the RMU conduct code and may be prosecuted under... criminal statutes. Even if the criminal justice authorities choose not to prosecute, RMU can pursue disciplinary action which could result in dismissal from the University.

7. **Student Grievance Policy.** RMU has the following student grievance procedure for the resolution of complaints: A student is encouraged to discuss his or her concern with the superior of the activity which gave rise to the difficulty. If the student is not satisfied with the response of the supervisor, he or she is directed to the department head, dean, or vice president. In addition, the President of Robert Morris University maintains an "open-door policy" for all student complaints and concerns.

**Study Abroad Grading Policy**

**Grading Policy for Study Abroad**

Study abroad grades will be brought in as actual grades or grade equivalencies; however, these grades will not be factored into the GPA. (This will be noted on the student’s transcript.)

**Policy for Handling Study Abroad Grade Complaints**

Students from Robert Morris University studying abroad are informed that while they follow all the policies and meet the requirements of Robert Morris University, they will also be subject to all the policies, procedures, rules and requirements of the host institution while attending those institutions.

Accordingly,

1. All the grading policies governing grading at the host institution will apply to the visiting students from Robert Morris University.

2. Appeals and complaints regarding grades received should be addressed to the host institution following grievance procedures of the host institution if there are any.
3. It is the responsibility of the visiting students to ascertain the appeal and grievance procedures of the institution they are visiting.

4. The International Exchange Programs Office at Robert Morris University will be available to provide counsel.

5. In keeping with well-accepted principles of academic freedom and academic prerogatives in the United States, no administrators or faculty members of Robert Morris University will attempt to interfere with the grading policies of the host institutions abroad.

6. All credits and grades received from the host institution will be entered by the registrar without change.

**Personal Conduct Code**

**Policy Statement**
The goal of the Study Abroad Program is to offer each participating student one of the most memorable and most rewarding learning experiences possible. To avoid the kinds of problems that can turn your time abroad into a negative disappointing experience not only for yourself, but for the people around you, for the host institution, and for the reputation of Robert Morris University, the following rules will be enforced. The institution and your foreign hosts will show flexibility, understanding and support in most areas of your adaptation to the new cultures and new situations you will encounter abroad. However, students who violate any of the following rules will face immediate dismissal from the program and mandatory return to the U.S. Upon return to RMU, students who have committed any of the following offenses will face the standard processes of disciplinary action as it is outlined by the University’s Student Judiciary System Policy Statement.

**Conduct Code**

1. Any student found to be in possession of illegal drugs will be terminated from the program, may face legal action in the country where the violation occurs, and will be returned to the United States as expeditiously as possible.

2. Any student who breaks the law while living or traveling abroad will be subject to legal penalties by the country where the infraction occurs and will face termination from the program and immediate return to the United States.

3. Any student who willingly inflicts physical harm or serious emotional distress upon another person or persons will face dismissal from the program and return to the United States.

4. Any student who creates a serious and ongoing source of disruption to the program through alcohol abuse, inappropriate public behavior, or reckless endangerment of others will be subject to dismissal and repatriation to the United States.

5. Any student suspended from enrollment at the school due to academic or behavioral misconduct will
face dismissal from the program and return to the United States.

I acknowledge that I have read the above conduct rules and that I agree to abide by them during my participation in the Study Abroad Programs offered by Robert Morris University.

**Health Insurance Options**

**Background Information**

Students choosing to study abroad must provide evidence to the Director of International Exchange Programs that they do have health insurance that covers them while outside of the U. S. Participants have a number of insurance options available to fit individual budgets and individual needs. If you have further questions about student health insurance, please contact the International Exchange Programs Office.

The importance of having adequate insurance cannot be stressed enough. Many important circumstances can be covered by insurance and need to be considered when traveling and studying abroad. Medical emergencies, evacuations to medical facilities or one’s home country, the repatriation of one’s remains in the instance of accidental death, and the transportation of one’s family to the foreign country in the case of an emergency are all very important things to consider in choosing insurance coverage.

**The following are several insurance options:**

**Option 1:** If a student has health insurance on their parents' plan that covers major medical expenses (hospitalization, accidents, etc.), they may wish to purchase minor coverage at their host university for incidental illness such as flu, colds, and other minor problems. Remember to check with the foreign institution about whether or not you must choose their insurance (i.e. Australia).

**Option 2:** If students need to obtain additional insurance on their own, they can research information for health insurance that will cover them overseas at several web sites. Listed in the following table are insurance companies that offer information and insurance packages for students studying abroad.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Insurance Company</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CMI Insurance Specialists</td>
<td><a href="http://www.studyabroadinsurance.com">www.studyabroadinsurance.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Insurance Services International</td>
<td><a href="http://www.culturalinsurance.com">www.culturalinsurance.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Underwriters</td>
<td><a href="http://www.globalunderwriters.com">www.globalunderwriters.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Harbour Group</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hginsurance.com">www.hginsurance.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Insurance Managers, Inc.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.heritage-ins.com">www.heritage-ins.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HTH Worldwide Insurance Services</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hthworldwide.com">www.hthworldwide.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Education Exchange Services, Inc.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.foreignsure.com">www.foreignsure.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDEX Assistance Corporation</td>
<td><a href="http://www.medexassist.com">www.medexassist.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Option 3: When students purchase the International Student Identity Card, the card automatically offers major medical health insurance. There are very large deductibles and limited coverage in this program. It should be supplemented by a more complete health insurance policy.

**Using the Internet**
The internet provides many websites useful in preparing for the Study Abroad experience. The following examples are only a small listing.

**Study Abroad.com Handbook:**
http://www.studyabroad.com

**General Travel Information:**
http://www.ciee.org
http://www.istc.umn.edu/Travel

**European Trains:**
http://www.raileurope.com
http://www.eurail.com

**Student Travel Info:**
www.sta-travel.com

**Guides to cybercafes or public access computer terminals:**

**International:**
www.curiouscat.com/travel/cybercafe.cfm
http://www.netcafeguide.com/index.html
http://www.curiouscat.com/travel/cybercafe.htm

**Other resources:**
http://www.CafeMagazine.co.uk (Cafe magazine)

**Internet Guide to Hostels:**
http://www.hostels.com/hostel.menu.html

**United Hostels of Europe:**
http://www.webcom.com/hostels

For other interesting and useful information, you can also refer to the [links:60661] section of the Study Abroad Website
Getting Ready to Go

Students are responsible for making their own travel arrangements for all of the RMU Study Abroad Programs. The International Exchange Programs Office plays an active support role in this process. Following are essential travel tips and on-the-road advice to assist students in their planning.

(Acknowledgment: Much of the following information has been adapted from information provided by Pennsylvania State University's Office of International Programs, http://www.upenn.edu/oip/sa/index.html)

Booking Planes, Buses, Boats, Trains, Gondolas, Yaks, Dogsleds, Camels, etc.
Keep it simple. Book your flights, get your Eurail Pass, and make any other travel reservations early. Many student have found the best rates with STA Travel. Still look around for deals, because you never know what you can find on special, but STA’s job is to make global travel an affordable possibility for poor students. They have been doing it for years. They buy blocks of tickets on major transportation carriers and then sell them at the very best rates available only to students and teachers. Unless your aunt works for an airline and can get you free (or nearly free) tickets, or your uncle has a plane and would like to fly you personally around the world, try STA Travel. They could save you hundreds. Phone: (412) 683-1881. Address (in Oakland, near the Cathedral of Learning at U. Pitt): 118 Meyran Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213. Or visit www.sta-travel.com.

Other student-recommended sources for tickets:
www.aesu.com
www.orbitz.com

No matter where you fly, plan ahead. That will save you the most money and, especially around the holidays and spring break, help guarantee you get the flight you want.

How Much Luggage Will I Really Need? Less!
To decide how much luggage to take overseas, pack everything you think you will need into your bags. Then grab all your bags and carry them to the nearest bus stop. On your way back from the bus stop, give everything you no longer want to take to street people. They will appreciate it and so will you. Trust us. The major airlines will allow you two large suitcases and one or two carry-ons (be sure to check with your airline for their specifications). Generally, each large suitcase is limited to 70 pounds. Anything over that may be subject to an additional per pound fee. Call your airline carrier if your luggage is over the weight limit and find out what extra charge to expect.

If there are things you would like to mail ahead, the best policy is to wait until you are settled at your overseas address. Then have your family put the boxes in the mail. Have packages sent to you via post office parcel post (surface/sea mail). Packages can be insured. Mailing packages can be quite costly, but there are special cheaper rates for book packages. The cost for all packages will depend upon the weight and destination. For specific rates contact your local post office. Surface/sea mail
Parcel post will usually take six to eight weeks to arrive. Remember that most packages sent abroad will be subject to being opened and searched by customs officials in the country of destination, and you may be contacted by customs officials for a statement about the contents of your package. Avoid sending packages as much as possible since it takes a long time to receive them and they are expensive.

Packing Tips
Most students who go abroad later say that they took about twice as much stuff as they actually needed. That becomes painfully clear as they drag their bags from the airport to bus stops, taxi stands, train stations, and sled dog drops on the way to their apartments overseas. Following is a suggested list of the items you can be sure you will need. The first thing you should do is go through the list and decide which things you can buy overseas. Then pack the remainder in your bags.

Clothing

- ESSENTIAL: 1-2 pairs of water-resistant walking shoes (make sure that your shoes are comfortable and broken-in. Your feet will feel every meter of overseas travel that you do, especially when you are loaded down with luggage).
- Waterproof sandals
- Socks, underwear
- Nightwear
- Shorts
- Skirts/trousers
- Shirts/blouses
- Sweater/sweatshirt
- Windbreaker/rain jacket
- Jacket/Light coat
- Bathing suit
- Hat
- A few nice outfits
- Winter coat, gloves, scarf, hat (as needed)
- Check the dress code for classes at your destination

Medicine and Toiletries

- Prescription medicine (enough to get you through your entire stay; carry a copy of the Prescription in case you're questioned at customs)
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Soap and shampoo
- Comb and brush
- Sunscreen, moisturizers, cosmetics, lip balm
- Deodorant
- First aid kit
- Contraceptives and condoms
- Aspirin/Tylenol/Ibuprofen
- Feminine Products
- Razors/blades
- Extra eyeglasses and sunglasses
- Extra contact lenses and cleaning solution
- Tweezers, nail files/polish, etc.
- Scissors and a sewing repair kit

**Miscellaneous**

- Watch
- Camera and film (film can be bought there; bring extra camera batteries)
- Flashlight (batteries can be bought)
- Address book
- Journal
- Books, guides, maps, train schedules, handbooks
- English language paperback novels (to read and swap with friends)
- Day pack/small, compressible knapsack
- Stuff bags/plastic storage zip-lock bags
- Umbrella (if rainy climate; can be purchased)
- Luggage lock and tags
- Battery-operated alarm clock
- Music/cassette tapes/CD's (portable, battery-operated CD “walkman”)
- Adapter and voltage converter/appropriate plugs (see The Electricity Problem)
- Small American gifts for friends, host families, etc.
- Small locks for backpack; bike chain and padlock for locking luggage on trains
- American cookbook/favorite family recipes, measuring cups and spoons
- Linens (if not provided by program site)
- Towel/washcloth

**Documents, etc.**

- Passport and visa(s) + photocopies
- Tickets and rail passes
- International Student ID card, driver's license
- Hostel membership card (can be purchased at any STA Travel office, $25)
- Money belt or neck wallet
- Cash, travelers checks, credit cards, calling card
- Copies of the above for reporting lost or stolen cards and travelers checks (also leave a copy at home)
- RMU Academic Checksheet
- A list of emergency contacts and phone numbers to carry with you at all times

Buy linens when you get there, if not provided. For staying in hostels, you will need a sleep sack rather than a sleeping bag. An alarm clock, camera, money belt or pouch, shoulder bag or backpack and good walking shoes are also useful items. Take some pictures of your family and home to cheer up your room and encourage conversation about your life in the U.S.
The Electricity Problem: The standard electric current in many other countries around the world is 220 volts. In the U.S. we operate on 110-120 volts. Also, the electrical plugs are a different configuration. This means that, to use an American appliance, you must have BOTH a plug adapter AND an electrical voltage transformer. You can buy these before you go (e.g., at Radio Shack or Wal Mart) or you can wait to purchase them at your destination. Or (and this may be your best option), you can wait and buy inexpensive electrical appliances at your destination. However, if you are going to travel throughout Europe, for example, you'll still need plug adapters for each country you plan to visit, since the French system is different from the British system is different from the German system.

RMU students studying abroad in the past have recommended just waiting to buy a hairdryer or other small appliance at your destination. "Don't bring many appliances--they'll probably blow up--especially items that heat up!"

Computers Abroad? Yes, all RMU partner schools do have them. Many students ask whether they should take laptops for use overseas anyway. If you plan to do so, one concern is whether your computer software is set up for compatibility (re. printer drivers) with the computer technology available on site. All RMU partners abroad have E-mail access for students, as well as other standard computer services available on our home campus.

Travel Warning: Do not take expensive jewelry or luxury items with you overseas which would mark you as a worthwhile target for a casual thief or pickpocket. Carry your airline tickets, travel documents, credit cards, travelers checks and cash in a money belt or neck pouch while traveling.

Laundromat/Dry Cleaning Facilities: Your program's location will determine whether or not you have access to these services. In many locations, people still hand-wash their laundry. This is true in Europe as well, where washing and drying clothes can run up to $8-12 per load. You can beat the system by doing what some Europeans do: wash in the tub or sink by hand, then hang your clothes out to dry.

Local Transportation: The best way to learn about a city is to walk. Not only is it healthy and without cost except for shoe leather, but walking at different hours of the day and by different routes leads to new and unexpected discoveries at every turn. A year spent walking the streets of a city will give you knowledge of the lay of the land and an understanding of the life of its people, which probably cannot be matched by most residents.

The only danger--albeit a very serious one--is remembering to watch the traffic lanes and patterns carefully at street crossings. In some countries (e.g., the UK, Australia) vehicles travel in the left lane as opposed to the right lane as in the U.S. You must be very attentive when crossing streets when you are unfamiliar with traffic patterns. There will be times when the burdens of the day may force you to look for alternative means of transportation such as by taxi or more likely by underground/metro or bus.

Rail Passes: Wherever your travels may take you, chances are that trains will be your choice of transportation. Rail travel is usually the most affordable and simplest way to get from place to place, and it's one of the best ways to make new friends. See Internet listings for web sites with train information. You also get a timetable with your railpass.
If your railway plans are restricted to Europe, you should consider one of the many Eurail or EuroPass options. The choice of most travelers under 26 is one of the youth passes that allow five or more days of second-class travel over a two-month period. If you want a bit more comfort, or if you're 26 or over, first class Eurail Passes are available. Students generally buy two Eurail Passes to cover the four-month semester abroad. However, the passes may be purchased in the U.S. Check the cost, they may be less expensive in the U.S. Many students start out with one, and if another is needed, they have family or friends send it over. With all Eurail Passes, you can avoid lengthy ticket lines at stations. Just hop the train and go! See STA (or any travel agency) for further details.

Youth Hostels: A Night's Rest at a Student's Rate: Youth Hostels are cheap, reliable, and a great way to meet other young people from around the world. Generally hostels provide meals or cooking facilities and are much sought after, so it is advisable to book in advance. The YWCA and YMCA both have hostels. If you want to have access to International Youth Hostel Federation (IYHF) hostels, you must first become a member ($25 annually - September 2002) which you can do by contacting the American Youth Hostel Association (AYH National Office, P.O. Box 37613, Washington, DC 20013; tel.202-783-6161) or the Delaware Valley Council AYH tel. 2159256004). You might want to purchase the annual IYHF Handbook and Guide to Budget Accommodation for listings. Also, sleep sacks will be needed, and can be bought through IYHF. See Internet listings as well.

Legal Information

Income Tax Information: Attention Year Abroad and Spring Semester Program Participants: If you have earnings which require you to file federal and state income tax returns, you must remember that you will be out of the country between January 1 and April 15. The best thing to do about this is to make arrangements with your parents to send you the necessary state and federal forms and other documentation so you can file your tax and return them by mail. Persons temporarily living abroad may normally request an extension on the deadline for filing federal income tax. The extension usually is until June 15. The best advice is to contact the American Consulate or Embassy in your host country overseas for information on your tax obligations; they may have 1040 forms and may even be willing to help you with questions.

Power of Attorney: If your signature will be needed for any official or legal documents during your absence, you should make arrangements for "power of attorney" to be held by an appropriate person to act on your behalf. You can do this by writing out in detail the specific duties that the person you choose will execute. Take this to a notary and have it notarized.

Property Insurance: It is wise to have insurance to cover at least partially any loss of money because of trip interruption or cancellation as well as loss of baggage and personal effects either while traveling or living abroad.

A final word about property loss/theft insurance: Note that many homeowner's insurance policies contain a clause about this coverage extending worldwide. Normally a copy of the police report filed at the time of loss or theft will be required by the insurer before any claim will be considered. Also, advice to obtain insurance against theft of one's possessions is often mentioned in student welfare publications; we therefore assume that theft is not an altogether uncommon occurrence and you would
be well-advised to take preventive measures.

**Customs:** Check custom’s limits and laws about what can be brought back into the United States.

**Living Wisely on the Road**

**Money and Budgeting:**
The overall cost of living abroad can sometimes be higher than at home because you are in an unfamiliar environment and are confronted with an almost endless array of entertainment possibilities and attractions.

It is important to keep in mind that the students with whom you will be studying are all managing to survive and even to enjoy life on fairly limited means. Everything you can learn from your new peers will help you to conserve your own funds. The following suggestions may be helpful:

- Make both weekly and daily budgets and stick to them. Learn the value of the money wherever you are and be consistently alert for special student rates and discounts wherever you go. Be careful not to fall into the habit of equating one unit of a foreign currency with $1.00. Exchange rates can be looked up on the Internet on a daily basis (i.e. [www.xe.com/ucc/](http://www.xe.com/ucc/)).

- Take advantage of less expensive alternatives wherever possible. Cook for yourself, and save even moderately priced restaurant outings for special occasions. Unless you are using a collegiate dining service, never purchase breakfast, which you can easily prepare for yourself. Always try to take your main meal in the subsidized collegiate cafeterias (if available), either at noon or before you leave for the day. This will leave you with a smaller, less expensive evening meal or snack to purchase or prepare for yourself.

- Plan your entertainment and recreational activities around the availability of free, inexpensive and discounted events.

- Plan to shop in street markets or chain supermarkets and avoid specialty shops and convenience stores that add a 20-30% markup. Part of your experience abroad should include learning how to get the best available value for your money. Try to put off making major purchases as long as you can. You may find that you can do without the item or will, at the very least, give yourself an opportunity to shop and compare goods and prices.

- Use your International Student Identification Card (ISIC) to take advantage of special rates and discounts on travel, accommodation, entrance fees and some entertainment.

- When you travel, hostels or modest bed-and-breakfast accommodations are usually cheaper than hotels. However, if you travel with others, sharing hotel room can actually be less expensive than hostels.
If you plan on traveling extensively, you may want to get an International Youth Hostel Federation membership card, which would be valid for their student hostels abroad. If you can use it enough, it will save you money in the long run.

Take care of your belongings and safeguard your travelers checks and cash. Losses from carelessness are difficult enough at any time. They are even more troublesome abroad, and pick pocketing is universally common, especially in large European cities like Rome and Paris, or on the trains at night. If you are in Europe, take advantage of the exemptions for overseas visitors, who are not from countries of the European Economic Union, from paying the value-added tax (VAT) on goods, but not on services. The trouble is worthwhile only if you are buying expensive items, and only certain stores participate in the program. Ask the store for a certificate of exportation when you make your purchase (they will need to see your passport), and present the certificate and the goods to the customs officer for validation when you leave the country. You must take the goods out of the country within three months of their purchase. Lines at airports are long so leave plenty of time. Once you depart, you can claim a refund of the tax from the store by mail—if possible, obtain it in US currency. You cannot reclaim VAT for goods you do not carry out of the country with you.

### Banking and Currency Exchange

For regular access to money during a one semester stay abroad, students are advised to use a check debit card. You may also use a Visa/Mastercard but this will be more expensive in interest charges unless you pay off your bills regularly. You can access your home account quickly and conveniently with a check debit or Visa/Mastercard. However, before you leave the U. S., be sure to verify with your bank that your credit card or bank card is on the PLUS or CIRRUS network. This allows you to withdraw money from bank machines around the world. Also verify with your bank that your PIN Number will be valid overseas, and find out exactly what the charges will be for using your card internationally. There is usually a small transaction charge for withdrawing cash overseas. Be sure to notify your bank that you will be overseas for several months. Don't just rely on one card or form of payment—always have multiple options, in case one fails.

If you use a Visa/Mastercard, make sure you have someone at home to pay your bills regularly, or, better yet, deposit a large sum of money in your credit card account before you leave, providing a surplus that you can draw upon. Beware: plastic can be dangerous because it is easy to overspend. Keep careful records of your spending. This means keeping all credit card receipts and verifying in dollars how much you spend each week. Very Important: always keep the emergency phone numbers to report a lost or stolen credit card and your credit card number on a separate piece of paper. Keep this paper in a safe place in your luggage while on the road and in your apartment when at school. Do not carry it in your wallet.

For students who plan to stay more than one semester abroad, it is advisable to open a bank account in the foreign country and to transfer money from home directly into the foreign account. You should consult your own commercial bank to find out about the various ways to send money abroad. There are several different ways, including purchasing an international bank draft in foreign currency and cabling money from one bank to another. The foreign
currency bank draft is the easiest way to transfer funds and the service charge is not excessive except for small amounts. It must be drawn on a major bank and should be made out for deposit to an account in your name. You take the draft with you and once you have opened an account with it at a convenient branch of the named bank, you can have subsequent drafts sent to you, which will clear in seven to ten days. Interbank cabling follows the same principle and is faster in an emergency, but carries a higher service charge.

- For emergency money on the road, carry Travelers Checks. If you lose your credit card, you have an immediate safety net to fall back on. These may be purchased in foreign currency or US dollars from any number of companies, such as AAA, American Express, Barclay’s, Citicorp, Thomas Cook, etc. They are safe because they are refundable if lost, but you must have a record of the check numbers lost in order to have them replaced. **Therefore, write down all travelers check numbers and put them in a separate place from the checks.** As a precaution, leave a list of the numbers with someone in the US.

- It will also be helpful for you to arrive with some of the foreign country’s currency in various denominations already in your pocket. This will save you the trouble of having to exchange your dollars immediately and will let you pay for local transportation and other incidentals. Foreign currency may be ordered in advance from a local US commercial bank for a small service charge, or may be purchased on demand at large US banks in major cities. You can also get foreign currency at most major U. S. airports on your way abroad.

**Health Care on the Road:**
You are advised to have a physical check up before you leave the U. S. This may alert you to health issues that can be taken care of very effectively if you know about them in advance. **Remember, as a traveler in a foreign land, you will probably walk much more than you do normally and you may experience many new physical demands in your daily routine.** If you have any concerns about your ability to walk a lot or to be on your feet for long hours while traveling, bring them up with your physician during the examination. Other tips:

- If you are sexually active, use condoms for disease prevention as well as other contraceptives for pregnancy prevention. Take a supply with you as conditions of availability and purchase may be limited, and conditions of manufacture and storage may be questionable. If you use prescription contraceptives, be sure to arrange with your doctor for an adequate supply to cover you for the time period you will be away. **Remember: none of these methods is foolproof and none of them protect against all diseases. The only foolproof method is abstinence.**

- Take good care of yourself while traveling. Don't wear yourself down, watch out for excessive exposure to heat, **drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration, and get plenty of sleep.**

- Overseas Injections: The Center for Disease Control recommends that diabetics or other persons who require routine or frequent injections should carry a supply of syringes and needles sufficient to last their stay abroad. It is not uncommon to do this, however, be aware that carrying needles and syringes without a prescription may be illegal in some countries. Make sure you carry a letter from your doctor explaining the need.
• Food and Water. In areas where chlorinated tap water is not available, or where hygiene and sanitation are poor (Western Europe is generally as safe as the U. S.), travelers are advised that only the following may be safe to drink:

1. Beverages, such as tea and coffee, made with boiled water.
2. Canned or bottled carbonated beverages, including carbonated bottled water and soft drinks.

Where water may be contaminated, ice (or containers for drinking) should also be considered contaminated. It is generally safer to drink directly from the can or bottle of a beverage than from a questionable container. Wet cans or bottles should, however, be dried before being opened, and surfaces that come into direct contact with the mouth should first be wiped clean. If no source of safe drinking water is available, tap water that is uncomfortably hot to touch is usually safe. After allowing such hot water to cool at room temperature in a thoroughly cleaned container, it can be used for brushing teeth as well as for drinking.

• Food should be selected with care to avoid illness. In areas of the world where hygiene and sanitation are poor, the traveler should be advised to avoid unpasteurized milk and milk products, such as cheese, and eat only fruit that has been peeled personally by the traveler.

• Since the sources of the organisms causing travelers diarrhea are usually contaminated food or water, precautionary measures are particularly helpful in preventing most serious intestinal infections. However, even when people follow these general guidelines for prevention, they may still develop diarrhea. Diarrhea is nature's way of ridding the body of noxious agents; intestinal motility serves as the normal cleansing mechanism of the intestine. Most cases of diarrhea are self-limited and require only a simple replacement of fluids and salts lost through diarrhea. Fluids that are readily available, such as canned fruit juices, hot tea, or carbonated drinks, may be used. Travelers may prepare their own fruit juice from fresh fruit. Iced drinks and non-carbonated bottled fluids made from water of uncertain quality should be avoided. It is strongly recommended that the traveler consult a physician rather than attempt self medication if the condition is severe or does not resolve itself within several days, if there is blood and/or mucus in the stool, if fever occurs with shaking chills, or if there is persistent diarrhea with dehydration.

• For more information on Health Issues, contact the International Travelers Hotline of the Center for Disease Control at 404-332-4559.

• Prescriptions. If you have to take medicine containing habit-forming or narcotic drugs with you, you should carry a doctor's certificate attesting to the prescription. Label all medicines. Prescriptions from doctors in the US are usually not refillable at foreign drugstores. If you take any medication regularly (including contraceptives), consider taking along a large enough supply to last the length of your stay. You should also verify with a local physician or your family doctor what kinds of medication are available in your particular country that would serve as generic substitutes for your regular prescriptions. If you wear contact lenses, consider taking extra solution and a special sterilizing unit that can be used overseas, as well as a spare set of
lenses or glasses.

The Law Abroad
It is important to remember that while you are visiting another country you are subject to the laws of that country. You should also be aware that legal protection and personal rights that we take for granted in the U.S. are often left behind when you depart. The principle of "innocent until proven guilty" is not necessarily a tenet of legal systems abroad. The use of illegal drugs is one area where students will find little leniency in foreign countries.

Penalties for Involvement with Illegal Drugs
Despite repeated warnings, drug arrests and convictions of American citizens are still on the increase overseas. If you are caught with either soft or hard drugs overseas, you are subject to local and not U.S. laws. Penalties for possession or trafficking are often the same. If you are arrested, you will find the following:

- Few countries provide a jury trial.
- Most countries do not accept bail.
- Pretrial detention, often in solitary confinement, may last months.
- Prisons may lack even minimal comforts: bed, toilet, washbasin.
- Diets are often inadequate and require supplements from relatives and friends.
- Officials may not speak English.
- Physical abuse, confiscation of personal property, degrading or inhumane treatment, and extortion are possible.
- If convicted, you may face one of the following sentences:
  - Two to ten years in most countries.
  - A minimum of six years hard labor and a stiff fine.
  - The death sentence in some countries.

The message in all of this is simple: Do not buy illegal drugs. Do not use illegal drugs. Do not be around other people who use illegal drugs. For those students who plan to study in Europe, do not foolishly assume that because marijuana is legal in Amsterdam it is accepted in the rest of Europe. Different countries in Europe have different drug laws. Students caught with marijuana in Switzerland will find that very harsh penalties are in effect.

U.S. Embassies and/or Consulates

Embassy Aid Abroad
There are several useful pamphlets about travel and residence abroad prepared by the Bureau of Consular Affairs of the US Department of State. Two are of particular interest, A Safe Trip Abroad and Your Trip Abroad. You can usually pick them up for free when you visit your Passport Office if you live in a major city. Otherwise you can order them for $1 each from the Superintendent of Documents, US Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. It is recommended that US citizens residing abroad for any extended period of time register with the local US Embassy or
Legal Advice
If your passport is lost or stolen, notify local authorities and the American Embassy at once. After an investigation determining identification, the embassy will issue you a three-month temporary passport.

If you are arrested and/or detained abroad, a consular official can visit you, inform you of your legal rights, and provide you with a list of reliable local attorneys and physicians. The consular officer protests, both orally and in writing, any violations of the prisoner's legal or human rights. He visits the prisoner as often as needed during the pretrial period and at regular intervals thereafter. He also provides humanitarian assistance. For example, insisting that the prisoner receive needed medical and dental care and adequate food and clothing. Finally, a consular official tries to ensure equal treatment under national laws during all phases of the legal proceedings against you.

A consular officer cannot provide certain services. For example, he cannot post bail, give legal advice or recommend a specific foreign lawyer, "spring" a US citizen from jail, or interfere in an arrested person's relationship with his/her lawyer. Keep in mind that bail provisions as we know them in the US are rare in other countries. Pretrial detention without bail is quite common. Prison conditions are often deplorable in comparison with conditions in the US.

Health Problems
In case of illness or accident, embassy people can make sure you are in an approved hospital, check on the fairness of billing procedures and explain your payment options. For smaller problems, the embassies provide lists of English-speaking doctors and dentists in various areas. Remember, adequate health insurance coverage is your responsibility.

Money
While officially prohibited from furnishing cash or loan money, embassy personnel can suggest possible sources of financial assistance. They may also cable someone back home for money for you and deduct the cost of the cable when your cash arrives.

Using the Office of Overseas Citizens Service
Should your family need to contact you while you are traveling (e.g. after the program is over), emergency assistance is available through the Citizens' Emergency Center of the Office of Overseas Citizens Services (OCS) operated by the State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs. That office is open from 8:15 am to 10:00 pm, Monday through Friday, and can be reached at 202-647-5225. For emergency communication between 10:00 pm and 8:15 am, or over the weekends, contact can be made through the Overseas Citizens' Services duty officer at 202-647-1512, or at 202-647-5225 on Saturdays from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. They can, for example, transmit emergency messages from your family, provide protection in the event of arrest or detention while abroad, transmit emergency funds to destitute nationals when commercial banking facilities are not available, etc. It would be wise for you to provide your family with at least a tentative itinerary so that in an emergency, they can give the State Department some idea where to begin looking for you.

Staying In Touch With Home
Your Overseas Address: You will receive the address for your study abroad stay during specific orientations for different locations. Note that you can expect long delays in regular mail delivery in some countries. In France, mail strikes occur all too often, which can delay mail for up to several weeks. Be sure to have other channels of communication open with your contacts back home. E-mail is an excellent way to keep in touch with family and friends. It's fast and inexpensive. In addition to your email access at your foreign university, you will find cybercafes in most major cities (especially in Europe), and a search of the Internet will find you a list of cybercafes in the locale you may be visiting.

Telephone/E-mail/Television
Be prepared to experience more difficulty finding access to phones, e-mail, and television while in foreign countries. Although all of these services are available at RMU's overseas study sites, there may be fewer machines available and less opportunity to use them than you are accustomed to in the U.S. Note: VCRs in different countries have different standards for tapes, so our American videotapes will not usually play in foreign VCR's, and vice versa. If you buy a videotape at a tourist site overseas to bring home, make sure you buy the version compatible with American VCR's.

Long Distance Calling Cards
Most European countries have phone card systems for pay phones. You buy the prepaid phone cards at post offices or tobacco shops ("tabacs" in France), and use them in the pay phones for either local or long-distance calls, measured in units. You can also make long-distance calls from your residences in some locations.

It is very useful to use a long-distance calling card when you are traveling abroad. However, CHECK THE RATES, since some of these companies (AT&T, MCI, Sprint, etc.) add exorbitant surcharges for overseas calls. We suggest that you look into the new "call-back" overseas long-distance phone services (e.g. Telegroup), some of which offer rates from international locations to the US at less than one-third the normal rate. Many companies also issue pocket-sized directories with the dialing codes you will need to call out of foreign countries. Get a directory. You will need it when traveling. If you still have trouble, with an American card, you simply call the number on the back of the card to access an American operator who can help you in English.

The pace of daily life overseas and other cultural differences
Students are often surprised at the endless variety of ways that people do things differently in different countries. Be prepared for a significant change of pace in literally everything. Here are a few examples of what to be prepared for.

- **The 24-Hour Clock:** Many countries run on military time - having a 13:00 o'clock, 14:00 o'clock, etc. This is most evident in all public timetables, like train schedules, bus schedules, planes, etc. Don't panic. It's the same time system used by the U.S. military. Just subtract 12 from anything between 13 and 24 o'clock and you'll have the same numbers you are used to back home.

- **New Holidays:** Yes, different countries have different holidays. This means that after walking an hour across town to mail an important letter and to buy stamps, you will find the post office locked up tight as a drum. If you look closely, you may find a little message indicating that it is
closed for a strange sounding holiday you have never heard of in your life. You may want a
calendar at a bookstore shortly after you arrive in the country. Ask for one that has all the
holidays marked. It will save a lot of wasted walking.

- **Mid-day store closings:** In much of Europe, especially in the Mediterranean region, the lunch
is the main meal of the day, and most businesses close for 2-4 hours in the early to mid-
afternoon. So, for example, if you decide to go out at lunchtime and do some afternoon
shopping and errands, you may be very surprised to find that nothing is open, not even the post
office! Find out what the normal business hours are in the community in which you will live and
go to school, and don't assume that they are the same as "normal" American business hours.
Also, know which day of the week stores are closed—it may be Sunday, but then again, it
maybe another day.

- **Customer Service:** One of the things about France, in particular, that seems to shock
American exchange students is the way French service representatives, food servers and store
clerks treat customers. In America, we are trained that "the customer always comes first" and
"the customer is always right." A very different cultural attitude exists in France. Rather than
believing that these people exist to serve us (the customer), the French who are customers
consider themselves honored to be the guests and patrons of these merchants. When you walk
into a store in France, you always catch the eye of the proprietor or salesperson and say
"Bonjour, Madame" or "Bonjour, Monsieur"; you are never invisible. If you are browsing, be sure
to say goodbye and thank you when you leave. Also, do not be impatient. Restaurant service in
France is much more leisurely than in America. Waiters and waitresses do not always bring
menus or take orders right away. They are flattered when you ask their recommendation, and
when you treat them as persons of expertise.

- **Cultural sense of space:** Be prepared for a very different sense of space in other countries.
This applies to interpersonal distance (for example, how far people stand from you when
talking, or how close people get to you in public places) as well as our expectations about how
much space we are entitled to (the size of apartments, rooms, parking spaces, cars, etc.). Since
we Americans are generally accustomed to (and expect) broad open spaces, we often feel
cramped and claustrophobic with the spatial norms of other countries.

### The Dreaded Metric System
The U. S. loves the pound, the quart, the gallon and the mile. The rest of the world has a more
standardized system, which you will probably have to learn when overseas, or you will be forever
confused. It's the same metric system that they never really taught you in middle school. Now's your
chance to learn it! Following are some basic conversions to help you. The ones you will use most
often are in bold print. You might use them when trying to determine how far it really is to the next
town when on the road, or when you are buying fresh fruit and vegetables at the market, or if you ever
need to gas up a car or motorcycle.

#### Metric Conversions

1 inch = 2.54 centimeters
A Useful Formula for Measuring Distance
On the road, you may have trouble judging the distance between locations because all the road signs are in kilometers. No problem. To convert from kilometers to miles, divide the number of kilometers by 8, then multiply the number you get by 5. For example, 80 kilometers divided by eight equals 10. Multiplied by 5, this equals 50 miles.

Temperature: Just How Hot is This Place, Anyway???
It takes a bit of time to get used to temperature telling overseas. You will need to know the Centigrade scale. In degrees Centigrade, freezing is at 0 and boiling is at 100. Not a bad concept. Rather logical. In application, however, it's a bit of a bear to go from Centigrade to Fahrenheit. To do so, multiply degrees Centigrade by 1.8 and then add 32. To reverse the procedure from "F" degrees to "C" subtract 32 from F and divide by 1.8. Good luck. Take a calculator. The best advice is to practice thinking in terms of Centigrade temperature without making the conversion. It will help to know that your body temperature is about 37 degrees Centigrade. That means that when the weather hits the 30 + degree mark Centigrade, it's a hot day. Eighty degrees Fahrenheit comes out to about 27 degrees C, etc.

Hmmm, What Size Do I Wear Abroad???
During your time overseas, you may want to do some shopping. The prices will never be lower on top quality clothing than what you find in Italy, Greece, Spain, or in Eastern Europe. The problem is getting the right size. Here are a few things you will need to know.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dresses, Sweaters, Underclothing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Women's Shoes/Stockings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>British / U.S.</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>8.5</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>9.5</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>10.5</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continental</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Men's Shirts (collar sizes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>British</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>14.5</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>15.5</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>16.5</th>
<th>17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>15.75</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continental</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shoes-Men and Women

| British | 3-3.5 | 4-4.5 | 5-5.5 | 6-6.5 | 7-7.5 | 8-8.5 | 9 |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-
| U.S.    | 4.5-5 | 5.5-6 | 6.5-7 | 7.5-8 | 8.5-9 | 9.5-10 | 10.5 |
| Continental | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 |

Dealing with "Culture Shock"

"Culture shock" is a term often used to describe an array of emotional and physical reactions to the stresses of adapting to a new cultural environment. The term culture "shock" may be misleading, since the symptoms of this condition can appear quietly and without great trauma. However, almost EVERYONE who adjusts to living in another culture experiences a well-documented cycle of emotional reactions, though the intensity of these reactions may vary from person to person.

1. **Spectator Phase** - Once you are in your new environment, the stages of cultural adjustment begin with a sense of intense excitement, exhilaration and fascination with the new culture: this is sometimes called the "Spectator Phase." During this period, you are mostly passive, but alert and observational. At this point, you are like a tourist: sight-seeing, taking pictures, writing in your letters home, "Wow! This place is so cool. I can't believe I'm actually here. It's awesome! The food is great, the scenery is amazing...I'm going to love it here!"

2. **Increasing Participation Phase** - As you become more involved as a participant in the day-to-day aspects of your new life's routine, you may begin to feel minor frustrations accumulating. Trying to buy groceries in a market when no one speaks English, having to walk up hundreds of steps at the end of a long day on campus, or realizing that it's just too expensive to call home and talk to your best friend in the U.S. every few days among other things. "Increasing Participation" stage is the most crucial in determining how well you can adjust to your new culture. If you dwell on the negatives and the
frustration, you may find yourself spiraling downward. On the other hand, if you accept these difficulties as challenges to accept, rather than unpleasant situations to avoid, you can begin to gain more satisfaction, self-confidence and self-esteem as you become more involved in your new culture. The successful sojourner will acquire new patterns of behaving, feeling and responding that are appropriate to the new culture--realizing, of course, that these patterns are often in contrast to the behaviors you learned at home.

3. **Shock Phase** - As the most basic level, living in another culture causes you to confront your own value system. Tom Lewis and Robert Jungman, in *On Being Foreign*, write:

- There is a deep sense of the ambiguity of one's position: on the one hand, the newly acquired cultural identity opens significantly new vistas of experience, yet on the other hand, those vistas are gained through an awakening, which is both intellectual and profoundly visceral, to the insight that all experience--even the experience of one's self is culturally determined. Hence, the sensation arises that life's deepest values are fundamentally a fabrication, an illusion, a kind of grand pretense supported by the vast majority of people.

What is called the "Shock Phase" usually occurs after you feel that you have had success at adapting to your new cultural environment. You may have been getting along quite well for some time, and then find yourself, for no easily identifiable reason, feeling depressed, indifferent or even angry. You may not recognize this as "culture shock" --but it usually is. You may have physical symptoms related to stress (headaches, intestinal disorders), or you may find your resistance to new viruses or infections has been lowered, and you will often get sick. Of course, being sick in a foreign land, away from the comforts of home, can reinforce your depression and feelings of loneliness or alienation.

In *Studying Abroad/Learning Abroad*, J. Daniel Hess lists some of the symptoms of culture shock:

- Fatigue, discomfort, generalized frustration

- Excessive preoccupation with personal cleanliness, manifested in worries about food, drinking water, bedding, and dirt; preoccupation with personal health, minor pains, skin rashes, etc.

- Fear of physical contact with natives (hosts); excessive fear of being cheated, robbed, or injured; a refusal to learn their language or practice common courtesies

- Irritability at slight provocations, criticisms; fits of anger over delays and other minor frustrations; constant complaining about the way things are done in your host country

- A strong desire to interact with, and be dependent upon, people of your own nationality

- A terrible longing for home, for letters, for home cooking; staring absent-mindedly; being disengaged from the present; in some cases, the strong desire to return home

- Decline in the quality of your work; loss of inventiveness, spontaneity and flexibility
Culture shock is your psyche's way of forcing you to confront your own cultural identity and to learn about other people and their world view. It encourages you to learn new skills in problem-solving and coping, skills which will be extremely valuable to you throughout your life (especially in the business world). As you work through your own fears, anxieties and problems, you gain new insights in terms of self-realization and self-affirmation. In short, you become a stronger and more mature person. You grow up.

4. **Adaptation Phase** - If you successfully pull through the "shock phase" without dropping out of school and catching the next flight home, then you are well on your way to the "Adaptation Phase." This is a condition that will seem well worth the wait, once you get there! At this point, you have acquired the proficiency to interact comfortably in the day-to-day social interactions of your new culture. You actually begin to appreciate the little quirks of your new culture rather than complaining about them. In effect, you learn to live more like a native does, rather than like a tourist. You embrace the new culture's values, at least while you are among them. This is when you really gain the most from your study abroad experience.

5. **Re-entry Phase** - The longer you stay in another culture, you are more likely to have a number of ups and downs as you face recurring challenges in cultural adaptation, but your adjustment becomes stronger and stronger. The last phase of culture shock is often called the "Re-entry Phase": it's coming home! Surprisingly to many of us, when our study abroad period is over and we eagerly return home, we must adjust to our home culture. We may find ourselves mourning the loss of our newly-adopted culture. This may surprise us and catch us off guard, and may occur over a period of months or even a year after returning home.
The study abroad experience does not end when you step off the plane at the end of the journey. In some ways, that is when the experience becomes most interesting not only to you, but to other people with whom you have regular contact. During the time abroad, so many unique experiences are compressed into one semester or year that it may take many years for you to process all that has been seen, felt, and learned. Once you are back home again, there is time to reflect upon and to learn from all that has been experienced. Through conversations with family and friends about specific experiences, through class discussions and assignments that have international connections, and in the process of day-to-day living and working, you will find that the time abroad not only remains an ongoing part of life, but becomes the source of much insight, understanding, and greater personal maturity.

The one place that international program participants are most likely to realize the value of their overseas experience is when they apply for work internships or full time jobs in their fields. During job interviews, they will find that employers are very interested in the unique experiences they have had abroad and the personal qualities that they developed by breaking away from the ordinary path of classroom-based education. This section informs students about re-integrating themselves back into life "at home," and gives valuable tips on how to incorporate the international experience into their personal and professional lives.

Dealing with "Reverse Culture Shock"
One young woman who spent a semester in the RMU Monaco Program on the French Riviera remembers painfully her first night back home with her family in the Pittsburgh area. Her parents went out and bought a gallon jug of wine to welcome her home. They served the wine in ordinary plastic cups. Over dinner, they were eager to tell her about all the family ups and downs that she had missed during her months abroad.

She interrupted now and then to try to describe for them the beauty of the sun setting on the ragged Mediterranean coastline below her balcony in the French fishing village where she had lived. She tried to tell them about how the wind smells in the evening in Monaco after blowing down from the French Alps through the fields of lavender and rosemary and thyme of Provence. She spoke of how fresh hot French bread tasted after a long night on a train to Paris, and how French coffee in a small, childlike cup made her mouth numb the first time she tasted it.

But she soon realized it was useless to try to tell her family about the things that had come to mean a great deal to her. They hadn't been there. They couldn't relate to what she was saying, although they tried very hard. Things that she had come to care about very deeply were just words without images or relevance to them. They listened politely, nodded, and then quickly changed the subject back to what was going on in their world.

There were a lot of things she couldn't even begin to tell them. Little things. For example, she couldn't say that she had just left a world where people don't buy wine in gallon jugs. Or that, if they did, they would never serve it in plastic cups. She couldn't explain that wine making is an art form in France and that only street beggars buy the cheap wine that comes in gallon jugs. She couldn't tell them that in Monaco and in France, it would be an insult to honor a family member's return by drinking wine out of plastic cups. She knew that they would have been hurt and would have accused her of thinking she was "too good" for them.
The student's first night home in nearly half a year ended with her running in tears from the dinner table to her bedroom. It took a couple of weeks to settle back in to her home routine.

Most people who go abroad have similar experiences in the first weeks after their return. It's called "reverse culture shock." It's often painful. It's never easy. But it is also a wonderful sign. It is an indication that the student has changed while abroad. He or she has learned new behaviors, new attitudes, and even a few new values. The experience abroad has taught the student to enjoy new foods, to appreciate new customs, to want to do things differently and to talk about new topics, issues, and ideas.

Once the returning student accepts and faces the personal changes and stops expecting the people back home to relate on an overseas level, the re-adaptation to home life can move forward more smoothly. This doesn't mean that the experience abroad should be pushed out of mind and forgotten, however. Quite the contrary. The student needs to continue to build upon the new parts of self and the new awareness of the world that have emerged during the time in another country. The following section offers tips and guidelines for keeping the international experience alive long after the return home.

Making the International Experience Part of a Life-long Path of Learning
It has long been said that traveling is an education in itself. Students learn what this saying really means during their weeks and months of living and studying in a foreign land. One of the worst things that can happen is for a student to return home and to go on with life as if the international experience never happened. That makes study abroad an expensive waste of time, money, and energy.

There are many ways not only to keep the overseas experience alive and fresh, but to build upon it. One of the wisest things a study abroad student can do is to make the international experience part of her or his lifelong path of learning about the world. This can be valuable as part of one's career path. It is equally valuable on a personal level for gaining a much deeper sense of what the human experience is all about and one's own place in the human story.

Some things students can do to continue the learning experience begun abroad include the following:

- Keep in touch with current ideas and issues in the foreign land. This can be done quite easily if a small effort is made to read a regular national newspaper and to watch international news updates on any of the major television or cable channels. Also, instead of renting only American films at the local video store to watch for pleasure on weekends, students can rent a popular foreign film now and then from the culture where they have lived. Such films will often bring up memories of personal experiences and places they visited while overseas, providing deeper insight into where they have been and what they have lived through.

- Take classes and attend lectures or seminars upon events and topics related to the country, culture, and people abroad. Not only will such things deepen understanding of personal experiences, but they provide valuable expertise that will prove very useful later on the job and in future interactions with people from abroad.

- Incorporate people from other countries and cultures into friendship networks. Students who have spent time abroad often find that they have a lot in common with people from abroad who are studying, living, or working here in the U. S. Also, once a student has been a "foreigner in a foreign
land," there is a much greater understanding of how difficult it is to be a newcomer without family or friends around to support and cheer one along. It can be a positive experience to reach out to foreigners here just as other people hosted and welcomed the student into their lives when he or she was abroad.

- Join foreign language clubs and other cultural/ethnic organizations. This is especially valuable for those students who master a foreign language while abroad. Very few Americans are able to speak a foreign language. Those who do are increasingly sought after in all career and educational fields. Joining a foreign language club or a cultural organization representing a specific nation allows returned students the means to maintain language skills and to deepen cross-cultural understanding.

- Become involved as a mentor in the RMU Study Abroad Programs, providing insights and inspiration to new students interested in having an international experience. Upon returning home, your expertise will be greatly needed to help recruit new international-bound students, plan and carry out pre-departure and re-entry trainings, and provide one-on-one counseling and support to students who are planning a trip or who are going through culture shock in a foreign country and need someone to talk to who's been there and done that--and lived to tell about it! You'll find that sharing your experiences will make you realize what an expert on intercultural living you really have become.

**Preparing a Resume that Highlights the International Experience**

On a practical level, one of the most valuable benefits of the international experience is a professional resume that is guaranteed to catch the attention of prospective employers. Students who successfully complete a semester or a year overseas should include an entire International Experience section on their resume. Students should also be ready to answer questions about the specific items included in their International Experience section. Usually prospective employers will express a great deal of interest and curiosity about the personal experiences, insights and perspectives the student gained abroad.