

Study Abroad Survival Skills

For a successful experience, students need to be prepared academically and personally for their host country. Use these reflection prompts to do just that!

Academic Expectations Abroad

- *What is my program's academic calendar, course time grid, grading and exam timeline?*
- *Will my class(es) be more discussion-based or lecture-style? How will I be assessed? Remember that many academic systems abroad will count the final exam as 60% or higher of the final grade.*
- *How heavily weighted will my final exam be for most of my courses? How many other assignments will be considered in my final grade, at what percentage? How will I manage the expectations of my academics abroad to ensure I pass with a C or higher and transfer my courses back to CWRU?*

Course Transfer Expectations

- *How do I get courses approved for transfer back to CWRU? What do I do if the information I provide is not detailed enough for the academic representative to grant a course transfer?*
- *What will I do if I do not hear back from the academic representative or if they don't respond with complete information for a course transfer (department code and number) or digitally sign the form?*
- *How will my credits convert from the program abroad? If the credit conversion means the credits transferred back from a course abroad do not match the number of credits for the corresponding course at CWRU, what will the impact of that difference in number of credits be?*

Social and Cultural Expectations

- *What is the political and cultural orientation of my host country? Is it more or less religious, conservative, liberal? How does that affect the social norms and expectations of society such as:*
 - *acceptable dress and clothing, access to reproductive care, catcalling?*
 - *sexual activity and appropriateness of public displays of affection, use of pronouns?*
 - *should I consider adapting any behaviors of my own to ensure I feel fully safe and secure?*
- *What is the drinking culture: how accessible is alcohol? How is intoxication perceived by locals?*
- *What is the culture of sustainability? Where/how can I recycle? How will I adapt to these norms?*
- *What do I need to normal about normal business hours and practices, such as tipping?*

Geographical and Political Expectations

- *Which countries border my country and what is the relationship between those countries? How might their political and cultural norms affect my experience traveling and studying abroad?*
- *How do my home country's politics affect the politics and individuals of my host country? What might they want to know about my home country's politics or social norms? How will I answer those questions accurately and sensitively? Is there anything I should not mention or discuss? How will I avoid or change that topic if it arises? What else might locals be interested in about my home?*
- *Are there any famous tourist destinations (World Heritage Sites, etc.) nearby I intend to travel to? What lesser-known sites are nearer to where I'm studying that I could visit? How will I balance my time between international and local travel, school and tourism? How should I prepare?*