Dear Family Member:

Your student has been accepted to a CU Boulder education abroad program. This experience presents unique challenges and opportunities that differ from those a student has while attending a U.S. institution of higher education. We’re delighted to be part of that experience abroad.

The Education Abroad staff at CU Boulder will work with your student to ensure that he or she has a positive academic and cultural experience abroad. In preparation for the program, your student has been given access to education abroad handbooks and additional program-specific information, all of which is available on our website. We invite you also to look over the material available on our Parents & Family page.

All education abroad students are directed to complete a series of online orientation modules and to attend an in-person program-specific orientation sessions. These orientations include information on topics such as health and safety, cultural adjustment, packing and budgeting and program site specifics. We encourage students to share the information learned from these orientations with their families.

Because parents and other family members play an important role in a student’s preparation, we have designed this guide for you. It includes general information you may need at the different stages of the abroad experience. It also has contact information, a parent checklist, and a parent resource list. We hope you will find it useful. For information on the details of your student’s particular program we encourage you to read through our Education Abroad Handbook and any program-specific materials your student is given.

Education abroad is a unique educational experience for each and every student. We hope your student will have the best experience of his or her life while abroad. We send our students off with much affection and best wishes. Please contact us if we can be of service while your student is away.

Sincerely,

Education Abroad Staff
University of Colorado Boulder

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Education Abroad at the University of Colorado Boulder has prepared this handbook. It is based on similar materials developed by the following organizations. We would like to gratefully acknowledge their assistance:

- International Task Force on Safety and Responsibility in Study Abroad
- University of Kansas Office of Study Abroad
- NAFSA: Association of International Educators
- Syracuse University’s Division of International Programs
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In Case of Emergency

In case of an emergency that cannot wait until the next business day:
- **Education Abroad Emergency**: (303) 653-1671
- **CU Boulder Police**: (303) 492-6666

How to Contact Us:

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Administrative Matters

Before Your Student Departs

Parental Access to Student Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) protects your student’s educational records. It limits the information that can be discussed with anyone – even you as parents – unless they specifically allow you to access their information.

While overseas, you may want to talk to the Office of International Education, Office of Financial Aid, or Bursar’s Office, if problems arise with bills, registration, or financial aid. Your student can provide blanket permission on the Student Information System by providing consent to the Office of the Registrar.

Travel

For most programs, students are responsible for their own flight arrangements. Even when group flights are available, the student must make all plans through a designated agency. More information is available through the resources in students’ checklists and the Education Abroad Handbook.

It’s smart to wait until your student has been accepted by CU Boulder and the provider or host institution (if applicable) before purchasing airfare. Be sure to check the actual dates of the program (which may not be available until 2-3 months before the program begins). This helps to avoid extra expenses if plane tickets are booked for the wrong dates.

Passports

By now your student should have a passport that is valid for at least six months beyond the end date of his or her program. We also strongly recommend that at least one parent or guardian have a valid passport while your student is abroad. This would be critical if your student has an emergency and you wish to travel to be with them in a time of need. You may also be making plans to visit at the end of the program so we urge you to apply for or renew your passport before the program begins.

Education Abroad Costs

The types of costs associated with studying or interning abroad are very similar to the costs associated with studying here at CU Boulder. Students will need to pay for tuition, fees, room, board, insurance, books, supplies, personal expenses, and transportation costs that are specific to their particular program. Some of these costs will be included in the program fee and will be charged to your student’s Bursar account. Costs not included in the program fee such as books, personal expenses and airfare and possibly room and board (depending on the specific program) are the direct responsibility of your student.

The Program Costs page shows the exact program fee and what it covers, an estimate of other program costs not covered by the program fee, and a payment and withdrawal fees & deadlines.

Financial aid may be used on CU Boulder education abroad programs. Please see the Financial Aid section below.

Students have digitally signed a Participant Contract that specifies their financial obligations for the program. An example of the contract can be found on the Parents & Family page. Click on the link to the Sample Participant Contract.

Paying the CU Boulder Education Abroad Invoice

The CU Boulder Bursar’s Office produces the education abroad bills using a paperless internet billing system called CUBill&Pay. With CUBill&Pay, your student will automatically receive an e-bill notification at his or her colorado.edu e-mail address stating the new bill is available on myCUinfo. Have your student sign you up to receive these emails if he or she has not already. For more information about how the bill will be broken down, scholarships will be applied, etc., please see the Education Abroad Handbook.

College Opportunity Fund (COF)
CU Boulder education abroad programs are neither COF eligible nor will the credit earned count against the 145 lifetime credit hour limits.

A more detailed explanation about COF and education abroad is available on the Education Abroad Finances page.

Financial Aid
If your student receives federal, state or institutional financial aid, including loans and/or scholarships, she or he should have reviewed a Financial Aid PowerPoint available on the MyCUAbroad checklist. It can also be found on the Financial Aid Information page.

Details related to the disbursement of funds must be arranged before the student leaves the U.S. This is the student’s responsibility but we encourage you to remind him or her about it. Avoid delays in getting aid or refunds!

We recommend that all students receiving financial aid select a person to serve as power of attorney to take care of financial affairs while they are out of the country. Information about what a power of attorney is and where to get power of attorney forms is in the Education Abroad Handbook.

In Case of Family Emergencies
If you have an elderly or critically ill family member or relative, we strongly recommend doing some contingency planning before your student leaves for the program site. Decide now, rather than in a time of shock and grief, what to do in case of an emergency. Will your student fly home? If not, think about ways to lend psychological support to him or her during a time of grief and separation from loved ones.

Enrollment during Education Abroad
All CU Boulder education abroad students are registered on the CU Boulder campus by Education Abroad in a generic "Education Abroad" course (STDY 1001). This course holds their place at CU and keeps them enrolled as an active student. When we receive transcripts from overseas, the generic course is replaced by the coursework taken abroad. Students on academic year programs are registered for both semesters abroad by Education Abroad.

Academic Questions
All participants are asked to complete the “Course Planning for Major, Minor and Certificate” form and the “Course Evaluations for A&S Core and MAPS” form prior to departure. These forms are available for your student to complete on his or her application checklist page, which is accessed by logging into the MyCUAbroad website. Questions about how specific coursework completed while abroad will apply towards degree requirements are generally referred to the college or major department and students are urged to discuss their plans with their academic advisor(s). This process helps students and academic advisors by providing a starting point for further discussions regarding remaining degree requirements.

While Your Student Is Abroad

Calling Home
Parents frequently ask their student to call home immediately upon arrival. We understand your concern, but be aware that it simply may not be possible.

On some programs, students are put onto a bus, go through various formalities, and are off to a housing situation where they are not immediately in a position to make an international phone call.

Their U.S. cell phone may not work overseas unless it is compatible with international GSM standards. Even if it is, they will have to purchase and use plug-in "SIM cards" to make calls at local rates.

They may also be exhausted, or forget. Ask your daughter or son to call within a certain timeframe (within 1-2 days of arrival is recommended) to allow her or him time to get situated. Or, have your daughter or son send a quick message via an internet-based app in the first 24-48 hours after arrival. Wi-Fi is sometimes a lot more accessible at the beginning of a program.
Withdrawning from an Education Abroad Program
We expect that your student will do extremely well, both academically and culturally. Sometimes, though, personal or academic problems prompt a withdrawal after the program has begun. If your student expresses a desire to return home, we suggest you urge him or her to contact us first.

In our experience, problems such as housing, finding the right courses, relationships with teachers, or cultural adjustment can be resolved without resorting to drastic measures.

- Urge your student to explore all options for solving the problem.
- Each program has a contact or resident director charged with assisting students on the program. This person can often sort out small problems before they become too large to handle.
- If this doesn't work, the student should contact our office and work with their Program Manager here.
- Although withdrawal might be the best alternative for the student, we ask you to consider all aspects (personal, academic, financial) of the situation carefully before advising your daughter or son to return to the U.S.

Please keep the following in mind if your student wants to withdraw from an education abroad program:

- **Withdrawal Fees**: Each program has a published withdrawal fees & deadlines policy outlining financial obligations which must be met. To see this schedule, go to the [Program Costs](#) page and choose the appropriate program and term from the drop-down list.

- **Official Notification**: In the event of a withdrawal, the student must inform Education Abroad in writing (an email from the CU email account is required) before the withdrawal is considered official.

- **Financial Aid**: The CU Boulder Office of Financial Aid must be notified. Withdrawing from the program could cause aid to be adjusted. Any education abroad scholarships awarded by CU Boulder must be repaid, and other types of aid might also have to be reimbursed.

Correspondence from CU Boulder
The official form of communication at CU Boulder is email. Because your student is registered at CU Boulder, email and/or mail may be sent to him or her from other campus departments. Students are expected to check their CU email accounts regularly or have it forwarded to an email address they will use abroad. We also advise students to change their local and permanent addresses to one central address in myCUinfo. Be sure to consult with your student about what you should do with mail that you might receive from CU Boulder.

If you have any questions about something you receive from CU Boulder, please contact Education Abroad first. The information may not be correct because education abroad students are often exceptions to campus rules and requirements. It is always best to check with us first.

Liaising with Other University Departments
The Education Abroad staff serves as a liaison between your student and various offices on the CU Boulder campus, including the Office of Financial Aid, the Bursar’s Office, the Office of the Registrar, and other student services offices. We can also work with academic departments, though it is more efficient for your student to contact his or her academic advisors directly.

When Your Student Returns

Registration for the Semester Following the Program Abroad
Boulder campus degree students will be able to register online during their regular time assignment for the next semester on the CU Boulder campus. Students register on the web via the myCUinfo portal. All students are enrolled in a 15 credit hour education abroad course during their semester abroad, which will count towards their attempted CU hours. Their attempted hours are used to determine their registration time assignment priority, so the education abroad course ensures that education abroad students are not penalized when registration time assignments are determined.

Registration works the same way it does on campus, so there should be no problems for your student if he or she is prepared. Before leaving campus, he or she should talk to his or her academic advisors to determine what
courses to take upon return. Using the “Course Planning for Major, Minor and Certificate” form allows your student to have a list of preferred courses when the registration period begins. If your student believes that he or she will not be able to register during the assigned time due to lack of internet access or any other reason, please ask your student to contact Education Abroad so that an alternative registration method can be arranged (other options can be arranged).

Registration for the summer semester generally begins in March; for fall in early April; and for spring in early November.

**Housing in Boulder**

**Residence Hall Reservations**
Applications are available online the first week of February each year. Students can contact [Housing & Dining Services](#) for assistance.

Students living in a dorm before they study or intern abroad lose their “continuing” status when they move out to go abroad. They do not get first priority for the certain dorms or room types. This makes it important to apply as early as possible. The appropriate dorm deposit (paid in dollars) must also be received early.

There is a cancellation fee for refusing a housing assignment once Housing & Dining Services has assigned a room, so your student needs to be willing to take whatever assignment is made.

**Off-Campus**

[Off-Campus Housing & Neighborhood Relations](#) is a great resource for off-campus housing options. OCH maintains listings of rooms, houses, apartments, and roommate requests and provides Boulder maps, free copies of the Boulder Tenants’ Guide, the Boulder Model Lease, subleasing agreements, furniture rental information, moving tips, renter's insurance information, and other materials related to living off campus.

OCH services are provided via the web or on a walk-in basis. Students may use [Ralphie's List](#) or come to the office in UMC 313 to search for rentals or roommates and talk with student assistants about the Boulder housing market.

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## Practical Matters

### Money

More information about this topic appears in the “Finances” section of the [Education Abroad Handbook](#).

There are a variety of helpful websites for finding the local currency of a country and looking up exchange rates. A few examples are [Google Finance](#) and [XE](#).

**Options for Managing Funds Overseas:**

- **Bank Account**: In some countries, students can open an account at a local bank. This option is often most beneficial for full-year students, but semester-long students may find this to be their best option as well. Fewer students are opening bank accounts due to the greater accessibility of ATM machines abroad.

- **Credit Cards**: A growing number of stores will take major U.S. credit cards. They can also be handy for emergencies or getting cash advances. The student should check the card’s grace period for payments and the policy on currency conversions, including surcharges for cash advances and purchases. Students should request a chip credit card from their credit card company if they don’t already have one, as they are increasingly required abroad.

- **ATM Cards** are the easiest way to get cash in most countries, though students cannot assume that cash machines will always be available or that they will accept their card. There are usually transaction fees for each credit/debit card transaction. Students may wish to withdraw the maximum amount each time to decrease the number of transaction fees (but only if they have a secure place to keep the extra money until they need to use it). Students who plan to use credit/ATM cards should check with the bank to find out exactly how the
credit, debit, or ATM cards might work overseas (What is the transaction fee? What is the daily limit for withdrawals? What networks does it have access to?). The student should be sure to have a four-digit PIN number that works overseas. **VISA** and **MasterCard** ATM/debit cards have international networks and both companies have ATM locator sites on their websites.

**Options for Transferring Funds:**
- **Direct deposits into the bank account connected to the student's ATM card** is the easiest and most affordable way to transfer money.
- **International money orders or international postal money orders.** Postal money orders are purchased and cashed at Post Offices, and are inexpensive.
- **Cashier’s check in the currency of the host country.** These can be purchased at many banks. There is usually a service charge of $25 or more.
- **Money can be wired** in care of a bank in the host city. This is expensive for both senders and receivers, but funds usually arrive in 48 to 72 hours (verify the time with the bank). You will have to get the name and address of the bank your student wishes to use. The money is then wired in your student’s name; he or she presents a passport to pick it up.
  - **Western Union**
  - **MoneyGram**
  - The **U.S. Department of State** may be able to help transfer funds as a last resort.

**Health Insurance**

Every student on a CU Boulder education abroad program is provided with limited health and accident insurance. In addition to health insurance coverage, this policy covers evacuation and repatriation in case of medical and non-medical emergencies.

Here is the basic information from the **Education Abroad Handbook**:
- The cost of insurance is included in the program fee.
- The policy provides benefits often not available in your personal coverage.
- The CU Boulder policy is managed by a third party administrator that processes claims for the insurance company.
- Once enrolled, the student will be sent an email containing the policy number, the website address, and instructions to access and print the policy and identification card.
- The insurance policy can be accessed on the **CU Boulder Education Abroad Health Insurance Policy & Claim Form** page.
- If your student withdraws from the education abroad program for any reason, the Education Abroad accident and health insurance coverage will cease. While our insurance provider does not offer individual insurance policies, your student may visit [http://www.insuremytrip.com/](http://www.insuremytrip.com/) to research possible coverage for the remainder of the stay abroad.
- The education abroad accident and health insurance policy is different from the insurance available through Wardenburg Health Center. The CU Student Gold Health Insurance Plan, unlike many parental policies, will cover illness and/or accidents outside the U.S. at an in-network coverage level. Additionally, the Student Gold Plan has evacuation and repatriation benefits, not typical on any parent plan, and often required to obtain visas. If your student chooses to continue their CU student health insurance, they must speak with Patient Services at Wardenburg Health Center to make arrangements for coverage and payment. Patient Services is located in Wardenburg Health Center, room 333. For more information call (303) 492-5107.

Since insurance coverage is provided for the education abroad period, you may be thinking about dropping your student’s current coverage. **We recommend that your student maintain Affordable Care Act compliant health insurance at all times (even during his or her time out of the country) in order to avoid any potential tax penalties for failure to comply with the Affordable Care Act’s mandatory insurance requirement.** Because the Office of International Education at the University of Colorado Boulder does not sell insurance coverage or in any way guarantee payment of benefits, we advise students to go over the insurance options with a family member or trusted friend to determine what is best for the individual student. You should contact your insurance provider with any questions about your specific policy. Do not make any assumptions about your coverage.
Emergency Situations

Recommended Steps for Students Who Experience an Emergency While Abroad

The CU Boulder Education Abroad staff is concerned about students’ health, safety and well-being while abroad. This section provides general suggestions of what steps we have recommended students to take in the case of an emergency. If your student’s on-site program has an emergency protocol, we recommend that they follow those procedures first.

Examples of possible emergencies while abroad:

- Serious accident
- Serious illness (physical or mental)
- Physical or sexual assault (attempted or occurred)
- Pick-pocketing or theft that has left the student stranded with no way to get back to their housing or host city.

Steps students should take in the event of an emergency abroad:

While their instinct is to first call their parents or guardians, in an actual emergency we recommend that students follow the general guidelines outlined below. This is because parents/guardians are thousands of miles away and may not be in an immediate position to do anything, other than offer moral support. This is why we suggest that students follow steps 1 to 3 below before calling their parents. In this way, students can get help in the quickest manner. We also recommend that students discuss this emergency protocol with their parents/families BEFORE they leave.

1. If it is a true medical emergency, contact the local police or medical emergency services in the host country. Students will be informed of these phone numbers during on-site orientations.
2. Contact the on-site program staff. Because they are on-site, local staff can often best assist in the case of emergencies. They are also experts on local systems and language and have experience and training on handling student emergencies in the host country. Students’ post-acceptance materials will contain contact information for local staff of the program organization or host university’s international office, and they will also be informed of these contacts during the on-site orientation.
3. Contact CU Boulder Education Abroad at 303-492-7741. If our office is closed, call the CU Boulder Education Abroad emergency phone at 303-653-1671.
4. Contact parents/families.

It is also the case that the on-site staff for each program will be able to provide the best assistance in the case of the following non-emergency difficulties. If one of the following situations occurs, students should contact their on-site program staff for assistance:

- Petty pick-pocketing or theft (as long as no physical injuries occurred and student is not stranded somewhere)
- Lost or stolen passport
- Problems with host family or housing abroad
- Problems with courses abroad

Please note that CU Boulder Education Abroad staff is required to report any incident of harassment or discrimination to the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) on campus. Each incident might be handled differently, but in general the OIEC cannot take action unless the allegation is against someone connected with the University of Colorado Boulder. However, the OIEC will provide referral information to the alleged victim to other campus offices that can assist him/her (for example, the Office of Victim Assistance, Counseling and Psychological Services, Office of Student Conduct, etc.).

Health
Before leaving, students should have a general physical exam, a dental checkup, and if pertinent, a gynecological checkup. They should be up-to-date on all shots and get the relevant booster(s). Wearers of glasses or contacts should have a copy of their prescription and an extra pair of glasses or contacts.

Students who take prescription medicine should speak to their doctors. Prescription medications vary from country to country in name, potency, and purity and may NOT be sent through international mail. Medications should be kept in the original container(s) when traveling. We advise that students consult the U.S. Department of State’s web page on medical information, which includes advice about traveling with prescription medication.

Students who need medical attention on a regular basis at the program site should inform Education Abroad before departure. These students should take a complete medical record to the program site, along with complete prescription histories.

More location-specific information on health matters is provided in students’ MyCUAbroad portals.

Safety

The personal safety of students while they are away from home is important both to you and to the Office of International Education.

First, we should note that travel to another country is not inherently dangerous. On the other hand, there are risks that are unique to the overseas setting. When an incident occurs, the impact on participants and their families is often more profound because of the unfamiliarity of the context and because of the distance that separates students from primary sources of support.

Health and Safety Guidelines

We believe the best strategy for ensuring students’ health and safety abroad requires collaboration among students, parents/guardians, and our professional staff. University of Colorado Boulder Education Abroad subscribes to the “Responsible Study Abroad: Good Practices for Health and Safety” guidelines of the Inter-Organizational Task Force on Safety and Responsibility in Study Abroad. Education Abroad adheres to the following practices regarding its programs:

- We monitor U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories to assess health and safety conditions at our program sites. We have a policy for dealing with political unrest and the threat of war (included in the appendix of this handbook).
- We provide health and safety information so you can make informed decisions about preparation for, participation in, and behavior abroad.
- We consider health and safety issues when evaluating the appropriateness of an individual’s participation in an education abroad program.
- We provide orientations, both in person and online, which include information on how to deal with health and safety issues, potential risks, and appropriate emergency responses.
- We provide limited health and accident insurance coverage, including coverage for emergency evacuation and repatriation. We urge you and your family to evaluate your insurance needs and to be sure you have adequate coverage.
- We inquire about available medical and professional services at the program site and provide information to you about obtaining services you may need. Our program partners evaluate the local environment and provide assistance as needed.
- We use reasonable care when contracting with any third party to provide products or services.
- We communicate applicable codes of conduct and the consequences of noncompliance to participants. We take appropriate action when we become aware of violations.
- In cases of serious health problems, injury, or other significant health and safety incidents, we maintain good communication with all who need to be informed.

There is a point where the University of Colorado Boulder’s responsibility ends, and where aspects of the student’s overseas experience are beyond our control.

- We cannot guarantee their safety or eliminate all risk from the education abroad environment.
• We cannot monitor or control all of their daily personal decisions, choices, and activities.
• We cannot prevent them from engaging in illegal, dangerous, or unwise activities.
• We cannot assure that U.S. standards of due process apply in overseas legal proceedings; nor can we provide or pay for legal representation.
• We cannot assume responsibility for actions or for events that are beyond the control of the University of Colorado Boulder or the program sponsor, or for situations that arise due to the failure of a participant to disclose pertinent information.
• We cannot assure that home country cultural values will apply in the host country.

Guidelines for Participants
As in other settings, the student will have a major impact on her or his own health and safety through the decisions made before and during the program and by day-to-day choices and behaviors. Students should:
• Read and carefully consider all materials that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, and cultural conditions in the host country. They should participate fully in orientations.
• Do research on countries they plan to visit, with particular emphasis on health and safety concerns.
• Consider their own physical and mental health and safety needs when accepting a place in a CU Boulder program.
• Make available to the education abroad staff accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary in planning for a safe and healthy education abroad experience.
• Maintain appropriate insurance policies and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers.
• Provide their families with emergency contact information. Keep them informed of any travel away from the program site.
• Understand and comply with the terms of participation and codes of conduct of the program, and obey host-country laws.
• Register with the U.S. Department of State’s internet-based Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).
• Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to the program staff or other appropriate individuals.
• Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and wellbeing of others, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
• Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining emergency health and law enforcement services in the host country.
• Follow the program policies for keeping program staff informed of one’s whereabouts and wellbeing.
• Accept responsibility for and consequences of one’s own decisions and actions.

Recommendations for Parents/Guardians and Families
Parents or guardians and families can play an important role by helping students make decisions and, sometimes, by influencing their behavior overseas.

When appropriate, parents, guardians and family members should:
• Be involved in the decision of the participant to enroll in a particular program.
• Obtain and carefully evaluate health, safety, and insurance information provided by CU Boulder Education Abroad and partner institutions.
• Discuss with the participant all travel plans and activities, safety and behavior issues, insurance needs, and emergency procedures related to the program.
• Be responsive to requests from the University of Colorado Boulder for information needed regarding the student.
• Keep in touch with the student.

See the Education Abroad Handbook for advice on living and traveling abroad safely and the Parents & Family page for additional information on health and safety.

Mail to and from the Program Site
Your student may eagerly watch for mail from you, and you will want to hear from your student as often as possible. Even under the best of circumstances it will take time for a letter to reach the U.S. from overseas. If circumstances are not ideal, it can take 10 days to four weeks for overseas mail to be delivered to the U.S. and vice versa.
Sending Packages
While sending a ‘care’ package is a nice gesture and students will sometimes ask for a favorite item from the U.S., be aware that this can be very costly for both sender and receiver. Packages will be screened through customs, taking longer than normal to arrive (2-10 weeks). When it arrives the student will have to pick it up in person and pay a fee, usually VAT, determined by the value of the items inside. VAT can be as high as 80% of the retail value.

Communication
It is always faster to communicate by telephone, email, web-based messaging apps, or voice-over-IP. If you wish to speak by phone regularly, make arrangements before departure so there is no confusion or needless waste of money. It is generally more expensive to call the U.S. from overseas than to call your student from the U.S. Here are the most common ways to keep in touch with your student:

- **Landline phones** are decreasing in availability in students’ housing abroad, but are still available to some students. It is often less expensive to make an international call from the U.S. than vice versa, so this can be a convenient way to call your student if you have a low per-minute cost available to you.
- **Skype** is a preferred option for keeping in touch internationally if your student has a reliable internet connection. To talk for free via Skype, both you and your student must download the free Skype program on your computers or phones. Calls and chats between Skype accounts are free. If only one of you downloads Skype, a call can be made from Skype to landlines or cell phones for a very low cost.
- **Google Voice**, **Facebook**, **WhatsApp**, **Viber**, and FaceTime are other good internet-based options you may wish to consider using.
- We ask that all students have a working cell phone while they are abroad (so that they can be contacted even without Wi-Fi in case of emergency). Students can then either use Wi-Fi and smart phone apps (such as and **Viber**) to communicate with you for free or cheaply. See the [Education Abroad Handbook](#) for more information on the different options to consider.

Some General Tips about Phone Communication with Your Student Abroad

- In most countries, there is a charge for every call made, even if it’s local.
- Remember the time difference. [TimeZone Converter](#) has a time zone section that tells you what time it is in other parts of the world.
- You generally need to dial the following numbers to make an international call from the U.S.: 011 (international access code) + country code + city code + the local number. [CountryCode.org](#) is a useful website for finding country and city codes.

Students can also access internet virtually anywhere in the world, either in their program’s on-site center or in local cafes.

Visiting Your Student on the Program
If you are going to visit your son or daughter during the program, make your plans with these thoughts in mind:

- Be sure that your student has discussed your potential visit with on-site staff prior to booking travel. Some education abroad programs prohibit students from having visitors during the program (especially if it's short in duration).
- Before booking your flight, get the exact program dates, including the holiday/break schedule.
- To have the best opportunity to travel together, plan your visit either during a break or, optimally, after the program has finished.

Packing
Encourage your student to:

- **Take lightweight yet sturdy luggage** tagged on both the outside and the inside with name, address, and destination. At least one piece should lock. Do not exceed the airline's international size/weight regulations.
- **Pack lightly** - students should be able to carry all luggage for some distance by themselves.
- **Purchase a money belt or pouch** for money, plane tickets, and passport.
- **Do not take family jewelry** or items that have great sentimental value.
- **Clean out the wallet or purse** before leaving. Students don't need gas, store charge cards or library cards while abroad. Unneeded cards and papers should be left at home.

## Emotional Matters

### Adjusting to a New Culture

Nearly every education abroad participant goes through some form of cultural adjustment or "culture shock" with vastly different reactions. If your student is a writer, you will notice traces of it in the emails you receive. Everything is rosy and wonderful - or everything is just awful - for the first few weeks. It is only after real adjustments have been made that students become able to size things up in perspective, seeing both the good and the bad aspects of life in a foreign country.

Contact with you is apt to be very important. You may find that he or she is venting the inevitable frustrations that occur in a strange culture in every email or phone call. This may be a means of letting off steam. Others may be hearing only about the new friends and exciting opportunities and nothing about the frustrations.

If you believe your student is in a genuinely bad situation, please notify us immediately.

Above all, please keep in mind that a period of mild disappointment, homesickness or depression is *a normal part of the education abroad experience* – and soon forgotten.

**What's Up with Culture?** is an interactive program to support and enhance an education abroad student's ability to make successful cultural adjustments both before going overseas and upon return home from education abroad. Don't miss the section for parents and family: "A Note for Browsing Parents/Guardians/Supporters of Study Abroad Student."

### Returning to the U.S.

Just as it takes a bit of time to adjust to the host country, it will take students time to re-adjust to the U.S. after they return. They have grown and changed in many ways and will not be exactly the same people they were before leaving. We encourage you to be patient and supportive as they go through the often difficult process of readjusting.

Check the [Education Abroad Handbook](#) for more information all students receive about returning to the U.S.

## Checklist

### Things for Parents to Keep in Mind:

- Be aware of the student's financial obligations outlined in the participant contract and the [Program Costs](#) page.
- Remind your student receiving financial aid to sign up for direct deposit so that refunds can be directly deposited to the student's checking account.
Plan how to handle any family emergencies that might arise.

Discuss how to handle the student's current mailing address on myCUinfo.

Talk to your student about reserving a space in a residence hall for the semester he or she returns, if applicable. All addresses should be kept current.

Review the section on “Finances” and decide how to handle finances while abroad.

Discuss whether it is advisable to have a limited Power of Attorney while your student is away.

Make arrangements with your student to keep in touch on a regular basis. Know email addresses, Skype IDs, etc.

Will the program health insurance policy be sufficient? Review the insurance info, which can be accessed from the Parents & Family page or on the CU Boulder Education Abroad Health Insurance Policy & Claim Form page.

Insure any valuables that the student is taking abroad (computers, cameras, etc.); urge students not to take anything abroad they can't afford to lose.

Review the sections on health and safety in this handbook.

Find out the exact dates of the program abroad; if planning a visit, go during a break or at the end.

Things Your Student Should Have Completed by Dec 1 (spring programs) or May 1 (summer, fall, or academic year programs):

- Visa: Determine if a visa is needed to go abroad by consulting the Entry Visa Information for Students Planning to Study on a CU Boulder Program page on the CU Education Abroad website.

- Get academic advising: Meet with major advisor(s) to discuss an intended course of study and what courses to take upon return to the U.S. Submit the completed advising forms to Education Abroad.

- Complete all items on the CU Boulder checklist (available to students when they log in to their MyCUAbroad account): This includes entering flight information, submitting course evaluation forms, and completing a medical questionnaire.

Things Your Student Should Complete Before Leaving Campus

- International Certificate of Vaccinations (yellow card): This is needed for some countries.

- Financial Matters: Clear any CU debts by reviewing your Bursar account through myCUinfo.

- Power of Attorney.

- FERPA: If desired, provide written consent to the Office of the Registrar to allow the university to discuss your student’s record with you.

- Clear any “I” grades that will turn into an “F” during the semester abroad.

- Applying for Graduation: If your student plans to graduate within the next year, he or she should check with the appropriate dean's office and review the Office of the Registrar's Graduation page for graduation
application deadlines and notification procedures. Students in the College of Arts & Sciences should also refer to the Academic Advising Center Graduation page. REMEMBER that graduation might be delayed if grades are not received from abroad before the graduation deadline.

Things Your Student Should Complete Before Leaving For the Program

☐ Register with the U.S. Department of State online Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). See the “Getting Ready to Go” section of the Education Abroad Handbook.

☐ Income Taxes: Out of the country in the spring? Plan ahead for filing taxes. See the “Finances” section of the Education Abroad Handbook.

☐ Inform Bank and Credit Card companies that they are going abroad. If students do not inform their bank and credit card companies that they are going abroad, their card will likely be shut down when they try to use it abroad. Having to order a new card or unlock the account can be very frustrating in the first days abroad, and may leave the student with no financial resources.

Parent/Guardian Resource List

You may be anxious to learn more about your student’s education abroad experience. These resources cover topics that may be of interest to you.

Resources on Education Abroad

“This is the first full-length book specifically geared to what parents want and need to know about study abroad. It assumes that while students themselves [...] bear the primary responsibility for deciding whether or not to study abroad and for choosing a program, informed parental involvement and support are essential before, during and after the overseas sojourn.” Topics include selecting the right program, budgeting, insurance, health and safety, civil and legal matters, cultural adjustment, and career planning. Reprinted from NAFSA’s (Association of International Educators) Publications brochure.

Education Abroad’s Access & Inclusion in Education Abroad page provides you and your student with information, resources and different perspectives on diversity issues abroad. Pages include: Disability, First Generation College Students, LGBTQIA, Non-Traditional Students, Race/Ethnicity, and Student Athletes.

**Mobility International USA** (MIUSA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting international exchange for people with disabilities. They can provide personalized information about specific locations around the world.

Resources on Intercultural Communication

It may be interesting for you to read one or several of these books to understand the process your student is going through.


**Traveler’s Tales: A Woman’s World**, Marybeth Bond, Traveller’s Tales, Inc., 1995.

**Education Abroad Handbook**
Resources on Safety and Health Issues

The best way to get up-to-date information on any location is to look online. Most travel guides will also include basic safety and health information on a particular country or city.

Safety Sites

The U.S. Department of State’s International Travel Information page contains information on travel warnings, alerts, and cautions.

Education Abroad’s Travel Safety Information page.

Health Sites

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Travelers’ Health page.

Travel Health Online.

World Health Organization (WHO).

Policy on Cancellation/Suspension of CU Boulder International Programs

To better support international activities and to address and minimize health, safety, and other risk issues for the university, the University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) has established an International Travel and Programs Policy (ITPP) (http://www.colorado.edu/oie/global-cu/international-travel-and-programs-policy-cu-boulder). The following policy on the cancellation or suspension of CU Boulder international programs involving students derives from the ITPP, and is managed by Education Abroad and the CU Boulder International Risk Committee.

Monitoring Student Health, Safety, and Security Abroad

The safety and well-being of students traveling internationally for university purposes is a top priority for CU Boulder. To address emergencies or other events that could jeopardize the security of students while overseas, Education Abroad routinely monitors health, safety, and security abroad through the following channels:

1. Daily briefings from the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), a division of the US Department of State’s Bureau of Diplomatic Security. OSAC briefings are for non-military US member organizations.
2. US Department of State Travel Advisories and Country Crime and Safety reports.
3. Briefings from the International SOS Travel Security team and from International SOS Risk Ratings Analyses
4. Daily Security Alerts from the Education Abroad international insurance provider

Additionally, for students participating on CU Boulder Education Abroad programs and for those registered in the International Travel Registry (as a Global Experience), the Education Abroad office does the following:

1. Provides access to country specific information including the United States Department of State’s International Travel page, Consular Information Sheets and International SOS reports which provide basic health and safety information about that we want and expect students to know.
2. Gives students information on registering their trip with the US Department of State’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). STEP registration allows the appropriate embassy to send information about safety conditions in the destination country, and helps the U.S. embassy to contact students in an emergency.
3. Registers students in the Education Abroad international insurance policy.

Please Note: All participants in CU Boulder Education Abroad programs are responsible for their own safety and for reviewing all safety and travel guidance; nothing in this policy supplants this responsibility or supersedes applicable releases and waivers.
Policy on Cancellation of CU Boulder International Programs

As stated above, Education Abroad monitors U.S. State Department Travel Advisories, which document the potential for unrest or signal imminent or actual problems.

The U.S. Department of State issues an overall Travel Advisory level for every country, but levels of advice may vary for specific locations or areas within a country, and the U.S. Department of State utilizes a classification system as follows:

- Level 1: Exercise Normal Precautions
- Level 2: Exercise Increased Caution
- Level 3: Reconsider Travel
- Level 4: Do Not Travel

Level 3 (“Reconsider Travel”) Travel Advisories are issued due to serious risks to safety and security. Level 4 (“Do Not Travel”) Travel Advisories are issued due to greater likelihood of life-threatening risks.

Examples of reasons for issuing a Level 3 (“Reconsider Travel”) or Level 4 (“Do Not Travel”) Travel Advisory might include crime, terrorism, civil unrest, health risks, natural disaster, a time-limited event, etc. Travel Advisory levels remain in place until the situation changes; some have been in effect for years.

Level 3 (“Reconsider Travel”) and Level 4 (“Do Not Travel”) Travel Advisories, either for the entire country or within a country, are the catalysts used to cancel or suspend a program. Appeals can be submitted to the International Risk Committee asking that travel be allowed for Level 3 warnings.

There are certain situations where travel to a country will be automatically suspended by the CU Boulder International Risk Committee, and appeals for travel shall not be allowed. Examples include:

1. If the country has an overall rating of 4 (Do Not Travel).
2. If the U.S. Department of State evacuates family members of government personnel or authorizes the voluntary departure of personnel.
3. If the Peace Corps withdraws its volunteers from a country.

The CU Boulder International Risk Committee (IRC) and Education Abroad will review the Travel Advisories and will determine whether or not to suspend programs. Other health or safety concerns could arise from renewed US Department of State advisories, travel warnings from the Center for Disease Control or from the World Health Organization, or Travel Advisories from other countries. The IRC may withdraw approval for international programs at any time based on changes in the security, health or safety situation of a location. Additionally, the IRC may request a review of travel plans for approval at any time, regardless of the current US Department of State Travel Advisory level.

Exclusions:
This policy does not apply to travel by faculty or staff not involving students, nor does it apply to personal, non-university affiliated travel by students. If the travel is affiliated with CU Boulder or with a student’s academic program or a university-registered student group, the policy does apply.

If you or members of your family have additional questions, please contact us. Our overall goal is to ensure that you have a safe, productive experience abroad.

Info for Students Considering Withdrawing From Education Abroad

If students are considering withdrawing from their education abroad program, they should consider that withdrawing either before or after the program has started can have serious financial and academic consequences.

Seek Assistance before Deciding
- The student should contact their CU Boulder Education Abroad Program Manager. The Program Manager can explain possible ramifications of withdrawing and can help students think through their decision.
• If the student is already abroad, contact the education abroad staff at the program site. They are in the best position to help resolve problems that students might be experiencing (such as housing or classes).

Financial Considerations
• First check the financial withdrawal fees & deadlines to see what you will owe. The schedule is available on the Program Costs page of the Education Abroad website. The amount due, which represents what has been spent on the student to date, can be sizeable.
• Exceptions to the withdrawal fees & deadlines policy are considered only if you withdraw for medical reasons. In that case, discuss the situation with the CU Boulder Education Abroad Program Manager.
• Appropriate documentation must be submitted to Education Abroad to request an exception to published withdrawal fees.
• If the student receives financial aid, contact the Office of Financial Aid to find out how withdrawing will impact aid. Students risk either losing a portion or all of their aid if they are not enrolled full-time.
• If students have received a CU Boulder education abroad scholarship, they will need to repay the full amount of the scholarship for the term they have not completed.
• Keep in mind that if the student withdraws from an education abroad program and plans to return to CU Boulder to take classes for that semester, they will need to make sure to authorize payment for the Colorado Opportunity Fund (COF) if they have applied for it. If they haven’t applied for it (and if they are eligible) they will need to do so by the appropriate deadlines, before they can authorize payment.

Health Insurance Considerations
The Education Abroad group accident and health insurance ends on the official withdrawal date. If the student is already abroad when they withdraw, they will need to secure health insurance for the remainder of the semester. While our insurance provider does not offer individual insurance policies for students, you may visit http://www.insuremytrip.com/ to research possible coverage for the remainder of the stay abroad. Please understand these policies may not cover the student while they are in their home country – consult with the insurance provider for exact coverage information.

Academic Considerations
• If students withdraw before the program begins:
  o Register for CU Boulder courses as quickly as possible.
• If students withdraw after the program begins:
  o To get credit for coursework the student has completed (e.g., an intensive pre-session course), they must stay enrolled in STDY 1001 for that term to have the work posted on the CU transcript.
  o Check with the on-site staff to find out how the withdrawal will impact the student’s grades. In some cases it may be too late to withdraw without failing some or all of their courses.
  o If students are not receiving credit for completed coursework and are no longer enrolled at CU Boulder, they may apply for a Leave of Absence to receive some services and benefits from CU.

Effective Date of Withdrawal
The student’s withdrawal is effective the day written notification is received by the CU Boulder Education Abroad Program Manager. Sending the notification by CU email is required. The email needs to state that the student is withdrawing from the program as of the date of the email and should include the reason for the withdrawal.