Congratulations on your acceptance into a study abroad program! Studying abroad is an incomparable experience. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to live in another country, learn the customs of another culture, and adapt to new surroundings. You will have moments of real inspiration and others of real frustration. Even simple tasks like making a telephone call from a payphone or buying groceries in a supermarket might be confusing. Just remember that you’re learning something new and be patient with yourself. One of the greatest benefits of living abroad is the added depth and appreciation you gain of American culture. It is advisable to familiarize yourself with the history and culture of your destination country before leaving the U.S. While overseas, expect a lot of questions about how people live in America.

The academic structures and practices at many foreign institutions can be quite different from what you have been accustomed to at UM. It is imperative that you familiarize yourself now both with your program’s academic requirements and with the College of Engineering’s academic policies regarding the transfer of study abroad credit. With proper planning and a strong academic performance you can make studying abroad a meaningful and productive part of your degree program.

This handbook is designed to get you started with both your academic and non-academic preparations. Please study it carefully and take it with you as a reference guide. Remember, with the right planning, your study abroad will be an incredible experience!
Table of Contents

- **International Programs in Engineering:** page 4
  - Our Mission
  - Our Services

- **UM Administrative Matters:** page 5
  - International Experience Registry (M-Compass)
  - Transfer Credit
  - Graduating Seniors
  - Registration for Non-UM Programs
  - CAEN Account & Email
  - Registering for Your Return Semester
  - Staying in Touch with UM and IPE

- **International Documents:** page 8
  - Passports
  - Visas

- **Health Information:** page 10
  - UM Travel Abroad Health Insurance

- **Safety Issues:** page 12
  - Alcohol Consumption
  - Alcohol and Drug Policies
  - Crime
  - Records and Documents
  - Driving and Pedestrian Safety
  - Hitchhiking
  - Safety Concerns for Americans Abroad
  - Personal Safety for Women Abroad

- **Other Concerns:** page 16
  - Sexual Harassment
  - Racial and Ethnic Issues Abroad
  - L.G.B.T.Q Students

- **Travel Preparations:** page 18
  - Travel Agencies
  - Choosing a Guidebook
  - Packing Tips
  - Mail
  - Money and Banking Arrangements
  - Phone calls
  - Travel Within and Outside the Host Country
  - Jetlag
  - Customs and Immigration
  - Unit Conversions

- **Practical Matters:** page 24
  - Absentee Voting
  - Income Taxes
Table of Contents Continued

- Power of Attorney
- Property Insurance
- Cultural Adjustment
  - Culture Shock
  - Intercultural Communications
- Returning Home
- Conclusion
- Checklist for Study Abroad Pre-Departure
  - Administrative Matters
  - General Preparation
  - Useful Links
International Programs in Engineering

Our Mission:

To prepare our graduates for success in the global engineering profession by helping all CoE students gain international experience.

- Develop programs that meet the specific needs of our students.
- Prepare students for a safe and successful overseas experience.
- Make international opportunities available to all students regardless of background or financial circumstances.

Our Services:

While overseas we can:

- Answer your questions by email or phone
- Give advice/assistance with any problems or issues that involve University matters.
- Assist your parents with University matters that arise while you are overseas. Parents may receive all sorts of University mail while you are overseas, so please, if they are worried about anything, have them call the International Programs in Engineering Office first (734-647-7129).
- Assist you in registering for UM classes if you have difficulties with Wolverine Access.

While overseas we cannot:

- Give your name, address, phone number, or social security number to anyone. You should give such information to all the people you want to have it.
- Pay bills, encumbrances, library fines, or any tuition other than what we’ve discussed. Remember that some bills will come in late, so do check before you leave. You may want to ask a friend to keep an eye out for it.
- Calm down anxious parents and other relatives if they haven't heard from you. Write or call them regularly. If you say you'll call at a certain time, do that! Remember holidays and birthdays.
- Arrange housing for you when you return. Pick up a housing contract before you leave campus or have family/friends arrange housing for you.
UM Administrative Matters

CoE International Experience Registry:

The College of Engineering requires all students (both undergraduate and graduate) to register their international experience with the International Programs in Engineering (IPE) office. International students should not register travel to their home countries. Register your planned experience online through the CoE International Experience Registry (M-Compass).

CoE International Experience Registry (M-Compass): http://www.engin.umich.edu/ipe/registry.html

The College of Engineering uses this information to:

- Share information about campus resources for international travel (health insurance, sources of funding, pre-departure planning).
- Contact you in case of an overseas emergency.
- Identify programs of interest for engineering students and develop new programs that meet your needs.

Transfer Credit:

At this point you should be completing or have already submitted a Transfer Credit Approval Form (TCAF) to the College of Engineering Credit Evaluation Office online so that your courses can be evaluated for transfer credit: https://www.engin.umich.edu/students/academics/transfercreditapproval/index.jsp

Pending approval, credit will be awarded after you have completed your coursework and the Credit Evaluation office has received an official transcript from the accrediting institution. Therefore, before leaving the foreign institution you attended, you must request your official transcript be sent directly to:

College of Engineering Credit Evaluation
145A Chrysler Center
2121 Bonisteel Blvd
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

Note: If you bring in the transcript yourself, it must be in a sealed envelope from the university you attended. It is also advised that you request 1-2 copies of your official transcript for your own records. Keep one copy in the sealed envelope, so that you can use it later if applying to graduate school.

When you return to UM, the credit transfer can take 4-6 weeks after your transcript is received. If you are graduating, or the credit transfer is urgent, please contact the Credit Evaluation office via e-mail at engincredit@umich.edu.
Graduating Seniors:
If you plan to graduate while abroad you need to file a Diploma Application and make arrangements to have a senior audit before you leave. Contact your department program advisor for details prior to your departure and prior to all deadlines set by the College of Engineering.

Registration for Non-UM Programs:
Since you will not be participating in a UM program, do NOT register for classes at the University of Michigan for the semester you will be abroad. If you have already registered, you will need to disenroll before the first day of classes to avoid being billed for those courses. You cannot disenroll on Wolverine Access. You must fill out a Disenrollment Form, available at the Registrar’s Office. Also from the Registrar’s Office, obtain a Procedures for Early Enrollment Form, which will be helpful when it is time to register for your return semester at UM.

- **If gone for one semester only:** You should remind your academic advisor before departure he/she should move your Wolverine Access appointment for the return semester to the correct time period. It is also a good idea to send an email reminder to your academic advisor just before the registration period begins (March/November).
- **If gone for one year:** In addition to reminding your academic advisor that you will be away from campus for a year, you should also contact the Office of Recruitment and Admissions to make arrangements to complete an Application for Readmission. This will ensure your Wolverine Access registration appointment is available for your return to campus. If you are having difficulty with this process you can contact the Office of Recruitment and Admissions at (734) 647-7101.

**Note:** Your host institution will give you registration instructions for your classes abroad before or upon your arrival.

CAEN Accounts:

“For me, studying abroad was the highlight of my college experience. Traveling taught me about the world, it helped me learn about myself, and it gave new dimension to my undergraduate education.”

- Matt Lokar
Registering for Your Return Semester:

It is best to plan U of M courses for the returning semester with your advisor prior to the study abroad experience. When you meet with your advisor to discuss international course approvals, plan your courses for your return semester as well.

Registering through Wolverine Access:

1) To access the time schedule and register for classes for the semester of your return, login to Wolverine Access: http://wolverineaccess.umich.edu.

2) To avoid problems with registering, it is a good idea to get in touch with your advisor before registration begins (March/November). Send your advisor an e-mail including the number of credits and specific courses that you are currently taking. This will help to insure that you receive the appropriate registration appointment. Wolverine Access may deny you access to courses that require a prerequisite that you are currently taking while abroad. Contact your advisor, he/she has the authority to override Wolverine Access and enroll you in a class, under the assumption that you will have passed the course while abroad.

Registering when you cannot access Wolverine Access:

If you cannot get into Wolverine Access, we can assist you in registering. Contact our office before registration begins (March/November) to plan for this.

Staying in touch with UM and the International Programs in Engineering Office:

Your account in M-Compass will remain active while you are overseas. Please remember to update your host country contact information in the M-Compass system when you arrive. IPE staff will use the M-Compass system to send Emails. Please respond to IPE emails and be aware of important or official communications from UM.
International Documents

Passports:

If you already have a passport, verify that it is valid for more than 6 months after your stay abroad. If your passport has expired, or will expire within this timeframe, then you must renew your passport. The processing time for a new passport or passport renewal can be 4 to 6 weeks, so plan accordingly. Expedited service is also available for an extra fee. Make sure to visit the appropriate website(s) first and come prepared with all required documentation.

Applying for a New US Passport: If you do not already have a passport, you must apply for one in person. You can apply for a passport at a post office, federal or state courthouse, or a passport agency. Detailed information and application forms can be found on the U.S. State Department website: http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html We suggest that you read the requirements posted on the site thoroughly, as to prevent unnecessary trips to the issuing agency.

In Ann Arbor, you may obtain and submit a passport application at the following locations:

- Vital Records Division: http://www.ewashtenaw.org/ Room 106, Washtenaw County Court House, at the corner of Huron and Main, (734) 222-6720.

You will need two passport photos (2" x 2"). Reasonably priced photos can be purchased at UM Photo Services: http://www.ps.umich.edu 500 S. State St. - LSA Building, Room 0246. Show your student ID to receive a small discount on the first set of photos. FedExKinko’s also offers passport photos.

Applying for a US Passport Renewal: You may apply for a passport renewal by mail if you meet certain U.S. State Department guidelines: http://travel.state.gov .

Record-keeping: A scanned copy of your passport is available through your Go Abroad account with IPE, but we still suggest that you make at least two copies of the first page of your passport. Leave one copy at home with a parent or friend, and take one with you - but keep it in a place separate from your passport. Another place to leave a photocopy of the passport is at the nearest U.S. Embassy. If your passport gets lost or stolen, it is much easier to replace it with a copy of the old one.

Visas:

A visa is an entry document that is issued by the host country. It is typically stuck directly into your passport. This means you have to have a valid passport before you can apply for a visa. Some countries have visa waiver programs for US citizens. In this case, US citizens are not required to get a visa. Non-US citizens should consult the host country's requirements to determine if a visa is needed.

It is your responsibility to contact the appropriate consulate and obtain all the necessary paperwork for a student visa. Be aware that processing may take 4 - 6 weeks. You may need medical forms and/or exams which may delay the visa acceptance further. You will not be able to apply for a student visa until after you have been accepted into the study abroad program.

Official Letter of Acceptance: In many cases you will be required to provide an official letter of acceptance in order to obtain your visa. Contact the program sponsor or host institution to obtain the acceptance letter.

Embassy/Consulate: You must contact the appropriate consulate in order to find out specific information about visa requirements. Please refer to the Electronic Embassy for embassy and consulate contact information: http://www.embassy.org.
International Documents Cont.

Official Letter of Acceptance:

In many cases you will be required to provide an official letter of acceptance in order to obtain your visa. Contact the program sponsor or host institution to obtain the acceptance letter.

Proof of Enrollment:

If proof of enrollment is required, an official certificate of enrollment may be obtained by contacting the UM Registrar's office or downloading the Certification Form from the website: http://www.umich.edu/~regoff/forms/certification-form.pdf

Permission to Study Overseas from Home Institution:

In some cases you may be required to provide proof that UM approves your plans to study abroad and that you are eligible to receive transfer credit for the courses you earn overseas. Once you have completed the credit evaluation process, the IPE Office can provide you with this letter. You must send an e-mail request to ipe-office@umich.edu and provide information regarding what the official letter must include.

Embassy/consulate:

You must contact the appropriate consulate in order to find out specific information about visa requirements. Please refer to the Electronic Embassy, http://www.embassy.org for embassy and consulate contact information.
Health Information

Where to Find Information about Health and Safety:

U.S. Department of State:
The U.S. Department of State’s Consular Information Sheets are available for every country of the world. They describe entry requirements, currency regulations, unusual health conditions, the crime and security situation, political disturbances, areas of instability, and special information about driving and road conditions. They also provide addresses and emergency telephone numbers for U.S. embassies and consulates. In general, the Sheets do not give advice. Instead, they describe conditions so travelers can make informed decisions about their trips. These sheets can be found at: http://travel.state.gov. Travel planning books and guides that you purchase ahead of time will have important information about history, customs, social conditions, religions, etc.

US citizens and permanent residents should register their travel with the State Department: https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/. US Embassies may use this information to contact you in case of emergency and connect you with local resources.

UM Health Services:
We recommend that you read the Travel Health Information offered by the University Health Service. The UHS website can provide you with information on immunizations and/or shots necessary for travel in certain areas of the world and other pertinent health information: http://www.uhs.umich.edu/aithc. If you have further questions or concerns, we recommend that you make an appointment with a doctor before you leave.

If you have a medical condition, be sure to discuss how it may affect your study abroad experience with your health care practitioner and the program sponsor. It is also possible to receive information about health conditions around the world by contacting the Centers for Disease Control.

You should also have a dental check-up and have any necessary dental or optical work done before you leave the U.S.

CoE International Experience Registry:
The College of Engineering requires all students (both undergraduate and graduate) to register their international experience with the International Programs in Engineering (IPE) office. International students should not register travel to their home countries. Register your planned experience online through the CoE International Experience Registry (M-Compass).

CoE International Experience Registry (M-Compass): http://www.engin.umich.edu/

Prescription Drugs:

Get enough medication in advance – do not plan to refill your prescriptions overseas. Talk to your insurance company and your doctor(s) and ask them to authorize a semester’s worth of your prescription(s). Carry a copy of all prescriptions for various custom-related questioning. Ask your doctor to provide a list of active ingredients for all of your prescriptions. Should a situation occur where you do need a refill, some home brands may not be available overseas. Make sure that all medications are packed in your carry-on luggage, in their original containers.
UM Travel Abroad Health Insurance

The University of Michigan offers Travel Abroad Health Insurance to students, faculty and staff, through the HTH Worldwide health insurance plan. The program is reasonably priced, covers a wide range of conditions and events, and eliminates the need to verify that your own health insurance will provide sufficient international coverage.

To learn more about the UM HTH insurance plan and purchase coverage, visit the UHS website:
http://www.uhs.umich.edu/tai

Highlights of HTH Worldwide Coverage:

- HTH Worldwide will pay “up-front” for most medical treatment, eliminating the need to pay out-of-pocket or file claims for reimbursement
- Coverage includes payment for treatment of mental and nervous disorders including drug or alcohol abuse
- Coverage includes most outpatient prescription drugs
- Pre-existing conditions are not excluded
- Coverage is valid for your entire time abroad, whether in your host country or traveling elsewhere outside the U.S.
- Coverage includes payment for emergency medical evacuation as well as expenses (up to $1,500) for a bedside visit by a family member if you are hospitalized overseas

In addition to excellent health insurance coverage, HTH Worldwide provides a customized website for UM students that provides full information about the insurance program and its benefits. Students have access to a website of HTH certified English-speaking physicians in their destination location and can pre-arrange an introductory appointment. The website also provides links to other important resources available through HTH Worldwide, including drug translations, medical terms & phrases, and CityHealth Profiles (for safety and security in your destination location): http://www.hthstudent.com

Students will need to purchase any health coverage that may be required by the host country. In some cases the host country may be willing to accept the HTH Worldwide coverage as sufficient. The IPE office can provide a letter outlining an individual student’s HTH Worldwide coverage to be used as proof of insurance, per individual request.
Health Information Cont.

International Student I.D. Card (ISIC):

The International Student I.D. Card (ISIC) is also available to students and does provide some emergency and medical evacuation insurance, though on a reimbursement basis only. It provides $25,000 in emergency medical evacuation services. ISIC card also carries some sickness and accident insurance, but it does not offer $50,000 minimum coverage per illness or injury. It also does not cover expenses related to mental illness or substance-related injuries. The cards can be purchased for $22 at the UM International Center or at Council Travel. The International Center also has a handout that describes in detail the benefits of the card or you can find them online at http://www.isicus.com.

Safety Issues

Alcohol Consumption:

If alcohol consumption is part of your host country’s culture you will likely have greater access to alcohol abroad than you have ever had at home. It is important that you be aware of the risks it poses to your general health and safety.

The safety issue is simply this: when you are drinking, your inhibitions are lowered, and you are not in complete control of your faculties. This makes you more likely to engage in risky behaviors (such as unprotected sex) and more vulnerable to accidents (such as falling) and crime (such as theft or assault). In terms of your health, too much alcohol can make you feel terrible, damage your long-term health and in extreme amounts, actually kill you. It is safest to drink only in moderation and to avoid alcohol completely if you are driving, even for a short distance.

The specific physical effects of drinking should also be understood, so you can make informed choices about when and how to use alcohol safely and what moderation means in concrete terms. The following advice is taken from Arcana, the student-produced guide to North Campus:

“If you are not used to drinking, you probably have little knowledge about your own tolerance level or how alcohol affects you. Your liver processes and removes alcohol from your body at a rate of about 1/2 ounce of pure alcohol per hour. To remain in control of your drinking, it is important to know exactly how much alcohol you are consuming. Each of the following drinks has about ½ ounce of pure alcohol:

1 shot of distilled spirits (1 oz.)
1 beer (12 oz.)
1 glass of wine (4 oz.)
1 wine cooler (9 oz.)

Most importantly, drink in moderation. Moderate drinking means no more than one drink per hour, with a limit of three per night for women and four per night for men. If you are going to drink, eat something beforehand and while drinking. This will both slow down alcohol’s effect on your body and provide nutrients you might otherwise miss while drinking.
Alcohol and Drug Policies:

As with many customs, cross-cultural differences exist with regard to the consumption of alcohol. Depending on the host country you may find the availability of alcohol greatly increased or decreased. Often rules about the acceptability of alcohol use are different from home. If you choose to use alcohol, use it responsibly.

The University of Michigan has had a long-standing concern about the harmful effects of alcohol abuse and the use of illicit drugs – this concern carries over to all study abroad programs. The University-wide drug and alcohol policy stresses the health risks of drug and alcohol abuse, counseling and treatment programs available and sanctions to be imposed by UM, depending on the severity of the violation. Your program will probably have its own policy with sanctions for violations. Bear in mind the counseling and treatment programs available at home are not likely to be accessible while abroad. Please also keep in mind that drugs and/or alcohol will impair your judgment and increase your chances of being the victim of a crime. Be aware that drug- or alcohol-related accidents, under certain policies and terms, may not qualify for health insurance benefits.

Illegal drug use and possession are serious crimes. The State Department's "Travel Warnings on Drugs Abroad" contains this valuable advice:

> Although drug laws may vary in each country you visit, it is important to realize, before you make the mistake of getting involved with drugs that foreign officials do not react lightly to drug offenders. Anyone who is caught with even a very small quantity for personal use may be tried and may receive the same sentence as the large-scale trafficker.

Once you leave the United States you are not protected by U.S. laws and constitutional rights. The U.S. consular officers abroad can only intercede with local authorities to make sure that an American's rights under local law are fully observed and humane treatment is accorded under internationally accepted standards. But the officer cannot demand your release. There is little anyone can do if you are caught with drugs while abroad. Fines, imprisonment and other penalties may be extremely harsh.

Crime:

Most large cities, in the U.S. and abroad, suffer from common crimes. You should use the same precautions abroad that you would in any U.S. metropolitan area. Following are some general safety precautions:

- Know about local safety conditions wherever you are going.
- Avoid poorly lit places and walking alone. Stick to well-traveled streets and try to walk in groups at night. Be especially cautious when you are new to a city and do not yet know what parts of town may be less safe.
- Avoid carrying valuables, even in a backpack or locked luggage. If you must carry cameras, radios, etc., don't leave them unattended.
- Don't flaunt wallets, purses or cameras. Wear a money belt concealed under your clothing. Don't trust strangers to watch your bags.
- Use alcohol sparingly and be aware of situations when drinking even a small amount could increase your vulnerability to crime.
- Put valuables in the hotel safe or ask your local contact about storing valuables at the program site.
- Leave expensive or expensive-looking jewelry at home.
- Be on the offensive, rather than the defensive. Be aware of your surroundings.
- When possible, avoid traveling by car. More people are injured or killed abroad in automobile accidents than through violent crime. Driving in a foreign country is particularly dangerous as you may be unaware of driving customs and local laws.

For travel warnings and emergency information for foreign-bound travelers contact the State Department's Citizens Emergency Center at (202) 647-5225.
Safety Issues Continued:

Records and Documents:

A copy of your Passport ID page will be kept in your M-Compass online account. Make two copies of your passport, plane ticket, traveler’s checks, rail pass, credit card numbers, and prescriptions. Write down the serial numbers on cameras, CD players, appliances, etc. Take one set of copies with you and leave another set in the U.S. with family or a friend. You may also want to consider maintaining an itemized list of your belongings in the case of theft or

Driving and Pedestrian Safety:

One of the primary causes of death in many overseas countries is from automobile accidents. Some countries drive on the opposite side of the road, so look both ways before crossing! In some countries there can be few to no government standards available for drivers and vehicles. In some regions, recent surges in prosperity have led to an increased number of automobiles. These automobiles are being driven by “new drivers” – people with no formal driver training. Also, many of the automobiles being driven are not required to meet safety standards which can lead to many hazardous situations. Be careful when getting in a vehicle, and if you ever feel that your driver is taking turns too fast, driving too quickly on a dangerous mountain road, or risking YOUR life in any way, don’t hesitate to ask them to use more cau-

Hitchhiking:

We do NOT promote hitchhiking! In many countries, hitchhiking is more acceptable than it is here, especially in small towns, but that does not necessarily mean it is safe. Please use good judgment and remember that if you do hitchhike (PLEASE DON’T) and you are uncomfortable with the person who stops to pick you up, don’t hesitate to refuse a ride!

Safety Concerns for Americans Abroad:

We encourage you to take the following basic steps that may help you avoid being targeted for any specifically anti-American acts or demonstrations.

- Avoid drawing attention to yourself as an Americans – in dress (e.g. with university logos or obviously American slogans) or in speech (no loud public discussions of American politics, policies, etc., and avoid conspicuous, loud use of English in non-English speaking countries).

- Stay away from demonstrations and other political activities at which anti-American opinions are likely to be expressed.

- Do not spend great amounts of time at government facilities such as the American Embassy or at commercial establishments that are known to attract large numbers of Americans (e.g. the Hard Rock Café).

- Travel in small groups (two to five people) rather than alone or in large groups. If your program has a Resident Director, keep that person informed of your whereabouts if you travel away from the program site.

Inform the U.S. embassy/consulate in your host country of your contact information and length of stay, in case a threat to Americans arises.
Safety Issues Continued:

Personal Safety for Women Abroad:

You may or may not have thought about what it means to live as a woman in the country in which you will be studying abroad, but we encourage you to do so. While it is impossible to generalize about the experience of women traveling in all places in the world, you may experience some gender-specific challenges when you live or travel abroad. You may or may not be aware, but the incidence of violent crime against women is higher in the U.S. than in many other countries.

However, due to language and cultural differences, what you consider appropriate behavior for a woman in the U.S., or for a woman in your native country, may be interpreted much differently by the men and women of your host country. For American women abroad, this is further compounded by the fact that the people in some other countries may have distorted or stereotypical notions of you, based on images acquired through American film and advertising. You should also be aware that behavior which is considered incorrect in the U.S. may not be viewed in this way abroad (e.g. whistling or personal comments).

A smile, eye contact, certain clothing, or the way you carry yourself can connote different things in different cultures. While we will supply you with what information we can, you are your own best resource. Read travel guides or articles and talk to women who have been to your host country. The more familiar you are with the customs and traditions of your host country, the more understanding you will have for why they exist and the safer you will feel while abroad.

- Take a self-defense class before leaving the U.S. to increase your confidence.
- Follow the example of women from your host country, in terms of culturally appropriate dress and demeanor.
- Trust your instincts. If you don't feel safe in a situation or someone's behavior is making you uncomfortable, get out of the situation.
- Travel in groups of at least two, especially when you are still unfamiliar with a town or city.
- Remember: You are worth it. Take a taxi if it's late and you are alone, even if you have to spend more money.
- Lock hotel rooms when traveling. Do not stay in hotels without adequate locks, despite the chance that you may have to stay where room rates are higher.
- Walk with purpose and avoid eye contact with strangers.
- Be aware that drinking could blunt your ability to interpret social and behavioral cues and thus increase your vulnerability to assault.
- Firmly say "no" to any invitation you do not want and turn away.

If you are sexually harassed or assaulted, or if you feel that particular situations are unsafe, you should contact your program director, or another staff member on the program or at the university with whom you feel comfortable. (Review the following section regarding Sexual Harassment.)
Other Concerns

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment, as defined by law, is any unwanted sexual gesture, physical contact, or statement which is offensive, humiliating, or an interference with required tasks or career opportunities.

You will be entering a different culture and must realize that in some instances the foreign methods of communication may be uncomfortable for you. People of some cultures touch one another in a more open fashion. Others stare. Regardless of the mode of communication, within the foreign cultural context this is not viewed as harassment. If the communication becomes uncomfortable, even after acknowledging the cultural differences, we would encourage you to sit down and talk to the individual and try to resolve your concerns on an informal basis. This provides the individual an opportunity to explain the culture and affords the same to you.

If you do not feel comfortable talking directly to the individual, you should feel free to take your concerns to a staff person on-site. This person could be the coordinator assigned by the program or the individual assigned to handle student affairs by the institution you are attending. If it is unclear to you who is responsible for handling this issue at your program site, or if you wish further advice or assistance, please contact the International Programs in Engineering Office at the University of Michigan.

Racial and Ethnic Issues Abroad:

If you are a minority student in your host country (for example, African American in London, or European American in China), you may experience additional anxiety as you try to adapt socially and academically to your new culture. You may face special challenges that other study abroad students do not have to confront. You may experience racial bias, prejudice, and discrimination that others may not face because they do not belong to a visible ethnic or racial minority. Keep in mind that the attention you receive may not always be negative. You may receive a lot of special treatment and positive attention as well. Further, if you are in the majority in your host country (for instance, a Japanese-American in Japan), your experience will also be different than that of your peers. You should recognize that there may not be many other persons of your race or ethnicity where you are living. Without this traditional comfort zone, you may feel especially isolated, since it may be difficult to identify with and relate to others due to contrasting circumstances.

It is important to understand that your race and ethnicity will affect your overseas experience, and at times it may be quite challenging. You may find, however, that confronting and coping with these issues abroad is not necessarily an entirely negative experience; in fact, it presents a unique learning opportunity which may serve you well in the future.
Racial and Ethnic Issues Abroad Continued:

American universities do not sponsor study abroad programs in countries where social conditions differ from those at home because it necessarily admires or endorses those conditions. Rather, educators see profound and lasting educational value in exposing students to cross-cultural differences, even those they may find offensive (assuming, of course, that student safety is not compromised). The encounter with cultural "otherness," particularly when we ourselves are put in the position of the "other," is always potentially an opportunity to enlarge our understanding of human limits and possibilities, and to discover what we have taken for granted about ourselves as individuals and as a people. The process ultimately contributes to better social analysis and problem-solving the student who witnesses racism or other forms of discrimination in another cultural context, for instance, learns how others make sense of and deal with the condition, and such newly acquired knowledge may have useful applications back in your native country. Because it enhances self-awareness and undermines prejudice, the process also fosters personal growth students develop greater tolerance and compassion and a more sophisticated approach to identity issues in general.

In order to reduce your anxiety and apprehension, do some research on where you will be living so that you are prepared for what you may face. Think of ways you can bridge the gap with others by using your language and coping skills. Do not be afraid to ask for help and reach out for support. The program contact and other students can be of great assistance to you no matter what their race.

If you are concerned about these issues, please do not hesitate to utilize resources around campus. The IPE office can potentially put you in contact with a student of color who has studied abroad. Further, the International Center on Central Campus also has information on Americans of Color Abroad. You can stop by their offices in the Michigan Union to pick up information.

L.G.B.T.Q. Students:

Differences in gender presentation and/or sexual orientation can also present special challenges to students living abroad, especially if you are going through or anticipating a period of transition such as coming-out or gender reassignment. We strongly recommend that you learn as much as you can about prevalent attitudes in the culture of your host country so that you will be prepared for any personal, social, legal or safety issues that may confront you.

Again, think of ways to use your language and coping skills to bridge the gap with others, and do not be afraid to ask for help and reach out for support. The UM Spectrum Center (3200 Michigan Union), can help you identify valuable resources and support services. You can reach them by email: spectrumcenter@umich.edu or get more information online: http://spectrumcenter.umich.edu/. The Spectrum Center also has created a new resource which specifically addresses study abroad: http://internationalspectrum.umich.edu/

We also strongly recommend that you familiarize yourself with the website of the Lesbigay Special Interest Group of the National Association of Foreign Study Advisors (NAFSA), at: http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/.

When choosing a travel guide to purchase, consider Lonely Planet, which usually includes information about L.G.B.T.Q. concerns in the specific region or country.
Travel Preparations:

Travel Agencies:

There can be many advantages to using a travel agency. An agency can help you find student rates and special prices that airline representatives may not know about. They can find the cheapest flight available for a 6 month layover. (Many cheaper flights regularly have a maximum stay of 1 month, for example.) An agent can tell you about the airline restrictions and transportation system of the country you are traveling to. Some travel agencies offer agents who specialize in a certain area of the world.

A travel agent’s fee may or may not be included in their quoted price. Don’t be afraid to ask questions and take time to make your decisions! It should cost you no more to use a travel agent, than to purchase directly from the airline. Also, beware of agents who work on commission, they might try to sell you a package you don’t really want or need. It is important to use a travel agency you can still contact while you are overseas. It is possible that you will need to alter your tickets, and due to time difference, attempting to call the United States during business hours can be very difficult.

The student travel agency on campus is STA Travel: [www.statravel.com](http://www.statravel.com). STA caters to students (25 and under), however they do charge a fee for their services and require proof of your student standing. One advantage of using a student travel agency is flexibility. STA travel allows you to change your departure dates for coming back to the U.S. for only $25 (providing there are available seats). STA does have international offices, so you should be able to contact them easily while overseas.

STA Travel
Michigan Union – Ground Floor
530 South State St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48109
Tel: (734) 769-2555
Fax: (734) 769-2595

Choosing a Guidebook:

Guidebooks will be very helpful in learning about your host country’s geography, culture, and history, as well as providing useful advice on what to bring and how to get around. Remember that each country is different, and before deciding on buying rail passes, youth hostel cards, outdoor gear, etc. it will be worth your time consulting a guidebook about access to places and products that you will need.

Some of the more popular guidebook series include the Lonely Planet, Let’s Go, Rough Guide, and Footprints. The Overseas Opportunity Office which is part of the International Center in the Michigan Union has a resource room full of travel books and information. You can also borrow guidebooks from the UM library and the Ann Arbor Public Library to help you choose an appropriate book.
Packing Tips:

- **Pack light!** Previous study abroad students have told us that they packed way too much clothing and personal items. If you plan to do a lot of shopping while overseas, consider this when you are packing.

- **Airline Luggage Restrictions:** Restrictions vary depending on the airline and the flight distance. Restrictions include things like weight limits, size limits, and limits on the number of bags per passenger. You should obtain this information when making your flight arrangements. Remember that you will most likely leave with much more luggage than you arrived with.

- **Shipping:** You may need to ship any additional purchases from overseas back to the U.S. or to your home country so you don't exceed the luggage limit. The cost can be based on box weight, destination, and/or physical box dimensions. Once in the country of your study abroad destination, inquire about shipping services.

- **Backpacks:** If you plan on doing a lot of traveling - short trips for 4-6 days, any hiking, Spring Break, etc. you will definitely want a backpack to simplify your life. Ask ahead of time at your foreign university if there is some kind of hiking club where you can rent or borrow a pack. Good packs can also be purchased at outdoor stores such as Bivouac on State Street or online.

- **Customs:** Be aware of the customs regulations for the U.S. and the country you are traveling to. Expensive belongings may need to be declared. You should be able to obtain this information when arranging your flights and other travel. Keep in mind that customs procedures and airline restrictions have greatly increased since the events of September 11th.

- **Computers:** It's best to leave your laptop in the U.S. to prevent theft and damage. If you must take it, mark down serial numbers, bring copies of receipts to avoid duty taxes, make sure insurance and warranties are up to date (check to see if your home or renters' insurance covers computers abroad). Be aware of differences between American and foreign electrical current. Computers can be easily damaged by the wrong current!

- **Avoid bringing unnecessary electrical devices!** (hair dryers, curlers, clocks). Budget for purchasing small appliances upon arrival. If you do bring such items, buy your current converters in the U.S. as they can be difficult to find abroad. These units are available at Travel2000, RadioShack, and most other appliance stores. However, they are often unreliable and you may find your equipment will not work once you are overseas.

- **Avoid bringing unnecessary valuables:** Although you may have reasons to bring your computer and a nice camera with you overseas, it is unlikely that you will need expensive watches, jewelry, or other valuable sentimental items that are subject to theft or loss. A basic rule of packing is if you can’t bear to part with it, don’t bring it. Pack any prescription medications in your carry-on luggage. Pack any sharp items in checked luggage (it might otherwise be confiscated by airport security).
### Packing Tips Continued:

The following list provides some suggestions for packing which you may find

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clothing Basics</th>
<th>Toiletries</th>
<th>Miscellaneous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweaters/shirts</td>
<td>Toothbrush &amp; Toothpaste</td>
<td>Money pouch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeans/pants/shorts</td>
<td>Soap</td>
<td>Watch, travel alarm clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least one nice outfit</td>
<td>Hair care products</td>
<td>Batteries (can be expensive overseas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacket/Coat</td>
<td>Shaving products</td>
<td>Camera &amp; photo card (also expensive abroad)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiking boots and/or good walking shoes</td>
<td>Deodorant</td>
<td>Sleep sack (for hostels)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flip-flops (to wear in the shower)</td>
<td>Travel pack tissues</td>
<td>Swiss Army knife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socks</td>
<td>Tampons, pads</td>
<td>Rain-gear and/or umbrella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergarments</td>
<td>Contraceptives/condoms</td>
<td>Passport size photos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports apparel/gear for intramural sports</td>
<td>Contact lens supplies</td>
<td>Ziploc bags for storage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extra pair of eyeglasses</td>
<td>Journal for writing, novel and/or magazine for leisure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small first aid kit</td>
<td>Gift for host family or program organizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Basic medicines: aspirin, cold remedies, anti-diarrhea/constipation tablets</td>
<td>Pictures of friends/family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prescription Medications</td>
<td>Linen, towels (check to see if both are provided)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Mail:

Airmail generally takes a week to ten days to reach most destinations. Get your airmail stamps from the post office in your study abroad city. Make sure to include the airmail stamps or clearly write “airmail” on your packages because otherwise, the package could be accidentally sorted with surface mail and take an extremely long time to arrive at its destination.
Money and Banking Arrangements:

Plan to bring some foreign currency (cash and travelers checks) with you for your travel and initial arrival. This will give you time to set-up your finances when you arrive, without worrying about having cash available. Keep in mind that living expenses for the first month will be considerably higher than in other months, because of some initial one-time expenses, and also because some time is needed to find the most economical lifestyle. So make sure that you bring enough money over with you to survive until you can set-up your financial accounts. Bring money in multiple forms (cash in small bills; traveler’s checks in dollars; credit cards; ATM card).

- **Currency exchanges**: AVOID currency exchanges in airports, train stations, or any other tourist spot, they charge large fees or offer poor exchange rates.

- **Traveler’s Checks**: Plan to bring $300-$500 in foreign currency traveler’s checks. Dollar traveler’s checks in small dollar amount can be useful.

- **U.S. Bank Account**: You may find that it is easiest to maintain your U.S. bank account, and use your debit and ATM cards for transactions. It is important that you check with your bank to find out if you are offered a good exchange rate and what fees may apply. Previously study abroad students have found that Cirrus and PLUS symbols are most common throughout the world, so check your ATM card to see if it is valid for those symbols. By using a debit card and an ATM card, you might not need to open a bank account abroad. Only four-digit PIN numbers work in most countries.

- **Overseas Bank Account**: Traveler’s Checks can be used to open a bank account overseas. You may then have money wired directly into your account from your U.S. bank account as needed.

- **U.S. Credit Cards**: In general, the credit card company will charge a reasonable exchange rate for international purchases. However, credit cards often have hidden charges for purchases made outside the U.S. Check with your credit card company prior to departure. Also, while overseas, check your monthly statement to verify that the appropriate rate was used and that no errors have been made.

Phone Calls:

Phone calls can be extremely expensive, so plan ahead! Generally, it is considerable cheaper for your family/friends in the U.S. to call you, than for you to call the U.S. This may or may not be true for students who have friends and family members who reside outside of the U.S.

- **Mobile Phones**: Depending on your length of stay, you may wish to purchase a mobile phone. Students taking their US-based smart phone abroad, should be sure to check with your carrier about charges and to be sure that it’s “unlocked”, in order to insert a local SIM card.

- **Calling Cards for International Calls**: It is advisable for you to obtain an international calling card from one of the U.S. based telephone companies (such as AT&T, MCI, SPRINT) prior to your departure. In order to dial out, you will be required to have the country code, the city code, and the actual number you wish to reach. Many countries sell very inexpensive pre-paid telephone cards.

- **Messaging**: In countries where computer access is readily available, many students find online services like Skype to be a cheap and effective means of communicating with family and friends at home. In countries where wi-fi is available, some students have used messaging apps like Viber or WhatsApp.

Be aware of the time difference: It may be helpful to create a time zone chart that you or your family/fiends can use as a quick reference to determine the time difference. Keep in mind that because of the time difference, you cannot always make your calls at times when the best rates are available.
Travel Within and Outside the Host Country:

- **Local Public Transportation:** You will likely find public transportation abroad to be more convenient and efficient for day to day than public transportation in the U.S. Inquire about month-long bus passes or discounted bulk tickets. There are usually discounted student tickets, so don’t forget to bring your student ID with you.

- **Trains, Planes, and Automobiles:** You may find yourself in a country where traveling on the weekends is easily accessible by train, plane, or car. Keep in mind that for travelers, all sorts of discounts, package deals, weekend rates, daily rates, student rates, group rates, etc. typically exist. Ask about discounts on train tickets at the main rail station. To find deals on airfare your best bet is to check the internet and/or inquire at the airport where, in Europe, there are “last minute” travel agencies specializing in cheap last minute flights. In addition, many adventurous students fly stand-by. Renting a car is another option while abroad. The minimum age is usually 21 in most of Europe and 23 in Great Britain and Ireland. You may want to take advantage of registered ride boards, which is a great way to meet other people. In some parts of the world, such as South America, buses are more common for weekend travel and are usually inexpensive and convenient.

- **Special Travel Passes:** If you plan to travel while abroad, you may need additional travel arrangements. It is definitely a good idea to do a bit of research about where you might want to travel while you are there, and how to get where you want to go. Sometimes you can find special deals, but tickets must be purchased BEFORE arriving in the host country. Samples include:
  - **Boomerang Pass:** To travel in Australia, you can purchase a “boomerang” pass which allows you to travel from one place to another quite cheaply. Each leg of the trip is a fixed cost based on the distance traveled.
  - **Eurail Pass:** If you are traveling in Europe for an extended period, think about purchasing the Eurail pass. These are great passes at getting you unlimited train travel in most of Europe except Great Britain (Britrail passes must be purchased separately).

- **Youth Hostels:** Youth hostels are places where you can stay overnight at inexpensive rates. They offer you a bed in a room shared with an average of about 5 other people. For those of you that have an anxiety about traveling alone - youth hostels are the answer! Everybody traveling is usually in the same situation you are - they don’t know anyone, they want to talk to people, and they probably have some interesting stories / traveling tips to share, as you will for other people. Consult a guidebook for locations and other information.

If you will be doing a considerable amount of traveling and/or know you will stay in hostels, consider joining the Hostelling International – Youth Hostel Association (HI-YHA), one of the major hostel companies around the world. This membership gives you discounted rates at over 5000 hostels in 77 countries, but you should consult your guidebook as to the extent to which you may be able to find YHA hostels. Find more information: [http://www.hiusa.org/](http://www.hiusa.org/).
Jet Lag:

You can expect to experience some form of jet lag when traveling through different time zones. Fatigue, indigestion and sleeping difficulties are common problems you may experience during the first few days after your arrival. In order to minimize jet lag you should avoid consuming alcohol and try to stay well-hydrated during your flight. Drink plenty of water or juice. When you arrive, try immediately to adjust to the time of the country where you are. You will probably want to sleep as soon as you get off the plane, but it is best to stay as active as you would normally be at that time of day. You should try to stay awake as long as possible and get up the next day at a standard time so that your body can begin to adjust to the new time zone.

Customs and Immigration:

You will have to show a valid passport to airline officials before you board the airplane to depart for your study abroad site. Once you arrive in the foreign country you have to pass through Customs with all of your luggage. This involves showing the Customs Officer your passport and telling him/her the purpose for your travel. Be courteous, cooperative and succinct when talking with customs officers and accept the fact that your bags may be searched. When you return to the U.S., you will have to go through U.S. Customs where you will once again have to show your valid passport. You may be searched. At this time you will have to declare the amount of goods you have purchased while overseas. Therefore, it may be useful to keep a list of major purchases and costs associated with each item.

Unit Conversions:

Most countries in the world use the metric system for all kinds of measurements. Here are some useful conversion equations:

Temperature
- $0^\circ F = (1.8 \times 0^\circ F) + 32$
- $0^\circ C = (0^\circ F - 32) \times 0.555$

Distance
- Miles = Kilometers $\div 1.6$
- Yards = Meters $\div 1.094$
- Inches = Centimeters $\div 2.54$

Volume
- Gallons = Liters $\div 3.785$

Mass
- Pounds (lbs.) = Kilograms $\div 0.4536$
- Ounces = grams $\div 28.35$
Practical Matters

Absentee Voting:

For some students, the first opportunity to vote coincides with their time abroad. Just because you are not in the U.S. at election time does not mean you cannot cast your ballot. Before you may vote from abroad you must be registered to vote at home. Check with your local city or town hall to obtain information on procedures for voting by absentee ballot, including timing. Remember to make note of your party, ward, district and voter registration number (if one is used). If necessary, your absentee ballot can be notarized at a U.S. embassy or consulate. For useful online information: [http://www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov).

Income Taxes:

Students participating in academic year-abroad and winter semester programs may have to complete their income tax returns while overseas. If you have earnings that require you to file federal and/or state income tax returns and you will be out of the country between January 1 and April 15, you may need to make special arrangements for getting your paperwork filed. You can file from abroad if you make arrangements with your parents to send you the necessary state and federal forms and other documentation. Persons temporarily living abroad may normally request an extension on the deadline for filing federal income tax, usually until June 15. The best advice is to contact the American Consulate or Embassy in your host country 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 you are likely to be required to sign any official or legal document while you are overseas, you should arrange to give “power of attorney” to someone who can make decisions on your behalf. This must be done in writing and should clearly outline in detail the specific duties that the person you choose will execute. Take this to a notary and have it notarized.

Property Insurance:

Student travelers may want to consider insurance to cover at least partially any loss of money due to trip interruption or cancellation, as well as loss of baggage and personal effects either in transit or while living in residence halls. Many, but not all, homeowner’s insurance policies contain a clause about this coverage extending worldwide – check your policy. 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. Theft or property loss from negligence is not an altogether uncommon occurrence for the inexperienced traveler and you would be well-advised to take some preventative measures. (See suggestions under Safety Issues.)
Culture shock is a phenomenon that most people experience when living abroad. In the initial stage, you are both excited and nervous as you prepare for your journey overseas. Once you've reached your destination, you enter the "Honeymoon Period" in which everything is new and your sense of adventure takes hold. Once this stage begins to wear off, however, you may begin to exhibit symptoms such as homesickness, irritability and irrational behavior due to feelings of anxiety, isolation and apprehension over integrating into a different culture. This is to be expected since you will be adjusting to your new "home away from home." Each day will present itself with a new challenge that at first may seem overwhelming. This is a normal phase of adjustment. It may take a few days or weeks to become accustomed to your new way of life. It is important that you recognize that everyone adjusts to culture shock in different ways depending on their personality. You should be aware that culture shock can be especially severe when you are also experiencing jet lag.

In order to reduce the impact of culture shock, there are a variety of things you can do to make your acclimation as smooth as possible. Above all, learn about your host country ahead of time. Further, if you plan for and anticipate the challenges you may face, you are likely to find yourself assimilating into your new culture more easily. Talking with past program participants will be especially helpful. Writing out some ways in which you think you will be able to cope with culture shock is also helpful. This may include keeping a journal, listening to a familiar radio station from home via the Internet, exercising etc. Getting involved with local groups and making new friends is the best way to lift your spirits.

As you work your way out of the third and most difficult phase of the culture shock cycle, you will enter a new stage where you find yourself adapting to your new environment. You will discover a renewed acceptance of local customs that you previously found frustrating, and you will feel more integrated into your surroundings as a whole. The culture shock curve is presented below:

(Adapted from: http://www.herneconsultants.com)
Cultural Adjustment Continued

Intercultural Communications:

You must be aware of the local customs and traditions in your host country as well as in other countries you visit. Observe the way people do things where you are living and do not assume that behavior that was acceptable in the United States or in your native country will be permissible elsewhere. Hand signals and body gestures have different connotations in various parts of the world. Time, space, rituals, economic class and social status also have symbolic meanings that are not universal, but rather, may vary widely.

Individuals from different cultures may observe the same event but interpret its content and significance in very different ways. It is important to understand the perspectives of others; avoid making assumptions based on American practices and try as best as you can to “fit in” to your new culture. Realize that misunderstandings are bound to happen no matter how prepared you may be. Take your experiences in stride and then make adjustments in your future behavior. For example, when packing, keep in mind that articles of clothing with U.S. logos or emblems will make you easily identifiable as an American, which you may or may not want to advertise, depending on the situation.

Particularly for Americans, a common mistake is to assume that everyone knows how to speak English and that they are comfortable doing so. In many parts of the world English is not the official language. The “Ugly American” often assumes that speaking loudly or slowly will help someone understand what is being said. American travelers are fortunate that many people are able to speak English as well as their national language. However, if you are American, it will be worthwhile if you make every effort to try and learn the language of your host country. This will be appreciated by the nationals and will also help you assimilate into the local culture.

An equally common mistake is overuse of alcohol. While alcohol consumption is part of many cultures, in very few countries is it socially acceptable to be visibly intoxicated. Alcoholic beverages are usually viewed as a pleasant accompaniment to a meal or an occasion for social rituals such as toasts. Loud, public displays of drunkenness are considered distasteful and a sign of immaturity. Women in particular should be careful. A woman visibly drunk in public may be considered loose and thus fair game for unwanted familiarities.

Please remember these are basic guidelines and suggestions for etiquette and should be viewed as a point of departure for learning about cultural differences. You should do further research on your own to look at the norms, and customs and mores of specific countries. The International Center has a wide variety of resources on these issues.
Returning Home

Whether you are excited or sad (or a combination of both) about leaving your host country, you may find yourself experiencing the cycle of culture shock again upon returning home. This is called reverse culture shock and is to be expected since you have spent your time abroad trying to assimilate into a new culture. It will be an adjustment to get re-acquainted with the life you previously led at home as many things may seem foreign to you. Most likely, you will not be the same person you were when you left to go abroad. Your views and outlook on how you approach various issues may have changed. You may have developed a new appreciation for your home country as well as a critical eye for things you no longer like. You should try to remember what it was like to adapt to your study abroad site and realize that it will take some time to get used to life at home.

Thinking about ways you can cope with reverse culture shock is also important. How will you stay in touch with the people you met while you were abroad? How will you maintain your new foreign language skills? Where will you find the new foods that you enjoy? Remember that the University of Michigan, as well as Ann Arbor, is rich in cultural diversity, and there are likely to be many opportunities for you to maintain ties with your new experience. Visit the IPE office or website for information on ways you can stay involved with international programs.

Conclusion

Congratulations on making the decision to add a global perspective to your education! We hope (and expect) your study abroad experiences will be wonderful in many ways – culturally, academically, and personally.

International Programs in Engineering Office
245 Chrysler Center
2121 Bonisteel Blvd.
Tel. (734) 647-7129
Fax. (734) 764-3229
http://www.engin.umich.edu/ipe
Sharing Your Experience  #UmichEnginAbroad
Blogging, Journaling, Social Media

Michigan Engineers do amazing things abroad. Every Michigan Engineer will have an experience abroad that is unique and powerful in its own way: what will be your story? We encourage all students to share stories about your travel adventures, professional development, host culture, and engineering around the world through social media. Here are some ways this can benefit you and your UofM community:

**Strengthen**

The University of Michigan and the College of Engineering are leaders on a global scale, especially when it comes to making an impact around the world. Sharing your experiences can help strengthen the reputation of the college and the university world-wide.

**Connect**

While you’re away, your community at home will be curious to know what you’re up to. Social media is a great way to keep your friends and family in the loop.

**Inspire**

Other Michigan engineers may not have considered an international experience. Sharing your story can help make the idea of studying, working, researching, or volunteering abroad a tangible and exciting prospect for other students.

**Articulate**

The College of Engineering strongly believes that international experiences belong on your resume and LinkedIn profile; but what will that look like? How will you speak about your international experience in a job interview? Keeping a blog can help you to collect anecdotes and examples that will be useful after you return to help to identify the key competencies you’ve developed, and provide you with specific stories that can be used in job interviews to demonstrate how you’ve used these competencies in action.

**Analyze**

There are many things that happen abroad that will excite, confuse, and challenge you. Recording such experiences can help you to further engage in your experience and critically analyze how and why you felt the way you did in a given situation.

**Educate**

You may be traveling to a location that others may not know much about. Blogging is a chance to introduce your community to a host country and culture that they may not know anything about.

**Showcase**

Exercise your bragging rights! Share your projects/what you’re learning with the CoE and UofM community – faculty, advisers, and fellow students: you won’t find a more captive audience.

**Chronicle**

Your time abroad will pass by faster than you can imagine, and while we’re in the moment we may feel that these are experiences we’ll never forget, it’s helpful to utilize social media to capture experiences as they happen, because before you know it, it’s over. Having a blog can serve as a great reminder of what you did, and how you felt during your time abroad.
IPE Social Media Guidelines

Rule #1: No matter where you post, use the hashtag #UmichEnginAbroad

As you share your story, remember that you are representing yourself, the College of Engineering, and the University of Michigan in a public forum. A good rule of thumb to follow is not to say anything on social media that you wouldn’t say behind a podium. Be mindful of different cultural interpretations and how others might react to your posts.

What Should You Share? What Not to Share?
The “hands on” stuff Illegal or inappropriate activities
Cultural interactions Negative comments about your hosts, fellow
Candid moments travelers, or staff/faculty members
Examples of collaboration What you had for lunch (unless it’s really cool
Fieldwork and unique)
A cool lab or facility The weather, random animals or objects

Above all, we want to see you so ask a friend to take a pic or snap a candid selfie. If you can sneak in some Maize & Blue or a Block M … bonus!

Here are some ways you can utilize Social Media to share your experiences abroad with others in the University of Michigan community and the International Programs in Engineering office.

Facebook

Like us on Facebook! Send photos to ipe-office@umich.edu and we will post them to our page. Share IPE Facebook content to your own page to help us spread the word about international experiences.

Twitter

Follow us and tweet us! Use #UmichEnginAbroad, and see who else is using the hashtag!

Instagram

Use #UmichEnginAbroad

Online Blog

Share your experiences on our Tumblr: Michigan Engineers Abroad page.

Email us the link to your personal blog (ipe-office@umich.edu) and we’ll share or highlight posts on our IPE Facebook and Twitter pages.
Checklist for Non-UM Programs

**Administrative Matters:**

- Register your international experience with the College of Engineering with M-Compass: [http://www.engin.umich.edu/ipe/registry.html](http://www.engin.umich.edu/ipe/registry.html)
- Meet with a department advisor about your study abroad and confirm that the courses you plan to take will count towards your degree requirements.
- Submit a Transfer Credit Approval Form (TCAF) online [https://www.engin.umich.edu/students/academics/transfercreditapproval/](https://www.engin.umich.edu/students/academics/transfercreditapproval/)
- Make sure that you are NOT registered for classes at UM for the semester you will be abroad, or UM will bill you for tuition.
- US citizens and permanent residents should register their travel with the State Department: [https://travelregistration.state.gov](https://travelregistration.state.gov). US Embassies may use this information to contact you in case of an emergency and connect you with local resources.
- Visit the CAEN office in the Duderstadt Center to receive directions on maintaining your e-mail account.
- Apply for graduation, if you will be graduating while overseas.
- Update your address on Wolverine Access in order to receive all UM mailings.
- As registration for your return semester approaches (March/November), contact your department advisor with the courses and number of credits you are taking overseas.
- After completing your courses abroad, have an official transcript sent to: Office of Recruitment and Admissions, 1108 Robert H. Lurie Engineering Center, 1221 Beal Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2102
- If you wish to apply for on-campus housing at U-M for your return semester, you should send an email to housing@umich.edu in either October or January of the semester prior to your return. Let them know you are studying abroad and would like to receive an application appointment for on-campus housing and specify the semester you want to move-in.
Checklist for Study Abroad Pre-Departure

General Preparation:

- Obtain a passport if you don’t have one. If you already have a passport, check that it will be valid for at least six months beyond the expected end of your stay abroad.

- Apply for your visa by consulting the consulate of your host country.

- Purchase additional health insurance through the UM plan for additional days of travel before or after your trip.

- Make and confirm travel arrangements.

- Take care of all medical, dental and optical needs. Make sure you receive inoculations as necessary.

- Obtain necessary prescriptions and medicines for the entire length of stay abroad. If you wear glasses or contact lenses, take an extra pair with you, or at least a legible copy of your prescription.

- Determine how you will handle money in the host country. Obtain some local currency of the host country before your arrival.

- Obtain an international calling card.

- Make two copies of important information and including passport, visa, and other documents for ease in replacing them if lost. Take one copy of these documents with you and keep at least one copy of each with a member of your family or a good friend.

- Purchase a guidebook and/or other reading material about your host country to prepare for your departure.

Useful Links:

- U.S. Department of State: http://travel.state.gov
- The Electronic Embassy: http://www.embassy.org
- UM Travel Abroad Health Insurance: http://www.uhs.umich.edu/tai/
- UM Health Services Allergies, Immunizations and Travel Health Clinic: http://www.uhs.umich.edu/aithc
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: http://www.cdc.gov
- International Student ID Card (ISIC): http://www.isiccard.com
- STA Travel: http://www.statravel.com
- Hostelling International: http://www.hiusa.org/
- Lesbigay Special Interest Group of the National Association of Foreign Study Advisors (NAFSA): http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/

Prayer Flags at Nam-tso Lake, Tibet
By John Hessburg
2010 Study Abroad