



Pre-Departure Orientation Summer and Fall 2025

University of Massachusetts Dartmouth
International Programs Office
Gina M. Reis, Assistant Director

INTRODUCTIONS

International Programs Office

- Telephone: 1 (508) 910-6506
- LARTS 016, Monday – Friday, 9:00 – 5:00 – **We're moving in May to the Library!**
- <http://www.umassd.edu/ipo/>

Daniel Pirbudagov, Executive Director of International Education


Gina Reis, Assistant Director of IPO

Jocelyn Baker, Administrative Assistant

Advising from abroad – available via Zoom

Your name? Major? Program abroad? Your goal?

AGENDA

- Connecting from Abroad - CITS
 - Office of Student Affairs
 - Expectations, Yours and Ours
 - Risk Management
 - Insurance Matters
 - Staying Healthy Abroad
 - Sexual Assault & Title IX
 - Staying Safe Abroad
 - Academics Abroad
 - Travel & Money Tips
 - Stay in Touch!
 - Returning to US and UMassD
 - Sign-out with Staff!
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UMassD STUDENT AFFAIRS: THERE FOR YOU


➤ Daniel Martinez, Assistant Director for Community Standards

- ❖ While registered as a UMassD Study Abroad participant, you continue in active student status
- ❖ Student Affairs, Health Services, Counseling, Housing, and other offices are available to you as needed


If you are registered with the Center for Access & Success, talk with them about arrangements while on study abroad

- ❖ Student Conduct Code applies


WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM YOUR PROGRAM

- Some form of orientation will take place very shortly after arrival. You should expect to receive basic information such as the information listed below. If you feel you need more, ASK THE LEADER: (s/he is your ally!)
 - ❖ How to reach the director and/or other emergency contact 24/7
 - ❖ Telephone services and how to dial locally and to the US
 - ❖ Be able to recognize police, police stations, hospitals/clinics and how to contact them if needed
 - ❖ How to recognize bank notes and coins and the appropriate conversion rate from USD
 - ❖ Know the recommended means of changing money
 - ❖ Hours, services, street address of the student accommodation
 - ❖ Basic phrases in the local language
 - ❖ Meeting place for the group and instructions in case of emergency
 - ❖ Academic and behavior expectations
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YOUR EXPERIENCE, YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

- The program is organized to teach you, provide opportunities for interaction with the host culture, and guide your overall experience – however, **YOU ARE ULTIMATELY RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING THE DAILY CHOICES AND DECISIONS THAT WILL AFFECT YOUR SAFETY AND YOUR DEPTH AND BREADTH OF LEARNING**
 - Attend all pre-program sessions and read materials
 - Research the country/city (including visa/immigration information)
 - Non-US citizens check with ISSC re: re-entry to US
 - Know where to find emergency assistance
 - Keep you parents & program informed
 - **Get to know the Program Leader – your best advocate!**
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WHAT THE UNITED STATES EXPECTS OF YOU

- Consider that you will be one of the few Americans that most people know; you will be an ambassador of this country (**people may be curious about current events and politics in the USA**)
 - Many people will want to practice their English with you
 - You may also be viewed by unscrupulous people as an unsuspecting target to get something they want
 - Upon re-entry to the US, you will need to account for your actions domestically and abroad and for all items you bring into the country.
 - An increasing number of study abroad students have been approached by foreign governments.
Read: <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/advice-for-us-college-students-abroad>
 - Don't be a Pawn: A Warning to Students Abroad (video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fw8ZorTB7_o)
 - Please report to IPO if you encounter this so we can advise you
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WHAT UMassD EXPECTS OF YOU

- Complete all online questionnaires and submit all forms to the IPO by **May 1**.
- Read, sign, and return IPO membership/academic agreements
 - ❖ Maintain "good standing" as a UMassD student academically, financially, and judicially
- Behave responsibly at all times; when abroad you represent UMass and the people of Massachusetts
- **Register your study abroad trip and ALL "side" travel (travel outside your host city) in the UMassD Travel Registry – HEALIX – more info on slide #11**
- Upon return to UMassD, complete an online evaluation form from the IPO so we can learn what you think of the program and your experience
- Participate in events/share your experience with other students

WHAT UMassD EXPECTS OF YOU

- **Required Check-in Meeting by Zoom**

CONSULT US GOVERNMENT ADVICE

- US State Department offers extensive information for students and other traveling abroad; USE IT
- Specific Country Information:
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html>
- US State Department section providing support for students preparing to study abroad:
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/travelers-with-special-considerations/students.html>
- CRITICAL: Register with the local US Embassy
<https://step.state.gov/step/>
- US Customs Regulations
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/customs-and-import.html>

Travel Registration through Healix

Daniel Pirbudagov

<https://www.umassp.edu/travel-and-expense/travel-registration>


See especially the following drop-down menus:

How Do I Register My Travel?

Registering Travel via Email For Yourself

Who Should I Contact About Questions about Travel Registration?


****ALL travel through and to the United Kingdom must be registered IN ADVANCE with UK authorities**. Apply for an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) [here](#).**



INSURANCE MATTERS

- UMass students on approved programs are covered by travel accident and sickness insurance which supplements your personal medical and travel insurance and provides coordination assistance in case of emergency.
- Alexander Basta, International SOS Insurance
- **IMPORTANT: BRING THE UMASS POLICY NUMBER AND TELEPHONE NUMBER**

INSURANCE MATTERS

- MAKE SURE YOU HAVE YOUR PROOF OF PERSONAL HEALTH INSURANCE WITH YOU, POLICY AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS
 - IMPORTANT: You will need to pay out-of-pocket for any doctor or hospital charges, then keep receipts and submit them to your health insurance company for reimbursement later
 - IF YOU HAVE UMASS STUDENT HEALTH INSURANCE: You must contact the Bursar's Office to register for coverage while you are away on EXH/study abroad status
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Staying Healthy Abroad

Student Health Services – See separate slide deck

Mental Wellness Abroad

Counseling Center



STAYING SAFE ABROAD

➤ **Much of our daily existence is based on unconscious assumptions**

- ❖ Issues like HIV, date-rape, theft are not unfamiliar – but may be more or less prevalent
- ❖ Health and safety precautionary steps may be the same, but the situations are often very different from those at home
 - ✓ No flashy jewelry or electronics in view
 - ✓ Don't walk alone late at night
 - ✓ Check your route in advance and don't look lost
 - ✓ Always carry enough cash and the number for a taxi
- ❖ Being in a place that is physically unfamiliar and surrounded by a less familiar language means less access to information for making decisions

STAYING SAFE ABROAD (continued)

- Note that cultural norms will vary regarding relationships and sexuality
 - ❖ Set boundaries and use your instincts; if something does not feel right, always report it to program/authorities
- RIGHTS – Your human right to being treated with dignity and respect is absolute; always report any situation that makes you feel uncomfortable
 - ❖ Women Travelers: <http://www.journeywoman.com/>
 - ❖ Diversity Resources: <https://www.diversityabroad.com/> and <http://allabroad.us/advice.php>
- If you are attacked or arrested abroad, contact your program coordinator as soon as possible. They will help to get you whatever assistance is needed, and advise you about filing a police report.
 - ❖ Rape: May also contact the UMassD Victim's Advocate

LOCAL RULES AND LAWS APPLY

- Outside the US, you are subject first and foremost to the laws and regulations of the local area
 - ❖ Do not become involved in crowded events and protests
 - ❖ US citizenship does not exempt or protect you
 - ❖ If you do have a problem, contact your program leader as well as the US Embassy
- The program provider has policies on behavior and responsibilities of participants
- National laws: “ignorance of the law is no excuse” – what may seem like a small infraction, may carry a severe penalty especially for things like drug use
- The host institution: their own rules and guidelines apply to academic work and appropriate behavior

CHOICES YOU MAKE

- RESPONSIBLE USE OF ALCOHOL – you may be of legal drinking age in your country but nowhere is drunkenness considered acceptable, especially when it results in harm to others or oneself
- ALCOHOL, UNFAMILIAR SURROUNDINGS, CASUAL ACQUAINTANCES = HIGHER VULNERABILITY
- The study abroad staff at the University of Texas Austin have put together a video that illustrates the importance of students taking responsibility and making good choices when abroad. “Culture of Safety”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4FzvdXUmdos>

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- Always carry emergency contact numbers with you
- If hurt or injured, contact police/ambulance first, then the local program coordinator to advise, and your family AFTER when you can tell them help is already being arranged.
- If you are involved in a larger incident or weather emergency, follow the direction of local authorities:
 - ❖ University/program authorities
 - ❖ Local police, public health, government officials
 - ❖ Watch the local news or listen to the radio
 - ❖ Use your mobile phone and email to contact the program coordinator to let them know you are OK
- If something major happens in your country and you are far away and not involved, call your family anyway as they will see it on the news and worry!

DON'T LET THIS BE YOU


- Read news articles in the Pre-Departure shared folder

ACADEMICS ABROAD

➤ Academic Guidelines

- ❖ Semester students must carry a full course load (equivalent to 12 US credits)
- ❖ Actively engage in and complete all classes

➤ Prior Approval for Coursework

- ❖ All students are required to have a full course load pre-approved for UMassD academic credit.
 - ❖ Upon arrival in the host country, if you would like a course considered for approval, use the same online process to have the course pre-approved (tinyurl.com/59ajrxvd)
 - ❖ If you take a course abroad that has not been pre-approved, UMassD credit is NOT guaranteed. You will need to present the course syllabus, any assignments/exams completed abroad to the Department for consideration.
 - ❖ The department of your major will certify completion of your graduation requirements; it is up to you to communicate with your department regarding choice of study abroad courses and to obtain approval for transfer credit.
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HOST UNIVERSITY ACADEMICS

- Maintain a full course load at all times; this is required by UMassD and by the terms of your student visa
- Professors/lectures more formal; reading lists long; students may not have the opportunity to speak in class
- Likely fewer books to purchase; use the library & shared materials
- Read syllabus; ask questions after class or at the department office
- Grades may be based primarily on the exams; don't fall behind
- Grades may be posted in public; exams can be oral
- Grade scales vary widely; do not confuse any letter or numeric mark with what you know in the US; ASK what the grade scale is
- UMassD GRADE POLICY: Per the UMassD catalogue – Study Abroad courses (except for faculty-led courses) transfer in with letter grades but are NOT calculated in the GPA.

UMassD OFFICE OF HOUSING & RESIDENTIAL EDUCATION

➤ Fall Study Abroad Students

Students studying abroad in the Fall should participate in the room selection process and then inform the Administrative Assistant in the Office of Housing and Residential Education (located in Oak Glen Hall) that they will be studying abroad by June 30.

➤ Spring Study Abroad Students

Students studying abroad in the Spring should contact the Administrative Assistant in the Office of Housing and Residential Education (located in Oak Glen Hall) that they will be studying abroad by December 1. Students will be required to complete contract release paperwork.

FINANCIAL AID

- If you are a financial aid recipient, you must submit a completed Prior Approval form and a completed Consortium Agreement. If you are on a campus-sponsored program, a completed Study Abroad Expense Form must be submitted.
- Most providers require the student to submit a Financial Aid Verification Form. It is your responsibility to submit this form *with the Consortium Agreement*. Please allow the Financial Aid Office ample time to complete this process.
- Courses must be approved by your college and be applicable to your UMassD degree.
- Some institutions/programs may require payment prior to the receipt of financial aid. You are responsible for ensuring the host institution/provider is paid according to their policy.
- Financial aid will be credited to the UMassD account. Funds will not be disbursed until after the UMassD add/drop period. On the Consortium Agreement, students must determine how they would like these funds to be managed.

FINANCIAL AID (continued)

- We strongly encourage students to authorize UMassD to allow your financial aid award to pay the provider directly. Any excess funds will be made available to you in a refund.
- If you have not already done so please sign up for direct deposit. Information may be found at: <https://www.umassd.edu/bursar/refunds/studentrefunds/>
- Private education loans must be credit approved and certified by the campus before verification will be issued to the provider. This process may take up to 30 days.
- You must notify the Financial Aid Office if you withdraw or drop a class at the host institution. Withdrawn or dropped coursework may impact your financial aid status and/or award.
- Upon completion of the program, you must submit an official transcript from the host institution to the UMassD International Programs Office.

TRAVEL INFO: COLLECT AND CARRY THROUGHOUT

- Passport and visa (if required)
- Roundtrip air ticket and itinerary
- Health insurance & UMass travel insurance
- Letter of Admission/Program Confirmation
- Credit card and small amount of local currency
- Phrasebook and basic maps
- Emergency contact numbers (direct-dial)
 - ❖ Family
 - ❖ Local Program Coordinator
 - ❖ US Embassy
 - ❖ Local Police


LEAVE WITH FAMILY

- Photocopy of your passport and visa
- Copy of your flight itinerary
- Copy of your insurance policies and id numbers
- Emergency contact numbers
 - ❖ Local program coordinator at your destination
 - ❖ US number for the study abroad program
 - ❖ UMassD number and IPO office
 - ❖ US Embassy/Consulate closes to your location
- If you purchase a pay-as-you-go phone, ADVISE PARENTS OF MOBILE TELEPHONE NUMBER AS SOON AS AVAILABLE & SET-UP THE VOICEMAIL

TRAVEL AND ARRIVAL

- Confirm your flights with airline 24 hours in advance and pack light – 1 large or 2 small bags
 - ❖ Verify check-in time and place for international flight
 - ❖ Number / Size / Weight of bags allowed
 - ❖ Obtain list of restricted items and carry ziplock bag
- Electric current and outlets vary by country:
Bring or purchase en-route, an electrical converter designed for use in your destination
- Arrange transportation from the airport to the program check-in point or accommodation
- Attend your program's entire arrival orientation


FINANCIAL PLANNING

- Arrange with your bank for a small amount of cash in the local currency to take with you (\$50-\$100)
 - Bring a credit card for unforeseen emergencies; make sure your bank sets it up for international use and ask what the fees are for ATM withdrawal when out of the US
 - ATM withdrawals have lower exchange rates than airport kiosks
 - Call your bank and credit card company to place a travel notification on your cards. Otherwise, your cards will likely NOT work abroad because the banks may think your cards have been stolen!
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COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING


- EMAIL: Continue to check your UMassD email at least daily. The university may have important general announcements and the Registrar or Student Affairs may need to contact you.
- The International Programs Office (IPO) is here for advising -- zoom advising appointments upon request! Use this email protocol for fastest reply:
 - ❖ ABROAD: 1-3 word title or as necessary
 - ❖ URGENT – ARBOAD: 1-3 word title or as necessary
- All of UMassD is here to support you. Email/call your academic advisor, the Enrollment Center, Housing, Student Affairs, etc. anytime you have questions or concerns.

RETURN TO USA


- Know Your Rights: Law Enforcement at the Airport
 - [Visa holders and citizens given urgent travel warning over new security policies at US border](#)
 - Marijuana Law in MA and reentering the USA
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UNIVERSITY CONTACTS WHILE ABROAD

➤ **EMERGENCY:** Contact Public Safety anytime and they will locate the appropriate person for you to talk with:

- ❖ **International Programs Office:** + 1-508-910-6506 or intl_programs@umassd.edu
 - ❖ **UMassD Police Department:** + 1-508-999-9191
 - ❖ **Student Affairs:** +1-508-999-8640
 - ❖ **Counseling Center:** +1-508-999-8648
 - ❖ **Victim Advocate:** +1-508-910-4584
 - ❖ **Health Center:** +1-508-999-8984
 - ❖ **University Enrollment Center:** +1-508-999-8857
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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- GlobalScholar online course series: Intro to Study Abroad
http://globalscholar.us/course_description.asp
 - Sexual Harassment & Prevention
http://globaled.us/safeti/v1n22000ed_sexual_harassment_and_prevention.asp
 - Diversity Resources
<https://www.diversityabroad.com/guides/diversity-and-inclusion-abroad-guide/diversity-guide-to-study-abroad>
 - Women Travelling Alone
<http://www.journeywoman.com/>
 - Disability Resources
<http://www.miusa.org/plan/americans-abroad>
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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (continued)

- Scholarships, grants listings, and international student loan programs
<https://www.iefanet.org/>
- Currency conversion calculator
<https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/> or <https://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>
- GLIMPSE: photos and journals of study abroad students
<https://matadoru.com/>

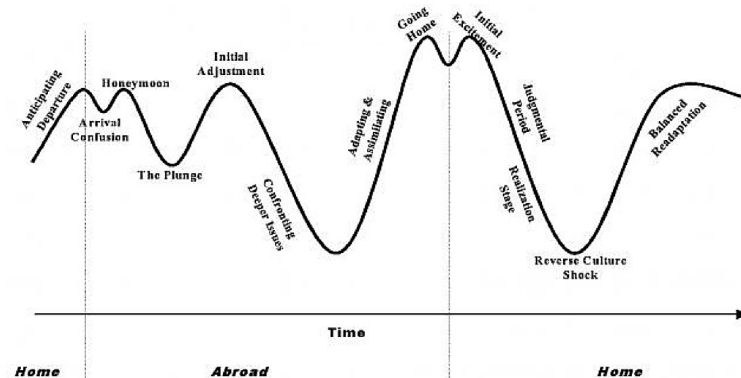
A CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

- One of the primary reasons to spend time abroad is to experience new cultures and perspectives, and gain an awareness that there are many ways to approach the opportunities and challenges all of us face in life.
- Cultural difference will underlie everything you experience abroad: how classes are taught and assessed, shopping, banking, socializing, etc.
- This link is to a self-guided and self-paced tool for students preparing to study abroad: http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/pub/CULTURE_ISSUES_2.htm

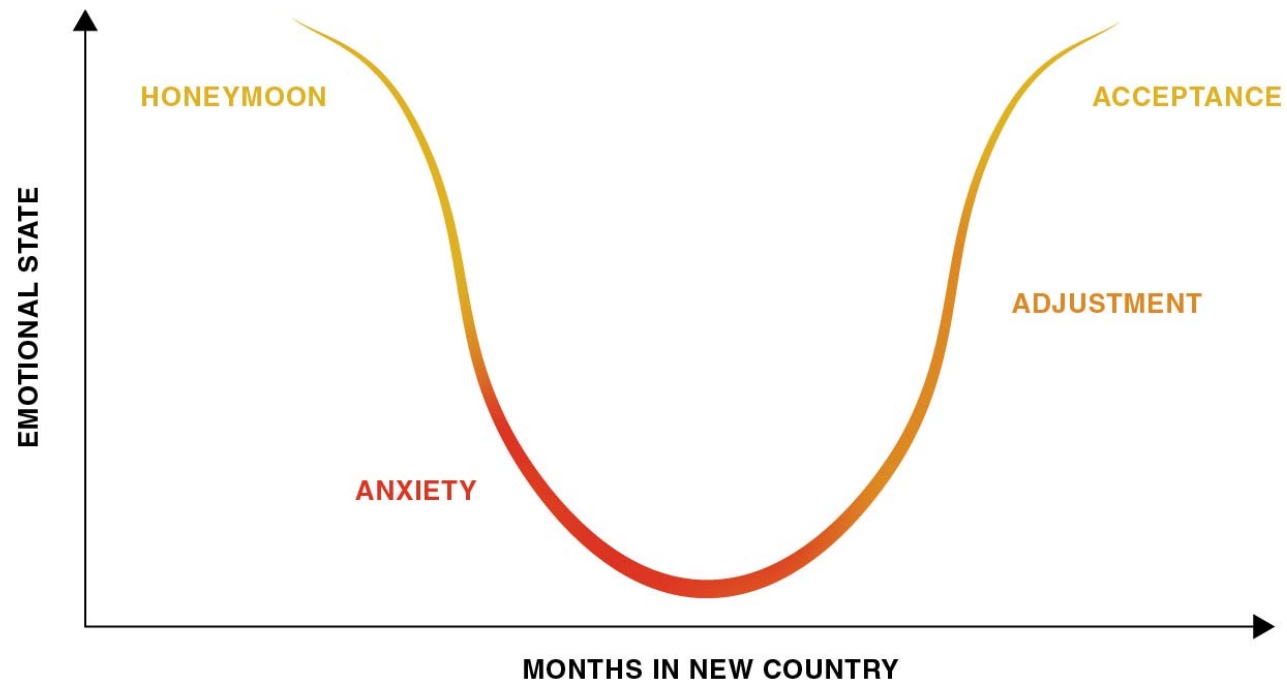
CULTURE SHOCK – IT'S REAL

➤ Reality differs from assumptions = Culture Shock

- ❖ Culture shock centers around assumptions being tied to culture
- ❖ Stress is felt because of dealing with different assumptions *all day*
- ❖ Definition of stress is: mind and emotions working harder at all times
- ❖ Tremendous leaps in adaptability and self-confidence result from these daily stresses
- ❖ **REQUIRES MORE SLEEP THAN NORMAL AND A HEALTHY DIET**

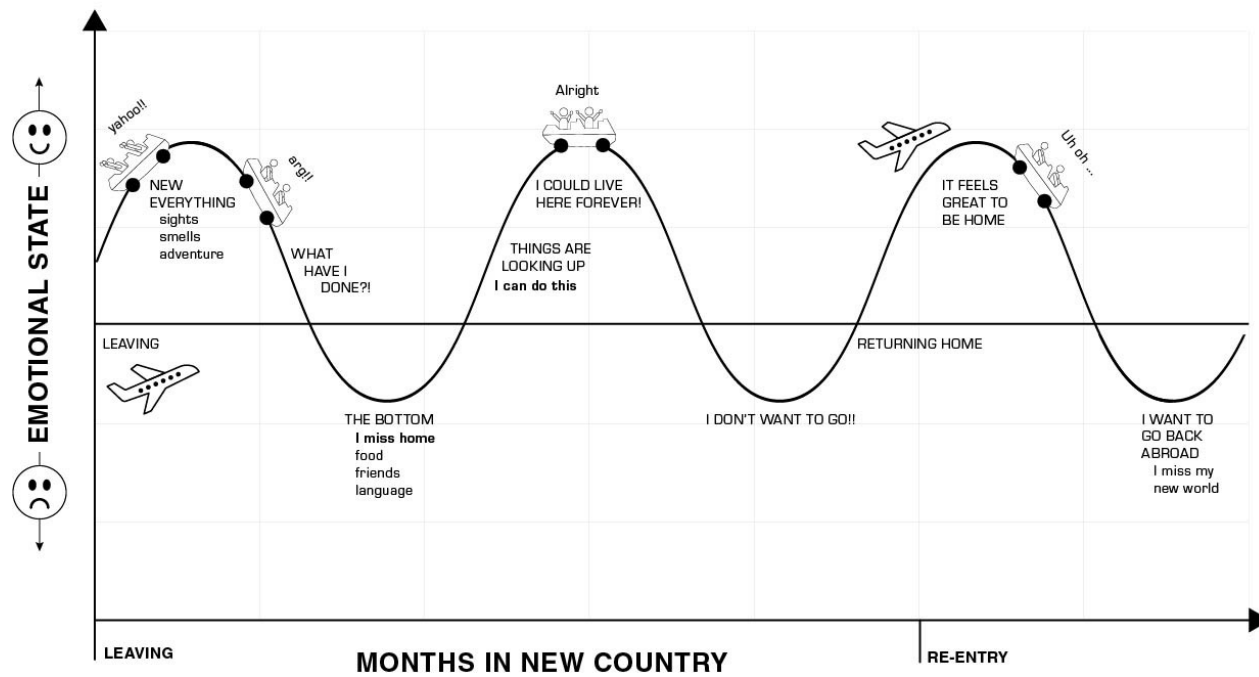


CULTURE SHOCK



CULTURE SHOCK

THE CULTURE SHOCK CURVE/ROLLER COASTER



CULTURE SHOCK

- Nearly everyone who goes to live in a different environment will experience “culture shock” at some point. This is a period of adjustment and adaptation essential to a person’s growth in cultural awareness and self-confidence.
- Being able to recognize culture shock when it occurs and having strategies to counter it is the best defense
 - ❖ Focus on your goals for being abroad
 - ❖ Keep a journal or blog to record your experiences
 - ❖ Go out and see new things; meet new friends through clubs and activities
 - ❖ If you feel really down or it lasts for more than a few weeks, let someone know – program coordinator, the host university counseling service or the IPO office
- The Peace Corps has developed guides for cultural adjustment:
<http://www.globaled.us/peacecorps/maintaining.html>

CULTURAL IDENTITY

- One becomes much more aware of their own identity as a member of their home culture and society
 - ❖ Recognize that other cultures can differ from the US in views of gender roles, races, religions, and other differences.
 - ❖ They also differ in perception of time and punctuality, in prioritizing individual vs. group choice, work vs. leisure, material possessions vs. simplicity, etc.
- “Cross-cultural competence” is the ability to see other’s point of view and to collaborate more easily with others
- As one gets to know others whose language, culture and society have been shaped by a different history other than one’s own, one becomes more aware of one’s own culture and develops greater cross-cultural competence

REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

- Prepare to experience reverse culture-shock when you get back to the US
 - ❖ Be aware that family and friends may have a difficult time relating to the exciting experiences you will have had; in fact they may tell you that you've changed – it will be true!
 - ❖ Blog or share photos about your experiences throughout to keep family & friends involved and to record for yourself!
- Expect reverse culture-shock to be more pronounced
- Networking with other returned study abroad students and learning how to describe the skills acquired abroad for prospective employers can help
 - ❖ Watch for IPO's invitation to the annual student Re-entry Conference. Info on past conferences is available at: <http://www.lessonsfromabroad.org/new-england/>

REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK (continued)

- Consider getting involved with international activities on campus when you get back to UMassD
 - ❖ Apply for a position in the IPO (short-term and semester-long positions available)
 - ❖ Plan a presentation on a project or experience you had abroad for the annual US International Education Week (IEW) in November. A variety of campus activities are sponsored by IPO and ISSC to familiarize the university community with international endeavors across the campus.
See: <https://iew.state.gov/>
 - ❖ Join the Global Ambassadors program by volunteering with the IPO -- be a buddy to exchange students, assist with prospective student information sessions, do peer advising