Where are you going?

Why Go Away?
Learn about a different culture and way of life

Improve foreign language skills
Have a life changing experience
Fulfill a degree requirement
Learn who you are
See yourself and your country from afar
Preparing for Difference

Do your RESEARCH!!
RESEARCH THE HOST CULTURE

- Read a book that is set in that area before you leave.
- Go online and read the local or national newspapers. Know what is happening in your host country.
- Contact local tourist boards by email, phone, or mail.
- Check websites
  - Check out local transportation options online
  - Research cultural attractions
LEARN NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Ask locals about non-verbal cues and other local behaviors

http://melibeeglobal.com/2010/10/preparing-for-study-abroad-non-verbal-communication/

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OWFPHW7BCCI
**BLEND IN**

- Avoid American hangouts and/or local demonstrations.
- Research the dress code for your country. Is it more formal than in the U.S.?
- Don’t wear clothing with U.S. logos.
- Read books in the local language if you can.
- Whenever possible, speak the local language.
Administrative Preparation
Submit Pre-Departure Packet to Office of International Programs

Complete Health Form and schedule appointment with UMF Health Center

UMF Programs: Purchase iNext insurance/card

Make sure your financial aid is set
  + File all information early
  + Stay involved and follow through with all forms, signatures, online processes
  + Make arrangements for any refund to be sent to permanent address

Travel Resources:
  http://studentsabroad.state.gov/togo.php
- Leave or send good addresses with family and friends.
  - Mailing, Email, Skype
- US/Local Elections - Register to vote absentee by visiting www.fvap.gov
- Power of Attorney - discuss with your family to see if you need to arrange this.
  - Banking / financial processes
  - Have your affairs in order
  - Consider making a will
Studying Abroad during your Senior year?

- Verify that you will have completed all degree requirements
- Submit your application for degree
- Check to see if your program will complete in time for you to participate in Graduation Ceremonies. Discuss with family.
- Order your study abroad graduation sash
- Make arrangements to order your graduation regalia
PACKING

- Go lightly, take only what you can carry by yourself!
- Read the article *Why You Should Pack Your Bags Half-Full*
- Check airline regulations for carry-on items and baggage/weight limits
- Leave room for items you will purchase to bring home!
KNOW THE CURRENCY

- Obtain $50-$100 in destination currency before entering the country
  - From local bank before departure
  - Exchange kiosk or ATM in airports
ATM & CREDIT CARD USE

- Know your account type, PIN number, fees, ATM locations. Carry copies of debit/credit cards in case your cards are lost/stolen.
- Have a back up plan: cash and alternate credit card
- Notify your bank and credit card companies of your travel dates/destinations both before you depart and for travels during your program.
- Set up online banking so you can monitor your accounts while abroad.
Stay Healthy!
HEALTH INSURANCE & IMMUNIZATIONS

- As part of the Pre-Departure process you must complete the Medical and Consent/Emergency Contact Form and schedule an appointment with the nurse or doctor at the UMF Health Center. Let them know if you wish to include a physical exam as part of this required visit.

- A thorough dental exam is also strongly recommended.

- Become familiar with your international health insurance policy. You often have to pay for expenses out of pocket and be reimbursed.
HEALTH INSURANCE & IMMUNIZATIONS

- For information on required or recommended vaccinations for travel abroad, consult the Centers for Disease Control website www.cdc.gov/travel.
- You will discuss immunizations during your required visit with the UMF Student Health Center. Call 778-7200 to make your appointment now!
If you use medication/s on a regular basis, including asthma inhalers, you should take a supply to last throughout your stay and carry a letter from your physician explaining the medical necessity and treatment. Any medications taken overseas should be left in their original containers and be clearly labeled.

Also carry a written prescription from your doctor, including the generic name of your medication.
Prescription medication for legitimate health conditions may be scrutinized by foreign officials when going through Customs. In some countries drugs that are legal and readily available in the United States will be considered illegal, require a prescription, or a host country authorization to be allowed in the country.

- Make sure your prescription isn’t illegal!
- Do not plan to stop taking your medications while abroad!
MAILING MEDICINES ABROAD... DON’T DO IT!

- Most countries have very strict regulations on having medications shipped abroad. Students typically find that refills of regularly taken medications in the U.S. get stopped by the host country’s Customs. Decisions on what medications may be mailed legally into some foreign countries are made by the host country government, not the U.S. Post Office. Students should call the host country government office in the U.S.
MENTAL HEALTH

- Going abroad can be very stressful and is NOT a cure for physical or emotional disorders. Being in a new environment, eating new foods, being on a different schedule, can all intensify pre-existing conditions.

- Do NOT ignore any health concerns. Your health is more important than an overseas experience.
MENTAL HEALTH

- Work closely with your physician or mental health professional to understand possible triggers and how to reach out for help. Discuss proper medication management with the UMF Health Center physician or nurse.

- It is in your best interest, if you are taking psychototropic medications, to be stable in your medication before starting your overseas experience.
CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

- There are distinct phases of culture shock which virtually everyone who lives abroad goes through. This is normal!
  - Preliminary Stage
  - Initial Euphoria
  - Irritability
  - Gradual Adjustment
  - Adaptation and Biculturalism
  - Re-Entry Phase
CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

- Learn as much as you can about your host country before you arrive.
- Be aware of the existence of culture shock. Realize it is natural to miss your family, friends, and home. Talk about these feelings with someone who you feel comfortable with.
- Keep a good sense of humor. Be able to laugh at your mistakes.
- Try to find someone from the host culture to be a "cultural informant". Ask questions about customs or attitudes that you do not understand.
CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

- Stay busy and get involved in activities that you enjoy.
- Have realistic expectations. Do not expect to become fluent in a month.
- Accept failure. Those who study/live abroad are successful people in their own culture so are often unused to failure. When living overseas it is natural to experience difficulties and occasional failures. It is from these struggles that we learn and grow.
CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

- Be tolerant and open-minded. There are many ways to accomplish the same goal. Just because things are done differently in your host country does not make them bad or inferior. The more open-minded you are, the easier it will be to adjust to your host country.

- Keep your self-confidence. Remember studying/living in another country is very difficult and the fact that you choose to do this says a lot about the type of person you are.
It is important to know that other countries are not bound by U.S. legislation on providing services to students with disabilities, and physical facilities and academic resources vary significantly from one overseas site to another.

If you are currently receiving disability-related accommodations at UMF or anticipate needing them at your program site, please contact the UMF Study Abroad Advisor or your program provider for further assistance.
SEXUAL HEALTH

- Exercise the same good precautions you take at home. Remember that STDs are global!
ALCOHOL USE

- If you choose to drink, do so in moderation.
  + Alcohol content is often higher than in the U.S.
- Alcohol use increases risky behaviors—false sense of safety, feeling of invincibility, poor decision making, inappropriate behavior, destructive behavior... to name a few.
- If you are sexually assaulted while voluntarily under the influence of alcohol or drugs, it will be much harder to make any legal charges.
- Remember, act responsibly....you are representing UMF, the State of Maine and the U.S.
TRAVEL SAFELY
LAWS AND LEGAL RIGHTS

- Know the laws and your rights, they are not the same as in the USA!
- This is especially true of drug laws. More than 1/3 of Americans incarcerated abroad, are in jail because of drugs. In many countries, possession is treated the same as trafficking. Bottom Line—NO DRUGS!
Keep a copy of your passport, ID cards, and photos in a separate place in case you need to replace them.

Leave copies at home as well.

Ask whether you need to carry your passport at all times.
TERRORISM ATTACKS

- Talk to local administrators about appropriate procedures and attitudes.
- Know alternate routes and modes of transportation.
- Periodically check travel.state.gov for any updates on alerts.
- Avoid protests, potentially violent situations, or places where Americans are known to congregate. In the event of disturbances, do not get involved.
- Register with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency.

https://step.state.gov/step
COMMON SENSE

- Let common sense be your guide.
- It’s easy to take risks in a new environment. Don’t do something you would never do at home.
- Be aware of pickpockets. They often work in groups or pairs.
- Use the buddy system at night.
- Know the emergency protocol for your program.
GENDER MATTERS

- Unwanted sexual advances or conduct should never be tolerated, no matter what country you are in!
- Talk to your resident director about social norms in your host culture.
COMMUNICATION

Stay in touch with home selectively

Remember to live in the moment and savor the experience.

Send photos, postcards, or e-cards!!!
COMPUTERS/ELECTRONICS

- Bringing a laptop, iPad, iPod and/or cell phone? Purchase plug adapters and voltage converters in the US before you travel. Leave expensive electronics home whenever possible.

- Digital Cameras-Bring extra batteries; replacements may be hard to find in some countries.

- Skype or Face Time are great ways to keep in touch with family and friends. Make sure you are all “connected” before you leave. A practice run is a good idea!
CELL PHONES

- Investigate cell phone plans and phone cards before you travel.
  - Pay-as-you-go phones versus a contract?
  - Bring a phone from home or buy a cheap one there?
  - Buy a SIM card for your existing phone?
  - Phone card access codes?
  - Work with your cell phone company to suspend your data service while abroad.
  - Use your smartphone in wireless environments, download free texting app.
Prepare for Return
To help assure you’re getting academic credit for courses completed abroad:

- Bring back course descriptions of courses not previously approved.

- Bring back syllabi, papers, textbooks used, references, reading lists, etc., in case the need arises to request a specific equivalency.
Have your final official transcript sent to UMF Office of International Programs.
Ask the program provider/international office overseas when to expect your transcript (usually 2-3 months).
Follow up until you see the credit on your UMF transcript.
GRADES / GPA

- Your grades will appear on your UMF transcript.

- **UMF Programs**: Quality points *are* computed and your GPA will be affected.

- **Provider Programs**: No quality points are computed and your GPA remains the same as when you left UMF.

- Honors standing could be potentially impacted by your grades abroad.
Housing

- Make sure you have a plan of where you will live before you return home!
- If you plan to return to UMF housing, communicate directly with Residence Life.
- If possible, try to arrange housing for when you return, before you leave for your semester abroad.
Pre-Registration / Registration

- Registration information will be sent via email in October and March.....
  - Check myCampus or MaineStreet at pre-registration time to search course offerings for the next semester.
  - Finalize your Wishlist by the deadline.
  - Check MaineStreet for any holds (account, library).
  - Register via Maine Street per your class standing.
  - If you experience any trouble registering, contact your Academic Advisor.
RETURNING HOME

- Be sure to include this experience on your **resume** under your education experiences.
- Think about what you learned and talk about it during a **job interview**.
- Jot down any **skills** that you have gained that may transfer to your career.
- Take a course with an **international focus** to keep your experience alive.
- Participate in a **UMF Study Abroad Fair** and other cultural programming.
- Be a **mentor** to an international student or UMF student considering Study Abroad.
Have Fun!
University of Maine at Farmington

Study Abroad
Pre-departure Orientation

Office of International Programs