# Parent and Guardian Information Book

## For Parents and Guardians of KSC Study Away Students

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Dear Parent or Guardian of a Keene State Study Away student:

Congratulations! By accessing this information book you are supporting your student in their personal and academic global learning journey. Your student deserves congratulations as well: Keene State College (KSC) Study Away programs have a rigorous and selective application process. Students must submit essays, fill out multiple forms, meet GPA requirements, and coordinate the submission of letters of recommendation and approval. Making the decision to study away at Keene State College shows commitment and exceptionality, as well as courage and conviction!

Thank you very much for your support for your child's study away academic experience at Keene State College. Some students tell us that their parents and/or guardians are more nervous about their study away experience than the student themselves. Whether or not this is the case with you, you probably have questions and concerns as your loved one prepares to embark on an academic program that may take him or her halfway around the world. We hope to address some of these your concerns and questions here – others will be answered in other areas of our website, including the section for study away students.

I know what it is like to have a child study away, since my own college-age son has studied away in India. Even though I work in the field of international education, I also experienced many of the same questions and concerns that you may be experiencing right now. And I want to reassure you that all of us at Keene State College work very hard to make the study away experience as academically enriching and personally transformational as possible for all participants. From careful selection of our global partners and programs to required orientations for all study students to clear and transparent information regarding program costs to support for getting visas, preparing to travel, etc., to academic transfer policies and grading, we work to support your son's or daughter's study away experience in numerous ways.

I would like to thank Marianne McGarrity for her assistance in creating this information book.

Sincerely, Dr. Skye Stephenson, Director, Global Education Office, Keene State College

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# Chapter 1:
# Study Away: An Introduction

**What is Study Away?**

Put very simply, study away is the process whereby students earn academic credit at an institution other than their home institution or university, often in another country. The field of study away, also known as study abroad or international education, is a rapidly growing and expanding field, with a rich history of cross-cultural communication and cooperation between nations. In 2011, over 273,000 U.S. students studied in another country (Institute for International Education, 2012). This number has increased by leaps and bounds in the last 15 years and continues to increase every year. Students are also increasingly studying in non-traditional destinations. Here at Keene State we are proud to represent the national and international trends: anywhere from 150-200 Keene State students study away every year to a wide variety of destinations and on a variety of program models.

The past 40 years have seen study away become embedded into the institution of higher education itself, with international offices, centers, and staff growing in numbers, and "internationalization" becoming part of the on-campus conversation. Program design and delivery has expanded to include much more than just the "junior year abroad" as it was first offered in the 1920's, and now includes faculty –led programs, short-term and summer programming, and semester programs.

Additionally, recent years have seen an increase in the number of Masters and PhD programs that focus on international education and intercultural communication. The resulting research and approaches to assessment of learning outcomes and impact on students has given professionals valuable information with which we can continually improve programming to optimize students' academic and personal development. At Keene State, we collect data through an extensive end-of-program assessment that gauges many different aspects of the student experience. Not only do we truly believe that study away is, for many students, the best experience of their lives, we have the data to prove it!

The field has well-established professional standards and guidelines, as well as a code of ethics, standardized by national associations, member organizations, and agencies. These standards and codes guide our behavior and decisions when choosing our partners and designing programs, and in training staff and communicating with our colleagues. Keene State College adheres to the Forum on Education Abroad's Standards of Good Practice including standards for academic rigor, program administration, health, safety, and security. KSC study away programs work with over 30 approved international program partners with whom we have excellent working relationships.

As the field has evolved, study abroad has become possible for more students no matter what their background or chosen academic discipline. In this increasingly interconnected world in which we live, your student's choice to study abroad can give them the competitive edge they need to succeed, while you can be confident that your student is part of a national and internationally supported academic community of learners and instructors, and part of an increasingly important educational trend.

**Benefits of Study Abroad**

"At its best, study abroad: Enriches and diversifies undergraduate education by offering courses, programs, and academic learning of the sort not available on the home campus; provides U.S. students with a global outlook that emphasizes the ties among nations and cultures, the universality of human values, and the necessity of working together; enhances career preparation by teaching cross-cultural and workplace skills of value to today's employers; and deepens intellectual and personal maturity, fosters independent thinking, and builds self-confidence."
~ Dr. William Hoffa, International Education Consultant

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Like the college experience itself, the benefits of a study abroad experience are potentially life-changing but difficult to measure. For years, study abroad professionals relied on personal anecdotes of participants, often relayed years after the study abroad experience. More sophisticated research - both qualitative and quantitative - has categorized and, in some cases, tracked, study abroad benefits. These include:

- **Academic Performance.** In a recent longitudinal study conducted by the Institute for the International Education of Students (IES), 87% of respondents said that their study abroad program influenced their subsequent educational experiences. Researchers at the University of Georgia are finding that an academic experience abroad can reinvigorate or even greatly improve a student's GPA. At Clark, we also enhance the overall academic experience by offering study abroad programs at universities that offer additional courses and particular academic strengths.
- **Global Outlook.** This is one of the most important potential benefits of a study abroad experience. Noting that Americans typically score very low on culture and geography tests, researchers have more recently termed "global competence" as a necessary component of a college education. Study abroad is an important way of enhancing that component. In the IES study, 82% of respondents said that study abroad contributed to their developing a more sophisticated way of looking at the world. Most Clark students indicate a similar response on our program evaluations.
- **Career Preparation.** Martin Tillman of The Johns Hopkins University's writes, "In an ever more globalized economy, educators need to assist students in building a sophisticated 'toolkit' to market the value of their varied portfolio of international experiences to employers." Employers look for skills like intercultural sensitivity, adaptation to new surroundings and ability to deal with ambiguity - skills that can be gained from study abroad and other international programs.
- **Personal Growth.** Perhaps the most recognized benefit of study abroad, the idea that study abroad promotes personal and intellectual growth, dates back hundreds of years, even before "study abroad," as we know it today, existed. Today, educators have traced the impact of study abroad on student development. The IES study found that 97% of respondents said study abroad served as a catalyst for increased maturity; 96% reported increased self-confidence; and 73% said study abroad continues to influence the decisions they make in their family life.

**Read More About the Benefits of Study Abroad**

- The International Education of Students (IES) Research study
- Other research studies on study abroad and international education
- The Right Tool for the Job, by Martin Tillman
- Further recommended reading

# Chapter 2:
# Supporting Your Child's Study Away Experience

**At a glance:**

- Encouraging personal independence and responsibility
- Cultural Adjustment: What to expect
- When your student returns: Reverse culture shock

**Encouraging Personal Independence and Responsibility**

Now that you have a better sense of the growing field of international education and study away, and the careful and rigorous selection process at Keene State's study away programs, let's turn our attention to one of the most pressing questions for many parents and guardians of KSC study away students: How can I best support my son or daughter before, during, and after their study away experience?

Our number one recommendation for you is to support independent learning by encouraging your student to do as much as possible on their own. Of course, you will still need to check in and make sure that they are progressing and completing their various tasks needed to make study away a reality. Remember that some of the valuable lessons many students learn via the study away experience are about how to practically make things happen. Learning how to obtain a student visa, for example, which is required for participation in many study away programs, teaches invaluable skills that can be applied later in life to areas such as job applications or applying for a mortgage, for example.

One of the major outcomes of study away is the maturity and confidence that study away students gain when they realize they can navigate visa acquisition, international travel arrangements, successfully attending classes in a completely new region or country, and communicating with people from all over the world. In the words of a KSC study away student,

> *"When something went wrong I couldn't just turn to my parents or teacher…I learned how to take care of things myself" (KSC 2012 study away participant, Italy)*

Legally, your child is the individual who has signed up for the study away program, and students over 18 years of age are considered legal adults. FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) rules apply here.

We send all communication regarding paperwork, deadlines, financial costs, and much more directly to students' Keene State e-mail address. This will remain true throughout the time your student is away and upon their return.

Additionally, KSC study away students receive extensive support from us at the Global Education Office (GEO), and we are available to answer any questions they may have. Students are required to attend a mandatory in-person comprehensive study away orientation on campus, as well as a separate academic orientation. They also will receive another orientation upon arrival to their study away country or site.

So, if you have questions, we recommend that you check with your student. It is likely that they have already received the information you may be wondering about. If they have not, you might want to encourage students to make the phone call instead of doing it yourself.

**Cultural Adjustment: What to Expect**

While we encourage independence for your son or daughter, providing emotional as well as practical support will also go a long way as your student experiences the challenges and ups and downs of global learning and cultural adjustment. It is normal and expected for students to experience some challenges in adjusting to a new culture. In fact, cross-cultural research indicates several phases of cross-cultural adjustment that most individuals pass through during study away or other cross cultural experiences. As parents you can encourage your student to learn about their study away program location prior to their departure. (We also encourage this in materials and orientations.) This can help ease some of the potential for "cross-cultural shock" and help them both academically and socially. What else can you do as a parent/guardian to support your student through the likely period of adjustment they will experience? You may find this description and advice helpful:

"Most students experience culture shock to some degree. Culture shock does not affect everyone the same – some students have it longer than others, some not at all. Upon arrival abroad most students are a little disoriented or experience discomfort in trying to adjust to the new culture. However, this difficult time will be temporary; the reward of studying abroad will soon outweigh the initial discomfort that the student might feel. If your son or daughter experiences irritation and depression after a few weeks, it is part of this pattern and will probably go away (all the faster if you remain cheerful in response!). If you get a tearful call 24 hours after departure, the best thing to do is to remain calm and positive. Your support and confidence are vital for the well-being of your child, as doubtful parents result in doubtful travelers." (Guide to Study Abroad, Chapman University Center for Global Engagement, 2011)

Especially important in this quote is the part about student communication. It is common for some students to share the very stressful parts of their day and/or focus on the negative or the shocking, especially in the beginning of their stay. Should this happen, we encourage you to provide calm support and ask for specifics. Most of the time, once the study away student "gets it all out," they feel better. A good strategy might be to ask your child to let them know how they are feeling a day or two later before you begin to worry unduly, barring – of course – a true emergency situation.

If your son or daughter expresses concerns about aspects of their study away program that appear to be sustained (not just a one-time discussion) and reasonable, the most helpful thing that you can do as a parent or guardian is to encourage your son or daughter to address the issues on their own. For example, if your child complains to you that their homestay family in Spain is not giving them enough to eat, encourage your child to speak to the program director at the site directly. This is more effective than a parent calling Keene State College about the situation, since what we would do is contact your child and encourage him or her to speak to their program director and/or speak ourselves to the program director.

There are some things that your child may complain about that cannot be changed and they will have to adjust to. For instance, we had a student once who was very unhappy in an England program because of the frequent rain. Obviously, none of us can change the amount of rain in

England, so in situations like this helping your child to be resilient and flexible is an important role you can play as a parent/guardian.

**When Your Student Returns: Reverse Culture Shock**

"Reverse culture shock" is just what it sounds like and is very normal for someone who has been out of one's own country or region for some time and then returns. A period of re-adjustment is to be expected. Students may experience difficulty readjusting to the pace of life, different economic conditions, a different level of independence than they might have had while living abroad or away, a new worldview, a new self-image, resuming personal relationships and the disappointment of realizing they are again living in a society where they are no longer "special!" In addition, typically a returning study away student may feel that they have changed more during their period of time that they were away than their family and friends who stayed home. In many cases, they are correct in this assumption because study away often brings about deep transformational learning and growth at many levels.

Knowing how much to share and who is interested in listening to stories of their study away experience is one of the challenges returned study away students may encounter. They may have lots of photos and stories. Finding a balance when talking about the wonderful food in Florence, Italy or their home stay family in Quito, Ecuador will be an area they will need to navigate differently with each parent, family member and friend. From you, as a parent or family member, they will benefit from patience, listening, a genuine interest in their experience, positivity, and reminders that the personal changes the student has experienced are for the better. Encouragement to seek out continued opportunities to engage with their host culture back in their home country can also be helpful.

Just a few examples of what returned students have had to say about the re-entry experience:

> *"The hardest part of re-entry was people seemingly not caring how my life had been transformed."*
>
> *"For me, the hardest part was finding myself in the lives of others who have been without me for so long."*
>
> *"I needed to find connections to my former host country…even just a restaurant. This would have helped me relax, given me a taste of the culture that had become so familiar to me."*

Quotes Excerpted from A Readjustment Manual for Parents: A handbook for parents of students returning home from studying abroad. (2002, Revised 2009) Leonore Cavallero, SIT Study Abroad Academic Director-Ecuador.

Keene State College has resources and opportunities available to support returning students, including volunteering as a student ambassador. See our webpage on returning to KSC. Also see the student handbook chapter on "Returning Home" (Page 33).

# Chapter 3:
# Connecting and Communicating with your student

How you manage your communication before, during and even after your child's study away experience is one of the most important ways that you can support your son and daughter during study away. Some of the questions to consider include:

What should I be discussing with my son/daughter about study away prior to their program departure?

How can I make sure that my son/daughter is communicating and following through appropriately with KSC and/or the host program/institution prior to their departure?

What ways can I communicate with my child while they are studying away, especially if they are studying outside of the United States?

How often should I communicate with my study away student?

**Before Your Student Leaves: Making a Plan**

We suggest you establish a communication plan before your student leaves, including how you will communicate and how often. Today, in an increasingly interconnected world, we can sometimes expect that communication channels will be open 24/7. With the ease of internet access, communication options for students abroad are vastly different than they were twenty years ago. As a result, some students are able to seamlessly access their home support network along with them, which can result in a diminished cultural experience in their new location. We encourage students to "unplug" and experience the world around them rather than striving to stay constantly connected.

So, when planning your communication strategy, bear in mind that speaking daily to someone attempting to adjust to a new culture and new location is not recommended. Planning to connect once per week or once every two weeks should be sufficient for keeping in touch and lending support. Of course, you should do what feels right for your family.

There are also some logistics to consider: Will you communicate mostly via e-mail? Skype? Will your student obtain and use an international cell phone and/or will their current smartphone only allow them to send e-mails? What would the cost be for an international plan on their cell phone for a few months? You will find some basic options outlined below:

**Skype:** With a stable internet connection and a working webcam on both ends, Skype is a very low-cost way to communicate internationally, and many students and families have found it to be helpful for keeping in touch without the added cost of international cell phone plans. The service is free for one-to-one video calling. Go to www.skype.com.

**Cell phones:** Cell phone plans and options are changing and becoming more accessible every year, but international calls and data plans can come with hefty charges, so do

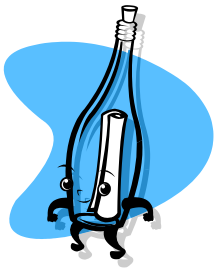
be sure to research your options. Some students have found that buying an in-country cell phone with a pay-as-you go plan is useful and affordable, and can be used to contact the student in case of an emergency. Cell phone plans and availability of international calling options and data plans for smartphones vary widely from site to site and it is good to do detailed research about this option, if you and your student want to pursue it. It is something your son or daughter can undertake as part of their predeparture responsibilities.

**Landline:** Your student may have access to a house phone where he or she can receive calls, but this will not always be the case. It is likely they will not be able to use the landline to make international calls, though it may be possible and again will vary from site to site.

**E-mail:** Remains the most cost-effective way of communicating, as the majority of students will have internet access during their programs. Please note that students must continue to check their Keene State e-mail address while they are away.

**Time difference**: Use this link to see the time difference between you and your student: http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/

**While Your Student is Away**



You may request that your student call you immediately upon arrival in their study away site, but this may not be possible. Often students have airport transfers to ground transportation, will be jet-lagged, and are getting settled in their host family or student housing situation. They may not have immediate access to a phone immediately upon arrival. They will also be exhausted and may need to attend to some other urgent errands before figuring out how to make a phone call. A more realistic expectation is to request that your student call you within 1-2 days of arrival. They may not be able to e-mail right away, either. Be patient, and adjust your expectations.

Again, after the initial check-in, we recommend a schedule for regular communication that does not include daily contact. If your student is constantly or frequently in touch with someone from "back home", they may never really become immersed in the host country and culture they are meant to be exploring.

In the words of a KSC study away student:

> *"I felt so far from home…I tried to get out and meet as many people as I could to take my mind off it…The more I talked and skyped with my family, the harder it was…I think it's best to get out and have fun." – KSC 2012 study away student, Australia.*

Please note that Keene State College will continue to be in touch via e-mail with your student while they are away on their program about course registration for the following year, housing, and other important considerations. Students must be sure to check their emails for important updates and information. So it remains true even when your son/daughter is away that if you are wondering about an important detail, your student may have already received the information.

# Chapter 4:
# Academic Policies and Procedures

**At a glance:**

- Course selection
- Credit transfer
- Transcript processing

**Academics and Credit Transfer**

One of the most compelling reasons students have for studying away is to take advantage of classes and academic opportunities that are not offered on the Keene State campus. KSC Study Away programming is comparable to on-campus programming in terms of academic challenge, and students are expected to take a full academic course load while away. Course offerings differ at every study away site. Students are responsible for researching the course offerings, registering for courses, and ensuring that their course load fulfills any academic requirements. It is highly recommended that students discuss their chosen courses with their on-campus academic advisor, to ensure that their courses will be approved as either general education requirements or credits towards their major, and to determine the number of credits they will register for. This is what you as a parent/guardian can and should encourage your son or daughter to do.

Students will receive transfer credit from Keene State for courses taken while on study away or study abroad. Please see the Academics section of the GEO website for a full description of our policies regarding credit transfer, courses counting toward a major/minor concentration, and integrated studies. GEO provides students with a separate academic in-person orientation meeting addressing these topics, and information can be found in the student handbook as well (See page 29, Academics.)

**Transcripts**

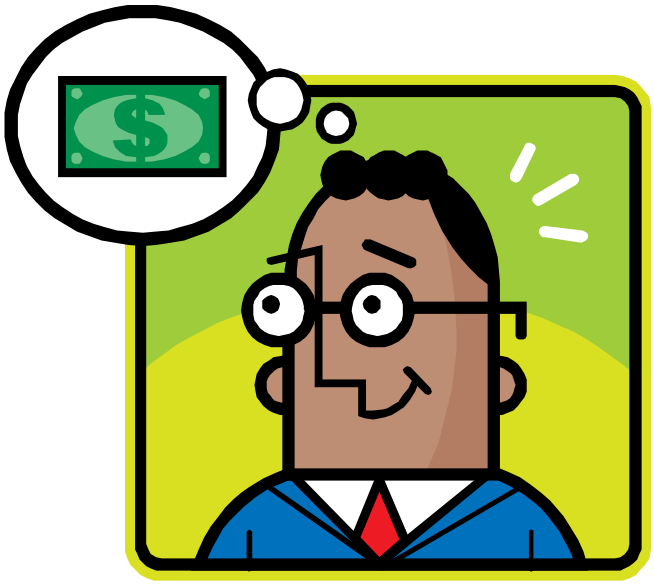
Transcripts are processed by the registrar's office. However, the GEO staff will inform each student when their transcript has been received and passed on to the registrar. Depending on the location of the program, transcripts can take anywhere from one to six weeks after the conclusion of the semester to process. In some cases students or staff must request the transcript from the program provider; in some cases it will be sent automatically. NSE (National Student Exchange) participants must request their transcripts be sent to KSC, for example. U.S. institutions will not release the transcript on the request of anyone but the student.

As is standard at most educational institutions, if students have any outstanding balance owed to their program, they cannot receive their transcript and will not receive their credits.

# Chapter 5:
# Financial Matters

**At a glance:**

- Cost of Study Abroad
- Student Accounts and Billing
- Financial Aid and Scholarship options
- Spending money while away



**Budget Worksheet and Costs of Study Abroad**

Approved study away program costs vary by destination. Each study away program's tuition and fees, flight, and estimated budget for student costs while away are detailed on the individual program budget sheets distributed to students. These are different from program to program. If you would like a breakdown of program costs, the first place to look is this sheet. These budget planning sheets are for you and your student's information, in order to plan for the costs of the entire program duration. The costs we predict for food and incidentals are estimates, and not a guarantee; personal expenses will of course vary with students' spending, shopping, and eating habits. The study away application fee is something that all students pay and is non-refundable.

Existing financial aid can be applied to study away programs; students planning to study away should still complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Students should meet with the Keene State College Financial Aid Office to discuss financial aid applicability for study away.

In addition to students' existing aid packages, there are other scholarships and funds available specifically for U.S. students studying abroad, to which KSC students are encouraged to apply. The GEO office has information about the varying scholarship options and can provide guidance to students in that regard.

**Student Accounts**

Even though the GEO manages the information and communication regarding the cost of study away programs, the billing will come directly from Keene State's billing office, and will be sent to the student's existing billing address on file. **Students must settle their student accounts before departing for the semester or summer.**

Please note that in some programs, KSC study away students will need to make payment to the host university or program. This can be true of housing and/or meal plans, in some cases. Should this be the case, it will be noted on the study away program budget planning sheet.

If you have any questions regarding KSC study away billing, please call the Students Accounts office.

**Spending Money While Abroad**

Parents and guardians often have similar questions about how much money their student will need while away and how they will access it. The most important recommendation overall that we can make is to be sure your student has multiple ways, preferably at least three ways, of accessing funds during their entire stay away. Students often think that if they have an ATM card, they can access cash anytime, but this is not always the case. It is advisable for students to keep some cash on hand in case of emergencies, especially when traveling, and a credit card as well. In other countries banks will not always honor cards the same way that they will in the U.S. It can be especially problematic if your bank or your son/daughter's bank is not aware that they are away, or that they are traveling to

another location from their study away site. To avoid any problems, please be sure your student has informed any banks of their travel plans, and just in case, that s/he has backup funds available.

Immediately upon arrival: We recommend students bring some cash to cover necessities for a day or two, and possibly up to a week after arrival. It may take some time to gain access to funds, or it may be quick and easy. Regardless, you never want your student to be stranded without access to money that they need. Students can change money before traveling, or they can do it upon arrival. At destinations where the currency is not the dollar, an ATM machine is usually the easiest option for obtaining foreign currency.

Traveler's checks used to be the norm for international travel, but they are no longer the easiest and most convenient way to use money when out of the country. The advantage is that they can be insured, so that if they are lost, they can be replaced. However, they are not as widely accepted as they once were, and so students will need an alternate source of funds in addition to any traveler's checks they may bring along. AAA now has "travel money" cards available that are replaceable if lost or stolen, that function like a debit card. This may be an option to consider as a more modern alternative to the traveler's check. See the AAA website for details. Pre-paid Visa or MasterCard "gift" cards may be something to consider as well.

An ATM card linked to a bank account back home is probably the easiest and most cost-effective way for students to access funds throughout their stay. You may want to open a shared account so that you can deposit money for your son/daughter's use. (If you send them checks, they will not be able to use or deposit them without substantial fees if they are outside the U.S.) If the account is in your name, be sure to notify the bank that your student will be using the ATM card and/or credit card while overseas to avoid any account freezes. You may want to inquire as well about fees that may or may not be incurred by using ATM and credit cards in other countries. Doing a little research may help you avoid surprise charges. If students will be at their study away site for an entire year, they may want to open up an account at a local bank. Otherwise, this is usually not the best option.

A final word of advice: it has been our experience that whatever students bring, they will spend. One way students can conserve funds is to consider limiting their travel and touring throughout the semester, and to focus on their in-country and academic experience.

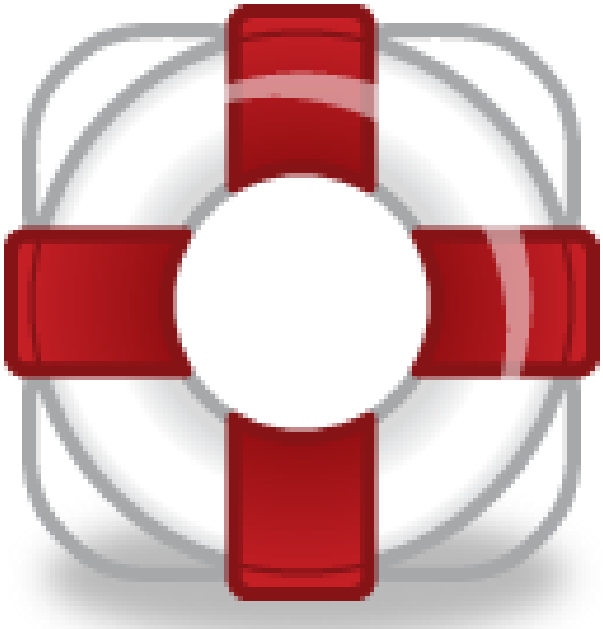
Information on spending money abroad is covered in-depth in the student handbook, including travelers checks, opening bank accounts while abroad, changing money and where to get the best rates, and other topics.

Find information about current exchange rates at www.xe.com

# Chapter 6:
# Health and Safety

**At a glance:**

- What we are committed to
- Student responsibilities: Making healthy choices
- Insurance, routine medical care, and prescription medication
- Emergency procedures



**Health and Safety**

We place the utmost importance on our students' health and safety, and we know you do as well. We are committed to fulfilling the responsibilities of program sponsors as outlined by NAFSA: The Association of International Educators' Responsible Study Abroad: Good Practices for Health & Safety. (Click the link to read the complete list of practices, including recommendations for parents and families.)

We are committed to:

- providing health and safety information for program participants so that they can make informed decisions, considering health and safety issues when evaluating students' eligibility for program participation,
- maintaining and communicating a code of conduct among participants and enforcing said code,
- partnering with reputable providers in other countries, and
- in cases of serious health issues or injury, maintaining good communication among participants, staff, and families as necessary.

For their part, program participants have responsibilities to make healthy choices. Behaving with maturity and sound judgment can minimize any risks associated with study away.

In order to take responsibility for their own health and well-being, students should:

- Follow all host country laws, and rules of any student residence or host family.
- Not consume illegal drugs or excessive or irresponsible amounts of alcohol.
- Conduct themselves in a manner that is respectful of others around them, and of local customs and cultures. Observe the behavior of those that live in the city where you live: if others do not go out alone after dark, neither should you.
- Learn the local equivalent to 911 and learn the 24-hour contact information of the local coordinator.

Above all, students should not leave for their study away experience without doing research on the region or country they will call home for the next few weeks or months. For more safety information and tips for Americans traveling abroad, see the "Additional Resources" section of the Study Away website.

**Insurance, Routine Medical Care, and Prescription Medication**

KSC students who study away outside of the United States must carry travel insurance. The travel insurance will either be provided and billed by Keene State, or through the study away program provider and/or international university depending on your son/daughter's chosen study away program. Students traveling on approved KSC international programs will have insurance coverage that provides for health insurance

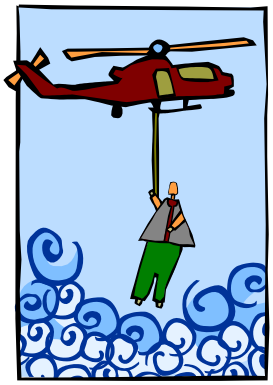
and emergency medical evacuation insurance and assistance. This coverage will only be valid outside the U.S. and during the official program dates. Students who intend to depart early or extend their stay beyond the official program dates are strongly advised to obtain their own insurance coverage for this extended period of travel. In addition, we also advise that students continue to carry coverage that will provide insurance inside the U.S. in case students are forced to return home for continued care in an emergency, and to avoid any lack of coverage upon their return.

Students studying away in domestic locations are not eligible to enroll in the international travel insurance plan but are absolutely recommended to check with their existing plan and to ensure that they will be covered wherever they will travel.

International travel insurance does not cover routine checkups or prescriptions for pre-existing conditions. However, if students are ill or in need of a doctor while at their study away site, they will need to display their insurance card and should keep it on them at all times. It is typically required that students pay up front and submit a claim for reimbursement.

Prescription medication recommendations are as follows:

- Students should plan to bring a sufficient quantity of any necessary prescription medication to last throughout their entire stay abroad. It is prohibited by law to ship medication to other countries. Students will most likely not receive any medication sent through the mail.
- If your insurance does not cover more than 30 days' supply at once, your student's physician can communicate with the insurance to assist with this process.
- Medication should be transported in the pharmacy-labeled bottles in a carry-on, in case checked baggage is misplaced.
- Students should carry a copy of their prescription, as well, however, their prescriptions are not likely to be honored in other countries.
- If the medication is complicated in any way, please take a physician's advice.



**Emergency Procedures**

It is normal for your student to call you and vent about things that are not going well. Please try to use your discretion to determine whether or not your student is truly facing a situation that would be defined as an emergency, or is just experiencing normal adjustment issues and/or homesickness.

If you think your student is in real danger, please advise them to contact local authorities and in-country program staff immediately. All of our programs have on-site coordinators who are available and on call to assist and support your student. Each host program has different staff support; make sure that your student knows the emergency contact information for their program.

Please read the complete GEO and Keene State guidelines for Study Away Emergency Procedures here.

# Chapter 7:
# Travel Planning and Support

**At a glance:**
Students cannot leave for study away without:

- Booking an airline ticket and obtaining a visa
- Paying balances due on student accounts
- Researching their destination

As a parent or guardian you can support students by:

- Keeping copies of all important documents

This section is a condensed version of the checklist provided for students' use before departure. You can see it on Page 1 of the student handbook. Part of the students' learning is to undertake and complete these tasks on their own, but we have outlined their basic responsibilities as well as your possible roles.

**Travel Arrangements**

It is the responsibility of the student to purchase their own airfare. Students can book their flights through any venue they prefer; we recommend comparing prices across sites to find the best rates. Student travel agencies are good options as they can usually work with changing and complex itineraries, and often have flexible change fees and options. We recommend a few reputable agencies in the student handbook. Upon arrival in the host country, some programs offer airport transportation to student housing or host family and some do not. Students are responsible for researching and making their own arrangements as necessary.

We suggest students connect with other students studying away to compare travel notes and recommendations, especially those studying on the same program. They will be able to support each other through the pre-departure preparations and may even want to travel together.

**Visas, Passports and Other Documents**

All students traveling internationally are required to hold a valid passport that expires no less than six months after the date of their return ticket. We recommend that a parent or guardian obtain and hold a current passport as well while students are away, in case of an emergency that requires travel to the student's host country. If you do not have a passport, you will want to begin the process of acquiring one as soon as possible as they can take more than six weeks to process. You will not be able to visit your student outside the country, even in case of an emergency, without a valid passport.

Most students will also need a student visa for the country in which they will be studying if they are attending a semester program. Most summer programs do not require a student visa, but this does vary from location to location.

Students receive instructions on how to obtain a visa at GEO orientations and in the student handbook, (see Page 9). Every country's visa process is different but some will require students to schedule an in-person interview at the host country's consulate nearest their permanent address (often in Boston or New York, for KSC students) in addition to completing and submitting required paperwork. As the visa regulations of each country vary greatly, students should start the process of researching their host country's requirements and procedures and applying for a visa as early as possible after their acceptance into a study away program.

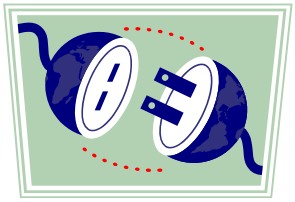
Students are advised to make copies of important documents. As their parent or guardian you may want to hold paper and/or electronic copies of these documents as well, in case of a situation where this could come in useful, such as a lost passport.

- Passport identification page and visa page of passport
- Other documents the students might bring/give to the consulate, including the Study Away acceptance letter
- Copies of credit card numbers
- Other forms of photo identification that may be difficult to replace; driver's license, for example, and Keene State ID
- Student medical insurance card and/or other forms of insurance in force while the student is studying away
- Travel itineraries and flight information
- Medical history/immunizations/prescription medications

**Packing**

A common piece of advice for travelers is to pack what you feel is the bare minimum and then take out half. You can read the full advice students have received on the Dos and Don'ts of packing in the student handbook (Page 12). Students should be able to transport their own luggage for some distance; if they need assistance, they may be bringing too much. However, do consider assisting your student in choosing gifts to bring their host family, if they will be staying with one.

Students should research the voltage used in electrical outlets in the country to which they are traveling and should bring the appropriate adapter so that they can continue to use their electrical devices. Adapters are inexpensive and bringing one will allow students to use their devices right away. Amazon carries a wide selection.



# Frequently Asked Questions

**What are the program dates?**

Program dates change slightly each semester. Exact dates are set by the hosting program, not Clark University. They may start or end earlier than Keene State College, and they will most likely have different break/vacation times. It is important that your student adheres to program rules and regulations, and that the they be present ("sit") for all exams before departing for home. Occasionally "retake" exams are available and may be administered several weeks after the regular exam period. Plan summer jobs and other commitments carefully.

**What about travel arrangements?**

KSC study away students are responsible for making their own travel arrangements to the host program. Some host programs offer advice and/or airport pick up service. Detailed information is often not available at the time of application but will be provided after admission.

Students who arrive earlier than the scheduled arrival date are responsible for arranging their own lodging and local travel, and must make arrangements to meet the group in the designated location. It is important that your son/daughter keep their host program informed about any alternate travel plans.

Whether students travel independently or in a group, we ask that they keep Global Education Office and the host institution notified of their flight schedule.

**Note:** Most immigration policies require proof of a round-trip ticket, but you may want to check with the host country consulate to see if a round-trip ticket is required. If you do purchase a round-trip ticket, you should check to see what the change-of-date or cancellation restrictions are before purchasing.

**When is the best time to visit my son or daughter at their study away site?**

You are welcome to visit your student, of course, preferably after they have completed their classes or they are on a break. Planning a visit that will require your student to miss classes is highly discouraged. We also recommend, to ease students' cultural adjustment to their new environment, that families plan visits near the end of a student's time away.

**Where will my son/daughter live?**

Each program features different housing arrangements. Some programs offer suite/apartment-style housing on campus, while others are home-stays. In each case, there is an attempt made to integrate the student with host country nationals or with other international students not from Clark or the U.S. We believe this scenario allows for more cross-cultural contact and better adaptation in the long-run.

**What will he/she eat?**

Depending on the arrangements of your student's program, he/she might be eating meals with their host family, cooking in apartment kitchens, or taking meals in the university restaurants/cafeterias/pubs. There are typically no meal plans (or limited meal plans) at host universities abroad.

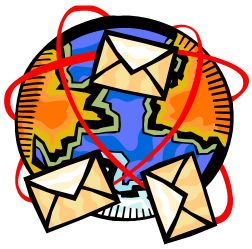
**What are the program cancellation policies? Are there fees associated with cancelling study away?**

We hope that your student is not considering cancelling their program, but unexpected things can happen. In most cases, if participants must cancel a program after they have begun the enrollment process, they stand to lose at least a deposit, but the financial penalties vary between programs. Each program has its own policies regarding cancellation. In all cases, the Study Away application fee is non-refundable.

**Will study away delay my student's graduation plans?**

If a student has taken a full course load, study away or study abroad should not delay or postpone a student's ability to graduate. However, there is some additional paperwork that students need to complete in order to ensure that they graduate on time. All communications regarding that paperwork will be sent directly to students, usually to their Keene State e-mail address. If a student is studying away during their senior year, they should be aware of this paperwork and complete it in a timely fashion. Questions about outstanding graduation requirements should be addressed to the Registrar's Office.

**How do I send packages to my student?**



Students will eagerly await mail from "home", but please remember that even in the best of circumstances, packages can take anywhere from ten days to

four weeks to arrive. You should not send anything valuable through the mail as there is always a possibility it can get lost.

Students will be able to receive mail at all study away locations. In some instances they may want to ship extra items ahead of time, and may be able to do so by sending them to the program site: they should check with their individual program for details.

International packages often must go through customs. This can result in a delay and an additional VAT tax (Value Added Tax) to be levied, often resulting in a cost of up to 80% of the value of the contents, and requiring the recipient to pick up the package in person. Be careful how you label the package's contents. Remember that it is inadvisable to ship medication internationally.

**When will students find out which books they need and where do they buy them?**

Students will purchase books for their classes upon arrival in their host country. After registering for classes, they will receive a book list and instructions on where to purchase books. Books are often (but not always) less expensive than at Keene State.

**My student will be on campus again after study away. Will they be able to return to student housing?**

Students will need to indicate to the housing office whether or not they will need on-campus housing the semester after their study away. This will need to be done regardless of whether or not the student is out of the country. Questions about this process and any necessary paperwork should be directed to the KSC Housing office.

Also, if students need to sublet their apartment or find a semester lease for their return, we recommend they be proactive, so as not to leave it to the last minute. Students receive this advice from us, but it may bear repeating from you as well.

## Contacts/Resources/Additional Information

We wish your student a successful and enriching program experience! We are here to support your student and we appreciate your support for your son or daughter as well. As a parent or guardian, your support means the world to a study away student. Thank you for taking the time to read through our Parent and Guardian Information Book. Please feel free to contact the KSC GEO with further questions:

**Global Education Office**
**Elliot Center, 3rd Floor**
**Keene State College**
**Keene, New Hampshire 03435**
**Ph.: 603-358-2348**
**Fax: 603-358-2469**
**E-mail: geo@keene.edu**

In the event that an emergency situation arises during the hours when the GEO office is not open, please call Campus Safety, who will be able to contact the necessary school official. Make sure you clearly explain that your student away on a KSC Study Away program and provide a contact number to reach you.

Campus Safety: 603-358-2228
Counseling Center: 603-358-2436

For questions relating to billing and payment for study away programs, please contact:
**KSC Student Accounts Office**: **Billing and Payments**
800-572-1909 or 603-358-2263
studentaccounts@keene.edu

**Additional contacts that may be useful to you and your son/daughter:**

**KSC Student Accounts Office: Financial Aid**
800-572-1909 or 603-358-2280
financialaid@keene.edu
fax: 603-358-2794

**KSC Registrar's Office:**
kscregistrar@keene.edu
(603)358-2320
See important deadlines and more information about the registrar's office here:
http://www.keene.edu/registrar/

**KSC Housing Office**
Housing Information & Questions:
(603) 358-2339
reslifeadmin@keene.edu

**KSC Academic and Career Advising**
603-358-2500
aca@keene.edu
Family Guide to Advising: http://www.keene.edu/aca/Family_Guide.pdf

**KSC Parent Relations:**
www.keene.edu/parents
parents@keene.edu

## Recommended Reading

**Comprehensive Guides for Study Abroad**:

- Study Abroad, A Parent's Guide, William Hoffa, NAFSA, 1998. Available via Amazon.com and NAFSA: The Association of International Educators
- Study Abroad: How to Get the Most Out of Your Experience, Michele Marie-Dowell and Kelly P. Mirsky, Prentice Hall, 2002.
- Study Abroad 101, Wendy Williamson, Agapy Publishing, 2004.
- Transitions Abroad Magazine
- Glimpse Magazine
- Students Abroad, The U.S. State Department's website on a wide variety of study abroad concerns such as passports, visas, health and safety.

**Resources on Culture-Shock, Returning from Study Abroad and Cultural Adaptation**:

- The Art of Coming Home, Craig Storti, Intercultural Press. Available at http://www.interculturalpress.com
- The Psychology of Culture Shock, Colleen Ward; Stephen Bochner; Adrian Furhnam, Routledge, 2001.
- Survival Kit for Overseas Living, Robert L. Kohls, Intercultural Press. Available at http://www.interculturalpress.com
- Welcome Back to Clark, a guide to life after study abroad, published by the Study Abroad Programs Office. Contact us at 508-793-7363 for a copy.
- What's Up with Culture? Online resource available at http://www.pacific.edu/sis/culture/

***Please note other suggested readings in the KSC student study away manual.**