THE "DON'T FORGET TO TAKE IT WITH YOU"

STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK
SPRING 2020

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
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Introduction

Studying abroad will challenge and inspire you and, like many students, you will probably look back on your time abroad as one of the highlights of your undergraduate career. Many MICA students who study abroad return to campus with a greater understanding of themselves, a different perspective on world affairs, a host of new friends, and an eagerness to continue to explore new places and newly discovered interests.

We tried to make this guide as comprehensive as possible, but when studying abroad, expect the unexpected! There is sure to be something we might have missed or a new concern altogether, so please know that this guide is non-exhaustive. Be sure to read the information provided by the Office of International Education and by your host institution thoroughly, and ask questions when you are not sure. Conduct your own research, consult guidebooks and historical and fictional works on your host country, and talk to recent program participants and natives of your destination. Be sure to familiarize yourself with MICA’s administrative and academic policies, and take this guide abroad with you as a reference; after all, it is called the Take it with you Guide!

Whether you are going abroad for the first time or already consider yourself a seasoned traveler, we want to make sure that you have the tools you need to have an incredible experience abroad.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us in the Office of International Education.

Best wishes for a productive and memorable study abroad experience!

- The MICA Education Abroad Team
Passports

- Identify you as a citizen of your home country, or countries
- Take about 8 weeks (or longer) to process, so if your is expired, please renew it right away
- Cost $145 (Adult), $110 (Adult Renewal)
- Can be applied for in-person, locally at: 1826 Pennsylvania Ave, Baltimore, MD 21217
- Are available online at: http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html

*When you receive your passport:*

- Sign the biographical information page immediately. Unsigned passports are not valid!
- Make 4 color copies of the biographical information page. Keep 1 copy about you while in transit; give 1 copy to the MICA OIE; offer 1 to your program’s administration office; and, provide 1 copy to a trusted friend or relative
  - Call upon these sources if you lose your passport
- Safeguard it, along with all other valuables, and find a safe place to store it when you arrive onsite

**NOTE:** Some countries require non-citizens to carry their passport or other forms of identification on them at all times. Check with the embassy or site staff of the host country for more information about acceptable forms of identification.

**Non-U.S. citizens (F1 Students)** are required meet with Lauren Hill, Assistant Director of International Student Services, before leaving to study abroad or domestically. Lauren advises F1 Students on how to remain in legal status during their time away, and how to re-enter the U.S. and back to MICA at the end of their study abroad experience.

**Student Visa (if Required)**

In order to enter most countries to study for an extended period, a visa is required. Visas generally:

- Take anywhere from several weeks to several months to process, so if your host country requires that U.S. citizens obtain a visa, start early.
- Require you to surrender your passport; complete a visa application form; provide proof of international health insurance coverage; proof of admission letter, or certificate of enrollment from both your host and home institution; and verification of monetary assets in bank accounts. Consult with your program’s administration to see if they offer advice and support with acquiring a student visa.

Alternatively, consult with the nearest embassy or consulate of your host country for guidance. Please be mindful of the following when applying for a student visa:

- You may need to appear in person at the consulate or embassy in the U.S. If this is a requirement, there no way to get around it. For example, if the NY Consulate of Spain requires you to apply in person, you must be prepared to drive, fly, or take a bus or train to NYC to meet the application requirement.
- Some countries allow you to apply by mail. If this is the case, send your passport and visa application to the consulate or embassy using overnight express mail service with insurance and tracking. Make sure to follow all instructions to a “T”. Call the embassy or consulate if you are unsure what to do.
- Consulates and embassies are impartial to late requests. Applications are processed in the order they were received - there are generally no exceptions to this rule. If you apply late for your student visa, there is a chance that you will not be able to study abroad. If this is the case, and you have been dedicated to your program, you may be financially liable to your program and MICA due to a lack of planning.

*Please note: the Office of International Education at MICA can only provide general assistance with student visa applications. While we do our best to help you grasp the basic concepts and responsibilities, we strongly recommend that you always consult the respective host country’s embassy or consulate for the best information.*
Non-U.S. Citizens: F1, International Students Studying Abroad

If you are not a U.S. citizen, then you will need to learn your host country’s visa requirements for citizens of your home country in order to determine whether you will need a visa for study abroad. Requirements for U.S. citizens may be entirely different from the requirements for citizens of other countries, so be sure to research this matter early in the advising and application process.

Before you go: all the Practical Stuff...

The following list of action items will help you plan and prepare for your semester abroad. These “MICA matters” should be at the top of your to do list. This is not an exhaustive list, but it should help get you started.

MICA Matters

- Attend the mandatory pre-departure orientation session offered by the Office of International Education.
- Complete all final critiques, papers, and examinations at MICA before you go abroad.
- Take a copy of your Study Abroad Course Approval Form in order to register for your courses abroad.
- Visit the Office of Financial Aid to arrange for your funds to be disbursed (or refunded).
  - Note: all disbursements (or refunds) are available to students 10 days prior to the start of classes at MICA each semester, regardless of your program’s start date. There are no exceptions.
  - Note: you need to make arrangements for refunds with the Office for Student Accounts.
- If you live on campus, return your key to MICA’s Housing office and cancel your housing and dining contracts.
- If you want to live on campus when you return to MICA, contact Residence Life for details on applying.
- If you live off campus, check with your landlord about sub-leasing your residence.
- Return all library books and pay any outstanding fines to the MICA Library in Bunting.
- Complete a change of address with the U.S. post office so that your mail is forwarded to another address.
- If you are not a U.S. citizen, consult with the Office of International Education regarding your I-20.

Study Abroad Program Matters

- Read your acceptance letter and materials from your host institution carefully and return all completed information as required. If applicable, send in the confirmation deposit by the deadline.
  - Failure to submit the deposit by the deadline may not allow you to pre-register for courses; have priority with student residence placement, and others. Talk to your respective program for further details.
- Apply for on-campus housing at your host institution, if it is available. Do this as early as possible, as space may be limited. If your program does not provide on-campus housing, arrange housing with a property management agency that your program may endorse.
- Make sure that your passport expiration date is valid for at least 3-6 months past the date of your anticipated return to the U.S.; if it is not, renew it immediately. Consult your host country’s embassy for further details.
- Apply for a student visa if your host country requires one for entry.
- Make all flight arrangements in accordance with any visa application requirements, or per the program.
- Collect any other documents you are required to take (e.g., program acceptance letter, immunization records, financial documents, drug fact sheets) and have them ready to be packed in your handbag.

Logistics

- Ask your onsite program staff to present you with information on what to do in the event of an emergency.
  - Ask for a list with their organizational contacts, and the national emergency response phone number (ex: 911); laminate this list and carry it with you at all times.
- Budget. Have an emergency fund available that you can access abroad if needed (suggested minimum: $500).
- Bring a sufficient amount of money for estimated start-up costs for living.
- Arrange with your bank to have $200 in small denominations of local currency or in traveler’s checks to bring with you.
- Make sure you have credit cards, ATM cards, telephone cards, etc., that you are planning to use.
• Contact your cellular provider about how to activate your smartphone with service abroad
• Contact your credit card provider and bank to let them know that you will need access to their services abroad
  o If you do not, your credit or debit card will deactivate due to fraud protections, and you will not have access to your money until you or your parent/guardian calls the credit card fraud department.
• Learn how to use public transportation in your host country; obtain all transit passes so you can be mobile
• Make sure you understand what your primary health insurance plan does and does not cover while you are abroad and how it works. Review the services of any secondary insurance plan that might also cover you (e.g., MICA insurance plan, a parent’s insurance plan, etc.).
• Review CISI insurance coverage for personal liability, property loss, trip cancellation, etc.; know how to initiate a claim based on the various types of potential occurrences you might encounter in-transit
• Plan to keep faithful to any treatment programs prescribed by your doctor(s); consult your doctor about your study abroad plans
• Bring several, extra passport-size and passport-quality photographs for any official documentation you might need to complete onsite
• Schedule a physical, dental check, eye examination, etc.; get required immunizations.
• Plan your suitcase - pack lightly.

Additional Concerns
• Arrange for power of attorney for the person handling your financial affairs in your absence.
• Discuss an emergency plan with your family as well as emergency contact procedures.
• Arrange for absentee voting in any election that may occur before you return.

Packing
The best advice is to pack lightly. You may wish to pack some items that are personal necessities; however, you might find that clothing, toiletries, gadgets, art supplies, and books are available in the host country. Make sure to consider the time of season and the appropriate clothing to bring along with you by doing simple research.

General Packing Tips
• Identify your luggage inside and out with your name and U.S. and overseas addresses, and information such as email address, or phone number.
• Place a strap or sturdy ribbon around your suitcase to secure it and identify it at your final destination
• Check airline regulations for weight, size, and number of bags. Check current regulations for carry-on items, liquids, etc.
• Pack enough clothing for 5 days in your carry-on luggage in case your main luggage is lost and irretrievable
• Pack all prescription drugs and the drug fact sheets in your handbag so you do no lose your medication
  o Ask your doctor for an accompanying letter explaining what the medication is used for

Clothing
Use the following basic list as a general guideline to choose what is essential for you. (You may wish to adapt these items to your own checklist.) Be sure also to consult any specific information provided for your program.
• 1 pair of rainproof walking shoes (dark-colored shoes are usually best to blend overseas.)
• 1 pair of flip-flops (showers may be less than scrupulously cleaned)
• Sweater/sweatshirt
• Poncho/rain jacket
• 1 light jacket
• 1 bathing suit
• 1-2 nice outfits
• Weather appropriate clothing, including winter coat, gloves, hat (depending on location and season)

Gift Suggestions for Host Families/ Foreign Roommates
• Clothing and items with the MICA logo
• Cookbooks with North American recipes (pancakes, chocolate chip cookies, etc.)
• Non-perishable foods specific to the U.S.
• Artwork you created, perhaps of a motif appealing to the host
• Items of U.S. pop culture, sports or lifestyles (Disney, NBA, NFL, etc.)
• Unique handmade crafts or jewelry
• Nothing expensive, but something thoughtful. A kind gesture is all that is needed to start the relationship

Medicine and Toiletries
• Carry medication(s) and accompanying pharmacy documentation with you in your carry-on luggage.
  o Medication must be in original containers, no mixing or matching, this is illegal and punishable
  o Have your doctor write a note explaining what the medication is prescribed for
• First aid kit
• Birth control and other types of Contraceptives
• Common, over-the-counter pain relief medication, i.e. Tylenol, Ibuprophen,
• Disposable razor blades, or electric razor (pack in check-in bags only)
• Extra eyewear
• Extra contact lenses and cleaning solution
• At least 1 set of bed linens
• Hand sanitizer - travel sized and refillable
• If you have a health condition or severe, life-threatening allergy, order a Medic Alert bracelet and wear it

Documents
• Passport and visa. Make several photocopies give to trusted individuals
• Transportation tickets showing your itinerary
• Health and travelers insurance cards
• Driver’s License for identification purposes only, not for driving.
  o The OIE strongly recommends that you do not drive while abroad for numerous reasons
• Under-clothes money belt
• Acceptance letter from the program and approval letter from MICA
• Extra passport-size photographs (useful for ID cards, rail cards, etc.)

Miscellaneous
• Books, guides, maps, handbooks
• Day pack/ small compressible knapsack
• Stuff bags/ plastic storage bags
• Hostel sleep sack (a folded-over sheet that is hemmed up the side)
• Luggage lock and tags
• Country-specific power converters and adaptors

Health
The MICA OIE strongly recommends that you visit all of your health care providers before you go abroad, even if your program does not require you to do so. You may find it helpful to talk with your doctor about your health, diet or
nutritional concerns, prescription renewals, and other questions you may have. Female students may wish to schedule an annual gynecological exam before going abroad.

General Advice
The risk of becoming ill while traveling abroad may depend on three important factors: making adequate pre-departure preparations, including immunizations; knowing the health and safety risks of your host country; and following sound U.S. and local medical counsel.

In addition, you should know that living outside your comfort zone might cause a degree of mental and emotional stress, which, in turn, may trigger negative emotions. In general, it is a good idea to find out about health care facilities in each of the countries in which you expect to spend any time. You may need to resume physical and mental health care while abroad if you currently rely on these services. The MICA OIE strongly advises you to be truthful when reporting health concerns with your program’s site staff. We recommend that you find suitable care services or learning resources before you go abroad. Perspectives on health vary from country to country, so ask your program’s administration for further details on their network of learning resources and healthcare resources.

Insurance
All students are required to have international health and travelers insurance. As a matter of MICA policy, all students are required to arrange health insurance matters with their parents or guardians, and to purchase travelers insurance, at their own expense, through CISI (Cultural Insurance Services International) before going abroad. Policy and enrollment details will be provided during the mandatory pre-departure orientation. MICA requires students to maintain their domestic health insurance while studying abroad, so there are no gaps in coverage in the event of an emergency that might require a student to return to his/her home country for continued medical care.

Students who study in their country of citizenship may not be required or eligible to purchase CISI insurance. If this is the case, then you must consult with the Office of International Education to determine if an exception can be made. If you require medical attention abroad, it is necessary for you to have sufficient cash or credit to make payment at the time of treatment, since the foreign physician and/or hospital may not be able to bill you later. Be sure to save all medical receipts so you may initiate a reimbursement claim when you get home.

Be aware of the provisions of any other policies you own, especially regarding coverage outside the U.S., including personal liability insurance against injury or damage caused by or resulting from your acts or omissions. In addition to being critical for your own well-being, comprehensive insurance coverage abroad is often a requirement for countries that require foreign students to obtain student visas. Such countries often require students to prove they have health insurance that will cover them completely for the duration of their time overseas. Be mindful of the following insurance features:

Will the plan cover hospitalization for accidents and illnesses for the entire period that I am abroad? Note: some policies may cover medical expenses for brief stays abroad, but not for the full term of a study abroad program.

- Will the plan cover you in your specific host country as well as every other country you plan to visit?
- Will the plan cover non-emergencies, such as regular doctor visits and prescriptions abroad?
- What does the policy exclude from coverage (e.g., injuries received while driving an automobile, sporting injuries, etc.)?
- Is there a deductible? If yes, how much?
- Is there a dollar limit to the amount of coverage provided?
- Does the plan cover pre-existing medical conditions?
- What are the procedures for filing a claim for medical expenses abroad? Do you need to pay expenses up front and then submit receipts to the insurance company for reimbursement?
• Does the plan cover emergency medical transportation and evacuation as well as repatriation of remains? If so, what is the maximum payable?

Make sure that you get full information from your policy about how to arrange for routine treatment, medical emergency procedures, and what is required to pay for or be reimbursed for a claim. Many overseas health providers will not process U.S. insurance claims and will expect payment at the time of treatment, so students should have access to a minimum of $500 cash for these purposes.

Required Immunizations
Make an appointment with Student Health Services or with your primary doctor to discuss the immunizations, medications, and other precautions specific to your destination. Some medications and immunizations may not be readily available, or may take several weeks to become effective, therefore plan ahead and make the appointment well before your departure date.

Prescriptions and Medications
If you require regular medication or injections (e.g., insulin or allergy shots), speak to your doctor immediately. You should also verify that the medication is legal in your host country and any country you plan to visit. Take an adequate supply with you to last you throughout your time abroad (including birth control pills) as prescription. Medications vary in name, potency, and purity from country to country, and cannot be sent through international mail, so make sure to arrange to have the needed quantities for the duration of your program.

Many insurance companies will cover your purchase of extra medication if you confirm with them that you will be studying abroad. Store any prescription medication in your carry-on bag, in the original container, along with a letter from your doctor to present to customs officials overseas.

The Center for Disease Control also recommends that, “diabetics or other persons who require routine or frequent injections should carry a supply of syringes and needles sufficient to last their stay abroad.” Be aware that carrying needles and syringes without a prescription may be illegal in some countries, so take along a note from your doctor. Some countries have needles and syringes for sale. Do not use or allow the use of contaminated, unsterilized syringes or needles for any injections.

Do not buy medications “over the counter” (OTC) while abroad unless you are familiar with the product, as OTC drugs abroad may be below standards set by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

If you have questions about your prescription medications, ask your primary care provider and/or a pharmacist for advice.

Other Medical Items to Take with You
• **Glasses/ Contact Lenses:** If you wear glasses or contact lenses it is a good idea to bring a typed copy of your prescription and an extra pair of glasses or contacts to take with you

• **Your Medical Records:** bring copies of the information from your personal medical records. It is advisable to carry these documents in a place that is both secure and accessible by you at all times while traveling. This information will provide insight to foreign doctors on how to treat or continue your treatment while abroad.

• **Medic Alert Emblem:** Medic Alert emblems are recognized internationally. If you wear a Medic Alert ID tag or bracelet, be sure also to wear it while abroad. If you carry a card, you should carry the card with you at all times. This identification should indicate the specific nature of the problem, and clearly state what must be done (or not) in the event you are unconscious.

First Aid Kit
You may want to bring a small first aid kit with you. The availability of specific OTC drugs and hygiene products is uncertain in other countries. Many of these products will have different brands in the countries to which you will travel,
so it is a good idea to have exactly what you need for the duration of your stay before you leave home. See below for examples of what to include.

First Aid Kit Essentials:

- Acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol), Ibuprofen (e.g., Advil, Motrin), or Aspirin for pain or fever
- An antihistamine (e.g., Benadryl) for allergies, motion sickness, and to ease the itch from insect bites or stings
- Loperomide (e.g., Imodium) for diarrhea
- Bandages and Band-Aids for minor injuries
- Antiseptic, e.g., povidone-iodine (e.g., Betadine) and antibacterial (e.g., Neosporin) for cuts.
- Aloe Vera cream to ease irritation from bites and stings.
- Acetaminophen or ibuprofen, throat lozenges, cough suppressants (e.g., Robitussin DM), decongestant for colds.
- Condoms and contraceptives. If you take birth control pills, bring enough for the duration of your stay.

Other things to consider including in your first aid kit:

- Multivitamins (especially for long trips when dietary vitamin intake may be inadequate)
- Feminine hygiene products
- Insect repellant
- Sunscreen and chapstick
- Scissors and tweezers (packed in your suitcase)

Food and Water

In areas where tap water is not safe to drink, remember to use bottled water and to avoid ice cubes. Review information on your destination’s water safety if you are unsure.

You should also be careful in choosing which foods to eat. In areas of the world where hygiene and sanitation are poor, always select fresh fruit and vegetables with care. Foods of particular concern include salads, uncooked vegetables and fruit, raw meat, and shellfish. Avoid unpasteurized milk and milk products, such as cheese, and eat only fruit you have peeled yourself. Following these precautions will help to avoid intestinal infections, such as travelers’ diarrhea, caused by organisms in contaminated food or water. However, be warned: following the guidelines is no guarantee and you may still develop diarrhea.

Many countries offer an abundance of food sold from roadside stands. It is advisable to avoid such food. Note: many locals may have no trouble with such food or drink, because they have developed immunities against indigenous microorganisms. Visitors lack these immunities, which means you should proceed with care.

Special Diets

If you are a vegetarian or have other special dietary needs, you may find it particularly challenging to maintain a healthy diet. You may want to research the foods offered in your host country. You may want to bring protein powder, vitamins, and other dietary supplements with you to provide good nutrition while abroad. Talking with other vegetarians or students on special diets who have studied abroad may also be helpful.

Common Illness

Consult the Center for Disease Control’s website (wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/) and speak with Student Health Services or your doctor regarding illnesses specific to your destination. If you have ongoing health concerns that may put you at risk, inform your doctor and take special care in your preparations.

Alcohol and Drug Use

Alcohol abuse by study abroad students is generally due to a misunderstanding of how alcohol is consumed in the host country. Although alcohol abuse may not carry the same legal penalties as the use of illegal drugs, it can create dire circumstances for you and your personal safety if you misuse it.
If you decide to drink while abroad, drink very carefully and wisely. Over-drinking and alcohol abuse can lead to unsafe choices, poor academic performance, higher risk behavior, and/or regretted sexual activity. Do not endanger yourself, others, or property. You should use good judgment whenever consuming alcohol.

Remember that you will be in a new environment and will often need to rely on public transportation to get home at night. You may need to make the journey home at night alone, so be sure to use caution and stay in control and aware of your surroundings. Use of inebriating or hallucinogenic drugs has very serious cultural and legal consequences (e.g., incarceration, deportation, removal from your program, etc.), as well as innumerable health risks.

Remember that you are serving as an ambassador for MICA and the U.S. and MICA’s rules apply to you while you are studying abroad.

**Emotional Health**

Living in a new place and adapting to a new culture is stressful. Emotional ups- and-downs may occur while you adjust to new academics, surroundings, food, habits, customs, people, etc. Feelings of loneliness or frustration will pass as you make these adjustments.

Going abroad is not a “magic cure” for concerns and problems at home. Both physical and emotional health issues will follow you wherever you go. In particular, if you are concerned about your use of alcohol and other controlled drugs or if you have a mental health concern, you should address it before making plans to travel. Contrary to many people’s expectations, travel does not minimize these problems; in fact, it often exacerbates them to a crisis stage while you are away from home.

If emotional signs and symptoms persist, consider it a possible medical problem and seek assistance from a counselor or physician. If your symptoms are severe, seek immediate assistance from your program’s site administration on making a referral to a local health services professional.

**Travel Tips**

As soon as you have confirmed your study abroad program participation and exact dates of attendance, it is important to begin researching your travel options. We recommend that you do not arrive too early to your study abroad program. Four or five days in advance should allow you sufficient time to recover from jet lag and become familiar with your new surroundings prior to the start of orientation and classes. Keep in mind that the terms of your student visa may or may not allow early arrivals, or late departures.

**Tips for Securing Valuables**

- **Packing**: Do not carry everything in one bag! Never pack essential documents, medicine, or anything else you cannot do without in your checked luggage. Put these items in your carry-on bag.
- **Money**: Never carry large amounts of cash. Consider other means of accessing funds (for example, credit cards, ATM cards, traveler’s checks, etc.).

Most major airports and train stations offer banking services, so if you have not brought enough local currency; it is often possible to purchase some there with U.S. dollars, other foreign currency, or traveler’s checks. ATMs are also often available at these locations, and you may choose to use your ATM card for your initial transaction (assuming you have checked with your bank in advance to ensure that your ATM card will work in your host country). Change only enough to cover local transportation and a few meals, as you will likely be able to get a better exchange rate at a bank in town.

Take only the cards that you will use on the trip. Keep these in your carry-on bag. Keep separately (e.g., in your necklace pouch or money belt) a list of your cards, numbers, and emergency replacement procedures.

Luggage: Mark all luggage, inside and out, with your name and address. Keep a list of what is in each bag and what each bag looks like—including brand name and color (you will need these if the airline loses your luggage), and carry the list with your other important documents. Mark your bags in some distinctive way so that you can easily identify them on the luggage carousel at the airport. Try to travel light; it is safer, easier, and, lately, often cheaper.
Immigration and Customs Inspections
Upon entry to any country, you must show your passport, required visa(s), and sometimes proof of immunizations and/or financial documents. Remember that admission to the country is entirely at the discretion of the immigration officer; do not make inappropriate jokes and obey regulations for baggage and travel documentation.

Duties and Tariffs
You will want to register in advance with U.S. Customs any expensive equipment (e.g., computer, camera, radio, etc.—especially foreign-made or new items) that you plan to take abroad with you. By registering these items with U.S. Customs before you leave, you will avoid any problems with their transport. Consult the U.S. Customs Service Web site sectioned entitled, *Know before you go*, in advance of your departure for further information. You should also obtain and save receipts for any major purchases you make overseas and intend to take home.

Remember to check regulations regarding duties and tariffs before returning to the U.S. Any new purchases that you made while abroad, in your possession at the time of your return to the U.S., must be declared to Customs officials.

Confirmation of Arrival
As soon as you have arrived at your host program or residence, you should call your family and email the Office of International Education at MICA to confirm your safe arrival. You will also need to notify the Office of International Education of your physical address abroad (and mailing address, if different), local telephone number (if you will have one), etc. as soon as you can. Contact details as follows:

Mike Rini  
Office of International Education  
MICA 1300 Mt. Royal Ave.  
Baltimore, MD 21217 U.S.A.  
Phone: +1 410-225-2409 / fax: +1 410-225-2548 / Email: mri@mica.edu

Academics
A number of important academic matters should be settled before you leave to study abroad and when you return. Please review this section and consult with your academic advisor and education abroad adviser if you have any questions.

Course Approvals
To earn MICA credits for all the courses you take abroad you must complete the following steps:

1. **Submit required Course Approval Form to the Office of International Education by the appropriate deadline!** Work with your academic advisor and faculty chair(s) to make sure you understand what you need to take while abroad so you are on track with graduation requirements. Pay particular attention to the *Portfolio Review Requirement* column on the *Course Approval Form*. If it is marked “yes”, then you will need to discuss exactly what the faculty chair will require - do not guess here; get the specifics in an email that you can refer back to as reference.

Perhaps you need to bring all of your work back, perhaps you can create a digital reference; regardless, it is your responsibility to understand what you need to provide your MICA instructors when you return to campus. Failure to do so may result in the course(s) being awarded as elective credit, instead of specific credit to be counted towards your major.

2. **Be aware that many host institutions and programs do not have course listings available in print or on websites.** They may set their classes/schedules later than MICA does. They may change their course offerings last minute. We cannot control this, nor can the MICA OIE influence them to bend the rules! Consequently, this means that your courses may change when you arrive abroad. You need to be patient and flexible and realize this is part of studying abroad and learning about a new culture. If your courses change when you arrive, you must seek email approvals from the appropriate MICA department chairs, or academic advisers.
Remember, academic advisers can approve study abroad electives, and academic chairs can approve specific, courses in the major. It is your responsibility to manage your course schedule and credits. Please copy your study abroad advisor on all emails regarding course approvals. He/she will print them and attach them to your original Course Approval form. The OIE cannot process your transcript without the correct course approvals. Do not wait until you return to obtain approvals because there is no guarantee a Department Chair will approve a class after-the-fact.

3. **Request that your host institution mail your official transcript directly to the MICA Office of International Education immediately when available.** Receiving a transcript from a foreign institution takes a while. Kindly ask your study abroad program administration to send the Office of International Education at MICA your transcript within 1-2 months after the program ends.

4. **Take a minimum of 12-15 MICA credits.** Falling below the equivalent of 12 MICA credits may result in the loss of certain financial aid or scholarship awards that you receive on a regular basis. Additional tuition charges apply when credits taken abroad exceeds 19.5 MICA credits.

5. **Pass! You will need to earn a “C” or greater to pass your courses abroad.** While you may be an exceptional student at MICA, you may have to work even harder to maintain your current GPA. Be sure to establish a fruitful relationship with your professors and instructors, and make sure that all class objectives are understood. Be polite, engaged, and conscientious of your work, and seek help when needed. Demonstrate good ambassadorship of your home country and try to develop positive international contacts with your program's staff.

### Money and Finances

Students on all semester study abroad programs pay MICA tuition (without fees) directly to MICA and pay no tuition at the host school. You will be charged MICA’s regular tuition and pay in accordance with MICA’s schedule for tuition payment.

Students are responsible for all other expenses (e.g., travel, housing, meals, health insurance, studio fees, etc.), some of which may be required and billed by the host institution. If the host program’s tuition is greater than that of MICA, you will be responsible for paying the difference. It is the responsibility of the student to research fully the program’s policies and procedures, including costs, prior to enrollment. For more information, please make an appointment with the Office of International Education.

MICA students with MICA scholarships or financial aid will be able to use their award (except work-study) for their MICA abroad program. Students on study abroad are eligible to participate in MICA’s annual competitive scholarships.

All financial matters must be up to date with MICA’s Student Account Services office before an application for study abroad is approved, and your student account must be in **good standing** before your departure. “Good standing” is defined as owing less than $500 on your MICA student account. Questions about your student account should be directed to Student Account Services: (410-225-2356)

### Withdrawals and Adjustment of Fees

If you decide to withdraw from participation in the study abroad program, you must notify the Office of International Education in writing. The effective date of withdrawal is the date that International Education receives the written request for withdrawal.

**Before the program begins:** If you withdraw voluntarily at any time after you commit to participate, or if your acceptance to the program is rescinded for any reason, then you will be charged via your MICA student account for any unrecoverable deposits and/or advance payments made on your behalf. You also remain responsible for any financial obligation due to the host institution or to MICA.

**After the program begins:** If you withdraw voluntarily at any time after the program begins, any adjustment of billed tuition due to involuntary or voluntary withdrawal can be made only as approved by MICA, and in accordance with the published MICA policy on refunds. You will be charged via your MICA student account for any unrecoverable deposits.
and/or payments made on your behalf. All financial obligations due to the host institution abroad must be satisfied before any refund will be made.

Any decisions you make after the program begins and while the program is in operation regarding your individual participation and continuation in the program are personal, and you are individually responsible for a personal decision to withdraw from a program or to return home early. There is no guarantee of credit should you withdraw from the program before the completion of scheduled instruction and examinations.

General Finance Info- Before You Go
It is wise to exchange a small amount of money prior to your departure in order to have some cash on hand upon your arrival abroad (the equivalent of around $200 is common). U.S. currency can be exchanged for foreign currency at: some U.S.-based banks; international airports; some banks and railroad stations abroad. Note that banks and exchange bureaus in town often have better rates than those in airports and transportation centers.

Banks abroad afford you the fairest exchange rate available, but you can still expect to pay a commission every time you exchange currency. In some countries, the commission is based on a percentage of the amount you exchange, while in others there is a flat fee regardless of the amount of the transaction.

The flat fee rate makes it advantageous to exchange larger amounts to avoid repeat visits to the bank, though this may mean you might have to carry more cash than is advisable. You will need to find a happy medium between carrying large amounts of cash and paying bank commissions. Oftentimes, you can use an ATM card to withdraw money and avoid any commission charge, although your bank may charge you a withdrawal fee.

Important to-dos Related to Accessing Money Before you go
- Make a list of international contact numbers for your financial institutions, as well as your account, credit card, and ATM card numbers. Keep this information in a safe location in case any of your cards are stolen.
- Maintain control of your finances so that your credit rating does not suffer. Sign up to receive online statements from your bank(s), credit card(s), brokerage account(s), etc. If online statements are not available, be sure to have mailings directed to your home or overseas address, and work with a trusted individual to help you pay on time.
- Contact your credit card company or bank in advance of departure in order to inform them of the dates and locations where you will be abroad. If you fail to do this, your card may be canceled or locked after the first or second time you use it abroad due to suspected fraud.
- Traveler’s checks are safer and more convenient to take to some locations than cash. Note, however, that U.S. traveler’s checks are becoming increasingly difficult to cash in some locations, especially in Europe. Consult a recent guidebook for your country or up-to-date online resources to learn the status of acceptance of U.S. traveler’s checks in your host country. If you do decide to use traveler’s checks, it is generally wiser to obtain them from a large bank (e.g., American Express), as these are more apt to be accepted abroad than are those from a small bank or one that has little or no overseas presence.

Budgeting
The overall cost of living abroad can sometimes be higher than in the U.S. because you are in an unfamiliar environment and making transactions with unfamiliar currency. Depending on your program site, there may be opportunities to spend money on a wide variety of engaging venues. A go-slow approach to making any type of purchase makes sense. You should to try to limit your spending based on a planned budget.

The following budgeting suggestions may be helpful. You should discuss your budget in advance with your parent/guardian; the budget worksheet in the appendix of this guide can serve as a helpful guide.
- Make both weekly and daily budgets and stick to them.
- Learn the “value” of the money quickly wherever you are. How far does your money go?
• Be alert to special student rates and discounts wherever you go. Ask your program staff for potential student discounts with the use of your student id
• Take advantage of less expensive alternatives whenever possible. Cook for yourself (especially breakfast and lunch), or use refectory or student cafeteria meals rather than restaurants
• Note: many local students eat their main meal at lunchtime, taking advantage of subsidized collegiate refectories. Doing this will save you money and has the added bonus of exposing you to increased interactions with host country peers.
• Plan entertainment and recreation around the availability of free or program-sponsored events
• When you travel, stay in youth hostels or modest bed-and-breakfast accommodations, as opposed to hotels
• Take care of your belongings and safeguard your money and documents. Keep in mind that pick pocketing is relatively common abroad. Never keep your wallet in your back pocket or backpack, as it is likely to be stolen. When at a café or restaurant, do not put your purse or backpack under your chair without it being secured to you in some way.
• Sales taxes, as U.S. residents know them, generally do not exist in other countries, but many countries now impose a Value Added Tax (VAT) on certain goods (not services), particularly those that are more expensive. As a visitor, you can often reclaim the amount you have spent on the VAT at the international airport when you leave the country, but you will need to show all of your receipts and your purchases in order to claim this refund.
• Join local organizations, sports teams, and other special interest groups and clubs that facilitate inexpensive social activities.
• The Credit Education Bureau suggests smart and effective ways to keep track of your credit card expenses. See their website and list of resource materials at: www.crediteducationbureau.org.

Banking: In-Country Local Accounts (Required in Some Countries)
Establishing a bank account overseas can be a convenient and cost-effective way to manage and access your money abroad. Most students wait until arrival in the country to establish a bank account; your program orientation or international coordinator can likely explain the procedures. Being on site will allow you to become acquainted with the various banks and the services they offer, and allow you to familiarize yourself with the different types of bank accounts and to find the branch office most convenient for your use.

If you already know of a particular bank and have the exact address of a convenient branch location, you may want to contact the bank in advance to learn whether you can open an account before you arrive. In this way, you can wire money in advance in order to have funds waiting for you abroad. You may need to provide a reference from your current bank. Many banks abroad have their own bankcards, allowing you to make easy, inexpensive withdrawals from their ATMs. Please note that opening an account at a local bank can be a time-consuming experience.

Credit Cards
Credit cards make foreign currency transactions easy and are invaluable in a financial emergency. Do take a credit card along, but use it wisely; credit cards can be dangerous because overspending is easy. In addition, credit card service fees and interest charges can be costly, the loss or theft of a card abroad can be a serious inconvenience when traveling, and most cards will charge you a fee (usually a percentage) for each purchase made abroad. Note that credit cards should not be your only means of making purchases.

Transferring Money from Home
If you run short on cash while abroad, money can be sent from home in a variety of ways:

• **Wire Transfer**: U.S. banks can telex money to foreign banks. This process can be completed in a matter of hours/days and there is a fee.
• **Bank Craft/Cashier’s Check**: You can request a bank to send a cashier’s check, or bank draft, to your account overseas. Be warned, however, that clearing the check can take some time.
• **American Express**: You do not need an American Express card to take advantage of their services. American Express can wire money from their U.S. office to one of their overseas offices, where it can be picked up with appropriate identification. Since not all American Express offices can prepare money orders or cable money, you should call your local American Express office for a list of offices abroad that can provide these services.

• **Credit Cards**: Be sure to acquire a PIN number for your credit card that is valid in your host country before you leave the U.S. Credit cards make foreign currency transactions easy and they are invaluable in a financial emergency. Use them wisely!

**Safety**

**Obeying National and Local Laws**

While you are visiting another country, you are subject to the laws of that country. Many of the legal protections you take for granted are left behind when you leave the U.S. U.S. embassies and consulates cannot provide assistance with incarceration if you get into trouble; the embassy cannot intervene on your behalf in the administration of justice in the host country. They can give you the names of competent attorneys and doctors, but no financial assistance in paying for legal or medical services. The best advice is, of course, to know the laws and to obey them scrupulously. If you get in trouble, contact your program director and seek legal assistance as quickly as possible.

**Registering with the U.S. Department of State**

All students are advised to register with the U.S. Department of State’s *Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)*. STEP allows U.S. citizens to register the details of their foreign residency and to receive Department of State communications and alerts.

To register, go to [https://step.state.gov/step/](https://step.state.gov/step/)

**STAYING SAFE ABROAD**

Just like in the United States, your host country will have safe and unsafe areas. Check with locals for areas to avoid and use good judgment. Tips for staying safe:

• Avoid crowds, protests, and other potentially volatile situations. Remember, even peaceful protests can turn violent quickly.

• Be aware of local laws and make sure that you are in compliance.

• Women may wish to consider conservative dress to avoid any unwanted advancements.

• Create an emergency plan and establish a system of communication with your program site administration and your family.

• Consult the State Department’s website before traveling outside of your host country.

• Have a back-up plan in case of emergency. Keep important numbers with you at all times (taxis, hospitals, emergency numbers, host institution/contact, the Office of International Education).

**Sexual Harassment and Study Abroad**

Cultural differences in interactions on romantic or sexual levels can be a problem area: some behaviors might be very inappropriate in the U.S., but considered perfectly acceptable in the culture in which you are living. Some of the new behaviors will be relatively easy to adjust to, but others pose more of a problem; sexual harassment is a particularly difficult area because of the extreme variance in acceptable behavior among cultures.

To avoid unwanted behavior, notice how local women behave (e.g., staring straight ahead when walking and avoiding eye contact) and try to mimic their behavior. Clear, direct and unambiguous responses may be difficult for many Americans to deliver, but these strong responses are crucial for clearer understanding in a cross-cultural situation. If you do experience a cross-cultural misunderstanding or unwanted attention, saying, “I do not want to go out with you, please do not ask me again” is a direct and strong way of expressing your true thoughts about the situation. To be safe, do not operate on assumptions.
You are encouraged to contact the appropriate person on your host campus/program to report any behaviors that you feel are sexually harassing. They should be able to assist you in sorting out the situation in a culturally appropriate way. If these campus/program representatives are unable or unwilling to assist you, please contact the Office of International Education and we will assist you in this matter.

**Sexual Misconduct and Gender-Based Violence**

MICA seeks to provide a safe environment for our community whether on campus or off. Our goal is to ensure that all cases of sexual misconduct and gender-based violence and harassment are handled appropriately.

Students on study abroad and domestic programs away from campus that experience sexual misconduct involving other students, faculty, staff, administrators, and third parties, can obtain information and guidelines on grievance procedures as well as assistance.

**How to Report a Title IX Incident**

The following MICA administrators must be contacted right away. Please make sure to “CC” or copy Mike Rini and James Dorsett in all Title IX study abroad-related matters, so our office can assist as needed to help you:

- Mike Patterson, Title IX Deputy Coordinator: 410-225-2422, mpatters@mica.edu
- Colleen M. Cashill, Title IX Coordinator: 410-383-6616, ccashill@mica.edu
- Scott Stone, Director of Residence Life and Off-Campus Housing: 410-225-2398, sstone@mica.edu

Please “CC” or copy the following individuals with all Title IX related matters relating to your study abroad experience.

- Mike Rini, Asst. Director, Education Abroad: 410-225-2409, mrini@mica.edu
- James Dorsett, Director, International Education: 410-225-2243, jdorsett@mica.edu

To learn more about Title IX, click here.

Please find MICA’s Title IX policy here.

**Help from American Embassies and Consulates**

Should you encounter serious social, political, health, or economic problems that cannot be handled within your program, the local U.S embassy or consulate can usually offer limited assistance. For example, they can provide a list of local attorneys and physicians; contact next of kin in the event of an emergency or serious illness; contact friends or relatives on your behalf to request funds or guidance; provide assistance during natural disasters, civil, and political unrest; and replace a lost or stolen passport.

Remember that U.S embassies and consulates cannot act as a travel agency; give or lend money to you; cash personal checks; arrange free medical service or legal advice; provide bail money or get you out of jail; act as couriers or interpreters; search for missing luggage; or settle disputes with local authorities. Their primary purpose is to fulfill the diplomatic mission of the U.S. government.

**When Things Go Wrong**

When students are in another country, they should be prepared for any crisis, whether it is an illness, accident, violent crime, terrorist attack, natural disaster, or political unrest. Prior to departing the U.S., be sure to register online with the U.S. Embassy or consulate nearest your host institution, as described previously.

In case of an emergency while you are abroad, you should contact the on-site program director or appropriate host institution staff immediately, and then notify the Office of International Education’s Assistant Director of Education Abroad, Mike Rini: mrini@mica.edu, or 410-225-2409.

If the emergency happens outside of normal business hours, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, you must call MICA’s Campus Safety emergency number 443-423-3333.
It can be easy to believe that one fully understands a foreign culture even without having directly experienced it. Media representations and information gleaned from books, or from encounters with a few natives, can provide the illusion of real knowledge. However, living in a culture and having to come to terms with its conventions and customs is a different matter entirely. Every culture has distinct characteristics that make it different from every other culture. Some differences are quite evident (e.g., language, religion, political organization, etc.). Others can be so subtle that learning to deal with them is a complex process. A first-time visitor may remain uncomfortable and off balance for quite some time.

**Cultural Stereotypes**

Cultural characteristics are often generalized into cultural stereotypes that are unfair and misleading. Most Germans, Japanese, Italians, etc. have stereotyped perceptions of “the American,” just as most Americans have stereotyped images of “Germans,” “Japanese,” “Italians,” etc. In short, misperceptions exist on all sides. In adjusting to your study abroad environment, you will have to deal not only with real cultural differences, but also with perceived cultural differences. Keep in mind that people of other cultures are just as adept at stereotyping Americans as we are at stereotyping them—and the results are not always complimentary.

Prepare yourself to experience similar stereotypes, at least initially, while abroad. You may also find yourself the subject of conversation and probing questions, such as: “Why are Americans so ignorant of other countries?” “Why does a rich nation have so many poor people?” “Do you own a gun?” Try not to become defensive or entrenched in debates regarding American culture. You are there to learn about your host country’s culture, not defend your own. Read literature on cross-cultural communication, and learn by listening to others perspectives and engage in logical conversations.

**Racial and Ethnic Concerns**

No two students studying abroad ever have quite the same experience, even in the same program and country. This rule holds true for students from U.S. minority ethnic or racial backgrounds. Some students report feeling exhilarated by being outside the American context of race relations; others experience different degrees of innocent curiosity about their ethnicity and sometimes familiar as well as new types of ostracism.

No MICA study abroad alumni have suggested that the racial or ethnic problems they encountered constituted a reason for not going abroad. Nevertheless, minority students should do some basic research to learn about student perspectives - YouTube has some interesting student videos and testimonials to illustrate interesting travel experiences. Try to find other minority students on campus who have studied abroad and who can provide you with some counsel. You may also wish to maintain a support network with the MICA Office of Identity and Inclusion.

Study abroad professionals recommend Diversity Abroad, which is an international organization that provides resources and assistance to students, graduates, and professionals in study, work, and volunteering abroad. Check out their website at: [https://www.diversitynetwork.org/](https://www.diversitynetwork.org/)

**Culture Shock**

It is quite possible that your initial reaction to life abroad will be euphoria, sparked by a sense of novelty and adventure. It is also quite possible that the euphoria will give way to a less pleasant emotion as you try to make your way through an unfamiliar culture. You may realize that your old habits do not fit your new circumstances and that you are unable to follow your usual routines. Minor problems may unexpectedly seem like major crises, and you may become depressed. You may feel anxious because the signs and symbols of social interaction that you are used to are lacking. All these symptoms point to “culture shock,” a kind of psychological disorientation.

It is normal to experience stress when studying abroad. You not only have to adjust to being a student in a new and different setting, but also to living a new environment. Quite likely, you will be far away from friends and family and will experience feelings of loneliness and homesickness. These feelings are very natural. The difference between what you
expect and what you actually experience may contribute to the level of distress you feel. It may help to know that most people go through the five stages as they adjust to their new environment:

**Stage 1:** The initial excitement about being in a new place is called the orientation or honeymoon phase.

**Stage 2:** This stage involves a period of cultural adjustment when you may feel lonely, frustrated, or depressed.

**Stage 3:** This is a time of adjustment when you start feeling more comfortable with your surroundings and acquaintances.

**Stage 4:** As you complete the adjustment cycle, you will find yourself feeling integrated into the host culture and may find that you enjoy most aspects of your host country.

**Stage 5:** Returning to the U.S. may send you into a period of reverse cultural adjustment. You may have wanted to stay in your host country longer and may try to figure out how and when you will return.

These symptoms are felt by some expatriates at some point in their time abroad, and it helps to anticipate that you may have periods of loneliness, sadness, or depression abroad, so that you can be prepared to work through them. Whenever your usual coping mechanisms are not working or you find yourself making coping choices that are not in your best interest, realize that you may need more support and seek help. You may find it helpful to talk with your program coordinator or an instructor abroad about the stress you are feeling.

**COPING WITH CULTURE SHOCK**
- Stay active in your host community and institution.
- Immerse yourself in any positive activity that resonates with you
- Practice relaxation strategies such as meditation, reading, walking, etc.
- Communicate with family and friends, but do not focus too much on this! Remember it is important to simply get out instead of commiserating on the phone, or social media
- Plan social venues and be with others

**Fitting In**
Social customs differ greatly from one country to another. It is impossible to provide guidelines that are universally applicable. Generally speaking, you should act naturally, always remaining friendly, courteous, and dignified. Keep in mind that you are a guest in someone else’s country. You should therefore behave pretty much as if you were a guest in someone else’s home. If your missteps are well intentioned, you are likely to be given the benefit of the doubt as a foreigner who is doing his/her best to fit in.

**Politeness:** In many countries, social encounters are governed by a code of conduct that requires a greater degree of formality than we are used to in the U.S. Be prepared to offer a formal greeting to whomever you meet in your day-to-day activities. For example, should you approach a clerk in a local market in France, always be courteous enough to begin your conversation with, “Bonjour, Madame (Monsieur, Mademoiselle)” before you launch into your inquiries about the product. Become familiar with the appropriate expressions of gratitude in response to your hosts’ hospitality.

**Humor:** While each country has its own particular brand of wit and humor, very few cultures appreciate the kind of “kidding” to which Americans are accustomed. Kidding, even when well intentioned, may be interpreted as unfriendly.

**Speaking The Language:** Most people will be extremely flattered by your efforts to communicate in their native language. Do not be intimidated or inhibited even if your command of the language is limited. A couple of words of caution might be in order: do your best to avoid slang expressions, the sense of which may be difficult for a foreigner to master. Be aware of the differences between the “familiar” and the “polite” forms of address, and be sure to use them properly.

**Physical Contact:** When establishing social relationships, “play it by ear” in determining the level of familiarity that you should adopt at the various stages of your relationship. Physical contact, for example, may not be appreciated or
understood by someone unfamiliar with the American idea of camaraderie - a cheerful pat on the back or a warm hug may be quite embarrassing and uncomfortable in certain cultures. All cultures have different notions about social space - for instance, how far away to stand or sit when conversing, how to shake hands or wave farewell. Restraint is advisable until you learn how the locals do it and what they expect of you.

**Too Personal Questions:** Let your hosts point the way when engaging in “small talk.” While Americans often find it easy to talk about themselves, in some countries your hosts may view this as being impolite.

**Drinking and Drunkenness:** Be extremely sensitive of others’ attitudes and feelings when it comes to drinking. You will probably find that your hosts enjoy social drinking as much as any American, but they might not look upon drunkenness as either amusing or tolerable.

*No rules of behavior apply to every culture. The best way to learn about local social customs is to inquire politely. Expect things to be different overseas.*

**Additional Tips for Cultural Integration**

Find out about current events in your host country and city. Read the newspaper. Inquire about national, local, and international news, and others to understand the culture and opinions of local citizens. Take advantage of invitations and opportunities to interact with locals. Making friends among your host country peers usually takes a genuine effort.

Joining an organized student group or special interest group at your host institution or in your host community is an excellent way to meet locals and gain a sense of belonging in your host country. Some common examples include a language conversation group, sports club, book club, cooking class, or religious group.

**Other tips include:**

**Ask your classmates and friends** what local events are of importance to them

Besides special cultural and holiday events, find out what other interesting and unique activities your hosts engage in on a daily basis, such as mushroom gathering in the Czech Republic.

**Try to shy away from familiarity.** Eat at local restaurants or pubs instead of American restaurants. Limit the time you spend with other Americans and English speakers. Avoid locations heavily visited by tourists.

**Discourage yourself from negatively comparing your host country to the U.S.** Things will be different, which is why you came! Instead of looking at these new environments, customs, and behaviors with criticism, try to understand what makes your host country tick.

**Keep an open mind.** Food, religion, thought patterns, and social habits will seem strange, but allow yourself to be open to new ideas.

**A Note to Women**

Some women have a difficult time adjusting to attitudes they encounter abroad, in both public and private interactions between men and women. In some countries, it is sometimes common for women to be acknowledged by passing cars, stared at from a distance, verbally appraised in public, or addressed in other ways. You may find this attention either intriguing or intolerable. Local women often have learned to ignore it or live with it. Take note of this while you are going about your day-to-day life, and learn how to brush it off in a polite way in order to avoid confrontation.

You will have to learn the unwritten rules about societal gender norms in your host country. Women can provide support for each other, and former students suggest that you get together several times early in your stay to talk about how to deal with the unwanted attention. Be mindful about the messages you may be unintentionally communicating through dress, behavior, or manner.

Above all, try to maintain the perspective that these challenging (and sometimes difficult) experiences are part of understanding another culture, which is one of the important reasons you are studying abroad. Prepare yourself by
learning about the gender roles and assumptions in your host country. Plan to discuss any concerns with your program’s site administration.

**Students with Disabilities**

If you need accommodations while studying abroad, contact the MICA Learning Resource Center before you go. It is important to be aware of differing attitudes toward disability and accommodations abroad. Unlike the U.S., some host countries lack the public infrastructure to accommodate people with physical disabilities. Additionally, there are varying philosophies on a wide-range of mental and physical disabilities that do not coincide with the North American perspective, so finding similar support could be challenging. The Office of International Programs strongly advises early planning with the MICA LRC; conducting thorough research on your host destination; as well as inquiring about potential services that might be available at your proposed study abroad program site.

Some additional resources include:

- MICA LRC: [https://www.mica.edu/offices-divisions/learning-resource-center/](https://www.mica.edu/offices-divisions/learning-resource-center/)