

Student Exchanges



PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

**The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only a page.
--Augustine (354-430)**

The responsibility for your study abroad preparation does not rest with the staff of Camosun College International. Staff can and will guide you, but ultimately **you must prepare yourself for the period of study abroad.** Having an enjoyable study abroad experience first means learning how to travel responsibly and sometimes, independently.

To assist you in this process, Camosun College has prepared a **Pre-Departure Orientation Handbook.** Information has been taken from a variety of sources including tips from students and staff who have traveled, studied and/or worked abroad.

This Handbook is fundamentally a series of questions on travel, study and life in another culture. Although you may have answers to some questions already, there will be other issues that require research. **Your Handbook requires that you find the answers by searching them out for yourself.** Remember, answering the questions should keep surprises to a minimum once you arrive in your host country.

Here are some good places to start researching and finding answers:

- The internet
- Students and locals who have lived or traveled in the countries you will visit
- The library
- A travel guide (can be purchased at any bookstore or may be found at the library)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Camosun College International wishes to acknowledge and thank the sources we have used to create our Study Abroad Pre-Departure Orientation Handbook.

TIME LINE

“Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness”
Mark Twain

1. **Approximately four months prior to departure**

- a. Get your PASSPORT
- b. Make airline arrangements if not done through Camosun College International
- c. Meet with your program advisor to arrange for classes to take upon returning to Camosun College
- d. Start to RESEARCH YOUR HOST COUNTRY and host culture

2. **Approximately two months prior to departure**

- a. Make sure that you have medical insurance and check the limitations on the policy (Camosun College students that did not “opt out” of student medical will have coverage through the Camosun College plan. See page 5 for more info)
- b. Get a physical and have a health card filled out with prescription information
- c. Get your VISAS for host country study and other country travel (this is generally arranged for you if you are participating in a Field Institution)
- d. Purchase a travel guide or make your own
- e. Get any immunizations required to visit the host country (see page 5 for more info)

3. **Approximately one month prior to departure**

- a. Make sure that you are available to attend the mandatory pre-departure orientation scheduled by Camosun College International
- b. If you plan to travel by rail, arrange for purchase of discount tickets
- c. Arrange for your International Student Identity Card (some host institutions provide this card)
- d. Arrange for your MONEY matters (traveler’s cheques, credit cards, ATM card) and determine bank fees for overseas bank activity (you may want to talk to someone to pick a banking plan that best accommodates your needs)

4. **One week prior to departure**

- a. Confirm with the assigned staff person at CCI that everything is in order and you will be departing as scheduled
- b. TAKE OUT HALF OF THE STUFF IN YOUR SUITCASE

HOST INSTITUTION (for exchange students only)

1. _____
(name of host institution) (city) (country)

Have you read all the information provided by the host institution (catalog, handbook)? ___(yes) ___(no)

Do you understand the policies and rules of the host institution? ___(yes) ___(no)

2. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Have you completed all of the required forms and turned them in to the host institution? ___(yes) ___(no)

Do you understand YOUR responsibilities as a student enrolled in study abroad? ___(yes) ___(no)

3. HOST INSTITUTION (abroad)

Address

Telephone

Contact Person

FAX

4. CALENDAR

Arrival date at the host institution _____

Departure date from the institution _____

Re-entry date in Canada _____

5. ORIENTATION

Is there an orientation program at your host institution? ___(yes) ___(no)

If the Orientation Program is held in a separate location from the host institution, identify the location:

Address

Telephone

Contact Person

FAX

6. LODGING

What type of lodging arrangements you have made for study abroad? _____

When is your lodging available at the host site? _____

Have you left a copy of the above information with your family and friends?

REGISTRATION AND CLASSES

1. ENROLLMENT

Do you enroll in your study abroad classes at CC? _____(yes) _____(no)

Do you enroll when you are in the host country? _____(yes) _____(no)

2. ENROLLMENT ABROAD

If you enroll abroad, where and when will the course offerings and catalogs be available? _____

How do you enroll? _____

3. TRANSFER OF COURSES

How will you know if a particular course will transfer to CC?

4. COURSE CHANGES

How do you get CC approval for a change to your pre-approved schedule?

Who must approve the change?

1)

2)

3)

5. FAILING A CLASS

What happens if you fail a class?

How does that affect your transfer?

6. PASS/FAIL COURSES

Can you take a course Pass/Fail? _____(yes) _____(no)

If you marked "yes," how many P/F courses does L-RC allow per semester?

7. INTERSHIPS

If you are doing an internship while abroad, what instructions do you have from your CC advisor related to internship requirements?

8. CC PRE-REGISTRATION FOR RETURN

How will you pre-register for CC courses the semester following your return to the Canada?

9. GRADUATION

Will you graduate while you are abroad? _____(yes) _____(no)

If you are graduating the semester you are abroad, you must consult with the Registrar for approval prior to your departure.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

AIRLINE TICKETS

For students participating in CC Field Schools, travel arrangements to and from your host country will be done for you. All others must make their own travel arrangements. We are prepared to assist with advice related to travel abroad and, if asked, we will put you in contact with travel agencies who have served CC well in the past.

PASSPORT

The passport application may be obtained from the passport office in **Victoria**

Scotiabank Building

747 Fort Street, 5th Floor

Or visit the website: <http://www.ppt.gc.ca/index.aspx?lang=e>

When you complete the form, take it to a post office with two passport photos and an official birth certificate. Current cost for application for a Canadian Passport is \$87.00.

CLASS REGISTRATION

Early in the process, the CCI staff, your academic advisor, and the Registrar's Office will work with you to determine which classes to enroll in at the host institution and what the equivalencies are for CC. In many instances, this is a preliminary process since you may need to register abroad when you arrive at the host institution. While abroad, you must make arrangements to register in classes for the semester after you return.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IDENTIFICATION CARD (ISIC)

This card lets you receive discounts for travel on many airlines and ground transportation, as well as cultural sites. In addition, this card provides a basic plan of accident/medical insurance for travel outside of the Canada as well as access to an international toll-free hotline for assistance in medical, legal or financial emergencies.

PRESCRIPTIONS

Prescription medications may come under intense scrutiny by foreign officials. In some countries, drugs that are legal and readily available in Canada are considered illegal or require a prescription. It is always best to contact the [Canadian Government Office](#) in the country you plan to visit to confirm the status of your medication.

When travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medication:

- Pack an extra supply of your medication in case you are away for longer than expected
- Carry a copy of the original prescription, and ensure that both the generic and trade names of the drug are included in case your medication is lost or stolen (a doctor's note describing why you are taking the medication is also recommended)
- If you are taking a less common medication, check to ensure that it is readily available in the country you intend to visit

Your medications should be packed in the original, labelled container to avoid problems with customs officials. Do not try to save luggage space by combining medications into a single container.

Make sure you are aware of what the health regulations are in your country and in your host country. For information about Canadian regulations, visit the following website:

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/compli-conform/int/export-import/medicnebord-medicamentsext_tc-tm_e.html

IMMUNIZATIONS

Visit your local travel clinic to find out if you require immunizations for travel to a particular country or region. Visit the following website for information on travel clinic nearest you: http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/tmp-pmv/travel/clinic_e.html

MEDICAL INSURANCE

You must have medical insurance that will cover you while you study abroad. Your extended health plan at Camosun College covers you for travel and medical emergencies abroad. Please pick up your documentation from the Student Society office (Field School participants will be handed their documents at the pre-departure orientation session). If you have opted out of the CC plan, please contact the coordinator of the Study Abroad Program immediately to discuss options. Remember to carry a wallet size ID card for verification of your insurance.

INSURANCE

You may wish to consider travel insurance, travel cancellation insurance and liability insurance on accompanying household and personal effects. Rates may vary depending on your length of time away. Find out if your personal items are covered by your (or your parents') homeowner's policy while you are away.

CANADIAN CUSTOMS CERTIFICATES

These certificates are for personal valuables accompanying you abroad. They must be completed and returned to Canada Customs before you leave, as proof of prior ownership when you return. You can register your camera, computer, jewellery and other valuables before you leave so that you will not be required to pay duty on these when you return to Canada.

WILL

It may happen. In consideration of family members, ensure that your will is in good order. In the event of a tragedy, the Canadian embassy will contact your family and help to make the required arrangements.

DUPLICATION OF DOCUMENTS

It is a good idea to make copies of valuable documents and to leave them in the safekeeping of friends or family. Documents that should be copied include your Birth Certificate, your Passport, travellers' cheques and college transcripts. It is also a good idea to carry several extra passport-sized photos with you, for visas or for other identification purposes while you are away.

RISK ASSUMPTION AND LIABILITY WAIVER

This form, which can be signed by you or by your parents, is required before you depart.

VISA

Visas are special permissions to visit a country and are issued by the host country. Not all countries require a visa for Canadian citizens. However, if you are planning to stay for more than a specified period in a country, you will be required to acquire the appropriate visa. Check <http://www.voyage.gc.ca/dest/ctry/visa-en.asp> to see if you need a visa for the host country and/or countries you will be visiting during your study abroad experience.

I need to make copies of the following documents

MONEY MATTERS

1. CURRENCY

How much currency will you take with you?

In what categories [CAN _____ US _____ Foreign _____]

2. EXCHANGE RATE

What is the exchange rate for Canadian currency in the host country?

Rate _____ Date _____ Source _____

3. CURRENCY CHANGES

Where can you change currency in the host country?

Where can you get information abroad regarding rates and the best currency exchanges?

4. NUMBERS, NUMBERS, NUMBERS

Have you written down the numbers of your traveler's cheques, credit cards?

___(yes) ___(no)

Remember to leave the list of numbers in a safe place.

5. CASH

How do you plan to handle cash while abroad?

How much cash should you have at one time?

How will you safeguard it?

7. CREDIT CARDS

Have you informed your credit card company that you will be using the card abroad?

___(yes) ___(no)

Be sure to have the credit card customer service number with you.

1. ATM

Where can you find a list of ATM's abroad that will accept your card?

Write down your PIN number and keep it in a safe place.

2. TRAVELER'S CHEQUES

What documents must you have when you use the traveler's cheques?

Remember, write down the numbers of the cheque and keep it in a safe place.

CULTURAL VIEWS

1. STUDY ABROAD GOALS

Write down 3 of your goals or expectations for this trip:

- a.
- b.
- c.

2. CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Write down 3 cultural experiences you want to have during your study abroad experience:

- a.
- b.
- c.

3. RESEARCH TOOLS

There are many sources for learning about your host country. CCI has several videos and travel books located in the Study Abroad display on the 2nd floor of the Dawson building, Lansdowne. Write down ways you can learn about your host culture in the following categories:

Title and author of a book about the culture:

One person you know who has visited or lived in the country:

Website about the country:

One source of current news about the country:

Other:

4. CULTURE SHOCK

What is culture shock and what are the stages of culture shock?

List 3 symptoms of culture shock.

- a.
- b.
- c.

CULTURAL COMPARISONS

What differences and similarities are there between your host culture and Canadian culture?

	Canadian Culture	Host Culture
Communication Styles		
Gestures		
Personal Appearance (Dress)		
Recreation and Leisure Activities		
Eating Habits		
Food (Diet)		
Family Lifestyle		
Dating/Marriage		
Religion and Spirituality		
Local Views on Sex, Alcohol and Drugs		

TRAVEL AND CURRENT EVENTS

1. SEASONS

What season(s) will it be in your host country while you are there?

How will this affect your packing?

2. TRAVEL

What are four things you expect to see and to do in your host country?

a.

b.

c.

d.

3. HOLIDAYS

What is the national holiday (similar to July 1 in Canada) in your host country?

Which holidays will happen during your stay?

What are the dates of the host institution breaks?

4. TRAVEL OUTSIDE OF YOUR HOST COUNTRY

What other countries do you expect to visit during your stay?

What travel documents are required to visit these countries?

5. NEWS (Host Country)

[Identify your sources]

What is the name of the major political leader in your host country? _____

What form of government exists in the host country? _____

Identify the following relating to your host country:

One major current news event _____

One major current sporting event/group/or player _____

One national popular entertainer _____

One internationally recognized person _____

INFO TO GO

The Department of Foreign Affairs provides information for Canadian travelers abroad. Please visit the following website for more information:

<http://www.international.gc.ca/international/index.aspx>

This site contains information on each country's culture, history, geography, economy, government, and current political situation.

Check for Travel Warnings and Public Announcements. Travel Warnings recommend Canadian citizens defer travel to a country because of dangerous conditions. Public Announcements provide fast-breaking information about relatively short-term conditions that may pose risks to the security of travelers. For more information visit the Travel Updates website at:

http://www.voyage.gc.ca/consular_home-en.asp

List the Canadian embassy, consulate and tourism office in the country/countries you will be visiting:

(Include address, phone number and web site):

MEDICAL MATTERS

1. HEALTH HABITS

What health risks are there in your host country?

What are the health risks in other countries or areas you may visit?

2. PRECAUTIONS

What should you do to protect yourself from health risks identified above?

Inoculations

Medicines

Certain clothing

Other

3. PRESCRIPTIONS

Are you taking any prescription medicines that you will need while abroad? ___(yes)___(no)

Do you have enough medicine to last you the entire time that you are abroad? ___(yes)___(no)

If not, how will you get your medication while you are abroad?

4. MEDICAL SERVICES AT THE HOST INSTITUTION

Are there any medical services provided by your host institution? ___(yes) ___(no)

Where?

Who can you call to find information out about the medical services?

5. MEDICAL INSURANCE

List what your medical insurance covers:

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Do you have to follow a certain procedure or process in order to be covered? ___(yes)___(no)

If so, please describe below or on the back of this page.

Are there specified doctors you go to in the host country? _____(yes)_____(no)

Identify them:

SAFETY ABROAD

PERSONAL SAFETY

As you prepare for your travels outside of Canada you should think about your personal safety. As you would in many areas here in Canada, you should continue to use care and caution while travelling abroad.

Remember, ignorance is not an excuse! Students participating in a study abroad program are expected to be familiar with and follow the laws of the host country as well as other countries the student may be visiting. Failure to do so could have very serious legal implications including possible prison sentences. Students being charged with an offence should contact the Canadian Embassy immediately; however, they should not expect any benefits from the Canadian government if they have broken a local national law.

“Canadian consular officials will respond to requests for assistance from all Canadians. While they are in [the foreign country], however, all Canadians are subject to the laws and regulations of the [foreign country], including legal and administrative processes.” DFAIT, December 2002.

The following are some common safe travel suggestions to help you plan:

- Before you head off, familiarize yourself with any trouble spots and/or potential conflicts in the countries you plan to visit, and be aware of current events while you are away. Visit the Department of Foreign Affairs website at: <http://www.voyage.gc.ca/dest/ctry/new-en.asp>
- Protect your valuables from pickpockets by remaining alert and cautious. Conceal your valuables in a money belt or neck-safe under your clothing while traveling
- Do not leave your luggage unattended and do not agree to carry or check any luggage or other items for anyone
- If you are looking for a taxi, ‘official’ taxi stops are generally located outside airports, train and bus stations
- Do not impair your judgment by consuming excessive amounts of alcohol or by using drugs
- Always avoid traveling alone
- As is wise anywhere, do not walk alone at night or in remote and unfamiliar areas. Stay near busy and well-lit areas
- Avoid demonstrations. What appears to be a peaceful demonstration can suddenly change into a dangerous situation and you can become caught up in an unwanted situation
- Leave your travel itinerary – where you are going and when you expect to return – with the international office of the host College and with a friend

HARASSMENT

While CC attempts to ensure its students are not placed where racism, homophobia and/or sexism are evident or rife, we do recognize that in some cultures and some countries one or all of the above may be an issue. Please prepare for your travels by thoroughly researching (on the Internet, using travel guides and talking with past participants) your host country and region to have a better understanding of the culture and society. If you find yourself in an uncomfortable situation involving some form of harassment, please contact the international office of your host institution and/or contact CC International for possible guidance and assistance.

RISK ASSESSMENT SOURCES

Listed below are websites that may help you find valuable information as you prepare for your Study Abroad experience.

Air Security International: Hot Spots www.airsecurity.com/hotspots/HOTSPOTS.asp

Up to date information on various situations throughout the world, including important reminders of anniversary dates which may indicate an increased risk.

Health Canada http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/tmp-pmv/pub_e.html

This comprehensive web site contains current information on health, inoculations, and current conditions in countries throughout the world.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade www.voyage.gc.ca

Contains travel information and advisory reports from the Canadian government.

Foreign & Commonwealth Office www.fco.gov.uk

This is the British version of the US State Department consular information sheets. Information on world news and travel can be found at this website.

Foreign Affairs and Trade/Australia <http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/>

This service offered by the foreign affairs office of Australia provides hints for travelers and consular information by country.

Kroll & Associates <http://www.kroll.com/library/>

A private investigation and risk assessment company with offices through out the US and world. Features current press releases on world situations.

Transport Canada <http://www.tc.gc.ca/aboutus/travel/Plan/menu.htm#generalinfo>

Information for Canadians flying internationally. Includes listings of what you can and cannot pack in your hand luggage.

World Clock <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock>

Easily check the time difference between major cities and convert the time zones between home and your current location.

PACKING

Safety begins when you pack! To avoid being a target, dress conservatively. A flashy wardrobe, or one that is too casual, can mark you as a tourist. As much as possible, avoid the appearance of affluence.

How many weeks will you be abroad? _____

While abroad, will the season change? _____

How often will you do your laundry? _____

How accessible will the washing facilities be? _____

What are the customs in your host country regarding energy conservation, hot water usage, and room temperature? _____

Does your host supply linens? _____

If not, do you plan to buy them there or take them with you? _____

Do you plan to take appliances? _____

What is the electrical current in your host country? _____

What kinds of plugs are necessary? _____ And adaptors? _____

What toiletries do you need to take and in what quantity? _____

Consider taking something small and special that will remind you of home (a keep-sake, music, photos of family and your pet).

Keep important documents in your carry-on luggage or a neck pouch. Remember to keep a change of clothes and your medications in your carry-on in case there is a problem with your bags.

Remember, most people around the world do not feel the need to wear a different outfit everyday. Black is the favourite non-color. Loud, colourful t-shirts, white shoes (especially Reeboks and Nikes), ball caps, and anything with corporate logos will mark you as a North American.

Pack your bags and then lift everything (including your carry-on, favourite stuffed animal, travel guide, etc.) and walk five blocks! If you are panting or in serious risk of heart failure, unpack and then re-pack with half of what you were going to take.

Pack Light ... No, Really Light!

The packing dilemma may be the biggest stress in your life in the weeks before you leave. Most airlines allow you to check two bags and bring one carry-on. Keep in mind that every item you pack may return to haunt your weary feet and aching back! After packing, walk several blocks with the luggage you plan to carry. Your best bet is to keep it simple. Use this list as a guideline and pick and choose what is essential for you.

CLOTHING:

- 1 pair of walking shoes (break them in before you go to avoid blisters)
- 1 pair of flip-flops (showers may be less than scrupulously clean)
- 3-5 pairs of socks
- 1-2 pair of shorts
- 2 shirts
- 1 poncho/rain jacket
- 1 bathing suit
- 1 semi-nice outfit (2-3 if you plan on attending formal events)
- 5-7 pair of underwear
- 1-2 skirts/trousers
- 1 sweater/sweatshirt
- 1 light jacket
- 1 hat

MEDICINE AND TOILETRIES:

- Prescription medicine (keep it in the original bottle and carry a copy of the prescription)
- Glasses, sunglasses, contact lenses and cleaning solution (carry a copy of lens prescription)
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Comb and brush
- Deodorant
- Aspirin
- Tampons
- Soap and shampoo (travel sizes)
- Sunscreen, moisturizers, cosmetics
- First aid kit
- Kleenex
- Razor blades

MISCELLANEOUS:

- Swiss army knife (must be in checked luggage)
- Camera and film
- Flashlight
- Orientation Handbook
- Backpack
- Sewing kit
- Hostel sleepsack
- Umbrella
- Battery-operated alarm clock/radio
- Batteries
- Watch
- Address book
- Books, guides and maps
- Laundry soap, line and clothespins
- Stuff bags (plastic storage bags)
- Change purse
- Luggage locks and tags
- Moist towelettes
- Adapter and voltage converter

DOCUMENTS, ETC.:

- International Student Identity Card (ISIC)
- Passport (and visa)
- Insurance documents
- International Driving Permit
- Money belt or neck wallet
- Host Institution documents
- Tickets and rail passes
- Hostel membership card
- Cash, traveler's checks, credit cards

MISCELLANEOUS

CANADIAN CONTACTS

What offices, agencies or people must you contact to update changes in your address or contact information after you are settled in your host country?

MAIL

Is your mail to be forwarded? _____ (yes) _____ (no)

Have you informed the people who will receive your mail? _____ (yes) _____ (no)

POSTAGE AND PARCELS

How much is postage from your host country to Canada? _____

How long will it take for a box to arrive in Canada? _____

E-MAIL

What is your e-mail address while abroad? _____

Will you have e-mail in your host country or at your host institution? _____ (yes) _____ (no)

How do you get e-mail if it is not included in your study abroad location?

TIME DIFFERENCE

What is the time difference between Victoria and your host country? _____

Have you informed your friends and family of the difference? _____ (yes) _____ (no)

TELEPHONE

Are you setting up a schedule for your family to call at a certain time on certain days? _____ (yes) _____ (no)

Is it cheaper for people to call you from Canada or vice-versa?

CCI WEBSITE

While you are abroad, CCI would like to share your impressions with other students who are considering study abroad. Would you agree to have all or part of your e-mails posted on our website? _____ (yes) _____ (no)

MY QUESTIONS & CONCERNS

Write down questions and concerns to bring up during the pre-departure orientation.
Be sure to write down the answers as well.

The Ten Commandments of Travel

Thou shalt not expect to find things as thou has at home,
for thou has left home to find things different.

Thou shalt not take anything too seriously
for a carefree mind is the start of a good holiday.

Thou shalt not let the other travellers get on thy nerves,
for thou has paid good money to enjoy thyself.

Remember to take half as many clothes as thou thinkest
and twice the money.

Know at all times where thy passport is,
for a person without a passport is a person without a country.

Remember that if we had been expected to stay in one place
we would have been created with roots.

Thou shalt not worry for he that worrieth hath no pleasure
and few things are that fatal.

When in Rome, be prepared to do somewhat as the Romans do.

Thou shalt not judge the people of the country
by the person who hath given thee trouble.

Remember thou art a guest in other lands
and he that treats his host with respect shall be honoured.