

Fall 2008

Dear Academic Adviser,

Congratulations on your receipt of a professional adviser site visit award! We hope your visit proves professionally and personally rewarding. MSU's success in making study abroad an expected and normal part of the undergraduate experience depends in part on the extent to which you and other advisers appreciate the richness and transformational qualities of a study abroad experience. For this reason, we are pleased that you will join students in their study abroad experience and return to share, through first hand experience, the advantages--academic, personal, professional and intercultural--of studying abroad.

This travel grant will allow you to better understand the design and functioning of a program, and will provide limited exposure to, and experience with, the local culture. More broadly, we hope this grant will provide you insights into the sorts of skills and perceptions that our students gain when they study abroad.

We expect you to spend a maximum of one week at an MSU program site while the program is in session and work with the MSU lead faculty member or the local Resident Director in familiarizing yourself with the program during your stay. Your grant will cover airfare, ground transportation, reasonable lodging and per diem expenses. Modest funds will also be available to take up to six student participants to dinner at a restaurant on site. It is expected that you will spend your own funds for tourist and personal outings.

You are expected to participate in the program on-site and duplicate the student experience as closely as possible. With that in mind, I have enclosed a copy of the *Study Abroad Student Handbook* for your reference. Operating under the direction of the MSU lead faculty member, the local MSU Resident Director, or the host university's designated personnel you will, as appropriate:

- visit several different classes;
- tour facilities such as residence halls, computer labs, dining room, etc;
- have informal discussions with local academic and administrative personnel whenever possible;
- schedule a meeting and/or dinner with up to six students;
- complete the study abroad site accessibility questionnaire at the end of this handbook;
- participate in any scheduled field trips (or, if timing does not permit this, visit the same sites on your own);
- attend other activities organized on site. If participants are involved in volunteer or social activities, you are encouraged to join the students for those activities to gain an insight into the extra-curricular activities;
- visit non-tourist sites that may be of personal or professional interest such as schools, churches, synagogues, mosques, rural areas, food markets, theaters, performances, etc.

In most cases, the host institution is not expected, nor will have the resources or time, to coordinate your visit for a full week. Once you have participated in these activities, you

are encouraged to explore and discover on your own. If there are additional MSU study abroad sites in the same geographic region, you may be able to visit two or more sites (check with Office of Study Abroad before beginning your plans).

Effort should be made to live in the same type of accommodations provided for the students: with a local family, in a university residence hall, etc. The appropriate Office of Study Abroad (OSA) coordinator will assist in making arrangements for meetings with local personnel.

We ask you to consider the impact of the site and program on diverse student populations. For instance, are facilities and local surroundings accessible for students with disabilities (see letter and site accessibility questionnaire at the end of this manual)? In order for this questionnaire to be adequately completed, you will probably need to send it in advance of your visit so someone on site who can prepare the answers. Please start this process by contacting Val Nilson in the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD) 884-1904, nilson@msu.edu.

In regards to other populations, have the students experienced any prejudice or racism? Would an openly gay student feel comfortable at this site? When you meet the students on site, they may be able to assist you with the disability questionnaire as well as address these other issues.

We would appreciate the sharing of your photographs for possible future brochures and publicity purposes. Please share digital photos or bring by your exceptional printed photographs so we may scan them. (OSA will cover the cost of scanning of photos for OSA use but cannot cover the cost of your film and processing.) Regular prints are preferred; digital photos need to be a minimum of 300dpi in order for the scanning quality to be acceptable. You may also wish to share the photos with the faculty leader who may have developed a program specific web site.

Once the site visit is completed, you will:

- submit a report to the Associate Director of OSA, describing the site visit activities and impressions, listing the positive program features and those that need improvement. Include a completed Study Abroad Site Accessibility Questionnaire (available at the end of this handbook). Identify possible specific strategies and activities that will increase study abroad participation in your college/unit. This report is critical for program assessment, feedback of the process to OSA, and ideas to share with advisers from other colleges/units.
- play an active role as an advocate in your college/unit for all MSU study abroad programs. You will work with the Office of Study Abroad in developing and implementing effective and efficient recruiting strategies and activities within your college/unit. This will include at least five student presentations during the academic year following the visit to share your experience and to promote study abroad.
- be involved in the orientation for the following year for the program you visited.

This handbook is intended to assist you with the preparation and execution of your visit. If you have any suggestions for improving this handbook, please notify me. Best wishes for a safe journey and an enriching experience that exceeds your expectations.

Cindy Felbeck Chalou
Acting Director

Travel Preparation and Documentation

Initial Planning

Once you learn of your award, contact Cindy Felbeck Chalou, Acting Director, chalouc@msu.edu, 432-4345 as soon as possible. She will provide you with background information and refer you to the appropriate individuals in the Office of Study Abroad (OSA) and other units who can best assist you in planning your visit.

You are responsible for meeting with the appropriate MSU faculty and staff prior to your departure and making your own arrangements to meet with resource people on site. OSA will provide you with on-site contact information and, if there is no accompanying MSU faculty, will “introduce” you and explain the purpose of your visit to on-site personnel through e-mail or fax. By meeting the MSU faculty leader(s), you will establish a relationship and thereby have a connection when you arrive on site and begin interacting with the students. Please request that the faculty formally introduce you to the students either during the campus orientation or upon your arrival on-site. It helps to explain to students the purpose of your visit as well as clarify that funding for your trip is paid through OSA and is not part of the program budget or fee.

Developing a Budget

In addition to identifying the timing of your visit, **you will be expected to submit a draft budget.** Your budget will consist of: your airfare, lodging, local transportation, per diem, and student dinner (for up to six students). You should obtain an estimation of your airfare (see ***Airline Reservations*** section following). The OSA coordinator or lead faculty will assist you with an estimation of the lodging, local transportation costs, and any other incidentals to be considered in the budget. The per diem (food and miscellaneous expenses) is based on the federal per diem rate. Current federal per diem allowances are available at <http://www.state.gov/m/a/als/prdm/c16476.htm> and foreign exchange rates are available at <http://www.oanda.com/convert/fxhistory>. **Provide a copy of this draft budget to Cindy Felbeck Chalou in OSA for approval.**

Travel Authorization

Once Cindy has reviewed and approved your budget, you should contact Sean Curry (currysea@msu.edu) from the Office of Study Abroad. He will help you prepare your travel voucher that is available at http://ctrl.msu.edu/download/scripts/form_search.asp?Department=Travel. When your form is complete, you should forward it to Sean. He will obtain the necessary pre-departure signatures. The earlier this can be done, the better. You are advised to book your flights and accommodations as early as possible to ensure space and the lowest fares.

The following information is required in order to complete this form:

1. The *actual dates of your departure and return* to East Lansing. Indicate cost of flight and whether you have direct billed your airfare.
2. Your *mode* of travel while on-site whether by private car, bus, train, air, etc.
3. Your MSU ZPID.

Your travel voucher must be completed and signed by OSA and the ISP Dean’s Office prior to booking air reservations. Authorized administrative personnel in International Studies and Programs,

your department and college, and the University Travel Office will sign this form. The travel voucher should remain on file in your office to provide insurance protection (as specified in university policy) while you are in travel status.

Airline Reservations

After you have received your travel voucher, you should book your flight.

You may book and direct-bill your airfare to the Office of Study Abroad any time prior to departure. MSU has recently identified new cluster agencies with whom you can direct bill, but details have not yet been publically released. Check with Cindy when you are ready to book your flight. It is your responsibility to schedule your own flight arrangements, which should be done as early as possible.

You may view and purchase airfares from Expedia, Orbitz, Travelocity, Southwest Airlines, and other airline Web sites via MSU's cluster agency (Passageways Travel) accessible through MSU's Travel Web site at <http://ctrl.msu.edu/travel>. You can direct bill business airline tickets booked through these Web sites and search virtually all options by going to only one Web site. Using Passageway's (or a newly identified agency) Web site reduces the fee and still provides 24-hour travel agency support which is not available when booking directly through the various Web sites.

Should you choose not to direct bill, you may receive a travel advance at any time that will reimburse you for only your airfare. Please contact Belinda Singleton (singlet6@msu.edu) once you have proof of payment if you would like to be reimbursed prior to your normal travel advance (see below).

In all cases, the passenger receipt and paid invoice statement from the travel agency must be submitted when program expenses are reconciled after your return to campus.

When you are booking your flight, remember the day and time changes. Although OSA can be somewhat flexible, the grant covers one week at the actual study abroad site. This may mean that you may be gone 9-10 days due to flight time.

Housing

You should make your housing arrangements as soon as you learn of your award. Your housing arrangement should ideally be the same as that of the students. If that is not possible, you should seek lodging close to their housing and classrooms at the most reasonable rate possible. If your group has homestays and a homestay cannot be arranged for you, you are encouraged to join a student at his or her home for a meal and evening. Past advisers have joined students for a dinner at their homestay and therefore, gained a glimpse of the local family experience.

Maximum lodging expenses are reimbursed according to the most current U.S. Department of State rates. These expenses can only be reimbursed for the *actual amount up to* the U.S. Department of State rate. However, since one of the goals of your visit is to simulate a student experience, it is expected that you will obtain accommodations at a cost far below this maximum rate. **For audit purposes you are required to have an original receipt to substantiate your housing expenses.**

While the Office of Study Abroad or lead faculty may, at some sites, be able to suggest possible options for your housing, you are responsible for arranging your international accommodations.

M & IE (per diem)

The terms “per diem” and “M & IE” are used interchangeably. Meals and Incidental Expenses (M & IE) is based on the most current rate available from the U.S. Department of State (unless you agree to accept a lower rate in order to keep trip costs low) and varies according to geographic location. This rate is for the *actual time* in a location abroad. As with our study abroad programs, you will be allocated 90% of the U.S. Department of State per diem.

M & IE is paid in lieu of actual expenses and eliminates the need to keep receipts for every personal transaction. It is intended to cover such things as meals, laundry and dry cleaning, fees, tips to waiters/porters/hotel maids, etc., baths, faxes, telegrams, telephone calls for reserving hotel rooms, transportation between places of lodging and business or where meals are taken.

You are encouraged to take up to six MSU participants out to dinner at a restaurant. If there is a reason you wish to increase that number (such as there is a total of eight students on the program), speak to Cindy for approval. We suggest you use an objective determination for selecting the students such as their major, college, etc. OSA will provide funding for up to US\$25 per student for food. OSA will not cover alcohol expenses.

Travel Advances

The amount set for your Travel Advance is taken directly from your budget. Since the advance includes your actual housing and flight costs and uses the latest currency exchange rate, there should be little or no deviation in the actual amount spent.

You may receive your travel advance seven days before your departure. In order to receive your travel advance, take your Travel Voucher to the University Travel Office, 370 Administration Building. They will authorize the advance and send you to the Cashier's Office, 110 Administration Building, to receive funds. Once you have received your advance, **PLEASE RETURN THE ORIGINAL TRAVEL VOUCHER TO THE OFFICE OF STUDY ABROAD.** This will insure that you are protected by University Travel Regulations and insurance during your trip.

The University Travel Office will ask you to sign a MSU Travel/Petty Cash Advance Note for the amount of the advance. **Within 30 days of your return, you must account (with the required receipts) for the entire amount of the advance.** Should there be funds unaccounted for, you will be asked to write a check for the difference to the University. If unforeseen circumstances arise while you are abroad and you encounter unexpected expenses, contact OSA to discuss the matter. If allowable expenses were higher than the amount advanced, you will receive a check for the difference.

NOTE: Failure to clear a Travel Advance within 30 days of return can result in the amount of the advance being deducted from your paycheck. If this occurs, you will not be allowed to receive travel advances at any time in the future.

Summary of Required Receipts

For audit purposes, ***the following receipts are required*** in order to account for money advanced to you for your travel, lodging, and per diem (M&IE):

- Airline passenger receipt (last coupon in airline ticket packet), boarding passes, and paid billing statement, showing times of arrival and departure
- Rail receipts (if applicable)

- Any other transportation receipts, including travel to and from East Lansing except by personal car. If you are flying out of Detroit, you will be expected to use the Michigan Flyer (www.michiganflyer.com) for transportation.
- Original lodging receipts
- Original receipt for dinner with students
- No receipts are necessary for M & IE (per diem). This is the *only* category where receipts are not required.

Travel Accident Insurance

The University provides immediate Travel Accident coverage to MSU employees traveling on approved University business or activities. This plan provides accidental death and dismemberment coverage up to \$50,000, and is automatic for all faculty/academic staff. This plan does not provide any type of health or accident insurance. No enrollment application is necessary and the cost is paid by the University. Additionally, MSU faculty, staff and authorized travelers abroad are covered by MEDEX Plus that provides international assistance, and emergency evacuation and repatriation.

The MEDEX Plus policy for faculty and staff provides certain benefits for individuals involved in University business who suffer accidental death or dismemberment while traveling to and from the site abroad. Benefits under this coverage are administered by the Staff Benefits Office (353-4434).

Ask, and the University Travel Office will give you a MEDEX card and information when you have your travel advance authorized.

Getting Ready to Go

Educate Yourself

If you are notified of your award in sufficient time prior to the students' departure, you should attend the same orientation(s) as the student participants. This will allow you to gain information as well as meet the students in advance. Learn as much as possible from the faculty leader and OSA coordinator about the history of the program (including challenges that have been faced) as well as course offerings. The Office of Study Abroad is pleased to share a participant list and on-site contact list with you.

There are additional ways to prepare for your journey. If the program is affiliated with an institution, check their web site for general information about the institution, the political hierarchy and set-up, facilities, courses and majors, areas of expertise, terminology (such as what the term *Vice Chancellor* means and who that person is), and surrounding area. Find out when the national and institutional holidays take place and don't plan your trip during those times! Do your homework in advance since it is possible that the on-site personnel will not have the time to give you full background on the history, culture, etc.

Check web sites and read books about the history, geography and customs of the countries you are visiting; study maps; read newspapers with good international news coverage; and watch DVDs of the places you'll visit. Check the Web to read issues of foreign newspapers and for helpful information and advice. Visit the International Center Library or the Office of Study Abroad Resource Room, 108 International Center, where you'll find guidebooks and program evaluations written by previous participants.

Check out the international travel sections of bookstores and purchase one or two good student guides such as *Let's Go*, *Lonely Planet* (<http://www.lonelyplanet.com>), *Berkeley Guides*, or *Rough Guides*. Finally, if you don't speak the language, learn some key words and phrases. Everyone likes to hear even simple words or phrases in their native tongue.

You also may wish to connect with international MSU alumni who live where you plan to visit. See "Alumni club (international)" on the MSU Alumni Web site (<http://www.msualum.org/clubs/international/>) for names of on-site contacts.

Passport Information

For complete instructions about obtaining a passport, see the *Study Abroad Student Handbook* or http://studyabroad.msu.edu/studenthandbk/pre-dep_planning/passport.html

Health Recommendations and Information

If you have any questions regarding medical problems, immunization requirements, or other health issues that may affect your trip, contact OSA, your personal physician, or the MSU Travel Clinic (517-353-3161) at least two months prior to departure to Africa, Asia or South America, and at least one month prior to departure to Central America, Eastern Europe or the Middle East. Make a travel clinic appointment for UK and western Europe only if you have concerns. OSA will cover the cost of the office visit and any mandatory immunizations but will not cover the cost of updating routine immunizations.

Some immunizations require a series or spacing for protection (as long as three months for a series of shots), so allow as much time as possible for immunization. Worldwide health information is also available through the Travel Clinic (<http://travelclinic.msu.edu>) and Center for Disease Control (<http://www.cdc.gov/>). Check one of these resources to determine the health requirements for your country. You may receive immunizations locally at the MSU Travel Clinic or the Ingham County Health Department in Lansing (887-4300).

If you have a pre-existing medical condition that may require treatment or need prescription medication while traveling, be sure to bring an adequate supply with your physician's explanation of the condition and generic and brand names of the medication and dosage information. Always carry prescription medication in its original container. If there is a question, check with the embassies of the countries you expect to visit to make sure your medications are not illegal there.

Packing and Baggage

- Check with an insurance or travel agent about insuring your luggage and other personal effects.
- Avoid oversize and overweight baggage: remember that you will be abroad for only a brief visit!
- Two small bags will probably be easier to handle than one large bag.
- Mark your luggage tags ahead of time with a clear indication of your name, home address and phone number. Also keep this information inside your bags. Remove these tags after you arrive at your site.
- Arrive at the airport **AT LEAST** two hours before departure. Go directly to the ticket counter to check your bags and learn about any flight schedule changes.
- Keep your luggage locked and close to you!

Airlines restrict the amount of baggage that passengers are allowed to carry. In general, passengers are allowed two bags, each weighing under 50 pounds. Requirements vary from carrier to carrier, and it is your responsibility to contact your airlines to determine these requirements.

Leave at home all unnecessary credit cards, expensive jewelry, or items you would hate to lose. Take a collapsible piece of luggage or leave room in your bags for items acquired abroad.

Most travelers pack too much clothing. Take only what you expect to wear. Although public laundry service is commonly available, it is advised to bring dark colors which will not readily show the dirt. Your clothing should be hand washable and require little care. Learn the typical climate of the location you plan to visit. Check the *Study Abroad Student Handbook* for a suggested packing list.

You may wish to bring small MSU items to distribute as thank-yous to those who assist you. You may also wish to bring materials related to your role at MSU and share with the on-site personnel some aspects of your role and responsibility at your home institution.

When packing your carry-on piece of luggage we suggest you include 1) an extra pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses and cleaning solution; 2) a map of or directions to your destination; 3) any medications you use (Keep medications in their original labeled container to make customs processing easier. If any medications contain narcotics, carry with you a letter from your physician attesting to your need to take them); 4) cosmetics; 5) a sweater or sweatshirt; 6) an extra change of clothes; and 7) several granola bars or dried fruit as snacks in case of delays. All liquids, gels and aerosols must be in three-ounce or smaller containers. Items must also be placed in a single, quart-sized, clear zip-top plastic bag.

Electrical service varies throughout the world. The best way to avoid problems is to not bring any electrical items with you! However, if you must, remember that not all outlets will accept the two- or three-pronged plugs that are standard in the United States. Along with a voltage converter, you will probably need a set of adapter plugs in order to use small appliances. These items can be purchased at electronics stores. Electric converters work for appliances up to 1600 watts, at least for a while, but good ones are expensive; don't be fooled by cheaper versions because they will burn up your appliance and perhaps cause a fire. Because of the voltage difference, US appliances often cause electrical shortages, even with an adapter and transformer. If you are bringing expensive electronic equipment such as a computer, obtain all necessary conversion information from a professional before departure.

On-Site Issues

Check the *Study Abroad Student Handbook* for information related to safety, communications, and customs. The handbook has good advice on money issues, and you can find a list of Web sites for travelers at <http://studyabroad.msu.edu/shared/links.html>.

Dear MSU Study Abroad Site Visitor and Staff,

The Americans with Disabilities Act mandates equal access to US university programs for students with disabilities. As a result, we are gathering information from sites abroad in order to advise students on accommodation possibilities. The attached *Site Accessibility Questionnaire* is designed to help MSU staff get a general idea of a site's physical and programmatic accessibility. This form can easily be completed during a routine site visit. Prior to departure, obtain the name and contact information from MSU's Office of Study Abroad of the on-site persons responsible for disability accommodations and various aspects of programming.

In many cases, a program abroad may not have typical types of accessibility, but creative solutions may enable a student to participate even if the physical environment is more limited. When responding to the questions, consider how flexible and willing the site personnel might be to discussing creative solutions to typical disability accommodations.

This brief questionnaire is intended to be used as a tool when time and resources are limited. We also have a longer version that includes definitions of disabilities and specific accommodations, in order for MSU to obtain more comprehensive accessibility information to share with students. We recommend you meet with MSU faculty leaders before departure to fill out as much as possible of this longer questionnaire version, and give this version to on-site personnel to complete.

If you have any questions prior to departure or while on site, please feel free to contact either of us. Please submit at your earliest convenience the completed questionnaire to the Office of Study Abroad. Thank you for your important role in obtaining this information.

Sincerely,

Cindy Chalou
Acting Director
Office of Study Abroad
109 International Center
East Lansing, MI 48824-1035
TEL: 517-432-4345
FAX: 517-432-2082
chalouc@msu.edu

Valerie Nilson
Study Abroad Liaison
Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities
120 Bessey Hall
East Lansing, MI 48824-1033
TEL: 517-884-1904
FAX: 517-432-3191
nilson@msu.edu

Study Abroad Site Accessibility Questionnaire (short version)

General Access/Background Information

1. What campus or city disability-related offices are available to assist a student with a disability? How receptive are they to working with US students with disabilities? List their contact information including name, title, telephone, fax, and email, if available.

2. What resources on accessibility are available at the institution or in the community (e.g. organizations, campus map, publications)? Obtain sample brochures/documents if possible.

3. What is your sense of overall cultural attitudes about people with disabilities? Are some disabilities recognized while others are not?

4. What experience has this institution had with students with disabilities?

5. What are the concerns about hosting students with disabilities?

6. What kind of health care facilities are available on or off campus for students who wish to purchase prescribed medication? For psychological counseling? Are these services available in English?

Physical Access

1. Are the classrooms, housing, food services, health clinics, pharmacies, and library on the ground level (no steps), or are there building ramps/elevators available? Could classes be relocated to the ground level, or to another building, if necessary?

2. *Are there accessible bathrooms in key areas, e.g. classrooms, housing, food services, and library?

3. Are there ramps for wheelchair users to circumvent steps and uneven ground?
4. Does this campus or community offer housing units accessible to persons using a wheelchair? If so, which ones?
5. How far must students travel between classrooms, housing, food services, and library? What forms of accessible transportation are available on campus or in the community?
6. Are there curb cuts on the streets in key areas to allow wheelchair users to access sidewalks?
7. Are there traffic signals at cross walks to control the pace of traffic? Are there auditory signals at cross walks?

Programmatic Access

1. How available is on-site staff or volunteers to provide assistance (e.g. notetaking, reading) when necessary? What other options might exist to provide such assistance? Is there a cost involved?
2. What accommodations could be made for a student with a disability who requests extra time or a quiet space to take exams?
3. Is a reduced course load feasible for a student with a disability?
4. What types of technology/special equipment (computer labs, tape recorders, scanner, and Braille printer) can be made available to students on the program? Is there a cost involved?
5. Are there field trips involved with the program? Would these be accessible to a student with a physical disability? What form of accessible transportation is available? If the field trips are not accessible, would there be a similar, alternative activity offered?

6. What other considerations should a student with a disability keep in mind about this program or site?

*Wheelchair-accessible by American electric wheelchair standards is usually defined as having a clearance of 3 feet (92 cm) for doorways and 5 feet (152 cm) diameter turning space. Additional specifics on physical accessibility are available upon request (email: rcpd@msu.edu).

General Counsel Approved October 2001