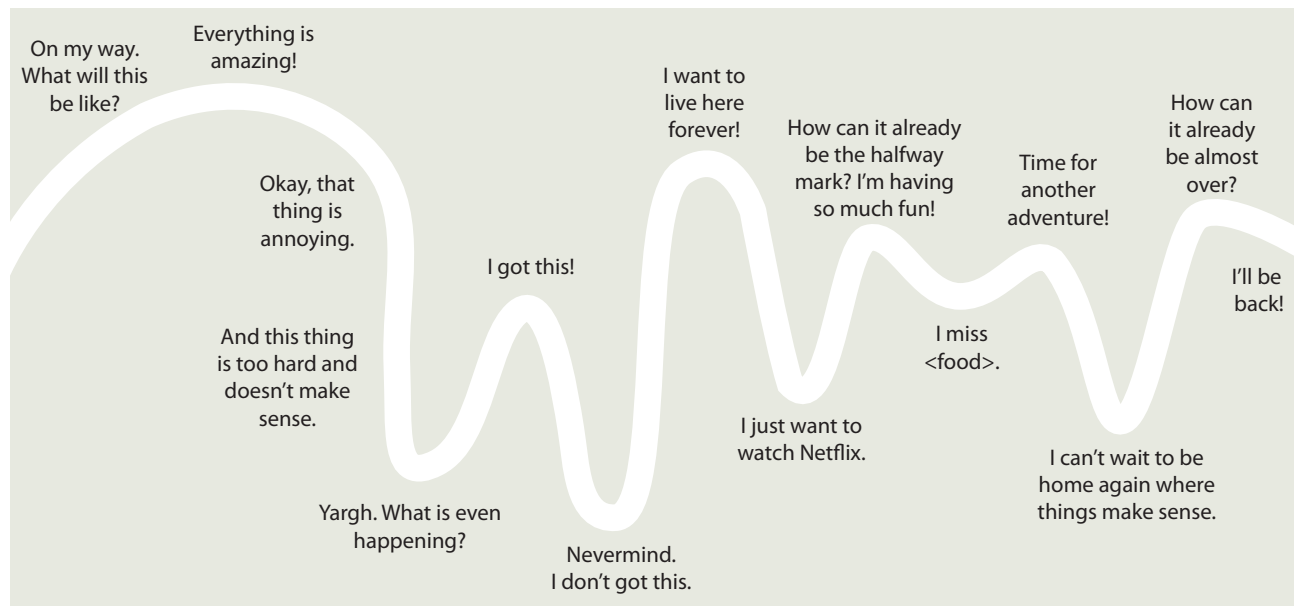




GLOBAL LEARNING WHILE ABROAD GUIDE

Congratulations on all of your hard work paying off in this amazing experience!

Arriving abroad, you will likely find that some days are fantastic and other days you run into frustration. This is a normal part of acclimating to a new place abroad. Know that ups and downs are to be expected and remember that these ups and downs are an important part of your learning process. Your experience may look something like this:



Be patient with yourself as you adapt. Here are a few strategies that may be helpful:

- Get active in your new community. Join clubs. Introduce yourself.
- Keep your sense of humor. There are going to be times where you don't know what to do, or where you make mistakes. That's okay! This is what learning looks like. It'll make for an entertaining story later.
- Sometimes you need quiet. Either too much activity or too much quiet can be draining. Find your balance.
- Keeping in touch with friends and family from home is important, but it can also keep you from adapting to your new location. Limit your social media and internet usage so you can enjoy where you are.

GOALS

To make the most of your experience abroad, it is helpful to set goals for your time away. There are many opportunities that will be open to you, and thinking through your priorities at the start and throughout the program is a good way to remind yourself what you had hoped to get from this time.

The section below is for you to think through goals you are setting for your term abroad. For each goal, decide what you want to achieve, plan activities that will help you to complete the goal, and set a metric for how you will know when you have achieved the goal. The opposite page includes some sample goals that may be inspirational as you brainstorm what is important to you.

WRITE SMART GOALS

Specific: Your goal should be clearly written what it is and how you want to achieve it.

Measurable: Make sure there is a metric attached to the goal so you can tell when you have completed it.

Achievable: The goal should be one you can reasonably accomplish in the time frame you have set.

Relevant: Set only goals that matter to you and are worth your effort to accomplish.

Time-bound: Plan when your goal starts and ends, as well as any dates you need for progress markers.

GOAL 1

COMPLETED

PLAN / SUCCESS MARKERS

GOAL 2

COMPLETED

PLAN / SUCCESS MARKERS

GOAL 3

COMPLETED

PLAN / SUCCESS MARKERS

REVIEW YOUR GOALS

Plan for a time to look over your priorities partway through your time abroad. Consider setting a reminder on your phone or scheduling a date on your calendar. When you do your review, don't feel locked into the goals that you set before you left. Your priorities may change over time, or you may discover possibilities that you hadn't known existed. Look at each goal and decide if you still want to pursue it, if you are on track to meet it, if you need to adjust your plans, and if you want to add or change any goals.

PLANNED WEEK TO REVIEW GOALS:



EXAMPLE GOALS

This page includes some ideas of possible goals. If you think a particular goal would be Relevant for you, consider how you would make the goal fit the other SMART guidelines: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, and Time-bound as outlined on the previous page.

ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL GOALS

- Complete a course requirement for my major/minor.
- Learn more about this specific topic in my major/minor through coursework and/or personal research.
- Explore a new topic through a course and/or specific non-credit learning opportunities.
- Build fluency in a target language by spending at least 30 minutes most days talking with a native speaker.
- Explore how my future field operates differently in this country by learning about at least 5 local businesses.
- Talk to 3 experts in my field to learn more about their experiences.
- Intern for at least 40 hours at a company or organization related to a field I am interested in.

INTERPERSONAL GOALS

- Make 2 local friends whom I spend time with at least once a week.
- Build local ties by joining a local student organization and taking part consistently.
- Learn about my homestay family's history and view on the world by talking with them 3 times/week.
- Give back by volunteering in the local community at least twice.

PERSONAL GOALS

- Gain confidence by organizing and leading 2 different travel excursions for me and my friends.
- Expand my understanding of the world by reading and watching news about local, regional, and national issues and concerns at least twice a week.
- Learn more about my own culture and values by journaling at least once a week on how others' perspectives are different from mine and why.

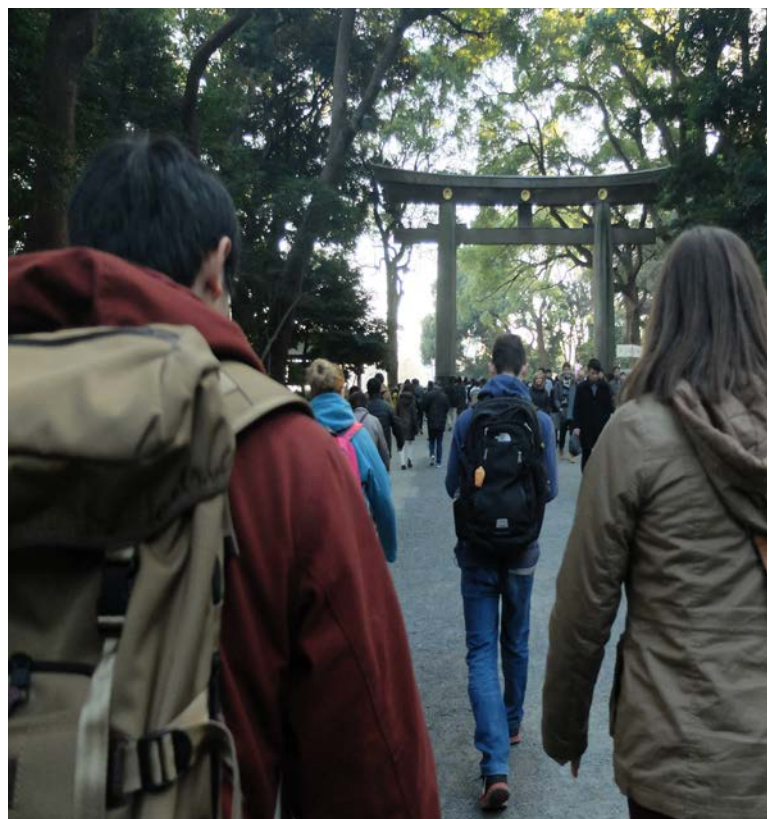
FUN GOALS

- Add to my Instagram by posting 5 photos per week.
- Visit 5 locations (cities, countries) to compare cultures.
- Create an ongoing scrapbook of my experiences, creating at least one page per week throughout my time abroad.

TRAVEL SAFETY REMINDER

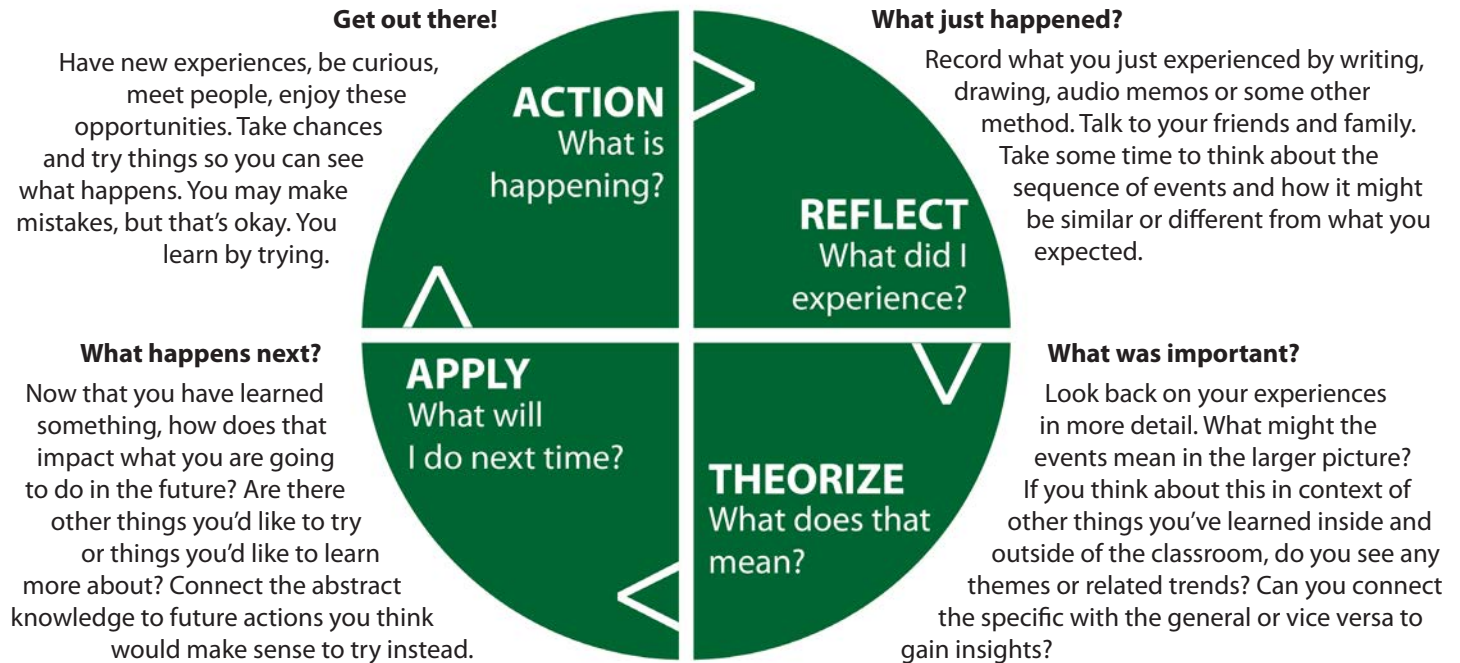
Although studying abroad is often even safer than study at home, it is important to keep safety in mind. Know that most problems that come up abroad are the same ones that you'd find at home or crimes of opportunity, such as pickpocketing.

Stay aware of your surroundings, listen to recommendations from your program leaders, watch out for others in your group, and listen to your instincts. Carry your Emergency Action Card. With these common sense practices, you'll be prepared for a positive time abroad.



LEARNING EVERYWHERE

During your program, learning will take place outside the classroom as much or more than as inside. You'll meet new people, do new things, discover new ways of living and different perspectives on the world. The "Experiential Learning Cycle" is one way to understand how you are learning in your everyday life.



Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.



ALERTTRAVELER APP REMINDER

Don't forget to download the AlertTraveler app for your phone or mobile device. AlertTraveler is available for iOS and Android, and gives you country and city-specific information about safety, health, politics, culture and travel logistics to help you make informed decisions while traveling (this includes your main itinerary and any other trips you might decide to do while abroad); sends you safety and security alerts to let you know immediately of any events that could potentially impact your travel plans or safety; and includes an instant check-in option allowing you to easily report your status back to our office at NDSU in case of an emergency.

To install, log into your study abroad application at nds.edu/studyabroad and follow the instructions in the AlertTraveler box at the bottom of your Applicant Home. A video and guide are also available in your program application.

JOURNALING TO REFLECT

**“WE DO NOT LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE... WE LEARN FROM REFLECTING ON EXPERIENCE.”
-JOHN DEWEY**

While you are abroad, it's important to reflect on your day-to-day experiences. There may be days where you do as many new things as you would do in an entire month or year at home. Journaling is a way to not only have a record of your experiences, but also a way to process and make sense of them.

Reflections are meant to be recorded in the moment, so don't overthink them or feel like you need to write down a perfect essay. In most cases, you will still be processing the events and so you may not know what you think about what happened yet. If something happens that is particularly significant, come back to

it a second time and write more on what happened and what it meant to you. Think about what the event might mean, and how you might act differently in the future (following the experiential learning cycle on the opposite page).

Often after you've been abroad for a while, you'll have an entirely different understanding of events because you've learned so much about the people and the place where you are. That's a great way to see how you're changing through your experiences.

Here are some ideas for topics to get you started:

- Practice being a participant observer. In the moment, write down what you see, hear, smell, etc. in a place, social setting, or event. Don't judge what you see now, just record the events.
- You took a risk. What happened?
- You just didn't know how to solve a problem or wasn't one right answer to a situation. What happened? What did you do?
- You experienced a strong emotion. What happened and what was the emotion? You don't need to fully understand or justify the emotion, only record the experience of it.
- You realized something about yourself and/or how other view you. This might be related to your background, your personality, your education, your culture, or something else. What is it and when did you realize this? You had a sudden insight into something about what you've believed or understood about the world. When did you realize this? Do you still believe the same thing?
- You discovered something abroad is similar to or different from something at home. What is it, and how is it similar or different?
- You learned about a new piece of local popular culture. What is it and why did you find it interesting?
- You met someone new. What happened?
- You learned about a global issue, social problem, or an injustice. What is it and why do you think it matters?
- You had a conflict with someone else abroad. What happened? You don't need to evaluate if anyone was in the right, only record what happened.
- You thought back to a previous entry and realized you think about it differently now. What are your new thoughts?

PICK A FORMAT

There isn't one single best way to reflect. You may prefer a traditional journal, or may find more using another format more interesting or convenient. Here are some possibilities to consider:

- Traditional journal (primarily writing)
- Art journaling or scrapbooking
- Blogging, long-form social media, etc.
- Text documents, audio memos, video captured on a mobile device

The most important thing is to pick a format that you will enjoy using regularly. Daily or several times a week is the best way to capture and process your thoughts and experiences.

WRITE YOUR STORY

Who we are and how we understand our lives is built from our experiences over time. You won't remember every event, so the ones you do remember become key elements in the story of your life.

Your journal is one way you are recording your story, so think about what positive events you want to capture for future recollection. For example, is your time abroad when you are becoming more independent and confident? Reflect on experiences where you are working toward those goals. Later on, even if you don't reread the entries, you'll be more likely to remember your successes. Setbacks can be just as useful to recall as long as you include how you persevered and/or what you learned in the process.

BLOGGING SAFETY TIP

Remember to share details safely: Rather than posting a planned itinerary on social media, post highlights from where you've been. This protects both your unattended belongings at home and yourself as you travel to an unfamiliar location.

ACADEMICS

You can use your classes abroad to fulfill requirements back at NDSU. Here are the three main possibilities.

FREE ELECTIVE CREDITS

For credits to transfer back as free electives, you only need to complete courses abroad and make sure that your transcript is sent to NDSU Study Abroad Services. Any class that is included on your transcript from the accredited institution abroad comes back as a free elective, unless it has been designated in one of these two options.

MAJORS OR MINOR REQUIREMENTS

If you would like to substitute a course abroad for a major or minor requirement at NDSU, academic departments at NDSU can sign off on the Substitute/Waive a Course Form to approve this substitution. To do this:

- Contact your academic advisor with any updates that you have on your class schedule abroad. Request that the department approve the alternative class using the Substitute/Waive a Course Form. The department may require documentation such as a syllabus to verify that the content of the course will be sufficient to replace the course at NDSU. Contact the department to ask what is needed for approval.
- The substitution form can be completed, during, or after your program. If you complete the form any time before your transcript from abroad is received, Study Abroad Services will hold onto the form and submit it together with your transcript from abroad to streamline the processing.
 - As a general rule, submit the Substitute/Waive a Course Form to Study Abroad Services before January 15th for fall programs, June 15th for spring/year programs and August 15 for summer programs.
 - After these dates, you can submit the form directly to Registration and Records.
- Take the course abroad as planned and make any arrangements needed for your transcript from abroad to be sent to Study Abroad Services at the conclusion of the program.
- No further action is usually needed on your part. Upon receipt of the transcript from the institution abroad, Study Abroad Services will send the transcript together with any Substitute/Waive a Course Forms to the Office of Registration and Records. Registration and Records will evaluate the transcript to determine the number of credits transferred and note any course substitutions that have been approved by the appropriate departments as part of the transfer process.

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Your study abroad experience itself can fulfill the general education requirements for Cultural Diversity and/or Global Perspectives, or you can use courses you take abroad to fulfill other requirements. To do this, after NDSU has received your transcript from your program abroad, complete the Appeal General Education Requirements form found on the NDSU OneStop website. The deadline for a response from the committee during a given semester is November 15 for fall and April 15 for spring. Several options apply:

- **3 credits of UNIV 492**, when completed successfully and transferred back to NDSU, will qualify for either Cultural Diversity or Global Perspectives credit. Check the box for "Study Abroad Students—Cultural Diversity or Global Perspectives" and select which of the two requirements you would like fulfilled.
- **6+ credits of UNIV 492**, when completed successfully and transferred back to NDSU, will qualify for both Cultural Diversity and Global Perspectives credit. Check the box for "Study Abroad Students—Cultural Diversity or Global Perspectives".
- **For other study abroad courses and/or general education requirements**, you must explain concisely how the proposed course will fit into the general education category description from the Undergraduate Bulletin. Check the box "Substitution of a course into a general education category" and complete the requirements listed on the form. The intention of the appeal process is for you as the student to explain how the course you took fulfills the learning outcomes for the General Education area you wish to substitute in your own words.



TRANSCRIPTS

Before you leave your program, make sure that you complete all of your required coursework, that you do not have any outstanding fees such as library fees, and that your transcript is ready to be sent to the correct location. Transcripts should be sent to Study Abroad Services using the addresses below. Mailing a transcript directly to Registration and Records will delay processing.

ISEP PROGRAMS

Follow any instructions from your school for closing out your semester. Your transcript will be sent to the ISEP central office for forwarding to NDSU Study Abroad Services.

OTHER PROGRAMS

Verify with your program administration that they have the correct address to send your transcript. There are two different addresses, depending on the type of mail used.

- **When sending by express mail:**

International Student and Study Abroad Services
Dominique Speer
1401 Administration Ave MU 116
Fargo, ND 58102

- **When sending by regular mail:**

International Student and Study Abroad Services
Dominique Speer
PO Box 6050, Dept 2862
Fargo, ND 58108



FINANCIAL AID WARNING

At the beginning of the semester following your study abroad experience, you will likely receive an email from the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships indicating that you are on "Financial Aid Warning". This is because of the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy requiring that you complete at least 66.67% of the courses that you registered for during the previous term. Until your transcript from abroad is received and processed it appears that you did not complete credits during that term. It is important to know this is a notice rather than a hold. It's only after two consecutive semesters of not meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress that the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships starts to hold the financial aid/loans for students.

- **If you were not on Financial Aid Warning previous to your study abroad experience:** You do not need to do anything. Your aid will come in as it normally does. Once the transcript is received and processed, the warning will be removed retroactively.
- **If you were already on Financial Aid Warning previous to your study abroad experience:** You can follow the instructions on how to appeal. You only do this if you were already on Financial Aid Warning; if you haven't received this warning before, you do not need to complete this appeal. Yearlong students may need to complete an appeal if the transcript from abroad is not scheduled until late summer or early fall in order to make sure there are no problems with aid for fall semester.



REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

For many long-term travelers, reverse culture shock when they return home is much more pronounced than the initial culture shock. Although you may expect to be surprised by differences abroad, you will likely expect your return to be one of stepping back into a familiar setting. As a result of your experiences while you were away, you may find that your perspective on aspects of American culture have changed, people you know have had significant events that you missed out on, and you are missing aspects of the place where you studied abroad. Some tips for adjusting:

- Be patient with yourself. The transition back is just as important as your initial experiences when you left.
- Reach out to friends and family whom you may not have seen in a while. Share a few highlights from your travels, and listen to what they have been up to as well.
- Look back at your time abroad by organizing your photos, making a scrapbook, or contacting those you met.
- Update your resume with the skills you learned abroad.
- Get involved on campus with the Bison Abroad student group or other organization. Or apply to be a Peer Mentor and pay it forward for future students.
- Look ahead to your next adventure through personal travel, studying abroad again, pursuing graduate studies or working abroad. More information is available at [Study Abroad Services > Returning to NDSU > Your International Future](#).

TIMELINE

WHILE ABROAD During Program

- Finalize course schedule, and contact academic department at NDSU for updated approvals as needed
- Register for classes for next term at NDSU in Campus Connection
- Review your goals at the program midpoint and update/adjust
- Before leaving, verify that all needed work has been submitted and that abroad coordinator has address for sending transcript
- Collect contact information for keeping in touch with people abroad
- Obtain any needed approvals for courses

RETURNING 1-3 months after

- Obtain any needed post-approvals for courses
- Verify transcript received
- Update resume to include skills learned abroad