BEYOND ABROAD
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ASIA EXCHANGE
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GUIDE

STUDENT CHECKLIST

Everything you need to know about studying abroad and preparing for it

YOUR WAY ABROAD

asiaexchange.org

beyondabroad.org

BEFORE APPLYING

- Familiarize yourself with your target country and university.
  - Host universities and programs
  - Overview of available study subjects
- Read about former students' experiences – Student Experiences.
- Ask your university if they will accept your semester abroad – See "what is a Free Mover?" in our FAQ.
- Can the courses be included in your degree? Make a study plan and present it to your home university. Use the course descriptions available on our website and the information on transferring foreign study credits for reference.
- What other documents are required by your home university?

- Online application – See how to apply.

BEFORE DEPARTURE

- Book your flights about 2 months before the semester starts. We recommend you arrive at the destination 1 week before the semester starts so that you have enough time for the visa process in your home country.
- Join our destination-specific Facebook group. The link will be sent to you by email after the application period has ended.
- Look for accommodation and flatmates. Some students choose to stay at a hotel or a hostel for the first week and look for long-term accommodation after they have arrived at the destination.
- Get a valid passport for your time abroad.
- Get insurance – you must present proof of your travel insurance at the start of the semester! See our recommended travel insurance providers.
- If you plan to drive a motor vehicle to your destination, find out if an international driver's license is needed.
- Familiarize yourself with the visa requirements.
- Make sure you have enough medicine with you to last for the duration of your trip or find out if the medicine in question is available at your destination if you require regular medication.
- Get vaccinations.
- Apply for scholarships and special funding.
- Get your study plan (Learning Agreement) approved by your home university.
- Get a credit card (for German students, DKB-Cash is a great choice). Note: we recommend using online banking and having a Visa Electron card, which is one of the most affordable ways of withdrawing money from your bank account while abroad. You might also want to consider granting a friend or a relative power of attorney, so they can take care of your finances back home if needed.
- Submit a notice of migration to local authorities and postal service and redirecting your mail.
- Please register with your home country's embassy so that they know you are abroad.
- Try to learn about the destination as much as possible beforehand.
- Apply for a visa.

DURING YOUR STUDY ABROAD SEMESTER

BE ACTIVE

The aim of the study abroad semester in Asia is to give you an unforgettable life experience. The most important thing is to be enthusiastic and active so that you will have a chance to see and experience as much as possible. Get to know people, learn at least the basics of the language and take your studies seriously. A few months is not a very long time to take in and learn so many new things, so every day is valuable. Experiencing a culture shock is a normal part of staying abroad for any longer period of time, especially if the destination's culture is very different from your own. Please look at this useful infographic, which summarizes what a culture shock is and gives tips for overcoming it.

EXPERIENCE A NEW CULTURE

It might seem difficult to make friends outside the circle of exchange students, but you won't gain a genuine insight into the country you are studying in unless you go beyond your comfort zone. The easiest way to meet new people is by taking up a hobby. Keep your eyes and ears open and something good will come your way. Making an effort from the beginning pays off. Take an active part in everything you do, from in-class participation to finding accommodation.

GET INVOLVED

Studies completed abroad, especially those completed in Asia, are a significant asset for students when competing for jobs after graduating. You should make the most of your studies in preparation for the future and strengthen your language skills during your studies. Try finding a local student who can help you learn the language and teach you about the local customs. If you understand why things are done in a certain way, it will be easier not to feel frustrated when you face cultural differences and if things seem difficult to take care of. Do as the Romans do! University staff and local students at your study abroad location are very hospitable and appreciate international students. Please show your appreciation for them and for the teaching you receive. Remember that you are a representative of...

your home country and carry out this task with pride. If you have overwhelming difficulties in making practical arrangements (e.g., due to the language barrier) at the start of your exchange program, contact the host university's exchange coordinator, Asia Exchange, or the exchange coordinator at your home university.

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

In addition to e-mails, the most affordable ways of keeping in touch with friends and family back home are buying a local SIM card and using Skype. Calling from computer to computer with Skype is free and it's also possible to call mobile phones and landlines at affordable prices. All you need is a headset with a microphone.

GET A NEW HOBBY

Your destination offers many free-time activities for culture, sports and entertainment. You can find information about what to do and where to go from Asia Exchange and online and at your destination from the university, fellow students, locals and tourist guides. Remember that you can always ask for advice and Asians are known to be very helpful.

TAKE INFO MATERIAL WITH YOU

Take course catalogs and brochures with you to your home institution. Not only will they help your institution make decisions about transferring credits, but other students might also be interested in learning about the university and possibly going there on exchange. Once you don't need the brochures anymore, you can leave them at your home institution's international office for other students to read.

AFTER YOUR STUDY ABROAD

- Fill out our Feedback Form
- Make sure you get your Transcript of Records.
- Write an exchange report for your home institution and us
- Share your experiences with fellow students and your home institution
- Recommend our study abroad programs to other students

You will most likely travel back to Asia someday. Nothing is nicer and more heart-warming than returning to visit familiar surroundings and faces. The friendships you form during your exchange are likely to last a lifetime.