Study Abroad
Pre-departure Orientation

Spring 2012
Welcome!

Lauren Gannon, Director of International Programs
Topics

- Housing
- Academics
- Finances
- Health & Safety
- Culture Shock

- What to Pack
- Keeping in Touch
- Photo Contest
- Breakout Sessions
Forms

Please submit the following forms to the Office of International Programs as soon as possible. All forms are available on MyMack:

- Medical form
- “International Study Agreement” form
- Course approvals
I. Housing at Merrimack for Spring 2012

- OIP will notify the Office of Residence Life that you will be abroad.
- Please pay the $500 housing deposit by February 24, 2012. You will be able to select your housing online.

Student apartments in Galway, Ireland
Housing Abroad

- Send your housing address and phone number to Carol and your parents as soon as possible; if you change housing, please inform us.
- Inquire about whether or not your linens are included.
- Be PATIENT and FLEXIBLE.
- Be conscious of the need to “get used” to new people, setting, customs, schedules, etc.
- Keep in mind that you may or may not have internet access in your home, apartment, or residence hall.
- If you have any concerns or difficulties with your housing while abroad, please contact your local Resident Director or International Office FIRST.
II. Academics

- Pre-approval is required for ALL courses to be taken abroad.
- Keep a copy of the approved courses with you when you travel.
- For any changes in your courses, please contact Carol Leibovitz:
  - Carol.Leibovitz@merrimack.edu or 978-837-5210
- Inform Carol of your final course list within the first 2 weeks of your semester abroad.
Contact your Academic Advisor and discuss your course selections for Fall 2012

Take your Academic Advisor’s contact information with you
Credit Transfer

- An official transcript should be sent to OIP at Merrimack at the end of your program.
- You must earn the equivalent of a “C” or better for transfer credit to be granted.
- Transfer credits appear as a “T” on your transcripts; they count as credit but are not factored into your GPA.
- Taking courses abroad and the 4X4 curriculum
Registering for Spring semester courses

- The Registrar’s Office will notify you about the dates/times of registration.

- If you need clearance for a particular course, please arrange that with the instructor and/or department.

- If you have difficulties logging on to MyMack while abroad, please contact Carol immediately.

- PLEASE REMEMBER: All official Merrimack information will be sent to your Merrimack e-mail address ONLY.
# Academic Differences: US and Abroad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Merrimack College/United States</th>
<th>International Universities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small-medium class sizes</td>
<td>May be a large lecture or tutorial-style class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continuous assessment (e.g. papers, presentations, group projects, quizzes, exams)</td>
<td>May only have 1-2 forms of assessment (e.g. a midterm and final exam)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion-based; professors generally ask for students’ opinions</td>
<td>Professor may just lecture and not ask for students’ opinions</td>
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III. Finances

- You will receive a bill from Merrimack for $750 for study abroad insurance and fees.
- Contact your bank and credit card company to inform them you will be abroad.
- Make photocopies of your debit and credit cards.
- Some banks distribute foreign currency. It is a good idea to have a small amount of the foreign currency you will need before going abroad - $150 equivalent of cash in your host country’s currency
- Inquire about the best form of banking abroad.
Financial Tips Abroad

- ATM use
- Credit cards
- Have a sense of your budget
- Set money aside at the beginning of the semester if you are planning a big/more expensive trip
- Working abroad
- ISIC (International Student Identity Card)
  - www.statravel.com
Paying for Your Program Abroad

Please contact the following people if you have any questions:

- David Martinez, Bursar’s Office: martinezd@merrimack.edu for questions about bills you received from Merrimack.
- Linda Cimmino, Financial Aid Office: linda.cimmino@merrimack.edu for questions about Financial Aid and student loans.

If you have any questions about bills you have received from your study abroad provider or university abroad, please contact them directly.
IV. Health & Safety

- Common Sense: Be aware of your surroundings!
- Good Communication
  - with on-campus directors and friends abroad
  - with friends and family at home
- Be in the know! Stay informed with up-to-date information about your host country and travel locations.
Health & Safety Resources

- State Department tips for travelers:
  - [http://travel.state.gov/](http://travel.state.gov/)
- Consular Information Sheets and Travel Warnings
  - [http://travel.state.gov/travel/warnings.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/warnings.html)
- Health Information
- Your on-site coordinator should be your 1st contact in the event of an emergency.
Insurance

- Merrimack utilizes HTH Insurance. Please visit [www.merrimack.edu/studyabroad](http://www.merrimack.edu/studyabroad) for specific program details.
V. Passports and Visas

- Make sure your passport is valid at least 6 months AFTER your program’s end date.
- It is generally recommended that you do not carry your original passport with you on a day-to-day basis when you are abroad. You should keep a photocopy with you at all times.
- You will need a passport when traveling internationally.
Visas

- What is a visa? Why may I need a visa?
- Consult with your study abroad provider to determine if you will need a student visa to study abroad.
- Begin the visa application process as soon as possible.
- Usually you must apply for a visa at a Consulate.
VI. What to Pack

- Pack lightly!
- If you can’t carry everything you’re taking up and down a flight of stairs by yourself, you’re taking too much.
- Remember: The less you pack, the more you can bring back!
Things to Remember when Packing:

- Airline baggage limits
- Travel documents (in your CARRY-ON bag)
  - passport & visa
  - financial documents
  - airline tickets (including the return portion)
  - the acceptance letter from your overseas program
  - address of the university or housing location
- Some luggage essentials (in your CARRY-ON bag)
  - prescription medication
  - eyeglasses
  - toiletries and change of clothes (in case your luggage is delayed)
Packing Considerations

Medication
- Take a complete supply of any prescription medication as well as a note from your doctor giving the generic name of the drug that is prescribed with you. Keep all medication in its original-labeled container in case Customs officials have any questions. Many countries will not allow your family to ship medications, vitamins and contacts so please plan accordingly.

Safety
- Safety begins with packing. Plan to dress conservatively. Short skirts and tank tops may be comfortable, but they may also encourage unwanted attention. Also, avoid the appearance of affluence – it will keep you from being a target to thieves and pickpockets.

Valuables
- Do not take anything you aren’t willing to lose.
Electrical Appliances
- Bring only dual voltage appliances. You’ll also need a plug adapter. It’s often easier to buy smaller appliances overseas.

Laptops with Camera (Skype)
- All students are allowed to take their laptops overseas; however, please consider if it is really necessary for you.
VII. Culture Shock

What to expect…
Stereotypes of Americans

- Optimistic
- Outgoing, friendly
- Informal
- Loud, rude, boastful, immature
- Hardworking
- Aggressive
- Judgemental
- Superficial
- Extravagant, wasteful
Confronting Stereotypes

- Resist becoming angry or defensive
- Avoid reinforcing negative stereotypes
- Persist in being yourself
- Be aware of U.S. issues and become familiar with the history, politics, and culture of where you will study abroad
Stages of Culture Shock

1. Initial Euphoria

2. Irritation and Hostility

3. Gradual Adjustment

4. Adaptation

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFbPCj_caiY&feature=PlayList&p=A7EC8F30525FCDDF&playnext=1&index=29
Symptoms of Culture Shock

- Homesickness
- Boredom
- Withdrawal (or spending time only with Americans)
- Excessive sleeping
- Compulsive eating or not eating enough
- Compulsive drinking
- Irritability
- Exaggerated cleanliness
Getting Over It!

- Culture Shock is NORMAL!
- Make connections
- Explore your host country
- Look for triggers & patterns
- Find the positive
- Maintain a sense of humor
- Make new friends – both Americans and host nationals
VIII. Keeping in Touch

- Check emails in your Merrimack email account.
- Inquire about purchasing a cell phone abroad.
- Stay in touch with OIP (especially if there are any changes in your academics or housing).
- Stay in touch with your family!
  - Sykpe
  - GoAbroad.net
IX. Photo Contest

Participate in Merrimack’s semi-annual photo contest!

2008 Winner
Jay Yeadon, Italy

2009 Winner
Greg Allen
Returning to Merrimack

INT 1000: Study Abroad Re-entry course

International Student Orientation
X. Breakout Sessions
Have a Great Semester Abroad!

Be safe,
be curious,
be great ambassadors,
and HAVE FUN!!!