Important Names & Addresses

University of Minnesota Learning Abroad Center
230 Heller Hall
271 19th Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55455-0430
Phone: 612.626.9000
Fax: 612.626.8009
Toll Free: 888.700.UOFM
Email: UMabroad@umn.edu
Website: UMabroad.umn.edu

Contact Prior to Departure
Erica Qualheim, Enrollment Specialist
Phone: 612.301.6807
Email: qual0080@umn.edu

Jen W. Johnson, Associate Program Director
Phone: 612.624.1537
Email: wahlq051@umn.edu

Heidi Soneson, Program Director
Phone: 612.625.2571
Email: sones001@umn.edu

Emergencies
In case of emergency, you or your friends and family members should contact the Learning Abroad Center at 612.626.9000 at any time. If it is after business hours, there will be a recording giving you a number to call. The Learning Abroad Center has someone on call to deal with emergencies and can contact the on-site administrators if needed. Once overseas, you should contact your in-country staff.

In India
Leo F. Saldanha and Bhargavi S. Rao
MSID
c/o Environments Support Group
(Environmental, Social Justice and Governance Initiatives)
1572, 36th Cross,
(Âpp Ashwini Apartments and Evolving Systems)
100 Feet Ring Road,
Banasankari II Stage,
Bangalore 560070
INDIA

MSID program emergency cell phone: 91-9663753987
Mail can be sent to you in your name at the address above.

Note: Please direct all pre-departure questions to the Learning Abroad Center, not to the on-site staff.

Telephone Codes
011 is the international access code from the US. From other countries, the code will be different.
91 is India's country code used for dialing from outside India.
80 is the Bangalore city code if you are calling from the US. If you are calling from elsewhere within India, dial 080.

Time Differences
Bangalore is 11.5 hours ahead of Minnesota during the winter and 10.5 hours during months when the United States is on daylight saving time.

Program Health & Safety
Program health and safety information is available at http://global.umn.edu/gosafe/index.html.
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Introduction

Purpose of This Handbook

Before you leave the country, make sure that you have read and understood the information in your Confirmation Checklist, the Health & Safety Online Orientation (available in your confirmation checklist), and the information outlined in this handbook. These materials will guide you on a safe and successful learning abroad experience.

Valuable resources for your friends and family members can be found at UMabroad.umn.edu/parents. It discusses topics such as health and safety, program prices, logistics, and travel.

Overview of the Program

The information below can help ensure that your learning goals match MSID’s program philosophy. Consider these statements and reflect on your own goals for the program.

Introduction to MSID

Mission

Minnesota Studies in International Development (MSID) is devoted to the preparation of culturally sensitive individuals who are committed to the concepts of justice and sustainable development for all societies in our interdependent world. MSID seeks to engage students, faculty, and staff, as well as the general community, in dialogue and reciprocal learning with people from Africa, Asia, and Latin America concerning local and global problems, with a particular emphasis on development issues. Through grassroots internships and research experiences in development projects, MSID participants gain firsthand experience with the conditions, needs, and strengths of the countries involved with the program.

Philosophy

Founded in 1981, MSID is an interdisciplinary, academically, and personally challenging study abroad program, combining classroom learning with practical experience. At its core is a grassroots internship or research project with an agency striving to contribute to development or social justice. Participants often report this placement to be one of the most life-changing experiences they have had.

Learning Outcomes

• Foster an understanding of the global context through classroom and experiential learning
• Cultivate awareness and appreciation for development issues through engagement with diverse communities
• Translate insights gained into thoughtful and respectful long-term perspectives on concepts of social justice and sustainable development
• Strengthen communication skills through acquisition of local languages and cultural awareness
• Gain cross-cultural competencies through extended engagement at a local grassroots organization

Cultural Experience

MSID seeks to maximize cultural immersion through:

• Internships
• Research projects
• Housing with host families, usually one family during the classroom phase and a second during the internship phase (Some students with urban internships may have the same family throughout their in-country MSID experience.)
• Written assignments help students bring their experiences back into the classroom and to relate them to course themes and concepts.

MSID focuses on issues of development.

MSID participants should be keenly interested in learning about these themes. This is not to say that you must have lots of relevant background—MSID does not require students to have studied development or engaged in service learning—but the content of the curriculum should mesh with your learning goals. Most participants also want to “experience Kenya,” “learn about Indian culture,” or “improve my French in Senegal.” You will indeed learn a great deal about your host culture and language.

MSID will give you many questions but few answers.

Poverty and complex social issues are challenging realities to tackle. None of the world’s development models seem to be working well—at least if our definition of development incorporates sustainability and equity. You will be looking at development and social issues as they present themselves in the “real world” and not just in textbooks.

MSID emphasizes grassroots.

MSID internships will immerse you in the everyday realities of the country where you are studying. Your experiences will give you insights into the conditions of life for the great majority of the population that is poor. This means that MSID seeks to arrange placements in rural areas or relatively poor urban neighborhoods and, as a result, your living and working conditions may be rather basic.

MSID is experiential and academic, flexible and highly structured.

MSID requires a balanced learning style and is for students who want to learn from field experience, but it also involves reading, writing, schedules, and deadlines. It requires a strong commitment to your host family, your agency, your community, and your faculty.

MSID calls for cultural sensitivity.

Respect for other cultures is a must in any study abroad program and especially in an immersion program like MSID.
You will live with a local family, work in a local agency, receive instruction from local faculty, and depend on support from local administrative staff. You will need to adapt to the host culture rather than expect it to adjust to you.

**MSID presents special challenges to women.**

For some students, the feelings engendered by being female in what may seem an anti-feminist society have proved painful and distracting. While striving to remain culturally sensitive, women have experienced incidents of harassment, seeming over protectiveness by host families (with respect to hours kept, places frequented, friends chosen), and a general feeling of being watched and even judged in public. Roles are defined by gender in many cultures, and you may elicit negative responses if you do not follow the prescribed role; moreover, foreign females may sometimes experience harassment even if they do follow the rules. When in country, be prepared to find your values and understanding of the world challenged daily.

**MSID will change you.**

Students repeatedly return from this program talking about how it has transformed their lives. You will learn astonishing things about yourself, acquire invaluable skills, and return to the US asking searching questions about your own society and your own values.

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**Preparation & Planning**

**Documents**

**Passport**

A valid passport is required to enter India. If you don’t have a passport, you should apply for one right away. Passports can take 4–6 weeks to process, so it’s important to begin this process early. More information is available at: [UMabroad.umn.edu/students/travel/passports](http://UMabroad.umn.edu/students/travel/passports).

**Embassy Contact Information**

Always keep your passport in a safe place. If your passport is lost or stolen, contact the local police, the American Consulate or Embassy, and the on-site staff. To identify the consulate or embassy nearest you, consult [http://usembassy.gov](http://usembassy.gov).

**Visa/Immigration Documents**

**Visas through Perry International**

MSID India participants must use Perry International, based in Chicago, to process their student visa. Perry’s processing fee is included in the MSID program fee; you need to submit payment only for the actual visa. Since you need special documents from our office, which we send to Perry International, you must use Perry’s services for your visa. You must submit your passport to Perry International in order to receive the student visa for India. Always send your passport via express mail.

Visa information is located on the University of Minnesota Learning Abroad Center’s (LAC’s) website. Additional information can be found on Perry International's website: [http://perryvisa.com](http://perryvisa.com).

From Perry International’s website:

- click on “Visas”
- select “India”
- select “MSID” as your account
- print the student visa packet

Read the instructions carefully and return all requested forms and payment directly to Perry International. If you travel abroad on the wrong visa, you will be responsible for returning immediately to the US to correct your visa.

Applying for a visa can be a lengthy process. Do not delay in visiting Perry’s website to inform yourself about the visa process and begin the paperwork for your country.

If you are planning to arrive early or travel after the program, inquire with Perry International regarding any visa restrictions.

**Note:** India student visas are for a maximum of 6 months for a semester program and 12 months of the academic year (program period plus personal travel) and will need to be registered with the authorities in Bangalore. Validation begins as soon as the visa is issued. Students of Indian origin may wish to consider a “country of origin” card rather than apply for a visa but will still need to register with local authorities if staying longer than 180 days. Students of Pakistani origin must allow at least six months for visa processing, and approval is not guaranteed. Contact Perry International for more information.

**In-Country Process**

Once in country, your local MSID staff will give you advice about keeping your passport and visa secure. In some countries, you can carry a photocopy of the relevant pages and keep the documents themselves locked up. When you do need to carry your passport, always keep it in a money belt.

Your passport and visa are valuable documents. Do not lose them. You cannot leave India without them. It is always wise to have a copy of your passport and visa in a separate location and one copy at home in case your passport is lost or stolen. The process of replacing a passport is much easier if you have a copy of it. If your passport is lost or stolen, you should notify your local MSID staff, the local police, and the US Consulate.
Non-US Passport Holders
Students who are not traveling under a US passport may have to follow different visa procedures in order to enter India. Contact Perry International for further assistance.

Power of Attorney
We encourage you to consider designating someone as your Power of Attorney while you are abroad. Your Power of Attorney can act as your legal representative in a number of situations, including banking and tax issues. For more information, review the information at UMabroad.umn.edu/students/policies/finances/powerofattorney.

Safekeeping Important Documents
Copy all of your important documents and store the copies separately from the originals. Leave an additional copy with someone in the US and keep an electronic copy in a secure location.

Coordinated Flight
Purpose & Benefits of Village Travel
The LAC arranges an optional coordinated flight in consultation with Village Travel, a local travel agency. This flight confirms the official arrival date and time. The program staff will meet this flight at the airport. Village Travel will contact you directly when this information is available. Information, booking, and payment are handled directly by Village Travel. Consult Village Travel’s website for information on the coordinated flight: http://villageinc.com.

The coordinated flight cost is designed to be competitive, but priority is placed on services such as routing, ticketing flexibility, and the ability to make group reservations and reserve specific travel dates. Travel can be arranged from any location in the US or internationally and every attempt will be made to connect with the coordinated flight. While you are not required to choose this group flight, it is designed to offer travel in the comfort of other participants in the program.

If you make your own flight arrangements, select a round-trip flight that has a flexible return date, since most students change their return date. Flying standby is not allowed.

If you are not taking the coordinated flight, you are required to provide the LAC with a copy of your flight and train (if applicable) information by the date requested. If you elect not to take the coordinated flight, you must arrive within six hours prior to the coordinated flight. Always bring a copy of you itinerary and your electronic ticket number (NOT your confirmation number) with you. Some airlines and ticketing agents outside of the US will require you to show this at the airport check-in.

Arriving Early
Consult the coordinated flight section in this handbook for general information regarding arrival. Students cannot arrive in India prior to the official arrival date. MSID participants going to India are required to arrive on the official arrival date due to visa restrictions. For this reason, the LAC strongly recommends that students arrive on the coordinated flight. The program must register students with the Indian police upon arrival, and the program cannot undertake this process prior to the arrival date.

Staying after the Program
If you intend to stay in India after the program ends, you are responsible for your own housing and your transportation to the airport when you depart. It is not acceptable to remain in your homestay after the program, unless the on-site staff authorizes it. In all cases, you must pay for any lodging after the program ends. For students departing on the official coordinated flight on the program end date, the on-site staff will arrange transportation to the airport for you.

Round-Trip Airline Tickets
Round-trip tickets are the best option, since many countries require travelers to purchase a round-trip ticket as part of the visa process. In addition, one-way tickets can be expensive, and it is extremely difficult to find a return flight to the US.

Packing
Packing is highly individual, and no single list will work for everyone. A packing list is provided at the end of this guide. The following considerations can help you pack wisely.

Packing Principles
Think about laundry. Lighter colors help you stay cool, but darker colors show dirt less; you might wish to strike a happy medium if you expect to be in hot areas. Stress lightweight fabrics that can be easily handwashed, can hold up to repeated washing, and do not need ironing.

Plan to be presentable. People dress nicely every day in India, especially in the cities. Pack clothing that is relatively new, both to be sure it lasts through your time overseas and because you will feel uncomfortably out of place if you wear ripped, baggy, or faded clothes.

Be conservative. Some clothing that is common on a US campus could attract unwanted attention in India. If you wish to pack a running outfit, choose athletic pants or shorts that extend to the knee. Do not plan on using shorts except when you go to the beach. If you use tank tops, choose modest ones. Women in rural areas tend to wear skirts for comfort.
Try to anticipate your internship, research project, and other activities. For example, if you think you will work partly in an office setting, you will dress more formally than if you want to work in a village. If you expect to work outdoors a lot, include boots and rugged clothing.

Choose your luggage wisely. Most students prefer backpacks to suitcases. Buy a high-quality backpack/daypack. Can your smaller backpack/suitcase nest inside a larger one? Will your carry-on double for weekend travel?

Anticipate possible delays (or even losses) in checked baggage when packing your carry-on. Pack in your carry-on anything that you would need during your first two or three days in country, including prescription drugs, as well as small items that are fragile, irreplaceable, or of significant monetary value. Do not take scissors, knives, etc., in your carry-on.

Remember you can buy things in country. You can purchase clothing and other items in country, although you will not have time to devote to shopping for new items, especially when you are at your internship site. If you have a strong brand preference, ask a returnee whether your brand is available in your country. Very tall students might find it hard to purchase clothes of the right size.

You will find many clothing items to be cheaper in India than in the US. However, other products, such as batteries, personal hygiene, feminine products, etc. are often more expensive in India and not always readily available.

Don’t take the kitchen sink. The most consistent feedback from returned students is “I packed too much!” Be selective. No one will need all the things on the packing checklist in the Appendix. Decide what, and how much, is really essential to you. Try to get by with one large backpack and a carry-on. Many savvy travelers recommend that you pack once, try walking around the block with all your stuff, and then begin eliminating things until you can do it comfortably.

A Note on Electricity
In India the supply of electricity tends to be erratic, with frequent blackouts and occasional power surges. You will need a good surge protector if you are taking a laptop computer or any other sensitive items, and if you are using a computer you should save documents frequently.

Electricity is very expensive, so host families may want you to limit your use of electronic appliances in the home.

Important Policies
Policies of the University of Minnesota and the Learning Abroad Center exist primarily for the protection and safety of LAC study abroad participants. The LAC expects all participants to read, understand, and adhere to the University of Minnesota and LAC policies, guidelines, and contractual documents. These include academic policies, finance and cancellation policies, health and safety policies, and student rights and responsibilities: UMabroad.umn.edu/students/policies.

FERPA
Under Federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, and University policy, college students are considered responsible adults and are allowed to determine who will receive information about them. As a result, the LAC does not share academic, personal, or financial information with a third party (including parents, spouse, guardians, etc.) without the student’s written permission. As part of their application, all students designate two emergency contacts who will receive information only in the case of an emergency.

Official Communications
Your UofM email address is the official means of communication. LAC messages will be sent to your UofM email address.

Health & Safety

Health

Health Information Form
The purpose of the form is to help the University of Minnesota Learning Abroad Center (LAC) to assist you in preparing for your time abroad. It is critical to disclose fully any health conditions or accommodation needs you may have on the LAC’s Health Information Form. If your condition changes after completing this form or you realize you forgot to fully disclose anything, contact the LAC and provide the updated information as soon as possible.
Timely disclosure allows the LAC to support your overseas experience effectively. The information provided will remain confidential and will be shared with program staff, faculty, or appropriate professionals only as pertinent to your own well-being.

For more information, visit: UMabroad.umn.edu/students/healthsafety/healthinfo.

**Mandatory Health & Safety Online Orientation**

The mandatory Learning Abroad Center Health & Safety Online Orientation contains important information on health precautions, taking prescriptions overseas, and the mandatory insurance policy in which you will be enrolled as a program participant. Refer to your online acceptance checklist for the link to this orientation information and contact the LAC with questions.

**Health Insurance**

**US Health Insurance**

All students enrolled at the University of Minnesota are required to have US health insurance. This includes students registered for education abroad.

The travel, health, and security insurance coverage through CISI is specifically exempt from the requirements of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and was not intended to and does not satisfy a person’s obligation to secure minimum essential coverage beginning in 2014 under the ACA. The University encourages travelers to consult with their legal counsel or tax adviser for information on their obligations under the ACA.

For more details and specific process information for students with University of Minnesota Student Health Insurance through the Student Health Benefits Office, visit the LAC’s US insurance webpage: UMabroad.umn.edu/students/healthsafety/intlhealthinsurance/ushealthinsurancerequirement.

**CISI Insurance**

In addition to your US health insurance, the University of Minnesota has contracted with Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI) to provide comprehensive international travel, health, and security insurance. This coverage is mandatory for all students and included in the program fee. You are covered by CISI only for the dates of the program and a few days to allow for travel to and from the US. If you plan to travel before or after your program, you should extend your CISI coverage or purchase your own insurance.

CISI does not include any preventive care, and individuals are advised to consult their medical providers for any checkups or preventive care prior to departure. Your CISI card and insurance policy will be emailed directly to you. Carry the card with you at all times. If you have any questions or need additional information about CISI, visit the LAC’s insurance webpage: UMabroad.umn.edu/students/healthsafety/intlhealthinsurance.

**Medication Overseas**

**Prescriptions**

Bring all necessary medication (including such items as birth control), for the entire term of your program, with you to your study abroad site. It is often illegal to ship medication overseas, and even where shipping medication is allowed it is not reliable and could result in high import taxes.

Consult with your LAC program contact if you have not already discussed your medical needs, including prescription and non-prescription medications. Some medications, including those that are commonly available over the counter in the US, are controlled or banned substances abroad. The LAC, in consultation with CISI, will assist you in determining if you can travel with your medications or if alternative solutions must be explored.

**Vaccinations, Immunizations, & Travel Medicine**

The LAC recommends that all students visit a travel clinic before their program abroad. Make an appointment as soon as possible so that you can get a scheduled appointment in time to complete any required and recommended immunization series. Many travel clinics often book far in advance (especially around the holidays), and some immunizations need to be started months in advance of your departure. For more information, visit: UMabroad.umn.edu/students/healthsafety/prepplanning.

Review the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([http://cdc.gov/travel](http://cdc.gov/travel)) and US Department of State ([http://travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov)) websites for general vaccination, immunization, and other travel medical information for the countries you will visit. It is strongly recommended by the CDC that all travelers are up-to-date on routine vaccines before travel. These include measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis, varicella, polio, and your yearly flu shot. However, only a travel clinic will be able to make a recommendation tailored for your specific travel plans and health history.

Medical facilities and health conditions in India are significantly less advanced than in the US. It is important that you inform yourself prior to departure what precautions to take while living in India. Long before travel, consult with a health provider specializing in travel medicine; most general practitioners lack the requisite knowledge. Following consultation with a travel health specialist, you will need a number of immunizations. Ensure that these are recorded in your international immunization record, a yellow card that you should keep with your passport.
Bangalore has good doctors and medical facilities, and care may be quite satisfactory in some other major cities as well. Only rudimentary levels of care, at best, tend to be available in villages and small towns.

**A Few Additional Tips**

- Avoid eating in restaurants with poor hygiene or buying food from street vendors. Assure yourself that food is well cooked. Avoid uncooked fruits or vegetables unless you can peel them yourself.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Tap water is not recommended. Drink boiled or bottled water (either carbonated or non-carbonated). Soft drinks are usually okay, but beware of juices that may be diluted with water.
- Ice is as unsafe as water. Never add it to drinks unless it has been made from boiled or bottled water.
- Take your own medications with you.
- If you travel to high altitudes, avoid intense exercise until you have adapted. Drink lots of liquids and eat lots of carbohydrates. Monitor any symptoms of altitude sickness, which can include headaches and nausea.
- It is strongly recommended you bring a water purification filter.

**Malaria & Dengue Prevention**

Consult with your travel clinic regarding malaria and dengue risks and prevention.

Your travel health clinic will most likely recommend that you take a prophylactic (preventive) drug for malaria. It is essential that you purchase and take the medication as recommended by your healthcare provider. Depending on your insurance coverage, malaria medication may be very expensive but it is well worth its benefits. If you get malaria, you will become very ill very quickly, may need hospitalization, and may suffer lifelong consequences.

Students in the past have inquired about purchasing malaria preventive medication in their study abroad country. The LAC strongly advises against this approach for two reasons. First, in order to be protected, you must take the medication prior to your departure. Second, exposure to malaria-carrying mosquitoes could occur as soon as you arrive in country. While the medication cannot prevent you from contracting malaria, it significantly reduces the symptoms, allows you time to seek medical attention at a clinic in country, and facilitates a more speedy recovery.

Speak with your US travel clinic about possible side effects and alternative anti-malarials if a change needs to be made overseas. Not all overseas physicians are aware of the different types of medications available, so inform yourself before you leave. Should you experience side effects once overseas, speak with the on-site staff and your US travel clinic about next steps.

Your travel clinic will also likely suggest that you purchase insect repellent with at least 21% DEET to help ward against malaria-carrying mosquitoes as well as those carrying other illnesses. **Ultrathon**, manufactured by 3M, contains 30% DEET and has been recommended by health professionals.

You should use insect repellent during the day and especially at dusk and in the evenings. Mosquitoes carrying dengue fever are active in the day, and malaria-carrying mosquitoes are active at night.

There is currently no vaccine or medicine to prevent dengue. Travelers can protect themselves by preventing mosquito bites.


**Rabies Vaccination**

Consult with your travel clinic regarding rabies vaccination. The rabies vaccine is often recommended for travelers who may come into contact with wild or domestic animals. Keep in mind that it is not possible to initiate the vaccinations in the US and then complete them overseas. Dosage and type of vaccinations differ from country to country. For more information, visit: http://www.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/rabies.

**Yellow Fever**

Travelers to certain parts of South America and Africa are at risk for yellow fever. Some countries require all travelers to show proof of yellow fever vaccination before they can enter the country. Other countries require proof of vaccination only if travelers have been in a risk area, so if you are visiting multiple countries, the order of travel may be important.

Proof of vaccination is not valid until 10 days after you get the vaccine, so plan to get the vaccine early if you need it. Not all travel clinics carry the yellow fever vaccination, so search for a yellow fever travel clinic at http://www.cdc.gov/travel/yellow-fever-vaccination-clinics/search.

**Safety**

**Travel & Safety Considerations**

**State Department Travel website**

Consult the United States State Department Country Information sheets, travel advisories and travel warnings at http://travel.state.gov for up-to-date information on travel precautions for the country where you will be studying or traveling.

**CDC Information**

Review the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (http://cdc.gov/travel) and US Department of State (http://travel.state.gov) websites for travel and safety information.
Embassy STEP Registration

The LAC will register you with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP), which makes your presence in India known to the US Department of State. Once you are enrolled in this program, you will receive the travel updates and information directly as they are issued. Please carefully review these messages and contact the LAC or on-site staff with questions. For more information, visit: https://step.state.gov/step.

In addition, the local embassy can be a source of assistance and information in the case of an emergency. Each of our programs has information about the local embassy, and you might even have an embassy visitor at your orientation. For more information, visit the Country Information sheet at http://travel.state.gov for the countries you will visit and study in.

In order to ensure that all official communication from the US Department of State is sent to the correct address while you are abroad, check your official contact information prior to departure. Visit http://onestop.umn.edu to verify that the information is correct. If your contact information changes, you must notify the LAC.

Sexual Harassment & Sexual Assault

The University of Minnesota and Learning Abroad Center take the risk of sexual harassment and assault very seriously. This topic will be covered in orientations in more depth, and LAC staff and our colleagues on site are trained and prepared to provide support to victim survivors.

Anyone who experiences sexual harassment or sexual assault while abroad must deal with the stress of this unwanted event in a place and culture that is unfamiliar. Being away from the support and comfort of home can exacerbate feelings of hurt, confusion, anger, and loss of control. This is normal.

Do not tolerate behavior that feels threatening or disrespectful by staff in country, faculty members, or homestay family members. When in any doubt, consult with someone with whom you feel comfortable.

Report any incidents of sexual harassment or sexual assault to in-country or LAC staff so that we can help you understand your options and supports available. The Aurora Center is a fully confidential resource for all students on LAC programs, even if you don’t normally attend the University of Minnesota.

For more information on resources, including the Aurora Center, visit: http://global.umn.edu/travel/assault/index.html.

The University of Minnesota prohibits sexual harassment and retaliation. In compliance with Title IX, the LAC will work with the University’s Title IX coordinator on any related inquiries and complaints. For more information, please contact the LAC or visit https://diversity.umn.edu/eoaa/titleix.

Alcohol & Drug Use

The University of Minnesota Code of Conduct and Code of Conduct for Education Abroad allow for responsible drinking if you are legally allowed to drink in your host country. Illegal, irresponsible drinking and/or misbehaving while drinking are violations of the University’s policy.

The University of Minnesota has a no-tolerance approach to drug use while abroad. Students using drugs abroad may immediately be removed from the program at their own cost. You are subject to the laws of the host country while abroad, and penalties for foreigners using or possessing drugs abroad are often very strict.

For more information, visit: UMabroad.umn.edu/students/healthsafety/alcoholdrugs.

Personal Safety

When you are traveling overseas, there are a number of precautions you should follow in order to travel safely. Consult the US State Department’s resources and your orientation materials for up-to-date information on travel precautions for the country where you will be studying or traveling.

For more information on women travelers: http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/Women.html

For more information on students abroad: http://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en.html

For more information on staying safe while abroad: UMabroad.umn.edu/students/healthsafety/safetyabroad.

Emergency Procedures

All students are required to carry a cell phone for use in an emergency. On-site staff will contact you on your cell phone, and you will utilize your phone to contact on-site staff and/or emergency services. In a life-threatening emergency, please seek immediate emergency care; otherwise, please contact on-site staff for assistance and recommendations.
On-site staff are trained and have resources available to respond to all types of emergencies including, but not limited to, civil disturbance, natural disaster, illness or injury, hospitalization, robbery or pickpocketing, sexual assault/harassment, hate crimes, and mental health.

The LAC will utilize on-site resources as well as insurance and security resources, including CISI. See more details above on insurance.

For more information, visit: UMabroad.umn.edu/students/healthsafety/emergency.

Independent Travel

Independent Travel Notification

You are encouraged to travel during official program break periods, over holidays, or after the program is completed. During the program, travel on the weekends should be limited to nearby locations to ensure that you are able to maintain good rest, health, and timely completion of all coursework. Students are not permitted to travel during the program dates, including on weekends or vacations, to countries currently under a US State Department Travel Warning. See http://travel.state.gov for the most up-to-date list.

Consult with the on-site staff, well in advance of your planned travel, to understand if there are other locations, beyond the Travel Warning locations, that you are not permitted to visit within your host country or region. These limitations are put in place for your safety and security and apply within the program dates. If you choose to visit a Travel Warning or other banned location before or after your program, you do so at your own risk.

All LAC program participants must notify the on-site staff of any independent travel that leaves the program location overnight. The required independent travel form is provided in the appendix of this handbook. Some sites will collect this form and others will have a slightly different way of collecting the same information, so refer to your on-site orientation for more specifics.

Travel Restrictions

During the Program

Students are not allowed to visit any country currently under a US Department of State Travel warning as a part of personal travel. Please visit http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html for up-to-date information about travel warning countries. If you have questions about travel restrictions, contact the LAC.

Driving & Renting Vehicles Abroad

It is against University and Learning Abroad Center policy to drive or rent motor vehicles (including motor scooters or motorcycles) while a participant on an LAC program. These limitations extend from the start date to the end date of your program and are put in place for your safety and security. Traffic accidents are the leading cause of injury and death of students abroad.

Arrival Logistics

Arriving at the Program Site

Upon arrival, you will go through immigration. You will need your passport with the student visa attached inside along with the completed immigration form that you receive on the plane. Be sure to carry the address and contact details of ESG with you on the plane because you will need to fill in your local address and phone number for your time in India. After clearing immigration, you will be directed to pick up your checked luggage, pass through the customs desk, and continue to the airport exit.

A representative from the Environmental Support Group (ESG) will wait for you outside of the airport in the arrival area along with many other drivers, family members, and others waiting for arrivees. S/he will hold a placard with “ESG/MSID” or “University of Minnesota” printed on it. If for any reason you will not be arriving as planned and you are not able to communicate with the University of Minnesota, contact the MSID India emergency number.

Note: If you do not arrive with the coordinated flight, you must arrive no more than six hours prior to the coordinated flight. A representative from ESG will meet you at arrival area described above and take you to the orientation hotel. It is best not to wait at the airport for the group flight unless the ESG representative meets you and has you wait with him/her.

You will not be able to call home upon your arrival. Telephones are not readily available, you will be exhausted, and orientation will begin quickly. Let your friends and family know that it will take several days for them to hear from you, and you are likely to contact them via email. The on-site staff will notify the University of Minnesota Learning Abroad Center (LAC) if a student does not arrive, and we will call the student’s emergency contact, as needed. Remind friends and family members not to contact the on-site staff directly. All contact should be through the LAC.
Initial Arrival Housing
You will stay as a group in a hotel for the first week. This gives you some time to recover from the trip and to begin acquainting yourselves with each other before moving to your homestays. During this time you will receive an orientation to your host country and city, the MSID program, and its staff and faculty. You will also have some opportunities to begin acquainting yourselves with the city. When it comes time to move to your homestay, your host family will come to your hotel or another gathering point to pick you up and take you to your new home.

Orientation in Country
The program orientation will begin in Bangalore. The MSID in-country staff and faculty provide an orientation covering a wide variety of topics including the academic program and its courses; expectations of staff, faculty, and students; cultural differences; the homestays; health and safety; local transportation, communication systems, and other practical matters. It may also include a welcome reception or other social event, a tour of Bangalore, and sometimes one or more additional field trips as well. Most of this orientation takes place during the first few days in country, but a few topics are deferred until you have had time to make the initial adjustment. An orientation and program schedule, as well as a handout for emergency needs, will be provided upon arrival.

Let friends and family know that it will be difficult to reach you during this orientation period. Reassure them that you will be in touch via email as frequently as possible.

Program Excursions
All program excursions are related to the concepts of development and will provide you with the opportunity to see how different India NGOs, some of which are MSID internship sites, engage in support activities for the community.

In-Country Staff
There is a dedicated team in India who is available to assist your daily life adjustments. MSID students rely on the staff to answer cultural questions, give travel advice, and lend a supportive ear when students are feeling homesick, among many other things. The on-site directors maintain frequent email communication with the MSID staff in Minnesota.

Program Information

On-Site Directors
Bhargavi S. Rao graduated in environmental science and is a botanist with an MPhil degree in Acrobiology from Bangalore University. She also has a post-graduate diploma in journalism. Her initial research was in the areas of microbiology and cell biology, and she has worked in the Microbiology and Cell Biology Department of the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore. She has co-authored research papers in journals like Current Science and Virology. She has had teaching experience as a lecturer in botany and microbiology at the BMS College for Women, Bangalore, and also as a high school teacher. Her interest in environmental and social justice issues brought her to the Environment Support Group (ESG), where she has taken a leading role in a wide variety of research and educational projects and campaign initiatives. She coordinates educational and training programs at ESG with a focus on enhancing awareness and critical engagement in social and environmental justice issues. She worked for eight years as coordinator and faculty of the India sector of the Cities of the 21st Century and Health and Community courses of the International Honors program, a study abroad program. In 2013, Bhargavi was guest faculty at the Simpson Center for Humanities at Washington University in Seattle. She has presented many talks and workshops on environmental and social justice issues in universities across the United States, Germany, Vietnam, and China. In recognition of her many contributions in the volunteer sector, the Association for India’s Development awarded her the AID ‘Saathiship.’ Her interests include environmental education, experiential education, environmental health, biodiversity, traditional and indigenous knowledge, governance, gender issues, law, public policy, and urban and community studies.

Leo F. Saldanha has gained wide-ranging experience in the areas of environmental law and policy, decentralization, urban planning, and a variety of human rights and development issues, working across many sectors for over a decade. He is a regular campaigner on critical environmental and social justice issues and has guided several campaigns demanding evolution of progressive laws and effective action. He has supported various distressed communities to secure justice through public interest litigations and advocacy efforts and has argued as party-in-person several public interest litigations, many of which have resulted in favorable judgments. In 2007 he coauthored the Green Tapism, a book critiquing the Environment Impact Notification 2006. His articles have appeared in many leading new papers, journals, and magazines. He facilitates a variety of learning programs on environmental and social justice concerns. For eight years, Leo was the country coordinator and faculty of the Cities in the 21st Century and Health and Community courses of the International Honors program:
Program. He has a background in environmental science from Saint Joseph’s College, Bangalore University, and has been invited as a speaker by organizations and universities around the world. In August 2010, he was invited as a speaker at the International Forum on China’s Rural Reform in the 12th Five-Year Plan Period, organized by the Chinese Institute for Reform and Development. In recognition of his contributions to environmental and social justice efforts, the Association for India’s Development has made him a Saathi.

Bhargavi Rao and Leo Saldanha also jointly direct ESG. ESG is located in a building adjacent to the MSID Center and works with a variety of environmental and social justice initiatives across India and the world. The ESG staff work to address pro-actively environmental and social justice issues and concerns, collaborating across sectors and communities, keeping the interests of local project affected communities and voiceless ecosystems as their primary focus.

Cheryl Braggs is the full-time MSID coordinator. Cheryl assists students with their daily academic schedule, health concerns, homestay needs, and general well-being during the MSID program.

In addition, Shashikala Iyer, the MSID housing coordinator, and additional support staff provide assistance to MSID students during their stay.

Program Center

The ESG/MSID center contains a library, a computer lab, and a student workspace as well as offices used for faculty meetings with students and social gatherings. A simple kitchen provides tea, coffee, and some snacks and is equipped with a water purification system, refrigerator, and microwave. Classrooms are located in the same building.

Libraries & Study Resources

You are invited to use the space at the ESG/MSID center in Bangalore for research, study, and conversations. The library contains books and periodicals on a variety of topics and is also supported by documentation of news.

Computers

The MSID office has wireless Internet access and several laptops that can be checked out for student academic use. A printer is available for use by students in writing papers. Once you are out on your internships or research project, much of your work will be handwritten; keep it legible. Feel free to bring along an inexpensive laptop to use for completing assignments. Bring an adapter to plug into your computer and keep in mind that laptops are a target for theft. Keep your laptop well hidden when storing and traveling with it. Never put these kinds of valuables in your checked luggage.

It is under the discretion of the on-site staff whether laptops are allowed for note-taking in the classroom. Laptops can be banned if students surf the web or access email during class time.

Housing Considerations

Housing Options

All students are housed with homestay families during the program period. During the internship/research portion of the program, students are typically with a host family but may also be housed at a residence building at the NGO site.

Notification of Placement

MSID typically receives basic information about your first homestay family (name and address) approximately one week prior to the program start date, and we will send the information to your University of Minnesota email account. Last-minute changes occasionally occur.

Since you may not know much about your host family(ies) prior to departure, we encourage you to bring a range of generic gifts to give as gifts. Past students have recommended coffee table books from your hometown/state, a board game, T-shirts, calendars, magnets, keychains, and sweets such as jelly beans. The in-country MSID administrative staff will outline for you and the family your respective rights and responsibilities in the homestay. The family is told that for the most part your presence should not lead them to change their customs, operating rules, or food.

Housing Concerns

If you have questions about your homestay experience, speak to the on-site staff. As in the US, it is not acceptable for you to be asked, for example, to assist with caring for a host family member on a daily basis, be exposed to drunken or rude behavior, or tolerate any sexual advances. Although it is extremely rare for a host family experience to involve any of these, speak to the on-site staff if you have any concerns. You are also encouraged to consult with the MSID staff if you are experiencing communication challenges or encountering cultural differences that are unfamiliar to you.

Homestay Families

Homestays are an integral component of the MSID learning experience. All students live and share most meals with at least one family, and many with two different families—one during the classroom phase, and a second in a different part of the country during the remainder of the program. Students with internships or research projects in the main city typically choose to remain with the same family throughout. Only in rare cases does MSID permit alternative housing arrangements (e.g., a rural setting where no adequate homestay is available and the student must stay in a school or a clinic), and living independently is not allowed.
Students take breakfast and the evening meal with their host families, and all three meals on weekends. Often distances preclude returning for the noon meal during the week. Although you generally will be expected to eat the same food as your family, MSID does ask the families to accommodate the dietary needs of students who have food allergies or are uncompromising vegetarians. Many students who are vegetarians in the US decide instead to relax their standards during their MSID experience in order to minimize the inconvenience to non-vegetarian host families.

Students report that the homestays are among the richest and most challenging dimensions of MSID. You will find that a tremendous amount of your language and cultural learning takes place while you are at home. Students constantly bring insights gained from their families into the academic program, and, similarly, the classroom learning helps provide tools for a successful homestay.

The Placement Process

MSID places students with a variety of families in terms of family size, profession, ethnic background, etc. Not only do students speak in class about the differences among their families, but they also drop in on fellow MSIDers in their homes. Think of each visit as an important learning experience.

The stipend paid by the MSID program to the host families is only a token gesture of appreciation for the time and expense of hosting you. The money in no way covers the cost of hosting an MSID student nor compensates for the adjustment the family agrees to undertake in order to incorporate an MSID student into their family.

Homestay Conditions

In terms of physical living conditions, all homestays are expected to meet the following:

- The location should be relatively safe, as close as feasible to the classroom location or the student’s internship/research site, and accessible to public transportation.
- Typically, only one student is placed with each family.
- Student requests for a single room or a room shared with a family member will be accommodated.
- The home should be clean and orderly and offer adequate study space for the student.
- The home should have at least one bathroom, which should meet basic standards of sanitation.
- The family should be able to offer an adequate diet, quantitatively as well as qualitatively, with food handling that meets reasonable standards of hygiene.
- The kitchen should have at least a stove and a refrigerator.
- Adequate quantities of boiled or bottled water should always be available for the student’s use.
- Either the home should have a telephone or the student should have easy access to one at the internship/research site.

- Either a washing machine should be available for student use (with soap provided by the family) or the family should arrange for weekly washing of the student’s clothes at the family’s expense, either by the family itself or by someone contracted to wash.

MSID prefers less luxury to more. Nonetheless, understand that it is usually impossible to place students with very poor families. Most poor families lack the space to take in an extra family member, and many also live in areas of the city that do not meet MSID’s standards of safety.

Most host families in Bangalore belong to what might be considered the Indian middle class, ranging from lower-middle to upper-middle. The families are highly diverse in terms of composition, educational level, occupation, and the degree to which they are traditional vs. “modern.” All speak English. The majority are Hindu, but some may be Sikh, Jain, Muslim, or Christian. MSID students learn much about Indian society through hearing about each other’s experiences and visiting each other’s homes. Most Bangalore homestay families have refrigerators, gas stoves, televisions, telephones, and baths—the kind where you ladle cups of lukewarm water out of a bucket. There is no air conditioning, but electric fans are available. Indian families exercise excellent frugality in the use of energy, water, and the telephone; be respectful. If your host family does have wireless Internet, you will be expected to pay for it.

Personal appearance and hygiene are very important in the families—just as they are in the internships or research placement. Indians tend to view American tourists as a very scruffy and unkempt lot, which is a major barrier to their being accepted. Clothes should be clean and well pressed, hair combed, bodies bathed (daily if not twice), etc. Indians will view this as a sign of respect for their cultural values.

In the evening, it is typical that you will be asked to wash your face, hands, and possibly your feet when returning home and before eating your evening meal. This is a typical and important ritual to follow. In some cases, the family will prefer that you take your bath in the evening instead of the morning; be certain to ask the family about their preferred routine. The host family may also have certain expectations on how the bathroom should be cleaned after each use, and you can ask them for their regular household routine.

Normally you will want to be in by nightfall, which is around 7 p.m. If you plan to go out in the evening, notify your host family. Most evenings, you should still expect to return home by 9 p.m. A social nightlife, especially by women, may not be allowed by your family. Most Indians also do not go out at night, unless it is to a designated event.

Most students work very hard to adapt to their Indian families. They are eager to fit in with family routines and show great respect for Indian values and mores. Occasionally students use visits to other students’ homes as an
opportunity to unwind. Remember to show the same cultural sensitivity with other homestay families as with your own.

Host family locations will vary, but all will be within five kilometers or so of the program office. In some cases you will be able to walk to classes; in other cases you will need to take a rickshaw or other public transportation.

**Tips for a Successful Homestay**

The MSID in-country staff seek families eager to incorporate US students into their lives. Host families are generally warm and welcoming and will want their students to participate in social events with friends and extended family. When you are placed with a family, you will probably get more than the family itself. You will get a wide range of friends, not to mention information, coaching, advice, and endless opportunities to practice your language skills. If you and the family are both willing to throw yourselves into making the experience a rich one, you are likely to look back on your homestay as a highlight of your time in MSID.

A successful homestay requires consideration and cultural sensitivity. At times your cross-cultural skills and insights will be stretched to the limit. The in-country MSID staff will supplement this with initial support and ongoing coaching to create a smooth linkage between students and their families. Staff are always available to assist and sort out cultural adjustment problems as they arise.

In India, the notion of private space and time is not as common as in the US. Spend plenty of time with your host family and do not seclude yourself in your room. This is often viewed as rude and may cause your host family to wonder if you are sick or unhappy. Also, keep your room as tidy as you would any public space since you are a guest in their home.

You will find your homestay parents and siblings very concerned for your well-being. They will be good sources of information and advice about negotiating the transportation system, safety precautions, etc. At the same time, their concern might occasionally seem to border on over-protectiveness, especially if you are a woman. Understand that the family is not trying to control you but to fulfill its inescapable responsibilities for the welfare of its US daughter or son.

In most cases, your family will do your laundry. Since dryers are infrequent, have sufficient undergarments for the delay in receiving your items back. Keep in mind that you should rinse and clean any underwear that is soiled because this is considered a very private matter.

Host families may not have Internet access. Be aware the cost of electricity and Internet use in homes can be very high. You may be asked by your host family to pay a fee for your Internet use, and you should consult with the on-site staff about correct cultural protocol.

When you leave the house, it is important to let the family know where you expect to be and approximately what time you plan to return. Never stay overnight elsewhere without first notifying your family.

In case of minor illnesses, your family will help you seek medical attention. In the case of more serious problems, you and your family are expected to notify the MSID administrative staff immediately in order to coordinate the best possible treatment.

Most families are conservative about relations between men and women. You are not allowed to have overnight guests of the opposite sex or to receive visitors in a closed bedroom.

Be judicious in your use of alcohol. Your host family and work colleagues will disapprove of substance abuse, and drunkenness could irreparably damage your relations with people who are important to you.

It is important not to abuse hospitality. Remember to ask your family for permission to bring friends to the house, and be ready to cover extra expenses when inviting them. In some families, alcohol may not be allowed, given their religious preferences.

Keep your room neat and tidy and be respectful of the common spaces in the house. Since you are a guest in the home, your bedroom should be kept in a manner that shows your respect and appreciation. In most countries, the notion of personal and private space does not exist in the same manner as in the US, and your room in your host family is not the same as having your own room in the US. Do not leave your clothes strewn on the floor or leave personal belongings around the house. Do not put your shoes on furniture, including your own bed. Unfortunately, US students are often viewed as messy and disrespectful. Do your part to correct this image. Keep in mind that personal hygiene is also very important. You are a guest in their home and should present yourself with respect and cleanliness.

Before you leave for India, it may be difficult to imagine the depth of the bonds that can develop between you and your host families. There is a special magic to friendships that cross deep cultural boundaries, and you may find the relationship with your family to be quite unlike other relationships you have experienced.

Farewells at the airport are often tear-filled on both sides. As your life becomes filled with the US hectic pace following your return, however, it can be all too easy not to take the time to keep in touch. An occasional letter, postcard, or email from you means a great deal to a family for whom you are as unforgettable as they for you. MSID asks you to take a few moments to write from time to time. Keep in mind, however, that host families should not be expected to host you after your MSID experience or on future visits you may make to India.
**Liability Insurance**

Regardless of your housing arrangement, you should consider your insurance coverage and needs. Does your renter’s or homeowner’s insurance cover your items if they are lost or stolen abroad? You may also wish to buy additional insurance in case you accidentally damage your accommodations, since any damages will be yours to pay.

For more information, visit: [http://global.umn.edu/travel/resources/insurance_other.html](http://global.umn.edu/travel/resources/insurance_other.html).

**Visitors**

**Program Housing**

Students’ personal guests (e.g., friends, family, etc.) are not allowed to stay overnight in program housing, including apartments, dorms, and homestays.

**During Program Period**

Friends or relatives may visit during official program breaks or before or after the program, but not while classes are in session. Visits during this time interfere with your ability to focus on the program and host culture. Visitors are not allowed to stay with you in your official program housing. Visits during internship/research phases are also not permitted. Students who miss classes or days at their internship/research location due to travel will be dismissed from the program and forfeit both the program fee and all academic credit.

**Academics**

Students are responsible for understanding and adhering to the academic policies for study abroad as published on the University of Minnesota Learning Abroad Center (LAC)’s website: [UMabroad.umn.edu/students/policies/academic-policies](http://UMabroad.umn.edu/students/policies/academic-policies).

**Courses**

**Overview of Program Courses**

**August or Winter Break Session**

Students can choose to participate in the August or winter break language session for an additional fee. This program grants 4 language credits and runs for three-and-a-half weeks in August or late December to mid-January. Students live with host families and participate in excursions.

**Semester Program**

**Courses Offered**

All undergraduates take the following courses totaling 16–17 semester credits. Complete course descriptions are available on the LAC’s website.

- MSID 4001/5001, *International Development: Critical Perspectives on Theory & Practice*, 4 credits
- MSID 4002/5002, *MSID Country Analysis*, 4 credits
- MSID Hindi or Kannada course, 4 credits
- MSID 4003/5003, *Community Engagement in the Global South*, 4 credits
- (optional) Global Identity, *Connecting Your International Experience to Your Future*, 1 credit

The Development course will be divided into the following tracks so that students can prepare for their upcoming internship:

- Arts & Cultural Studies
- Education & Literacy
- Entrepreneurship & Alternative Economies
- Public Health
- Social Services (poverty, homelessness, housing, youth studies)
- Sustainability & the Environment

The Social Services track may be combined with Education if enrollment in one or both tracks is low.
Semester Schedule

The semester program consists of the following phases:

Orientation (1 week)

In-Country Classroom Work (7 weeks)

You will spend an average of around 20 hours per week in the classroom, plus time outside doing readings and assignments. Local field trips and field assignments supplement the classroom work. You will also work with MSID staff and faculty throughout this period to define the subsequent internship or research project.

Internship/Research Project (6 weeks)

Once the classroom phase concludes, students move to their individual placements with development agencies/projects in scattered locations, some urban and some rural. Unless you are interested in a specifically urban topic, MSID urges you to consider a rural placement. You cannot really know your country if you experience only the city.

Activities. The internships/research projects are the most important hallmark distinguishing MSID from most study abroad programs. In addition to contributing to their agency/project/community, students do written assignments connected to themes and concepts from the various courses.

Support. The MSID on-site director or another member of the program faculty visits each student at the internship site once during this phase. In addition to any troubleshooting regarding the internship, these visits serve as occasions for you to hand in coursework and reflect on what you are learning.

Academic role of the internship/research project in the semester programs. In addition to academic work for the internship/research course itself, during this phase students also complete written assignments for the other courses. Each course thus becomes a different lens through which you interpret your experiences in your agency/project and your community. You might think of the internship or research project as a sort of lab section for the courses. Course descriptions are available on the LAC’s website.

Final Seminar (1 week)

The concluding week of the semester program brings students back together, whether in Bangalore or in a retreat setting in the suburbs, to analyze their internships or research projects. In final sessions of the various classes, each instructor helps students tie their experiences systematically to themes and concepts from the particular course. Any final exams are also given at this time. The week concludes with an integrating seminar at which the program staff help students reflect more holistically upon their MSID experience.

Academic-Year Schedule

The academic-year program is best suited for students who are independent, self-sufficient, and seek an extended internship experience in their MSID country.

Academic-year students register for an additional 16 spring semester credits. Course descriptions are available on the LAC’s website.

MSID 4004, Topics: Case Studies in International Development, 4 credits
MSID 4006, Applied Field Methods, 4 credits
MSID 4007, MSID Directed Research, 4 credits
MSID 4005, Advanced International Development Internship, 4 credits

Second Semester Schedule

The calendars of the second semester vary somewhat. The following is a representative sequence.

Research Seminar (1–2 weeks)

After returning from their travel break, academic-year students work with program faculty to refine the plans they have begun to lay in the fall for their research projects. This phase includes group sessions on methodology plus individual meetings with faculty. Students also receive an additional 20 hours of language instruction, as needed.

Internship & Research I (5–6 weeks)

Academic-year students return to their sites in mid-January for their internships and their research. Each student receives a visit from the MSID on-site director or another MSID staff member sometime during the second semester. This visit is the scheduled point in the second semester for academic-year students to hand in assignments.

Spring Midterm Research Week, Seminar (1 week)

Students travel to Bangalore for a week and a half. They have a week to work on their research and writing, then join the in-country directors for a midterm seminar. This is a time to compare experiences, take stock of progress on the internship and research project, plan for the home stretch, and reflect with classmates and program staff on what has been learned. It is also a second scheduled point in the semester for handling in assignments. Following the seminar, some programs have a weeklong spring break.

Internship & Research II (5 weeks)

During this period students may receive a second visit from the MSID on-site director or another MSID staff member. Again, some written assignments may be due during the visit.
Final Seminar (1 week)

The mid-semester pattern is repeated. Students again have a week in Bangalore to finish any last research and writing, then join the director for a final seminar. As with the end-of-semester gathering, this seminar provides an opportunity for debriefing experiences and processing learning, as well as for evaluating the program.

Writing for MSID

MSID writing assignments can range from traditional to highly experiential, from individual to team-based. MSID requires approximately five focus papers per course and a longer end-of-term paper.

Focus Papers

Focus papers are less formal than traditional term papers, and they generally ask you to draw on both your formal coursework and your experiences as you consider an issue. A typical focus paper might be three to five pages in length. Focus papers are assigned within individual courses (their number and due dates are specified in course syllabi).

You might find it useful to think of a focus paper as a sort of take-home essay exam designed to help you structure your thinking about the relation between your in-country experiences and course themes. Topics will vary from course to course, from country to country, and from year to year.

Focus papers have two parts which faculty may combine into one paper or ask students to submit as two different papers:

Field Observation: an analytical account of something you have seen, heard, read, or experienced. Your analysis reflects on aspects of development and how it is manifested in your MSID country.

Personal Observation: a written record, grounded in experience, of your own journey. It can contain description, exploration of issues, reflection, the posing of questions, personal perspectives, and analysis of your thoughts, feelings, and observations. The focus is on the ways in which a particular aspect of development impacts you personally and your values.

The focus papers are essential vehicles for you to record the learning that is taking place throughout your MSID experience. MSID faculty have high expectations for these reports. As you write, ask yourself whether you are demonstrating not only what you have experienced but also what you have learned.

Format

Each Focus Paper must include at the beginning:

Your name
A title
A date
Course name

Evaluation

In evaluating the focus papers, the faculty member will assess the extent to which you have met the following general criteria:

Relevance to MSID curriculum. Is the topic related to the content of the course?

Quality of description. Does your entry include a detailed description of the particular event or topic that you plan to analyze? Have you been able to avoid interpretation disguised as description?

Quality of analysis. Does your entry reveal that you have thought in some depth about the subject? Do you develop one or more hypotheses to explain what you have written about? Do you criticize your own hypotheses?

Use of theory-experience dialogue. How well does your entry relate what you have experienced or observed to bodies of academic knowledge that have been introduced through lectures, assigned readings, etc.? Do you attempt to understand what you have observed by holding theories and concepts when relevant? And/or do you use your observations to support or challenge theories and concepts?

Evidence of growth. Do your entries show a growth in your understanding over time, whether of the host culture, of development, or of yourself? Is the quality of your description and the depth of your analysis improving?

Quality of writing. Is the entry clearly written? Well organized? Free of spelling and grammatical errors?

As you write, try to imagine someone grading your reports and deciding, partly on the basis of what you have written, that you deserve University of Minnesota credit. If that exercise makes you feel uneasy, you may need to thicken your description, sharpen your analysis, read more, and/or tie your experiences more systematically to formal bodies of knowledge and theory.

Language of Instruction

All courses are taught in English with the exception of the language course. For the language section of the curriculum, students choose between two options: a Hindi language course from beginning to advanced and a beginning Kannada course. More information on these course options can be found on the program website.
Global Identity

Global Identity: Connecting Your International Experience to Your Future

This optional, one-credit course will provide opportunities for you to “make meaning” of your learning abroad experience and prepare you to communicate your intercultural competence to future employers, graduate schools, or law schools. As global connectivity becomes increasingly important, you are asked to think beyond the borders of your own perception and better understand the world based on the new ideas and experiences to which you are exposed. Your ability to work in a multicultural setting and succeed in different cultural contexts is vital to your future. This course will help you apply these skills to your post-graduation plans.

For more information, visit: [UMabroad.umn.edu/students/academics/globalidentity](UMabroad.umn.edu/students/academics/globalidentity).

MSID Internships & Research

MSID internships and research projects are grassroots experiences with local nonprofit agencies. MSID does not organize internships with banks, embassies, for-profit organizations, or large political agencies.

Internship Versus Research

Internships focus on applied learning complemented by a thematic paper that reflects on your experience. Activities might include teaching English to school children, shadowing a health professional in a clinic, assisting with a reforestation project, shadowing reports and assisting with newspaper articles for a local nonprofit news agency, or organizing activities at an urban youth center.

Research projects focus on a larger theoretical topic that is relevant to development in the MSID country. Sample topics include the structure and educational goals of primary education, the realization of public health care services, organic farming and its role in the local economy, government and private funding resources for homeless children. Students who engage in a research project will typically not participate in applied, hands-on activities. The goal is to conduct research under the supervision of the host NGO agency on a larger theoretical topic.

Semester Program

For those students who enroll for a semester, the shorter internship or research period provides a meaningful opportunity to begin to understand the many aspects of the term “development.” The six-week experience entails service to the agency, and job responsibilities are usually less ambitious. The experience will also afford a powerful venue for participant observation related to MSID course themes.

Academic-Year Program

Academic-year students have the opportunity to develop a meaningful project or work assignment. These students can be of real assistance to their host agency. However, MSID cautions you not to underestimate the time it will take to get into the heart of an internship or research project, nor the number of things that can go wrong even at later stages. It is reasonable to hope to make a contribution to the agency or project, but it is important also not to judge the success or failure of your experience exclusively by how much you are able to accomplish. MSID is first and foremost an educational program, and even internships or research projects that seem to “fail” can be powerful learning experiences. In most cases, semester and academic-year internships or research projects will be with the same agency.

Internship or Research Placement

As part of your acceptance process, you need to submit an Academic Information Form to the LAC. This form permits you to identify a sector in which you wish to be involved (e.g., health, environment, education), to specify, as well as you can, what sort of project you would like to have within that sector, and to indicate whether you are interested in a rural or urban placement. MSID strongly recommends that you consider a rural placement, both because it will introduce you to a very different life from that of the city where the classes are held, and because it is easier to become fully integrated into the life of rural than urban communities. Not all types of placements are feasible; for example, health-related internships or research projects in some countries cannot be in clinical settings.

MSID will forward all of the completed forms to the in-country staff, who will begin exploring potential placements even before you arrive. Upon arrival, you will further discuss your placement ideas with the in-country staff. The in-country staff will make contact with one or more organizations working in the field you identified and will inquire about their interest in hosting an MSID participant. Once a tentative placement has been identified, you will have an opportunity to discuss it before it is finalized. Most requests for placement within a general field can be accommodated, but in-country issues may sometimes require adjustments. Particularly if you request a project related to sensitive populations, your project may be very limited or not possible.

Characteristics of MSID Internships/Research Projects

- Related to development
- Grassroots, immersing the participant, directly and personally, in the social realities of the poorer strata of the population
- Designed to serve the goals of both the student and the agency
- Guided by objectives agreed to by the participant, supervisor, and in-country director
- Generally involve about 25 hours per week of work
Placement Categories

MSID projects fall into the following categories:

- Arts & Cultural Studies
- Education & Literacy
- Entrepreneurship & Alternative Economies
- Public Health
- Social Services (poverty, homelessness, housing, youth studies)
- Sustainability & the Environment

Visit the MSID India program webpage for examples of past placements: umabroad.umn.edu/programs/asia-oceania/msid-india/academics/internships.

The Importance of Initiative & Imagination

Past students and in-country staff have repeatedly stressed the importance of student initiative in developing successful placements. Yes, it is true that some students receive a detailed job description from their agency when they arrive at their site, but that is the exception rather than the rule. You are just as likely to be given only a general idea of what to do. If you wait for someone to tell you exactly what you need to do and when you need to do it, you will be disappointed. When you get to your site, observe, think critically, try out ideas on your host-country colleagues, and use your imagination.

Location

Internships and research projects in all countries are restricted to certain geographical regions. It is essential that your project be in a location that is safe and accessible. Keep in mind MSID encourages you to consider internship placements outside of the program city in order to offer you the possibility of a comparative experience.

Alternative Schedule

You must discuss with your site supervisor any alteration to your schedule due to illness or travel for medical care or other necessary meetings. You or your site supervisor must also notify the MSID on-site director or coordinator if your schedule changes significantly.

Changing an Internship or Research Project

MSID on-site staff will do their best to help you and your site supervisor make your placement successful. Commitments are made on your behalf before you start your project, and they should be honored to the fullest extent possible. Difficulties with an internship or research project should be discussed with the site supervisor and the MSID director. Changes in placement should be a last resort. Adjustments are ultimately the decision of the resident director.

Any participant who abandons an internship or research project without prior notification and approval of the on-site director will automatically receive a failing grade for all related coursework and may be removed from the program.

Extending Internships/Research Projects

Occasionally an agency and a student would like to continue an internship or research project beyond the end of the program. Your ability to do so depends on the enrollment option you have chosen.

Fall semester students. You may not extend your internship beyond the end of December.

Spring semester and academic-year students. If you complete the full program and you and the agency agree for you to stay on, you are free to do so. Typically students continue to work during such extensions on a volunteer basis. Take into account visa and health insurance issues.

Within these guidelines, any arrangement to extend an internship or research project is entirely between the student and the agency. After your particular enrollment option finishes, you are no longer an MSID student. Neither the LAC nor MSID’s in-country staff is a party to such arrangements, nor does either bear any responsibility for your welfare as you continue your work.

Guidelines for Health-Related Projects

Keep in mind the limits of your expertise. The need is great, and you must be careful to limit yourself to the areas in which you truly are knowledgeable, regardless of what people ask of you at your site.

You should decline to engage in any activity for which you are not personally trained. This includes such as activities as delivering babies, giving injections, drawing blood, and surgery. If you are asked to engage in these kinds of activities, decline and seek assistance. It is much more dangerous to assist in these areas than to wait and find someone who is trained to do these activities.

You should not be asked to engage in activities that involve contact with bodily fluids, wound cleaning, or invasive procedures. Since you cannot know for certain what illnesses the patient may have, it is important to observe these activities and not participate. You can learn a great deal from observation, and you should protect your health. Be certain to take universal precautions, including using face masks, eye shields, and non-latex gloves. As these items may be in short supply in India, you should bring these items with you.

HIV and HBV transmission can occur when someone is exposed through an open wound, mucous membrane, or punctured skin to infected blood or bodily fluids that are contaminated with infected blood. These bodily fluids include amniotic fluid, pericardial fluid, semen, and vaginal secretions. HIV and HBV transmission has not been documented to occur from exposure to bodily fluids such as feces, nasal secretions, sputum, sweat, tears, urine, or vomit. Saliva is only a risk factor in dental settings where saliva is likely to be contaminated with blood.
It is important to meet with a travel nurse or physician to discuss the vaccinations you will need for India. If your project might involve participation in tasks or activities with exposure to blood or other bodily fluids, you should be vaccinated with hepatitis B vaccine, and you should discuss this with your health care provider. While meeting with your travel doctor or nurse, discuss bringing along an anti-retroviral. If you decide not to take one, identify a place in the country where a reliable anti-retroviral can be purchased in the event of exposure. MSID students in health care or HIV-related settings should use surgical gloves when handling patients if there is likely contact with bodily fluids or when handling items or surfaces soiled with blood or bodily fluids. Bring a box of surgical gloves with you.

Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, including front and back of your hands and in between your fingers, with plenty of soap and water (or waterless hand cleaner) for several minutes. Particularly after exposure to any bodily fluids from another person, it is important to wash your hands thoroughly. You should also wash your hands immediately after removing surgical gloves. This not only helps protect you; it reduces the spread of illnesses from hand-to-hand contact.

You should take precautions to prevent injuries to yourself through needles, scalpels, or other sharp devices. In orphanages, you should not be asked to change diapers or clean vomit or other bodily fluids, regardless of whether the children are infected or not. Keep in mind, however, that you can be exposed to bodily fluids just in the daily contact with children. Bring along an extra set of clean clothes or at least a clean shirt to your internship site. Also keep a log of any injuries or exposures, in case medical follow-up is needed at a later time.

Designing Your Research Project

Students wishing to use their research toward their major, including as a senior project, should consult their major adviser on the home campus. See the discussion on Using Credit for Specific Purposes, in the section on the Academic Program.

When planning a research project, keep in mind that you will be engaging in the ongoing research activities of the NGO where you will be placed. While students can often conduct additional independent research on theoretical topics that complement the agency’s activities, research involving interviews with human subjects is significantly restricted by the University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board (IRB). Contact the LAC well in advance of your MSID participation if you have questions about your research interests.

Choosing a Topic

You will determine your topic in consultation with the academic director and, in some cases, another faculty member given responsibility for overseeing the project. With this project supervisor you will develop a research plan specifying the questions to be addressed, the background reading necessary, the methodology to be employed, and the outcome to be developed. Some students choose their topic before leaving their campus; others wait until they are in country and can ground their choice in better knowledge of local conditions. As long as you remain flexible, there are big advantages to thinking through your topic while you are still in the US; it permits you to consult with faculty on your campus and to use library and computer resources that may be difficult to match in country.

Regardless of whether you decide on a topic before or after arrival in country, you should begin asking yourself the following questions as early as possible:

- What degree requirements do I wish to meet with my project? Does it need to fit into a particular major or minor? Does it need to meet departmental guidelines for a senior thesis? Do I understand those guidelines clearly?
- Is my topic feasible in relation to the time constraints I face?
- Am I sure I am not asking questions that are too sensitive politically or culturally? Does my host country impose any legal constraints on research?
- Do I have the necessary linguistic and/or methodological skills to carry off my project?
- Does my project require specific local resources (e.g., libraries, interpreters, or a steady supply of electricity for my computer)? If so, am I sure those resources will be available to me?
- Can my topic command the necessary faculty support?
- Can I get assistance on my campus prior to departure?

Starting Your Academic Planning

Once you have selected a topic, begin shaping the project:

- Limit your topic to something manageable. Projects that are too large are difficult to complete.
- Think through your methodology carefully, and seek advice from faculty on your campus. What do you propose to do once you are on site? What will you be looking at? With whom will you want to speak? What research tools will you use?
- Try to identify in advance the vulnerable points in your research strategy. On what local resources or circumstances are you counting? Discuss contingency plans with faculty in case those resources prove unavailable or those circumstances nonexistent.
- Budget enough time for such post-fieldwork activities as data analysis and further library research, not to mention the writing itself.
Additional Resources
The University of Minnesota libraries has a dedicated page for study abroad research: http://lib.umn.edu/libdata/page.phtml?page_id=4349.

Registration

Registration through the UofM

University of Minnesota Twin Cities Students
Before registering, you should meet with your academic adviser(s) to discuss the courses you plan to take and complete the Academic Planning form. All University of Minnesota Twin Cities students will be responsible for registering themselves using the University of Minnesota online registration system. Prior to departure, you will receive an email with all the necessary information for registration. Do not look for your class number to appear on the class schedule on the MyU website. The numbers required for registration can only be obtained from the LAC. If you register for a course that is listed online, you have registered for the wrong course and may be subject to tuition charges. Complete your registration by the stated deadline in the registration instruction email from the LAC. Check online for holds or required registration approvals that would prevent you from registering for classes and clear them before the registration deadline. The LAC cannot remove holds on student accounts. Failure to complete registration may result in late registration fees and may delay or prevent financial aid disbursement. If you do not register for study abroad, your grades cannot be processed. Failure to register before departing for study abroad may result in no credit for your study abroad program.

UMN System Students
Students from the University of Minnesota–Morris, Crookston, Rochester, or Duluth will be set up as a multi-U student by their home campus. Please contact your study abroad office to verify that your multi-U status has been set up. You can then register as a UMTC student (see above).

Non-University of Minnesota Students
Students from other institutions will be registered by the Learning Abroad Center and do not need to register themselves through the MyU website.

Graduate Credit
Students participating in MSID for graduate credit take 5xxx-level counterparts to the 4xxx courses (e.g., 5801 instead of 4801), each for 3 credits. The language course does not generate graduate-level credit, although it is posted on the student’s University of Minnesota transcript. It is University of Minnesota policy that graduate students are expected to meet higher standards than undergraduates. MSID complies with this policy through two measures. First, the 5xxx-level courses are worth 3 credits versus the 4 credits for undergraduate. Second, MSID informs the in-country director which students wish to be considered at the graduate level. In-country faculty then adjust academic expectations accordingly.

Maintaining Full-Time Status
Students are required to maintain full-time registration status as defined by their individual program throughout the duration of their study abroad program. Dropping or withdrawing from a class will not be allowed if it will bring a student below the required full-time enrollment.

Post-Program Registration
While abroad, University of Minnesota students and most other students will need to register for classes for the following term on their home campus. You must make any necessary arrangements prior to departure so that you are able to register while overseas. In many cases, students are able to register online.

Grades & Credit
All courses must be taken for A/F credit. MSID does not permit S/N (pass/fail) registration. The University of Minnesota’s A/F grading scale includes grades of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, and F.

Contact hours and credit for the International Development course, the language course, and Country Analysis course include the final seminar week and integrate reflection of the internship/research experience. As a result, students who leave the MSID program early are not eligible for partial credit for their academic work on this program.

Hours of Student Effort
University of Minnesota policy specifies that each semester credit should reflect approximately 12.5 instructional contact hours of 60 minutes and twice that amount for out-of-classroom assignments. The policy also notes that certain kinds of courses with a strong experiential component—including field seminars, internships, and research projects—may involve fewer classroom contact hours than this and greater out-of-classroom hours.

Semester programs: MSID courses conform to these standards, which means that each 4-credit course has 50 instructional contact hours, including didactic instruction during field trips. Out-of-classroom hours of student effort are achieved through reading assignments, focus paper assignments, group work, excursions, and cultural contact with host families and program-sponsored activities. Semester program internships have a minimum of 120 contact hours.
Second semester of the academic-year program: The second semester of courses for academic-year students is highly individualized. Students meet as a group during the first weeks of January and during the midterm and final seminars. The course content revolves around each student’s internship and research. Just as with internships or directed research at the University of Minnesota, contact hours during the second semester are thus far fewer. Scheduled contacts (initial research seminar, faculty visits to students at their internship sites, individual meetings with faculty during the research week, midterm and final seminars) total, on average, 50–70 hours. The remaining hours of student effort come from the research, the engagement in the internship, and their written assignments. The total contact hours at the internship site is a minimum of 240 hours with most students exceeding 280 hours.

Using Credit for Specific Purposes

Regardless of whether or not you are a University of Minnesota student, obtaining credit is one thing and getting that credit accepted toward an academic major or minor is another.

Many students wish to use one or more of their MSID courses for such purposes. Students are often able to negotiate one or more of these courses toward an appropriate major on the home campus. This will likely require documentation—one of the reasons it is so important to hold onto syllabi, graded assignments, and so on.

If you hope to apply an internship or research project toward your major or minor, it is essential that you consult with appropriate advisers and faculty before going overseas. Use the course descriptions on the LAC’s website in the discussion with your adviser or faculty. Ask your adviser for written guidelines if they exist. A faculty member in your department may wish to review the final product before deciding whether it can count toward your major or minor.

University of Minnesota students should note that MSID fulfills two Liberal Education requirements for graduation: the Global Perspectives theme and the Civic Life & Ethics theme.

Course Drop/Add/Withdrawal

Course Changes

These must be made in consultation with the on-site staff and per the deadlines as outlined on the LAC’s Academic Policies website. Since MSID courses are all mandatory, the only change allowed is for a student to switch between pursuing an internship and pursuing a research project.

Changing Enrollment Options

During the course of fall semester, students may change their mind about the enrollment option they have chosen. MSID allows students who have chosen fall semester to lengthen their enrollment to the full academic year or academic-year students to scale back to fall only. Neither change carries an administrative fee, but keep in mind that the fall semester fee is higher than half of the academic-year fee. Students reducing to one semester will be billed this difference in cost. The LAC must receive notice for such a change in writing; email messages are acceptable means of notification. You must notify the LAC by December 1 for any enrollment changes.

Non-University of Minnesota students considering an enrollment change will also need to consult with their home study abroad office. Some institutions can more easily accommodate requests to extend to an academic year than others. Even if you have not made a final decision about whether to change your enrollment, please initiate the communication with your home campus early so that you will have no problems meeting MSID’s December 1 deadline.

UMN 13-Credit Policy

University of Minnesota students are required to maintain a minimum enrollment of 13 credits per semester or maintain the minimum credit enrollment determined by their study abroad program, whichever is greater. For certain semester programs, 12 credits is considered a full-time course load.
Academic Culture

Academic Rigor
The program is designed to be academically rigorous, and it is each student’s responsibility to maintain good study habits and complete assignments on time.

Students will need to learn to function simultaneously in two cultural contexts. Local time as experienced in the village or the family may be more fluid and informal than “MSID time.” It is important to learn to flow with local time; it is equally important to retain enough structure and self-discipline in the academic part of life to avoid getting behind on assignments. Students who fail to attend class or who miss internship or research hours without prior permission from the on-site director will be dismissed from the program.

Books & Materials
All required books and materials will be provided to you once in Bangalore and are included in your program fee.

Grades & Transcripts
Grades will be posted to the University of Minnesota transcript 6–8 weeks after the LAC has received them from the program. Grades will be converted into US equivalents, if necessary, prior to being posted on the University of Minnesota transcript. The LAC will provide one free transcript to the home institution of all non-University of Minnesota students. Additional transcripts can be ordered separately on the One Stop Student Services website: http://onestop.umn.edu.

Incompletes
MSID does not grant incompletes or allow students to opt out of a particular course. All coursework, including the directed research projects, must be handed in by the end of the program. Rare exceptions can be requested in cases such as serious health problems or family emergencies. These exceptions must be approved in advance by the on-site director.

Grade Appeals
If you wish to question a grade issued for a particular course after the program is completed, you must provide evidence that the professor made an error in his/her grade calculation. The following are not reasonable grounds for grade appeal:

- Differences between US and host country educational systems
- Personal disappointment in the grade outcome
- Comparison with one’s own prior academic record/GPA
- Failure to complete one or more assignments
- Minimum grade requirement of college/department or home university
- Health concerns/missed classes

Consult with your program contact in the LAC if you believe an error has occurred and you wish to complete the Grade Petition Form.

Student Grievances
Academic grievances are complaints brought by students regarding the provision of education and academic support services affecting their role as students. For grievances concerning University of Minnesota Learning Abroad Center or affiliated programs offered through the LAC, students should make inquiries and appeals to the appropriate University officials, in the following order: the program representative in the LAC, the Assistant Dean for Learning Abroad, the Student Conflict Resolution Center, and the Office of the General Counsel. For complaints concerning non-University of Minnesota programs, students should make appeals to the program sponsor.

Living in India

History Resources
India is officially named the Republic of India. (The official Sanskrit name for India is Bharat, the name of the legendary king in the Mahabharata.) Located in South Asia, India is the seventh largest country and second most populous country in the world. India’s population is just over one billion, falling only below China. The capital is Delhi.

India consists of three major geographic regions from north to south: the Himalayas and associated mountain ranges; the northern plain; and a diverse southern region of highlands and plains.

Economy
Over the past decade, India has been shifting from a “mixed” economy with substantial government ownership and widespread regulation toward a neoliberal economic model with reduced government ownership and regulation. Agriculture still accounts for about two-thirds of the labor force but for only about one-third of the gross domestic product (GDP). The service sector yields two-fifths of the GDP; and the steadily expanding manufacturing sector provides as much as one-fourth of the GDP. India’s economic growth, though fairly steady since independence in 1947, has been undramatic, and its gross national product (GNP per capita) remains one of the lowest in the world. Despite a substantial and expanding middle class, a large proportion of the population still lives below a meager poverty line.
Despite much land-reform legislation, less than half the country’s peasantry own land, and most peasants are still subsistence cultivators. Landlessness, tenant farming, and debt remain serious problems. Rice and wheat are the principal staple crops, followed by various millets, legumes, corn (maize), and oil seeds, while the chief cash crops are cotton, sugarcane, coconut, spices, jute, tobacco, tea, coffee, and rubber. India’s combined population of cattle and water buffalo is by far the world’s largest, and goats, sheep, and camels are also numerous. The government manages most of the rapidly diminishing forests.

**Geography & Climate**

Bangalore enjoys mild climatic conditions throughout the year. June to September is monsoon season, with heavy downpours. In September or October, the monsoon season ends and the weather generally is dry—October can get warm. Spring semester students should be prepared for a dramatic (and pleasant) swing in temperatures, especially outside Bangalore. Winters are a little chilly and cold during nights. Be prepared for chilly weather in December, January, and February and bring appropriate clothing (light sweaters, jackets, and so on). Late spring months, just before monsoon season, are warm, especially March and April, with occasional precipitation. To avoid unwanted attention, dress conservatively—keep arms, shoulders, and knees covered.


**Language(s) of the Country**

More than 780 different languages are spoken in India. Hindi and English are the official languages used by the central government. In Bangalore, you will hear Hindi, English, Kannada, and Tamil, among other languages. Communication is a unique experience in Bangalore because not everyone speaks each other’s language, even in daily interactions, and you will often hear a mixture of English words amongst one of the indigenous languages. Certainly in Bangalore, everyone speaks some level of English depending on their educational level and socio-economic background.

**Food Considerations**

Eating is a daily adventure in India, and many students find American food bland after months of Indian spices. In most households everyone eats with fingers from a plate—always with the right hand. Using the left hand is considered unacceptable. Dinner is frequently served between 7:30 and 9:30 p.m., and many families are vegetarian. Significant time is put into the preparation of meals, so remember to notify your family well in advance before missing a meal.

It is important not to eat food from local vendors, as the ingredients may not be fresh or properly hygienic. Students easily become quite ill if they venture into street vendors quickly. It is always best to eat with the host family, in well established restaurants, or food prepared at or delivered to the MSID center. The on-site staff will provide you with the contact information for safe fast food that can be delivered to the MSID center for lunch using a web application or texting.

For a natural electrolyte beverage, which is particularly welcome during the warm months, try a fresh green coconut from a street vendor. Be certain that the vendor opens the coconut in front of you, and you can drink the coconut water and eat the soft coconut flesh.

It is particularly critical to drink only bottled water throughout your stay, including water that you use to rinse your toothbrush. Water in soft plastic bags is not safe, and water from street vendors may actually be tap water resealed. Always purchase water from well-established stores. The MSID center also provides filtered water.

**Utility Usage**

Electricity and water are very precious commodities in India. Be certain to shut off lights and be very thoughtful in your use of water, particularly in the homestay and at the internship site.

**Relationships**

Given the significant cultural differences between the United States and India, MSID strongly encourages students to prioritize their academic experience and seek cultural experiences through their host family environment. What might be considered a casual drink or meal with a person of interest can have a much more significant meaning abroad, and extracting oneself from a misinterpreted encounter can be both emotionally painful and embarrassing. It is also important to remember that it is very difficult for you to determine safely who might be genuinely interested in you and who has ulterior motives (such as stealing your passport, money, or seeking a visa to the US).

**Living in Bangalore**

Bangalore is a city of more than eight million inhabitants and lacks the ability to enforce thoughtful urban planning. As a result, it is city of contrasts, traffic, and constant visual and auditory stimulation. Since there are no street signs, all directions are given in relation to major monuments, buildings and parks. Bangalore is also considered the “garden city,” and the tropical plants, fruits, and many green spaces are noticeable and a welcome place of calm. Public transportation consists of buses, motorized rickshaws, and taxis. There is also a limited metro system above ground, which is still mostly under construction.

It is helpful to read about Bangalore and its many features in a thorough travel guide such as Lonely Planet.
Communication

Email & Internet

The MSID office has several laptops and wireless access, and you are encouraged to bring an inexpensive laptop for academic and personal use. Internet cafés are commercially available at reasonable rates throughout India. Cost varies greatly from place to place. MSID will provide additional information after you arrive. Few host families may have Internet access, and you are requested to use only outside facilities. If the host family does have Internet access, you may be asked to pay an additional fee for the cost of electricity if you use the Internet frequently in their home.

Social Media

Not all countries share the same laws about freedom of expression that we have in the US. Keep in mind that derogatory comments, especially on social media, can result in legal claims and have extended legal implications even after you have returned to the United States.

Phones

All host families in Bangalore have telephones. However, that does not mean they are available for calling friends and family, including receiving calls. Ask the family about the use of the home telephone. There is a toll for local calls, so please use the phone sparingly. Some families may request reimbursement.

To call the US, you could use a Skype account where there is Wi-Fi or buy specific plans to add on their cell phones. There are public phone offices in every neighborhood called ISD/STD booths. More information will be provided in Bangalore.

Remind your family of the time difference before you depart. India is approximately 12 hours ahead of Minnesota.

The MSID India program requires all students to purchase and carry cell phones while on the program. This is not only a good safety precaution, it also facilitates communication between students and program staff. MSID India on-site program staff will assist students with selecting and obtaining cell phones and service contracts. The cost of the cell phones are included in the program’s budget estimate. The service contract or minutes that are purchased by students are not included in the budget estimate.

Mail

Air mail takes about two weeks to reach India from the US. Letters posted to Bangalore arrive much faster than letters sent to smaller towns. It is advisable to send everything first class airmail. Any valuable items should be sent via FedEx or DHL to the MSID office. Do not attempt to send a parcel or letter by surface mail; it will take at least three months. Even air parcels typically take one to two months. Ask friends and relatives not to send anything you do not request.

Money Matters

Credit Cards

A credit card is a good resource for emergency situations and for obtaining cash advances, including cash for emergency situations, as long as you have a personal PIN. It is important to know your PIN in both letters and numbers. Please note that some ATMs require that the card have a metal “chip” visible on the front for added security. Many US credit cards now have this chip, but it is wise to ask your credit card company whether they can issue you a “chip credit card” if you do not yet have one.

Keep in mind that you may incur fees for using your credit card abroad. Be sure to notify your bank and credit card company that you will be traveling abroad for the semester/summer. If you do not, they may assume your foreign transactions are fraudulent and may deny further transactions.

In the rural areas, credit cards are not useful, but in large cities and some tourist centers, they are convenient. Credit cards are now frequently used in Bangalore and most small towns, though usually only at selected businesses like large grocery stores, restaurants, train stations, shopping malls, and hotels.

Financial Planning

The rupee is the official currency of India. Bills are issued in denominations of 10, 20, 50, 100, 500 and 1000 rupees, and coins are available in 0.1, 0.25, 0.5, 1, 2, and 5 rupee coins. You can check the current exchange rates at http://xe.com/ucc. It is helpful to exchange $100 upon arrival at the airport. Note that Indian laws do not permit you to bring rupees into India, even if these can be made available at a US exchange bureau, or carry them out of the country.

We recommend that you carry only a small amount of cash with you at any given time. You should use a money belt for carrying larger sums of money, ATM or credit cards, and traveler’s checks. As with any large city, pickpocketing occurs in Bangalore and other Indian cities, so be alert in crowded areas like markets or on buses and trains.

Consult the program budget sheets on the MSID country website for recommended spending amounts and plan to bring the appropriate amount. Refer to a travel guide, such as Lonely Planet, for estimated daily expenses. Your host family will provide two daily meals (breakfast and dinner) during the week and all three meals on the weekend. You will need to budget for your weekday lunches, bottled water, local transportation, and other miscellaneous expenses.

Personal spending habits vary too greatly to predict exactly how much it will cost you to live in India during the program. Expenses tend to be higher in major cities than in most other locations. But wherever you are, the amount...
you spend will depend on your lifestyle and your own objectives in participating in MSID. The big variables are optional activities such as nights out, music or dance lessons, gifts, and especially recreational travel. You should budget accordingly. In the past, many students have found that they spent much more money than they had anticipated. When asked what they spent it on, however, most have said travel.

Extracurricular Activities

There are many parks, festivals and temples to visit in and around Bangalore. Mysore is also accessible for a day or overnight trip. The on-site staff can assist you in hiring affordable drivers, particularly if you plan to travel outside the city or overnight. Drivers are inexpensive, reliable, and safe. Consult a reliable guidebook, such as Lonely Planet, for free-time excursion suggestions.

If you will be visiting Delhi and the Taj Mahal after the program or during an official break period, you can contact Vinstring Travel (http://vinstring.com) and direct your questions to the owner, Vini. He can provide transport from the airport to the YMCA, which is well located in Delhi, and can arrange transport and lodging in and around Delhi as well as to Jaipur and/or the Taj Mahal for a very reasonable fee. Taxis from the Delhi airport are not safe in Delhi, and we recommend that you use Vini’s services to provide safe and reliable support.

For travel to the south, students have recommended http://tranquilresort.com as a beautiful destination. Students have traveled with a driver as a small group, and the trip takes four days to reach this part of Karala.

Tips from Students

The following student comments may be helpful as you prepare for your upcoming experience:

- “Be prepared for a very large and busy city. Take the time to go to a park or find a quiet place to decompress from the city stimulation.”
- “Be sure to get out and see various cultural heritage sites and festivals. It takes careful advance planning, and it is best to travel in small groups.”
- “Ask the on-site staff if you have any questions about your homestay experience. Small matters can build up easily and can be solved just as easily if you keep communication a priority.”
- “Definitely try fresh coconuts!”
- “Find a partner and undertake activities together. It really helps to have two people to plan in a new city.”

Social & Cultural Adjustments

Student Identity

As a foreigner in India, you will need to take the initiative to meet people. Don’t be afraid to start a conversation with others.

Race & Ethnicity

You may wish to consult the resources available at the University of Minnesota Learning Abroad Center (LAC) related to students of color and learning abroad. For more information, visit: UMabroad.umn.edu/students/identity.

Diversity & MSID

Race can influence students’ perspectives on their host country. Past participants of color tell us that the differences between their experiences and those of Euro-Americans can include both advantages and disadvantages. Students of color often learn a great deal about their identity as a US citizen through an experience in a foreign country, and they sometimes find the new cultural context quite liberating. On the other hand, they occasionally encounter new forms of prejudice and discrimination. It is important that participants of all races avoid projecting American assumptions and attitudes about race onto the host culture. For example, definitions of racial categories, if they exist at all, may be very different from those in the US.

It is difficult to generalize about the overt and covert levels of racism that may or may not exist in any given culture, or to predict what a particular student’s personal experience will be. It can be said that any experience abroad will be a combination of circumstances, attitude, and coping skills. Some study abroad offices have put together resources for students of color who are preparing to study abroad. You should contact your own study abroad office or a member of the LAC MSID staff for additional information.

Students going to a location related to their ethnic heritage might wish to examine critically their expectations in advance. If part of your reason for enrolling in MSID is to explore your own identity, be careful not to romanticize what you might find. Students often discover that local people perceive them much more in terms of their American identity than their racial or ethnic background. You may gain rich insights into your roots, but do not expect members of the host society to treat you as a returning brother or sister.
Gender

Gender roles tend to be more rigidly defined in India, especially in rural areas, than they are today in the US. You may find that people respond quite differently to you depending on whether you are male or female. You may also observe a strongly gender-based division of labor in your homestay family or your agency. This sometimes challenges students’ cross-cultural understanding and skills. As in other areas, try to understand what is going on rather than to judge. It is all right to gently test the limits of gender roles—for example, if you are male to see what happens when you offer a couple of times to help with the dishes in your homestay, or if you are female to try to be more assertive than you observe among female colleagues in your agency—and be sensitive to the feedback you receive. Above all, resist any temptation to launch a one-person crusade to change things. For example, even if you feel that your homestay mother and sisters are “oppressed,” you will not be able to “liberate” them, and any attempt to do so could irreparably harm your relations with your family.

Many women experience “cat calls” and other forms of gender harassment while overseas. Be prepared in advance for this possibility and consider the following coping strategies: look straight ahead and keep walking; walk with a purpose and do not appear to be wandering without aim, walk quickly and with confidence; say “no” or “no, thank you” with conviction; consider wearing local attire to help you blend in (shawls, head scarves, etc. can reduce the possibility of intruders catching your eye and attention); develop a tough skin and do not take the matter personally; avoid walking alone or at night.

Cultural norms concerning relations between men and women, including dating, vary considerably among developing countries, and even from one region to another or between rural and urban settings. This topic will be included in your in-country orientation. When in doubt concerning what behavior is acceptable, consult with a trusted MSID staff or faculty member.

Sexual Orientation

Attitudes toward sexuality vary greatly from country to country. Some cultures are open about homosexuality, and strong gay communities exist in many cities. However, some cultures and peoples are intolerant of different sexual preferences, and strict taboos or laws against such relationships may exist. As a result, it is important to disclose to the program staff either through the program housing form or by contacting the LAC program staff directly for guidance. For more information, visit: UMabroad.umn.edu/students/identity.

Attitudes toward sexuality in India are very traditional. People are generally intolerant of different sexual preferences, and strict taboos and laws against such relationships exist. We encourage you to find out how different sexual preferences are viewed overseas and where your support may exist, so that your time overseas can be as enriching as possible. Consult with the LAC staff for more information on gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender issues if you have any questions.

Disabilities

Many of the disability accommodations or services that are provided at US universities may be different or unavailable overseas. Being in a new environment can also be stressful, and accommodations that you may not have needed at home may become necessary in an unfamiliar setting. Participants with any kind of disability, whether hidden or visible, should contact the LAC in advance to discuss their particular needs. For more information, visit: UMabroad.umn.edu/students/identity.

MSID in-country staff are more than willing to help locate personal assistance or arrange testing accommodations as needed, so long as they learn early enough of your needs. The level of physical accessibility varies from country to country. For example, wheelchair-accessible transportation or elevators may be non-existent in India. On the other hand, local people tend to be very supportive and will often assist you in gaining access to public transportation or buildings. It is important to consider your comfort level in asking for access assistance while abroad.

Diversity among Program Participants

Whatever your own sexual orientation, gender, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, or physical ability, keep in mind that you will be part of a diverse group. Some differences will be obvious or made known to you, others will not. Sensitivity to diversity within your own group will further enrich your experience abroad. Some of your most powerful learning experiences may revolve around differences within your group. MSID participants also come from extremely varied academic backgrounds. Majors range from the social sciences or humanities to fields such as engineering, business, or agriculture. An economics or political science student who has taken considerable coursework on development may find that some aspects of the academic coursework are repetitious; on the other hand, the field experiences in MSID offer a rich opportunity to explore the application of theory to practical settings. An engineering major may have little background in development or cross-cultural communication but may have practical skills and knowledge that make internship placements easier to find than for a liberal arts major. A student with limited course preparation relevant to MSID may bring a wealth of volunteer experience or social and political activism to the program. All students are strong in some dimensions and weak in others. Be prepared to share your strengths and to draw on those of your classmates.
Cultural Adjustment

The On-Site Experience

What happens when you suddenly lose clues and symbols that orient you to situations in everyday life? What happens when facial expressions, gestures, and words are unfamiliar? The psychological discomfort and adjustment period in a foreign country is commonly known as culture shock or cultural adjustment.

You will almost certainly experience some form of culture shock. It might hit you after two days, two weeks, or two months—timing varies widely for different people. Six common phases of cultural adjustment are listed below. These may be out of order for you, one phase may last longer than another, or you may skip a step entirely.

Initial Fascination: On arrival, your surroundings seem glamorous and exotic. You feel like the focus of attention and activity.

Initial Culture Shock: The initial fascination and euphoria fade as you settle in and you enter an emotional decline.

Surface Adjustment: After the initial “down” (a few days to a few weeks for most), you begin to truly adjust and settle into your surroundings. Language skills begin to improve, and you’ll feel less fatigued. Often you’ll be forming a small group of friends at this stage as well.

Feelings of Isolation: Difficulties in your new culture seem to stubbornly remain and you grow frustrated with the process. A sense of isolation sets in. Boredom and a lack of motivation often follow. Unresolved personal issues often surface during this stage.

Integration/Acceptance: After continued effort you find yourself more at ease with language, friends, and professional and academic interests. The culture you are living in is more easily examined. Differences between yourself and the society you live in become understandable and you come to accept both the situation and yourself in it, allowing you to relax and feel at home.

Return Anxiety: Just when you feel at home in the new country it’s time to go. Thoughts of leaving new friends raise anxiety similar to those felt before departure. You sense that you’ve changed as a person, and apprehension grows when you think about people at home who may not understand your new feelings and insights, yet you may feel guilty for wanting to stay.

When in any of the above phases, you may experience changes in sleeping habits, feelings of helplessness or hopelessness, loneliness, depression, unexplainable crying, placing blame for difficulties on the program or host culture, homesickness, getting angry easily, increase in physical ailments or pain, compulsive eating, or lack of appetite.

Other symptoms may manifest themselves as well. It is important to understand these are part of a normal process of adjustment; however, if uncomfortable feelings persist for extended periods or seem unbearable, seek assistance from your program’s on-site support staff.

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![Cultural Adjustment Curve](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

Adjusted from Otberg (1960) and Galloway (1963)
Looking Ahead

Career Information

Linking Undergraduate International Experience to Your Future Career

Learning abroad can help you develop and enhance intercultural competencies that are appealing to potential employers and graduate schools. Think about your academic and career goals before, during, and after your experience abroad. For more information, visit: UMabroad.umn.edu/students/career-info.

Re-Entry

Students often find that it is just as difficult, if not more difficult, to readjust to life in the US after studying abroad. You may find that your perspectives have changed significantly and that you may not connect with friends and family in the same way you did before going abroad. The LAC offers a variety of resources and opportunities to help you readjust to life in the US. For more information, visit: UMabroad.umn.edu/students/process/reentry.

In the particular case of MSID, the following tend to be among the biggest issues:

Poverty and affluence: MSID students catch many glimpses of the meaning of real poverty. You will gain a new perspective on resource use as you observe the austerity of most people’s lives in your host country. Everything is used until it is worn out, then re-used by someone else who is still poorer. Your host family may discourage you from showering more than a minute or two per day in order to conserve water, or from reading late at night because of the energy that a light bulb consumes. Then, when you return home, you may experience a profound sense of resentment at over-consumption and waste in the US. People in the US may seem to have far too much, and their dissatisfaction about still not having enough may seem incomprehensible.

US influence: Living in another country, especially a poorer one, affords many opportunities to observe the economic, political, and cultural roles the US and its corporations play on the global stage. Especially when viewed from the perspective of the poor in your host country, those roles may seem less than constructive. Upon return to the US, you may feel resentful that such issues trouble your friends and family members so much less than you think they should.

Ignorance and distortion: You may find yourself intensely resentful of the US media. Coverage of the rest of the world, when it exists at all, may seem shallow and ethnocentric, and the depths of American ignorance may appall you. Remember, though, that you were probably almost equally ignorant of your future host country a year ago.

Social justice: The inequalities of your host society probably hit you daily throughout your MSID experience. Upon return, you will likely be more attuned to see the inequalities in our own society. You will find yourself asking why so rich a country should have the most inequitable distribution of income and wealth anywhere in the industrialized world, and you may find it strange that others here can be so oblivious to injustice.

Values and pace: The MSID experience leads many students to reexamine their own values and lifestyle. Although the slow pace of life in your host society may have been frustrating initially, you finally did learn how to just “be,” rather than always needing to “do.” Now the hectic pace of US life may well feel disconcerting, even offensive. US society may seem obsessed with productivity, leaving little time for cultivating the human relationships you have found central to your host culture. director and the program coordinator maintain frequent email communication with the MSID staff in Minnesota.

MSID is likely to prove to be one of the most profound learning experiences of your life. It will not always be easy, but if you are willing to invest the requisite amounts of emotional and intellectual energy, you will be forever changed. MSID staff and faculty will do everything in their power to assist you in this adventure, but ultimately it is you who will make the experience what it is.

Appendix

Packing

The following is a list developed by past MSID students and in-country staff. Adapt it to suit your own style and priorities. You will not need all the items on the packing list; they are only suggestions. Women should bring fewer clothes because Indian clothing is far more practical and more comfortable and attracts far less attention.

Clothing
- 2 pairs of comfortable shoes
- 1 pair of sandals
- 2 dress outfits for women—buy Indian clothes
- Lots of underwear, durable bras
- Lightweight socks
- T-shirts
- Tank tops
- Skirts/dresses that extend below the knee
- 3–4 pairs of pants (jeans, khakis, etc.)
1–2 long-sleeve lightweight shirts
Several short-sleeve shirts
1 long-sleeve warm top
Sweatpants (light-weight)
Shorts (hiking/sport style) for beach and sports wear
Bathing suit—one-piece for women
Bandanas or handkerchiefs
Lightweight waterproof jacket
Lightweight sweater
Lightweight long-sleeve, long-leg pajamas
Sun hat/cap
Scarf and knit hat for chilly weather

Household/Personal Items
Money belt containing passport, international immunization record, credit card, cash card, traveler's checks, any dollars you are taking in cash, etc.
1 or 2 towels and washcloths
Umbrella/rain coat
Travel alarm
Digital camera with extra batteries (recharging is only possible with a voltage converter)
Film or digital flashcards (most film/batteries/developing are available in country)
Many Ziploc plastic baggies
Flashlight with extra batteries
Sleeping bag, lightweight sleep sack (handy for travel, sometimes necessary for rural or even urban homestay)
1 or 2 water bottles
Sewing kit, safety pins
Wristwatch
Music player
Electric converter and adapter if you are taking electrical items
Contact information of friends/family/academic contacts
Guide book (e.g., Lonely Planet or Rough Guide)
Pocket knife
Photographs of friends and family, your house, your community, etc.
Locks for luggage
Combo lock/padlock for locking room at NGO
Zip/flash drive
Journal
Clothesline

Health Items & Toiletries
A full supply of prescription drugs in original bottles (in case customs needs documentation); include one prescription for bacterial dysentery and directions for its use; malaria medications
First-aid kit
Insect repellent (at least 21% DEET)
Condoms, birth control
Tampons (expensive or unavailable in country)—cardboard because Indians burn trash and plastic won't burn—or a DivaCup
Bladder infection/yeast infection medication
Anti-diarrheal medicine
Pepto-Bismol or similar stomach settler, Imodium
Laxatives
Small packages of tissue or toilet paper
Pain medicines
Sunscreen, lip balm (high SPF), aloe vera for sunburns
Anti-itch cream
Eye drops, all contact lens materials needed for your stay, an extra pair of glasses and a copy of your prescription
Earplugs
Sunglasses
Vitamins
Hand sanitizer
Sanitary moist wipes
Toiletries: soap, deodorant, shampoo, and toothpaste are all easily available in country (but take enough for first few weeks); dental floss (take enough for your stay), nail clippers, toothbrush, hairbrush or comb, razor
Thermometer to detect a fever. In hot climates, it is very difficult to assess a fever independently.
Granola bars
Water filter/purifier, iodine tablets
MSID Habits

MSID seeks to foster in its participants nine lifelong habits of mind, heart, and action. The program has been deliberately designed to help its participants acquire these habits.

Habit 1: Think, Feel, & Act Holistically
MSID helps students value many kinds of knowledge and ways of knowing. It asks them to cultivate not only the cognitive domain but also the affective and behavioral and to appreciate not only Western linear approaches but also more holistic non-Western approaches.

Habit 2: Extract Meaning from Experience
After leaving the university, most people receive information not through neatly organized lectures or textbooks but through real-world events. MSID’s experiential pedagogy provides opportunities to hone important observational and analytical skills. Field experiences and writing assignments push students to move continually back and forth between experience and ideas. MSID challenges students to apply theories, concepts, and modes of analysis to help understand their experiences but also to critique these same theories, concepts, and tools in light of those experiences. MSID strives to produce alumni who are actively attentive to their surroundings, who have learned to spot the significant in the midst of the mundane, and who seek to produce ongoing dialogue between theory and practice.

Habit 3: Understand the Intimate Relationship between Knowledge & Power
As MSID students seek to understand how poverty, discrimination, and powerlessness are produced and manipulated, and as they dissect “knowledge” about development, they come to see more clearly that knowledge is socially constructed. MSID alumni should reflexively ask who has produced particular knowledge, on what perceptions of reality that knowledge is built, whose interests it serves, and how knowledge based on other realities and interests might differ. They will be aware that the public arena reflects some realities better than others. MSID is intentionally cross-class as well as cross-cultural. MSID alumni should constantly reflect on what voices are absent or distorted in public discourse and in media portrayals. They should wonder how civic dialogue would change if valuing a diversity of voices and opinions were the norm rather than the exception. They should seek to hear those multiple voices themselves and to help them reach the ears of others.

Habit 4: Savor Diversity
Working in boundary zones generates creativity. Through classroom study, homestays, internships, excursions, and field assignments, MSID brings students into interfaces across boundaries of culture, social class, religion, and ideological perspective. Program alumni should be eager to move beyond their comfort zones and resist the temptation to surround themselves only with people like themselves. Knowing that reality is too complex to yield to the tools and insights of a single academic tradition, they should be addicted to interdisciplinary thinking and should seek always to understand a variety of perspectives before formulating their own positions.

Habit 5: Invoke the Global Context
The MSID experience pushes students to examine local and national issues in their host countries in the context of great forces—economic, political, social, environmental, cultural—that are reshaping the globe. Students often conclude that the dominant approaches are not working and that the world’s problems require a rethinking of development and intercultural relations at all levels. MSID alumni, by second nature, should consider the global context as they seek to understand and address issues in their own communities. In the quest for alternatives, they should be capable of questioning the assumptions that underlie current ways of doing things, and of thinking creatively about alternatives. Moreover, having come to a new appreciation for the perspectives and strengths of at least one society within the Global South, they should have an ongoing impulse to help others share that appreciation. In ways big or small, they should find themselves striving to build north-south bridges.

Habit 6: Take a Long-Term Perspective
Political systems and the marketplace give disproportional weight to the short term (e.g., the latest poll results or quarterly financial reports). MSID asks students to question models of “development” that are unsustainable and to challenge “progress” that is based on borrowing from those yet to come. MSID alumni should ask how decisions—individually and as a society—affect posterity. They should imagine what the voices of future generations would say if they could be heard and how to live keeping these voices in mind.
**Habit 7: Cultivate Empathy**

MSID helps students develop the capacity to experience aspects of reality from the frame of reference of others, to value their skills and insights, and to walk—at least mentally—in their shoes. An ability to identify with others casts suspicion on the asymmetry inherent in many efforts to promote development and social justice. MSID alumni should have not only a bent toward empathy but an aversion to condescension. When reflection and analysis lead them to couple empathy with action, they should instinctively eschew a vocabulary of “helping” in favor of “working with,” “joining the struggle of,” or “learning with.”

**Habit 8: Foster Community**

MSID students are immersed in societies less individualistic than their own. Their internships and homestays often prove a powerful venue for experiencing the magic of community. At the same time, they are part of a second kind of community—a community of learners. MSID students have a responsibility not only to maximize their own learning but to assist in the learning of their classmates. In the MSID model, all teachers are learners and all learners are teachers. The MSID experience should leave alumni with a respect for the power of community and a commitment to contributing effectively to the communities in which they participate.

**Habit 9: Translate Insights & Values into Action**

By immersing themselves in alternative realities, MSID students gain new insights into their own. By learning about the other, they rethink who they are. By directly participating in work within the host country, they act on their learning. Through writing assignments and group discussions, they continually reflect on their own relationship to issues of injustice and social change. As they gain new self-understanding, they re-examine what is important to them and what kind of lives they wish to live—as professionals, as consumers, as investors, as parents, as citizens. This re-examination should be not a one-time event but a lifelong process. MSID alumni should lead lives of effective action coupled with critical reflection. They should have a lifelong passion for justice and a lifelong habit of thoughtful civic engagement.
INDEPENDENT TRAVEL FORM

This form must be completed for all independent travel as indicated by the release and waiver you signed prior to participation (https://gps.umn.edu/registration/release/245). Failure to complete in full and submit prior to departure will be grounds for review and sanctions as outlined in the Policy on Student Conduct in Education Abroad Opportunities (UMabroad.umn.edu/assets/files/PDFs/policies/rightsResponsibilities/studentConduct.pdf).

Note:
1. Students are not allowed to travel to a country under a US State Department Travel Warning or one not recognized by the US government (e.g., North Korea) without prior approval. A copy of the suspension committee approval is required with this form.
2. Independent travel should not interfere with academic work, classes, or events. On-site staff has the authority to deny travel due to such conflicts.
3. Failure to return on time may be subject to dismissal. Travel with your program contact details and keep the staff updated on any changes to your plans.

Complete one form per student, per trip.

Student name: ___________________________ Cell phone (if applicable): ___________________________

Proposed destination(s): ____________________________________________________________

Departure date: ____________________________ Return date: _____________________________

US emergency contact name, email, and phone number: ____________________________

Contact information while traveling (below):

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<th>Dates at this location</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Name of hotel or host</th>
<th>Phone number</th>
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Additional information:

Signatures

Student Signature                      Date

Authorized On-Site Staff Signature        Date

Note to on-site staff: The form must be signed and dated by both the student and the authorized on-site staff person prior to travel and kept on file for the duration of program period.