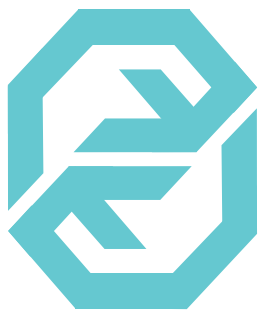


MSID Thailand

PROGRAM HANDBOOK 2019



Important Names & Addresses

In the United States

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

Abby Fink, Enrollment Specialist
Phone: 612.301.6807
Email: finkx196@umn.edu

Ryan McCarthy, Associate Program Director
Phone: 612.626.7561
Email: mccar313@umn.edu

Vanessa Walton, Program Director
Phone: 612.625.0195
Email: vwalton@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 MSID Thailand staff in case of an emergency.

In Thailand

International Sustainable Development
Studies Institute (ISDSI)
47 Chotana Rd.
Chang Puak Sub-District
Muang, Chiang Mai 50300
Thailand
Mobile phone (24 hours): +66.82.381.2634
Office phone (M–F: 9–5 p.m. UTC+7) : +66.53.218.931

Telephone Codes

To call the Thailand from the US, follow these dialing directions:

1. First dial 011, the US exit code.
2. Next dial 66, the country code for Thailand.
3. Then dial the phone number.

Time Differences

Thailand is 12 hours ahead of Minnesota (Central Time). Note that due to daylight saving time, the time difference is 11 hours during certain points of the year.

Program Health & Safety

Program health and safety information is available at 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 in dialogue and reciprocal learning with people from Africa, Asia, and Latin America concerning local and global development issues. Through grassroots internships and research development projects, MSID participants gain first-hand 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.

Learning from experience is the core of MSID. The program puts you in direct contact with the social and economic realities of actual communities and of people working within them to address complex problems. You will learn through classes, field trips and an extended internship or research placement.

Preparation & Planning

Documents

Passport

A valid passport is required to enter Thailand. 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.

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 usembassy.gov.

Visa/Immigration Documents

Students on the MSID Thailand program are required to have a visa to travel to Thailand. Details on the visa process can be found on the program webpage: UMabroad.umn.edu/programs/asia-oceania/msid-thailand/apply/visa.

Non-US Passport Holders

Students who are not traveling under a US passport may have to follow different visa procedures in order to enter Thailand. Contact the adviser for your program for assistance in determining the correct visa process.

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.

Once in country, your local MSID staff will give you advice about keeping your passport and visa secure.

Your passport and visa are valuable documents. Do not lose them. You cannot leave Thailand without them. 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.

Coordinated Group 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: 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.

While students are not required to book through Village Travel, they are expected to arrive on the coordinated flight arriving into Chiang Mai. If you would like to request a deviation from the coordinated flight, you must get prior approval from the LAC.

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.

Arriving Early

Due to visa regulations, students cannot arrive in Thailand more than 7 days prior to the start of the program. Students who arrive in country prior to the official start date will be

responsible for their own housing, food, and transportation until the official start date of the program. You will not have access to program staff or facilities. Students are also responsible for making sure they are compliant with immigration requirements associated with an early arrival.

Staying After the Program

If you intend to stay in Thailand 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.

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 Thailand, 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 Thailand. If you wish to pack a running outfit, choose athletic pants or shorts that extend to the knee. If you wear tank tops, choose modest ones.

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 or duffle bags 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. 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 Thailand than in the US. However, some products could be more expensive in Thailand and not 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 checked 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.

Required Thai University Student Uniform

From the first day of orientation forward, students are required to dress in the same style that is worn by Thai university students. All Thai university students wear a standard outfit. For women, this outfit is a short-sleeve white blouse (buttons up the front) with a collar (not a T-shirt) and a plain black skirt. For men, this outfit is a button-down, short-sleeve, collared white shirt (not a T-shirt) and black trousers (no jeans). For both women and men, nice sandals for women are appropriate footwear. Rubber flip-flops are not acceptable for classes.

This is the required dress for classes, including orientation sessions. Foreign students who dress in the university outfit in Thailand have found that they are immediately identified as university students, not as tourists, and that most people speak to them in Thai first instead of attempting English (or not speaking with them at all). Thus, dressing this way is not only culturally appropriate; it works to your advantage. It is also cheaper, since local taxis will often charge you the local rate, rather than the tourist rate. Wearing the Thai school uniform will also help keep you safer because you will be seen as part of the community with connections to local people rather than as a tourist just passing through Chiang Mai who might be viewed as an easier target.

Appropriate Personal Appearance & Etiquette

For the same reasons you will be required to wear the Thai school uniform while on the program, there are guidelines regarding appropriate appearance outside of the classroom. Personal appearance is very important in Thailand as a measure of respect to other people, and you will find that dressing appropriately means that you are shown more respect in return. While some allowance is made for the differing customs of foreigners, Thais respond more positively to well-dressed Westerners. Traditionally, Thais are modest and conservative dressers. At a minimum your clothes should be neat, clean, and free from holes or tears. Except at the beach or at sacred sites, normal Western dress is acceptable for both men and women, but avoid clothing showing a lot of skin. Pants are preferable to shorts, blouses should have capped sleeves, and if tank tops are worn, the straps should be thick (i.e., not spaghetti straps).

Taking off your shoes at temples and private homes is mandatory etiquette, and this may even be requested at some shops. Wear shoes that slip on and off easily. Flip-flops, hiking sandals, and clog-type shoes are usually a good pragmatic choice for traveling in Thailand; only in the most top-end establishments are shoes required.

Displaying a tattoo in Thailand sends a different message about your background than in the US. Tattoos are often associated with magic, criminals, and gangsters and should be kept covered when necessary. Thais also view piercings in a more conservative way. Earrings of a reasonable size and number are fine for women, as is a small discreet nose stud (not hoop), but any earrings or piercings for men are not culturally appropriate. Facial piercings or tongue studs are also not appropriate for men or women.

Many hairstyles that are common in the US are viewed unfavorably in Thailand and may have negative connotations. Long hair or facial hair for men is not common and is frowned upon, especially for university students. Consider either cutting your hair or keeping your facial hair trimmed and tidy. Shaved heads or dreadlocks are also looked down upon. Dreadlocks when worn by white tourists are often associated with drug use and backpacker culture, however they are considered more socially acceptable when worn by black tourists. Unnatural hair color (e.g., blue or green) is also viewed unfavorably and will draw negative attention. It is best to keep your hair a natural color while on the program.

If your religion dictates a certain style of dress or facial hair, you are not required to follow any of these rules that conflict with your religious beliefs, but you should discuss any concerns with the LAC staff prior to departure. In general, the program staff cannot require you to dress or style your hair in a certain way, but choosing to ignore these guidelines may make it challenging for the program staff to

identify a host family willing to accept you into their home and find you an internship placement.

Choosing to follow these guidelines is part of adapting to your host culture and acting in a respectful way to the Thai community where you will be living. Just as important as honoring the cultural norms of your host community, following these guidelines will help you avoid unwanted negative attention and contribute to a safer, more respectful environment.

Laundry

Some families will offer to do your laundry for you, while others will show you how to do so on your own. Similarly, some families insist on washing underwear separately from other garments and may consider it a very private matter taken care of independently. Since dryers are infrequent, have sufficient undergarments for the delay in receiving your items back.

A Note on Electricity

American and European style plugs will work in Thai outlets, which are a hybrid of the two.

Electricity is very expensive, so host families may want students to limit their 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, Wellness, & 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 and bring it in your *carry-on luggage only*. It is illegal to ship medication overseas and will be rejected at customs. Contact the LAC if you need an enrollment verification letter to submit to your insurance company requesting prescription medication for your entire stay abroad.

Consult with your LAC program contact if you would like to consult with CISI about obtaining any medication once abroad. 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/preplanning**.

Review the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (**cdc.gov/travel**) and US Department of State (**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.

It is important that you inform yourself prior to departure what precautions to take while living in Thailand. 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.

Chiang Mai has good doctors and medical facilities, and care is quite satisfactory in some other major cities as well. Only basic care is available in villages and small towns.

Dengue Prevention

Consult with your travel clinic regarding dengue risks and prevention.

Your travel clinic will 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.

For more information, visit: **wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/dengue**.

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: www.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/rabies.

Japanese Encephalitis

According to the CDC, risk factors for Japanese Encephalitis virus include trips over one month, travel to Chiang Mai and Northern Thailand, travel in rural areas, travel that includes time spent outdoors and in agricultural areas, and travel during peak transmission season (May–October). Visit: wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2016/infectious-diseases-related-to-travel/japanese-encephalitis#3880. The MSID Thailand program is characterized by all of these; thus we strongly recommend that you discuss the JE vaccine with a health professional. The JE vaccine is given in two or three doses spaced over a month and takes 10 days to be effective. Please research the costs of completing the vaccine in the US. The cost for completing the series in Thailand is approximately US \$50 and, due to the urban setting of the beginning of the program transmission risk is low, so you may decide to do the vaccination series once in Thailand.

Wellness

Wellness & Study Abroad

In addition to any medications and required vaccinations, it is important to plan proactively for how you will maintain healthy habits abroad, both mentally and physically. Consider the following guidelines for your time abroad:

- **Physical self-care:** Be physically active for 30–60 minutes daily, sleep enough to have energy through the day, spend at least an hour outdoors, and eat a balanced and moderate diet mostly of wholesome, minimally processed foods.
- **Emotional self-care:** Talk to your medical provider prior to departure about effective ways to cope with the stress that can arise from experiencing unfamiliar surroundings and lack of family and friend support, as well as to identify new ways of centering and embracing change and new experiences. This is a valuable lifelong skill.
- **Stress reduction practice:** Participate in at least one practice to quiet your mind and body. Examples include deep breathing, time in nature, prayer, journaling, sensory grounding, meditation, yoga, tai chi, qigong, progressive muscle relaxation, autogenic training, biofeedback, imagery work.

- **Hydration:** Be certain to drink sufficient water and nutritious fluids as your body adjusts to a new climate and daily rhythm.
- **Making adjustments:** Monitor your stress levels while abroad and adjust your daily routine (sleep patterns, exercise, food balance, hydration) to meet the needs of your new location.
- **Positive attitude:** Try to keep perspective on the challenges that you may encounter and work toward your long-term study abroad goals.
- **Support structures:** Identify who in country is available to provide support and guidance when you feel confused or challenged.
- **Finding resilience:** Keep in mind that it is important to recover and grow from adversity and navigate difficult challenges with awareness, intention, and skill. Seek out healthy connections to others, focus on balanced self-care, keep an open, engaged mind, and work to address manageable challenges with patience and intention.

The following website provides suggestions: gloaled.us/peacecorps/maintaining-strong-mental-and-emotional-health.asp.

Mental Health

Learning abroad can be both fulfilling and challenging for all students and may present some additional challenges for those with mental health conditions. Even if you have no history of a mental health condition, it is possible that the impact of cultural adjustment or being in a foreign environment can influence your well-being.

The Health Information Form requires you to disclose any past and current mental health issues, family history of mental health, indications of mental health concerns, and current prescription medicines. It is imperative for LAC staff to receive this information before you study abroad to best support you and provide reasonable accommodations.

Past or current treatment for psychiatric and mental health conditions does not preclude you from studying abroad. However, if a healthcare professional recommends no travel or travel under certain conditions that cannot be met at a certain study location, you may be encouraged to focus on your health first and postpone program participation until a later time.

The following steps for managing mental health are important, regardless of where you will be traveling:

- Meet with your mental health professional prior to departure to discuss learning abroad and its implications, your plan to manage your health while abroad, and access to alternative support networks.

- Discuss a realistic communication plan for your time abroad with your support networks (i.e., family and friends).
- Understand that ups and downs are normal during study abroad. Check in with yourself often and seek support if you are feeling more intense ups and downs than expected.
- Connect with an LAC staff member prior to departure to set up on-site care with a mental health care professional, if required.
- Plan to bring sufficient amounts of prescriptions with you for the entire duration of your program. Work with LAC staff to ensure you can safely bring all necessary prescriptions abroad.

Resources for UofM Students

- Student Counseling Services (counseling.umn.edu) and Boynton Mental Health Clinic (bhs.umn.edu/east-bank-clinic/mental-health-services.htm): Staff in both settings can inform you about treatment options and offer immediate crisis counseling if needed.
- Behavior Consultation Team (BCT) (mentalhealth.umn.edu/facstaff/behavioral-consultation.html): If you are concerned about causing harm to yourself or others, call the University's BCT at 011.612.626.3030. For additional resources, visit mentalhealth.umn.edu.

Safety

Travel & Safety Considerations

State Department Travel website

Consult the United States State Department Country Information sheets, travel advisories and travel warnings at 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 (cdc.gov/travel) and US Department of State (travel.state.gov) websites for travel and safety information.

Program-Specific Safety Considerations

Embassy STEP Registration

The LAC will register you with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP), which makes your presence in Thailand 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: step.state.gov/step.

In addition, the local consulate can be a source of assistance and information in the case of an emergency. Each of our

programs has information about the local consulate. For more information, visit the Country Information sheet at 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 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: 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 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: travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/Women.html

For more information on students abroad: 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 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 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

Students arriving on the coordinated group flight will be met at the airport by the MSID Thailand team. Look for a staff member holding a sign that says "ISDSI." Students arriving independently of the group flight should wait until the coordinated group flight lands and the MSID staff arrives for pick-up.

Initial Arrival Housing

You will spend your first night in Thailand staying at a hostel or hotel during orientation. You will then move in with your host family on the first day of orientation.

Program Information

Orientation in Country

For the initial in-country orientation, you will review topics like using public transportation, academic, homestay, health and safety, and acclimating to your new home.

Program Excursions

Although excursions change from semester to semester, you can expect to visit a variety of sites that may include

local markets, development agencies, and areas of interest around Chiang Mai. Excursions will typically be held on Fridays during the classroom phase.

In-Country Staff

Mark A. Ritchie, Ph.D., Executive Director

Mark has lived in Thailand for more than 20 years, working with local communities, international development work, and international education. Originally from the United States, Mark studied the transition of agrarian rural communities in Northern Thailand and has been involved in project evaluation and assessment, participatory development research, and training of local communities in Asia. He founded ISDSI with his wife, Dana E.C. Ritchie, 18 years ago, and is currently working on empowering local communities through international education.

ISDSI Center

The ISDSI center where the program is based has several classroom and office spaces, a small library, and a few computers and printers. Classes will take place there each day, and you will have lunch at the center as well. There is a small kitchen where you can store food, and filtered water is available to refill your personal water bottles.

You will also have access to a CrossFit gym with weights, other equipment and a variety of daily classes.

Housing Considerations

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 sometimes 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 you must stay in a school or a clinic). Do not ask to live independently.

You will take breakfast and the evening meal with your host families, and all three meals on weekends. Often distances preclude returning for the noon meal during the week. During the classroom phase, a group lunch is provided on Mondays. However, students are responsible for lunches during the rest of the week and usually chose to eat on their own at local markets. 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, but this may not always be possible, so please contact MSID program staff in the LAC should you have dietary concerns. 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. 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 may 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.

Housing and meals are provided for break periods during the semester if you elect to remain with your host family. During the break between program terms, you are encouraged to explore your MSID country. Housing and meals can be provided for an extra fee, if needed.

Notification of Placement

We typically receive 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, or keychains. Sweets and other foods that are signatures of your home are also well received. 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.

The Placement Process

The in-country staff strives to match students with families that meet as many of the characteristics as possible that

students have requested on their forms. It is often not possible to find a family that meets all the criteria a student has listed.

If your internship or research project is in a different part of the country, the administrative staff will arrange your second homestay at the same time your internship or research project is being negotiated.

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.

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 Thailand, 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.

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, as 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 the family for permission to bring friends, and be ready to cover extra expenses when inviting them.

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.

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.

Before you leave for Thailand, 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 Thailand.

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: global.umn.edu/travel/insurance/outgoing.html#personal-tab.

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 or during the internship phase. 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. 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.



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.

Courses

Overview of Program Courses

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

- MSID 4001, *International Development: Critical Perspectives on Theory and Practice*, 4 credits
- MSID 4002, *MSID Country Analysis*, 4 credits
- THAI 1000, *Beginning or Intermediate Thai*, 4 credits
- MSID 4003, *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 Entrepreneurship & Alternative Economies if enrollment in one or both tracks is low.

Language of Instruction

English is the language of instruction for this program.

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.

Program Schedule

The semester program consists of the following phases:

Orientation (1–3 days)

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 Chiang Mai 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 Chiang Mai 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 handing 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 Chiang Mai 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, maybe you need to thicken your description, sharpen your analysis, read more, and/or tie your experiences more systematically to formal bodies of knowledge and theory.

MSID Internships & Research

MSID internships and research projects are grassroots experiences with local non-profit 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 the student's 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, 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. 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 Thailand program webpage for examples of past placements: UMabroad.umn.edu/programs/asia-oceania/msid-thailand/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 Learning Abroad Center 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. Since these items may be in short supply in Thailand, 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 Thailand. 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. You should bring a box of surgical gloves with you.

Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, both the 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 under Hours of Student Effort (p. 22).

When planning a research project, keep in mind that you will be engaging in the on-going 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, the project must be within the scope and oversight of the NGO and must be approved by the MSID resident director.

We encourage students to wait until they are in the MSID country and have a chance through the coursework and daily living to become sensitive to the local culture and understand some of the unique and challenging cultural perspectives before they try to formulate a research project.

Human Subjects Research and Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Students cannot start any human subjects research without IRB approval in advance, and most MSID research projects, including interviewing experts in country, can be achieved without needing IRB approval.

If the research focuses on products, methods, policies, procedures, organizations, etc. and not on people themselves, then students can collect data from individuals with expertise in this area, and it is not considered research with human subjects and thus does not need IRB approval.

Please contact the Learning Abroad Center MSID program staff if you have questions prior to departure and be certain to consult the MSID resident director if you have questions while on your MSID program.

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 to 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: 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.

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.

The final contact hours for the International Development course, the language course, and Country Analysis take place during the final seminar week and are based on 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.

You 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.

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: 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 Thailand

Thailand lies in the heart of southeast Asia. It shares borders with Burma (Myanmar) to the west and north, Laos to the northeast, Cambodia to the east, and Malaysia to the south. Topographically the country is divided into four distinct areas: the mountainous North, the fertile Central Plains, the semi-arid plateau of the Northeast, and the peninsular South distinguished by tropical beaches and offshore islands. Thailand has a tropical climate with three distinct seasons: hot (March–May), rainy (June–October) and cool (November–February), with cooler temperatures in the mountains year-round.

Thailand has a population of about 60 million. Ethnic Thais form the majority, though the area has historically been a migratory crossroads, and thus includes strains of Mon, Khmer, Burmese, Lao, Malay, Indian, and, most strongly, Chinese. In Northern Thailand various upland minority groups (hill tribes) are also an important part of the ethnic mix, including Hmong, Karen, Akha, Lahu, Lisu, Mien, and others.

Theravada Buddhism is the primary religion in Thailand, practiced by more than 90 percent of all Thais. The remainder of the population adheres to Muslim, Christian, Hindu and other faiths.

The Kingdom of Thailand is a constitutional monarchy. The king wields moral authority rather than political power. He is very highly respected, as is the rest of the royal family, and speaking against them is a crime.

History Resources

Known as “Siam” until 1939, Thailand is the only southeast Asian country never to have been colonized by a foreign power and is fiercely proud of that fact. A bloodless revolution in 1932 led to a constitutional monarchy. During World War II, while Japan conquered the rest of Southeast Asia, only Thailand was not conquered by the Japanese due to smart political moves. In alliance with Japan during World War II, Thailand became a US ally following the conflict.

After a string of military dictatorships and quickly toppled civilian Prime Ministers, Thailand finally stabilized into a fair approximation of a democracy and the economy boomed through tourism and industry. Above it all presided King Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX), the world’s longest-reigning monarch and a deeply loved and respected figure of near-mythic proportions.

In September 2006, a swift and bloodless military coup overthrew populist tycoon Thaksin Shinawatra’s democratically elected but widely criticized government, exposing a fault line between the urban elite that has ruled Thailand and the rural masses that supported Thaksin.

Thaksin went into exile and a series of unstable governments followed, with the successors of Thaksin’s Thai Rak Thai party and the royalist-conservative People’s Alliance for Democracy dueling both behind the scenes and, occasionally, out in the streets, culminating in Bangkok’s airports being seized and shut down for a week in November 2008. In October 2016, King Bhumibol passed away and his son, Prince Vajiralongkorn, ascended to the throne.

You are expected to read more about Thailand prior to departure to gain a better understanding of the country. A valuable resource is “Culture Shock! Thailand: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette.”

Geography & Climate

The weather in Thailand will be hot and humid from June to October, in the 80s and 90s most days. It will gradually turn cooler, from November to January, leading to a very pleasant and cooler winter, especially at night, with daytime temperatures in the 80s and evening temperatures in 70s or cooler. March through May is hot season, with dry and very hot weather, with daytime temperatures in the 90s and cooler at night. There is a marked difference in temperature between the lowlands and the mountains. During rainy season (which lasts until late October or mid-November), it often rains every day. While rain seldom lasts all day, when it does rain it can be quite intense.

Thailand’s heat can be difficult to adjust to. It often makes people tired and sluggish or unable to engage in activities that they routinely enjoy, like exercising or walking long

distances. It can affect your sleeping and study patterns. The tropics are also full of animal life that will be new to you—many houses have ants and spiders in them, mosquitoes can be bothersome, small lizards live inside most buildings on the walls, and cockroaches can be found even in the most luxurious homes. In rural areas you may encounter such things as mice, lizards, and snakes, but usually they stay out of your way.

Thailand has a tropical climate with three distinct seasons: hot (March–May), rainy (June–October) and cool (November–February), with cooler temperatures in the mountains year-round.

Average afternoon high temperatures:

Temperature	Oct	Jan	Apr	July
°F	88	95	99	93
°C	31	35	37	33

You can find up-to-date weather at www.accuweather.com/en/th/chiang-mai/317505/weather-forecast/317505.

Languages of the Country

Central Thai language is used in education and is understood by almost everyone. Thais in Chiang Mai also speak Kham Muang (also known as Northern Thai or Lanna) amongst themselves.

Food Considerations

Thai food is world famous for its variety, flavors, and freshness. Thai food varies regionally, and you will have a chance to eat some fantastic food that is impossible to find outside of Thailand. All Thai food is based around rice, so you can expect to eat a lot of rice while in Thailand, often for every meal while in both urban and village homestays. A lot of Thai food is very spicy, including curries, *naam phrik* (chili paste), and soups. Not all Thai food is spicy, but be prepared to learn how to eat and enjoy food that is likely spicier than you are used to.

Pork and seafood are common, and in some places students may eat rice and fish at every meal. A common stereotype of Asia is that lots of people are vegetarians. While Thais do not eat large quantities of meat, they do add meat to almost all dishes (mostly pork chicken and seafood). Even stir-fried vegetables usually contain small pieces of meat.

Maintaining a strict vegetarian or vegan diet while in homestays during the program is impossible, and refusing to be flexible can result in you being culturally offensive as well as hungry. While the program recognizes that how one eats is a personal decision, during program activities cultural factors take priority. When invited into someone’s home, it is rude to refuse to try something because you don’t

like what is put before you, and eating together is a crucial part of Thai culture. This is especially true in the setting of a homestay.

The number one fear of some Thai host families is having to deal with a strict vegetarian. Unfortunately, some American students have come to Chiang Mai and rudely insisted on a vegetarian diet in the host family. This has left a bad impression, and there are families that now refuse to take in any American host students.

If you are really serious about coming to Thailand and adapting, you will have to temporarily give up a vegetarian diet in order to adapt to Thai culture. By refusing to eat meat or fish when it is served to you, you risk offending the people with you and it is seen as culturally insensitive. This is especially the case in the villages where you will be staying because most villagers are poor and do not have the luxury to choose their protein sources. They will likely serve meat as an honor to their guest—and it may mean killing their only pig to do so. To refuse meat in that setting would be considered extremely rude.

Certain food allergies can't be accommodated; this includes shellfish, peanuts, and severe gluten allergies.

Being flexible in your diet not only assures that you will be able to eat, it is a sign of acceptance and appreciation to your Thai hosts and simply reflects good manners as a guest. Eating is more than just filling your stomach. In Thailand sharing food is a social event. Refusing to try new foods or join in with others may be misunderstood or considered anti-social. Joining in is a way of “being with Thais.”

Meals

Breakfast and dinner are included in the program fee and are provided by the host families.

Safe Food & Water

Tap water is usually not drinkable in Thailand. Bottled water is inexpensive and widely available at 5–20 baht a bottle depending on its size and brand. Drinking water served in restaurants is usually boiled. Ice in Thailand usually comes packaged straight from the factory and is usually safe.

Mainly in residential areas, machines dispensing water into your own water bottle. This is usually UV treated on the spot and safe to drink clean. These machines are widely available in Chiang Mai.

Utility Usage

Electricity

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

Relationships

You'll most likely observe different gender dynamics in Thailand that seems like discrimination to a Western person. At the same time, Thailand is undergoing a tremendous amount of change, so gender dynamics are in a great deal of flux.

Asking about these things with your Thai friends can bring on heated (and fun) discussions as they try and figure things out as well. Depending on the context, relationships between young men and women (even those in college) can be more formal than here in the US. Public displays of affection, even holding hands between the sexes, are frowned upon—but are becoming more common by the more “daring” young people.

Western women are stereotyped as being “easy,” so be wary of Thai men who approach you. For men, be aware that there are many preconceptions about why Western men come to Thailand. In fact, a lot of Western men do come to Thailand on so-called “sex tours,” and being seen alone with a Thai woman—even if she is from the university—will make many Thai people assume she is a prostitute. It is always better to go out in groups to avoid embarrassment for all concerned and to save face for your female friends. Even being alone with someone of the opposite sex will create the impression that you are having sex.

Dating Apps

Be cautious when considering online dating applications or other venues for meeting people. This is particularly important when seeking to meet new people because there are different cultural norms and values that surround relationships of all kinds. What might be considered a casual drink or meal with a person of interest can have a much more significant meaning in a different cultural context. Online dating applications can carry different connotations or serve different purposes than they do in the United States. It is important to remember that it is very difficult for you to safely determine who might be genuinely interested in you and who has ulterior motives (such as stealing your passport or money, or seeking a visa to the US). Given the significant cultural differences between the US and countries abroad, the Learning Abroad Center strongly encourages students to prioritize their academics and be mindful to seek out cultural experiences that are safe, such as through homestays, local staff, and program activities.

Living in Chiang Mai

Founded in 1296 CE, Chiang Mai is a culturally and historically interesting city, at one time the capital of the ancient Lanna kingdom. Located among the rolling foothills of the Himalayan Mountains 700 kilometers north of Bangkok, it could only be reached by an arduous river journey or an elephant trek until the 1920s. This isolation

helped keep its distinctive charm intact. Chiang Mai's historical center is the walled city. Sections of the wall dating to their restoration a few decades ago remain at the gates and corners, but of the rest only the moat remains.

Inside Chiang Mai's remaining city walls are more than 30 temples dating back to the founding of the principality, in a combination of Burmese, Sri Lankan, and Lanna Thai styles, decorated with beautiful wood carvings, Naga staircases, leonine and angelic guardians, gilded umbrellas, and pagodas laced with gold filigree. The most famous is Wat Phrathat Doi Suthep, which overlooks the city from a mountainside 13 kilometers away.

Modern-day Chiang Mai has expanded in all directions, but particularly to the east toward the Ping River (Mae Nam Ping), where Chang Klan Rd, the famous Night Bazaar, and the bulk of Chiang Mai's hotels and guest houses are located. The locals say you've not experienced Chiang Mai until you've seen the view from Doi Suthep, eaten a bowl of *kao soi*, and purchased an umbrella from Bo Sang. Of course this is touristic nonsense, but the Doi Suthep, *kao soi*, and Bo Sang umbrellas are important cultural icons for Chiang Mai residents. Ratchadamneon Rd hosts the main Sunday night walking street market from Tha Phae Gate to the popular Wat Phra Singh.

Transportation

Chiang Mai is well-connected by bus, train, and air transportation services. A number of bus stations link the city to Central and Northern Thailand. The Central Chang Pheuk terminal provides local services within Chiang Mai Province. The Chiang Mai Arcade bus terminal northeast of the city provides services to over 20 other destinations in Thailand including Bangkok, Pattaya, Hua Hin, and Phuket. There are several services a day from Chiang Mai Arcade terminal to Mo Chit Station in Bangkok, which is a 10- to 12-hour journey.

You will use local public transport, which consists of *tuk-tuk*, or *songthaew*. Local *songthaew* fare is usually 20–50 baht per person for trips in and around the city. For groups, the fare per person is less. *Tuk-tuk* fare is usually at least 60 baht per trip; fares increase with distance.

Chiang Mai International Airport acts as the northern hub for those flying to other parts of Thailand. Over 28 flights a day arrive to Chiang Mai from Bangkok; flights typically take about 75 minutes.

Communication

Email & Internet

You will have free Internet and computer access at the ISDSI facilities, although it is limited and the computer lab is small. ISDSI and most classrooms have wireless access throughout. Use Wi-Fi only for low-bandwidth activities (e.g., no streaming movies or downloading large media files). Most students who own laptops will bring them to Chiang Mai;

however, a laptop is not required. Wi-Fi is available at many cafes and restaurants throughout Chiang Mai.

It is worth noting that broadband Internet in Thailand is much more limited than it is in the US. Thailand does not currently have the infrastructure to support high-speed networks that you may be used to back 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.

Thailand has very strict *lèse majesté* laws. Speaking or acting against the royal family, including posting anything critical or disrespectful about the royal family on social media, can result in deportation or jail.

Phones

Even if your Thai home has a telephone, do not make international calls; use a public phone or your cell phone. The average cost of an international phone call is 5–7 baht per minute. Phones are about \$50 and can be sold prior to departure. On average, budget \$20 per month for minutes.

The MSID Thailand 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 Thailand on-site program staff will assist students with selecting and obtaining cell phones and service contracts. The service contract or minutes that are purchased by students are not included in the budget estimate.

Today there are many ways to communicate with others back in the US. Services like Skype, Google Hangouts, FaceTime, and WhatsApp often take the place of an international call.

Mail

Packages sent priority or express (FedEx, DHL, UPS) should be sent to the student address at ISDSI listed at the beginning of this handbook. Letters and non-priority packages should be mailed to:

YOUR NAME
PO Box 222
Phransing Muang
Chiang mai 50205
Thailand

Mail typically takes about 10–15 days to reach Thailand from the US and vice versa. Send everything first class airmail.

Letters posted to Chiang Mai arrive much faster than letters sent to smaller towns. Valuable items should not be sent through the mail. Do not attempt to send a parcel or letter by surface mail; it will take at least three months.

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.

The Plus, Cirrus, and other networks are available in Chiang Mai; check with your bank or credit union to find out which network they use. Make sure that this isn't your only source of money as there are times when the networks are down. It is also important to make sure your cards will not expire while you are on the program.

Financial Planning

Consult the program budget sheets on the MSID Thailand website for recommended spending amounts and plan to bring the appropriate amount. Refer to travel guides, 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 your country 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.

A budget estimate can be found in the “Cost of Participation” on the Fees page: UMabroad.umn.edu/programs/asia-oceania/msid-thailand/fees.

Cost of Living

While the cost of living in Chiang Mai is much lower than Minneapolis, it is still important for students to budget for their time abroad. A great tool to get clear understanding of the cost of living is expatistan.com. Expatistan provides up to the minute costs and comparisons of items in two difference cities. We suggest that you take some time to compare both Chiang Mai and Minneapolis-St. Paul or another American metropolitan area to see the differences for yourself.

Social & Cultural Adjustments

Student Identity

As a foreigner in Thailand, 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.

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.

Thais are normally very tolerant of people. Tourists, regardless of skin color, are very unlikely to encounter aggressive racial abuse in major tourist centers like Chiang Mai or Bangkok. However, some visitors may notice their ethnicity attracting some attention. Usually these situations are limited to stares or unwanted attention in shops or on the street.

Many Thais are often curious about black travelers and students; this may result in questions, photo requests, or attempts to touch your hair or skin. Apart from this curiosity displayed by Thais, most travelers from more diverse backgrounds will enjoy their time in the country and will find it easy to strike up a rapport with locals.

Gender

Women make up nearly half of all the foreign travelers who travel to Thailand and generally face few problems. It is important for students to remember that the concept of “No means no” and what is considered consent are very much Western and more specifically, American concepts that don’t exist in Thailand.

Gender roles tend to be more rigidly defined in Thailand, 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 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 Learning Abroad Center staff for more information on gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender issues if you have any questions.

Many students have this preconceived notion that Thailand is a liberal oasis for LGBTQ travelers, but this is hardly the case. Identifications such as “gay,” “lesbian,” “transgender,” etc. have very different meanings and associations compared to American culture. Thai culture is relatively tolerant of both male and female homosexuality. However, public displays of affection, whether heterosexual or homosexual, are deeply frowned upon. Spaces that in the US would be considered safe for LGBTQ people, are often extremely dangerous in Thailand and should not be frequented.

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.

In general, Thailand can be very difficult for people with physical disabilities. There are many high curbs, uneven sidewalks, hectic traffic, pedestrian walkways that are only accessible by steps, and public transportation that is not accessible. Students should be prepared for the fact that disability will be culturally defined. With this mind, we still encourage you to reach out to LAC staff with any disability/access questions and encourage students to utilize resources like Mobility International USA as well: www.miusa.org.

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 some parts of Thailand. 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.

Heritage Students

Students going to a location related to their ethnic heritage—for example, a Hmong or Asian American student traveling to Thailand—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.

Religious Identity

Students interested in practicing their faith will find mosques, temples, and churches widely available in Chiang Mai. While Thais are tolerant of different religions, the concept of atheism or agnosticism isn't one that is well known amongst the Thai people.

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.

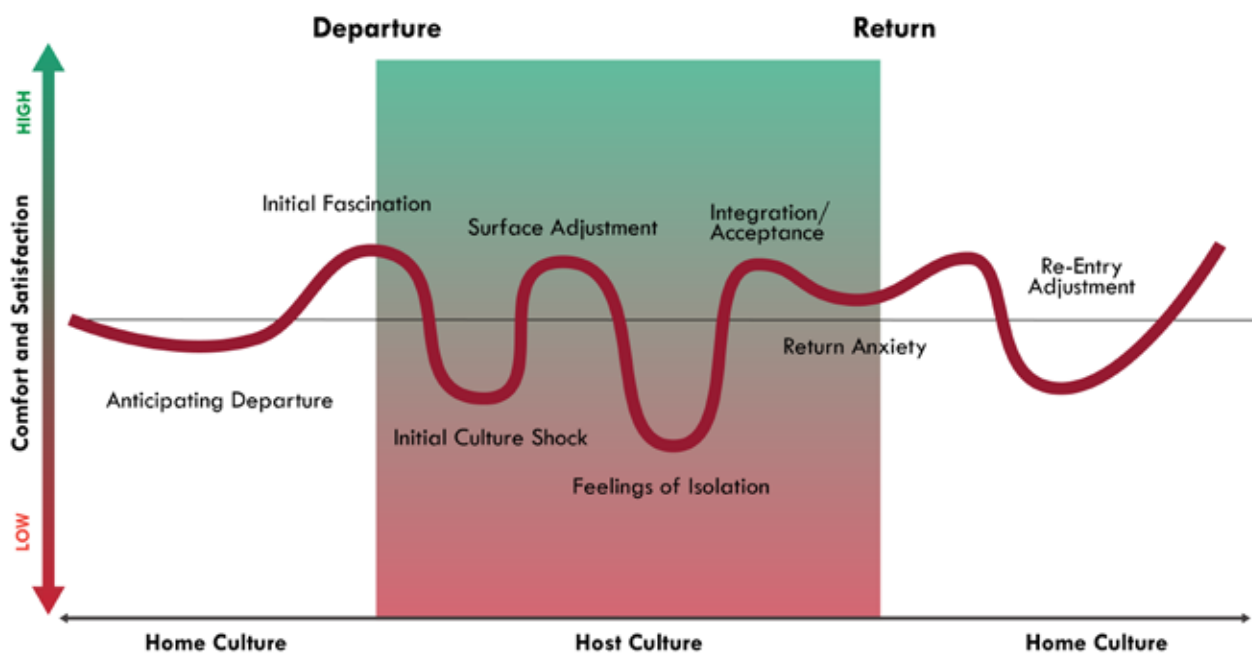
Feelings of Isolation: Difficulties in your new culture seem to stubbornly remain and you grow frustrated with the process. A sense of isolation sets in. Boredom and a lack of motivation often follow. Unresolved personal issues often surface during this stage.

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.



Adjusted from Oberg (1960) and Galloway (1963)

Cultural Adjustment Curve

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.

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 List

- 2 pairs of comfortable shoes in which to walk long distances (hiking shoes and sneakers)
- 1 pair of sandals
- 2 dress outfits
- 5 black pants or skirts
- 5 white button-up tops (potentially can be purchased in Thailand)
- Lots of underwear, bras
- Workout clothes (optional)
- 1 pair athletic pants (lightweight, quick dry, and/or zip off for outdoor excursions)
- Lightweight socks
- 1 swimsuit
- 1 cardigan or light zip-up hoodie
- 1–2 T-shirts
- 2–3 skirts/dresses at knee-length or longer
- 1–2 pairs of pants (jeans, khakis, etc.)
- Long shorts (lightweight and quick dry)
- 1–2 long-sleeve lightweight shirts
- Lightweight waterproof jacket
- Sun hat/cap

Household/Personal Items

- Sunscreen
- Money belt containing passport, international immunization record, credit card, cash card, traveler's checks, any dollars you are taking in cash, etc.
- Umbrella
- Digital camera with extra batteries (recharging is only possible with a voltage converter)
- 1 water bottle
- Electric converter and adapter if you are taking electrical items (please be aware that electricity is very expensive and host families may want to limit the use of electric appliances)
- Contact information of friends/family/academic contacts
- Guide book (e.g., *Lonely Planet* or *Rough Guide*)
- Photographs of friends and family, your house, your community, etc.
- Locks for luggage
- Zip/flash drive



Social Media Hashtag Guidelines

Basic guidelines

- Keep hashtags on topic, always related to the post
- Place hashtags at the end of the post
- Always add a geotag based on the photo location
- Capitalize multiword hashtags for clarity

Number of hashtags to use

- Facebook: 0
- Twitter: 1–2
- Instagram: 9–11

Required hashtags

- #UMabroad
- #UMNProud
- (NOT #UMNabroad)

Recommended hashtags

- #communityengagement
- #globalseminar
- #goglobal
- #internabroad
- #internationaldevelopment
- #lifeonthemove
- #studyabroad
- #studyabroadlife
- #theworldasaclassroom
- #workreadyworldready

Program-specific usernames

- @accentflorence
- @accentrome
- @alc.fes.alif
- @capalondon
- @capasydney
- @cemanahuac
- @fogaargentina
- @fomtoledo
- @idsithailand
- @warawarc

Program-specific hashtags

- #LACFSA
- #MSIDEcuador
- #MSIDKenya
- #MSIDSenegal
- #MSIDThailand

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):

Dates at this location	City	Name of hotel or host	Phone number	Email address

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.

CONDUCTING RESEARCH ABROAD

Key Guidelines

What is a research project?

A research project involves a systematic investigation of a specific topic, question, hypothesis, or theory. The purpose of research is to establish new knowledge or confirm what is already known. The research process involves discovery, documentation, and interpretation using a variety of reliable, scholarly resources.

Under the guidance of a project supervisor, students consult relevant primary and secondary sources, analyze findings, and draw conclusions culminating in a final paper or project that demonstrates the knowledge gained through the investigation. Research typically does not involve applied work, internship, or volunteer activities.

What is IRB?

Any research that involves human subjects will require University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. There is also a review process for projects involving animals. Given the short duration of a study abroad program, **you should select research topics that do not include human subjects and thus do not require IRB approval** when doing research abroad.

The University's IRB process (even an exempt review) is intensive, takes time, and must be completed prior to initiating any research abroad. Since IRB only reviews projects if the overseas project supervisor, full research project, methodology clarification, and required methodological training are confirmed, human subjects research during study abroad programs is highly discouraged (this applies to Learning Abroad Center (LAC), affiliate, and non-affiliate programs). In addition, undergraduate students rarely have completed the level of methodological training to be approved by IRB.

What should I know about conducting research abroad?

Fortunately, **there are many research projects that can be conducted abroad and do not require IRB approval, such as research that focuses on policies, procedures, methods, products, and organizations (instead of people)**. Also keep in mind that projects that focus on observation and documentation may not be considered research and, therefore, do not require IRB approval.

It is *essential* to consult with the overseas staff regarding your project and the approach you plan to take *before* initiating your research. Particularly if you plan to conduct a survey or interviews, you must discuss your questions with the overseas staff and receive approval for all questions in advance. The overseas staff will consult with the LAC, as needed.

Students who fail to modify their project to meet overseas staff and LAC expectations regarding IRB considerations risk receiving a failing grade for that course. It is not appropriate to engage in research that requires IRB clearance without having obtained the clearance in advance.

What should I know about conducting research abroad?

When planning your research, **consider whether the project focuses on the person or on policies, practices, or procedures about which the person is knowledgeable**. Projects that collect information about policies, practices, or procedures—even if the person who provided that information is identified—do not constitute human subject research and do not require IRB review.

Research projects that focus on “a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains (1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual, or (2) identifiable private information” as well as projects that involve “sensitive populations” are typically subject to IRB review and should not be pursued during a study abroad program. For more details, visit the IRB research web page: www.research.umn.edu/irb/

What restrictions should I keep in mind regarding my primary sources?

Any data about people that you use for your research must be publicly available or previously published. Private medical files, for example, require IRB approval and should not be consulted.

Research projects that focus on policies, procedures, and best practices instead of gathering private identifiable data do not require IRB approval. Interviewing individuals with expertise in the relevant field, as long as the focus is on policies, practices, and procedures, is

also allowed and does not necessitate IRB involvement.

IRB has significant **restrictions on “sensitive populations,” vulnerable populations, and minors.** These populations cannot be consulted or interviewed without IRB clearance and should not be part of a research abroad project.

What if I have IRB clearance from my home university?

Students from other institutions who participate in LAC programs may have received some form of general IRB clearance from their home institution. This does not provide clearance to engage in human subjects research. The overseas staff are not in a position to supervise or approve IRB research projects and may also not have the required specific IRB-required training for that particular subject area. All students must abide by the general guidelines stipulated above.

LEARNING ABROAD CENTER

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