

# Exchange in Oslo & University Study in Norway

PROGRAM HANDBOOK 2017–18



LEARNING ABROAD CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

# Important Names & Addresses

## In the United States

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Minneapolis, MN 55455-0430  
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### Contact Prior to Departure

Erica Qualheim, Enrollment Specialist\*  
Phone: 612.301.6807  
Email: [qual0080@umn.edu](mailto:qual0080@umn.edu)

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\*Prior to departure, contact Erica for all questions relating to the program.

## Emergencies

In case of emergency, 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 the University of Norway in case of an emergency.

## In Oslo

International Education Office  
P.O. Box 1081  
Blindern NO-0317, Oslo  
Norway  
Phone: (+47) 22 85 82 00  
Email: [international@admin.uio.no](mailto:international@admin.uio.no)

## In Bergen

International Student Mobility  
University of Bergen  
P.O. Box 7800  
5020, Bergen  
Norway  
Phone: (+47) 55 58 24 95  
Email: [bilateral@uib.no](mailto:bilateral@uib.no)

## In Ås

Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)  
P.O. Box 5003  
NO-1432, Ås  
Norway  
Phone: (+47) 64 96 50 00

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

## Program Health & Safety

Program health and safety information is available at [global.umn.edu/gosafe/index.html](http://global.umn.edu/gosafe/index.html).



# Contents

<b>Important Names &amp; Addresses .....</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Living in the Host Country .....</b>	<b>16</b>
In the United States .....	2	History Resources .....	16
Emergencies .....	2	Geography & Climate .....	17
In Oslo.....	2	Food Considerations.....	17
In Bergen .....	2	Relationships.....	17
In Ås.....	2	Living in Norway .....	18
Program Health & Safety.....	2	Communication .....	18
		Money Matters .....	19
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Social &amp; Cultural Adjustments .....</b>	<b>19</b>
Purpose of This Handbook .....	4	Student Identity .....	19
Overview of the Program.....	4	<b>Cultural Adjustment.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Preparation &amp; Planning.....</b>	<b>4</b>	The On-Site Experience.....	20
Documents .....	4	<b>Looking Ahead .....</b>	<b>21</b>
Packing.....	5	Career Information .....	21
Important Policies.....	5	Re-Entry .....	21
<b>Health, Wellness, &amp; Safety.....</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Appendix.....</b>	<b>21</b>
Health.....	5	Suggested Packing List .....	21
Wellness.....	6	Resources .....	21
Safety .....	7		
Independent Travel .....	8		
<b>Arrival Logistics .....</b>	<b>9</b>		
Arriving at the Program Site.....	9		
<b>Program Information.....</b>	<b>9</b>		
Orientation in Country .....	9		
Program Excursions.....	10		
In-Country Staff .....	10		
<b>Housing Considerations .....</b>	<b>10</b>		
Housing Options.....	10		
Visitors .....	12		
<b>Academics.....</b>	<b>12</b>		
Courses.....	12		
Registration .....	14		
Course Drop/Add/Withdrawal .....	15		
Academic Culture.....	15		
Books & Materials.....	15		
Grades & Transcripts .....	15		
Student Grievances .....	15		

# 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](https://umabroad.umn.edu/parents). It discusses topics such as health and safety, program prices, logistics, and travel.

## Overview of the Program

Congratulations on choosing to study at a Norwegian University! This program will provide you with the unique opportunity to integrate fully into the academic system and daily life of another country. You can expect to be challenged by complete immersion in a different academic system, a different culture, and a whole new way of life.

Although you may already be familiar with the culture, history, and language of Norway, you may still be surprised by some of the differences you will encounter. It is important for you to prepare for your upcoming experience by reading the following information carefully and by expecting the unexpected while studying abroad.

Studying at a university in Norway will require independence, individual initiative, and flexibility. To encourage and guide you, the University of Minnesota Learning Abroad Center (LAC) provides a full range of services from preliminary program advising to assistance with re-entry. Contact the LAC at any point before, during, or after your program, and we will do our best to make your study abroad a rewarding and successful experience. While the international student support staff of your host university and the LAC will provide as much assistance as possible, the ultimate success of this unique opportunity depends on your commitment and effort to make the most of your exchange. Good luck and best wishes for a rewarding and successful study abroad experience!

# Preparation & Planning

## Documents

### Passport

A valid passport is required to enter Norway. 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](https://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](https://usembassy.gov).

### Residence Permit

All US passport holders must apply for a Residence Permit to be able to study in Norway. This will start after you are accepted by the Norwegian university. Please be aware that this process requires a trip to Chicago to submit your application. More details can be found here: <https://umabroad.umn.edu/programs/europe/norway-oslo/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 Norway. 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](https://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.

### Round-Trip Airline Tickets

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

## Packing

### Packing Principles

It can be cold and rainy in Norway. You should bring a waterproof windbreaker with zip-out lining, winter hat, mittens, and scarf. Think in layers. Having long-sleeved shirts with warm sweaters that you can wear repeatedly is a good approach. Bring warm long underwear and warm, waterproof shoes/boots. People dress casually in jeans and comfortable walking shoes.

We recommend that you check one suitcase and bring a carry-on bag with essential and expensive items such as any medication, electronic items, an extra set of clothes in case your luggage is lost or delayed, and a copy of this program handbook with important phone numbers.

A packing list is included in the appendix of this handbook.

## 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](http://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. questions or need additional information about CISI, visit the Learning Abroad Center's insurance webpage: [UMabroad.umn.edu/students/healthsafety/intlhealthinsurance](http://UMabroad.umn.edu/students/healthsafety/intlhealthinsurance).

## 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://UMabroad.umn.edu/students/healthsafety/preplanning).

Review the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([cdc.gov/travel](http://cdc.gov/travel)) and US Department of State ([travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov)) websites for general vaccination, immunization, and other travel medical information for the countries you will visit. However, only a travel clinic will be able to make a recommendation tailored for your specific travel plans and health history.

# Wellness

## Wellness and 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, lack of family and friend support, and how 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, and 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 towards 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 web site provides suggestions: [gloaled.us/peacecorps/maintaining-strong-mental-and-emotional-health.asp](http://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 Learning Abroad Center 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 implications of learning abroad, 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 (e.g., 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.

## 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](http://travel.state.gov) for up-to-date information on travel precautions for the country where you will be studying or traveling.

#### **CDC Information**

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

#### **Embassy STEP Registration**

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

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

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

### Sexual Harassment & Sexual Assault

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

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

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

Report any incidents of sexual harassment or sexual assault to in-country or LAC staff so that we can help you understand your options and supports available. The

Aurora Center is a fully confidential resource for all students on LAC programs, even if you don't normally attend the University of Minnesota.

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

The University of Minnesota prohibits sexual harassment and retaliation. In compliance with Title IX, the LAC will work with the University's Title IX coordinator on any related inquiries and complaints. For more information, please contact the LAC or visit [diversity.umn.edu/eoaa/titleix](http://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](http://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](http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/Women.html)

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

Norway in general is a very safe country, but as with any large city or unfamiliar setting, you should exercise general caution and be aware of your surroundings. We recommend that you always safeguard your valuables, let others know where you are going and when to expect you, and go out with at least one other person at night.

For more information on staying safe while abroad: [UMabroad.umn.edu/students/healthsafety/safetyabroad](http://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](http://UMabroad.umn.edu/students/healthsafety/emergency).

## Independent Travel

### Independent Travel

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](http://travel.state.gov) for the most up-to-date list.

## 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](http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html) for up-to-date information about travel warning countries. If you have questions about travel restrictions, contact the LAC.

## Driving & Renting Vehicles Abroad

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

# Arrival Logistics

## Arriving at the Program Site

### Flight

You will need to arrange your own plane ticket to Norway once you know your arrival date. Visit [UMabroad.umn.edu/students/travel](http://UMabroad.umn.edu/students/travel) for a list of local and online travel agencies.

Once you have your flight arrangements, give a copy of your itinerary to the University of Minnesota Learning Abroad Center (LAC). We will need your travel details at least 30 days before your departure.

If your flight is delayed, contact the LAC if you are in the US.

### Arrival at the Airport

Carefully read the arrival information in your pre-arrival packet.

#### Oslo:

A taxi from the Oslo airport to your housing on the University of Oslo campus is quite expensive and may cost up to \$105. A more affordable option is to take the train into town and catch a bus to campus. You can find more detailed instructions in your arrival packet.

#### Bergen:

Students who have been granted accommodation at Fantoft Student Hostel should go there directly. Please observe the reception opening hours and note especially the extended opening hours in the beginning of the semesters. Remember that you must pay the deposit in order to get the key to your room. The deposit fee is NOK 2500. If you arrive outside Fantoft's opening hours, we suggest that you find alternative accommodation for the first night/weekend.

You will need Norwegian currency to pay for bus/taxi and the deposit at Fantoft Student Hostel (Visa credit cards are also accepted). Students arriving by plane should take the airport bus toward the city centre. Those who have a room reservation at the Fantoft Student Hostel can ask the bus driver to let them off at Fantoft (approx. 15 km from the airport). There is a 350-meter walk from the bus stop to the hostel.

Students arriving by train may take a suburban bus to Fantoft Student Hostel from the central bus station, located only a few minutes' walk from the railway station. Buses leave from platform 19–21 (bus no. 20–23, 30) every 15 to 20 minutes.

Once you arrive at the student residence, you can check in and get the key to your room.

#### Life Sciences:

The distance from Oslo Airport (in Norwegian, the airport is called *Oslo lufthavn Gardermoen*) to Ås is 80 km.

The easiest way to get to NMBU is to take either the train or the bus. It is possible to take a taxi from the airport but it will cost hundreds of dollars. We recommend that you take the bus because it is simpler and does not require a transfer.

The Nor-way buss Airport Coach (*Flybussekpressen*) will be able to drop you off right near Ås and NMBU. The stop, called Korsegården, is a 20–30 minute walk from the UMB campus. It is then possible to take a taxi to the campus from the stop. More information is available on their website: [nor-way.no/?lang=en\\_GB](http://nor-way.no/?lang=en_GB).

If you take the train from the Oslo airport to Ås, there is no direct line so you must transfer to another train at Oslo central station. Representatives from the Norwegian rail line (NSP) will be at the airport to help you, and they all speak very good English. In short, take a local train to Oslo central station, *localtog til Oslo S* (there are many different ones).

After that, take another local train south toward Moss (*localtog til Moss*). There is only one and it is route 550 going from Spikkestad to Moss. Get off at the Ås station, the third stop, which is right after the town of Ski. From the train station, the campus is a 20–30 minute walk north. It is possible to walk but it is easier to take a taxi. For more train information, visit NSB's website: [nsb.no/?lang=en\\_US](http://nsb.no/?lang=en_US).

Regardless of the method you use to get to the NMBU campus, your first stop will be the student housing offices, called *Studentsamskipnaden i Ås*, or University Foundation for Student Life in Ås. This is commonly called *SiÅs*. More information on housing is available later in this guide.

## Program Information

### Orientation in Country

#### Oslo:

There will be an orientation week in the beginning of the semester. During this week, you must pick up an information package from the International Student Reception located on the first floor of the Administration building, take the placement test for Norwegian language courses (if you are planning to study Norwegian), and attend a general and program orientation meeting and an orientation devoted solely to registration for courses.

During orientation, you will be assigned a Norwegian buddy who will help you during the first several weeks. Typically, each buddy assists several international students and they all get together for different activities. Seize this opportunity to meet others.

## **Bergen:**

All University of Minnesota students are highly encouraged to participate in the introductory program for new international students. The program introduces new international students to different aspects of being a student in Bergen and Norway through lectures and practical information the first days/week at the university. Another important aspect of the program is to finalize various formalities regarding your studies at the university and your stay in Norway in general.

The introductory program is also an excellent opportunity to meet other new international students. There is no fee for participating in the program and no need to register as long as you have been admitted as a new student.

During the introductory program, you will meet representatives from Buddy Bergen, a six-week program to help integrate international students into Norwegian student society. When participating in the program, you will be paired with a Norwegian student who can help you get to know Bergen. Your buddy can answer questions about everyday life in Bergen, and together you can join our weekly activities.

As a new international student at UiB, you must complete certain compulsory registrations and semester start formalities in the first few weeks of the semester. The Centre for Information and Student Services will run a separate information desk to assist all new international students.

When you participate in the introductory program, the Centre for Information and Student Services will provide you with your personal welcome envelope and guide you through all the necessary formalities.

Note: It is not possible to register before the semester starts.

At the Centre for Information and Student Services, you will receive detailed information about the following compulsory formalities most of you must attend to as soon as possible:

- Semester registration and registration for examination
- Student ID card
- User account and student email address

## **Life Sciences:**

If you arrive in the fall, there will be an orientation week at the beginning of the semester. If you arrive during the spring semester, there will be an orientation meeting instead of a week-long session.

During the fall orientation week, you will move into your housing. You will then meet all the other new students and register for classes. You can also attend many other information sessions and guided campus tours during the week.

During orientation, you will be assigned a Norwegian buddy, who will help you during the first several weeks.

Your buddy will be able to provide you with a lot of practical information about being a NMBU student.

At your orientation, you will learn how to register for courses at NMBU.

## **Program Excursions**

While there are no formal excursions included in the program fee, students often join campus student groups that organize weekend trips and excursions around Norway. Typically these excursions are subsidized, making them much more affordable than a similar trip on your own. This is a great way to meet friends and see new parts of the country.

## **In-Country Staff**

### **Oslo:**

While studying at the University of Oslo, you will work with many of the departments and offices on campus. You will be assigned an adviser from the International Education Office who can answer general questions and help you navigate the university system.

Visit [www.uio.no/english/studies/contact](http://www.uio.no/english/studies/contact) for contact information and hours for the International Education Office.

### **Bergen:**

You will work with many of the departments and offices on campus. You will be working primarily with the International Student Mobility Office (see contact information on page 2) and the Centre for Information and Student Services ([infosenter@ua.uib.no](mailto:infosenter@ua.uib.no)). The latter office assists with transcripts, Student Web, exam registration, residence permits, student welfare, general and personal counseling, disability services, and many other services.

### **Life Sciences:**

While studying at NMBU, you will work with many of the departments and offices on campus. Contacts will be provided during your on-site orientation.

## **Housing Considerations**

### **Housing Options**

#### **Oslo:**

Student Housing, affiliated with The Foundation for Student Life in Oslo (SiO), provides affordable housing for students in Oslo. They have more than 6,000 rooms and apartments at different rates on or near campus. Living in a student village or house is a great opportunity to meet other students, develop lasting friendships, and be a part of the student life.

You will receive a housing application in your acceptance packet from the University of Oslo. You are guaranteed housing if you apply before the deadline. The general period of notice for tenants is two months.

Student housing typically consists of a single room with shared bathroom, kitchen, hall, and telephone. You will choose your specific room upon arrival in Oslo. The SiO Housing Division offers comprehensive services to tenants. Most units have electricity, cable TV, Internet, caretaker service, and security service included in the rent. In units where telephones are installed, tenants pay call charges only (i.e., you pay for the time you use the telephone). There is basic furniture in the rooms. Laundry facilities are also available, and you can pay for them with a special swipe card. You can rent bedding (sheets, blankets, pillows) from the dormitory. There is no reason to bring your own bedding, since bed sizes are different from the US.

Rents vary from NOK 2,200–4,200 per month including utilities. Note that your first payment will be for the first two months' rent. Therefore, be prepared to pay from NOK 4,400–8,400 in housing expenses at the start of the semester. All students who rent housing must pay a deposit of NOK 3,000.

On arrival you will be required to sign a formal housing contract. As a rule, housing contracts are issued for the entire semester.

We strongly advise you to arrive during the weekdays when the reception desks are open. If you cannot do so, you will have to find alternative accommodation at your own expense. This can be expensive and should be avoided.

More information about student housing is available online at [uio.no/english/student-life/services/housing](http://uio.no/english/student-life/services/housing).

### **Bergen:**

The University of Bergen offers housing for international students at the Fantoft Student Hostel ([sib.no/en/housing/news-from-sib-housing/club-fantoft](http://sib.no/en/housing/news-from-sib-housing/club-fantoft) for more information).

There are about 1,300 units available for rent. Living at the Fantoft Student Hostel is a great opportunity to meet other students, develop lasting friendships, and be a part of the student life.

Application deadlines for the Fantoft Student Hostel are the same as the deadlines for admission to the university. International students are guaranteed housing if they apply before deadlines.

Rent is approximately NOK 1812 per month and must be paid in advance. Please note that your international students must pay a NOK 2500 deposit when checking in. This can be done by postal payment, with cash, or with a Visa card. You must also pay about NOK 433 per month for electricity.

On arrival, you will be required to sign a formal housing contract. Housing contracts can be terminated by giving two months' notice. The termination forms are available at the reception desk.

We strongly advise you to arrive during the weekdays when the reception desks are open. If you cannot do so, you will have to find alternative accommodation at your own expense. This can be expensive and should be avoided.

The rooms at Fantoft come furnished with desk, chair, bookshelves, sofa, curtains, and a wardrobe. Some rooms share a larger kitchen, while others have a single kitchenette with hot plate and small fridge. Bedding is not included and must be bought by the student. Duvets and pillows can be purchased at the reception desk for around NOK 300. Each room has free Internet access if you bring your own computer. Laundry facilities and reading rooms are available for use. Next to Fantoft are the Safari Supermarket and Fantoft Sports Centre.

To reach the university from the Fantoft Student Hostel, you can bike or take the bus. Monthly bus passes cost NOK 400 for students under 30.

### **Life Sciences:**

Student Housing, affiliated with The Foundation for Student Life in Ås (Si Ås), provides affordable housing for students in Ås. They have rooms and apartments at different rates on or near campus. Living in a student village or house is a great opportunity to meet other students, develop lasting friendships, and be a part of the student life.

Apply for housing as soon as you receive your letter of acceptance from NMBU. International students are guaranteed housing if they apply before deadlines.

Rents vary from NOK 2,000–3,000 per month including utilities. Please note that your first payment will be for the first two months' rent. Therefore, you must be prepared to pay from NOK 4,000–5,000 in housing expenses at the start of the semester. All students who rent housing must pay a deposit of NOK 3,000. Rent cannot be paid by check and must either be paid through a Norwegian Bank account or by bank transfer from your home bank back in the US. Information about bank transfers can be obtained through Si Ås and at the NMBU orientation. A Norwegian bank account can only be obtained if someone has a Norwegian ID number.

Once you have been assigned a room, you will receive a tenancy agreement in the mail. You should read, sign, and return the agreement by mail. More information about housing is available at [sias.no/english/housing](http://sias.no/english/housing).

The Si Ås Housing Division offers comprehensive services to tenants. Most units have electricity, cable TV, caretaker service, and security service included in the rent. In units where telephones are installed, tenants pay call charges only (i.e., you pay for the time you use the telephone). There is basic furniture in the rooms. Laundry facilities are also available and you can pay for them with a special swipe card.

## Liability Insurance

Regardless of your housing arrangement, 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/resources/insurance\\_other.html](http://global.umn.edu/travel/resources/insurance_other.html).

## Visitors

### Program Housing

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

### During Program Period

Friends or relatives may visit during official program breaks or before or after the program, but not while classes are in session. Visits during this time interfere with your ability to focus on the program and host culture. Visitors are not allowed to stay with you in your official program housing.



## Academics

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

## Courses

### About Your University

#### Oslo:

As Norway's largest university, the University of Oslo and its eight faculties offer more than 100 study programmes in most academic fields at the bachelor's and master's degree levels. A number of integrated programmes, combining subjects from different faculties, are also available.

#### Bergen:

The University of Bergen is fortunate to receive students from all over the world. They offer a large number of courses taught in English at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, in addition to some 40 master's degree programs taught in English.

#### Life Sciences:

NMBU specializes in biology, the environment, food, and land use and natural resource management. In 2003, the university transferred to the US degree model: baccalaureat→master's→doctorate.

#### Calendar

Fall Semester	Early August–Mid-December
Spring Semester	Early January–Mid-June

#### Credit System

The standard credit system used for courses in Norway is the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). A course value varies from 5 to 20 ECTS. 10 ECTS correspond to 5 US semester credits.

You will take the equivalent of 15 US credits per semester, or 30 ECTS.

You will receive resident credit, which means that all of the course titles, credits, and grades will appear on your University of Minnesota transcript. Your grades will be factored into your GPA.

#### Class Size

The maximum class size at the university is students. On the average, 25–30 students are in each class. Freshmen courses are mostly in the form of lectures, while graduate students typically have smaller sessions.

#### Coursework

If you have specific academic questions once you are in Norway, you should contact the administrative coordinator in your department.

Students typically take 3–4 courses for a total of 15 US credits, or 30 ECTS credits. If you are on financial aid, be aware of the number of credits you must take each semester to retain your aid while abroad.

### **Course Level**

#### **Oslo:**

1000-level courses are foundation courses at the baccalaureate level and usually can be taken to fulfill Liberal Education requirements at the University of Minnesota. 2000–3000 level courses are advanced baccalaureate and are considered “upper division” courses in the US system. Check the prerequisites of each course to make sure you have adequate preparation to take the course. 4000–5000 level courses are advanced courses generally reserved for the master’s level, though they are occasionally open to undergraduates who have sufficient preparation in the subject area.

#### **Bergen:**

Undergraduate courses at the University of Bergen are offered at the 100–300 level. Check the prerequisites of each course to make sure you have adequate preparation to take the course. 100 courses are beginner’s courses. 200 courses involve some specialization, while 300 courses involve a higher level of specialization. 100 courses and 200 courses are listed as undergraduate courses. As a rule, 300 courses may only be incorporated into master’s level courses, though they are occasionally open to undergraduates who have sufficient preparation in the subject area.

#### **Life Sciences:**

100-level courses are foundation courses at the baccalaureate level. 200–300 level courses are advanced baccalaureate. Check the prerequisites of each course to make sure you have adequate preparation to take the course. 400–500 level courses are advanced courses generally reserved for the master’s level, though they are occasionally open to undergraduates who have sufficient preparation in the subject area.

### **Registration at Your Norwegian University**

#### **Oslo:**

You will be pre-registered for classes by the administrative coordinator at your department. However, check this and, in case you are not registered, register yourself. You will be given instructions on how to register for classes once you arrive in Oslo. If you want to make any changes, also address your coordinator for help. The registration process that takes place at the University of Oslo will be different than what you are used to at the University of Minnesota. Refer to the Getting Started guide for more information.

#### **Bergen:**

Registration will take place once you arrive on the University of Bergen campus. You must contact the Centre for Information and Student Services prior to completing the registration. If you arrive during Introductory Week, you will be guided through this process. Both semester and examination registration are done online via the StudentWeb.

#### **Life Sciences:**

You will be given instructions on how to register for classes once you arrive in Ås. The registration process that takes place at NMBU will be different than what you are used to at the University of Minnesota. Be patient and ask questions if you do not understand something.

### **Language of Instruction**

#### **Oslo:**

Most of the courses in English are designed for international students, so the majority of students in class will be from different countries with a few Norwegians majoring in English.

To view the courses offered in English at the University of Oslo, visit [www.uio.no/english/studies/courses](http://www.uio.no/english/studies/courses).

#### **Bergen:**

Most of the courses in English are designed for international students, so the majority of students in class will be from different countries with a few Norwegians majoring in English.

There are many courses taught in English (approximately 800 at different levels), including the Norwegian language. All of them are listed in a special course catalogue and online. To view the courses offered in English at the University of Bergen, visit [prospective.uib.no/index.php?mode=show\\_page&link\\_id=22&toplink\\_id=22](http://prospective.uib.no/index.php?mode=show_page&link_id=22&toplink_id=22).

If you have any other academic questions, contact the administrative coordinator at your department.

#### **Life Sciences:**

About 300 courses at NMBU are taught in English. Some courses can be taught in English upon request. The course catalogue is available at [umb.no/study-options/article/study-options](http://umb.no/study-options/article/study-options). Click on “course catalogue” in the right-hand column.

### **Norwegian Language Courses**

#### **Oslo & Bergen:**

There are both continuing and beginning Norwegian courses. The beginning 30-hour course is designed to provide students with the functional level of Norwegian for practical everyday use, while introducing them to Norwegian culture. The number of places available are limited and sometimes restricted to those for whom Norwegian is obligatory. So it is important to sign up for the courses before a specific deadline, which will be listed in the Getting Started guide.

## Life Sciences:

NMBU does not currently offer Norwegian language courses. Non-credit courses are available locally through the Adult Education center.

### Courses Offered in Norwegian

If you are proficient in Norwegian, you may be able to take courses taught in Norwegian. You must take a language assessment when you arrive on campus. This option is only available to those with advanced language skills.

### Assessment

In most courses, your academic performance will be assessed through one or more assignments or papers and a final examination, which often accounts for 50% or more of your total grade. The requirements will differ from course to course. Detailed information about the course, its objectives, prerequisites, grading, and exams can be obtained online.

### Grading Conversion

Grading in Norwegian universities is different than in the US. A “C” is considered a good grade and you must work hard to earn an “A,” which is more rare than in the US. To account for these differences in grading systems, the grades for your Norwegian courses will be converted to the US grading scale using the conversion chart shown below.

Norwegian Grade	University of Minnesota Grade
A	A
B	A-
C	B
D	C
E	D
F	F

### Full-Time Enrollment Policy

The LAC has a full-time enrollment policy that applies to all University Study in Norway programs. Students must enroll in a minimum of 15 credits for the duration of the program.

Students may not drop or withdraw from a course, either by formally withdrawing through the host university or informally withdrawing by no longer attending the course, if it will result in a total enrollment of less than 15 credits. This LAC policy supersedes any academic policies of the Norwegian host university.

The Norwegian host university will report to the LAC all courses students have registered for by the end of the on-site add period (generally the first two weeks of classes). All of these courses will be posted to the student’s University of Minnesota transcript including courses not listed on the Norwegian transcript. Courses not listed on the Norwegian transcript will be posted on the University of Minnesota transcript with a grade of either a “W” if the student does not complete the course or an “F” if the student fails the course.

## 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](http://UMabroad.umn.edu/students/academics/globalidentity).

## 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.

## **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.

Note: Universities in Norway may have different policies regarding adding or dropping class. Consult with the administrative coordinator and/or your adviser in the International Education Office before making any changes in your enrollment.

### **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.

## **Books & Materials**

Books are sold at your Norwegian university. You can also borrow books at the University Library, which has an extensive collection.

## **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](http://onestop.umn.edu).

### **Incompletes**

Students are generally expected to complete all course requirements by the end of the term. In very rare circumstances, students can arrange an "Incomplete" in consultation with the instructor, the on-site staff, and the LAC, whereby the remaining work can be finished shortly after returning to the US.

### **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 the Host Country

## History Resources

### **Introduction to Norway**

Ethnically, Norwegians are predominantly Germanic, although in the far north there are communities of Sami who came to the area more than 10,000 years ago, probably from central Asia. In recent years, Norway has become home to increasing number of immigrants, foreign workers, and asylum-seekers from various parts of the world. Immigrants now total over 300,000; some have obtained Norwegian citizenship.

Although the Evangelical Lutheran Church is the state church, Norway has complete religious freedom. Education is free through the university level and is compulsory from ages 6 to 16. At least 12 months of military service and training are required of every eligible male. Norway's health system includes free hospital care, physicians' compensation, cash benefits during illness and pregnancy, and other medical and dental plans. There is a public pension system.

Norway is in the top rank of nations in the number of books printed per capita, even though Norwegian is one of the world's smallest language groups. Norway's most famous writer is the dramatist Henrik Ibsen. Musical development in Norway since Edvard Grieg has followed either native folk themes or, more recently, international trends.

### **History**

The Viking period (9th to 11th centuries) was one of national unification and expansion. The Norwegian royal line died out in 1387, and the country entered a period of union with Denmark. By 1586, Norway had become part of the Danish Kingdom. In 1814, as a result of the Napoleonic wars, Norway was separated from Denmark and combined with Sweden. The union persisted until 1905, when Sweden recognized Norwegian independence.

The Norwegian Government offered the throne of Norway to Danish Prince Carl in 1905. After a plebiscite approving the establishment of a monarchy, the Parliament unanimously elected him king. He took the name of Haakon VII, after the kings of independent Norway. Haakon died in 1957 and was succeeded by his son, Olav V, who died in January 1991. Upon Olav's death, his son Harald was crowned as King Harald V.

Norway was nonbelligerent during World War I, but as a result of the German invasion and occupation during World War II, Norwegians generally became skeptical of the concept of neutrality and turned instead to collective security. Norway was one of the signers of the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949 and was a founding member of the United Nations. The first UN General Secretary, Trygve Lie, was a Norwegian. Under the terms of the will of Alfred Nobel, the Storting (Parliament) elects the five members of

the Norwegian Nobel Committee who award the Nobel Peace Prize to champions of peace.

### **Government**

The functions of the king are mainly ceremonial, but he has influence as the symbol of national unity. Although the 1814 constitution grants important executive powers to the king, these are almost always exercised by the Council of Ministers in the name of the king (King's Council). The Council of Ministers consists of a prime minister—chosen by the political parties represented in the Storting—and other ministers.

The 169 members of the Storting are elected from 19 fylker (counties) for four-year terms according to a complicated system of proportional representation. After elections, the Storting divides into two chambers, the Odelsting and the Lagting, which meet separately or jointly depending on the legislative issue under consideration.

The special High Court of the Realm hears impeachment cases; the regular courts include the Supreme Court (17 permanent judges and a president), courts of appeal, city and county courts, the labor court, and conciliation councils.

Each fylke is headed by a governor appointed by the king in council, with one governor exercising authority in both Oslo and the adjacent county of Akershus.

### **Economy**

Norway is one of the world's richest countries in per-capita terms. It has an important stake in promoting a liberal environment for foreign trade. Its large shipping fleet is one of the most modern among maritime nations. Metals, pulp and paper products, chemicals, shipbuilding, and fishing are the most significant traditional industries.

Norway's emergence as a major oil and gas producer in the mid-1970s transformed the economy. Large sums of investment capital poured into the offshore oil sector, leading to greater increases in Norwegian production costs and wages than in the rest of western Europe up to the time of the global recovery of the mid-1980s. The influx of oil revenue also permitted Norway to expand an already extensive social welfare system. Norway has established a state Petroleum Fund that exceeded \$132.6 billion as of December 2004.

The fund will primarily be used to help finance government programs once oil and gas resources become depleted. Norway is currently enjoying large foreign trade surpluses thanks to high oil prices. Unemployment remains currently low (in the 3%–4% range), and the prospects for economic growth are encouraging thanks to the government's stimulative fiscal policy and economic recovery in the US and Europe.

Norway voted against joining the European Union (EU) in a 1994 referendum. With the exception of the agricultural and fisheries sectors, however, Norway enjoys free trade with the EU under the framework of the European Economic Area. This agreement aims to apply the four freedoms of the EU's internal market (goods, persons, services, and

capital) to Norway. As a result, Norway normally adopts and implements most EU directives. Norwegian monetary policy is aimed at maintaining a stable exchange rate for the krone against European currencies, of which the euro is a key operating parameter. Norway is not a member of the EU's Economic and Monetary Union and does not have a fixed exchange rate. Its principal trading partners are in the EU; the US ranks sixth.

### **Energy Resources**

Offshore hydrocarbon deposits were discovered in the 1960s, and development began in the 1970s. The growth of the petroleum sector has contributed significantly to Norwegian economic vitality. Current petroleum production capacity is more than three million barrels per day. Production has increased rapidly during the past several years as new fields are opened. Total production in 2003 was about 263 million cubic meters of oil equivalents, more than 63% of which was crude oil. This represents a slight decline in crude oil production over the past year, accompanied by sharp increases in gas and liquefied natural gas (LNG) production. Hydropower provides nearly all of Norway's electricity, and all of the gas and most of the oil produced is exported. Production increased significantly in the 1990s as new fields come on stream.

Norway is the world's third-largest oil exporter and provides much of western Europe's crude oil and gas requirements. In 2003, Norwegian oil and gas exports accounted for 56% of total merchandise exports. In addition, offshore exploration and production have stimulated onshore economic activities. Foreign companies, including many American ones, participate actively in the petroleum sector.

## **Geography & Climate**

Norway has a long rugged coastline with many islands and fjords. The inland contains a long stretch of mountains running north to south with glaciers and waterfalls. With its high latitude, winters in Norway are long and dark while summer offers long days and "midnight sun."

The weather in Norway is warmer than in Minnesota. There is less snow in winter, but it can be cold, windy, and rainy.

There are generally four seasons:

- Spring (March–May): temperatures range from  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $15^{\circ}\text{C}$ , and occasionally it may even snow in late April;
- Summer (June–August): the weather varies from cold and rainy to warm and sunny; temperatures range from  $10$ – $30^{\circ}\text{C}$ ;
- Autumn (September–November): temperatures range from  $15^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $-10^{\circ}\text{C}$ ;
- Winter (December–February): temperatures range from  $5^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$ , and there may be some or a lot of snow and ice.

You can find up-to-date weather at [accuweather.com](http://accuweather.com).

## **Food Considerations**

### **Meals**

All of the cities have a wide variety of restaurants serving different cuisines. Eating out can be quite expensive, though an estimated price range for main courses in restaurants is under 150 NOK for budget, 150–250 NOK for mid-range, and over 250 NOK for high-end restaurants. More affordable restaurants are available near campus, but many students cook a meal with friends rather than going to a restaurant.

Students typically cook breakfast and dinner for themselves. They will often bring their own lunch to campus. There are also cafeterias that serve hot food for \$3–5. Vegetarian, vegan, and kosher dishes are available. Vegetarians should note, however, that vegetables and fruits are expensive.

### **Oslo:**

The dorms have common kitchens with two refrigerators, a stove, counters, a kitchen table with chairs, and a sitting area. There are generally sufficient pots, pans and kitchen utensils left by previous students.

Most of the housing complexes have an inexpensive grocery store.

### **Bergen:**

Students typically cook breakfast and dinner for themselves. They will often bring their own lunch to campus. There are also cafeterias that serve hot food for \$8–16. Vegetarian, vegan, and kosher dishes are available. Vegetarians should note, however, that vegetables and fruits are expensive.

The dorms have common kitchens with two refrigerators, a stove, counters, a kitchen table with chairs, and a sitting area. There are generally sufficient pots, pans and kitchen utensils left by previous students.

Next to Fantoft, there is the Safari Supermarket for buying groceries.

### **Life Sciences:**

There are several cafeteria providing breakfast, lunch, and dinner to students. For more information, visit: [www.sias.no/english/cafeterias](http://www.sias.no/english/cafeterias).

## **Relationships**

### **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 Norway

### Oslo:

Oslo is the capital and largest city in Norway. The population is around half a million. Oslo is situated at the head of the Oslo fjord and surrounded by forested ridges. There are abundant parks and green space throughout the city.

### Bergen:

Bergen is Norway's second largest city and the capital of western Norway, which is the leading region for all significant Norwegian export industries. Bryggen, the old wharf of Bergen, has been named an UNESCO World Heritage site for its well-preserved ancient wooden urban structure once common in northern Europe. The nearby west Norwegian Fjords of Geirangerfjord and Nærøyfjord are also on the list of UNESCO World Heritage sites.

### Ås:

The town of Ås is located about 40 km south of Oslo.

### Electricity/Water

Norway has 220 V electricity with outlets different from the standard US model, so you will need a voltage converter and plug adapters for any electronic items you bring.

It is safe to drink the tap water in Norway.

### Tiping

Service charges are often included in a restaurant bill. If they are not, you can choose to add around 10%. It is not uncommon to round up a bill even if the tip has already been included.

### Entertainment

There are many student organizations at each Norwegian university. These groups provide an excellent way to meet other students and participate in a wide variety of activities. You are strongly encouraged to join one or more of these groups as a way to meet students your age and immerse yourself in Norwegian culture.

### Public Transportation

Traveling in Norway is easy. You can go all over the country by plane, train, bus, or boat. Bergen is the ideal starting point for boat excursions to the famous fjord-country as well as for trips to the fascinating islands along the coast. Hurtigruten (the coastal steamer) runs from Bergen to North Cape daily. Short-haul services to Stavanger, Haugesund,

and the Hardangerfjord in the south and to the Sognefjord, Nordfjord, and Sunnfjord in the north are provided by high-speed catamarans and express buses.

## Communication

### Email & Internet

#### Oslo & Bergen:

Rooms in student housing have Internet access via Ethernet and not Wi-Fi. You may want to consider bringing your own Ethernet cable. Every faculty also has computer facilities with Internet access. There are free stand-up kiosks around campus for limited time use. For paper writing, each faculty has a sit-down computer facility. Although few students have laptops, you may find it more convenient to bring one because the computer facilities will have more limited hours than what you are used to. Note that PCs are much more common than Macs in Norway.

#### Life Sciences:

All students at NMBU have access to their own space on one of the NMBU servers. "Home-area" is your personal space on the server that only you have access to. Regular backups are made of all files stored there.

Several student computer rooms are located on campus. They can be found at Tower Building, Clock Building, Biotechnology Building, and TF Building.

Private computers can be brought, but to connect them to the Internet in your room, they must be registered with the Student Computer Services. This registration can be done in their office, located in the TF building, or online. In addition, there is no wireless Internet in the housing, so a wired Ethernet cord must be used to connect to the internet. The cord can be purchased at the NMBU student bookstore.

All students at NMBU are given a username and password. You also have your own NMBU email address, which you are responsible for checking regularly, since all official notices are sent to this address.

### Social Media

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

### Phones

Direct dialing or calling collect to the US will be quite expensive. Most students plan to keep in contact with friends and family back home by using applications like Skype and FaceTime. These are a cheap and easy way to call home.

All semester students are required to have a cell phone in Norway with a local number. If you would like to use your US cell phone in Norway, you should contact your local provider because most US cell phones will not work in

Europe. If they do work, the rates will be very expensive. It will be less expensive to buy a cell phone once you arrive in Norway. Cell phone companies in Norway often use the “pay as you go” system rather than a monthly or yearly plan.

## 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.

### Financial Planning

You can find an estimate of the total cost of studying in Norway for Oslo, Bergen, and Life Sciences at our website:

[UMabroad.umn.edu/programs/europe/norway-oslo/fees](http://UMabroad.umn.edu/programs/europe/norway-oslo/fees)

[UMabroad.umn.edu/programs/europe/norway-bergen/fees](http://UMabroad.umn.edu/programs/europe/norway-bergen/fees)

[UMabroad.umn.edu/programs/europe/norway-nuls/fees](http://UMabroad.umn.edu/programs/europe/norway-nuls/fees)

New international students are often surprised by the high prices of goods and services in Norway. Norway is an expensive country and it takes a while to get used to the high cost of living. You will need a minimum of NOK 8,000 per month in order to cover basic expenses, such as housing, meals, transportation, etc.

## Social & Cultural Adjustments

### Student Identity

As a foreigner in Norway, 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](http://UMabroad.umn.edu/students/identity).

### Gender

Norway is generally quite liberal and GLBT friendly. Gay and lesbian couples in Norway can form “registered partnerships,” which carry most of the same rights as marriage except adoption, artificial insemination, and access to church weddings. Oslo has a thriving GLBT community with plenty of local events and entertainment.

Although same sex couples are accepted for the most part, public displays of affection may not be as well received. Acceptance of the GLBT is not universal in Norway, and you may encounter resistance or discrimination from those with conservative religious views. We recommend that you consult some of the many local GLBT resources available in Oslo and follow the lead of those you see around you to determine cultural norms related to GLBT issues in Norway.

### 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](http://UMabroad.umn.edu/students/identity).

### 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](http://UMabroad.umn.edu/students/identity).



# 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.

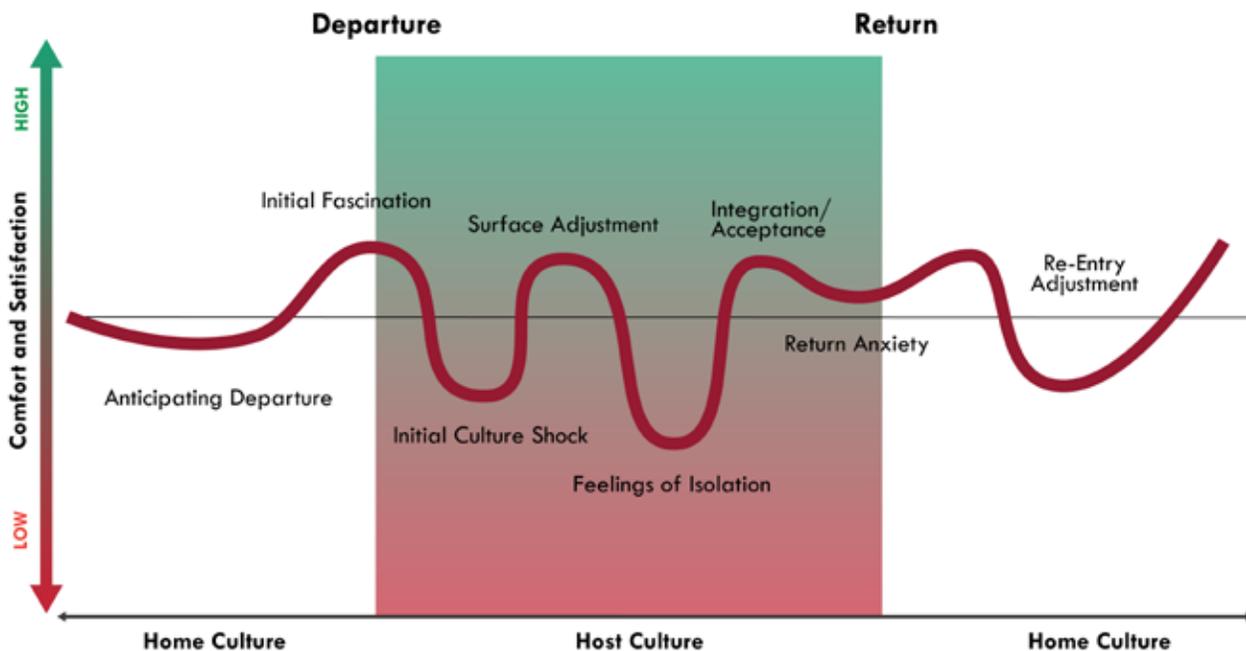
**Feelings of Isolation:** Difficulties in your new culture seem to stubbornly remain and you grow frustrated with the process. A sense of isolation sets in. Boredom and a lack of motivation often follow. Unresolved personal issues often surface during this stage.

**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 Gullahorn (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](http://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](http://UMabroad.umn.edu/students/process/reentry).

## Appendix

### Suggested Packing List

It is extremely important that you pack light, because you will be carrying your luggage yourself during the trip, often for long stretches in airports and in bus and train stations. Take only as much as you can carry easily by yourself.

#### Necessary Items

- Comfortable, seasonable clothing that you can wash and wear, plus one or two formal outfits
- Waterproof jacket/coat for cold, wet weather
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Waterproof, warm boots or shoes
- Supply of any prescription medication you require (bring enough for your full stay and make sure it is in its original bottle for customs)
- Voltage converter and outlet adapter if you bring any electronic items such as a digital camera or laptop
- Backpack or small suitcase that is suitable for weekend trips
- A copy of all of your Residence Permit application materials, carried with you in your carry-on bag.

### Resources

Study in Norway: [studyinnorway.no](http://studyinnorway.no). Get practical information on studying and living in Norway. Cultural information, costs, scholarships, health, and more.

Visit Norway: [visitnorway.com](http://visitnorway.com). Tourist information.

*The Silent Language*, by Edward T. Hall. Known as “the father of intercultural communication,” Hall writes about many of the more subtle cultural differences, such as nonverbal communication, in an engaging and anecdotal way.

*Survival Kit for Overseas Living*, by L. Robert Kohls. A rather simple but useful general guide for persons preparing to live abroad. A good, basic introduction, short and easy to read.

*Intercultural Communication: A Reader*, by L.A. Samovar and R.E. Belmont. A book of collected readings on various topics of intercultural communications.

*American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, by Edward C. Stewart and Milton J. Bennett. A description of contrasting values between the mainstream US culture and other cultures. Examples of problems encountered between Americans and citizens of developing countries. Especially valuable for students going to non-European cultures.

*The Art of Crossing Cultures*, by Craig Storti. Storti focuses on learning how to anticipate differences and to employ different reactions according to the cultural situation.

Many of these books are available in the University of Minnesota libraries. Some are also available in the University of Minnesota Learning Abroad Center. Nearly all of them, and many others, are available through Intercultural Press at [nicholasbrealey.com/boston/subjects/interculturalpress.html](http://nicholasbrealey.com/boston/subjects/interculturalpress.html).