



Learning Abroad Information for

# PARENTS



## SEQUENCE OF SUPPORT



### BENEFITS OF LEARNING ABROAD

#### Academics

Students can study any topic from a different perspective and in a new environment while earning credits toward their major, minor, or liberal education requirements.

#### Language

Students have the opportunity to study a language more efficiently and accurately while being immersed in it abroad.

#### Intercultural Learning

Learning abroad strengthens students' ability to interact with people from different cultures.

#### Personal Development

Students increase their self-confidence, maturity, and global identity.

#### Career Development

Time abroad enhances students' resumés with international experience and allows them to expand attractive skill sets for future employers.

### MORE INFORMATION

Additional resources can be found at [UMabroad.umn.edu/parents](http://UMabroad.umn.edu/parents).



### 1. Exploration

Talk to students about their goals and needs for their experience abroad. Study with a new professor? Career development? Travel? Heritage exploration? Scholarship options? The Learning Abroad Center (LAC) asks students the same questions as it advises them in finding the best program for their personal and career goals.

### 2. Selection

Ask your students about their choice. Why did they choose this program? What are their expectations? What do they hope to gain from the experience?

### 3. Departure

Students can often feel overwhelmed and less confident than when they originally began the steps to go abroad. Reiterate that you feel they will succeed and that both the LAC and you will be there when challenges arise. You will be invited to attend the pre-departure orientation that is offered for all LAC programs.

### 4. In Country

Remember, just like when your student went to a week-long summer camp, they don't call you when they are surrounded by friends and feeling wonderful about the experience. You are their support system, and they will rely on you when confused, lonely, or vulnerable. Talk to your students and ask them to check in the day following the pep talk. The emotional cloud often passes and things improve dramatically. Encourage them to contact local staff with concerns.

### 5. Re-Entry

Ask your students specific questions about their experience. What did they see on the way to classes or an internship? What was the food like? Language? Host-national friends? American friends? Some students may take more time to reflect independently. Other students may show you photos and share stories with you from their time abroad. Encourage your students to think about how this experience has enhanced their skills and confidence as they prepare to enter the workforce after graduation.



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LEARNING ABROAD CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



## Information for Parents

Learning abroad has the potential to be one of the most exciting and significant events of your student's life. It's an occasion to learn about another country, its culture, and its people while earning academic credit or participating in a non-credit-bearing opportunity. The experience provides a chance to learn about oneself in the context of the global community. Learning abroad can enhance a resume and increase career opportunities. Parents and family members are the primary supporters of student international experiences—so it's important for you to understand the processes of learning abroad.

### STUDENT-CENTERED OFFICE

Parents are very important supporters of students' international experiences. The Learning Abroad Center is dedicated to being student-centered. We purposefully strive to communicate with and send all correspondence to students. Students are the individuals who will be abroad and are responsible for themselves in a foreign country. In our experience, independent student preparation helps them make the transition to being abroad a successful one.

While we are pleased to meet with parents to answer questions, in many cases, we are not at liberty to share information out of compliance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). We encourage you to funnel your

questions through your student, having him/her serve as the family representative. When sharing your questions with your student, you may wish to discuss why you have questions about a particular topic and what impact different answers could have. This process is a wonderful exercise to help your student reach the next stage of maturity and become an independent adult.

### FERPA

The same laws that give parents and students access to and control over a student's educational records during elementary and high school transfer ownership of the records to the student at the college level. According to FERPA (also known as the Buckley Amendment), college students are considered responsible adults and are allowed to determine who will receive personal information. Under this law, parents who want to receive a copy of their student's academic or financial records can do so if their student signs a release form. FERPA, along with the State of Minnesota Data Privacy Act, forms the backdrop for the Regents Policy on Access to Student Records.

While federal law FERPA prevents the LAC from sharing information about a particular student, you are encouraged to browse the resources available online and in our office, and to talk to your student.

### FINANCE & BILLING

Students are billed through the UofM Pay system—just as they are for on-campus coursework. Your student will be prompted by an email message about fee deadlines. For information about financial resources, visit our website.

### ACCESS ABROAD

We encourage students with disabilities, apparent or non-apparent, to explore opportunities abroad. The LAC and Disability Resource Center collaborate to enhance access to study abroad for students with disabilities.

"There is nothing like this experience. It truly lasts a lifetime. It seems especially important for American students to go abroad as we sometimes get caught in our 'bubble.' This helps to foster windows, not mirrors, for us."

— Abby Carpenter  
Parent of UofM student

