

Central College Abroad Parent Handbook 2008-2009

INTRODUCTION	1
IMPORTANT CONTACTS.....	2
TRAVEL-RELATED WEBSITES	4
UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENT'S EXPERIENCE	5
COMMON QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS.....	8
CENTRAL COLLEGE ABROAD SAFETY AND SECURITY PLAN	11

Introduction

To the parents of all Central College Abroad students,

Studying abroad is a wonderful, exciting and sometimes anxiety-provoking experience for students. It is also an exciting and sometimes anxiety-provoking experience for their families. We know that parents and families sometimes have special concerns and questions that are different from those of the students. We hope that this handbook, along with the program's Student Survival Guide, will address most of those concerns and questions and will help to make your student's study abroad experience a more enjoyable one for you as well.

The Student Survival Guide contains practical information for both students and their families: program addresses and phone numbers, expense budgets, travel agencies, information on obtaining student visas (if applicable), consulate contact information, hotels near the program site, and more. The Parent Handbook is intended to address special concerns that parents and families might have, such as understanding the process of cultural adaptation their student is undergoing, what to do if there is a question about billing or transcripts, or when your student doesn't call home upon arrival as promised. We encourage parents to read through both the Student Survival Guide and the Parent Handbook completely as soon as you receive them. The handbooks should answer many of your questions and suggest the best person or organization to contact if you need more information.

We hope you have a wonderful experience, sharing this life-changing opportunity with your student. Please do not hesitate to call or email our office before, during or after the journey.

The Staff at Central College Abroad

Important Contacts

For individual program offices, please see student handbook.

Central College Abroad:

812 University, Box 0140
Pella, IA 50219
studyabroad@central.edu
800-831-3629/641-628-5284
Fax: 641-628-5375

Please note that you may call our 800 number at any time. For emergencies, you will hear instructions on how to reach a representative from our office.

Central College Abroad Office Staff:

Brian Zylstra, Manager of On-Campus Operations and Student Services
zylstrab@central.edu

Annique Kiel, Director of Institutional Relations
kiela@central.edu

Jessica Klyn de Novelo, Senior Coordinator of Institutional Relations
klynj@central.edu

Jennifer Larson, Coordinator of Institutional Relations
larsonj@central.edu

Maria Hickle, Territory Representative
hicklem@central.edu

Central College Controller's Office:

Jeff Sanger
Staff Accountant
Controller's Office
Central College
812 University, Box 5700
Pella, IA 50219
sangerj@central.edu
641-628-5161

Central College Academic Records/Registration:

Jaelyn Smith, Assistant Registrar
Academic Records and Registration
Central College
812 University, Box 6400
Pella, IA 50219
smithjk@central.edu
641-628-5343

Central College Financial Aid:

Donna Newendorp, Associate Director
Counseling Services, Financial Aid
Central College
812 University, Box 5800
Pella IA 50219
newendorpd@central.edu
641-628-5267

Travel-Related Websites

The Internet guide of Hostelling:

<http://www.hostels.com/>

State Department:

<http://travel.state.gov/>

State Department Travel Warnings:

<http://travel.state.gov/travel/warnings.html>

U.S. Embassies:

<http://www.embpage.org/>

World Health Organization:

<http://www.who.int/>

Weather Channel:

<http://www.weather.com/weather/int/>

USA Today weather information:

<http://www.usatoday.com/weather/basemaps/world1.html>

Olsen's Currency Converter:

<http://www.oanda.com/converter/classic>

Country-Specific Websites

City Net:

<http://www.city.net/countries/>

CIA country handbook:

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>

Flight Information Websites

Commercial airlines:

<http://www.travel.org/airlines.html>

STA Travel

<http://www.statravel.com>

Student Universe

<http://www.studentuniverse.com/travel/central>

Understanding Your Student's Experience

Students often go through similar stages as they prepare to leave the U.S., adjust to life abroad, and return home. Although it may not be immediately apparent, as students adjust to life in a different culture, they gain important skills that will benefit them throughout their lives. They are developing intercultural competence, the ability to recognize and respect differences among cultures, and to live and work effectively in a culture other than their own. Following is a list of 13 typical stages of adjustment and suggestions on how families can support their students during each stage. Each person adjusts to new situations in a unique way, and sometimes a student may pass through these stages in a different order or skip them entirely. The following is intended only as a general guide.

1. Anticipating Departure

Preparing to go abroad is an exciting time. With this excitement comes the formation of expectations and goals. However, it is important that students remain realistic in their expectations so they will not face disappointments when they settle in abroad.

Suggestions for Support:

Your student can benefit from researching the country, reading important works of literature and consulting local newspapers on the Internet. It is also beneficial for the student to start a journal that defines goals and expectations for their time abroad. The journal should be continued throughout the abroad experience and after returning home. These activities will help give your student a sense of understanding of the process he/she is going through and a connection to the new country.

2. Arrival Confusion

The first few days can be very trying and disorienting for some students. They will be recovering from jetlag, meeting new friends, adjusting to a new language, living style, food and customs. For most young people this is very exciting, but for some it can be intimidating. However, most students recover and adjust and do very well.

Suggestions for Support:

Particularly during the first few days, it is not uncommon for a student to call home upset about the housing, the city, jetlag or local people. Please encourage your student to speak with the resident program director about his or her concerns. The directors are familiar with these situations and are ready and able to help your student during this initial adjustment period.

3. The Honeymoon

When a student arrives in the host country, everything is typically new, different and fascinating. Many students respond by being on a cultural high and feel that everything is wonderful. This stage can last from one to several weeks.

Suggestions for support:

Sharing your student's excitement, exploration, and new experiences is fun. Stockpile some of the good experiences to use when times become more challenging. This is a good time to begin inquiring about differences in food, people and other cultural variances.

4. The Plunge

When the novelty of the new culture wears off, students can become frustrated and confused. This is when reality sets in. They need to begin adjusting to new ways of communicating and differences in living styles, food, social customs, and classroom interactions. Although difficult, this stage prepares the student to engage with the new culture at a deeper level.

Suggestions for Support:

Listen carefully. Ask about what is frustrating your son or daughter. Avoid making value judgments on cultural differences. Instead, work together to understand these differences.

5. Initial Adjustment

As students develop their language and social skills, they become more confident. They feel at home with local transportation, communication, and social customs. Novelty items become commonplace and many of the initially confusing differences begin to make sense. This period can last a long time as they begin to balance the negatives and positives within the culture.

Suggestions for support:

Cultural differences are not problems to be solved. Understanding these differences and responding appropriately are important accomplishments for students. Praise these accomplishments, however mundane they may seem.

6. Confronting Deeper Issues

As students confront cultural differences and personal issues at a deeper level, they begin to see a multitude of approaches to their life abroad. They learn through experience what is socially acceptable and question deeper assumptions about the world. Students may feel isolated at times during this stage.

Suggestions for support:

This important and very challenging stage is the pathway to profound growth. Students may have strong negative feelings about the host culture or their own culture. Encourage your student to explore his or her own values and beliefs. Avoid rushing to judgment, as your student's values appear to change.

7. Adapting and Assimilating

The sense of isolation subsides as students begin to feel more at home in the host country. They begin to identify with new ways of thinking and doing. They may establish a strong friendship with a local student, or they may accept that they will not have the time to develop deep friendships. At this point, students are comfortable with their home identities as well as the adapted identities they've developed in the new culture.

Suggestions for support:

Not all students will reach this stage, so don't be disappointed if yours doesn't. Many expatriates do not reach this stage even after several years of living in another culture. You may well sense a greater maturity in your student. Share your student's clearer understanding of both his/her home country and other cultures.

8. Going Home

The program is winding down and students want to take a few more pictures, visit places they still haven't seen, say farewell to friends, and pack for home. Students have to prepare for departure while at the same time complete an academically rigorous semester. They are also reflecting on what they've accomplished and where they've been.

Suggestions for Support:

Prepare yourself for your student's return home and the challenges to be faced. Help him or her make the psychological adjustments to prepare for the return home.

9. Initial Excitement

Students are thrilled to be home, eat their favorite food, see their friends, and be with their families. They may talk endlessly about their many experiences and discoveries while abroad.

Suggestions for support:

Listen. Enjoy their experiences with them. Try to accept their enthusiasm for the host culture and their experiences without brushing them off (even though it seems you have heard the story a hundred times.) Encourage them to reflect on how they have grown and developed in preparation for returning to their home college or university.

10. Judgmental Period

What was once familiar and commonplace at home becomes strange, uncomfortable and boring. Students may find fault in everything and believe it was better overseas.

Suggestions for support:

Avoid ignoring your student's concerns or debating the relative value of U.S. culture versus the culture of their host country. Instead, help your student further explore the positive and negative aspects of each culture. How can they develop a confident identity with different cultural backgrounds?

11. Realization Stage

At this point, students are noticing significant changes at home and in themselves. This stage can be compared to the *Confronting Deeper Issues* stage. This is an important link between the students' adapted selves and their original self-perceptions.

Suggestions for Support:

Encourage your son or daughter to forge his or her own identity and self-confidence. Help him or her build upon his or her experiences to set future academic, professional and personal goals.

12. Reverse Culture Shock

Students often experience frustration at not being able to use the skills acquired overseas that are now second nature to them. This may cause them to feel isolated and misunderstood by family or friends. Students may feel that important new perceptions and values acquired abroad have been lost.

Suggestions for Support:

Encourage your student to get involved with activities that will enable them to use their cross-cultural skills. Examples of these activities include international student organizations on campus, volunteer activities with foreign students or immigrant workers, and working with prospective study abroad students. Central College provides similar opportunities for students returning to campus and many of the other students' home schools provide this as well.

13. Balanced Re-Adaptation

During this stage, students begin to integrate their experiences abroad into their life in the U.S. They find a niche at home and are comfortable expressing their new viewpoints and values. They integrate

their identities developed overseas with their identities in their home culture, resulting in a more complete appreciation of both the home and overseas culture.

Suggestions for support:

Enjoy the observations and take pride in your student's development.

Common Questions and Concerns

Who should pay the initial deposit, the student or the school?

Students are informed of their home institutions payment procedures via their online account. Students from colleges and universities which have not signed a cooperating agreement with Central College Abroad may need to pay the initial deposit and all remaining fees directly to the Central College Controller's Office. Students from Cooperating Institutions generally pay the program deposit directly to Central College Abroad. However, a number of Cooperating Institutions pay the program deposit on their students' behalf. If you have questions, please check with the study abroad coordinator at your student's home institution or with Central College Abroad regarding deposits.

Students who are enrolled full-time in a degree program at Central College pay the deposit directly to the Central College Controller's Office. Central College can transfer funds from a student's safe account to pay the deposit, but the student must make this specific request. If a Central student has an outstanding balance, even for a small amount, it must be cleared before the Controller's Office will credit the deposit toward the program.

What is the program deposit used for? Can I get it back later?

The program deposit is part of the overall program fee and is included in the total program fee. Paying the deposit reserves a place for your student on the program and allows the program director to begin reserving housing and making other arrangements for your student. The deposit is non-refundable unless Central College Abroad cancels the program.

It's close to the due date for paying the program fee, but I haven't received an invoice yet. Will my son or daughter be dropped from the program?

Your son or daughter's school may be one of the cooperating schools that pay the program fee to Central College on your behalf. The school will then invoice you according to its usual procedure. If you are being invoiced directly by Central College Abroad, the Controller's Office at Central will invoice you upon receipt of the program deposit. A student would only be dropped from a program if he/she failed to make payment after being contacted about a late payment. The student can access their home institution's payment procedures via their online account.

I can't afford to pay the full program fee by the deadline. Do you have a monthly billing plan?

Central College Abroad does have a monthly billing plan available for semester or academic year programs. If you are being invoiced directly, you can participate in the plan. Please contact Jeff Sanger in the Controller's Office at Central College for details. If the home institution is paying the program fee and invoicing the student later, you will need to contact the Business/Controller's Office at the home campus to work out a payment plan. Central College cannot do monthly billings for you if we have an agreement to invoice your student's college or university.

Can my son/daughter's financial aid be used to pay for your programs?

This option depends on the policy of the individual college or university. If your student is not enrolled full time in a degree program at Central College, you will need to contact the Financial Aid Office at his/her college or university regarding financial aid allowed for Central College Abroad programs. Central College does accept financial aid from other schools, with their permission. All financial aid must be processed through your student's home institution. Federal and state aid should be transferable for most students.

In general, Central College students may use their full financial aid, with the exception of work-study, for off-campus study for up to one academic year. After one year, a portion of the financial aid can be used. Please contact Donna Newendorp in Student Financial Planning for details on your Central student's financial aid situation. Central students should let Student Financial Planning know as soon as possible of their decision to study abroad, so that financial aid can be reconfigured to include the additional costs of study abroad, such as airfare.

Will my son/daughter need any special vaccinations before going abroad?

For the European programs, Central College Abroad recommends that students have all their regular vaccinations up to date. They should have a tetanus booster if they have not had one in the last five years. We recommend that all students have a TB test before and after their trip abroad as there is a slightly increased risk of exposure when traveling. We also recommend typhoid and hepatitis A vaccinations for students attending the programs in Mexico and China. Be sure read the Health and Safety section of the student handbook for details and have your student consult with his/her doctor and the school health center in preparation for the trip.

Does Central College Abroad book group flights?

Students are responsible for booking their own flights. Students attending the programs come from all over the U.S., so it's not possible to book group flights. The Central College Abroad office does provide a roster of program participants so that students can contact each other and arrange to be on the same flight if they choose. The student needs to consult the program calendar made available on their online account for making flight arrangements. For further information on making flight arrangements and travel agencies, please see the "Know Before You Go" section of the Student Survival Guide.

Should I consider obtaining a passport?

In the past, some parents have decided to purchase a passport in hopes of visiting their son/daughter or in the unlikely event that a health-related emergency would occur. Information on obtaining a passport can be found at www.travel.state.gov.

Will the program director pick up the students at the airport?

It depends on the program. Directions on how to reach the program site or first meeting location are included in the Student Survival Guide in the Arrival section or in the student's online acceptance packet.

Please contact Central College Abroad if you have further questions regarding arrival arrangements.

My son/daughter was supposed to call me as soon as he/she arrived. It's been a whole day and I'm worried.

Try not to panic. Every semester at least one or two students forget to call home, causing their parents a lot of anxiety. Most students simply are not cognizant of how much their parents are worrying about them. They are tired from traveling or are busy trying to get settled in or perhaps haven't yet figured out

how an unfamiliar telephone system works. Please be assured that all the program directors have the students' flight information and are watching for their arrival. They will notify us if a student does not arrive when expected. If you are concerned, please contact Central College Abroad. We will locate your son/daughter, let you know that we have reached him/her, and ask him/her to call you.

How soon do we receive the grades at the end of the program?

It usually takes at least three to four weeks for grades to be sent back to Central College from abroad, but can take longer. The Registrar's Office at Central then sends an official Central College transcript directly to the student's home institution and a statement of grades to the student. If you need more exact information on when your student's grades will be available, please contact Kelly Taylor in the Registrar's Office at Central College.

We just received the grades and my son/daughter thinks there is a mistake on the transcript.

Please contact the Central College Abroad office and let us know about a potential transcript error. We will need to know the student's name, the program he/she attended, the number and title of the course in question, and the problem with the grade or credit. Central College Abroad cannot change a grade or credit, but we will contact the program director, who will investigate the situation. The professor who taught the course will make any appropriate corrections in writing, which the program director will forward to the Registrar's Office at Central College. The Registrar's Office will then issue a revised transcript. Minor errors are usually easily resolved.

If the student is disputing the grade received, then he/she will need to make a case for changing the grade, just as he/she would at the home institution.

What will Central College do in case of emergency?

The following pages outline the Central College Abroad Safety and Security Plan.

Central College Abroad Safety and Security Plan

Emergency Plan

The Central College Abroad Emergency Plan enhances the safety of our participants and guides their response to emergencies. The plan is not a guarantee that a specific action will take place in a specific situation, nor is this document a contract between Central College Abroad and any other party. Health, safety, and recovery from emergency situations are the sole responsibility of each participant as outlined in the Conditions of Participation form signed by each participant.

Assessing the Risk

Central College Abroad uses a number of sources to assess the safety and security risks for participants. We use data provided by the U.S. Department of State, and gather data provided by our on-site program directors regarding their local situation. Other sources include consultation with other study abroad program providers and recommendations made by the NAFSA Association of International Educators. We encourage individual participants and their family to remain in close contact with each other and to regularly check travel advisories at www.travel.state.gov.

Role of On-site Program Directors

Our program directors are continually monitoring safety and security in their respective countries.

In the event of a local emergency or worldwide crisis, program directors will:

- Contact all participants to ascertain their well-being and to provide information and advice;
- Contact the U.S. Embassy, Consulate, or Interest Section, and also confer with other study abroad providers and/or U.S. organizations operating in their city or country;
- Gather or not gather the participants in a group based on the particular circumstances;
- Advise participants to contact their family as soon as possible;
- Contact the Central College Emergency Response Team;
- Continue to monitor the local situation and implement instructions from Central College Emergency Response Team as needed.

Role of Participants

We encourage our participants to be in routine contact with their family and to advise them of their travel plans during their time outside of the United States. Our program directors also request travel plans from each of their participants as a precautionary measure. In addition, Central College Abroad advises participants to:

- Make sure their family has their accurate and up-to-date contact information at all times;
- Notify the program director of any emergencies and any health condition that lasts a day or two;
- Review travel advisories for countries they plan to visit.

Role of Emergency Response Team

Central College Abroad's Emergency Response Team consists of the following individuals:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>
David Roe	President, Central College
Paul Naour	Provost, Central College
JoNes Van Hecke	Dean of Student Life, Central College
Connie Cross	Director of Media and Marketing Relations, Central College
Abby Gonzales	News and Marketing Writer, Central College
Brian Zylstra	Manager of On-Campus Operations & Student Services, Central College Abroad

To contact members of the Emergency Response Team outside of business hours, please call our 24-hour information desk at 1-641-628-9000 for directory assistance.

In the event of a local emergency or worldwide crisis, the Emergency Response Team will:

- Consult with program directors regarding situation;
- Determine proper course of action and have program directors implement plan of action;
- Contact sending schools regarding course of action as soon as possible;
- Contact the participants' family depending on the severity of the situation.

Each member of the Emergency Response Team has immediate access to:

- All critical contact data regarding participants, worldwide staff, sending schools, and other safety and crisis information.

U.S. Department of State

We continually monitor the travel advisories in the countries in which our programs operate. Travel advisories for specific countries can be viewed at www.travel.state.gov. The U.S. State Department also provides a service to families in the United States whose U.S. Citizen relatives living abroad are directly affected by a crisis. Families can communicate with the Department of State through the Office of American Citizens Services and Crisis Management (202) 647-5225. Participants and their families need to be aware that the U.S. Department of State Office of American Citizens Services and Crisis Management will generally not release individual information to Central College Abroad or to other third parties.

Contingency Plans

We do have contingency plans for each country in which we operate. Contingency plans will be put into effect in case there is a known local condition that requires (1) extra caution (2) removal of the program to a different site in the same city or country or a nearby country or (3) suspension of a program and evacuation of participants. For security reasons, these contingency plans are made known only to Central College Abroad staff.

On-site Orientation

As a part of the comprehensive on-site orientation, our program directors have reviewed in-depth safety and security measures for their respective countries. Participants have been given all necessary emergency contact information and have been guided in the steps they should take should an emergency arise. The program directors also register each participant with the U.S. Consulate or Interest Section.

Cellular Phone Information

As part of Central College Abroad's commitment to students' safety abroad, we require all students to have a cellular phone with them at all times while enrolled in our programs so that they can be reached quickly in the event of an emergency. Your student's online acceptance packet includes program specific information.

Health Insurance

Once on site, participants will be provided with information regarding recommended local health care providers. As a requirement to participate in Central College Abroad's programs, participants must have health insurance to cover them while abroad.

Health Care

As always, Central College Abroad's top priority is our participants and their well-being. We will continue to monitor the world situation and act in the participants' best interest. If an emergency arises, please know we will act prudently and notify sending schools and family of our actions. We are prepared to act should the need arise.

Avian Flu

Although there have been no travel warnings issued with avian flu, students of Central College Abroad are provided the information necessary to make adequate preparations and appropriate decisions before and during the study abroad experience.

Avian Influenza (H5N1) is a rising concern due to sporadic outbreaks in Asia and Europe. The virus itself is present in the droppings of birds, especially chickens. Human cases have occurred, but only after direct contact with poultry. Although the risk to travelers is small, it is important to avoid places such as poultry farms and bird markets. It is safe to eat well-cooked chicken.

The Center for Global Education recommends that all students and parents review institutional/program and personal emergency action plans, and take necessary precautions to make informed travel decisions. Besides practicing good personal hygiene, students should consider staying away from people and areas of potential risk, and seek medical attention at the first indication of flu-like symptoms.

In addition, the Center strongly suggests all parents and students review Avian flu information, as well as travel and country-specific warnings provided by the *U.S. Department of State*, the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* and the *World Health Organization (WHO)*. The Center also suggests students seek alternative information from international sources in the European Union, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and from the World Health Organization.

Before Travel:

- Students with pulmonary disease or any respiratory illness should disclose this information on their medical records.
- Students are advised NOT to travel to/from an H5N1 (avian flu) area if they have a fever.
- Students should consult their physicians about obtaining an influenza vaccine prior to travel.
- Students should consult their physicians as to whether they should bring a supply of the antiviral medications such as oseltamivir ("Tamiflu") or Relenza in case of an outbreak in humans of influenza.
- Student's routine vaccinations should be updated, and they should visit their doctors or health-care providers, ideally 4-6 weeks before travel, to get any additional vaccination medications or information they may need.
- Assemble a travel health kit containing basic first aid and medical supplies. Be sure to include a thermometer and alcohol-based hand gel for hand hygiene.
- Avoid all direct contact with poultry, including touching well-appearing, sick, or dead chickens and ducks.

While Abroad:

- Cleaning hands often with soap and water removes potentially infectious material from the skin and helps prevent disease transmission. Waterless alcohol-based hand gels may be used when soap is not available and hands are not visibly soiled.
- All foods from poultry, including eggs and poultry blood should be cooked thoroughly. Egg yolks should not be runny or liquid. Because influenza viruses are destroyed by heat, the cooking temperature for poultry meat should be 74°C (165°F)
- If the student becomes sick with symptoms such as a fever accompanied by a cough, sore throat, or difficulty breathing or if he or she develops any illness that requires prompt medical attention, the student should contact his or her program director immediately.

- The student should not travel while ill, unless seeking medical care. Limiting contact with others as much as possible can help prevent the spread of an infectious illness.

Back Home:

- Monitor your health for 10 days after the student's return. If the student becomes ill with a fever plus a cough, sore throat, or trouble breathing during this 10-day period, consult a health-care provider immediately.