

MSSU Honors Program – Study Abroad Contract

This form should be filled out as soon as possible after deciding on a study abroad plan and submitted to the Honors Director **no later than 6 weeks before planned departure.**

Name: _____

Date: _____

SID #: _____

Semester and Year of Study Abroad:

Fall_____ Spring_____ Intersession_____ Summer_____

Length of Study:

_____One Year_____One Semester _____Other (indicate length of time) _____

Location of Study (country, city, etc.): _____

Dates of Travel: From date_____ To date _____

Is this:

A University-sponsored trip lasting a minimum of 10 days? Yes_____ No_____

If yes, which University? _____

Faculty Sponsor _____

An ISEP trip? Yes_____ No_____

A Bilateral Exchange? Yes_____ No_____

Other, give details _____

School Attending (if applicable): _____

Courses planned (if any): _____

Do you have a passport? Yes_____ No_____

Is your FAFSA on file in financial aid? Yes_____ No_____

Are you receiving monetary support from the Institute of International Studies? Yes_____ No_____

Have you checked to see if you need immunizations or other shots? Yes_____ No_____

Approval by Honors Director _____

Date _____

MSSU Honors Program – Study Abroad Requirement

1. Before leaving on your trip, please email to Honors@mssu.edu a 1,000 word essay in which you address expectations about your upcoming trip. Questions you might want to address include:
 - a. Why did you choose to visit this country?
 - b. What do you expect out of this experience? Why?
 - c. What are you expecting the people to be like? Why do you have those assumptions?
 - d. What are you expecting the landscape to be like? Why?
 - e. What sights or events are you most excited to see. Why?

2. Within two weeks of returning home from your trip, please email to Honors@mssu.edu a 1,000 word essay in which you discuss your overall thoughts and opinions on the country you visited. Questions you might want to address include:
 - a. How has this experience changed you? Was this experience what you expected? Why or why not?
 - b. How have cultural differences made you more aware of your own culture, of its benefits, limitations, strengths, or biases?
 - c. How has a museum, gallery, historical landmark, etc. that you have visited, contributed to your understanding of the country's history, identity or culture.
 - d. How will this experience affect your future, whether in academic, social, career, or personal choices?
 - e. In what ways might your own culture/society benefit by learning from others?

Study Abroad – What You Need to Know

Preparation:

1. Read up about your study abroad destination. You'll regret it if you don't. Pick up a travel book, like a Lonely Planet, to get to know the culture, history, major monuments, transportation, local sites, as well as the good and bad areas of town. You will know more about what you are seeing, and what to see.
2. Try to learn a few handy local phrases of the local language. The more you know of the language, the better you'll adjust.
3. Students always say, "Bring fewer clothes and more money!" Don't miss the chance to enjoy doing what you want to do on the trip. For a short trip, I would pack so that everything I needed was in the one roll-on bag and one personal item.

What NOT to Pack:

1. Anything you would kick yourself for losing; that expensive watch, the Tiffany's locket your dad bought you for your birthday, unnecessary credit cards, wads of cash, your Social Security card, and any other valuables.
2. Anything that would be considered a weapon. Even a pocketknife can result in a serious weapons charge while on foreign soil.
3. Toiletries and amenities may already be available at your destination. Any liquids you plan to carry onto a plane must be in 3-oz bottles (or smaller) and all of them must fit into one quart-sized Ziploc bag.
4. Big purses or messenger bags. These are like wearing a neon sign that says, "Rob me!" Your passport, cash and credit cards are most secure when locked in a hotel safe, in inside pockets, a sturdy shoulder bag with the strap worn across your chest, or in a pouch or money belt worn under your clothing.

What you SHOULD Bring:

1. Make two photocopies of your passport identification page; put one in luggage separately from your passport and leave one with someone at home. Also, leave copies of airline tickets, driver's license, the credit cards you're taking, insurance information, as well as the addresses and phone numbers of the places you'll be with someone at home.
2. Take pictures of family and friends (not just on your phone) that you can look at whenever you get homesick. It will happen occasionally and having pictures to look at will help it pass.
3. Record the address and telephone numbers of the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate, and keep this information with you at all times.
4. Many other countries use 220-volt electricity while U.S. appliances use 110-volt electricity. If needed, get a travel adapter (a "transformer" and "plug adapters") before you go. (Target has these)
5. Pack an extra outfit in your carry-on just in case your luggage is lost, or if you are separated from your travel gear.
6. Bring a back-up supply of any medications you need in case you are delayed during your trip. Keep it on you when you travel in case you and your luggage get separated. All prescriptions should be clearly marked in their original containers. A small first-aid kit, sunscreen, and pain relievers may come in handy.
7. Pack appropriate clothes. Find out what the weather conditions and dress expectations are for your destination, and pack accordingly.
8. Make sure your luggage is labeled with your name, address and telephone numbers inside and outside of each piece of luggage.
9. Find out if internet connections are available where you are going. Online access lets you contact family and friends via email or apps, and keep them informed of events back home.

Tips:

1. Convert some American dollars into foreign currency before you travel.
2. Tell your bank that you will be traveling abroad, and for how long, so your ATM/credit cards will work overseas.
3. Take pictures! Most students regret not having taken more pictures. And so you don't forget what you took pictures of, rename your digital images with descriptive titles.
4. If you are traveling for a longer period of time, consider buying weekly/monthly subway or bus passes, including museum passes; they save money and often allow student discounts.
5. Take your student ID to get discounts.
6. Look up information about the airports you'll visit before you go so you can find your way around.
7. Pack lightly, especially if you are moving around a lot; carrying heavy luggage all over the place gets old fast.
8. Don't pack your suitcase all the way full. Leave room for any souvenirs.
9. Take snacks, especially if there is something you cannot live without. Not all cultures believe in having snacks, and you might not like what is available there. One jar of peanut butter can go a long way.
10. Do something different! Get out of your comfort zone, whether it is eating strange foods, studying in the local language, living in a homestay with a local family, joining a local club or sports team, volunteering or finding an internship locally, or simply getting off the beaten path when you travel. Not only will you get a better flavor of the cultural nuances and how things work in the country you are living in, but you will be more resilient and gain a different view of the country you are in.
11. Try to integrate into the culture! Connect with the locals as much as you can, even if this means leaving some of your travel mates on occasion, and don't be afraid to act like a local. You will always be an American, but it is worth reading up and respecting the history of the country and people you are living with. Know what is an appropriate tip when at a restaurant and for a cab ride.