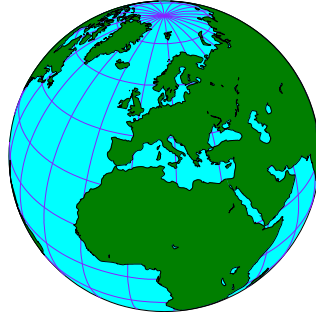


WELCOME BACK!



The **Office of International Programs** welcomes you back from study abroad! We hope that your time overseas enabled you to grow personally and intellectually, develop new friendships, learn about another culture, discover new interests and travel to other countries. We encourage you to think of your study abroad experience as the beginning of a life-long global journey. However, you will also need to think about your return to Ithaca College. This packet was designed to help you face the academic and non-academic issues that often accompany the process of readjusting to life at IC.

INSIDE . . .

RECEIVING CREDIT FOR STUDY ABROAD

REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

HOW TO KEEP YOUR INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES ALIVE

WELCOME BACK RECEPTION

STUDY ABROAD AMBASSADORS INFORMATION

Office of International Programs
214-2 Center for Health Sciences
(607) 274-3306

RECEIVING CREDIT FOR STUDY ABROAD

Study Abroad Transcripts

In order to award credit for study abroad coursework (this includes work done on affiliated, non-affiliated and exchange programs), the Office of the Registrar at Ithaca College must receive an **official** final transcript from your study abroad program. If you attended an exchange or affiliated program or accepted any federal or state financial aid for a non-affiliated program, you are required to submit your transcript to Ithaca College.

Most programs will send your transcript automatically, but it may take some time to arrive. Foreign universities and study abroad programs often take several months to process and send an official transcript to Ithaca College. To expedite the process, confirm with your study abroad program that you have taken the necessary steps to have your final transcript sent to the Office of the Registrar, 220 Job Hall, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY 14850-7150, USA.

Transfer Credit

AFFILIATED and EXCHANGE PROGRAMS: When the Office of the Registrar receives your official transcript from ANACSA, CC-CS, IAU, IES, SIT or one of our exchange programs, the credits and grades you earned overseas will be posted on your Ithaca College transcript and averaged into your cumulative GPA. However, this can happen only if complete Petitions for Assignment of Credit are on file for each course that appears on your study abroad transcript. If you have not yet completed a petition for a course taken abroad, you must do so before that course will appear on your IC transcript. If you need to complete more petitions, you may pick them up from the Office of International Programs, or go online to <http://www.ithaca.edu/oip/forms.htm>. Here you can find petitions that can be partially completed electronically, and then printed out to circulate for signatures. Be sure to bring a copy of the electronic petition to Rachel or Mimi in International Programs for a signature before gathering the other required signatures. **Do not delay in completing missing petitions: if you do not complete all petitions, this could potentially impact your class standing, financial aid (both current and retroactive), and your eligibility to graduate!**

NON-AFFILIATED PROGRAMS: Upon receipt of your official study abroad transcript, the Office of the Registrar will award transfer credit for courses that have been approved on Petition for Transfer Credit forms. Credit will be awarded for grades of C- or better, and will be assigned as major, minor or elective credit based on the Petitions for Transfer Credit. The grades will not appear on your Ithaca College transcript and will not be considered in the calculation of your GPA. The Office of the Registrar cannot award transfer credit for classes taken on a pass/fail basis unless the study abroad program will furnish documentation indicating that your work would have earned a letter grade of C- or better. IC will accept the number of credits per class awarded by accredited U.S. institutions. Transcripts from foreign universities, which may operate under different credit point systems, will be evaluated according to the number of contact hours scheduled for each class.

If you have not yet completed a petition for a course taken abroad, you must do so before that course will be counted as transfer credit on your IC transcript. If you need to complete more petitions, you may pick them up from the Office of International Programs, or go online to <http://www.ithaca.edu/oip/forms.htm>. Here you can find petitions that can be partially completed electronically, and then printed out to circulate for signatures. Be sure to bring a copy of the electronic petition to Rachel or Mimi in International Programs for a signature before gathering the other required signatures. **Do not delay in completing missing petitions: if you do not complete all petitions, this could potentially impact your class standing, financial aid (both current and retroactive), and your eligibility to graduate!**

Questions & Concerns

If you have questions or concerns regarding your study abroad transcript or transfer credit, ask the Office of International Programs for help. Stop by the Office of International Programs, 214-2 Center for Health Sciences, call 274-3306 or e-mail Rachel at rcullenen@ithaca.edu or Mimi at mwright@ithaca.edu. Your study abroad program or the Office of the Registrar may be able to help, too.

REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

You likely had mixed feelings about leaving your host country and returning to the USA. You have probably been experiencing a very common side effect of study abroad, known as reverse culture shock. While most of you have now been home for a while and have had time to readjust, returning to Ithaca may cause some of those feelings to resurface. Most people expect to have a period of adjustment when they travel to another culture, but not when they come home. Although it is nice to return to family, friends and familiar places, you probably miss your host country as well as the friends you made and the life you led overseas. After a semester of traveling to foreign countries, visiting historically and culturally significant sites and trying interesting new foods, it will probably take some time to readjust to life in Ithaca, NY.

Back in Ithaca

After a semester of adventures in other countries, returning to old friends and routines may seem dull. It is natural to miss the excitement and challenges that are associated with the study abroad experience. Challenge yourself academically by taking classes that allow you to pursue interests you developed overseas. Make an effort to spend time with other people who can relate to your experiences. Gradually, you can strike a balance between your life at IC and your new international interests.

Feeling homesick for another country

While you were abroad you may have felt homesick for your family or friends or familiar places in the USA. After spending a substantial amount of time in another country, it is common to miss the people, places, attitudes, customs and lifestyles that became familiar while you were abroad. In order to alleviate these feelings, brainstorm ways to go abroad again, keep in contact with the people you met overseas, keep up with current events in your host country and keep your international interests alive at IC.

People aren't interested

You are probably full of enthusiasm about your time abroad and want to share all of your experiences and cultural observations. Unfortunately, your friends and family may not seem interested in hearing about your adventures. They may not be able to understand or relate to your experiences. Remember that their lives did not stop while you were away, so they may have a lot to share with you, too. Get to know some people who have had a similar overseas experience, and keep in touch with friends from your study abroad program who can understand your experiences and reminisce with you.

Renegotiating relationships

Following a long period away in another country, people often need to renegotiate relationships and adjust to being together again. Study abroad will have altered some of your ideas and attitudes, and the people at home may have a difficult time understanding and appreciating your new perspectives. Expect that your relationships with relatives and old friends will be different. Be flexible and open as you develop "new" relationships with them.

Changes

Integrating the knowledge you have gained of yourself and the world into your lifestyle in the USA may be a challenge. If you experienced significant personal growth while you were away, it may be difficult to fit into the life you led before you went abroad. It is common to feel frustrated because opportunities to apply recently acquired social, linguistic, and practical skills are limited. Be creative, be patient and use cross cultural adjustment skills to help you through the re-entry process.

International Experiences

Hopefully, study abroad will be the first of many international experiences you will enjoy during your lifetime. You can continually build on the skills and interests you developed overseas, and keep your international experiences alive while you are in the USA.

HOW TO KEEP YOUR INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES ALIVE

- Join the **Cultural Connections Club**. The Cultural Connections Club is for those students who have studied abroad or are interested in studying abroad. Activities will involve promoting international education, sharing past experiences, preparing future students for travel, and celebrating other nations' diverse traditions. If you are interested in promoting international experiences and study abroad to the Ithaca College community, this is a great opportunity. Contact Rachel at rcullenen@ithaca.edu for more information.
- Join the **International Club**. The club sponsors social and cultural events for U.S. and international students. Watch for International Club signs for further information or contact the club president, Pooja Shah, at pshah1@ithaca.edu.
- Volunteer to be a **U.S. Buddy** to an incoming international student. Help a new student adjust to life in the U.S. and at IC and learn more about another country. Contact Diana Dimitrova, Director of International Student Services, at the Office of International Programs for more information. Her email address is ddimitrova@ithaca.edu
- Take classes that are relevant to your host country at IC or at Cornell. Attend events on campus, at Cornell and in the community that are related to your host country or just international in scope.
- Seek people, events and reading material from your host country. For a small city, Ithaca has an extremely large international population, so it may be possible to develop connections with people from your host country.
- Keep in touch with your friends and host family from your study abroad experience.
- Start thinking about your next international adventure! Start making plans to study, work, volunteer or travel abroad.
- Become a **STUDY ABROAD AMBASSADOR!** (See below)

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH OTHER IC STUDENTS

We hope that your study abroad experience was so positive that you would like to encourage other IC students to go abroad! If you would like an opportunity to share your overseas experiences and stories with other students, you should become a **Study Abroad Ambassador**. The Ambassadors are returned study abroad students who are involved in helping with peer advising, study abroad information sessions, orientations and other events that promote study abroad on campus. Serving as an ambassador requires only a minimal time commitment, but it will allow you to talk about your experiences with an interested audience and encourage others to study abroad.

If you are interested in becoming a **Study Abroad Ambassador**, please complete and return the Ambassador form to the Office of International Programs (downloadable from the International Programs website at http://www.ithaca.edu/oip/SAamb_form.pdf). Also, consider attending the Welcome Back meeting (see below) for further discussion of the Ambassador program.

COME TO THE WELCOME BACK MEETING!

The Ambassador program will be discussed at the Study Abroad Welcome Back meeting, to be held on Wednesday, August 26, from 7:00-8:00 p.m., in the Clark Lounge, Campus Center. Pizza will be served. Bring stories, photos and memories to share with others who were also abroad last semester!