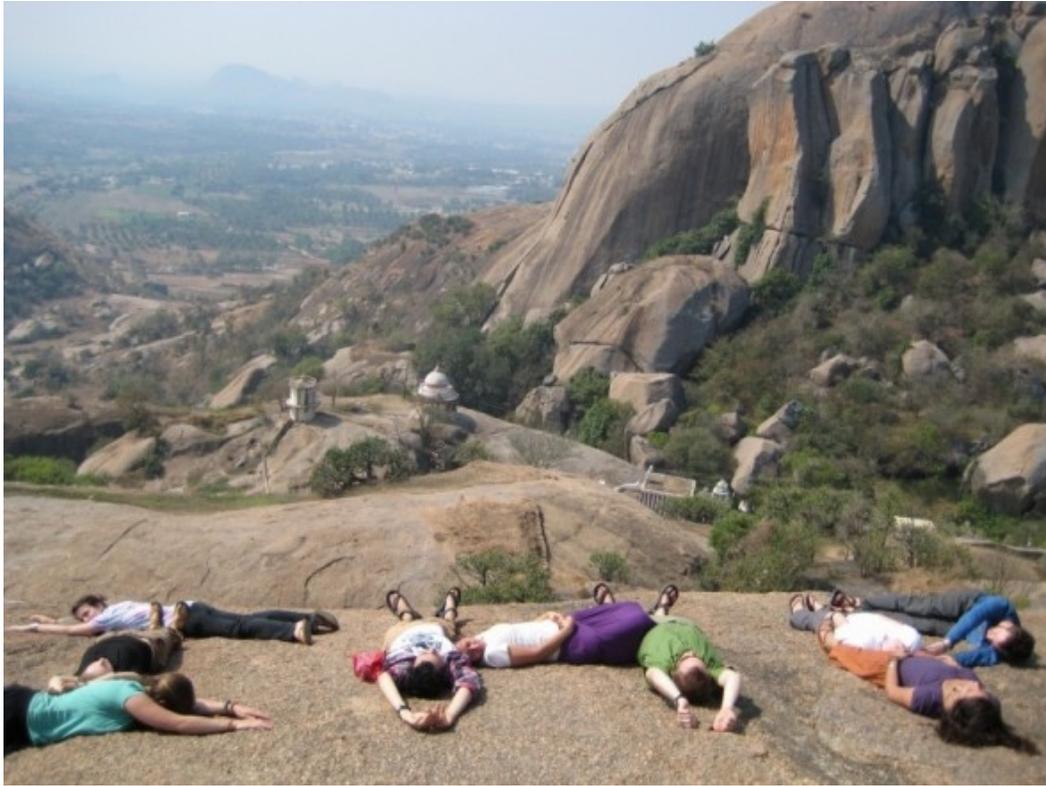


SIT Study Abroad

a program of World Learning



International Honors Program Student Handbook

September 2014

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The 2013 *Student Handbook* is a publication of the SIT Office of Student Affairs. This publication supersedes all previous editions of the Student Handbook. The dean of students reserves the right to change its policies, either by publicly promulgating the changes and/or by including the changes in future editions of the *Student Handbook*. Every student is held responsible for knowledge of the policies and procedures contained in this handbook and any special instructions and directives promulgated by the dean of students or his/her designee. All inquiries or comments should be directed to the Dean of Students, 1 Kipling Road, Box 676, Brattleboro, VT 05302, (802)258-3212. The *Student Handbook* is also published on SIT Study Abroad's official home page at sit.edu/studyabroad.

SIT Study Abroad
International Honors Program Student Handbook

CONTENTS

I. Introduction

Introduction to IHP.....	1
Introduction to SIT Study Abroad.....	1
Introduction to World Learning.....	1
Introduction to IHP Student Handbook.....	1
Handbook Contributors.....	2
How to Contact SIT Study Abroad.....	2

II. Preparation

Pre-Departure Documents.....	3
Confirmation Materials and WebAdvisor.....	3
Additional Forms to Complete.....	3
Itinerary.....	3
Academic Information to Supplement the Catalog.....	3
Pre-departure assignments and recommended materials.....	4
Contacting Other Students.....	4
Voting from Abroad.....	4

III. Financial Matters

Fees.....	5
Payment.....	5
School Billing.....	5
Liability and Student Responsibility.....	5
Refund Policy.....	5
Voluntary Withdrawal Refund Procedures.....	5
Dismissal for Nonpayment of Fees.....	6
Account Balance Refund Policy.....	6

IV. Important Travel Documents

Passports.....	7
Parent/Guardian Passports.....	7
Visa Information.....	7
Non-U.S. Citizens.....	7
International Student ID Card (ISIC).....	7

V. Travel, Transportation, Baggage, Packing, and Money Matters

Flights and Frequent Flyer Mileage.....	8
Ground Transportation.....	8
Individual Travel.....	8
Luggage.....	8
Valuables.....	9
Customs.....	10
Money Matters.....	10

VI. IHP Community: Roles & Responsibilities

Introduction to the IHP Community.....	11
Your Group.....	11
Your Responsibilities.....	11
Program Directors.....	11

Program Managers.....	12
Trustees Fellow.....	12
Faculty.....	12
Country Coordinators.....	12
Host Families/Communities.....	12

VII. Student Conduct, Rules and Regulations

Student Conduct.....	15
Local Law.....	15
Policy on Alcohol and Other Drug Use.....	15
High Risk Activities.....	16
Diversity and Discrimination.....	17
Harassment Policy.....	17
Disability.....	19
Expectations of Student Conduct.....	19
SIT Code of Conduct.....	20

VIII. Academics

Attendance and Participation.....	23
Academic Integrity.....	23
Grade Policy.....	23
Incomplete Grade Policy.....	24
Transcripts.....	24
Graduating Seniors.....	24
Written Evaluations.....	24
Grounds for Dismissal.....	24
Voluntary Withdrawal.....	25
Student Withdrawal Procedures.....	25
Administrative Withdrawal Grade.....	25
Academic Probation.....	26
Academic Dismissal.....	26
Academic Appeal Process.....	26

IX. Keeping in Touch with Home and Guest Policy

Program Updates and Letters Home.....	28
Mail.....	28
Packages.....	28
Phone Calls and Phone Cards.....	28
Email.....	29
Visitors During the Program.....	29

X. Health and Safety

Safety Statement.....	30
Medical and Overseas Insurance.....	30
Medical Review.....	31
Health Information.....	31
Prescriptions.....	31
Vaccinations.....	31
Malaria.....	32
Diarrhea.....	32
General Health, Cleanliness and Prevention.....	33
Mental Health.....	33
Jetlag.....	33
Medical Resources.....	34
Safety and Well-Being.....	35

Women Traveling Abroad.....	35
LGBTQ Issues.....	36
Emergency Contact Procedures.....	36
Sexual Behaviors, Relationships and Culturally Appropriate Communication and Dress.....	36
SIT Study Abroad Policy on HIV.....	36
Illness and Crime Reporting.....	37

XI. Personal Growth, Cultural Adjustment and Re-Entry

Culture Shock.....	38
Recording and Remembering.....	39
Returning to the U.S.....	39
Common Re-entry Symptoms.....	39
Post Travel Illness.....	40
IHP Alumni: A Valuable Resource.....	40

XII. General Policies

Equal Educational Opportunities.....	41
Privacy of Educational Records.....	41
Public Right to Information.....	42
Program Changes.....	42
SSA Conditions of Participation.....	42
Modifications.....	42
Other Offices and Services.....	42

I. INTRODUCTION

Introduction to IHP

Welcome to the International Honors Program! You are about to embark on an experience that will challenge you in many ways, expand your imagination and empower you with new resources. It will affect who you are and how you view the world. The learning you engage in will be experiential, personal and dependent on the dynamic situations you encounter during the program. IHP requires motivation, dedication, and a positive, flexible attitude toward new ways of learning and group life. The classrooms may be nontraditional, and the faculty come from academia and activism. Coursework will tie into direct experience and will open new avenues of exploration in the “real world.” We look forward to working with you, getting to know you better, and helping you and your family prepare for IHP. Welcome!

Introduction to SIT Study Abroad

A pioneer in experiential, field-based study abroad, SIT provides academically rich programs in more than 40 countries for over 2,000 undergraduates from 200+ colleges and universities each year. The semester program model focuses on an examination of critical global issues in a specific cultural and geographical context. Programs are offered in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. Over the last fifty years, SIT’s model and philosophy have deepened and expanded across disciplines and countries. SIT is committed to not only educating its students, but also to contributing to its host communities in meaningful and sustainable ways.

To date, more than 30,000 students have benefited from the field-based academic programs offered by SIT Study Abroad. Alumni of our programs return from around the world to their home colleges equipped with academic insight, strong field research skills, essential intercultural competencies, and a comprehensive understanding of critical global issues in a regional context.

Field-based learning is the cornerstone of SIT Study Abroad. In every program, students integrate classroom study with field and research experience, creating synergies that enrich both their time abroad and their future studies.

SIT Study Abroad has long-established relationships with academic institutions and organizations around the globe. Academic directors with experience in a relevant area of study and extensive knowledge of the host country supervise in-country coursework while facilitating student access to local resources, facilities, and experts. Each student group also benefits from the expertise of talented language instructors, lecturers, homestay coordinators, and other local staff.

In addition to formally structured coursework, students typically undertake a month-long Independent Study Project. Building on field study techniques acquired throughout the semester and working together with a local advisor, students have the opportunity to conduct research using primary sources on an approved topic that they find particularly interesting.

Both the curriculum and program administration are coordinated centrally from World Learning’s main campus in Brattleboro, Vermont. SIT Study Abroad is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

Introduction to World Learning

World Learning is a nonprofit organization that runs education, training, and exchange programs in over 70 countries, with participants from more than 140 countries. Through its international education programs – The Experiment in International Living, SIT Study Abroad, and SIT Graduate Institute – World Learning fosters global citizenship by connecting over 3,000 students annually across cultural differences and social barriers.

World Learning International Development Programs focus on a single purpose: to bridge the gap between the desire for human development and the ability to achieve that goal. Programs in more than 20 countries work to enhance the capacity of individuals, communities, and institutions to take ownership of their own development, secure just and effective policies and structures, and create sustainable positive change.

Over 80 years, World Learning has built a deep and diverse array of offerings and services that transform lives and strengthen the capacity of communities and institutions to address pressing global needs.

Introduction to *IHP Student Handbook*

To prepare for your participation in the International Honors Program, it is important that you read through this Handbook prior to beginning your program.

We hope that this Handbook answers many of your questions and calms your nerves a bit (and those of your parents!). The information contained in the Handbook will be supplemented by pre-departure information posted on your program-specific webpage. Please read all information carefully. It is your responsibility to read and follow the requirements and expectations outlined in this Handbook and other SIT communications.

Please note: The information contained in this Handbook is subject to change.

Handbook Contributors

This Handbook has been developed by SIT Study Abroad with the assistance of IHP students, with content and edits based on program evaluations and questionnaires sent to IHP alumni. Tina Holt ('86), a student from Harvard, prepared the initial Handbook. Cynthia Borg ('87), from Wellesley, provided further input, as did Rick Gifford ('91), Boston University; Zoe Amos ('92), Bowdoin College; Don Chesebro ('93), University of Texas; Roopali Phadke ('93), Wellesley College; Jonathan Werberg ('02), MIT; Shannon Simms ('04), Boston University; Bethany Hall ('04), Boston University; Heather Fukunaga ('05), Boston University; Roshni Sampath ('03), Wellesley College; and Adrienne Murray ('04), Boston University. Additional contributors include students from recent programs, faculty, coordinators, and SIT/IHP staff.

How to Contact SIT Study Abroad

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us!

Phone: (888) 272-7881

Fax: (802) 258-3296

E-mail: studyabroad@sit.edu

SIT Study Abroad
c/o World Learning
Kipling Road, PO Box 676
Brattleboro, VT 05302-0676 USA

The SIT office is open Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm Eastern Time.

If no one is available to take your call, please leave a message and we will call you back.

II. PREPARATION

Pre-Departure Documents

Prior to your program departure, you will be able to access all of your pre-departure information on the SIT website: <http://www.sit.edu/studyabroad/ur-predeparture.cfm> These documents will include visa process, country overview, health and safety information, packing guidelines, reading assignments and resources, travel arrangements and the student handbook. Many student questions can be answered by reviewing these materials, but please do not hesitate to contact us if further information is required.

In addition to materials on the website, Study Abroad Admissions Counselors are always available by phone and email, and sometimes conduct on-line chats for students prior to departure. Students also receive a detailed and informative email from their Academic Director and an email from SIT with a list of other students on their program. SIT alumni from each program, called [Alumni Mentors](#), are available by email to answer detailed packing and "what's it really like" questions.

Confirmation Materials and WebAdvisor

You should have already received an email providing you with an ID, password, and instructions for logging into WebAdvisor. This is an online account which allows you to view and track your confirmation materials and billing information. If you haven't received that information yet, please let us know.

Confirmation materials are the required paperwork you must complete and send to the SIT office in order to attend the program. These forms are due within two weeks of your acceptance to the program. They can be found here: http://www.sit.edu/studyabroad/confirmation_materials.cfm.

When you submit confirmation materials, your WebAdvisor page will be updated, and you will be able to see which materials are still outstanding. Please allow at least one week for mailed materials to be reflected on WebAdvisor.

Confirmation Materials Include:

- Passport copy
- Passport-sized photos (if required for your program)
- Acceptance Statement
- Medical Form
- Statement of Responsibility: Release and Indemnification
- Visa Process Acknowledgement Form
- Permission to Transfer Credit
- Letter of Financial Responsibility
- Power of Attorney Form
- Transferable Funds Information Sheet or Proof of Aid Letter
- A \$2,500 non-refundable deposit

Additional Forms to Complete

The Power of Attorney form and Financial Aid Information Sheet OR Proof of Aid Letter are required for students receiving any kind of financial aid.

Even if you are not receiving financial aid, it is a good idea to designate Power of Attorney to a parent or guardian while you are overseas. This will facilitate loan payments or any other paperwork in your absence. It can be crucial for someone to have this capability. Loan checks cannot be signed by anyone other than you if you have not done this paperwork. Please double-check with your financial aid office and loan agencies that all your paperwork is complete and in order.

If you are a non-U.S. citizen, you should fill out the Non-U.S. Passport Information form after having spoken to your international student advisor

Itinerary

You will receive your final, personalized itinerary from STA Travel once all flights have been confirmed. Please be patient and remember that itineraries are subject to change.

Academic Information to Supplement the Catalog

The academic information currently posted on the SIT website is for the previous academic year programs and can be used as an indicator of what may be covered in your program. Please remember that program details are subject to change. This information is posted on the SIT website at <http://www.sit.edu/studyabroad> under the "Coursework" section of each

individual program. You can refer your academic advisors here if they wish to review the academic information or download the PDFs.

Pre-departure Assignments and Recommended Materials

Pre-Departure Assignments will either be posted for you on the Pre-Departure webpage or emailed to you. Additionally, lists of recommended readings, films, and other resources may be provided to you.

Contacting Other Students

If you wish to be in contact with other IHP alumni, please go to the Contact a Former Student page to locate an IHP alum from your program: http://www.sit.edu/studyabroad/eop_contact_alum.cfm.

Voting from Abroad

If you plan to vote while abroad, you will need to complete a Federal Post Card Application form and send it to your local Board of Elections. Interested students should visit <http://www.fvap.gov/> or contact the Federal Voting Assistance Program through email (vote@fvap.ncr.gov) or by calling 1-800-438-8683.

III. FINANCIAL MATTERS

Fees

The SIT Study Abroad fee covers all scheduled program expenses during the period of enrollment.

Students are expected to pay for the following additional expenses: travel to the program's meeting location; travel home from the program's end location; food and lodging prior to arrival at the orientation site on the program start date; baggage insurance; fees for passports, visas, tourist cards, and identification cards; pre-program medical expenses (e.g., inoculations) and prophylactic medicines; local travel expenses including expenses that are a part of the Independent Study Project; expenses for student books and supplies, tips, laundry, telephone, fax, and email expenses, postage, gifts, all alcoholic beverages and beverages that are not a customary part of meals, food outside of customary meals provided by the program, and all other such personal expenses.

IHP students are expected to pay for one meal a day during the program and all expenses incurred over the vacation periods. IHP fees do include an International Student Identity Card and all required course reading materials.

Fees, as posted on our Web site, have been established based on all known circumstances at the time of calculation. Due to the nature of SIT programs and the global economy, SIT reserves the right to change its fees without notice. In the event of a fee increase, students will be provided with a reasonable amount of time prior to the program's start date and not less than ten (10) days from the date of notice, in which to withdraw. In the absence of notice of withdrawal, students will be committed to the program.

Payment

A \$2,500 deposit, credited toward the student's program fee, must be received before a space on a program can be confirmed. This deposit is due within 2 weeks of your admission offer and can be paid online or via check. The deposit is nonrefundable and may not be transferred to another term. Payment of the balance of the program fee is due:

July 15 for fall semester programs

December 15 for spring semester programs

May 15 for summer programs

Students are expected to pay the program fee according to this schedule. If payment is not made on schedule, the student will be withdrawn for nonpayment. For enrolled participating students, insurance fees are included in the non-refundable deposit as soon as a student begins the program.

School Billing

SIT Study Abroad maintains special billing relationships with some colleges and universities. These agreements facilitate the use of financial aid to cover the cost of SIT Study Abroad programs. The terms of the agreements vary by school. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of their home institution's current billing policies and agreements.

Liability and Student Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that SIT Study Abroad has a correct mailing address at all times. Failure to receive a Student Statement of Account will not exempt the student from the responsibility to pay the balance on the assigned due date, nor will it exempt the student from late penalties, neither from World Learning Collection Policies and Procedures, nor from having a Bursar Hold or administrative hold which would restrict transcript access. Students are responsible for the payment of all financial obligations: this includes all costs associated with the collection of this debt, which, on a past due account can include collection fees, court costs, and legal fees.

Refund Policy

It is the policy of SIT Study Abroad that students who withdraw from a program for any reason are entitled to a refund in accordance with federal and school policies, whether or not they are recipients of federal or institutional financial aid. The effective date of withdrawal is the date SIT is notified or the last date of association with the program, whichever is later. The period of enrollment for which the student is charged is defined by SIT Study Abroad as from the program start date to the program end date. Students who are dismissed from a program are not entitled to any refund.

Voluntary Withdrawal Refund Procedures

After acceptance to the program, refunds in the event of withdrawal will be made according to the schedule below. Refunds will be calculated from the time SIT is notified by the student or by the last date of association with the program,

whichever is later. The amount of the total refund will be determined by the Office of the Registrar. After the refund amount has been determined, balances will be refunded or invoices issued for outstanding funds.

For the yearlong program, each semester is 17 weeks. Percentages below are applied to the tuition, room, and board fees billed during the semester of withdrawal.

Students withdrawing before the first 50% of the term is over will realize an adjustment of tuition, room, and board, excluding the nonrefundable deposit, according to the following schedule:

Before the first day of the program: 100% refund minus the deposit and any airline

During the first 10% of the term: 90% refund of tuition, room, and board

Between 11% and 20% of the term: 80% refund of tuition, room, and board

Between 21% and 30% of the term: 70% refund of tuition, room, and board

Between 31% and 40% of the term: 60% refund of tuition, room, and board

Between 41% and 50% of the term: 50% refund of tuition, room, and board

After 50% of the term: No refund of tuition, room, and board

In all cases, group airfare costs are refunded at the discretion of the airline carrier and SIT.

If a student believes individual circumstances warrant an exception to these procedures, a written request with supporting documentation should be sent to the Office of the Registrar and copied to the dean of student affairs.

Dismissal for Nonpayment of Fees

Students are expected to pay their tuition fees in full as outlined in the Tuition and Fees Schedule Sheet. If payment is not made on schedule, the student will be administratively withdrawn for nonpayment. The refund policy above will apply in all such cases and collection procedures will be initiated.

Account Balance Refund Policy

When a student's account shows a credit balance after the period of enrollment begins, the refund will be disbursed to the payee within 14 days of the date the credit balance occurs.

IV. IMPORTANT TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

You are responsible for safeguarding your passport, visas, travel tickets, and health documents. If you lose any of the documents or tickets, you are responsible for their replacement, including any additional costs. We recommend photocopying all important documents twice. Leave a set of copies at home and take a set with you. It is also a good idea to scan these documents and email the electronic versions to yourself so you can access them if you lose the paper copy. At orientation, SIT will provide you with your International Student Identity Card (ISIC) and airline e-tickets; these documents then become your responsibility. Refer to the “International Student ID Card” section for more information.

Passports

You are responsible for obtaining your own passport and visa(s) after reading all of the passport and visa information in this Handbook and on the Pre-Departure Documents webpage.

If you do not already have a passport or if the one you have needs to be renewed, you must take care of this immediately because you will need your passport to apply for visas!

Make sure there are ample blank pages in your passport, and that your passport is valid for at least six months after the completion of your trip (December-end programs: June of the following year; May-end programs: November of the same year). If you need to get a passport, go to <http://iafdb.travel.state.gov/>.

Parent/Guardian Passports

Encourage your parents/guardians to check their passports to make sure they are valid, or if they do not have a passport, encourage them to apply for one. In the unlikely event of an emergency, it might be necessary for a parent to travel to your location.

Visa Information

You should apply for visas as soon as you receive the visa application instructions from the Pre-Departure Documents webpage. Do not wait until the last minute to apply for your visa(s) or you may jeopardize your own travel and the travel of the group. While you may be told that it takes one to two weeks to process a request, you can never know how long it will really take. The visa process can be unpredictable and you may encounter difficulties along the way.

Visa requirements are subject to change and you are responsible for understanding all current requirements. Wait for program-specific visa application instructions on the Pre-Departure Documents webpage before applying for your visas!

Non-U.S. Citizens

If you are not a U.S. citizen or passport holder, you will need to identify all countries (including transit countries on the flight itinerary) for which you need visas. Please contact SIT for further instructions.

International Student ID Card

Certain programs require students to obtain an ISIC card in order to qualify for certain student-only airfare. If you are required to obtain an ISIC card, your admissions counselor will advise you on the process.

V. TRAVEL, TRANSPORTATION, BAGGAGE, PACKING, and MONEY MATTERS

Flights and Frequent Flyer Miles

You are responsible for being at airports or other designated departure points on time. Missed flights are costly; the expense involved in catching up with the group will be paid by you! SIT may be able to assist in making new flight arrangements, but this often has to be done on-site.

Obtaining frequent flyer miles is up to you. If you want to do so, we advise you to contact each airline before leaving the U.S. to find out what they require of you or if mileage is available to you. Your travel itinerary will be posted on the Pre-Departure Documents webpage for your reference. You will be traveling as part of a group reservation, and frequent flyer miles are typically subject to restrictions. Most airline tickets are now electronic and you may not get a paper ticket until checking in at an airport. You should save all ticket stubs for reference if information on them is requested by the airline to redeem miles after travel.

Ground Transportation

Travel within a city or town is normally via local public transportation, and you are financially and logistically responsible for your own travel to and from required organized activities. Housing is normally arranged so that you can get to and from classes without resorting to private vehicles. Transportation for some scheduled group trips is coordinated and provided by SIT.

Individual Travel

“Free time” in the schedule is generally, but not always, on weekends. It is an opportunity to do assignments, get to know the local area, socialize with hosts or other students, relax, or catch up on laundry or other errands. This is not a time to do extended traveling, but may be a time for day trips.

Independent travel during the program is restricted. Independent travel is defined as travel within or outside the program country, conducted by a student, which is not part of a scheduled group activity, [scheduled group activities include travel with homestay families], and is wholly planned by the student. Violation of the Independent Travel policy may result in removal from the program. Students traveling independently following the close of a program assume total responsibility for themselves. World Learning, SIT, and its employees assume no liability for individuals once they are separated from the program.

A student who leaves the scheduled program at any time without prior written authorization from SIT Study Abroad may not be allowed to return to it at the discretion of SIT Study Abroad and may be withdrawn from the program. The normal refund schedule will apply, and travel expenses incurred due to a premature return to the USA from abroad, either alone or accompanied, must be borne by the student.

For safety reasons, you should always travel with at least one other person and provide destination and contact details to the local coordinator. Keep your hosts advised of anticipated arrival and departure times. It is irresponsible, inconsiderate to hosts, and potentially dangerous to you and to the group to do otherwise.

You are responsible for advising your parents/guardians about your travel plans. You are also responsible for providing Country Coordinators and faculty with your travel destination(s) and, if possible, relevant contact information: phone or email, dates in location, as well as the student(s) with whom you will be traveling. It is also your responsibility to keep your parents/guardians and IHP coordinators informed of any major changes to vacation plans. You will be given phone numbers and email addresses of the local coordinator in case of emergency during vacation. Understand that contact may not be immediate.

IHP strongly discourages travel outside the region where the vacation is based, and travel outside of the country is not allowed; vacation should be used as a time for rest and relaxation. Your proposed travel plans must be presented to IHP personnel for approval. Staff may reject proposed vacation plans based on safety and security concerns. There are many fun vacation opportunities within the region and country. However, please be aware that the High Risk activities listed in the *Student Conduct* section of this handbook remain applicable during your vacation. Travel outside of the country can lead to visa complications, logistical concerns for re-joining the group, and increased fatigue from cumulative travel. You will not be permitted to leave early for or return late from vacation.

IHP coordinators may provide contact information of local resources to help with vacation planning (e.g., travel agents, volunteer or local opportunities). However, you are fully responsible for all logistical and financial aspects of vacation and/or independent travel, including but not limited to accommodations, meals and transportation. SIT is not responsible for supervising students during independent travel, vacation, or time away from the program.

Luggage

You are responsible for your own possessions, including properly tagging and checking luggage and retrieving any items lost in transit. You'll want to have a bag that is easy to handle, waterproof (or at least water-resistant), and durable. A backpack or wheeled suitcase is preferable to a duffel bag, which can be hard to carry when full. Some alumni suggest bringing a duffel bag to put your backpack in during transit to avoid snags. You should have only one large backpack or suitcase (this will be checked luggage), plus one smaller daypack or zippered bag for everyday use. Every piece of baggage should be lockable; small combination locks are good. Some airports do not permit baggage that is locked, but it is still helpful to have locks on hand for other instances. Make sure all locks used are TSA approved when locking baggage in the US.

Most international carriers have baggage limitations with certain dimensional and weight limits.

It is your responsibility to research each airline after you get your flight itinerary to learn about their limitations. You will be responsible for paying baggage fees.

You can also find further information on the Transportation Security Administration website: <http://www.tsa.dhs.gov/>.

Remember that you will travel with your luggage in many locations other than the airport. In some cases, you'll need to walk far distances to get to homestays, transportation, or other locations. Thus, it is important to *pack lightly, pack lightly, pack lightly!* We cannot emphasize enough the need to pack lightly. You should be well under airline limitations; but most importantly, you should be able to carry all of your stuff at one time by yourself. When packing, remember to allow 10 pounds for course materials and group items you will need to carry. It is a burden to you and to your fellow travelers to have more.

It can be very expensive to send things home after leaving the U.S. Furthermore, it may be embarrassing and inconvenient to arrive at a homestay or other accommodation where possessions are far fewer. You will need much less than you think you do.

A detailed packing list for your program will be posted on the Pre-Departure Documents site: <http://www.sit.edu/studyabroad/ur-predeparture.cfm>.

Valuables

Do not bring personal valuables unless you are willing to guard them or to lose them. Items such as audio devices and cameras are usually safe at host family homes, but you may wish to consider how such items will be protected on field trips, on weekends, in hostels, etc. SIT does not supply comprehensive property insurance with their insurance packages, so you are responsible for obtaining supplemental property insurance if you are bringing valuable items. SIT cannot be held responsible for your property that is lost or stolen while traveling with the program.

Even if you do not want property insurance, it may be a good idea to type up a list of equipment and serial numbers, and take a photograph of each item for easy explanation and declaration at customs.

Cameras

If you are bringing a digital camera, consider file-storage issues. Alumni suggest an iPod or flash drive for digital storage. These are less expensive if purchased in the U.S. prior to departure. In most urban locations, you will be able to go to an Internet café and upload pictures to the web or burn them to a CD, but processing speeds can be slow. You may also need a power adaptor. Research your options if you plan to bring a digital camera.

If you have a film camera, you can purchase film abroad at competitive prices. It is suggested that you bring all exposed and unexposed film with you on the plane in your carry-on luggage rather than in your checked luggage because the carry-on x-ray screening is less damaging. There are x-ray shield bags that you can purchase if you are especially concerned.

Laptop Computers

Starting in spring 2012, the IHP programs modified the technology policy from discouraging (yet allowing) students from bringing technology such as laptops, netbooks, tablets, and e-readers to encouraging and integrating such resources into academic activities where appropriate. The decision to do so is in response to student and faculty requests made during previous programs as well as our own sense of the pedagogical, economical and environmental advantages of this shift.

When considering how you will use your computer or other electronic device on IHP, though, remember:

- Computers (like cell phones) are frequent targets of theft and may get stolen. Keep them safe.

- Computers can break and are frequently more difficult and expensive to repair abroad. Invest in reliable equipment and take care of it. IHP faculty and coordinators cannot be expected to help students with computer repair or replacement and use of your computer equipment is at your own risk.
- Computers can detract from the experience of studying abroad (just as they can detract from your experience at home). The more time students spend with computers, the less time they spend exploring the communities and connecting with homestay families, which are the most memorable aspects of IHP students' experience. Be thoughtful about the quality and quantity of your use of computers.
- In general, computers are not allowed in the classroom (faculty sessions, guest lectures, presentations, etc.). There may be times where use of laptops or e-readers in class is appropriate or permissible but this will be determined by the faculty on a case-by-case basis.
- Wireless internet is often not available, including in homestays. Be prepared for much less consistent and much slower access to the internet.
- Assignments will not require any online research or resources. Assignments are based largely on primary research in the field and assigned articles.
- For students needing more technology resources, internet cafes are easy to find, inexpensive, and can provide word processing, internet access, Skype, printing, and online photo-uploading capabilities.

Cell Phones

SIT does not provide cell phones or SIM cards for IHP program participants. Students are welcome to bring their own device, but they should be aware that they are responsible for procuring SIM cards or other communications support while traveling. Cell phone service may not be available in all locations visited during the program, and certain countries restrict availability of SIM cards to non-residents. Students will have access to payphones, email and internet access in most locations that they visit in order to communicate with family and friends at home.

Notifications regarding safe arrivals will be communicated to parents via the SIT Study Abroad Facebook page, which can be accessed at <https://www.facebook.com/SITStudyAbroad>. Any time-sensitive or emergency information will be communicated via email or phone.

Customs

You are responsible for complying with all U.S. and foreign import and export regulations. If you have new or expensive valuables, register at the U.S. port of exit so that it can be proven that these were not purchased outside the U.S. on this trip. If you do not register valuables, you may have to pay duty on the items when you return to the United States. Registration is done with U.S. customs officials at the airport customs office, or can be done ahead of time at any international airport. Each country has different import and export regulations. It is your responsibility to know the regulations for each country. Visit www.cbp.gov and look at the Consular Information Sheets at <http://travel.state.gov/travel/>.

Money Matters

The amount of money you will need depends upon your own spending habits. Past experience indicates that approximately \$1,600 for spending money for a semester is a reasonable amount to have, including funds for lunch, sundries, public transit, airport departure taxes, entertainment, vacation and emergencies. The amount you need will depend on how much you want to buy; \$1,600 assumes you take a careful approach to spending. Unless you have unlimited funds, be prepared to budget carefully.

Cash

You might want to bring \$100-\$300 in cash, and have a credit card and debit card with you so you can get money by ATMs. Having some U.S. cash reserves for cases where ATMs are not available or not working. Having some cash is a good idea but generally you can get access to an ATM whenever the group is in a city. Make sure that your PIN is only four digits — longer PINs don't always work in other countries. If you open a joint account with someone at home before you leave, they can deposit money into your account that you can then access with an ATM card.

Credit Cards

Visa, more than MasterCard, is readily accepted in most tourist areas, and cash advances are available. Make sure you know the PIN for your credit card so you can use it for cash as an alternate source to an ATM card. American Express may give you cash if you have personal checks on a current U.S. bank account — find out from them what they currently require. Check with the credit card companies and compare the services they offer. Many credit and ATM cards charge a service fee for getting cash outside of the U.S. Research your cards' terms and conditions and the exchange rate your card offers in every country on your itinerary.

Make two copies of all your important cards and documents, including traveler's checks. Scan your cards and email them to yourself, in case you lose the paper copies. In the event the original documents are lost or stolen, this will make them easier to replace. Leave one copy at home and take one with you.

Call your credit card and debit card companies to tell them the dates you will be traveling. It is always best to have a backup credit or debit card that you keep in a safe place.

VI. IHP COMMUNITY: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Introduction to the IHP Community

Your IHP community abroad will include students, faculty, the Trustees Fellow, country coordinators, host families and communities, guest speakers, and numerous other people. The IHP community is supported by SIT staff in the SIT Study Abroad office in Vermont and by the IHP Board of Trustees. The success of the program depends on all participants performing their responsibilities to the best of their abilities.

Your Group

The group you travel with will become your campus, your discussion section, your family – your main constant throughout the program. This can be intense, but also rewarding. Previous students say these words come to mind when they think about what it was like to interact with others so closely over the course of the program: compassion, trust, patience, conflict resolution, open-mindedness, sense of humor. As one alum says, “Let things slide – breathe and smile!”

Expect the unexpected! There will be changes and adjustments that stretch your tolerance and flexibility. Things may not always go smoothly, but IHP alumni spanning 50 years agree almost 100% that the experience was one of the most important and influential of their lives.

Your Responsibilities

As a student on IHP, you bear responsibility to yourself and to the group for the success of the program.

Look out for each other. Don't let anyone fall by the wayside. Your ultimate success will be measured by how the group fares as a whole as well as how you grow and develop as an individual. Pitch in to help when you see a problem; don't rely on faculty and Coordinators to do everything. Respond when asked for help. Show respect to others. Take care of your health and look out for the health of others. Think of solutions and help solve problems. Be self organizers and take initiative.

The leadership team will encourage, request, demand, and nurture your responsibility and initiative. You will meet as a group during orientation to determine how you would like to divide the many tasks and roles that the group will collectively take on. Be creative! Some of the most innovative projects and ideas come from student initiatives in these committees. There will also be many chances to develop your group leadership skills and experience.

Ways you can contribute to the group:

- Field trip coordinator
- Clean-up crew
- Airline liaison
- Group presentations/entertainment
- Person of the Day
- Treasurer
- Group introductions and verbal thank-you's
- Writing/sending thank-you notes
- Remembering birthdays and other special celebrations or acknowledgements
- Meal requirements
- Traveling library
- Assisting in the care of sick students
- Organizing group language study
- Coordinating community service opportunities
- Coordinating physical exercise opportunities
- Organizing an archive or mechanism for sharing student and faculty photos
- Contributing to Letters Home

Program Directors

The program directors have both academic and administrative duties. They are charged with program development, leading faculty, fellows, and country coordinators in program delivery, and ensuring the completion of all administrative duties. The program director oversees all program staff, creates academic programming, and works with SIT staff to ensure the program runs smoothly. Program directors do not travel with the group; however, they will often make an appearance in one or more countries during your program to check in and see how everything is going.

Program Managers

The program managers collaborate closely with their program director to ensure smooth running of the program. They will assist the director in developing the curriculum for the program and support traveling faculty and country coordinators in the delivery of the academic content of the program. They will work closely with country coordinators, faculty, and fellows on program logistics and will assist with logistical questions before and during the program. The manager will also co-coordinate the launches.

Trustees Fellow

First started in 2002-03, the position of Fellow is neither coordinator, nor faculty, nor student. Rather, the Fellow is a facilitator, mediator, and catalyst. As part of the traveling team, he or she contributes to the overall success of the program by providing academic, personal, and logistical support to IHP administration, students, and faculty. The Fellow can be someone to talk to if you need a friendly ear, someone to tell if you're having a problem or feel ill, and someone with whom to bounce ideas around.

Faculty

Traveling faculty are responsible for academic coursework and overall leadership of the program, and working with the program director, country coordinators and IHP staff in Vermont. Faculty assume many roles, including advisor, teacher, risk manager, and team member. Some faculty will travel with the student group throughout the entire program, while others will be with the program only in particular countries.

Country Coordinators

With the help of the management team, country coordinators are responsible for arranging the overseas country program, including the schedule of lectures, field trips and homestay arrangements. IHP country coordinators also take on a wide array of other tasks for the program, such as teaching, writing and revising program literature and curricula, and helping to define the direction of the program. Most country coordinators have other jobs relevant to the themes of IHP, so ask them about their interests and careers. You can help IHP run smoothly by understanding the following:

Tell faculty, country coordinators or Fellow if...

- there is an emergency, medical or otherwise.
- you get sick.
- you are having problems at your homestay (communication, cultural questions/ adjustment), regardless of if you think those problems will require a change of homestay.
- you experience harassment.
- you have experienced a safety incident or are concerned about your personal safety.
- and specify your location and contact information during your personal travel time.

Faculty, Fellow, and Country Coordinators are NOT responsible for...

- running your personal errands.
- making your personal travel arrangements.
- forwarding your mail after you have left the country.
- obtaining visas for you.
- collecting packages mailed to you.
- guessing that you need help when you have not asked for it.
- cleaning up after you.

Simply put: pitch in to help when you see a problem; communicate with faculty and coordinators; look out for each other; don't let anyone fall through the cracks; respond when asked for help. Every member of the leadership team is dedicated to you and your IHP experience.

Host Families/Communities

During the course of the program you can expect to stay with host families, in hotels/hostels, and/or in retreat/community centers. Comfort levels and living standards will vary from country to country and among families.

The communities and families are all different from each other in the way they approach the hosting situation. Some will want to plan activities to fill your day and others will leave you on your own. Some will be affluent, and some will not. You may be staying with other students, or you may be by yourself in the family. Your hosts may speak fluent English or virtually none.

Your compatibility will vary. Remember that you are a guest, and try to work around personal differences. You may be the only foreign student some families have met, and your visit may be very significant to them. Do not underestimate how close you can become in a short time.

When you arrive at each accommodation, communicate about food preferences, smoking, allergies, and logistics about shower, laundry, dinner time, curfews, and transportation. Leave behind your American concept of personal space; you may have less privacy than you are accustomed to at home.

Areas of tension can be around use of the host family's telephone and notifying the family about lateness and missed meals. At the beginning, talk about telephone use and how to communicate a change in plans with the family. In general, you should not use host telephones, because even local calls may be expensive or prepaid, and often phone bills are not itemized. Use pay phones for overseas calls. Always call your host family if you will be late returning home; otherwise, they will worry. Remember that your host family has gone out of their way to welcome you to their home and most hosts will treat you as their own child in their concerns about your safety.

Above all, do not ignore your host family – but do not miss out on other things you want to do because you feel you must spend a certain amount of time with them. Communication and balance is the key.

Your role as a guest is twofold:

1. PARTICIPATE

- Participate in home life, respecting the cultural norms and rules of the household including such aspects as meal times, laundry, smoking, drinking, curfews, phones, computers, showers, visitors, resource use, and chores.
- Be responsible for your behavior and actions in the homestay.

2. COMMUNICATE

- Keep the lines of communication open with the host family. If there is a disagreement or difference of opinion, students and hosts should try to work it out together.
- Contact the country coordinator, Fellow, or faculty if you are unable to reach a solution to a disagreement. Report any serious problems immediately to the country coordinator.

Be sure to write your host family a thank you note! A postcard from time to time is also very much appreciated.

We asked alumni what characteristics were most called upon in the host family situations, and they responded: flexibility, curiosity, generosity, open-mindedness, and ability to focus on the positive.

Dinner and Eating

Time spent at the dinner table often is important. You may discuss any range of topics, and families will be eager to introduce you to their country's cuisine. You may enjoy cooking with them! Manners vary (polite portion size, utensils, proper expressions of satisfaction, etc.), so try to observe and imitate, and ask questions when you are confused. It is likely that you will be asked the first day what foods you do not eat; after that it may be insulting if you refuse to try everything else. Plan to tell your family each day's schedule. Be sure to let them know if you will miss a meal.

Dietary Concerns and Special Needs

If you are a vegetarian, vegan, have religious dietary laws, or have allergies, make sure this information is in your SIT medical forms. Also, tell your host families about dietary and special needs when you arrive, so that they can take this into consideration when preparing meals. Try to be specific (no red meat, but chicken yes, dairy or no dairy, flexible, etc.), but do so courteously. Most families will not be familiar with veganism; even vegetarianism may be a foreign concept. They may not be able to prepare special or separate meals for you, but will expect you to adapt to what they are serving. In some cases, this will mean not eating part of the meal.

Remember, too, that sharing food is a way to get to know and understand the culture of a country; this is part of the experience of travel! It can be a delicate balance to be true to your principles and respectful of your hosts.

Gift Suggestions

You should be prepared to give some small gift to each of your host families. Some ideas for host family gifts are picture calendars from your home area or school, small picture books of your home area, souvenirs from your university, a non-perishable specialty food item from an area where you are visiting, small regional cookbooks, your favorite family recipes (remember that not all ingredients are available everywhere), pins, coins (state quarters or the new dollar coin), CDs of your favorite music (though not all host families will have CD players).

Former students suggest that it is nice to bring something small with you to give your host family when you arrive, and then supplement it with another small gift before your departure after you have gotten to know them. You will know better

what they might like after you have met them, and can pick up some small gift locally, or cook a meal for them. Projects you make are often appreciated, like drawings or dream-catchers.

Don't worry about bringing gifts in advance for every country! Be prepared with a few gifts in the first country on your itinerary. You may wish to consider bringing trinkets for others you meet along the way who are especially kind, and for children you meet (one alum suggests stickers for kids). As a rule, gifts should be generic and conservative, to avoid offending or embarrassing host families.

A former student shares this succinct advice about homestay families:

1. Never leave the room a mess.
2. Always call to let them know where you are.
3. While time spent with hosts is your own decision, do not neglect them.
4. Remember that you are a guest in a home, not a hotel.
5. If you are out for the evening, return home at a reasonable hour – generally by 10:00 p.m.
6. Write thank-you notes.

- If any uncomfortable situation or problem comes up with your host family, do not be afraid to communicate this to the faculty team or country coordinator. They cannot take steps to help you if they are not aware of the problem. It is SIT policy to make immediate changes if necessary.
- Students should not be guests in IHP homestays during times not designated in the IHP planned schedule, including vacation periods.
- If for personal safety reasons, it becomes necessary to stay somewhere else than your homestay, it is imperative that you let your homestay family and your IHP homestay partner know.

VII. STUDENT CONDUCT, RULES, AND REGULATIONS

Student Conduct

During your travels, you will be a representative of your home country, college, family and SIT/IHP – not just yourself. Because this is an American program, people you meet may interpret your behavior as typical of everyone from the U.S. Be a good ambassador! There are some things that you should try to do on a regular basis to get the most out of IHP and create a great experience for yourself and the group. This section also contains information about specific rules and regulations pertaining to your conduct on the program. Please read this section carefully.

DO...

- Read this Handbook from cover to cover.
- Send in all forms and other requested information promptly.
- Anticipate need and pitch in to help.
- Be kind and respect others.
- Respect the traditions of host communities.
- Remember that you are a guest with a responsibility for appropriate behavior, dress, and response to your hosts, even in areas that you might not otherwise consider important.
- Keep a sense of humor and stay flexible.
- Keep up with the readings and assignments.
- Communicate with IHP leadership team and other students.
- Express your appreciation.
- Complete evaluations. These are extremely important for SIT to make program adjustments during the year and for future years. Each program builds upon the experience of previous groups. Your contributions make a big difference!

Local Law

Students will attend an orientation upon arrival in a new country informing them of, among other topics, local laws. Ignorance of local law is no excuse for breaking it. Students are always subject to local law. When in doubt, consult your host family, a member of the staff, or your home country's Embassy or Consulate. Rights you are accustomed to at home may not exist in other countries. SIT can provide only limited assistance to a student who has been arrested or detained.

Policy on Alcohol and Other Drug Use

Statement of Philosophy

In keeping with its mission, it is the intent of SIT Study Abroad to provide an environment that fosters tolerance, a commitment to learning, personal development, and respect for others. While there does exist some latitude for individual choice regarding the personal use of alcohol that freedom of choice exists within certain guidelines. Students and staff are required to obey all applicable laws regarding the possession, use, and distribution of alcohol, comply with SIT Study Abroad alcohol and other drug policies, and take full responsibility for their conduct. This includes respect for individual and collective rights and property. Behavior which threatens to create disorder, public disturbance, damage to oneself or to others, or that otherwise interferes with the proper functioning of the institution or the program will not be tolerated. SIT Study Abroad expressly prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession, or use of any controlled substance by students or staff. Convincing indication of drug use requires immediate dismissal from an SIT Study Abroad program.

Use of alcohol will be shaped by local laws, cultural norms, individual program regulations, and safety considerations. The academic director will set guidelines and rules for alcohol consumption, in relation to local cultural norms and program standards, for each program. SIT Study Abroad reserves the right to prohibit alcohol use on any of its programs at any time. SIT Study Abroad staff will not purchase alcoholic beverages for students. Excessive alcohol use and/or alcohol abuse is not permitted and will result in disciplinary action.

SIT Study Abroad Alcohol Policy

If moderate consumption of alcohol, within the limits of local law, cultural norms, program standards, and safety considerations is permitted, the following guidelines apply:

Students must obey local laws and take full responsibility for their conduct.

Students must behave in a culturally appropriate manner.

Behavior must not violate the rights of roommates, host families, host community members, other students, program staff, program contacts, or others.

Inappropriate behavior resulting from alcohol consumption, including but not limited to behavior which is offensive to others; and/or poses unreasonable risk to the student or others; and/or results in damage to property; and/or affects student performance; and/or causes embarrassment or otherwise interferes with the proper functioning of the program, is not permitted and will result in disciplinary action.

Sponsoring SIT Study Abroad Events Where Alcohol is Requested

There may be events where alcohol may be served when this is in keeping with local alcohol laws and local custom. Alcohol may be served at sponsored events under the following conditions:

All SIT Study Abroad-sponsored events at which alcohol is to be served must be approved by the country coordinator.

When alcohol is served at an event, food, as well as an equal amount of nonalcoholic beverages (such as soda and juice), must also be provided.

SIT staff cannot purchase alcoholic beverages for students. Purchase of alcoholic beverages must be paid for by the student.

Violations

Students who violate the SIT Study Abroad Alcohol and Other Drug Policy are subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, dismissal from the program, and may face possible criminal or civil liability. Such persons may be referred to law enforcement authorities for prosecution and/or referred to substance abuse programs for evaluation or treatment.

Resources for Substance Abuse Counseling & Treatment

SIT Study Abroad supports the prevention of substance abuse and encourages the rehabilitation of those persons who may be affected by alcohol and other drug problems. Information and counseling availability varies by program, and the country coordinator is the main resource person who will inform students of the counseling options in the program area.

Drugs

SIT has a strict no-tolerance policy for drugs on all SIT/IHP programs.

SIT expressly prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession, or use of any controlled substance by students or staff on its premises (including the office, classroom buildings, homestays, anywhere else SIT holds program-related events, or through any of its sponsored activities). Convincing indication of any violation will lead to immediate dismissal from IHP.

Foreign countries often punish drug violators severely: American (or foreign) citizenship will not be a protection. SIT can provide only limited assistance to a student detained or arrested!

Violations

Students who violate the SIT Alcohol and Drug Policy are subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to disciplinary probation and dismissal from the program, and may face possible criminal or civil liability. Such persons may be referred to law enforcement authorities for prosecution and/or referred to substance abuse programs for evaluation or treatment.

For more information about the importance of SIT's drug policy, please read the US State Department's Tips for Traveling Abroad:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html#drug_offenses

High Risk Activities

High risk activities may have tragic consequences for individual students, and may seriously disrupt the program for the entire group. In addition to creating additional work and stress for SIT, irresponsible actions may jeopardize the reputation of the program.

SIT Study Abroad has determined that such activities including, but not limited to, the following will not be engaged in by students while enrolled in IHP:

- motorcycling
- hitchhiking
- driving

- parachuting
- bungee-jumping
- hang-gliding
- riding in private airplanes
- rock climbing
- white water rafting, and
- SCUBA diving.

These limitations are stated in the Conditions of Participation. Engaging in these activities while on IHP may affect your participation in the program.

Diversity and Discrimination

IHP is committed to maintaining a community that is free of discrimination and harassment, and where a variety of backgrounds and perspectives enriches the experience for all. Any behavior that makes an individual feel uncomfortable deserves to be acknowledged and addressed. When possible, direct discussion with the individual(s) whose actions are interpreted as objectionable may resolve the issue. However, if you feel that you need further support or other action, you should notify faculty, the Fellow, local coordinators, and/or SIT immediately. The resources of SIT or outside expertise may be brought in as needed to promptly address and resolve the problem. SIT will not tolerate disrespectful actions on the part of anyone – student, lecturer, instructor, or country coordinator – that demeans someone because of his or her gender, sexual orientation, race, national origin, ethnicity, or religion.

Sexual activity or other inappropriate behavior involving IHP students and local IHP contacts or faculty/coordinators is irresponsible, inconsiderate, and detrimental to IHP. Such conduct is grounds for dismissal and will require that the local contact be terminated from working with the IHP program. Be reminded that choices you might otherwise consider personal may have far-reaching implications for future IHP programs. Responsible and thoughtful actions are required at all times.

Harassment Policy

Harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault are acts of aggression, whether verbal or physical. All such behavior is illegal under both state and federal law. It is also a violation of standards of conduct that are honored in the SIT community and is not tolerated under any circumstances. An individual who engages in harassment, sexual harassment or sexual assault is subject to appropriate disciplinary action by the administration, including, but not limited to, reprimand, suspension, termination, or expulsion. In addition, he or she may face possible criminal or civil liability. It is further illegal for an employee or student to attempt in any way to retaliate against a person who makes a claim of sexual harassment. Any such retaliation will also result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, and may also result in criminal or civil liability.

The International Honors Program, in an effort to create an environment where all people can work and study without fear of discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or intimidation, is committed to the following: educating the community about harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault; implementing appropriate, consistent, and prompt procedures for protecting the rights and well-being of victims, the respondent, and the community-at-large; and assisting victims to secure needed services.

Students and staff from other countries must abide by U.S. laws and regulations while members of the SIT community. Students and/or staff involved in programs in countries other than the United States must abide by U.S. laws and regulations while overseas, as well as observe local laws and regulations of their host-country. Harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault, as defined below, are never acceptable. For those from other cultures who may not be familiar with such a code of behavior, below you will find an explanation of the rules:

Definition of Harassment

Harassment is a form of discrimination and is defined as verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, age, disability or handicap, or veteran's status or any other characteristic protected by law or that of his/her relatives, friends or associates, and that:

1. has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work, educational or living environment;
2. has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance; or
3. otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment or educational opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to: epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; denigrating jokes; and written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group and that is placed on walls or elsewhere on SIT premises or program sites.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct or written communication of an intimidating, hostile, or offensive sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or education.
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic or employment decisions affecting that individual.
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic or job performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive employment, educational, or living environment for the person as a student and/or employee.

Examples of conduct which may constitute sexual harassment include but are not limited to: conditioning a promotion, pay raise, or course grade upon the receipt of sexual favors, unwelcome hugging, kissing, embracing, patting, pinching, or leering; persistent unwelcome social invitations; use of vulgar language of a sexual nature; graphic comments about a person's body; displaying sexually explicit pictures or other materials; making sexually suggestive comments or telling sexually suggestive or "dirty" jokes or stories; asking an employee or student questions about his or her sex life; retaliating against an individual for complaining about the behaviors described above.

Definition of Sexual Assault

Sexual assault (including acquaintance and stranger rape) may fall by definition within the scope of sexual harassment and may be subject to criminal prosecution by law enforcement authorities to which it must be referred by SIT/IHP. Such conduct must be addressed by SIT in conjunction with any external criminal proceedings.

Sexual assault is defined as any sexual act that is perpetrated without consent of the victim. The type of force employed may involve physical violence, coercion, or the threat of harm to any person. A victim is considered unable to consent, and therefore, sexually assaulted if he or she is:

1. Mentally incapacitated or physically helpless due to drugs or intoxicants;
2. Cognitively impaired;
3. Unaware that the sexual act is taking place;
4. Under 16 years of age (except where the persons are married and the act is consensual), or under 18 years of age when the accused:
 - a. Is a parent or entrusted by law to care for the victim;
 - b. Uses a position of authority over the victim to persuade him or her to submit.

Examples of acts defined as sexual assault by Vermont law and World Learning/SIT Study Abroad policy include forcible rape by an acquaintance or stranger, incest, and sexual abuse of minors, as well as sexual assaults that do not involve penetration.

Reporting and Assistance for Victims

SIT strongly encourages reporting of all perceived incidents of harassment, sexual harassment, sexual assault or retaliation, regardless of the offender's identity or position. Individuals may decide, however, to first address the offender directly without going through formal procedures. If for any reason an individual does not wish to address the offender directly, or if such action does not successfully end the offensive conduct, the individual should immediately notify any one of the listed individuals. All complaints will be investigated thoroughly and appropriate actions will be taken. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigation process to the extent consistent with adequate investigation and appropriate corrective action.

IHP students and staff may report an episode of harassment to, or obtain initial information and assistance from, the following persons:

Country Coordinator
Faculty or Trustees Fellow
IHP Program Director
SIT Student Affairs

Assistance will be provided in helping to assess each situation in clarifying possible alternative courses of action that might be pursued, and in contacting the appropriate people once a course of action has been decided. They also will be able to direct people to needed services, such as counseling, translation, and medical or police assistance, within or outside IHP sites and SIT Study Abroad offices. Care will be taken to protect the identity of the person with the complaint and of the accused party or parties, except as may be reasonably necessary to successfully complete the investigation.

Disability

SIT Study Abroad Disability Services aim to facilitate an accessible educational experience for students with disabilities and to serve as a resource to all members of the academic community in furthering this goal. Students with disabilities (including physical, learning, or other types of disabilities) should contact the SIT Disability Services office as soon as possible to discuss their needs and to obtain information about the accommodation process. Each situation will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and every effort is made to work collaboratively with qualified students to facilitate an accommodation. In-country conditions and resources do vary by site, however, and specific program locations may have limited accessibility.

Students seeking accommodations are asked to provide the following:

1. A written request for specific accommodations signed by the student; please use SIT's Accommodation Request Form which can be obtained by contacting disabilityservices@sit.edu
2. Current documentation of the disability provided by a qualified professional. Documentation must be written on that professional's letterhead, be personally signed by the evaluator, and at a minimum include the following:
 - Specific diagnosis of the disability
 - Specific evidence of the disability, including any tests or other evaluations performed and results
 - Impact of the disability on the person's functioning (functional limitations)
 - Recommendations for accommodations, including academic adjustments or auxiliary aidsDocumentation should be recent, ideally no more than three years old.
3. A copy of the student's accommodation letter from his/her college disability office, if available

Requests for accommodations and documentation of the disability should be submitted as early as possible, within 15 days of students' offer of admission and no later than 60 days prior to the start of the program. Please note that additional information may be requested to assist SIT Study Abroad in making a determination on reasonable accommodations.

Please send all information and inquiries to:

SIT Disability Services
Attn: Jane Buckingham, Director
SIT Study Abroad
One Kipling Rd.
Brattleboro, VT 05301

disabilityservices@sit.edu

phone at 802-258-3367

fax 802-258-3252

Expectations of Student Conduct

Students are required to comply with all policies and procedures of SIT Study Abroad, including program-specific ground rules and codes of conduct introduced during the orientation portion of the program. Behavior of student participants on SIT Study Abroad programs must be above reproach at all times. Students must take into consideration an accurate perception of the values and norms of the host communities, and the wellbeing of fellow group members and program staff, and act accordingly. The following is a non-exhaustive list of prohibited conduct:

1. Violation of safety practices or action or inaction that might cause injury or death to oneself and any other person.
2. Sexual or other harassment of any kind.

3. Creating excessive noise, disturbing the peace, violation of individual rights or privacy, or disruption of lawful activities of others.
4. Deliberately or carelessly damaging or stealing SIT Study Abroad property or the property of those associated with SIT Study Abroad or a host community.
5. Theft or unauthorized use of property from any other person or entity.
6. Unauthorized entry or use of program facilities, including host facilities such as host universities, hotels, or offices of program staff and contacts.
7. Possession or use, including the threat of use, of a weapon or other hazardous materials, such as, but not limited to, a firearm, knife, explosive, or other object that could be considered a weapon while on the program.
8. Violation of host country or US laws, including, but not limited to, those that relate to the use of alcohol and controlled substances on the program. Violation of local laws may result in fines, punishment, imprisonment, or deportation in addition to punitive actions by SIT Study Abroad.
9. Failure to comply with the reasonable directions of program employees acting in the performance of their duties.
10. Violations of all approved SIT Study Abroad policies and regulations as published in the SIT Study Abroad Student Handbook, Conditions of Participation, program materials, or other official SIT publications and Web site.
11. Any conduct which jeopardizes SIT Study Abroad's ability to maintain positive relations in host communities or to continue to carry out its programs, including but not limited to culturally inappropriate behavior or defamatory statements regarding host families, organizations, communities, or countries in "blogs" or other public media.

SIT Code of Conduct

Standards of Fairness & Student Rights in Disciplinary Cases

SIT Study Abroad respects and is determined to protect the individual dignity, integrity, and reputations of its students. At the same time, it requires that students comply with those conventions and conditions of participation that are necessary to maintain order, to protect individuals and property, and to fulfill its purposes and responsibilities as a global institution of experiential learning.

Toward that end, the model for disciplinary procedures that SIT Study Abroad adopts is that of the administrative/educational process, not that of the criminal or civil courts. Certain procedural rights shall be guaranteed to a student in any SIT disciplinary proceeding in which he or she stands to bear significant injury, such as dismissal, suspension, permanent reprimand, or other stigmatizing actions. He or she is therefore guaranteed full protection of his or her rights:

1. The right to notice of charges whenever formal action upon such charges is initiated. Such notice is to be given within a reasonably prompt period and with sufficient particularity as to the facts so that the student may reasonably investigate the charge and prepare/offer his or her explanation of the incident.
2. The right to know, prior to any disciplinary action, the contents of, and the names of the authors of, any written statements that may be introduced against him or her and the right to rebut unfavorable inferences that might be drawn from such statements.
3. The right not to be compelled to be a witness against himself or herself.
4. The right to submit documentation pertinent to the matter in question from parties who were involved in the incident. This includes self-created documents, witness testimony, and appeal letters. Letters from individuals not identified as principle participants will not be used in the disciplinary process.
5. The right to a decision based upon evidence of a kind upon which responsible persons are accustomed to rely in serious affairs. However, rules of evidence in courts of law shall not, as such, be applied. The disciplinary officer shall operate under the guiding principle of fairness to all participating parties.
6. The right not to be sanctioned unless the decision maker is persuaded by the preponderance of the evidence, which means that it is more likely than not that the student is responsible.
7. The right to have the case processed without prejudicial delay.
8. The right to utilize a parent or legal professional as an advisor during the disciplinary process. This advisor may counsel the student, but is not an active participant in the proceedings.

Sanctions for Violations of Disciplinary and Behavioral Expectations

Violations of the codes of conduct may result in one or more of the following sanctions:

Official Warning

A warning is given in verbal and/or written form to the student stating that s/he has violated SIT Study Abroad policy and that any additional violations may result in more serious disciplinary action during the stated period of reprimand. Documentation of warnings will be kept on file.

Disciplinary Probation

Probation is a period of time during which a student's actions and behavior are subject to close examination. Any further violation committed during this time period can result in further sanctions, up to and including dismissal from the program. While on probation a student may be denied permission to participate in certain program activities. A copy of the written and signed probationary letter will be kept on file and shared with the student's sending institution. Each sending institution may have their own policies, procedures and additional sanctions to address policy violations.

Disciplinary Dismissal

Dismissal serves as a sanction for violations of the Conditions of Participation, the Statement of Responsibilities and SIT's code of conduct. In addition, SIT Study Abroad, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to dismiss any student for the following reasons: failure to participate fully in all program components; failure to observe published policies or procedures; falsifying information provided on any official SIT Study Abroad form, including the application, the health form, transcripts, references or any other document required of the student; failure to disclose material information requested by SIT Study Abroad (e.g., emergency contact information, ISP information, health information), behaviors that interfere with effective program participation; or conduct that is, in the judgment of SIT Study Abroad, represented by the dean of students and academic dean, improper or offensive to the host community; potentially detrimental to the health or safety of the student or others; or inappropriate for the program or for study in a cross-cultural environment. A student who leaves the scheduled program at any time without prior written authorization from SIT Study Abroad will not be allowed to return to it and will be considered immediately withdrawn (see the section on Voluntary Withdrawal).

Once withdrawn or dismissed, the student will not be permitted any further association with the program and will forgo any of the benefits that the program provides, including insurance coverage and visa sponsorship. Students agree that when they are withdrawn or dismissed from a program, they will leave the program site and discontinue contact with the program. Students will be responsible for making their own travel arrangements from the program site.

NOTE: If a student is dismissed, then the student will forfeit his/her tuition and receive no credits for any courses of the program (i.e., an "F" for all courses).

Appeal Process for Disciplinary Dismissal

Any non-academic disciplinary decision may be appealed by the student to the dean of students and/or designee. Any dismissal decision may be appealed by the student to the provost and dean of students and/or designee. All appeals must be submitted in writing by the student within 48 hours of the notification of the decision. Only one appeal is permitted per student in any disciplinary case. Disciplinary sanctions may be increased, decreased, or modified in any number of ways through the appeals process. All decisions made based on an appeal are final.

Students found responsible for violations may submit a written appeal (via their email account or in writing) to the designated appeals officer requesting a review of findings (i.e., responsible for violation(s) and/or sanctions). An appeal/review does not constitute a re-hearing of the case, but a review of the process. For an appeal to be considered, the following guidelines must be adhered to:

Letters of appeal must be received in writing (hand-delivered or via email) to the designated SIT Appeals Officer no later than 48 hours from the date of the written report issued by the Hearing Officer. Failure to appeal within the allotted time will render the original decision final and conclusive.

Grounds for appeal: A written statement outlining the specific issues for which review is sought and the grounds upon which exception is taken to the original finding or ruling. Grounds for appeal are limited to the following:

There is evidence that was not available at the time of the disciplinary decision which had it been available, would in all reasonable likelihood have produced a different finding (responsible or not responsible).

The factual findings are "clearly erroneous" based on the evidence presented.

There was a substantial procedural irregularity.

The sanctions imposed are grossly disproportionate to the violation.

The student received a sanction of suspension or dismissal. If you are appealing a suspension or a dismissal from the SIT program, you will be required to move out of program housing accommodations until the appeal process can be completed.

Please note: The appeal officer (who will be the dean of students or designee, as long as he or she was not involved in an earlier stage of the disciplinary proceedings) may, in his or her discretion, elect to schedule a phone appointment with the student or base the appeal solely on the content of the letter.

The appeal officer may alter the findings if they are clearly erroneous, may reduce the sanctions imposed, and/or, in some cases, may remand for additional fact-finding to be made at a hearing. Letters of appeal will be reviewed and a determination on the appeal will be emailed to the student's email address.

The decision on appeal shall be issued within seven business days from the date of receipt of the appeal and is final.

Emergency Interim Suspension

If a student's behavior constitutes endangering behavior that presents an immediate, severe, and direct threat to him or herself or others (by evidencing a likelihood of harm to him or herself or others) or there is a presence of grievous misconduct and violation of SIT policies, the academic director, in consultation with the dean of students, or designee, may direct that the student be suspended for a period not to exceed seven (school) days, pending the results of administrative proceedings or, where mental health issues are present, psychological evaluation. During that interim suspension, the student shall not be allowed to participate in program activities or utilize program resources. Alternate housing arrangements may be necessary and will be the responsibility of the student placed on suspension. Additional violations while the student is placed on interim suspension will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

The fact that a student has threatened to commit or attempted to commit suicide, however, may not, in and of itself, be used as the basis for an emergency interim suspension. In such a circumstance, the dean of students, associate dean of students, or designee will work with the program's academic director and staff to refer the student to a mental health professional for an assessment of whether the student presents a severe, direct, and imminent threat to him or herself or others. Furthermore, under SIT's medical withdrawal policy, if the student refuses to submit to the assessment, the dean of students and/or associate dean of students may determine whether he or she poses such a threat based on the available evidence and act as permitted under the policy.

A student subject to emergency interim suspension will be granted a phone appointment with the dean of students or associate dean of students as soon as is practical to discuss the action taken.

Student Legal Fees

Students are expected to abide by all of the laws, policies, and procedures of the program country. In the event of a legal matter during the academic program, the student is responsible for all penalties, costs, and legal fees associated with the incident. SIT Study Abroad will not be liable for the selection, hiring, or vetting of legal professionals for the student or for any legal fees incurred.

VIII. ACADEMICS

At the beginning of the program, IHP faculty will explain to you their intentions for course structure and content as well as their aims for personal and group academic growth. Keep up with the work; it is very hard to concentrate later if you put it off, and your grades may suffer as a result. You will find that the reading is more relevant and the discussions more dynamic if you make a serious effort to keep up.

Aside from participating in the daily program, think about your own interests (e.g., photography, journalism, religions, learning languages, dance, etc.), and find opportunities to pursue them outside of the group. Much of IHP depends on students who take initiative to make the most of the academic experience. A positive attitude and a willingness to explore all the resources available are crucial to individual and group success.

Do not pass up unique opportunities in the name of academic virtue, but remember that the academics are the central feature of IHP. It is expected that students will attend every class and be on time.

Stay in touch with your university for registration materials, graduation, and other requirements (including academic material your school may require from your time abroad). We recommend that you designate a friend or family member to receive all mailings/information from your school; they can forward important information to you and assist you with minor tasks.

Attendance and Participation

Due to the nature of SIT Study Abroad programs, and the importance of student and instructor contributions in each and every class session, attendance at all classes and for all program excursions is required. Criteria for evaluation of student performance include attendance and participation in program activities. Students must fully participate in all program components and courses. Students may not voluntarily opt out of required program activities. Valid reasons for absence – such as illness – must be discussed in advance with the academic director or other designated staff person.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is the failure to maintain academic integrity. It includes, but is not limited to, obtaining or giving unauthorized aid on an examination, having unauthorized prior knowledge of an examination, doing work for another student, having work done by another person for the student, and plagiarism. Academic dishonesty can result in severe academic penalty, including failure of the course and/or dismissal from the institution.

Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's ideas or product as one's own. Examples of plagiarism are: copying verbatim and without attribution all or parts of another's written work, using phrases, charts, figures, illustrations, computer programs, websites without citing the source; paraphrasing ideas, conclusions or research without citing the source; using all or part of a literary plot, poem, film, musical score, computer program, websites or other artistic product without attributing the work to its creator.

You can avoid unintentional plagiarism by carefully following accepted scholarly practices. Notes taken for papers and research projects should accurately record sources of material cited, quoted, paraphrased or summarized, and research or critical papers should acknowledge these sources in footnotes.

Grade Policy

Grades will be given in accordance with the system below.

- A = 4.0 or 94-100
- A- = 3.7 or 90-93
- B+ = 3.3 or 87-89
- B = 3.0 or 84-86
- B - = 2.7 or 80-83
- C+ = 2.3 or 77-79
- C = 2.0 or 74-76
- C- = 1.7 or 70-73
- D+ = 1.3 or 67-69
- D = 1.0 or 64-66
- F = 0.0 or below 64

I = Incomplete
W = Withdrawal (student initiated)
AW= Administrative withdrawal
NR = No grade received from instructor

Note: SIT does not award an A+ grade

SIT Study Abroad awards letter grades to all students in order to give standard values to an assessment of work. Pass/Fail and Credit/No Credit are not options. Other than letter grades, only I (incomplete), W (withdrawal), or AW (administrative withdrawal) will be submitted, as explained below. Program specific grading policies and criteria for A-B-C-D-Fail will be shared with the students during orientation.

IHP has a consistent late policy across all programs. All late work will drop a grade per day unless there is prior permission granted by the faculty. As an example, a grade would drop from a B+ to a B, and then from a B to a B- for every day it is late. Students submitting work late will likely fall behind in other work and perhaps not be able to take advantage of other program offerings.

Incomplete Grade Policy

The expectation is that all course requirements are due on the dates set by instructors in the course syllabi unless prior arrangements are made. A grade of incomplete (I) is awarded only as a result of illness or other extenuating circumstances (such as a family emergency) and must be confirmed in writing by the academic director at least one week prior to the end of the term or at the beginning of the program's evaluation period. At the time of grade submission, the academic director will provide the registrar with the Report of Incomplete Grade form that outlines the agreement made between the student and the academic director. The specific deadline of materials due to the academic director is arranged between the student and the academic director and may not exceed 60 days after the last day of the term. The academic director is responsible for the submission of a final grade to the registrar within 30 days. If the registrar does not receive a final grade within 90 days of the term end, the Incomplete will convert to an "F".

Transcripts

Students should be advised that an official transcript may take up to 45 days after the program completion date to reach their home institution. Additional transcript copies may be obtained for a small fee from SIT's registrar. Students will also receive an unofficial grade report sent to their home address within 45 days after the program completion.

Students should be advised that transcripts will not be released to their sending school until they have completed the mandatory, online program survey that is sent out via email on the last day of the program. If a student does not complete the survey within 3 weeks of their program's end date, their transcript will be placed on hold until the survey is completed. If a student is not able to complete the online survey within 3 weeks of the program's end date, s/he should contact SIT at studentevaluation@sit.edu to make other arrangements.

Graduating Seniors

Any seniors who need their transcripts expedited at the end of the IHP term in order to graduate must notify SIT in writing before the program begins. Include the address to which we should mail your transcript and the date your institution needs it. Due to the timing of the end of the IHP program, SIT cannot guarantee that your transcript will be available to meet your institution's deadlines. However, SIT will work with you to expedite the process to the best of its ability.

Written Evaluations

In some cases, your college or university may require a written evaluation rather than a grade. You must advise SIT prior to the program start if this is the case. Faculty will be responsible (in coordination with the IHP Program Director) for determining the evaluation requested.

Grounds for Dismissal

Students are expected to act in a responsible and mature manner. SIT and its employees assume no responsibility whatsoever in connection with losses, expenses or other damages resulting from dismissal. In its sole discretion, IHP reserves the right to dismiss any student for the following reasons: failure to participate fully in all program components and perform satisfactory academic work, failure to observe published policies or procedures, failure to disclose material information requested by SIT (e.g. health information), ill health that interferes with effective program participation, failure to comply

with the provisions of local country laws, regulations and customs, or conduct that is, in the sole judgment of SIT Study Abroad, improper, disruptive or offensive to the host community, potentially detrimental to the health or safety of the student or other members of the group and program, or inappropriate for the program or for study in a cross-cultural environment. The following is a non-exhaustive list of prohibited actions:

1. Violation of safety practices or negligence that might cause injury or death to oneself or any other person.
2. Sexual or other harassment of any kind.
3. Creating excessive noise, disturbing the peace, violation of individual rights or privacy, or disruption of lawful activities of others.
4. Deliberately or carelessly damaging or stealing SIT property or the property of those associated with SIT or a host community.
5. Theft of property from any other person or entity.
6. Unauthorized entry or use of program facilities, including host facilities such as host universities, hotels or offices of program staff and contacts.
7. Possession or use, including the threat of use, of a weapon or other hazardous materials, such as, but not limited to, a firearm, knife, explosive or other object that could be considered a weapon while on the program.
8. Violation of host country or U.S. laws, including, but not limited to, those that relate to the use of alcohol and controlled substances on the program. Violation of local laws may result in fines, punishment, imprisonment or deportation in addition to punitive actions by SIT.
9. Failure to comply with the reasonable directions of program employees acting in the performance of their duties.
10. Violations of all approved SIT policies and regulations as published in the SIT/IHP Student Handbook, Conditions of Participation, program materials or other official SIT publications and website.
11. Any conduct which jeopardizes SIT's ability to maintain positive relations in host communities or to continue to carry out its programs, including but not limited to culturally inappropriate behavior.

In the event of dismissal, no refunds will be issued. Failure to comply with the program restrictions and other SIT policies and procedures, whether or not resulting in dismissal, may preclude a student from participation in future SIT/IHP study abroad programs.

Note that a dismissal from the program will be reflected in your academic records and may adversely impact your future.

Voluntary Withdrawal

Voluntary withdrawal occurs when a student withdraws from the program for any reason, other than for disciplinary actions. If a student withdraws from the program voluntarily for any reason while a program is in progress, the grade of W is assigned.

At the discretion of the academic director, a failing grade (F) may be assigned for any student withdrawing without proper notification and completion of forms.

Student Withdrawal Procedure

SIT Study Abroad does not permit students to voluntarily withdraw from an individual course. If a student is considering withdrawing from the program, the student must contact his or her home institution prior to withdrawing to discuss possible implications for credit transfer or the student's standing at that institution. If a student wishes to withdraw from the program, the student must notify the academic director who will ask the student to sign a withdrawal form. Upon notification, or last date of association with the program, whichever is later, the student will be considered withdrawn from the entire program. Once withdrawn, the student will not be permitted any further association with the program and will forgo any of the benefits that the program provides, including insurance coverage and visa sponsorship. Students agree that when they withdraw voluntarily or are dismissed from a program, they will leave the program site and discontinue contact with the program. Students will be responsible for making and paying for their own travel arrangements from the program site.

Administrative Withdrawal Grade

The administrative withdrawal grade (AW) is initiated by the academic director and approved by the academic dean, and includes dismissal from the program. If coursework has not been submitted and a student leaves the program, a grade of

AW is assigned. In accordance with the SIT Study Abroad program design and philosophy, credits are given after the completion of the program and are not compartmentalized according to components of the program. In the presence of extenuating circumstances that warrant partial credits, an AW will be assigned for work not completed or handed in according to an agreed-upon timeframe.

Academic Probation

A student may be placed on academic probation, and will be notified of such in writing if s/he:

- Is continuously absent at program activities;
- Repeatedly falls asleep in class or is repeatedly late;
- Is repeatedly rude and/or shows a lack of consideration to the academic director, other students, program related personnel, program lecturers, homestay families, host nationals, or others.
- Repeatedly engages in behavior which is, in the opinion of the academic director(s) and/or program-related personnel, culturally insensitive and/or inappropriate;
- Engages in behavior which endangers the academic director, other students, themselves, and/or host nationals, including, but not limited to, a repeated refusal to take action to address physical, behavioral, or mental health problems;
- Commits a further transgression of a norm about which a warning was previously issued;
- Has received a letter of warning from the academic director indicating that the student is failing to work up to the standards or within the spirit of the program;
- Has received an incomplete and has not satisfactorily outlined a course of action to meet any outstanding course requirements;
- Has failed 33% or more of course requirements.

The student is required to discuss his or her academic status with the academic director and make a plan for regaining satisfactory status.

Academic Dismissal

A student is subject to dismissal and is so notified in writing if, in the opinion of the academic director, s/he:

- Has failed to meet the conditions of any academic probation;
- Has failed 50% or more of the program's requirements;
- Demonstrated inadequate quality of participation.

In cases of academic dismissal, the academic director makes a recommendation to the appropriate academic dean for his/her region who will make the final decision. SIT Study Abroad's only obligation to a dismissed student is to confirm in writing the reasons for dismissal. The normal published refund schedule applies.

Academic Appeal Process

Students may appeal a decision of dismissal consistent with SIT's policies and procedures. Appeals of any decision must be made in writing to the SIT provost within 48 hours of the initial decision. The student's status remains dismissed until the appeal has been decided.

Phase One

A student seeking a grade change or to appeal the applications of an academic policy other than academic integrity cases must first, within six months of the posting of the grade, file a written request for reconsideration directed to the appropriate academic dean (IHP-Comparative), via email (preferred) or regular mail: SIT Study Abroad, Box 676, 1 Kipling Road, Brattleboro, VT 05302. Any and all relevant materials and information the student has to support the appeal must accompany this letter by email attachment or in hard copy. Students should follow up with the academic dean to confirm receipt of these materials. A copy of the student's appeal letter and materials will be forwarded to the academic director(s) and a copy of the appeal letter will be sent to the SIT registrar by the academic dean.

In considering the appeal, SIT Study Abroad relies on the materials and information the student submitted, feedback and documentation from the academic director, consultation with appropriate in-country faculty, evaluated work that may have remained in country, and any other documentation relevant to the specific course(s) being appealed. Within forty-five days of receipt of the appeal, the academic director must submit an evaluation of the appeal and recommendations for action to the academic dean. The academic dean forwards the letter of decision to the student and SIT registrar, which becomes part of the student's academic file. The dean also returns to the student all hard copy materials the student submitted with the appeal.

Phase Two

Should the student want to proceed further, s/he must submit an appeal in writing to the SIT Study Abroad provost with any and all relevant materials, documentation, and information within forty-five days from the date a response to Phase I is sent from the academic dean to the student. The academic director(s) is given the opportunity to submit any additional response to the student's appeal at this point. Upon receipt of the academic director(s)' response, the SIT provost forwards all documents to the SIT Academic Review Board and informs all concerned individuals that the appeal rests with the Academic Review Board. This board is comprised of members of the SIT faculty, including one SIT Study Abroad representative who is not in any way connected to the case, and the SIT registrar as an advisor and recorder. The board can request additional information from the academic director(s) and/or the student if it deems it necessary.

The board will make every effort to deal expeditiously with the appeal. Under normal circumstances, an appeal will be taken up at the next regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the board and the case will be decided within sixty days of the board receiving the appeal. Ideally, decisions are made through consensus, but otherwise through majority opinion. The board's decision and rationale are then sent to the registrar, who notifies the student and the academic dean/academic director(s).

Phase Three

Should the student want to further pursue the appeal, a board decision can be appealed in writing to the provost of SIT within sixty days of the date of the board's decision. This appeal must be based only on the evidence and rationale previously considered by the SIT Appeals Board, and the provost will review the official record of these proceedings. A copy of this appeal letter is also sent to the registrar, the academic dean, and the academic director. The provost's decision is final, and s/he will notify the involved individuals within sixty days of receipt of the student's final appeal.

If the student's appeal results in a change to the academic record, the SIT registrar will forward an updated grade report to the student's permanent home address as it is recorded in SIT's files. The student must provide the registrar with a written request for an updated transcript for his/her home institution.

Students may appeal a decision of academic dismissal consistent with SIT's policies and procedures listed above. Appeals of any decision must be made in writing by the student to the SIT provost within 48 hours of the initial decision. The student's status remains dismissed until the appeal has been decided.

To request a deferral of implementation of the dean's sanction, the student must submit a written request no later than 5 PM the business day after receipt of the sanction letter and email or present the request in writing. The dean's written decision will be available for the student the following business day.

IX. KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH HOME AND GUEST POLICY

Expect traditional forms of communication with family and friends to be limited on IHP. Plan to make a good effort to keep in touch through writing letters or emails (plus occasional phone calls). This communication will give your friends and family a better understanding of your experiences and provide a record of your time on IHP that might help ease your transition after returning home. Keeping a blog can be a good way to stay in touch with many people at once. A blog can also become a forum for discussion with people from your home institution about what you're learning and experiencing.

Do not set family or friends up with a system of expected communication (phone calls or email) for certain points on the program, including arrivals and departures to/from new locations. Days on IHP will be extremely full and your access to phones and email will be unpredictable and at times unreliable. When you arrive in a new country, you will have many immediate obligations, including getting to your accommodations, eating a full meal, recovering from jet lag, meeting your new host family, attending required scheduled sessions, evening engagements, and getting oriented. You will have opportunities for communication along the way, but this will vary according to region, IHP schedules, and your personal schedules. If you set a system for communication, you should be aware (based on years of IHP experience) that you may not be able to follow it, which can cause logistical complications, emotional strain, and increased worry for all parties (mostly for your family!). Please be flexible and communicate this to your parents/guardians.

Program Updates and Letters Home

Your parents/guardians should check the SIT Study Abroad Facebook page, which can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/SITStudyAbroad>. Program Updates announce the safe arrival of your group to a new country. These postings are not immediate and typically occur within 1-2 business days after the group arrival. **Letters Home** are posted on each individual program page and are more detailed reports written by the Trustees Fellow, in conjunction with students, upon completion of a Country Program. They represent the group, the sharing of the journey with people at home, as well as "giving back" to the places and people visited by telling a piece of the story to those who cannot experience the places firsthand (like your family and friends!). Your parents/guardians should understand that the SIT office staff are in touch with on-site staff and faculty periodically, but will probably not know your exact location at any given time, as program schedules are frequently updated and changed by on-site staff. When possible, keep your parents updated about your whereabouts and well-being to ease their concerns.

Mail

Before the program starts, parents/guardians will receive a letter from SIT Study Abroad, which includes a list of mailing addresses where letters can be sent. These addresses should not be used for any important, time sensitive materials. Share these addresses with family and friends. In the event a mailing address changes, we will send out another *email*. Receiving mail from loved ones is always a highlight on IHP, and friends and family are encouraged to write letters!

Packages

Please ask your friends and family not to send you packages.

Package delivery can be unreliable and packages often arrive damaged or missing contents. Most importantly, packages may involve considerable expense and time for IHP coordinators. Often when a coordinator receives a package, he or she has to deal with customs, leave the IHP program to travel to another location to pick up the package, and pay a customs fee. Additionally, if packages arrive after you leave the country, coordinators cannot send these packages to the next country. SIT cannot be held responsible for lost or stolen packages or any related fees.

The **only** instance when a package should be sent is in an **emergency** for replacement of important financial or personal items (credit cards, passport, or medication). If you need this type of emergency item, you should notify the country coordinator and find out which mail carrier is best to use. Emergency packages should be sent via UPS, Federal Express, or other insured carrier. Be aware that even these carriers can have delivery complications. **It cannot be stressed enough: ask your friends and family not to send packages!**

Phone Calls and Phone Cards

Plan to stay in touch with family and friends by mail and email. To avoid very expensive collect calls from overseas, consider signing up with a long distance carrier with service to the U.S. (make sure service is offered in all countries on your itinerary). However, do not expect to have easy access to phones. Inexpensive phone cards can easily be purchased in each country at convenience stores, and usually provide better rates than some cell phones or calling plans. In the past, students on IHP have relied primarily on locally purchased phone cards used with payphones.

Do not use a host family's phone for overseas calls. Even with a phone card, the host family may be charged a service fee just to dial out. Host phones should be reserved for the family's use.

If you choose to carry a cell phone, you should do so with careful thought. While cell phones are useful in cases of emergencies, they can prevent students from engaging in meaningful cultural experiences and may distract from full immersion in the program. Phones, calling cards, and SIM cards can often be bought locally at moderate rates.

Email

You should not expect to have regular access to email. In some locations, email access may be more frequent, but you may not have much access for one to two weeks. Many locations will have Internet cafe facilities, but SIT neither provides nor guarantees computer access. Internet cafes are prevalent in most of the places you will travel. You will be most successful with an Internet-based email address (such as Yahoo, Hotmail, or Gmail).

Visitors During the Program

SIT occasionally sends visitors from the home office or from home institutions to program sites during the term in order to monitor progress and evaluate program components. Aside from these special cases, SIT does not encourage any visitors during the term, due to the rigorous nature of the programs and the disruption that such visits cause in program flow and group dynamics. Students should be sure that friends and relatives are aware of this policy and do not make plans to visit during the academic program. All plans for visits are to be scheduled for dates during the IHP vacation or after the formal conclusion of the program. SIT may grant or refuse permission for any visits during the program in its sole discretion.

X. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Safety Statement

Student safety is SIT Study Abroad's highest priority. Due to SIT's long experience with risk assessment, emergency preparedness, and crisis management, SIT is able to adapt quickly to dynamic international challenges. Given that socioeconomic, political, environmental, and medical conditions vary widely across the countries in which SIT operates, SIT Study Abroad specifically tailors health, safety, and security measures to each location and current circumstances.

SIT Study Abroad has a full-time Office of Student Affairs dedicated to addressing health, safety, and risk management issues first from a preparation and prevention approach to reduce risks and secondly from an incident response approach that functions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The various types of health and safety situations that arise for individual students or for the programs in the field are reported to the Dean of Students who works with the program's academic director to respond carefully, appropriately, and swiftly to all situations that arise. The Student Affairs Office maintains an on-call system of trained professional staff for any emergencies that occur after normal business hours.

SIT academic directors in country are trained in risk assessment and crisis management, and we continuously gather information from a variety of sources to evaluate safety and security conditions, as noted below:

1. SIT Study Abroad monitors US government advisories, considering those issued both by in-country embassies and consulates and by the State Department in Washington, DC.
2. SIT academic directors and other in-country staff also rely on the considerable in-situ knowledge and analysis from local institutional colleagues with whom SIT has long and trusted relationships.
3. SIT Study Abroad consults with local academic and nongovernmental organizations using our global networks.
4. SIT Study Abroad maintains close contact with other study abroad programs and professionals around the world using academic, personal, and online networks.
5. SIT Study Abroad senior staff have lived and worked in the regions where our programs operate and they use their familiarity with local institutions to inform their decision making.

SIT Study Abroad infuses safety and security throughout the program curriculum. Key elements of the SIT model help to maximize in-country safety, including:

- Orientation - During the initial orientation period, academic directors and others educate students about potential safety risks and strategies for students to keep themselves safe within their new context. SIT staff provides further safety and security briefings at key junctures throughout the semester, most notably at times of movement to different program locations.
- Homestays - Homestays provide students with grounding in the local culture – critical to building realistic perceptions of risk. Host families help students navigate their new surroundings by providing firsthand exposure to local norms, modeling culturally appropriate behavior, and giving precautionary advice about the local environment.

Total safety cannot, of course, be guaranteed abroad just as it cannot be guaranteed in the United States. SIT Study Abroad is committed to taking the necessary steps to maximize student safety at each and every program site.

Medical and Overseas Insurance

As an IHP student, you are covered by SIT Study Abroad's emergency accident and sickness insurance, which is included in the program fee. The insurance is designed to cover the cost of medical care necessitated by sickness or accidents which occur during the official program period (including one day before and one day after the program period.) The insurance is in effect even when treatment occurs after these dates, subject to the terms of the coverage. If necessary, the coverage facilitates medical evacuation from the country. For further information, please visit: <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/pn/admitted-students/medical-review-process/> Claim forms to request reimbursement for medical care expenses are available at <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/documents/studyabroad/Insurance-Claim-Form.pdf> Students are responsible for paying medical expenses on-site and filing claims with the insurance company. The insurance company will then reimburse the student for approved expenses above a \$50 deductible per injury or period of illness. Any questions regarding insurance coverage, filing a claim, or medical bills should be directed to the student insurance specialist at SIT Study Abroad. Be aware that the insurance provided is supplementary to any other insurance coverage the student may have; claims must be submitted to the student's primary insurer first. SIT Study Abroad has no control over any insurer's policies or decisions regarding coverage.

SIT's accident and sickness insurance does not cover pre-existing conditions. Please consult with your physician about the medications or treatment you may need while overseas if you have a pre-existing condition, such as asthma, arrhythmias, or a

skin disorder. Depending on your physician's advice, you may want to keep in effect, or purchase, additional health insurance that can be used overseas for your condition.

Medical Review

SIT Study Abroad's medical review process allows our medical staff to determine whether a student has any health issues that may require support in a particular program setting. Full and timely disclosure of any medical or mental health issues or special student needs is required and helps SIT Study Abroad assist students to have the best possible program experience.

All students must submit a complete SIT Study Abroad medical form by the stated deadline. Please note that SIT Study Abroad does not accept medical forms completed by a relative. The information contained in the medical form is not used in the admissions process, and documented health issues do not necessarily preclude acceptance. Each student's health information must be cleared by our medical staff in order for a student to participate in the program. All students are fully expected to disclose their medical history so that we can properly prepare them for their experience, make arrangements for any special accommodations if necessary, and in some cases assess whether there may be any medical reasons that a student should consider another program. Failure to disclose complete and accurate information on the medical form will result in denial to participate prior to the program or dismissal from the program. Health information will be kept confidential and will be provided to our academic director in country to be accessed in case of an emergency. If our medical staff has any questions about a completed medical form, an SIT Study Abroad staff member will be in touch to request further information.

We require that all students participating on SIT Study Abroad programs show medical and mental health stability for no less than six months prior to the program's start date.

Health Information

Your primary care physician might recommend that you seek additional advice from a travel doctor or travel clinic. You should make an appointment with your physician/travel doctor as soon as possible. Some vaccinations are taken in a series requiring weeks in between shots.

You should talk with your doctor about the trip and any possible restrictions that may be necessary for you during the program. When you discuss the itinerary with your doctor, it is important to consider not just what countries you will visit, but in what order.

In particular, you should talk to your doctor about anti-malarial drugs and their possible side effects. You should be sure to discuss the current medications you are on and how they may interact with other drugs and vaccinations you will be getting.

In addition to meeting with a doctor, SIT requires that you read the Traveler's Health section of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website (<http://www.cdc.gov> or <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>). The CDC provides comprehensive health information and advice for general travel in locations on the IHP itinerary. This site should answer most of your health-related questions, and also provides links to additional resources.

While we will do our best to inform you about the itineraries so that you can make informed medical decisions, SIT is restricted from giving medical advice.

It is your responsibility to be vigilant about your own medical needs and to attend to all health requirements prior to departure. Don't forget to research medical requirements of any area you plan to visit outside the program itinerary, and to make appropriate medical preparations. If program locations change, you are responsible for familiarizing yourself with recommendations for the new location.

Prescriptions

Be sure to ask your doctor about prescriptions and get enough medication for the duration of the program; prescriptions cannot be filled everywhere. Confirm that all medication you are carrying with you may be transported across borders. Bring extra copies of all prescriptions, including those for glasses or contact lenses. You should keep medications in labeled original containers and bring a letter from a doctor certifying your need to carry these drugs. Customs officials may ask to see these as proof that you are carrying prescription medication and not illegal drugs.

Vaccinations

Talk to your doctor about required and recommended vaccinations for the countries on your itinerary, as well as any others you plan to visit. Ask your doctor to fill out an *International Certificate of Vaccination* with the inoculation record and keep this with you. It is a yellow passport-size booklet, obtainable either from a hospital or from the state Board of Health.

Routine Vaccinations

Everyone, traveler or not, should be up to date on routine vaccinations. These immunizations include MMR (measles/mumps/rubella), varicella (if you haven't had chickenpox), tetanus-diphtheria which should be administered every ten years, and various booster shots as directed by your doctor. If you will need booster shots abroad, please let us know so our country coordinators can help you find a doctor.

Yellow Fever Vaccination

Yellow fever is a viral disease transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito.

The CDC recommendations for yellow fever vaccination include all areas where there is a risk for yellow fever virus transmission. Yellow fever-infected areas, by World Health Organization criteria, are areas reporting yellow fever cases. The CDC defines yellow fever-endemic zones as areas reporting cases but also includes areas where a competent vector, nonhuman primates, and the ecological conditions for yellow fever virus transmission exist. Because there is a potential for infection for travelers to either endemic or infected zones, the best protection is to be vaccinated if visiting such areas. In addition to the CDC's recommendation for the yellow fever vaccination, proof of vaccination is also required for entry to and from certain countries.

The most current information on the CDC's yellow fever vaccination recommendations and entry requirements by country can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/yellowBookCh5-MalariaYellowFeverTable.aspx>

Yellow fever vaccination requirements and recommendations for IHP:

While some countries do not require Yellow Fever vaccination to enter, they do require proof of vaccination if you have been in a country where Yellow Fever is present prior to arriving. This is the case for several IHP itineraries. Be sure to check the requirements for each country you are going to determine if you need yellow fever vaccination. These requirements can be found in the **Health Guidelines and Requirements** document provided to you with your pre-departure documents from SIT.

If you receive a yellow fever vaccination, you must obtain proof of vaccination by receiving an International Certificate of Vaccination from your doctor/clinic. The certificate should be signed and validated with the vaccination center's stamp showing the location of vaccination. You will need the certificate as proof of vaccination in order to enter countries if required. The certificate is valid ten days after vaccination for ten years. As soon as you receive your vaccination certificate, make three photocopies, mail one copy to SIT, keep one at home, and carry one with you during travel.

Authorized yellow fever vaccination clinics are listed on the CDC website: <http://www2.ncid.cdc.gov/travel/yellowfever/> You should double-check yellow fever requirements in case anything changes. Note that the order in which you visit countries is relevant.

Other Vaccinations to Consider

You must consult your own doctor, as everyone's medical histories, conditions, and philosophies differ; the suggestions offered here are NOT medical advice. Remember that inoculations are not a substitute for taking precautions in your everyday behavior. For more information, remember to look at the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/travel/.

- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Typhoid

Malaria

Malaria is a parasitic blood disease characterized by fevers, chills, muscle aches, headache and fatigue. Transmission of malaria occurs by the bite of an infected mosquito. It is critical for you to research and become informed of the risks associated with malaria and the preventive measures against infection. Please read the information on the CDC site on malaria. Discuss with your physician and/or a travel doctor the risk of malaria in the areas you'll be visiting weighed against known side-effects of anti-malarial drugs. Discuss pros and cons of several medications such as mefloquine, malarone, doxycycline, and chloroquine plus proguanil.

The CDC lists risk of malaria for several regions on various IHP programs, including India, low-land areas in South Africa, some urban areas in Brazil, and rural areas of Vietnam. The most current information from the CDC about malaria can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/yellowBookCh5-MalariaYellowFeverTable.aspx>

Diarrhea

Travelers' diarrhea is a group of illnesses caused by different bacteria (and sometimes parasites or viruses) that produce one common symptom: loose watery bowel movements. Other symptoms include abdominal cramps and rumbling, nausea and vomiting, chills and low fever. When a person consumes contaminated foods or water, the foreign bacteria or viruses infect the intestine, producing the diarrhea and other symptoms.

To avoid this problem, the most sensible thing is to be very careful about what you eat and drink. We are not suggesting that you should avoid new foods and new experiences; just take some precautions.

Avoid raw unpeeled fruits and vegetables – this includes salads with ingredients that may have been washed in tap water. Eat food that is still hot or that has been refrigerated recently. Avoid street vendor food unless it is hot and well cooked. Don't drink or brush your teeth with tap water that has not been boiled. Be wary of water served at hotels and restaurants, and don't drink beverages with ice. Boil your own drinking water or drink carbonated or bottled drinks. It is best to boil water for at least 15 minutes. Alternately, bring tablets or a filtration pump to make your own purified water. You should discuss sharing several purifiers with your group after you've received the class list. Not everyone will need one.

If you have the symptoms of diarrhea, take in extra fluids to avoid dehydration. Pepto-Bismol, Imodium, or an antibiotic prescribed by a doctor can help relieve the symptoms. Usually the symptoms are most intense on the first day, running their course in three to seven days.

If symptoms worsen after the first day or two, if you develop a fever of 101 degrees or higher, or if you see any blood in your stools, let faculty, country coordinators or the fellow know immediately. They will make arrangements for a doctor. Dehydration and intestinal troubles can be very serious.

General Health, Cleanliness, and Prevention

During the program, it is important that you monitor your health and that of others, especially if you have a unique medical history or chronic illness. Carry the name and telephone number of your own doctor with you. IHP Coordinators in each country will provide contact information of local doctors who should be contacted in the event of illness.

It's tempting to underestimate the number of foreign organisms in the air and elsewhere that can make life unpleasant. Don't be alarmed, but be realistic. The prospect of staying in a hospital to be treated for an illness instead of participating in IHP activities should help you take precautions.

It's easy to let yourself get down physically or emotionally without you or others noticing. Be on top of your health when something goes wrong and don't let things slide or wait for someone else to notice and pick you up. It helps to be alert and notice others in the group. If you think someone is sliding downhill, offer help.

FOR YOUR HEALTH...

- A balanced diet is not always available to students on IHP, so taking a multivitamin while on IHP is a good idea.
- Drink lots of purified water. Stay hydrated!
- Keep clean. Wash your hands! Carry soap or hand sanitizer with you because soap or water may not always be available.
- Avoid bare feet and wear sandals in the shower.
- Take care of yourself physically and emotionally and help others do the same. Your health affects you and the entire group.
- Watch your eating, drinking, and sleeping habits. Eat a varied diet. Stay clean, hydrated, and rested. Prevention is best.
- Let the Trustees Fellow or coordinator know of any health problems so that they can give advice or seek help for you before it becomes a problem. Even though the IHP leaders are not professional counselors, they care about your well-being and need to know about things early on so that small problems don't become bigger issues.
- Review the materials in the Handbook and be aware of how culture shock may affect you. If you are in a slump, let someone else know how you are feeling. Culture shock is real, and everyone experiences it to some degree.
- Exercise! Walking, running, and yoga are all great ways to stay healthy and relieve stress.
- Develop other ways of dealing with stress. Make a list of what works well for you – talking with friends, listening to music, singing, keeping a journal, drawing, etc.
- Get involved. Try to understand the cultural differences you are experiencing.

Mental Health

If you have a history of emotional or psychological problems, report this information on the confidential Medical Information form. Please consult with a mental health professional before joining IHP to discuss the potential stresses of study abroad and group life.

Coordinators and faculty, while caring and involved leaders, are not mental health counselors. You will not have the same access to professional mental health counselors while participating on IHP as you would at home. SIT does not employ health

professionals to travel with the program and mental health treatment may be difficult or impossible to access during IHP. It is very important to be in communication with SIT about any current or potential problems.

Jet lag

Jet lag is something you will experience in varying degrees on IHP. There are many theories on how to avoid jet lag or lessen the symptoms. In general, it can help to try to adjust your body's sleeping and eating cycles to time of your destination while you're on the flight. Set your watch to the destination's time and try to convince yourself of the reality of the time.

Put a snack and a bottle of water in your carry-on after you go through security. Flying causes dehydration, so drinking lots of fluids (not caffeinated or alcoholic) will help you stay healthy and encourage your body to adjust to the new time zone. Eat when it corresponds to a mealtime at the destination.

Keep yourself busy during the flight when it is daytime at your destination and try to sleep when it is night time. Don't forget to stretch and take a walk down the aisle. Upon arrival, set and maintain an appropriate sleep schedule – if it is morning, try to stay awake throughout the day. If it is night, try to sleep even if you're not tired. Get a good night's sleep for the first couple of days, and jet lag can be minimized.

Medical Resources

The following are suggestions for sources of information, especially if you do not live near a travel medicine specialist or hospital with a travel medicine department:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

1-877-FYI-TRIP

www.cdc.gov/travel/

IHP requires students to go to this website to get country-specific health information. Go to the Traveler's Health page for a variety of health and safety topics. In particular, go to the "Destinations" link to "choose the region that contains the destinations on your itinerary."

www.cdc.gov/travel/contentStudyAbroad.aspx

Travel health tips for students studying abroad

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/

Recommendations on vaccinations.

www.cdc.gov/malaria/faq.htm

Frequently asked questions about malaria.

Travel Health Online

www.tripprep.com

Traveler's Advice and Immunization Practice at Massachusetts General Hospital (Boston)

http://www.mgh.harvard.edu/id/clinical_practice/travel_advice/

(617) 724-6454

The International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers (IAMAT)

www.iamat.org

716-754-4883

Provides free lists of areas prone to malaria and other diseases, and immunization requirements.

"International Travel Health Guide" by Dr. Stuart Rose

http://www.travmed.com/thg/travel_health_guide.htm

Travel Clinic Directory

www.travmed.com

Lists tropical medicine and travel doctors by state.

American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene

847-480-9592

www.astmh.org

A directory of travel medicine specialists by location. Click “Travel Clinic Directory”.

[SAFETI Pre-departure Health Training Handbook](#)
<http://www.globaled.us/peacecorps/personal.html>

Safety and Well-Being

SIT Study Abroad places the highest priority on the safety and health of all students. Because social, economic, political, environmental, and other conditions vary widely in each of the more than 45 countries in which SIT Study Abroad programs are offered, SIT's safety and health policies are specifically tailored to location and current circumstances. They are also flexible, which enables us to adapt quickly to change.

Students should immediately contact a member of the faculty or the local Coordinator in the event of an emergency or to express a concern – even if it is mild – before it becomes a problem. Consult faculty and local coordinators as necessary to obtain additional information about a situation, to help manage personal difficulties with other students or families, to resolve academic questions, to help in medical emergencies, or to help deal with whatever else comes up. In the event of illness or if you are arrested or detained by local authorities, immediately contact the local coordinator, faculty, and if they are not reachable, the Program Director. If that is not possible, contact a representative of the U.S. government at the nearest Consulate.

It is important that you and your parents understand that there are inherent risks in international travel and study. You should discuss these risks, and address any questions before departure through ongoing communication with each other and SIT. Use caution in your travel and note cultural differences that may increase risks. Common sense, respect, communication, conservative behavior and attire, not traveling alone, and general awareness all contribute to safety.

SIT monitors advisories issued by the U.S. State Department in addition to staying in touch directly with local embassies. These State Department advisories appear on the web at <http://travel.state.gov/travel>. All U.S. Embassies and Consulates are online at <http://usembassy.state.gov>. These websites contain annual announcements for Americans in the respective countries, although these usually do not differ significantly from the information found on the main State Department website.

In addition to IHP Country Coordinators and other in-country staff, SIT relies on the considerable on-site knowledge and analysis of local institutional colleagues with whom we generally have long and trusting relationships.

- SIT consults with academic and nongovernmental organizations that are part of the worldwide network of SIT/World Learning.
- Through personal, professional, and online networks, SIT maintains close contact with other study abroad programs and professionals around the world.
- IHP Country Coordinators are local citizens who live and work in the regions where our programs operate. These staff members are on call 24 hours a day.

The IHP program model has at least two characteristics that have proven important over the years in minimizing safety risks in-country, including street crime, accidents, and exposure to political violence:

- During the initial orientation period, Country Coordinators and others will educate you about potential safety risks and how to minimize these risks. As you move to new locations, IHP staff will provide further reminders and orientation briefings.
- The homestay component of our programs provides significant additional community perspectives on local issues. Homestay family members can provide you with precautionary advice about local conditions.

Total safety cannot be guaranteed abroad, just as it cannot be guaranteed in the United States. SIT is committed to taking the necessary steps to maximize student safety at every program site.

Women Traveling Abroad

The following advice to women traveling alone comes to us from the University of Oregon Study Abroad Handbook; many of the points apply to men as well.

A woman traveling may encounter more difficulties than a man. Some of the best methods to avoid hassles are to fit in and try to understand the role of the sexes in the culture in which you are traveling. Observe how the host country's women dress and behave and follow their example. What may be

appropriate or friendly behavior in the U.S. may bring you unwanted, even dangerous, attention in another culture. [...] If your intuition tells you a situation is dangerous, then act as if it is. Be extra careful with giving your trust. This applies generally, but is especially important when traveling.

LGBTQ Issues

Sexual orientation and sexual identity are viewed differently in the various host communities you may have contact with on your program. While on IHP, you may be challenged by vastly different beliefs and boundaries than those in your home community. Please discuss the specific local cultural and religious realities as they apply to GLBTQ issues with your Program Director during orientation. For more information about GLBTQ issues abroad, visit the NAFSA: Association of International Educators GLBT Special Interest Group's website at www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay. This site has information on lesbian and gay issues, as well as links to international lesbian and gay organizations, and overseas support.

Emergency Contact Procedures

Each of our country programs has prepared a set of guidelines to be followed in the event of an emergency. These are country-specific and developed in consultation with SIT, the IHP Program Director, and Country Coordinator. You will receive medical and emergency contact information upon arrival in each location, including phone numbers for faculty and Coordinators, the U.S. Consulate or Embassy, and a trusted local medical professional.

SIT generally depends on you to let your family know how you are doing. As an adult with privacy rights concerning medical information, you must give SIT permission to contact your parents concerning your health. SIT generally does not contact your parents without permission, except in the event of a serious health issue or accident. If you would like SIT to call your parents or guardians to talk with them about your health, please give permission to do so to a member of the SIT staff.

Make sure your parents know that the Office of Student Affairs can be contacted in cases of emergency. Student Affairs staff members will communicate with the proper IHP staff members to address the emergency. Staff members are on-call and ready to respond to any emergency situation 24 hours a day throughout the duration of your program. Student Affairs should NOT be contacted for general inquiries, questions about mail delivery, arrival or departure information, etc.

Student Affairs staff can be reached by calling 802.258.3212. This call will be fielded by an Answering Service and then directed to on-call Student Affairs professionals. The call is toll-free in the US, or they can be reached via email at studentaffairs@sit.edu.

Sexual Behavior, Relationships, and culturally appropriate communication and dress

Students must be fully aware that both verbal and non-verbal communication, including dress, conveys specific sexual expectations in every culture. The subtleties of acceptable sexual behavior vary widely and it will be difficult at first for students, as outsiders, to grasp the host communities' sexual norms. Students' assumptions about what is acceptable may be frequently challenged. Students need to become sensitive to these differences, and strive to educate themselves quickly on appropriate behavior. This is a matter of personal safety as well as of cultural learning. Appropriate dress for the specific culture is required, and students in many programs will be informed by their academic director of what clothing is unacceptable in the new cultural setting and what is required instead.

One of the greatest concerns regarding safety for those choosing to engage in sexual activity is the use of effective protection against life-threatening diseases and other associated risks. It is vital to obtain the most current information possible regarding sexual relationships, host-country expectations in this regard, and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies. Students should make every effort to address these issues before going abroad. If necessary while enrolled in the program, students should seek medical advice on how best to protect themselves and the availability of different methods of protection.

SIT Study Abroad Policy on HIV

The following is SIT Study Abroad's policy with respect to HIV infection and AIDS:

1. As it is not a US legal requirement and, for reasons of privacy, SIT Study Abroad does not require students or host family members to submit to HIV testing or to disclose their status for our records. However, some countries require HIV testing as part of the visa application process; in cases where SIT Study Abroad facilitates this process by collecting visa application materials, we do not keep test results on file at SIT Study Abroad.

2. We provide our students with written information on precautions that should be taken to avoid transmission of communicable diseases. With respect to HIV/AIDS, specifically, we strongly encourage that universal precautions be observed.
3. The prevalence of HIV infection and AIDS is a fact of life around the world. SIT Study Abroad students and staff should take steps to inform themselves of modes of transmission and preventive measures to minimize the likelihood of exposure and adjust their behavior accordingly.
4. Medical information concerning our students, including HIV status, is confidential and is to be disclosed only with the written consent of the student or otherwise in accordance with applicable law.

HIV Universal Precautions

Due to the threat of HIV and other infectious diseases, a series of simple rules has been developed to prevent the spread of these preventable diseases. The precautions, if followed, will help greatly to protect students and others from acquiring these infections.

1. Avoid any unprotected sexual contact in any area of the world. Remember that condoms are not 100% effective. Also avoid tattooing, body piercing, or handling used medical needles. In addition common household items such as razors, toothbrushes, personal care scissors, tweezers, etc., can be contaminated with blood, and therefore should never be shared.
2. Avoid exposure to potentially HIV-containing fluids, primarily blood, but also semen, vaginal secretions, mother's milk, and any other body fluid that contains blood, e.g., bloody vomit, feces, saliva, or urine.
3. When exposure is unavoidable, as in caring for an injured person, or in cleaning up a bloody spill, always wear surgical gloves and protective garb, and, where splattering is likely, protective mask and eye wear. Do not re-use gloves, gowns, or masks; dispose of them in a manner that prevents contaminating others. Blood spills should be cleaned up (while wearing gloves) with 1 part in 10 Bleach/water solutions, and the rags safely disposed of. Thorough hand washing after clean up is also necessary.
4. These precautions are universal, i.e., they must be observed at all times in any part of the world, regardless of the perceived level of endemicity of HIV in a given individual or population.
5. Following these precautions also minimizes exposure to Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C, which are other common blood-borne viral infections.

Illness and Crime Reporting

It is each student's responsibility while a participant on an SIT Study Abroad program to report any illness or crime that happens to the student or that the student is involved in, to the program's director immediately. Communication of this information allows SIT Study Abroad to provide optimal support to students, and can also assist students with later insurance claims. SIT Study Abroad also analyzes incident reports to assess and adjust programs to minimize health and safety risks.

All health and crime incidents are reported to SIT Study Abroad's Office of Student Affairs in Vermont, with serious incidents reported immediately. Both health and crime incidents are considered confidential information and only shared with staff members at SIT and your home institution on a "need-to-know" basis.

XI. PERSONAL GROWTH, CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT, AND RE-ENTRY

During the program you can expect to experience much travel and change, which is likely to challenge your sense of order. You may find it helpful to consider this very partial list of factors in the physical and cultural environment, which vary from place to place. As a starting point, they may give you an idea of what your own subconscious sense of order entails:

- climate
- language and nonverbal communication
- exchange practices and market life
- religion and celebrations
- family life
- use of space
- entertainment and recreation
- food and drink
- proper etiquette
- expression of emotions

Our personal cultural upbringing does not consist merely of the knowledge we have of the arts. Culture is that ever-present force that shapes and molds our thoughts and actions, telling us what is important and what we consider right. There will be certain aspects of the cultures you visit that you may find hard to adapt to (i.e. eating dried fish heads for breakfast, or various viewpoints of your host family), but it is important to keep in mind the distinction between “adapt” and “adopt.” You are not expected to change, only to try to understand. Practice only that which feels comfortable to you and understand that things can be different.

When traveling to so many cultures, you are bound to make comparisons. These comparisons may be enriching if viewed from the right angle. Comparisons may be personal as you try to understand yourself as a product of your culture. You may struggle to understand why things in another context make you react, think, and feel the way you do. By knowing where you are starting out, the challenges of understanding other ways of life will be easier to keep in perspective. The comparisons that you make will be much clearer if you understand what you are comparing it to.

Culture Shock

Everyone experiences culture shock in varying degrees. The more you are aware of what to expect and how to deal positively with the challenges you face, the better off you will be, and so will the group as a whole. The following is a summary of information outlined in the book *Survival Kit for Overseas Living* by L. Robert Kohls.

According to research, culture shock happens in two repetitive waves consisting of:

1. Initial euphoria
2. Irritability and hostility
3. Gradual adjustment
4. Adaptation.

(The low point of the second wave tends to be worse than the first.)

With IHP, it seems that students go through culture shock related to the overall program, and also related to the experience within each country. So you may be subject to two bouts of culture shock that are happening simultaneously. Not a pleasant thought...but not a cause for alarm!

Culture shock can be hard to recognize when you are experiencing it, but pay attention to the following symptoms, which are good indicators:

Homesickness • boredom • withdrawal • excessive sleeping • compulsive eating or drinking • irritability • exaggerated cleanliness • group tension and conflict • chauvinistic excesses • stereotyping/hostility relating to host nationals • loss of ability to work effectively • crying • physical ailments (psychosomatic illnesses).

What will make a difference in coping with culture shock? Good skills include:

Tolerance for ambiguity • keeping busy • open-mindedness • being non-judgmental • empathy • communication.

Nurture the following traits:

Flexibility and adaptability • curiosity • warmth in human relationships • motivation • self-reliance • strong sense of tolerance for differences • perceptiveness • ability to listen.

And guess what! The most important qualities are a sense of humor and the ability to tolerate failure.

As Kohls says, “Living in a foreign culture is like playing a game you've never played before and for which the rules haven't been explained very well. The challenge is to enjoy the game without missing too many plays, learning the rules and developing skills as you go along.”

Recording and Remembering (Journaling)

To record all you see, experience, learn, and do, two things are valuable: a journal and a camera. Try to keep track of your impressions, thoughts, and feelings, but not to the point of distraction. In the past, students who kept journals like scrapbooks and pasted in ticket stubs and lots of other neat trivia and miscellany ended up with great records. If you're taking pictures, you might want to think of a theme or themes to pursue from country to country. Use your best judgment in deciding when to use your camera, as it can be intrusive or inappropriate at times. Sometimes it is best to limit photographers to two or three students a day and then share photos at the end of the experience. An online journal or blog can also be a good way to record your experience, allowing you to integrate your written words with photos, and even to get input on your reflections from friends, family, faculty, or others if you want. Bear in mind though, that unless you put a password on your blog, people you'd never expect may read it.

Think carefully about the information you provide on your blog. For safety reasons, it is best not to include your exact location. Ask permission of people you take photos of before posting them.

Returning to the U.S.

Coming back is sometimes the hardest adjustment, and we know it's difficult to even think about this as you prepare to start your time abroad. Make sure your parents/guardians and friends read this section, and you should save it so you can re-read it when you get home.

People may ask you the simple questions, “So how was your semester?” or “What was your favorite part?” and you may have no way of answering. Unfortunately, the surprise of not finding everything new and different, and also not exactly the same, may last for awhile. Your friends and family may be more aware than you are of how you have changed in your outlook, and it may take everyone awhile to adjust to the changes.

You may feel many more restrictions on what you can do than before you left; this may be partly because as a stranger and a traveler you are allowed a bit more leniency in your actions, and also because you may have glorified some aspects of your own country. You probably will not feel you fit in exactly with your old self, even though people expect you to, and it takes a while for everyone to realize how you have changed.

Past experience has shown that a few approaches can help to ease this readjustment period. By keeping track of your thoughts and experiences throughout the trip (i.e. through letters, journal entries or photos) and keeping in touch with important people, you and they will be more aware of what has deeply affected you while you have been gone. You can continue to learn about these aspects when you return, or in some way gather together some of your impressions to help you finalize parts of the experience. For example, some students have completed photo projects, written essays, or organized yearbooks to help tie things together.

When you return, please stay in touch with your classmates and fellow alumni.

Keeping in touch with those who have gone on the program with you is one of the most important ways of solidifying and understanding much of what you (separately and together) have learned and experienced. In addition, you will then be part of a large network of IHP alumni who would love to meet you, talk with you, and help you through the reintegration process. Remember – even though they may have participated on IHP 50 years ago, they still experienced the same dislocation feelings you will be going through.

Common Re-entry Symptoms

As adapted from *Returning Home* by Cynthia Hockman (1989, Pinchpenny Press Goshen College - Goshen, Indiana 46526):

- It is common – and normal – to feel as if you don't “fit in” with family, friends, and the whole campus environment.
- You may have thought that stories would pour out, only to find that you'd rather not discuss the experience at all.
- You may miss the food and your host families more than you expect.
- Things may seem abnormally clean and shiny.
- Buildings may look overwhelmingly large.
- Prices may seem ridiculous.
- You may feel a new appreciation for or disgust with aspects of U.S. culture.
- Family and friends may be unable to understand your feelings or what you've experienced.
- You may feel very alone.
- It is frustrating when someone asks, “How was it?” but doesn't really want to hear any reply but “Great!”
- It is difficult to begin to share all that you've learned.

- Traditional academia may feel trite after learning so much about the world.
- Life may feel as if it is going back to normal too quickly.
- Initial excitement may become a letdown after you've been home a while. A common feeling is "I'm different but life here is just the same old boring thing."
- You may feel negative about returning and want to withdraw from the people and activities around you.
- You may experience difficulty in returning to "the usual" – especially schoolwork and life at home or on campus.

Specific suggestions for coping with re-entry:

- Expect things to be different.
- Help an international student.
- Become a homestay host for international students
- Write letters and send pictures to your IHP homestay families, faculty, and coordinators.
- Cook a representative meal from your experience for family or friends.
- Continue your journal or blog.
- Meet with local, campus or administrative leaders to talk about your experiences, and work to create additional opportunities for future students.
 - Talk with others who have studied overseas (and other IHPers).
 - Get in touch with IHP alumni you had been in contact with before your departure.
 - Read international press.
 - Publish your writings, artwork, or photographs at campus, your hometown, or in magazines and journals (and include your publications on your resume).
 - Write a letter to your hometown newspaper to let them know about your experience and ask if you could schedule an interview.
 - Update your resume to reflect your IHP international experience, and remember that you also have new experience dealing with group dynamics and team-building!
 - Form or join a discussion group or book club.
 - Volunteer to mentor youth or refugees in your community.
 - Make a presentation or lead a class related to your experience.
 - Become more involved at the local level with your community by volunteering or joining a committee.

Post Travel Illness

If you develop a fever or other illness during the first year after your return home, be sure to tell your doctor that you have traveled abroad and that the possibility of a parasite or a tropical illness such as malaria should be considered when making a diagnosis. Of course, keep in mind that you may have just caught the flu after you got home!

IHP Alumni: A Valuable Resource

IHP has a vast network of alumni who remain active with IHP as mentors and contacts. These alumni are from classes dating back to 1960; they're all over the country and all over the world. They're here to help with reentry and to share stories of IHP's past! IHP is a unique experience and is best represented by individuals who have lived it!

Recent alumni are the best source of answers to questions about homestays, packing, vacations, and the gritty details. Many IHP alumni, especially recently returned students, are happy to talk to you, communicate over email, and, if possible, meet with you before the start of the program. If you wish to be in contact with IHP alumni, please let your admissions counselor at SIT know. If you are interested in meeting with an alumnus who lives near you, is from your hometown, or graduated from your university, contact the SIT office and we will do our best to find someone in your area.

XII. GENERAL POLICIES

Equal Educational Opportunities

It is the policy of World Learning/SIT to provide equal employment and educational opportunities for all persons regardless of age, ethnic origin, gender, nationality, physical or learning ability, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, protected veteran's status, or any other legally protected status.

Privacy of Educational Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as amended is a federal law. The "Act" was designed to protect the privacy of education records, establish the rights of students to inspect and review their education records, and to provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate or misleading data through informal or formal hearings. FERPA affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the SIT registrar receives a request for access. Students should submit to the Office of the Registrar written requests that identify the record(s) they wish to inspect. The registrar will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. If the records are not maintained by the Office of the Registrar, the registrar shall advise the student of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes is inaccurate or misleading. Students should write to the SIT official responsible for the record, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. FERPA was not intended to provide a process to be used to question substantive judgments, which are correctly recorded. The rights of challenge are not intended to allow students to contest, for example, a grade in a course because they felt a higher grade should have been assigned. If SIT decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, SIT will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.* One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by SIT in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom SIT has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, collection agent, or official of the National Student Clearinghouse); a person serving on the World Learning Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. **

SIT may disclose education records in certain other circumstances: to comply with a judicial order or a lawfully issued subpoena; to appropriate parties in a health or safety emergency; to officials of another school, upon request, in which a student seeks or intends to enroll; in connection with a student's request for or receipt of financial aid, as necessary to determine the eligibility, amount, or conditions of the financial aid, or to enforce the terms and conditions of the aid; to certain officials of the U.S. Department of Education, the Comptroller General, to state and local educational authorities, in connection with certain state or federally supported education programs; to accrediting organizations to carry out their functions; to organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of SIT; and the results of an institutional disciplinary proceeding against the allegation of a crime of violence may be released to the alleged victim of that crime with respect to that crime.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by SIT to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA appears directly below:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

5. World Learning/SIT Study Abroad may release directory information without prior written consent. Directory information is limited to: name, address, telephone numbers, email address, dates of attendance and classes, field of study and certification, certificates, diplomas, and degrees conferred including dates, honors, and awards, the most recent previous

educational agency or institution attended, participation in officially recognized activities, practicum location and organization, enrollment status, and anticipated graduation date.

6. Directory information shall be released freely unless the student files a written request to withhold disclosure of information with the registrar. SIT Study Abroad students can file a written request by contacting the registrar's office in advance or with the assistance of the academic director once the program has begun. The block will remain in effect until the registrar receives a written statement from the student releasing the hold on directory information.

*The Approval of Participation or Student Disclosure Form signed by each applicant to SIT Study Abroad authorizes SIT and the home institution to release educational records to each other.

**In the case of students studying abroad who remain enrolled in their home institution, and, hence, are dually-enrolled in that institution and SIT, a "school official with legitimate educational interests" includes an individual at the home institution with professional responsibilities for oversight of study abroad. Information that may be shared may include, but is not limited to, academic status, disciplinary actions, dismissal, or withdrawal.

Public Right to Information

As soon as is feasible after an incident which seriously disrupts student life on the program, the country coordinator or other staff member may notify the student group regarding an incident or actions being taken in one of several ways, including through a designated person, a group meeting, or written memos. Incidents which may involve the greater community or public interest may be made public, when necessary, through on-site staff and/or the World Learning Marketing and Communications team in collaboration with the SIT Dean of Students.

Program Changes

Although SIT will attempt to maintain its programs as described in its publications, SIT reserves the right to terminate or alter a program at any time and for any reason, with or without notice, and shall not be responsible for any expenses or losses resulting from such changes.

SSA Conditions of Participation

Future SIT/World Learning publicity materials, including but not limited to its Web site, may include statements made by participants and/or their photographs, film or video images and voices. All students automatically consent to SIT/World Learning's free and perpetual use of any statements, photographs, likenesses, film or video images and voices in any medium, including those that SIT/World Learning obtains from any participant or other source.

Modifications

World Learning/SIT Study Abroad may modify, supplement, and/or replace, without notice, any of its policies, procedures, and/or fees.

Other Offices and Services

Financial Aid Office

The Financial Aid Office provides scholarship counseling and assistance to SIT Study Abroad students from the time of initial inquiry until completion of studies. Details on how to apply for scholarships are available at www.sit.edu/studyabroad/710.htm.

Philanthropy Office

Achieving World Learning's global vision means investing today in strengthening and deepening the impact of our programs worldwide while ensuring access and opportunity for all students, regardless of background, who have the desire to engage global issues through our programs. The World Learning Philanthropy Office designs and implements SIT's fundraising efforts to support the institution in achieving its mission, including securing support for scholarships, program development, general operations, capital projects, and endowments.

Support comes from many areas, including alumni of all World Learning and SIT Study Abroad programs, parents, friends, staff and faculty, foundations, and corporations. The Philanthropy team works closely with SIT Study Abroad and World Learning's Constituent Relations Office in an ongoing effort to keep alumni and friends informed of current and future opportunities for funding support.

Alumni donations help provide scholarships and keep tuition costs as low as possible. To make a gift, visit [OurWorld](#) and click "Make a Donation" or respond to World Learning's annual appeals by mail, email, or phone.

Registrar's Office

The Registrar's Office handles registration, grade processing, and maintenance of enrollment records, school identification cards, and certification of student enrollment. Academic transcripts are issued by the Registrar's Office. All requests for transcripts must be made by the student in writing and a nominal fee is charged for each transcript copy. The student's account with SIT Study Abroad must be paid in full in order for transcript requests to be honored.