SIT SCHOOL FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAINING
STUDY ABROAD

SIT STUDY ABROAD

STUDENT HANDBOOK

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About SIT Study Abroad

SIT'S MISSION

SIT educates future scholars and professionals in diverse settings to address the most critical global issues in pursuit of a more sustainable, peaceful, and just world.

SIT'S VISION

SIT aspires to be a global research-professional university offering values-driven, high-impact programs and practitioner-oriented degrees through collaborative, learner-centered, experiences based on reciprocal and meaningful engagement with diverse communities.

SIT'S VALUES

SIT's mission and approach are guided by core values that unite our community, inform our practices, and drive our decision-making. These values serve as both a reflection and aspiration as we strive to fulfill our mission, helping us frame who we are and who we want to be as an institution of higher education.

Community

We value active togetherness, reciprocity, and respect as the essential ingredients for sustainable community-building. With our presence and our programs, we create a global network of learners empowered to become community builders and collaborators.

Intercultural Understanding

With open minds, empathy, and courage, we facilitate understanding of and respect for the commonalities and differences between people. We do this through cultural immersion and experiential learning, which leads us to seek and create a better world.

Social Inclusion and Justice

We champion inclusion in all that we are and all that we do, from ensuring our community and our programs amplify the voices, agency, and dignity of all people to deliberately instilling the principles and practices of inclusion in all of our work. We seek a world in which individuals and communities are self-determining, interdependent, and equitable.

Sustainability

We are committed to human and environmental well-being and contributing to a better world for all living and future generations.

About World Learning

World Learning Inc. is a thriving global organization made up of The Experiment in International Living, the nation's most experienced provider of international education through exchanges for high school students; School for International Training, offering accredited undergraduate study abroad programs through SIT Study Abroad and internationally focused master's degrees through SIT Graduate Institute; and World Learning, a global development and exchange nonprofit organization.

As both an accredited academic institution and an international NGO, we offer the best of theory *and* practice to individuals and institutions in 162 countries. We are guided by our core values of community, intercultural understanding, social inclusion and justice, and sustainability.

We believe that our work, grounded in our experiential approach to learning, helps people become the best version of themselves. By offering opportunities for people to learn about and experience the world, and develop their skills, confidence, and understanding, we create leaders who effect positive change in their communities and around the world.

Commitment to Diversity

EQUAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

It is the policy of 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.

Program Design

SIT offers two distinct models for undergraduate study abroad: SIT Study Abroad programs are immersive, single-country study abroad programs, and the

International Honors Program (IHP) utilizes a comparative multi-country thematic model.

The program components for SIT Study Abroad semester-long immersive programs form a logical progression enabling students to gain greater language proficiency, further understanding of the host culture, develop field research skills, and gain advanced knowledge of a subject. During single-country programs, students advance from a structured learning environment to a more independent one through the program's interrelated components. Program-specific components vary and will be covered in detail during orientation. Summer immersive programs typically last between six and eight weeks and offer students a more condensed course of study on a topic. Summer programs vary in design, and can include thematic seminars, language study, research projects and/or internships. You may visit individual program pages on our website at studyabroad.sit.edu to learn about the specifics of each program.

IHP/Comparative programs result in a distinct form of student learning within a learning community comprised of peers, visiting faculty, staff, and program director. The approach emphasizes multidisciplinary and cross-regional analysis of issues within a learning community. Typically, the cumulative work involves qualitative research undertaken in each of the countries visited. Language focus is limited to a basic introduction in most countries and the focus of the semester is a thematic analysis.

Both models utilize an experiential learning approach to international education and a typical schedule involves a mix of lectures, site visits near the program base, excursions, homestay activities, student-led sessions, reflection discussions, and other hands-on activities. SIT programs in all disciplines utilize a decolonial approach to curriculum, decentering Western modes of knowledge production, creation, and dissemination while elevating the ideas and work of local and regional scholars, activists, NGO practitioners, artists, and community members. SIT places an equal commitment on the creation of inclusive teaching and learning environments which welcome students from all identities and neurodiverse ways of learning. SIT learning centers across the world are committed to building and implementing sustainability practices to leverage carbon footprints and contribute to the well-being of the communities where they are immersed.

THEMATIC SEMINARS AND COURSES

On both SIT Study Abroad immersive programs and IHP programs, interdisciplinary thematic courses focus on topics central to the program's theme. In many cases, these courses are facilitated in collaboration with scholars from host-country universities and expert practitioners working in the field of study. Classroom activities, readings, and assignments are complemented by educational excursions, rural stays, and field-based assignments.

RESEARCH METHODS AND ETHICS

The Research Methods and Ethics (RME) course is a core component of all SIT Study Abroad semester-long immersive programs and most IHP programs. The RME course introduces students to the ethical and cultural complexity of living and studying in a new context, and allows students to develop the tools, frameworks, and problem-solving skills needed to undertake complex research projects. Students also learn to be aware of the effect of their informants' biases - and their own - on the design of field study projects and the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. By the end of the course, SIT immersive students will have developed an Independent Study Project research design or internship plan (where internships are offered) in strict observance of local norms, ethics, and value systems.

The RME course includes cross-cultural adaptation and skill-building; project selection and refinement; developing contacts and finding resources; developing skills in observation, memo writing, and interviewing; gathering, organizing, communicating, and representing data; and maintaining a work journal. The RME course is customized to the methodologies, methods, and ethics appropriate for the program's theme.

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT

In the final weeks of the semester program, SIT Study Abroad immersive students pursue an Independent Study Project (ISP) related to the program's theme. During the semester, students work with the academic director to develop plans of study utilizing primary sources. Appropriate topics have a manageable focus and can be carried out in a variety of settings, such as schools, nongovernmental organizations, or field research stations. All projects must be in accordance with the Human Subjects Review process.

Students work closely with a project advisor and other key contacts during the Independent Study Project period. The culmination of this project is typically a 20- to 40-page paper that is presented to colleagues, the academic director, and often the project advisor and other interested host-country individuals. Each semester, SIT academic directors and ISP advisors select the best ISPs for publication in SIT's Digital Collections.

INTERNSHIP

Some SIT immersive semester programs offer the opportunity for an internship in lieu of an ISP. The SIT internship is an opportunity for students to be immersed in the community and culture where they are studying, to directly engage in and contribute to work focused on the core themes of the program, to more deeply understand the nuances of the program's theme, to gain professional experience and skills, and to acquire greater insight into potential career pathways following graduation. SIT offers summer internship programs in select locations.

INTENSIVE LANGUAGE STUDY

On SIT Study Abroad immersive programs, language instruction is offered through partnerships with universities, language institutes, or qualified private teachers. With its focus on oral communication, SIT Study Abroad language learning enriches the academic experience and enhances cultural immersion. Based on in-country evaluation, including estimated oral proficiency testing complemented in many cases by a written evaluation, students are placed in a small class at the appropriate language level.

Depending on the program, SIT language classes may be taught in intensive formats for up to two hours of daily formal classroom instruction and discussion, or may be spread throughout the semester. Through classroom activities and field exercises, students develop conversation skills and learn aspects of written language. Upper levels of many language courses may focus specifically on language needed to work and conduct research in a field related to the program's theme. Guided self-instruction under the supervision of host country language instructors is available for students who place above the language levels offered. There may be an additional fee associated with this option.

IHP programs do not include intensive language study, but conversational language skills are introduced to students upon arrival in each location.

HOMESTAY

On most SIT programs, students' primary accommodation is with a local homestay family. Through a homestay placement, students become a member of a family and share in their daily life. This opportunity facilitates cultural immersion, helps develop language skills, and provides a context for academic learning. While fundamentally challenging, students frequently cite the homestay as an educational highlight of the term. Homestay placements are arranged by a local coordinator who reviews and approves each family for suitability. These families represent a variety of occupational, educational, and socio- economic realities, and live in diverse neighborhoods, towns, and rural settings. Families include one or more adults and may or may not include children. The success of the homestay experience depends largely on each student's willingness to adapt as an active family member.

When not living with a homestay family, students stay in accommodations chosen under the guidance of the SIT learning center staff. Accommodations may include guesthouses, educational institutions, lodges, hostels, hotels, or camping facilities, depending on local conditions and customs.

SIT IMMERSIVE PROGRAMS

Orientation

During the first week of the program, faculty, staff, and local partners conduct academic, cross-cultural, health and safety, and site-specific orientations. Through group discussions, readings, and experiential activities, students are introduced to the host country and develop skills for successful and ethical cross-cultural engagement and communication. Orientation is also a time to review academic requirements, program policies, understand program learning outcomes, and develop group norms.

Academic Director

Academic directors are responsible for the overall leadership of their respective programs and oversee both academic and programmatic elements. The academic director collaborates with SIT leadership, staff at the learning centers, local faculty, and host communities and networks on coursework, grading, student health, group dynamics, program preparation, and program management. In consultation with SIT leadership, they develop syllabi and curricula to achieve the programs' academic goals whilst adhering to academic intent and policies. Academic directors manage any academic or programmatic issue that arises in the field.

SIT Learning Centers

SIT maintains a learning center in each of its locations around the world. Learning centers are in a variety of settings, from residential to commercial, and serve as the hub for all SIT activities. The design of each learning center is unique, and may include classroom space, administrative offices, small libraries, student lounges, and when possible, outdoor recreational spaces.

SIT Learning Center Staff

SIT learning center staff support academic directors in the management of each learning center and study abroad program. Each SIT learning center has several full- and part-time staff members devoted to program logistics, student support, academic design and scheduling, homestay community coordination, excursion planning, and financial management. Learning center staff are often the primary point of contact for SIT students, ensuring the smooth delivery of day-to-day operations for each SIT program.

INTERNATIONAL HONORS PROGRAMS (IHP)

International Honors Program (IHP) participants conduct issue-based learning projects throughout the entire semester in each program location. This study is conducted both individually and in groups and is curriculum driven.

These programs are structured to provide a comparative experience over the course of a semester. All IHP programs begin with a 10-14 day launch in the United States to introduce the themes and topics to be examined throughout the semester.

IHP programs consist of four courses which contribute to the interdisciplinary thematic study of a topic, and they unfold simultaneously over the entire semester. Through this coursework, students gain an understanding of the global system surrounding each program focus.

Launch

The launch site also gives students a foundational basis for curricular comparison across locations. After launch, the program moves through three distinct contexts (countries) to further engage in comparative study of that theme over the semester. As such, the program components are distinct from traditional SIT Study Abroad immersive programs in that students have a shorter homestay in each of the three countries outside of the United States.

Program Directors

IHP program directors (PDs) are responsible for the overall leadership of their respective programs and oversee both academic and programmatic elements. The program director collaborates with the traveling team, local faculty, country coordinators and IHP/SIT staff on coursework, grading, group health and dynamics, program preparation and management. They ensure that faculty and country coordinators develop syllabi and curricula to achieve the programs' academic goals whilst adhering to academic intent and policies. The PD will manage any academic or programmatic issue that arises in the field. Whilst the program directors do not travel with the group, they are involved in and facilitate sessions at the program launch, and conduct a mid-term visit and an end-of-semester retreat.

Program Managers

The program managers collaborate closely with their program director to ensure smooth running of the program. They provide high-level assistance to the program directors, such as developing program curriculum and supporting traveling staff and country coordinators in program delivery and administrative support. They work closely with country coordinators, faculty, and other IHP staff on program logistics before and during the program.

Visiting Faculty

Visiting faculty are responsible for academic coursework and working with the program director, country coordinators and IHP staff. Faculty assume many roles, including advisor, teacher, risk manager, and team member. Visiting faculty will travel with the student group throughout the entire program and work collaboratively with local faculty.

Local Faculty

Local faculty develop syllabi for a team-taught course that spans the semester. They teach a segment of the thematic course and participate in select site visits and debriefs, usually during a single country segment of the semester. In addition to the disciplinary lens of their course, the local faculty bring city/country-specific knowledge to the team.

Country Coordinators

With the help of the management team, country coordinators are responsible for the organization and delivery of the program(s) in their respective countries, including the schedule of guest lectures, site visits, excursions, and homestay

arrangements. They support the overall health and well-being of the group, as well as individuals. IHP country coordinators also teach, write and revise program literature and curricula, and help to define the direction of the program. Country coordinators may 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. Most country coordinators have other jobs relevant to the themes of IHP, so ask them about their interests and careers.

PROGRAM REALITIES

Due to the nature of SIT Study Abroad programs, and the importance of student and instructor contributions in each 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. All absences impact academic performance, may impact grades, and could result in dismissal from the program.

Intercultural living and learning can be exhausting and stressful. Functioning in an environment where the trivial things are different, trip us up or result in confusion can cause students to feel tired and lonely or ill. We understand that students can be subject to more illness in the abroad experience than they typically would at home. We also understand the importance of self-care in nurturing one's own resiliency.

At the same time, we are delivering intense experiential academic programs that require participation in every aspect of the program. Significant learning happens outside the classroom- during long bus rides, a shared meal, visiting an important local monument or natural or cultural phenomenon, etc. As such students are required to be present and engaged during these pieces of the program as well. Absence from any program itinerary activity (classroom based or otherwise) is considered an absence and will be treated as such. Absences are limited each semester after which point the academic director will assess whether repeated absences hinder the student's achievement of the learning objectives of the program and will recommend the appropriate measures to take including probation and dismissal. Granting exceptions due to severe illness, hospitalization, traumatic event, etc. remains at the discretion of the Academic or Program Director.

Culture Shock

Everyone experiences culture shock to 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. 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:

- Initial euphoria
- Irritability and hostility
- Gradual adjustment
- Adaptation

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, patriotic 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?

Important skills include: Tolerance for ambiguity, keeping busy, open-mindedness, being non- judgmental, empathy, and communication.

Nurture the following traits: Flexibility and adaptability, curiosity, warmth in human relationships, motivation, self-reliance, strong sense of tolerance for differences, perceptiveness, and ability to listen.

The most important qualities are a sense of humor and the ability to tolerate failure. Fellow students in the Learning Community will also be experiencing culture shock and can be a great resource and network of support. 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.” If the challenges of culture shock become overwhelming, counseling is available.

RESPONSIBILITY TO HOST COMMUNITIES

Students' first responsibility is to the host communities that support SIT's programs (please refer to the Human Subjects Review policy below). Should conflicts of interest arise, the interests of the human subjects take precedence over other considerations, including the success of the field study or Independent Study Project. If the study has negative repercussions for any members of the target culture, the project cannot be considered a success. Students must do everything in their power to protect the dignity and privacy of the people with whom they conduct field study.

The rights, interest, safety, and sensitivities of those who entrust information to students must be safeguarded. Students may not realize that participants may face risks simply by taking part in the student's research. Students should endeavor to understand and appreciate the role of their human subjects. The right of those providing information to students either to remain anonymous or to receive recognition is to be respected and defended. It is the responsibility of students to make every effort to determine the preferences of those providing information and to comply with their wishes. It should be made clear to anyone providing information that despite the students' best intentions and efforts, anonymity may be compromised, or recognition may fail to materialize. Students should not reveal the identity of groups or persons whose anonymity is protected using pseudonyms.

Students must be candid from the outset in the communities where they work about the fact that they are students. The aims of their study projects should be clearly communicated to those among whom they work. Students must acknowledge the help and services they receive. They must recognize their obligation to reciprocate in culturally appropriate ways. Students must consider and, where relevant and to the best of their ability, make explicit the extent to which their own personal and cultural values affect their field study.

To the best of their ability, students have an obligation to assess both the positive and negative consequences of their field study. They should anticipate any possible consequences and inform individuals and groups likely to be affected.

Students must not represent as their own work, either in speaking or writing, materials or ideas directly taken from other sources. They must give full credit in speaking or writing to all those who have contributed to their work.

Students should be honest and candid in all dealings with their own institutions and with host institutions. They should ascertain that they will not be required to compromise either their responsibilities or ethics as a condition of permission to engage in field study. They will return copies of their study to SIT Study Abroad and, in consultation with their academic director, may be required to submit copies to other sponsoring institutions and to the community that hosted them.

Academic Policies and Expectations

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

For information relating to academic integrity and academic integrity policy sanctions please visit the Academic Integrity page on our website.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

For information relating to attendance and participation, please visit our Attendance and Participation page on our website.

ACADEMIC STATUS

For information regarding satisfactory academic performance, academic probation, and academic dismissal please visit our Academic Status page on our website.

Withdrawal, Early Leave Policy, Program Changes, and Period of Enrollment

For information referring to withdrawal, early leave, program changes, and periods of enrollment please visit the Withdrawal page on our website.

ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT

Grading, Grade Appeal Process, and Incomplete Grade Policy

For information referring to grades, the grade appeal process, and our incomplete grade policy please visit the Grading page on our website.

RESEARCH AND ETHICS IN FIELD STUDY AND INTERNSHIPS

Responsibility to People Whose Lives and Cultures are Studied

Students' first responsibility is to those whose lives and cultures they study (please refer to the Human Subjects Review policy below). Students must do everything in

their power to protect the dignity and privacy of the people with whom they conduct field study. Please read our full statement on the Responsibility to People Whose Lives and Cultures are Studied.

While conducting fieldwork, complex relationships, misunderstandings, conflicts, and the need to make choices among apparently incompatible values often arise. It is each student's fundamental responsibility to anticipate such difficulties to the best of their ability and to resolve them in ways that are compatible with the principles stated here. If a student feels such a resolution is impossible, or is unsure how to proceed, they should consult the academic director or project advisor and discontinue the field study until a resolution has been achieved. Failure to consult in cases which, in the opinion of SIT faculty and leadership, could clearly have been anticipated can result in disciplinary action.

Students must respect, protect, and promote the rights and the welfare of all those affected by their work. Please familiarize yourself with our Policy on Contacting Vulnerable Persons or Other Risk-Sensitive Populations. Please also read our Responsibility to Hosts.

Independent Study Projects and Human Subjects Review Policy

All final Independent Study Project (ISP) proposals must reflect a thoughtful and culturally appropriate consideration of the effects of the inquiry on the participants. SIT's Independent Study Project and Human Subject Review policy requires students to submit a Human Subjects application form that includes questions about any potential harm that might occur because of the study; appendices to the form should include interview and survey protocols. If the academic director believes that the concerns of this policy have not been sufficiently addressed, they may require a revision of the proposal. Standards for this Human Subjects Review policy are developed in country and reflect local academic practice. Completion of the Review of Research with Human Subjects application occurs during the SIT Study Abroad program and is a standard part of ISP preparation. All ISP proposals are submitted to the Study Abroad Review Board in each location for approval. The Study Abroad Review Board may expedite the review, suggest minor changes, or recommend full review by SIT Institutional Review Board. However, if the Study Abroad Review Board deems a research proposal unfeasible in-country because of local laws, value systems or other safety concerns, the student will be asked to change or amend the nature of the research proposal to meet the recommendations of the Study Abroad Review Board.

Use of Independent Study Project (ISP) and Field Study Projects (FSP)

Student research (such as an Independent Study Project or Field Study Project) is a product of field work and as such students have an obligation to assess both the positive and negative consequences of their field study. Ethical field work, as stipulated in the SIT Study Abroad Policy on Ethics, results in products that are shared with local and academic communities; therefore, copies of ISP/FSPs are returned to the sponsoring institutions and the host communities, at the discretion of the institution(s) and/or community involved.

1. When students submit the ISP/FSP to the academic director, World Learning/SIT Study Abroad archives it in the permanent collection at the SIT Study Abroad learning center.

2. In some cases, partner institutions, organizations, or libraries in the host country house a copy of the ISP/FSP in their own collections for enrichment and use of host country nationals.

3. World Learning/SIT Study Abroad may publish the ISP/FSP in the SIT Digital Collections, housed on World Learning's public website. As a published document World Learning/SIT Study Abroad can provide open access to the ISP/FSP with interested members of the World Learning community and the broader public who will be able to access it through ordinary Internet searches.

Students retain ALL ownership rights of the ISP/FSP. Students retain the right to use all, or part, of the project in future works.

World Learning/SIT Study Abroad has a non-exclusive, perpetual right to store and make available, including electronic online open access, to the ISP/FSP. World Learning/SIT Study Abroad may archive, copy, or convert the ISP/FSP for non-commercial use, for preservation purposes, and to ensure future accessibility.

World Learning/SIT Study Abroad websites and SIT Digital Collections are publicly available via the Internet. World Learning/SIT Study Abroad is not responsible for any unauthorized use of the ISP/FSP by any third party who might access it on the Internet or otherwise.

Students may choose to withdraw permission to publish ISP/FSPs to library collections, however doing so may constitute an infringement of the SIT Study Abroad Policy on Ethics. Students who choose to withdraw permission are to

provide the reasons for doing so and the program Academic Director will review for compliance.

Failure to Comply

When SIT Study Abroad determines that a student has violated SIT's statement of ethics, the student will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the program.

STUDENT EDUCATION RECORDS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as amended ("FERPA") is a federal law that endows eligible students with certain rights pertaining to their education records. Please see SIT's FERPA policy on our Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) page.

Student Health, Safety, and Well-being

The Office of Student Health, Safety, & Well-being is responsible for policies and procedures that help ensure student success holistically. Student Health, Safety, & Well-being support includes, disability services, health administration, counseling services, crisis management, safety and security analysis, emergency preparedness, student diversity, student conduct, and staff training in support of the student experience. SIT/IHP students are invited to contact the Student Health, Safety, & Well-being team at any point in your program at studentwellbeing@sit.edu or +1.802.258.3366 24/7.

IDENTITY ABROAD

Every study abroad student will have different considerations and concerns when preparing for a semester abroad with SIT depending on your multiple identities and lived experiences. We all have different relationships to power and privilege in the United States based on our race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, ability/disability, sexual orientation, and immigration status. When we go abroad, these power dynamics often look and feel very different—in some cases they might be a huge shift from what we are used to experiencing. While studying abroad opens students up to so many new possibilities, ways of thinking, and ways of living, it can also be a grim reminder that oppression and injustice—and the frustrating stereotypes that accompany them—exist in every part of the world. Please visit our Social Identity page for extensive resources about identity abroad.

ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

SIT Accessibility Services facilitates an accessible educational experience abroad for students with accessibility needs. Students with accessibility needs of all kinds—including learning, physical, mental health, short-term, or other types of needs—are encouraged to contact Accessibility Services as early as possible for information and support at accessibility@sit.edu or 802.258.3523.

Please visit our Accessibility Services page to learn how to request accommodations, documentation, confidentiality, and resources.

HEALTH REVIEW

SIT Study Abroad is committed to the health and safety of all program participants. Through our years of experience, we have found that preparation, prevention, and communication are key to keeping students healthy and safe.

A health review will be conducted for all admitted students prior to departure. This process helps determine whether a student has any health issues that may require support in a particular program setting. Health forms must be submitted by the stated deadline. 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.

Please visit our Student Health page to learn more about our health review process and available resources.

SUPPORT FOR MENTAL HEALTH

SIT Study Abroad programs offer exciting academic and personal challenges, including the experience of adapting to another culture. The cultural adjustment process requires psychological flexibility in the face of different customs, beliefs, and living conditions. These new situations may trigger "culture shock" while studying abroad, marked by symptoms such as sadness, anxiety, homesickness, and difficulties eating and sleeping, to name a few. The adjustment process, with all its ups and downs, is a manageable experience for most participants, but sometimes preexisting health conditions can become exacerbated in new settings or new conditions can emerge. You are always encouraged to seek assistance if you are not feeling well or have any questions.

Please visit our Mental Health and Well-Being page to review our mental health resources, counseling resources (virtual and onsite), how to create a wellness plan, and how to prepare for your specific program in relation to mental health.

STAYING HEALTHY

Students can best prepare for a positive study abroad experience by developing a set of healthy coping strategies to use while on the program. We encourage all students to create a wellness plan tailored to their individual needs and specific study abroad program. Visit our Mental Health and Well-being page to read about specific practices to proactively prepare for your program and how to develop a wellness plan.

Before departure, students should do thorough research about their upcoming travel locations. They should stay up to date on CDC guidelines regarding immunization recommendations and requirements, environmental hazards, packing guides, insect bite prevention, etc. Students should read and understand the nature of their program and what is involved to determine if the program is a good fit. Some things to consider are excursions, physical difficulty levels, extreme weather, rural or remote locations, etc. If students have questions about maintaining their health and wellbeing while on program, they should contact studenthealth@sit.edu as soon as possible. During orientation, students will receive an additional health briefing and are expected to follow the recommendations and requirements set forth by program staff.

Policy on HIV

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

1. As it is not a U.S. 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 the transmission of communicable diseases. With respect to HIV/AIDS, 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.

Universal Precautions

Due to the threat of HIV and other infectious diseases, a series of simple rules have been developed to stop the spread of bloodborne pathogens. The precautions, if followed, will help greatly to protect students and others from acquiring these preventable 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 contaminated 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 attire, 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 should be safely disposed. Thorough hand washing after clean-up is also necessary.

4. These precautions are universal, i.e., they must always be observed in any part of the world, regardless of the perceived level of endemicity bloodborne pathogens in an individual or population.

PARTICIPANT HEALTH INSURANCE

To help ensure the health and safety of participants, SIT partners with GeoBlue to provide health insurance as well as medical, mental health, and security assistance

services. Participants are covered for the duration of their program while outside the U.S. Coverage includes any accidents or illness incurred while abroad as well as treatment of chronic conditions, mental health services, and prescriptions. It does not cover routine preventative care. We strongly encourage participants to maintain ongoing health insurance coverage in the U.S.

You can learn about coverage details in the GeoBlue Member Guide. GeoBlue offers a wide range of services including assistance with finding a provider, scheduling appointments, global TeleMD, prescription benefits, pre-departure assistance, and political and natural disaster services. In most cases GeoBlue is able to issue a Guarantee of Payment letter for in-network providers. For out-of-network providers or cases not opened in advance, participants are required to pay out of pocket and submit a claim for reimbursement. Participants should be prepared to pay at least $500 out of pocket for care and get fully reimbursed after a claim is filed. Claims can take up to 30 business days to be reimbursed.

Please visit our Participant Insurance page for more information and frequently asked questions.

REPORTING ILLNESS AND CRIME

It is each student's responsibility while a participant on a 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 staff 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's Office of Student Health, Safety & Wellbeing, with serious incidents reported immediately. Both categories of incidents are considered confidential to those outside of SIT and your sending institution, based on the communication agreement that has been established with those institutions.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The safety and security of SIT students, faculty, and staff are of paramount importance and any action we take is with that concern foremost in our minds. SIT is committed to meeting all situations head-on and taking all appropriate action to mitigate risk. Our priorities are to:

- Ensure the safety, security, and well-being of students, program participants, faculty, and staff;
- Uphold the values and mission of SIT; and
- Maintain normal operations to the extent that it is safely possible to do so.

Please visit our SIT Risk Management page to learn more about our risk assessment processes.

CODE OF CONDUCT

SIT expects students to engage in responsible social conduct that models good citizenship, cultural awareness, and reflects our Core Values and Standards of Behavioral Integrity. Students are held accountable for behaviors that may impact the welfare and rights of others which can be found outlined in our Student Code of Conduct. When there is a violation of this code, there is a multi-step disciplinary process to protect the safety and interests of the student as well as the learning and living community.

Please review our Student Code of Conduct to learn about the conduct process and the rights and responsibilities you have as a student during your time at SIT.

Standards of Fairness and 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 the student stands to bear significant injury, such as dismissal, suspension, permanent reprimand, or other stigmatizing actions. Students are therefore guaranteed full protection of their 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 enough particularity as to the facts so that the student may reasonably investigate the charge and prepare/offer their 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 them 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 themselves.

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 relying 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.

Policy on Drugs and Alcohol

For information on alcohol consumption on programs and prohibited drug use, please see our Alcohol and Drug Use page on our website.

Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Policy

Please read our full Sexual Harassment and Misconduct policy on our website. To report any instances of sexual harassment or misconduct, please reach out to our Title IX coordinator: TitleIX@sit.edu.

Religious Holiday Observance Policy

Consistent with our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access, SIT acknowledges and respects a student's right to partake in religious

observances. Please visit our Religious Holiday and Observance Policy page for information on how to request absences for religious holiday observance.

Housing

Student housing will vary during the program and may include homestays, hotels, guesthouses, lodges, educational institutions, camping, hostels, and other appropriate housing. Students are responsible for their behavior and actions in their housing situations and students must respect the policies and practices of each establishment or facility at which they are housed, including respectfully following their homestay family's norms and rules. Please read our full Housing policy.

Appropriate Use of Technology

For information on internet access on programs, dating apps, and drones, please see our Appropriate Use of Technology page on our website.

Independent Travel

Studying abroad with SIT is an intensive, immersive experience. Students should expect that most weekends will be occupied with homestay family interaction, academic work, and planned program excursions. During the program's enrollment period, it is possible for students to engage in limited independent travel under the guidelines listed on our Independent Travel Policy page.

Visitors on Program

SIT strongly discourages and will not provide support for any visitors to students during the term, due to the rigorous nature of the programs and the disruption that such visits cause in program flow and group dynamics. Please read our full Visitor Policy on our website.

Prohibited Activities

Certain activities are deemed potentially dangerous to individual safety and program integrity. Please access a full list of activities on our Prohibited Activities page.

Water Safety

There are dangers inherent to any water activity including boating, wading, swimming, and snorkeling. Some SIT programs include pre-approved water activities within the program itinerary. In such cases, SIT staff will provide marine safety guidelines for local conditions prior to the activity i.e. orientation to tides,

currents, water temperatures, site-specific water hazards, marine animals that could pose a risk to students, and relevant weather concerns. Please read our full Water Safety policy.

Grievance Policy

The student grievance policy seeks to establish and maintain a respectful learning environment for all members of the SIT community by providing students with the outlet to remedy a dispute or disagreement when they believe to have been treated improperly. Please see our full Student Grievance policy on our website.

Inclusive Housing

SIT strives to achieve an inclusive housing experience for all students and we encourage students to reach out to their admissions counselor with their specific needs.

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.

Local Transportation

All local motorized transportation must be done with registered and insured transportation options. Students are prohibited from renting cars, flying in private airplanes and helicopters, and riding on or driving motorcycles.*

* Exceptionally, participants on our Vietnam programs are able to ride on motorcycles upon completion of a safety course and adherence to our helmet policy.

Peer Relations

SIT Study Abroad fosters an environment of mutual respect for all program participants. It is incumbent upon each student to try to work out disagreements with peers. If the students cannot satisfactorily resolve the issues, students are urged to approach the academic/program director or program staff to assist students with resolving the disagreement. Sexual harassment/assault issues or

complaints will be handled in accordance with SIT Study's Sexual Harassment policies and procedures.

Sexual Behavior, Relationships, 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 local staff of what clothing is unacceptable and what is required in the new cultural setting.

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 unintended pregnancies. Students should make every effort to understand these issues before going abroad and utilize SIT staff as resources in better understanding their new context. 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.

Contact and Communication

Communication is vital for safety and security on study abroad programs and is necessary to stay connected to friends and family back home. Please read our full Contact and Communication page which includes our policies on: Cell phones, communication with friends and family, program communication, emergency communication, and communication with home institutions.

Parents and Families

SIT encourages families to maintain open communication with their student and to encourage students to take ownership of their experience, whether through the application, the visa process, or during their program. SIT programs require strength of character and independence, and families can help by empowering their student

as the primary point of contact. That said, the SIT Office of Student Health, Safety, and Wellbeing is available for parent questions, comments, or concerns at any point before, during, or after a student's program.

In the event of an emergency, parents, family, and students can contact the Student Health, Safety, and Well-being Department 24/7 by calling +1 (802) 258-3366.

Please read our Parents and Families page for more information about communication while on program.

Billing, Finance, Refunds, Educational Records, and Financial Aid

BILLING, FINANCE, AND REFUNDS

For information relating to fees, payment, school billing, liability and student responsibility, dismissal for non-payment of fees, SIT's refund policy, voluntary withdrawal refund procedures (including refund schedule), and account balance refund policy please visit our Billing, Finance, and Refund policy page on our website.

REGISTRAR'S OFFICE

The Registrar's Office maintains enrollment records, including academic transcripts and handles registration, grade processing, and certification of student enrollment. Visit the Registrar's Office page on our website regarding contact information, key dates and deadlines, viewing grades, requesting transcripts, and course information.

Transcripts and Forms

For information regarding transcripts and various forms related to the registrar's office please visit our Transcripts and Forms page on our website.

Students should be advised that an official transcript may take up to 45 days after the program completion date to reach their home institution.

FINANCIAL AID OFFICE

SIT Study Abroad is committed to increasing access to international education and to ensuring you have the information you need to successfully access funding for your study abroad program with us. SIT has awarded an average of over $1.3 million

in scholarships and grants to SIT Study Abroad students in the past three years. We encourage all qualified students to apply for our need-based study abroad scholarships. Please visit our Study Abroad Scholarship and Grants page for information on what programs qualify for assistance, details on scholarships and grants available, key application deadlines and requirements, and contact information for our manager of financial aid.

General

PROGRAM CHANGES

Although SIT Study Abroad 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.

MODIFICATIONS

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

MEDIA DISCLAIMER

I understand that 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, and I 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 me or any participant or other source.

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 www.studyabroad.sit.edu/donatenow or respond to World Learning's annual appeals by mail, email, or phone.

ALUMNI RELATIONS

Our alumni represent SIT's mission and values in the inspiring work they do all over the world. Join our network of leaders and changemakers. Visit our Alumni page to access resources related to employment opportunities, funding opportunities, career services, staying connecting, and making a donation.

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 not the same, may last for a while. 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 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.

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 over 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 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.
- Get in touch with 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 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!