



S F S THE SCHOOL
FOR FIELD STUDIES

PERU

Student Field Preparation Guide

Semester Programs 2017-2018

The School for Field Studies (SFS)

**PLEASE READ THIS MATERIAL CAREFULLY BEFORE LEAVING
FOR THE PROGRAM. BRING IT WITH YOU TO THE FIELD AS IT
CONTAINS IMPORTANT INFORMATION.**

100 Cummings Center, Suite 534-G, Beverly, MA 01915

P 800.989.4418 **F** 978.922.3835

www.fieldstudies.org

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Introduction

This Student Field Preparation Guide is an important tool to help you prepare for your SFS experience! Use it to prepare for your phone interview, after you are accepted to the program, as you prepare to depart, while you are in the field and even after you return home.

We begin with a reminder list of the vital tasks you need to accomplish, including what you need to send to SFS and when. There is information about traveling to and from the program, visa instructions, and arrival at the airport on the first day. Next, you will find information about the particular country where you will be spending a semester. Along with some background on these places, we have included a packing list and some suggestions concerning finances to help guide you in planning what to bring with you. There is also information about what life is like on a day-to-day basis and what to expect as far as living conditions. Finally, we have included some resources on safety and traveling abroad, and details on our school-wide policies. **Please be sure to read through the entire Guide** and don't hesitate to contact your Admissions Counselor with any questions.

Terms and Regulations Contract

Note that as a condition for participation in an SFS program, you are required to document that you have read, understood and accepted all academic, safety, administrative and operational policies, rules and requirements by reading and signing the SFS Terms and Regulations Contract.

Preparing for Departure

Preparation Checklist

Please see the SFS website for PDFs of forms and access to your online account & checklist. Most forms can be submitted online through the account that you created when you applied to your SFS program, but any other forms/information can be submitted by mail, email, or fax:

The School for Field Studies
100 Cummings Center, Suite 534-G
Beverly, MA 01915
Email: admissions@fieldstudies.org / safety@fieldstudies.org
Fax: 978.922.3835 (general) / 978.232.1254 (safety)

If you have questions about items on your online checklist or cannot access it, please contact admissions.

Read this Guide carefully in its entirety, including sections on Program Overview, SFS Policies, and Traveling and Living Abroad.

To be submitted within 10 business days of acceptance:

- **Non-refundable Program Commitment Deposit of \$500.** Students are not considered enrolled and financial aid applications will not be reviewed until this deposit payment is received. This deadline and these conditions apply to all students, even if your home school is responsible for making the deposit payment to SFS on your behalf.

To be submitted by the deadline that applies to your session:

SFS Fall Programs: June 15th
SFS Spring Programs: November 15th

- **SFS Terms and Regulations Contract.** Submitted electronically through your SFS online account.
- **Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risks Form.** Submitted electronically through your SFS online account.
- **FERPA Notice and Consent.** Submitted electronically through your SFS online account.
- **Passport number and expiration date** (passport must be valid for at least six months after the last day of the program). Submitted electronically through your SFS online account.
- **SFS Medical Forms:**
 - **SFS Online Medical Review Form.** Self-disclosure form that you complete online. Submitted electronically through your SFS online account.
 - **SFS Physical Examination & Authorization Form.** To be completed by a physician and submitted to the SFS Safety Department via fax, scan and email, or regular mail.
 - **Psychotropic Medication Form** and/or **Counseling Questionnaire**, if applicable, to be completed by your prescribing physician and/or counselor, therapist, psychiatrist, or psychologist and submitted to the SFS Safety Department via fax, scan and email, or regular mail.
 - **Documentation that you received the rabies pre-exposure vaccination series.** This is required for participation. The vaccination is a series of three shots given over 21 to 28 days. Plan accordingly.

Please note: No student may enter the field until Final Medical Approval is granted by SFS personnel. This includes receipt and review of the SFS Online Medical Review Form and Physical Exam and Authorization Form. The Counseling Questionnaire, Psychotropic Medication Form, and supplemental documentation from a medical specialist may also be necessary. Inaccurate or incomplete information on any of the SFS medical forms may be grounds for rescinding an offer of admission, recalling a student from the program, or restricting student participation in certain activities. In addition, students are responsible for informing SFS of any changes to their health status that occur after submission of SFS medical forms.

- **Final tuition payment.** Due based on the timeline below. Invoices will be sent 30 days prior to the deadline listed below.

SFS Fall Programs: June 1st

SFS Spring Programs: October 30th

Other Preparation To Do's

- Contact SFS alumni on campus or as provided by SFS to learn more about what to expect.
- Obtain passport/Check to make sure your passport is valid for six months from your planned return to the US.
- Obtain visa for entry into country if necessary. See Passport and Visa section of this Field Guide for more information.
- Make sure your bank/credit card companies know you will be using your cards abroad. In order to receive medical attention, a credit card with a limit of at least \$1,000 is required.
- If you are a permanent resident of the U.S. (NOT a U.S. citizen) or an international student returning to school in the U.S after the program, please be sure to have the necessary documentation for re-entry into the United States.
- Obtain required clothing and equipment (see packing list later in this document).
- Make travel arrangements that meet the schedule outlined by SFS. If you do not book using Advantage Travel, you must submit your itinerary to your Admissions Counselor and have it approved prior to purchase.
- Schedule a consultation with a travel doctor or your physician at least 60 days prior to departing for the program. Be sure to review:
 - Your vaccination history and requirements for every region in which you plan to travel.
 - **Note: the Rabies pre-exposure vaccination series is required** for program participation. The vaccination is a series of three shots given over 21 to 28 days. Plan accordingly.
 - Your prescription and over-the-counter medications. Prescription medications should be in their original, labeled containers. Work with your physician and insurance to ensure you have enough prescription medication to last the full duration of the program, as it is rare you will be able to find the medicine you need in-country.
 - Review and understand what the specific risks are for each region and country you will be visiting during the program and any pre- or post-program travel.
 - The Program Information for Participants and Medical Professionals, listed on your Physical Exam and Authorization Form. Consider your level of fitness as well as any medical or physical accommodations that may be needed.
- Make sure you have **comprehensive international health insurance** (*required*). Documentation of your insurance is necessary on the SFS Medical Review Form. Check with your provider to make certain that your policy offers coverage outside of the United States and specifically in the country or countries where you are going.

- Configure your laptop to access your home school's online libraries and e-journals before you arrive in the field (see *Computers and Internet* section for further details).
- Take care of any obligations or arrangements you might have at your home institution for the semester following your time abroad. This includes student housing, course registration, campus employment, etc. Opportunities to do this while on program may be limited.
- Make two clear copies of your flight itinerary and your passport. Take one copy of each with you and leave one copy with a friend or family member and save copies in your email inbox.

Travel Arrangements

You are responsible for making your own travel arrangements and for paying your travel to and from the program. You have a few choices: you may wish to book your ticket online, through your local travel agent, or by working with Advantage Travel Agency, which is the SFS travel agency of choice. **You will receive your specific travel instructions and contact information for Advantage Travel about 3-4 months prior to the start of your SFS program** – do not try to make arrangements before receiving these instructions.

Advantage Travel

SFS does not offer a group flight for this program, but we do encourage you to book your flights through our travel agent, Advantage Travel. You are not required to book with Advantage, nor is it guaranteed to be the cheapest offering available. However, there are a number of benefits to booking with Advantage, including:

- Your itinerary is guaranteed to meet the group pickup/drop off program schedule.
- Advantage Travel has some influence with airlines to make ticket adjustments in the event of last-minute program date changes or cancellation, lost tickets, or other unforeseen circumstances.
- This travel agent is familiar with SFS programs.
- This will be one-stop shopping for your travel plans, both to and from the program and for other trips if you plan to travel during a break or pre/post-program.
- It will be fun to begin your travels with your fellow SFS students!

Making Your Travel Arrangements

If you do not book using Advantage, all travel plans must be reviewed and approved by your SFS Admissions Counselor prior to purchase. SFS will designate a group meeting time at and departure time from the Coronel FAP Francisco Secada Vignetta International Airport (IQT / SPQT) in Iquitos, Peru. SFS staff members will meet the group at the airport at the designated meeting time and coordinate transportation to the Center.

Regardless of whether the ticket is purchased through Advantage Travel or another agent, SFS is not responsible for reimbursing travel expenses for programs cancelled or rescheduled due to acts of war or civil unrest, acts of God, strikes, weather, quarantine/epidemics/sickness, government regulations, or failure of equipment, power or communications.

If you opt to travel before or after your program, be sure to check with immigration officials regarding your visa status. It's a great idea to arrange all your travel before you leave because it is logistically challenging to make flight changes once in the field.

Be sure to join a frequent flyer program! Also, check with your agent about multiple stops or stopovers; long trips are an excellent opportunity to see other countries or regions for a small fee or at no extra cost, but this usually needs to be arranged at the time of ticket purchase.

Proof of Departure

Students should have with them a copy of their return flight should airport personnel request to view it.

Passport and Visa

You must have a passport to enter all of the countries where our programs take place. Make certain that your passport is valid until six months after your intended return to the US.

Upon arriving in Peru, US citizens are most often given a tourist visa of only 90 days unless a longer period is requested. You will need to state the number of days that you will require to the immigration official upon entering Peru. Our semester program lasts for 100 days. Tourist visas are given for a maximum of 183 days. Double check the number of days you are allotted before leaving the Lima airport (**international flights are routed through Lima first, and then you'll travel on to Iquitos**) as visa extensions cannot be made while in the country. This number will be written both over the stamp in your passport.

Non-US citizens may, however, require a consular visa. SFS is not responsible for administrative procedures with immigration for traveling or visas not related to the academic program, so if you plan to travel outside of the program and/or stay in Peru for longer than the visa lasts, please check with the Embassy of Peru. See the Peruvian Consulate website for more details: www.consuladoperu.com, or if you aren't a US citizen you may need to obtain a consular visa before traveling. Please directly check with the Peruvian Consulate. Contact your SFS Admissions Counselor to discuss the visa as well.

Arrival at the Airport in Peru

When you arrive to the airport in **Lima, Peru**, you will need to present your passport at immigration. On the immigration form you should indicate number of days you intend to stay in the country, which, for the SFS program will be 100 days. If questioned, indicate to immigration officials that you are visiting Peru as a tourist. Immigration officials will stamp your passport and write in a given number of days for which you are permitted to stay in Peru. Check this number and make sure that it is enough time for the duration of your stay in Peru.

You will need to pick up your bags to go through customs, and check them again for your flight to Iquitos. At customs, you will present your completed Customs Declaration Form (be sure to pick one up from your flight attendant during the flight!). Because you will not be leaving anything valuable behind in Peru, and because SFS prohibits alcohol on site (!), you should have nothing to declare (unless bringing in tobacco).

If your bags do not arrive, you must complete a lost baggage form at the airline desk after clearing customs. You can provide the field station address:

The School for Field Studies
Center for Amazon Studies
Km 54 – Carretera Iquitos-Nauta
Peru

It is not unusual for bags to get delayed in transit; they usually show up within two days. For this reason, it is a good idea to carry some items in your carry-on luggage in case bags get delayed. For example, include a toothbrush, contacts, change of underwear, any necessary medications, etc.

You will then proceed down the arrivals hall to check in for your domestic flight from Lima to Iquitos. For those of you with a long or overnight layover in the Lima airport, check in for Iquitos flights typically starts 2 – 3 hours before departure but they will sometimes check your bags earlier – just ask. There are several coffee shops on the upper level of the airport that have wifi. Make yourself comfortable but keep checking on your flight. **While waiting, you may wish to exchange money or to withdraw money from an ATM as access to ATMs will be limited throughout the program.**

It is important to note that many airlines that fly from Lima to Iquitos charge fees for overweight baggage or more than one piece of luggage. These standards and fees may be different than typical U.S. airline baggage weight limits and fees. After arrival in Iquitos, the SFS staff will meet the group just outside of the baggage claim area. **You must walk outside**

of the building to meet the staff as SFS staff are unable to enter the baggage claim area. Please note that we do not send in baggage caddies to carry your luggage and so if you choose to use their services, you will be responsible for tipping them (please note that they are resourceful and will sometimes read our SFS signs in the waiting area, copy it out, and then act as if they have been sent to pick you up). However, free baggage carts are available for your use.

About SFS Peru

About Peru

Peru, the third largest country in South America, shares its borders with Ecuador and Colombia to the north, Bolivia and Brazil to the east, and Chile to the south. Its terrain is varied: high mountains, canyons, coastal deserts, rainforests, and all the microclimates in between. Half of Peru's population of 31 million lives in coastal areas, with 9 million living in the capital of Lima alone. Cusco city has close to half a million inhabitants.

Thoughts of Peru often conjure up images of Machu Picchu, the famous Incan city and the high Andes, but half of Peru's territory rests in the Amazon rainforest. About 5% of the population lives in the rainforest, with about 55 ethno-linguistic groups being represented.

Weather and Climate

During the course of the program you will be staying in places ranging from 3400m elevation to 100m elevation, and thus will enjoy several climates. Our field station near Nauta, Peru is located at about 200m. Nauta has a tropical equatorial climate with constant rainfall throughout the year and temperatures ranging from 70F to 90F. It is hot, humid and rainy. The *rainiest* season is from November to May. The Amazon River, which surrounds the area, reaches its highest levels in May.

For our excursions, we will spend time in premontane tropical rainforest, cloud forest, and Andean highlands. The highlands/Sacred Valley region is at a high altitude (Cusco is at about 3,400m) and has a dry climate. Temperatures can drop dramatically, especially at night, with a year-round average high of 68F and low of 40F.

Peruvian Social Systems and Economy

Historically, Peru has been a collage of cultures and languages, even before the arrival of Europeans in the 1500's. However, within this diversity of culture there is a very distinct class structure, with indigenous people at the bottom and people of European descent at the top. There is an exceedingly wide gap between the rich and the poor, but recently there has been significant growth of the middle class.

Most Peruvians are friendly and welcoming towards visitors; they are also enormously patriotic, despite being aware of issues of corruption and poverty in their country.

One-third of the population of Peru works in agriculture. Tourism is also a booming industry, with about 2.5 million visitors coming each year. To a large degree, the economy reflects the geography of Peru with mineral rich deposits in the highlands, petroleum in the lowlands, and coastal waters full of marine life. Most of the export earnings of Peru come from mining, and some of the world's largest mines of gold, silver, copper and zinc can be found here. Peru's fishing industry is second only to China's, and it leads the world in fishmeal production. The coast has become a major exporter of fruits and vegetables grown under extended irrigation systems.

The political structure of Peru has a president as the head of state and government. The president is elected for a five-year term, and cannot be elected to a second consecutive term. Three branches make up the government: the Executive (Council of Ministers appointed by the President), the Congress (120 representatives), and the Judiciary. The voting process utilizes an electoral system. Sometimes referred to as regions, there are 24 departments in Peru and one constitutional province (Lima-Callos). Regional authorities report directly to the Executive. Our field station is located on the border of the Cusco and Madre de Dios departments.

In 1976 Peru returned to democratic leadership after years of military rule. There was a period of rampant inflation, intensification of the guerilla war waged by the Shining Path Maoist group (1991-1998), and soaring poverty before Alberto Fujimori and Alejandro Toledo's presidencies ushered in a dramatic upturn in the economy and movements toward peace.

Program Overview

The Biodiversity and Development in the Amazon program seeks to understand both the conflicts and synergies of conservation and development. Students will gain a sense of the richness of the Amazon region—biodiversity, social and cultural diversity, and ecosystem services—while exploring strategies for sustainable livelihoods in this highly productive and diverse region of South America.

The interdisciplinary themes of socio-ecological resilience, environmental justice, and conservation will guide our inquiry. Through coursework, field exercises, and Directed Research, students will study people's dependence on the environment, examine the threats to the environment and to social networks, and explore the tools and strategies for mitigating the threats and promoting well-being among rural communities. A strong component of the program will be examining the ecological patterns and processes that underpin the high diversity of the region.

Program Schedule, in Brief

PLEASE NOTE: SFS programs usually operate 6 days a week, with Sundays as free days. However, Sundays may be dedicated to group activities or travel, so please be prepared for limited down time!

Our weekly schedule in Peru will vary significantly throughout the program. After the first few days of orientation and organization, the program will include about 15 classes a week, plus three to five other activities (community engagement, organizational meetings, guest lectures). The days are filled by lectures, both in the classroom and the field, and field trips. Most of these activities take place in and around the Center, but some involve traveling throughout the area. **Academic scheduling is on a six day/week schedule.** There is no real typical day we could describe for the program. You may have class in the morning, a field exercise in the afternoon, then some homework. Or a full day of classes, mixing lecture, discussion, and workshop. Sundays are generally reserved for studying, relaxing, or exploring in town.

The three disciplinary courses wind down in the second half of the semester, and the work on Directed Research (DR) ramps up, eventually to light speed. Mid-semester, the DR groups will be assembled according to project needs and student interests. The DR groups of approximately five to ten students will meet frequently with the professor to develop project proposals, design the research, and plan the field work. You will attend classes on research ethics, science communication, data management and analysis, and other key elements for research. The DR groups will be trained in field skills, and then set out for a week or more of data collection. The final weeks of the program back on site are dedicated to data analysis, paper writing, presentation preparations, and then delivery.

Facilities

Our field station center is located along the only highway in the area that runs 100km from Iquitos to Nauta. The property encompasses 74 hectares of land which is mostly covered by secondary forest with a creek winding its way from one corner to the other. There is a classroom, kitchen and dining area, spaces for studying and relaxing, a pool, student dorms, and faculty offices/housing all on campus.

Library and Computers

Students need to bring their own laptop computers with them for use during the program. A tablet alone is not sufficient. As a general recommendation, this should be a PC or Mac compatible laptop less than 6 years old, containing Microsoft Office 2003 or later software, or office software that can export Microsoft Office compatible documents. It is NOT recommended to bring Chromebooks or any other devices that are reliant on the internet for many of their functions as internet in the jungle is not always reliable and can therefore greatly inhibit your ability to complete assignments that require programs only available to these devices via internet (**please see Internet section below for**

more details). If you are bringing a Mac computer, please also bring an adapter so that you can connect your Mac to a VGA projector to display PowerPoint presentations. Files can be transferred between your personal laptop and the Center's computers, using your own USB flash drive. Please bring a USB. You will not be able to connect your laptop directly to the Center network or printers. You should also bring a portable surge suppressor, and a laptop carrying case to protect your lap top. We have seen computers fall victim to humidity problems and so it is also highly recommended that you bring a re-sealable bag and silica gel packets to protect your computer from the humidity and back up your computer before leaving home.

A note about Mac computers: over the past several semesters at some of our programs, Mac computers have not held up very well in rainforest conditions due to the humidity so you may want to leave your Mac at home and bring PC instead.

You should plan to rely on the databases and online library available to you through your home institution during your SFS program. SFS does not provide additional access to any e-library resources from our Centers. Before arriving in-country for your SFS program, you should make arrangements with your home school to have remote access to your library's online journals, as you will use this very often during your program. **Make sure you know your remote library log-in and password, understand your home school's policy on accessing library materials remotely, and configure your laptop to access your school's online libraries and e-journals before you arrive in the field.**

Because of the limited internet access (detailed below), before you leave, you may want to download music and movies on to your computer for entertainment during free time. You won't be able to stream audio or video, but listening to music or watching a movie can be a nice break. Past students recommend Spotify Premium.

Note that SFS cannot accept responsibility for ensuring the safety of students' personal computers, either onsite or in the field. Personal laptop insurance coverage can often be obtained through the credit card used to buy the equipment (check with your credit card company), or through homeowners' insurance.

You will be responsible for backing up and managing files saved on your personal laptop or in any other location outside of your network storage folder. **Be sure to take your project data with you upon completion of the program, as it will not be available from SFS later.**

Communications

Internet

Internet access and email are available for students at the field station to support research and educational work, and to communicate with friends & family back home. The internet is often slow and un-reliable at the field station, so its strength should be reserved primarily for academic purposes. **Wireless internet is not available at our field station in Peru, so please be sure your laptop can connect to an Ethernet cord.** Email will be the best way to keep in touch with home regularly, **but Skype video calls will not be permitted.** In order to maintain the stability of the network, the following actions are prohibited:

- Downloading any non-research related files
- Downloading large files, especially audio/video files (including iTunes and **streaming videos from YouTube, Megavideo, Netflix, etc.**)
- Downloading any software application
- Gaining unauthorized access to remote Internet systems or abusing Internet systems or Internet users.
- Taking actions that compromise the security of the center network.
- Representing The School for Field Studies in any manner.
- Distributing SFS-owned knowledge or propagating falsified information about SFS.
- Spamming, hacking, virus distribution, etc.
- Illegally copying or redistributing copyrighted material.

- Viewing pornographic or illegal content.

In the event of any violation of this policy SFS reserves the right to suspend or terminate any or all Internet access. These rules can be adapted and changed at any time. We must emphasize the fact that the Internet is a resource and not a luxury; therefore personal use should be kept to a minimum.

SFS encourages students to “unplug” a bit during their semester abroad and certainly not expect to use the internet in the same way they are used to at home. Living in Peru is a wonderful opportunity to take advantage of the surrounding natural environment, and interact with locals and friends from the program. While students are encouraged to stay in touch with family and friends at home, it is important to limit the amount time spent on social media or uploading/downloading anything, as it slows the internet use needed for academic and communication purposes and takes away from the SFS student experience.

Telephone

Cell phone service is also very good in Peru and students will be issued a local cell phone by SFS to use for the duration of the semester. You will be responsible for keeping your phone charged and purchasing phone credit, but you can share the cell phone number with family and friends so that they can contact you. Receiving calls on these phones is free for you!

Mail

We will have a PO Box set up soon for sending and receiving mail, but **please tell friends and family to avoid sending packages to the Center.** Package service is very slow, and a considerable nuisance for the recipient. **If you have prescription medicines, make sure to bring enough for the entire session, as you will not be able to receive this through the mail.** You will be liable for all applicable customs duty which may be very expensive (up to 200% of value!), depending on what you receive. It can take several hours of paperwork at the postal customs offices and warehouse in Lima (a flight away!) to retrieve a package and you will need to arrange your own transportation to Lima in order to pick up packages during your limited free time. Retrieving packages is extremely difficult and burdensome and most items you might be getting through the mail can be purchased in the country anyway. Given the above, you should plan to pack and carry with you everything you will need for the duration of the program.

Food

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner will be served at the Center each day. Breakfast usually includes eggs, fresh fruit and fried yucca or plantains. Pancakes are sometimes served, as well. Bread, jelly, and butter are always available. Lunch is the main meal of the day and generally includes rice, beans, meats, vegetables, and fruit juice. Dinner is a similar menu of chicken, pork, potatoes, rice, and cooked vegetables. Fresh vegetable salads are not served very often as produce is sent from Cusco and does not stay fresh for very long. Peru has local groceries that sell yucca chips, chocolate, nuts, snack foods, and a market that sells fresh fruit and vegetables. Students always have access to coffee, tea, and hot chocolate as well as crackers, peanut butter, fruit, and bread. Students are not allowed to cook in the kitchen except on special occasions, but there is a student fridge for food storage.

Exercise during the program

You will have several options for exercise while at the field station! We often play soccer and volleyball in the evenings. There are some exercise videos at the Center (yoga, pilates, 21-Day Fix workouts). Morning is usually the best time for exercise. Past groups have done Zumba classes together (as long as someone is willing to lead/has a video), and there are 4 yoga mats, some exercises bands, and balance balls available for students to use.

Cleaning

Groups of students will rotate to help with breakfast preparation and cleaning up after dinner. We also have a general cleaning rotation in which each student has to perform a task rotating each week. These tasks include tidying common spaces and performing other Center maintenance tasks as deemed necessary.

Students and the Local Community

Living at the Center, you will have the opportunity to learn about and participate in the culture of Peru. You will be involved in various programs that enable you to work directly with the community. Activities that may be offered include community dinners, designing and maintaining a recycling program, teaching English, creating an environmental education class for an elementary school, and participating in community sporting events. Each one of these activities is intended to connect our students with members of the community. Further, if there are certain activities in which you have a specific interest, the Center staff will do their best to arrange a community connection that best meets your needs while still contributing to the community. Please remember that what is considered acceptable or appropriate varies from culture to culture and be sensitive to this when you are away from the Center or interacting with community members. The staff will brief you on this in more detail during orientation.

Language

You will take a course entitled “Language, Culture and Society of Peru.” You will receive two weeks of formal Spanish instruction, and several of the activities that are graded require some understanding of Spanish. Additionally, speaking Spanish will greatly facilitate all interactions with community members, participation in field exercises and students will be required to use Spanish in the final presentation given in the community. Spanish skills will significantly enhance your research and personal experience in Peru. Realize that although the program is taught in English, several of our field studies include speaking with community members to collect data on which you will be evaluated. You will need to be able to understand Spanish spoken by some of the local farmers and other community members in interviews. Keep in mind that the amount of Spanish you learn will be up to you and how much effort you put into it.

Mid-Semester Break

Semester programs in Peru include a five-day break during which time the Center is closed and students are expected to travel on their own. This is a wonderful opportunity (and the only one during the program!) to do some independent travel in the region. In the past, most students have traveled together to Cusco and Machu Picchu during this break time. You may also have friends/family come to visit you during the break. **The exact dates of this break are not determined until 2-3 days before the semester starts, so it is not something you should plan for far in advance. Please do not ask for break dates early – we will not have them!** During this time, certain SFS Policies are not in effect. While not under the full set of SFS policies, students are expected to observe the SFS Operational Objectives at all times.

SFS does not provide students with recommendations for activities during Non-Program Time, but informs students about the inherent risks associated with travel and certain activities. Please note that students are responsible for their actions, judgement, safety and well-being during this time.

Prior to travel, students are expected to submit itineraries, including emergency contact information, mode of transportation, and accommodations. Travel to countries currently under a U.S. Department of State Travel Warning or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Warning Level Three are prohibited during the full duration of the program. Additionally, the SFS Safety and Student Life Department may prohibit travel to regions with known or foreseeable political unrest, credible threat of terrorism, unstable weather patterns, or other factors of high risk upon review of student itineraries.

Non-Program Time dates are clearly established by SFS staff and travel must be done within this established time frame. **Individual early departures or late returns will not be permissible.**

Please contact your SFS Admissions Counselor with any concerns regarding the mid-semester break.

Storing Personal Items after the Program Ends

Due to space limitation, and insurance and liability issues, students are not permitted to store personal belongings at the Center after the semester program ends. Students must make appropriate arrangements for their belongings.

News from the Field Blog

Be sure to let your friends and family know about the SFS News from the Field Blog (www.fieldstudies.org/blog)! Updates will include photos, posts from the faculty on what students have been doing most recently, as well as entries from students with their thoughts about their experience. It's a great way for your loved ones to follow your exciting adventures!

What to Bring

We recommend using the SFS packing list. It was compiled based on feedback from past students and current staff. **Please keep in mind that this packing list does not have amounts suggested, due to high variation in needs among students so please pack according to your own needs.** We recommend that these items be purchased before you arrive because there will be very few shopping opportunities and limited selection once you are in Peru.

Please contact your specific airline for more detailed requirements on number, size, weight and additional fees for checked luggage. Be sure to put the Center address provided earlier on your luggage tags {coming soon!}. Traveling light is recommended.

NOTE: customs officials may break locks on luggage but zip-strips are a good alternative for locking your bags.

Electrical Appliances

Electricity in Peru is 220 V. Check your devices to see if they can convert this voltage. If not, you will need to bring a power converter. There are two types of electrical outlets in Peru. One accepts two-pronged plugs with flat, parallel blades, while the other takes plugs with two round prongs. Many Peruvian electrical outlets are designed to accept both types:



If your appliance has a different plug attachment or is three-pronged, you'll need to buy an adapter.

Power levels fluctuate often and power surges are very common so electronics should not be plugged in for long periods of time and students should bring their own surge protectors. Come prepared with adapters, converters, and surge protectors for your devices!

Required Clothing, Equipment, and Personal Items

Required Clothing

During any field excursions, all participants will be required to wear long sleeve shirts, long pants, high socks, and rubber boots (sturdy hiking shoes and T-shirts can be worn for some excursions to local communities). During the day, modest, lightweight shirts and long shorts, skirts, capris, or pants are recommended. SFS recommends that students dress modestly while in Peru out of respect for local culture. Modest attire will be required during any field work or community activities as part of the program, and we encourage students to follow these requirements during their free time in the community, as well. At the higher elevations, increased sun exposure and cold nights will require layers. At night at any lowland site, all participants will be required to wear long sleeves, long pants, socks, and closed toe/ closed heel shoes; rubber boots will be required for all excursions and trail use. This is to avoid exposure to disease-carrying biting insects and other hazards on the ground. These clothing requirements are mandatory. **Quick dry clothing is HIGHLY recommended as the humidity in the jungle can make it harder to dry clothing, and damp clothing is more prone to molding.** Remember, it is hot and you will SWEAT A LOT!!

- **Pants.** Please note that pants need to be worn on every field excursion. This includes both trail hikes and visits to local communities, so please bring appropriate attire for both. Pants need to be worn every day from 5pm until 6am to protect against disease carrying insects. Mosquitos are rampant in the areas that we live and visit and so loose clothing is highly recommended to reduce them biting through your clothes. Bring a few pairs for each purpose:
 - Long, lightweight field pants. Loose, fast-drying cotton or nylon pants are ideal. You will likely want 2 or more pairs.
 - Long, loose pants to wear around the center and to town (some warmer pants for higher elevations and some lightweight pants for time spent at our primary field station). Loose, fast-drying cotton or nylon pants are ideal, past students suggest harem pants.
 - Shorts/Capris/Skirts for use around the center, in town, or for athletic activities (**NOTE: Short shorts and short skirts are NOT appropriate or acceptable; Shorts MUST fall at least half way to knee**)
 - Comfy pants for lounging around the station on your free time and for travel days
- **Tops & Outerwear.** Long-sleeved shirts are required for field excursions and trail use though T-shirts are acceptable for some community and urban excursions. The sun is intense both in the lowlands and the highlands and for this reason, T-shirts are recommended to protect against sunburn. Long sleeves are highly recommended for nighttime to protect against insects. Warmer, long sleeved tops are a necessary layer to have on all field excursions in the highlands as temperature conditions can change significantly and unexpectedly. We recommend the following:
 - Long-sleeved, lightweight shirts for protection against insects, plants, and the sun while in the field (long-sleeved athletic, wicking, quick dry shirts are often most versatile for the program). Button-up field shirts alone or over a T-shirt give added protection from mosquitos compared to long sleeve T-shirts.
 - Warm long-sleeved shirts for cooler days or at night
 - Short-sleeved shirts to wear around the station, as a base layer for field excursions, or for sports activities (volleyball, soccer, yoga, etc.)
 - Wool or fleece sweater or sweatshirt (cotton for a warm layer is not recommended)
 - Light raincoat or poncho (for dryness, not warmth; a waterproof shell that is also breathable is the most effective). An umbrella is also very effective for movement around the station or in town (compact travel umbrellas are handy to bring but normal umbrellas can be purchased in Peru).
- **Footwear:**
 - Rubber boots are REQUIRED for all field activities and hiking in the lowlands. You can find very basic rubber boots at the local markets for approximately \$10 unless you wear larger than a size 10 or have uniquely shaped feet or calves

- Lightweight but sturdy hiking shoes are required for all field activities and hiking in the highlands Sneakers or running shoes
- Comfortable, lightweight, easy-on, closed toe/ closed heel shoes to wear around the station at night
- Sturdy Sandals (e.g. Tevas or Chacos) these can also be used as shower shoes at our lowland locations
- **Socks:** we recommend that you bring a variety (some cotton, some wool- 50/50 combination with polypropylene and wool for hiking, some tall for boots- like soccer socks- some lightweight). Bring quite a few pairs of tall and mid-calf socks as you will often use more than one pair a day.
- **Underwear:** we recommend women to bring several sports bras. Keep in mind that underwear will hang on a communal line to dry, so you should plan accordingly!
- **Pajamas:** Bathrooms are open air in some of the places in which we stay, and are shared between students, volunteers, and guests, so pajamas should be appropriate for use in these spaces.
- **Clothes for town:** Bring some nice clothing for going into town in the evenings. You will likely want a break from field clothes, so bring clothes that you are comfortable in.
- **Cold-weather accessories:** it can get quite cold in the Sacred Valley and the city of Cusco at night, so you may want to pack a warm hat (fleece headbands are also nice) and gloves, especially if you are prone to getting cold easily! If you don't want to pack them, these items can also be found for reasonable prices in the markets of Cusco and the Sacred Valley.
- **Swimsuit**
- **Rain/sun hat:** the sun is strong in the mountains, so it's always good to have extra protection!

Required Personal Items, Gear, and Toiletries

- **Personal first aid kit:** You know your own special needs. During field trips out of urban areas, we carry a first aid kit for emergencies. Otherwise, you will have to purchase medicine or supplies. You will find greater selection if you bring these things from home. You should have:
 - Any necessary emergency medication (e.g. inhaler, Epi-pens, etc.)
 - Cold medicine
 - Band-Aids
 - Antiseptic cream
 - Little scissors
 - Aspirin
 - Tylenol
 - Anti-itch cream
 - Benadryl
 - Motion sickness medication
 - Antacids
 - Pepto Bismol
 - Anti-diarrheals
 - Any personal needs, etc.

NOTE: It is better to use medicines from home that you are familiar with and know work for you as most of these brands are not available in Peru.
- **Student I.D./ISIC Card** (this can get you discounts on travel, hotels, and park entrances)
- **Soap and Shampoo:** We highly encourage students to bring biodegradable soaps, shampoos and conditioners. The water system in Peru is old, and used water is often dumped back into nature without being properly treated. It should be noted that on some field trips, conventional soaps and shampoos can have an impact on the environment. Not all soaps and shampoos labeled "natural" are biodegradable (Brands that are typically biodegradable: Jason's Natural, Kiss My Face, Nature Gate-Rainwater, Dr. Bronners, Tom's of Maine, Desert Essence and some Aveda products.)
- **Sunscreen.** Waterproof and SPF 30 or greater.
- **Tampons/sanitary pads and other toiletries.** Pads and toiletries can be restocked easily from local towns. Tampons can only be found in major cities such as Iquitos and Cusco. You may want to consider a menstrual cup to reduce waste.

- **Headlamp.** Lightweight, long-lasting.
- **Insect repellent and anti-itch cream.** You will be living in a Malaria endemic area and mosquitos are numerous which is why we highly recommend repellent with DEET. You will not be able to find this in Peru. Avoid bringing aerosol cans as these may be confiscated at the airports. Anti-itch cream/lotion is also helpful (e.g. Benadryl stick).
- **Rechargeable batteries and RECHARGER or enough batteries for length of program:** Bring enough for your camera, headlamp and any electronics that you have (An extra set of batteries for cameras and headlamps are recommended for long excursions and times when power is not available)
- **Glasses or contact lenses. Glasses are highly recommended as bacteria grows quickly in the humidity of the jungle, including on contact lenses and can cause serious eye infections.** If you choose to bring contacts, consider bringing an extra pair and lots of contact solution. To replace your contacts in Peru, you may have to pay for a complete eye exam and wait at least a month to receive the lenses. Glasses take less time.

Required Items for the Dorm Room

- Pillow
- Sleeping bag (or other bedding)
- Sheets: fitted sheet, flat sheet and pillow case(s) that fit a standard twin sized bed (not extra long).
- Towels: at least one bath towel and wash cloth – quick dry is best! A sarong is also useful for swimming trips.
- We will provide mosquito nets for all beds in our dorms and on expeditions.
- Travel alarm clock unless you plan to use your phone/watch.

Required Items for the Field and Classroom

- Laptop computer. Students are encouraged to bring their own personal laptops for the added convenience and freedom that they provide. We strongly recommend a PC, but as a general recommendation, this should be a PC or Mac compatible laptop less than 6 years old, containing Microsoft Office 2003 or later software, or office software that can export Microsoft Office compatible documents. You **MUST** have an ETHERNET PORT or adapter cable in order to connect to the internet!
- A large re-sealable plastic bag with silica gel beads for computer storage is highly recommended to help protect your computer from humidity damage
- **Required computer programs.** There are several programs that the professors request that you have on your computer, including:
 - Vortex (Population Viability Analysis Software)
 - ImageJ
 - Raven (Sound Analysis Software. **Special instruction:** don't register yet, just download!)
 - Spectrogram (Audio Spectrum Analysis Software)
 - Distance (Sampling Design & Analysis Program)
 - EstimateS (Biodiversity Estimation Software)
 - PAST Program & Instruction Manual
 - DIVA-GIS 7.5.0 Program, Manual, and Relevant Data sets (found under "Free Spatial Data" tab on download site):
 - Global Climate Data (Current Climate, 2.5 minute resolution)
 - Near Global 90 Meter Resolution Elevation Data
 - Global Level Data (Country boundaries)
 - Google Earth (Highly recommended, not required)

STUDENTS WITH MACS: Most of these programs are designed to run only on PC. Students in the past have found the program WineBottler to be helpful with this issue, as it allows you to run PC-only programs on a Mac. Additionally, the programs will be available on the student computers that we set up for your use.

- Notebooks for five classes (ones with graph paper quadrants can be easily purchased in town).
- Waterproof field notebook/journal (**MANDATORY**) with pencils or waterproof pens.

- Websites for waterproof materials: www.kooters.com/fieldbook.html, www.riteintherain.com
- USB flash drive(s)-at least 2.0 GB (having enough storage space to back up documents in case of computer malfunctions is recommended)
- Record of international travel immunizations. This can aid in diagnosis and/or treatment should you get sick.
- Work or gardening gloves
- Inserts, boot liners, or even a cheap pair of orthotics can help a pair of rubber boots fit better
- Daypack (for field work and to carry your notebook, water, lunch in a Tupperware, camera, rain gear, first aid kit, and field guide books). Waterproof pack covers are great, or garbage bags work well for lining a backpack to make it waterproof.
- A small to medium backpack for overnight trips/during mid-semester break. Big backpacks become very uncomfortable when you have to carry them on guided hikes, and you will have to share space with other students because we have limited space for cargo when traveling in the field.
- Waterproof bags: Ziplocs of varying sizes are always useful; small dry bags are more durable and great for carrying cameras in the field as they can clip easily to packs or belts
- 2 durable water bottles of at least 1 liter each

Optional Clothing, Equipment, and Personal Items

This list has been compiled based on suggestions and feedback – you might not need to bring **all** of these items, so it is important to keep in mind what you might *personally* need or want as you read through this list!

- Water-resistant wristwatch
- Calculator
- Academic planner
- Clipboard for writing in the field (plastic clipboards where you can store things inside have been especially well-liked)
- Spanish-English dictionary
- Binoculars. Ideal magnifications for field binoculars are 7 x 35 or 8 x 40 mm. Bushnell, Swift, Vivitar, and Nikon make good, reasonably-priced binoculars
- Camera (please keep in the mind that it is VERY expensive to develop film in Peru—Digital Cameras are recommended)
- Sunglasses
- Travel mug for hot drinks
- Peppermint oil (very refreshing on hot days and helps with bugs)
- Small treats from home – granola bars, Nutella, your favorite tea, etc.
- Dietary supplements - vitamins (if these are something you normally take or you are concerned about supplementing your diet), fiber bars (helpful if you need to get things moving), protein bars (good boost for vegetarians, nice snack)
- Songbooks, poetry, personal journal, Hacky Sack, portable musical instruments, portable speakers, etc.
- Ear buds/head phones
- Small tote bag
- Books for pleasure reading to enjoy and share during free time
- Pocketknife or Multi-tool. Swiss Army Spartan and Tinker are good models. If you bring this, be sure to pack it in your **checked** luggage.
- Bandanas
- Wet wipes/ baby wipes, small packs of tissues
- Bug face net
- Movies to watch during free time (you will not be able to download movies while in Peru due to internet limitations)
- Loofah for shower (highly recommended to remove dirt and chiggers)
- Small sewing kit
- Earplugs. Very important if you are a light sleeper and good for boat travel

- A guidebook for Peru

Finances

In general, the best way to deal with money during your trip is to carry a combination of undamaged bills (i.e., crisp, clean, unwrinkled, unfrayed), and debit and credit cards (e.g. Visa, Master Card, etc.).

- A combination of cash, debit cards, and a credit card is a good safety net for your finances.
- Bills (and coins) are not exchanged by the banks if they are damaged in any way.
- You should bring at least US \$300 worth of cash or available funds on debit with you to start. **You will want to order Peruvian money from your bank prior to traveling, change money at an airport exchange kiosk while traveling, or withdraw it from an ATM after landing in Peru.** You will have access to ATMs periodically during the semester, but it is best to carry a good amount of cash with you to the program. Exchange rates are extremely poor outside of major centers, so try to exchange money before leaving the airport in Lima. Peru's currency is the *nuevo sol*. You will be responsible to cover any visits to local clinics and so you should always have an emergency medical fund available.
- Ask for smaller bills in *nuevo soles*, if possible, as it can be difficult to pay with large bills at small, local shops and markets. It is also less conspicuous. Banks, large stores, or exchange kiosks can help you with this.
- Most businesses no longer use traveler's checks, so these are not the most convenient way to carry money. Plus, you pay fees to both buy and sell them and often get a lower exchange rate.
- Guard your identification and pin numbers. Never let someone take your credit or debit card where you cannot see it, including behind the counter at a store. Only do online banking on trusted computers and not at internet cafes as they are often rampant with viruses.
- You will need your passport with you to change money.
- Inform your bank and your credit card company that you will be traveling to Peru and that you will be making transactions from this destination. Otherwise, they may block transactions for security purposes.
- In addition, please check with your bank to make sure your ATM card will work internationally. (Note that occasionally if a phone line goes down, the Visa or Plus network may go down temporarily)
- There is a service charge for withdrawing cash and you should check with your bank to find out what the fee will be. The bank machine will charge an additional fee separate from the fee your bank charges. Personal checks are not accepted, even by banks.
- Visa is by far the most widely-accepted credit card. It is more difficult to find outlets that accept American Express and Discover. Almost all of the restaurants and grocery stores in Cusco and Iquitos accept credit cards, but most establishments in Nauta and other more remote areas accept only cash. You will probably use your card mainly during the break in more touristy areas. You should have at least one credit card with you in case of emergency (clinic trip) or unexpected expenses, but DO NOT depend on credit cards for your regular spending money.
- Cash advances may be possible with Visa or Mastercard (again, Visa is the more accepted card), but it takes several hours at the bank and involves a fee both at your bank and the bank in Peru. Having a PIN for your credit card (contact your credit card company if you need to obtain one) can help expedite this process.
- Counterfeit bills and coins are prevalent in Peru. Always change or withdraw money from a reputable source and pay in smaller bills when possible. Always check the change you are given before putting it away. Bills that are ripped or damaged are not accepted by vendors but may be exchanged in banks.
- There is a safe at the Center for you to store cash and other valuable items.

Estimated Costs

<i>Expenditure</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Spending money	\$800 – 1100
Mid-semester break travel	\$400 – 600
Meals for non-program time	\$100 – 200
Deposit for SFS phone	\$20
Money to purchase phone cards	\$5 per 10-15 minutes
TOTAL	Approx. \$1370 – \$2000

Tips for Living and Studying Abroad

Introduction

Upon arrival to your SFS campus, all students participate in an orientation that provides information specific to the Center and country, including local community and culture, daily Center operations, and relevant risks and hazards. Prior to arrival on program, SFS recommends that students take time to understand the risks associated with travel in a foreign country as well as ways to increase their own personal safety. The following is a useful guide that provides information on best practices when traveling abroad.

Country Information

Visit government websites to learn country-specific information about your destination:

- Bureau of Consular Affairs: www.travel.state.gov
- Overseas Security Advisory Council: www.osac.gov
- CIA World Fact Book: www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html

Personal Safety

Understand the potential health and safety hazards you could encounter while traveling. Consider that most incidents resulting in injury or death of students while participating in study abroad involve:

- Transportation and traffic accidents
- Use and abuse of drugs or alcohol
- Sexual harassment and assault
- Crime or theft
- Mental health issues
- Region-specific illnesses

Situational Awareness

Be aware that travelers, especially those who have just arrived abroad, are often a likely target for petty theft or crime. Take steps to protect yourself by being aware of your surroundings.

- Travel in pairs or groups.
 - Avoid traveling alone or being out past local curfew.
 - In the event of confrontation, remain calm and focus on de-escalation and removing yourself from the situation.
- Keep belongings close to your body.

- Consider leaving valuables or “flashy” jewelry at home or on campus.
- If carrying valuables, make sure they are not visible or easily accessible in outer pockets of backpacks or purses.
- Be wary of undue attention or affection.
 - Be cautious about accepting food or drink from strangers. Where alcohol is served, keep an eye on your drink at all times and do not accept drinks that you did not see being opened in front of you.
 - Understand that the idea of consent varies between different countries and cultures. The current dialogue and understanding of the concept of consent in the US often does not apply in other cultures. Situational awareness and understanding of local cultures is an important factor in reducing risk in certain situations.
 - Protect yourself from sexually-transmitted diseases by using protection (e.g. condoms) or practicing abstinence. While it may be intriguing to start a relationship in a new country, consider the ramifications that a fleeting or short-term relationship may have within the local community.
- Avoid events that might be prone to civil disturbances, including protests, demonstrations, elections, and anniversaries of difficult events. If you see a protest forming, leave the scene. Even demonstrations meant to be peaceful can turn violent with little or no warning.
- Trust your instincts; if a place does not feel right, move to an alternative location as quickly and safely as possible. If that is not an option, find a secure area and shelter in place.

Local Laws and Cultural Norms

Know the local laws to avoid putting yourself in a situation that could have been easily prevented. Behave maturely and in a way that is respectful of local cultural norms.

- Be aware that there might be country- or region-specific laws on alcohol consumption, smoking, behavior in public (e.g. public displays of affection, public intoxication, behavior at cultural sites, photography, etc.), carrying prescription medications, and many others.
- Wear clothing that is consistent with, and respectful of, local dress. Some monuments and places of worship may require certain parts of the body to be covered.
- Be aware that non-verbal communication (such as body language and hand gestures) considered harmless in the United States may be inappropriate or culturally insensitive to people in other countries.
- Be aware of local events or holidays where you are traveling, as some religious events or holidays require a heightened sense of cultural awareness or specific behaviors.

Food Safety

Water used for consumption and food preparation at SFS centers is filtered or boiled. Students are able to access potable drinking water at all times while on campus or on field trips. When off campus, students are encouraged to carry potable water from campus and consider safe drinking and eating practices. Remember:

- Water in many regions is often not potable, including ice, juices, and water for brushing teeth or showering. Be aware of how cups, plates, and utensils are cleaned or rinsed, as food or drink can be contaminated by utensils rinsed in non-potable water.
- If sampling street food, consider how it was prepared. Avoid raw or undercooked meat, fish, and shellfish or cooked food that has been allowed to stand for several hours at ambient temperature. Instead, eat food that has been cooked through and is still steaming hot.
- If consuming fruits or vegetables, select options that can be peeled or appropriately washed.
- Avoid unpasteurized milk and milk products, including cheeses.

Protection from Insects

When exposure to ticks or biting insects is a possibility, travelers should practice preventative measures:

- Take prophylactic medications where recommended
- Use a chemical-based insect repellent
- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing
- Tuck pants into socks and wear closed-toe shoes and long-sleeve shirts

- Be aware of active times of day for insects in the region, and prepare accordingly
- Use a mosquito-net at night, if needed
- Check yourself for ticks, both during outdoor activity and at the end of the day

Policies

By signing the SFS Terms and Regulations Contract, students agree that they have read, understand, and will abide by all SFS policies. Violation of any policy may result in disciplinary action.

SFS Policies are in effect at all times throughout the full duration of Program Time, including downtime, rest days, and field trips. The SFS Policies function under a set of Operational Objectives, which are common sense principles designed to support SFS centers and their students in functioning safely and successfully. The Operational Objectives include:

- Ensuring the well-being, health, and security of students and staff
- Providing high-quality academic programming
- Maintaining positive and cohesive local community relations
- Maintaining local and international standards necessary to successfully operate all Centers and SFS Headquarters

Students should consider the Operational Objectives at all times in order to prevent circumstances that may prevent them from successfully completing the program, disrupting the program experience of other students, or compromising the ability of SFS to operate. Such circumstances can include injury, preventable illness, reckless behavior, poor judgement, or acting in a way that harms community relations. Through pre-departure literature and program orientation, SFS works to empower students and requires them to manage their behavior in order to achieve the following objectives and aims:

- Taking responsibility for their own behavior
- Being aware of health, safety, and security risks present in the local area or specific to an activity
- Having good situational awareness
- Behaving maturely and in a way that is respectful of local cultural norms
- Knowing the country or region-specific laws
- Maintaining good individual and SFS relationships with the local community and other communities you may encounter

During Non-Program Time, which on certain programs may include designated breaks such as Weekends Away or Mid-Semester Break, certain SFS Policies are not in effect. While not under the full set of SFS policies, students are expected to observe the SFS Operational Objectives at all times.

SFS-Wide Policies

Alcohol Policy

No possession or consumption of alcohol is permitted on SFS property including any SFS vehicles, common areas, student quarters, Center grounds, field trip sites, or during any program activities. Any use of alcohol that in any way compromises the Operational Objectives will be addressed and may include disciplinary action. The permissible drinking age is defined by the laws of the country that the Center is located in. Centers may have additional restrictions. Please check with the Student Affairs Manager or Center Director regarding pertinent local laws.

Drug Policy

Use or possession of any drugs, chemical or medications that are illegal or interfere with the Operational Objectives of any SFS program or site, is prohibited. Illegal drugs are defined by United States and host-country laws. SFS reserves the right to interview, investigate, search for and confiscate any substances or paraphernalia in violation of this policy. SFS has a zero tolerance illegal drug policy – violation of this policy will result in expulsion. This policy is in force from the beginning to the end of the program, including Non-Program Time.

Violence Policy

There is no place for violence of any kind at SFS. Violence can be verbal as well as physical. Some examples include making threats, verbal intimidation, bullying, aggressive physical contact or behavior otherwise designed to frighten or intimidate. This list is not intended to be comprehensive. Violence of any sort will not be tolerated by SFS and may be grounds for immediate expulsion from the program. This policy is in force from the beginning to the end of the program, including Non-Program Time.

Sign-Out Policy

All students must sign themselves in and out of the Center so that they can be located in case of an emergency.

Visitor Policy

Aside from visiting professionals and guest lecturers, SFS does not allow visitors on site during the program because it is disruptive to the program schedule and the dynamics of the group. For security reasons, no local visitors are allowed on the Center property without prior consent from the Center Director. This policy increases students' and staff's safety, security, and sense of privacy.

Local Laws Policy

SFS supports and complies with all local laws. Students will be briefed on local laws and expectations soon after arriving at the Center. Any violation of a local law will result in SFS disciplinary procedures and in addition, may subject you to local penalties such as fines, arrest, or deportation. This policy is in force from the beginning to the end of the program, including Non-Program Time.

Non-Program Time Policy

During designated Non-Program Time, such as Weekends Away or Mid-Semester Break, students may have the opportunity to travel to other regions of the host country or neighboring countries. During this time, while not under the full set of SFS policies, students are expected to observe the SFS Operational Objectives at all times.

SFS does not provide students with recommendations for activities during Non-Program Time, but informs students about the inherent risks associated with travel and certain activities. Please note that students are responsible for their actions, judgement, safety and well-being during this time.

Prior to travel, students are expected to submit itineraries, including emergency contact information, mode of transportation, and accommodations. Travel to countries currently under a U.S. Department of State Travel Warning or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Warning Level Three are prohibited during the full duration of the program. Additionally, the SFS Safety and Student Life Department may prohibit travel to regions with known or foreseeable political unrest, credible threat of terrorism, unstable weather patterns, or other factors of high risk upon review of student itineraries.

Non-Program Time dates are clearly established by SFS staff and travel must be done within this established time frame. **Individual early departures or late returns will not be permissible.**

Swimming Policy

Swimming is always at your own risk. Where SFS maintains swimming pools or conducts recreational swimming during program time or on SFS property, protocols and guidelines will be presented. Recreational swimming is always optional and may be prohibited on certain programs or in certain regions due to local hazards or cultural practice. In Panama and the Turks and Caicos, where swimming is integral to the program, there will be a swim assessment and orientation to waterfront guidelines. In such cases, students must successfully complete a swim assessment, conducted by trained SFS staff, before participating in any other swim-related activities.

Motor Vehicle/Boating Policy

SFS students may not operate SFS motor vehicles or motor boats. SFS students may not ride in an SFS motor vehicle or motor boat without an SFS-approved operator. Students may not ride in non-SFS motor vehicles or motor boats without prior Center Director approval. Operating a motor vehicle, or operating or riding on a motorbike, motorcycle, moped, ATV, or motorized recreational watercraft, is prohibited for the full duration of the program, including Non-Program Time.

Seatbelts must be worn in all motor vehicles, where available. SFS Centers that utilize motor boats have additional Center-specific protocols including maximum occupancy, approved seating, personal flotation devices, radio protocols, rescue and first aid equipment in compliance with all local regulations.

Sexual Harassment Policy

It is the policy of SFS to respect the rights of students to work and study in an environment free from any type of sexual harassment and to investigate and resolve any reported cases of sexual harassment. Each administrator, faculty member and student is responsible for ensuring a work and learning environment free from sexual harassment. SFS policy specifically prohibits any faculty or staff member from having a sexual relationship with a student at any time while the student is enrolled in an SFS program. In addition, no SFS employee shall threaten, promise, or insinuate, either explicitly or implicitly, that any student's refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect the student's status with SFS, including but not limited to influence on grades or recommendations.

Moreover as a part of its overall nondiscrimination policy, SFS prohibits all forms of harassment of others because of race, color, religion, sex, age, sexual preference, national origin, physical or mental disability, or veteran status. In particular, an atmosphere of tension created by disparaging racial, ethnic, sexual, or religious remarks does not belong in the SFS workplace or learning environment and will not be tolerated.

Campus-Specific Policies

The SFS Center in Peru has policies that are unique to the program, taking into consideration local environmental hazards and the local community and culture. Campus-specific policies may change at the discretion of SFS staff. Upon arrival to campus, students will be presented with a complete list of campus-specific policies; the following list is not exhaustive.

Curfew

Curfew is 10:00 pm on Sunday through Friday. Curfew is 11:00 pm on Saturday. Quiet hours begin at 10:00 pm every night.

Buddy System

Students are required to travel in groups of two or more whenever traveling outside of the Center. While hiking, students must travel in groups of three or more.

Shoes

Due to the presence of snakes and other dangers, students must wear close-toed shoes at all times during field trips and excursions and after dusk while at the Center.

Swimming

Students may only swim in designated areas when a staff member is present.

Disciplinary Procedures

Violations of any SFS-wide policies, Center-specific rules and protocols and Operational Objectives may result in one or more of the following disciplinary actions:

- Verbal warnings
- Written warnings
- Probation
- Expulsion

All staff and students are expected to understand and to actively support the standards of behavior as presented in our written materials and in our on-site orientations. While all staff are responsible for understanding and enforcing our standards for behavior, all formal disciplinary measures for students are at the discretion of the Center Director in consultation with his or her staff and Headquarters, where appropriate. Generally speaking, behavioral issues arising out of misunderstandings or that are not overly compromising to SFS Operational Objectives will be addressed with education, clarification and intermediate disciplinary measures (warnings/probation). However, any behavior that significantly compromises the Operational Objectives or any violation of SFS policy may be cause for immediate expulsion. In the event of an offense at the level of Written Warning or above, SFS will contact the student's home institution. SFS also reserves the right to contact parents/guardians in the event of any behavior that potentially compromises the student's ability to participate in our program. In the event that a student is asked to leave the program, SFS will return the student to the point of program departure at his or her own expense. At this time, any and all responsibility on the part of The School for Field Studies will cease. Students who are expelled or who depart early from the program will be withdrawn from all courses and receive no credit. All outstanding financial obligations to SFS remain in full effect.

Insurance

Emergency Evacuation and Repatriation Insurance

All SFS students are automatically enrolled in the SFS Emergency Evacuation and Repatriation insurance plan through American International Group, Inc. (AIG). This insurance is effective for the duration of the program and does not cover personal travel before or after the program.

Benefits of the SFS Emergency Evacuation and Repatriation insurance plan include:

- \$350,000 for emergency medical evacuation
- \$100,000 for emergency security evacuation
- \$20,000 for repatriation of remains

The coverage provided by the SFS Emergency Evacuation and Repatriation insurance plan is **NOT** the same as health, medical, or dental insurance. The plan covers the cost of transportation, accommodations, and medical care associated with an evacuation (e.g. life-saving support during transport in an air evacuation), in cases where the evacuation is deemed medically necessary. This insurance plan does not cover urgent or emergency medical care, basic medical care, laboratory tests, or pharmacy needs. **Therefore, students on SFS programs are required to supply their own health insurance, valid in the country or countries in which the program operates, for the full duration of their SFS program.**

Health Insurance

Students on SFS programs are required to supply their own health insurance, valid in the country or countries in which the program operates, for the full duration of their SFS program. Students are not allowed to join an SFS program without identifying such coverage.

Students looking to obtain health insurance should keep in mind the following:

- Most domestic health insurance plans do not cover out-of-country medical expenses. Students should check with their policy provider on what services are available out-of-country.
- Students should check to see if their home institution provides or offers international health insurance.
- Most insurance companies provide international coverage on a reimbursable basis, as most foreign public or private medical care facilities do not accept insurance for payment. Therefore, **students need to carry cash and/or a high-limit credit card to pay for medical expenses up front**, and then request reimbursement when they return home.

In the event that a student requires medical attention during a program, a staff member will accompany him or her on the visit(s) to a medical care facility. Students are liable for all incidental expenses, including medical costs, transportation, accommodations, etc., incurred by all parties involved during these visits. Students must pay in full for these expenses prior to departure from the program.

Personal Property Insurance

SFS does not provide insurance for personal property of students, staff, and visitors.

Travel Insurance

SFS does not provide travel insurance or reimbursement for trip cancellation. Students can look into options for travel insurance through their personal travel agent or through Advantage Travel.

Health and Safety

Introduction

Every region has its own unique health challenges. Statistically, the most common injuries sustained by students on SFS programs are recreational in nature and the most common medical problem is traveler's diarrhea. However, international traveling and living presents potentially significant health and safety risks and challenges.

24-Hour Emergency Hotline

If a parent or guardian needs to urgently contact a student in the field, an emergency call can be made to the **SFS 24-hour Emergency Hotline: 978-741-3544**. After dialing, press "2" when prompted to leave an emergency message and to receive a call back from the SFS Safety and Student Life Department. For non-emergency inquiries while a student is in the field, a message can be sent to safety@fieldstudies.org.

Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medications

Students should bring enough prescription and/or over-the-counter (OTC) medication to last the entire duration of the program. This also applies to any personal travel that may be done before or after the program. If you are having difficulty procuring the full amount of medication, please alert the SFS Safety and Student Life Department immediately,

as most medications cannot be replaced or refilled once in country, including common OTC medications. It is important to note that it is illegal to send medications through the mail and this will result in confiscation, criminal charges, or deportation.

While traveling, keep all medications in their original container to avoid issues through border control and customs. Note all medication on the SFS Online Medical Review Form and please alert the Safety and Student Life Department to any changes, including dosage. It is highly recommended that students do not discontinue or alter the dose of certain prescription medications before or during the program. Please consult with your prescribing physician and the Safety and Student Life Department with any questions.

Dietary Requirements

If you have a medically-necessary dietary requirement, you must contact the SFS Safety and Student Life Department within one week of acceptance. All dietary restrictions or preferences (e.g. gluten-free, vegetarian, vegan, etc.) should be noted on the SFS Online Medical Review Form and discussed with either your Admissions Counselor or the SFS Safety and Student Life Department. SFS is able to accommodate most dietary needs, but variety of food may be limited due to local availability, cultural practice, and cost.

Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Students requesting physical and health accommodations should contact the SFS Safety and Student Life Department. Students requesting learning accommodations should contact the SFS Office of Academic Affairs. SFS will work with students, home institutions, and physicians to determine the required level of accommodation and whether or not it can be safely and reasonably maintained on program. While SFS strives to make accommodations for most disabilities, due to the remote nature of the programs, there are varying levels of accessibility, services, and accommodations at each SFS center.

Physical Conditioning

Field work by its very nature is physically arduous: the days are long, the traveling seldom comfortable, and creature comforts generally lacking. The program involves a few fairly strenuous hikes as part of the academic program, so physical conditioning is strongly advised. In order to withstand the pace and rigors of the program as well as any “foreign” health risks of the country, it is strongly advised that you be in good physical health. Due to the altitude, humidity, and temperatures, SFS has noted that chronic health problems often flare up, even if they are under control in the U.S. You should discuss such conditions seriously with your physician and SFS Admissions or the SFS Safety and Student Life Department to see if this SFS program will be right for you.

Existing Medical Conditions

Students must note any current or past medical conditions on the SFS Online Medical Review Form. If you have any medical conditions that could lead to sudden illness, such as allergies to foods or insect stings, asthma, chronic heart conditions, diabetes, epilepsy, or others, you must inform the SFS Safety and Student Life Department.

If you carry any critical medications (e.g. Epi-Pens, inhalers, glucagon, etc.), you must carry them with you at all times while on program.

If you have asthma, even if you have not had any issues in recent years, it is strongly recommended to bring an inhaler on program. Past students have found that their asthma can be triggered by environmental conditions (e.g. humidity, heat, dust, elevation, allergies, etc.) of certain program locations. Keep in mind, you may be exposed to allergens or environmental conditions you have not been exposed to in the past.

If you have a severe allergy or a family history of severe allergies, even if the reaction has been minor in the past, it is strongly recommended to bring two or more Epi-Pens with you on program. Due to the remote nature of the program, access to medical care can be delayed. In addition, you may be exposed to allergens that you have not been exposed to in the past, as well as the possibility of repeat exposures. Please contact the Safety and Student Life Department with any questions or concerns.

Be certain to take care of any existing medical issues before arriving in country. Due to the remote nature of the program, medical care is not always easily accessible. You may be responsible for all costs acquired to reach advanced medical care for treatment of pre-existing or non-emergency issues, including transportation and accommodations for yourself and an accompanying staff member.

Medical Care in Peru

Each SFS Center has a Student Affairs Manager (SAM) who is responsible for risk management, health, and safety on program. SAMs are certified Wilderness First Responders (WFR) and can provide initial first aid in the event of an illness or injury. If further medical care is needed, SFS staff will accompany the student(s) to the nearest and best available medical care facility. In the event of an emergency or hospitalization, SFS will contact appropriate emergency contacts as necessary.

The cost of medical care can vary quite significantly depending on the nature of the illness or injury and whether or not advanced medical care is needed. A visit to a basic medical care facility may be around \$50, while being admitted to a private hospital in Iquitos, Cusco, or Lima may cost \$1000 or more per day, plus the cost of any transportation and accommodations for both the student and an accompanying staff member.

Keep in mind that most insurance companies provide international coverage on a reimbursable basis, as most foreign public or private medical care facilities do not accept insurance for payment. Therefore, **students need to carry cash and/or a high-limit credit card to pay for medical expenses up front**, and then request reimbursement when they return home.

There are some medical emergencies or conditions that may necessitate medical withdrawal from the program, including injuries and illnesses such as infectious mononucleosis, malaria, or orthopedic injuries that result in reduced mobility. Final decisions on medical withdrawal are made by SFS in conjunction with the treating physician.

Disease in Peru

SFS requires that all students consult with a travel medicine clinic or physician who can look at the personal travel itinerary and medical history to develop a health strategy for travel, including appropriate vaccinations, medications, etc.

To locate a nearby travel medicine clinic, ask the Study Abroad Office at your university for recommendations. Your university may provide these services on campus. Alternatively, you can look up nearby travel medicine clinics on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: www.cdc.gov/travel.

CDC-Recommended Vaccinations for Travelers to Peru

For a list of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended vaccinations, visit the CDC website at: www.cdc.gov/travel. **Be sure to schedule your appointment at least six weeks prior to departure, as some vaccinations require a series of doses over a specific time frame.**

Hepatitis A is a viral infection of the liver that results in jaundice and severe malaise. It is rarely fatal, but disease can be protracted, and infected persons can be ill for six weeks or more. The disease is transmitted through ingestion of food or water that is contaminated by infected fecal matter, even in microscopic amounts. Symptoms occur two to six weeks after first exposure to the virus. There are now two vaccines licensed in the United States that are extremely effective in preventing hepatitis A infection, and that are quite safe to administer. Both vaccines require two doses (the booster dose is given six to nine months after the initial dose). The initial dose, however, is effective in providing protection. The CDC recommends that all travelers to Peru receive this vaccine.

Hepatitis B is a contagious virus that is transmitted through blood, blood products, and other body fluids (such as semen). Symptoms include a sudden fever, tiredness, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, dark urine, joint pain, and yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice). Symptoms may last from several weeks to several months, or can develop into chronic hepatitis B with increased chance of liver disease and liver cancer. Travelers can become infected through unprotected sex with an infected person, injection drug use, transfusions with unscreened blood, and contaminated needles, so the CDC recommends this vaccine for travelers who might have sex with a new partner, get a tattoo or piercing, or have any medical procedures. Please keep in mind, medical procedures could be necessary due to unforeseen accidents or illness.

Typhoid fever is a serious disease caused by bacteria in contaminated food and water. Symptoms of typhoid include lasting high fevers, weakness, stomach pains, headache, and loss of appetite. Some patients have constipation, and some have a rash. Internal bleeding and death can occur but are rare. The CDC recommends that all travelers to Peru get this vaccination.

Malaria is a disease that is transmitted by mosquitos. Symptoms usually appear within 7 to 30 days but can take up to one year to develop and include high fevers, shaking chills, and flu-like illness. Malaria can cause severe illness and can be life threatening if left untreated. Prevention includes prophylactic medication, minimizing exposed skin (long-sleeved shirts and pants) especially between dusk and dawn when the mosquitos are most active, and applying insect repellent containing DEET. Malaria is extremely common in the Iquitos area, so it is highly recommended to take prophylactic medication for the duration of the SFS program and take extreme care in using preventative methods to avoid insect bites.

Rabies is a fatal viral infection that is transmitted from animals to humans through bites or scratches. The disease causes neurological symptoms that rapidly progress after a one to three month incubation period. Rabies is present in bats, dogs, and among other domestic and wild animals. The most effective way to avoid rabies is to avoid animals. Do not pet or approach animals, including dogs. The prophylactic administration of rabies vaccine (which consists of three doses) does not eliminate the need for taking vaccine if you are bitten by a potentially rabid animal. It does, however, reduce the number of injections that are required from five to two, and eliminates the need to administer rabies immune globulin. In response to the growing threat of rabies incidence in Peru, coupled with the rural and remote location of our program, **SFS requires that all students obtain the rabies pre-exposure prophylaxis treatment from their health care provider, prior to the start of the program. This is a three shot series that takes 28 days, so plan accordingly.**

Yellow Fever is a viral disease that is transmitted by mosquitoes. The disease causes flu-like symptoms that in some cases can lead to severe liver damage or death. Prevention includes vaccination, minimizing exposed skin (long-sleeved shirts and pants), and applying insect repellent containing DEET. The CDC recommends that those traveling to Peru receive the yellow fever vaccine, especially those visiting low-lying regions, such as Iquitos. At the time of immunization you will be given a certificate of immunization, and you should carry this with you on your travels. A certificate is required for travelers coming from infected areas and from, or in transit to, countries in the endemic yellow fever zone. You may be asked to provide documentation of immunization if you choose to travel to other countries from Peru, or if requirements change.

The recommendations enumerated above are specific for Peru. If you are planning to travel outside the country, the health risks may be different, and you should consult with your travel medicine specialist as to what additional measures may be required.

Non-Vaccine Preventable Disease in Peru

There are a number of non-vaccine preventable insect-borne diseases found in Peru and protective measures are recommended.

Leishmaniasis is a flesh-eating parasite that is transmitted by sand flies. Symptoms include skin sores that become large scabs or ulcers over time. You can minimize exposure to sand flies by wearing long-sleeved shirts and pants after dusk (when sand flies are most active) and applying chemical insect repellent (containing DEET or Picaridin).

Dengue is a viral infection that can cause a very severe flu-like illness. Subsequent exposures can cause symptoms to increase in severity. While rare, severe cases of dengue can be fatal. The disease is transmitted by mosquitos and is becoming increasingly common in many tropical countries. There is no vaccine against dengue available. Preventative measures include chemical-based mosquito repellent and protective clothing (e.g. lightweight, loose-fitting, long sleeves and pants). Dengue is common in the Iquitos area, so vigilance in preventing insect bites is important.

Chikungunya is a viral infection transmitted by mosquitos and recently detected in the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. Symptoms most commonly include high fever and joint pain. The virus is transmitted by the same mosquito that carries dengue (active during the daytime), so preventative measures are the same: chemical-based mosquito repellent and protective clothing (e.g. lightweight, loose-fitting, long sleeves and pants).

Zika Virus is a mild viral infection that causes flu-like symptoms, including fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis. The primary concern for Zika virus, as stated by the CDC, is for women who are pregnant or thinking about becoming pregnant. In rarer cases, incidents of Guillain-Barre syndrome and other neurological disorders have been reported. The virus is transmitted by the same mosquito that carries dengue (active during the daytime), so preventative measures are the same: chemical-based mosquito repellent and protective clothing (e.g. lightweight, loose-fitting, long sleeves and pants).

Diarrhea is the most common ailment that students encounter. Diarrhea can be caused by a number of different factors, including 1) the process of acclimating to a new environment or new foods, 2) stress or other emotional challenges, 3) use of certain medications, and 4) infections caused by bacteria, viruses, or parasites. Shortly after arriving in country, students participate in an orientation that explains the importance of diligent hand washing, personal hygiene, kitchen hygiene, careful food handling, and water purification. These are important preventative measures that all students are expected to closely follow throughout the full duration of the program. Students who do experience diarrhea are encouraged to inform the Student Affairs Manager or other SFS staff member so that they may receive the proper treatment, which may include oral rehydration, a bland diet, and potentially a visit to the local medical clinic for diagnostics and medication, if necessary. Prior to coming on program, some students are prescribed an antibiotic for “traveler’s diarrhea” by a home physician or travel clinic. If this is the case, it is highly recommended to consult with the Student Affairs Manager at the onset of diarrhea, prior to starting this medication. Overuse or improper dosage, attempting treatment for a non-bacterial or non-parasitic cause of diarrhea, or failure to properly complete treatment could result in a persistent or worsening condition.

Other Hazards in Peru

Some of the hazards associated with this SFS program and doing field work and living in Peru are described below. While SFS has tried to anticipate as many risks as possible, you may nonetheless encounter risks that are not described here.

Heat/Humidity: Dehydration occurs easily in hot environments. A conscious effort should be made to replace fluids lost through evaporation, which can be as much as two quarts an hour when physically active.

Altitude: Altitude illness is a potentially fatal condition that can occur at elevations greater than 5,000 feet, but is more common at elevations greater than 8,000 feet. The majority of the program will be spent at approximately 300 feet, but students will spend some time in the Cusco region, at an elevation of over 11,000 feet. The most common complication of altitude, acute mountain sickness (AMS), has symptoms that include weakness, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, and insomnia. Other complications include high altitude cerebral edema (HACE) and high altitude pulmonary edema (HAPE). Both are medical emergencies that, if not properly treated, can result in coma and death. Signs and symptoms of altitude illness will be covered in program orientation but it is also important to have a basic understanding of the affects that altitude can have on your body, as well as self-awareness of signs and symptoms while on program. Prior to coming on program, some students are prescribed a medication to take prophylactically or at onset of altitude sickness. If this is the case, please let the Safety and Student Life Department know that you plan to take this medication or carry it with you on program.

Swimming: Recreational swimming is always optional and may be prohibited on certain programs or in certain regions due to local hazards or cultural practice. (Please see Swimming Policy).

Earthquakes: There have been several earthquakes in recent years in Peru. These natural disturbances are unpredictable. Earthquake awareness and response are covered during program orientation.

Snakes: Peru has approximately 15 species of poisonous snakes. Students are required to wear close-toed shoes after dusk and will be required to wear thick rubber boots that go up to the knee during all field excursions and hikes. Upon arrival, students are provided with an orientation on snake precautions. At no time are students to handle snakes.

Africanized Bees: Africanized bees can be aggressive when disturbed. You should be aware of this risk, particularly when you leave defined trails. If you think a beehive is near you, you should leave the area quickly. Students will be educated on Africanized bees during program orientation. Students who are allergic to bee stings should carry epinephrine with them at all times.

Dogs: Dogs can be aggressive and territorial and it is advisable to avoid dogs or approach them with great caution.

Motor Vehicle Accidents: Driving on roads in Peru is more hazardous than driving in the US, especially at night or during periods of heavy rains. It is also important as a pedestrian to have a heightened awareness of traffic. Do not assume pedestrians have the right-of-way. It is important to utilize only reputable and verified modes of transportation. At no time are students allowed to operate an automobile, boat, motorcycle, scooter, or other motorized vehicle. Students are not permitted to ride on motorcycles, motorbikes, or scooters at any time during the program, including Mid-Semester Break.

Please note this list is not exhaustive or complete. If you plan to travel to other areas, either inside or outside of the country, the health and safety risks may be different, and you should educate yourself and consult with your travel medicine specialist as to what additional measures may be required.

Cultural Adjustment

Defining Cultural Adjustment

Think about how you are feeling now as you prepare to go abroad with an SFS program. Are you feeling excited? Anxious? Overwhelmed? Content? Afraid?

Now, think about how you might feel when you first arrive at your host country. Will you feel high on life? Bombarded by the newness of it all? Jet-lagged? Irritated or humbled by the reality that you are unable to communicate as well as you are used to being able to?

How will your emotions and thoughts change with time after the initial high of arrival? Will you be amazed and/or frustrated by the differences between how things are done at home and how things are done at your temporary home abroad? Confronted with these differences, will you question values you held and always thought were in the “right”? Will you grow in depth of thought and sense of self? Will you be unbearably homesick and seek out a friend to talk with?

It may seem like a very long time from now, but imagine returning home after study abroad. How do you hope you have changed as a result of your time abroad? How will others see your new personal, cultural, social, and academic developments? Will it be easy to reconnect with family, friends, and your community? Will it take effort? How will you communicate your experiences and developments and help loved ones take part in an important period of your life?

The flow of emotions and experiences above describes the cultural adjustment process that many students move through before, during, and after their study abroad terms.

So, what *is* cultural adjustment? Most simply put, cultural adjustment is the process of adjusting to a different cultural context. It is the process of filtering through initially identifiable differences in eating style, language, customs, and more to discover the underlying values and assumptions that are the foundation of a certain way of life. Whether you are from the United States or from another country, encountering another way of life may entail questioning your own basic values and beliefs. Cultural adjustment may beg of you to ask the question, “Who am I?” By asking such a fundamental question and working through the answers, you can build a strong sense of self, gain more confidence in who you are, learn to identify at a basic level with people from any background, and become more accepting of others. At this point, you will have begun to develop a sense of global citizenship, a crucial key to developing a peaceful global society.

Signs of Culture Shock

Experiencing some difficulty adjusting to your new environment is normal and even important for personal development. Some students experience:

- Homesickness
- Physical symptoms such as mild colds and headaches
- Anxiety, depression, disappointment, and/or frustration
- Defensiveness toward home culture(s)
- Tendency to put the host or home culture(s) and way(s) of life on a pedestal
- Criticism toward home or host countries
- Gratitude for the chance to rethink world views and customs

Cycling through Cultural Adjustment: The “W” Curve



The model above puts into visual format the process of cultural adjustment previously described.

Arrival: Upon arrival, many students are exhilarated by the myriad of new sights, sounds, and smells of their host country. You may feel physically exhausted from the travel, and you may need to give your body time and care to help it adjust to the different weather, geographic conditions, food, and time schedule. During this initial period, you may experience a variety of heightened emotions.

Culture Shock: After the initial high period, you may begin to notice the many differences between your home and your temporary home abroad. Processing these differences may be difficult, and many students report emotions of anxiety, stress, confusion, homesickness, discouragement, hostility toward the local culture and customs, and even depression. You may experience physical symptoms such as colds, headaches, or stomach upsets. On the other hand, some students experience very little culture shock.

Recovery: Fear not! With effort and time, you will get your legs back under you again. You may wish to employ some of the coping strategies listed in the next section, or find your own way to regain and rethink equilibrium.

Adaptation: At this stage, students have renegotiated belief systems and “the way things are done.” You may feel at home in your residence abroad.

Returning Home: Some students find that just when they have become comfortable with their surroundings abroad, it is time to return home! Because you are traveling back to a familiar place, you may not expect to experience reverse culture shock, which mirrors the culture shock process. Many students experience re-entry culture shock more severely than they do culture shock. The best way to smooth the reverse culture shock process is to prepare for it before, during, and after your time abroad. Make sure to share your experiences and personal development with important family and friends so that they can take part in your growth! Continuous communication in a spirit of sharing (rather than expecting or needing others to understand) will greatly smooth the reentry process.

What Does It Mean To Be From Another Place?

Perhaps this is your first time visiting a foreign country for an extended period. By removing yourself from the USA or your country of origin and being confronted with difference, you may gain a greater awareness of what it means to be American, Chinese, Mexican, or whatever your nationality.

In part because of the USA’s prominent media and political and economic presence, you may find that people around the world have formed viewpoints, even stereotypes about Americans.

Below are some examples of stereotypes of Americans that you might encounter in-country. Keep in mind that there are many different points of view on Americans.

- Wealthy and wasteful
- Caring about the environment
- Heavy drinkers
- Careless
- Want to help others
- Loud and dumb

- Openly friendly and kind
- The youth like to party
- Academically-oriented

As you can see, stereotypes are not always accurate, and they do not apply to every person within a culture. Making generalizations about a culture or people is normal and even useful in learning about them. However, be aware of the possible negative impact of stereotyping. Be open to and appreciative of the great differences between individuals within a population.

A Note to Women And Diverse Students

What it means to identify as LGBTQIA+, a woman, a person of color, a member of a certain religious group, a participant with a disability, etc. may be very different in your host country than at home. For example, a gay student may find that the host community is much less accepting of homosexuality than his university community. Students who are accustomed to being part of the majority group at home (e.g. Caucasian students) may need to readjust to living as a minority abroad. The change may be for better or for worse, but you might not be treated or viewed in the way that you are accustomed to at home.

Please use the resources available on the Diversity & Inclusion page of our website (www.fieldstudies.org/about/diversity-inclusion) to inform yourself as you prepare for your abroad experience.

Coping With Cultural Adjustment

What are some tricks for coping with and growing through the cultural adjustment process?

- Keep a journal. Be your own best counselor and write about the experiences, emotions, and thoughts that you have.
- Take care of your physical body. Be sure to get sufficient exercise, and take care of your body's nutritional needs. Get enough rest and sleep.
- Communicate. If you are feeling particularly down, approach a friend, staff member, or mentor. Sometimes just talking about difficulties you are facing makes the burden seem lighter. Many of the people surrounding you at the Center have experienced or are experiencing the same cultural adjustment process as you. There is strength and comfort in sharing!
- Step out of your comfort zone. When everything around us is new, we sometimes just want to withdraw. Although some level of withdrawal can be helpful, in the end, there is more joy in living fully than hiding from fear. Do not do anything unreasonably risky or foolish, but practice your language skills with community members. Try delicious foods you had never heard of before. Take advantage of your abroad experience, because you will not have the same exact opportunity again!
- Breathe! The simple act of inhaling and exhaling a few times will help clear your mind.
- Keep in touch with family and friends at home. Regularly sharing your experiences will help ease the reentry process. However, be aware of spending too much time on the phone or Internet to the detriment of your abroad experience.
- Remember to be grateful for what you have. A sense of gratitude makes cultural adjustment easier because of a positive outlook. You will see things in a more positive light, and those you meet will respond to you more positively because they can sense your humility and good feelings.

The above are just examples of strategies for facing cultural adjustment. There are a multitude of ways that people cope, and you may discover other strategies that work particularly well for you.

Everyone at The School for Field Studies extends a warm welcome to you and looks forward to seeing you in the field!