Associated Colleges of the Midwest

Parent/Guardian Handbook

International Programs

2013-14

Beloit  Carleton  Coe  Colorado  Cornell  Grinnell  Knox  Lake Forest
Lawrence  Luther  Macalester  Monmouth  Ripon  St. Olaf
Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................................................. 2
THE ACM AND OFF-CAMPUS STUDY .................................................................................................. 2
COURSES, CREDITS, AND GRADES ............................................................................................................ 3
FINANCES, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND FINANCIAL AID ...................................................................................... 4
PRE-DEPARTURE REQUIREMENTS, INCLUDING ORIENTATION ............................................................ 5
PASSPORTS, VISAS, AND TRAVEL ................................................................................................................. 5
MEDICAL INSURANCE & FACILITIES, MEDICATIONS, AND ON-GOING CONDITIONS ...................... 6
ARRIVAL AT THE PROGRAM SITE ................................................................................................................. 7
SAFETY DURING OFF-CAMPUS STUDY ........................................................................................................ 8
ACM PROGRAM RULES AND POLICIES ........................................................................................................ 9
COMMUNICATION ........................................................................................................................................... 9
COMMUNICATION WITH ACM ....................................................................................................................... 10
CULTURE SHOCK ........................................................................................................................................ 11
ADDITIONAL TRAVEL WHILE STUDYING OFF-CAMPUS ........................................................................ 12
READING AND VIEWING .............................................................................................................................. 12
RE-ENTRY ................................................................................................................................................... 12
A FINAL NOTE ............................................................................................................................................. 13
CONTACT INFORMATION AND OFFICE HOURS ....................................................................................... 13
INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your student’s acceptance into an off-campus study program through the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM). ACM is a consortium of 14 liberal arts colleges in the Midwest; its members are Beloit, Carleton, Coe, Colorado, Cornell, Grinnell, Knox, Lake Forest, Luther, Macalester, Monmouth, Ripon, and St. Olaf colleges, and Lawrence University. As a consortium, ACM administers a selection of off-campus study programs on behalf of its members with academic and student service standards comparable to those of the ACM college home campuses. Many ACM programs are also open to students from other colleges and universities, and some of those institutions choose to affiliate with particular ACM off-campus study programs to provide even greater benefits to their students.

Students’ off-campus study experiences have the potential to become the highlight of their undergraduate careers, and it is ACM’s goal to make this opportunity both personally enriching and intellectually engaging. Studying off-campus can be demanding and at times frustrating; however, it can also be exhilarating and rewarding.

We applaud you for supporting your student’s decision to study off-campus. Only a small percentage of U.S. students take advantage of the opportunity to live and study off-campus during their undergraduate years and your support for their doing so is an important component of their success. ACM’s role in this is, in part, to prepare students (and their parents/guardians) for a positive experience. We can work together to encourage the academic and personal growth that lie at the heart of off-campus study.

This handbook is designed to provide answers to some of the many questions you may have begun to ask about participation in an ACM off-campus study program—how the finances will work, what the safety arrangements are, and how the credits will transfer. It is a general guidebook for parents/guardians of all students accepted into ACM programs, regardless of a student’s home college or off-campus study destination. More specific information for each program and location can be found in the student handbook or at the ACM website at www.acm.edu.

THE ACM AND OFF-CAMPUS STUDY

The ACM was established over 50 years ago, and throughout its existence off-campus study has been integral to its mission, which reads:

The Associated Colleges of the Midwest, a consortium of residential liberal arts colleges, aims to strengthen its member colleges as leaders and exemplars in liberal arts education through significant, innovative, and sustainable collaborations. The ACM does this by:

- Fostering professional effectiveness of faculty and administrative leaders at member colleges;
- Providing exemplary liberal arts learning through off-campus studies;
- Promoting members’ excellence in teaching and learning, especially as achieved through collaboration.
ACM member colleges endorse off-campus study for their students and see it as a vital part of the undergraduate curriculum. Internationalization and cultural understanding are critical elements in the curricula at ACM colleges, and our programs play a central role in promoting these.

ACM programs are typically small in size, in line with class sizes at the home colleges. Although the programs’ goals vary, there are similarities among programs: each has dedicated on-site faculty and staff; each encourages active, discussion-based learning; and each promotes cultural immersion as an important feature of the program. Most of the programs also incorporate homestays, independent research projects, and/or organized field excursions as integral elements of the curriculum.

The ACM office is located in Chicago, and off-campus study programming and support is a significant portion of our work. We provide students and the off-campus study offices on the home campuses with information and advising about ACM programs and help students prepare to go off-campus after they have been accepted to a program. This support continues while students are on-site and includes handling any emergencies that may occur.

**COURSES, CREDITS, AND GRADES**

**Students go off-campus as scholars and not as tourists,** and the academic experience shapes the core of their time away from campus. Academic work completed through participation in an ACM program is recorded on the individual student’s academic record at his or her home campus. Although each campus sets its own policies regarding off-campus study programs, students from ACM member colleges who participate in ACM programs remain fully enrolled at their home campuses, and the courses and credits taken off-campus count toward graduation credit. At many ACM schools, students are required to meet with their advisors as soon as they are accepted into a program to determine how the program courses can be used to fulfill their various college requirements and to ensure that the credits are appropriate for their individual academic program. After the off-campus study program has been completed and a student’s grades assigned, ACM reports the results to the registrar at the student’s home campus so that these may be added to the student’s academic record. This record will include the total number of credits assigned for the program, as well as the title, number of credits, and grade for each course the student has taken through the program.

Please note that ACM staff members may not discuss a student’s academic performance with a parent without the student’s permission. This policy is in accord with policies in place on all ACM campuses regarding access to students’ academic work and records. (For more information, please see the section titled “Communication with ACM” on page 10.)

ACM will bill students (through their home campus accounts) at the end of the program for outstanding program costs and any additional program expenses such as medical costs, damage to program housing or equipment, loss of keys or equipment, etc. ACM is only able
to release grades once payment for all expenses has been received and a student has completed all program and student conduct requirements.

**FINANCES, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND FINANCIAL AID**

The total amount students pay to participate in an off-campus study program varies from college to college, as does the availability of financial aid for off-campus study. These campus policies are often based on the specific curricular goals established at each college. Depending on the policies of your student’s home college, charges for off-campus study may be based upon the program’s cost, or may be based upon the college’s own tuition. Additional tuition charges and/or fees for off-campus study are likely to apply at most colleges. These additional campus charges typically relate to expenses for academic support services and the awarding of academic credit and/or financial aid. Therefore, students should check with the Off-Campus Study Office and the Financial Aid Office to find out how their college charges students for off-campus study programs, what additional campus fees may apply, and how financial aid may be used toward the cost of their program.

ACM will bill the student's home college directly for all fees for off-campus study. These costs consist of two elements: educational costs and a program fee. The latter typically covers housing, on-site orientation, special program activities, and some meals. Please note that the specific items covered by the program fee may vary among the programs, and it does not include airfare and personal expenses. A detailed breakdown of program costs, including estimates of those expenses not covered by the educational and program fees, is available on the ACM website. These costs are based on the most current information available to us, and we ask that you review them carefully. The cost sheet clarifies which costs are included in the program fee and which are separate, additional expenses. In some cases, as indicated on the cost sheet, we can only provide estimates (e.g., for airfare or food). Keep in mind that expenses abroad may be greater or less than the estimates as exchange rates rise or fall and may vary based upon each student's spending habits.

All students are required to pay a $400 non-refundable deposit to the ACM to secure their place in the program; this deposit then is credited to the program fee which the ACM bills to the college. Until this deposit is received, the ACM is unable to reserve a student’s place in the program. Students are asked to pay the deposit within two weeks of receiving their acceptance notification. It is not possible to return deposits to students who withdraw from the program after being accepted. In addition, ACM will bill students’ colleges for a percentage of the program costs if they withdraw after deposit. Please refer to www.acm.edu/pricing for the most current policy on withdrawals.

Students participating in an ACM-sponsored off-campus study program are typically eligible to apply some or all of their financial aid awards toward the cost of the program (with the possible exception of the summer programs). The ACM supplies cost information about its programs to the financial aid and off-campus study offices at the ACM member colleges for use in calculating students’ financial aid packages. Some colleges also have additional funds available to support off-campus study, and students should inquire about
this possibility at the off-campus study office at their home institution. There are also outside scholarships for students studying off-campus. A partial list of scholarship resources can be found on the ACM website at www.acm.edu/scholarships.

**PRE-DEPARTURE REQUIREMENTS, INCLUDING ORIENTATION**

In preparation for their time off-campus, students receive a program-specific handbook, a pre-departure checklist, and information about visa requirements, program dates, and other program-specific arrangements. They are also expected to participate in a program-specific online orientation with ACM staff, program faculty or director, program alums, and other accepted students. (This will be in addition to more general pre-departure meetings at the home campuses at most schools.)

During the online orientation, students will learn how the program operates, what they need to do to prepare for the program, what is expected of them in terms of academics, and how best to represent themselves in a new country and as U.S. students abroad. ACM staff will also discuss with students the safety measures for their particular program and program location. (Information about safety, local arrangements, and various on-site activities will be covered again in an orientation meeting when students first arrive at the program site.) During the second part of the session, students will have the opportunity to speak with program alums about their experiences on the program and their recommendations for a successful experience.

For some international program destinations, students will be required to receive additional immunizations in advance of departure. It is each student’s responsibility to consult with their personal physician or campus clinic to review the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) which are available at: www.cdc.gov/travel.

ACM will also schedule a pre-departure online orientation for the parents/guardians of participants for each program. This orientation will likely be in late summer for Fall semester programs and in December for Spring term programs.

**PASSPORTS, VISAS, AND TRAVEL**

Students studying abroad must have a passport to travel, and we require students to provide the ACM with a copy of their passport photo page. Students who already have passports need to verify that they will be valid for the entire time they are abroad. (Some countries require that passports be valid for a specific length of time after the program end-date, some for as much as six months beyond the proposed return date.) Visa requirements vary from one country to another, as well as by length and purpose of stay, and students are provided with this information at the program-specific orientation meeting. For some countries, the ACM is able to assist students in the processing of their visas; for others the consulates require students to apply individually for their visas. In all instances, a current passport is required for a visa to be issued.
The ACM does not make travel arrangements for program participants. We suggest that students make reservations as soon as they commit to a program as it is generally easier to obtain less expensive plane fares. Students’ program handbooks will contain information about program beginning and ending dates. We encourage students to correspond with other students accepted to the same program to explore the possibility of booking travel arrangements together. Students are required to arrive at the program site on or before the official program start date and depart on or after the end date. The ACM makes no accommodation for late arrivals or early departures. (Students are responsible for any lodging, food, or other expenses resulting from early arrival to or late departure from their program site.)

MEDICAL INSURANCE & FACILITIES, MEDICATIONS, AND ON-GOING CONDITIONS
ACM provides health insurance coverage for all students participating in its international programs. This coverage is through HTH Worldwide Insurance, a company with long experience and excellent service in providing health coverage for students abroad.

The policy with HTH provides a broad range of coverage for students’ medical treatment while abroad. Among the features of the policy are:

- Coverage for both physician office visits and hospitalization (except routine medical examinations);
- No exclusion for mental disorders or alcohol-related accidents or illnesses;
- Coverage for prescription drugs;
- No exclusion for pre-existing conditions (except in the case of pregnancies beginning before the start of the program);
- Medical evacuation coverage; and
- No deductible.

The policy covers students from the day before the start of the program through the day after the program ends, and thus includes the time to travel to and from the program. The coverage is valid not only in the host country, but also for any travel to another country during the inclusive dates of the program—e.g., during program vacation periods.

To arrange for HTH payment for medical expenses, your student (or the on-site staff) should contact HTH in advance of treatment, and HTH in turn will contact the treatment provider. In the event that this is not possible, or if the provider wishes payment in advance of treatment, the student is responsible for these costs and should then file for reimbursement by HTH. ACM will bill the student and/or the student’s family for any medical expenses or related costs (e.g., for transportation to the medical facility). ACM is not able to file medical claims on behalf of program students.

The policy, however, should not replace any coverage students have in the U.S., nor should students (or their parents/guardians if they are the policy holder) discontinue their U.S. health insurance coverage—the HTH policy provides only limited coverage for follow-up
treatment of illnesses or injuries which begin while students are abroad and only up to a maximum of 60 days.

The cost of this coverage is included in the program fee, and ACM will complete the initial registration for the insurance. It is also possible to independently purchase additional coverage to extend the days available through the ACM policy. (If, for example, a student plans to travel before or after the program, the policy can be extended by the student. The cost of this additional coverage is about $10/week.) HTH will email students a welcome letter and an ID card a few weeks prior to departure. The welcome letter will describe how to log on to www.hthstudents.com to view the tools available to policyholders and to purchase any additional coverage. (Students will need the ID number provided in the card and also a credit card to which the cost of the additional coverage can be billed. It is also possible to purchase the additional coverage by phone.)

Please remember that medical insurance does not cover personal property. You may wish to purchase insurance for loss or theft of personal property such as laptops and cameras.

If a student is taking prescribed medication, the ACM recommends that, if at all possible, the student bring enough medicine for the time abroad. In order to avoid problems when clearing security and customs, all prescription and over-the-counter drugs should be kept in their original containers and properly labeled. It may also be useful for the student to know the generic or Latin name of the prescription so that an equivalent version of the drug can be located in emergencies. (HTH provides drug translation services through their website at http://www.hthstudents.com/drug/translationGuides.cfm.)

Some on-going medical conditions may require treatment while off-campus. The ACM urges students to take copies of their medical records to be shared with medical professionals should the need arise. In addition, it is important for the ACM and on-site staff to be informed in advance about such medical conditions, particularly those conditions which may require special accommodations in housing, diet, or academic arrangements. The ACM encourages students to completely and accurately fill out the medical disclosure forms so that on-site staff can research and arrange appropriate medical and mental health resources.

Please note that not all medical conditions can be accommodated at every program site and that, in certain situations, it may be necessary to seek an alternative program for a student.

ARRIVAL AT THE PROGRAM SITE
All programs begin with a required orientation session. This initial meeting is critical for students as it is the first time they meet the program director, staff, and fellow students face to face. During the orientation, the director will review the academic requirements for the program, housing arrangements, appropriate behavior, safety guidelines and actions that students can take to facilitate their own safety, and emergency contact information.
SAFETY DURING OFF-CAMPUS STUDY

Our first guiding principle regarding our students abroad is concern for the safety and well-being of our students, faculty, and staff. For this reason, we monitor conditions at our program sites before and during students' time abroad and provide students with safety information they will need to know while abroad. Should conditions at a program site deteriorate to threaten students' safety, the ACM will take the appropriate steps to place students out of harm's way.

When informing students about safety at program sites, our practice is to repeat the information early and often. Safety issues are addressed in the program-specific on-line orientation before students leave campus, reiterated during on-site orientation when students first arrive, and discussed in students' program handbooks. Directors and other on-site staff also meet with students periodically and when warranted during their time abroad. Before a travel break, for example, when students often travel away from their off-campus study site, directors may meet with students to review guidelines for safer travel (including such suggestions as avoiding known gathering places of U.S. citizens or students; avoiding public protests or demonstrations; not drawing attention to themselves as U.S. students; and traveling with one or two other students but not as a pack).

It is important to emphasize to students that even in a new setting with specific local concerns, the most significant safety risks they may face while off-campus are the same risks they face on their home campuses—alcohol and traffic-related accidents and injuries. For those students traveling abroad, laws and customs relating to alcohol consumption and driving can be significantly different and students need to be cautious and alert. The ACM prohibits students from renting cars or motorized vehicles, and this restriction is outlined in the Study Abroad Contract that each student signs. Public transportation, such as trains and buses, is far more reliable in most areas—and even superior to what is found in some areas of the United States. Similarly, although we cannot regulate or prohibit students' consumption of alcohol during their free time within the program, we urge them to observe local customs of alcohol use. In most countries drunkenness, in public or private, is frowned upon. We also emphasize that their judgment is impaired while intoxicated and that they may be ill-equipped to evaluate the risks of dangerous situations.

For ACM's international program sites, the process of monitoring conditions abroad is ongoing. In gathering and evaluating information about safety and related concerns, the ACM is in contact with program directors and other on-site staff, U.S. State Department officials, and other study abroad professionals as well as monitoring daily bulletins from the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) and numerous local and international news sources. We review information to assess not only security conditions and the risk of terrorism in a given country, but also potential medical risks, crime, and other threats such as natural disasters which may result in cancellation of a program. This monitoring continues as long as students are abroad. If conditions warrant, the ACM will relocate or cancel a program and make the necessary arrangements for bringing students home as quickly as possible.
ACM PROGRAM RULES AND POLICIES
The ACM has a listing of standards and rules that apply to all international program locations. These policies are available in all student handbooks, which are available on the ACM website at www.acm.edu. Other policies that apply to particular program locations will be noted in the specific student handbook for that program or will be outlined during the initial on-site orientation.

Each ACM program participant is also expected to read and sign the ACM Study Abroad Contract and Comprehensive Release Form which outlines expectations for student health and safety, student behavior, financial obligations, and more. This document is available at http://www.acm.edu/uploads/cms/documents/2013-14_-_contract_and_release_-_international.pdf

COMMUNICATION
With cell phones and e-mail so widely used, many students and parents are accustomed to instant communication. Parents/guardians sometimes request their children contact them immediately upon their arrival at the program site and when they fail to call or e-mail within 24 hours, some parents/guardians may become concerned. Please be patient. ACM asks program directors to notify us of students’ safe arrival and we in turn email this information to students’ emergency contacts. Conversely, if your student does not arrive on her or his scheduled flight, ACM will contact you.

If your student is delayed in route to the program site and has contacted you, please call ACM with an update on their arrival information. You can find ACM contact information on the last page of this handbook.

During the first few days of the program as students get settled into their housing and are engaged with the orientation sessions, students may not have instant access to quick communication. While the ACM is glad to assist in getting a message to the program site in such situations, our experience is that the first 24 to 48 hours are quite busy, and students are often unable to get to a computer to send a message or to find a telephone from which to call. You can expect that your son or daughter will contact you as soon as he or she is able.

E-mail is a simple way to stay in touch and minimizes the problems caused by time differences and individual schedules. Students studying off-campus typically continue to use their home school e-mail accounts. Virtually all program sites offer computer access for students, either at the program center, in student housing, or at an internet café. Although these facilities are usually more than adequate, they are seldom comparable to what is available on the home campus or at home. For students on international programs, few families abroad have access to the internet in their homes, and some residence halls are not equipped with wireless internet service.

Students may wish to use a cell phone while abroad. Keep in mind that U.S. cell phones will not work abroad unless the phone is set to an international plan, and in that case calling can be quite expensive depending on the program location. Some ACM programs
provide a cell phone for students (Tanzania, Botswana, and Jordan). The other programs will provide information about cell phone options and vendors when students arrive on site. The ACM encourages all students to have and carry a working local cell phone and share their phone number with their on-site program director to facilitate communication in an emergency.

The immediacy of cell phone and e-mail communication is not without its hazards. Perhaps chief among these is when a student’s regular (or daily) communication with parents, friends, or significant others back home interferes with the student’s acculturation or time to make connections at the program location.

Because students are encountering unfamiliar situations and may be unsure how to conduct themselves or to assess specific situations, it is not unusual for them to call their parents/guardians to share their concerns before they have had a chance to analyze the situation and to discuss the problem with on-site staff. Parents/guardians may hear negative comments that reflect immediate reactions or frustrations that students encounter as a typical stage in acclimating to a new environment and cultural setting. At times, students may complain that “no one is helping,” or that what they remember as being promised has not materialized.

The ACM strongly recommends that as a first step, students discuss the problem with the on-site staff, who are likely to have the best perspective on the situation. This is what we recommend to students, and it is often all that is necessary to resolve a problem. Learning how to problem-solve in a new environment is an important element of the personal growth experienced through off-campus study.

COMMUNICATION WITH ACM
Parents of students participating in ACM’s international study programs often have questions about specific activities or events during the time their sons and daughters are abroad. Please direct your concerns and inquiries to the ACM Chicago office rather than attempting to contact ACM staff on-site. Communicating directly with faculty or staff on-site can be very difficult given the busy program schedule and significant time differences for some locations. The ACM Off-Campus Programs team welcomes parent phone calls to our offices in Chicago during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Central Time). Our contact information is included at the end of this handbook.

Please be aware that the ACM is prohibited from releasing certain information to anyone without the expressed permission of the student. In accordance with the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), a student’s education records are maintained as confidential by the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM) and, except for a limited number of special circumstances listed in that law, will not be released to a third party without the student’s prior written consent. FERPA regulations do allow the ACM to release limited “directory information” at any time, without obtaining the prior consent of the student. The ACM does not provide directory information to third parties for
commercial purposes. The ACM has determined that the following student information is considered directory information:

- Name
- College/university
- E-mail address
- Off-campus study program
- Semester/term of off-campus study
- Awards, honors

Students can sign a release form to give parents or others access to protected information. Having a release form on file does not mean that information will automatically be shared with parents or other authorized designees; information will be made available upon request from the authorized third party.

In most cases, the ACM will not contact parents to provide medical, academic, or disciplinary information without the student’s permission. In the case of an extreme emergency, where the student’s health is in jeopardy or if there is a concern that the student poses a threat to themselves or others, the ACM will contact the student’s listed emergency contact. As a general guideline, however, if a student is able to communicate about the situation, the ACM believes it is up to the student to decide whether, how, and when to discuss the situation with parents and others.


**CULTURE SHOCK**

During the first weeks in which students arrive on site, it is not uncommon for students to experience culture shock, surprise, dismay, and even anxiety at the cultural differences in the new location and in the unfamiliar situations in which they find themselves. The on-site orientation program is intended to help ease this adjustment. Students can and do adapt to the new situations in a surprisingly short time. Finding themselves able to settle in and adjust independently to a new environment is a component of easing culture shock.

Research has shown that many students go through a three-step adjustment process in acclimating to their new environment. In the first stage, they are likely to be excited and entranced by the novelty of being in a new location and delighted with most things around them. In the second stage, after the initial “euphoria” has worn off, they may focus on the ways in which everything is different or “foreign.” The tendency is to highlight the differences and compare them unfavorably to things at home—the food is bad, the computer facilities are inferior, services are badly organized, etc. During the third stage, their view of home and their program location is more nuanced—they are likely to take a more analytical approach to both locations and to find good and bad things in each.
As a primary support person for your student, you may hear, early and often, what your son or daughter is experiencing and thinking. We very much hope that you will provide them with the support and encouragement they need as they learn about their program location and the new context in which they find themselves.

**ADDITIONAL TRAVEL WHILE STUDying OFF-CAMPUS**

Students are often eager to visit as much of their host country, host continent, or program region as they can while studying off-campus. And while we are delighted for them to do so, we also wish to emphasize that off-campus study is an academic activity, for which they will be earning credits and grades. Absences from on-site orientation, classes, or exams will be reflected in student grades. We strongly urge students (and hope you will too) to confine their travel to weekends and program breaks.

Similarly, if you plan to visit the program site, your trip should coincide with an academic break or occur before or after the program dates. This also means that you should not plan to visit the program during the initial on-site orientation period. We ask you to keep in mind that students are expected to remain at the program site until the end of the program—it is not possible to arrange final exam dates to accommodate students’ travel interests, or, except in emergency situations, to allow them to return home early.

**READING AND VIEWING**

As a way of understanding (and following) your student’s experiences while off-campus, you may wish to learn more about the program location through newspapers and magazines, films, and books. Program handbooks often contain reading and viewing suggestions for students and you may also wish to investigate these materials. They often can convey a picture of life at the program site that a program manual cannot. (Please keep in mind, however, that they are not necessarily perfect representations, any more than films and television programs such as “Jersey Shore”, “The Fast and the Furious”, “Real Housewives”, or “Animal House” accurately depict typical American life.)

**RE-ENTRY**

When they return from studying off-campus, students may have mixed feelings about sharing their experiences with family and friends. Their experiences, even for a relatively short program, may have been intense and exhilarating. They are often eager to convey the flavor and detail of this experience with those closest to them. For many students, off-campus study has been a transformative experience, both intellectually and personally, and they want those around them to be aware of the importance of their time off-campus. As one returned student remarked, “I can’t begin to tell you how different I am from who I was when I left campus.”

Readjustment to home can be a difficult process—as unsettling as adapting to the host culture when they first arrived abroad. “Reverse culture shock” may be expressed as criticism of their own culture, a certain distance from family and friends, or simple
“homesickness” for what they have left behind. All of this may continue for a number of months. In time, students generally find ways to reflect upon the experience, integrate it into their lives, and perhaps make significant choices about the direction they will take in life based upon the experience. The single most important contribution you can make to this readjustment process is to listen. Students who experience reverse culture shock in its strongest form report that they find it hard to describe their time abroad to family and friends, who are seldom willing to take the time to listen to what they have to say.

For a useful introduction to cross-cultural adjustment, and for some helpful recommendations, see http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/index.htm

A FINAL NOTE
One of the exciting features of off-campus study is the extent to which this experience enriches and broadens students’ perspectives of themselves, their home, and the rest of the world. For parents/guardians, it’s a time to let your student learn about and adapt to new situations—new people, new foods, new communities. The learning process is not always tidy, and there will undoubtedly be times when he or she is dismayed or disappointed and wants to share this with you as much as the good times. This, too, is part of the intellectual and personal growth that is at the heart of studying off-campus.

The ACM takes great pride in our programs and their role in undergraduate education. We work hard to provide the necessary support to make this experience as fulfilling as we can for all of our students.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND OFFICE HOURS
Associated Colleges of the Midwest
11 East Adams Street, Suite 800
Chicago, Illinois 60603
Tel: 312.263.5000  Fax: 312.263.5879  www.acm.edu

Monday through Friday: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Central Time)

Joan Gillespie, jgillespie@acm.edu
Vice President and Director of Off-Campus Study

Kevin Dostal Dauer, kdostaldauer@acm.edu
Associate Director of Off-Campus Study Programs

Emily Gaul, egaul@acm.edu
Assistant Program Manager: Botswana, Chicago, India, Jordan, Tanzania, and Urban Education

Lindsey Wolf, lwolf@acm.edu
Program Associate: Brazil, Costa Rica, Florence, Japan, London/Florence, Mexico, Newberry, and Oak Ridge