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Welcome and Program Overview

The ACM India: Social Entrepreneurship & Development student handbook is designed to help prepare you for your quarter/semester in India and to give you an initial sense of what to expect academically and personally while you are there. It is revised each year to include more current information and contains information on various logistical arrangements for your trip. It is, in effect, a reference tool that provides you with the information you need as you make arrangements to participate in the program. It is important that you read it carefully as preparation for the pre-departure orientation session and raise any questions you may have either in that orientation session, or individually, with the Off-Campus Study Staff at ACM.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

India is home to over one billion people, making it the world’s second-most populated country and largest democracy. High-tech urban centers are a testament to the economic reforms of the 1990s that opened India to the outside world. These co-exist with rural villages where farmers engage in subsistence agriculture, representing vast differences in culture, education, and opportunity. While it has become one of the fastest-growing economies, India still faces major challenges. Poverty remains a critical issue, fueled by lack of access to primary education. Public health is a growing concern, be it the availability of clean drinking water, pollution, or malnutrition that affects half of the country’s children. Rapid industrialization and limited infrastructure have taken their toll on the environment, with approximately two-thirds of India’s land degraded in some way. Economic growth has brought both the opportunity for and challenges of expanding rights, especially for women and traditionally under-privileged groups. How India continues to respond to these development-related issues will help determine its place not just in Asia, but throughout the world.

The winter/spring ACM India program, located in Pune and Jaipur, is designed to provide students with insight into Indian culture and society through a wide-ranging exploration of issues related to development. There are two program options—a spring semester or a winter quarter/trimester. The program begins in January, and students will spend the first 10 weeks in Pune, taking classes and participating in a development studies practicum with a non-governmental organization (NGO). Students doing the semester-length program spend an additional month in the city of Jaipur, continuing with intensive Hindi language studies and experiencing a different region of India. Throughout the program, classroom learning is augmented by weekly activities outside of the classroom. The program organizes several program-sponsored overnight excursions, and a one-week break in March provides opportunities to travel further afield in India.

In both Pune and Jaipur, students live with host families, providing a window into Indian society that students might not otherwise have. For many this may be the highlight of their experience. Both are medium-sized cities, offering students excellent resources for experience, exploration, and study. Pune is located in the western state of Maharashtra, and is home to more universities and colleges than any other city in the world, earning it the nickname of “The Oxford of the East.” Jaipur is located in the northwestern state of Rajasthan, and is one of the first planned cities in modern Asia. It is known as the “Pink City,” for the color of the buildings in the walled city.
## Program Dates

### Semester Option

**January 6 - April 20, 2019**

- **January 6:** Students arrive in Pune
- **January 7:** First day of orientation
- **January 9:** Class begins
- **March 15:** Last day of classes in Pune
- **March 16:** Spring break begins
- **March 24:** Students return to Pune or arrive in Jaipur
- **March 25:** Classes begin
- **April 19:** Last day of classes
- **April 20:** Students depart

### Quarter/Trimester Option

**January 6 - March 16, 2019**

- **January 6:** Students arrive in Pune
- **January 7:** First day of orientation
- **January 9:** Class begins
- **March 15:** Last day of classes in Pune
- **March 16:** Students depart

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**NOTE:**

- **PUNE, MAHARASHTRA:**
  - **Winter Quarter/Trimester (11 weeks):**
  - **Spring Semester (Early January - Late April):**

- **PUNE OR JAIPUR, RAJASTHAN:**
  - **Social Entrepreneurship:**
    - in Pune
    - or -
    - Hindi Language
      - in Jaipur
  - **Homestay:**
Academics

The ACM India program is designed to integrate learning within the classroom with activities, field trips, and experiences outside the classroom. In each of the courses you take, the schedule has been designed to incorporate co-curricular activities that enhance what you are learning within the classroom. Courses, independent work, field trips and excursions, and living arrangements are all interrelated components of the learning environment.

You will find that your classes in Pune are a combination of the small, discussion-based learning that you are accustomed to at your home school and the more structured, lecture format that is common in higher education in India and, in fact, throughout the rest of the world. While the principal instructors for each of the courses have experience teaching ACM students and are more likely to elicit students’ ideas and thoughts in classroom discussion, the guest speakers may take a different approach to convey their knowledge. In either case, typical behavior in an Indian classroom is more formal than it is at home. Informal behavior such as surfing the internet, checking and writing e-mail, passing notes, or eating in class is considered by Indian professors to be highly inappropriate.

You will be expected to attend all classes and participate in program activities unless you have previously made arrangements with the Program Director or the course instructor. It is not appropriate to miss class in order to travel, nor will it be possible to arrange for special examination dates for students who may wish to leave early.

The program begins in Pune, where students will spend 10 weeks. The first week is an orientation, which continues as classes begin. All courses in Pune are taught at the ACM office. Students take three classes in Pune: a class focused on development issues in India, a Hindi language class, and a development studies practicum with a local non-governmental organization (NGO). The practicum provides an opportunity for students to gain practical experience with a local organization to complement their classroom learning. For students from quarter/trimester schools, this 10 weeks in Pune acts as a stand-alone winter term program. For all other students, the spring semester continues with an additional month in the city of Jaipur to compare and contrast the two cities. While in Jaipur, students take an additional intensive Hindi language class. Housing arrangements, with families in Pune and Jaipur, supplement the academic program, providing an immersive experience and introducing students to a critical component of Indian society.

Program Courses

Development Studies Internship
Required course, 4 semester credits

The development studies internship offers a unique opportunity to work with a non-profit, non-governmental organization based in Pune. The students will be placed in an organization that works in the area of interest
expressed by the student. The students are expected to complete the work assigned by the respective organization that they are placed in.

Student will have a faculty advisor who will be the mentor for the multifold learning process during the course period. The faculty advisor will also be the guide for the reflection paper and the final presentation that the students are required to submit at the end of the component.

**Hindi Language**
Elective course, 4 semester credits for all students and additional 4 semester credits for semester students continuing in Jaipur.

Hindi is the official language of India and is estimated to be the sixth-largest language spoken in the world. While Marathi is the primary language spoken in the city of Pune, Hindi is the ideal language to study for students who will be experiencing different regions of India. This intensive class in Hindi language gives students a broad overview of the language, with a particular emphasis on spoken communication, to facilitate communication with host families and people within the community. Students will also receive some instruction in Marathi language, building a basic foundation to help navigate the city of Pune. Field trips to locations such as a local vegetable market, along with guest speakers, add an experiential component to the classroom learning. This class will take place over a ten-week period in Pune.

**Development Economics**
Elective course, 4 semester credits

India is a difficult country to analyze at the best of times, and its economy in particular perhaps even more so. A burgeoning, entrepreneurial middle class maintains increasingly tenuous links with a mostly agrarian rural populace in an era when India’s links to the global economy are increasing by the year. On the other hand, India continues to remain home to millions of people who barely manage to eke out a living, without sufficient access to meaningful education, basic healthcare or even the semblance of adequate infrastructure.

How will India manage the increasingly difficult task of addressing the issues of managing growth and reducing inequality at the same time? Will addressing either one of these concerns make addressing the other difficult? And if so, will the resultant imbalances result in internal tensions? Has the path India has travelled on over the last two decades, since the liberalization of the early 1990’s, provided indicators that will help answer this question? What conundrums will the coming years throw at this rapidly growing economy, and is India well placed to solve them?

This course will frame and answer these questions and more, over the course of the entire semester. The approach will be comparative, drawing upon the development experiences of other countries around the world. It will draw upon the academic literature associated with this field of study as well, although the discussions will be non-technical in nature. The lectures will aim to be informative, and will be oriented towards learning by discussion. Plenty of case studies will be used, along with observable experiences drawn from life in and around Pune.

**Contemporary India**
Elective course, 4 semester credits

The course introduces students to contemporary India — its culture and society, the current politics, political economy, and foreign relations. It deals mainly with the current happenings in India with history as a point of reference. It is desirable that the students participate actively in the classroom discussions. In a sense this is an area
studies course that is introductory in nature. But the course seeks to go beyond being a descriptive one — it will provide the student some analytical tools to understand contemporary Indian scene. It seeks to equip the student with the basics that would help the student to take off for further study in an area of his/her choice or specialization. This course along with a working knowledge of local language should enable the student to make sense of the developments in the country that the student may see or read in the media.

Social Entrepreneurship: A New Paradigm in Development Studies
Required course for semester students in Pune week 12-15, 4 semester credits

India has a long history of many development initiatives taken up by the citizens of India. In the contemporary language most of these initiatives come under the broad umbrella of social entrepreneurship. This course aims to acquaint the students with diverse approaches to socio-economic development in India and the world. The course is offered as a continuation of the student’s experiences in the Development Studies Internship. It is aimed at understanding and working out the finer details of various strategies implemented for development of a chosen sector.

The course will draw upon interdisciplinary approaches to development and will discuss and analyze various case studies from India and the world. Students will also get a chance to interact with social entrepreneurs in Pune. At the end of the course students will develop a plan of intervention under the guidance of course faculty.

Education in India

As a student in the ACM India program, you will be enrolled in classes taught by Indian instructors, themselves the products of an educational system that differs markedly from that to which you are accustomed at your home college. You will find that the classroom culture, the approach of your professor, academic expectations, and even the way the course is organized often call for a very different style of learning.

In immersing yourself in a culture abroad, you want to discover and experience new things but also to learn how to learn in new ways. Your willingness to approach classes in a fresh way will enhance your experience abroad. It will also provide you an opportunity for intellectual growth and understanding that will be of value long after your undergraduate education has come to a conclusion.

Becoming comfortable and learning effectively in this different system is a bit like mastering the challenge of traffic in India. You’ll notice quickly that cars drive on the left, not on the right. Being aware of this difference is straightforward. But notice how you feel at the edge of the street. Which way do you want to look? Which way do you actually look? As cars approach, what do you see in the driver's seat at first? Someone who seems to be paying no attention? Or no one at all? When you get into the front seat of a vehicle, where do you find yourself going?

The difference is not complicated but it can feel difficult, confusing or even “just not right” at first. With time, however, you notice how this system that is inverted in comparison with what you know works, is actually no better or worse than driving on the right, and that you can develop the skills (and cultural understanding) to function in it without getting hit by a car.

The same will likely be true with gaining comfort in the Indian educational system. Although the stakes of learning and adapting to an educational culture organized around the instructor, more than the student, are not life or death, learning these skills is crucial for having an academically rewarding experience. You may find that the instructor says things about grades and other expectations that sound alarming or the syllabus may not contain the signals and organization that you expect. The classroom experience may feel as if the driver is not driving. To be successful in
this new academic environment will require suspending judgments, learning to read things in new ways, de-
activating “natural” reactions, and learning new ones. It will require learning how to get into a new driver's seat
yourself, to propel your learning.

Differences in the way university-level students are educated in India go beyond the simple distinction between
large, lecture-based courses, which are the norm, and the discussion-based courses at small liberal arts colleges in
the U.S. These are some of the key differences:

1. Courses at Indian universities, as true virtually everywhere in the world except the U.S., are instructor-
rather than student-centered. Faculty members expect a level of respect and deference that often differs
from informal U.S. classroom environments. Faculty are likely to maintain a greater distance from students
than what you are accustomed to at your home campus. Indian instructors are themselves the product of
this more formal, instructor-centered system, and their classroom demeanor reflects this training.

2. University-level students in India (and elsewhere) approach their courses and daily classes with a level of
independence that is more comparable to graduate-level education in the U.S. Students typically do not
receive (or expect to receive) syllabi that detail topics and readings for each classroom session, as is the norm
at a U.S. liberal arts college. Rather, faculty are more likely to give an extensive list of relevant books from
which the student reads selectively throughout the semester, choosing on their own to investigate specific
topics more deeply, to complement and expand beyond their understanding of material in lectures. One day's
lecture in a course may cover one particular aspect of a topic, and is intended as a beginning or an opening
to pique students' interest in further their own knowledge, rather than to exhaust the subject. Even though students are not “held responsible” for doing the readings—as American students typically are in discussions
and quizzes—the instructor assumes that students are reading independently outside of class throughout
the semester so that they can write knowledgeably about the subject of the course at its end.

3. The learning process in India thus may feel less engaging or demanding on a day-to-day basis than the active
learning class sessions on liberal arts campuses. Students in India typically do more memorization (e.g., of
information, dates, names, facts, etc.) than American students may be accustomed to at liberal arts colleges,
where the faculty often emphasize concepts over information. Class participation may be a smaller factor in
final grades. However the Indian instructor organizes the class, and whatever the mix of lecture and
discussions, it is important that you need to generate the engagement, working to connect lectures to self-
guided reading, constantly self-monitoring your learning to gauge understanding, and maintaining
independent progress throughout the term.

4. Grades: While the distribution of grades in a course in the U.S. usually resembles a bell curve, with most
students receiving B's, in India students receive numerical grades, 0 to 100, ranged along a pyramid, with
almost no students receiving top marks and very few what would be considered B’s in an American system.
This contrast is the result of very different philosophies about academic achievement (and grades): In an
American course, excellence is measured against other students (i.e., on a curve). In an Indian classroom
excellence is measured in terms of overall mastery of the subject matter and includes not only students in
the class, but also individuals who are experts in the field; most Indian students will pass a course, but few
will get a mark above 70. To mediate between the two very different approaches to grading, ACM will convert
the numerical grades you receive in your courses in India to letter grades according to the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>Superb</td>
<td>95% or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>90-94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>80-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>70-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Passing</td>
<td>60-69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>59% or lower</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the end, you will find that as long as you keep up with the work in your courses, your grades will be
comparable to those at your home college.
CREDIT AND GRADES
ACM recommends 16 credits (12 for quarter/trimester students), as shown in the course descriptions, for your work overseas. Before you leave home, you should find out from your home campus registrar exactly how many credits you will earn and what graduation requirements they will meet. Different colleges have different policies about credit, and it is your responsibility to inform yourself about pass/fail options and how your India program credits will appear on your transcript. Provided that you do not have any outstanding financial obligations to ACM and the program, the ACM office in Chicago will forward final grades from the program to the registrar of your college as soon as they are available.
Preparing to Go

PASSPORT AND VISA
You will need a passport for travel to India, one which is valid for at least six months beyond the end of the program. If you are not a U.S. citizen and need to renew your passport, please contact the nearest consulate or embassy.

In addition to a passport, you will need a visa for India. As a first step, ACM will obtain a letter from the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) certifying that you will be enrolled in a program in India. ACM will notify you by e-mail when it is time to apply for your visa. Instructions will be posted at www.acm.edu/acceptedstudents. Once a visa application is started it is only valid for seven days, so do not start an application until you have been informed to do so by ACM. Once you have your visa it is crucial that you make sure the visa is correct and will be valid for the right amount of time. Please upload a copy of your visa to the pre-departure checklist.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS
You should make your travel arrangements before applying for your visa: keep in mind that earlier reservations are usually cheaper. You will likely get a six-month visa, which becomes valid the day you apply, so please make sure your time in India does not exceed your visa allotment. In making your travel reservations, there are a number of options available to you. You will need to arrange to fly from your home to India and arrive at the Pune airport on January 6th. Most flights arrive before 7 a.m. Please upload a copy of your flight itinerary to the pre-departure checklist so that the staff is aware of your flight arrangements. You will be met at the airport by ACM staff. If you plan to arrive before January 6th, you will be responsible for making your own arrangements for transportation and accommodation prior to the start of the program on January 6th.

TRAVEL SUGGESTIONS
Passport Security
Do not pack your passport in your checked luggage since you will need to show it several times while in transit. Photocopy your passport (the photo page and visa page) and carry the copy separately from your passport. Also bring a copy of a certified birth certificate which will be necessary in case of a lost passport. You will be responsible for any expenses incurred in case of loss of your passport.

Especially while you are traveling, it would be safest to keep your passport separate from your wallet in a money belt or other concealed carrier. That way, if you should lose your wallet, you won’t have lost your passport as well. While India is a safe country, pickpockets are becoming more common with the increase in tourism, and international airports are always popular spots for thieves.

Getting through Customs
You may or may not be asked to declare your electronic equipment at airport customs. If you are carrying more than $1000, you must declare that as well. Generally, ACM students should simply state that they have nothing to declare. Keep in mind that airports and customs around the world are always changing rules, so pay attention. ACM students have generally been lucky with customs, but there’s always a chance that officials will inspect your luggage.

COMMUNICATION
Cell phones
Students will need to be set up with a local number in India. Having a phone allows you to talk and text with other students and your host family with ease. It will also be extremely important during an emergency and the most convenient way for the program staff to be in touch with you. Although your US cell phone might function in India, international plans can be very expensive. However, if you have an unlocked phone you can bring it with you to insert
a local Indian SIM card. You will also have the option to buy an inexpensive cell phone to use while you are in India once there.

Your host family will provide you with a prepaid SIM card (a bit of data and calling minutes) which you will need to return to them at the end of the semester. You will reimburse your host family for the cost of the SIM card and prepaid data and calling minuets put on your phone. This SIM card can be “topped” up using scratch cards or a mobile device. The SIM card can be placed in an UNLOCKED smart phone. If you plan to use your US phone, make sure to contact your cell phone provider before you leave the US to unlock your phone.

Most people in India communicate via Whatsapp, which is a good way to also communicate with family and friends back in the US. It also allows for voice and video calling using data or a wireless connection. In addition to cell phones, most families will have a phone in their home. Students should inquire with their host families regarding the use of these landlines.

**To call the U.S. from India**, dial the international calling code (00) + country code (1 for the U.S.) + 3-digit area code + 7-digit number. **To call India from the U.S.**, dial the international calling code (011) + country code (91 for India) + number. When calling India, remember to account for significant time zone differences.

**Internet Access**
The ACM office has wireless internet for the students to access during office hours. Please be aware that connectivity can be much slower than what you are accustomed to on your home campus and that there might be times when the wireless is down for various reasons. Your host family will likely have wifi in their home, as well, but there might be restrictions on how much bandwidth you can use in a given timeframe. Please speak with your host family regarding the use of the internet while you are at home. Many public coffee shops or restaurants offer wifi, as well.

You need to take adequate precautions to keep your laptop from being stolen. You’ll want to make sure it is insured, likely through your (American) family's property insurance policy, as ACM does not provide insurance coverage for personal property.

**Communicating with Home**
The most cost effective way for parents and their students to speak with each other is via Skype, either by purchasing Skype minutes to call a landline or cell phone, or by using free on-line service from one computer to another. Whatsapp is a great way to keep in touch with friends and family back home.

You should also speak with your family and friends regarding a plan for communicating. That is, how often you will be in touch and how you will communicate.

**Mail**
While you are in Pune, you should **not** receive mail at your host family's residence. Instead, please ask your family and friends to send mail care of ACM (see address at the back of the handbook). ACM does not recommend that you receive any packages. Customs charges a flat fee on all incoming packages containing books, used items, or things for which no value is declared in the shipping documents. If a value is declared on the package, however, you (the receiver) will be charged 20% of the declared value for customs fees, plus an additional 20% for value-added tax. Be sure to bring all the prescription medication you’ll need for the entire semester, because you will not be able to have it mailed to you internationally.

**Medication and Other Medical Preparations**
As part of your preparation to go abroad, please read carefully information from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) about medical conditions in India and the recommended precautions for Americans traveling to India. The website is: [http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/india](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/india)
You should share this information with your doctor or the physician who signs your Medical History form and your parents. You will want to make sure that you have the recommended vaccinations and are aware of and take precautions against the various health risks in India.

If you take one or more prescriptions drugs regularly, you will want to be sure you can continue this medication while abroad. You should speak with your physician about obtaining a supply to take with you that will last you the entire semester. (And please make sure to keep it in its original container, and in your carry-on luggage.) You should not plan to have drugs (of any kind) sent to you while abroad. Many medications you might be prescribed in the US are not available abroad so please consult with your physician about your options.

For more information, see the Health & Safety section later in this handbook.

**MONEY**

Students on the program in the past several years have relied on debit and ATM cards almost exclusively to obtain rupees for daily expenses. (For information on what expenses you can expect to have, please see the Cost Information Sheet for the India program posted on the ACM website.) ATM machines are readily available throughout Pune, and you should have no problem withdrawing funds in rupees from your U.S. bank account. Before you leave for the program, however, you should notify your bank that you will be abroad. If you neglect to do so, you may find that your bank, fearing that your card has been stolen, will freeze your account after several withdrawals. You will also want to check on the transaction charges your bank may levy. While the exchange rate is typically good when using an ATM or debit card, you may find that transaction fees are such as to discourage multiple withdrawals of small amounts.

While ATM and debit cards work well, this should not be your only means of getting money—ATM and debit cards can get lost, stolen, or eaten by cash withdrawal machines. You should also bring along some hard currency in dollars—perhaps $100 to $200—and a credit card. These can be useful in emergencies or if you travel outside of Pune or Jaipur. Visa is more widely used than other credit cards, but you should not plan to use it with the frequency that you likely do in the U.S., as most small businesses in India will not accept it.

Here are examples of how many rupees an average item may cost. Please refer to [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com) for the most current exchange rate. As of March 2016, 1 US Dollar equaled 66 Indian Rupees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost (Rs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rickshaw from host family to ACM</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movie ticket</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottle of beer</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch near ACM</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunscreen</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towel</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toothpaste</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tampon/pads</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibuprofen</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shampoo</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soap</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notebook</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Café/hour</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sari or other India dress</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel during break</td>
<td>10,000-15,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PACKING CONSIDERATIONS**
Luggage
While packing, be aware that you will leave India with more than you brought, and that airline luggage restrictions can be strict. You should also keep in mind that you will travel throughout the semester so you will want to bring a duffel. When you pack your bags, include your name and the program address inside each bag in case it gets lost.

When packing your bags, it is essential you purchase TSA–approved luggage locks and lock all of your luggage before you check it in. Theft from luggage is possible and we want to make sure all of your belongings arrive in Pune with you.

Clothing
Clothing is more complicated when you are in a new and varied culture. You may find that you are more comfortable in India wearing clothing that is more modest than you would typically wear in America. This can be a delicate balance—female students have explained that many women wear sleeveless blouses, but tank tops with spaghetti straps would be inappropriate.

Bring cool and comfortable clothes. Cotton clothes are cool and dry quickly. Poly-cotton blends are the best. Some students have recommended linen garments. Past students from the fall India program emphasize that jeans are okay, and that women typically wear leggings often. Most students buy and wear Indian clothes once they get to India. Past students, however, remark that many Indian college-age students wear western, though not overly-revealing, clothes.

Toiletry Items
Basic toiletry items like toothpaste and shampoo are readily available at reasonable prices. Feminine hygiene products, deodorants, sun screen, and contact solution may be more rare and different than those found in the U.S. However, there are shopping centers that carry a wide variety of brands, so it is not necessary to bring a 4-month supply of everything. Many students report bringing too many toiletries, particularly shampoo. We recommend you bring a few small toiletry items to get you through the first week.

Gifts for your Host Family
It is a wonderful gesture to take a gift to your host families. Choose something representative of your college, town, or culture, but keep it within a moderate price range. Here are some general recommendations:

- T-shirts or pennants from your college or favorite sports team
- Calendars with scenes of your home state or town
- Specialty foods (wild rice from Minnesota, bread mix, your favorite cake/muffin mix)
- Fridge magnets
- Handmade sweets from your state or region
- Artwork from your area (small pottery, weaving, watercolors)
- Small toys for children (jacks, stickers, matchbox cars, stuffed animals, magic markers)
- Picture books about the U.S. or your home region
- CD’s of popular music in the U.S.
- Collection of photos that showcase your friends and family, hometown, campus, etc.

ACM ALUMNI ADVICE: When selecting gifts for your host family, remember to keep the gifts modest. Offering a gift that is too expensive or fancy may make your family feel as though they need to reciprocate with a gift of equal value, which may be difficult for some families.
SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

Documents
- Passport/visa + copy
- Certified copy of birth certificate (in case of lost passport)
- Copy of driver’s license or official ID (used as proof of permanent address for cell phone SIM card provider)
- ATM card, credit card, cash
- 6 passport sized photos (which can be printed in India)
- Required readings

Clothing (keep in mind that most students buy local clothing)
- Cotton shirts, a few long-sleeve shirts
- Pants
- A pair of jeans
- Leggings (for women)
- Bathing suit (2-piece suits are only common for women in Goa or other touristy areas)
- Shorts. For females, they should be capris, Bermudas, knee length. Short shorts will draw unwanted attention, especially in a gym
- Comfortable walking shoes and/or hiking boots
- Pair of shoes you won’t mind getting wet such as Chaco, Teva, Merrell, or Crocs
- Pair of shoes for showering and walking around hotels, such as flip flops
- Sandals
- Raincoat
- Hat
- Underwear
- Socks

Personal and Miscellaneous Items
- Toiletry articles (note that most U.S. brands are readily available in Pune and cosmetics are often expensive)
- Travel toilet paper (Charmin makes travel rolls)
- Baby wipes
- Hand sanitizer
- Glasses or contact lenses (Contact lens solution is expensive, so you might want to bring a semester’s supply)
- Enough prescription medicine to last your stay and copies of prescriptions (with latin names)
- Medicine kit with basic items such as Band-Aids, antibiotic cream, aspirin, antihistamine, antacids, etc.
- A bath towel (do not expect to use your host family’s towels)
- Sunscreen
- Bug spray containing DEET
- Camera, memory card, USB cord
- Pictures of your family, home, and college to show to your host family and friends in Pune/Jaipur
- Backpack for routine daily use in Pune/Jaipur (some students bring larger backpacks to use for travel)
- Money belt
- Laptop, USB drive, 230 V adapter, Converter plug
- Reusable water bottle and/or water bottle with a filter
- Tampons (plastic applicators are not available in India)
- Guidebook and this handbook

STEP Registration
ACM recommends that you register with the U.S. State Department’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) so that you will receive any alert messages from the U.S. government during your time in India and help the U.S. Embassy contact you in an emergency. Register at www.step.state.gov.
ARRIVAL IN INDIA
When you arrive in India, you will need to clear immigration at the port of entry, where you will be asked to show your visa. After immigration, you’ll then clear customs where you may be asked to open your suitcase. If your point of entry is not Pune, (for example, if your flight is to Delhi and you will then be taking a domestic flight to Pune) please ensure that you pick up your luggage before you go to the domestic airport.

Provided that you arrive on January 6 and have notified ACM of your flight arrangements, the ACM India Staff will be at the airport to meet you.

ORIENTATION
Beginning the day after you arrive (January 7th), the orientation is meant to give you a broad overview of the program and prepare you to live in India for the entire semester. Your Hindi language classes will begin during the first week and you’ll begin to learn basic vocabulary to help you get around for the first couple of weeks. Orientation will be given by ACM staff and their associates. Importance will be placed on your responsibility for your health and safety over the course of the program. Students will also learn how to use the Indian currency, take a rickshaw, go on a city tour, and visit the markets and shopping center near campus. A full orientation schedule will be given to you upon arrival in Pune.

Registration with the Police
Students are required to register with the police within 14 days upon arrival. This process will require your passport. ACM staff will assist with this process.

Registration with the American Consulate
You are required to register online with the American Consulate in Mumbai within a week of your arrival in India. The ACM staff will assist with this process.
Housing Arrangements and Meals

Host family assignments will be made during the first few days of the program while students are staying in the hotel. Students will have the opportunity to meet with their host family before they move from the hotel. Host families provide students with breakfast and dinner Monday-Friday and all meals on the weekends. Keep in mind that non-vegetarian families do not necessarily eat meat everyday.

The housing stay, with Indian host families, is integral to the ACM program. Families are important units within Indian society, and living with a host family provides an important window into India that would otherwise be missing from a student’s experience abroad. For many students, it is the aspect of the ACM program that they most miss when they return home. At the same time, however, like the more academic aspects of the program, it demands a level of commitment and work (not to mention sensitivity) to make the arrangement work. The host families often feel responsible for the students placed in their homes (in their “care,” as many of them see it) and in return expect that students will treat them with the respect and courtesy they expect of their own sons and daughters.

In your Indian home you should keep in mind the courtesy expected of a guest. No matter how much you prepare for the difference between college study on your home campus and student life in India, there will be surprises and adjustments to make. The differences you encounter will include food, household routine, amount of privacy and personal space, and protocol. You may also hear political attitudes you've never heard at home. Sensitive areas may be some of your family members’ views of feminism, poverty, and Dalit (formerly labeled “untouchables”) issues. You may need to remind yourself that you are a guest in India, and that it is your responsibility to make adjustments to a different way of life.

In all this, we remind you that your homestay is an important source of experiential learning. The experience may make you recognize preconceived notions about contemporary India. It may sensitize you to cultural differences more subtle than you had anticipated. It will most certainly challenge you to see life from someone else’s point of view and to stretch your own culturally-shaped perceptions. It will not necessarily be a simple task, but you will be richly rewarded if you are open to exploring the possibilities for learning that surround you in India.

If you are encountering difficulties with your host family, please speak with the Student Services Assistant or Program Director about your concerns or problems. They may be able to provide insight into your concerns and offer suggestions for resolving matters.

ACM ALUMNI ADVICE: The success of your stay with an Indian family will depend upon your ability to observe and adapt to a very different lifestyle. Past participants have emphasized that this is crucial. Being honest with your Indian family builds trust and helps to avoid tension later.

No matter what country you’re in, it’s polite to let your hosts know when you’re going out and when you’ll be back. Try to establish a schedule which does not disrupt your host family’s routine. Find out when you’re expected to be present for meals and other family events, and find out what your household responsibilities are. You may have to remind yourself that you are in India to learn from your Indian family and friends, not to make them adapt to your expectations and preferences. Being constantly alert to what is going on around you is tiring at first, especially where using a foreign language means that just speaking requires effort.
Getting Around

You have several transportation options in India. You can walk, take the bus, or take a rickshaw. At first glance, Indian traffic can be quite frightening: Not only do people drive on the left side of the road, but also the sheer volume and variety of traffic getting from one place to another is challenging, exciting, and potentially dangerous. Past students have described traffic as “insane,” but they also have found that there is a pattern to it. Their best advice: look left, right, left, up and down before crossing the street.

Rickshaw
Rickshaws are virtually everywhere in Pune and Jaipur. They look like covered scooters and take three people. This is the most popular way for students to get around. During the orientation program staff will teach you ways to be safe when using the rickshaws.

Your fare is determined by a meter, and you should make sure that the driver turns the meter over. The driver will hand you a fare card which converts the fare shown on the meter into the current rates, and this will allow you to know how much the ride will cost.

ACM will provide a rickshaw allowance for travel to and from the ACM program center for students with host families further than walkable from the program center. The allowance will cover the cost of a rickshaw for five days a week. This allowance will be paid to students once a month beginning when students first move into the homestays. When two students live with the same host family, the rickshaw allowance will be shared between them.

Long-Distance Options
When traveling beyond Pune or Jaipur, students have the option to utilize shared taxis, buses, or trains. Program staff will provide information on these options during orientation and can assist with arrangements.

For longer trips by train, it’s a good idea to buy your tickets well in advance. If your train trip is overnight, reserve a berth. You’ll get either a plain or padded berth with no bedding. You can avoid the hassles of making your own arrangements by using a travel agent. It is important to take a chain and lock when travelling by train; they can be purchased at the station for about Rs.50.

Air
Domestic air travel is a rapidly changing industry in India. While Air India used to be the only government-run domestic airline, there are now various private domestic airlines like Air Asia, IndiGo, Jet Airways, Go Air, and SpiceJet.
TRAVEL BREAK
When planning your travel for the break, you may wish to consult with ACM program staff for suggestions. It is always best to travel in small groups of three or four, so most students wait to make their plans until after they arrive in India and meet the other students. When traveling, be sure to carry your police registration, passport, and a copy of your passport (kept separately from the real thing). Keeping up-to-date on the current political situation and any U.S. State Department or Indian travel advisories is essential. You will need to inform the ACM India staff when you will be leaving, where you will be, how to contact you, and when you plan to return through the use of the ACM Independent Travel Form. You will fill out this form anytime you leave the program site, even for a weekend. (This helps us contact you in the case of an emergency.) You should plan your travel in such a way that you do not miss classes or come unprepared to class following a trip.

Please note that the states of Jammu and Kashmir, as well as the India-Pakistan border areas, are off-limits to foreigners, as stated in your visa. Nor should you travel to countries for which a U.S. Department of State Travel Warning is in effect (see: http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html). In addition, ACM program students are prohibited from renting or driving motor vehicles while the program is in session; failure to observe this rule can result in dismissal from the program.

YOUR RETURN DATE AND GETTING TO THE AIRPORT
The earliest date you can return home from India is April 20th (March 16th for quarter/trimester students). ACM India staff will also let you know of the various steps and formalities you will need to follow in order to leave the country.

If you stay in India after the end of the program, you are in India independently and are no longer affiliated with the ACM India program. Of course, you will probably keep in touch with the people you have met in Pune or Jaipur, but be careful not to impose. Your homestay arrangement ends on the final program date – after that you should expect to pay your host family or find other lodgings. ACM is not responsible for you if you run out of money, become ill, have problems with the government or police, or problems with your travel arrangements.
Host Country Information

No country in the world is as diverse as India, and every statement about its geography, people, climate, language, religion, economy, and even political system must be qualified by its opposite. The second most populated country in the world (after China), India's populace is divided along lines of caste, religion and language. There are approximately twenty official languages, including English, and while the national census does not recognize ethnic groups or castes, recent estimates are that there are over 2,000 different ethnicities in India. In terms of religion, virtually every world religion is represented among its population, with Hindus, Muslims, Jains, Sikhs, Parsis, Buddhists, Christians, and even a small Jewish community. It boasts modern glass office buildings in its cities; shanty housing of tin, mud, and cardboard in its slums; and some of the most beautiful architecture in the world.

The history of the sub-continent goes back to 2,500 BCE, a time when Europeans were still in caves and Egyptians only beginning to build the remarkable monuments along the Nile. Successive waves of migrants and invaders introduced new peoples, languages, religions, and political systems to India, and by the time that the British began to establish their first trading posts in the seventeenth century and, ultimately, their overall authority two hundred years later, India was composed of a series of small princely states. Britain considered India to be the “jewel in the crown” of its empire, and no other colony, for better or for worse, received the level of attention and investment, in all sectors, that India did. Conversely, no other part of its empire has had in the influence on modern British society and culture that India has exercised.

Independent since 1947, India today is at a crossroads in its development and faces important issues: While its economy has grown at an enviable pace since 1991, when many economic policies were liberalized, and its rate of population increase has declined, the benefits of this growth have been uneven and largely confined to specific sectors of its urban areas. The service sector comprises roughly half of the Indian economy, with the industrial and agricultural sectors sharing the remainder of the pie. The poor in villages in the rural areas have, by and large, not participated in this prosperity, and while some experts see village life as key to India’s future, for many at the present time it is only through migration to the cities that the cycle of poverty has been broken. The Indian agricultural sector remains outside the ring of growth and success, largely based on peasant labor and smallholder production. What the Indian economy most needs, according to at least one expert, are jobs in industry for semiskilled laborers, and this, unlike in China, is not occurring. India’s advantage over China, on the other hand, is the widespread use of English, a factor that has led to the establishment of many offshore call centers.

Pune, where the ACM program has been located since its establishment, demonstrates the contrasts in the Indian economy and society today. A city of over three million, it is the home not only of one of India’s oldest and most respected universities, the University of Pune, but also of many of its newest industries. It is second only to Bangalore in the number of high-tech firms and is home to many drug and pharmaceutical companies. The Serum Institute, for example, supplies roughly half of the supply for the vaccines the United Nations provides to children all over the world. It also offers plazas, fast food shops, and a host of smaller businesses. Pune is in Maharashtra state, the second largest city after Mumbai (formerly known as Bombay), and with its inland location and somewhat higher altitude, has a much more pleasant climate than Mumbai.

Those students staying for the full semester will also experience Jaipur, a Northern Indian city known for its pink walls. Jaipur is a major business center located in the desert land of Rajasthan. Initially a capital for royalty, Jaipur now hosts a large population of all different classes of Indians. Living in both cities will provide students with a broad perspective on city life in India.
Cultural Norms and Expectations

Although Indian society and individual families are becoming less conservative in values and manners than they once were, you will find that, in comparison to U.S. society, it remains a very conservative place. While you will not be expected to get everything right and allowances will be made for you as a foreigner, common courtesy will go a long way to compensate for your lack of understanding and to ingratiate yourself with your host family and other Indians with whom you come in contact.

The ACM India staff is a good source of information about manners and behavior, both in the home stay and outside the home, and will be discussing these with you in the on-site orientation when you first arrive. Here are some general tips, gathered from past program participants and ACM staff, to guide you while in India:

- As a general rule you should plan to dress a bit more conservatively than you would at home. While you may see young Indian men and women on the streets dressed in shorts or skimpy tops, you as a Westerner draw special attention and will find that more conservative clothing attracts less notice.

- Be sure to greet people when you enter a room or home. Rather than simply blurt out your request or question, take the time to greet others in the traditional fashion and ask how they are. You'll find that people respond more favorably to you—and that, as a result, you're more likely to have your request granted.

- Your host family will be providing breakfast and dinner for you, and if you plan to be away for a meal, please let your host family know in advance.

- Similarly, if you plan to be away from home overnight, let your family know in advance where you'll be and when you plan to return. Your host family will likely feel very protective of you and unless they know that you will be away, will be very worried if you do not return (or if you're late).

- In the past, Indian men and women have tended to be very guarded publicly about their relations, although this is now changing somewhat and it is not unusual to see younger couples walking hand in hand on the street. With your host family, you should be careful about touching a member of the opposite sex. Moreover, while in some host families it may be acceptable and even expected for a young woman to hug her host mother, in other families this may not be the custom. You will want to observe to learn what is appropriate and/or expected with your host family. And be sure to greet your host family members in the morning at breakfast and when you return home after the day's classes.

- Despite the gradually changing attitudes in Indian society today, social restrictions on relations between the sexes in India are stricter than you are undoubtedly accustomed to in the United States. When living with the host family, we ask that you abide by their standards which may preclude even being alone with a member of the opposite sex. Don’t offend your family or place yourself in an inappropriate situation.

ACM ALUMNI ADVICE: Indians generally greet other and say goodbye with their hands held together (as if in prayer), and say, “Namaste.” Learn to do this and get used to it as it is both a common practice and a common courtesy.
Although you may think you are being discreet, remember that your high profile in India ensures that your actions will not remain confidential.

**Cultural Adjustment**

No matter how much you prepare for your time abroad, there will be surprises, both good and bad. As one study abroad student said, “It doesn’t matter what you expect—it won’t be what you expect.” It’s not unnatural to go through a period soon after you arrive when you’re desperately homesick and everything Indian looks more foreign than you can bear. These cultural adjustment periods pass; for some, they come and go quickly, while for others, they may last longer.

In the first weeks when you arrive on site it is not uncommon to experience surprise, dismay, and even anxiety at the cultural differences in a new location and the unfamiliar situations in which you find yourself. The on-site orientation program is intended to help ease this adjustment, and you will in all likelihood find yourself adapting to the new culture and situations in a surprisingly short time. You’ll also likely discover that being able to settle in and “learn the ropes” can give you an enormous sense of self-confidence.

Research has shown that many students go through a three-step adjustment process in acclimating to their host country. In the first stage (once they have gotten over jet lag), 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 once 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 analytic approach to both locations and to find good and bad things in each.

As a student studying abroad, you will undoubtedly feel uncomfortable at times, especially in the beginning, and likely hear your fellow students expressing similar responses. This is not unusual, and we anticipate that after a time these feelings of discomfort and insecurity will dissipate. We encourage you to speak with the program director, other on-site staff, and even your peers about your concerns and to raise any questions about the host country and the new culture to which you are learning to adapt.

**ACM Alumni Advice:** Regardless of your academic discipline, learn to be a cultural anthropologist. Observe the people around you to learn how people interact in India. Reflect on your own approach to this new cultural context, and share what you discover with others.
CULTURAL PREPARATION AND RECOMMENDED READINGS

When you first arrive in India, you will undoubtedly be struck by the many new and different sights, sounds, and smells around you. And while you can never really prepare yourself for the full experience of studying abroad, you can arrive with some knowledge of India today, its diversity, and its challenges. You’ll undoubtedly find your Indian teachers, friends, and host family more knowledgeable about the U.S. than you are about India. The more you can learn in advance about India and prepare yourself for the program, the more you can learn and benefit from discussions with instructors, project guides, new Indian friends, and host family members. Your overall experience will be richer for it. We encourage you to approach your arrival in India with as much patience and flexibility as you can. For more information, see the section titled Cultural Norms and Expectations later in this handbook.

Highly Recommended Readings

Ramchandra Guha’s *India After Gandhi*
R. K Narayan’s *Malgudi Days*

*India – Culture Smart!: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture*

Recommended Readings

Fiction
- Salman Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children*
- Rohinton Mistry, *A Fine Balance*
- Vikram Chandra, *Love and Longing in Bombay: Stories*
- Kiran Desai, *The Inheritance of Loss*
- Chetan Bhagat, *One Night at the Call Center*
- Arvind Adiga, *White Tiger*
- Arundhati Roy, *God of Small Things*

Non-Fiction
- Edward Luce, *In Spite of the Gods: The Rise of Modern India*
- Sara S. Mitter, *Dharma’s Daughters*
- Shashi Tharoor, *The Elephant, The Tiger, and the Cell Phone: Reflections on India in the 21st Century*
- Mihir Bose, *Bollywood: A History*
- Mukul Kesavan, *Men in White*

Websites

http://www.pune109.com
http://www.jaipurtravel.com/
http://india.gov.in/

Movies
- “Best Exotic Marigold Hotel”
- “Slumdog Millionaire”
- “Bride and Prejudice”
- “Salaam Bombay!”
- “Lagaan”

- “Om Shanti Om”
- “Three Idiots”
- “Earth”
- “Water”
- “Fire”

Travel Guides

*The Rough Guide to India*
*Lonely Planet India*
Insurance, Health, and Safety

While studying off-campus offers new educational opportunities, it can also present challenges and risks that are different from those on your home campus. Just as you prepare for a new mode of learning on the program, you should also think about living in a new environment that may contain new kinds of risks. You will not have the same support systems or forms of assistance that you have turned to on your home campus or in your home town. Here are some guidelines to keep in mind as you prepare for your semester in India.

For information about health and safety in India as a whole, two very useful websites are those of the U.S. Department of State and the Centers for Disease Control. These can be found at:

https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/studying-abroad

https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/india.html

(The Consular Information Sheet contains information about visa requirements, safety and crime, and road conditions, among other things, while the Background Notes are more like an almanac entry, providing a summary of Indian politics, history, the economy, and basic statistics.)

Once you have been registered for your medical insurance (see below), you will also have access to country-specific health and safety information on their website.

Insurance

ACM will provide health insurance coverage for all students participating in its programs. This coverage is through Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI), a company with long experience and excellent service in providing health coverage for students abroad.

The policy with CISI provides a broad range of coverage for students’ medical treatment while abroad. Here are several key features of the coverage:

- Coverage for both medically-necessary office visits and hospitalization;
- No exclusion for mental disorders or alcohol-related accidents or illnesses;
- Coverage for prescription drugs (excluding preventative medications such as malaria prophylaxis);
- 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 will cover students from the official arrival date through the official departure date for their programs. It covers you not only while you are in the host country, but also during any time you may travel away from the program site—e.g., during program vacation periods.

The policy, however, should not replace any coverage you have in the U.S., nor should you discontinue your U.S. American health insurance coverage—it provides only limited amounts of coverage for follow-up treatment of illnesses or injuries which begin while you are abroad and only provides for up to 30 days.

The cost of this coverage is included in your program fee, and ACM will handle your registration for the insurance. It is also possible for you to independently purchase supplemental coverage through CISI to extend the days that you will be covered by the ACM policy. (If, for example, you plan to leave early for the program site or do some traveling outside the U.S. after the program, you can purchase health insurance coverage for that additional time.) The cost of this additional coverage is approximately $40/month. CISI will e-mail 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.culturalinsurance.com to view the tools available to policyholders and to purchase any additional coverage. (You 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.)

CISI is a medical insurance plan and will not cover your personal property. Please consult your parents’/guardians’ insurance to ensure adequate coverage of anything you take to or purchase in India.

HEALTH

In addition to the pre-departure preparations for managing your health while in India, you need to need to take precautions to maintain your health in India. Probably the biggest risk to your health in India is from food (e.g., undercooked or street food) and untreated water, leading to stomach and intestinal upsets. As part of your preparation to go abroad, please read carefully information from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) about medical conditions in India and the recommended precautions for Americans traveling to South Asia. The CDC pages on travel in India recommend not only monitoring what you drink and eat, but also using hand sanitizer.

Other health risks in India include malaria and sexually transmitted infections. Malaria is present outside of Pune, for example, and particularly in the rainy season. When traveling in an area where it is present, you should take your malaria prophylaxis regularly, wear long sleeves, and use insect repellent. Sexually transmitted infections are spread most often through unprotected intercourse. If you choose to be sexually active while abroad, safe sex is a must.

Pune has very good medical facilities, and if you need to see a doctor while you are on the program, ACM staff will be able to give you the names of doctors and clinics where students have been treated in the past and who work with the CISI insurance.

If you take one or more prescriptions drugs regularly, you will want to be sure you can continue this medication while abroad. Speak with your physician about the possibility of obtaining a supply to take with you. (And please make sure to keep it in its original container, and in your carry-on luggage.) If you cannot get a supply to take with you, you will want to see if this medication can be obtained in India and to have the generic name. You should not plan to have drugs (of any kind) sent to you while abroad.
Psychological Counseling: If you require regular sessions with a counselor, please include this information on your Medical History Form so that we can help to make arrangements in advance. ACM encourages students who regularly see a counselor to discuss with them a plan for continuing support for the semester you are abroad.

**SAFETY**

Pune and Jaipur are modern and safe cities, and India is a hospitable and secure country. Like any place else in the world, however, there is some crime and random violence, but most of it is preventable or avoidable with appropriate caution. You should be especially careful when you first arrive in India and everything is unfamiliar. You'll find traffic to be more congested and also faster than on the streets of, say, Northfield or Galesburg. The biggest difference you’re likely to notice, and immediately, is that traffic is on the left rather than the right side of the road, and all your instincts as a pedestrian will need to be adjusted. You will be commuting between your home and the classrooms each day by foot, bus, or rickshaw, and you’ll want to consciously train yourself to expect traffic to be coming from the opposite direction. ACM India staff, as well as your host family, will talk more about getting to and from the ACM program center when you first arrive and can advise you about safety as you travel around India.

While participating in the program, you will be living and studying as a foreign guest and will be expected to conform to the standards of Indian society. Keep in mind that you are subject to all Indian laws and that your visa can be revoked for infractions deemed serious by the Indian government. As a member of the ACM-sponsored group, you are very visible in Pune and Jaipur. Your actions will reflect on the program and could jeopardize the position and legal status of the program. ACM has had a presence in India for over forty years and has carefully cultivated good relations with people and vendors; illegal or inappropriate actions can imperil both yourself and the program. The following issues have been identified by program staff as potentially problematic.

**Drugs and Alcohol**

As in the United States, recreational drugs are illegal in India. The program or the U.S. consulate can do very little for you if you are caught in possession of illegal substances. Keep in mind too that India as a society is very circumspect about alcohol consumption. Furthermore, excessive alcohol consumption impairs your judgment and can put you at risk; it is also offensive to your host family and casts an unfavorable light on you and the ACM program.

**Theft**

Some ACM students have been the victims of theft. Be careful, especially while traveling on trains and buses, as foreigners are an easy target. Carry your passport and money under your clothes and take the same precautions you would in an American city. If anything of value is lost or stolen, report it to the nearest police station, as well as to ACM staff. (Sometimes parents’ homeowners’ insurance policies can cover lost property, so it is essential that you get a police report for the insurance company.) As a precaution, keep a photocopy of your passport and visa, police registration papers in a safe place; also, make a list of credit card numbers and serial numbers from any electronic equipment.
Political Involvement
Politics in India can be extremely volatile and sometimes violent. Any participation in political organizations, rallies, etc. will be in violation of your student visa and could lead to deportation as well as endangering the program’s educational status. In addition, you may be placing yourself in physical danger.

Travel
Parts of India and the surrounding countries have been plagued by communal violence and terrorism at times, so it is essential to keep yourself informed about the current political situation and any U.S. State Department or Indian travel advisories. You should consult with the program staff about travel plans, and abide by their recommendations about places to avoid. Do not travel alone; accidents can happen, and it is vital to have someone to assist you in case of trouble.

Prohibited Activities
ACM’s insurance policy does not cover certain high-risk behaviors and activities, and those activities are therefore not permitted during the program. First, it is absolutely prohibited to operate a motor vehicle while in India. Additionally, you are not permitted to engage in any action or inaction that might cause or lead to injury or death to oneself or any other person; threat or cause of harm; self-endangerment. Finally, you may not participate in an of the following activities: mountaineering where ropes or guides are normally used; hang gliding; parachuting; bungee jumping; racing by horse, motor vehicle, or motorcycle; parasailing; participating in any professional sports or competitions; or riding as a pilot, student pilot, operator, or crewmember in or on any type of aircraft.

Serious infractions will lead to dismissal from the program.
The Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM) is a consortium of 14 residential liberal arts colleges in Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and Colorado. ACM programs reflect the academic standards and policies of its member colleges, and the standards and policies in the paragraphs which follow are applicable for all ACM off-campus study programs.

The ACM Off-Campus Study Program mission begins:

Our programs’ academic standards and curricula are rooted in the liberal arts. They emphasize the interdisciplinary educational approach, intimacy of small classes, focus on independent research, and discussion-based learning that characterize liberal arts education at ACM colleges. The programs accelerate and deepen students’ scholarly and personal growth through structured interactions between selected topics and distinctive locations. They offer educational experiences unlike those found in conventional classrooms.

You and all ACM students play an essential role in ensuring that the scholarly and personal growth sought as an outcome of this mission is accomplished in a dignified and respectful manner in conjunction with the people and customs of the host culture. As guests in the cities and countries of our various programs, all students are subject to the same laws and regulations as their host citizens and are responsible for knowing both ACM policies and local laws.

The ACM Code of Student Responsibility and its subsidiary policies exist to facilitate the educational process for you and the other students and to ensure a safe, fair, and successful experience for all students, staff, and faculty. While enrolled in an ACM program, your home campus may also choose to hold you accountable to their code of conduct. If enrolled in a host institution during their off-campus study experience, students will also be subject to the policies of that host institution.

**ACM Code of Student Responsibility**

The ACM Code of Student Responsibility reads as follows:

I understand that I am required to comply with all policies and procedures of the ACM including policies outlined here as well as program-specific rules introduced during the on-site orientation. My participation in an ACM program represents my college and the ACM consortium at all times. I know that my behavior must respect the values and norms of the host community while promoting the safety and wellbeing of other students and my program’s faculty and staff. I will strive to ensure that my behavior supports the educational nature of the ACM at all times.

Studying off-campus during your college career can be both very exciting and very challenging. Many students return to their home campus feeling dramatically changed, eager to embark on a new academic or career path, or with a clearer understanding of who they are as an individual. Off-campus study is a privilege; an option within higher education that not all students can select as a part of their collegiate experience. It often creates lifetime memories and presents multiple prospects for personal growth. In order to protect this opportunity for all students, however, ACM has instituted some policies and to ensure it remains accessible to the greatest possible number of students.

Please note that these policies and procedures comprise guidelines that can be changed by ACM at any time in its discretion. It is not and should not be construed as a contract, either express or implied.

**ACM Policies and Procedures**

On our website, you will find the following ACM policies and procedures for which you are expected to adhere to:

- ACM Code of Student Responsibility
- ACM Policy on Academics
- ACM Housing Policy
Please read through these closely before signing the ACM Comprehensive Release form (this is included on the accepted student webpage). These policies were designed with your health and well-being in mind. They are intended to support you, your peers, and the entire off-campus study community as you develop personally, professionally, and academically on your Off-Campus Study Program.
Personal Information “Opt-Out” Form

In accordance with the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), as amended, 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. Provisions of FERPA allow the institution to define certain classes of information as “directory information,” and 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

Additionally, throughout the duration of ACM off-campus study programs, ACM representatives may take photographs, make video or audio recordings, or write articles about program participants and/or activities that involve program participants. Many student participants and associated faculty and staff may also take photos and videos, write articles, or maintain blogs for their own personal use, which they frequently share with the ACM. The ACM also shares short excerpts of student work, such as titles and overviews of projects and brief research abstracts. These images, recordings, excerpts, and accounts are regularly collected for the primary purpose of highlighting and showcasing the ACM via our website, posters, brochures, and other educational marketing materials. (Note: The ACM will never publish full accounts of student projects or research or use student photographs, video, or audio recordings without specific permission from the student in question.)

If you do not want the ACM to release your directory information, use your likeness in photos or recordings, or share excerpts of your work without your prior consent, you may choose to “opt-out” by making a copy and signing the form below. Requests can only be made via this form, which must be completed and returned to the ACM prior to participation in the program, to be applicable to that semester/term and for subsequent periods of time. Students wishing to reverse this decision may complete and submit the revocation section of the form below.

I request the withholding of the following personally identifiable information, associated with my participation in an off-campus study program through the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM). I understand that upon submission of this form, the information checked will not be released or used for ACM promotional purposes without my written consent or unless the ACM is required by law or permitted under FERPA to release such information without my prior written consent; and that the checked information will not otherwise be released or used from the time the ACM receives my form until my opt-out request is rescinded. I further understand that if any of the information checked below is released or used prior to the ACM receiving my opt-out request, the ACM may not be able to stop the disclosure of this information.

CHECK ALL BOXES THAT APPLY:

☐ Name
☐ College/university
☐ E-mail address
☐ Off-campus study program
☐ Semester/term of off-campus study
☐ Awards, honors
☐ Use of likeness in ACM recordings (photos, video, audio, written articles)
☐ Use of short excerpts of student work (titles, overviews, and abstracts)
☐ All items listed above

______________________________________ ________________________________   ____________________
Name (please print)  Signature          Date

RESCISSION OF OPT-OUT REQUEST

I, the above named student, hereby rescind my request to opt-out from the release of the information indicated above.

________________________________________________________  ___________________________________
Signature      Date
Program Contact Information

ACM Chicago Office

Address:  
Associated Colleges of the Midwest  
11 E. Adams, Suite 800  
Chicago, IL 60603

Phone: 312.263.5000  
Fax: 312.263.5879  
Emergency: 312.561.5911

Office Hours:  
Monday - Friday, 9:00am–5:00pm

ACM Off-Campus Study Team

OCS@acm.edu

Betsy Hutula, Chief of Staff, ACM  
ehutula@acm.edu, +1 312-561-5000

ACM India Office

Student mailing address:

Student’s name  
Associated Colleges of the Midwest  
c/o Kalachhaya  
270 / D Patrakar Nagar Road  
Shivajinagar  
Pune 411 016  
Maharashtra, INDIA

Phone: (011-91)20-2565-2298/5181

Office Hours:  
Monday through Friday, 9:00am–5:00pm

U.S. Consulate in Mumbai, India

http://mumbai.usconsulate.gov/  
(011-91) 22-2363-3611

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mkotwal@acm.edu

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