Associated Colleges of the Midwest

LONDON & FLORENCE

Student Handbook • Spring 2016

Beloit Carleton Coe Colorado Cornell Grinnell Knox Lake Forest Lawrence Luther Macalester Monmouth Ripon St. Olaf
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Welcome to the ACM London & Florence Program! Since the program’s inception in 1972, more than 1600 students have participated in this semester in two of the world’s most enchanting and historic cities. We are pleased to welcome you to this group of aesthetes and explorers.

We hope this handbook will lay a good foundation for what to expect and how to prepare for the coming winter/spring. Its contents are intended to help you plan for your term or semester abroad and to let you know what to anticipate during your first few days in each city. Once you start to get acquainted with each place and its respective culture you’ll make your own discoveries and connections, but we hope this material will help you begin.

Read this handbook carefully. If you have questions or you need more information, don’t hesitate to contact the ACM office. Like the program itself, the student handbook changes from year to year. This year, the handbook has been re-designed for ease of finding critical information while still maintaining all the details that have proven invaluable to students in the past. All the information in this handbook has been included in response to questions and feedback from past students, parents, and program staff. We welcome comments and ideas on how to improve this book for future participants.

Both London and Florence have intrigued foreign visitors for centuries, not least for their delicate intermingling of new and old, of history and progress. Each city displays the coexistence of the traditional and the contemporary—and the tensions between the two—in its own unique way. Over the course of the semester you’ll learn to peel away the modern facades of London and Florence and, with an increasingly informed and critical eye, examine the many layers of history underneath.

The epicenter of Renaissance art, architecture, and culture, Florence has lured visitors from abroad for more than 500 years. You will see that the spirit of the Renaissance continues to resonate in the remarkable art and architecture of this city, which is in many ways a time capsule of a seminal period in the history of Western civilization. A stroll through the streets of the historic centro will take you past churches, palaces, piazze, and sculptures that have remained largely the same for centuries. For all its history, however, Florence is also a modern city, and this delicate intermingling of new and old creates its unique texture. Surrounding the famous sights and monuments are dozens of chic and extravagant designer shops, busy trattorie, street-side cafes, and the persistent hum of Vespas and pint-sized cars whizzing through narrow streets. People-watching is an art in Florence, particularly in the centro, which is constantly abuzz with conversation and bustling with the commotion of sidewalk vendors, window-shoppers, tourists, and well-clad Italians out for a stroll. During your time in Florence, you will have a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in this culture, to learn more about how Italians constructed their lives centuries ago, what makes them tick today, and how modern and ancient intersect.

Where Florence may seem an embodiment of Italian culture and more, today’s London is truly a global city, a vast international hub of commerce and culture. Immigrants and visitors from the world over contribute to the rich and colorful fabric of this vibrant city. London may at first seem more familiar because English is the primary language, but compared to American English you’ll notice significant
differences in syntax and intonation. You may sometimes feel as though you’re learning a language within a language, especially with regard to the lexicon of British slang, which routinely mystifies American visitors. But because London is home to so many non-native citizens and a worldwide tourist attraction, you’re almost as likely to hear French, Mandarin, or Hindi on the street as you are to hear British English.

You are going to London to study theatre, art, and architecture—in essence, the art of looking—and the city’s landscape lends itself perfectly to such an undertaking. London’s 32 distinct boroughs are studded with public squares, stately museums, cathedrals, theatres, scrupulously manicured gardens, rambling mansions, wide avenues, and narrow cobblestone alleys. Although sometimes hidden by the grand structures of the modern city, traces of medieval and ancient London remain visible to the careful observer. You’ll see remnants of the Roman wall built around London almost two thousand years ago. The Tower of London and the Palace of Westminster date to the eleventh century, when William the Conqueror took over the city. You’ll see St. Paul's Cathedral and other buildings designed and erected by Christopher Wren and his contemporaries in the seventeenth century after the Great Fire. Similarly, you’ll see theater productions that range from traditional representations of Shakespeare’s early plays to Broadway-style musicals to conceptual dramatic productions of the most up-to-the moment scripts. In every interaction with the sleek sophistication of modern London, you’ll encounter a dash of history.

Before you begin the London & Florence program, take some time to prepare both academically and personally. You will be challenged in new ways—by no single person, by no single event—but rather by a new way of living. Most likely you’ll encounter different views on the U.S. and its people. You may come to realize that you hold stereotypes or misconceptions others might dispute. Learn enough in advance so that you arrive with informed expectations, but expect some of your notions to be challenged. Take time to reflect on what you want to get out of your semester and prepare yourself to approach these new places and cultures with an open mind. No one can plan for every contingency, but a clear understanding of your goals will help you respond to the unanticipated and accomplish what you set out to do.

The ACM London & Florence: Arts in Context program aims to develop in students the ability to read a city through first-hand comparative study of how painting, sculpture, architecture, theatre, and literature reflect history and culture in two world-renowned cities and across several centuries.

The overall learning goals of the program are:

- To convey to students an understanding of the cultural heritage and present-day complexities of two European cities, London and Florence;
- To enhance students’ critical thinking skills and specifically their ability to “read” a city through its artistic media;
- To develop students’ intercultural awareness in both an English-speaking milieu and in a culture where English is not the medium of communication.

Students in this program encounter a variety of artistic media—architecture, painting, sculpture, literature, and theatre—and reflect on the experience of art to understand its social, political, historical, and religious contexts. The program aims to give students not only a depth of knowledge about urban-based art but also the ability to analyze artistic media across sites, historical eras, and modes of expression by conducting their studies in two different yet complementary sites.

Through immersion in the contemporary life of two great European cities —studying Italian and living with Italian families in Florence and living in apartments in the heart of London—as well as formal classroom study and program-sponsored site visits, students should become more inter-culturally aware and be proficient in reading the “text” of modern cities.
Program Calendar

10- Week Option (students going to Florence only)

January 3 - March 12, 2016

Sun, Jan. 3, 2016: Students arrive in Florence and check-in at Hotel Palazzo Vecchio before orientation meeting at 5 p.m. at the Linguaviva classrooms

Mon, Jan. 4, 2016: First day of classes

Fri, Mar. 11, 2016: Last day of classes

Sat, Mar. 12, 2016: Students depart

18- Week Intensive Language Option (students starting in Florence)

January 3 - May 7, 2016

Sun, Jan. 3, 2016: Students arrive in Florence and check-in at Hotel Palazzo Vecchio before orientation meeting at 5 p.m. at the Linguaviva classrooms

Mon, Jan. 4, 2016: First day of Florence classes

Fri, Mar. 11, 2016: Last day of Florence classes

Sat, Mar. 12, 2016: Break begins and check-out of homestays

Sun, Mar. 20, 2016: Students arrive in London AND arrive at Clifton Gardens before 4 p.m.

Mon, Mar. 21, 2016: First day of London classes

Fri, May 6, 2016: Last day of London classes

Sat, May 7, 2016: Students depart

15- Week Option (students starting in either London or Florence)

January 21/23 - May 7, 2016

Thu, Jan. 21, 2016: Students arrive in Florence by early afternoon at Via Fiume, 17 4th floor to transfer to homestays in the early evening

Sat, Jan. 23, 2016: Students arrive in London AND arrive at Clifton Gardens before 5 p.m.

Mon, Jan. 25, 2016: First day of classes

Fri, Mar. 11, 2016: Last day of classes

Sat, Mar. 12, 2016: Break begins

Sun, Mar. 20, 2016: Students arrive in second city AND at housing by 5 p.m.

Mon, Mar. 21, 2016: First day of classes

Fri, May 6, 2016: Last day of classes

Sat, May 7, 2016: Students depart
Academics

Just as they are on campus, reading, analyzing, discussing, and writing are central to the London & Florence program. You will not have the resources of your college library, unlimited internet access, or your usual study spots, but you will have two fascinating cities as your laboratory. Museums, architecture, newspapers, theatrical productions, historical sites, and living, breathing Britons and Italians will all, in one way or another, serve as your texts while you’re abroad. The program staff, too, will be valuable resources to you, but much of what you reap from this program will depend on your own curiosity and personal initiative.

The courses offered in each city reflect the special interests and expertise of the instructors, and they are designed to make full use of the unique cultural strengths of the local environment. Since the curriculum is integrated across the program and classroom instruction is closely linked to out-of-class activities, students are required to participate in all courses. If you find that a subject of interest to you is being taught at too basic a level, or perhaps with the assumption of greater prior knowledge than you have, it will be your responsibility to take the initiative to talk to your instructors. They will be more than willing to discuss your questions, suggest supplemental readings, and help you pursue your interests in written assignments.

Overall, keep in mind that study abroad requires just that—studying! Travel and exploring will be an integral and unforgettable part of your experience this spring, but your courses need to be your first priority. You should consult with the director in London or Florence before confirming travel plans for weekends or breaks. Do not assume that the schedule will be the same from week-to-week and understand that there may be one-time program activities outside of typical class meetings times. Make no plans, including departure from either city at the break or end of program, without first confirming with the professors or directors that you are free to be gone!

Academics in Florence

In Florence, orientation will begin on the first night that you arrive, and will include an introduction to the program and a walking tour of the city. If you have prior Italian language study, you will be given a test to determine the appropriate class level at Linguaviva, the language school where the ACM program is centered. This is only a placement test. If you haven’t had Italian before, you will be placed in the beginning class.

Daily schedules vary from year to year depending on the director’s plans but classes usually meet Monday through Thursday with field trips on Fridays. In Florence, many of your class sessions will be taught around the city in art galleries, architecturally significant buildings, and historical sites most of which are a short walk from Linguaviva. The classrooms at Linguaviva will serve as a study area when not in use, and since the students live all over the city, Linguaviva will often be a central meeting place. There will also be day-long and overnight field trips outside Florence, and they usually fall on weekends. With this hectic field trip schedule and your academic obligations, you should plan to do most of your traveling during the break or before/after the program. There will be at least one long weekend for students to travel independently.
Florentine families generally have their evening meal at about 8:00/8:30 p.m., and it is often a long, leisurely one. It is not always realistic to plan for after-dinner study time. Previous groups have found that meeting their academic obligations while becoming acquainted with their Italian families and friends and participating in some of their activities was a challenge. Students also found the effort of functioning in a foreign language to be tiring at first. In the end, though, they were rewarded with great satisfaction at being able to converse in a new language and with the kind of personal growth they could not have experienced living among Americans.

Courses in Florence:

**January Language Course** (Linguaviva staff, 3 credits)

Ten-week and 18-week Florence students participate in the intensive Italian language course offered by Linguaviva during January. The course meets five days a week, 3.5 hours a day. Because the cost and credits awarded for the intensive Italian in January may vary from one campus to another, you should review the information on the cost sheet carefully and also check with your home campus before you leave for Florence.

**Italian Language** (Linguaviva staff, 2 credits)

After the regular term begins in Florence (in late January for Florence first students, in late March for the London first group), students will continue to take Italian, although with fewer weekly contact hours than in the January intensive course. As with the January session, instruction emphasizes spoken colloquial Italian so that students may quickly continue to build their conversational ability. The Linguaviva instructors are not just language teachers but also rich sources of information about Italian culture, and they can help students solve the daily problems which Italians and foreigners share.

*Students choose two elective classes from the list below:*

**The Medici as Patrons of the Arts**

(Josephine Rogers Mariotti, 3 credits)

The Medici family is arguably the single most important family in Florentine history, generation after generation, all active patrons of the arts during centuries in which the city experienced its greatest cultural and artistic flourishing. This course will trace the family’s history as art patrons during the course of the 15th and early 16th century, examining the relations between specific members of the dynasty and the art produced under their auspices. Beginning with the late 14th century, at the debut of the rise in wealth and power of the family, we will explore the history and profiles of various members of the family from Giovanni di Bicci, Cosimo the Elder, Piero the Gouty, Lorenzo il Magnifico to the Medici popes, Leo X and Clement VII; our studies will also include other Florentine families and patrons who share a common culture with the leading family. On site experience of the art they promoted will allow us to explore: how each patron relates to the artists employed; how the patron’s choice of artist reflects personal philosophy and persona; how patronage relates and contributes to contemporary culture and philosophy; how the art produced under their auspices fits within the cultural, political and social make-up of the city. We will also see the significant role the Medici played in the complex game of art and politics with regard to other centers in Italy, some of which we will have the opportunity to visit during the course of the term. Thus, this course will focus on the major personalities of the early branch of the Medici, concluding
with the initial stages of the Cinquecento (1500s) and the early life of Michelangelo, one of the Medici’s most beloved artists.

**The Sight-Size Tradition: Drawing and Portraiture**  
(Staff of the Charles H. Cecil Studios, 3 credits)  
*This course will be offered during the first half of the program. Students participating in the Florence-first program will be able to take this course.*

This studio art course will teach a historic technique for drawing from a live model, from casts of famous statues, and from the city itself. Live models will be used for full figure drawing and casts for portraiture. Classroom instruction will take place in the Charles H. Cecil Studios, the most historic Florentine atelier still in active use. At the end of the semester, there will be an exhibit of the student work and a final critique.

**Italian Cinema**  
(Stefano Socci, 3 credits)  
*This course will be offered during the second half of the program. Students participating in the London-first program will be able to take this course.*

This course examines the historical, social and cultural roots of Italian Cinema, starting with the silent movies (*Cabiria*, 1913), and traces its development from Neorealism to the present. The course covers leading directors, such as: Antonioni, Bertolucci, De Santis, De Sica, Fellini, Giordana, Leone, Moretti, Muccino, Pasolini, Placido, Rossellini, Sorrentino, Tornatore, and Visconti. The course also offers an outline of main genres in Italian Cinema: drama, melodrama, comedy, spaghetti western, and peplum (sandal movie). The main purposes of this course are: (1) to introduce students to major Italian movies from Neorealism to the present; (2) to examine some of the basic principles of film criticism; (3) to show how Italian history is described by Italian directors. **TEXTBOOK FOR THIS COURSE AVAILABLE IN FLORENCE:** P. Bondanella, *Italian Cinema from Neorealism to the Present*, New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1983.

**Through the Looking Glass: Intersections of Time & Place in Italian Opera**  
(Andrew Whitfield, Affiliated Scholar, 4 semester credits)  
Between 1573 and 1587, an esteemed body of academics, philosophers, musicians, and poets gathered at the salon of Count Giovanni de’ Bardi in Florence. From the discussions and subsequent artistic efforts of this group, a new musical art form was born: opera. Deeply connected to the intellectual, political, and cultural atmosphere of Florence in the late Renaissance, this new art form sought to embody a new unity of the arts as an homage to the combination of poetry, drama, dance, and music found in ancient Greek dramas.

Beginning with some of the earliest operas that were performed in Florence, this course will investigate the intersection of specific time periods in Italian history and specific Italian cities through the lens of opera. Using operas that demonstrate an effective integration of time and locale, students will be able to assess how composers and librettists choose to incorporate elements of a city or a time period into the drama, how a place can become a “character” in the story, and how trends in the visual arts and the ethos of a place can be translated into music and drama. The locales selected for study in this course represent ones significant to historical and cultural developments in Italy: medieval Florence; medieval Genoa; eighteenth-century Naples; imperial Rome; and Rome at the turn of the nineteenth century. Furthermore,
the operas associated with each of these periods and locations represent significant works from the operatic repertoire—ones that are frequently performed today, and ones that present a compelling integration of drama, music, and action.

This course is designed to be accessible and challenging for students from all disciplinary backgrounds, regardless of musical experience.

**Program-Sponsored Excursions**

There will be two weekend trips (to Venice and Rome) that are part of the academic program. Attendance is mandatory as it is for classes. The cost of these trips is included in your program fee.

**Program Library - Florence**

The ACM has a limited resource library available for student use located in the main classroom of the program. Unfortunately, this means that it is sometimes unavailable to students due to class sessions.

Though students in the London & Florence program do not complete a research project, students may still wish to have access to the resources of a campus library while abroad. ACM recommends that students interested in accessing such resources connect with their home campus library so they know the procedures for accessing databases and other resources in their home library from remote locations.

Students can consult the on-line catalog (https://www.librarything.com/profile/ACMFLORENCE) to see what is available in Florence, including the number of copies of any one text. It also serves the students in Florence as a search machine and the checkout system to guarantee availability of the texts to all.

**Radio receivers for on-site classes**

ACM Florence will loan each student a radio-receiver for use during all field trips. The use of radio-guides has become obligatory for group visits to Italian museums and monuments. ACM requires that at orientation, each student sign a contract for the loan of this device. At the end of the term, if your assigned receiver is not returned in good, working condition, you will be assessed a 70 euro replacement fee. You are responsible for caring for the device and reporting any malfunction during the loan period.

**Academics in London**

There will be orientation sessions and activities throughout your first few days in London. During these initial meetings you will discuss practical things such as rules for the apartment building, getting around London, and the academic schedule. The director will also confirm the theatre bookings for her course. Classes normally meet four or five days per week and when classes meet on-site you will need to factor in travel time to get to the meeting point on time. Most weeks also involve two nights at the theatre. Carrying a full course load and getting to know one of the world’s most diverse and active cities challenges every student. Doing everything (and doing it on time) is possible, but it takes good organization and self-discipline.

**Courses in London:**

**London as Visual Text**

(Andrew Kennedy, 4 credits)

This course will examine the art and architecture of London while considering the political, religious, economic, and social forces that shaped their creation and current function. Discussion of historical texts and visits to important buildings, neighborhoods, and museums will trace the development of the English city from its ancient roots to the 20th century. By the end of the course, students will be able to readily distinguish between Medieval Gothic and Gothic Revival buildings, as well as identify Elizabethan,
Classical Revival, and Postmodern architectural styles and recognize the role that each played in London's history. While the main focus of the course will be architecture, other arts such as portrait painting and tomb sculpture will also be addressed.

**London Theatre and Theatricality**  
(Constance Walker, Carlton College, 4 credits)

The purpose of this course is to explore both theatre in London and the ways in which London itself functions as a theatrical space calculated for political, economic, cultural, and aesthetic display. London is arguably the home of the finest theatre in the world, and during our seven weeks together we will see a wide variety of the best productions on offer in the winter and spring of 2016. We'll attend plays at venues ranging from the National Theatre, the Barbican, the Donmar Warehouse, and the Almeida, to the experimental work going on in the Hampstead, Tricycle, and Gate Theatres, and to even more intimate productions staged in makeshift quarters above pubs and bakeries. We’ll also travel to Stratford-upon-Avon to see several performances by the Royal Shakespeare Company. In addition to attending performances, we’ll have the opportunity to talk with critics, actors, and directors of several of the plays we’ll see, and to tour the Globe, the Rose, and the National Theatres. In class we’ll analyze and discuss the productions we see, working closely with their scripts, considering their interpretive choices, and thinking together more broadly about the means and ends of performance.

Moreover, if we consider performance even more generally as “any action that is framed, presented, highlighted, or displayed,” as Richard Schechner defines it in *Performance Studies*, then we may also observe similarities between the performances enacted inside London’s theatres and those that take place throughout the city at large. In conjunction with the other ACM London course, “London as Visual Text,” we will consider the city itself as a vast theatre, the setting and impetus for dramas real and imaginary over the centuries. London has served as the stage of spectacles historical and modern, of scandals, riots, criminal trials, and public executions, of devastating fires and bombings, of historic debates in the Houses of Parliament, and of majestic royal weddings, pageants, and funerals. And it is intimately bound up as well with the highly dramatic exploits of iconic literary characters scarcely less real—Oliver Twist, Sweeney Todd, and Sherlock Holmes, for example. In addition to studying London theatre, then, we will also explore its theatricality, looking at the staging of the city's rituals, ceremonies, and dramas. We will pursue several key questions in particular: who stages London's varied spectacles, and to what ends? What about the city's distinctive urban identity lends itself to its dramas and spectacles? How does that drama manifest itself, and what can we learn about the city and about performance from the spectacles that are staged outside of London's theatres?

**Collecting the World in London**  
(Andrew Kennedy, 4 credits)  
*This course will be offered during the second half of the program. Students participating in the Florence-first program will be able to take this course.*

London has dozens of museums, displaying a range of objects from mummies to fans, toys to tropical plants. This course looks at museums not simply as institutions of enlightenment, but as enactments of power – power over the past; over colonized or subjugated peoples; over life, death and disease; over
nature. How have museums attempted to classify the world? In doing so, what is the price paid for taking things or living entities out of their original context? We examine questions of repatriation: should museums return objects and human remains in their collections? What is the need to display material artefacts in a digital age? Are there other ways of creating ‘authentic’ experiences?

Program-Sponsored Excursion
Each London group will visit Stratford-on-Avon. This trip is part of the academic program and attendance is mandatory, as it is for classes in London. The cost of the excursion is included in your program fee.

Classroom Expectations - London
London classrooms are located in a building operated by Anglo Educational Services (AES). AES policies do not allow consumption of food or drink in the classrooms, and no smoking is allowed in the building or on adjacent sidewalks. Smokers are asked to cross the street into Russell Square.

Educational Differences
In your studies in Europe, you will be a participant in an educational system that differs markedly from that to which you are accustomed at your home college. You may 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.

Suggestions for academic success:
- Faculty members expect a level of respect 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. Unless your instructor suggests differently, address him or her as “Doctor” or “Professor.”

- Be more formal in the classroom than at your home campus, especially toward the professor. Choose to sit with a posture that shows respect and attention. You should not eat or drink during class. If you bring a laptop, use it only to take notes, not to check email or surf the web. Do not text in class.

- Instructors typically do not hold traditional office hours. If you have questions about the material or readings, the best strategy is to speak with your instructor immediately after class.

- Establish informal discussion groups with several of your fellow students in which to discuss your understanding of the material covered in class and in readings. Meet regularly.

Credits
ACM recommends a total of 12, 17, or 20 semester credits, as shown in the course descriptions, for your academic work in Florence only, London & Florence 15-week program, or London & Florence 18-week program respectively. Before you leave your home campus you should contact and discuss with your 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 find out about pass/fail options and how your London & Florence credits will appear on your transcript.
Preparing to Go and Arrival

Passport & Visas

You need a valid passport to travel outside the U.S. and into the UK and Italy. If you don’t already have a valid passport, or if your current passport expires before November 2016, you need to apply/renew immediately. Go to http://travel.state.gov/passport/ for more information.

As a precaution, we suggest that while you are traveling, keep your passport separate from your wallet in a money belt or other concealed carrier at all times. This way, even if you lose your purse or wallet, your passport will remain safe. There are a few precautions you can take to expedite the process of replacing your passport in case it is lost or stolen. Make a copy of your passport and carry the page separately from your passport. Keep a few extra passport-size photos and a certified copy of your birth certificate. If, for whatever reason, you lose your passport, contact the program staff and the nearest United States Consulate or Embassy as soon as possible.

Requirements for visas vary from country to country, and are changing all of the time. U.S. citizens are permitted to enter Italy for up to 90 days without a visa. Since the Italy portion of the program is less than 90 days, you do not need to obtain a visa for the program. If you plan to extend the semester in Italy (or elsewhere), it is your responsibility to research the immigration rules. Non-U.S. citizens may need to obtain a UK or Italian visa, and they should contact the nearest Consulate or Embassy as soon as possible for more information on visa requirements.

Once students arrive in Florence, the program coordinator will assist them in obtaining the requisite dichiarazione di presenza, required of all students who spend less than 90 days in Italy. (There is no additional charge for this process.) Students who enter Italy from a non-Schengen country (Chicago-London-Florence) or on a direct flight from the U.S. do not need to complete the dichiarazione di presenza.

Students will need an official student visitor letter in order to enter the UK. ACM will work with your college to generate the letter and it is your responsibility to pick up the letter from your Off-Campus Study Director prior to departing your campus.

Passport-size Photographs

You will need to bring two passport sized photos to Italy, one for your Linguaviva ID and one for the bus pass in Florence. These photos can be printed on a home printer but must be on photo paper. Photos should be in color, approximately 2” x 2”. They should show your full face against a white background. You may need official passport photos if you plan to visit countries that require a visa for entry; determining those requirements is your responsibility. You can get passport-size photos taken at
most Walgreens and Kinkos stores. Photo booths are scattered throughout both London and Florence, so you can have more pictures taken there if you need.

**Communication**

**Email and Computers**

If you have a laptop, bring it along. The Linguaviva building in Florence has a wireless connection. With an adapter, you can plug your laptop in and use it at school or in your room at home. Please note that host families may have wireless or dial-up internet. Before you go, be sure to check the battery life and other functions on the computer, and have any repairs taken care of in advance, because computer repair is slow and very expensive in Italy. There are two computers and two printers for students to use to write and print school papers. Be aware that Linguaviva closes at 5 p.m., which means that from that time onward you won't have access to the program computer or wireless internet. Students can access Wi-Fi at other places in Florence including the Biblioteca Oblate. Another option is to access the internet at one of the several internet cafes within walking distance of Linguaviva, and with your Linguaviva student ID you're eligible for discounted rates. Students will need to register for the service and are responsible for paying an hourly rate for the time they spend online.

In London students have access to the internet at 29-31 Clifton Gardens but there are limits on the use of bandwidth per week. Some students opt to leave the premises and can access the Wi-Fi at various internet cafes and coffee shops around London. There are also computer stations in the program’s classroom building for student use.

**Mail in Florence and London**

Please ask family and friends to send mail to the addresses listed at the back of this handbook (AES office in London, Linguaviva in Florence). While you are in Florence, **you should not receive mail at your host family's residence**. Staff at Linguaviva will be there to accept the post during business hours, and you can pick up your mail every day on your way to class.

**Receiving Packages**

**ACM does not recommend that you receive any packages in either city.** 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. It is a huge hassle to retrieve packages, and for these reasons we ask that packages not be sent. Ask family and friends sending you packages not to send anything expensive or valuable (e.g., computer equipment, cameras, etc.) and to declare the package’s contents worth nothing. Also, be sure your family does not send you anything that will arrive after you've left the site. Packages sent from the U.S. take about two weeks to arrive plus additional time if they get held up in customs. Finally, be sure to bring all of the prescription medication you’ll need for the entire semester; do not plan to have medications (of any kind) sent to you while abroad.

**Phones**

You will likely want to purchase a cell phone to use while you’re abroad. Unlike most cell phone providers in the U.S., you’re not required to sign a service contract in Europe, there is no monthly
allowance for minutes, and you do not get a bill. Instead, you buy a cell phone and purchase a certain number of minutes, similar to using a calling card. When those minutes run out, you simply pay for a recharge. Each European country requires a different SIM card, so if you want to use a phone during the program you will need to buy a SIM card in London and one in Florence.

ACM students have the option in Florence to purchase a cell phone upon arrival with the WIND company. The cost is around 20€ for the phone and SIM card. There are special tariffs that permit the students to contact faculty, staff and each other at a low cost and at the end of the term, the phone company repurchases the phones for 5€, bringing the total cost per student per semester to about 15€ (plus the cost of traffic generated). The advantages with regard to security and logistics and the fact that students can be reached by their families at no cost to the student, make this a highly recommended solution. It has proven to be of exceptional utility in various circumstances: field trips, daily on-site visits, travel, health issues, etc.

You may receive telephone calls at the home of your host family, but you should plan on making calls to the U.S. only from your cell phone or from a pay phone if you have a credit card. This is a courtesy to your host family, because in Italy the phone company frequently makes the mistake of billing callers for collect calls. Receiving bills for an ACM student’s transatlantic calls has been distressing to host families in the past.

Alternatively, you can bring your U.S. cell phone, provided that it is a GSM, and that you call your cell phone carrier in the U.S. for an unlock code. You can then purchase SIM cards in Florence and in London for use on your existing phone and purchase minutes for traffic. It’s a simpler process than in the U.S.

Students rely heavily on Skype for communicating with their families and friends (www.skype.com).

To call the U.S. from Florence, you must dial the following: international calling code (00) + country code (1 in the U.S.) + 3-digit area code + 7-digit number. To call Florence from the U.S., dial the international calling code (011) + country code (39 in Italy) + city code (055 in Florence) + number OR CELL PHONE NUMBER WITHOUT 055. Calls to landlines within Florence must begin with the city code (055).

To call the U.S. from London, you must dial the following: international calling code (00) + country code (1 in the U.S.) + 3-digit area code + 7-digit number. To call London from the U.S., dial the international calling code (011) + country code (44 in the U.K.) + city code (20) + number. Calls within London whose city code is 20 require only that you dial the last eight digits.

When making international calls, remember to account for the time difference.
Money

The amount of money you’ll need in Florence and London depends upon your plans, tastes, and habits. Most members of last year’s group spent between $2,000 and $4,000 (including food for lunch), but if the exchange rate drops in either country, you might have to budget for more. You’ll need to adjust this figure to fit your own lifestyle and budget.

Your major daily expenses in Florence will include lunch, internet, and personal necessities. (For information on how much you can expect to spend for personal needs such as shampoo, lunch, or a movie ticket, please see the Cost Information Sheet posted at http://acm.edu/programs/7/lonflo/Cost.html.) On program-sponsored field trips to Rome and Venice, your breakfast and dinner will be provided for you, just as they are in Florence. The program provides bus passes in Florence to all students.

For London, while you’ll receive a tube pass for zones 1 and 2 (known as an “oyster card”), you’ll want to budget for the costs of meals and personal items such as toothpaste plus additional travel outside of zones 1 and 2 in Greater London. On the program-sponsored excursion to Stratford, the cost of transportation and an overnight stay, as well as theatre tickets, is included in the program fee, but you will be responsible for some meal costs.

You’ll need more money if you plan to travel on your own before or after the program, or if you plan to buy a lot of gifts and other things to take home with you. Be sure to budget for the cost of your travel, accommodations, and meals during the program break.

In Italy, as in most of the European Union, the currency is the euro. Britain, although a member of the EU, has elected not to adopt the euro and continues to use the pound as its unit of currency. In each country you will need to have the appropriate unit of currency. (€ is the symbol for the euro, while £ is the symbol for the British pound.)

Cash

All airports will have ATMs, and for a fee you can withdraw some cash as soon as you arrive in Europe; this is the best and easiest option. You will need euros or pounds for the taxi, bus, or train once you exit the airport. If you decide to buy euros or pounds in the U.S., buy only enough to tide you over for the first few days, students recommend the equivalent of £100 or 100€ or less. Foreign currency can be purchased in the U.S. at any bank with an international banking department and at some airports. During the program we don’t recommend that you keep more than 50€ or £50 in cash in your wallet at a time.
Euros for Florence:

Credit and Debit Cards
Using debit and credit cards is the safest and most convenient way to handle your money while you're abroad, and it is recommended that you bring one of each type. ATMs on the PLUS and CIRRUS networks are available throughout Europe, and can be used to withdraw currency from your American account. ATMs almost always offer better exchange rates than banks and currency exchange offices, but 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 discourage multiple withdrawals of small amounts. Shop around for a credit card that has no or limited foreign transaction fees. Before the program starts, consult your bank and credit card provider to make sure that your cards will work in Italy, the UK, and wherever else you plan to go. Also, inform them that you will be spending a
semester in Florence and London so that they won’t block activity on your card, thinking it was stolen. In the unfortunate event that your card actually is lost or stolen, make sure you know the procedure for reporting the loss and obtaining a new one while you are overseas.

Packing Considerations

You are advised to pack the type/style of clothing you normally wear. If something on the suggested packing list is not something you already own or feel you need, then don’t bring it. The packing suggestions are just that, they are suggestions made by program alums. The only items that are required for you to bring are listed under the heading of Required Materials.

Bring items that you plan to leave behind, such as towels, t-shirts, etc. so that you have room in your luggage for souvenirs. Bring travel-size toiletries when possible. You can buy full-sized products in both London and Florence but they tend to be more expensive than what you will find in the U.S.

Bring a suitcase, plus a backpack for field trips and weekend traveling. If you plan to do any travel before/after the program or during your weeklong break (for those doing both London and Florence sections), bear in mind that you’ll have to keep all of your luggage with you as you travel during these periods. ACM does not provide options for students to ship their luggage from one city to the other and does not have facilities or staff to receive and/or store shipped luggage. Students should not expect to be excused from academic sessions so they can be present at their flats in London to receive shipped luggage, and students should not expect homestay families to receive luggage on their behalf in Florence. **Expect and plan to travel with your luggage before and after the program and during the weeklong break.**

Double check with your airline about the baggage limits of weight and dimensions for both checked and carry-on luggage. If you exceed the weight and/or size limits for baggage, you might be charged an additional fee, so check with your airline in advance. When you pack your bags, include your name and the program address inside each bag in case it gets lost. If your bags are damaged or missing when you arrive, file a written report with the airline before leaving the airport.

Pack anything you’ll need immediately upon arrival in your carry-on bag. It is always recommended that you pack at least one day’s worth of clothing in your carry-on in case your checked baggage is delayed. Check both your airline’s and the Transportation Security Administration’s websites for the latest carry-on luggage restrictions (www.tsa.gov). **You should never put prescription drugs or valuables in your checked luggage.** To avoid a delay at customs, carry medications in their original packaging. You might also ask your doctor to write a spare prescription using the drug’s generic name, since brand names may vary. If you wear glasses or contacts, bring an extra pair. If, when you board your flight, the overhead luggage is full and you are asked to put your bag under the plane, take out all prescriptions and valuables!

We strongly recommend that you carry your money, passport, and any valuables in a money belt beneath your clothes while you’re traveling or in a small bag/wristlet. It’s an unfortunate truth that petty thieves and pickpockets are common in larger European cities, especially on trains and in train stations. Do not presume that you will be immune to this, and take the precautions to prevent it. A few years ago, one student’s purse was stolen off her shoulder in the centro of Florence in broad daylight. In her purse she was carrying, among other things, her passport, driver’s license, credit cards, and several hundred euros in cash. Protect yourself against theft.
Clothing

Bring clothes that will adapt to different seasons and situations and that are sturdy, comfortable, easy-care, and ones that can layer. Many students use scarves to layer. Avoid a piece of clothing you’ll wear only once or twice during the semester. Laundromats and dry-cleaning are expensive, so hand-wash and drip-dry materials are the most practical. For the most part, dryers are not used, so you may wish to bring along a collapsible plastic hanger or clothesline for drip-drying. Your packing will be much more efficient and your clothes will arrive in a more wearable condition if you tightly and smoothly roll them rather than fold them.

Comfortable walking shoes are an absolute must and it is a good idea to break them in before the program. Remember that you will be walking in rainy weather; choose your shoes accordingly. You will need a warm coat, jacket, or a raincoat with a zip-in-lining for outdoors, and sweaters for the cool indoor temperatures. Warm pajamas are a necessity for cool winter and early spring nights. Sweaters are versatile traveling garments: they work with jackets on frigid days or without jackets on mild ones. Lightweight thermal underwear may also be a real asset. Keep in mind that it will be warmer by the end of May, so bring lighter shirts, t-shirts, blouses, and perhaps a swimsuit and towel. You should have casual clothes for everyday use, and one dressy outfit for concerts and the theatre.

Your Italian family will expect you to wear slippers in the house, so bring a pair with you. It is considered impolite to walk around in bare or stocking feet. This custom has practical origins: many apartments in Florence have chilly marble or ceramic floors, and slippers provide a barrier against the cold.

Climate and Dress in Florence

If you are spending the first part of the semester in Florence, you’ll catch the last part of winter and the first part of spring. January and February temperatures will vary from about 35 to 55 degrees Fahrenheit (2 to 13 °C). March is normally the beginning of spring, and midday temperatures can reach the high 60s (18 to 21 °C). You will need both winter and spring clothing. Students who spend the second part of the semester in Florence will probably find full spring weather, including frequent rains. Past Florence groups, in fact, have found Italy more rainy than sunny. Typical student dress in Florence is casual, but not sloppy.

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Climate and Dress in London

The average temperature in London in February is 35 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit (2 to 4 °C). In March the average temperature climbs to 45 (7°C) and to the mid-50s (11 to 14°C) in April. Those of you in the first London group will, therefore, be in for more severe weather than those in the second. These temperatures can be misleading because the weather is damp as well as chilly. However, you will enjoy the early English spring when the country is rich with cherry blossoms and spring flowers. Like in Italy, public buildings, galleries, theaters, etc., in London are often quite chilly by American standards. Rain in the winter and early spring months is also a fact of life but you will enjoy some warm days too (up to 60°F/15°C). You will need warm clothes, and would be well advised to have a raincoat and a travel umbrella. Think in terms of layers of clothing (i.e., shirt + sweater + jacket) to accommodate a variety of conditions. Keep in mind that while formal dress is by no means required for most of your theatre outings in London, you might want to have the option of occasionally wearing something dressy—a jacket and tie for men, a dress or skirt for women.
Suggested Packing List

Required Materials
- Passport
- Certified copy of your birth certificate (in case of lost passport)
- ATM card, credit card, cash
- 2 passport-sized photos – See page 11
- Copy of your acceptance email
- UK student visitor letter
- Required textbooks
- CISI insurance card

Essential Clothing
- Raincoat with zip-in lining
- Warm coat
- Gloves, hats, scarves
- Sweaters
- T-shirts and long-sleeve shirts
- Pants
- Warm pajamas
- Undergarments and socks
- Slippers/shoes to wear around the house (it is not acceptable to be barefoot)
- Walking shoes (break them in before the program)

Personal and Miscellaneous Items
- This student handbook
- Umbrella (for both locations)
- Clothesline (dryers are very expensive)
- Sewing kit
- Toiletry items in travel sizes and larger
- Stick deodorant (can be hard to find on-site)
- Hand sanitizer
- Glasses or contact lenses + extra pair and copy of your prescription (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 generic names)
- Basic medicine kit (pain medication, band aids, cold medicine)
- A bath towel and wash cloths (not provided in either location; can purchase on-site)
- Bug spray (Florence)
- Travel alarm clock
- Backpack/bag for routine daily use (some students bring larger backpacks for weekend travel)
- Small bag for just a notebook during classes on-site
- Money belt, small bag/wristlet
- School supplies (can be purchased on-site)
- Guidebooks
- Laptop
- USB drive
- Converter plug
- Voltage adapter
- Camera, memory card and charger
- Pictures of your family, home, and college to show to your host family and friends
- Water bottle
- Lanyard for keys
- Journal to record personal reflections
- Italian/English dictionary
- Theatre-style glasses/binoculars for shows
Travel Arrangements

You are responsible for arranging your own transportation to and from Europe and between cities during the break (if you are a part of the 15 or 18 week program), and should begin researching airfares and travel options as soon as possible. Most students wait to plan their break travel until they arrive in their first city so they can organize travel with other program participants. We encourage you to find another program participant to travel with by coordinating through the Facebook group. A big advantage of traveling with other participants is that you’ll have people you know around to keep an extra eye on your luggage, as theft and pick pocketing can occur in airports and larger European cities.

Later in this handbook (starting on page 45), you will find very specific directions for arrival in both London and Florence. These are verified directions on how to get to each city, but feel free to consult other sources, including program alumni.

Travel guides are full of useful information for students and travelers on a budget. Websites like Kayak, Orbitz, and Expedia can help you compare flight schedules and prices. You might also contact a travel agent, who can suggest other options and will help you to build an itinerary that fits your needs. When you make your flight reservations, be sure to factor in the time you'll need to make connections between planes and/or trains so you’ll arrive safely and at a reasonable time.

If you can afford it, you might plan to arrive in your starting city a day or two before the program begins. Keep in mind that all expenses incurred before or after the official program are your responsibility. Although there are no planned group activities during this time, arriving early gives you a chance to rest, recover from jet lag, begin finding your way around town, and see some of the sights before your schedule starts to fill up.

Remember: You should consult with the director in London or Florence before confirming travel plans for weekends or breaks. Do not assume that the schedule will be the same from week-to-week and understand that there may be one-time program activities outside of typical class meetings times. Make no plans, including departure from either city at the break or end of program, without first confirming with the professors or directors that you are free to be gone!

Arrival

Please adhere carefully to arrival times. Depending on how and where you are arriving, you should plan for your flight arrival to be at least two hours before the times listed below. Orientation activities will begin promptly as noted.

**Florence First 18-week & Florence only** students should arrive in Florence to check-in at Hotel Palazzo Vecchio in time for Orientation meeting on Sunday, January 3rd at 5 p.m. This meeting will take place in the ACM classroom on the 4th floor of Via Fiume, 17, which is the building around the corner from the hotel.

**Florence First 15-week** students should arrive in Florence by 5 p.m. on Thursday, January 21st at Via Fiume, 17 4th Floor to transfer to homestays in the early evening.

**London First 15-week** students should arrive at Clifton Gardens by 5 p.m. on Saturday, January 23.
After the break, students need to arrive in their next city and be at their initial meeting location by 5 p.m. on Sunday, March 20. Make sure your flight/train arrival allows you enough time to get from your disembarkation point to the program location by 5 p.m.

**Immigration and Customs**

When you arrive in Europe, you will be required to clear both immigration and customs. You will fill out an immigration card, which you should get either at check-in or on the plane. Once you land, you will head towards the immigration lines: the wait could be 5 minutes or 2 hours. Present the immigration card with your passport at the immigration desk. You will be asked some questions, such as the purpose of your visit (to study) and perhaps asked to prove that you are able to support yourself financially without working while you are abroad. When entering the UK, you will need to present your official acceptance letter and your UK student visitor letter. The UK may also ask to see that you have sufficient funds, and you should show the immigration officer your credit card; you should also draw his/her attention to the statement on the student visitor letter which notes that you have already paid for your lodging, etc. as part of the program fee. In Italy you will enter the country as a tourist, as visas are not issued for students studying there for less than 90 days.

You will then collect your luggage and go through customs which can be just a wave of the hand, but it can also be a thorough search of your luggage.

If you are landing in another international country before your final destination country you will likely need to go through immigration twice. Just follow the signs in the airport or ask an airport employee for assistance if you get confused.

For detailed arrival information and directions, please see page 45.
Living Arrangements

Florence

When you first arrive in Florence, you will be staying at the Hotel Palazzo Vecchio for 1-2 nights, getting acquainted with staff and other program participants. The cost of the hotel stay and reservation has been taken care of by ACM Florence.

Hotel Palazzo Vecchio
Via Bernardo Cennini, 4 - 50123 Firenze, Italia
Tel. +39 055 212182
Email: info@hotelpalazzovechhio.it
Website: www.hotelpalazzovecchio.it

If you plan to arrive before the official program start date, you will be responsible for your own arrangements. To reserve a room at the Hotel Palazzo Vecchio for a few nights before the program starts, please contact Mr. Andrea Pucci at manager@hotelpalazzovecchio.it and make sure to mention that you are with the ACM program in your email.

Host Families

Upon arriving at the program site you will be matched with a host family. After the night(s) at the hotel you will be placed in an Italian home. There are generally two ACM students to a household, and you'll share a room; singles are available only if there are an odd number of women and/or men. Some or all members of your host family may be able to speak English, but you should expect to communicate in Italian.

Most Florentine residents do not live in the historic city, and you will probably need to commute from your host residence to the centro for classes at Linguaviva. The commute is generally between 15 and 30 minutes by bus or on foot. You will be provided a Florence bus pass and given orientation on using the bus system.

ACM students enjoy a great deal of diversity in their living situations. You may be placed in a multigenerational household with babies and grandparents, or you might live with an older woman or a couple with extra space in their apartment. As you might expect, most large Florentine families don't have an abundance of space to host students, so the number of families with small children who can accommodate ACM students is limited. Give some thought to the kind of situation that might work best for you, and express your preferences in your housing letters to the Florence program staff.

According to the Linguaviva contractual agreement with the families that ACM follows, breakfast and dinner will be provided by your host family; lunch is on your own. If you have any special dietary restrictions, be sure to let ACM know in advance so that it can take into account in making housing arrangements. Breakfast is usually fairly simple—coffee and bread or a pastry, for example—but the
evening meal is another thing entirely. Italians are known for taking time every day to savor large meals and enjoy the company of friends and family, and dinner can often involve many courses, lasting for two or more hours. Take advantage of this opportunity to learn about your host family and the cuisine of Italy. Lunch is not included in the program fee; students are provided a small space in their host families’ refrigerator to store ingredients for cold lunches that you can then take to Linguaviva. Alternatively, there are several inexpensive restaurants near Linguaviva where you can purchase lunch in the middle of the day. Please keep in mind that you do not have the use of the kitchen in your host family’s house or apartment for food preparation except for lunches.

Respect of the privacy and property of the families is of the utmost importance. You may not access their belongings or collections of books, films, CDs (in short, their personal property) without first asking their permission. The same holds true for food and kitchen supplies.

Each student will have one load of laundry done per week by their host mother. Since there will almost always be two of you with a family, we recommend that you share washing, doing one white wash and one dark wash per week together, specifying that you want your clothes washed at a low temperature (maximum 40° C).

Here are a few tips for living with an Italian family:

- Your family in Italy will expect you to wear slippers inside the house, so bring a pair with you. Many of the apartments have cold marble or ceramic floors, and you will be considered impolite if you walk around in bare or stocking feet.
- Many more Italians than Americans smoke, and while your Italian family will not smoke in front of you, we cannot guarantee a smoke-free home for everyone.
- Cats are popular pets in Italy, so if you are allergic to cat dander you should indicate so on the Medical Information Form and let the Director in Florence know.
- Please be sure to inform your family in advance if you will miss a meal or if you plan to be away for the weekend.
- Ask your host family if friends and your (American) family can call you there, but also plan on using your cell phone for calls you make yourself. (The Italian phone system charges for minutes used and does not list individual phone calls on its bills.) Your host family will, in all likelihood, prefer you to use their phone only for brief incoming calls.
- Don’t be shy about asking your host family to do things with them during free time (such as going to the grocery store or going out for gelato).
London

You will be living in apartments at 29-31 Clifton Gardens in the Maida Vale neighborhood of northwest London. Each flat will house at least four students in two or three bedroom units with one or two bathrooms. Each unit has its own kitchen and living space. You might feel safe leaving your dorm room door unlocked from time to time on your home campus; do not do this in London.

![Image of a bedroom and kitchen in a flat]

The building’s housekeepers will provide basic weekly cleaning and linen service, but ACM students are expected to keep their flats in clean condition. You will be living in this building as a member of a community of students and, out of consideration for other residents, common areas should be kept as tidy as possible.

Basic bedding linens and cooking supplies are provided in the flat and ACM has purchased some supplementary cooking and kitchen supplies. Students will need to provide their own towels and will need to purchase consumable supplies such as paper towels and bathroom tissue. The purchase of all food items is the responsibility of the students. Laundry facilities are located nearby in the adjoining neighborhood.

The flat is a three-minute walk from the Warwick Avenue Underground station, which is served by the Bakerloo line. It’s a block from a very vibrant area of shops and restaurants including a Tesco (grocery store). The building and its neighborhood are central to the entire city. London’s theatres, parks, markets and cathedrals, etc. are just a short Tube ride away.

If you plan to arrive in London before the official program start date, you will be responsible for your own arrangements. Space in the Clifton Gardens flats is not likely to be available in advance of the program dates.
Cultural Norms and Expectations

Cultural Differences

By design, an off-campus program is unlike life on your home campus. In addition to everyday differences—what and when you eat, you may also encounter larger, more elusive cultural contrasts. A big part of living abroad is recognizing and integrating to your new cultural surroundings. As you meet and establish friendships with English and Italian people, you might find that you need to adapt to different rules of etiquette and consider social and political perspectives you may not have heard expressed at home. Americans sometimes find it difficult to adjust to some Italians’ attitudes towards women and minorities, for example.

Adapting to new and different cultural practices and belief systems certainly doesn’t mean you have to abandon your own, but being aware of and attuned to cultural differences can help smooth the transition to life in another country. We encourage you to play the role of an anthropologist: observe Italian and English behavior on the street (and in your host family) and try to adapt. Italians and Brits come in all shapes, sizes, and attitudes, like any other group. You will encounter a discourteous, pushy, or aggressive person on occasion. Try not to take it personally. There will undoubtedly be days when you find it all overwhelming and crave the comforts of home—things you may realize you took completely for granted before. This is all a part of becoming attuned to the cross-cultural challenges of education abroad.

ITALY
Especially in Italy, where communicating in a foreign language can mean that even basic speech requires effort, you might sometimes start to feel tired of confronting so many challenges. But keep trying! It takes courage to remain open to so much newness, but in the end your efforts will bring rich rewards. Italy is not the U.S. and you may find yourself puzzled, or even annoyed, by various Italian customs and practices. It’s obviously impossible for ACM to tell you in advance everything you will experience or feel while in Italy, but there are some differences in behavior you may want to know about in advance. Here is a very incomplete list of some of the cultural contrasts you may encounter in Italy:

- Conceptions of personal space are quite different in Italy. You may find that people stand closer to you than at home, especially in public areas and on public transportation.
- Italians value courtesy and politeness. On buses, for example, you will find Italians readily giving up their seats to the elderly and mothers with children. And in waiting for the bus, while you may be taken aback by the lack of a line, you’ll find that people get on in an orderly fashion without pushing or shoving.
- Italians communicate more easily with strangers than Americans do, although in a less casual way.
- Even if you haven’t studied Italian before, start immediately to use small courtesies in Italian (“buon giorno” or “buona sera” when entering shops or cafes and “arrivederci” and “grazie” when exiting). You’ll find that it’s appreciated. Remember that “ciao” should be used when addressing people your own age or younger.
- The Italian language has two forms of address, the familiar ‘tu’ and the formal ‘Lei’. The latter is used with people one does not know well, with elders, generally in business negotiations, in
ACM ALUMNI ADVICE: Don’t eat on public transportation or in public buildings (except in cafeterias). Italians don’t “eat on the run” and they don’t bring snacks and lunches to meetings.

• In shops, merchandise is often kept on shelves behind the counter; even when it is not, let the sales person show you what you ask to see rather than sorting through the stock yourself. Your discretion will be appreciated.

• Smoking is banned by law in all enclosed spaces (including restaurants and theaters) unless they have a separate area with continuous floor-to-ceiling walls and a ventilation system. The smoking ban is one of the toughest in Europe.

• It is optional to tip in restaurants, taxis, at the hairdresser’s, or the barber’s. Tips are considerably lower than in the U.S., often less and never more than 10%.

UK

In Britain, don’t let the fact that we share a common language delude you into thinking that there are no significant cultural differences between the U.S. and Britain or that you need not adapt your way of interacting to function smoothly in your daily life. There are very real cultural differences, and one of the most significant is the high premium Britons put on politeness. They are, for example, far more likely to under-state rather than over-state a situation, as Americans are prone to do. You’ll find that “please,” “thank you,” and “sorry” are used with great frequency. And in making requests to one another, Britons tend to be overly polite—or at least that’s how it seems to us. Instead of saying, “I want to do such-and-such,” Britons are more likely to say, “Would it be possible for me to...?” or “Might I...?” We urge you to begin to do the same—you’ll find that people are much more likely to respond positively to your requests. Persistence is fine, but a lack of courtesy, especially losing your temper, is likely to be counterproductive. You’ll also find British politeness expressed in “queuing”—lining up for service and to get on buses and trains. It’s the norm in Britain, and you should do it too.

Although we share the same language, there are often significant differences in the meanings of words, with the same words expressing quite different and even opposite things on the opposite sides of the Atlantic. Some of these differences can be quite amusing, while others are simply confusing. You’ll learn some of these differences as you go along, and may at times find it humorous or, possibly, frustrating. Be prepared for these moments of mutual incomprehension!

Mental and Intellectual Preparation

Pre-Program Reading

You will receive a list of texts you’ll need for your courses in London and Florence. Readings and books are available in Florence for the Florence portion unless otherwise indicated. For London and especially for the plays you will be seeing in the Faculty Director’s course, you will be able to purchase books in London. You may also be asked to read one or two books before the program starts.

In the meantime, start to do some general reading about London and the UK, and about Florence, Tuscany, and Italy. Most libraries have collections of travel guides that can answer questions you may have about what to see and do during your time in England and Italy, and you can find specific reference books to help with the customs and cultures of both countries. (An option that previous ACM students have found particularly useful and relevant are CultureSmart guidebooks published by Kuperard.) You’ll make many discoveries on your own, but a good travel guide and map can help you get your bearings in an unfamiliar place and reduce the time it takes to start feeling at home.
Spend some time in the art history section of your college or public library looking at books on some of the art and historical sites you will experience in person when you get to Europe. Italian and English novels are good for recreational reading too.

Make a special effort to keep up with current events in Europe and North America. Past participants have remarked that their European friends were well informed and interested about American current events and politics. You may be asked your opinion on many international current events as well, so it's useful to stay apprised of what's going on in the world.

Travel Guides

*Italy* - *CultureSmart: The Essential Guide to Customs and Culture* (available through Amazon)
*Britain* – *CultureSmart: The Essential Guide to Customs and Culture* (Amazon)
*Lonely Planet*
*Rough Guide*
*Blue Guide: Florence*

Art and History of Florence & Italy

Eve Borsook, *The Companion Guide to Florence*
Martin Clark, *Modern Italy 1871-1982*
Peter d’Epiro and Mary Desmond Pinkowish, *Sprezzatura: 50 Ways Italian Genius Shaped the World*
George Holmes, *The Oxford History of Italy*
Christopher Hibbert, *Florence: The Biography of a City*
Ross King, *Brunelleschi's Dome: How a Renaissance Genius Reinvented Architecture*
Ross King, *Michelangelo and the Pope's Ceiling*
Richard Turner, *Renaissance Florence: The Invention of a New Art*
Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Artists* (abridged edition that includes lives of 16th century masters as well as earlier masters)

Art and History of London & Britain

Peter Ackroyd, *London: The Biography*
Christopher Hibbert, *The Story of England*
John Summerson, *The Classical Language of Architecture*

Online News Sources

BBC online
  - www.bbc.co.uk
*Corriere Della Sera’s* Italian Life section (in English)
  - www.corriere.it/english
Florence newspaper *La Nazione* (in Italian)
  - www.lanazione.it
*The Guardian*
  - www.guardian.co.uk/
*The Guardian Weekly*
  - www.guardianweekly.co.uk/
*The Independent*
  - www.independent.co.uk/
*The New Statesman*
  - www.newstatesman.com/
Language Adaptation: Florence

There are many on-line resources, apps, and travel dictionaries that can provide you with lists of useful Italian words and phrases that may help you during your first few days in Italy. For example, the Fodor’s website (http://www.fodors.com/language/italian/) offers additional useful Italian phrases and includes links to sound files to help your pronunciation. If you have no Italian language skills, we encourage you to make an attempt to learn some basic words and phrases in advance of your arrival. At the very least, you should be able to communicate basic courtesy phrases:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Italian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Basics</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sì</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please</td>
<td>Per piacere; per favore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you</td>
<td>Grazie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excuse me (apology)</td>
<td>Scusì; mi scusi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excuse me (may I get through?)</td>
<td>Permesso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m sorry</td>
<td>Mi dispiace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Greetings</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good morning / good afternoon</td>
<td>Buongiorno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good evening</td>
<td>Buona sera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good night</td>
<td>Buona notte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hello (formal)</td>
<td>Salve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good-bye (formal)</td>
<td>Arrivederci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hello / good-bye (informal)</td>
<td>Ciao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My name is</td>
<td>Mi chiamo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approaching someone for help</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you speak English?</td>
<td>Parla inglese?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t speak Italian</td>
<td>Non parlo italiano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand a little</td>
<td>Capisco un pò</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question words</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When?</td>
<td>Quando?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where?</td>
<td>Dove?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How?</td>
<td>Come?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much?</td>
<td>Quanto?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Language Adaptation: London

DO NOT ASSUME that just because you speak and understand English there will not be communication challenges in London. There are extensive lists of American English to British English conversions on the internet. One example can be found at: http://www15.uta.fi/FAST/US1/REF/engtran.html. Or you could consider purchasing a handy pocket dictionary to help you.
Cultural Adjustment

In the first weeks when you arrive on site it is not uncommon to experience challenges in adjusting to a different culture. You may be surprised, dismayed, and even feel 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 any feelings of 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. It’s very normal for all students to experience challenges with cultural adjustment. You are not alone and we can help in many ways. We encourage you to speak with the Program Director and other on-site staff about your concerns and to raise any questions about the host country and the new culture to which you are learning to adapt.
Health and Safety

Health

While you are overseas, you need to be aware of your health and your responsibility for monitoring new or ongoing medical concerns. Once you arrive, program staff in both London and Florence will instruct you on what to do if you need medical attention. The challenges of adapting to a new culture are an important part of what you will be experiencing in Europe. Adjusting to this new environment can be especially difficult when you are away from friends, family, and college faculty or staff that you know well. You will have days that are exciting and rewarding and also days where everything seems strange and exhausting. Program staff, host families, and new friends can help you recognize and talk through these pressures, and staff can also recommend counselors if you wish to have professional help.

Medications and Other Medical Preparation

As part of your preparation to go abroad, please read carefully information from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) about medical conditions in Western Europe. The website is: wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list.aspx.

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 any recommended vaccinations are up-to-date.

If you take one or more prescription 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 Italy and the UK and to have the generic name. Most drugs are available in Italy and the UK, although they may be compounded somewhat differently. Do not plan to have drugs (of any kind) sent to you while abroad.

Insurance

ACM will provide health insurance coverage for all students participating in its international 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 day before the start of the program through the day after the program ends, and thus be in effect for the time students will travel to and from 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 breaks.

The policy, however, should not replace any coverage you have in the U.S., nor should you discontinue your 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.

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 to extend the days that you will be covered by the ACM policy. The cost of this additional coverage is approximately $40/month. CISI will email students a welcome letter and an ID card prior to departure; the welcome letter will describe how to log on to culturalinsurance.com to view the tools available to policyholders and to purchase any supplemental 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.)

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

**Personal Safety**

While studying off campus offers many new educational and personal 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 and will not have the same support systems or forms of assistance that you have turned to on your home campus or in your hometown. In this section you will find some guidelines to keep in mind as you prepare for the ACM London & Florence Program.

The most important difference is that you will be living and studying in cities that are perhaps larger than what you’re accustomed to. In Florence, you will be commuting between your home and Linguaviva each day by public transportation; while in London you will make frequent use of the Underground system. Public transportation in both cities is widely used and apt to be crowded. You will also be coming home at night from program-sponsored events or socializing with friends. You will need to become aware of different traffic patterns and practices. One major difference: in London drivers travel on the left side of the road. Whenever you cross a street you need to look first to your right—not to the left as you would in the U.S. or in Italy. Your host family and program staff can advise you about how to ensure your safety as you travel around Florence and London.

**ACM ALUMNI ADVICE:** The #1 thing you can do to facilitate your own safety is simply to be aware of your surroundings and trust your instincts.
Obviously, you also need to be mindful of your personal safety as you travel independently around Europe on weekends or during the break. **You will be expected to fill out an independent travel form anytime you leave the program city and you should inform your host family or roommates of any travel plans and your expected time of return.** (This is not intended to track or control you, but so that we can contact you in case of emergency and know when and how you’re expected to return.) Students are encouraged to focus their independent travel during the program in Italy or England; your exploration of different regions will bring to life some of the classroom discussions of Italy and Britain’s history and character. Leave more extensive traveling for the program break or the summer.

**Crime and Random Violence**

By and large, Florence and London are modern and relatively safe cities, and Italy and the United Kingdom are hospitable and secure countries. Like any place else in the world, however, both cities have some crime and random violence. Pickpockets commonly target tourists at historic sites and restaurants, on public transportation, and in other crowded areas. Avoid keeping cash or valuables – like your passport – in easily accessible pockets or purses. It’s generally safer to carry a wallet in a front pocket rather than a back one.

We encourage you to travel with a partner or in a small group. Follow the staff and host family’s advice about coming home at night, and follow more than your usual precautions until you learn to read street signals or cultural signs that might be warnings.

**Gender Relations and Sexual Harassment**

In the same way you have learned how to judge your behavior with the opposite sex in the United States, in Europe you will need to negotiate a new set of customs. American movies have created an impression of free and easy sexual relations between Americans. An open approach to strangers in the street or in a bar or “sexy” clothing can be read as a sign of promiscuity. To an even greater degree than in the U.S., excessive consumption of alcohol and casual flirtation can be misinterpreted as an invitation. Many students have found it necessary to adopt more conservative dress and behavior than in the U.S.

Even these strategies, however, may not discourage Italian (or some other) men from making comments about your appearance or following you on the street. Italian men have a reputation for being somewhat forward when approaching women, particularly foreigners and especially women with fair coloring. The following passage, written by a British woman and borrowed from www.italyheaven.co.uk/women.html, gives some idea of the cultural forces surrounding gendered behavior in Italy and how to navigate some potentially unfamiliar terrain:

> Whole volumes could be written about Italian men, but for [women] travelers the most important fact is that they are usually harmless. . . . Italy is a modern country, but many old-fashioned attitudes remain. . . . [A] woman alone can attract appreciative comments, whistles, hisses or snatchers of song. But remember that most Italians live in tightly-knit communities where the domestic sphere is ruled over by the mamma. Women are seen as strong and quite capable of saying no if they’re not interested, or conversely of pursuing a man they are keen on.

> It is actually rare to get hassled for more than ten seconds. Here any attention you get is likely to be a simple compliment with no agenda, and expected to be received as such. It would be disproportionate and inappropriate to respond with an insult. If you don’t want to accept the compliment, just ignore it. If you want to, you could allow yourself a half-smile or a casual “grazie.” When Italian women are hooted or hissed at, or have compliments yelled at them, they generally just ignore it.
Particularly if you have light coloring or blonde hair you can expect a certain amount of attention, which will increase the further south you travel. You will automatically be seen as unusual and attractive. You should also be aware that foreign tourists have a reputation for drinking too much, and it is true that some act in a manner that is shocking to Italian traditionalists, and others are tempted into a fling by the unaccustomed compliments. If you’re not interested, just make it obvious. The sort of male who picks up tourists won’t waste his time if you ignore him, walk past, say “no, grazie,” or ask to be left alone.

If you’re in doubt about how to act in certain social situations while you’re abroad, look to the local residents for clues. Italian women have learned to deflect these comments, and as you gain confidence in the language, you too will learn how to handle these uncomfortable situations.

A special note for women: In recent years, there have been isolated incidents of sexual assault perpetrated against young American women in Florence, and without the victims being able to identify their assailants, the police have been unable to prosecute. Excessive consumption of alcohol, a lack of fluency in Italian, and uncertainty in decoding cultural signals all contribute to students’ putting themselves in dangerous situations. While ACM does not intend to mandate students’ conduct during free time, we strongly suggest that when students are out in the evenings that all students, especially female students:

1. **Watch out for each other.** Don’t leave a fellow student behind in the bar at the end of the evening. Before the evening begins, make arrangements to take a taxi home together at the end of the night. Leave with the group and stay safe.
2. **Dress defensively.** You will find that if you dress a bit more conservatively than you might at home (and especially on your home campus) that you are less likely to be the focus of unwanted attention and the harassment to which women may be subject when dressed in especially short skirts and revealing tops.
3. **Don’t leave your drink unattended at a bar.** The police suspect that drugs have been slipped into drinks left unattended, exacerbating the effects of the alcohol and, in some cases, resulting in students’ inability to remember subsequent events.

Finally, please remember that both of these cities, but especially Florence, is heavily populated most semesters by U.S. students. Just because you see someone displaying a particular behavior, don’t assume that behavior is or isn’t a cultural norm of that location. You could be observing another U.S. student displaying behavior that is not culturally acceptable and is therefore inappropriate to replicate.

**Travel & Safety Information**

Travel and passport information from the U.S. Department of State

[travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov)

[https://step.state.gov/step/](https://step.state.gov/step/) - all students should use this site to register for the U.S. Department of State’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program. This free program allows students to register their location(s) with the Department of State and receive updates, messages, and alerts pertinent to U.S. citizens abroad as well as help the Department of State better serve our students in the case of an emergency.

Health info for travelers from the Centers for Disease Control: [www.cdc.gov/travel/](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/)
Student Conduct and Discipline

Enrollment in an off-campus study program obligates you to conduct yourself as a responsible member of that program. A full listing of ACM policies and conduct procedures can be found in the next section of this handbook. Here, however, are a few highlights that are particularly important:

- You will be expected to conform to the behavioral standards of the country you are in, which, as mentioned before, are different from ours. Remember that you are in Europe to experience a different kind of living, and that attitudes, assumptions, and customs are different. Your attitude, cooperation, and flexibility will make the difference in the quality of your experience abroad and will be especially important to the success of your stay with your Italian family.
- You may not acquire or operate any kind of motorized vehicle while you are a participant in the ACM program. You will probably find, as do a great many residents of both London and Florence, that public transportation and your own two feet are the most efficient means of getting around.
- While on an ACM program, any behavior by a student that discredits the student or the program, as determined by the program rules and the Program Director, may result in disciplinary action.
- Life-threatening events, serious involvement with the police, unscheduled loss of contact with a student, and incidents having the potential for serious public relations consequences may warrant dismissal.

Alcohol

One significant area of difference between Italy, the UK, and the U.S. has to do with consumption of alcohol. While there is not the rigid enforcement of a drinking age in Italy or, to a lesser extent, in Britain, you will also find that Italians seldom drink to become intoxicated. Rather, alcohol is consumed in moderation on social occasions and with meals. Public drunkenness and rowdy behavior are rare and frowned upon. Moreover, over-consumption of alcohol may lead to problems such as unwanted attention and sexual assault. Please keep in mind that your judgment is likely to be impaired with alcohol, and that you may lose the ability to evaluate situations with the same caution you would normally use. Remember that you may not be aware of or able to read the various social signals that are being given.

In Britain, unfortunately, norms with regard to the consumption of alcohol are less moderate than in Italy, such that Britons abroad are regarded with a certain amount of disdain and even hostility. As an American in Britain, however, this is not an area in which to imitate local standards. Excessive consumption of alcohol is a risk to your safety and that of others: your judgment is diminished and you may not be able to assess the danger of a situation.

Drugs

Anti-drug laws in Italy and the UK are very severe and, contrary to what is generally believed, enforced with considerable rigor. In Italy you are subject to a minimum sentence of three years for use or possession of illegal drugs; penalties in Britain are similar. You can be arrested for suspected possession, suspected use, knowledge of possession or use not reported to the police, and on these charges you can be held without bail for an indefinite period of time. The possession or use of any illegal drugs may result in immediate dismissal from the program.

English law and customs are also strict, and are sufficiently different from our own to make it necessary for you to be forewarned. It is particularly important that you realize that ACM cannot function in a foreign country in the same way that your home college may function in dealings with civil authorities. In case of trouble there is little ACM can do to insulate you from the effects of European laws. If you are arrested on a drug charge, you may or may not be allowed consultation with the American Consulate, and all they will likely be able to do is provide you with a list of local attorneys.
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 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 expressed or implied.

**Expectations of Student Conduct**

Any student who engages in inappropriate conduct will be in violation of this Code of Student Responsibility and will be subject to a conduct review and possible sanctions. While it is impossible to outline all forms of inappropriate conduct, what follows is a non-exclusive list of the more common examples:

1. **Violations of any ACM policies or regulations** – policies published in student handbooks, Study Abroad Contract, the website, or other official ACM publications (including but not limited to the Housing Policy, the Policy on Alcohol and Drugs, the Policy on Sexual Harassment, and the Policy on Academics).

2. **Violation of safety practices** – 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. Participation in any activity expressly prohibited by ACM or the terms of the CISI insurance policy (international programs only) including mountaineering where ropes or guides are normally used; hang gliding; parachuting; bungee jumping; operating a motor vehicle of any kind (including motorcycle); 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 on any type of aircraft.

3. Any **conduct which threatens ACM’s ability to function** or maintain positive relations in host communities including but not limited to culturally inappropriate behavior or defamatory statements regarding host families, organizations, communities, or countries in blogs, social media, or other public media.
4. **Failure to comply** with reasonable directions of ACM staff (or designees) or failure to promptly and properly identify self to ACM staff or law enforcement authorities if asked. Examples might include use of a fake ID, failure to comply with staff requests in an emergency, or not completing assigned sanctions resulting from a previous policy violation.

5. **Theft** – attempted or actual theft or willful possession of items belonging to another. Unauthorized use of property belonging to another.

6. **Unauthorized entry** – inappropriate use of keys or facilities (ex. housing or program site).

7. **Inappropriate use of ACM technology** including but not limited to computers or wireless internet provided by ACM or any of ACM’s partners, and including but not limited to actions such as illegal downloading of copyrighted material, computer piracy, or using technology to threaten or cause harm.

8. **Damage** – causing damage to property belonging to ACM or to the property of any of its partner organizations, any person, or the public domain.

9. Possession or use of **any weapon, fireworks, incendiary device or explosive device**.

10. **Participation in political demonstrations, rallies, or protests** is prohibited in international locations regardless of the peaceful intention or nature of the gathering. For students in domestic off-campus study programs, students should be mindful that participation in such activities, affiliated or not with the program, conforms to the other expectations of student conduct listed in this section.

11. **Disorderly conduct** – obstruction or distraction of the educational process, lewd or indecent behavior, breach of peace, physical abuse or threat, intimidation or coercion, etc. Also includes retaliation against any individual who reports any violations of the Code of Student Responsibility or any individual who participates in any investigation of such reports.

12. **Stalking or Hazing** – Behavior that is disturbing or distressing to others including but not limited to stalking or hazing. Stalking is defined as the willful and unsolicited following or harassing of another individual through any means. Hazing is defined as any act which endangers the mental or physical health or safety of another person for the purpose of initiation, admission into, affiliation with, or as a condition of continued membership in a group. Any group of students acting together may be considered a group for the purposes of this section. The express or implied consent of the victim will not be a defense. Apathy or acquiescence in the presence of hazing is not a neutral act and is also a violation of this section. Stalking or hazing can include actions in person, via social media, or through other electronic means.

13. **Bias-related behavior or personal abuse** – use of language, images, signs, symbols, threats, or physical behavior that directly or indirectly demonstrates hostility or contempt toward a person or group on the basis of actual or perceived identity. Behavior that exceeds the bounds of appropriate discourse and civil conduct. Harassment of another because of his/her race, sexual orientation, ethnic background, religion, expression of opinion, or other personal characteristics. Actions that would reasonably tend to cause alarm, anger, fear, or resentment in others or would endanger the health, safety, and welfare of another member of the ACM community.

14. **Any criminal behavior** or breach of local, state, host country or domestic or international laws.

15. A willful **failure to report** a violation of ACM policies or law or reasonably suspect harassment or abuse.

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**ACM Policy on Academics**

All academic pursuit depends on trust. All of us should be able to trust that we will be treated with honesty and respect—respect for our ideas and for us as persons. As a participant in an ACM program, you will be expected to conduct yourself with the same level of honesty and openness as is expected on your home campus.

The following academic policies apply to all students participating in an ACM program:

**Arrival and departure dates.** You should make travel arrangements to arrive at the program site on the date specified in the program handbook. Similarly, you should plan your itinerary to remain at the program site through the last day of the program. ACM staff and instructors are unable to accommodate students who request to arrive later or depart earlier.

**Course load.** You are required to carry the full load of courses and credits as determined for the ACM program in which you are enrolled.

**Class attendance and participation.** You are expected to attend and participate fully in all classroom sessions, site visits, and field trips. Instructors typically take into account attendance and class participation when assigning final grades. Please remember that these are academic programs: it is not appropriate to miss classes because you are traveling or hosting visitors; you are expected to participate in all program activities unless otherwise excused.

**Grade Choice.** All ACM courses will be graded and reported to home schools on an A-F grading scale. If a student wishes to take a class or classes on a pass/fail basis, the student must contact their home school’s registrar.
Completion of course work. All class assignments (including final papers, projects, and exams) should be completed and submitted before the end of the program. Any assignments or work submitted after the final day of the program will receive a “0” and this will be factored into the final grade for the course. ACM does not record/report an “Incomplete” grade for courses.

Academic honesty. Actions of dishonesty are destructive to the well-being of the academic community, and ACM staff respond to them vigorously. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic theft will result in a failing grade for that assignment and may result in failure for the course. Extremely serious incidents of cheating or other actions destructive to the classroom community may result in expulsion from the program. Instructors who encounter plagiarism or other forms of cheating in an ACM program will report such episodes to the Director of Off-Campus Study, who will investigate and hold a review according to the ACM Student Conduct Procedures. Students who are aware of academic dishonesty on the part of other students are expected to report that information to the Director of Off-Campus Study.

Final exams and presentations. ACM instructors cannot make special arrangements for a student or students to take a final exam or make a final presentation at a time different from that set by the instructor for the course (with the exception of a student who has a documented learning disability and with whom ACM staff has made prior arrangements).

Grading policies related to off-campus study. You should consult your home campus registrar’s office for off-campus grading policies in effect on your own campus.

Graduating seniors. Students who expect to graduate at the end of the term of the ACM program should discuss graduation requirements with an advisor at their home school prior to the start of the program. If you need to make special arrangements (e.g., if grades need to be reported by a specific date), you should share this information with the ACM Program Director at the beginning of the program.

Retention of syllabi, course work, and other course-related materials. Because home campus advisors may wish to review course work to determine how to assign credit for a particular course or courses taken abroad (and because, occasionally, course grades can be misreported), it is important that students bring back to their home campuses all materials from courses taken abroad. This is particularly important for courses taught by an on-site (i.e., non-ACM) faculty member, where it may be difficult to contact the faculty member after the semester or program has ended.

Release of student grades. ACM staff will only release grades to your home campus once all program, financial, and student conduct obligations are complete.

ACM Housing Policy

Student housing will vary across the ACM programs and may include homestays, apartments, educational institutions, camping, hostels, and other appropriate housing. Your housing situation while abroad is part of the learning environment that ACM programs provide, and you will want to take advantage of the opportunities that different housing situations provide. You are responsible for your behavior and actions in your housing environment and must respect the policies and practices of each establishment or facility in which you are housed, including respectfully following your homestay family’s rules. Any damage to property or environment, disruptive activities, or willful disregard of policies and practices of any housing situation may result in disciplinary action including expulsion from housing and/or dismissal from the program. You should inform your on-site director if problems or concerns arise during the homestay and efforts will be made to either resolve the issue or find an alternative placement.

International programs: Although visitors are strongly discouraged during the program, anyone planning to visit you during the period of enrollment must plan independent accommodations. You are prohibited from bringing any visitor to stay at a homestay or other provided place of housing. You should not ask your host families to accommodate your guests.

Domestic programs: Visitors should not interfere with the functioning of the program or any participant’s ability to complete program responsibilities. Any program participants wishing to have a visitor stay overnight in program housing should consult with any roommate(s) for approval. All visitors shall abide by all provisions of the unit’s roommate agreement, and the host participant may be held responsible for the actions and consequences of his or her guest’s behavior.
ACM Policy on Alcohol and Drugs

Knowing how to engage responsibly with alcohol among peers is a component of living in a new, educational environment. In the same way that positive living environments create positive experiences and learning, appropriate choices around alcohol can create notable memories among a community of students. In the context of off-campus study, this can mean deciding if or when it is culturally appropriate to consume alcohol, in what quantities, and amongst what company.

Alcohol may be consumed responsibly by students who are of legal age in their host country. You should be aware of the limits of local law, cultural norms, and safety considerations when choosing to consume alcohol. You are prohibited from providing alcohol to others who are not of legal age in the host country. Inappropriate behavior resulting from alcohol consumption, including but not limited to behavior which is offensive to others; and/or poses unreasonable risk to you or others; and/or results in damage to property; and/or impacts student performance; and/or causes embarrassment or otherwise interferes with the proper functioning of the program or other students, is not permitted and will result in disciplinary action.

Possession, use, or distribution of any substances that are considered by host country law to be illegal drugs or controlled substances is prohibited. You are hereby cautioned that the possession of drugs is often handled harshly by local law enforcement in host countries. The misuse and abuse of prescription medications is also considered a violation of this policy.

ACM Policy on Sexual Harassment

It is the policy of the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM) that sexual harassment of students and employees is prohibited. Violation of this policy may result in discipline or dismissal of students or discipline and discharge of employees. However, allegations of sexual harassment are serious and may be extremely prejudicial to the alleged offender. Accordingly, allegations not made in good faith may subject the complainant to disciplinary action.

Sexual Harassment Defined

Sexual harassment is unwelcome words or conduct based upon the recipient's gender. Sex or gender-based harassment does not have to be sexual in nature. However, such harassment can often take the form of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical behavior of a sexual nature. Harassment can become unlawful when (1) submitting or refusing to submit to such conduct is used as a basis for any decision affecting an individual's academic status or employment, or (2) such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment. Be advised that ACM reserves the right to interpret these policies and procedure more stringently than applicable legal definitions. Therefore, harassment or discrimination that does not rise to the level of a legal violation may still be found to violate ACM's standards of conduct.

ACM Policy on Dual Relationships

A dual relationship is one in which the faculty/staff member has both a professional and a romantic or sexual relationship with a student. This includes relationships which appear to be mutually consensual. However, the inherent inequality of power between student and faculty/staff creates an unacceptable conflict of interest in a supervisory, educational or advisory context. For this reason, dual relationships between faculty/staff and students who participate in the same program are prohibited. If a relationship nonetheless develops, the faculty/staff member is expected to remove him/herself from supervisory or advisory responsibility for that student, or face disciplinary action.

ACM Policy on Sexual Assault

Definitions:

Consent: Consent means the mutual understanding of words or actions freely and actively given by two informed people, which a reasonable person would interpret as a willingness to participate in mutually agreed upon sexual activity. Consent is not effective if it results from the use of physical force, there is intimidation or coercion, or the recipient party is incapacitated, or if a person is under the influence of drugs or alcohol such that they lack necessary judgment to give consent to sexual activity. Also remember that consent can be withdrawn and that consent to one activity does not necessarily imply consent to another. Finally, silence or non-communication should never be interpreted as effective consent.

Sexual Contact: Sexual contact includes but is not limited to: sexual intercourse, penetration of an orifice (anal, oral or vaginal) with the penis, finger, or other object in a sexual manner, intentional touching of the genitals, buttocks, or breasts, or coercion to force someone else to touch one's genitals, buttocks, or breasts. Sexual contact can occur over clothing.

Sexual Contact With An Incapacitated Person: Incapacitation is the physical and/or mental inability to make informed, rational judgments. To have sexual contact with someone whom you know to be, or should know to be incapable of making a rational, reasonable decision due to his or her consumption of substances, in other words, unable to give effective consent, is a violation of policy.
Sexual Exploitation: Acts committed by a person for sexual gratification, financial gain and/or advancement, entertainment, or for any other reason that abuses or exploits the privacy of another person’s sexuality. Examples may include but are not limited to: non-consensual recording of sexual activity or nudity, unauthorized presentation or distribution of said recordings in any form, allowing others to observe a sexual act without the knowledge or consent of the individuals involved, or prostituting another person.

Policy Statement
ACM prohibits sexual assault or sexual violence in any form, including non-stranger rape. The goals of this policy are to create a community free of sexual assault, to provide avenues for those affected by sexual misconduct to obtain assistance, and to provide a clear and fair complaint and investigation procedure.

Sexual assault committed in connection with any ACM program in any location is prohibited. ACM strongly recommends that people who believe they have been victims of sexual assault pursue criminal charges against the person or persons they believe to have committed the sexual assault. Victims are also urged to make a complaint to staff in the ACM Chicago office. A criminal charge and an internal complaint can be pursued at the same time. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process or anyone who pursues legal action—including the complainant, the respondent, or anyone participating in the investigation—is prohibited and will not be tolerated.

Sexual Assault Defined
Sexual assault is intentional sexual contact with another person without that person's consent (see definitions of sexual contact and consent). Consent exists when a person freely and knowingly agrees at the time to participate in a particular sexual act with a particular person. Consent is not effective, for example, when force, threat, or coercion is used. Consent is not effective when sexual contact is with a person who is unable to say no or otherwise resist because of the use of alcohol or drugs or because he or she is asleep or unconscious (see definition of incapacitated sex).

The initiator of sexual contact will be found in violation of this policy if it is determined that he or she knew or should have known that the other person could not give effective consent as defined by this policy. Being intoxicated or under the influence of any substance at the time of sexual contact is never an excuse for violation of this policy. Sexual assault can be committed by a man or a woman against a person of the same or opposite sex. Sexual assault can be committed by current or former lovers, friends, or acquaintances.

ACM Policy on Non-Discrimination
The Associated Colleges of the Midwest does not discriminate in the operation of its educational programs, activities, or employment on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, color, religion, national origin, age, veteran status, marital status, or disability.

ACM Student Conduct Procedures
Should an alleged violation of the ACM Code of Student Responsibility occur, ACM faculty and/or staff will investigate the situation and review any responsible student's status with the program. This review will be conducted by the on-site director or other ACM staff in the model of an educational/administrative process, not a proceeding of a criminal or civil court. These policies and procedures are designed to ensure a productive learning environment for all students.

The following process for an initial conduct review is designed to assure that the student receives appropriate due process:
1. The student will be notified verbally and/or in writing of the incident/alleged violation and the time and place of the review meeting.
2. At the review meeting, the student will have the opportunity to share her/his perspective of the incident and present any witnesses or documentation relevant to the incident/alleged violation.
3. The student may be accompanied at the review by a third party. Since this is not a case before a court of law, however, the third party may not be legal counsel.
4. After discussing the incident/alleged violation and the circumstances, the student will be given an opportunity to admit or deny involvement in the situation.
5. Given the information, the ACM faculty or staff reviewer will make a decision regarding the student's responsibility for violation of the Code of Student Responsibility based on a preponderance of evidence.
6. Within five working days from the date of the review meeting, the student will be notified in writing of the decision and any relevant sanctions and deadlines for completion of those sanctions. This notification will also include the procedure a student can follow to appeal this decision (see below).
7. Repeat or more serious incidents may involve review by staff in the Off-Campus Study unit of the ACM Chicago office and may include notification of the student's home school.
Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure

Due to the often complex nature of sexual harassment or assault investigations, ACM has instituted a more elaborate procedure for review and management of these claims. This section outlines that procedure.

Any individual who believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment has recourse to informal and formal grievance procedures designed for the purpose of investigation and resolution of such allegations. Informal grievance resolution is encouraged although not required prior to initiating the formal grievance procedure.

As a preliminary matter, any individual who believes that she or he has been sexually harassed should report the incident promptly to any of the following:
- Director of the program in which the student is enrolled or other appropriate local staff or faculty member
- Associate Director of Off-Campus Study
- Vice-President and Director of Off-Campus Study

Assistance in presenting a grievance may be obtained from another employee or student. However, attorneys or other third persons may not participate in any facet of the grievance procedure unless ACM and all interested parties otherwise agree.

Informal Procedure

An informal procedure is designed to resolve sexual harassment allegations without having to invoke the formal grievance procedure. This can be initiated through contact with any of the staff named above. The goal is to resolve the problem through discussion with the student, the alleged offender, and any other relevant persons. The student and/or staff member grievance officer may elect to terminate the informal procedure if it appears that no progress is being made in resolving the dispute and initiate a formal procedure.

Formal Procedure

1. Students who wish to lodge a formal complaint must sign and submit it in writing to any staff members named above within 60 working days of the alleged harassment.
2. Thereafter, the President of ACM (or if the President is the alleged offender, the Chair of the Board of Directors) shall assign a grievance officer to investigate the complaint and report his/her findings to a grievance board comprised of the President, the investigating grievance officer, and one other grievance officer selected by the President. No employee accused of harassment may serve on the grievance board.
3. The investigation shall include interviews with the complainant, the alleged offender, who shall be informed of the allegations against him/her, and other relevant persons. The grievance board may supplement the investigating officer's investigation by itself conducting interviews and reviewing relevant evidence.
4. Within 21 working days after the investigation concludes, the grievance board shall decide by majority vote whether the complaint allegations are supported by substantial credible evidence. It shall then inform the complainant and alleged offender of its decision.
5. Any disciplinary or other corrective action resulting from a violation of this policy shall be determined in accordance with ACM disciplinary procedures.

Third Party Harassment

Any student who has been sexually harassed by a third party (i.e., vendor, member of host family, guest speaker, internship setting) should report the incident promptly to any grievance officer who will then investigate and attempt to resolve the problem.

Confidentiality

Be advised that ACM is legally obligated to review complaints or investigations of potential abuse or harassment. Therefore, it cannot generally receive a confidential complaint and promise to do nothing. However, ACM will endeavor to handle all complaints and investigations of sexual harassment in a discreet manner; Grievances and documents will be maintained separately from other student files. If you wish to make a truly confidential complaint, you will need to identify a recipient who is subject to professional confidentiality standards, such as clergy or certain medical or counseling professionals.

Non-Retaliation

Complaints made in good faith under this policy shall not result in any adverse action against the complainant, nor shall any person who participates in good faith in an investigation be treated adversely because of such participation.

Nothing in this policy precludes an individual from pursuing any legal remedies available to him/her.
Interim suspension
If a student's behavior constitutes an immediate, severe, or direct threat to self or others or if there is evidence of egregious misconduct and violation of ACM policies, the on-site director, in consultation with the Associate Director of Off-Campus Study, may immediately remove a student from the program and/or housing until a review can occur. During that interim suspension, the student will not be allowed to participate in program activities or utilize program resources. Alternate housing arrangements may be necessary and will be the responsibility of the student. Any additional violations of ACM policies while on interim suspension will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

Sanctions
In keeping with the nature of the institutions comprising the ACM Consortium, sanctions are designed to be educational in nature whenever possible. Depending on the severity of the policy infringement, however, the ACM reserves the right to impose a sanction beyond a warning for a first violation if deemed appropriate. Multiple sanctions can be issued as appropriate. Failure to complete any assigned sanctions may delay the release of grades from the ACM program to the home campus.

1. Written warning – A warning is given and provided in written form to the student outlining the violation of the ACM Code of Student Responsibility and that any additional violations may result in more serious action during the time of warning.
2. Restitution – The student may be required to pay for any damages caused or repair or replace any property damaged or stolen.
3. Loss of privileges – The student may have privileges for use of a resource or participation in certain activities withdrawn for a certain period of time.
4. Housing change or termination – The student may be required to leave their housing and either move to alternative housing or obtain independent housing accommodations.
5. Disciplinary probation – A final warning is provided to the student in writing indicating that any further violation within the probationary period may result in dismissal from the program. A student's home campus will be notified if a student is placed on disciplinary probation.
6. Dismissal – The student is permanently removed from the program. Once dismissed, the student will not be permitted any further association with the program and will forgo any of the benefits that the program provides including insurance coverage and visa sponsorship. The student will leave the program site and discontinue contact with the program. The student will be responsible for making his/her own travel arrangements from the site. A student's home campus will be notified if a student is dismissed from the program.

Helping Your Peers
As a part of your off-campus study experience, you will be one member of a particular learning community, a group that you will help to define and foster throughout the program. As a part of a community, you will be thrilled to discover the great benefits that come from the contributions of others, but you should also recognize the obligations that come from being part of a group of people studying together off-campus. ACM students are encouraged to look out for each other, advocate appropriately for each other, and work together toward your community's educational goals.

This commitment to helping others out can sometimes put you in difficult situations. If you feel hesitant to seek physical or mental medical attention for a friend (out of concern that by asking for help, ACM staff might discover that your friend's behavior or your own behavior has been in violation of the ACM Code of Student Responsibility), please know that the responsibility and care that you demonstrate by taking the appropriate action to ensure the safety and wellbeing of another member of the community will be considered in determining what action, if any, is taken against you when reviewing the matter with ACM staff.

Appeals
Students may request an appeal of a student conduct decision made by the on-site director or other reviewer. The appeal must be received within five (5) working days of the issuance of the decision. The student should direct this appeal request to the Associate Director of Off-Campus Study in the ACM Chicago office.

The appeal request must be received in writing and should include a statement giving relevant facts and the reason for the appeal. In order for any appeal to proceed, the student must demonstrate that at least one of these three reasons for appeal exists:

a. There was a procedural error in the initial review that substantially impacted the rights of the student and had a reasonable possibility of affecting the outcome.

b. New information can be presented that was not previously available, despite reasonable diligence, which has a substantial likelihood of directly impact the review decision.

c. The sanction(s) imposed are perceived as excessive.
The Associate Director of Off-Campus Study will gather all materials, documents, and previous communications related to the student conduct review and forward that information to the Director of Off-Campus Study. The Director of Off-Campus Study will review the materials and determine within five working days of receipt of the materials whether any of the three above grounds for appeal exist in this case.

If the Director of Off-Campus Study determines that no grounds for an appeal exist, the student will be notified and the decision of the initial review will be final. If the Director determines that grounds for an appeal do exist, the Director of Off-Campus Study will convene an ad hoc committee consisting of the Off-Campus Study Director from the student's home campus, another ACM Off-Campus Study Director, and the Director of Off-Campus Study. This committee will review and discuss the student’s petition to determine if there are grounds for an adjustment of the student conduct decision.

The Associate Director of Off-Campus Programs will report the decision of this ad hoc committee to the student in writing, ordinarily within 15 working days of receipt of the appeal. The decision of this committee is final.

**Tuition, Program Fees and Refunds**

**Program Costs**
The total amount students must 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 a student's home college, charges for off-campus study may be based upon the program's tuition, or may be based upon the college's own tuition. Additionally, some colleges may assess special fees for off-campus study. ACM students should therefore check with the Off-Campus Study and Financial Aid offices to confirm how their college charges students for off-campus study programs, what additional campus fees may apply, and what financial aid may be used toward the cost of their program. Please see the cost worksheets for each program at www.acm.edu/pricing for a detailed breakdown of educational costs, the program fee, and out-of-pocket expenses.

**Financial and Scholarship Aid**
Students are responsible for making sure that any financial or scholarship aid is appropriately applied to the off-campus study program. Students should check with their college's Financial Aid office to confirm their financial aid package for the term of off-campus study.

**Confirmation Deposit**
In order to secure a spot in the program, students are required to pay a deposit of $400 within two weeks of acceptance. This $400 non-refundable deposit is credited toward the program fee and cannot be returned if a student decides to cancel. Students who do not submit the deposit within the time frame risk losing their spot on the off-campus study program.

For the Chicago Program, Newberry Seminar, and Urban Education program, an additional sum of $200 is required for the housing deposit. This deposit is refundable upon completion of the program, provided that no additional cleaning or special repairs are required to the student’s apartment.

**Cancellation Policy**
ACM makes significant financial commitments on the behalf of all participants well before the start of their program. If a student is thinking about canceling participation after depositing, the student should contact ACM and inform the ACM Program Associate immediately. All cancellations will only be effective the date that the ACM is notified, in writing, of the student’s decision to cancel. After canceling, the student will be responsible for program expenses incurred on their behalf, according to the schedules below:

**Cancellation schedule for fall, winter, and spring programs**
ACM typically bills the student’s college for the cost of the program after a deposit is made to confirm participation. The college then determines the total amount the student will be billed and this total amount may be equivalent to the amount billed by ACM or it may be different, according to each college's particular policies on financial aid and off-campus study. If a student decides to cancel:

- **90 or more days before the start of the program:** The $400 deposit will be forfeited and no other charges will be billed.
- **60-89 days before the start of the program:** ACM will bill the student's college 5% of the total program cost.
- **30-59 days before the start of the program:** ACM will bill the student's college 10% of the total program cost.
- **15-29 days before the start of the program:** ACM will bill the student's college 25% of the total program cost.
- **1-14 days before the start of the program:** ACM will bill the student's college 50% of the total program cost.
- **On the day the program begins or later:** ACM will bill the student’s college 100% of the total program cost.
Cancellation schedule for summer programs
After the $400 deposit is received, ACM will send the student an invoice for the payment of the full program cost. **Full payment is due 30 days before the start of the program.** If having paid the program deposit, a student decides to cancel:

- **30 or more days before the start of the program:** The $400 deposit will be forfeited and no other charges will be billed.
- **Less than 30 days before the start of the program:** 100% of the total program cost will be billed to the student.

Students should check with their college about campus-specific cancellation policies, and whether their college may apply additional financial penalties for a cancellation. If unforeseen circumstances force a student to leave a program once it has begun, ACM may work with the student’s college to determine what portion, if any, of the program cost may be refunded. If a student is asked to leave a program for cause, no program costs will be refunded by ACM.

Outstanding Fees and Grade Release
ACM will bill students at the end of the program for outstanding program costs and/or any additional program expenses such as: medical costs, damage to program housing or equipment, loss of keys or equipment, etc. ACM is unable to release grades to students or their college until full payment for such expenses has been received.

ACM Policy on Health and Safety Notification
ACM staff strives to keep all program stakeholders, including your home campuses and parents, informed of critical incidents and concerns that might arise related to any of our programs. We balance this goal with respect for your individual right to privacy as an adult.

Once you have reached the age of 18, you are considered an adult within the U.S. Higher Education system. ACM’s standard procedures will typically involve communicating primarily with you and informing parents on an as-needed basis. ACM staff will seek to work with you, our students, as primary decision-makers whenever possible.

Communication with Parents/Guardians
In situations of medical or program emergency, especially in situations where students are not able to communicate with their parents/guardians or in the case of student hospitalization, ACM staff will endeavor to inform parents of events and developments in as great of detail as possible and as often as possible. These communications will be balanced with ACM’s need to maintain operational management throughout whatever the situation might be.

For international programs, ACM staff sends an initial message to all listed parents/guardians/emergency contacts to notify them that all students have arrived safely at the program site. We do this because students may not always have access to immediate communication tools allowing them to contact individuals at home or may be initially quite consumed with orientation activities, and this initial period of travel to an overseas destination can be a source of worry.

Beyond that initial message for our international programs, ACM staff’s preference is that you are the primary sources of information for parents/guardians. ACM staff will always encourage students to openly and honestly communicate with their parents/guardians and will assist if requested in situations when the student may not have the means to communicate directly.

Communication with Home Campuses
ACM staff strives to maintain high levels of communication with all campuses sending students on any of our programs. Because colleges have different requirements for reporting or documenting incidents, ACM staff will communicate any reportable incident to the Off-Campus Study Director at a student’s home campus.

In situations where an incident impacts multiple students on a program (ex. illnesses not limited to a single individual, major program changes, etc.), ACM staff will notify all home campuses represented on that program of the situation in a way that does not identify specific students. Exceptions to components of this policy will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Evaluations and Surveys
Over the course of the program, you will be asked to complete questionnaires at several intervals. These surveys allow us to better understand the impact that off-campus study has on students and to use feedback from you to make improvements in our programs. Additionally, these surveys provide students with an opportunity to reflect upon their experiences and better
prepare students to articulate the positives and negatives of the program. Below you will find a brief synopsis of the feedback we will be seeking from you throughout the term. **In all cases, your responses will be confidential.**

After the first month of the program, ACM staff will ask you to complete an online mid-program evaluation which asks for your feedback on such aspects of the program as ACM’s assistance in preparing you to go abroad, pre-departure and on-site orientation, and the extent to which the program to date is meeting your goals for off-campus study. Your responses enable us to assess the effectiveness of our materials and services in the critical first weeks of the program and to make any necessary changes. Summaries of responses (but not individual responses) for each of our program sites will be shared with program staff and faculty, and with faculty advisors at ACM campuses. This survey will require approximately 15 minutes to complete.

At the mid-point in your program, you will be given a short survey in each of your courses which asks you four short questions about the course. Your feedback allows the instructor to assess his/her effectiveness and provides an opportunity for changes in the course if appropriate. Instructors are seeking your candid feedback and will attempt to gather your thoughts to ensure anonymity whenever possible. Your responses are for the instructor alone and will not be shared with ACM program staff or Chicago office staff.

Shortly before the end of the program, you will be asked to complete a final online survey about the program. As with the mid-program evaluation, your responses will enable us to review program arrangements and course offerings and make any necessary changes for future programs. A summary of responses are shared with program instructors and staff only after the program is complete and your grades have been submitted. Faculty advisors at ACM campuses will also receive the summary. This survey will require approximately 20 minutes of your time.
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
Arrival Information and Directions

London

Early Arrival in London
You are free to arrive in London earlier or stay on after classes end, but you should be prepared to arrange and pay for your own expenses before or after the official program dates and during the break. You will not be able to arrange to stay at the Clifton Gardens flats prior to the start of the program, so plan to arrange alternate lodging in London.

If you’re spending the first part of the program in London...
You will fly into either Heathrow or Gatwick Airport, although Heathrow is closer and more convenient. Both offer train, bus, and taxi service into the city for a range of fees. The taxi ride from Heathrow or Gatwick is long and expensive (over £70). Because of the excellent public transportation into London, a taxi is probably an unnecessary expense. If you do elect to take a taxi, we suggest you do so from central London (e.g., from Victoria or Paddington train station) rather than from the airport. You should take an “official” London taxi—the boxy ones, usually black in color, which have meters.

You have two options to go from Heathrow Airport to 29-31 Clifton Gardens, Maida Vale. Please see the directions that follow.

Option 1: Take the Underground from Heathrow Airport to Clifton Gardens for £5. This option is best for savvy travelers, those who have limited luggage, are in a group, and don’t mind a longer journey:

- After going through customs and immigration with your bags at Heathrow Airport, follow the signs to the Underground, and take the Piccadilly line towards Cockfosters Underground Station (the only train you can take) into the city. It will take you about 8 minutes to walk from customs/immigration to the platform.
  - Download a copy of the Tube map to familiarize yourself with the location of the airport and the place where you will get off: [www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/standard-tube-map.pdf](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/standard-tube-map.pdf)
A train departs every 5-10 minutes during the day; travel time is approximately 45 minutes.

A one-way ticket from zone 6 (the airport) to zone 2 (Warwick Ave) will cost £5.50. You can purchase your ticket from the ticketing machines. You only need to buy a one-way ticket as the program is providing you with a monthly tube pass (Oyster Card) for the program.

Scan your ticket to get to the platform.

Don’t forget to Mind the Gap!

- Get off at Piccadilly Circus and transfer to the Bakerloo line towards Harrow & Wealdstone (or Stonebridge Park or Queen’s Park).
- Get off the Bakerloo line at Warwick Ave (5 stops later). Be aware that the Warwick Ave. station has no lifts.
- To exit you will need to pass through a turnstile and scan your ticket again.
- When you come out of the station, either directly in front of you or directly behind you (depending on which station exit you use), you will see the church and tall spire of Saint Saviour’s.

- Facing the church with either station exit behind you, Clifton Gardens runs left to right in front of you. Turn right onto Clifton Gardens Road and walk about 300 yards (2 blocks) to number 29-31 (located between Randolph Road and Randolph Avenue on the right side).
Option 2: Take the Heathrow Express and a taxi from Heathrow to Clifton Gardens for about £26. This option is best for travelers who just want to get to their destination and want an easier trip with their luggage:

- After going through customs and immigration with your bags at Heathrow Airport, follow the signs to the Heathrow Express Train which will take you to Paddington Station. It will take you about 8 minutes to walk from customs/immigration to the platform.
  - Trains run every 15 minutes from Heathrow (Mon-Sun 5 a.m. - 11:45 p.m.); travel time is about 15 minutes.
  - A one-way express class ticket costs £21 at ticket booths or £26 on-board. (www.heathrowexpress.com). You can buy the train ticket at a self-service machine or through a ticketing agent located along the walk way to the platform.
  - Your ticket will be checked on board.
  - Don't forget to Mind the Gap!

- Get off the train at Paddington Station.

- Follow signs to the taxi line from Paddington Station to 29-31 Clifton Gardens, Maida Vale. Depending on traffic, the ride should take 5 minutes and cost about £6. Only take a taxi that is in the line and is an official taxi.
The Clifton Gardens Flats
Clifton Gardens has many apartment facades that look somewhat similar so look for the flat numbers to find 29 or 31 Clifton Gardens. You can find more information about the flats in the section titled Living Arrangements later in this handbook.

To Clifton Gardens from Gatwick:
1. At the airport, follow signs to the Gatwick Express train (www.gatwickexpress.com). The train runs every 15 minutes during the day, and a one-way ticket costs £16.60. Travel time is approximately 30 minutes.
2. Take the Gatwick Express to its final destination, Victoria Station. At Victoria, follow signs to the Underground.
3. Make your way to the Victoria line platform headed toward Walthamstow Central.
4. In two stops at Oxford Circle, get off the Victoria line and transfer to the Bakerloo line towards Harrow & Wealdstone (or Stonebridge Park or Queen's Park).
5. Get off the Bakerloo line at Warwick Ave (5 stops later).
6. To exit you will need to pass through a turnstile and scan your ticket again.
7. When you come out of the station, either directly in front of you or directly behind you (depending on which station exit you use), you will see the church and tall spire of Saint Saviour's. Facing the church with either station exit behind you, Clifton Gardens runs left to right in front of you. Turn right onto Clifton Gardens Road and walk about 500 yards (2.5 blocks) to number 29-31 (located just past Randolph Avenue on the right side).

Other options from Gatwick:
- Take the Southern Railway to Victoria Station. The train runs every 15 minutes and travel time is 30 minutes. A one-way ticket starts at £11.90. (www.southernrailway.com)
- Take the National Express coach service, which has frequent service to central London. The travel time is about 1 hour 35 minutes. A one-way ticket starts at £7.50. (www.nationalexpress.com)
If you’re spending the second part of the program in London...
...or will be elsewhere on the continent before the program begins, you may arrive by Eurostar train at Waterloo Station, or by air at one of London’s smaller airports, such as Stansted, Luton, or London City Airport. See previous arrival information for main airports or see below for other possible arrival locations. Ryanair, a small international airline with bases in London and Rome, offers very low fares to and from major cities in 17 European countries. Visit www.ryanair.com for more information. Be aware, however, that Ryanair's baggage limits are strict, and travelers are subject to penalty fees for luggage with weight or dimensions over the limit.

From Luton Airport
- Take the Express Coach 757 to Victoria Coach Station. Travel time is 90 minutes, with coaches departing every 30 minutes.
- Take the First Capital Connect train to King’s Cross Underground. Travel time is 35 minutes. A one-way ticket starts at £13. (www.firstcapitalconnect.com)

From Stansted Airport
- Take the Stansted Express to Liverpool Street Train Station. Trains depart every 15 minutes with a travel time of 45 minutes. One-way tickets start at £18. (www.standstedexpress.com)
- Take the National Express A6 to Victoria Coach Station. The travel time is about an hour and 40 minutes, and buses generally depart every 10-20 minutes. A one-way ticket costs £22. (www.nationalexpress.com)

From London City Airport
- Take the Docklands Light Rail (DLR) to Bank Station where you can transfer to the District and Circle Lines. The travel time is 22 minutes. A one-way ticket costs £4.

London is also served by several mainline rail services, each serving different areas of the UK, and all with convenient connections to the London Underground system or “Tube.” To get to the Warwick Avenue station on the tube, you’ll want to take the Bakerloo line. Reminder: there are no lifts at the Warwick Avenue station.

The mainline rail services and stations are:
- Waterloo serving the South Coast: Eurostar, Bournemouth
- Victoria serving the South Coast: Gatwick Airport, Brighton
- Euston serving the North West and North Wales: Birmingham, Chester, Manchester, Blackpool, Scotland
- St. Pancras serving the Midlands: Nottingham, Sheffield
- King’s Cross (directly opposite St. Pancras) serving the North East: York, Leeds, Newcastle, Scotland
- Liverpool Street serving the East: Stansted Airport, Cambridge, Harwich, Norwich
- Charing Cross serving the South East Coast: Canterbury, Dover, Hastings
- Paddington serving the South West and South Wales: Heathrow Airport, Oxford, Bath, Plymouth
Florence

Early Arrival in Florence
You are free to arrive in Florence earlier or stay on after classes end, but you should be prepared to arrange and pay for your own expenses before or after the program dates and during the break. If you plan to arrive early, it is a good idea to arrange for a hotel ahead of time. Housing can be difficult in Florence at times, especially for those arriving late in the day. Regardless of where you stay, make and confirm reservations well in advance. One option to consider is the Hotel Palazzo Vecchio for a room shared with other students at a modest price (for a room in central Florence). If you would like to know more about prices and reserve a room at the hotel, please contact Mr. Andrea Pucci at manager@hotelpalazzovecchio.it as soon as possible. Tell him that you are a student of ACM.

If you’re starting the program in Florence...
Be sure to take into consideration the time you will need to make connections between planes and/or trains so that you will arrive in Florence safely and on time. Once in Florence, you should go to Hotel Palazzo Vecchio to check-in before orientation begins.

We highly recommend that you arrange to fly into Florence. While flying into Rome or Milan is not difficult, flying back home may require an overnight stay, since it is logistically impossible to get to either city from Florence before noon, and thus it may end up costing more.

From Florence-Amerigo Vespucci Airport (located three miles outside Florence): This international airport offers direct service from eleven European cities: Amsterdam, Barcelona, Brussels, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, London, Lugarno, Munich, Nice, Paris, and Vienna. You have two options to get to the hotel.

Option 1: Taxi from the airport to Hotel Palazzo Vecchio
A taxi from the airport takes about 20 minutes and costs a flat rate of 20€ plus 1€/piece of luggage.

Option 2: Take a bus from the airport to the train station and then walk to Hotel Palazzo Vecchio
There is a bus service (Volabus run by Sita/Ataf) for 6€ that will take you from the arrival terminal in the airport to the SMN (Santa Maria Novella) Train Station not too far from the Hotel Palazzo Vecchio.

If you have a lot of luggage it may be worth taking a taxi from the airport because by the time you pay for the bus and a taxi from the station to the hotel, you will have spent nearly the same amount.

From Rome: You can take the train to Florence if you arrive in Rome. If you choose to do so, make sure you purchase both tickets (from the Rome airport to the Rome train station, Stazione Termini, and from there to Florence) while you are at the airport. This way you will avoid standing in a long line once you reach the Rome station—you’ll be able to board the train straight away. When you ask for your ticket to Florence, ask for the first Eurostar leaving Rome after your train from the airport arrives. The airport train you will take arrives on the far side of the station. You will have to walk in towards the main part of the station until you are at the head of the tracks. Look for your train posted on an illuminated board hanging above the tracks. Your ticket will be printed with a carrozza (car) number and a seat number. The carrozza number is under a little drawing of a train car.
From Pisa: You can easily take a train from Galileo Airport. Buy a ticket at the information booth to the right of the exit from customs. Then, without going outdoors, walk from customs to the opposite end of the airport passenger terminal and down a corridor to the railroad platform. Signs mark the way: a FIRENZE Santa Maria Novella (SMN). Trains leave almost every hour, though more frequent service is available from Pisa’s central train station. The last train leaving the Pisa AIRPORT for Florence leaves at 6:55 p.m. If you don’t catch this train, you’ll need to take a bus or a taxi from the airport to Pisa’s central station. The trip from the Pisa airport to Florence takes a little over an hour. The last train leaving the central station in Pisa for Florence is at 11:03 p.m.

From Milan: Flying into Milan should be a last resort because it offers one of the most difficult connections. If you land in Milan, you will either catch a connecting flight to Florence or take an airport bus to the train station, continuing by train to Florence. Milan has two airports, Malpensa for international flights, and Linate for Italian and some European flights, and you may have to change airports to catch a connecting flight to Florence. Another inconvenience: on your return trip to the U.S. you would probably need to spend a night in Milan, as it’s impossible to get there from Florence for any flight that leaves before 2 p.m.

From Malpensa International Airport in Milan, an Airpullman bus meets international flights 8:00 a.m. to midnight. It costs approximately 5€ and takes 60 minutes. Get off at the Milano Centrale train station, not Garibaldi. Do not take the Nuova Malpensa Treno Express which goes into the center of Milan and does not stop at the Centrale Station.

From Forlanini-Linate Airport, SEAV (orange signs) operates a coach service to Centrale every 20-30 minutes. Purchase tickets from the driver. The ride will be about 45 minutes. The coach will stop at the Garibaldi train station also; you should go to Centrale.

If you’re spending the second part of the program in Florence...
Where you spend your program break will determine your route to Florence. If you plan to spend your break in the UK, you can fly cheaply into Pisa, Rome, or Milan from London on Ryanair. You can also fly into those cities from select locations on the Continent (visit www.ryanair.com for details) and take the train into Florence. You should also be able to find flights directly into Florence from certain places in Europe. Furthermore, Europe boasts a superior grid of railways, so you can make your way to Florence by train from virtually anywhere in Europe, though you’ll probably have to make a connection or two. You might want to visit a travel agency in London before the program break to explore different options for getting into Florence.

By Train:
Check out the official site of Italian Railways at www.trenitalia.com for train schedules, stations, special offers, etc. Train tickets can be purchased at the main ticket office, or Biglietteria, and are valid for two months after the date of purchase, but they must be punched with the date and time just before you get on the train in order to make them valid for traveling. This is called convalidare in Italian. Look for a yellow or gold colored box about 15” x 20”. You stick one end of the ticket into a slot at the top of the box and the date and time are printed on the ticket. If you fail to validate your ticket before getting on the train, the fine is about 30€.

There are several types of trains. With a few exceptions, only the trains that travel within one region, like Tuscany, charge only the base ticket price, called a biglietto. IC (Intercity), EC (EuropeanCity), and EN (EuroNight) trains charge a supplement or supplemento. A faster and fancier train called ES (Eurostar) costs more yet. Some EX (Espresso) and IR (InterRegional) trains now need a supplemento. Remember
to ask for secondo classe because it is not worth paying more for a first class ticket. Check the schedule before you buy your ticket and specify which train you are taking, so they give you the proper ticket.

For overnight trains, you can reserve a sleeping shelf called a cucchette which costs 15 euros in addition to the biglietto and supplemento. The trip from Rome to Florence takes about one and a half hours; the trip from Milan takes over three hours. In both cases, the ticket and the supplemento total 22.45€. The best option is to take the Eurostar train from Rome or Milan because you will pay under 30€ and can get the ticket, supplemento, and seat reservation at the same Eurostar ticket window. This would be a good idea since non-Eurostar trains can take as much as twice as long as Eurostar trains. During the middle of the day, trains leave at 30 past the hour from Rome and on the hour from Milan. Trains are less frequent early in the morning and late at night.

Keep an eye on your valuables and suitcases at all times when you are traveling. Beware of small children trying to pick your pockets, particularly in the Rome train station, churches and other places frequented by tourists. They travel in groups and getting rid of them may require some aggressiveness on your part. Above all, do not keep your money or passport in exterior pockets and hold all belongings tightly. Pickpockets on buses are also very common.

To Get to Linguaviva and/or Hotel Palazzo Vecchio
Students arriving in Florence by train should go to the end of the track and turn left (with their back to the trains) using the left exit from the station. They should then cross the street at the stop light and turn left until they reach Piazza Adua (a half of a block). This is the same piazza that gives access to Palazzo dei Congressi. Turn right at the corner and cross Via Fiume. Hotel Palazzo Vecchio is the first building on your right once you cross Via Fiume (follow red arrow). Linguaviva is located around the corner from the hotel on Via Fiume (follow orange arrow).
Most students use the program break as an opportunity to travel in Europe before heading to the next city. Be sure to budget for the cost of your travel between not only your entry point in Europe and your first city, but also between London and Florence. You are responsible for your travel expenses, accommodations and meals during the break as well as transporting all of your luggage. Remember to be realistic about your travel plans and to use good judgment during your independent travel.

**Eurail Passes:** If you plan to do a fair amount of rail travel on your own before or after the program or during the break, you might be interested in one of the variety of Eurailpasses available for travel in and among 17 European countries but not travel in Great Britain. Several passes with different restrictions and durations are available including: Eurail Youthpass, Eurail Youth Flexipass, Eurail Saver Pass, Eurail Flexipass, and the Europass. If you are interested in one of these passes, you should contact your own travel agent or the official Eurail website at www.eurail.com for advice on which type of pass to purchase.

**BritRail Passes:** Eurailpasses are not valid for travel in Great Britain. The BritRail Classic Pass and the BritRail Flexipass cover England, Wales, and Scotland. Airport services—Heathrow Express, Gatwick Express, and Stansted Skytrain—are also included. The BritRail Classic Pass is valid for travel on a certain number of consecutive days. Passes are available for 8 days, 15 days, 22 days, or 1 month. The BritRail FlexiPass permits the holder to choose travel days within the period of validity. Passes are available for 4 days of travel in two months, 8 days of travel in two months or 15 days of travel in two months. Tickets are available in the U.S. from BritRail (www.britrail.net) or Rail Europe (www.raileurope.com).

**Other Passes and Train Tickets:** www.railpass.com features a wide variety of regional and national train passes. A word of caution: You may need to do a lot of train traveling before a rail pass begins to save you money. Compare the cost of purchasing tickets individually with the price of any pass. Remember to keep the receipt part of your pass or tickets so you can get a replacement or refund in case of loss.

**Air Travel:** Flying within Europe can be affordable if you search for discount/student fares. If your schedule allows some flexibility, you may save money by arranging your travel between European cities once in Europe. There are many inexpensive airlines offering good deals including Ryanair and easyJet. To find more budget airlines, check out www.skyscanner.com.

**Accommodations:** Youth hostels are the least expensive housing option while traveling in Europe; a bed generally costs around $20 or $30 a night. They vary greatly in quality, however, and often have curfews and daytime lockouts that may restrict your schedule to some extent. If you plan to stay in hostels, visit the Hostelling International website at www.hihostels.com for locations and more information. At www.hiusa.org you can purchase a membership card for about $28. This card allows you to stay in International Youth Hostel Federation hostels at a cheaper rate and will usually prevent you from being turned away during busy periods. If you're going to join Hostelling International, be sure to do it before you leave the U.S. Pensiones and hotels will cost more money than hostels, but they generally give you more privacy, security, and flexibility. Most tourist information centers in train stations and airports can help you to find accommodations, but a good guidebook will also come in handy. Many guidebooks list lodgings that readers have liked in the past.
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