

## **Welcome to the Queen's University Pre-departure Orientation for Study, Work or Travel Abroad.**

This orientation program contains information about travel logistics, health and safety, and culture and cultural adaptation.

You are required to read all of the material and watch all of the clips that are embedded throughout.

All of this material is designed to guide you as you prepare for your time away. Please ensure that you read/listen/view all of the material. **At the end of this presentation and to complete this process you must email [QUESP@queensu.ca](mailto:QUESP@queensu.ca) at which time you will be asked a number of questions that you must answer correctly in order to have your pre-departure marked as complete.**

If, at any point, you require clarification, you may send an email to [QUESP@queensu.ca](mailto:QUESP@queensu.ca). We will respond shortly.

We hope that you find this on-line pre-departure orientation informative as well as engaging. If you have comments or questions about the on-line delivery of pre-departure information we would like to hear from you.

Please send your comments to [CL4@queensu.ca](mailto:CL4@queensu.ca).

***Bon voyage!***

# Academic Systems Abroad

One of the reasons you may choose to study abroad is to receive exposure to an academic culture other than the one you are most familiar with. If you choose to pursue work abroad or further studies in another country after you graduate, your experience adjusting to a different academic culture may help you later.



- Before you leave, do some research into choose to be in contact with a student domestic students and international students). student's approaches.
- Understand what is expected of you from both
- Research different types of services you will have access to while you are abroad (e.g. academic advising, counseling, writing support, language support, sports facilities, clubs). The level of support for students may be very different from what you are used to at Queen's University or your home institution.
- Be mindful of student-professor relations as they may be drastically different from those in Canada. For example, you may notice that students interact with their professors in a very different manner than what you are used to. The relationship may be much more formal or much less formal. Attitudes towards a professor's availability for additional support may also be different (e.g. office hours, contact through e-mail, etc.). In turn a professor's expectations of the role of a student in his/her classroom environment could differ.
- You may notice differences in course work load, examinations, assignments and assessment. Be prepared for the weighting system of each to be different.
- Group work and independent study: your host academic culture may value one more than the other.
- Access to and availability of learning resources may differ from those at Queen's or your home institution.
- Marks received while abroad may be transferred to your transcripts at home. Keep in mind that while Queen's may only grant you a pass or fail for credits earned abroad, graduate schools and future employers may ask for transcripts from all institutions attended to see the grade earned for all subjects.
- When are you approaching your time to return to Canada, we recommend that your bring extra copies of transcripts from your host institution (signed and sealed) back with you to Canada, as you may face challenges obtaining transcripts once you have returned.

the academic culture of your host institution. You may who has studied in that academic system (both When you arrive at your host institution, follow local your host and home institutions.

# Passports, Visa and Logistics

- Please ensure that you have the correct entry and exit documents required to participate in your activity abroad by contacting the host country's embassy/high commission or consulate offices. Keep in mind that your citizenship, country of birth, medical history, duration and purpose of activity abroad may be factors in determining whether you will be required to obtain a visa to enter and/or stay in the countries to which you will travel.
- Some countries may require transit visas, records of immunizations, and/or other supporting documents (e.g. offer letters, medical reports) to enter a country even if you are only transiting through it. Contact the embassy of the country through which you will be transiting to find out whether you will need a visa.
- The visa application process may take a long time to complete. We, therefore, recommend that you begin the process at least three months in advance of your expected departure date.
- Visit the [Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada](#) to learn more about Visa requirements. You might consider book marking this page to return to it later and for future reference.

# Passports

- To travel abroad you will need a passport valid for at least six months past your expected return date. Canadian citizens should apply for a passport through Passport Canada. Citizens of other countries should check with their respective passport offices.
- You may wish to photocopy the identity page of your passport and leave your passport in a safe place. Please note that some countries will require you to carry your original passport at all times.



- Passport Canada Site <http://www.ppt.gc.ca/index.aspx>
- Again, we urge you to bookmark this page for future reference.

# Dual Citizenship

- The Canadian government recommends that you travel on your Canadian passport. If you have multiple citizenship and you plan on traveling to one of those countries, please check that you do not have any outstanding obligations (e.g. military duty). Please note that traveling on your non-Canadian passport may limit the ability of Canadian officials in providing consular services.
- For all of those traveling on their Canadian passport we strongly encourage you to register with the Canadian government as being in that country. It is quick and easy to do. Just go to the [Registration of Canadians Abroad](#) (ROCA) site and complete the information required. In the event of an emergency the Canadian government can easily call up who is in the affected area and may need assistance (emergency evacuation, etc.).
- If you choose to travel on your non-Canadian passport, we recommend that you still register with a Canadian government office abroad.

# Travel Logistics

## Airport and Tickets

- Most countries will require proof of a return ticket before allowing you to enter the country. If you are not sure of when you want to return, purchase a return ticket around the date on which you anticipate you will return and then check with the airline for costs that may be incurred for changing a flight.
- An emergency could arise close to your departure date preventing you from traveling abroad or requiring you to postpone your trip. Purchasing trip cancellation insurance may prove to be cost-efficient in the long run.
- Check with your household insurance provider (students may want to check with parents/guardians) for luggage & property insurance.
- Close to your departure date check what quarantine measures for H1N1 are in place for the countries to which you will be traveling [http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries\\_pays/menu-eng.asp](http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/menu-eng.asp). Many countries will enforce very strict quarantine measures. If you have flu-like symptoms close to your departure date, you may want to consider postponing your travel as you may not be allowed to disembark or face being placed in quarantine.
- To prepare for the possibility of your travel documents (passport, immunization records) being stolen or lost, please make at least two copies of all your travel documents. Leave one copy at home with your emergency contact. Keep the second one with you, separate from the original documents. Photocopies of original documents can be very useful for replacing lost/stolen items. ***Please be sure to note that you will do this on your risk assessment, later on in this process.***
- If you will be required to carry a form of identification with you throughout your time abroad, we recommend that you keep a photocopy of the ID page of your passport with you instead of your original passport. ***Please note that some countries require that you carry your original passport with you at all times so check this out prior to your departure!!***
- [Canada Customs/ Border Services Agency](#)
- [International Student Identity Card \(ISIC\)](#)
- Check them out for rail passes, discount airlines and more...

# Bon Voyage but...

- Check out this publication from the Department of Foreign Affairs Canada that covers all of the essential information for Canadian travelers. (Hard copies of the booklet are available in the QUIC Resource Library)
  
- [Bon Voyage But....](#)

# Finances

## Accessing Your Money Abroad

- Before you leave ***it is imperative*** that you inform your bank(s) that you will be traveling outside of the country (and where and for how long) so that your accounts do not get frozen when you try to access them from abroad.
- It is important to have several different ways to access your money while you are away. Depending on the region to which you are traveling, you may have limited access to your money. Make the necessary arrangements before you travel.
- Having some local currency on you for when you first arrive in the country is a good idea as you may not be able to access an ABM immediately. Please note that some countries have regulations and/or laws regarding importing currency, both foreign and local currency, and that ABM/credit card fraud is increasingly prevalent in many countries. You will need to research this while completing your risk assessment, later on in this process.



- Consider whether you will readily have access to ABMs in your chosen destination. If not, you may need to travel with enough cash.
- In certain countries, you may find it easier to travel with a credit card that has a chip in it. If you do not have a chip in your credit card, please contact your banking institution to arrange to have a credit card with a chip.
- Fees associated with using your bank cards overseas may be very high. Check with your bank to see whether you can lower the costs. Some banks are affiliated with banks abroad which may help to defray user fees.
- Know the pin number of your credit card in case you plan on using your credit card for cash advances.
- We recommend using a money belt to carry your valuable items such as bank cards as doing so can help reduce theft.



# Power of Attorney/Third Party Authorization

- You may choose to assign someone you trust (e.g. family member, spouse) to act on your legal behalf while you are away. This is often most helpful when dealing with difficult financial situations such as a lost/stolen credit card. The person you have authorized to act on your behalf would be able to inform the bank and make the necessary arrangements for you to have a replacement card. This person can also act or make decisions on your behalf should you be seriously ill, or injured, and unable to communicate with emergency services, hospitals, local authorities etc.
- Contact your banking institution or a lawyer to arrange for this.

# Money and Budgeting

- Budget carefully...the majority of those who go abroad find that they spent more money than they had anticipated spending.
- Be realistic when you budget for your time away.
- Avoid customs difficulties -- before taking valuable items abroad, you can use a free identification service at any office of the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). For more information, consult the CBSA publications entitled [I Declare](#) or [Traveling Outside Canada](#).

# Responsible Travel

## PlanetAir

- PlanetAir: Carbon Offsetting for your international flights
- The environmental costs to studying abroad do not go unnoticed. Take this opportunity to calculate the emissions that your travel produces at [PlanetAir.ca](http://PlanetAir.ca) and what you can do about it!

## Green-Washing

- Eco-tourism: how to avoid “[Green-Washing](#)”
- Ask about written policy with respect to conservation
- Ask what concrete actions are taken to minimize damage to ecosystems
- Are produce and services sourced locally? Is wastewater properly treated?
- Make use of local guides and tour operators where available

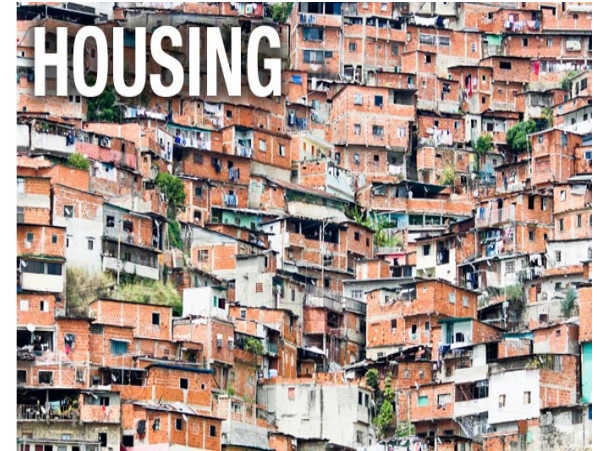
\* *Adapted from ResponsibleTravel.com*

# Accommodations

## General Information

For many travelers spending a significant time abroad, securing accommodation can cause some stress. You will need to decide whether you have access to living in university residences. Others may prefer to live with a group of students in apartments and houses.

- Do your research into the different types of living arrangements available to you at your host institution. Contact your host institution's international office or accommodation/residence office to determine what your options are.
- Prepare for different living standards.
- Laws may be different in the following areas: oral/written leases, access to premises, tenant obligations, landlord obligations, payment of rent, termination of tenancy, subletting, guests, deposit, guarantor.
- Safety considerations: distance from home to school/work, neighbourhood, access to transportation, lockable doors and windows, smoke detector.
- Consider your personal preferences: noise levels, roommates, access to internet/telephone, smokers, pets, shared kitchen/bathroom.
- **Sublet Your Room in Kingston**  
Every term, exchange students arrive on the Queen's campus looking for housing for one or two terms. Consider placing your room for sublet on the [QUIC housing database](#) and help an international student! Other options include the [Queen's Accommodation Listing Service](#).



# Communication

Have important addresses and contact information with you while you are traveling (including the Canadian embassy contact information). You should carry the Queen's Emergency Support Program (ESP) card with you throughout your travels. This card includes the Queen's University 24/7 emergency contact number (1 613 533 6111) that can be used by yourself, or anyone who may be assisting you.

- Take important addresses in your hand luggage.
- Consider important contact information written in the host country's language.
- Leave a copy of your itinerary with family/friends.
- [Make a collect call home shortly after arriving in your host country.](#)
- Know how to use local phones before finding yourself in an emergency situation. Consider whether phones require coins, pre-paid cards, or are run by local vendors.
- Know your options for getting help during an emergency (taxi numbers, access to police or ambulance, neighbours).
- Know the equivalent of 911.
- Spend some time learning a bit of your host country's language.
- Learn a few key words (greetings, questions, safety-related words).
- Familiarize yourself with local customs and attitudes.
- Even in countries where English is spoken widely, communication problems may arise because of cultural differences (gestures, customs, etc.).
- Knowing a few key words could become useful in case of emergency.



***PLEASE NOTE: MAKE TWO COPIES OF YOUR PASSPORT AND ALL OTHER RELEVANT TRAVEL DOCUMENTS. CARRY YOUR ORIGINALS WITH YOU AS YOU TRAVEL. CARRY ONE COPY OF THESE DOCUMENTS WITH YOU BUT IN A SEPARATE LOCATION. KEEP THE SECOND COPY AT HOME WITH FRIENDS OR FAMILY. HAVING PHOTOCOPIES WITH YOU MAKES OBTAINING REPLACEMENTS MUCH EASIER IF YOUR ORIGINALS ARE LOST OR STOLEN.***

***MAKE SURE TO NOTE THAT YOU WILL DO THIS ON YOUR RISK ASSESSMENT/MANAGEMENT PLAN, SHOULD YOU BE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE ONE. FAILURE TO NOTE THIS MAY RESULT IN YOUR SAFETY PLANNING RECORD BEING REJECTED.***

# Communication with Queen's

- If Queen's needs to get in touch with you, we will use the e-mail address you provide us with. Please ensure that you check this email account while you are away. Please note that some email accounts have mailbox limits, or may be incompatible when forwarded from Queen's email accounts, that result in Queen's University not being able to contact you. You will need to look into this prior to departing for your chosen destination. Also, make sure that Queen's email is not being routed to your junk mailbox - check this periodically.
- If there is a travel advisory for the region in which you will be traveling, we will send you an e-mail and may ask you to respond to confirm your safety. ***If we do not hear back from you, we would then need to take the necessary steps to ensure your safety, including contacting your personal emergency contacts. In order for us to ensure that you are safe and well AND not needlessly upset your friends or family, make sure to respond promptly to these emails from QUIC.***
- In the event of an immediate emergency, access the local authorities. If the situation warrants support/assistance from Queen's, the Queen's University Emergency Support Program can be accessed by calling Queen's Security 1-613-533-6111. Collect calls are accepted.

# With family and friends

## Maintain Communication with Loved Ones

- Stay in touch with friends and family while you are away through email, telephone, social network sites, blogs, etc.
- Family members may not know the exact location of your whereabouts and be concerned for your safety if they are not able to get in touch with you.



- Follow local news as those at home will be concerned about you should they hear of events happening near to where you are staying.
- Consider the expectations of family and friends to be able to communicate with you while abroad. Before you leave, be clear with family members as to how often you will be able to contact them.
- Keep up-to-date with news and events in Canada as well as news concerning your family and community at home as it may help with feelings of homesickness and with re-entry.

# Your Safety Abroad



## Lost/Stolen Items

- Consider wearing a money belt while traveling.



- Inform local authorities and your host embassy if you suspect your items have been stolen.
- Contact the Canadian Embassy if your passport is missing.
- Contact your host embassy or local immigration office if you need to replace other travel documents (e.g. study permits, entrance visas, etc.) and have your photocopied documents with you for easier replacement.

- Avoid carrying too much cash.



- Be extra careful in crowded places (markets, fairs, festivals) and on public transportation.

# Getting Around

- Before you leave for your destination, research local public transportation – availability, routes, safety.
- Reoccurring problems with local transportation will sometimes be mentioned on the [Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade – Canada \(DFAIT\)](#) website.
- Before going out, plan how you will return home.
- Know your route home and how long you anticipate it will take.
- Carry phone numbers for taxis with you.
- Whenever possible, call for a licensed taxi, especially when alone.
- When taking taxis, try to establish a price and length of journey before getting in.
- When entering the taxi, ensure that the driver has turned on the meter (if there is one).
- Ensure seatbelts exist and use them.
- If you do not feel safe while in a taxi, ask to be let out in a public or familiar place.
- Consider buying or renting a cell phone (pay-as-you-go plans); check whether your phone from home will work abroad.



- Let others you trust know of your whereabouts.
- Familiarize yourself with campus security programs (e.g. walk-home, emergency lights).
- Study maps beforehand and pick a route, remembering key names of streets.
  - Avoid opening your map or guide book in the middle of the street.
  - Consider stopping at a café or store to consult a map.
  - Avoid looking like a tourist - once you get your bearings walk with authority.
- Do not leave your belongings unattended or out of sight.
- Be wary of strangers offering assistance.
- Carry phone numbers of local friends and police; know how to use a public phone beforehand.
- Inform local authorities and your host embassy if you suspect your items have been stolen.
- Avoid “once-in-a-lifetime” thinking.
- Use the same common sense you would if you were at home.
- Recognize that you are in very unfamiliar environments.



# Political Issues

- Some countries prohibit photography of military installations, government buildings, prisons or airports.
- Recognize that areas where photography is prohibited are not always clearly marked.
- When unsure, ask before taking photos, including when taking pictures of people.
- Avoid taking part in political demonstrations. Please note that "taking part" may involve a variety of activities; taking pictures, actively participating in the demonstration, distributing material, or standing in the vicinity watching the event unfold, etc.



- Your embassy may be limited in providing assistance if you are arrested or detained.
- Your travel health insurance policy may not cover injuries sustained during times of political turmoil.

# Legal Issues

***Become familiar with and respect the laws of each country you will be visiting.***

- Understand the consequences of breaking laws - ***ignorance is not a defense!***
- Know what your embassy can and cannot do for you.
- The Canadian embassy cannot get you out of jail.
- You may not be allowed to enter certain countries if you have a criminal record. For example, Canada may not allow entry for foreigners with a criminal record.
- You are a guest of the government and citizens of your host country.
- Drugs which are legal in one country may be illegal in another.
- Be conscious of laws and attitudes not only for yourself but also for how they may impact your traveling partners who may be [LGBTQ](#). For more information before you depart check out [Queen's Positive Space](#).
- Visit [Canadian Consular Services](#) to learn more about what they can do for you



# Driving Abroad

- Unless absolutely necessary, we **do not recommend** that you drive while you are abroad. The number one cause of death and injury to travelers abroad continues to be driving-related incidents.
- Please see page 31 in the Government of Canada Travel; Publication [WELL ON YOUR WAY - A CANADIAN'S GUIDE TO HEALTHY TRAVEL ABROAD.](#)
- If you will need to drive while abroad, please become familiar with not only the driving laws of your host country, but the driving culture. Speak with locals to gain an understanding of the many unspoken driving laws that you will also be required to abide by.



- Make sure that you have the proper documentation (including insurance) to drive in your host country.
- Some countries require you to have an International Drivers License in order to operate a motor vehicle. Check out the local laws regarding this if you do plan on driving.
- If traffic drives on the left, pay particular attention while driving and as a pedestrian as you may not be familiar with that system.

# Staying Healthy While Abroad

## General Information – Your Health and Wellness

- Be aware of your own health context
- Make sure your routine immunizations are up-to-date and speak to your health care provider about other things to consider for travel to your destination.
- A certificate of Yellow Fever vaccination is required for entry into many countries.
- Consider bringing a basic medical kit with you.
- Consider bringing your own contraceptives as the standards, costs and availability in some countries can be different from that in Canada. Please note that if you will be taking medication (both prescription and over the counter) with you, you will need to research the laws/regulations for importing medication into your host country.
- Consider bringing a portable smoke detector when you travel.
- Access to health care may be limited or restricted and therefore, air evacuation may be necessary in the event of serious illness or injury. ***Please note that you will need to research whether your health insurance provider will cover this cost if it becomes necessary.***
- Are your belongings insured?
- A change in climate can affect energy levels and overall health. When you first arrive, allow plenty of time for your body to adjust to your new surroundings.



- Culture shock and the stress of living in unfamiliar surroundings can be particularly difficult. Research culture shock prior to leaving for your destination: learn how to recognize the signs and develop skills and coping strategies. ***Please note there are a variety of "Culture" modules later in this process, that will give you a better understanding of what to be aware of, tips on how to minimize the affects of culture shock, as well as when, how, and where, to seek assistance.***
- Drugs & Alcohol: you are subject to laws of host country. The laws may differ from those of your home country - ***ignorance is not a defense!***
- Safety standards vary from country to country and can be different to what you may expect.
- Check the safety standards in your place of accommodation, including making sure there are smoke detectors and making sure doors and windows are properly locked.
- Make note of fire escapes and exit routes in case of emergencies.
- Monitor your physical and mental health after returning home.
- Have a medical check-up once you return.
- Some illnesses are asymptomatic while others may take time to show symptoms.
- Check out the Government of Canada [Travel Health](#) website for more information.



# Food

- Visit a travel health clinic prior to leaving to determine how you may better prepare for food and waterborne diseases.
- Consider your dietary needs as you plan your time away.
- Plan how you will be able to maintain a healthy diet if you have food restrictions, e.g. being vegan in a region with little access to non-meat products.
- Cultural attitudes to food preferences, restrictions and allergies can vary.
- In some places, allergies to peanuts will not be taken seriously, as it is very uncommon in the local population, unless you explain the severity of the allergy. On the other hand, being a vegetarian may result in an entire meal cooked in separate pots etc. ***Please note that if you have serious or life threatening allergies/conditions, you should seriously consider wearing a medic alert bracelet in the event that you are unable to communicate. You will also need to indicate this in your risk assessment later on in this process, if you are required to complete one.***



- Some foods which are perfectly safe for local people to eat, may react very differently in those new to a region.
- Remain respectfully adamant on foods that you are not able to eat.
- Avoid eating uncooked food and food from street vendors. Fruits and vegetables that can be peeled are safer. Drink bottled water or boiled water.

# Accessibility and Travelers with Disabilities

- Different cultures will interpret and approach disability differently.
- Learn how your host country understands your disability, recognizing that different cultures will interpret and approach disability differently.
- Laws and regulations of countries and institutions will reflect these different approaches.
- Identify what services you will require while you are abroad and whether these will be met. ***Please note that if you are required to take medication that needs to be refrigerated (i.e. insulin) or are required to carry an epi pen with you at all times, research whether there will be refrigeration facilities (especially if you will be located in very hot climates and in rural areas) and if you will be able to replenish your epi pen in your host destination should this become necessary.***
- If necessary, communicate your disability to your staff at your program to determine what arrangements can be made for you.
- Consider how you will answer questions about your disability to your host community. Learn key words in the host language.
- Companions of persons with disabilities may need to provide support in new ways when in another country. Please note that you will need to research whether there are laws/regulations regarding documentation for your companions; especially if they are required to administer medication.

# Your Mental Health

- According to the World Health Organization, one of the main responsibilities a traveler must accept is the decision to travel.
- Almost three million Canadians have serious depression.
- Nationwide studies of college students reveal that approximately 45 percent of both undergraduate and graduate students reported an emotional problem that significantly interfered with their ability to function within the past 12 months. Ten percent had seriously considered suicide (*American College Health Association, 2004*).
- Avoid feeling trapped by the decision to go abroad.
- Deciding not to go abroad does not mean that you will never go abroad.

# Mental Health Issues While Abroad

- Should you experience mental health issues while abroad (anxiety attacks, the symptoms of "[culture shock](#)" not subsiding, etc.) you should seek out professional assistance in your host country/institution.
- You can also call the Queen's University Emergency Support Program (ESP) 1-613-533-6111. The ESP can make arrangements for you to speak to the Education Abroad Advisor or access professional assistance from Queen's Counseling Services via phone, Skype or email.
- Further along in this pre-departure process we have included modules on cultural difference and adaptation which may also help.
- Sometimes existing (but previously under control) mental health issues can be exacerbated by the anxiety associated with living abroad and being cut off from your support network.
- If you think you might be at risk., please speak to your health care professional to devise a strategy for staying healthy while abroad.
- Recognize that most people will have trouble adjusting at the beginning of their time away. However, recognize that returning home early is not a failure.
- Explore ways in which to have an international experience at home.

# Vaccinations

- Visit your local travel health clinic to determine whether you will need vaccinations for the regions in which you will travel. Consider not only your host country but other countries/regions to which you may travel while you are away.
- Begin your research as early as possible as some vaccinations will need to be administered several months before you arrive in your destination. Start the research early and consider a timeline and the sequence of shots.
- The World Health Organization and Health Canada provides information to travelers on recommended vaccinations for different regions of the world.
- The [Kingston Travel Health Clinic](#) is located at the local Health Unit at 221 Portsmouth Ave., Tel. 613-549-2335
- [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) and [Travel Health - it's your health](#)



# Prescription Drugs

- Prescriptions drugs which may be legal in Canada, but may not be approved elsewhere. Verify this before traveling with prescription drugs abroad. Consult your doctor to make arrangements.
- If possible, bring enough medication for entire period you will be away. Bring copies of prescriptions.
- While transporting prescription drugs, keep in original packaging with labels.
- As your checked-in baggage may get lost or delayed, bring prescription drugs in your carry-on baggage.
- Check with the airline first.



# Primary, Supplemental and Travel Health Insurance

- Your provincial health insurance (e.g. OHIP, UHIP) provides you with primary health care insurance. Please note that out of country coverage is usually extremely limited in primary health insurance policies.
- Travel Health Insurance is normally incorporated into your supplemental coverage. For example, students may be covered under the AMS/SGPS Plans at Queen's (provided they did not opt-out of the plans), or through their parents'/guardians' work. Students who are attending the First-year option at the BISC will need to opt-in to the AMS health insurance plan as they are not automatically enrolled in it.
- **Important Note:** Supplemental health insurance is only valid while your primary health insurance has not expired. For Ontario residents, your OHIP expires if you spend more than 212 days in a 12 month period outside of the country. So even if you have the best travel health policy (under your supplemental insurance), if your OHIP has expired, your travel health policy is **NOT** valid.
- Contact your provincial health care provide to find out about out-of-country coverage. You may need to make arrangements with your primary health care provider to have the policy extended for the entire time you are away.
- [OHIP Ontario Health Insurance Plan information](#)

*Continued...*

## Travel Health Insurance Policy

- We strongly recommend that you purchase travel health insurance for the entire duration of your time away, including time spent in transit.
- Make sure you have appropriate coverage for where you'll be going and what you'll be doing.
- Many health insurance plans do not cover high risk activities (such as skiing, certain water sports or mountaineering), travel to areas of civil unrest, pre-existing medical conditions, or accidents or illnesses caused by 'abuse' of drugs or alcohol.
- Ensure that the health insurance you purchase is appropriate for your personal health and for the traveling you will be doing and for the activities in which you will take part.
- Know what will NOT be covered.
- Ensure that the health insurance you purchase is appropriate for your personal health and for the activities you will take part in while abroad.
- This [information sheet and checklist](#) should assist you.
- If you are covered by the [AMS Health Insurance information](#) or [SGPS Health Insurance information](#) you should visit their office to ensure that your coverage is valid, will continue to be valid for the duration of your time abroad and that it has appropriate coverage to meet your needs.

# WHAT QUEEN'S CAN DO FOR YOU IN AN EMERGENCY

- By completing this process you will be enrolled in the [Emergency Support Program](#) (ESP) at Queen's University. The ESP is designed to support Queen's students (and others from the Queen's community i.e. faculty, staff, volunteers) while they are abroad. On a daily basis we monitor news reports from several sources and travel advisories put out by Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT) to check whether anyone enrolled in the ESP is affected by events around the world.
- In the 2009-10 academic year 33 travel advisories were sent to students abroad for a range of issues including flooding in West Africa, demonstrations in Bangkok, protests and civil unrest in Thailand, high level travel warning regarding travel to regions/cities in Mexico and Tropical Storm Alex descending on the coast of Mexico.
- Students are provided with the emergency phone number which they can call collect at any time. When the number is called, the emergency protocol is triggered whereby trained Queen's staff is contacted to best respond to the emergency. Please check out the ["In the event of an emergency while abroad"](#) page to learn more.

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## ***What constitutes an emergency?***

An emergency is anything you consider to be an emergency including challenges related to cultural and personal adjustment, theft, medical emergencies/injuries, and visa-related problems.

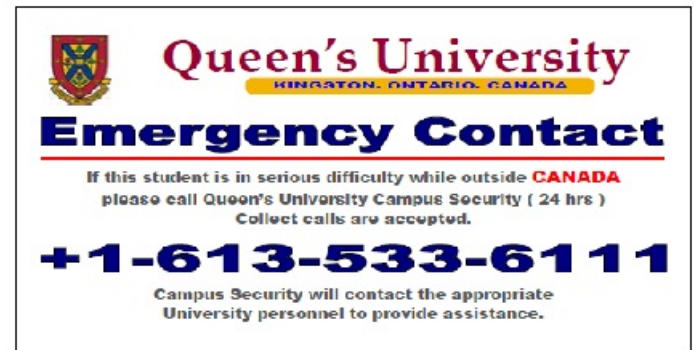
In the 2009-10 academic year, the Emergency Protocol was triggered 19 times including students out of contact with family, illness while abroad, cultural maladjustment, earthquakes and escalating violence in a region.


While Queen's University will attempt to support you as best as possible, please note that this is a support service only. Again, you are strongly encouraged to register with the [Canadian \(or your country of citizenship\) Embassy or Consulate](#) in your host country.

If you haven't already done so, please take a moment to register now using the link above. Also, the previously mentioned Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade - Canada (DFAIT) ["Before you go"](#) publication has a comprehensive checklist that you might want to review.

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- The Queen's University Emergency Support Hotline is +1.613.533.6111. (Collect calls will be accepted)
- Canadian Consular Services can be reached at +1.613.996.8885 (Collect calls will be accepted)
- Please make sure that you receive an Emergency Contact Card, from your faculty or department, before you depart.
- ***And please remember to ensure that we have the email address that you will be accessing while abroad as it is our main means of contacting you.***




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**Emergency Contact**

If this student is in serious difficulty while outside **CANADA**  
 please call Queen's University Campus Security ( 24 hrs )  
 Collect calls are accepted.

**+1-613-533-6111**

Campus Security will contact the appropriate  
 University personnel to provide assistance.

Please carry this card with you at all times while traveling on a Queen's University study / work / travel abroad program. In case of emergency, if you are able, direct authorities to your local contact for assistance. In all other cases, use the contact number on the front of this card.


Local Contact in \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Foreign Affairs Canada Emergency # +1 613 996 8885 (Collect calls accepted)

Valid until August 31st of the academic year in which you are studying / working / traveling abroad





# **Introduction to Culture and Cultural Adaptation**

## **Modules**

The following modules will introduce you to and help you define the meaning of culture. You will be asked to consider your own culture and all of its unique aspects.

We will discuss the Canadian culture and get a sense of what it means to have cultural awareness. You will acquire enough cultural knowledge to begin to understand the concept of cultural competence.

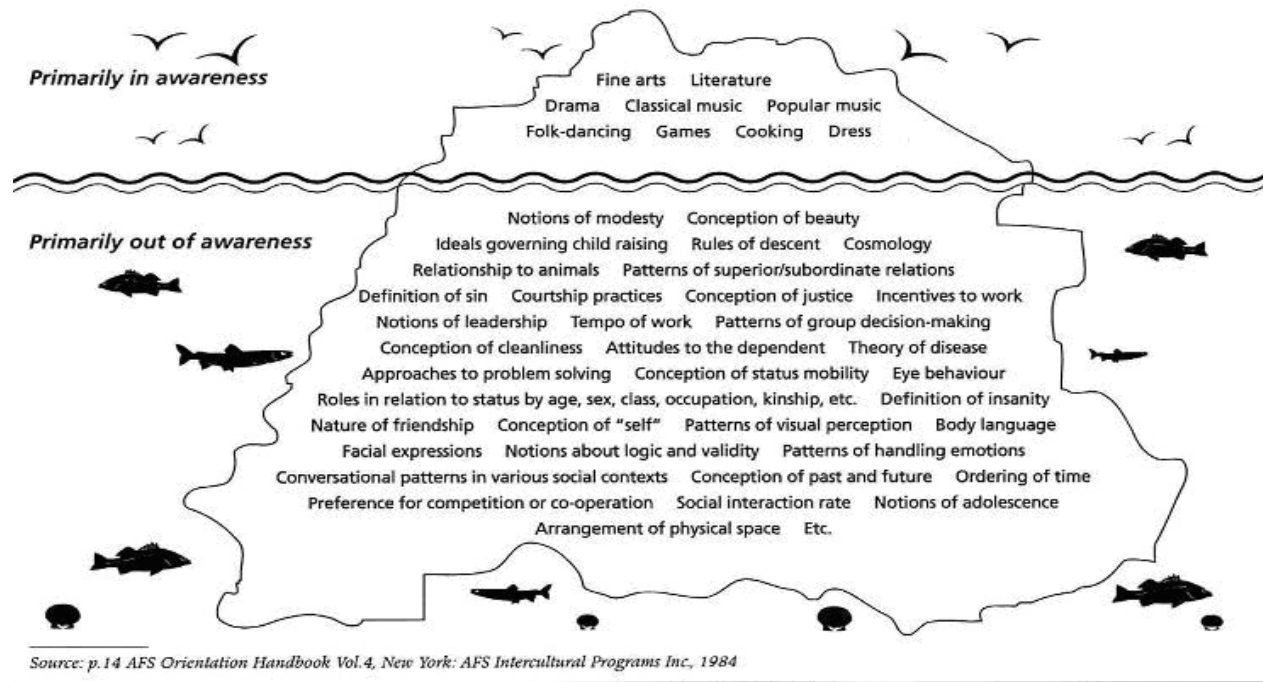
You will also begin to understand that you may need to shift your assumptions, values or actions in order to make your experience and the experience of those you encounter in your travels meet their full potential.



# ***Did you know that more than 200 definitions of culture exist?***

- Culture is... How we meet... Metaphors we use...Our humour...Our symbols... Our stories...Our rituals...Our use of space...Our rewards...How we greet strangers...How we communicate...Our sacred cows...Time issues...How mistakes are dealt with...Our celebrations...Our heroes and heroines...How we learn...How we view hurdles...Our tribal rules...How we deal with deviants...How leaders lead...How we approach new problems... How we deal with angry customers...How we get better at what we do...How we induct new people...Our status symbols. *Source unknown*
- For the purpose of this course, we'll use the definition: A shared, learned, system of values, beliefs and attitudes that shapes and influences perception and behavior. Culture can change over time.

**Fig. 1: The iceberg concept of culture**



**Culture** is often defined/described using the iceberg as an analogy.

**Above The Water Line:** Aspects of culture that are explicit, visible and taught (i.e. Food, dress, music, language, literature, celebrations, dance, how they pronounce the letter "R")

**At the Water Line:** This is the transition zone is where the cultural observer has to be more alert to the new cultural way "of doing and knowing things". (i.e. attitudes about formality/informality, gestures, rules of politeness, etc.

**Below the Water Line:** The "hidden" cultural habits, assumptions, values, judgments, and understandings .

- Usually these are not taught directly they are learned by interacting with the group to which they belong and include: concept of time, social proximity, rules of social etiquette, eye contact, concepts of food, concept of cleanliness, attitudes about sexuality, views on equality, religious beliefs, concept of power distance, concept of beauty, rules of politeness, meaning of facial expression, gestures, concept of fairness, child raising beliefs, understanding of the natural world, concept of self, concept of leadership, nature of friendship, general world view, concerns about individual versus collective, privilege and responsibility , conceptions about personal space and privacy, definitions of gender and associated strengths, duties, and roles, work ethic, notion of modesty, and more...

## Keeping the iceberg analogy in mind...what does it mean to be Canadian?

- Try this fun little exercise. Describe the Canadian culture....
- Start with...All Canadians are.... and then write a list.
- Now scroll down.....



- **And here is a newcomer's description of Canadians.**
- Canadians... Smile a lot and are very friendly
- Accept differences and are truly multicultural
- Require at least 14 inches of personal space
- Always think they are busy
- Are so polite it is hard to know what they really mean or really think
- Are time keepers and rule followers
- Live in a beautiful and clean country
- Don't like to be mistaken for American
- Talk a lot and interrupt other people
- Finish our sentences even though it's not what we meant
- Avoid disagreement or argument
- Jealously guard personal space
- Stick together and speak English
- Ask lots of questions to fill up the silence
- They talk a lot about their own abilities and accomplishments
- Expect others to make choices (i.e. Do you want to go to the movie?)

## ***DO ALL OF THESE STATEMENTS DESCRIBE YOU?***

Of course all of those statements don't apply to you. Most are generalizations about Canadians.

It is safe to say that some general aspects of culture can be recognized in certain cultures but each member of a culture is also a unique individual – just like you! And just like you, we all belong to several different culture, each one influencing our ideas and the way we see the world.

Understanding how we are influenced by our cultural affiliations is an important part of being interculturally effective. How does your membership in different groups affect your perspectives or behaviours? Are you influenced by your gender? Your ethnicity? Your family? Your socio-economic status? Your nationality?

Consider “What does it mean to be Canadian?” and then watch this video to see if you agree with [Shane Koyczan](#), a noted Canadian poet.

***Did Shanes' poem resonate with you?***

***Did you learn anything new about what it means to be Canadian?***

***Do you think you might be able to offer a thoughtful response when asked about the Canadian culture?***

If you asked a foreigner, “What do Canadians value?” what answer might you get?

How about if you asked, “What is a Canadian behaviour that you notice?” Which would be easier to answer? Why is that?

Read the following comments from visitors to North American culture. How do they make you feel? Are they accurate?

From Kohl's *How Others See Us* ...

- **Visitor from India:**  
“North Americans seem to be in a perpetual hurry. Just watch the way they walk down the street. They never allow themselves the leisure to enjoy life; there are too many things to do.”
- **Visitor from Indonesia:**  
“In North America, people show hospitality to strangers, but do not care for family members.”
- **Visitor from the Philippines:**  
“They say children everywhere are the same. In my observations I found out a couple of ways where children differ. Children in North America are very forward in their way of speaking, even to their parents and elders. Children here show a lack of respect for old age. Also, I have observed that children here do not offer their services to their parents willingly. They either have to be told what is to be done or they have to be given some reward or compensation for what they do.”
- **Visitor from Cameroon:**  
“It is shocking to me to see how the father and mother in North America kick out of their family their own children when they become eighteen years of age. The most surprising thing about it all is that the young people do not seem to mind it or think it is too cruel to be thrown out of their own family, but they accept it as the natural and normal way of behaving.”
- **Visitor from Colombia:**  
“I was surprised to find so many young people who were not living with their parents, although they were not yet married. Also, I was surprised to see so many single people of all ages living alone, eating alone, and walking the streets alone. North America must be the loneliest place in the world.”

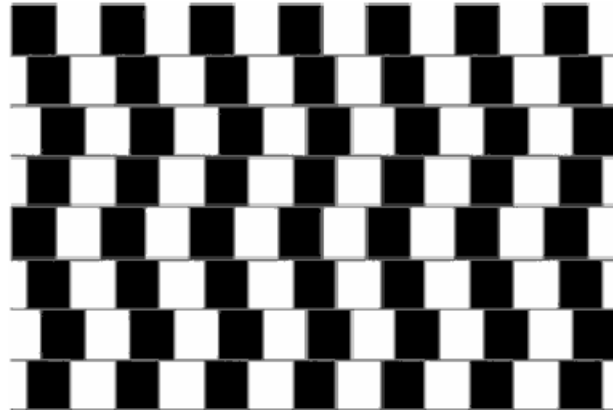
- If people visiting us see us this way... is it possible that our assumptions about other cultures are also a matter of perspective?
- Maybe this [video clip](#) will help....

***Can you understand how the participants in this clip might feel the way they do?***

***Can you begin to see how various cultures differ in their basic value systems and how this affects perception?***

Check your perception...

What do you see?



- The lines in this picture seem to be very disorganized but every horizontal line is one hundred percent straight and all horizontal lines are parallel.
- This is an example of how we sometimes see things that do not exist. Sometimes this happens when we see people too. We see things from our own perspective and our cultural values shape that perspective.
- Try to be mindful of the ways in which cultures differ and not to make snap judgments that are based on your cultural assumptions. When entering a new culture - assume difference - not similarity!

# How Theory can Help

## Recognizing Similarities and Difference

- “[The women of the harem] pitied us European women heartily that we had to go about traveling, and appearing in the streets without being properly taken care of—that is, watched. They thought us strangely neglected in being left so free, and boast of how closely they are watched as a token of the value in which they are held”. *Harriet Martineau, Eastern Life*
- Intercultural Competence involves a balance between valuing unity and diversity. Cultures have both similarities and differences. Understanding both can help us develop skills and attitudes to become interculturally effective.
- Many cultural theorists have developed models of cultural differentiation from which we can begin to understand general assumptions about cultural values. We will look at a few here but please keep in mind as you read these next few pages that most are generalizations on country based cultural values.
- Geert Hofstede has identified 5 dimensions in which cultures vary and based his research on his personal experiences and the statistical analysis of two unique data bases. One matched employee samples from 40 different countries to the same attitude survey questions. The second survey was similar but respondents were executive students who came from 15 countries and from a variety of industries.

- "Values, in this case, are "broad preferences for one state of affairs over others", and they are mostly unconscious." Geert Hofstede  
<http://www.geerthofstede.nl/culture/dimensions-of-national-cultures.aspx>
- Fons Trompenaar has identified 7 cultural dimensions and his work spans 15+ years of academic and field research as well as over 1000 cross-cultural training program delivered in over 20 countries. Trompenaar's focus is on cultural difference and how it effects the process of doing business and managing.
- These are just two of the many cultural theorists whose work is considered a starting point when learning about different cultural values.
- There is some overlap between the concepts they each use. View the next few pages for a brief introduction to the theoretical dimensions of cultural differences.

***Think about the dimensions of culture as you read through the next few pages. At the end of this module we will link back to Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Scale where you can click on a country name (on the left side bar menu) and learn more about its culture as it relates to Hofstede's theories. Be sure to check out where the Canadian culture falls as well. Comparing and contrasting different cultures will give you an idea of why cultural communication sometimes breaks down. You may also see where adjusting certain behaviours or judgments may make communication successful!***

# Hofstede's Power distance

Power Distance is the extent to which the less powerful members **accept** that power is distributed unequally. High power distance cultures observe strict hierarchies in society, the workplace and often the family.

- ***Low Power Distance Values***

Equality

Superiors and subordinates are independent

Achieved status

Decentralized

Elderly not highly respected

Obedience not highly valued

- ***High Power Distance Values***

Inequality / Hierarchy

Subordinates dependent on superiors

Ascribed status

Centralized

Elderly respected

Obedience valued

*Write down one culture that you think would fit into the Low Power Distance category and one that would fit into the High Power Distance category. Keep them handy for the end of this module to see if you were correct.*

# Hofstede's Individualism and Collectivism

- **Individualism:** the opposite of collectivism. Individualist societies are those in which the interests of the individual prevail over the interests of the group, and in which people are expected to look after themselves and their immediate families.
- **Collectivism:** the opposite of individualism. Collectivist societies are those in which the interests of the group prevail over the interests of the individual, and in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout their lifetimes offer them security in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.

*Here is a chart to show where some cultures fall within the two orientations.*

Argentina	
Brazil	
China	
Vietnam	
Egypt	
Greece	
India	
Japan	
Taiwan	
Korea	
Mexico	
Scandinavia	
Portugal	
Arab World	
<b>Collectivism</b>	<b>Individualism</b>
	Canada
	Australia
	England
	France
	Ireland
	Italy
	New Zealand
	United States

*Look at the list above. Can you see why Canadians are in the individualist column?*

Kyra Garson,  
2010 International Educators Training Program (IETP)

*Canadians, American, Australians, etc. are considered individualists and not as community centered. Decisions are not generally made based on the needs of the community or sometimes, even on the extended family, but on the individual's needs and wants.*

*Those in the collectivist column tend to be more community/family centered, often with many generations of a family living under one roof. Life decisions are weighed against the needs of the larger community or family - will the decision benefit them or hinder them? Will that decision embarrass the family?*

# Hofstede's Masculinity

Masculinity refers to the degree that gender roles and characteristics are distinct. In a highly masculine culture men and women have specific roles in society and the family.

- ***Masculine Pole Values***  
Differentiated gender roles  
Sympathy for strong  
Values assertiveness and competition  
Emphasis on ambition and performance  
**“Live to work”**
- ***Feminine Pole Values***  
Overlapping gender roles  
Sympathy for weak  
Values modesty and caring  
Emphasis on quality of life and service  
**“Work to live”**

*Write down a culture that you think would fall into each of these categories. Keep them handy for the end of this module to see if you were right.*

*Can you think of how a specific gender pole might be associated with another of the theories? i.e.*

*Would a masculine gender pole culture fall into the individualist or collectivist pole? Or both? Why do you think that?*

# Hofstede's Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance describes the degree to which a culture accepts risk and ambiguity. High avoidance cultures often create structures that mitigate uncertainty – in many cases this is in the form of ritualized religion or politics.

- **Low Avoidance Values**  
Low stress and anxiety  
Dissent accepted  
High risk taking  
Few rituals  
Acceptance of foreigners / others  
“What is different is curious”
- **High Avoidance Values**  
High stress and anxiety  
Consensus desired  
Low risk taking  
Many rituals  
Suspicion of foreigners / others  
“What is different is dangerous”

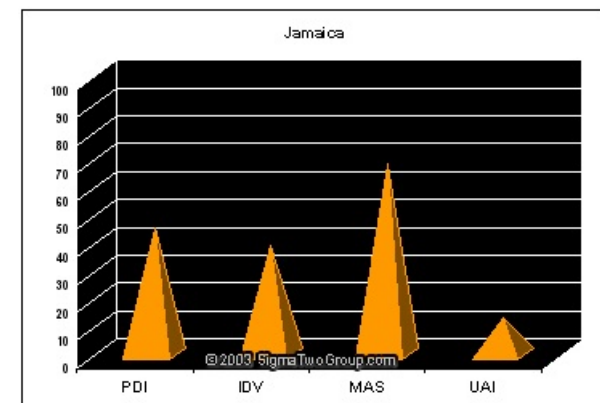
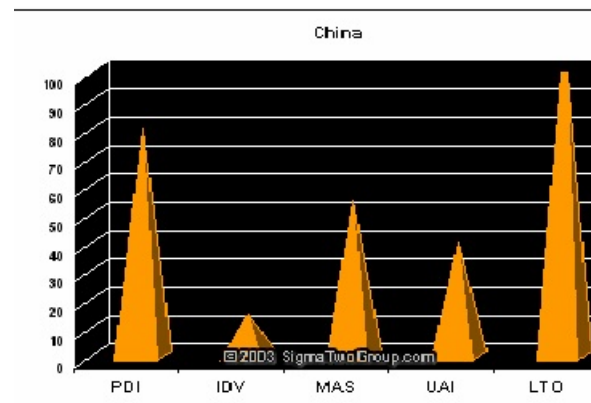
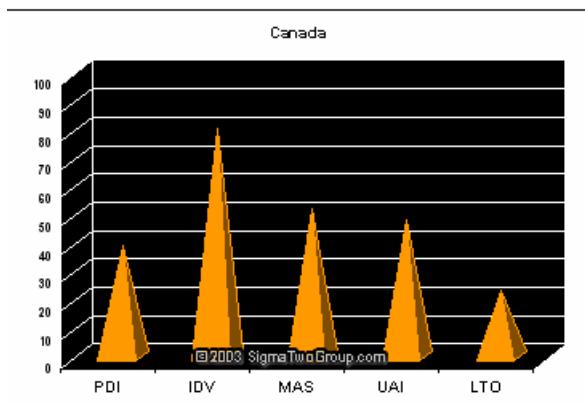
*Where do you think Canadians might fall in these categories?*

*Where do you think the Japanese culture might fall? Why?*

# A short comparison

Now look at the following charts to see where Canada falls in these cultural dimension orientations...and then compare that to where China falls and Jamaica....

- PDI = Power Distance Index
- INV = Individualist (vs Collectivist)
- MAS = Masculine pole (vs Feminine pole)
- UAI = Uncertainty Avoidance Index
- LTO = Long Term Orientation



***Can you begin to see how the different value systems, that the charts represent, might effect communication between these cultures?***

# Trompenaar's Universalist and Particularist

Universalism and particularism describe differences in how rules are interpreted and whether relationships play a part in how rules are applied.

- **Universalist Values**  
Focus on rules  
Consistency of rules  
1 truth or reality  
Universal application of rules  
**“Get down to business”**
- **Particularist Values**  
Focus on relationships  
Flexibility of rules  
Multiple perspectives of reality  
Particular / situational rules  
**“Get to know you”**
- *Read the following statements. Decide for yourself if they are characteristic of Universalism or Particularism.*
- *A deal is a deal*
- *Friendship is more important than authority*
- *Consistency is critical*
- *Reason and logic prevail over feelings*
- *There are always exceptions to the rules*
- *The same rules apply to everyone*

# Trompenaar's Affective/Neutral

These orientations explain differences in the appropriateness of physical proximity (i.e. your "physical space" requirements), eye contact and displays of emotion.

- Affective or neutral context describes how cultures express their emotions. Neutral or affective orientations are behavioural manifestations of deeper culture.
- Members of cultures which are affectively **neutral** do not express their feelings but keep them carefully controlled and subdued. In contrast, in cultures high in **affectivity**, people show their feelings plainly by laughing, smiling, grimacing, scowling and gesturing; they attempt to find immediate outlets for their feelings.
- In affective cultures like in China people express their emotions more naturally. Reactions are shown immediately verbally and/or non-verbally by using mimic and gesture in form of body signals. Affective cultures don't avoid physical contact. A good example is how many Italian or Spanish people greet each other - very enthusiastically and with raised voices.
- In contrast neutral cultures like Japanese tend to hide their emotions and don't show them in public. Neutral cultures don't express precisely and directly what they are really thinking which can lead to misunderstandings and certain emotions are considered to be improper to exhibit in certain situations.

*If you are introduced to a person from an affective culture what type of greeting might they offer you? How might that differ from a neutral culture introduction?*

To learn more check out "[International Business Cultures](#)"

# Monochronic and Polychronic

- Monochronic and polychronic describe different cultural orientations toward time.



- **Monochronic** or sequential time means doing one thing at a time. It assumes careful planning and scheduling and is a familiar Western approach that appears in disciplines such as 'time management'. Appointments are strictly kept, with a strong preference for following plans.
- **Polychronic** or synchronous time means that human interaction is valued over time and material things, leading to a lesser concern for 'getting things done' -- they do get done, but more in their own time. In cultures like France and Mexico, people usually do more than one activity at a time. Appointments are approximate, subject to change at any moment, thus a French person may turn up to a meeting late and think nothing of it (much to the annoyance of a German or American co-worker).
- *Would you consider yourself a monochronic or polychronic individual?*
- *Do you fit within the description of your culture above?*
- *Can you see how a person from a monochronic culture might have difficulty in dealing with a person from a polychronic one? Why? Or why not?*

Learn more at [Changing Minds.org](http://ChangingMinds.org)

# Milton Bennett's *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity*

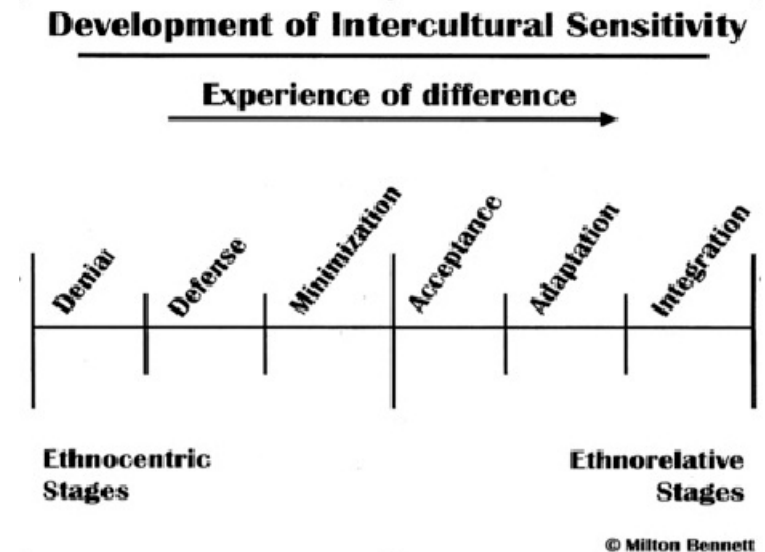
Milton Bennett provides us with a *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* which describes the movement through 6 phases of development from ethnocentric (*the belief in the superiority of one's own ethnic group*) to ethnorelative (*an awareness of the cultural barriers that hinder communication and an acceptance of other culture's ways of life*). This involves a process of changes in the way one thinks about another cultures and world views.

Where do you think you fit in?

## *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)*

- **Denial:**  
Being comfortable with the familiar  
Not anxious to complicate life with “cultural differences”  
Not noticing much cultural difference around you  
Maintaining separation from others who are different

- **Defense:**  
A strong commitment to one's own thoughts and feelings about culture  
Some distrust of cultural behavior or ideas that differ from one's own  
Aware of other cultures around you, but with a relatively incomplete understanding of them and probably fairly strong negative feelings or stereotypes about some of them



*continued....*

- **Reversal** is the opposite of Defense. The person feels that some other culture is better and tends to exhibit distrust of their own culture.
- **Minimization:**  
 People from other cultures are pretty much like you, under the surface  
 Awareness that other cultures exist all around you, with some knowledge about differences in customs and celebrations  
 Not putting down other cultures  
 Treating other people as you would like to be treated
- **Acceptance:**  
 Aware of your own culture(s)  
 See your own culture as just one of many ways of experiencing the world  
 Understanding that people from other cultures are as complex as yourself  
 Their ideas, feelings, and behavior may seem unusual, but you realize that their experience is just as rich as your own.  
 Being curious about other cultures  
 Seeking opportunities to learn more about their cultures
- **Adaptation:**  
 Recognizing the value of having more than one cultural perspective available to you  
 Able to “take the perspective” of another culture to understand or evaluate situations in either your own or another culture  
 Able to intentionally change your culturally based behavior to act in culturally appropriate ways outside your own culture
- **Integration:**  
 To varying extents, have integrated more than one cultural perspective, mindset, and behavior into one’s identity and worldview. Able to move easily among cultures

*Where ever you decide you are on this continuum it is possible to move to a higher level through purposeful engagement and self-reflection.*

# Where do Canadians fit in?

- Check out where Canadians fit into [Geerte Hofstede's model](#) and [Fons Trompenaars's model](#) to see if you agree!!
- You have seen where Canada falls in Hofstede's model now check out where your host culture fits. Compare/contrast the two to see if you can determine where intercultural communication might break down. Why do you think this? What can you do to ensure (or at least help) this does not happen to you?
- Remember these are generalizations about country based cultural values and may not speak directly to individuals from those cultures.
- Look back at all of those little notes you made throughout this module. Do you still agree with them?



*Remember.....the development of intercultural competence is a process that depends in part on our experiences and in part on how we process those experiences.*

# Other Cultures

“It’s a funny thing: the French call it a couteau, the Germans call it a messer, but we call it a knife, which is after all what it really is”. Richard Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*

***To learn more about a specific culture, cultural taboos, etc. check out these sites:***

- The [Centre for Intercultural Learning](#) Enter your host country/culture. Spend some time reading about customs, communication and culture from a host nationals’ perspectives and from Canadians living in that region.
- [Fasten Your Seatbelts](#) Lots of cool facts about countries and their cultures.
- [Cultural Savvy.com](#) An international cross-cultural training and consulting firm that believes global business success begins with cultural awareness and the ability to make the appropriate behavioural adjustments when working in different cultural environments.
- [International Business Etiquette](#) The ExecutivePlanet guide to international business culture, customs, and etiquette covers many aspects of doing business worldwide.
- And don't forget to visit [QUIC's Resource Library](#) where you will find all kinds of books, periodicals, the Education Abroad Advisor and lots of students to help you learn even more. QUIC is located in the JDUC.
- ***And for some real insight....make use of [QUIC's World Link Volunteers](#). Search for students who are currently at Queen's from your host country/region/school or who have recently returned...and talk with them about what you might expect.***

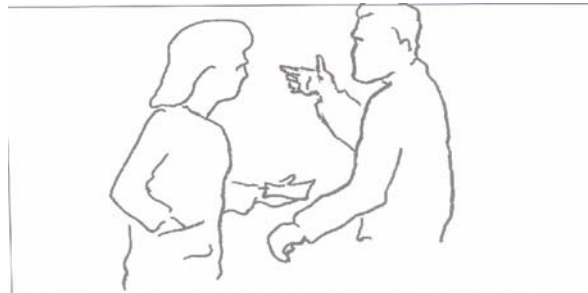
# Recognizing the Influence of Culture on Interactions

“A fish only discovers its need for water when it is no longer in it. Our own culture is like water for the fish. It sustains us. We live and breathe through it.” ~ *Stephanie Quappe and Giovanna Cantatore*

## ***Interpreting Behaviour...***

- Interpreting behaviour involves assigning meaning. The meaning we assign to the behaviour is usually taken from our own cultural background. In cross-cultural situations it is safer to describe the behaviour rather than interpret it, at least initially. Eventually you must assign meaning to the behaviour, but if you can take a moment to describe the behaviour and think about the cultural dimensions that may be influencing them, you may avoid misinterpretation.
- When attempting to interpret behaviour, try to follow this simple rule: Describe, Interpret and Evaluate - The D.I.E. method.
- Describe what you see - only the observed facts.
- Interpret what you think (about what you see)
- Evaluate what you feel (about what you think ...positive or negative)

**What do you see here?**



Could it be that ...

- a woman giving a man money and he is claiming he wants more...
- a woman is trying to bribe a man
- a woman is asking for directions and a man is offering them
- this is a discussion among friends
- this is a violent discussion...a quarrel. She has insulted him in some way.

Remember, when faced with an intercultural situation to not interpret it too quickly. Take a step back and in your mind, describe what you see. Interpret the situation mindfully using the ***D.I.E. method***.

Watch this [short clip](#) for another example of how behaviour might be misinterpreted.

*Using the D.I.E. method for interpreting behaviour how might the Balinese woman interpreted the situation? How might her neighbour have used it to explain her friend's anger?*

# Intercultural Communication

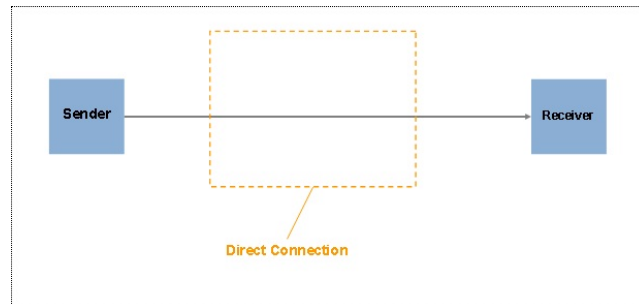
Intercultural misunderstandings arise more easily than we think. Sometimes this has to do with language but more often it has less to do with linguistics than the way messages are sent and received.

*Think about these different culturally-based communication styles.*

Edward Hall introduced the concept of high and low context cultures.

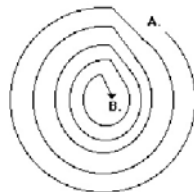
- **Low context cultures**, tend toward direct and wholly verbal communication styles.
- Examples of low context/**direct communication** cultures: Germany, Scandinavia, American, Canadian

## Direct Communication



- **High context** cultures, where the majority of people share familiar contexts, tend toward more indirect and non-verbal communication. Cultures with high context believe that strangers must be 'filled in' before business can be properly discussed.
- Examples of high context/**indirect communication** cultures: Japan, First Nations, Saudi Arabia

## Indirect Communication



You can have successful interactions in a culture that has a different communication style if you make minor adjustments to certain behaviours.

*Remember, you are visiting a different culture and if you want to be accepted or even understood you must make the effort to mirror their "norms".*

**Switching Styles** Taken from Craig Storti *Figuring Foreigners Out*

**If you are a direct communicator you might make the statement** "I'm not sure that's such a good idea."

To say the same thing using indirect communication might sound like: "Do you think that's a good idea?", "I like most of that idea" or "Are there any other ideas?"

The following statements are of the kind typical for direct communicators. Try to rephrase these statements for an indirect style of communication.

**Direct** -- That's not the way to do it.

**Indirect** -- \_\_\_\_\_

**Direct** -- I don't agree.

**Indirect** -- \_\_\_\_\_

**If you are an indirect communicator you might make the statement** "That is a very interesting viewpoint." To say the same thing using indirect communication might sound like: "I don't completely agree.", "We need to talk more about this." or "I see things differently."

Now try these ones yourself...

**Indirect** -- We will try our best.

**Direct** -- \_\_\_\_\_

**Indirect** -- Your idea might work.

**Direct** -- \_\_\_\_\_

- ***So you might begin to understand that how the message sent might not be received exactly as it was intended.***
- *How might your style of communication pose challenges for you in your host country?*
- *How might your communication style challenge others?*
- *Keep the suggestions above in mind as you embark on your cross-cultural journey.*

# Tips for Communication with Cultural Awareness

- Now that you are getting ready to immerse yourself in another culture you might want to give some thought about cultural diversity and what it means.
- Remember that you are about to enter a new culture....so you will be the *cultural newcomer!* And just as we expect cultural newcomers to adapt to our cultural norms you will have to do the same in your new culture in order to have successful interactions.
- Watch this [short clip](#) to learn more about cultural diversity and intercultural communication.

*Do you remember each of the tips the speaker gave?*

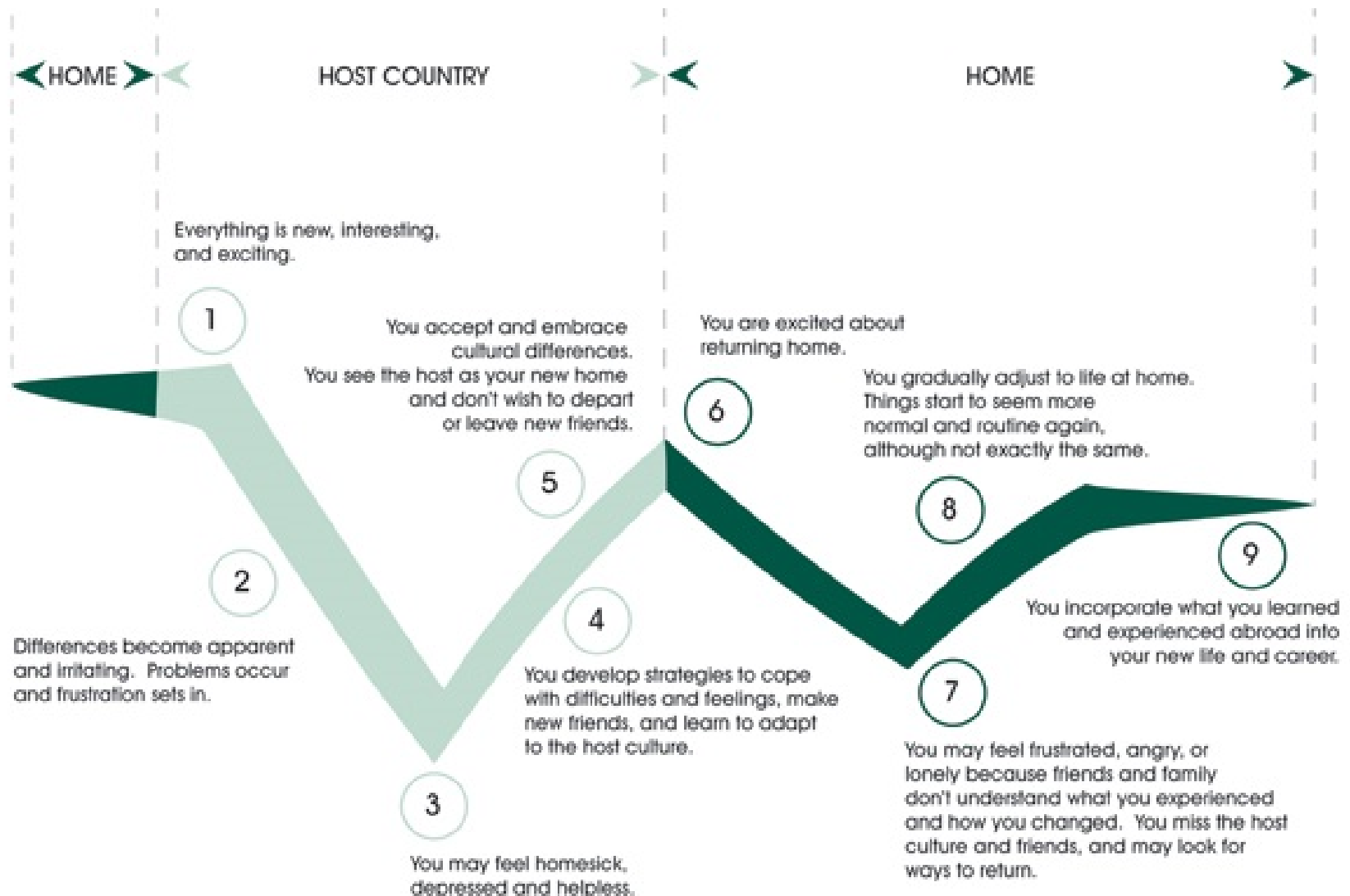
*Which one do you think is the most important?*

# Culture Shock – How to cope.

“It was not difficult for me to work up a rage at this moment. All of a sudden I felt that revulsion against an alien way of life that anyone who travels in remote places feels from time to time. I longed for clean clothes, the company of people who meant what they said, and did it”. Eric Newby, A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush

When moving to a new culture, most people will experience some degree of Culture shock or adjustment. This will usually occur in the first or second month. Responses to culture shock/adjustment vary from person to person and can range from mild discomfort to extreme frustration or depression. Cultural adjustment takes time. There are different cultural "rules" or "norms" that you must learn in order to adapt to your new/host culture.

# The Stages of Culture Shock



## ***Symptoms of culture shock/adjustment may include:***

- Simple embarrassment
- Homesickness
- Identity confusion
- Depression
- Frustration
- Feeling confused and uncomfortable
- Stereotypes are being reinforced
- Anxiety

The main thing is to remember that it is a natural cycle and that you will adjust in time. Trying to stay positive and engaged in the host culture will help speed up the adjustment. You might also consider these recommended [coping strategies](#).

*Think back to a situation where you had to adapt...where you were new and didn't know the "rules". What coping strategies did you use? What other coping strategies would have helped you?*

“Travelers never think that they are the foreigners”. ~Mason Cooley

# Tips for Success

## Suggestions for easing the transition

- Realize that what you are going through is normal. Remember that the unpleasant feelings are temporary, natural and common to any transition that a person makes during their life. Be patient and give yourself time to work through the process.
- Keep in touch with your home country. Read newspapers from home, international magazines etc. Watch international television channels or surf the internet. Call home regularly. Have familiar things around you that have personal meaning, such as photographs or ornaments. Find a supplier of familiar foods or visit restaurants that are similar to your home cuisine.
- Take care of yourself. Eat well, exercise, and get enough sleep!



- Talk to someone. Find friends who are going through a similar process, call your family back home, or see a counselor. Take advantage of the resources available to you at your host institution.
- Have fun and relax! Join student groups. Get out of your room and volunteer to help others. Take up a new sport. Participate in activities, clubs and student organizations of interest to you.
- Seek out a counselor at your school if you don't notice improvement in a couple of weeks

## General tips for success in a new culture

- Improve your language skills. Cultural adaptation is greatly enhanced by perfecting your language skills of your host culture. Not being able to clearly communicate can create isolation and loneliness. Make a point to join activities that give you the opportunity to share in conversation and express your identity.
- Remember that language acquisition does not mean cultural immersion....get out and meet people. And it's a lot easier if you speak their language!!
- Keep in mind that solo study abroad sojourners need to make quick connections/ community for a successful experience.
- The easiest community to join is the one whose members are in the same situation and who have a common language.
- But be careful as this can lead to the creation of satellite communities and little integration into the one you have traveled abroad to live in. Satellite communities can be transient and the remaining members can be left without their base, if they haven't included locals in their social circles.
- Stay in touch with family and friends back home
- Attend all planned social activities. These are key to building community. A common area for meeting is important for learning about and inclusion in activities. Try to establish one early.
- Communication is key and even if learning a new language, being able to communicate in your own is important to your sanity.
- Books and country profiles do not prepare you for the reality of a new country (although it is wise to be forewarned...so read, read, read).

## **and more tips....**

- It is difficult to shed your “way of being” and adapt to a new way without getting swept up in the moment or by peer pressure (regardless of what you know). eg., personal security issues, being a pedestrian in another country/culture, walking alone (day or night), looking like a tourist, personal space issues, etc.
- People who need structure, routine and order in their lives....immersing in a new culture strips that away. Now you will find out just how adaptable you really are!!!
- Adding a normal activity into your routine can help ward off the effects of culture shock (exercise, comfort food, etc.).
- Adapting to a change in amenities/privacy can be challenging. Think of it as part of the adventure!
- Being exhausted and sleeping more than usual is normal...it is an exhausting experience (but watch for excess).
- Patience is a necessity – you are in a different environment. You need to be easier on yourself and on others, as your ways of doing/thinking about things are quite different.
- You will make mistakes/cultural faux pas. Don’t sweat them too much but do learn from them!
- Be brave, but not to the point of carelessness. Venture out on your own. You can’t believe what a feeling of confidence it gives you to master the bus system or get somewhere by taxi (especially when there are no street names or numbers!).
- Practice your new language skills on locals. Most people are eager to help and complimented that you are attempting to speak their language
- Support Services are key to a successful sojourn - a cultural interpreter – assistance with day to day activities (banking, budgeting - community building activities – advice on numerous issues – even just a friendly face or someone who knows your name!
- Remember these feelings that you are having. Bring them home with you so that you will have empathy for newcomers to your culture.
- **Meet the locals!!** Simply living in another country does not mean you are experiencing or immersing in a different culture. Experiencing another culture comes through interaction with the people from that culture.
- **Becoming interculturally effective** starts by learning about the host culture, meeting the locals, experiencing their reality, learning their stories and by doing that challenging any personal assumptions you may have made prior to your arrival.

# Making Sense of the Experience

Watch and listen to Nigerian author [Chimamanda Adichie](#) tell the danger of only knowing a single story...



To learn more about Chimamanda Adichie visit her [website](#).

# Re-entry Reflection

“The whole object of travel is not to set foot on foreign land; it is at last to set foot on one's own country as a foreign land” ~G.K. Chesterton

After an extended encounter with another culture many people experience difficulty returning to their own culture. This can surprise us. We often think returning home will be easy, after all, it's my culture.

You may be excited to return home and have great expectations. Such as:

- Everything at home will be the same
- Life will be as it was before I left
- I am the same person as I was before
- People will be interested in my stories
- People will be excited and impressed by my personal growth
- People will understand my experience

## ***Reality Check – You have changed!***

Many people are disappointed or disoriented when returning home. They have had amazing experiences and often find that returning back to their former existence is not easy. Common feelings are:

- No one is interested in my experience and stories
- Canada is boring
- I miss my host culture and friends
- I was somebody there, here I'm normal
- I can't wait to leave again

***But.....***

## **The Challenge is:**

To understand the changes in yourself and manage to integrate them into your new life.

To see the process of adaptation to home in the same way as you saw the process of adaptation abroad. This too is a learning experience!

It is also important for you to consider the gains in skills, attitudes and behaviours and to learn to articulate them. Your experiences have value and may be important in your future.

Think about documenting your learning. Think about incorporating your experience into your Queen's course work in some way.

Use your intercultural learning in a meaningful way!

Watch this [short clip](#) on re-entry to hear some first hand accounts.

# Keeping a Journal

- Written reflection can be a powerful tool when trying to make sense of your study abroad experience. It can serve as your memory for the numerous situations you found yourself in, and as a record of the way you felt while in them. Written reflection can also act as a catalyst for critical reflection of your experience, well after you have returned home and resumed your "normal" life.
- We encourage you to keep a journal during your sojourn abroad. Start writing it before you leave so that you get into the habit of recording your thoughts on a daily basis. Make time for it. Many students have commented that they wrote in their journal at the end of the day. This way they were relaxed and could reflect on the events of the day recalling their mood, the people they talked to, the feelings they had, the new things they learned....the list goes on.
- When writing, it may help to picture yourself writing to someone close to you. Whether they ever read your journal is immaterial - they are your own personal musings, after all - but it may help to "write/talk" to a person you would normally confide in.
- 
- After you have written about your time abroad a good way to summarize your experience is by answering (to yourself) a few broad stroke questions, such as:
  - *Was this what I expected? Why? Why not?*
  - *Have I changed in some way?*
  - *What did I learn about myself?*
  - *What shocked me?*

To read a wonderful example of reflective writing - blog style go to [Academic Programs International](#).

## Re-entry Checklist

- Be aware of reverse culture shock – it could happen to you!
- Get involved in international/intercultural initiatives at home
- Attend all of the international/intercultural events that you are invited to
- Join/create clubs with an international focus
- Consider QUIC volunteer programs, (eg. *World Link Volunteers*)
- Get involved with [“International on Campus”](#)
- Meet with the Education Abroad Advisor at QUIC to share your experiences.
- Incorporate your international experiences into your academic work
- Invite an international student into your study/work group - for a coffee - consider being their mentor!
- Consider volunteering for the English Language Support Group at QUIC
- Attend one of the many info/advising sessions for returned students at QUIC throughout the year
- Don't forget to contact your department about next year's courses.
- Follow up on any Queen's email you might receive (Registrar's Office, Student Awards, etc.)
- Stay in touch with and keep on info from your faculty/department by staying on mailing lists ,etc.
- Maintain contact with friends back on your home campus so that you don't feel to out of touch ...stay connected!
- ***Drop by [QUIC \(the Queen's University International Centre\)](#) ....everybody who visits wants to hear your stories!!!!***

**Skills Evaluation** - Here is a challenge for you... **Print two copies of this page** - one to complete now and one to complete when you return home from your sojourn.

Consider the how you have changed. Think about the skills you've gained **and** enhanced to help you articulate your learning in documentation (resume, applications etc.).

**Resiliency and Coping Skills:**

Function effectively in diverse situations  
Manage workload and personal stress  
Demonstrate a positive attitude toward change or uncertainty  
Find new ways to problem solve  
Identify, analyze, and solve problems  
Ability to navigate and adapt to new environments  
Learn through observation  
Learn through mistakes  
Realize success despite difficulties  
Time management and organizational skills  
Open to change, flexible

**Intercultural competence:**

Recognize and respect cultural differences  
Recognize issues that may be sensitive to other culture  
Identify one's own cultural biases and values  
Demonstrate open-mindedness, respect, and tolerance toward other cultures  
Demonstrate flexibility while retaining the stability of one's own values  
Demonstrate an ability to adapt to other cultural standards when necessary  
Use appropriate body language  
Understand the impact of one's own values on one's perception of world events  
Understand how culture influences practices and ethics of other societies  
Understand how communication styles vary between cultures  
Demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively with people from other cultures  
Work effectively with individuals and groups from another culture  
Understand that cultures are different, not better or worse

**Global perspectives:**

Demonstrate knowledge of world geography  
Integrate knowledge of world histories  
Demonstrate knowledge of history, politics, and current events  
Demonstrate knowledge of different religions and their impact on social, cultural, and political realities  
Ability to analyze global issues from multiple perspectives  
Understand the interconnections between local and global issues  
Understand the impact of Western liberal democratic views on one's perception of the world

**Language skills:**

Ability to understand and speak fluent in another language  
Ability to adapt the use of language to formal or casual situations  
Ability to adapt use of English to the fluency of another person in an international setting  
Ability to understand technical reports or conduct research in another language  
Ability to understand a variety of accents in English  
Ability to translate fluently to or from English

***"I met a lot of people in Europe. I even encountered myself". ~James Baldwin***

# Bon voyage!

You have completed the Queen's University on-line pre-departure orientation. We hope that you found it both helpful and engaging. If you are interested, *and we hope that you are*, learn even more by checking out the resources module in this tab.

As you finalize your trip preparations keep in mind that you are going abroad as an ambassador from Queen's University and Canada.

*Remember to savour every experience as you embark on the journey of a lifetime!*



***IMPORTANT NOTE -- You must email [QUESP@queensu.ca](mailto:QUESP@queensu.ca) to confirm that you have completed this process. We will note this in your file and your pre-departure orientation requirement will show as complete.***