



# **INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS STUDENT HANDBOOK 2025-2026**

While participating in an ACU International Program, students are required to follow all policies and regulations established by Abilene Christian University. These include, but are not limited to, guidelines outlined in the ACU International Programs Student Handbook, the ACU Academic Catalog, the Student Code of Conduct, official communications from International Programs (verbal and written), and location-specific Program Manuals or partner institution policies. In addition, students must comply with the laws and regulations of the host country and any other countries visited during their time abroad.

Additional information can be found on the [ACU Study Abroad website](#).

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## **APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

1. Student must be enrolled as an undergraduate or approved graduate student at ACU
2. Student completed at least one semester on campus
3. Student must not be on academic probation
4. Student must not be on disciplinary probation
5. Student must have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.50

Note: All non-U.S. passport holders should consult with the ACU International Programs (“IP Office”) and the Office of International Students and Visiting Scholars (OISVS) at +1 (325) 674-2237 before applying for immigration purposes.

## **ADMISSION CRITERIA**

1. GPA
2. Application with supplemental materials if required
3. Interview (if applicable)
4. Staff/Faculty reference form (1)
5. Fit and availability of internships, cross-cultural experience and prior work/internship experience (internship candidates only)
6. Payment of a \$75 application fee

## **FINANCIALS**

Tuition for the 2025–2026 academic year remains consistent with ACU’s block tuition rate on the Abilene campus.

The Study Abroad program fee for either the fall or spring semester is \$8,250. This International Programs fee covers round-trip airfare, international health insurance, an educational field trip, local orientation, cultural excursions, and other program-related expenses.

In summer 2026, the International Programs charge for the 2025-2026 academic year is \$6,700. A summer program fee includes airfare, housing, international

health insurance, local transportation fees, some meals, and group excursion fees.

In 2025-2026, non-hub site program fees are as follows:

- Rwanda: \$6,100
- Japan: \$6,345
- Costa Rica Spring Break: \$1,500
- Costa Rica Summer: \$2,950

Non-hub site program fees include airfare, housing, international health insurance, local transportation fees, some meals, and group excursion fees.

In 2025-2026, ACU's international internship fees are as follows:

- Leipzig: \$3000

The Leipzig internship and Honduras internship fees include round-trip international flights, housing, and international health insurance. The Honduras internship includes a grocery stipend.

## INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS CONTRACT

Each student must sign a contract to confirm their place in each international program they attend. Failure to turn in a signed contract by the established deadline will result in the student's acceptance being canceled. If the student is a minor, a parent or guardian must sign on their behalf. If a student will be a minor one day prior to the departure date for their program, the student must be approved for admission by the Executive Director.

Students are expected to be familiar with the terms of the International Program contract, which is available for view at any time on the [ACU Study Abroad Website](#). A student who withdraws or becomes ineligible to attend their program will incur all of the fees specified in their ACU International Programs contract.

## WITHDRAWALS

To withdraw from an International Program, a student should first meet with an authorized ACU International Programs staff person (Lindsay Snyder or Mark Barneche) to complete a withdrawal form. They may contact the ACU Study Abroad Office at [studyabroad@groupmail.acu.edu](mailto:studyabroad@groupmail.acu.edu) or by phone at 325-674-2754.

If the student is abroad when withdrawing, a conversation will be scheduled with the student. Before withdrawing, students should make sure they fully understand the financial consequences of withdrawing. Students may appeal any penalty fee over

25% of the total program fee as outlined in the appeal guidelines, which is available by request from International Programs. Please refer to the International Programs student contract for specifics on withdrawal fees. Students who withdraw from the university for any reason must still go through the process to withdraw from their international program.

## INELIGIBILITY

After being officially accepted and signing their ACU International Programs contract, a student may become ineligible to participate in an International Program for any of the following reasons:

1. By being placed on academic probation or by having a cumulative GPA below a 2.50.
  - a. Students currently applying for a program: Students that are in the process of applying to a program and have not signed a contract and receive a cumulative GPA below 2.50 or are currently on academic probation will have their application deferred. The applications will be reviewed again at the end of the current academic term. If the student is then in good academic standing and has a cumulative GPA of 2.50 or greater, then their application will be reconsidered. If the student is reported to be on academic probation again or their cumulative GPA is below 2.50, then the student's application will be denied.
  - b. Students with signed contracts that have not departed for their program: If a student has been accepted into a program and their cumulative GPA falls below a 2.50, they will be removed from their program and will be responsible for all program withdrawal fees assessed at the time of the removal from the program according to their International Programs Student Contract signed at the time of application for an International Program. Note: After at least one academic session, a student who improves their cumulative GPA to at least a 2.50 is eligible to re-apply to attend an International Program; such a student has no automatic right of reentry and may not be able to attend the program they were originally accepted to. Students that are successful in gaining re-acceptance to their original contract term and location and sign their new study abroad contract will have their withdrawal/ineligibility fees reversed less any direct costs incurred at the student's request.

Note: A student removed from their program due to academic ineligibility may petition the Executive Director to reverse this decision within 48 hours of receiving the initial ineligibility email from the ACU International Programs

office. Students that wish to petition must provide any and all documentation as required by the Executive Director.

Please refer to the ACU Academic Catalog for more information on academic probation.

2. By being placed on student conduct disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion. Note: A student who has successfully completed their suspension or probation is eligible to re-apply to attend an ACU International Program, but they have no automatic right of reentry. Students who are successful in gaining re-acceptance and who fulfill the terms of their original contract term (length of time) and location will have their withdrawal/ineligibility fees reversed, less any direct costs incurred on the student's behalf in the interim time period.
3. By withdrawing from Abilene Christian University. Students who withdraw from ACU but would like to maintain their International Programs participation after a period away from ACU must notify the IP Office in writing within one week of withdrawal from ACU and must continue to meet all preparation deadlines and requirements or risk removal from the program and assessment of any applicable withdrawal fees.
4. By having unresolved restrictions placed on registration for any reason (i.e., financial or other academic holds).
5. By not being completely registered for International Programs courses by the registration deadline communicated by the ACU IP Office.
6. By failing to complete a critical course prerequisite.
7. By being unable to enroll in 12 credit hours (semester) or 3 credit hours (summer) required at the International Program location for which a student has been accepted.
8. By failing to provide evidence to International Programs of having obtained a passport meeting the program/term requirements and visa (if required), by not submitting a copy of the passport and visa (if required) in accordance with the timeline set and communicated by International Programs.
9. By failing to submit the Health Information Form or other required health-related forms or documents in accordance with the timeline set and communicated by International Programs.
10. By failing to participate in all mandatory orientation sessions (including Abilene and overseas locations on-site orientation).
11. By failing to complete one semester (fall or spring) at ACU in Abilene, Texas before departing for an International Program.

12. By falsifying official documents needed by ACU in order to participate in the program.

## **PENALTIES FOR BREAKING CONTRACTS & WITHDRAWAL FEE APPEAL PROCESS**

Upon being accepted into an International Program and signing a contract, any student who subsequently withdraws from or becomes ineligible to attend the program is liable for a standard withdrawal fee charged to their student account (\$250) and increasing withdrawal fees closer to the program deadline as outlined in the ACU IP Student Contract. The fee incurred for withdrawal on or after January 31 (summer I & II), February 28 (fall semester), or June 30 (spring semester) is 25% of the total program fee. The fee incurred for withdrawal on or after February 28 (summer terms I & II), April 30 (fall semester), August 31 (spring semester) prior to the start of the program is 50% of the total program fee. The fee incurred for withdrawal on or after March 31 (summer terms I & II), May 31 (fall semester), and September 30 (spring semester) is 100% of the total program fee. A student who breaks a contract and withdraws from or becomes ineligible to attend a program within the withdrawal penalty periods on their contract will be liable for increased program charges which are discussed in students' Withdrawal Ineligibility contracts. International Program withdrawal fees are immediately applied to student accounts. Scholarships which would have otherwise been used toward an International Program fee cannot be used to cover a withdrawal fee.

A student is only allowed to switch their application to another program until the 25% program fee date of their original program: that is, before January 31 (summer I & II), before February 28 (fall semester), or before June 30 (spring semester). On or after these dates, the student is liable for the standard \$250 withdrawal fee plus the increasing withdrawal fees based on the dates listed in the previous paragraph. If a student submits a switch form before the 25% program fee date for their original program, they are only subject to a switch fee of \$150.

If a student believes that there are compelling, mitigating factors that should cause the penalty charges to be reduced, the student may appeal in writing to the ACU International Programs Office using the ACU IP Program Fee Appeal form (below). The withdrawal fee (\$250) is not subject to an appeal unless in the case of documented extreme financial hardship. Appeals must be submitted to the IP Office within 45 calendar days from the date the student signed the withdrawal form or the date they became ineligible to attend the program. Appeal documents received after 45 calendar days will not be accepted by the IP Office. Appeals

may take anywhere between 4-6 weeks to be processed after the monthly submission deadline which is the first business day of each month. During the appeals process, ACU International Programs is not empowered to remove or freeze any portion of the withdrawal fees nor any associated finance charge posted on a student's account. The International Programs Committee (IPC) will review appeal documents and the Executive Director will render the IPC's decision in writing to the student.

Detailed appeal instructions, including a list of all required documentation, is available by contacting the IP Office. This document is given to any student that withdraws or becomes ineligible to attend a program with greater than a 25% withdrawal fee.

Students that depart the program mid-semester for any reason will be responsible to pay for any and all transportation, change fees, food, and lodging costs relating to their travel.

## SCHEDULE OF WITHDRAWAL FEES

Please see the schedule of withdrawal fees listed on the IP student contract. This schedule is also available on the [ACU Study Abroad website](#).

## ACADEMIC EXPECTATION & RESOURCES

The academic and co-curricular activities of each International Program are aimed towards developing **Christian service and leadership through *interaction with the global Christian community, rigorous academic experiences, the pursuit of wisdom and humility, and the reciprocal practice of hospitality.*** This development of student skills and character while in an International Program is pursued in multiple ways which are consistent with Abilene Christian University's Christian mission and the liberal arts tradition to which ACU belongs. The synthesis and integration of the Christian faith, culture, and faithful discernment has always been at the core of the Christian liberal arts tradition, and takes on a new importance in an age that values multicultural diversity and globalization. International Programs seeks to provide a balance of major-specific and/or general education courses along with relevant field trips, which supplement and enhance students' coursework. Students are required to participate in the whole program, not just to take specific courses.

Students' academic performance in classes and on educational field trips will determine how students will be evaluated at the end of the term.

The most important part of a student's overseas experience is their academic participation and performance. Students are encouraged to get to know the city in which they live and the other parts of the host country, as well as experience travel throughout the continent. Each program requires a number of educational outings as a means of cultural and historical enhancement. While independent travel is a central part of the ACU student experience, independent travel must always be secondary to scheduled classes and other ACU educational events.

Courses abroad are equal in rigor to classes on the Abilene Campus. Classes will not be modified to meet student travel needs. Thus, it is the student's responsibility to meet all class expectations and deadlines. Tests and final examinations are given according to each individual program's academic calendar. Neither adjustments in class schedules nor in scheduled programmatic or academic events will be made to accommodate visitors, travel, or transportation schedules.

It is the student's responsibility to make sure that courses taken abroad are compatible with their degree requirements and intended deadline for graduation. Students are required to meet with their academic advisor to make an academic plan that includes their study abroad program(s) prior to signing a contract.

## ACADEMIC ETHICS

The [Academic Integrity Policies](#) at ACU are an integral part of the educational process. Academic Integrity makes possible an atmosphere conducive to the development of the total person through the learning process. Since a person is more than intellect, learning is more than academic achievement. It includes achievement in all the qualities of an individual – intellectual, spiritual, ethical, emotional, and physical.

Dishonesty in any form, including plagiarism, cheating on assignments or examinations, knowingly furnishing false information on University records, forgery, alteration, or misuse of documents, records or identification cards, or failure to comply with written or verbal directives of duly authorized officials acting in the performance of assigned duties is strictly prohibited. Instances of cheating, plagiarism, falsifying information, and/or inappropriate classroom behavior are unacceptable and subject to disciplinary action.

It is extremely important that students are aware of what constitutes plagiarism or a breach of academic integrity. Disciplinary action for plagiarism or other inappropriate behavior will follow the same procedures as if it took place on the Abilene campus. Please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policies](#) for the most up-to-date information.

The ACU Code of Academic Integrity is designed to foster a climate of mutual trust, respect, and interpersonal concern among students, faculty members, and the administration, where openness and integrity prevail. Each member of the ACU community is expected to pursue his or her academic work with honesty and integrity.

## ORIENTATION REQUIREMENT

All students attending an International Program are required to attend all IP orientation components prior to departure and at their overseas locations. Failure to attend any part of an IP orientation could result in the student becoming ineligible to participate in a program and thus, subject to withdrawal fees. Students may receive an excused absence if there is a conflicting ACU class obligation, if the student is part of a university D1 athletic event, if there is a required scholarship event, or if there is an urgent health issue with documentation from a medical professional. All requests for excused absences must be submitted to Lindsay Snyder ([lms11b@acu.edu](mailto:lms11b@acu.edu)) at least one week prior to the orientation event and will be reviewed by the International Programs Office. Students with personal urgent health issues must submit documentation to the International Programs office the following business day after the orientation program. Students exempted from attendance will be required to review orientation material and may be required to complete an alternate assignment.

## COURSES

### Enrollment Requirement

Students participating in International Programs enroll in Abilene Christian University classes that meet in Abilene Christian University classrooms abroad, or within partner institutions. All of these classes, while especially designed to take advantage of unique learning opportunities offered by the host country's culture, are approved by ACU and correspond in class time and rigor to Abilene classes.

Students can expect their coursework overseas to require at least as much class preparation and independent study as corresponding courses in Abilene.

The length of the term overseas is slightly less than it is in Abilene in the fall and spring terms, but individual class periods are longer to ensure the same amount of instruction time. Thus, missing a class period overseas is a serious matter. Class schedules can vary with classes meeting four or five days a week, with the exception of faculty-led programs or other travel-heavy programs. Currently, most ACU Programs typically have classes four days per week (Monday – Thursday). (Note: All programs require the same amount of classroom hours.)

International Programs students will be registered for published courses online without concern for time scheduling by their academic advisors. Class schedules are set after registration and while every effort is made to avoid class time conflicts, should one arise, a student may need to select a different course.

## **Fall and Spring Course Enrollment**

International Program students must enroll in a minimum of 12 credit hours and maximum of 18 credit hours during each semester of the academic year, including a single (3 hour) language course, if applicable, each semester for a letter grade. In keeping with ACU academic policies, other elective credit hours can be taken for credit/no credit. Falling below a class load of 12 credit hours constitutes withdrawal from the program. Given the concentration of International Programs courses and the extraordinary cultural opportunities that accompany studying and living abroad, we do not advise students to enroll in more than 15 credit hours.

## **Summer Course Enrollment**

Please see the International Programs website for details on minimum credit hours required, as it varies by program. Students can only enroll in the courses offered in their program and must meet the minimum credit requirement. Students who do not meet this requirement will become ineligible to attend the program.

## **Language Requirements & Training**

In programs where the host country's official language is not English, students must enroll in one (3 credit hour) language class each semester and take the course for a letter grade. Students are encouraged to build upon classroom learning by speaking the language with as many local people as possible. Since the rich and unique educational and cultural resources that exist overseas enhance all International Program classes, students will find many of their classes meet or have activities at local sites that will enrich their learning experience and challenge them to use their language skills more effectively.

## **Physical Education**

Many physical education courses offered overseas require the payment of an extra fee. These extra fees will be communicated to students on ACU IP marketing materials and during the registration process.

## **House Meetings (Devotionals)**

During the fall/spring semester, students are exempt from spiritual formation credit requirements. However, weekly House Meetings in International Programs are mandatory for all students. Students will be informed of house meeting days/times by their Program Director. These meetings, which will have a substantive spiritual component, may also include important program announcements as well as speakers from the ACU community or special guests from the local community.

## **Textbooks**

All students are required to have their textbooks on the first day of class. Most books cannot be purchased overseas; therefore, it is advisable for students to purchase their books before they depart and either carry the physical copies in their suitcase or as online E-books accessible with a personal laptop. Books will be available in the ACU Campus Bookstore and can also be purchased online. Some programs have a limited number of used books for loan on a first come, first served basis. Refer to our website for program specific instructions and required textbooks. It is the student's responsibility to ensure they have the proper textbooks for their courses. If using an E-book, pay careful attention to the

instructions from your Program Director and each individual program's technology policies on use of electronic devices within the classroom.

## **CLASS ATTENDANCE**

Absences totaling more than one hour in a one (1) credit class or three hours in a three (3) credit class automatically lower the student's final grade by three (3) points regardless of the circumstances (example: from 92 to 89). Each successive absence will in turn lower the grade by an additional three (3) percentage points from the final grade. Absences immediately before or after weekends or holidays, or due to travel during the week are considered double absences. If a student is tardy to a class three times, it will count as equal to one absence. For emergencies or documented illness, an online illness form must be completed and confirmed by the program staff (RA, director, or designee) on the days the student is sick. Students are responsible for classwork during their absences. If a student misses a test, the professor will determine whether or not the student will be given a make-up test.

### **Leaving the Program**

Students must submit a written request to the Program Director and receive written permission from their Program Director if they plan to leave the program during any portion of the semester, which includes the time between final exams and other programmatic events that mark the end of a semester. The Program Director will communicate the exact time that the semester has concluded. The double-absence policy will apply if class time is missed.

## **GRADE CONSIDERATIONS**

Students are graded for each class. Final grades will be calculated by professors, taking into account all of the factors stated in the class syllabi. Class grades are uploaded online by professors in a timely manner after the semester is over.

Students whose semester or cumulative GPA falls below a 2.5 after applying for a program will not be permitted to go overseas.

# EDUCATIONAL FIELD TRIPS & INTERNATIONAL STUDY TOURS

Educational Field Trips are an essential part of the overseas learning experience. Each semester, every student will participate in a multi-day, educational experience connected with the academic curriculum of each program. This is officially referred to as the Educational Field Trip (EFT) or more commonly called a Program Excursion.

## Student Participation in Educational Field Trips and International Study Tours

All students enrolled in the program are required to participate in every aspect of the EFT (referred to below as the “Trip”) including all pre-departure and reentry meetings. Students who have previously scheduled personal trips or vacations during the scheduled Trip will not be excused from participation. The fact that a student has previously traveled to a particular destination is not a valid reason to be excused from the Trip. If a student is certified by a physician that they are unable to participate in the Trip, or can document a family emergency, the student may be excused from participation without sanctions. Written documentation of a medical or family emergency must be provided to the Program Director to be excused from the Trip. Trip locations and dates are subject to change at any time.

All Trip destinations are evaluated for safety and security (see [Travel Risk Policy](#)) . Therefore, students will not be excused from a Trip because of their own opinions or their family’s opinions regarding safety of a destination. If a trip is deemed safe by the University, it is deemed safe for all students. If a student or a student’s parent insists on not participating in the Trip due to perceived safety issues, the Program Director, in consultation with the Executive Director of International Education or designee, will determine how to handle such situations on a case-by-case basis.

## Sanctions for Missing the Trip

If a student is considered unexcused for missing the Trip, the student’s final grade will be lowered 6 percentage points (ex. 92 to 86) in all of his/her courses.

Additionally, the student could face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the program and University suspension. If a student is excused from participating in the Trip, reasonable attempts will be made to accommodate the student (e.g., housing in the facility, food). The student will be required to engage in alternative educational activities as determined by the Program Director. The student will not be allowed to engage in personal travel during the week of the Trip. If a student misses the Trip for any reason, no refund will be provided, regardless of whether it was deemed excused or unexcused. Students are expected to participate in all excursions, activities, tours, lectures, etc. associated with the Trip, barring any serious unexpected health-related incidents during the Trip. Missing any of these scheduled events or engaging in inappropriate behavior during these events will result in a 3 percentage point reduction in the final grade for all courses (e.g., 92 to 89). In addition, the Program Director may sanction any student who is willfully absent from more than one event within the trip.

## TESTS & FINAL EXAMS

Final exams are usually scheduled during the last week of the program before departure. The finals calendar is published in advance, and all final exams are taken in person in the international program. Each professor schedules dates of tests and exams beforehand in their syllabi. Each professor has the right to determine his or her policy for tests missed due to excused absences. (Note: No professor may give a final examination at a time other than the time indicated on the professor's syllabi, or in any format other than in person, unless he or she has been given permission by the Program Director or the Executive Director.)

## ADD/DROP/WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Students may add/drop courses while the designated add/drop period is still open. Add/drop periods for International Programs are not the same as on-campus classes in Abilene and may vary by each individual program. Each student should be very aware of the deadline and make sure they are properly enrolled in the courses they want before the add/drop period is over. After the drop/add period, students must officially withdraw from a course by completing and submitting a "withdrawal from class" form. The student's advisor must sign the withdrawal form for individual courses. A withdrawal grade for the course will appear on the transcript. A fee of \$10 will be charged for processing. Students must not drop below 12 credit hours while abroad or they will be ineligible to participate in the program.

Students may not withdraw from a required language course until after the last regular class meeting before the course final. The student must receive approval from the local Program Director and ACU International Programs Office personnel.

## INCOMPLETES

Students need to be aware that grades of “I,” Incomplete, are rarely permitted. In such cases, where an “I” is to be assigned, the following [University policy](#) applies:

“Professors may assign a grade of “I” (Incomplete) only when illness or some significant reason beyond the control of the student prevents the student from completing the course by the end of the semester. The Incomplete Grade Contract must be signed by the instructor, the student, and the department chair and should reflect the assignments and deadlines necessary to resolve the incomplete grade. A grade of “I” (Incomplete) must be resolved no later than the end of the next long term; otherwise, it becomes an “F” on the student’s record. The student is responsible for requesting and resolving an “I.” A student who is graduating should finish any incomplete courses prior to the semester in which he or she is graduating. Students must complete all courses graded as “I” in order to participate in commencement.

Students in online programs may not receive an “I” (Incomplete) grade for online courses. Students unable to complete course requirements must withdraw or receive the grade they have earned without completing the course requirement. Contact the course instructor and advisor if an exceptional circumstance occurs after the withdrawal date and before the end of the course that prevents successful completion. If an instructor agrees to give a student an “I” in this exceptional circumstance, the student will not be permitted to enroll in another course until the “I” is completed. A deadline for completion should also be submitted to the college dean.”

## ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Each of ACU’s International Programs locations offers space for students to complete academic work. Each facility has a study room available for student use. ACU facilities have free wifi and provide printers for student use.

Each of our international locations feature world-class universities with both public and university library facilities. We encourage students to work with local staff to obtain library cards and to use local library resources for their coursework and as venues for studying.

Students are encouraged to read and watch local media to learn as much as possible about their host country. Learning outside the classroom helps to form a context for further learning and understanding inside the classroom.

## **Student Computers**

It is highly recommended that all students bring a personal laptop to their International Program. Prior to departure, laptops should be loaded and tested with all desired and necessary software and hardware because computer service/repair can be very expensive.

Students bringing a laptop computer should be aware that laptops are valuable and desirable objects that are special targets for thieves, especially in airports. Laptops and other valuable property should be well guarded. This is true in ACU facilities as well. While the University takes measures to secure its facilities, it assumes no responsibility if property is stolen or damaged.

Almost all laptop computers sold now are plug-compatible for 100-250 VAC and 50-60 Hz. This means that using a laptop overseas requires only a plug adapter and not a voltage converter or transformer to plug a laptop into the local power supply. Should there be any doubts, consult the owner's manual or ask the manufacturer.

Students should be aware that in Europe (and in many other countries) the standard paper size is A-4, not the 8.5" x 11" size used in the U.S. A-4 paper is slightly narrower and slightly longer than 8.5" x 11". It is necessary to set the correct paper size in the laptop computer's print commands.

## **MyACU**

Students overseas have access to their MyACU accounts. MyACU provides students in International Programs full access to their student account, transcript, and ACU class registration information. Contact the HELP Desk if there is a problem (+1-325-674-2754). Please note that students are required to have the Microsoft

Authenticator application on their mobile device to access their myACU account while abroad.

## Brown Library

ACU's Brown Library developed sites specifically for International Programs. These sites include information on local news sources, travel resources, tools to practice language acquisition, and information on country specific current events. Also, there are resources available through the Brown Library's website to help conduct research for courses. Brown librarians are available to answer questions while students are overseas through "Ask a Librarian" instant messaging on Brown Library's website.

## FLIGHT INFORMATION

Upon signing the contract for their program, students are required to abide by the flight policies of IP. Students should not make flight arrangements on their own. For information regarding the flight policy or deviations due to planned independent travel after a program, please see the [flight information section](#) of our website, direct questions to [studyabroad@acu.edu](mailto:studyabroad@acu.edu), or call the ACU IP office at +1 (325) 674-2754.

## PROGRAM REGULATIONS

Participation in an International Program is a privilege, not a right. Students are expected to comply with all ACU policies and regulations. Failure to do so will subject the student to disciplinary sanctions. Below are the general policies regarding student housing in International Programs, as well as standards of conduct.

Students will receive specific local program regulations for the program they are attending upon arrival. The student is responsible for following all local program regulations in addition to those designated in this document and other applicable University policies.

## HOUSING REGULATIONS

Housing in the different IP locations requires policies unique to the respective programs. Housing rules may differ from those in Abilene and are subject to change when required by local conditions or by the Program Director. Most housing regulations will be outlined in each program's site-specific [Program Handbook](#).

## **Housing Between Semesters**

All ACU International Program residences close on the program dates provided ([see Calendars](#)). Students may not store their belongings in the program residence prior to the beginning of a program or following its conclusion, unless explicitly approved by the Program Director if the student remains in the country or region after the conclusion of their term abroad.

## **ACU (Abilene Campus) Guest Policy**

Traditionally, students who are in transition to or from International Program locations have often arrived at the Abilene campus before or after their programs to connect with friends who currently reside in residence halls or apartments on the Abilene campus. Be advised there is no housing available for International Program participants on the Abilene campus during the academic period in which they are studying abroad, and all IP students are therefore considered to be University guests during this time period. All ACU students must comply with the [University's Guest Policy stated in the Code of Conduct](#).

## **Housing Requirement**

All participants must live onsite at the ACU facility. Students are not permitted to rent an additional apartment or residence in their host city. Students are required to spend the night in the ACU facility every night if classes will be held the following day. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action, including possible suspension from the University.

Students are required to report back to their facility before 11:59 p.m. at the end of each weekend or each extended travel period. Failure to report back to the facility before 11:59 p.m. may result in sanctions, including double absences for class the following day. If students are delayed from returning to their facility due to travel disruptions or flight cancellations, they are encouraged to contact their Program Director, Faculty-in-Residence, or RA as soon as travel delays are known.

As a rule, no local curfew policies are established. However, Program Directors, in consultation with the Executive Director, have the ability to establish local curfew policies if student behavior or contextual issues demand such policies be enforced. All curfew related violations will be decided by administrative hearing. A first violation will result in a warning. Second violations may result in probation. Further violations will be subject to review by the ACU IP Disciplinary Committee.

## **Visitation Policy (within ACU programs)**

Currently enrolled ACU Study Abroad students are welcome to apply to stay in the ACU Leipzig facility over normal travel weekends and approved holidays. ACU students currently enrolled in Abilene, students of other universities, student friends, or students' parents are not allowed to stay in any ACU facility or on the

ACU facility grounds. To see a list of approved Leipzig visitation weekends, click [here](#). To apply to stay in the facility, please see our website: [www.acustudyabroad.com/acu-ip-student-weekend-visitation-program](http://www.acustudyabroad.com/acu-ip-student-weekend-visitation-program). When housing is available, a similar visitation program will be available to students at ACU's Oxford program.

Currently enrolled IP students are allowed to visit other's rooms or hotel rooms between the hours of 10:00 am and 8:00 pm unless specific program policies provide additional guidelines. No one outside of the ACU IP community is allowed in a student room – under any conditions – without written or verbal approval from the Program Director. Students that do not comply with this rule will go through the student disciplinary process. The purpose of visitation guidelines is to safeguard the security and privacy of all students, as well as to maintain an atmosphere conducive to academic achievement.

## Visits from Family and Friends

Family members and friends are not allowed to stay in the residence overnight. Visitation is only permitted during the hours of 10 a.m. and 8 p.m., unless specific program policies provide additional guidelines. Guests must remain in the “public” areas of each facility unless they have the explicit permission of the Program Director to visit any other areas of the facility. More policies guiding visitation, including timing and accommodation information, can be found here: [www.acustudyabroad.com/visiting-programs](http://www.acustudyabroad.com/visiting-programs)

Students are responsible for the actions of their guests. Disciplinary sanctions, including fees, may be assessed if ACU property is damaged or destroyed.

## Smoking

Smoking (including vaping and e-cigarettes) is not permitted inside of ACU International Programs facilities or on the grounds of ACU International Programs facilities. If you smoke, please speak with your Program Director about the nearest area suitable for smoking outside our international campuses.

## Facility Walk-Throughs

Student rooms may be inspected periodically by program resident advisors (RAs) or an official ACU designee. Each room is expected to be clean and functionally neat. Rooms that are not in order will be identified, the students will be required to clean them immediately, and the occupants of the room may receive sanctions including fines. Although the RA inspection is generally limited to a walk-through of the room, and not an inspection of the student's belongings, the RA is expected to open doors or drawers if something is leaking or to trace the source of a noxious odor, or make any other reasonable inspections if the RA has reason to suspect the presence of items prohibited by the guidelines. Alcohol or drugs found incidentally in the course of such an inspection must be reported by the RA to the Program Director. Final room inspections will take place at the end of each semester. Rooms may be subject to damage and/or cleaning fines.

## Damage to Facilities or Hotel

All students must properly check out of their residence at the conclusion of the program, and students who leave without properly checking out will be fined. Any damage to a room, its furnishings, or any University-owned or University-rented property will be charged to the student through their Wildcat Pay Portal account, according to a set of established fees communicated by International Programs. If there is damage to a room and no student is willing to admit being responsible for it, the cost of repairs will be divided equally among all of the residents of the room and charged to their Wildcat Pay Portal accounts after the session ends, unless and until the individual(s) responsible for the damage is identified.

## Meals

For fall/spring program students, the cost of a student meal plan is \$2,500.00. Students will receive this payment in four installments of \$625 throughout the semester as a direct deposit into their designated bank account. Payments are distributed during the first week of every month (Fall: August, September, October, November // Spring: January, February, March, April). Students are expected to participate in all group meals in their host city and during their EFTs. Students are responsible for all other meals not provided by the program during the semester.

Fully-equipped kitchens and food storage facilities are provided in each program for student use.

Summer students do not pay for student meal plans and are not provided with the same disbursements. Students are responsible for all other meals not provided by their program.

In their host cities, students are responsible for managing their own dietary restrictions. Most restaurants can serve a vegetarian meal if given advance notice, though the ability of restaurants to accommodate strict diets such as vegan, gluten-free, or lactose-free meals will vary by location. In preparing for a student meal at a restaurant, it is common practice to order special meals requested by students prior to arrival at the restaurant. However, once the group has reached the restaurant, it is not usually possible for a student to change his/her preference.

Students should be aware that food will be different in each program depending on the region and should not expect all meals to reflect American tastes. This is often a strong point of culture shock for many students. Research your respective country and prepare for differences. Plan to be flexible and adventurous throughout your term.

## **Student Programming**

### **Student Activity Fee**

All ACU students, whether at the Abilene campus or at an International Program, are charged \$140 each semester for extracurricular activity fees. Some of this fee (approximately \$40 per semester) is retained in Abilene to support student life activities which apply to students in both domestic and international contexts. The remainder (\$100 per semester) per student is transferred by International Programs to each program account. Extracurricular fees are not charged to summer students and are, therefore, not provided for extracurricular programming during the summer months.

The \$100 per student per semester is to be spent on student activities and cultural events. The following points govern the use of these funds during the academic semester:

- a. Students, in keeping with guidance from local staff, will make final decisions on how to use the funding. Students are encouraged to think

- of ways the funding might be used to benefit future generations of students studying in their program.
- b. Students are responsible for ensuring all receipts are given to the appropriate staff person.
- c. Students are responsible for staying within the agreed-upon budget.
- d. Below is a list of potential uses of these funds. This is not an exhaustive list and the overall purpose of the funding is for cultural and community building events.
  - i. Food/supplies/advertising for a house meeting;
  - ii. Event support (coffeehouse, small concert, travel costs, etc.);
  - iii. Cultural outings including local athletic events;
  - iv. Community events with city partners
  - v. Movie nights
  - vi. Ice cream socials

## Merchandise

Students may choose to take initiative to create program merchandise (t-shirt, sweatshirt, jackets, water bottles, etc) to represent their program with design approval from the Program Director. Local program budgets or the Student Activities Fee can contribute funding per student for a group item. Items are distributed to students by the local program and not shipped to or stored in the Abilene Study Abroad Office. All items must be paid in full before departing from the international program.

# TRAVEL REGULATIONS

## Passports

All students participating in International Programs are required to have a valid passport. The passport must be **valid for at least six months past the return date** of the student's program. It is the student's responsibility to obtain or renew their passport. Students must submit a copy of their passport to the International Programs Office by the deadline communicated by the International Programs office.

Application forms for U.S. passports can be obtained from any passport agency or acceptance facility (call first to learn whether an appointment is necessary) or on the [US Department of State Passport Services Website](#).

Information on local U.S. passport agencies, requirements and fees is available on the U.S. State department website. Students should contact the [ACU International Programs Office](#) if they need additional assistance or have questions about obtaining a valid passport.

## Visas

Please note that U.S. permanent residents are not U.S. passport holders and must attain the proper visas independently when applicable.

**If required**, the International Programs Office will provide mandatory preparation and visa workshop(s) for each program that requires a U.S. passport holder to obtain a visa to provide information on the visa application process. This information is based on the requirements for U.S. citizens as stated by the program's local consulate. If a student misses the workshop, it will not be repeated, and he/she is responsible for researching the visa process.

All non-U.S. passport holding students will need to independently verify the visa process, based on the guidelines of their citizenship. If a student does not obtain the required visa by the departure date, the student will be ineligible to participate in the program and will be subject to withdrawal fees. Additionally, all non-U.S. passport holders must verify that their U.S. visa and/or credentials are valid for a return to the U.S. after their program(s). International students must verify program eligibility with the [Office of International Students and Visiting Scholars](#) prior to signing a contract.

### Visas for Educational Field Trips

1. U.S. passport holders: Necessary visas for all educational field trip locations will be handled by local program staff.
2. Non-U.S. passport holders: Necessary visas for all educational field trip locations must be obtained by the student independently. Local program staff will provide any necessary documentation for international students to obtain visas if requested in a timely manner.

### Visas for Independent Travel for Domestic and International Students

1. All necessary visas for students' personal travel must be obtained by the student independently. Both the Abilene International Programs Office and local program

staff can provide advice and required documentation (letters, enrollment status, etc), but will not be responsible for securing visas for non-academic travel.

## **Weekend Travel**

Students studying in ACU's International Programs often find that personal travel becomes an important part of their total educational experience. Seeking advice about travel from the Program Director, staff, Faculty-in-Residence, and class instructors can help to integrate academic and personal learning. International Programs encourages students to plan some weekend travel to locations outside of their host city. It is discouraged that students travel every weekend of the semester. Former students report that travel can be physically/emotionally exhausting, and students are encouraged to take full advantage of living in their city and see the sights in their local areas. Students should plan on finding a balance between academic demands and travel. After a weekend or travel period, students are required to return to the residential facility by midnight preceding the next scheduled class day, whether or not the particular student has a class on that day. A student who arrives after midnight is subject to disciplinary action.

In most ACU International Programs, classes are normally scheduled Monday through Thursday during the fall and spring semesters, leaving three-day weekends in which students may explore the local area or travel. Please note that even though programs may vary in the number of class days per week, classroom hours are equivalent across all programs.

During fall and spring semesters, there are weekend travel restrictions. Students are not allowed to travel on the first weekend students start the semester for orientation activities. The orientation schedule is full of activities from day through evening, so students are encouraged to use their free time to explore their host city and get to know their housemates. Students are able to only travel locally (within 2 hours by ground transport (train, bus, etc) of the host city) during the finals period. The last weekend of the semester is reserved for final exam preparation and, in some cases, final exams may be scheduled on Saturday. Therefore, during the last weekend of the semester, students are only allowed to travel locally as their exam schedule allows. Each student is encouraged to plan wisely to make personal travel as richly rewarding as possible.

## **Travel Tracker**

For safety reasons, it is imperative for ACU to know the travel plans of all Study Abroad students during weekends and other travel times during the term. As a result, all IP students are required to log all personal travel (all weekends and travel breaks) into the [Travel Tracker](#). The deadline for students to fill out their travel tracker is the day before a travel period (generally, Thursdays) by 11:59 p.m. local time. All Study Abroad students must fill in Travel Tracker details whether or not they are remaining in the program location during the travel period. Students must update the Travel Tracker if there are any changes to their itinerary. ACU International Programs and Risk Management will monitor students' travel information.

Students who do not complete the Travel Tracker are subject to disciplinary action. Each week, program staff will examine Travel Tracker submissions and note students who do not submit their Travel Tracker details. After three "strikes," possible sanctions may include travel restrictions, university warnings, probation, or program dismissal. Falsifying travel tracker data is a serious offense and places students at risk. As such, the first offense of falsifying data will result in an administrative hearing with the Program Director/Executive Director. Possible sanctions include university probation or program dismissal. If the falsification of data was related to travel to a restricted area, relevant sanctions would apply.

While ACU does not require IP students to enter travel plans if the student travels abroad before or after their IP term, ACU recommends doing so. The student is solely responsible for sharing all travel plans with their family members and emergency contacts.

## Travel Resources

### Safe Traveler Program

All IP students that are U.S. passport holders are also encouraged to log their travel in the U.S. Department of State's Safe Traveler Program (<https://step.state.gov/step/>). This is a free program that registers travelers with the local U.S. embassy and provides students and emergency contacts they elect with travel alerts.

## Travel Safety

Student safety is a top priority for International Programs. Please consult the Travel Policy section of this handbook and the [ACU Study Abroad website](#) for the most up to date information on how ACU safeguards communities abroad and how students can safeguard themselves.

Living and traveling in another country can be a rich and rewarding experience, and the odds are very much in your favor for an incident-free trip. You can increase your chances of avoiding problems by developing awareness and by careful planning ahead of time.

Consider the following strategies:

- Use common sense to protect your valuables. Don't wear expensive jewelry. Keep vital documents out of view and reach of other people. Don't carry more cash than you can afford to lose and place it in various locations on your person. Keep a list of your credit card numbers and customer service numbers reachable from your host country in your emergency envelope in order to report them if lost or stolen. When traveling, always keep valuable possessions within view if you can't hold on to them.
- Take a low-key approach. Avoid loud conversations or arguments and attempt to blend in with your surroundings. In most countries, it is in very poor taste to be boisterous in public. Avoid clothing that could identify you as a tourist. In most situations, observing and imitating the locals will help you both learn the local culture and blend in.
- Pickpockets normally operate in crowded places like public transportation facilities, spectator events, etc. Never carry valuables in a back pocket or carry your purse behind your back. Some pickpockets will resort to cutting a tightly held purse in order to gain access to its contents. In case of theft or loss of any valuables, report it to the local authorities. The report will be necessary for coverage under your insurance policy. Please inform your Program Director as well.
- Learn about the places you plan to visit. Familiarize yourself with local customs in those areas.
- Keep track of what is being reported in the media about any recent developments in the places you plan to visit. International SOS emails travelers destination information and updates them based upon travel details inputted in the MyTrips system. In addition, the US Department of State's STEP solution communicates similar information to travelers. While students are in their programs, University Public Safety personnel will be in constant contact with the U.S. Department of State and other agencies and will advise your Program Director immediately of

any advisories issued for Americans traveling abroad. Additional information is available on the IP website and at

<https://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en.html>

- ACU International Programs does not encourage students to travel alone. In the case that a student is considering traveling alone, ACU International Programs encourages all students to discuss their travel plans with their Program Director. *\*Please note that students are only permitted to travel to countries that have been designated by the U.S. Department of State with safety rankings of 1 or 2 (with distinctions), and they must apply for a travel exemption in order to travel to countries designated with a safety ranking of 2 (with distinctions), 3, and 4 using the same travel exemption form linked above. If the student wishes to travel alone to a prohibited country, they must indicate both of these requests in the same exemption form. See the next section for more information on ACU IP's Travel Risk Policy.*
- Learn about local laws and rules, and obey them. Your consulate or embassy has limited ability to protect you if you break the laws of the foreign country you are visiting. This is especially true in regard to drug laws, which are more rigidly enforced in some countries compared to the U.S.
- Should you find yourself in any legal difficulty, contact your Program Director and your consulate or embassy immediately. The contact information for the consulate/embassy in each host city are as follows:  
[U.S. Consulate Leipzig](#): (+49) 0341 213 840 or  
[U.S. Embassy Berlin](#): +49 (030) 832-9233  
[U.S. Embassy Montevideo](#): (+598) 1770-2222  
[U.S. Embassy London](#): (+44) 020/7499-9000
- U.S. passport holders and citizens: Register yourself independently into the [Safe Traveler Program](#) for all personal travel.
- Consult the ACU Study Abroad [website](#) for additional travel safety information.

## Travel Risk Policy

In the interest of preserving student safety and security during their term abroad, International Programs students have weekend and travel break travel restrictions based on ACU's International Travel Policy and the U.S. Department of State's travel risk assessments. Please refer to the [U.S. Department of State's site](#) to

understand the travel risk rating system. Students may also use the U.S. Department of State [Travel Risk Map](#) for further reference:

### **Pre-Approved Destinations**

Travel to Level 1 countries is permitted as long as the itinerary does not enter regions with Level 3 or 4 advisories within that country.

Travel to Level 2 countries is permitted as long as no regions within the country have Level 3 or Level 4 advisory language.

### **Destinations Requiring Review & Approval**

Travel to a country with a Level 2 countrywide advisory, which also has areas within the country with Level 3 or Level 4 advisories, must be reviewed and approved by ACU's International Travel Risk Assessment Team.

Travel to a country or region with a Level 3 or Level 4 advisory is prohibited. Rare exceptions may be granted by following the destination approval process, and require the approval of the Executive Director, Director of Risk Management, the Provost, and the Executive Vice President .

### **Destination Approval Process for IP Students**

Below is the protocol used by ACU when an International Programs student wishes to travel to a destination that is not level 1 or level 2.

- 1) Students can apply for a travel exemption request on our website: [www.acustudyabroad.com/travel#exemption](http://www.acustudyabroad.com/travel#exemption). Students must submit a request at least three weeks prior to the proposed departure date. If there are two or more travelers on the same itinerary, only one person needs to submit a request and list all other travelers.
- 2) The Executive Director and the Director of Risk Management will review and approve travel exemptions.
- 3) The Executive Director will email all travelers with a decision.

Note: ACU desires to provide a decision back to students at least 10 days prior to the planned departure date but cannot guarantee that a final decision can be provided within this period of time. Any variance from the originally submitted travel plan must be resubmitted for approval. Students who fail to receive approval and still travel to banned locations will face disciplinary action, which may include university suspension. If the destination approval request is still in process by the proposed departure date, the student(s) is not permitted to travel

to proposed locations. Students will be responsible for paying all travel costs associated with the canceled trip.

## **MEAL PLAN DEPOSITS (Semester Only)**

Meal Plan Deposits are an electronic transfer of funds from the university directly to a student's personal bank account. This account can be, but does not have to be, the same account with which the student's program fee is paid. It should, however, be a bank account that a student has access to while abroad. Students will receive meal plan deposits for meals outside of group meals while in the program. In order to receive digital disbursements and access the funds, students are required to follow steps communicated by International Programs.

Students are responsible for ensuring they meet these requirements and that they are able to accept digital disbursements prior to their program departure. If a student is unable to meet one of the above requirements, students must contact the International Programs office prior to their program departure.

Typically, students will receive a meal plan deposit the first week of every month (August, September, October, November // January, February, March, April) funds for meals. Funds will then be automatically deposited into their bank account. If a student does not receive these meal payments, they will need to communicate that their funds were not received to Abilene [Study Abroad staff](#).

If a student's debit card associated with the account chosen to have the funds deposited is lost or stolen, the student will need to contact their personal bank to obtain a new debit card. If the student would like funds deposited into an alternative account, they should contact ACU IP Office.

## **Internships**

Unpaid international internships are available to students on a competitive basis during summers in some of ACU's programs. This is a dynamic and expanding offering and students are encouraged to inquire about internship options with the ACU IP Office. Students can apply to this specific internship program through the [Focus Application](#) page.

# COMMUNICATIONS

## Telephones

### Cellular Phones

ACU International Programs strongly encourages all students to have a cellular device that is able to make or receive phone calls and send and receive messages at all times. This includes ensuring phone service to any other countries students plan to travel to during their personal travel periods and educational field trip locations. If possible, these devices should not be left on airplane mode while abroad for safety reasons. Students may use their existing phones or rent/purchase cellular telephones while overseas – the IP website as well the Program Director of each international program will have the most recent information on local companies and the services that they provide. IP also recommends these phones having a data plan that will allow students to utilize important applications when traveling like maps, e-mail, and other relevant local information.

There are companies in the United States that rent and/or sell global/international phones and service plans. Consult the IP website for additional information on communications.

### Time-Zone Differences

Since time zones differ, it is important to keep the variations in mind when telephoning friends and family at home. Please be aware of daylight savings time changes, which are observed on different dates in different countries.

## Mailing & Shipping

### Mail Forwarding

The United States Post Office, including ACU's Mail Services, cannot forward mail to an overseas address. If students wish to have mail forwarded from ACU's Abilene campus, they will need to give mail services a forwarding address in the U.S.

Completed forms should be returned to the mailroom. If a student fails to fill out the paperwork to forward their mail to another U.S. address, all mail will be returned to the sender.

## Shipping Information

While rates may vary, the United States Post Office generally has better rates than UPS and express mail services like FedEx for shipping packages from the U.S. to International Programs. Packages should be sent by airmail (surface shipping may take as long as four months). Shipping by air takes approximately two weeks. Students should share their new address as needed. Shipping addresses are the IP facility addresses and are as follows:

- Leipzig: *Student Name, Attn: ACU Study Abroad, Käthe-Kollwitz-Strasse 52, 04109, Leipzig, Germany*
- Montevideo: *Student Name, Attn: ACU Study Abroad, Obligado 1137, Montevideo 11300, Uruguay*
- Oxford: *Student Name, Attn: ACU Study Abroad, 163 Woodstock Rd., Oxford OX2 7NA, United Kingdom*

Students must be present to claim packages. Do not send something by mail that will arrive before the program begins. Students must be present to clear packages through customs. Otherwise, the customs agency will charge storage. Then, after a period, they will return the package.

Please be aware that customs duties may be charged on clothes, shoes, and electronic equipment sent from the U.S. (especially if it is new merchandise). Furthermore, medications may be confiscated by customs officials depending on location and medication type. Shipping electronics is not recommended.

Students are responsible for bringing personal belongings home at the end of the program. Articles that do not fit in suitcases must be shipped, and sending items from overseas to the U.S. is very expensive. Articles that are left will be donated to charitable organizations.

## CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

As exciting as the prospect of spending a summer term or semester living and studying abroad may be, at times it will present unexpected challenges. Adapting to different cultural mores, hearing unfamiliar words spoken regularly, and even little things like buying a bus ticket or posting a letter can challenge even the most

seasoned traveler. People go through these five stages in making a transition to living in another culture:

1. Anticipation
2. Arrival euphoria
3. Irritability and hostility
4. Gradual acceptance of difficulty and difference
5. Adaptation

“Culture Shock” is the term used to describe the disorientation most people experience when they live for even a short period of time in a culture markedly different from their own. In some cases, culture shock is little more than the recognition that doing the ordinary things of life has just become more difficult. In other more pronounced cases, discomfort and/or distinct physical symptoms of psychosomatic illness occur. For some people, the bout with culture shock is brief and hardly noticeable, for others it may last much longer.

Culture shock does not result from a specific event or series of events. It comes instead from the experience of encountering ways of doing, organizing, perceiving or valuing things which are different and which threaten a person’s basic, unconscious belief that his or her customs, assumptions, values and behaviors are “right.” We all learn cultural cues without being conscious of them. Why do you stand in line at a checkout counter in the supermarket? There are no signs posted to say that you must do so. Standing in line at the supermarket is an unwritten rule. The new culture you are in will also have unwritten rules that may be different. These may surprise us at first and then may make our ignorance uncomfortable. Being continually faced with situations in which you are expected to function with maximum skill and speed with inadequate knowledge of the “rules” produces culture shock. Culture shock is cumulative; it does not strike suddenly or have a single principal cause, although one particular incident may be the one to spark awareness of these feelings.

#### Culture Shock Symptoms:

- Homesickness;
- Boredom;
- Withdrawal (e.g., spending excessive amounts of time alone; excessively engaging in social media; only seeing other Americans; avoiding contact with host country nationals; avoiding going out of the house; excessive emailing, etc.);
- Need for excessive amounts of sleep;
- Compulsive eating and/or drinking;
- Irritability;
- Exaggerated cleanliness;
- Roommate tension and conflict;

- Stereotyping of host country nationals;
- Hostility toward host country nationals;
- Loss of ability to study effectively;
- Unexplainable fits of weeping;
- Physical ailments (psychosomatic illness).

However uncomfortable culture shock may be, it passes with time. To make the most of the experience of studying overseas, there are things students can do to minimize its impact:

- Prepare ahead of time for the adjustment process. Research as much as possible about the program location before you leave. Learn about customs and history. Once there, look for reasons behind everything that seems strange, difficult, confusing, or threatening. The more one knows about why people do things a certain way, the less one will be frustrated by their customs.
- Cultivate sensitivity. Do not succumb to the temptation to disparage the host culture. This temptation is especially strong when many students all feel the same frustrations. Although jokes about the country may seem like a good way to "vent," they actually heighten frustration. Remember, your feelings about the country, not the country itself, are the source of the problem.
- Be patient. Give yourself permission to relax. Forgive your fellow students. Talk about your feelings with each other. Find a host national who is sympathetic and understanding to talk with about your feelings. If you have not yet met someone, try talking to the local program staff.
- Remain positive. Be assured that the frustration will pass and focus on the positive elements of your experience!

Should you find yourself to be struggling with the adjustment to your new home, please seek out your program staff who can connect you with valuable resources while you are abroad, including counseling services.

The realities described above are experienced by many students while in an international program. It is important to note that if you are already facing psychological or physical challenges at home, these can - and often are - magnified when out of your comfort zone. Students in these situations should work closely with parents and medical providers, and campus services to assess the wisdom and feasibility of them thriving in an international program

## **STUDENT CONDUCT**

The following student conduct expectations and disciplinary procedures for students attending International Programs are intended to help make experiences successful for both the student and their community. Students are responsible for conforming to the laws of the host country and all countries they visit. In addition to this International Program Student Handbook, students are also responsible for all material contained in the University's Student Code of Conduct and related policies (e.g., sexual misconduct). The Student Code of Conduct and related policies are located at:  
<https://acu.edu/dean-of-students/student-handbook/code-of-conduct/>.

## **Responsibility for Student Discipline**

The ACU Dean of Students and Executive Director for International Education and Study Abroad comprise the ACU IP Disciplinary Committee, which is responsible for the overall coordination of the disciplinary process and both will oversee adjudication or delegate the responsibility to other parties. If code of conduct violations have implications for other terms on the ACU campus, the Dean of Students will provide ongoing disciplinary coordination and oversight.

Process:

If a Program Director or the Executive Director considers an disciplinary incident report to indicate a probable violation of the Student Code of Conduct, the incident will be heard through either an administrative hearing (typically conducted by the local Program Director for less serious offenses) or a committee hearing with the ACU IP Disciplinary Committee (for more serious offenses).

Students have the right to appeal disciplinary decisions in a given timeframe (see further information on the appeal process). Administrative hearing appeals are reviewed by the ACU IP Disciplinary Committee. ACU IP Disciplinary Committee hearing appeals will be reviewed by the Vice President of Student Life (VPSL). If appropriate, some University policy violations may be addressed or investigated by other ACU disciplinary bodies.

## **Jurisdiction of the Student Code of Conduct**

The ACU International Program Student Conduct expectations are expressed within the IP Student Handbook, the ACU IP website, and communication by IP staff as

well as the University's Student Code of Conduct apply to conduct that occurs on University premises, at University-sponsored activities, and to off-campus conduct that adversely affects the University community and/or the pursuit of its objectives. Each student is responsible for his or her conduct from the time of application for admission through the actual awarding of a degree, even though conduct may occur before classes begin or after classes end as well as during the academic year and during periods between terms of actual enrollment (and even if their conduct is not discovered until after a degree is awarded). The Code applies to a student's conduct even if the student withdraws from school while a disciplinary matter is pending. The adjudicator will decide whether the Code will be applied to conduct occurring off campus, on a case-by-case basis, at his or her sole discretion.

## **Interim Restriction**

In certain circumstances, the Dean of Students, the Executive Director of International Education, Program Director, the Provost, and/or a designee may impose an International Program restriction prior to or after a disciplinary hearing or for another deemed purpose. An interim restriction may be imposed: (1) to ensure the safety and well-being of members of the University community or preservation of University property; or (2) if the student poses a definite threat of disruption of or interference with the normal operations of the University. During the interim restriction, students may be denied access to any International Program facilities (e.g., attending classes and residing on University property) and/or all other activities or privileges for which the student might otherwise be eligible, as the Vice President for Student Life, Dean of Students, Executive Director, Program Director or the designee may determine to be appropriate. The interim restriction does not replace the regular disciplinary process, which will proceed on the normal schedule, up to and through a disciplinary hearing and subsequent appeal, if required.

## **Interaction with Local Authorities**

Civil and criminal laws and penalties of foreign countries vary from those of the U.S. Students are expected to learn and abide by local laws. Except in cases where violating local laws also constitutes a violation of ACU policy, ACU regards alleged infractions of local laws to be a private matter between a student and local authorities to the extent that these do not impact the ACU program. Should a student become involved with local authorities, the University staff, both overseas and on the Abilene campus, will attempt to assist a student with communications and other necessities. However, responsibility for compliance with local laws and

interactions with authorities rests fully with a student. In the case that a student incurs a penalty fee as a result of law infraction overseas, fails to pay this fee, and then the program continues to be contacted about the fee after a student's departure from the program, the program will pay this fee on behalf of the student and the total fee amount and service charge (\$150) will be posted to the student's Wildcat Pay Portal.

## Parental Notification

Abilene Christian University has long recognized its special relationship with parents and families of its students. Even after students leave home for college, parents often play a central role in their character development, so ACU works in partnership with parents in helping students make the transition to responsible adulthood.

The University also recognizes that students have specific privacy rights. FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, is a Federal law that controls the confidentiality of, and access to, student education records. The Higher Education Amendments of 1998 permit educational institutions to notify parents if a student, under the age of 21 at the time of notification, commits a disciplinary violation involving alcohol or a controlled substance. See ACU's Student Records Policy for additional information about FERPA and educational records: <https://acu.edu/dean-of-students/student-handbook/access-to-student-records-and-information-release-form-ferpa/>.

The purpose of ACU's parental notification policy is to promote the holistic development of students and to foster an alcohol- and drug-free campus community. Among several interventions that may be used to further this purpose, parents or guardians of students under the age of 21 may be notified in the case of a violation of university alcohol or other drug policies. Notification typically occurs:

1. The first time a student is charged with violating the University policy under one of following circumstances:
  - a. Caused serious harm to oneself or another while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs or was transported to a medical facility and treated because of alcohol or other drug use.
  - b. Caused significant damage or disruption while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
  - c. Operated a vehicle under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

- d. Was arrested or taken into custody by law enforcement officers while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs or is charged with violating a federal, state, or local law related to alcohol or other drug use.
  - e. Because of previous violations (not related to alcohol or other drugs), the current alcohol or other drug violation might result in the student being placed on suspension or a more severe sanction.
  - f. Hosted or in any way assisted or promoted a gathering that included underage drinking or drunkenness.
2. The first time a student is charged with violating the university policy regarding the attempt to obtain or the use, possession, sale, or distribution of any narcotic or other controlled substance not lawfully prescribed by a healthcare provider.
3. The second time a student is charged with violating the university policy regarding:
  - a. The consumption, possession, sale, or distribution of alcoholic beverages.
  - b. Being in the presence of alcohol, alcohol containers, controlled substances, or drug-related paraphernalia on University property.

A parent or guardian may be notified in writing by the Dean of Students or the Executive Director before the disciplinary hearing. Before notifying the parents or guardians, every effort will be made to inform the student and attempt to have the student make the first contact with their parents. This is consistent with the general philosophy that supports students developing independence and personal accountability. However, in some situations this may not be possible. In other situations, after consulting with the student, the Program Director, Executive Director, or Dean of Students may determine that notifying the parents/guardians may be harmful to the student and in such cases the University will not make notification.

This policy does not preclude the University's contacting parents or guardians for other policy violations that may endanger the health and wellbeing of a student or other individuals in the community.

## **Alcohol & Drugs**

The following alcohol and drug regulations apply to all International Programs in both the academic year and the summer.

In keeping with our domestic ACU campus policy, the legal consumption of alcohol is determined by the laws of the program host country/state and all countries

students visit. Laws regarding legal consumption and age limits vary across international jurisdictions but will be strictly upheld.

Students are responsible for conforming to the laws of their host country/state and all countries they visit and to the university's policy on alcohol and controlled substances. Students are personally liable for harm to persons or damage to public, private, or University property arising from their actions.

University property is herein defined as any facility that ACU leases, owns, or is temporarily used by students during their international experience. On all educational field trips, the hotel or facility used for lodging is defined as "University property," and thus all regulations regarding alcohol and other drug use apply. If there is a need to redefine what is considered "University property," the Program Director must obtain the permission of the Executive Director.

1. The consumption or possession of alcoholic beverages or a controlled substance or possession of empty containers or drug paraphernalia is prohibited on University property or at any University-sponsored event or activity (e.g. group meals, farewell banquets, group transportation), regardless of the student's age. This includes all group flights to and from your program location, as well as all transportation during Educational Field Trips.
2. On University property, it is a violation to be in the company of others who are drinking alcohol, using a controlled substance, or displaying alcohol containers or drug-related paraphernalia.
3. Intoxication, on or off campus, may result, minimally, in university probation on the first offense and suspension/program dismissal on the second offense. Intoxication is defined as a blood alcohol content of .08% or more. Intoxication may also be determined by conduct (e.g., aggressive, disruptive, destructive, hazardous, vulgar), speech (e.g., incoherent, rambling, slurring) and/or coordination (e.g., difficulty maintaining balance, staggering) during or following the consumption of alcoholic beverages. In addition, promoting the consumption of drugs or alcoholic beverages may not be undertaken within the confines of university properties or through university-sponsored or approved publications. Breathalyzers may be used to determine a student's blood alcohol content. If a student is unable or unwilling to comply with a breathalyzer test, it will be considered an admission of intoxication.

The first violation of any of the above regulations (1–3) relating to alcohol, the standard sanction is University Probation, an alcohol assessment with a licensed mental health professional (BASICS) which carries a \$100 fee, and a fine of \$200-\$300. Other sanctions, including additional financial penalties, weekly

meetings with the Faculty-in-Residence and reflective assignments, may be given.

On the second violation of any of the above regulations (1–3), or on the first violation relating to drugs, the standard sanction is suspension/program dismissal, an alcohol/drug assessment with a licensed mental health professional (BASICS or other) which carries a \$100 fee, and a fine of \$500. Other sanctions, including university suspension, additional financial penalties, weekly meetings with a faculty mentor, and other reflective assignments may be given.

## **Violations Warranting Suspension**

Below is not an exhaustive list, however, if the Student Disciplinary Committee determines that a student has violated any of the following, the standard sanction is University suspension (which includes program dismissal):

1. A threat or act of violence.
2. Theft.
3. Purchase, possession, sale, distribution and/or use of any amount of a controlled substance or University prohibited drug, in or out of an ACU facility.
4. Repeated drunkenness in or out of an ACU facility.
5. Significant damage to property.
6. Substantial disruption to the living community.
7. Traveling to a location that is on the State Department's Travel Warning list and/or to a location ACU has prohibited without an approved exemption.
8. Allowing unauthorized visitors to access the facility or spend the night on facility grounds.

## **Disciplinary Procedures**

The disciplinary process is based on the assumption that disciplinary procedures, when required, should be an educational process. Disciplinary sanctions are

imposed to help students develop individual responsibility and encourage self-discipline, to foster a respect for the rights of others, and to protect the rights, freedoms, and safety of all members of the community.

Due to the complexities and regulations related to charges of sexual misconduct, please note that a separate set of disciplinary procedures are followed and can be found in the [sexual misconduct policy](#) which includes Title IX policies and resources:

<https://acu.edu/human-resources/title-ix-and-sexual-misconduct-information/>

When an infraction of any of the ACU standards of conduct is believed to have occurred, the following steps will be taken:

1. When a violation is of sufficient gravity that it could result in a student's suspension from the University, a hearing will be conducted by the ACU IP Disciplinary Committee. Committee hearings may either be conducted by a committee in Abilene or it may be conducted on site.
2. When the violation is of a less serious nature and the misconduct is unlikely to result in suspension, expulsion, or dismissal, the student must attend an administrative hearing with the Program Director to discuss the incident, the student's involvement in it, and any steps that must be taken or sanction imposed to resolve the matter. The meeting will be followed by an official letter summarizing this decision. Sanctions imposed as a result of an administrative hearing can be appealed to the Executive Director. Sanctions imposed by the ACU IP Disciplinary Committee may be appealed; therefore, students who are summoned to an administrative hearing may request instead to meet with the ACU IP Disciplinary Committee if they want an appeal option. Appeals will only be granted on the [following grounds](#):
  - The disciplinary response is unreasonably disproportionate to the misconduct (including consideration of the student's prior offenses or willingness to cooperate in the disciplinary process).
  - The disciplinary process as outlined in the Student Handbook/ACU IP Handbook was not followed, and this failure significantly affected the student's opportunity to receive a fair hearing.
  - The disciplinary decision was not supported by reasonable evidence.
  - New evidence has become available since the initial hearing that would have significantly altered its results.
3. Before the Administrative or Committee hearing, the student will be provided in writing with a notification letter briefly summarizing the behavior that allegedly violates particular provisions of the Student Code of Conduct. The notification letter will also include the date and time of the hearing. The date and time of the

hearing will be set by the Program Director, Dean of Students, or designee to allow the student enough time to write a written response to the charges and a reasonable amount of time to prepare for the hearing.

4. Student Disciplinary Committee Procedures:

- a. The accused student will be informed clearly of the alleged violations and will be given an adequate opportunity to respond at the hearing.
- b. Students are responsible for presenting their own case; therefore, advisors, or any third party persons are not permitted to represent the student or to participate directly in the hearing.
- c. The Program Director or ACU IP Disciplinary Committee may call witnesses in an effort to establish the facts of the matter. The accused student may also present information and may ask witnesses to appear before the Committee. Each witness will appear before the Committee individually and the accused may be present when witnesses appear before the Committee.
- d. If, during the course of the hearing, additional alleged violation(s) are discovered, the accused student will be notified of the new charges and may be granted additional time, if needed, to prepare a defense of the new alleged violation(s). The accused student may waive the additional time and the hearing can proceed with the new charges taken under consideration by the committee. A record should be made in the hearing notes of additional alleged violation(s) and whether or not the student desires additional preparation time.
- e. Information about the misconduct of other students shared at the hearing may be used as the basis for disciplinary action.
- f. The Committee's hearings and deliberations will be in private and no member of the program other than members of the Committee has the right to be present.
- g. There will be a single written record of the hearing, which normally consists of the statement of alleged misconduct, a summary of the information presented in the hearing, a summary of the statement of the accused, statement of the decision, and the sanctions issued, if any. The hearing will not be transcribed or otherwise recorded.

5. Disciplinary decisions are made on the basis of whether it is more likely than not that the student violated the Student Code of Conduct or a University policy.

6. Sanctions imposed at the discretion of the Dean of Students, Executive Director, Program Director, or designee may include the following:
- a. Warning: Oral or written notice to the student that the student is violating or has violated the Code of Conduct and that continuation or repetition of misconduct may result in a more severe sanction.
  - b. Conduct Probation: A status which indicates that a student's relationship with Abilene Christian University is tenuous and includes the probability of more severe disciplinary sanctions if the student is found in violation of any University regulations. Probation is for a designated period of time. Specific limitations to and restrictions of the student's privileges may accompany probation. The length of University Probation is determined by the Dean of Students, Executive Director, Program Director, or designee.
  - c. Loss of Privileges: Such loss may include, but is not limited to, financial assistance, eligibility to represent the University officially on athletic teams or performing groups; seeking or holding an elected student office; or use of specific University facilities, computer systems, equipment, or services.
  - d. Fines: Payment of charges for violation of regulations. These charges will be added to a student's account.
  - e. Restitution: Requirement to pay for the repair to and/or replacement of damaged property. Failure to pay such charges may result in additional sanctions (including, but not limited to, denial of re-enrollment or refusal to release official transcripts and records).
  - f. Educational Sanctions: Mandatory work hours, reading/writing assignment, drug or alcohol assessment/treatment, seminar attendance, Faculty-in-Residence meetings, or other discretionary sanctions as deemed appropriate.
  - g. Suspension: Separation of the student from the University for a specified length of time. Conditions for readmission may be specified.
  - h. Expulsion: Temporary separation of the student from Abilene Christian University for a definite period of time, but not less than one semester, after which the student must reapply through the Office of Admission and be granted acceptance before becoming eligible for re-enrollment at the University. Conditions for readmission may be specified, but the student is not guaranteed readmission.

- i. Dismissal: Permanent separation of the student from Abilene Christian University. The student is dismissed from the University and is permanently ineligible to re-enroll at the University at any time in the future.

7. After an Administrative or Committee Hearing has been conducted, the student will be sent a letter that states whether he or she is responsible for the violations and, if so, what sanctions are imposed.

- a. If the student is found responsible and the ACU IP Disciplinary Committee or designee recommends suspension or expulsion, the Program Director, Executive Director, or designee must immediately dismiss the student from the program and the student must depart within 24 hours of notification. If a student is suspended and is appealing the decision, they may remain in the program facility during the appeal process. Violations for offenses other than those listed in this Handbook also may result in University suspension, upon the determination of the Committee.
- b. If an RA, or similar student leader, is found responsible for a charge and is put on probation, he/she must be removed from his/her position and his/her scholarship will be revoked.
- c. Suspension from an International Program constitutes suspension from the University.
- d. A student who has been suspended from one of the International Program campuses has no right to housing, meals or other campus privileges at any of the other International Programs facilities or on the Abilene campus during the remainder of the semester in which that student has been suspended.
- e. A student who has been suspended while at an International Programs location may not be entitled to any financial refund or academic credit, regardless of the date on which the suspension occurred. In some instances, a student who has been suspended may be allowed to take final exams for an international program after he/she has returned to Abilene, but in no case may an exam be given in Abilene before that examination has been administered in the overseas program.

8. The University has implemented procedures for student appeals with the intent of assuring fundamental fairness. Students who would like to appeal a decision can submit a written appeal to the Vice President of Student Life (hereafter, "VPSL"). The appeal letter must be submitted within two calendar days of the issuance of the initial

sanction.

- a. Submitting an appeal “stops the clock” on the suspension, probation or other sanctions.
- b. If the student is suspended from a program and declines to appeal, the student must leave the ACU facility within 24 hours of the time of notification. A student who seeks to appeal a suspension decision may continue to reside in the ACU facility until the appeal has been reviewed unless an interim restriction has been issued (see “Interim Restriction” section above).
- c. The written appeal must specify grounds that would justify consideration. General dissatisfaction with the outcome of the decision or an appeal for mercy is not an appropriate basis for an appeal. The written appeal must specifically address at least one of the following criteria:
  - i. The hearing decision was not supported by substantial information. In other words, there was no reasonable basis for such a decision. The disciplinary committee’s credibility assessment of the student and witnesses is not subject to review by the VPSL. The student must state the basis for this belief and provide relevant supporting information.
  - ii. New information that was not reasonably available at the time of the hearing and would have substantially impacted the decision. The appealing party must provide a summary of this new information and its impact.
  - iii. Procedural irregularity in the investigation or disciplinary committee proceedings that was substantial enough to undermine the student’s ability to present a defense or provide relevant supporting information. The student must identify the specific investigative or hearing procedure that was not followed, along with a summary of how it undermined the student’s ability to present a defense or provide relevant supporting information.
  - iv. Bias or conflict of interest by an investigator or committee member. The student party must state the basis for this belief and provide any supporting information.
  - v. Inappropriateness of the sanction for the violation of the Student Code of Conduct.
- d. Generally, the appellate process does not require a hearing, nor does it require the VPSL to make personal contact with the student or the ACU IP Disciplinary Committee. The VPSL may, but is not required to, convene an advisory committee to assist in making a recommendation to the VPSL

regarding the appeal. The VPSL shall not be bound by the committee's recommendation.

- e. The VPSL may affirm, reverse, or modify the sanction. The VPSL may also return the case to the ACU IP Disciplinary Committee for further consideration. The VPSL's decision shall be final and effective immediately (or as otherwise designated by the VPSL). The appeal decision will be emailed to the student's acu.edu account.
- f. A student whose suspension appeal has been denied must leave the ACU facility within the remainder of the 24-hour period of notice after receiving the appeal decision. If the student is dependent on a parent's tax return or there are other compelling circumstances, the Program Director or Executive Director may place a telephone call to the student's responsible parent, in the student's presence (in-person or video/audio conference call), and the student or Program Director or Executive Director will inform the student's parents. This decision may also require the student to leave the country immediately due to immigration status.

## **Amnesty Policy**

### **Non-disciplinary Process/Administrative Agreements**

In keeping with the redemptive nature of ACU's disciplinary philosophy, students who come forward voluntarily confessing a violation of the university policies or an addictive lifestyle associated with a violation (such as illegal drugs and controlled substances, alcohol, sexual misconduct, etc) to the Program Director, Executive Director, Dean of Students may be afforded an opportunity to submit to a range of possibilities outside the disciplinary process. The university maintains the right to require the student to enter into professional counseling and/or medical treatment as a condition of continued enrollment if, in the judgment of the ACU IP Disciplinary Committee, the behavior in question warrants such a response. The following conditions must be met in order for students to take advantage of this non-disciplinary policy

- The student must take the first step by discussing his or her situation with the Program Director, Executive Director, or Dean of Students in order to develop an appropriate response. If a violation is identified or reported before the student voluntarily comes forward, the normal disciplinary process will ensue, and the student will no longer have the option of a non-disciplinary response.
- The student must be willing to submit to any intervention deemed appropriate.

- The student must understand that in cases where the behavior is repetitive, self-destructive or endangering others or involves legal issues, the university has the responsibility to take appropriate action, including suspension or dismissal from the university.

### **Amnesty Policy**

A student and/or witness who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs should not be reluctant to seek assistance from university personnel in the event of a health issue (physical or mental) or safety issue for fear of being sanctioned. Abilene Christian University will not pursue disciplinary violations against a student for his or her improper use of alcohol and/or drugs under these circumstances. This practice only applies to amnesty from violations of Abilene Christian University's policies.

## **HEALTH & HEALTH INSURANCE**

All ACU International Programs students will be enrolled by the ACU IP Office in a GeoBlue health insurance policy.

Below are key points about GeoBlue health services:

- Students may simply contact Geoblue through a phone call, email, or chat message through an app for health advice, telemedicine, or can arrange for an appointment with a local medical provider.
- All students should download [Geoblue's Mobile Health Application](#). The application allows access to a host of care resources, digital insurance card information, and more.
- GeoBlue health insurance coverage costs are a part of your ACU Study Abroad fee. Review the [insurance section](#) of our website for more information.

All students are required to complete a medical health information form. Students are encouraged to seek out additional health advice and clearance from their medical doctor if they suffer from chronic illness. Students are responsible for asking their health care professional about required vaccinations and medications as well as obtaining them prior to program departure.

Students who have experienced a significant health event or health change after turning in their health information form should inform the ACU Executive Director

and meet with their health care professional again to discuss whether or not going abroad is in the student's best interest.

Please visit the [International Programs website](#) for more information on health abroad.

## STUDENT CRISIS/MEDICAL SITUATIONS

Occasionally, a student may need to leave a program early because of personal or medical reasons (death or serious illness of a family member, student illness or injury). These situations will be handled on a case-by-case basis including decisions regarding course credit, drops, and exams. When a student becomes aware of such a situation that may warrant leaving the program, students must notify the Program Director to discuss the situation and fill out needed paperwork. Depending on the situation, this may entail a follow-up meeting with the Executive Director or designee. If an unscheduled trip home is necessary, the student is responsible for the cost of changing the ticket or obtaining a new ticket along with any lodging, food, and incidental costs. Students should coordinate their travel with the ACU IP Office and ACU's travel logistics partners.

## HEALTH CARE RESOURCES ABROAD

International Programs encourages all students to participate in its study abroad opportunities. However, students are urged to consider the physical demands and mental and emotional stressors that will likely be encountered during their trip. Health care resources abroad are not the same as in the United States and students should consult with family, physical health and mental health providers, IP staff, and other ACU support offices (i.e., SOAR, etc.) to establish whether or not a study abroad opportunity is viable before they commit to their program. Students should understand that if they exhibit behaviors (including, but not limited to, eating disorder behaviors, self-injury, or substance abuse) which causes a safety concern for them or for others, or a disruption to the academic, residential, or travel experience of the program, this may be cause for an immediate return home at their own expense. The university may require that the student have a friend or family member accompany them as an escort during the return trip at the expense of the student. The Medical and Mental Health Withdrawals and Emergencies Policies in the ACU Student Handbook outlines procedures regarding interim medical suspensions, voluntary and involuntary

withdrawals, and clearance to return. The costs of healthcare, hospitalizations, and counseling are the responsibility of the student.

ACU has mental health staff available through our health plan for a limited number of sessions at no charge to the student. Students can view information regarding [ACU's local counseling partners](#) and establish appointments ahead of or during their time abroad.

## ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations approved through the Alpha Scholars Office are applicable to academic programs and events hosted by International Programs. Students who are already registered with Alpha should follow usual processes for activating accommodations each semester (i.e. complete a Semester Request). New requests for accommodations, including dietary, housing, and academic, must be made to Alpha at least 90 days prior to the beginning of the program. Dietary requests or restrictions not based on a disability may be possible, but are not guaranteed. Not all accommodations can be met abroad and disability infrastructure standards are not the same as in the United States. For instance, ACU is unable to accommodate emotional support animals at our international locations, and we have very limited ability to accommodate housing, meal, and learning needs during our educational field and international study trips and in our faculty-led summer programs. Therefore, students should obtain information from Alpha and International Programs before committing to any International Program.

Facilities abroad are not subject to the same accessibility standards as those applicable to the Abilene campus. As a result, not all accommodations available at the Abilene campus are available at our international locations. Students with questions or concerns regarding accommodations abroad should contact Alpha at (325) 674-2667 and [ACU International Programs](#) prior to applying for an international program to understand what accommodation requests are possible. You may visit their website for more information here: <https://acu.edu/about/uap/overview/>.

*\*International Programs policies are subject to change. Substantive changes will be announced to students and Faculty-in-Residence. June 2025.*