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COMMUNICATING WITH UWEC

UWEC EMAIL

In your Statement of Participation, you agreed to check your UWEC email account at least weekly.

- Most study abroad communication will be sent via UWEC email, and a response is often required.
- In the event of an emergency in your host country, the CIE will email you to confirm your safety. Please respond as soon as you have access.

You may forward your UWEC email to a different email, if necessary. For help forwarding your UWEC email account, check the LTS Help Desk website.

Reset your UWEC email password before going abroad. If your password expires or you forget your password while you are abroad, you will need your PIN or the last four-digits of your social security number to reset your password. PINs cannot be given out over the phone or via email.

OKTA VERIFY

You need Okta Verify software to access your UWEC email, a BlugoldsAbroad account and Blugold CampS while abroad. Install the Okta Verify Mobile app on your smartphone. This app can be accessed anywhere in the world, regardless of whether you have access to Wi-Fi or cell phone service and will give you a one-time use passcode to access your email.

To access the passcode once you have installed the app:

1) Open the Okta Verify Mobile app.
2) The passcode for your UWEC account should appear automatically on the app home screen.
3) Type the six-digit passcode into the Okta Verify portal.

If you do not have a smartphone, request a security token that resembles a key fob. 
Request a token here.

More information about Okta Verify is here.

Any questions about Okta Verify, access, or app installation should be directed to the LTS Help Desk at helpdesk@uwec.edu, Vicki Lord Larson Hall 1106, or via phone: (715) 836-5711.

CIE COMMUNICATION WITH HOST SITE

As noted in your Study Abroad Application Agreement, study abroad staff may share information from your study abroad application materials with staff at your host site. Different countries have different regulations about sharing information.

WHOM TO CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU GO

Contact your UWEC Study Abroad Manager unless you have a question arising from an email sent directly to you from your host university/organization.

If you get an email from your host site, read it carefully. They may be informing you of a new procedure you need to follow, or they may be asking you to return a new form or send them additional information.

If you have questions, reply to the email, and copy your UWEC Study Abroad Manager. Universities abroad consider students to be adults and often do not copy the UWEC study abroad staff on communication to you. Unless you copy us on your response, we will not know what information you received or what questions you have about it.

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WHILE ABROAD

If the question **has to do with the host site**, such as housing, getting into classes, medical care, field trips, etc., **contact the on-site program liaison**.

If the **question has to do with UWEC/UWEC regulations**, or if you still have questions or concerns after you have contacted the appropriate person on-site, **contact your UWEC Study Abroad Manager**.

If an emergency occurs, the CIE will contact you via email and expect a response in 24 hours.

UPON RETURN

Contact your UWEC Study Abroad Manager, *unless* you have a question arising from an email sent directly to you from your host university/organization. In that case, reply to the sender, but copy your UWEC Study Abroad Manager as well.

**Study Abroad Evaluation:** You will receive an evaluation at the end of your program. Please respond and help us improve the experience for future students.

EMAIL ETIQUETTE

Email is an effective tool for questions about your study abroad program. However, **email is viewed differently in different cultures**.

EMAIL FORMAT

You are using **email as a means of formal communication**. It may be the first impression staff members here and abroad have of you. When texting or messaging, communication is often informal and includes slang or shortened words. **This is not appropriate in intercultural email communication**. Be sure to:

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Use a specific subject line. For example: “Study Abroad Cost Question”
Use a greeting for each new email topic. (If you exchange several emails on the
same topic, it is like carrying on a conversation. A greeting is not needed each time.)
Use capitalization and punctuation as you do in formal writing.

RESPONSE TIME

In the U.S., people tend to respond to email within a day or two. Some people even
check and respond to work emails in the evenings or on weekends. This is not the
case in most other countries. Business emails will be attended to during business
hours, and a response time of a full business week is not unusual. When you email
a question to a UWEC study abroad staff member, we may need to check with a
colleague abroad before giving you an answer. It may take multiple weeks to receive a
response.

EMAIL TONE

Intercultural communication can be frustrating. People start with different assumptions
or understand common terminology differently. Misinterpretations can happen easily
even in neutral emails, as there is no nonverbal expression. It is important to be sure
that you are not “angry” in an intercultural email.

Here are some questions to ask yourself:

• Would I say this to the person’s face?
• What impression is the receiver going to form of me?
• How would I feel if I received this email?

If you are uncomfortable with any of your responses, take a few deep breaths and try a
different approach. Your goal is clear and open communication. Venting may feel
good, but the result may alienate someone who could be a good resource before,
during or after your time abroad.
STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK: COMMUNICATION & CONTACTS
CALLING, TEXTING, AND OTHER COMMUNICATION

Additional suggestions specific to your host site are in your UWEC program guide or USAC Housing Guide.

BRINGING A PHONE

If you have a cell phone, check with your provider about a temporary international plan until you have time to figure out what plan may work best for you at your host site. This will also give you cell phone access while traveling, in case you are delayed and need to notify the host site, or to call your parents to let them know you have arrived safely.

Questions to ask your cell phone provider:

• Will my phone work in my host country?
• Does it make sense to buy international voice, text, and/or data?
• How do I turn off my data (or whatever else you will not use) to avoid charges?
• When and for what will I be charged? What additional fees should I expect?
• Would a “disposable” or pay-as-you-go phone make more sense?
• Can you unlock my phone, so I can use it abroad?
• Can I remove my U.S. SIM card with no penalty?
• Does my phone use a physical or virtual SIM card?
• Does my warranty travel with my phone, my phone number, or my SIM card?

Calls or Texts? With many phone plans and providers, it is cheaper to text than to call internationally. Check with your provider to find out what calls and texts will cost you from your program site.

PRE-PAID PHONES

Some students choose to buy a pre-paid cell phone while abroad, rather than bringing a cell phone. “Pay-as-you-go” phones are an inexpensive option. Such plans allow you to
communicate with other students in the program, local friends and roommates.

Providers and plans will differ with each program site.

PURCHASING A SIM CARD ABROAD

If you decide to purchase a SIM card abroad rather than use a pre-paid phone or purchase an international plan through your current provider, we suggest doing the following:

- Before you leave:
  - Confirm if your SIM card is physical or virtual with your current phone provider.
  - Ask your current phone provider to unlock your phone to allow it to change SIM cards.
  - Do some research into your host country to determine what phone plans and providers are available. This may be found through a simple Google search, talking with study abroad interns and study abroad alumni, travel blogs or websites, travel books, etc.
  - Some countries and providers may allow you to order or purchase a SIM card and plan while in the U.S., allowing you to have access to talk, text, and data continuously between leaving the U.S. and arriving in your host country.

- When selecting a provider and a plan, consider the following:
  - Does the plan offer talk, text, data? How much?
  - Is it a contracted plan? Monthly? Yearly?
  - What are the international call rates in case you want to call home?
  - Does it offer talk, text, and/or data coverage in neighboring countries, in case you want to travel? Is there an additional cost, or is it free? Free coverage across multiple countries may be easier to find in, say, the European Union than in Japan, Chile, or Australia.
If it is not available, be sure to plan how you will use these services before committing to personal travel in other countries.

**OTHER OPTIONS**

**Communication apps:** WhatsApp, Google Voice, Viber, Text+, and Skype are apps that you can download free to a handheld device, tablet or computer. Depending on the app, you will get free international texts and/or video or voice calls, using Wi-Fi.

**Zoom:** All UWEC students have access to Zoom using their uwec.edu email address for login. Use Zoom for voice or video calls.

**FaceTime:** FaceTime is an iPhone tool that allows video or voice calls to other Apple users. You can use FaceTime via your data package or where Wi-Fi is available.

**Blogging:** There are many different blog generators that you can use including blogger.com, wordpress.com, and weebly.com.

**COURTEOUS COMMUNICATION IN YOUR RESIDENCE ABROAD**

If using other communication apps in your room, use headphones, close the door to your room, and speak softly. If you are living with a host family, end the conversation immediately if it is time for a meal.

**DEVELOP A COMMUNICATION PLAN**

Friends and family want to hear about your adventures abroad, and social media makes keeping in touch easy. Having a clear communication plan will make life easier for everyone.
• **Let loved ones know that they may not hear from you every day.** While it is important to keep in touch, it is equally important to live in the moment. Setting clear expectations for communication frequency can reduce stress on both sides.

• **Have an emergency communication plan.** See the “Emergency Protocol” information in the Safety Abroad section of this Handbook for details.

• **Think before you post, tweet, or snap.** Ask yourself what your friends and family on the other side of the world will think of that image or video, particularly if they do not understand the context.

• **Your online persona may follow you forever.** Employers are increasingly looking to social media to get the “real story” about job applicants. That “funny” post of today may affect job chances tomorrow.

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**USEFUL NAMES & ADDRESSES**

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<th>Center for International Education</th>
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<td>3 Schofield Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>studyabroad.apps.uwec.edu</td>
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</table>

**Jacqueline Chambers, Study Abroad Manager:** chamberj@uwec.edu  
Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Sweden

**Anna Dresnack, Study Abroad Manager:** dresnaah@uwec.edu  
Ireland, United Kingdom (England & Scotland), France, China, India, Japan, South Korea, Thailand

**Mikaela Reid, Study Abroad Manager:** reidm@uwec.edu  
Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Uruguay, Spain, Portugal, Israel, South Africa,  
API Internships, USAC Virtual Internships

**Other UWEC Contacts**

**Blugold Central**  
Vicki Lord Larson Hall 1108 | 715-836-3000 | blugoldcentral@uwec.edu  
General questions about your student account, financial aid, registration, etc.

**Transfer Credit Wizard**  
For questions about how classes you are taking abroad will transfer back to UWEC, you can consult the Transfer Credit Wizard.

**Counseling Services**  
Vicki Lord Larson Hall 2122 | 715-836-5521
**UWEC After Hours Numbers**

In an after-hours **emergency**, you can call one of these numbers and the University Police will contact a CIE staff member.

(715) 839-4972 or (715) 577-9045

Leave a message if there is no answer; someone will be in touch shortly.

When you are abroad, calling the emergency contact on-site will be the fastest way to get help, and they also know the local resources and processes to follow. You will receive an emergency contact card for your site prior to departure.

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**CISI Insurance**

www.culturalinsurance.com

Claim questions: claimhelp@mycisi.com

1-203-399-5130

24 Hr. Assistance Access Numbers from Anywhere Abroad, call collect:

1-443-470-3043

From within the US, call toll free:

1-855-951-2326

Medical Emergency Email: medassist-usa@axa-assistance.us