Study Abroad

USAC CHINA: CHENGDU
2020

Program Guide
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Congratulations on being accepted to the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (UWEC) study abroad program in Chengdu, China, offered through the University Studies Abroad Consortium (USAC). Living and studying in a new culture is both an exciting and a challenging experience. Past participants of study abroad report that the many advantages of international study include:

- Gaining new perspectives on a chosen academic field
- Increasing understanding of different cultures
- Enhancing personal development
- Developing different perspectives on U.S. culture
- Gaining self-confidence and independence
- Learning skills for the future international job market

It is up to you to determine how you can best benefit from these possible advantages. This is your experience!

Use this program-specific guide with the more general resources in your BlugoldsAbroad account. While this guide contains the information available at the time of publication, it is impossible for any single resource to answer all of your questions. Your peer advisor will email information throughout the semester, and we encourage you to do your own research, also, using the web resources listed towards the end of this guide, as well as others that you find. Contact the Center for International Education (CIE) staff or your peer advisor with your specific questions.

Questions only you can answer include:
1) What are YOUR goals for this experience? Advancement in a future profession, desire to expand personal and academic horizons, need for a change, and wish to challenge yourself in a new environment?

2) How can you best prepare to meet your goals within the context of this program? For example, if one of your goals is truly being immersed in Chinese culture, yet you are going with a group of UW-Eau Claire students, how can you ensure that you do not spend too much time with other Americans?

The information in this guide was current at the time of publication, though changes may occur at any time.
**ACADEMICS**

Additional information on topics such as maintaining program eligibility, registration at UWEC, class attendance, course equivalencies, grades, transcripts and service learning is in the Academics section of your Study Abroad Handbook.

**Pre-departure Planning**

Please see the UWEC China academics page for details on how to plan your courses in China.

As part of the USAC admissions process, you completed a preliminary course registration, indicating your course and tour selections, along with two alternative courses in case any courses become unavailable. You can see the form, Course and Tour Registration Form, in your USAC Gateway account. Your courses and/or level of language may change once you arrive at your host university.

**Credits and Course Load**

**Summer**

You can enroll in Session I; Session II, or both Sessions.

- Session I: 3-6 credits
- Session II: 3-5 credits (if taking Intensive Chinese Language as one of your courses, you can enroll in 6 credits)
- Both sessions, you will earn 6-12 credits.

Students are required to take one, three-credit course each session.

Introduction to Chinese Language (1 credit) is required if you aren’t taking an intensive Chinese language course.

To receive summer financial aid, you must take at least six credits.

**Semester**

You are required to take a minimum of 12 credits for the semester and may take a maximum of 18 credits.

**For all terms:**

- The credits you earn abroad are considered UWEC resident credits.
- The classes you take abroad will count towards the total credits needed for graduation.
- Dropping below full-time status may result in loss of financial aid and/or insurance coverage and must be approved in advance by the CIE and USAC.

**Chinese Language Studies**

If you would like to take an intensive language course you should try to select the level that you are at. Once at the program site, you will finalize your class schedule with the Resident Director and have a few days to make changes. If for some reason you want to attend a different language class, you will have to take a placement test to make certain that you can move to the next level. After that, a language teacher will check it and give their approval.

All Chinese language courses will be taught in Chinese, with English used when necessary to explain concepts.

Language students can also select additional Chinese culture and studies courses to fill their schedule.

**Chinese Culture Studies**

Students who decide NOT to take the Chinese language tracks will need to enroll in Introduction to Chinese Language and fill their schedule with other elective courses that are intended to familiarize you with the local region and culture. To see tentative course offerings, go to: https://usac.edu/study-abroad-
Registration in Chengdu
Once you arrive in Chengdu, you will take a placement test and your registration is adjusted accordingly, if you’re planning to do the intensive language track. You won’t have multiple time slots to choose from, like you usually do in the states so you may need to adjust your courses. You need to be flexible and have backups in mind. There is a drop-add period and withdrawal deadline set by the USAC resident director. You will receive these dates upon arrival.

Add/Drop Courses
There is a drop-add period for each term, set by the USAC resident director. You will receive these dates from the USAC Office in Chengdu.

Withdrawing from USAC Courses
Your USAC resident director will establish a course withdrawal deadline. If you must drop a course after the drop deadline, but before the withdrawal deadline, a grade of “W” will be reported on your USAC grade report. If you stop attending a class without officially withdrawing from it, the grade will be reported as an “F.”

Class/Activity Attendance
USAC generally allows students one excused absence. Each tardy is considered one half of an absence. If you fail to attend class, this will affect your grade in the course. All exams must be taken as scheduled.

Grades
Courses in the USAC program are graded on the U.S. A-F grading scale. The grades reported on your USAC grade report are the same grades that will appear on your UWEC transcript.

Note: UWEC students abroad are not allowed to take classes pass/fail. USAC grades are figured into your UWEC GPA and posted to your UWEC transcript. No exceptions will be made.

USAC Grade Report/UWEC Transcript
Please see the Academics section of the Study Abroad Handbook for important information if you are graduating, transferring or applying for a competitive major such as Nursing or Education at the end of your term abroad.

At the end of the program, USAC prepares a grade report, which must be sent to UWEC. If you have any outstanding financial charges, your transcript will be withheld until payment is made.

If you are asked to complete a transcript release form by USAC, have the transcript sent to the Center for International Education (see Contacts page for full address). UWEC cannot post grades that were first sent to a student.

USAC will also update your grades on your Gateway account for you to review. Courses, credits, and grades are incorporated into your UWEC transcript.

Summer: Grade reports are not available until a few weeks after the summer program ends.

Semester: Grade reports are not available until a few months after the program ends.

For all terms: Due to this delay, you will initially receive a grade report with “NR” (not reported) for all courses. This will be changed once your grade report arrives.
The Academic System
In Chengdu, there is a greater emphasis on individual study. You will be expected to plan and carry out your own work. Courses are often lecture-based, so they may not be as interactive as you are used to. Chinese professors may not state the course structure and expectations, so the responsibility will fall on you, the student, to keep up with assignments and due dates.

Chinese professors are also more formal than what you may be used to, and it is expected that you will behave in a proper and respectful manner with professors. Also remember that your professors come from a different cultural and linguistic background, so their perspectives and teaching styles may be influenced by these two elements. If you have any concerns while abroad, do not hesitate to contact your Resident Director.

Your classmates will be other USAC or international students. Local students are already quite fluent in Chinese and typically their English is not proficient enough to join you in courses taught in English. However, there will be many opportunities to interact with local students.

MONEY MATTERS
UWEC information about making payments, when they are due, withdrawal and refund deadlines, financial aid, general scholarships, budgeting and ways to bring money abroad is in the Money Matters section of your Study Abroad Handbook.

Cost Estimate
You can find the most current cost estimate for your program, in easily printable format, on the CIE Chengdu brochure page. Be sure you are looking at the correct term. The cost estimate includes what you pay to UWEC, what you pay to USAC, and what you pay directly to other vendors.

USAC Payments & Refund Policy
For questions about paying your USAC fees, please contact the USAC accounting person listed in your Gateway account. You can pay with credit card, check, or money order.

In addition to the UWEC refund policy outlined in the "Money Matters" section of the Study Abroad Handbook, USAC has its own financial policies related to payment, cancellations, and changes. Information about the withdrawal deadlines and penalties are in the USAC Program Agreement and USAC Financial Agreement in your Gateway account.

Currency Exchange
The currency of China is the Renminbi, also known as the yuan. It is abbreviated as either CNY or RMB and means "People’s Currency." You can find examples of bills and coins at: http://www.travelchinaguide.com/essential/money-matter.htm

You can find current exchange rates at http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/.

Cost of Living
For an idea of what everyday costs you may encounter, check out this website: https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/in/Chengdu

USAC Scholarships
USAC Scholarships: USAC offers a variety of scholarships. For information, visit USAC’s Scholarship website. You will see optional scholarship applications on your USAC Gateway account when they open. You can apply for all scholarships you are eligible for and can be awarded more than one scholarship.
Scholarships for UWEC students on USAC Programs: USAC also offers an Affiliate Scholarship just for UWEC students on a USAC program. You will be considered for this scholarship when you complete the UWEC Study Abroad Foundation Scholarship application. The number of awards varies by term. Amounts vary between $200 - $500.

**Freeman-Asia Scholarship**
This scholarship is supported by the Freeman Foundation and the Institute of International Education. Students studying for a semester can receive up to $5,000 and those studying for an academic year can receive up to $7,000.

To apply, students need to be a U.S. citizen, demonstrate financial need, be accepted to a program based in Asia and spend at least 8 weeks in one country (China is included (summer students need to be doing both sessions)), have a GPA of at least 2.8, have at least one semester left at UWEC after their study abroad program and have little to no experience in the country they plan to study in.

To learn more and to see when the application opens:

**Eligibility:**
https://www.iie.org/Programs/Freeman-ASIA/Eligibility

**Deadlines:**
https://www.iie.org/Programs/Freeman-ASIA/Apply

**Credit Cards**
In addition to the information on credit cards in your Study Abroad Handbook, you should be aware that **credit cards are slowly becoming more accepted in China.** You should expect to use cash in most transactions. Only major stores, tourist hotels, and travel agencies are likely to accept cards. Where they are accepted, Visa and MasterCard are the most commonly accepted. Most credit cards charge a flat or percentage fee for purchases in foreign currency. Prior to departure, notify your credit card company where you will be travelling.

**Cashless Society**
With technology on the rise in China, you may hear people talk about Alipay or WeChat Pay. Both allow you to link your credit card to an app and pay with your phone at businesses/restaurants. This type of paying is becoming increasingly popular in China. However, to use, you need to have a Chinese bank account, which you most likely will not have. While this is a fun, convenient new technology, currently, it is harder, for a foreigner who is visiting for a short time, to enjoy. [Here is one article](#) that explains it in more detail, so you are in the know if you hear local students talking about it.

**Cash**
With cash, it is recommended that you have small bills of CNY as some places might not be able to make change for large bills. You will most likely be making most of your payments in cash, as credit cards aren’t as popular, especially now that they have jumped right to mobile phone apps making purchases.

**Banks/ATMs**
Surrounding the university, you will find the Bank of China, Agriculture Bank of China, and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China. These banks can conduct withdrawals, deposits, and exchanges between CNY and foreign currencies (traveler’s checks included). It is not recommended that you open a bank account in China.

There are several ATMs very close to campus, which can also be used to withdraw CNY.
Health & Safety

General information on these issues, as well as information on CISI insurance, is included in the Health & Insurance and Safety Abroad sections of your Study Abroad Handbook.

Centers for Disease Control

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has vaccination suggestions, how to stay healthy when abroad, and health information specific to China, etc. You can review the CDC site for China.

Due to increasing measles and mumps cases worldwide, we strongly encourage all students to check their vaccine history to see if they have had the MMR vaccine.

Medical/Mental Health Facilities in Chengdu

If you become sick or injured, contact the Resident Director and/or on-site USAC staff immediately. They can provide assistance in locating the appropriate medical facility for your needs. They will also assist in taking you to the clinic and helping you understand the medical staff, if English is not a language the medical staff speak.

There are many health facilities near campus, so do not hesitate to contact the Resident Director for assistance.

In the past, the CISI insurance company has been able to identify English speaking therapists in Chengdu. If you are interested in seeing a therapist, it is recommended that you contact your study abroad coordinator, Jenna (kroschjm@uwec.edu). If you are abroad when you decide this, you can also reach out to the resident director for assistance.

Health Insurance in China

As part of your program fees to USAC you receive health insurance. Your USAC health insurance cards will be handed out at the on-site orientation. This insurance is in addition to the CISI insurance that you have through the UW system policy. You are not able to opt out of either one, both are required as they have different levels of coverage.

Services for Students with Disabilities

If you will need any disability accommodations when abroad, it is important to complete your USAC Disability and Health Accommodation Request Form on your USAC Gateway account. While USAC cannot guarantee services, they will do their best to accommodate your needs. When you complete that form, USAC will be in contact with you regarding services they can/cannot provide.

It is also important to look at the level of accessibility in China in general. To find more information on the topic, please see the “Laws and Special Circumstances” tab on the US Department of State China site.

Safety in China

For important information on crime, drug penalties and other topics, please see the Safety & Security section of the U.S. State Department Country Information Sheet.

Specific safety in and around China will be discussed during orientation in Eau Claire and at your on-site orientation in Chengdu.

Pick-Pocketing: Pick-pocketing is common on public transportation and at popular tourist sites throughout China. To reduce the risk, do not have your phone or other valuables out in public spaces. An iPhone is a target for pick-pocketers. If you carry a purse, make sure it is across the body and has zippers. Keep your
wallet in a front pocket, not a back pocket. Only carry small amounts of cash on you to minimize loss. Using a money belt under your clothing is another way to prevent valuables from being stolen.

**Adventure Sports:** Some tour operators take risks, and government regulation and oversight of firms that organize sporting activities may not always adhere to international standards and best practices.
- Use caution and common sense if engaging in ALL adventure sports, and remember that they are NOT covered by CISI insurance, such as bungee jumping, sky diving, hiking, rappelling, climbing, whitewater rafting, kayaking, etc.
- Never participate in adventure sports alone. Always carry identification and let others know where you are at all times.
- When hiking, rappelling, or climbing, carry a first aid kit and know the location of the nearest rescue center.
- Observe all local or park regulations and exercise caution in unfamiliar surroundings.

**Earthquakes:** China does experience earthquakes from time to time. For more information on how to stay safe during an earthquake, see here: [https://www.ready.gov/earthquakes](https://www.ready.gov/earthquakes)

**Social Media:** Per the US State Department: “Social media accounts are widely monitored in China. Local authorities may use information they deem critical or controversial or that might involve illegal activity against both the poster of the material and the host of the social media forum under Chinese law. Individuals have also been held responsible for the content that others place within social media spaces they control, such as the comments section under a post or within a group chat that an individual controls.”

**Air Quality**

Air pollution has been an increasing concern for many cities in China. The quality of air can vary greatly between cities or between urban and rural areas. U.S. citizens traveling to China should consult with their doctor prior to departure. If you have had respiratory issues in the past, please consult with your doctor. The U.S. Department of State has also suggested wearing a disposable respirator of N95 certification or higher on days when the air pollution reaches hazardous levels. You will notice many local students wearing masks, so it is not out of the norm to wear one daily. To keep track of the air pollution levels in Chengdu, you can follow the U.S. Consulate’s webpage: [http://www.stateair.net/web/post/1/2.html](http://www.stateair.net/web/post/1/2.html)

Most students will notice the air pollution at some point in their term abroad. You may notice that it is often hazy or foggy, when really that is air pollution. You might also develop an irritated throat and cough soon after arrival. If you have complications, it is recommended that you wear a mask, and do not hesitate to contact the Resident Director to see if medical attention is necessary.

**Food**

Generally, food in China is okay to consume. Be cautious when ordering food from a street vendor and avoid it if it looks like it has been sitting out all day or if the vendor's cart is dirty. (The knives used might be dirty as well.) Fruits that cannot be peeled, fruit juices diluted with water, raw vegetables, and salads that have not been washed with disinfected water should be avoided.

You will notice that numbing and spicy seasoning are common in Sichuan cuisine; however, there will be milder food to choose from as well.
**Travel to North Korea**
The U.S. State Department has issued a level 4 travel advisory for North Korea (DPRK) and advises U.S. citizens to not travel to this country.

According the travel advisory, "U.S. passports are not valid for travel to, in or through North Korea. Do not travel to North Korea due to the serious risk of arrest and long-term detention of U.S. nationals.” Students should not travel to North Korea, even if on an approved travel company.

More information can be found on the State Department’s website.

**Emergency Contacts**
General emergency procedures are described in the Study Abroad Handbook, and the USAC staff is available if difficulties arise. You will receive an emergency contact card with USAC staff information at the Orientation 2; be sure to keep it in your wallet at all times. The information is also on the Contact Names & Addresses page of this guide.

**911 Equivalent in China**
If you are in an emergency in China, you will need to know how to reach the local police, fire, or ambulance services. The local equivalent to the 911 emergency line in China is 110 for police; 122 for traffic accident; 120 for ambulance; and 119 for fire.

Save these numbers in your cell phone in case you need to use them quickly.

The U.S. State Department also provides a list of 911 numbers abroad. Please note that in some countries there are different numbers for fire, police, and ambulance. Plan ahead and research numbers before you go.

**REQUIRED DOCUMENTS**
Passport information is included in the Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook.

If you are not a U.S. citizen, please contact the CIE for more information about the following topics.

**Visa**
A visa is official permission to temporarily reside in another country and is granted by the government of that country. All U.S. citizens must obtain a visa prior to studying in China.

Although the CIE and USAC will provide information, it is your responsibility to keep up-to-date about student visa requirements for China, and to apply for and receive a visa from a Chinese consulate or embassy in a timely manner. Please read the “Visa” section of your Study Abroad Handbook for more information about what you should do to keep up-to-date on visa requirements.

**Important Info for Dual Nationals**
China does not recognize dual citizens and considers U.S.-born children of Chinese nationals to be Chinese citizens. See the State Department Travel Information for more information.

**Visas for Travel to Other Countries**
If you plan to travel outside of China, while abroad, you should verify visa requirements for each country you will visit by contacting the nearest consulate for that country, or your travel agency.
**Packing Tips**

There is general packing information in the Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook, you will get a suggested packing list at Orientation 2, and USAC will post a packing list to your Gateway account. In addition, you should know the following:

**Weather**

**Winter:** is from November to March; it is long and cold. Make sure to pack layers of winter clothing! In winter, Chengdu has short days and is dark at 5pm. The advantage to going to sites in winter is that there are fewer tourists and you can get great photos.

**Spring:** is from March to May. A warmer spring usually starts in early April and ends early May. Rain is very common in the spring, so keep an umbrella handy. When it becomes warmer out, the heat is turned off for the season. There may be times where it still gets cold at night, so be sure to have layers.

**Summer:** is from May to September. Chengdu gets very humid, and air conditioning is not found in every building. Pack light clothing for the summer months and always be prepared for rain. But still dress modestly (no short shorts, tight clothing, halter tops, etc.).

**Autumn:** is from September to November and tends to have mild temperatures and a lot of sun.

**Clothing**

Take clothing that is machine washable and does not wrinkle easily. Choose a color scheme and bring mix-and-match clothing. Dark colors show dirt less quickly when you travel.

Good walking shoes and/or hiking shoes are recommended, along with a pair of dress shoes. Flip flops for the showers might also be a good idea, especially if you intend on traveling to hostels. Note that sweatshirts, sweatpants and tennis shoes are usually reserved for athletic activities rather than worn as everyday items.

Clothing in Chengdu can be expensive, so past students have suggested bringing all your clothes and not buying them when you arrive. If you do need to purchase clothing or shoes, when abroad, it may be hard to find your size as most Chinese clothing/shoe stores have stock geared towards the local population, which tends to be smaller than most Americans.

**Feminine Products**

Feminine hygiene products and deodorant/antiperspirant are available in Chengdu but are relatively expensive because they are imported. Past female students have recommended that women who prefer tampons bring enough to last the entire duration of the program.

**Converters & Adapters**

If you plan to bring a hair dryer, razor or other appliance from the US, you will need to **buy both a voltage converter and a plug adapter**. Another option, which is recommended, is to buy the appliances after you arrive (especially hair dryers, curling irons, etc.).

If you plan to bring your laptop abroad, check the power cord to see acceptable voltage inputs and outputs. If it includes 220 volts, you will only need to use a plug adapter, not a voltage converter.

If you have several US appliances you plan to use abroad, consider bringing a power strip, also. You will still need to have a voltage converter in order to plug it into the wall.

**Do Not Bring**

Do not bring expensive cell phones, jewelry, or other luxury items that can be lost or stolen. If you do decide to bring items that are expensive to replace, you may want to consider personal property insurance for your time in China.
GETTING TO CHINA

There is information on student-oriented travel agencies, instructions for booking a flight, and other travel information in the Travel Resources section of the Study Abroad Handbook.

USAC will also post a detailed “Flight Guide” in the 5-6 Months Before Program Start section of your Gateway account.

Travel Arrangements

It is your responsibility to make and pay for travel arrangements to China. Airline tickets are not included in your USAC program fees.

An optional group flight is available for this program through a travel agency recommended by USAC. If you choose not to book the group flight, you will need to book your own flight and arrive prior to the mandatory orientation. There is a $200 fee for students who miss orientation! See the USAC Flight Guide (on your USAC Gateway account) for details on both options.

In both cases, pay attention to the group flight dates as they may not directly align with the program calendar. Sometimes there is an optional field trip before or after the program, and the group flight may include this fieldtrip.

If the group return flight leaves after the program end date, and you do not request a change to leave when the program ends, you will be responsible for finding your own housing until the departure date.

USAC Group Flight

Benefits to booking with the optional group flight:

- Flexible payment plan (pay a deposit to hold your seat, then pay the balance 2 weeks prior to departure)
- Select the group return date or select your own date for the same price
- Frosch Student Travel can help book connecting flights to merge with the group flight departure cities.
- Airport pick-up in China (there is no USAC staff to chaperone the flight, but group flight participants will be met at the airport by USAC staff, unless you arrive late).

USAC will be in contact with you and information will be on your USAC Gateway account on how to sign up for the group flight.

Early Arrivals

USAC strongly discourages students from arriving early. If you decide to arrive early, you will need to find and pay for your own accommodations. You should not expect to have any assistance upon arrival and should be prepared to deal with any issues on your own.

Airport Pick-Up Service

Please fill out the Flight Form in your Gateway account after you have booked your flight.

Depending on several variables: if you are on the group flight, if there is an optional field trip prior to the beginning of the program, etc., you may be met at the airport in China. If not, you will get detailed instructions on how to get to your initial accommodations in the USAC Arrival Guide, that will be posted to your Gateway account about two months prior to departure.

Late Arrivals-Expected and Unexpected

If you do not arrive as scheduled for any reason, you will be responsible for arranging and paying for your transfer from the airport. Again, watch for detailed instructions in the USAC Arrival Guide.
Important reminder: Write down dorm or apartment address on a piece of paper, in case you need to give it to a cab driver on arrival.

Leaving Your Host City
Return airport transportation is not included in the USAC program cost. It is your responsibility to make arrangements to get to your airport of departure and to pay for the cost of whatever type of transportation you use. USAC staff aren’t obliged to take you to the airport.

SETTLING IN
Orientation
When you first arrive in Chengdu, you will have a mandatory orientation, with topics such as cultural differences, appropriate behavior, Chengdu in general, safety & emergency procedures, etc. This is also a great chance to get to know the USAC staff and other participants.

You will also take a Chinese language placement exam (if applicable) and receive your final course schedule during the on-site orientation.

On-Site Support
USAC provides a resident director and staff to assist students with the transition to Chengdu. They will also be coordinating various excursions and activities throughout the term. If any questions or concerns arise, reach out to the onsite staff! It could be anything from how to say something in Chinese to needing to go to the doctor. The USAC staff is there to assist you so please use them as a resource.

Getting Involved
There are numerous clubs on campus that USAC students can participate in (summer students: it can be harder to find active clubs).

You can also sign up for a language exchange partner. You will be paired with a native Chinese speaker who wishes to practice English and who is willing to help you learn Chinese.

There are many gyms in Chengdu with nice facilities. The fee is about $60-$80 per month. Some places offer a student discount.

There are many sport complexes (basketball courts, ping pong courts, etc.) on campus, which students can use for free.

During the summer months, you may not notice as many students on campus, but USAC tries to connect you with local students and will send you information during your time aboard.

HOUSING
See the USAC Housing Guide in your Gateway account for additional general information on housing, as well as cancellation policies.

Paying for Housing
ALL STUDENTS: A deposit (not included in program or housing fees) will need to be paid to USAC’s central office. Utilities are not included and will vary by students. Average is around 200-300 CNY/month.

Summer students: housing fees are included in the program fee.

Semester students: fees for housing will vary, depending on what you select. All housing fees are paid directly to USAC’s central office.

Shared Apartments
A shared apartment is good for students looking for a more independent lifestyle and are used to group living. Most apartments are co-ed. All apartments are different. Most are Western
style (sit down toilet) but that cannot be guaranteed.

**What's Provided?** Each apartment has typical furnishings like a bed, desk, bookshelf, wardrobe. There is a shared bathroom but if you want your own private bathroom, you need to pay extra. No linens are provided, unless past students left theirs behind. Some kitchen supplies will be available to use. There is air conditioning/heating but please note that it is NOT common for people in China to run their AC/heat at all times. You need to be conservative. You will have to pay for any utilities, including using heat/AC.

**Roommates:** 2-3 other USAC participants

**Meals:** There is no meal plan so students will cook their own meals in their kitchen or go purchase food from restaurants/markets.

**Laundry:** There will be access to a washer but no dryer. Dryers are not common in China, so students will air dry their clothes.

**Telephone/Internet:** There will be a TV with local channels only. Unlimited internet per apartment is around $18/month. Students will get more information about how to sign up for internet during orientation in Chengdu.

**Distance to class:** On-campus apartments have a 5-10-minute walk. Off campus apartments will have around a 25-minute walk or 10-minute bike or two bus stops.

**Placement:** You won’t learn your housing placement until you arrive in China. During the USAC application you will indicate your housing preferences. Housing is first come, first served, so you should complete that right away when it is posted to Gateway.

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**Residence Halls**

The residence halls have a western style toilet (sit down) and shower.

**What's Provided?** Residence hall rooms are single rooms with a private bathroom. There will be typical furnishings like a bed, desk, bookshelf, wardrobe, etc. No linens are provided unless past students have left some. There is a shared kitchen on each floor that comes with a shared fridge and some kitchen supplies.

There is a water dispenser in each room and students will pay for water delivery. Students will learn more about this during orientation in China.

**Roommates:** none

**Meals:** there is no meal plan but students can use the shared kitchen to cook meals. In addition, campus is surrounded by many small restaurants/markets.

**Laundry:** There is a washer on each floor but no dryer. Dryers are not common in China so students will need to airdry their clothes.

**Telephone/Internet:** Local TV channels are available. Internet is also available.

**Distance to class:** The residence hall is the same building that your courses are in!

**Placement:** You won’t learn your housing placement until you arrive in China. During the USAC application you will indicate your housing preferences. Housing is first come, first served, so you should complete that right away when it is posted to Gateway.
Air Conditioning & Heating in Chengdu
There is no central heating or air conditioning in this part of China. However, USAC arranged housing does have heating and air conditioning units that should be used sparingly as they consume a lot of electricity. The excessive use of electricity will be charged to you in addition to the housing fee. It is very important to turn off the heater/air conditioner while you are not in your housing. Students are also asked to dress appropriately for the season, even when indoors. You need to bring appropriate clothing for cold weather such as warm clothes, socks, and house slippers, as most Chinese buildings have tile or marble floors.

COMMUNICATION
Information on accessing/forwarding your UW-Eau Claire email address and on computer app-based phone services (SKYPE, What’s App, Facetime, etc) is in the Contacts & Communication section of your Study Abroad Handbook.

Time Difference
Chengdu is 13 or 14 hours ahead of Eau Claire (varies depending on daylight savings). For example, when it is 1:00 PM on a Thursday in Eau Claire, it is 3:00 AM on Friday in Chengdu. China has only one time zone for the entire country.

To see the current time in China visit: (find appropriate list); https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/china/chengdu

Email/Internet
Students who live in the apartments will have to pay for their Internet connection. Students who live in the residence halls will have access to campus Internet.
The Chinese government monitors the Internet extensively. As an international student, you are not immune to this, so be careful what you post, write, etc. Never post negative comments about the Chinese government. Familiar sites such as Facebook and Google may not be available to you, so be sure to inform your family and friends and change any email addresses you may use that are housed by Google. You should download Skype before you get to China, as the Chinese Skype is heavily monitored.

Changing your IP Address Before you Go
If you would still like access to sites such as Facebook and Google, you can change your computer’s IP address PRIOR to going abroad. This will allow your computer to still think it is in the U.S. thus granting you access. LTS Helpdesk can walk you through how to change your IP address or you can find instructions here: https://www.uwec.edu/kb/article/vpn-installation-and-use-globalprotect/

Telephone Information
From the U.S. to China: To call someone in China, you must first dial 011, which is the international dialing code. Next, you dial 86 (the country code for China), then 28 (the area code for Chengdu) and the rest of the number.

From China to U.S.: To call someone in the U.S., you will need to dial 00+1+city area code+phone number you wish to call. Depending on which China mobile company you use, there may be other numbers to include. Please inquire with the phone company.

Cell Phones
Some U.S. providers are able to unlock your cell phone so that you can use it while abroad. You need to check with your local provider to see whether or not this is an option for you.
It may be easiest to purchase a pay-as-you-go phone while in China. This will give you a local Chinese number and allow you to communicate with your new friends. Calling internationally may still be expensive.

Some students who have smart phones opt to bring those with but only use them for Internet access. Staying connected to WiFi allows students to use Skype, FaceTime and iChat.

It is recommended you download WeChat to your phone as that is most commonly used by local Chinese students.

**Snail-mail**

You will receive mail at the USAC office in your host city. This address will be provided to you in a USAC Update via your USAC Gateway account. International airmail takes 7-10 days to cross the ocean in either direction. Packages usually take at least two weeks and sending from China can take longer than receiving in China. Any packages that arrive to China are subject to being searched by Chinese customs officials.

**Communicating in Chinese**

Mandarin is the official language of China and the language you will experience the most. Many students are concerned that they will not be able to communicate while in China. To help with your transition to China, you will have to enroll in a Chinese language class, which will give you a nice overview of the language. You also have the chance to be paired with a local Chinese student with whom to practice.

Some common Mandarin phrases:
Hello = nihao
Goodbye = Zaijian
Excuse me = Laojia
Thank you = Xiexie

USAC will provide each student with a language booklet that will tell you how to say different addresses of common places, how to order in a restaurant, how to tell a taxi where to go, etc. These little phrasebooks will come in handy when doing many things around Chengdu. If you ever don’t know how to say something, you can ask your Resident Director for the proper pronunciation and/or have them write it in Chinese.

You may also want to purchase your own phrasebook before you go. You can show the Chinese phrase to someone in the event they do not understand what you are trying to ask.

**TRAVEL WHILE ABROAD**

See additional information in the Travel Resources section of your Study Abroad Handbook.

**Tours and Field Studies**

USAC organizes field trips each semester to familiarize students with their host region in China. These trips generally take place on weekends and are included in the program fees. The exact dates and sites may change at the discretion of the Resident Director.

**Optional Excursions**

USAC also plans optional tours and field studies at an additional cost. You can select these options on the Course & Tour Registration Form you filled out as part of your USAC application.

**Local Transportation**

Chengdu is a major travel hub in Western China. Bus, train, and plane services offer travel out of the city to other places in China and Southeast Asia.
The Chengdu Airport is situated outside Chengdu, about 20-30 minutes from USAC housing and can be accessed by taxi or bus. Flying is the most convenient way to travel around China since it is so large.

CULTURAL NOTES

Government
The Chinese Communist Party has been ruling since 1949. Power is concentrated in the Paramount Leader, Xi Jinping, who heads the three most important political and state offices. He is the General Secretary of the Communist Party, Chairman of the Central Military Commission, and the President of the People’s Republic of China. Although political power remains centralized in the Chinese Communist Party, China is undergoing economic and social changes.

Local Culture
There are 55 officially recognized ethnic groups in China, and all are represented at Southwest University for Nationalities. Han Chinese is the largest group in China.

Most social values derive from Confucianism or Taoism. Many Chinese believe in reincarnation or rebirth and the afterlife is just as important as real life. Many Chinese honor their loved ones who have died and entered the afterlife.

Chinese also have high respect for elders. Elders are looked to as having knowledge and should be respected at all times.

China tends to have a leisure culture, especially in Chengdu. A number of leisure games are popular within the Chinese culture and you will often find people enjoying these pastimes. Mah Jong is the most common game you will see being played, often accompanied with tea. Chengdu is known for its tea culture. Many teahouses (whether indoor or outdoor) are open year-round and it is very common to be asked to go to a teahouse and enjoy a cup of tea. Out of respect to others, it is common to pour tea for your guests first and pour your cup last.

Religion
China is a multi-religion country and has been since the ancient times. Many Chinese believe in Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Islam or Christianity. Buddhism is the most important religion in China.

One Child Policy
In 1979, the family planning policy, also known as the one child policy, was put in place to help alleviate social, economic, and environmental problems in China. Over the years, there has been some leniency in the policy, especially since 2013. The policy is most enforced in areas that are densely populated and urban, where families who have more than one child may incur penalties from the government. Rural families are allowed two children without incurring penalties. Families that have a father who is disabled are allowed to have two children as well. Some provinces make other exceptions to the policy. Non-Han ethnic groups also have different policies in that they are usually allowed two children if they live in urban areas and three to four children if they live in a rural area. In most areas, families are allowed to apply to have a second child if their first-born is a daughter. If one parent in an ‘only child’, then they are allowed to have two children. There are many ways that parents can qualify for exceptions to the law and recently more and more exceptions are being granted.

The implementation of this policy has helped China’s birth rate even out; however, there have also been negative consequences. Some parents may overindulge their only child, a phenomenon called “little emperors.” This may cause the child to have poor communication skills with peers and have more difficulties interacting with others (because they don’t have siblings to interact with). Also, parents who are
wealthy or hold higher official status have been found to be violating the one child policy without consequences. Finally, while sex-selected abortions and abandonment are illegal in China, they still occur and have caused a decrease in female babies.

**Gender Relations**

Traditional beliefs have always placed men ahead of women in the social hierarchy and the one child policy didn’t help this. This belief put a pressure on families to produce a boy so the family name would carry on. However, under Communism, women have made great strides in working and taking on greater roles in professional life.

**Police Registration**

All foreigners are required to register with the local police station within 24 hours of arrival in China. If your first night in China is spent in a hotel, the hotel will do this for you. If your first night is in USAC housing, the Resident Director will help you do this.

**Spitting**

Many Westerners are very off put by the spitting and loud phlegm raising efforts that Chinese people do. You will notice many men and women hawking up spit and spitting in public (both outdoors and indoors). Spitting and littering is normal but occasionally frowned upon. Always look where you are setting your personal belongings and never walk barefoot!

**Dining Etiquette**

Here are some tips from the Chinese Student Association at UW-Eau Claire on dining etiquette:
- If you are provided a cloth napkin, tuck a corner under your plate so that it hangs in your lap
- When taking a break, leave your chopsticks on the side of your plate or bowl or on the chopstick rests (if provided). NEVER stick them in your food
- Making slurping noises is okay when eating noodles or drinking soup
- Don’t spin, point, tap or play with your chopsticks
- Do not spear food that you cannot pick up with your chopsticks
- Don’t use your hands to handle food. Lift large pieces with your chopsticks and nibble
- Passing a piece of food to someone with your chopsticks, or receiving food by snatching it with your chopsticks is extremely taboo
- You can drink water and tea whenever you like, but alcohol should not be consumed alone. Drink only after a toast is given

**Texting Culture**

When you are texting with your local friends, it will be important to respond as soon as you see the message. If you don’t, they may take it personally and be offended that you didn’t respond right away. Local Chinese students are always connected to their phones so try to be as responsive as you can.

**Crowds**

You will have to get used to the amount of people. If you choose to travel or go out around the city, you will be exposed to many people. On public holidays, the masses of people will become readily apparent. Along with crowds, there is very little sense of personal space and waiting in a line is almost unheard of.

**Traffic**

With large amounts of people comes chaotic traffic. While China has traffic laws, many people do not adhere to them. Be careful when using the sidewalks as motorbikes often hop up on the sidewalks when they aren’t supposed to. Always look twice to make sure no one is coming and do not expect them to yield to you. Traffic accidents are very common in China, so be extra careful. See the consular information section on Safety for more information.
In urban areas, the roads are maintained; however, in rural areas, road conditions may vary depending on where you are. If you are susceptible to motion sickness, you may want to have the proper medication with you.

You are not allowed to drive in China and any students caught driving or using motorbikes will be released from the program.

**Toilet Expectations/Open Butt Pants**

While your accommodations will most likely (rare that they won’t, but not guaranteed in apartments) have a Western-style toilet (sit down), you may encounter squat toilets while in China. Most newer establishments offer sit down toilets and squat toilets, you just have to look at the sign on the door. **Always have tissues or toilet paper with you, as there is no paper provided in either kind of toilet.** You are strongly encouraged to Google “how to's” on how to use a squat toilet as there is an “art” to using one. If you travel to more rural areas of China, you can expect squat toilets to be your only option. You will notice that Chinese prefer using a squat toilet compared to a sit-down toilet.

Children are taught at a very young age to squat when they need to use the bathroom. You may notice many Chinese babies wearing open butt pants. These are used as a form of potty training and are exactly what they sound like – pants with an opening in the butt and no diaper underneath. Parents encourage their child to squat the instant they have to go potty. You may notice children going all over, city streets, stores, on the subway, etc. so be careful when you sit down somewhere! Diapers are becoming more and more popular; however, diapers are often considered to be for the upper class and damaging to the environment. There are mixed thoughts on whether or not open butt pants are good or bad for a child, but it is something you may encounter while in China.

**Tipping**

The thoughts on tipping are changing, so if you are uncertain, ask during your USAC orientation. It is common to tip travel guides, tour bus drivers, etc., but it is less common to tip servers.
CONTACT NAMES & ADDRESSES
GENERAL UW-EAU CLAIRE & CISI CONTACT INFORMATION IS IN YOUR STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK.

**USAC Chengdu**
Resident Director: Wentao Song
Foreign Affairs Office
Southwest University for Nationalities
Chengdu, Sichuan 610041
PR CHINA
Office Phone: 011-86-28-8552-4878
wenusac@usac.unr.edu
Assistant: Jiajing Zhu
chengdu@usac.unr.edu

**USAC-Reno Office**
University Studies Abroad Consortium
MS 0323 / University of Nevada, Reno
Reno, NV 89557-0323
Toll free: 1-866-404-USAC (8722)
Tel: 1-775-784-6569
Fax: 1-775-784-6010

Ronald Hemphill
China Coordinator
Email: Ronald.hemphill@usac.edu

Questions on billing/housing deposit:
Schyler Tune: schyler.tune@usac.edu

**UW-Eau Claire**
Center for International Education
Jenna Krosch
Study Abroad Coordinator
E-mail: kroschjm@uwec.edu

3 Schofield Hall
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
Eau Claire, WI 54702
Phone: (715) 836-4411
Fax: (715) 836-4948

**After Hours Emergency**
(715) 577-9045

Remember that in most cases, local contacts are best in local emergency situations.

If you have an after-hours emergency that can be helped on the U.S. side, please call University Police at the number above. Calls can be made to this number 24 hours a day. You may get an answering machine; however, an officer is alerted as soon as you have left your message. Be sure to give the officer the phone number you can be reached at, as well as what type of assistance you require.

**U.S. Consulate in Chengdu**
4 Lingshiguan Road
Chengdu, Sichuan PRC 610041
Phone: 011-86-28-8558-3992 (outside China)
028-8558-3992 (inside China)
010-8531-4000 (emergency)
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WHAT PAST PARTICIPANTS WISH THEY HAD KNOWN

- In the rainy season it rains – a lot! Bring an umbrella.
- Sign up for a language buddy right away! They become a great resource for seeing the city!
- Try the numbing spices in hot pot – it is a weird feeling!
- Practice chop sticks before you go! And bring a few forks to help get by if you struggle with chopsticks.
- As an Asian American student, many people would start speaking Mandarin with me because they assumed I knew Mandarin. When I couldn't respond, they would get very confused.

BIGGEST ADJUSTMENTS THEY HAD TO MAKE

- There were many times when people would ask to take pictures with me or hold their kids and take pictures with them. It was interesting.
- Bring toilet paper or tissues with you everywhere! Everywhere!
- The language barrier is real and it is hard.
- Order food with a group of students. It is common to order many plates and share with friends. This also makes it really cheap!
- Eating rice isn't as common as you'd expect. Our friends said that you order rice at the end of a meal if you aren't full (and it can offend your host if someone has you over for the meal).

SAFETY TIPS FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

- Travel in groups – it's easier to book hostels and provides comfort knowing you're with others you trust.
- Be strong & understand the culture is different.
- Pedestrians NEVER have the right of way. Drivers, especially motor bike drivers, are crazy!
- Don't walk alone at night and try to walk with someone during the day.
- People will stare and point. It may seem rude, but that is very common. Try not to let it get to you.

HOW THEY SUMMED IT UP:

- The USAC staff is great! They helped us learn phrases to help us order a pizza with cheese.
- It can be challenging to live in China but it was such an amazing experience. I didn’t realize how much I’d miss it until I came back.
- Great info for black students studying in Chengdu: https://blog.usac.edu/black-abroad-my-experience-in-chengdu-china/

Updated December 2019 jmk