

STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK: COMMUNICATION & CONTACTS

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COMMUNICATING WITH UWEC

UWEC EMAIL

In your Statement of Study Abroad 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 an emergency in your host country, the CIE will email you to confirm your safety. Please respond as soon as you have access.

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UWEC WEBMAIL

To receive official emails from UWEC while abroad (registration, billing, etc.), you **must be using your UWEC email address**. Instructions for forwarding your UWEC email account are on the [Helpdesk](#) website.

Re-set 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.

DUO SECURITY

You need Duo Security software to access your UWEC email, BlugoldsAbroad account and Blugold CampS while abroad. **Install the Duo Security Mobile app on your smartphone.** This app can be accessed anywhere in the world, regardless of **whether you have access to WiFi 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 Duo Security Mobile app
- 2) Navigate to the upper-left hand corner of your screen
- 3) Click the Key Icon or Down Arrow
- 4) Type the six digit passcode into the Duo app portal

If you do not have a smartphone, you can request a Duo security token, a small device that resembles a key fob. Request a token here:

<https://www.uwec.edu/kb/article/services-duo-overview/#duotokens>.

More information about Duo Security is here: <https://www.uwec.edu/kb/article/services-duo-overview/>

Questions about how to install the app, or any questions about Duo Security? contact the Helpdesk at helpdesk@uwec.edu, OL 1106, or via phone: (715) 836-5711.

CIE COMMUNICATION WITH HOST SITE

As noted in your Study Abroad Enrollment 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.

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WHOM TO CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS

BEFORE YOU GO

Contact your UWEC study abroad coordinator 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 coordinator. 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.

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 after you have contacted the appropriate person on-site, you still have questions or concerns, **contact your UWEC Study abroad coordinator.**

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

Study Abroad Check-Ins: While you are abroad, winterim & summer students will receive one, and semester students will receive two check-in messages from the CIE. Please respond so that we know how things are going and can address questions you have.

UPON RETURN

Contact your UWEC study abroad coordinator, 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 coordinator 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 very informal and includes slang or shortened words. **This is not appropriate in intercultural email communication.** Be sure to:

- 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 email 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.

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, and there is no nonverbal expression. **It is very important to be sure 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.

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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 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 on the program and local friends and roommates. Providers and plans will differ with each program site.

If your current phone is unlocked, you could opt for a pre-paid sim card. Even if you do not add minutes to it, you can receive calls and texts and will have a local phone number to give out.

OTHER OPTIONS

Communication apps: WhatsApp, Google Voice, Viber, Text+, are apps that you can download free to a handheld device and/or computer to make free international texts and/or calls over Wi-Fi.

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Skype: If you have a laptop or tablet, [Skype](#) is good for inexpensive international calling and can be downloaded free. To make a phone call, you need your device, a headset, and a microphone. If you call another computer with Skype, the call is free. If your computer has a camera, you can also video chat.

FaceTime: FaceTime is a popular 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.

Calling cards: Calling cards are another option if your site has a landline phone available for student use. There are many providers and rates, so some research may be necessary to find the best deal! When you buy calling cards, make sure to read the fine print. You want to make sure you are calling from “outside the U.S.” and “into the U.S.”

Blogging: There are many different blog generators that you can use including www.blogspot.com which works through a Gmail account.

COURTEOUS COMMUNICATION IN YOUR RESIDENCE ABROAD

If Skyping/using other communication apps in your room, use headphones, close the door to your room, 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. Agreeing upon expectations for communication 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

Center for International Education

3 Schofield Hall | 715-836-4411 | studyabroad@uwec.edu | uwec.ly/studyabroad

Jenna Krosch, Study Abroad Coordinator: kroschjm@uwec.edu

Australia, Brazil, China, Cuba, Ghana, India, Ireland, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Poland, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Thailand, Semester at Sea, United Kingdom (England & Scotland)

Cheryl Lochner-Wright, Study Abroad Coordinator: lochnecb@uwec.edu

Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Mexico, Peru, Spain

Storm Jacko, Study Abroad Advisor: jackosr@uwec.edu

Colleen Marchwick, DDirector

Other UWEC Resources

Blugold Central

Old Library 1108 | 715-836-3000 | blugoldcentral@uwec.edu

General questions about your student account, financial aid, registration, etc.

Transfer Credit Wizard | <https://transfer.uwec.edu>

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

Counseling Services

Old Library 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. Leave a message if there is no answer; someone will be in touch shortly. (715) 839-4972 or (715) 577-9045

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.

(continued on next page)

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