Study Abroad

PUEBLA, MEXICO
2021
# Table of Contents

- Academics .......................................................... 5  
  - Pre-departure Planning ..................................... 5  
  - Registration at UPAEP ....................................... 5  
  - Reporting Your Registration .............................. 5  
  - Class Schedule ................................................ 5  
  - Class Attendance ............................................... 5  
  - UPAEP & UWEC Transcripts ................................ 6  
  - Language Immersion Requirement ....................... 6  
  - Academic System .............................................. 6  
  - Service Learning ................................................ 6  
- Money Matters ........................................................ 6  
  - Cost Estimate ................................................... 6  
  - Currency Exchange ............................................ 6  
  - Money on Arrival ................................................ 7  
  - Cost of Living .................................................... 7  
  - Exchange Explanation .......................................... 7  
- Health ....................................................................... 7  
  - Travel Advisory Notice ........................................ 7  
  - Centers for Disease Control .................................. 7  
  - CDC Recommended Vaccines ............................... 8  
  - Prescription Medication ....................................... 8  
  - Intestinal Upset .................................................... 8  
  - Water ................................................................... 8  
  - Insect Bites .......................................................... 9  
  - Gonorrhea ............................................................. 9  
  - Healthcare .............................................................. 9  
  - CISI Insurance in Mexico ...................................... 9  
  - Services for Students with Disabilities ............... 10  
- Safety ........................................................................ 10  
  - Safety in Mexico .................................................... 10  
- ATM USE ................................................................. 10  
- Credit/Debit Card “Skimming” ................................ 10  
- Other Crime ............................................................. 10  
- LGBTQIA+ Travelers ............................................ 10  
- Sexual Assault ........................................................ 10  
- Alcohol Use ............................................................. 11  
- Marijuana and other Illegal Drugs ....................... 11  
- Potential for Natural Disasters ............................. 11  
- Emergency Contacts ............................................. 11  
- 911 Equivalent in Mexico ...................................... 11  
- Required Documents ............................................. 11  
- Packing Tips ............................................................. 12  
- Weather .................................................................. 12  
- Clothing ................................................................. 12  
- Gifts ....................................................................... 13  
- Getting To Mexico .................................................... 13  
- Travel Arrangements ............................................. 13  
- Clearing Immigration & Customs ......................... 13  
- Getting to Puebla .................................................... 13  
- Travel Arrangements-Departure ............................ 14  
- Settling In ............................................................... 14  
- Orientation ............................................................... 14  
- On-Site Support ...................................................... 14  
- Local Transportation ........................................... 14  
- Housing .................................................................. 15  
- Living Situation ....................................................... 15  
- What's Provided? .................................................... 15  
- Meals & Snacks ....................................................... 15  
- The Refrigerator ..................................................... 15  
- Water ..................................................................... 15  
- Toilets ................................................................... 15
Telephone/Internet ..................................................15
Living with a Family ...........................................16
Checking In .........................................................16
"Your" Room ......................................................16
Communicate Openly ........................................…16
Guests ......................................................................16
Financial Arrangements ........................................16
Changing Families ................................................17
Communication ....................................................17
Email/Internet Access ...........................................17
Landline Phone Information ................................17
Calling from the U.S ..............................................17
Courteous Communication ..................................17
Snail Mail ..............................................................18
Communicating in Spanish ....................................18
Travel While Abroad .............................................18
Organized Travel ..................................................18

Cultural Notes .....................................................18
A Very Brief History of Mexico ..............................18
Contact Information .............................................22
Web Resources: Mexico ........................................23
Puebla .....................................................................23
Culture .....................................................................23
Country ....................................................................23

When Past Participants Of The Puebla Program Were Asked About Their Experience, Here Is What They Said: ..................................................24

How did your identity affect your experience abroad? ........................................24
What advice do you have for future participants who similarly identify? ...........24
What do you wish you had known before you left? .............................................24
What was the biggest adjustment you had to make? ........................................24
How would you sum up your experience? .. 25
Congratulations on being accepted to the UW-Eau Claire program with the Universidad Popular Autonoma del Estado de Puebla, A.C. (UPAEP). 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 adventure!

Use this program-specific guide with the more general resources in the Study Abroad Handbook and 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) Given the way the program is set up, how can you best prepare to meet your goals? For example, if one of your goals is truly being immersed in Mexican 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 U.S. Americans?

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

The Academics section of the Study Abroad Handbook has more information on:

- registration at UW-Eau Claire and abroad
- class attendance
- credits & course-load
- integrative learning
- transcripts
- service learning

Pre-departure Planning

Please see the UWEC Mexico Academics page for details on how to plan your courses at UPAEP, including information on finding courses, credits and course-load, and grad conversion.

Registration at UPAEP

Summer: You completed the UPAEP Summer Course Registration form after you were accepted by UWEC. There are no registration changes allowed after arrival in Mexico.

Semester: About a month before the start of the semester, you will be given access to UPAEP’s UNISOFT system to check the schedule and course availability. You will register for classes through that system. Enrollment is done BEFORE you arrive in Puebla. You will receive information on how to register from UPAEP in your welcome email.

Reporting Your Registration

Semester students only: Once you confirm your final registration at UPAEP, log in to your UW-Eau Claire online study abroad account and complete the Course Descriptions questionnaire. You will find it at https://studyabroad.apps.uwec.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=Abroad.Home. Choose LOGIN from the top toolbar and login with your UW-Eau Claire username and password. If a course you are taking is not already in the UW-Eau Claire Transfer Wizard, you will need to provide the following information:

- course title
- course number
- course description
- number of credits
- name of the department you would like credit in

Once equivalencies have been established by all department chairs involved, the courses will be posted to the Transfer Credit Wizard, and you will be able to see them there.

Equivalency timeline: The process of determining an equivalency can take four to six weeks or more. In other words, you will not be able to ask to have equivalencies established for three or four courses so that you can choose which one you wish to take.

Class Schedule

Summer: Classes meet Monday-Friday unless there is a program excursion. Classes usually meet in a 2-3-hour blocks in the morning or afternoon; the internship runs opposite the class schedule. In other words, if you have class in the morning, you will have your internship in the afternoon, or vice versa.

Semester: Classes meet multiple times a week, just as they do here.

Class Attendance

Summer: Class attendance and participation is part of both your classroom and internship/practicum grade.

Semester: 75% attendance is mandatory for passing a course. If you pass all other parts of the course but don’t meet the required attendance percentage, you will fail the course due to absences.
**UPAEP & UWEC Transcripts**

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.

An UPAEP transcript is sent to UW-Eau Claire, 4-6 weeks after the end of the term.

**Summer students:** Even though your grades may arrive prior to the end of the UW-Eau Claire summer session, grades from abroad cannot be posted until after on-campus grades have been added to students’ records.

**All students:** You will initially receive a grade report with “NR” (“not reported”) for all courses. This will be changed once the transcript arrives.

**Language Immersion Requirement**

If you are a Spanish or LAS major or minor, this program fulfills the six-week requirement.

**Academic System**

You are taking courses from Mexican professors in the Mexican academic system and must adapt to their teaching style.

Each professor will explain the academic criteria for the course and how you will be graded at the beginning of the course. If you do not understand the academic criteria, speak up! Ask your professor – they will be more than happy to help you, but they won’t know you have questions unless you ask.

**Service Learning**

**Summer:** Depending on your specific placement, the internship/practicum in the professional program tracks may fulfill part or all of your UW-Eau Claire service-learning requirement.

**Semester:** Service-learning opportunities are available through the Liberal Arts Service-Learning program, a credit-bearing program open to both Mexican and international students.

See the Academics section of the Study Abroad Handbook for information on having a project approved. This must be done in advance of beginning the project, but you probably need to wait until you are in Mexico to have the details required by the form.

**MONEY MATTERS**

**UWEC information about**

- making payments
- when they are due
- withdrawal, cancellation and refund deadlines
- financial aid,
- general scholarships
- budgeting
- ways to bring money abroad

is found on the following websites:

- Fund Your Experience
- Study Abroad Handbook: Money Matters

**Cost Estimate**

The most current Cost Estimate for your program and term, in easily printable format, is on the CIE Mexico webpage. The cost estimate includes what you pay to UWEC, what you pay to UPAEP, and what you pay directly to other vendors.

**Currency Exchange**

The currency of Mexico is the peso. When you see “$” in Mexico, it generally refers to pesos, not dollars! However, in areas with lots of tourist traffic, costs may be in U.S. dollars. If you see M.N., MXN or MXP as abbreviations, prices are in pesos; DLLS is the abbreviation for dollars.
There are 20 and 50 centavo coins, 1, 2, 5, 10 and 10 peso coins, and 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 peso bills. It can be hard to use large bills for small purchases, such as in cafes, in taxis, etc. so be sure to keep coins and smaller bills on hand.

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

Money on Arrival
You will want cash (in pesos) for small purchases you may need to make before visiting a bank or ATM. A general recommendation is to travel with the equivalent of $100-$200 dollars in your host country currency.

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

Exchange Explanation
Semester students only: UWEC students go to UPAEP as exchange students. On a tuition-only exchange program, each participant pays the costs they would normally pay at their home school – so UWEC students pay UWEC tuition costs, and UPAEP students cover tuition costs at UPAEP, and they switch places. Students pay the host institution directly for their housing.

No money is exchanged between the schools, and there is no direct monetary correlation between what you pay in Eau Claire and what you receive in Puebla.

What is exchanged is not actual payment, but rather benefits. You should receive the same benefits a typical UPAEP student receives, and the UPAEP student receives the benefits a typical UWEC student receives. This type of arrangement allows students to participate in programs abroad at a cost similar to what they would pay to attend their home university.

HEALTH
General information about:
- CISI Insurance
- Preparing to Go
- Staying Healthy
- Traveling Safety
- Emergency Protocols

and links to additional health and safety resources are found on the following websites:

Health + Safety
Study Abroad Handbook: Health & Insurance and Safety Abroad sections

Travel Advisory Notice
As noted on the CIE webpage for Puebla, the U.S. Department of State travel advisory level for Mexico as a whole, as well as the state of Puebla is Level 2: Exercise Caution. UW-Eau Claire allows travel to areas with this travel advisory rating.

However, many individual Mexican states are rated as Level 3: Reconsider Travel, or Level 4: Do Not Travel. You are advised to avoid travel to or through all Level 3 and 4 areas. You can review the full travel advisory here.

If the travel advisory for Mexico as a whole, or for the state of Puebla, should change, the CIE will re-evaluate if the program is allowed to continue and will work with any students who are applying or have been accepted to the program.

Centers for Disease Control
The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has vaccination suggestions, how to stay healthy when abroad, and health information specific to Mexico. Review the CDC site for Mexico.
**CDC Recommended Vaccines**
The Centers for Disease Control recommend hepatitis A and typhoid vaccines for most travelers to Mexico and additional vaccines depending on the type of travel you plan to do. See complete information here: https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/mexico and discuss these recommendations with your medical professional.

**Prescription Medication**
If you are bringing prescription medication that is a controlled narcotic or psychotropic drug to Mexico for your personal use, you are only allowed to bring 30 days of such medication with you. You must declare the medication and, in addition to having it in its original container with the original prescription, which must contain the doctor’s name, signature, contact details and professional registration, you must also have a Spanish translation of the prescription.

If you are not sure if your prescription medication fits this description, contact CISI for assistance. Call 1-800-872-1414 or email medservices@assistamerica.com with the policy number: STB009987903 and ask your question. For example, “I am going to Mexico for 45 days and take (specific name of medication). Is this considered a controlled substance in Mexico? If so, and I am unable to take more than 30 days of it with me, what is the best way for me to access the rest of the medication I will need?”

See “Bringing Medication Abroad” in the appendix of the online Study Abroad Handbook for more information.

**Intestinal Upset**
The most common health problem for U.S. Americans in Mexico is intestinal upset. The change in diet, the different meal schedule, and organisms unfamiliar to your system are possible causes.

A very common ailment is traveler’s diarrhea. Prevention includes being careful about where and what you eat and avoiding dairy products if they are not pasteurized. If you do get it, the following suggestions can help speed recovery and guide your decision to seek formal care:

1. It will usually run its course in three to five days. The worst symptoms usually occur the first day. Bed rest may help relieve cramps.
2. The main risk is dehydration. Maintain fluid intake. An excellent source of fluid replacement is ORS or Oraltye, a prepackaged liquid sold in many countries. If unavailable, the following recipe provides similar value: one liter carbonated water, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon baking soda (not baking powder), 4 tbsps. sugar.
3. An over-the-counter medicine like Pepto Bismol may help relieve nausea and vomiting.

**Water**
The general recommendation from the CDC for water is to drink bottled or boiled water at all times. By making sure that you are drinking uncontaminated water, you can reduce your exposure to many diseases such as infectious hepatitis, cholera, diarrhea and dysentery. Additional considerations:

| Brush your teeth with bottled or boiled water. |
| Carbonated bottled water, soft drinks, beer, wine, hot tea, and coffee are usually safe. |
| Wipe off the top of a bottle before drinking out of it or ask for a straw ("popote" in Spanish). |
Where water is contaminated, ice is also contaminated—you may wish to order drinks “sin hielo” (without ice).

Avoid fruits that cannot be peeled, fruit juices diluted with water, raw vegetables, and salads that have not been washed with disinfected water. If buying food from street vendors, stick to breads or fruits that you peel yourself.

When you are not in control of your water supply or cannot purchase bottled water, consider bringing a portable water purifier, available at most outdoor stores, boil water vigorously for at least 10 minutes, or use water purification tablets (one tablet per quart of clear water, or two tablets if water is cloudy).

Please see the U.S. Centers for Disease Control recommendations on eating and drinking safely in Mexico:


**Insect Bites**

Insect borne diseases, particularly mosquito, such as chikungunya, dengue, malaria and zika virus, are present in parts of Mexico. See the CDC recommendations for current travel health notices, as well as suggestions on prevention. Avoiding bug bites is key.

There is no vaccine for zika virus, dengue fever, or other insect-borne diseases, so prevention of insect bites is the best safeguard. See the CDC recommendations on avoiding bug bites for detailed information and discuss prevention with your physician.

**Gonorrhea**

Each year an estimated 78 million people are infected with gonorrhea, a common sexually transmitted infection. In July 2017, the number of gonorrhea cases reported in Mexico at that point was up 162% compared to a 2016 report during the same time frame. Approximately half of the cases have been reported in women nationally; however, in Puebla, the report notes that 70% of reported gonorrhea cases are in women.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recently reported that some countries – particularly high-income ones, where surveillance is best – are finding cases of the infection that are untreatable by all known antibiotics. WHO reports this antibiotic resistance is making gonorrhea much harder, and sometimes impossible, to treat.

**Healthcare**

**Campus Medical & Counseling Services:**

There is a small emergency clinic centrally located on the main UPAEP campus and a larger health clinic, including mental health facilities, on one edge of campus. Students can access either of these locations with their UPAEP ID. There is no charge for appointments at the emergency clinic or student health service, although there is a charge for prescriptions.

**Community Medical Services:**

There are three private hospitals near campus, including one jointly owned by UPAEP and a private foundation, that are typically recommended for UPAEP students. The three hospitals are Christus Muguerza (the UPAEP hospital), Hospital Puebla and Hospital Angeles.

If you need to go to a hospital, a host family member will typically accompany you, assist with the admissions process, and stay with you as needed and as their schedule allows.

**CISI Insurance in Mexico**

If you have an accident or become ill while studying in Mexico, you must pay the price of the medical service up front. You will then file a claim through CISI, the insurance provided through the UW System for partial or full reimbursement in accordance with plan coverages.
Services for Students with Disabilities

UPAEP will do their best to accommodate any disabilities, but services cannot be guaranteed or may be different than what you are used to in the United States. Please contact the Cheryl Lochner-Wright, the UWEC Study Abroad Coordinator for Mexico, to begin exploring what services might be available to you.

It is also important to look at the level of accessibility in Mexico in general. To find more information on this topic, please see the Local Laws & Special Circumstances section of the U.S. State Department Country Information page.

SAFETY

Safety in Mexico

Information on crime, specific safety issues, road safety, drug penalties, and terrorist activity in Mexico is included in the U.S. State Department’s Mexico Country Information website. Information below is drawn the “Safety & Security” section; read the complete section for details. Specific safety in and around Puebla will be discussed during orientation in Mexico.

Pick-pocketing

Pick-pocketing is common on public transportation and at popular tourist sites throughout Mexico. To reduce the risk, do not have your phone or other valuables out in public spaces. An iPhone and other small electronics are 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.

ATM USE

Limit the amount of cash you carry in public and exercise caution when withdrawing cash from ATMs, avoiding ATMs located in isolated or unlit areas.

Credit/Debit Card “Skimming”

There have been instances of fraudulent charges or withdrawals from accounts due to “skimmed” cards. If you use credit or debit cards, regularly check your account to ensure there are no unauthorized transactions. Whenever possible, travelers should watch service workers swipe their credit cards.

Other Crime

Crime in Mexico occurs at a high rate and can be violent. Armed robbery, carjacking, kidnapping, sexual assault, and extortion are serious problems in most major cities. Increased levels of cartel-related violence have resulted in turf battles and targeted killings, injuring or killing innocent bystanders. Travelers who find themselves in an active shooter scenario should flee in the opposite direction if possible, or drop to the ground, preferably behind a hard barrier.

LGBTQIA+ Travelers

Per the US State Department, exercise caution in identifying yourself publicly as LGBTQIA. They provide additional information on these two sites: LGBTI Travelers

Section 6, Department of State’s Human Rights Report for Mexico

Sexual Assault

Rape and sexual assault are serious problems in Mexico. See the Safety & Security: “Sexual Assault” section of the U.S. State Department.
Consular Information Sheet and the resources for prevention, victims, and bystanders in the Health & Safety section of the study abroad website.

**Alcohol Use**

The U.S. State Department updated their safety and security information regarding alcohol after the death of a 20-year-old woman raised questions about the quality and strength of alcohol being served in Mexican resorts. There have been allegations that consumption of tainted or substandard alcohol has resulted in illness or blacking out. If you choose to drink alcohol, it is important to do so in moderation and to stop and seek medical attention if you begin to feel ill.

A 2015 report from Mexico’s Tax Administration Service found that 43% of all alcohol consumed in the nation is illegal, produced under unregulated circumstances resulting in potentially dangerous concoctions.

**Marijuana and other Illegal Drugs**

Although marijuana is relatively easy to obtain in Mexico, **the possession and use of marijuana is illegal**. Even carrying it on your person can be considered drug trafficking. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs in Mexico are severe, and convicted offenders can expect long jail sentences and heavy fines. U.S. citizenship offers no protection if you break a Mexican law. There is NOTHING the CIE, your host organization, or the U.S. government can do if you are found in violation of Mexican laws.

In addition to legal penalties, you are putting yourself at risk of robbery or assault, or you may get a much more dangerous combination of drugs than you thought you were buying.

**Potential for Natural Disasters**

Per the U.S. State department information, Mexico is in an active earthquake zone. Tsunamis may occur following significant earthquakes. You can use these sites to monitor information on earthquake activity and preparation:

- [U.S. Embassy Mexico City website](#)
- [Civil Protection (Protección Civil) (Spanish only)](#) provides information from the Mexican Government about natural disaster preparedness
- [U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)](#) provides general information about natural disaster preparedness
- [U.S. Geological Survey](#) provides updates on recent seismic and volcanic activity

**Emergency Contacts**

General emergency procedures are described in the Safety Abroad section of the Study Abroad Handbook, and UPAEP Office of International Relations staff are available for consultation if difficulties arise. See the Contact Names & Addresses page of this guide.

**911 Equivalent in Mexico**

911 is the general emergency phone number in Mexico.

**REQUIRED DOCUMENTS**

General passport and visa information is in the Study Abroad Handbook: Travel Resources section.

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

A visa is official permission to visit a country and is granted by the government of that country.

**Summer:** To be in Mexico for less than 90 days, you will not need a visa before you arrive. If asked upon arrival in Mexico, state that you are doing a cultural program at UPAEP. **You are considered a tourist, not a student.** The student visa is a special category that is granted by the Mexican government under specific circumstances.

You will receive an entry permit—Forma Migratoria Multiple (FMM), also called a tourist card. Carry a copy of this form, along with a photocopy of the photo page of your passport, with you at all times.

Keep the original of the FFM safe: **you will need to present it again when you leave the country. Failure to present an FMM can result in detention by immigration authorities and/or missed or delayed flights.**

**Semester:** once you have received your official acceptance letter (Carta de Aceptación) from UPAEP, scan and send it to the Mexican Consulate in Milwaukee at visasmke@sre.gov.mx and ask what additional documentation you need/steps you need to take in order to apply for a student visa. Often, semester students who will be in Mexico for less than 180 do not need to apply for a visa in advance, but the Consulate will give you the most current information.

**Academic year:** Students going for the full academic year do need to apply for a visa. The CIE will post basic information about the current visa options for U.S. citizens for study in Mexico to the Learning Content section of your BlugoldAbroad account. However, immigration decisions are made of government of Mexico. **It is your responsibility to keep up to date about student visa requirements for Mexico, and if required, to apply for and receive a visa from a Mexican consulate or embassy in a timely manner.**

You will need to provide UPAEP with contact information for the Mexican Embassy or Consulate where you will apply for a visa. UPAEP International Affairs Office will provide a special acceptance letter to allow you to apply for the Student visa.

**All students:** You will receive an entry permit—Forma Migratoria Multiple (FMM), also called a tourist card. Carry a copy of this form, along with a photocopy of the photo page of your passport, with you at all times.

Keep the original of the FFM safe: **you will need to present it again when you leave the country. Failure to present an FMM can result in detention by immigration authorities and/or missed or delayed flights.**

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.

**Packing Tips**

General packing information is in the Study Abroad Handbook: Travel Resources section. A country-specific packing list will be released through your BlugoldsAbroad account a few months prior to departure.

**Weather**

Puebla has a mild, temperate climate. In it will be humid, with temperatures typically ranging from lows in the 40s and 50s and highs in the 70s.

**Clothing**

Mexican university students clothing is like that of US students, although little more formal.
Mexican women rarely wear shorts. Piropos (catcalling at women) are common and may intensify if a woman is wearing short skirts, shorts, or low-cut tops.

**Summer students**: If you are participating in the Spanish for Business, Spanish for Education, or Spanish for Health Professions track, you will need to bring appropriate attire to wear for your internship or observations. Your internship or observations will typically take place Monday through Friday for four hours a day throughout the duration of the program. Schedules are finalized once you arrive in Puebla.

Students in the Spanish for Business track should plan to bring business casual attire to wear for their internship.

Students in the Spanish for Education track should plan to bring attire appropriate for their student teaching internship.

Students in the Spanish for Health Professions track will be required to have two sets of scrubs for observations:

- one set of white scrubs to wear in the hospital, AND
- one set of either blue or green scrubs to change into and wear when observing surgeries.

White shoes must be worn with both sets of scrubs.

A past student recommended bringing two pairs of white scrubs since white scrubs are worn every day in the hospital, except during surgical procedures. You will be asked to change from white scrubs to blue or green scrubs to observe surgeries.

**Gifts**
You may want to pack some small items as gifts for your host family. A memento from Wisconsin, like a UWEC mug, might be nice. If you are unsure what, if anything, to bring, ask your Peer Advisor for suggestions.

**GETTING TO MEXICO**

*There is information on booking flights in the Study Abroad Handbook: Travel Resources section.*

**Travel Arrangements**
It is your responsibility to make travel arrangements to Mexico City, Benito Juarez International Airport, arriving BEFORE 2 pm on the date listed on the UWEC Puebla web page.

**Clearing Immigration & Customs**
Flight attendants will give out two different kinds of forms that need to be filled out, one for immigration (the FMM or Tourist Card) and another for Customs (Customs Declaration Form).

In general, you should not need to declare anything because you will only be bringing items for personal use. One exception is if you are bringing prescription medication that is a controlled narcotic or psychotropic drug to Mexico for your personal use. See the “Medications” paragraph in the “Packing” section for details.

Again, your immigration category for entering Mexico is as a tourist. To enter as a student, you need to have been admitted to a Mexican university for a semester or longer and have gotten a student visa.

**Getting to Puebla**
**Summer**: Representatives from UPAEP will meet students at the airport at the designated time and date will escort you to the Estrella Roja bus terminal inside the airport. The non-stop bus service goes directly to Puebla. You will be met at the bus terminal in Puebla by UPAEP staff and your host family.
If you arrive on any other day, or after the designated time, you will need to make your own way to Puebla.

Semester: It is your responsibility to make travel arrangements to Mexico City (the Benito Juarez International Airport) and then on to Puebla.

Be sure that your flight arrives on the day suggested by UPAEP. In order to allow ample time to get from Mexico City to Puebla, arrive by 2 pm.

You will receive instructions from UPAEP directing you to the Estrella Roja bus terminal inside the airport. Carry these directions with you in your carry-on. This non-stop bus service goes directly to Puebla. You are responsible for the cost of your ticket.

The Estrella Roja bus goes to two stations in Puebla: 4 West and Puebla Bus Station (CAPU). Unless otherwise instructed by UPAEP, go to the 4 West Station. UPAEP staff and your host family will meet you there.

The buses are coach buses with beverages, snacks and movies provided. The trip typically takes about 2 hours but can vary depending on traffic conditions.

Travel Arrangements-Departure
Summer: UPAEP will again arrange transportation from Puebla to Mexico City on the departure weekend. See the UWEC Puebla Program page for departure dates. Please book a flight that departs from Mexico City after 2 pm to allow time for travel from Puebla.

Semester: You are responsible for arranging your own transportation back to the Mexico City airport once the program has ended. Estrella Roja is the recommended carrier.

All students: Again, be sure you have the original of your Forma Migratoria Multiple (FMM)/tourist card with you; you will need to present it as you leave. Failure to present an FMM can result in detention by immigration authorities and/or missed or delayed flights.

SETTLING IN
Orientation
You will have required orientation sessions when you arrive.

On-Site Support
Octavio Gonzalez in the UPAEP International Office will be your main contact for summer students; Yazmin Alvarez is the contact for semester students. Their contact information is on the Contact Names & Addresses page of this guide.

Local Transportation
Host families are no more than 20-30 minutes from campus by public transportation. You may have an additional walk (up-to 10 minutes) to the nearest bus stop. All UWEC students will be placed with families in the same neighborhood.

The area around campus is served by both the regular city bus system and the Metrobus, a newer, express public bus. Your host mothers will teach you how to use the bus system and may ride to-and-from campus with you the first few days, to be sure you understand. You will not need to change buses more than once to get to/from your host family to campus.

Bus cost is roughly 6 pesos/ride; there is a 20 peso pass available for the Metrobus good for 4 rides.

UPAEP has its own taxi service, with a taxi stand directly in front of the main campus entrance. You can call the station and the taxis can pick you up anywhere in Puebla. The
number for the UPAEP taxi service is: 2-28-21-77

There are many other official taxi companies within the city. Taxi costs are reasonable – ~$5-$7 dollars for a 15-20 minute ride, so students sharing a taxi ride home can do so quite inexpensively.

If not using an UPAEP taxi, only use taxis that you take or call from an official taxi stand. When calling, ask the dispatcher for the driver’s name and the taxi’s license plate number.

Puebla is also an easy city to walk, with streets laid out on a grid pattern. There are many restaurants and shopping opportunities in the blocks right around campus; it is about a 25-minute walk from the main campus area to the historic downtown area. Observe proper safety precautions, especially at night.

**HOUSING**

**Living Situation**
To encourage the maximum use of newly acquired Spanish language skills, you will live with Spanish-speaking families in Puebla. UPAEP arranges accommodations with carefully selected host families. In general, one-two students of the same sex are placed per family; unless otherwise requested, you will have your own bedroom and bathroom.

**What’s Provided?**
The cost of your room, breakfast and dinner with your host family, and laundry is included in the cost of your program. Discuss the laundry schedule with your family; advanced planning may be required.

**Meals & Snacks**
You will be eating typical Mexican foods with your host family. Unless you have an actual food allergy, it is polite to try whatever you are offered. Do not expect your family to prepare special meals for you—you should expect to be treated as part of the family, not a special guest.

Meals are family time. Some U.S. students are in the habit of taking their meals to their rooms at home; this is not acceptable behavior in Mexico. Also, if you are going to miss a meal for any reason, let your host mother know well in advance.

**The Refrigerator**
Typically, families encourage you to eat when you are hungry. However, the fridge and cabinets are not stocked with snacks and food like in the United States. Families tend to purchase the food they will prepare each day. Always ask before helping yourself to food.

**Water**
Water is a precious resource. Most Mexicans take a shower every morning, and you can, too, but it should be short, both to conserve water and to keep the bathroom as free as possible. Hot water is not always guaranteed! If you can’t figure out how to use the hot water, just ask!

**Toilets**
In Mexico, as in many parts of Latin America, you can’t flush toilet paper down the toilet. Plumbing pipes are typically only one inch in diameter, rather than the two inches standard in the U.S. There will be a garbage can next to the toilet to be used for toilet paper. **Make sure to throw toilet paper in the garbage can, not in the toilet!** This takes some getting used to, but after a few weeks, it will become habit.

**Telephone/Internet**
Telephone rates are high in Mexico, and every call, local or long distance, is charged by the minute. Some families forbid the use of the landline, and all prefer that students use cell phones or pay phones rather than the phone at home. You may or may not have internet access at home; you will have it on campus.
See the "Communication" section of this guide for details.

Living with a Family
Get involved as much as you can with your family. They are an important resource for you to learn from and a great resource to help you experience Mexican culture. You may have an interest in cooking. Take some mixes or recipes from home and offer to cook them for your family. Your host mom may be thrilled if you show an interest in Mexican cuisine.

Conversation is important in Mexican culture. You can spend hours after a meal chatting and watching television or learning to play Mexican card games.

You are a guest in your family’s home. Offer to do some things around the house, like helping with meals or dishes. Keep your room and other areas of the house that you use tidy. Be aware of noise levels, particularly if you are coming home later at night.

Any relationship is a two-way street. It is as much your responsibility to fit into the family as it is their responsibility to include you in their daily life. The more you put into the relationship, the more you will receive!

Checking In
Mexican parents are generally more protective, even of university-age students, than their U.S. counterparts. This may feel intrusive to you, particularly if you have been living on your own for a while. Remember that this is a cultural adjustment and respect your host family's wishes. Let them know if you are going out, particularly in the evening, where you are going, with whom, and what time you will be back. They will most likely not go to sleep until you have returned. If they ask that you be back by a particular time, be sure that you are. If you will be gone overnight, inform your family well in advance.

"Your" Room
You will have your own room; however, the concept of a private room is different in Puebla than in the U.S. A messy room reflects poorly on you and your upbringing. In addition, it will reflect poorly on your host family, as the messy room is part of their house. Keep your room neat, make your bed every day before leaving home, and you will avoid tensions that could otherwise arise. Just closing the door is not acceptable. In addition, be aware that it is never proper to entertain guests, regardless of their gender, in your bedroom.

Communicate Openly
If you have questions about what your family expects of you, or you feel they do not understand your behavior, talk with them! Open lines of communication are important in building trust in any relationship.

Guests
Only invite visitors to your house if you have first cleared this with your host family. Visitors should never be invited for meals or to stay overnight without prior family permission.

If you are expecting friends or family members from the U.S., make lodging arrangements for them at a local hostel, apartment or hotel prior to their arrival in Puebla. The host family should not be expected to have additional visitors stay in their homes, even for just a few days.

It is not culturally appropriate for you to have your boyfriend or girlfriend spend the night in your room in your host family's house.

Financial Arrangements
While UPAEP screens families carefully to ensure that they have cultural interests for participating, most households participating do so at least partially for economic reasons. This is only logical, given the disruption that hosting a student causes to family life. It is not easy to welcome a stranger into your home for several weeks or months. The entire family needs to
adjust schedules and habits to accommodate a new person. In addition, there are very real costs associated with having another person in the home. Receiving some monetary compensation for this is only fair, and most families would not consider hosting otherwise.

If you stay after the program ends and request to remain at your host family's house, you must pay your family for room and board. You should not expect your host family to provide room and board for free. The families need your contribution in order to take care of you.

**Changing Families**

If you discover that you absolutely cannot get along with your host family, talk with UPAEP International Office Staff about it so that changes can be made, if appropriate. (UW-Eau Claire is not involved in the actual family placements, and changes must be done through UPAEP.) But remember to give the situation some time and to be flexible and open-minded.

**COMMUNICATION**

See the Study Abroad Handbook: Travel Resources section for information on:
- Communication with UWEC
- Calling, Texting & Other Communication

**Email/Internet Access**

The campus offers free WIFI access for students and has large computer labs for student use.

You will also find Internet cafés with printing and photocopying services at affordable prices. Internet cafés in Mexico are not the same as in the U.S. You mostly use the café's computers; they are typically not a sit-down-and-drink-coffee café where you can use your laptop with wireless, especially in smaller communities.

Don't 'over-use' the Internet! You are in Mexico for a relatively short time, and it is important to experience what is in front of you!

**Landline Phone Information**

As mentioned previously, phone calls are expensive. The telephone is primarily used briefly to set up times/places for meeting with friends. If you find it absolutely necessary to use a phone at home, and your family approves, limit yourself to ONE 3-minute call per day.

Never make a long-distance call from your host family's home unless you make it COLLECT. Ask someone in the family to help you do this. Long distance calls are often not billed until two months later, and the bills may not be itemized. It is therefore not practical or polite to offer to pay for a long-distance call.

Past participants note that it is easy to Skype from Internet cafes, and, apart from the Internet charge, it is free.

**Calling from the U.S.**

From the U.S. to Mexico: It may be easier for you to call home than for your parents to call you at first. However, once you get situated, it could be cheaper for your parents and friends to call you. To call from the U.S. to Mexico, you must first dial 011, which is the international dialing code. Next, you must dial 52 to get Mexico, and then the rest of the number to reach a specific city and location.

Note that if there is a "0" listed before the main number, drop it when dialing internationally.

**Courteous Communication**

If Skyping/using other communication apps in your room, use headphones, close the door to your room, speak softly, and end the conversation immediately if it is time for a meal.
Snail Mail
International airmail takes 6-10 days in either direction. Until you have an exact address, your family and friends can send mail to:

Your Name  
Study Abroad Student  
UPAEP international office address (See Contacts Page at the end of this guide.)

Communicating in Spanish
You have been studying Spanish for years, and now you are going to apply your language skills in day-to-day life. Here are some things to keep in mind.

Before you go: Start listening to Spanish music, watch movies, TV in Spanish. Get your ear accustomed to it before you get there!

Also, start reading it, beyond what is required for class. Consider changing your phone language to Spanish, reading websites from Mexico, finding online newspapers.

Fluency: In the words of a past language student, "I am going to warn you right now: you WILL NOT be fluent after only six weeks in another country. I improved in my reading, writing, listening and speaking, but I did not sound like a native. Don't expect to come home fluent, or you will spend your whole time abroad frustrated with yourself. Take things one day at a time and you will be so impressed with yourself. There were days where I would all of a sudden realize that I was participating in conversations in Spanish without thinking about it."

Speaking: Speak as much as possible. You have SO MANY OPPORTUNITIES to speak Spanish (since you're living in Mexico). And there are so many people willing to help you get better.

Professors: It's their job to help you improve, so they will correct you in class and will require you to speak often. They are always willing to help explain things or sit down and talk with you about things you don't understand.

Families: It is likely that your family has been hosting American students for a number of years. This means that even when you say the wrong thing, chances are they will understand you. Don't be afraid to speak with your family at meals, after meals, during down time, at any possibility.

Other people you meet: Mexicans know that you are not a native speaker even before you open your mouth. In most cases, if you try to communicate with them, they will be very kind and patient with you. In addition to this, get to know local students. Many of them are studying English and would LOVE to get together and talk. One thing to remember: you need to make the effort to get to know them.

TRAVEL WHILE ABROAD
General information on guidebooks, maps, hostels and more is in the Study Abroad Handbook: Travel Resources section.

Organized Travel
A tour of Puebla’s downtown and trip to nearby Cholula, as well as weekend trips to other locations such as Cuetzalan, Mexico City and Oaxaca are included in the program cost.

CULTURAL NOTES
A Very Brief History of Mexico
Before the arrival of the Europeans, what is today Mexico was inhabited by indigenous peoples. The Olmec peoples of the Gulf of Mexico are considered by anthropologists to have been mother culture of Mexico. The most famous Mexican civilizations were those of the Aztecs in central Mexico and the Mayas in the Yucatan Peninsula and southern Mexico. Some
anthropologists and historians compare these civilizations of Meso-America, including Mexico, to the civilizations of the Mediterranean.

During the period from 1400 to 1521, the Aztecs, based in the capital city of Tenochtitlan (the future Mexico City) built an empire that extended throughout central Mexico. Tenochtitlan is believed to have had a population of 250,000 in 1519, larger than any European city at the time.

Spanish conqueror Hernan Cortez landed in Mexico in 1519. Cortez and his few hundred soldiers arrived with their sailing ships, horses, war dogs, metal armor, gunpowder and firearms all of which intimidated the indigenous people. European diseases, which the natives had no immunity, also played an important part in the conquest. By 1521, Cortez succeeded in conquering the Aztecs and then in the next decade he and his men extended their control over most of the other native people.

The conquerors imposed the Spanish government and the Roman Catholic religion on the indigenous peoples. The Spanish rulers gradually took control of the land, wealth and labor. While the Roman Catholic Church and the Spanish king and queen decided that Indians could not be enslaved, they could be subjugated and forced to work for the Spanish overlords. The Spanish eventually established great haciendas, plantations, ranches, and mines.

The indigenous population dropped from a peak as high as 25 million in 1519 to as little as 2.5 million in 1600. The demographic catastrophe of the indigenous people, whom the Spanish called "Indians," (indios), led the Spanish to import about 200,000 African slaves.

The Spanish rule of Mexico lasted for three hundred years from 1519 to 1821. Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821, and September 16 has been the national independence day ever since. For most people, Mexico's independence did not change their lives very much. A Spanish (criollo) elite continued to dominate politics and own the land and mines, while most mixed-race people (mestizos) labored as artisans or workers and Indians worked the land for the plantation owners.

Between 1821 and the 1860s, "Conservatives" and "Liberals" fought for control of the government. Conservatives tended to support the old Spanish system of domination by the Roman Catholic Church, the military and the landlords. Liberals wanted to move to a system of private industry and agriculture more like that in the United States. During this time, Mexico suffered a series of devastating and almost catastrophic political and military defeats. Most important, between 1836 and 1854, the United States took more than half of Mexico's territory, first through the secession of Texas from Mexico, and then through the U.S.-Mexican war of 1847.

In the 1860s, the Conservatives invited the French Emperor Louis Napoleon (Napoleon III) to come aid in their battles with the Liberals. Taking advantage of the Civil War in the United States, which kept the U.S. government from opposing a European invasion of Mexico, Louis Napoleon's French troops invaded Mexico and established the Austrians Maximilian and Carlotta as the King and Queen of Mexico. The Mexican Liberal Benito Juárez, a Zapotec Indian lawyer and politician, led the Mexican people in their struggle against the Conservatives and the French conquerors. May 5 ("Cinco de Mayo") celebrates a Mexican
victory over the French at the city of Puebla during those wars and is a second Mexican Independence Day.

In the 1870s Porfirio Díaz became president of Mexico and would be its dictator until the outbreak of the 1910 rebellion. Díaz kept control of the country through the Federal Army and through the rural police force. His slogan was "pan o palo," bread or the stick. Bread for those who worked with his dictatorship, and the stick to beat those who did not. Under the Díaz regime, labor union organizers, peasants demanding land and poor Indians were arrested, tortured and murdered. Opposition to Díaz and those forces laid the basis for the Mexican Revolution.

Francisco I. Madero, a wealthy landowner and industrialist, but part of a group which had been excluded from power by the Diaz dictatorship, attempted to run for president; but Diaz had him jailed. Escaping to the U.S., Madero launched the revolution on November 10, 1910 with the slogan "effective suffrage and no re-election." November 10 is still celebrated as a national holiday.

Madero's revolution also attracted support of small ranchers and poor peasants who were fighting not only for democracy, but also for land. Pancho Villa in the state of Chihuahua in the north organized an army of small ranchers, railroad workers and miners, and other middle class and working-class people. Emiliano Zapata in the state of Morelos in the south organized the poor peasants who demanded that the haciendas return the land to the peasant communities. Together Madero, Villa, and Zapata and other revolutionary forces succeeded in overthrowing Diaz. An election was held, and Madero was elected president.

But Madero proved a weak leader who failed to satisfy anyone, and he was overthrown and murdered by the counter-revolutionary Victoriano Huerta. Once again, the revolutionary forces rose, this time under Venustiano Carranza, Alvaro Obregon, Villa and Zapata, and once again they were victorious by 1915. But then the revolutionaries had a falling out, with the more conservative Carranza and Obregon and their Constitutionalist Army fighting against Villa and Zapata and their Conventionist forces.

The Constitutionalists won, with Zapata and Villa being assassinated. Then Carranza and Obregon had a falling out, and Carranza was assassinated, and Obregon and his allies took power. Obregon became president in 1920, ending the violent phase of the revolution.

The Mexican Revolution eventually changed the country's economic and social system in important ways. First, the hacienda system ended after hundreds of years as haciendas' land was divided up and distributed to Indian communities and to peasants. Second, the Mexican government recognized the labor unions and peasants' organizations, and promoted their organization, and their incorporation into the state-party. Third, the Mexican petroleum company (PEMEX) was created. Fourth, a new Mexican business class grew up more based in banking and manufacturing than in land. While Mexico remained capitalist, it now had a mixed economy, part state-owned and part Mexican and foreign private capital.

In 1940, the Mexican government gradually moved away from a focus on workers rights. By the late 1950s, Mexico's government had become an authoritarian state which
suppressed popular movements to promote and protect capital.

The situation became critical in the 1970s and early 1980s when President Jose Lopez Portillo decided to use newly discovered oil reserves to finance Mexican economic development. Lopez Portillo's government pumped and sold oil and used its projected oil revenue as collateral on $100 billion in loans for both industrial infrastructure and for social programs. However, when the price of oil collapsed in 1982, Mexico could not pay its debts.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank became key players in the new economic order on Mexico, with a focus on privatization and deregulation, free trade and foreign investment, and cutbacks in government spending for social programs. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Mexico was forced to give up its nationalized industries and national trade barriers and become part of the North American bloc. Mexico's economy was transformed into an export platform. Corporations such as Ford, Chrysler and General Motors, General Electric, etc. built factories employing tens of thousands of Mexican workers producing automobiles, auto parts, electrical and electronic goods for sale abroad.

http://www.ueinternational.org/Mexico_info/Mexico_history2.php
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<tr>
<th><strong>UPAEP</strong></th>
<th><strong>Mexican Consulate in the Chicago</strong></th>
<th><strong>UW-Eau Claire</strong></th>
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| *Dirreción de Asuntos Internacionales* | **204 S. Ashland Avenue**  
*Summer:*  
Octavio González Núñez  
Group and Special Programs Coordinator  
octavio.gonzalez01@upaep.mx  
Phone: +52 (222) 229-9400, ext. 7759 | **Center for International Education**  
Cheryl Lochner-Wright  
Senior Study Abroad Coordinator  
lochnecb@uwec.edu |
| *Semester:*  
Yazmin Álvarez Salgado  
Student Mobility Coordinator  
intercam@upaep.mx  
Phone: +52 (222) 229-9400, ext. 7135 | **204 S. Ashland Avenue**  
Chicago, IL  60607  
Tel: 312-738-2383  
Email: info@consulmexichicago.com  
105 Garfield Avenue  
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire  
Eau Claire, WI 54702  
Phone: (715) 836-4411  
Fax: (715) 836-4948 |

**Edificio T, Primer Piso**  
UPAEP  
21 Sur 1103  
Barrio de Santiago, CP 72419  
Puebla, Pue. México

**U.S. Embassy in Mexico**  
Paseo de la Reforma 305  
Colonia Cuauhtemoc  
Mexico, D.F., Mexico C.P.  
06500

Calling from the U.S.: 055-52-555-080-2000
Calling from within Mexico (but outside Mexico City): 01-555-080-2000
Calling from within Mexico City: 5080-2000

Email: acsmexicocity@state.gov

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.
## Web Resources: Mexico

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Puebla</th>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
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| **UPAEP Website**  
https://upaep.mx/internacional/internationalexchange_students | **Food – Mole Poblano**  
http://www.mexonline.com/molepoblano.htm | **About Mexico**  
| **Puebla’s History**  
http://www.history.com/topics/mexico/puebla | **Customs and Etiquette**  
http://www.commissceo-global.com/country-guides/mexico-guide | **Lonely Planet – Mexico**  
https://www.lonelyplanet.com/mexico |
| | | **Newspapers**  
http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/mexico.htm |
How did your identity affect your experience abroad?
Being a woman, I was affected by the different roles men and women play within Mexican society. I was also very aware of my privileges as a (U.S.) American.

At times, I was looked at differently due to my gender and race (Caucasian woman), but overall, everyone I talked to was very welcoming.

Being (U.S.) American caused a lot of staring and prompted many conversations about politics.

What advice do you have for future participants who similarly identify?
(If you’re white), you’re going to be stared at, laughed at, pointed at. I tried to embrace it because that was something new for me. In the US, (if you’re white), it’s rare for someone to point at you and say, “Whoa, look at that person!” Get out of your comfort zone, accept the culture, learn and enjoy it.

(If you’re a woman), dress more conservatively for school. Very few women in Mexico wear shorts. They wear pants or dresses.

What do you wish you had known before you left?
That it would be normal to be stared at so much. At first it made me uncomfortable, but I quickly got used to it.

That we had to pay for our own transportation for internships. I would have set up an Uber account on my phone so I didn’t have to rely on others. (Editor’s note: the “local transportation” line in the cost estimate assumes students will travel mostly by bus.)

That a lot of public bathrooms aren’t free to use.

What was the biggest adjustment you had to make?
The schedule. I was up a lot earlier than I had to be during the school year.

The hospital was hard to adjust to, as many of the other students and doctors couldn’t understand why we were just observing.

Speaking Spanish all day, every day.

Being one of only two guys from UWEC. I spent almost all my time with the girls. I’m used to spending time with my roommates, etc. There were times when I missed them—a lot.
**How would you sum up your experience?**

It has been one of the best experiences of my life and I could not be happier that I was able to come to Puebla. I was not ready to return home at the end.

An experience of a lifetime. This was my second trip to Mexico (family vacation two years ago to Playa del Carmen was my first) but this trip revealed to me the “true Mexico”. The richness of the Mexican culture continues to inspire me—I was able to attend mass in church, travel, go to school, walk in markets and observe in maternity/surgery departments in a local hospital. I will remember these experiences for the rest of my life and I will most definitely be returning to Puebla to visit again soon! I can’t thank my host mom enough for the role she played in making my stay a memorable one.

Worth it. There is so much to be learned about the world we live in and the best way to experience it is to travel to different places. I wouldn't trade the experience for anything!

Wonderful! I loved getting immersed in the culture here and my favorite part was my internship in the clinic.

My time abroad allowed me the freedom to grow in ways I couldn't in the USA. I have been home for three days and I already wish I could go back.