

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN EAU CLAIRE

CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

# Study Abroad



**USAC CHENGDU, CHINA**  
**SPRING 2019**

*Program Guide*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

General Information.....	3	Water.....	9
The Program .....	3	Food .....	10
The Location .....	3	Air Quality.....	10
The University .....	3	Medical/ Mental Health Facilities in Chengdu .....	11
Academic Calendar .....	3	Safety in China .....	11
Academics .....	3	911 Equivalent in China .....	11
Registration.....	4	Emergency Contacts .....	11
Withdrawing from USAC Courses.....	4	Travel to North Korea .....	12
Chinese Language Requirement .....	4	Required Documents .....	12
Chinese Language Studies .....	4	Passport.....	12
Chinese Culture Studies .....	5	IMPORTANT INFO FOR DUAL NATIONALS .	12
Internships.....	5	Visa .....	12
Credits and Course Load .....	5	Packing Tips .....	13
Class/Activity Attendance .....	5	Clothing & Weather .....	13
Academics at USAC Chengdu.....	6	Appliances .....	13
Grades.....	6	Feminine Products.....	14
Grade Reports.....	6	Packing List.....	14
Money Matters .....	7	Getting to China .....	14
Cost Estimate .....	7	Travel Arrangements.....	14
USAC Scholarships .....	7	USAC Group Flight .....	14
Freeman-Asia Scholarship.....	7	Getting to USAC Housing.....	14
Currency Exchange.....	8	Orientation .....	15
Credit Cards .....	8	Local Transportation .....	15
Cashless Society .....	8	Getting Involved .....	15
Cash.....	8	Tours and Field Studies .....	15
Traveler's Checks .....	8	Campus Involvement .....	15
Banks/ATMs .....	9	Housing .....	16
Health & Safety .....	9	Air Conditioning & Heating in Chengdu.....	17
Immunizations .....	9	Laundry .....	17
		Meals.....	18

Post Offices .....	18
Communication .....	18
Time Difference .....	18
Telephone Information.....	18
Cell Phones.....	19
Computer/Email Access.....	19
Changing your IP Address Before you Go ....	19
Language.....	19
Cultural Notes.....	20
Government.....	20
Local Culture .....	20
Religion.....	21
One Child Policy .....	21
Gender Relations .....	21
Police Registration .....	21
Spitting .....	22
Dining Etiquette .....	22
Texting Culture .....	22
Crowds.....	22
Traffic.....	22
Toilet Expectations/Open Butt Pants.....	23
Tipping.....	23
Contact Names & Addresses.....	24
Web Resources for China.....	25

**CONGRATULATIONS** on being accepted to the UW-Eau Claire study abroad program with USAC Chengdu, China. Living and studying in a foreign culture is both an exciting and a challenging experience. Past participants of study abroad report that the many advantages of international study include:

***Building upon existing foreign language skills***

***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!

This program guide is to be used together with the general Study Abroad Handbook. The handbook has information that is valid for all study abroad programs. This guide will provide you with specific information for the Chengdu program. It is designed to complement the handbook, study abroad orientation, and your individual pre-departure preparations.

Please realize that although this guide was written to help you better prepare for your time abroad, and that all the information available at the time of publishing has been used, it is impossible for any single resource to answer all your questions. We strongly encourage you to contact your peer advisor, the Center for International Education (CIE) study abroad staff, and Chinese students on campus with your specific questions. You should also make use of the additional written and web resources listed towards the end of this guide.

Basic questions only you can answer include:

1) What are YOUR goals for this experience? Common objectives of students abroad include advancement in future profession, wish to expand personal and academic horizons, need for a change, and wish to challenge oneself with immersion in a new culture.

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 the Chinese culture, how can you ensure that you do not spend too much time with U.S. students? How can you best meet your goal?

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

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### **The Program**

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire has partnered with University Studies Abroad Consortium (USAC) to offer students the opportunity to study the politics, culture, and language of China in Chengdu, China. This exciting program in China will not only interest students in Asian studies but will also be of interest to those who enjoy learning about different cultures, globalization, economic development, etc.

### **The Location**

Chengdu is the capital of the beautiful Sichuan Province of China and is known as "the city of heaven." It is a city where the past meets the present and is the fastest developing city in China. Chengdu has a population of around 14 million people, making it an economic, cultural, and political center of southwest China. It is known for its tea houses and for the year-round availability of fresh vegetables (a rarity in China). Past participants say that once you come to Chengdu, you will never want to leave.

### **The University**

The program is located on the campus of Southwest University for Nationalities. The campus has more than 20,000 students from all 55 ethnic groups in China and is nestled in the heart of Chengdu, which means there are a lot of local restaurants

nearby. On campus, students have access to the library, post office, academic buildings and many athletic complexes for ping-pong, basketball, etc.

## **Academic Calendar**

### **Spring 2019**

Depart U.S.	January 8 (if doing optional Shanghai tour)	January 13 (if NOT doing Shanghai tour)
Arrival	January 9 (if on tour)	January 14 (if NOT on tour)
Orientation	January 15	
Classes Begin	January 16	
Final Exams	May 6-10	
Program Ends	May 12	
Move out of housing	May 12	

\*Dates are subject to change. To see a more detailed program calendar:

<http://usac.unr.edu/study-abroad-programs/china/chengdu/calendars> and click on your term.

## ACADEMICS

*There is additional information on academic topics such as eligibility, registration, class attendance, credits and course load, grades, transcripts, and accessing the UW-Eau Claire*

*library while abroad in your Study Abroad Handbook.*

### **Registration**

As part of the USAC admissions process, you completed a preliminary course registration. You completed this form indicating your course and tour selections along with two alternative courses in case any courses become unavailable. Please note that courses may still change due to low enrollment or cancellations in offerings.

If you need to change your courses before you arrive in China, you can do so by contacting [registration@usac.edu](mailto:registration@usac.edu) and letting them know which courses you want to change. You can make changes up until USAC's application deadline.

You will receive your final course schedule during the on-site orientation. The USAC Resident Director will make every effort to avoid class conflicts; however, there may be scheduling conflicts and you may need to adjust your class selection. Please be flexible and prepared for course changes.

You are given a period of a few days to add/drop courses once you arrive onsite. Written permission is required from both the Resident Director and instructor to add, drop, or change the status of a course once it has begun.

### **Withdrawing from USAC Courses**

Your resident director in China 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 abandon a class without officially withdrawing from it, the grade will be reported as an "F" (improper withdrawal).

### **Chinese Language Requirement**

All students are required to enroll in at least one language course. Students who don't enroll in a language track must take Elementary Chinese I to help assimilate more effectively into the Chinese culture. Students are strongly encouraged to continue their language study if they have previous Chinese instruction.

### **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 take a placement exam and finalize your class schedule with the resident director and have a few days to make changes.

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



Language students will also select additional Chinese culture and studies courses to fill their schedule, as all students must take at least 12 credits.

If you register for a certain track but have already taken the first course in the track, you don't have to take it for credit, but you will have to audit it. The tracks are made up of three courses and it is very important that you are still present for the first course. You will move through all three courses, in your track, with the same professor and students.

### ***Chinese Culture Studies***

Students who decide NOT to take the Chinese language tracks will need to enroll in Elementary Chinese I 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-programs/china/chengdu/courses> and click on the appropriate term.

### ***Internships***

USAC offers students the opportunity to enroll in an internship. Student do need to have a 3.0 GPA and be at junior standing by the time of the internship. There is also a refundable \$100 fee if participating in an internship. Placements are really geared towards the participant's interest and past placements have included: local schools,

teach English within the community, local non-profits, local magazines, etc. Students are placed in Chinese-speaking environments, so you must be at an advanced level. Placement is not guaranteed by USAC, but they will do their best to arrange a placement. After you arrive, you will complete the internship application and interview with a potential sponsor site.

### ***Credits and Course Load***

All students are expected to enroll in 12-18 credits. Course availability is subject to student enrollment and can change.

Credits earned abroad on this program are considered UW-Eau Claire resident credits.

**All course grades will be figured into your UW-Eau Claire GPA.**

### ***Class/Activity Attendance***

When studying abroad, you are required to follow the attendance policies of your program abroad. In general, you are expected to attend all regularly scheduled classes and field trips unless illness or other unavoidable circumstances make this impossible. Absences must be approved in advance by the instructor and may result in lower grades.

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.

### ***Academics at USAC Chengdu***

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.

You might not have to purchase books for your courses as USAC has some on-site. Right before you leave the U.S. you will receive a book list from USAC.

### ***Grades***

Courses in the 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 UW-Eau Claire transcript; **grades are included in your UW-Eau Claire GPA**. Pass/Fail grades are not allowed.

### ***Grade Reports***

At the end of the program, USAC prepares a grade report, which is sent to UW-Eau Claire. USAC will also update your grades on your Gateway account for you to review. Courses, credits, and grades are incorporated into your UW-Eau Claire transcript.

**Grade reports are not available until two or three months after the end of the term.** Due to this delay, you will initially receive a grade report with "NR" (not reported) for all courses. The actual courses you took will be reflected on your record once the CIE receives your grade report from USAC.

**If you are a senior and are studying abroad at USAC China for your last semester, please note that the different**

**timelines in grade reporting may require you to delay your graduation.**

## **MONEY MATTERS**

*Information about how payments are made, when they are due, the withdrawal/refund deadlines, financial aid, scholarships, budgeting, and ways to bring money abroad is in your Study Abroad Handbook.*

### **Cost Estimate**

You can find the most current cost estimate for your program, in easily printable format, on the [CIE China Webpage](#). Be sure you are looking at the correct term. Remember that the cost estimate includes what you pay to UW-Eau Claire, what you pay to USAC, and what you pay directly to other vendors.

**Optional Personal Travel:** This varies greatly from student to student, depending on your budget and your priorities. Students who want to be involved in their host community generally spend less time (and money) traveling. Others travel every weekend with correspondingly high costs and fewer close connections in their new home.

### **USAC Scholarships**

USAC offers a variety of scholarships for students. To see more information, visit [USAC's Scholarship website](#). You will have optional scholarship applications applied to your USAC Gateway account when they are

open. Students can apply for all scholarships they are eligible for and can be awarded more than one scholarship.

USAC also offers an alliance scholarship just for UWEC students on one of their specialty programs. This application will be applied to your BlugoldsAbroad account in **September for spring students** and in March for Summer/Fall/Academic Year students. Your UWEC Study Abroad Coordinator, Jenna, will email you when it is available. The number of awards will vary by term. Amounts will 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 US citizen, demonstrate financial need, be accepted to a program based in Asia (China is included), 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>

## ***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>

The exchange rate as of June 2018 was 1 U.S. dollar = 6.43828 CNY. You can find current exchange rates at <https://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>

## ***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.

## ***Traveler's Checks***

Traveler's checks are increasingly rare, difficult to use and not recommended. They generally must be cashed at a major bank, although in some countries, post offices

also offer this service. You must have your passport with you. Most banks charge a fee for cashing the checks; it can vary widely. Before cashing a check, **ASK** what the fee is.

Make sure you record your check numbers and keep the numbers separate from the checks, in case you need to get them replaced.

### ***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 on and very close to campus, which can be used to withdraw CNY.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

*Additional information on these issues, as well as information on CISI insurance, is included in the Health Issues and Safety Abroad sections of your Study Abroad Handbook.*

### ***Immunizations***

The CDC recommends that travelers to China discuss several vaccinations with a doctor at least 4-6 weeks prior to travel.

You can find the list of vaccinations here:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/china.htm>

Malaria is generally not a risk in cities including Chengdu, Beijing, etc., although it is a concern in some rural areas of China. If you plan to do any additional travel outside of the program destinations, discuss travel plans with your doctor.

UW-Eau Claire's Student Health Services offers immunizations (IG, tetanus, Hepatitis B, etc.) and health education on international travel. You can make an appointment by calling (715) 836-5360.

### ***Water***

Although China is in the process of updating its water purification systems, **tap water is generally considered unsafe**. You should drink bottled or boiled water always. Brush your teeth with bottled or boiled water also.

Carbonated bottled water, soft drinks, beer, wine, hot tea, and coffee are usually safe. Be sure to wipe off the top of a bottle before drinking out of it or ask for a straw. 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. Where water is contaminated, ice

is also contaminated, you will want to remember to order drinks without ice.

When you are not in control of your water supply, 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).

If you decide to live in the residence hall, USAC may be able to arrange a large bottled water service (like Culligan in the U.S.) for you. Your resident director will give you more information at orientation on site. If this is available, there is a small fee for it that you must pay directly to the water company. Past students have utilized this service and found it beneficial.

### **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 is common in Sichuan cuisine;

however, there will be milder food to choose from as well. If you have a low tolerance to spicy foods, be sure to ask the resident director how to say, "no spice" or "little spice" in Chinese. Keep in mind, that even if you request for no spice, it still may seem spicy to you.

### **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>

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.

### ***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](mailto:kroschjm@uwec.edu)). If you are abroad when you decide this, you can also reach out to the resident director for assistance.

### ***Safety in China***

Be cautious when using taxis and always make sure that the driver starts the meter. If a taxi driver is refusing to use the meter, get out of the taxi and find one that will use a meter. It is a law that all taxi drivers must

use their meter, but when they see you are a foreigner, they may try to scam you. If you tell them to use their meter, they will know you understand the law. Always have your destination written in Chinese so you can show the driver.

Information on crime, road safety, drug penalties, and terrorist activity in China can be found on the state departments website at

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/in-ternational-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/China.html>

### ***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.** We suggest you 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](#). Plan and research numbers before you go.

### ***Emergency Contacts***

General emergency procedures are described in the Study Abroad Handbook, and USAC Chengdu staff are available if difficulties arise. You will receive an emergency contact card prior to departure;

be sure to keep it in your wallet always. The information is also on the Contact Names & Addresses page of this guide. During orientation in Chengdu, the USAC staff will also provide you with their contact information and other emergency numbers. Keep all of these in a safe spot.

## Travel to North Korea

As of September 2012, the U.S. State Department has issued a travel advisory, level 4 (Do Not Travel) for North Korea (DPRK) and strongly warns US citizens to not travel to North Korea.

According to the travel advisory, "The North Korean government will detain, prosecute, and sentence those who enter the DPRK without first having received explicit, official permission and an entry visa from its government. **Travel by U.S. citizens to North Korea is not routine, and U.S. citizens crossing into North Korea, even accidentally, have been subject to arrest and long-term detention. Students should not travel to North Korea, even if on an approved travel company.**"

**The CIE strictly forbids any UWEC students from travelling to North Korea.**

For the full advisory, please visit the U.S. State Department site:  
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/in-ternational-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information->

[Pages/KoreaDemocraticPeoplesRepublicof.html](#)

## REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

## Passport

*General passport information is found in your Study Abroad Handbook.*

## 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](#) scroll to “Entry, Exit and Visa Requirements” for more information.



A visa is official permission to visit a country and is granted by the government of that country. All U.S. citizens must obtain a visa prior to studying in China. It is your responsibility to obtain a student visa from the Chinese government. If you are not a U.S. citizen, or if you plan to travel to other countries while you are abroad, you should verify visa requirements for each country by contacting the nearest consulate. You need to know before you go!

USAC will post very helpful visa information to your Gateway account and your UWEC coordinator will meet with you to discuss your visa options.



## PACKING TIPS

*In addition to the general packing information in your Study Abroad Handbook, you should know the following about China.*

### **Clothing & 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.

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.

### **Other Clothing Tips**

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.

### **Appliances**

The standard electric current in China is 220 volts. U.S. appliances such as hair dryers and razors run on 110 volts. If you plan to bring these appliances, you will need to buy a converter and a plug adapter. Do not be surprised if the voltage ruins your hair dryer or other hair appliances. It is recommended that you purchase electronics that use high

voltage (like hair dryers) in China. Items such as computers should be okay with the standard adapter and converter.

### ***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.

### ***Packing List***

Your peer advisor will give you a packing list at your second program group meeting during the semester prior to your departure.

## **GETTING TO CHINA**

### ***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 by 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. If you arrive before or at the same time as the group flight, it may be possible to join the group transportation, depending on availability.

### ***USAC Group Flight***

Benefits to booking with the optional group flight:

- Flexible tickets that are refundable and changeable for a fee
- 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 for a reasonable amount
- Flexible payment plan (pay a deposit to hold your seat, then pay the balance two weeks prior to departure)
- 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 post information to your Gateway account on how to sign up for the group flight.

### ***Getting to USAC Housing***

Students who are staying in the dorm will go directly there to move in. Your name will be at the front desk and you will be given a room right away. The International Student Residence Hall is located just inside the East Gate of the university campus. USAC will provide you with the address and further information prior to your arrival in Chengdu.

Students living in the apartments will be taken there by the USAC staff.

Arriving early is strongly discouraged and you will not have assistance from USAC.

### ***Orientation***

You will have a mandatory orientation upon arrival to Chengdu. The orientation will introduce you to Southwest University for Nationalities and its services, as well as to Chengdu in general. Chinese buddies will teach you how to use the public transportation, show you around the city and campus, and answer general questions you may have. There is a \$200 penalty for not attending the entire orientation.

You will receive your final course schedule during the on-site orientation.

### ***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.

## **GETTING INVOLVED**

### ***Tours and Field Studies***

During orientation, USAC will provide a city tour for all students. This will give you the opportunity to familiarize yourself with Chengdu.

Depending on the term, USAC also provides students with field trips to the Panda Research Institute, the restored ancient village of Huanglongxi, the Yellow Dragon River, and the largest sitting Buddha at Leshan and Emei Shan. (Field trips included in your USAC fees vary from term to term.)

USAC will arrange OPTIONAL tours and field studies as well. In the spring, the program will begin with an optional tour of Shanghai.

**All optional tours are NOT included in your USAC fees** and students must pay for these out of pocket. USAC will send more information on how to enroll and pay for these tours.

### ***Campus Involvement***

There are numerous clubs on campus that USAC students are invited to join.

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 \$56-\$72 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.

## HOUSING

USAC will provide you with a housing questionnaire on your Gateway account and you will need to fill it out in timely manner. Failure to do so could result in you being responsible for finding your own housing. Students are generally given their first choice of housing (however not guaranteed) and you will find out once you arrive in Chengdu.

The cost of living in the residence hall or in a shared apartment is different and USAC will post a housing guide to your USAC Gateway account that goes through the specifics of each.

Please note that smoking laws are different in other countries. While every effort will be made to accommodate your preferences, it depends on availability and is not guaranteed.

Remember, when assessing the quality of the facilities available to you in Chengdu, you need to use Chinese, not U.S.,

standards. Although USAC does its best to make sure all apartments and residence halls are up to Chinese standards, they may not have the same comforts as your U.S. housing. Also, in China, as in many countries in the developing world, **electrical outages are common** and may even be scheduled at times.

Finally, remember that you are going to a sub-tropical region and heat may be limited during the colder months. Walls are thinner (they don't need insulation), and insects are larger (they live year-round!) than they are in the Midwest. Cockroaches are common, as are other large insects. This is a part of life that often requires some adjustment from students from colder climates!

You will have a few options for housing in Chengdu:

### Shared Apartment

Cost of rent will vary. You will live with other USAC students in an apartment located off campus, in a residential neighborhood. Most apartments are co-ed. The apartments have three bedrooms with two bathrooms. Most apartments have a Western style toilet (sit down toilet), although that is not guaranteed. The rooms are furnished with air conditioning and heat, fridge, TV, and washing machine. You will have your own bedroom and share the common areas of kitchen, bathroom, living room, etc. If you

would like a room with a private bath, there will be a surcharge for this. Students living in the apartments are responsible for paying their own utility fees (around 300-900 CNY/month). If you decide to use the A/C and/or heating unit, you may be charged for the additional electricity, as it costs a lot to run those items.

Linens are NOT provided in the apartments. Internet and phones are also NOT included in the housing fee. The fee is around \$18/month for unlimited usage of Internet, but students are responsible for paying for this.

Neighbors and landlords are very sensitive to noise. As such, parties in the apartments are strictly forbidden.

### **International Student Residence Hall**

You will live in a residence hall, on campus, with other international students. You will have a single room with a private bathroom (with a Western-style sit down toilet) and shower. Furnishings provided in your room include a TV, air conditioning and a water cooler (think Culligan water coolers). Students will pay for water delivery, which will be explained during orientation. There are shared kitchens, with a fridge, on every floor that students can use. There is also shared laundry and each floor. Students also must pay for electricity and other utilities (average around 300 CNY/month)

Linens are not provided. If you plan to arrive late at night, you may want to travel with a smaller blanket as you may not have time to go purchase one. Phones and Internet are available in the residence halls. Internet is available in the rooms, but it is maintained by the university and may be unreliable. Parties in the residence hall are strictly forbidden.

### ***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.

### ***Laundry***

You will have access to laundry facilities whether you are in the apartments or residence hall. Dryers are not common in

China, so you will be expected to line dry your clothes.

### **Meals**

You are responsible for your own meals. You will have access to kitchen facilities to cook your own meals. There are also many local restaurants and cafes right outside the university gates that cater to students. The restaurants and cafes frequented by students are very affordable, often costing around \$2-\$3 for a meal.

There is a cafeteria located very close to the residence hall, and students can pay to eat there as well.

### **Post Offices**

There is a post office on campus that you will be able to use to send mail, buy stamps, etc. The employees may not speak good English, so you may want to bring your Chinese buddy with you if you require more extensive services. Sending and receiving mail from the U.S. can take a long time and can be very expensive.

If you would like mail sent to you, please use this address:

YOUR NAME  
c/o Wentao Song  
International Student Dorm 8002  
Southwest Minzu University  
Chengdu, Sichuan

610041 PR CHINA  
0086-1370-8175-715

Please note that anything mailed to you over \$25 in value will be charged high customs fees. It is not possible to receive vitamins, food or medicine by mail.

## **COMMUNICATION**

*Information on accessing/forwarding your UW-Eau Claire email address, which you need to check while abroad, is in 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.

### **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 can unlock your cell phone so that you can use it while abroad. You need to check with your local provider to see whether 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 Wi-Fi allows students to use Skype, FaceTime and iChat.

### ***Computer/Email Access***

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/>

### ***Language***

Mandarin is the official language of China and the language you will experience the most. Many students are often 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.

There are now a lot of apps you can download to your phone that can help make translating easier. It is recommended that you find one that works best for you.

## 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 always.

China tends to have a leisure culture, especially in Chengdu. Several 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. 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 can 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 can apply to have a second child if their first-born is a daughter. If two parents were 'only children' themselves, then they can 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 clear. 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  
Phone: 011-86-28-8552-4878  
[Wentao.song@usac.edu](mailto:Wentao.song@usac.edu)

## USAC Central Office (US)

Sarah Kapel  
University of Nevada, Reno  
1664 North Virginia St.  
Reno, NV 89557  
1-866-404-8722 or 1-775-682-5847  
[Sarah.kapel@usac.edu](mailto:Sarah.kapel@usac.edu)

## OTHER RESOURCES

The U.S. Department of State offers useful travel information on the "Tips for Traveling Abroad" section of their website:  
<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/checklist.html>

## 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)

## UW-Eau Claire Center for International Education

### Jenna Krosch

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Fax: (715) 836-4948  
[kroschjm@uwec.edu](mailto:kroschjm@uwec.edu)

# WEB RESOURCES FOR CHINA

City
<b>Chengdu Living:</b> (a blog about life in Chengdu) <a href="http://www.chengduliving.com">http://www.chengduliving.com</a>
<b>Weather in Chengdu:</b> <a href="http://www.travelchinaguide.com/climate/chengdu.htm">http://www.travelchinaguide.com/climate/chengdu.htm</a>
<b>Lonely Planet: Chengdu:</b> <a href="https://www.lonelyplanet.com/china/sichuan/chengdu">https://www.lonelyplanet.com/china/sichuan/chengdu</a>
Culture
<b>Lessons Learned from living in China</b> (blog): <a href="https://www.nomadicmatt.com/travel-blogs/life-lessons-learned-china/">https://www.nomadicmatt.com/travel-blogs/life-lessons-learned-china/</a>
Country
<b>Lonely Planet-China:</b> <a href="http://www.lonelyplanet.com/china">http://www.lonelyplanet.com/china</a>
<b>CIA World Factbook: China:</b> <a href="https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ch.html">https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ch.html</a>
<b>China Tourism Booking Site – C-Trip:</b> <a href="http://english.ctrip.com">http://english.ctrip.com</a>

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