Study Abroad

USAC BRAZIL: FLORIANÓPOLIS
2020

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

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

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

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

Questions only you can answer include:

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

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

The information in this guide was current at the time of publication, though changes may occur at any time.
ACADEMICS
Additional information on topics such as maintaining program eligibility, registration at UWEC, class attendance, course equivalencies, grades, transcripts and service learning is in the Academics section of your Study Abroad Handbook.

Pre-departure Planning
Please see the UWEC academics page for Brazil for details on how to plan your courses in Brazil.

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

Credits and Course Load
Summer
You will enroll in three to six credits each summer session. Students are required to take at least one, three-credit course each session.

Introduction to Portuguese I (1 credit) or Introduction to Portuguese II (1 credit) is required for students not taking an intensive Portuguese language course. This course is meant to help you assimilate into the culture.

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

Semester
You are required to take a minimum of 12 credits for the semester and may take a maximum of 18 credits. All students must enroll in an intensive language and culture course during the first four weeks of the fall semester or the first five weeks of the spring semester.

You will be placed into the appropriate language level and the course will take you to different cultural areas around Florianópolis.

Students will then fill their schedules with additional language courses and/or electives in international business, environmental/conservation management, Latin American Studies, etc.

For all terms:
- Most courses will be taught in English unless noted on USAC’s website.
- The credits you earn abroad are considered UWEC resident credits.
- The classes you take abroad will count towards the total credits needed for graduation.
- Dropping below full-time status may result in loss of financial aid and/or insurance coverage and must be approved in advance by the CIE and USAC.

Internships
All internships require an additional deposit and if you successfully complete your internship, USAC will refund that to you.

Summer
Summer students need to be enrolled in both sessions and have Portuguese language in order to complete an internship. Internships can be for 1 or 2 credits. In very rare cases, students with no Portuguese MIGHT be able to find an internship but that is not guaranteed.

Semester
Semester students can do an internship for 1-3 credits. Students do need to have previous Portuguese to participate in an internship. Very rarely can internship placements be found in settings where Portuguese isn’t needed.
Portuguese Language Studies
As mentioned, all semester students are required to complete a 4 or 5 week intensive Portuguese course at the start of the semester. Summer students are required to take Intro to Portuguese I or II if they aren’t taking intensive language courses.

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

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

Additional Studies
Students who decide to not take the additional Intensive language tracks will need to enroll in other elective courses. To see tentative course offerings, go to: https://usac.edu/study-abroad-programs/brazil/florianopolis/courses and click on your term.

Registration in Floripa
Once you arrive in Floripa, you will take a placement test and your registration is adjusted accordingly, if you’re planning to do the intensive language track. You won’t have multiple time slots to choose from, like you usually do in the states so you may need to adjust your courses. You need to be flexible and have backups in mind. There is a drop-add period and withdrawal deadline set by the USAC resident director. You will receive these dates upon arrival.

Some courses may no longer be offered due to under enrollment so that is another reason why having backups is important.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For all terms: Due to this delay, you will initially receive a grade report with “NR” (not reported) for all courses. This will be changed once your grade report arrives.

The Academic System
In Brazil, 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. Brazilian 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. The course work will vary by professor but you may find some faculty will only require you to do a few assignments and exams, so your grade may not be based on a lot.

Brazilian 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 Portuguese and typically their English is not proficient enough to join you in courses taught in English. However, there will be many opportunities to interact with local students.

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

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

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

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

Currency Exchange
The currency of Brazil is the real. It is abbreviated as “BRL” or “R.” You can find examples of bills and coins at:

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

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

USAC Scholarships
USAC Scholarships: USAC offers a variety of scholarships. For information, visit USAC’s Scholarship website. You will see optional scholarship applications on your USAC Gateway account when they open. You can apply for all scholarships you are eligible for and can be awarded more than one scholarship.

Scholarships for UWEC students on USAC Programs: USAC also offers an Affiliate Scholarship just for UWEC students on a USAC program. You will be considered for this scholarship when you complete the UWEC Study Abroad Foundation Scholarship application. The number of awards varies by term. Amounts vary between $200 - $500.

Credit Cards
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.

Cash
You can order Brazilian Real from your bank before you leave or you can use the ATMs in the international airport when you arrive in Brazil.

You can use BRL at stores and restaurants.

Banks/ATMs
You will be able to use ATMs all throughout the city to withdraw money. Make sure you know your 4-digit PIN.

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

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

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

Medical/Mental Health Facilities in Floripa
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.

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

**Health Insurance in Brazil**

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

**Services for Students with Disabilities**

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

It is also important to look at the level of accessibility in Brazil in general. To find more information on the topic, please see the “Laws and Special Circumstances” tab on the [US Department of State’s Brazil site](mailto:kroschjm@uwec.edu).

**Safety in Brazil**

For important information on crime, drug penalties and other topics, please see the Safety & Security section of the [U.S. State Department Country Information Sheet](http://travel.state.gov). The State Department goes into a lot more specific information and recommendations they give their employees so that is something to consider. While it is important to be aware of these safety concerns, try to not let them take over your emotions and hinder your experiences when abroad. Specific safety in and around Brazil will be discussed during orientation in Eau Claire and at your on-site orientation in Floripa.

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

**Credit card scams and fraud:** a common problem that tourists and foreigners run into is their credit card numbers being stolen. The card itself may never leave your possession but someone may have skimmed your cards numbers. This can happen without you ever knowing. To prevent this, get an RFID wallet or bag; check to see if ATMs or credit card readers have been tampered with, etc. Keep a copy of your credit card info so you can call your bank or company right away if you notice suspicious activity.

**Adventure Sports:** Some tour operators take risks, and government regulation and oversight of firms that organize sporting activities may not
always adhere to international standards and best practices.

- Use caution and common sense if engaging in ALL adventure sports, and remember that they are NOT covered by CISI insurance, such as bungee jumping, sky diving, hiking, rappelling, climbing, whitewater rafting, kayaking, etc.
- Never participate in adventure sports alone. Always carry identification and let others know where you are at all times.
- When hiking, rappelling, or climbing, carry a first aid kit and know the location of the nearest rescue center.
- Observe all local or park regulations and exercise caution in unfamiliar surroundings.

**Water Safety:** Brazil is known for their beaches but with the ocean, comes safety concerns. The beaches can have very dangerous rip tides, even if the water looks safe. Only swim in areas that are designated as being okay, have lifeguards or first responders. Shark attacks can also happen. There have been shark attack reports in the past and especially on the northern beaches, near Recife. No matter where you are swimming, always be on the lookout and follow all warnings.

**Blackouts:** Occasionally, there may be blackouts within larger cities. When these occur, sometimes there is increased violence. Most large hotels have generators that kick in. You may never experience these in Floripa but if you do, just know that this is a common thing and is a part of learning about a different way of living. Always remain cautious if you experience a blackout.

**Housing Developments in Brazil:** The US Department of State has a lot of information about this topic on their website under “Safety and Security” but here are the important takeaways:

- “Do NOT travel to
  - informal housing developments in Brazil (commonly referred to in Brazil as favelas, vilas, comunidades and/or satellite cities, even on a guided tour, at any time of day due to crime. The tour companies and police cannot guarantee your safety when you enter these areas and situations can change very fast. Be careful if you are in areas surrounding these as most often confrontation can go outside these areas.

**Safety Precautions:** To help reduce the chances of becoming a victim of crime,
- be sure to limit the amount of belongings you carry with you to draw less attention to yourself
- Wearing expensive jewelry will draw unwanted attention
- Keep expensive technology out of site when out and about
- Don’t walk on beaches alone, at night
- Don’t go out alone – always go in pairs or more
- Be aware of what is going on in the streets and avoid any areas that seem suspicious
- Crime on public transportation happens so use caution
- Always give up your items if you are held up. This reduces your chances of being injured.
- Always keep an eye on your drinks
- Registered taxis have red license plates and openly display the company information and phone numbers.

**Zika**
Zika is found throughout Brazil and other parts of South America. The Zika infection, in pregnant women, can cause serious birth defects so the CDC doesn’t recommend travel to affected areas for women who are pregnant. While Zika hasn’t been found in Floripa, if you
travel to other areas you may encounter it. To learn more about Zika, please see the [CDC’s website](http://www.cdc.gov).

**Malaria**
Malaria can be a very serious and potentially life-threatening disease that is transmitted by mosquito bites. Malaria is present in parts of Brazil and South America. While Floripa isn’t known for malaria, if you plan to travel to other parts of Brazil, you may encounter regions where it is present. To see a map of where Malaria is present, [click here](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/malaria).

You should discuss your malaria prevention strategy with your doctor, since personal travel plans may affect it. When talking with your doctor, please discuss the program location and your personal travel plans. What you will do about malaria prevention is a decision you must make with your doctor. Neither the CIE nor USAC-Brazil can make this decision for you. If you decide to take anti-malaria medication, follow the instructions from your physician carefully. **Remember that malaria is rarely acquired if you’ve taken the proper precautions.**

If you become ill, early treatment is essential. Consider any flu-like illness in a malarial area to be malaria until proven otherwise.

Common symptoms of malaria include fever and chills, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headaches, and dizziness. **See a physician promptly!** Delay in seeking medical care increases the chances of complications. Per the CDC, "Malaria symptoms will occur at least 7 to 9 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Fever in the first week of travel in a malaria-risk area is unlikely to be malaria; however, you should see a doctor right away if you develop a fever during your program. Malaria may cause anemia and jaundice. Malaria infections with Plasmodium falciparum, if not promptly treated, may cause kidney failure, coma, and death. Despite using the protective measures outlined above, **travelers may still develop malaria up to a year after returning from a malarious area.** You should see a doctor immediately if you develop a fever anytime during the year following your return and tell the physician of your travel.

To learn more about malaria, please visit the CDC website: [http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/malaria](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/malaria).

**Yellow Fever**
In 2017, Santa Catarina, the state that Florianópolis is in, was listed as a "vaccination recommended" state due to the outbreak that occurred. Since then, it has stayed as a recommendation. To learn more, you can see [here](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellow-fever-vaccination-clinics/search). You should discuss this with your doctor to see if obtaining the yellow fever vaccine is right for you. If you plan to travel to areas where it has been recommended since before 2017, you may want to consider it more.

**Please note:** At the time of printing (December 2019), the CDC has announced that there is a shortage of Yellow Fever Vaccines in the United States. There are only a few clinics that have the approved vaccine and can administer vaccinations. Due to this, you may need to travel to obtain the vaccine. Please see this website: [https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellow-fever-vaccination-clinics/search](https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellow-fever-vaccination-clinics/search) to learn more and to accurately plan where you can obtain the vaccination.

To learn more about yellow fever and the vaccination, please visit the CDC website [http://www.cdc.gov/yellowfever/](http://www.cdc.gov/yellowfever/) and discuss with your doctor.
Prevent Bug Bites
Bugs (mosquitoes, ticks, and fleas) can spread a number of diseases in Brazil. Malaria, zika and yellow fever (described above) are carried by mosquitos. Some other diseases spread by insects in Brazil such as dengue, cannot be prevented with a vaccine.

The best way to avoid malaria and other diseases spread by insects is to prevent bug bites! To minimize bites:
- Cover up with clothing. Wear garments with a high neckline (or a bandana around the neck), long sleeves, and long pants.
- Use a DEET-containing insect repellent on exposed skin AND permethrin, an insecticide, on clothing.
- Avoid shiny jewelry and perfumed cosmetics, as they attract mosquitoes.
- Remain indoors at dusk or after dark.
- When travelling on your own, choose accommodations with tidy grounds and air conditioning or with windows having well-fitting screens. Use mosquito netting elsewhere.
- Check that bed netting has no holes or rips.
- Tuck netting under your mattress.
- Avoid unproven preventatives, such as mosquito coils or Avon Skin-So-Soft. While these are popular folklore insect repellents in the United States, they perform poorly in scientific studies.

Other Vaccinations
Routine vaccines: The CDC recommends that all routine vaccinations be up-to-date before any travel. These include the following vaccines:
- measles-mumps-rubella (MMR),
- diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis,
- varicella (chickenpox),
- polio, and
- yearly flu shot.

Recommended for most travelers: You should also discuss the following vaccinations with your doctors: Typhoid, Hepatitis A and Yellow Fever (see section above).

Recommended for some travelers. Hepatitis B, malaria, and rabies are recommended for some travelers based on travel plans and length of stay.

To learn more, please visit the CDC website and consult your medical doctor. The CIE and USAC cannot advise on what immunizations you should/should not get.

Food/Water
Do not drink the tap or well water in Brazil. Keep in mind that this most likely includes ice as that is usually made with tap or well water.

You should only drink water that is bottled and sealed or disinfected. Hot coffee or tea should be okay but if your stomach is aggravated, switch to making those drinks with bottled water.

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 should avoid food that is left out at room temperature or is uncooked or unpasteurized. When in doubt, only eat food from places where you know the facilities are clean.

Food and Waterborne Illnesses
Diarrheal illness is very common in Brazil. Typical causes are unclean water, contaminated food, and unclean hands. Thorough hand washing prior to food preparation and eating can help diminish the risk of diarrheal disease. However, other diseases can be contracted from unclean water and food.
You may want to ask your doctor about bringing prescription or over-the-counter medications to Brazil in case you get sick. If you do fall ill, make sure that you stay hydrated as dehydration is a serious concern for those with diarrhea.

**Schistosomiasis**: Schistosomiasis is caused by a parasitic worm that is spread by fresh water snails and found in Brazil. The larval stage of the worm can burrow through your skin when in contact with contaminated fresh water. Avoid wading, swimming, bathing, washing in, or drinking from bodies of fresh water such as canals, lakes, rivers, streams, or springs.

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

**911 Equivalent in Brazil**
If you are in an emergency in Brazil, you will need to know how to reach the local police, fire, or ambulance services. The local equivalent to the 911 emergency line in Brazil is **190 for police; 192 for ambulance; 193 for fire**.

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

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

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**REQUIRED DOCUMENTS**

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

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

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

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

**Student Visa On-Site Police Registration**
Student visa registration is mandatory in Brazil and must be done within 90 days of arrival. **When you arrive in Brazil, you will be given a small entry paper which will be stamped at immigration. You MUST keep this in a safe place for your visa registration in Florianópolis.**

The USAC office, in Brazil, will provide instructions about registering your student visa during orientation. The USAC staff will help arrange appointments. You will have to gather documents, pay the registration fee and go to the Brazilian Federal Police Station, in person, to complete your visa registration. You have to be present for all of the steps to registering your visa.
Documents needed from the US: make copies of your entire visa application BEFORE submitting to the consulate (the part you do in the states). Keep everything the consulate returns to you and bring ALL of these to Brazil. If you forget this paperwork, it could affect your on-site visa registration.

Cost of Visa Registration: The visa registration process costs 330 BRL (~$105 USD) (subject to change). You will have to pay this amount, in cash, at the start of orientation in Florianópolis (this is NOT included in your program fees).

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

Packing Tips

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

Weather

The seasons are opposite in the southern hemisphere! Floripa is a subtropical environment that will be hot and humid! The sun is going to be much stronger (you’re close to the equator) so be prepared to protect yourself! Even if you tan easily in the mid-west – you will most likely have a reaction to the Brazilian sun.

The warm season is from December – March with highs in the 80-90’s. This is also when the water will be warmer.

The cool season is from June – September with highs in the upper 60’s – mid 70’s. While this may not seem “cool” to us mid-westerners, if you’ve become acclimated to the tropical weather, you may find it chillier.

The wet and muggy season is from October to March with peak wet days in January-February. The dry season is from around March – October.

Being so close to the equator means that the shortest day of the year will be in June and be 10+ hours. The longest day of the year will be in December and last almost 14 hours! You will get your fill of daylight, sunshine and sweat!

Clothing / Other Items

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 but may be warmer. Loose fitting clothes are recommended as it gets HOT!

Good walking shoes and/or hiking shoes are recommended, along with a pair of dress shoes. Flip flops for the beach and for the showers might also be a good idea, especially if you intend on traveling to hostels. Water shoes might also be good to wear at the beach. A good swimsuit (or 2 or 3) as Florianópolis has over 40 beaches! Rain gear will be important too as Floripa gets over 60 inches of rain each year!

Note that sweatshirts, sweatpants and tennis shoes are usually reserved for athletic activities rather than worn as everyday items. Having a few items for cooler weather is important.

Bringing along strong SPF and a good bug spray are important. Floripa is a subtropical environment and the sun will be much stronger than what you are used to. While you can purchase these items there, bringing some will
free up suitcase space for when you come home.

Bring reusable bags for groceries! A farmer's market is nearby campus. Plus, Floripa is environmentally conscious so be on trend by bringing your own bags.

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

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

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

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

**Gifts**
If you are staying with a host family, you may want to pack some small items that you could use as gifts. It is suggested, but not obligatory, to offer a small gift for your host-family. A small memento from Wisconsin, like a UWEC mug, might be nice. If you are unsure what to bring for your host family, ask your Peer Advisor for suggestions.

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

**GETTING TO BRAZIL**
There is information on student-oriented travel agencies, instructions for booking a flight, and other travel information in the [Travel Resources section of the Study Abroad Handbook](#).

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

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

You are REQUIRED to have transportation into and out of Brazil booked before you leave your home country. This is required for the visa application and the airlines will double check it when you board. While you don’t have to leave South America at the end of your program, you do need to show that you will leave Brazil.

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

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

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

**USAC Group Flight**
The group flight may not be the least expensive option but there are benefits. Benefits to booking with the optional group flight include:

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

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

**Where to Fly?**
Depending on if you do additional tours before/after the program term (will vary by term), you may fly into/out of different airports. The Flight Guide on your USAC Gateway account will list out what airports are recommended. The three letter airport code will also be included. Be sure to look at those so you fly to the right place.

**Early Arrivals**
USAC strongly discourages students from arriving early and this could jeopardize your visa. If you do arrive early, there isn’t a place to store luggage and you should not expect to have any assistance upon arrival and should be prepared to deal with any issues on your own.

**Airport Pick-Up Service**
Please fill out the Flight Form in your Gateway account after you have booked your flight.

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

**Late Arrivals-Expected and Unexpected**
If you do not arrive as scheduled for any reason, you will be responsible for arranging and paying for your transfer from the airport. Again, watch for detailed instructions in the USAC Arrival Guide.

**Important reminder:** Write down dorm or apartment address on a piece of paper, in case you need to give it to a cab driver on arrival.

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

**SETTLING IN**

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

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

**Registration with Police**
As mentioned in the Required Documents section above, and in your USAC Gateway visa guide, you will need to register your student visa when you arrive in Florianópolis. The USAC staff will go over this during orientation and be sure to follow through in a timely manner.

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

**Getting Involved**
There are numerous clubs on campus that USAC students can participate in. Keep in mind that the Brazilian academic system is opposite us, so there may or may not be students on campus when you are there.

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

USAC will also notify you of opportunities to get involved on campus and in the local community.

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

**Paying for Housing**

**ALL STUDENTS:** A deposit (not included in program or housing fees) will need to be paid to USAC’s central office.

**Homestay students:** Housing fees are paid to the USAC central office before the balance due deadline. See your USAC Gateway account for when that is.

**Shared apartment students:** Housing fees are paid in cash to the host/owner upon arrival or in three installments throughout the program. Paying rent, in cash, in Brazil is very common. Paying in cash allows the landlord to charge less than if they use a third party to oversee the transaction. Always ask your landlord for a receipt when you pay an installment. USAC recommends you find an ATM close to your housing and go with a small group.

**Housing Expectations**
The living standards in Brazil may not be as high as you are used to in the U.S. You need to go in with the expectation that your housing may be simpler and different than what you are used to. Housing in Brazil doesn’t have clothes dryers, dishwashers, hot water taps in the sinks, garbage disposals or air conditioning. It is important to embrace this living situation instead of getting angry or upset and complaining. If these standards are a concern for you, you should meet with the UWEC study abroad coordinator to decide if this program is the best option for you.
**Year Long Students**
If you are studying for the full year, you can choose different housing options each term. If you decide to do a homestay for both semesters, housing during winter break can be arranged for an additional fee. Apartment students can stay in their apartments for the same monthly rent rates that they’ve been paying.

**Summer Session Students**
If you are doing both summer sessions, you can stay in your housing during the short break between sessions for no additional fee.

**Shared Apartments**
A shared apartment is good for students looking for a more independent lifestyle and are used to group living. Most apartments are co-ed. All apartments are different. Students who have strict eating habits are encouraged to live in the apartments.

**What’s Provided?** Each apartment has typical furnishings like a bed, desk, wardrobe. Students will share rooms or have a single room. Single rooms are more expensive and not guaranteed. There is a shared bathroom. Basic pillow, sheets and blanket are provided. Some kitchen supplies will be available to use. There is no air-conditioning.

**Roommates:** 2-5 other USAC participants

**Meals:** There is no meal plan so students will cook their own meals in their kitchen or go purchase food from restaurants/markets. There are many local markets, stores, cafes, restaurants around the area where you'll live and near campus.

**Laundry:** There will be access to a washer but no dryer so students will air dry their clothes.

**Utilities:** Water, electricity and Wi-Fi are included in the rent fee. If the event that you have unreasonably high usage of utilities, an extra amount may be charged to you/your apartment.

**Distance to class:** This will vary greatly but normally takes about 15-25 minutes to get to class.

**Placement:** You won’t learn your housing placement until about one week before you arrive in Brazil. You'll receive an email from the on-site USAC staff – nothing will be posted to your Gateway account. During the USAC application you will indicate your housing preferences. Housing is first come, first served, so you should complete that right away when it is posted to Gateway.

**Homestays**
Living in a homestay is one of the best ways to learn the local language and culture. You will need to put in some effort to engage with your family as many of them will not know English. If you have strict eating habits (i.e. celiac, vegan, allergies, very picky) living with a family may not be the best option for you. While the families will try to meet your needs, you cannot expect it to happen automatically.

Homestay families will vary from placement to placement. Some families may be traditional or some may be a single person, some may have children, some may not.

**What’s Provided?** You will have a private bedroom but share the bathroom with the rest of the family. There will be standard home furniture for your bedroom. Basic pillow, linens and towels will be provided.

**Roommates:** none

**Meals:** During the week, your family will provide breakfast and dinner. Lunches will be on your own. You will have access to the kitchen to
prep food. On the weekends, your family will provide breakfast, lunch and dinner.

**Laundry:** One load is provided each week.

**Telephone/Internet:** You will have access to WiFi.

**Distance to class:** This will vary and can range from 15-40 minutes.

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

**Financial Arrangements:** While USAC screens families carefully to try 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 you request to remain at your host family’s house, you must pay your family for room and board. It isn’t a guarantee that they would even be able to have you stay longer as they may be getting another student soon after you leave. 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:** Keep in mind that 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. USAC expects you to commit to a host family for the full semester.

If you are having problems, please contact the USAC resident director to discuss the situation. UWEC is not involved in the actual family placements and changes must be done through USAC. The resident director may be able to offer valuable cultural insight and suggestions for improving the situation. Remember to give the situation some time and to be flexible and open-minded.

**COMMUNICATION**

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

**Time Difference**

Florianópolis is 3 hours ahead of Wisconsin. So staying in touch with family/friends is easier to do.

To see the current time in Brazil visit: (find appropriate list);

https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/brazil/florianopolis

**Email/Internet**

WiFi is available in both housing options. The speed and accuracy of the WiFi may not always be the best, so have patience.

**Telephone Information**

From the U.S. to Florianópolis: To call someone in Brazil, you must first dial 011, which is the international dialing code. Next,
you dial 55 (the country code for Brazil), then 48 (the area code for Florianópolis) and the rest of the number.

From Brazil 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.

Cell Phones
Some U.S. providers are able to unlock your cell phone so that you can use it while abroad. You need to check with your local provider to see whether or not this is an option for you.

It may be easiest to purchase a pay-as-you-go phone while in Brazil. This will give you a local Brazilian number and allow you to communicate with your new friends. Calling internationally may still be expensive.

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

It is recommended you download WhatsApp as that is very popular worldwide.

Snail-mail
You will receive mail at the USAC office in your host city. This address will be provided to you in a USAC Update via your USAC Gateway account. International airmail takes 7-10 days to go either direction. Any packages that arrive to Brazil are subject to being searched by Brazilian custom officials.

Communicating in Portuguese
Portuguese and the official language of Brazil and you will experience it the most. Many students are concerned that they will not be able to communicate while in Brazil. To help with your transition to Brazil, you will have to enroll in a Portuguese language class, which will give you a nice overview of the language.

You also have the chance to be paired with a local student with whom to practice. USAC will also give you a language cheat sheet that you can carry with you that helps you remember phrases/addresses.

Some common Portuguese phrases:
Hello = olá (oh-la) or oi (oy)
Goodbye = adeus (ah-deuzh)
Bye (informal) = tchau (cha-oh)
Please = por favor (pooh-r fah-vooh-r)
Thank you = obrigado (oh-bree-gah-dooh/dah)

For more phrases: https://m.wikihow.com/Say-Common-Words-and-Phrases-in-Portuguese

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 Portuguese.

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

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

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

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

**Local Transportation**
Florianópolis has an international airport that can get you all around Brazil and internationally. They also have a great bus system and it will cost around R$2.10 each trip. Uber is also a low-cost way to get around the city and students have used this in the past. If you do Uber, be sure to take safety precautions and never accept a ride from someone posing as Uber.

In larger cities, like Sao Paulo or Rio, you will want to make sure you follow the local’s advice on what to take for transportation. If you aren’t sure, ask the USAC resident director.

**CULTURAL NOTES**

**Government**
Brazil is the largest country in South America and is comprised of 26 states and one federal district. They have three branches: executive, legislative and judiciary. After the 2018 election, Jair Bolsonaro was sworn in as the 38th and current president of Brazil. The president has come under fire recently for his interesting comments on the fires burning in the Amazon. Students are encouraged to do some research to learn more about the political situation in Brazil.

**Local Culture**
Brazil gained its independence from Portugal in 1822. After World War II, it began a transformation and has become a rising economy and political leader in the region and world.

There is a mix of European, African and indigenous cultures in Brazil and Floripa specifically. Floripa is known to have a different feel to it compared to mainland Brazil.

The African and Indian influences stem from slavery over 500 years ago. When Brazil was being colonized by Europeans and Jesuits, they brought with them more than twice as many African slaves and Indians. Brazil went through many years of turmoil and colonial expansion but it was in 1888 when slavery was abolished. In 1889 the monarchy was overthrown which also assisted in starting a social, economic and political change that accelerated modernization in Brazil. Just because slavery was abolished in 1888 didn’t mean everything would be easy for Black Brazilians. Many of them faced hardship and lack of employment due to the Brazilian government favoring “European descendant” immigrants to be better skilled laborers.

When colonists first arrived in Brazil, there is said to have been 11 million indigenous people, within 2,000 tribes, living in Brazil. Brazil currently has around 240 indigenous tribes that make up around .4% of the population. Most were lost due to exposure to diseases and later being enslaved in rubber and sugar cane plantations. Many of them have been exposed to western ways but have maintained their traditional culture language. There are still a handful of tribes that haven’t had contact with the modern world although their days seem limited as Brazil tries to industrialize the Amazon. Unfortunately, Brazil doesn’t recognize that the indigenous people are the rightful owners of their land and the government keeps taking control of more and more.

**Religion**
Catholicism has been the largest religion in Brazil since the 16th century. 90% of Brazilians associate themselves with some religion.

**Carnival**
You’ve probably heard about carnival! Originally it had ties to Catholicism and European pagan traditions. It also began as a food festival because it was the last day to eat abundantly
before the 40 days of Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday. This means that students who study in the spring will be able to experience carnival!

Brazilian carnival gets its roots from the white people bringing the tradition, but the black people brought the rhythm, music, dance and costumes. Over the years it came to be a time where everyone would gather and party in the streets. Customs and styles have merged from all over the world. During Carnival, anything is possible! People view it as a time where they can be anything and let go of all of their troubles!

Rio de Janeiro is known for their carnival but really any city you go to will have one. Floripa is known for having an eclectic mix of samba, street parties and parades. Learn more about Floripa’s carnival here.

**Gender Relations**

Traditional beliefs have always placed men ahead of women in the social hierarchy. Being that Roman Catholicism is the largest religion in Brazil, that has sometimes hindered decisions regarding reproductive rights. However, Brazil is known to have the most organized women’s movement in Latin America. Still, challenges exist for women all over Brazil.

**Non-Verbal Communication**

Brazilians are known for touching when making conversation. They do this to show interest in what you’re saying, and it’s not meant to mean anything else.

In addition, you’ll find that they don’t leave as much distance between you and them. If you keep too large of a distance, that can come off as offensive.

Also, maintain eye contact! Brazilians feel that if someone cannot maintain eye contact, they are hiding something.

When you first meet new people, men shake hands and women kiss on the cheek twice. Men and women also will kiss each other. As you first meet people, they may not kiss you but as you become friends, you can expect them to kiss on the cheek. Also, when meeting new people, be sure to greet each person individually. Don’t walk up to a group and do a general hello. Look each person in the eye and greet them.

**Tipping**

Typically tipping isn’t expected or given. People may tip if they received something special or a nonstandard service was given. Sometimes you may see a “service” charge on the bill and most people will pay this, even though it isn’t a legal obligation.

**Football**

Brazil lives and breathes football (soccer). It is seen as the one thing that brings the whole country together. Brazilians will say their football is the best as it has influences of samba and capoeira. Every boy dreams of being a professional footballer as that is the way to climb the social scale.
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Nadeen Black
Brazil Coordinator
Email: nadeen.black@usac.edu

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Jason Connolly: jason.connolly@usac.edu

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

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

U.S. Consulate in Porto Alegre, Brazil
Av. Assis Brasil 1889
Passo d'Areia, Porto Alegra RS
Phone inside Brazil: (51)3345-6000
Email: portoalegreACS@state.gov

24 hour emergency assistance:
(51) 3345-6000 during consulate hours
(51) 98293-0446 after hours

Additional consulates in Brazil:
https://br.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/contact-information-working-hours-appointments/
## WEB RESOURCES: BRAZIL

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WHAT PAST PARTICIPANTS WISH THEY HAD KNOWN

Coming soon – after we send our first students on the program! 😊

BIGGEST ADJUSTMENTS THEY HAD TO MAKE

SAFETY TIPS FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

HOW THEY SUMMED IT UP:

Updated December 2019 jmk