

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN EAU CLAIRE

CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Study Abroad



**USAC CHENGDU, CHINA
SUMMER 2017**

Program Guide

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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 of the information available at the time of publishing has been used, it is impossible for any single resource to answer all of your questions. We strongly encourage you to contact your peer adviser, 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 summer 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

Summer Session II, 2017

Depart U.S.	June 25 (if doing optional Beijing tour)	June 30 (if NOT doing Beijing tour)
Arrival	June 26 (if on tour)	July 1 (if NOT on tour)
Orientation	July 2	
Classes Begin	July 3	
Final Exams	July 24-28	
Program Ends	July 28	
Move out of housing	July 30	

*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 registration, class attendance, credits and course load, grades, transcripts, and accessing the UW-Eau Claire library while abroad in your Study Abroad Handbook.

Program Prerequisites

To participate in this program, you must **be in good academic, conduct, and financial standing and have the minimum 2.5 GPA required**. The CIE will check grades at the end of the semester prior to departure. If you have been suspended, you will not be allowed to participate in the program.

Registration

Once you are approved, you will find a Course & Tour Registration Form on your USAC Student Gateway account. You will need to complete this form indicating your course and tour selections along with 3 alternative courses. You will submit the form directly to USAC following the directions provided on your Gateway account.

If you need to change your courses before you arrive in China, you can do so until registration closes.

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 in order 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. Those who wish to focus on

Chinese culture studies have the option of taking a one credit Introduction to Chinese Language course. However, 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 finalize your class schedule with the Resident Director and have a few days to make changes. If for some reason you want to attend a different language class, you will have to take a placement test to make certain that you can move to the next level. After that, a language teacher will check it and give their approval.

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

Language students can also select additional Chinese culture and studies courses if they'd like to fill their schedule, but this is not required.

Chinese Culture Studies

Students who decide NOT to take the Chinese language tracks will need to enroll in Introduction to Chinese Language and fill their schedule with other elective courses that are intended to familiarize you with the local region and culture. To see tentative course offerings, go to: <http://usac.unr.edu/study-abroad-programs/china/chengdu/courses/2017/summer-1>

Credits and Course Load

All students are expected to enroll in 3-6 credits for Session I and 3-5 credits in Session II. If you

are hoping to use financial aid when abroad, you will need to be enrolled in at least 6 credits over the summer.

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.

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.

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/mon ey-matter.htm>

The exchange rate as of December 2016 was 1 U.S. dollar = 6.89636 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 not as widely accepted in China as they are in the U.S.** 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.

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.

Traveler's Checks

Traveler's checks are increasingly rare and difficult to use. 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 at all times. 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).

As a part of the summer program, you will most likely live in a residence hall. USAC may be able to arrange a large bottled water service for you. Your resident director will give you more information at orientation on site.

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.

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 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.

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 <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country/china.html>

911 Equivalent in China

If you are in an emergency situation 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 ahead 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 at all times. 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 warning for North Korea (DPRK) and advises U.S. citizens to avoid travel to this country.

According the travel warning, "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.

For the full warning, please visit the U.S. State Department site:

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings/north-korea-travel-warning.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](#) for more information.

Visa

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!

PACKING TIPS

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

Clothing & Weather

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.).

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 of your clothes and not buying them when you arrive.

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 adviser will give you a packing list at your program group meeting in April.

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 be in contact with you 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.

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 \$100 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. Summer students can participate in an optional Beijing Tour.

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.

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

HOUSING

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 included in your summer program fees. If you decide to do the homestay, you will need to pay additional fees directly to USAC on your Gateway account.

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

The cost of rent is included in the program fees. You will live with other USAC students in an apartment located off campus, in a residential neighborhood. The apartments have three bedrooms with two bathrooms. At least one bathroom is Western style (sit down toilet). 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).

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 have to pay for electricity and other utilities (average around 300 CNY/month)

Towels are NOT provided; however, one set of sheets and a blanket ARE. 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.

Homestay

This option is subject to availability and cannot be guaranteed. There is a surcharge should you decide and be granted this option. You will pay that surcharge directly to USAC. Utilities are included in the homestay surcharge. Breakfast and dinner are included in a homestay.

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.

If you are in a homestay, you will be given breakfast and dinner daily.

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
Foreign Affairs Office
Southwest University for Nationalities
Chengdu, Sichuan
610041 PR CHINA

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

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

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

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. If you are in a homestay, it is not a guarantee that the family will have access to the 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. 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.

Language

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

Some common Mandarin phrases:

Hello = nihao

Goodbye = Zaijian

Excuse me = Laojia

Thank you = Xiexie

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

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

CULTURAL NOTES

Government

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

Local Culture

There are 55 officially recognized ethnic groups in China, and all are represented at Southwest

University for Nationalities. Han Chinese is the largest group in China.

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

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

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

Religion

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

One Child Policy

In 1979, the family planning policy, also known as the one child policy, was put in place to help alleviate social, economic, and environmental problems in China. Over the years, there has been some leniency in the policy. The policy is most enforced in areas that are densely populated and urban, where families who have

more than one child may incur penalties from the government. Rural families are allowed two children without incurring penalties. Families that have a father who is disabled are allowed to have two children as well. Some provinces make other exceptions to the policy. Non-Han ethnic groups also have different policies in that they are usually allowed two children if they live in urban areas and three to four children if they live in a rural area. In most areas, families are allowed to apply to have a second child if their first-born is a daughter. If two parents were 'only children' themselves, then they are allowed to have two children. There are many ways that parents can qualify for exceptions to the law and recently more and more exceptions are being granted.

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

Gender Relations

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

working and taking on greater roles in professional life.

Police Registration

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

Spitting

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

Dining Etiquette

Here are some tips from the Chinese Student Association at UW-Eau Claire on dining etiquette:

- If you are provided a cloth napkin, tuck a corner under your plate so that it hangs in your lap
- When taking a break, leave your chopsticks on the side of your plate or bowl or on the chopstick rests (if provided). NEVER stick them in your food
- Making slurping noises is okay when eating noodles or drinking soup
- Don't spin, point, tap or play with your chopsticks
- Do not spear food that you cannot pick up with your chopsticks

- Don't use your hands to handle food. Lift large pieces with your chopsticks and nibble
- Passing a piece of food to someone with your chopsticks, or receiving food by snatching it with your chopsticks is extremely taboo
- You can drink water and tea whenever you like, but alcohol should not be consumed alone. Drink only after a toast is given

Crowds

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

Traffic

With large amounts of people comes chaotic traffic. While China has traffic laws, many people do not adhere to them. Be careful when using the sidewalks as motorbikes often hop up on the sidewalks when they aren't supposed to. Always look twice to make sure no one is coming and do not expect them to yield to you. Traffic accidents are very common in China, so be extra careful. See the consular information section at the end of this guide for more information on traffic safety.

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 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 look up “how tos” 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

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UW-Eau Claire Center for International Education

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Eau Claire, WI 54702
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Fax: (715) 836-4948
kroschjm@uwec.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](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)

We suggest that you copy this page and leave
it with your emergency contact and/or parents.

WEB RESOURCES: China

City	Culture	Country
Chengdu Living (a blog about life in Chengdu) http://www.chengduliving.com	Cultural China http://traditions.cultural-china.com/en/14Traditions5522.html	Lonely Planet-China http://www.lonelyplanet.com/china
Weather in Chengdu http://www.travelchinaguide.com/climate/chengdu.htm	Learn Chinese http://www.learnchineseez.com/lessons/mandarin/	CIA World Factbook: China https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ch.html
		China Tourism Booking Site – C-Trip http://english.ctrip.com

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