Region/Country-Specific Pre-Departure Orientations

Here are suggested topics to cover that will not be addressed in the large group pre-departure orientation!

Academics
   A. Classroom structure
      o Role of professor (lecturer, formal, relationship with students)
      o Role of student (participation expectations, independence, taking initiative)
      o Language of instruction
      o Grading/Exams, papers, projects
      o Reminder about transfer or direct credit (C or better if transfer)
   B. Libraries & Books
      o Accessibility/location/hours/cost of library(ies)
      o Availability of course materials and book; buy beforehand or in-country?
      o Access to UA online library resources/database
      o Is there a designated study space/center? (on campus, in the 3rd party main office)
   C. Internet
      o Included in apartment/dorm/homestay?
      o Computer labs
      o Accessibility of Wi-Fi in destination country

Living
   A. Banking & Money
      o Local currency & exchange rates (www.xe.com)
      o ATM’s
      o Using an American account abroad-notify bank and CC companies beforehand!
      o Opening local bank account
      o Paying with cash vs. paying with card
      o Cost of living differences
      o Tipping customs
   B. Housing
      o Homestay, apartment, residence hall
      o How to pay rent – included?
      o Gifts for host family
      o Transportation to and from the university/program center
      o Understand expectations about guests, staying out late, noise
      o Be cognizant of residence hall rules, curfew, etc.
   C. Health
      o Immunizations/medications prior to departure (yellow fever, malaria pills, etc.)
      o Is there an on-site clinic?
- Find English speaking doctor *before* you are sick!
- Availability of common over the counter medications (aspirin, ibuprofen, cold medicine, etc.)
- Understand your health insurance coverage. Is it reimbursement-based? Does it include dental? Only for emergencies or does it cover doctor visits?
- Obtaining prescriptions in host country
- Can you drink the tap water?

D. Safety
- Know the safe vs. unsafe areas of town
- Drinking and nightlife
- Local laws will vary from those of the US (controlled substances, alcohol consumption)
- Know your in-country emergency #s (equivalent of 911, provider’s emergency phone)
- When traveling, let someone know where you are going and when you expect to be back. Don’t make this someone from home. Tell a classmate or roommate.
- Country-specific discrimination or harassment issues (women, LGBTQ, race/ethnicity)
- Rule of thumb: If you wouldn’t do it at home, why would you do it abroad?!

E. Transportation
- How to get from the airport to your residence upon arrival
- Buses
- Subways/trains
- Taxis
- Walking (is it safe?)

Culture

A. Language
- Will locals default to speaking English?
- Expectations around studying and speaking the language
- Best practices to maximize your experience (practice; don’t be afraid to make mistakes!)

B. Local Customs and Traditions
- How to get the most from your experience (participation in local activities, clubs, etc.)
- Concept of time (strict or fluid)
- Appropriate dress
- Meals and local cuisine
- Family values and traditions

C. Gender roles
- What to expect
- How to behave- any specific “do’s” or “don’ts”?
- Male-female, male-male, and female-female interaction and communication
- Dating customs
Packing

A. Technology
   i. Computer
   ii. Electrical outlet adapter/converter
   i. Internet; wired or wireless?
   ii. Cell Phones
   i. Does your US phone have a SIM card?
   ii. International plan vs. buying local phone (plan or pay as you go)

B. General tips
   - DO NOT bring more than you can carry! Leave room for purchases abroad & souvenirs
   - Necessities/clothing specific to the region (raincoat, hiking boots, mosquito net, etc.)
   - Any specific items that you may not be able to get in your host country (OTC medication, feminine products, etc.)
   - Don’t bring anything that plugs in (besides your computer and cell charger); buy things like hair straighteners and hair dryers abroad unless you are sure it’s designed for different electrical voltages
   - Guidebook

Leisure/Travel

A. Recreation
   - Are there organized trips through the program?
   - Specific sights to see
   - Travel tips (seasons, discounts, packing for trips)
   - Passes (Euro Rail, ISIC, hostel cards, etc.)

B. Shopping
   - Groceries
   - Cheap souvenirs

Miscellaneous tips & reminders

- Invite program alumni to join and speak about their experience abroad and answer questions from the student perspective
- Visa process
- Don’t spend too much time on Skype and Facebook!
- Remember, you have access to all UA services while abroad
- You are a representative of the University of Arizona. Please be mindful of this and know that your actions and behavior will reflect not only upon yourself but the image of the university as well.