Ten issues to deal with **BEFORE** you leave

1. **Deal with MSU** - take care of any bills, holds, and paperwork with MSU. Make sure you have enrolled for the correct study abroad course sections and number of credits, as well as other summer courses and courses for the next school year. Take care of your financial aid, scholarships, loans, or any financial holds.

2. **Bills** - leave money for friends or family who will take care of your rent and bills while you are gone. You might set up automatic or on-line bill payment, which you can monitor overseas. Be sure to let your utilities, creditors, and bank know that you will be gone by providing them with your travel location and dates. *It is especially important to tell the financial institution(s) providing your credit, debit, or ATM cards. If they are not notified, they may unknowingly put a block on your overseas credit charges as a safe guard to your financial security. If you have an MSU Credit Union account, you can use ComputerLine to enter “Travel Information.”*

3. **Mail** - have you forwarded or put a hold stop on your mail. Do you have someone gathering your mail while you are gone? Visit www.usps.com to submit an electronic hold mail service for up to one month in duration. You can suspend some subscriptions while you are gone too (e.g., Netflix, newspapers, magazines, etc.).

4. **Dependants** - find proper homes for all your living friends—your children, pets, and plants. Have someone take care of your car too (e.g., start it up and drive it around the block). Don’t just let it sit around for a month.

5. **Job/Job Hunt** - inform your employer and/or future employer(s) about your trip. Have you let your future or potential employers know you will be gone? Are you set to start work when you get back? Do you have someone collecting your last paycheck for you? Make sure you check the calendar. Don’t schedule a check-in or interview while we’re camping!

6. **Family** - give your friends and family information about your flight and itinerary information (give them the blog and web addresses). Do they know how to use/access the WWW to contact you? Do they have copies of your passport and credit cards in case of emergency? Do you have a plan for them sending you money in an emergency? Have you established an expectation for contacting people back home (e.g., when you will call, how often you will call, etc.)?

Public Web Site: www.msu.edu/course/be/475/australia/
Blog: au2012studyabroad.wordpress.com/

7. **Housing** - secure or renew your lease for next year, find a sub-leaser, leave money for your rent, etc. Will someone take care of your garden/yard/home for you? Should you keep your cell phone service active? Do you need to turn off any utilities? Have you left your belongings in a state that is safe and appropriate (e.g., think about the weather)?

8. **Renewals** - renew any license or certifications that will expire while you are gone (i.e., driver’s license, automobile, insurance, etc.).

9. **Prescriptions** - fill your medication and/or contact prescriptions. Make sure you bring the actual prescription form and your prescriptions in their original labeled containers, as you may need to show it at customs or get the meds refilled in an emergency. Buy any special medical products you use frequently, as they might not have an equivalent overseas.

10. **Flights** - Did you give your flight information to the person picking you up when you get home? Remind them to check the Internet for flight delays. Also, do you have your frequent flyer card or number for our airlines? Did you contact the flight about special dietary needs?
Money matters

Settle on the amount of money you will need while abroad. Friends with foreign experience or students who have participated in study abroad programs are excellent sources for advice on spending money and ways to save money while abroad. For conversion tables, consult the foreign exchange listings in a financial newspaper such as the *Wall Street Journal* or online at [http://www.oanda.com/cgi-bin/ncc](http://www.oanda.com/cgi-bin/ncc).

Most students access home funds through automated teller machines (ATMs). Many ATMs abroad will only access a checking account. **Do not leave your funds in a savings account before departure.** Otherwise, ATMs are used the same as they are here: your home checking account is debited for your withdrawal and you secure local currency. You are charged a service charge and the current exchange rate. Check with your local bank concerning use of ATMs abroad. A list of ATM cards available through MSU Federal Credit Union is available at the Credit Union. There is a small charge for using MSU related ATMs and debit cards overseas. **If you are ordering a card for the first time, please use it a few times before leaving.** In other words, make sure it works.

If you are nervous about security, you may want to carry some of your money in the form of traveler’s checks. To lock in a favorable exchange rate before you leave, you may wish to purchase traveler’s checks in the currencies of countries you plan to visit; however, traveler’s checks in U.S. dollars are accepted at banks abroad. Leave a copy of the serial numbers of your traveler’s checks at home; take another with you separate from the checks themselves. As you cash in the checks, keep a tally of which ones remain unredeemed. If you do carry traveler’s checks, realize you will need to have access to a bank to cash them in, and there are usually fees for both getting them here and cashing them later. Please note that you are charged a fee to purchase and cash traveler’s checks, and you must cash them at a bank or bureau d’ exchange, which makes using them hard at times.

Credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard, and American Express are honored abroad. Visa and MasterCard are most common, and Discover is fairly non-existent. Seek advice from the issuing company as to the card’s applicability abroad and the billing rate for converting the amount of purchases abroad into dollars; many companies charge a conversion fee for foreign purchases. Find out from your credit card company your credit limit and be sure not to charge over that amount on your trip. **Also, as with your bank, make sure your creditors know you are traveling overseas.**

The best way to assure you of adequate funds is to take more than the proposed budget. If your money runs out and you have a credit card, you have access to additional funds. If you are a Visa cardholder, take your card to a foreign bank for a cash advance. The amount available to you varies with the exchange rate, but averages $150. You can obtain a cash advance directly from an ATM machine or speak with somebody at the bank. If you choose to do the first option, you need to know the PIN number, (your credit card company will issue this information to you). If you choose to do the latter, the bank will enter your passport and credit card numbers into the central computer, so you can't run down the street to another bank and do it again the same day.

Make sure to check, with the issuing company, that your ATM card and/or your credit cards are properly working. If they do not work properly the company will issue new ones, but this may take up to one-week. MSU Federal Credit Union will issue an ATM or Visa debit card at the branch office while you wait. A credit card replacement will be ordered and can take up to a week.

If your money runs out and you do not have an ATM card or credit cards to access funds, you have several alternatives, all based on the assumption that someone at home can send you money. Funds can be transferred or wired from home, but this process is very costly and complicated. People at home can wire money to any bank, which takes about two weeks; or, using the local AMEX Office, it takes about a
day, but high fees may apply. Avoid the expense and hassle by bringing the necessary funds and sticking to a budget.

Most ATM, debit, and credit cards will work overseas. The instructors recommend taking several forms of money and a small amount of cash, rather than large amounts of travelers’ checks. Travelers’ checks cost money to purchase and exchange, and they also require a bank or special location to redeem them.

If you take electronic forms of money, please make sure of the following:

- To use the ATM and debit cards, you usually need to have a checking account at your home bank, not just a savings account.
- Make sure you have multiple forms of money. Do not just take an ATM or a debit card, take both.
- Make sure someone at home has access to your bank account, in case you need money transferred or deposited.
- When in doubt about using an ATM machine overseas, try your US ATM card first. ATM cards are easier to replace and harder to “steal” money from than debit cards.

Tips for packing and luggage

Packing and Pre-Airport tips

- Make photocopies of your airline ticket, your passport, traveler’s checks, driver’s license, and the credit cards you take with you. Leave one set at home and keep another with you in a carry on bag or a separate place from the original items. Leave a copy of your itinerary with family or friends at home should they need to contact you in an emergency. NEVER pack your passport and other important documents in your checked luggage. Carry your passports, credit cards, and money in a money belt, pouch, fanny pack, or other device close to your body. Keep photocopies of these documents in a separate bag from the one the actual documents are in.
- Electrical service is not identical throughout the world. Australia voltage is 220 and has a different plug configuration. Many chargers support multiple voltages or voltage ranges. Check all chargers and electrical devices to see if they take a voltage range of 110-220. If so, you simply need a plug adapter. For 110 voltage electrical items, you will a voltage converter. You can purchase these items at electronics stores such as Meijer, Target, Kohl’s or Radio Shack. If you are bringing expensive electronic equipment such as a computer, obtain all necessary conversion information from a professional before departure. We do not recommend that you bring a computer on this program.

- Keep your cell charger with you in your carry on bag, as you might have an emergency before departure and need to use your phone.
• When packing, keep in mind that any object that could be used as a weapon (e.g., nail file, tweezers, finger nail clippers, etc.) should be put in your checked luggage. Cigarette lighters and other combustible materials are totally banned from any luggage. Also, see 3-1-1 list below regarding liquids.

• When packing, remember that you also will have a set of clothes on your body. When dressing for the plane, we recommend that you wear comfortable clothing such as sweat-shirts and pants, running pants, jeans, etc. Remember that the more metal on your person (i.e., belts, shoes, jewelry, etc.) the more you will need to take on and off during security. Also, remember that you will be flying to someplace cooler than Michigan. Packing to dress in layers will help for various weather conditions. You should get a blanket, tooth brush, and some footie socks on Qantas, but often the plane will be cold overnight.

• You will not always have time to change as soon as we land, so make sure you dress and pack accordingly, as you will not have time to ruffle through your bags looking for the right clothes or footwear.

• Before arriving at the airport, mark luggage tags clearly with your name, home address, and phone number and put this information inside your bags too.

• Make sure your bags are not locked before you check-in unless you have a TSA approved lock, or they will cut the locks off in Customs. Check with an insurance or travel agent about insuring your luggage and other personal effects if this issue concerns you.

• You will have to carry your own luggage. It is a good idea to pack your bags a few days early and try to carry them when you are tired. Eliminate items that are not essential. Do not pack anything you would hate to lose or have ruined. Leave at home all unnecessary credit cards, expensive jewelry, or irreplaceable family objects.

Tips for packing light:

1. Follow the packing guide.
2. Pack for layers so as to avoid bulky clothing.
3. Pack items that are mix and match.
4. Buy vacuum bags to help organize and compact the value of clothes.
5. Fill your bag up and carry it or walk with it around the block.

Luggage Restrictions:

• Avoid oversize and overweight baggage. Airlines will charge you for overweight baggage or refuse to accept them. Overweight charges are your responsibility. We suggest a bag on wheels or a backpack-style piece of luggage. Leave room for items you purchase overseas, and remember to bring a messenger bag or backpack that you can carry during the day.

• Airlines restrict the amount of baggage that passengers can carry. In general for international, airlines allow passengers 2 bags, each weighing less than 70 pounds. In addition, neither bag can exceed 62 dimensional inches in size, nor can the combined size be greater than 106 dimensional inches. Airline requirements vary from carrier to carrier, it is your responsibility to inform yourself of these requirements.
Despite the fact that you can have two pieces for the international flight, we request that you only pack one bag for the program. Also, we ask that you not bring a roller-bag as a carry-on, as they have caused us delays in the past.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carrier</th>
<th>Checked Bag</th>
<th>Carry-on Bag</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Qantas: Travel to/from USA | Size/Amount for Economy:  
Baggage Allowance: 2  
**Weight/Size:** 23kg (50 lbs.) per piece.  
Total dimensions of the 2 pieces must not exceed 270cm (106in) ) in combined length, width, and height with no one piece exceeding 158cm (62in) | Size/Amount for Economy:  
Baggage Allowance: 1 + 1 personal item  
**Weight/Size:** 7kg (15lb) All items must easily fit into the overhead bin or under the seat in front of you. May not exceed 45 linear inches (or 115 cm) in combined length, width, and height. |

- If you add additional domestic lay-overs, you may be charged to check luggage.
- To calculate the size of your baggage, use a tape measure to determine the three dimensions and add them as this example:

  \[
  30" + 20" + 12" = 62 \text{ inches} \\
  20" + 14" + 10" = 44 \text{ inches} \\
  \text{Total} = 106 \text{ inches}
  \]

- When packing your carry-on piece of luggage we suggest you include:

  1. Eyeglasses or an extra pair of contact lenses;
  2. The contact information, map, and directions of your destination;
  3. Medications (Keep medications in their original labeled container to make customs processing easier. If medications contain narcotics, carry a letter from your physician.);
  4. Needed toiletries;
  5. A sweater or sweatshirt;
  6. Reading material (a book not the library), music, puzzles, etc.; and
  7. An extra change of clothes (i.e., underwear and socks) in case your luggage gets lost.

**3-1-1 Guidelines:**

- 3-1-1 for carry-ons = 3 ounce bottle or less; 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag; 1 bag per passenger placed in screening bin. One-quart bag per person limits the total liquid volume each traveler can bring.
- Consolidate bottles into one bag and X-ray separately to speed screening.
- Be prepared. Each time TSA searches a carry-on it slows down the line. Practicing 3-1-1 will ensure a faster and easier checkpoint experience.
- 3-1-1 is for short trips. If in doubt, put your liquids in checked luggage.
- Declare larger liquids. Prescription medications, baby formula and milk (when traveling with an infant or toddler) are allowed in quantities exceeding three ounces and are not required to be in the zip-top bag. Declare these items for inspection at the checkpoint.
- Carry-on baggage restrictions:
  - All liquids, aerosols and gels must be carried in containers of no greater than 100ml/3.3oz capacity (approximately 100gm in weight).
  - All containers must fit comfortably in a transparent, resealable plastic bag.
The plastic bag must be no greater than 1 litre in capacity with a total outer edge measurement of the sealed section of the bag no larger than 80cm.

There is a limit of one plastic bag per passenger.

The plastic bag must be removed from carry-on baggage and presented to security personnel at the checkpoint for inspection and separate x-ray screening.

Containers larger than 100ml will not be accepted, even if only partially filled.

Liquids, aerosols and gels include, but are not limited to:

- water and other drinks, soups, syrups, jams, stews, sauces and pastes;
- foods in sauces or containing a high liquid content;
- creams, lotions, cosmetics, oils and perfumes;
- sprays;
- gels including hair and shower gels;
- contents of pressurized containers, including shaving foam, other foam and deodorants;
- pastes including toothpaste;
- liquid-solid mixtures;
- mascara;
- lipsticks;
- lighters;
- lip gloss or lip balm; and
- any item of similar consistency at room temperature.

Prescription medicine and non-prescription medicine is permitted provided the passenger can demonstrate a bona fide need for these items. Reasonable amounts of non-prescription medication required for the length of the flight are permitted. All medication may be subject to additional security checks.

Airport Departure and Check-In

Your departure:

- You are leaving for an international flight, so you should plan to meet at the international departures desk at the appropriate airport terminal **2:30 to 3:00 hours before we leave**
- When checking in, you should have a copy of your electronic ticket and itinerary with all associated numbers, a copy of your electronic VISA for Australia, and your passport
- You should get boarding passes for all flights, or at least flights through to Adelaide, Australia – if you have problems ask the instructors
- Please note that you should check your luggage all the way through to our final destination, which is Adelaide for this flight – if you have problems, ask the instructors
- Please check-in with the instructors before going through security

Help us get through security quickly by packing and dressing with airport security in mind:

- Put all magnetic or materials that may be damaged in transit—credit cards, ATM cards, debit cards, film, lithium batteries, etc.—in your checked luggage.
- No sharp objects or things that could be consider weapons in your checked luggage.
- When going through security, remember that you will need to remove jackets, shoes, belts, large jewelry/watches, etc. Also, you will need to empty your pockets and take any laptops or liquids out of your bag for easier inspection (3-1-1 rule). As such, we recommend **packing and dressing appropriately** as you will need to go through security frequently and sometimes quickly.
- Always keep your carry-on luggage close to you! Do not leave it unattended.
Arriving in Australia:

1. While on the plane to Sydney, complete your incoming passenger card. **You must complete this card before going into immigration/passport control.** To complete this card, you will need to know:
   - family name (last name), given name (first name), and passport number (inside cover of passport)
   - flight number or name of ship (on boarding pass or plane paperwork)
   - intended address in Australia (in your course documents, put address for our first hotel)
   - the country in which you boarded the flight/vessel (USA)
   - their date of birth and usual occupation (student is your occupation)
   - nationality as shown on their passport (look in passport)

   You may also be asked about the issues below. Providing false information can affect your visa status.
   - Migration status
   - Health status
   - Prior criminal convictions
   - What you are bringing with you or where you have traveled recently

2. **Once off the plane, we will meet in the hallway.**
3. We will walk through to immigration, where you will wait in line to officially enter the country. You need your passenger card and passport. **Please be prepared to give semi-coherent answers about why we are coming to Australia.**
4. **We will then meet near the baggage claim and wait until everyone has their baggage.**
5. **We will then clear customs,** where you will have your bags scanned again (maybe), searched (hopefully not), and turn in your passenger card. Note that there may be dogs sniffing your bags. Remember: NO FOOD. Do not even take food off the plane, especially fruit, nuts, cheese, meats and jerky.
6. **We will drop our luggage at a transfer desk.**
7. **We will reconvene outside of customs in the airport lobby and then transfer to the domestic terminal for our next flight.**

**Time permitting, you can use the toilet, bureau d’exchange, and ATM machines; however, make sure you do these things while we are waiting, not when we are about to leave.**

Returning home:

- The instructors will not be with you the entire way home, but going home is the opposite of coming into the country, so make sure you pay attention.
- On the way home, you will also complete a passenger card to enter into the U.S. This card contains much of the same information as the card you completed to enter Australia.
- When arriving in LA, you will wait in line for immigration, have your passport stamped, then collect your luggage. Once you have your luggage, you will wait in a custom's line, where they will collect your passenger cards. Customs in the US is typically, but not always, more lax than in Australia.
Once you have gotten through customs, you will need to check your luggage at the transfer desk and then proceed immediately to your departure terminal, which may be a different building than the terminal we arrive in. LAX is very, very busy, so you should move quickly to the terminal and recheck through security.

**U.S. Customs:**

- The government requires you to pay duty on goods purchased abroad and brought into the United States over $800. If you have spent more than $800, then you must pay a percentage of whatever you went over.
- Your exemption is $800 (retail value) on articles acquired abroad, if: articles are for personal use or gifts; articles accompany you; you have been out of the country at least 48 hours (Mexico and U.S. Virgin Islands are exempt from the 48 hour limitation); you have not claimed the exemption within the preceding 30 days; and articles are not prohibited or restricted.
- You must declare, including the price paid, everything acquired abroad that you bring home, including gifts given to you and articles worn or used. If you fail to declare or understate the value, penalties may be severe. You cannot bring meat, fruits, vegetables, and Cuban products (e.g., cigars) into the U.S., they will be taken away from you! **You are limited to the equivalent of two fifths of liquor (as long as one is native to the country visited) duty-free, and you must be 21 years old to bring it into the country.** Additional alcohol purchases are subject to tax (see custom’s document below for more information).
- You may mail packages home of up to $100. You cannot mail more than $100 of goods home per day to any single individual.
- You should know and understand these requirements before leaving, so there are no problems when you return. You must declare expensive and/or foreign goods before leaving the United States, so you are not charged duty on them when you return. If you own imported articles such as cameras, binoculars, watches, computers, etc., register them with Customs (before leaving the U.S.) to avoid extra duty charges upon re-entry. Fine art is exempt from duty charges.
- Upon your return, group purchases together and keep receipts for them ready for Customs inspection. Should you bring back foreign pharmaceuticals, have the prescriptions ready to present.
### Packing List

Most travelers pack too much clothing. Take only what you expect to wear; learn what the typical climate is for the locations you plan to visit. **Public laundry service is available where students will be staying.** The following list is a helpful guide for Australia at this time of year:

#### Clothing
- 1 pair of outdoor/hiking shoes
- 1 pair of casual/walking shoes
- 5-6 pairs of socks, some hiking socks
- 6-8 pairs of underwear
- 1-2 pairs of jeans
- 1-2 pairs of hiking, outdoor pants (e.g., jogging pants)
- 3-4 shirts
- 2-3 under/t-shirts
- Fleece/sweatshirt (something for warmth)
- Rain jacket and rain pants
- Mid-weight jacket (weather repellant)
- Hat or headband to cover ears (for warmth)
- Gloves – lightweight
- Balclap or visor
- Bathing suit (we will be on the reef)

Other suggestions:
- 1 pair of sandals/shoes for walking to the bathroom or showering (Crocs work great)
- 1-2 pairs of shorts

#### General Tips:
Dress in layers, modular clothing works well (e.g., pants that zip into shorts or a jacket with a fleece and outer shell), pack items that are mix and match, **pack for hiking and being outside**, pack items that are washable in the sink.

#### Medicine and Toiletries
- Cold/sinus medicine (buy sample sizes)
- Comb and/or brush
- Common products you use at home, and may need
- Deodorant/antiperspirant
- Eyeglasses, sunglasses, contact lenses and cleaning solution
- First-aid kit materials
- Kleenex (travel size)
- Nail clippers
- Pain killer (aspirin, ibuprofen, Tylenol)
- Prescription medicines with their documentation
- Shaving supplies
- Comb, brush, and hair products
- Skin care products, cosmetics
- Soap and shampoo
- Sunscreen
- Tampons/Sanitary pads
- Q-tips
- Ziploc bags for all liquids and gels

Other suggestions:
- Ear plugs
- Travel/camping towel (you will have towels provided at your accommodations, but some students want a spare for other activities or emergencies)

#### Miscellaneous
- Watch (dual time zone with alarm is great)
- Alarm clock (or use a watch, phone or iPod)
- Address book/labels for postcards
- Music (player, cords, and media)
- Camera (w/memory and charger)
- Electrical plug adapter and/or voltage converter
- Extra batteries
- Laundry detergent (single load size or Purex Complete 3-in-1)
- Water bottle

Other suggestions:
- Day pack
- Money belt or safe-storage device
- Travel pillow (for plane)
- Flashlight
- Playing cards/travel games

#### General Tips:
**PURCHASE PHONE CARDS AND INTERNET HOURS Abroad:** **WE DO NOT RECOMMEND BRINGING YOUR COMPUTER** (but if you do bring an adapter).

#### Documents
- Cash, ATM card, debit card, credit cards (call your bank/credit union to inform them of your travel)
- Academic and course packet/information
- Drivers license/Student ID Cards
- Emergency Contact Information
- Insurance Information
- PASSPORT
- Pen and Paper
- Tickets and Travel Passes

Other suggestions:
- Personal/travel journal
- Books, guides, and maps about your destination
- Personal reading

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### General Climate for July & August:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Average High</th>
<th>Average Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>Low 60s</td>
<td>Mid 40s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverlands</td>
<td>High 50s</td>
<td>Mid 30s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Low 60s</td>
<td>Mid 40s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>Low 80s</td>
<td>Low 60s</td>
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