

What to Expect When You Return

Feedback

The Office of Study Abroad greatly values feedback from students about their off-campus experience. Upon your return, you will receive a link to a program evaluation; please take this opportunity to give constructive feedback about your program. Students are also invited to share their experiences and feedback directly with Study Abroad staff.

Transcripts

During their semester off-campus, students should ascertain whether their transcript will be sent automatically to W&J after the end of the semester, or if the student will need to request that a transcript be sent. At some institutions, transcripts may be issued several months after the end of the semester. Students concerned with the status of their transcript should either contact their program directly, or consult with the Office of Study Abroad.



Re-Adjusting to Life in the US

Coming home can be just as difficult as or even more difficult than leaving home. Students are often well prepared for traveling abroad and dealing with homesickness; however, they are often unprepared for readjustment back to the US.

Based on feedback from other students, you may experience some or all of the following difficulties once you return home:

- You don't completely fit in anymore
- You think you have changed, but no one has noticed
- No one wants to hear about your trip
- Nothing has changed since you left
- Everything has changed since you left
- Some people never even noticed you were gone
- Your perceptions of the U.S. or W&J have changed.
- You miss friends made while abroad
- Your friends in the U.S. have shared experiences that didn't include you
- No one understands what you are feeling

These feelings are very normal. For some people it takes months before they feel completely readjusted, and for others it takes only a few weeks. Whatever it is that you are feeling, let yourself feel it. Just as you let your "old self" adjust to W&J life when you were a freshman, let your "new self" adjust to W&J life when coming back from abroad. You may find that some of your favorite clubs no longer interest you, but different ones do. You may even find that some old friendships are no longer the same. Accepting this as part of your life experience is winning half of the battle. Do not blame yourself or your friends for these changes; friendships constantly take on different roles in one's life. You may develop new friendships with other returning study abroad students, or you may develop new friendships with a completely new group of people.

Tips and pointers from past study abroad students on how to deal with readjustment:

- Follow up on your new interests or hobbies; don't tuck them away in the back of your mind.
- Talk to other W&J study abroad students. Sharing experiences and feelings will surprise you and help you to see how many understand and share feelings.
- Go have a chat with counseling services. Contrary to what some students may think, you do not have to be on the verge of a nervous breakdown in order to go down and see them. Tell them about the difficulties of readjustment. You may be surprised to find that, due to personal international experiences, they know how you are feeling.
- Give yourself time to adjust. You are a more rounded, more mature and overall better person. Give your friends time to know this new you.
- Make a scrapbook to show friends and family.

- Be an advocate for study abroad and urge someone else to experience it.
- Reach out to the international exchange students at W&J, as they may be experiencing the same adjustment process that you did while abroad.