

Student Field Preparation Guide

TURKS & CAICOS ISLANDS

THE SCHOOL FOR FIELD STUDIES STUDENT FIELD PREPARATION
GUIDE 2009-2010: TURKS & CAICOS ISLANDS

Introduction

This Student Field Preparation Guide is an important tool which includes everything you need to know to prepare for your international education experience! Use it from the time you are accepted to the program, when you are getting ready to leave, while you are in the field and even after you return home.

We begin with a reminder list of the vital tasks you need to accomplish, including what you need to send to SFS and when. There is information about plane tickets, travel documents and insurance, and some helpful safety tips. Next, you will find information about the particular country and Center where you will be spending a semester or summer. Along with some background on these places, we have included a packing list and some suggestions concerning finances to help guide you in planning what to bring with you. There is also information about what life is like at your Center on a day-to-day basis and what to expect as far as living conditions. Finally, we have included some resources on safety and traveling abroad, and details on our school-wide policies. **Please be sure to read through the entire Guide** and don't hesitate to contact your Admissions Counselor with any questions.

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PREPARING FOR DEPARTURE

PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Paperwork and Fees to Send to SFS

All required forms should be sent to SFS:

**The School for Field Studies
10 Federal Street, Suite 24
Salem, MA 01970**

- Nonrefundable deposit of \$650(semester) or \$450 (summer). Due 10 business days after acceptance.
- SFS Financial Aid Application (if applicable). Due 10 business days after acceptance.
- SFS Online Medical Review Form. Due 10 business days after acceptance.
- SFS Physical Examination & Authorization Form. Due 10 business days after acceptance.

No student may enter the field until a current SFS Medical Review Form and Physical Examination & Authorization Form have been reviewed and approved by SFS personnel. Inaccurate, incomplete or fraudulent information on your SFS Medical Review Form could jeopardize your safety and the safety of other students and staff during the program. This may be grounds for not admitting you, recalling you from the program, or restricting your participation in certain activities which may affect the quality of your experience and/or your academic credit.

- SFS Terms and Regulations Contract due 10 business days after acceptance.
- Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risks Form due 10 business days after acceptance
- Credit Registration Form (semester students only). These can be submitted electronically through your online checklist at www.fieldstudies.org.
- Final tuition payment. Due 60 days prior to start of program.
- Updated SFS Medical Review Form and Physical Examination & Authorization Form if there are *any* changes to the information before you depart.

Other Preparation To Do's

- Contact SFS alumni on campus or as provided by SFS to learn more about what to expect.
- Obtain passport/Check to make sure your passport is valid.
- Obtain visa for entry into country if necessary. See Passport and Visa section of this Field Guide for more information.
- If you are a permanent resident of the U.S. or an international student returning to school in the U.S after the program, please be sure to have the necessary documentation for re-entry into the United States.

- Obtain required clothing and equipment (see packing list later in this document).
- Make travel arrangements that meet the schedule outlined by the group flight departure and arrival times. (If traveling independently, have itinerary approved by, and submitted to, SFS).
- Prepare with your doctor and a Travel Specialist to cover all your travel plans in the countries where you plan to go. Be sure to review:
 - Your immunization history and requirements for every region in which you plan to travel (some information in the Safety section of this Guide)
 - Your fitness level
 - Medications and prescriptions in sufficient quantities and in their original containers. Check with your insurance company on how to fill prescriptions for several months in advance as you may not be able to find the medicine you need in-country.
 - Any changes in treatment programs
 - Understand what the risks are for each place where you'll be going.
- Make sure you have health insurance (required). You will have to fill this in on your SFS Medical Review Form. Check with your provider to make certain that your policy offers coverage outside of the United States and specifically in the places where you're going. The evacuation and repatriation insurance that you receive from SFS is **not** medical or dental insurance.
- Make arrangements to have student housing/registration/summer employment taken care of before departure.
- Leave Center Address (can be found later in this document) for friends and family to contact you.
- Make two clear copies of your plane ticket and your passport. Take one copy of each with you and leave one copy with a friend or family member.
- Read this Guide carefully in its entirety, including the sections later in this document on life at your particular Center, traveling and living abroad, safety in the country where you'll be going, and SFS policies.**

Optional

- Obtain personal property insurance (e.g. for your laptop computer) if you so desire; SFS does not provide this.
- Purchase travel /course cancellation insurance if you wish. You may want to check with your home university if you are unable to locate a provider on your own. This is different from evacuation and repatriation insurance, which is provided by SFS.

INSURANCE

HEALTH INSURANCE

Students are required to carry health insurance valid in the country or countries of program operation, while enrolled in SFS programs. You will not be allowed to join an SFS program without identifying such coverage. Some insurance carriers do not cover out-of-country medical expenses. Therefore, you should ensure that your medical insurance policy

offers coverage outside of the United States and specifically in the country where the program is being held. Those insurance companies that do provide international coverage often do so on a reimbursable basis. TCI public or private hospitals and clinics will not accept insurance for payment. In most cases, you will need to secure a payment with a credit card deposit. This means that you will need to have a valid credit card to pay for your medical expenses up front and then request reimbursement when you return home. If your current policy does not provide coverage outside the U.S., the SFS Admissions staff can provide information on affordable short-term insurance options.

In the event that you require medical attention during a program, a staff member will accompany you on the visit(s) to a medical facility. You will be liable for all these incidental expenses, including travel, meals, etc, incurred by all parties involved during these visits. You must pay in full for these expenses prior to your departure from the program.

PERSONAL PROPERTY INSURANCE

SFS insurance does not cover the personal property of students, staff and visitors. You may wish to check on your current policies or purchase some.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

SFS insurance does not cover travel or course cancellation. You may wish to purchase some, so check with Advantage Travel or your travel agent for more information on your options.

EVACUATION AND REPATRIATION INSURANCE

Most insurance companies do not cover medical evacuation costs. SFS provides students with emergency medical evacuation and repatriation insurance through Seabury & Smith. This insurance is effective for the duration of the program and for seven days immediately following the program. You will receive an insurance card during the orientation at the Center. Note: this is **not** the same as health/medical or dental insurance!

Benefits include:

- Unlimited coverage for emergency evacuation.
- \$20,000 for repatriation of mortal remains.
- Assistance services (see below for details)

The travel assistance benefits are provided by American International Assistance Services, Inc., (AIAS), with assistance centers located throughout the world and staffed 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. Some of the services which can be accessed through AIAS include:

- Worldwide, 24-hour medical care location services
- Medical transportation arrangements

- Medical case monitoring, arranging of communications between patient, family, physicians, consulate, etc.
- Arranging medical transportation home after treatment

DIVERS ALERT NETWORK INSURANCE- REQUIRED

Neither healthcare plans nor SFS' additional emergency evacuation policy will pay for treatment should you develop decompression sickness or other diving-related conditions. Dive-related injuries and illnesses are extremely rare at SFS, but they do happen, and the costs of even basic treatment can be high. Recompression facilities are available in the Turks & Caicos Islands, but the cost of those services can easily exceed US\$2,000. Currently, medical coverage is available through DAN (the Divers Alert Network) for US\$64 per year. When compared to the cost of professional medical treatment, SFS believes that a dive-specific insurance policy is a smart investment. For this reason, SFS requires all students who will be participating in SCUBA diving to purchase DAN insurance before the start of the program by calling 1-800-446-2671 or finding DAN on the web at <http://www.diversalertnetwork.org/>. It is possible to buy a membership to DAN without purchasing DAN insurance, so if you are planning to dive during your SFS program, you need to make sure that you have in fact purchased DAN insurance.

DAN is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to dive safety and accident prevention and is a recognized leader in the field of dive medicine research. At a minimum, you must register for the DAN Master Plan (total cost \$64, including DAN membership), which provides coverage for any and all in-water injuries.

When you sign up, you should include SFS's sponsor #30697.

Note that you should send your registration directly to DAN in the envelope provided by the organization. Do not send this registration form to The School for Field Studies.

Finally, you must bring proof of coverage with you to the Center upon your arrival. The South Caicos staff will verify your policy at the start of the program. **You will not be allowed to SCUBA dive without proof of DAN insurance.**

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

You are responsible for making your own travel arrangements and for paying your travel to and from the program. You have many choices: you may wish to book your ticket over the Internet, through your local travel agent or by working with Advantage Travel Agency to book a seat on the group flight arranged by SFS for most semester and summer programs.

ADVANTAGE TRAVEL AND GROUP FLIGHTS

You are not required to travel on the group flight, nor is it guaranteed to be the cheapest flight available. However, there are a number of benefits to joining the SFS group flight, including:

- You can take advantage of group ticket rates.
- Your itinerary is guaranteed to meet the group pickup/drop off program schedule.
- Advantage Travel has some influence with airlines to make ticket adjustments in the event of last-minute program date changes or cancellation, lost tickets, or other unforeseen circumstances.
- This travel agent is familiar with SFS programs.
- This will be one-stop shopping for your travel plans, both to and from the program and for other trips if you plan to travel during a break or pre/post-program.
- It will be fun to begin your travels with your fellow SFS students!

MAKING YOUR TRAVEL PLANS ON THE INTERNET OR THROUGH A LOCAL TRAVEL AGENT

Be sure to arrive at the pickup location on time! All travel plans must be reviewed and approved by your SFS Admissions Counselor prior to purchase. The Advantage Travel Agency group flight schedule determines the program meeting time at the destination airport, as well as the program departure time and place. We'll meet the group at the airport at the time of the group flight and coordinate transportation to the Center. If you miss the group pickup time, you are responsible for getting to the Center on your own.

Regardless of whether the ticket is purchased through Advantage Travel or another agent, SFS is not responsible for reimbursing travel expenses for programs cancelled or rescheduled due to acts of war or civil unrest, acts of God, strikes, weather, quarantine/epidemics/sickness, government regulations, or failure of equipment, power or communications. Therefore, The School routinely does not authorize its designated agent to issue tickets until 30 days prior to the start of a program.

If you opt to travel before or after your program, be sure to check with immigration officials regarding your visa status. It's a great idea to arrange all your travel before you leave because the only chance you'll have to exchange tickets is during mid-term break of the semester program (if applicable) or at the end of the summer program.

Be sure to join a frequent flyer program! Also, check with your agent about multiple stops or stopovers; long trips are an excellent opportunity to see other countries or regions for a small fee or at no extra cost, but this usually needs to be arranged at the time of ticket purchase.

PASSPORT AND VISA

You must have a passport to enter all of the countries where our programs take place. Make certain that your passport is valid until six months after the program ends.

When you arrive at the Turks and Caicos Islands (on Providenciales), you will need to go through immigration and will need to present your passport in order to be issued a 30-day visitor's pass. For semester students, this visitor's pass may need to be renewed monthly. Cost per each additional month renewal is approximately \$50 US; please plan ahead for this total cost of up to \$150 US. Students who are not citizens of the U.S., Britain, or Canada should contact SFS to see if visa arrangements need to be made prior to the start of the program. Semester students who are not U.S. citizens are urged to obtain visas for potential vacation spots (during the mid-semester break) before leaving for the program.

ABOUT THE TCI

HISTORY OF THE REGION

Arawak Indians were the original inhabitants of the Islands through 1550. Bermudian salt traders frequented the islands in the 17th century, and after the American Revolution, Loyalists immigrated to the island and attempted to farm sisal and cotton with slave labor, with little success due to the water shortage, disease and other hindrances.

After the abandonment of farming, the low-lying interiors of South Caicos, Grand Turk, and Salt Cay were developed into salinas, or sea water evaporation ponds, and salt became the principal industry. There was considerable commerce with Bermuda and New England through this export. After World War II, competition from more efficient sources of salt production reduced profitability of TCI salt, and the government began to subsidize the industry. Salt production was discontinued in South Caicos in 1964.

The Turks and Caicos Islands have been under the British flag for most of the last 400 years. At one time, they were included with Jamaica for colonial administrative purposes. The Islands later were incorporated with the Bahamas after Jamaican independence in 1962. When the Bahamas gained independence in 1972, the Turks and Caicos Islands became a separate British Dependent Territory. Though the Parliament and Ministers are elected locally, the British government appoints a Governor, who holds ultimate authority.

The population of the Turks and Caicos Islands (approximately 30,000) is evenly divided between the two island groups. Grand Turk is the seat of government and the second most popular tourist destination. Providenciales, or "Provo," is the most developed for tourism, which began in earnest in the mid-1980s. The Turks and Caicos Islands welcome more than 200,000 visitors annually, and hotel construction continues at a rapid pace. The other islands,

including South Caicos, host little tourism at the present time and are home to small-scale business and subsistence fishing. However, there are currently several resorts being constructed on South Caicos and significant changes are expected to accompany their opening.

GEOGRAPHY AND ECOLOGY

The Turks and Caicos Islands are a limestone archipelago lying at the southeastern tip of the Bahamian archipelago, approximately 575 miles (925 km) southeast of Miami and 100 miles (170 km) north of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and 888 miles (1,430 km) northwest of Puerto Rico. The total land area of the island complex is about 166 square miles (430 km²). The islands are ancient coral seamounts that have been periodically exposed and covered by changes in sea level. Geologically, the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) are an extension of the Bahamas Bank. The highest elevations are about 200 feet (60 m) above sea level. There are two distinct banks and attendant island groups: the Turks Islands include Grand Turk, Salt Cay, and smaller islands, while the larger Caicos Bank incorporates North, Middle, East, and South Caicos Islands, as well as Providenciales, Pine Cay, and other smaller islands. These two extensive banks are only 6-9 feet (3-4 m) deep, yet drop off sharply to depths exceeding 8,000 feet (2,500 meters). South Caicos lies at the southeastern edge of the Caicos Bank and is approximately 12 square miles (32 km², maximum elevation = 157 feet; 48 m).

The vegetation on South Caicos is a scrubby “coppice” plant community, dominated by plants that are well-adapted to the xeric conditions. Most shrubs are less than 6 feet (2 m) in height, cacti are abundant, trees are uncommon, and palm trees are relegated to a few ornamental plantings in Cockburn Harbour. The soil of South Caicos is generally poor and unable to support agriculture. The soils on North, Middle, and East Caicos support limited agriculture. It is likely that the original plant and soil covers of the island were much richer and that human activity has changed the ecosystem greatly.

The marine environment of South Caicos is almost pristine and ideal for learning and research. The offshore areas support a variety of marine habitats, including vast seagrass (*Thalassia testudinum* and *Syringodium filiforme*) beds, coral reefs, mangroves, and sand flats. Coral reef habitats include patch reefs, barrier reefs, fringing reefs, and deep reefs. Underwater visibility often exceeds 100 ft (30 m). Due in part to upwelling of nutrients from the deep ocean, the bank has supported extensive commercial conch and lobster fisheries in the past.



COCKBURN HARBOUR

Virtually the entire South Caicos population resides in Cockburn (pronounced "Coburn") Harbour on the southwestern shore. The population is approximately 800-1,200, varying as individuals (primarily younger males) emigrate for employment and return for the lobster fishing season.

The number of cars and trucks on the island is growing, but many people still get around by foot. Dogs, donkeys, cows, chickens, and pigs roam freely. Many locals carry their household water daily from a municipal supply. Telephone service is adequate, but expensive. Basketball and soccer are the most popular local sports, although cricket is coming back to the islands.

There are a number of small stores that carry groceries and household items (although none would be considered a souvenir shop), small family restaurants, and 12 churches. There is one hotel that is currently open to accommodate a small number of guests. South Caicos has one bank that is open one morning per week. Everything is imported, and most items are subject to a 30% duty. Prices therefore average nearly 200% of mainland U.S. rates. Many things that might be easily accessible elsewhere are not available locally on South Caicos and therefore can only be imported with two weeks' notice.

One of the most important aspects of Cockburn Harbour, from a resource management standpoint, is that it is the center of a thriving lobster and conch fishery in the Turks and Caicos Islands. In fact, the Turks and Caicos Islands are one of the largest exporters of conch in the world. Cockburn Harbour has three conch and lobster processing plants that export seafood in large quantities.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Since the opening of the Center for Marine Resource Studies, SFS has worked closely with the Department of Environment and Coastal Resources (DECR) on a variety of conch and lobster-related fisheries projects of local importance. At present, South Caicos is awaiting the advent of

three large-scale tourist developments, which are already underway. There is also a plan to dredge the harbor for a deep-water port in East Caicos, as well as a deep-water port proposal for South Caicos. SFS is involved in the natural resource inventories that are an essential step in formulating resource management plans for several important resource-dependent sites.

Recently, the Center has been involved in marine parks planning and the review of environmental impact assessment documents. Both projects have partnered SFS with the TCI Government.

The Turks and Caicos Islands are at a critical point in their development, when decisions regarding fisheries development and management, tourism development, and national park design and management will play a pivotal role in the success of national development schemes.

SFS uses SCUBA diving and snorkeling as a tool for research and education. SFS programs are NOT designed for people whose primary interest is sport diving. Faculty will often have students snorkel instead of SCUBA dive because this allows for increased time spent in the water and ease of communication. South Caicos offers outstanding diving, but the focus of our logistical resources is on the academic and research program. Please reconsider attending this program if your primary interest is recreational SCUBA diving. There are other and less expensive ways to go SCUBA diving. The use of SCUBA and the sites chosen for dives are wholly based on the research needs of the School. Semester students can expect to dive an average of 10-20 times during the program and summer students can expect to dive an average of 3-5 times during the program. In addition, water activities are entirely dependent on the weather; therefore, please be flexible and prepared for scheduled activities to change in the event of bad weather.

With the above information in mind, SCUBA is part of the learning experience. Diving involves groups of 4-7 students and a Dive Leader who go out in small boats to sites generally within a mile of the Center. Much of the diving takes place on the top of the reef crest, reef flat and sometimes off of the reef wall. Dives in water beyond 60 feet (20m) are generally too restricted in bottom time to be of much value for research or teaching and are not a part of the program. SFS follows conservative diving table use.

If you are not SCUBA certified for this program, you will experience no restrictions in terms of course content. Most of the fieldwork is accomplished in waters less than 20 feet (7m) deep, well within snorkeling range. **Those who are not SCUBA certified will not be able to get certified during the program.** The only time semester students may possibly get certified will be on their own during the mid-semester break. Due to difficulties in managing people at different stages of diving skill, students certified after the start of the program will not be allowed to dive as part of the program. Summer students will not have an opportunity to get certified since there is no break during our summer programs.

Diving certification is required (unless you are admitted strictly for snorkeling) **prior to the start** of the program. You must have a certification card from a recognized organization, such as PADI, NAUI, CMAS, or SSI. If you are not certified at the time of your application, you will need to make your own arrangements to obtain your materials and for final open water testing by a certified instructor before going on the SFS program if you plan to SCUBA dive. This process is required, vital to your safe participation, and may take some time - you should not delay beginning it! Prior to diving at SFS-CMRS, you must perform a SCUBA and rescue skills

checkout with an SFS Dive Leader. Additionally, a written exam on dive policy may be given at the discretion of the Diving Safety Officer.

ARRIVAL AT THE AIRPORT IN TCI

After you collect your bags, you will go through customs and will need to present your completed Customs Declaration Form. Since you should not be leaving anything behind on the island, you will have nothing to declare (unless you bring in tobacco — SFS prohibits alcohol on site). It is not unusual for bags to get delayed in transit; they usually show up in one to four days. If your bags are delayed in travel, you should complete a lost baggage form at the airline desk after clearing customs. Ask the individual at the airline desk to route your bags to The School for Field Studies on South Caicos. After you clear your luggage through customs, the Student Affairs Manager will meet you outside the main doors of the Providenciales International Airport to direct you to the local, 20-minute connecting flight to South Caicos Island. Be sure to have US\$150-220 (cost varies within this range, payable by cash – preferred; or credit card) available to purchase this roundtrip ticket upon arriving in Providenciales. If you arrive in Provo in the morning, please be prepared to spend a few hours at the airport before catching the flight to South Caicos. Bring some extra cash for food and drinks at the airport!

The local airline charges variable fees for checked baggage. Be prepared to spend \$40 - \$60 each way (cash) for baggage allowances. Fees may be charged per pound over the limit or a charged as a flat rate. The baggage allowance may be one or two checked bags per person (up to 50 lbs each) between Providenciales and South Caicos. Bags over 70 lbs are not allowed. For this reason, you are encouraged to pack your belongings in advance so you can determine how much your bags will weigh and whether you will need to adjust your packing. The best advice is to pack conservatively, be prepared to pay fees for baggage, and do not exceed the 70 lb limit.

In total, please plan on having about \$220 - \$280 available to pay for your (and your bags) roundtrip travel from Provo to South Caicos.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

The climate in the Turks and Caicos Islands is hot and dry. The dry season in South Caicos lasts from February until September, and the wet season from October to January, with an average annual rainfall of 17 inches (42.5 cm) or less. Temperatures vary little throughout the year from the mean of 80° F. Due to the arid conditions, fresh water is in critically short supply, and special attention must be paid to water use.

WATER USE AND SANITATION

South Caicos is not a lush, green island, although the ocean views and underwater scenery are spectacular. Fresh water is a precious commodity on South Caicos since the island receives little rainfall. The SFS Center uses captured rainwater for its fresh water supply and does not

use water as one might in the United States. The average Turks and Caicos Islander uses 7 gallons of water per day; the average American uses 90-150 gallons per day. The Center must maintain its rate of consumption at local levels. You will be oriented on habits that conserve the very limited water supply. Along these lines, you should be prepared to use your dive/snorkel gear in saltwater with limited rinsing in fresh water. You will be able to take a fresh cold-water shower once a week. Bathing in the ocean is common (with biodegradable soap only). Despite stringent water restrictions on showers, the toilets use an unlimited supply of saltwater. You will find that hand washing your laundry with seawater will suffice. No laundry facilities are available at the Center. Each student room has a sink with running fresh water (for brushing teeth, etc.) and a shower (for use once per week).

The Center drinking water is runoff collected from the rooftops and a concrete catchment area. This water is stored in a cistern. It is pumped through a sediment filter (5 micron filter) and then chlorinated to 1-3 pm. As a final step, the drinking water tap in the kitchen, which is the only recommended drinking water, is passed through another filter and an ultraviolet sterilizer. Drinking water in town is not recommended unless it is bottled.

WHAT TO BRING

SFS' suggested packing list contains all the items that are essential for this program. It was compiled based on feedback from past students and current staff; other than the required items, most items are just suggestions and you should plan which items to pack based on your own lifestyle and preferences. You must have the required clothing and equipment when you arrive on South Caicos, as it will be difficult to acquire items locally at a reasonable cost.

We suggest that you carry with you on the plane (carry-on bag) your passport, underwear, a shirt and a pair of shorts, minimal toiletries, a swimsuit, sandals, medications, mask, snorkel and anything else you must have in order to survive for up to three days after arrival without your full luggage. Dive gear is best packed in a sturdy duffel bag. Special "dive bags" are expensive and merely label the contents as valuable to others. You will have little storage space in your room; therefore, you should keep extra items to a minimum. Make sure your equipment is in excellent condition and ready to use upon arrival.

ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES

All electrical outlets at the Center are the same voltage as those in the United States. No adapters or converters are necessary.

REQUIRED CLOTHING AND PERSONAL ITEMS

Loose, cool, cotton clothes are most comfortable. Women have found that casual sundresses and sarongs are good additions to their attire. Bear in mind that clothing gets heavily used, dirty, damp, and can only be washed in saltwater. You should not expect to bring any clothing home in good condition. Please also note that local standards of dress are more conservative, especially for women, than what we are accustomed to in the States. Modesty while

experiencing another culture is always wise and culturally sensitive, however around the center itself you do not have to be as modest as when you go out into the wider community.

IN REVIEWING THE FOLLOWING LIST, PLEASE NOTE THAT THE PACKING LIST IS FREQUENTLY UPDATED BY THE CENTER STAFF. PLEASE REVIEW THE FIELD PREPARATION GUIDE AS YOU BEGIN PACKING TO ENSURE PROPER PREPARATION.

Items	Semester Programs	Summer Programs
<input type="checkbox"/> Shorts – Board shorts stay clean and dry quickly. Women should not bring very short shorts as this is against local custom and will offend the local women on the island. Thighs should be covered at all times while in the community.	5–10	3–4
<input type="checkbox"/> Sarongs/sundresses	1-4	1-2
<input type="checkbox"/> T-shirts or tank tops. Tank tops may be worn around the Center but it is more appropriate culturally to wear shirts with sleeves when going into town. (Low-cut necklines are also not appropriate town wear). Shirts with sleeves must also be worn when working in the kitchen in accordance with health code regulations.	12+	10+
<input type="checkbox"/> Long-sleeved, lightweight shirts for sun protection in the field.	2+	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Rash guard – essential for water activities	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Lightweight sweatshirt - Nights are cool November-April.	2	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Bathing suits, including a one-piece suit for women to be worn when interacting with community members.	4-5	2-3
<input type="checkbox"/> Pajamas or other suitable, lightweight sleeping attire	2-3	1-2
<input type="checkbox"/> Casual long pants	1-3	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Lightweight shirts and long-pants/dresses (for evening). For formal interactions with local officials, you will need this attire.	2+	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Underwear (dependent upon how frequently you plan to hand wash clothing)	2-4 weeks' worth	2 weeks' worth
<input type="checkbox"/> Socks – bring more if you are a runner!	A few pairs	A few pairs
<input type="checkbox"/> Sneakers – important to protect feet from thorns and rock outcroppings around the island	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Flip-flops, Tevas, or sandals - for around the Center.	1-2	1-2
<input type="checkbox"/> Sunglasses	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Hat with visor or brim	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Bath towel and face cloth	1-2	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Beach towel	1-2	1-2
<input type="checkbox"/> Bed sheets and pillowcases. Fitted and flat sheet sheet (twin size). Pillows are provided.	1-2	1

<input type="checkbox"/> Waterproof sunscreen. You will need to use sunscreen every day, so bring plenty of waterproof sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 15.	1-2	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Nalgene, canteen, or plastic quart/liter bottles	2	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Alarm clock or waterproof watch with an alarm	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Backpack (a good sized day pack will suffice)	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Insect repellent (natural repellents work well)	2-4	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping bag (lightweight should suffice) – used as bedding and for any overnights on local beaches	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping pad (occasional beach camp outs may be offered)	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Lightweight rain or spray jacket for use on boats	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Mosquito net (rigged on top or bottom bunk bed – choose one with four corners, not single anchor point) along with string and lots of tacks to rig it	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Headlamp or small, lightweight flashlight and batteries (bring extras). Batteries are expensive; therefore rechargeable batteries are recommended. The Center can recharge AA, C, or D sized batteries.	1	1

Required Equipment for Snorkeling and SCUBA

Note: There is NO rental of SCUBA equipment on South Caicos. SCUBA tanks, weight belts and weights are provided at the Center.

- Mask: Check for a good fit and solid strap construction and bring an extra strap. If you need corrective lenses, you'll find it easier to get a supply of disposable contacts for the program than to invest in a mask with prescription lenses. If you do opt to purchase a prescription mask, you are encouraged to try using a similar model mask before purchasing one. You will be required to remove your mask underwater during review skills and training, so disposable contacts are the best option.
- Fins: There are two options, 1) fins with straps, sized to fit over dive booties (preferred as you can use the booties in many other situations) – bring extra straps and clips OR 2) full foot fins.
- Hard-soled diving booties or similar wading/diving shoe. These are essential!
- Snorkel: Make sure you have a full-sized adult snorkel. Smaller models will restrict air flow.
- Weights: Do NOT bring weights to the program with you. Weights and belts are provided on-site.
- Underwater slate (8x10) and regular pencils: Bring at least 2 spare pencils and avoid small slates. These can be purchased cheaply on eBay.
- Wetsuit: The required rash guard may be sufficient for summer students who plan to snorkel only and who aren't particularly susceptible to cold weather. For those who plan to SCUBA dive: spring semester students should strongly consider bringing a full-length, 3 to 5mm thick wetsuit. Female students in particular should consider a warmer suit. Summer and fall students should strongly consider bringing a 3mm "shorty" wetsuit. When

performing work in water at 77-82°F for 45 minutes to 2 hours, it is possible to become hypothermic. A wet suit is also very important as protective barrier against biting and stinging marine organisms.

- A mesh dive bag: Please ensure that this bag is large enough to hold your snorkel gear (mask, fins, booties, and snorkel).
- Waterproof watch: Make sure it can withstand the pressures of diving if you are a SCUBA diver.
- 'Save A Dive' Kit – when purchasing your equipment, ask the shop to put one of these together for you. This should include fin straps, mask straps, spare computer batteries, mouth pieces and bulbs for your flashlight.

Required Equipment for SCUBA Only

- You MUST bring a SERVICE receipt for your SCUBA equipment (BCD, Regulators) completed within the last 12 months. If your equipment is new (less than 12 months of age) then you MUST bring the sales receipt. Students arriving without this documentation will NOT be allowed to dive with the gear.**
- PADI Dive Tables: You will not be permitted to dive without having these or a dive computer. Even students who bring a dive computer are required to bring dive tables as a backup in the event that the dive computer fails during the semester.
- Inflatable Buoyancy Compensating flotation vest (“BC”): Try on the BCD before purchasing it to ensure a good fit! You should stand sideways in front of a mirror and make sure that there is no gap between your shoulder blades and the BCD. You may even want to consider connecting the BCD to a tank before trying it on.
- Primary (two-stage) and secondary alternate air source regulator. It is highly recommended that the second stage be connected to the first stage and not the BCD; however, the choice is yours. Both of these regulators are required. Make sure that your regulator attaches to the tank with a **yoke** configuration.
- Submersible pressure gauge
- Depth gauge

The submersible pressure gauge and depth gauge are best combined in a single console.

- Alternate air source retainer: Retains second stage regulator close to the body. Helps prevent damage to the reef and to your equipment and is important for safety.
- Dive hanger: Sturdy enough to hang BCDs and other equipment in our dive locker.

Optional SCUBA and Snorkel Equipment

- Dive Computer: There will be no opportunity to repair a dive computer that fails so you are urged to bring a backup battery that you can change yourself as there are no facilities on South Caicos where this can be done should there be a problem. Because of the lack of repair facilities, even students with a dive computer are required to bring PADI dive tables.
- Compass: Either wrist mount or BC mount with a retractable clip.
- Waterproof box: (such as a “Pelican case”) to hold spare parts, glasses while diving, etc. This could be the “Save a Dive Kit” for keeping spare equipment parts.
- Snorkeling vest – only for students who are weak swimmers, but **STRONGLY** encouraged in such cases.

It is likely that you will have the opportunity to go on at least one optional night dive or night snorkel during your time at the Center. However, this activity is very weather-dependant and you should decide for yourself if it is worth purchasing dive lights and chemical light sticks. We hold no responsibility if nights dives are not possible during a session. According to PADI standards, you must be a **certified Advanced Diver or Adventure Night Diver** to dive at night (it may be possible for the DSO to offer this course for a fee of approximately \$350 (cash, to cover PADI costs). **If night water activities are offered, you will be unable to participate unless you bring the items listed below.**

- Primary dive light for night dives: A standard dive light – the stronger, the better. Bring spare batteries. Note: You are not guaranteed to go on a night dive however, snorkeling off the dock at night can be very rewarding. Highly recommended and can double as your flashlight. **Required** of any students who wish to participate in any **night snorkels or SCUBA dives** that are offered.
- Secondary light source for night dives: Can be a smaller light used as a backup. If you intend to go on a night dive if possible, you must have a small backup light. **Required** of any students who wish to participate in any **night SCUBA dives** that are offered.
- Chemical light stick for night dives or snorkels – bring a minimum of 6. SFS may have some chemical sticks for sale at the Center; however, we do not guarantee they will be available. **Required** of any students who wish to participate in any **night snorkels or SCUBA dives** that are offered.

Note: Spear guns and lobster loopers are illegal in the TCI and will be confiscated by the TCI government; do **NOT** bring them! Fishing licenses are also required in the TCI and can be purchased locally and local laws must be adhered to. Do not fish illegally or in MPAs!

If you have specific questions regarding equipment, please call your Admissions Counselor.

Items for the Room

- Toilet articles: Students often end up paying extra baggage charges by overpacking in this area; there is a good selection of pharmacy and toiletry items available locally, although at marked up island prices. Please note that the **Center does have a first aid station** with basic supplies, as well as some sunscreen and bug spray left behind by former students if you should run out.
- Biodegradable soap, shampoo, and conditioner are important to bring for washing in seawater (e.g. Dr. Bronner's, Bio Suds, Nature's Gate, JASON, Sauve (some products), Giovanni, Campsuds, Outdoor Rx Anti-bacterial Outdoor Soap, Sea Savon Salt Water Shampoo and Body Bath). Health food stores carry many types of biodegradable products, but Suave also makes some biodegradable products that are widely available – check the label or call the company to be sure that are purchasing the 'biodegradable formula'. This is very important to research since you will use these directly in the ocean!
- Prescription or other medicines you require (**like Dramamine for motion sickness**) to last the entire length of the program. All prescriptions must be cleared through the Diving Safety Officer before diving, as some medications contraindicate diving activities.
- 'Personal blister kit'– will come in handy on field excursions
- Extra prescription glasses or contacts

Items for the Classroom

- One (summer) or two (full semester) three-subject notebooks – *essential!*
- A flash drive (memory stick) with a capacity of at least 64 MB – you'll use this to submit all of your papers
- Pencils, pens, highlighters, and markers
- A basic calculator
- Any other **school supplies** you'll need for the semester. Don't count on buying any of these items locally; even if they are available, prices will be higher

OPTIONAL CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

- Laptop computer. Students are **highly** encouraged to bring their own personal laptops for the added convenience and freedom that they provide. There are a limited number of computers at the site, so you will appreciate having an alternative when the Center computers are in high demand. As a general recommendation, this should be an IBM or Mac compatible laptop less than 6 years old, containing Microsoft Office 2000 or later software, or office software that can export Microsoft Office compatible documents. To easily transfer your work between Center computers and your laptop, please bring a USB flash drive with a capacity of at least 64MB. You should also bring a portable surge suppressor, a laptop carrying case, and a security cable or lock to protect your laptop.

Note: SFS cannot accept responsibility for ensuring the safety of students' personal computers, either onsite or in the field. Personal laptop insurance coverage can often be obtained through the credit card used to buy the equipment (check with your credit card company), or through homeowners' insurance.

- DVD of a feature film or documentary you'd like to share with the group. The Center does have a collection of previously viewed films.
- Camera gear and plenty of film. Some students have found it helpful to document on film the scope and specific nature of their work, particularly the Directed Research. It is very expensive to convert regular picture film to slides, so digital is always recommended. Underwater disposable cameras are also useful.
- Dry bag (waterproof bag to protect small personal – e.g. camera, medications)
- Sporting equipment: there is a volleyball court, soccer field and cricket ground. The local school also has a tennis court, but limited rackets. New or used tennis rackets, Frisbee Golf discs, basketballs, beach volleyballs, and footballs will get plenty of use
- Small personal fan- highly recommended, especially for summer and fall sessions
- Anti-itch cream (Benadryl Gel works well) and baby powder
- Ear drops for after swimming/diving
- Small personal reading lamp
- Index cards for flash cards
- Paperback books (a couple to read and exchange) – a small reading library does exist on site.
- Personal MP3 player
- For students who wish to bring items to donate to the local community, SFS will advise you on what items are needed most about one month before the start of your program. In the past donations have included:

- Grade-school level workbooks for math and reading are needed by the local primary and secondary schools. Adult ESL materials are also in demand and can be used by local Haitian immigrants
- Children’s bathing suits, especially for girls, in young adult, plus, and small sizes are all needed. We hold swimming lessons for community children and many do not own suits.
- Inexpensive snorkel gear to donate to community children
- Athletic equipment for local school – softballs, tennis rackets, soccer balls, and basketballs are all welcomed
- Face/Baby wipes – highly recommended by past students since fresh water is limited
- Hair detangler for those with medium length to long hair
- Febreeze (to freshen clothes washed in seawater)
- Clothes pins for hanging your wet gear or laundry

FINANCES

Shopping on South Caicos is very limited. Credit cards are generally not accepted in the TCI at anything but the airlines, banks and hotels on Provo and Grand Turk; cash (US dollars) is the preferred medium of exchange. It is difficult to cash traveler's checks (e.g., American Express, Visa, Citibank, etc.) on South Caicos (with a \$1 bank fee per traveler's check cashed). The bank on South Caicos is only open for 3 hours once a week. Personal checks are not accepted, even by the bank, and the Center does not maintain sufficient funds to act as a bank. Money should be carried in the form of cash in small denominations (preferably no bigger than \$20 bills- 5s and 10s are best for use in town) and you should plan to rely mostly on cash that you bring with you to last throughout the duration of the program. There is no ATM machine on South Caicos. ATM or credit cards will, however, be useful while traveling during the mid-semester break and for paying airline tickets for break. We have a small safe on site where student valuables (passports, cash) can be secured.

ESTIMATED EXPENSES

Expenditure	Semester	Summer
Round trip ticket Provo - South Caicos (including baggage fees) The ticket can be paid for with cash or credit card.	\$220-280	\$220-280
Visitor’s Pass Renewal Fees	\$150	N/A
Spending money	~\$500	~\$200
Money to purchase phone cards if you plan to use a land line and don’t bring international calling cards with bulk minutes from home.	~\$250	~\$150
Break (mid-semester travel – highly dependent on your budget and living	Fall: ~\$400-600 Spring (peak	No break during summer

style)	travel season): ~\$500-800	
Room/computer room deposits Note: Deposits will be returned on the day of departure.	\$50	\$50
TOTAL ESTIMATE	~\$1570-2030	~\$620-680

FACILITIES

South Caicos is not a resort island – there are no swaying palm trees and very few amenities. This is a small island with many cacti and salt bushes, where donkeys and horses freely wander the streets. The Center is located in Cockburn Harbour in a modest former hotel (the “Admirals’ Arms Inn”) that is in moderate condition. The Center and student rooms sit on top of a 20 ft cliff facing the sea and provide a spectacular view of the sunset and starlit skies. Each room sleeps four-six and has a freshwater shower and sink and saltwater toilet. Fifteen motel-style rooms arranged in three wings extend from the main building, which houses dining room, kitchen, classroom and library facilities. You will be sharing close quarters with about 40 other people (students and staff).

The Center overlooks the Cockburn Harbour entrance, and is structured in the shape of a large U, with the open side facing the sea to the south and west. Architecture is Caribbean style, using shade and trade wind ventilation to keep things comfortable in the heat. The Center has a combined library and computer room for writing final reports and data analysis.

There is a dive locker and snorkel shed on the property that houses the compressor and stores SFS' SCUBA tanks and your personal equipment. The Center has a small fleet of five boats, most of which are kept alongside a pier at the east end of the property.

RESEARCH EQUIPMENT

The Center's commitment to non-destructive field research has not encouraged the collection of laboratory equipment. Sampling equipment is therefore limited to transect tapes, calipers, etc. Consequently, the Center does not have a laboratory as such. The field sites are the laboratory. The Center has one research-grade binocular and one high-power microscope. Other equipment includes a pan balance (sensitivity to 0.01g), a plankton net, some glassware, and a chemical test kit.

CENTER SCUBA EQUIPMENT

The Center owns an electrically driven 18.7 CFM Mako air compressor. Tank filling is accomplished by a manifold system. There is no air bank system. The Center operates all its compressed air equipment at a maximum of 3,000 psi. Only SFS staff operate the air compressor. The Center also owns and services fifty 80-cubic-foot aluminum air tanks. The Center has about 400 pounds of standard lead weights and weight belts available for your use. All other snorkel and dive gear is your responsibility.

LIBRARY AND COMPUTERS

During the 2008 hurricanes, most of the library resources at the center were destroyed. We are currently rebuilding this library. The focus of the collection will be on topics of direct relevance to the Center — primarily marine resource management and tropical coastal environments. If you have applicable books that you would like to donate, you are encouraged to bring materials that can be left on-site. While, through SFS, you will have Boston University online library access while at the center, we highly recommend that you make arrangements with your home school to have remote access to your library's online journals. You will need to access your home library often.

At a minimum, there will be five networked student computers available, running Microsoft Windows and Microsoft Office software. Access controls on all student computers will prevent additional software installations and settings changes.

If you have your own laptop, you are highly encouraged to bring it to the Center. This can help alleviate some of the stress involved during critical assignment periods, when computer access is in high demand. As a general recommendation, this should be an IBM or Mac compatible laptop less than 6 years old, containing Microsoft Office 2000 or later software, or office software that can export Microsoft Office compatible documents. Files can be transferred between your personal laptop and the Center's laptops for printing or other purposes, using your own USB flash drive or CDRs. Floppy disks and zip disks are not reliable in this environment and are therefore not recommended. You should also bring a portable surge suppressor, a laptop carrying case, and a security cable or lock to protect your laptop.

SFS cannot accept responsibility for ensuring the safety of students' personal computers, either onsite or in the field. Personal laptop insurance coverage can often be obtained through the credit card used to buy the equipment (check with your credit card company), or through homeowners' insurance.

All assignments can be saved to your network storage folder, which will be backed up by the network at the end of each day. This folder can be burned onto a CDR prior to departure from the program. You will be responsible for backing up and managing files saved on your personal laptop or in any other location outside of your network storage folder. **Be sure to take your project data with you upon completion of the program, as it will not be available from SFS later.**

FOOD AND CLEANING

Almost all food is imported to the Center, much of it by an island freighter which only visits South Caicos once every two weeks. Students and staff aid in unloading and stocking of food shipments. Student teams assist with the clean-up at every meal. A cook prepares meals except on Sunday.

SFS will work with you to ensure that balanced meals are prepared, but unlike large college dormitory kitchens, usually only a single entree, with a vegetarian alternative, is prepared for each meal. If you have any good recipes that serve 40+ people, you should bring them along.

Please inform SFS if you have any special medical or dietary restrictions. Vegetarians should be prepared to eat canned fruits and vegetables, as fresh produce arrives only on the boat every two weeks and usually lasts a week. Despite the location of the Center, fresh seafood is not readily available. If you are a vegan, you will need to be flexible and not expect much variety in your diet. It may be difficult to accommodate exclusive dietary requirements. If your requirements are extreme, please contact your SFS Admissions Counselor to discuss. You may want to consider taking vitamins if you have dietary restrictions.

SPECIAL DIETARY/RELIGIOUS REQUIREMENTS:

Although past vegan students have found our meals to be both delicious and sufficient, please be prepared to bear any additional costs associated with veganism or any special dietary requirements. It may be difficult to accommodate exclusive dietary requirements; please contact your SFS Admissions Counselor to discuss any of your questions regarding your diet.

Also, if you have questions regarding a religious holiday which falls during program time, PLEASE contact your Admissions Counselor immediately upon acceptance. We will try to accommodate students' religious observances. However, schedules often involve complex coordination with many parties and reservations are often made months in advance. Any missed program time will necessarily need to be made up.

A TYPICAL DAY AT THE CENTER

07:00 Breakfast

07:50 Morning meeting

08:00 Lecture (classroom or field)

09:00 Lecture (classroom or field)

10:00 Break

10:20 Lecture (classroom or field)

11:20 Lecture (classroom or field)

12:30 Lunch

14:00 Field work

18:30 Dinner

19:30 Evening activities vary, but may include lecture/dive/snorkel/study/free time

A TYPICAL WEEK

The weekly schedule on South Caicos will vary significantly from the beginning of the program to the end. The first week is filled with orientation and introductions to each of the courses and the program as a whole. After the first week, you will typically have 12-15 lectures a week plus 4 to 8 other meetings (organizational, research/paper presentations, guest lectures), until a couple of weeks after the mid-semester break (semester program only). The afternoons are generally filled with field work or research. Most of these activities take place in the water, but some are terrestrial/town-based. Academic scheduling is maintained on a six-day-a-week schedule, Monday through Saturday. Throughout the entire program there will be morning meetings that everyone is required to attend. There are daily kitchen duty chores, twice a week community service projects and weekly site clean-ups that everyone participates in. This often includes yard work (landscaping) and beach clean-ups.

In order to lock the gates at night for the protection and security of people and property at SFS-CMRS, there is a student curfew weeknights and Sunday of 11:00 pm and midnight on Saturdays. The curfew aides us in maintaining a positive relationship with the entire South Caicos community, and is strictly enforced. If you feel that you may have trouble adhering to a curfew policy, please speak with an Admissions Counselor as this may not be the best program for you.

The last few weeks of the program, for semester students, the lectures and organized classes diminish in frequency and are replaced with blocks of time allocated to the Directed Research projects. Groups of five to eight students generally go to a research site with a staff member to collect data. Additional meetings are scheduled to offer training sessions in the skills needed to complete the research. These include sessions on statistics, paper writing formats, computer spreadsheets, word processing, and laboratory analysis.

STUDENTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

SFS is involved with the community in many ways. Students and staff often assist with community-wide projects such as helping to teach reading at the local elementary school or public library and working with the residents of the Disabled Center. We run swimming lessons for the local children, many of whom rarely go into the water. In addition, the Center hosts two invitational dinners each year. These events are both festive and educational, giving the Center the opportunity to share with local residents the work that is being done.

Please remember that what is considered acceptable or appropriate varies from culture to culture and be sensitive to this when you are away from the Center or interacting with community members. The staff will brief you on this in more detail during Orientation.

MID-SEMESTER BREAK (Semester students only)

Semester programs in the TCI include a five-day break, during which time you must leave the program (South Caicos) and travel on your own or in a group. The Center is closed during this break and you are responsible for yourself during this time. Some students meet up with friends or family or choose to travel with other students or on their own. You must depart the South Caicos community during this period.

Before the mid-semester break, staff will brief you on current health and safety concerns as well as necessary precautions for traveling in the host country and/or surrounding countries. You are advised to travel in groups of two or more and will be given emergency contact numbers to carry with you during the break. You should also plan to submit a rough itinerary, with phone numbers where possible, prior to the break. Please contact an SFS Admissions Counselor with any concerns regarding the mid-semester break.

COMMUNICATIONS

MAIL

Letters to the Turks and Caicos from the U.S. normally take three to six weeks to arrive. You are welcome to give the Center address to your friends and family and ask them to send you letters. However, we ask that you please tell your friends and family to **avoid sending packages to the Center**. Package service is very slow, and a considerable nuisance for the recipient. You will be liable for all applicable customs duty when you receive a package. The sender will have filled out a declaration of value; duty is likely to be 40% of this amount. Invoices or sales slips should be enclosed in the package as proof of value. All packages will be opened and examined by customs officers. Given the above, please plan to pack and carry with you everything you will need for the duration of the program. Please advise family and friends not to send mail in the last month of the program, as it will not arrive before you leave.

If you truly need a package sent to you, SFS encourages that the package to be sent using FedEx as this carrier typically takes the least amount of time. Be aware that not only will there be charges for tax and duty, but there will be an additional carrier charge to cover the cost of the package being sent from the Providenciales FedEx office to South Caicos. You must pay all charges before your package can be released to you.

Letters sent from the Center to the US usually take one to three weeks to arrive, although it can take much longer. You can buy stamps locally at \$.60 per stamp. They are often difficult to buy, so do not count on being able to send mail regularly.

Regular mail should be sent to the following address:

Student name
The School for Field Studies
P.O. Box 007, South Caicos
Turks & Caicos Islands
British West Indies

Express mail can be sent (Fedex is recommended) to the following address:

Student Name
The School for Field Studies
c/o John Claydon
1 West Street
South Caicos
Turks & Caicos Islands
British West Indies

TELEPHONE

The Center has a student telephone to which you will have access for both incoming calls. You will not be able to use phone cards bought in the US or in the TCI to make outgoing calls, but you can receive calls on the line. The number for family and friends to call students on is (649) 332-3364. Alternatively, you can buy a local SIM card to use with your personal cell phone or buy a local cell phone (\$60) on South Caicos. Your phone must not be locked to a network in order to use it with a local SIM card. You can get some reasonably priced phone cards to load onto cell phone to call back to the US. It is much cheaper for family and friends to call the TCI student phone, than it is for students to call the USA from the TCI, however past students recommend buy a local cell phone and phone cards as the best way to regularly keep in touch by phone. Internet phone calling (computer to computer- like Skype), is sometimes permissible, but you should not rely on this as your primary form of communication. The internet is unreliable and using Skype slows down the entire network.

INTERNET

Internet access and e-mail are available for students 24 hours a day at the Center to support research and educational work. In order to maintain the stability of the network, the following actions are prohibited:

- Downloading any non-research related files.
- Downloading large files, especially audio/video files.
- Downloading or running any software applications, including plug-ins and scripts.
- Using any Internet application other than Internet Explorer.
- Gaining unauthorized access to remote Internet systems or abusing Internet systems or Internet users.
- Taking actions that compromise the security of the center network.
- Representing The School for Field Studies in any manner.
- Distributing SFS-owned knowledge or propagating falsified information about SFS.
- Spamming, hacking, virus distribution, etc.
- Illegally copying or redistributing copyrighted material.
- Viewing pornographic or illegal content.

In the event of any violation of this policy SFS reserves the right to suspend or terminate any or all Internet access.

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Be sure to let your friends and family know that SFS publishes News from the Field every two weeks on our web site (www.fieldstudies.org). This includes photos, updates from the Center Director and Student Affairs Manager on what students have been doing most recently, and quotes from students with their thoughts about their experience. It's a great way for your loved ones to follow your exciting adventures!

EMERGENCY CONTACT

Emergency contact should be made with The School for Field Studies Headquarters office in Salem, Massachusetts at 978-741-3544. Office hours are 8:30am to 5:00pm (Eastern time) Monday through Friday. At all other times SFS maintains a 24-hour emergency message system while students are in the field. This system is for reporting family emergencies that require immediate contact with a student in the field, or to report a problem with a student in transit to or from one of the SFS field stations. To leave a message, which will page a staff member, call 978-741-3567, once prompted, press "2" for the emergency system. While headquarters' staff know the whereabouts of student groups at all times, it may require 24 hours or more to make contact in some cases.

NOTE: Problems or emergencies that arise in the field will be reported directly to the SFS Safety Director. SFS will then contact appropriate parties as necessary.

SAFETY EDUCATION

In some areas where our programs operate the average local five-year-old has vastly superior knowledge about what is important in order to keep safe than our students do upon arrival. Learning to observe and interpret what is going on around you is a desirable skill that may enable you to effectively minimize risks, make better-informed decisions and mitigate the consequences of undesirable events. Like most skills, it takes some time to develop. The following section will help guide your behavior while you are learning and help facilitate the process.

This section (Traveling and Living Abroad) presents traveler best practices and lists a number of information resources. This will serve you during your SFS program time, as well as during travels before or after the program, and during break and free time. In addition, during your on-site orientation you will learn about potential local hazards, safety systems, Center specific rules and the local Operational Objectives. In addition, you may have discussions based on case studies and on your experiences and those of your group members.

TRAVELING AND LIVING ABROAD

COUNTRY INFORMATION

US State Dept. Country by Country Background Notes: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/>

US Embassies and Consulates: <http://usembassy.state.gov/>

CIA Country profiles including geography; people; government; economics; transportation; communications: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>

For Government Worldwide Travel Advisories

The following sites contain information on road/travel safety, the political situation, laws, medical facilities, crime, political strife, terrorism, etc:

US State Dept., Bureau of Consular Affairs: <http://travel.state.gov/>

Australian Dept of Foreign Affairs and Trade: www.smarttraveller.gov.au

United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office: www.fco.gov.uk

Canadian Dept of Foreign Affairs and International Trade: www.voyage.gc.ca/dest/index.asp

Personal Safety

Adapted from the USC Center for Global Education Study Abroad Safety Handbook

According to travel and study abroad experts, most of the incidents resulting in injury or death of students while participating in study abroad involve:

- Travel/traffic accidents
- Use and abuse of drugs or alcohol
- Sexual harassment and assault
- Crime/petty theft
- Mental health issues/stress
- Diseases and illnesses that exist in the host country

Some Best Practices for Mitigating Personal Safety Risks

Precautions When Accepting Food and Drink: Be cautious about accepting drinks from a stranger, alcoholic or non-alcoholic. Be cautious about accepting food from a stranger.

Risk upon Arrival: Travelers, especially those having just arrived abroad, are often targets of crime and at higher risk of harm, because they:

- Are unfamiliar with their surroundings
- Might not speak the local language well
- Are clearly recognizable as foreigners
- Have not yet learned the social norms or unwritten rules of conduct
- Are eager to get to know new people and the local culture
- Are naive to the intentions of people around them
- Are carrying all their valuables with them when they first step off the plane, train, or boat

Keeping in Control: In addition to the circumstances involved with being new in a foreign country, which are often beyond one's immediate control, there are many situations that you can control. Some controllable factors that place you at greatest risk include:

- Being out after midnight
- Being alone at night in an isolated area
- Being in a known high-crime area
- Sleeping in an unlocked place
- Being out after a local curfew
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Non-verbal Communication: Non-verbal communication (such as body language and hand gestures) considered harmless in the U.S. may be offensive to people in other countries. The list of gestures considered rude in other countries can grow beyond the obvious.

Sexually-Transmitted Diseases: Keep yourself free from sexually-transmitted diseases by using protection (like condoms or abstinence). Also, remember that "no" may not always be interpreted as "no" in other countries. Inform yourself about the types of diseases prevalent in the area in which you are traveling. Unprotected sex puts one at risk for acquiring a sexually-transmitted disease, including HIV. Traveling abroad can be romantic - beautiful scenery, a new culture, none of the constraints of home. Do not however, let the romance overwhelm your common sense. If you do decide to have sex, you should make sure that it is protected sex.

International Sources of Information: Inform yourself about your new environment, making use of as many different sources as possible – the Internet, the library, television and radio news programs, and the newspaper. Don't limit yourself to U.S. sources. Instead, contrast the U.S. information with that provided by other countries.

Understanding Locals: Beyond tuning into yourself, make it a point to try to understand what locals are communicating to you, how they feel about you and about U.S. citizens in general,

how you are fitting with their values, and how well you understand them. Obviously a stronger grasp of the local language will help you with these things, but even knowing a few essential phrases can be immensely beneficial.

How to Dress: It is often best to dress conservatively – by local standards, so you can't be identified on sight as a tourist or a U.S. citizen.

Jewelry and Other Valuables: Any time or place you travel, be careful with your valuables. Leave your good jewelry at home, and keep money in a safe place like a money belt or hidden pouch under your clothes. Keep a low profile with regard to your camera and electronic equipment, and keep your bags with you at all times.

Becoming Aware of Your Surroundings: You should be aware of your surroundings, remembering to:

- Pay attention to what people around you are saying
- Find out which areas of the city are less safe than others
- Know which hours of night are considered more dangerous
- Stay and walk only in well-lit areas
- Avoid being alone in unfamiliar neighborhoods
- Know where to get help (police station, fire station, phones, stores, etc.)
- Do not touch suspicious items like letters or packages mailed to you from someone you don't know
- Know what is "normal" and "not normal" to see on a daily basis in the areas you frequent
- Do not respond to explosions or gunfire by going to a window; seek cover away from windows and exterior walls

Effects of U.S. Foreign Policy: The foreign policy of the U.S. does not always sit well with citizens of foreign countries. In some cases, Americans living abroad can be targets of the frustrations of these individuals. Consider the nature of the political climate and relations between the U.S. and the countries you plan to visit.

Crimes against U.S. Citizens: There are some steps you can take to avoid being targeted for politically-motivated crime or anti-U.S. crime in general. Try to assimilate your style of dress and mannerisms as much as possible into the local norms. "Dressing like a U.S. citizen" (or any way conspicuously different from local people) can make you a target.

Political Rallies: Avoid political rallies, which can increase tensions and emotions or breed angry mobs for which a U.S. citizen may serve as a scapegoat.

Health: Every region has its own unique health challenges. We strongly recommended that you consult with a travel medicine clinic or physician who can look at your travel itinerary and your personal health profile and work with you to devise a health strategy for your travel, including all appropriate vaccinations, medications and treatment options.

To locate a travel medicine clinic as well as for information on destinations, outbreaks, diseases, vaccinations, insect protection, safe food and water, and medical emergency preparation: The Center for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>

Disease maps; health risks and precautions; travel by air; environmental health risks; accidents, injuries and violence; infectious diseases; vaccine-preventable diseases; malaria; blood transfusions, etc.: <http://www.who.int/en/>

SOME HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

MEDICATIONS

You should bring enough over-the-counter and/or prescription medication to last throughout the program and your travel before or afterwards, if applicable. Keep it in its original container (this will be helpful when passing through customs). Please make sure that all medication is noted on the SFS Medical Form. Program staff will check in with you on your medication requirements (storage, schedule, etc.) during the orientation at the Center. Per local laws, staff may be limited in their ability to dispense over-the-counter and prescription medications.

SPECIAL MEDICAL CONDITIONS/NEEDS

If you have any allergies or special conditions which might lead to sudden illness (such as asthma, diabetes, bee sting or penicillin allergies, etc.), you must inform the staff of possible reactions. You should also consider discussing these with the rest of the student group during the orientation at the Center so that other people will know how to react in case you suddenly need assistance or medication. If you have any critical medications, you must carry them with you at all times and should report these medications on their SFS Medical Form. SFS also recommends that students consider wearing a medical alert bracelet describing any special medical conditions.

If you have asthma, even if you have not had any problems for years, you should bring an inhaler and all the necessary medications because past students have found that asthma acts up in some of the environments where our Centers are located.

DIVE MEDICAL SCREENING

The Safety Director and the Diving Safety Officer reserve the right to deny any diving privileges to any prospective diver if medical conditions are not met, or in cases of any unexpected anomalies. Certain pre-existing conditions restrict or even preclude people from diving. SFS policy holds that persons with any of the following conditions must be evaluated by a DAN-approved physician and SFS to ensure their eligibility to dive.

Generally, diving will not be permitted for individuals with the following conditions:

- I. Asthma or other severe respiratory disorders

2. Insulin dependent diabetes
3. Epilepsy or any seizure disorder
4. Pregnancy
5. Any condition which requires taking psychotropic medication or drugs that affect the central nervous system (Check with SFS Headquarters if you are taking any medication regularly; many physicians are unfamiliar with the special demands of diving)
6. Sickle-cell anemia
7. Any condition that inhibits normal cardiovascular functions
8. Any history of cardiac septal defects
9. Chronic ear or sinus conditions
10. Active depression, mania, or other psychiatric disorders
11. Eating disorders which may affect electrolyte balance or general health
12. History of migraine headaches
13. Bleeding disorders

It is important to note that this list is not complete; other conditions may preclude diving, as well. Any questionable medical backgrounds must be considered by a dive-knowledgeable physician in consultation with SFS staff and medical advisors.

FOOD (FROM THE CDC)

To avoid illness, travelers should be advised to select food with care. All raw food is subject to contamination. Particularly in areas where hygiene and sanitation are inadequate, the traveler should be advised to avoid salads, uncooked vegetables, and unpasteurized milk and milk products such as cheese, and to eat only food that has been cooked and is still hot or fruit that has been peeled by the traveler personally.

Undercooked and raw meat, fish, and shellfish can carry various intestinal pathogens. Cooked food that has been allowed to stand for several hours at ambient temperature can provide a fertile medium for bacterial growth and should be thoroughly reheated before serving. Consumption of food and beverages obtained from street food vendors has been associated with an increased risk of illness.

PROTECTION FROM INSECTS

Travelers should be advised that exposure to spider and insect bites can be minimized by modifying patterns of activity or behavior. Some vector mosquitoes are most active in twilight periods at dawn and dusk or in the evening. Avoidance of outdoor activity during these periods can reduce risk of exposure. Wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and hats minimizes areas of exposed skin. Shirts should be tucked in. Repellents applied to clothing, shoes, tents, mosquito nets, and other gear will enhance protection.

When exposure to ticks or biting insects is a possibility, travelers should be advised to tuck their pants into their socks and to wear boots, not sandals. Permethrin-based repellents applied to clothing as directed will enhance protection. Travelers should be advised to inspect themselves and their clothing for ticks, both during outdoor activity and at the end of the day.

Ticks are detected more easily on light-colored or white clothing. Ticks should be promptly removed from skin by using tweezers to firmly grasp the head and then slowly pull back. Bite should be cleaned well with an antimicrobial soap or alcohol etc.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IN TCI

In this section, we present some of the health and safety issues of the Turks and Caicos Islands. Statistically, the most common injuries sustained by students on SFS programs are recreational in nature. The most common medical problem is traveler's diarrhea. However, international traveling and living presents potentially significant health and safety challenges.

DISEASE

Turks and Caicos has its own unique health challenges. Risk from infectious disease is limited when compared to other countries in the tropics; however, it is still recommended that you consult with a travel medicine clinic or physician who can match up your health profile with this region and any additional travel that you may plan and work with you to create a health strategy that includes vaccinations, etc.

Please see <http://www.cdc.gov> for a list of immunizations recommended by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), including routine immunizations (vaccines that are given to all children in the United States and that are usually required for matriculation into elementary school and into college) and immunizations especially for the country where you will be traveling.

IMMUNIZATIONS RECOMMENDED BY THE CDC FOR TRAVELERS TO THE TCI

Hepatitis A: Hepatitis A is a viral infection of the liver that results in jaundice and severe malaise. Unlike hepatitis B it is rarely fatal, but disease can be protracted, and infected persons can be ill for six weeks or more. Infection is transmitted by fecally-contaminated food or water. Symptoms occur 2 to 6 weeks after first exposure to the virus. There are now two vaccines licensed in the United States that are extremely effective in preventing Hepatitis A infection, and that are quite safe to administer. Both vaccines require two doses (the booster dose is given 6-9 months after the initial dose). The initial dose, however, is effective in providing protection, and the CDC recommends that all travelers to TCI receive this vaccine.

The recommendations enumerated above are specific for the Turks and Caicos. If you are planning to travel outside the Turks and Caicos, e.g., the Dominican Republic, etc., the health risks may be different, and you should consult with your travel medicine specialist as to what additional measures may be required.

DISEASE (NOT VACCINE PREVENTABLE)

DENGUE: Dengue is a viral infection that can cause a very severe flu-like illness. It is transmitted by mosquitoes, and is becoming increasingly common in many tropical countries. There is no vaccine against dengue available in the United States. Prevention is achieved by preventing, or reducing, the risk of mosquito bites.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES AND HIV INFECTION: HIV infection rates among heterosexuals in the Turks and Caicos are very high, and South Caicos has the highest rate in TCI.

OTHER HAZARDS

Some of the hazards associated with this SFS program and doing field work and living in TCI are described below. While SFS has tried to anticipate as many risks as possible, you may nonetheless encounter risks that are not described below.

HEAT/SUN: You should bring along a good supply of SPF 15 (minimum) sunscreen, and carefully monitor your exposure to the sun, especially during their first week of adjustment to the climate. You should use sunscreen, wear a hat, stay in the shade when possible, wear loose, light-colored clothes and get out of the sun if you feel dizzy. Dehydration occurs easily in hot environments. A conscious effort should be made to replace fluids lost through evaporation, which can be as much as two quarts an hour when exercising.

SCORPIONS/SPIDERS/WASPS/CENTIPEDES/MOSQUITOES: There are scorpions and poisonous spiders on South Caicos, but they are reclusive and rarely encountered. Biting centipedes and wasps produce painful bites on rare occasion. Students with bee sting allergies should consult their physicians about bringing a bee sting kit which contains antihistamine and epinephrine. A prescription is necessary to obtain a kit. Mosquitoes become serious pests when there has been rain or the wind dies. For these times, SFS recommends a supply of good insect repellent.

HAZARDOUS MARINE LIFE: Several biting and stinging marine animals are common, including: fire coral, bristle worms, sea lice and sea urchins (some of which are easily avoided in the water by wearing a wetsuit or dive skin). Run-ins with these creatures are uncomfortable, but seldom serious. More serious are scorpion fish, sting rays, and biting fish. All these creatures are found in waters surrounding the Center. A wetsuit, worn as thermal and anti-sting protection, is highly recommended.

MEDICAL CARE

Staff will provide initial first aid in the event of an accident or illness. Student Affairs Managers have Wilderness First Responder certification (72-hour emergency medical training).

Community health care on South Caicos consists of a clinic, which is normally staffed by two Registered Nurses and one doctor. The clinic charges \$30 for a visit and \$6 per packet of prescription medication. You must be prepared to pay by cash for medical treatment when it is

administered. You cannot charge treatment to SFS. The closest hospital is on Providenciales, a 15-25 minute flight away. However, to organize an unscheduled flight may take several hours. The facilities at that hospital may not be equipped to handle major emergencies; in the case of such an emergency you may have to be flown to Miami. There is also a well-respected medical clinic with a 24-hour recompression chamber for diving accidents on the island of Providenciales. Any serious medical accident requires air evacuation by charter aircraft. You will bear at the time of the incident, the cost of visits to the clinic, the hospital, or recompression chamber and all other expenses related to treatment, including the flight for an SFS staff member to accompany you. SFS will assist you in contacting your parents if you have insufficient funds on hand to pay for the cost of the visit and can assist your family in getting the necessary funds to you.

WHAT'S UP WITH CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT?

DEFINING CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Think about how you are feeling now as you prepare to go abroad with an SFS program. Are you feeling excited? Anxious? Overwhelmed? Content? Afraid?

Now, think about how you might feel when you first arrive at your host country. Will you feel high on life? Bombarded by the newness of it all? Jet-lagged? Irritated or humbled by the reality that you are unable to communicate as well as you are used to being able to?

How will your emotions and thoughts change with time after the initial high of arrival? Will you be amazed and/or frustrated by the differences between how things are done at home and how things are done at your temporary home abroad? Confronted with these differences, will you question values you held and always thought were in the "right"? Will you grow in depth of thought and sense of self? Will you be unbearably homesick and seek out a friend to talk with?

It may seem like a very long time from now, but imagine returning home after study abroad. How do you hope you have changed as a result of your time abroad? How will others see your new personal, cultural, social, and academic developments? Will it be easy to reconnect with family, friends, and your community? Will it take effort? How will you communicate your experiences and developments and help loved ones take part in an important period of your life?

The flow of emotions and experiences above describes the cultural adjustment process that many students move through before, during, and after their study abroad terms.

So, what is cultural adjustment? Most simply put, cultural adjustment is the process of adjusting to a different cultural context. It is the process of filtering through initially identifiable differences in eating style, language, customs, and more to discover the underlying values and assumptions that are the foundation of a certain way of life. Whether you are from the United States or from another country, confronting another way of life may entail questioning your own basic values and beliefs. Cultural adjustment may beg of you to ask the question, "Who am I?" By asking such a fundamental question and working through the answers, you can build a strong sense of self, gain more confidence in who you are, learn to identify at a basic level with people from any background, and become more accepting of others. At this point, you will have begun to develop a sense of global citizenship, a crucial key to developing a peaceful global society.

SIGNS OF CULTURE SHOCK

Experiencing some difficulty adjusting to your new environment is normal and even important for personal development. Some students experience:

Homesickness

Physical symptoms such as mild colds and headaches

Anxiety, depression, disappointment, and/or frustration

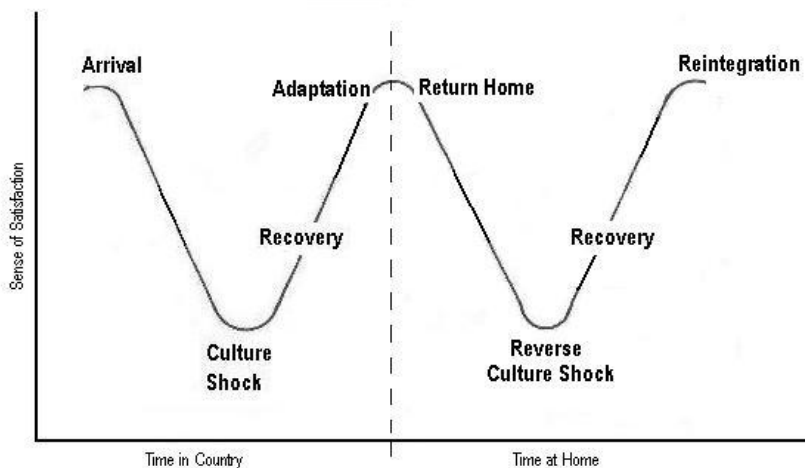
Defensiveness toward home culture(s)

Tendency to put the host or home culture(s) and way(s) of life on a pedestal

Criticism toward home or host countries

Gratitude for the chance to rethink world views and customs

Cycling through Cultural Adjustment: The “W” Curve



The model above puts into visual format the process of cultural adjustment previously described.

Arrival: Upon arrival, many students are exhilarated by the hundreds of new sights, sounds, and smells of their host country. You may feel physically exhausted from the travel, and you may need to give your body time and care to help it adjust to the different weather, geographic conditions, food, and time schedule. During this initial period, you may experience a variety of heightened emotions.

Culture Shock: After the initial high period, you may begin to notice the many differences between your home and your temporary home abroad. Processing these differences may be difficult, and many students report emotions of anxiety, stress, confusion, homesickness, discouragement, hostility toward the local culture and customs, and even depression. You may experience physical symptoms such as colds, headaches, or stomach upsets. On the other hand, some students experience very little culture shock.

Recovery: Fear not! With effort and time, you will get your legs back under you again. You may wish to employ some of the coping strategies listed in the next section, or find your own way to regain and rethink equilibrium.

Adaptation: At this stage, students have renegotiated belief systems and “the way things are done”. You may feel at home in your residence abroad.

Returning Home: Some students find that just when they have become comfortable with their surroundings abroad, it is time to return home! Because you are traveling back to a familiar place, you may not expect to experience reverse culture shock, which mirrors the culture shock process. Many students experience re-entry culture shock more severely than they do culture shock. The best way to smooth the reverse culture shock process is to prepare for it before, during, and after your time abroad. Make sure to share your experiences and personal development with important family and friends so that they can take part in your growth! Continuous communication in a spirit of sharing (rather than expecting or needing others to understand) will greatly smooth the reentry process.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN AMERICAN?

Perhaps this is your first time visiting a foreign country for an extended period. By removing yourself from the USA or other country of origin and being confronted with difference, you may gain a greater awareness of what it means to be American, Chinese, Mexican, or whatever you identify as.

In part because of the USA’s prominent media and political and economic presence, you may find that people around the world have formed viewpoints, even stereotypes about Americans.

Below are some examples of stereotypes of Americans that you might encounter in-country. Keep in mind that there are many different points of view on Americans.

Wealthy and wasteful
Caring about the environment
Heavy drinkers
Careless
Want to help others
Loud and dumb
Openly friendly and kind
The youth like to party
Academically-oriented

As you can see, stereotypes are not always accurate, and they do not apply to every person within a culture. Making generalizations about a culture or people is normal and even useful in learning about them. However, be aware of the possible negative impact of stereotyping. Be open to and appreciative of the great differences between individuals within a population.

A NOTE TO WOMEN AND DIVERSE STUDENTS

What it means to identify as IGLBTA, a woman, a person of color, a member of a certain religious group, a participant with a disability, etc. may be very different in your host country than at home. For example, a gay student may find that the host community is much less accepting of homosexuality than his university community. Asian or Asian-American students may find that host nationals, who perhaps have had little or no contact with Asians, view them as exotic. Students who are accustomed to being part of the majority group at home (e.g. Caucasian students) may need to readjust to living as a minority abroad. The change may be for better or for worse, but you might not be treated or viewed in the way that you are accustomed to at home.

There is more information about women and underrepresented students traveling abroad than it is possible to cover in this section. Please use the resources below to better inform yourself as you prepare for your abroad experience.

Women Travel Tips - Women

<http://www.womentraveltips.com/index.shtml>

University of Minnesota's Learning Abroad Center – GLBT Students, Students with Disabilities, Multicultural Students (Scroll down page for links)

<http://www.umabroad.umn.edu/students/index.html>

All Abroad – Ethnic Minorities

<http://allabroad.us/>

Mobility International USA – Students with Disabilities

<http://www.miusa.org/>

COPING WITH CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

What are some tricks for coping with and growing through the cultural adjustment process?

Keep a journal. Be your own best counselor and write about the experiences, emotions, and thoughts that you have.

Take care of your physical body. Be sure to get sufficient exercise, and take care of your body's nutritional needs. Get enough rest and sleep.

Communicate. If you are feeling particularly down, approach a friend, staff member, or mentor. Sometimes just talking about difficulties you are facing makes the burden seem lighter. Many of the people surrounding you at the Center have experienced or are experiencing the same cultural adjustment process as you. There is strength and comfort in sharing!

Step out of your comfort zone. When everything around us is new, we sometimes just want to withdraw. Although some level of withdrawal can be helpful, in the end, there is more joy in living fully than hiding from fear. Do not do anything unreasonably risky or foolish, but practice

your Spanish skills with community members. Try delicious foods you had never heard of before. Travel with friends during the mid-semester break. Take advantage of your abroad experience, because you will not have the same exact opportunity again!
Breathe! The simple act of inhaling and exhaling a few times will help clear your mind.

Keep in touch with family and friends at home. Regularly sharing your experiences will help ease the reentry process. However, be aware of spending too much time on the phone or internet to the detriment of your abroad experience.

Remember to be grateful for what you have. A sense of gratitude makes cultural adjustment easier because of a positive outlook. You will see things in a more positive light, and those you meet will respond to you more positively because they can sense your humility and good feelings.

The above are just examples of strategies for facing cultural adjustment. There are a multitude of ways that people cope, and you may discover other strategies that work particularly well for you.

Everyone at The School for Field Studies extends a warm welcome to you and looks forward to seeing you in the field!