

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Domestic Intercultural Immersion Programs (DII)



Student Handbook

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INTRODUCTION

Who Should Use this Handbook?

This handbook contains policies, procedures, and general information that apply to all students participating on any faculty-led, short-term Domestic Intercultural Immersion (DII) program coordinated by the Intercultural Immersions Office under Academic Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (UW-Eau Claire). Please read it carefully and refer to it as needed. You are responsible for the content of this handbook.

Intercultural Immersions at UW-Eau Claire!

Mission of the Intercultural Immersion Office: To enhance the UW-Eau Claire student experience by administering and supporting high-impact intercultural immersion programs that are integrated into the curriculum. We aim to deepen student intercultural competence through experiential learning opportunities and engagement with people, cultures, languages, environments, and systems different than their own, in order to foster engaged citizens who have personal and professional skills for lifelong learning in a diverse world.

We fulfill our mission through a commitment to

1. Work with Faculty / Staff and departments to develop and promote a diverse array of high-impact intercultural immersion programs through mutually beneficial collaborations with international and domestic partners.
2. Foster development of intercultural competency and a respectful understanding of diverse cultures, populations, and environments through transformative learning opportunities.
3. Increase access to immersion experiences and encourage participation by all students, particularly those traditionally underrepresented in off-campus high-impact practices.

4. Develop faculty expertise in building global relationships through cultural immersion and international research opportunities.
5. Bring knowledge, increased capacity, and understanding back to UW-Eau Claire.

Program Goals

DII programs provide students with the opportunity to engage in a transformative experience that helps prepare them to take part in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. A domestic intercultural immersion experience at UW-Eau Claire is defined as a guided, critically-reflective intercultural experience outside the classroom designed to challenge and transform students' perspectives regarding cultural norms and values.

People's beliefs, customs, experiences and environment create shared ways of perceiving and engaging in the world. Through dialogue and relationship building, students become more aware of and reflect on multiple perspectives. Guided, critical reflection is a key component to students' transformations as they seek a deeper understanding of another culture as well as their own. A meaningful engagement within the cultural environment inspires students to analyze the foundational assumptions that govern their thoughts and actions.

Specifically, the DII program works to:

1. Engage learners firsthand in various cultures, populations, and environments within the United States
2. Deepen learners' understandings of intercultural dynamics as they relate to the UW-Eau Claire Liberal Education Learning Goals

Blugold Commitment DII Funding

DII Programs are made possible through Blugold Commitment Differential Tuition (BCDT) funding. The goals of the Blugold Commitment

are to extend access and affordability to these exceptional high-impact practices for all UWEC undergraduates, to ensure that more of these opportunities are available for these students, and to increase the numbers of students who participate.

All DII programs receive BGDТ funding which is automatically granted to all full-time undergraduate UWEC students. No additional application is necessary to receive DII funding. BGDТ funding covers 90% of the program costs (minus food). You can calculate the amount of BGDТ funding that is being contributed to your individual participation by taking the program fee and adding one zero to the end of it and subtracting the amount of the program fee from that number. For example, if the program fee is \$300, add a zero (\$3,000) and subtract the program fee of \$300: $\$3,000 - \$300 = \$2,700$. Therefore, UWEC is funding \$2,700 of the true program cost per student if the program fee is \$300.

While students are encouraged to participate in multiple high-impact immersions, each student is eligible to receive BCDТ funding for only one FLIIE experience. Any student who has participated in a previous FLIIE experience is not eligible to receive BCDТ funding for a second FLIIE experience. You will be notified upon acceptance if you do not qualify for the FLIIE funding.

STUDENT CONDUCT

Your Responsibilities as a Participant

Predeparture: Participating in a UWEC immersion program is a privilege, with that privilege comes several responsibilities:

1. Turning in all forms/materials required for your program by the stated deadlines.
2. Attending any preparation meetings set by your Faculty / Staff Leaders.

3. Being responsible for the information in this handbook.
4. Checking your UWEC e-mail account at least weekly.
5. Remaining in good standing (academic, financial and conduct) at UWEC from the time of your application until the end of the program.
6. While on the program, you are expected to follow all state and federal laws. This includes not engaging in underage drinking or illegal drug use.
7. Making all program payments on time.

Failure to live up to these responsibilities may result in termination of participation.

During the Program: While you are on the program, you are still a UWEC student, and you are subject to the same code of conduct and disciplinary measures that are in place on the UWEC campus. The [Blugold Code](#) includes policies for both academic and non-academic misconduct.

If we receive a complaint of misconduct involving you, we will consult with the Dean of Students Office to determine whether misconduct as defined by the Blugold Code has occurred and what disciplinary sanctions may apply.

If the Dean of Students Office determines misconduct has occurred, based on the information they have been provided, they will contact you to arrange a conference. This may happen after your return. At the conference you will have an opportunity to present your information. You will then be notified as to whether you were found responsible or not, details regarding any sanctions assigned and information on how to file an appeal.

As stated in the Enrollment Agreement that you signed as part of the application process, failure to maintain good academic standing or academic requirements of the program,

personal conduct that adversely affects other students or faculty, and/or conduct that violates the rules and regulations published in the Bugold Code, or conduct which violates the local laws, may result in termination of participation.

Upon Return: You are responsible for completing all program requirements due after the travel portion of the program ends. This might include a final project, reflection paper, or presentations on your experience.

Specific Program Policies

Each DII program also has its own program policies around student behavior and conduct. These are put in place to minimize risk and ensure your safety as a participant on the program. This could include but is not limited to a program curfew, rules around rental car use, limited free time, and group dynamics. On all programs, you are expected to demonstrate respect for yourself, your Faculty / Staff leaders, other students, and the local partners or organization of the program.

Staff Resources

Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Studies are the units on campus responsible for UW-Eau Claire faculty-led immersion programs. Below is the staff of the Intercultural Immersions Office:

Intercultural Immersions Coordinator: Jeff DeGrave (degravjr@uwec.edu or (715) 836-4471) with questions about the program, activities, academics, health and counseling services, housing, or the cost for your program.

Immersion Program Assistant: Andrew Akey (akeyal@uwec.edu or (715) 836-5940) can provide information about forms, deadlines, documents, and other predeparture information for all UWEC Immersion programs.

Faculty / Staff Leader: Your program will have 1-3 UW-Eau Claire Faculty / Staff Leaders. They will work with you before you leave to get you ready

for the program, complete any academic preparation and readings, and discuss cultural adjustment. Please contact your Faculty / Staff Leader with questions regarding the program itinerary, course requirements or syllabus, or local accommodations or activities.

Written Resources

You will receive information at different points throughout the process of getting everything in order to prepare you for your Immersion program. To help you keep it all straight, here is a list of what you receive, and when!

Acceptance: You received an acceptance email directing you to information in your online Immersion Program application.

The rest of the semester before travel: You will receive email updates from your Program Coordinator or Faculty / Staff Leader with any important information. Read the updates carefully and often!

ACADEMICS

Program Prerequisites

To participate in a UW-Eau Claire DII program, you must be in good academic standing. Some programs also have other prerequisites, such as a specific course(s) or being within a specific major. Check with your faculty / staff leader for details.

The Immersions Office checks grades and academic standing at the end of the semester prior to your departure. If you are on academic warning or probation, we will need to check with your Faculty / Staff Leaders to see if you will be allowed to participate. If you are suspended, you will not be allowed to participate on the program. Please contact the Immersions Coordinator if you have concerns about your academic performance at any time prior to your planned departure.

Academic Credit

Some domestic programs are offered in combination with a course for academic credit, while others are not. However, all programs are coordinated and offered by UW-Eau Claire and thus considered educational and academic programs. Even non-credit programs will have readings, assignments, and projects – and you are expected to complete all program requirements.

Program Participation

While on the program, you are required to attend all regularly scheduled classes and actively participate in all program activities unless illness or other unavoidable circumstances make this impossible. Absences must be approved in advance by the Faculty / Staff Leader.

Liberal Education Requirements

All faculty-led domestic intercultural immersion programs fulfill the Responsibility Outcome 1 (R1): Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity upon completion of all program requirements.

Service-Learning

Some programs, but not all, provide the opportunity to complete your service-learning requirement. Service-learning is a hands-on learning approach that helps connect abstract theory with practice, strengthen interpersonal and communication skills, promote the value of diversity, and foster civic engagement.

Please contact your Faculty / Staff leaders to determine whether or not the program will fulfill any of the requirement. For some programs, you must obtain prior approval of your service-learning project from your Faculty / Staff Leader and the Center for Service-learning.

The estimated cost of participation in each DII program is listed [here](#). This includes costs you will pay directly to UW-Eau Claire, and costs while on the program.

Payment Deadlines at UW-Eau Claire

Once you are accepted into a program, you will receive an acceptance email with specific payment amounts and deadlines. Most non-credit programs require a non-refundable deposit to hold your spot in the program, as well as a final payment of the remaining balance. Some non-credit programs require only a one-time payment of the entire program cost. For-credit programs will have a special course fee that includes the program cost, which is paid as part of your tuition / fees bill for each term.

Program Refunds from UW-Eau Claire

Any program deposits are non-refundable. If you commit to the program once accepted, and then later withdraw at any point, you are still responsible for paying any program costs already paid on your behalf. Depending on when you withdraw, this could include the roundtrip airfare to your location, lodging deposits, or reservation payments. If you are considering withdrawing, please contact your Faculty / Staff leaders immediately to determine any financial consequences of withdrawal.

UWEC Withdrawal Deadlines

The \$40 application fee is non-refundable. The final payment is also non-refundable, except in the case of a documented medical or family emergency, or if cancelled from the program due to academic ineligibility or conduct violations.

The refund deadlines are as follows:

- Winterim programs: October 1
- Spring Break Programs: February 1
- Summer programs: March 1.

No refunds are available after these respective dates. All withdrawals must be made in writing.

MONEY MATTERS

If you withdraw after the refund deadline, you will still need to pay some or all of the program costs as listed in the cost estimate. In addition, if you receive financial aid and withdraw or are cancelled after the program begins, you may be required to both pay back your financial aid and pay the full program costs.

All Immersion programs receive Blugold Commitment funding. Undergraduate students who withdraw after the no-refund deadline will lose their DII funding. As such, they will be expected to pay ALL non-refundable program costs paid to UWEC. A student who withdraws after the refund deadline will be responsible for paying the full program fee, which is the true cost of the program without the Blugold Funding. In other words, the student would have to cover all of the costs of the entire program. As you know, students receive funding to cover 90% of the program costs (aside from the \$40 non-refundable application fee) to participate in a DII Immersion. You would have to repay all of these expenses (e.g. plane fare, hotels, food, all local transportation, guest speakers, etc.) that were purchased on your behalf. Please speak with the Immersions Coordinator before withdrawing after the no-refund deadline has passed.

Withdrawing After Your Program Begins

Withdrawing from your immersion program after the start date involves a number of serious academic and financial consequences. You should contact your Faculty / Staff leaders as soon as possible if you are considering withdrawing to discuss these consequences. The process and outcomes are governed by the academic / registration and billing calendars at UW-Eau Claire.

Academic consequences. Depending on when you withdraw from a for-credit program, you will most likely either receive a "W" or an "F" for your program, if offered for credit. If you withdraw after the UW-Eau Claire last day to drop with no record, UW-Eau Claire requires

that an academic record be submitted on your behalf.

Financial consequences. You will be expected to pay your full UW-Eau Claire program costs, including any flight change fees or additional costs associated with leaving the program early.

Financial aid implications. If you received any type of financial aid (e.g. grants, scholarships, or loans) to fund your experience, you may be required to return all or a portion of the aid. Your withdrawal date and the UWEC refund and financial aid repayment notice will govern how much of your aid you will need to repay.

Additional Required Costs

Depending on your program, you may be responsible for paying some costs, such as meals or personal expenses while on the program.

Be sure you understand what you will pay for, how much the cost is estimated to be, and when payment is due. Contact your faculty / staff leaders or the Immersions Office with questions regarding payments.

INSURANCE

CISI Insurance

UWEC requires that all students participating on a UWEC "study away" program carry CISI insurance. CISI coverage is included in your program fee. Details are below and contact information is provided later in this handbook. Your program may have additional or different insurance requirements; if so, they are described in your program guide.

All CISI information is available to enrolled participants via the [CISI Participant Portal](#). The Immersions Office will enroll you in CISI coverage after you have attended the required Immersions orientation session. You will receive an email once your enrollment is complete.

Creating a CISI Account & Logging In

Once you are enrolled, download the CISI Traveler app and / or go online and log-in to the “myCISI” to create an account and reset your password. You will receive instructions for creating an account and resetting your password. You can also access these instructions online by visiting the “myCISI” portal on the [CISI website](#).

CISI App

Upon completing the previous step, you can manage your CISI enrollment via the CISI Traveler app. From the app, you can:

- download and / or print your insurance card,
- download and / or print your proof of insurance letter for a visa application (if required for your program),
- view country-specific travel alerts,
- search medical providers,
- access policy information, documents, and claim forms,
- access emergency assistance numbers,
- email information to a trusted friend or family member.

The app also has a “Check In” feature that can be used if you are in a location that suffers from a natural disaster, terrorist attack, etc. By checking in, UWEC will be notified that you are safe or need assistance. We strongly encourage all students to download this app. You can [download the app for iPhones](#) or [download the app for Android phones](#).

Pre-Existing Conditions

Losses (medical expenses incurred) due to pre-existing conditions are covered up to \$100,000 in the current UW-System CISI policy, if you have been treated for that condition in the past 6 months. CISI does not cover expenses incurred while in your home country. If you have a pre-existing condition that will require treatment while you are away, please:

- Consult with your current US insurance company to see how your care will or will not be covered, and
- Contact Assist America, CISI’s global assistance provider, at medservices@assistamerica.com or 1 (800) 872-1414 to open a case so that your medical care can be coordinated. Assist America can:
 - Locate a provider and a treatment facility as close as possible to where you will be studying.
 - Check the availability and legality of medicines that you are currently using and possible alternatives
 - If needed, try to schedule the next appointment for while you are participating on your Immersion program.
 - If you will be studying in a non-English-speaking country, they can also try to find an English-speaking doctor.

When contacting Assist America, please provide your full name, date of birth, Assist America ID, coverage start and end dates (if already enrolled), Immersion program location (city, country, address if possible), diagnosis / condition, current treatment details, and any current medications.

Claims to CISI

Keep in mind that with CISI insurance, you will have to pay all expenses up front (e.g. at a hospital while you are away) and then file a claim, since the foreign physician and / or hospital may not be able or willing to process medical bills through a U.S. insurance company. You can file a [claim for reimbursement](#).

CISI Policy Exclusions

A complete list of exclusions is included in the CISI brochure on the CISI portal. Several high-risk activities are specifically excluded from CISI coverage. The current policy specifically

excludes: injury sustained while taking part in mountaineering where ropes or guides are normally used; hang gliding; parachuting; bungee jumping; racing by horse, motor vehicle, or motorcycle; and parasailing.

Extending your CISI Coverage

The CISI coverage is purchased in one week increments for the length of your program. If you are planning to travel independently either before your program begins or after your coverage ends, you may purchase additional coverage directly from CISI through the on-line portal. You are only able to extend your coverage with CISI at the UWEC rate by exactly one month—no more, no less—by choosing "Extend Coverage." You can also print a new insurance card that includes the extended coverage dates. There are minor differences in the coverage and cost when you extend your policy for personal travel than what you have while you are on your Immersion program. You can read the policy for your extended plan on the CISI portal.

24-Hour Assistance

Included in your CISI benefits is access to 24-hour Medical Assistance, Personal Assistance, Travel Assistance & Security Assistance. The company providing these benefits is called Assist America.

You can find all details about this benefit and the emergency assistance provider, Assist America, at the CISI portal: <http://www.culturalinsurance.com/> or access the [Assist America Global Emergency Services](#) website for additional details.

Continuous U.S. Coverage

The CISI insurance will cover you while you are traveling and includes things such as medical evacuation and repatriation that are not usually covered by a standard policy. However, you should also keep your U.S. coverage in order to have continuous coverage before, during, and after your time away. If you stop coverage and

are injured or become ill while you are away, you may experience a lapse in coverage while you are seeking to become re-insured and/or higher premiums due to your newly acquired pre-existing condition.

Also, you should contact your U.S. health insurance company prior to your departure to see what type of coverage you will have while you are away. In particular, this is important if you have any pre-existing conditions that would not be covered under the CISI policy.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Before You Go

UWEC's [Student Health Service](#) or your regular healthcare provider can assist you with your health care needs when preparing for your immersion. You can schedule a travel consult to discuss your current health care needs, including medications.

Prescriptions

If you take prescription medication, bring a supply for your **entire** time on the program. This can take time to arrange -- start now, if you haven't already! Also, bring a copy of the prescription with the generic name of the drug in case you need to get it filled while on the program.

Mental Health

If you currently see a mental health professional, it is important that you speak with them prior to your departure. Cultural adjustment is a normal part of traveling to a new place, but sometimes feelings of sadness, anxiety, and / or depression may be more than culture shock. Discuss with your counselor how you might cope with these feelings and develop some strategies that you can implement while you are away.

If you do not currently see a counselor and would like to discuss travel concerns, or any other matter, Counseling Services on campus

are available. Contact them at (715) 836-5521 or visit them in Old Library 2122 to make an appointment.

Health Records

After you are accepted into the program, you will complete a medical form. Please feel comfortable disclosing as much information about your health on there as you would like, as this form is meant to help keep you safe and healthy while on the program. This information is shared with your Faculty / Staff leaders, as they must be aware of any allergies or health conditions that might impact your participation.

Traveling Safely

The primary rule for safe travel is to use common sense. When everything around you is new and exciting, it is easy to forget the simple safety precautions you would use at home. Suggestions for safe travel include:

- Do not carry all your valuables together in a purse, wallet, or backpack. If that is lost or stolen, then you don't have any back-ups.
- Never carry large amounts of cash. Use debit/credit cards if possible. Only keep as much cash on your person as you may need for the day.
- Travel itinerary. Make sure someone has your itinerary. Making others aware of your travel plans is an important step in planning for unseen emergencies. The travel itinerary also helps friends and family locate you in the event you do not arrive at your location on the expected day and time.
- Use common sense! Hold your bags when checking train schedules; do not carry your ID or other valuables unless necessary; lock doors, especially at night.
- Do not walk alone at night. This advice applies to both men and women, especially if are in unfamiliar parts of a city, or are in isolated areas. Walking alone at night makes you an easy target for assault, theft and, in some places, transportation accidents.

Sexual Assault

Sexual assault occurs off-campus just as it does on campus. Sexual assault is 100% the perpetrator's fault; victims / survivors are not to blame. Anyone can be a victim of sexual assault, and the most important thing you can do for yourself if you are a victim is to get support and medical care.

Reporting Health / Safety Concerns to UW-Eau Claire

Why Report? In the event that you or a friend experiences a health or safety incident, we strongly encourage you to report the incident to the Program Coordinator and Faculty Leader.

1. Most importantly, reporting allows us to provide support or resources that might be needed to manage a health or safety concern.
2. In some instances, UWEC has a legal obligation to report incidents that occur on off-campus programs under the Clery Act. Your report will help us determine if an incident needs to be reported to the federal government. No personally identifying information will be shared.
3. Reporting incidents assists UWEC in evaluating the safety of program locations.

What to Report? UW-Eau Claire would like to be made aware of any of the following incidents:

- Aggravated Assault
- Arrests
- Death
- Sexual Assault or Harassment
- Theft
- Illness or Injury
- Missing / Separated Person
- Other Safety Concerns: disease outbreak, fires, floods, equipment failure, etc.

How to Report?

You can report an incident via the [Study Away Health and Safety Incident Report Form](#). This form allows you to report an incident

anonymously and / or to provide your name and contact details.

You can also report by contacting your program coordinator with the following information:

- Date of the incident
- Time (in-country time) of incident
- Country / city of incident (note these may be different than your program site if you are traveling)
- Nature of the incident (e.g. illness, injury, assault, theft, etc.)
- Individuals involved
- Activity/location at time of incident

PACKING TIPS

Rule number one of traveling on Immersion programs: **PACK LIGHT!** The week before you leave, pack everything you think you need, pick up your bags, and walk around the block. If you have trouble, you have packed too much. To become the ultimate light packer, visit the [one-bag website](#).

Rule number two: never pack essential documents or items in checked luggage (i.e. passport, meds, anything you could not do without for a few days). You should have important documents along with personal items in your carry-on such as a toothbrush, contacts, eyeglasses, medications, and a change of clothes.

IF YOU ARE FLYING, please note that there are many personal items you cannot pack in your carry-on. See the [Transportation Security Administration website](#) for current information.

Some other ideas for packing include: rolling your clothes, putting items inside of shoes (e.g. socks or underwear inside dress shoes in your suitcase), using space saver bags, and putting items such as underwear in Ziploc bags (if security searches your bag, they will quickly be able to see what is inside, and your personal items won't be strewn about!). A word of

caution: just because you now have more space doesn't mean you need to fill it! And you'll want to save room to bring home souvenirs and gifts.

Luggage

Though most airlines operating international flights allow 1-2 pieces of checked luggage, you are better off not bringing any large bags that need to be checked. Bags can get lost or delayed along the way to your destination and they may take several days to reach. This situation is particularly problematic if your program does not stay in the same city the entire time. You are also generally allowed one carry-on. A weight limit is set for each of the two checked bags. Requirements vary by airline; verify this information with your travel agent or the airline itself. Be aware that airlines have become very strict about carry-on luggage.

Past participants highly recommend bringing a backpack as one of your pieces of luggage. If you do not choose to carry a backpack, a suitcase with wheels, or a collapsible luggage carrier are useful. And you can avoid checking your luggage if you choose to travel with small bags instead of large ones. It is also easier to carry two medium-sized suitcases than one large one.

Clearly mark all of your bags with luggage tags with the address of your host site. You do NOT want your home address on your luggage tags, as it is better to have the lost luggage delivered to your host country, rather than having it sent back to the U.S. All luggage should be locked for travel within the country, but do not lock it for the airport sections of your journey. Padlocks can also be purchased for backpacks, or you may wish to purchase an external mesh covering for your pack, since you will likely not have enough locks to keep every pocket locked shut.

Clothing

Specific packing suggestions will be provided by your faculty / staff leaders. In general, take clothing that is machine washable and does not wrinkle easily. Bring garments that can be worn

interchangeably and can be layered. Past students suggest choosing a color scheme and bringing mix-and-match clothing. Dark colors show dirt less quickly when you travel. Do not bring expensive clothes.

Suggested Packing List

These are general suggestions of things you will want to bring. Remember that other items specific to your program are listed in the packing tips section of your program guide.

Documents:

- Driver's License, state ID, or passport (packed separately)
- Credit Card(s)
- Debit (ATM) Card and PIN numbers
- CISI Insurance card / proof of insurance (in your phone)

Travel Accessories:

- Cell phone
- Money belt
- Traveling necessities: maps, guidebooks, backpack, water bottle, hat, sunglasses

Personal First Aid Kit:

- Antihistamine / decongestant (for colds)

- Aspirin or ibuprofen (in original containers)
- Band-Aids / bandages
- Antiseptic/antibacterial cream or ointment
- Motion sickness remedy
- Antacid / anti-diarrhea for upset stomach
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Prescription medications (in original containers)
- Extra eyeglasses / contact lenses and solution
- Alcohol wipes
- Women's sanitary supplies
- Toilet paper

Gift Suggestions

Past participants suggest the following items as possible gifts for new friends or hosts:

- Clothing and items with university logos
- Local Cookbooks
- Scenic potholders, aprons, mugs, glassware
- Calendars with local imagery
- Local referenced items (e.g. Wisconsin or Minnesota-themed items)

ADDITIONAL CONTACT INFORMATION

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[Blugold Central / Financial Aid](#)

*Questions about your specific student account
as well as help with registration*

Vicki Lord Larson Hall 1108

Phone: (715) 836-3000

Email: blugoldcentral@uwec.edu

[After-Hours Emergency Medical Services](#)

UW-Eau Claire After Hours Numbers

In an after-hours emergency, you can call one
of these numbers and the University police will
contact someone from the Immersions Office.

[UW-Eau Claire Police Department](#)

(715) 839-4972 or (715) 577-9045