



The
EXPERIMENT
in International Living

A PROGRAM OF WORLD LEARNING

PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK SUMMER 2017



WELCOME TO THE EXPERIMENT FAMILY

Your experience with The Experiment in International Living this summer will likely be a pivotal part of your high school years, creating a lasting impact for years to come. By making the decision to explore another culture firsthand, you've already demonstrated your willingness to step outside of your comfort zone. The Experiment staff and thousands of past Experimenters applaud your decision! We hope you share our excitement as you join a group of young people from all over the U.S and the world. Together, you will embark on a shared journey that encompasses the challenges, beauty, and differences of life in another country.

This participant handbook will help you and your family prepare for your Experiment adventure. The first part of the document provides insight into an Experiment program. In the Getting Ready section, you will find general recommendations about logistics. In the final section, you will see information about our expectations for each participant's behavior.

It is the policy of World Learning to provide equal employment and educational opportunities for all persons regardless of age, ethnic origin, gender, nationality, physical or learning ability, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, protected veteran's status, or any other legally protected status.

1 Kipling Road, PO Box 676,
Brattleboro, Vermont 05302
800 345-2929 | 802 258-3427(fax)

1015 15th St. NW, 7th Floor
Washington, DC 20005
202.408.5420 | TTY 711



This publication and its provisions do not constitute a contract between any party or parties and The Experiment in International Living. At the time of publication, reasonable effort was made to ensure the factual accuracy of the information. However, this publication is not a complete statement of all policies, procedures, rules, regulations, and academic requirements applicable to The Experiment in International Living, its students, or its programs. The Experiment in International Living reserves the right to make changes and additions to the information in this publication without prior notice.

World Learning and its circle design, School for International Training, SIT, and The Experiment in International Living and its infinity design are registered trademarks of World Learning Inc. The U.S. Experiment in International Living is a trademark of World Learning Inc.

CONTENTS

GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

<i>Program Overview</i>	2
<i>Cross-Cultural Orientation</i>	2
<i>Experiment Groups</i>	2
<i>Quick Facts about 2016 Experiment Groups</i>	2
<i>Group Leaders</i>	3

GETTING READY

<i>Luggage and Packing</i>	3
<i>Travel</i>	4
<i>Communications</i>	4
<i>General Communication Information and Recommendations</i>	4
<i>In Case of an Emergency</i>	4
<i>Spending Money</i>	5

IN-COUNTRY BEHAVIOR AND GUIDELINES

<i>Guidelines for Experiment Participants</i>	6
<i>General Rules</i>	6
<i>The Experiment's Alcohol and Drug Policy</i>	6
<i>The Experiment's Code of Conduct and Procedures</i>	6
<i>Attendance Policy</i>	6
<i>Technology</i>	6
<i>Prohibited Behavior / Reasons for Dismissal</i>	7
<i>Procedures for the Violation of the Experiment Code of Conduct and Other Experiment Policies</i>	7
<i>Consequences of Dismissal</i>	8

General Program Information

Program Overview

For 85 years, The Experiment in International Living has been a pioneer in cross-cultural education for young people. Experiment programs introduce students to important local and global issues through homestays, language training, community service, ecology, regional exploration, and the arts. Our group leaders facilitate substantive immersion programs by collaborating with experienced in-country educators, language trainers, artists, ecologists, musicians, and chefs.

In preparing for your Experiment program, it is important to recognize that you will be participating in neither a highly structured tour-based trip nor a strictly classroom-based academic experience. Instead, you will be involved in a program that will ask you to develop a deep understanding of and connection to the people and culture of the host country and that will challenge you to build the confidence, skills, and abilities necessary to connect and engage on this level. You will get the most out of your experience if you approach the summer with an open mind, patience, and enthusiasm.

Cross-Cultural Orientation

Every Experiment program begins with an in-depth cross-cultural orientation to introduce students to the host country and culture. Orientation takes place in a major city of the host country and typically lasts three to four days. This time enables students and group leaders to become accustomed to one another and form a network that will provide vital support throughout the summer.

From the moment you arrive in the host country, you will engage in discussions and activities with your group and group leaders as well as in-country experts to better acquaint you with life in the host country.

Throughout orientation, you will acquire “survival” language skills, discuss cultural differences, become familiar with the orientation city, and prepare for the rest of your program. This fast-paced orientation often includes visits to local markets, museums, and important historical, artistic, or architectural sites. You may go to a bank or post office, or participate in a scavenger hunt to reinforce your communication and navigation skills in a new cultural context. Orientation

is designed to foster your confidence and provide preparation for deeper immersion in the host culture.

Experiment Groups

Each Experiment group develops its own identity throughout the course of the program. Most likely, your group experience will be a significant part of your overall experience. During Experiment programs, your group and group leaders usually become like family, sharing in the joys and bonding over the challenges of your summer abroad.

Experiment groups promote an atmosphere of understanding, acceptance, learning, and growth. Not only will participants be introduced to the diversity within their host country, but they'll also learn about diversity within their own country from their fellow participants. Interestingly, many participants learn as much about the U.S. as they do about the country they are visiting.

Participants may be from different geographic, socioeconomic, ethnic, religious, or cultural backgrounds.

While the size of each Experiment group varies, the average group consists of 14 students and two adult group leaders. Your group is matched with leaders selected specifically for your program because of their expertise.

Quick Facts about 2016 Experiment Groups

- 652 Experimenters traveled to 24 countries worldwide.
- Experimenters represented 30 nationalities.
- Experimenters came from:

37 US U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico as well as 14 countries outside the US: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Israel, Kenya, Mexico, Nicaragua, Turkey.

Experimenters played more than 16 sports and more than 11 types of musical instruments and were involved in over 278 student clubs and activities.

- Experimenters attended a wide range of both public and private schools. Groups were made up of 10 - 16 students. The average group size was 14.
- During the summer Experimenters spoke Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin), French, German, Italian, Japanese, Kiswahili, Korean, Mongolian, Moroccan Arabic, Setswana, Spanish, Thai, and Xhosa, in addition to English
- Experimenters and Experiment group leaders contributed more than 420 hours of community service.

Experimenters lived with 567 different homestay families and spent approximately 349 days in a homestay

Group Leaders

Each Experiment group is accompanied by two trained adult leaders who are selected because of their in-depth experience living abroad and working with students. Leaders are also selected based on their competency in the culture of the region and (depending on the program needs) the language of the host culture.

Before departure, leaders are given a week-long training that prepares them to run successful programs. On the program, leaders will keep in close contact with in-country partners, communicate with the U.S. Experiment office, conduct group excursions, guide students through discussions of their experiences, respond to emergency situations, and guide group dynamics.

Experiment group leaders maximize the well-being of all participants, so they can have a meaningful and memorable learning experience. During the course of the program, leaders work with Experimenters to increase their knowledge of the host country and culture; develop their communication skills; cultivate new attitudes and awareness; and explore the program theme. At the end of the program, leaders help students evaluate their experiences and assist

them in considering how they can integrate what they learned about themselves and the world into their lives moving forward.

Getting Ready

Luggage and Packing

Experimenters are limited to bringing two pieces of luggage which includes a carry-on. Any student with more than two pieces of luggage will be required to send the excess home from the group meeting place at the student's expense. Past group leaders have recommended using a traditional hiking backpack as your main piece of luggage and bringing a daypack as your carry-on as these are useful to have throughout the program.

Please check with the airlines (both domestic and international) for the most current luggage weight requirements, restrictions, and fees.

Detailed packing instructions specific to your country and program will be provided.

Prescriptions

Participants bringing medications should be sure to pack all medications and vitamins in their original containers, and bring enough for the entire duration of the program. Also, bring a paper copy of your prescription from your doctor in case you lose your medication. You should travel with all essential medications in your carry-on luggage. If you wear glasses or contact lenses, you should bring a spare pair, as they are often difficult to replace if lost or damaged. If you are diabetic and traveling with syringes, be sure you bring a certificate or letter from your doctor.

Other Medications

While you will not need an entire first aid kit, you should bring the medication normally used for minor ailments like body aches, upset stomach, bug bites, or a cold. You should also bring the toiletries and sanitary items you are accustomed to using. Girls should bring enough feminine hygiene products for the duration of the program. It is often difficult to find the items you are used to while abroad.

Travel

All Experiment programs officially begin and end at a specific airport. On the day of departure, you will be responsible for getting to your group's meeting place five hours before the scheduled departure of the group's international flight. When everyone is present, you will check in as a group with your group leaders, who hold your international ticket. The program officially ends when the group returns to their gateway airport in the U.S. It will be your responsibility to make arrangements beyond this point.

Programs to the following locations begin and end at the following airports:

- Europe and Africa: John F. Kennedy (JFK) International Airport (NY)
- Latin America: Miami International Airport
- Asia and the Pacific: Los Angeles International Airport or San Francisco International Airport
- Mexico: Mexico City International Airport

Any costs associated with transportation to airports where the program begins are your responsibility.

You will receive program-specific details regarding travel preparation. This information will include:

- Your international flight itinerary (except for programs in Mexico);
- information about your group's meeting time and place;
- information necessary to arrange domestic transportation;
- contact information for the travel agency that procures the group's international flight; and
- general travel recommendations, information, and newly established protocols for Americans traveling abroad.

Participants who receive financial assistance from The Experiment are required to travel internationally with their group. The Experiment will contact all participants as soon as our summer travel itineraries have been finalized. If you have any questions about international group travel, please contact Admissions at experiment@worldlearning.org. Please note: Any US student traveling independently must be dropped off and picked up in country by a parent/guardian. There is a \$250 inconvenience fee for traveling independently from the group.

Communications

We have found over the years that too much contact from a participant's friends or family members back home in the US can cause undue pressure on the participant. If a participant is struggling with adjustments to the local customs, reminders of "how it is at home" can make things even more difficult. Remember that for the duration of the program, our group leaders and in-country colleagues are available 24 hours a day and seven days a week to help participants with any problems or issues that may arise.

That being said, we understand the need for some direct communication between participants abroad and their families at home. We recommend that before departure, you sit down as a family to discuss the most comfortable and appropriate communication strategy (e.g., by emailing and/or phoning a specific number of times a week). Our recommendation for a reasonable amount of calls home is once a week, to accommodate busy schedules and to minimize homesickness.

Parents and friends should note that orientation is a busy time and it may be difficult for Experimenters to find time to call or email home during the first few days of the program. The Experiment office in Vermont will email each family upon each Experimenter's arrival in the host country.

In addition, some rural homestays do not have access to internet and families live in areas where cell phone reception is minimal. Expect to communicate less during this period.

General Communication Information and Recommendations

- In our experience, the best and most reliable way to contact the U.S. while abroad is through web-based communication such as: email, Skype, WhatsApp, iMessage, Facebook messenger, etc. We highly discourage the use of international cell phones. In our experience, they are expensive, unreliable, and likely to be lost or stolen. They also make it difficult for you to disconnect from home, discouraging the immersive experience abroad and may make participants more homesick. Some host families have expressed disappointment when their homestay participants use their phones regularly. If you feel it's necessary to have service, you can contact your long-distance phone provider to see if

they have an international calling plan.

- Internet cafés may be a useful resource when available during free time.
- Experimenters should not expect to use their host family's telephone, and should discuss this with them before attempting to do so. In some countries, even local calls incur additional fees.
- If you find yourself feeling sick, homesick, or dealing with other issues in-country, talk to your group leader first so he or she can provide immediate help. If you call your parents, they will call the U.S. Experiment office, which will contact your group leader.

Spending Money

We recommend that you bring \$300 to \$600 USD. Make your decision regarding how much spending money to bring based on the following: the economy of the country of your program, the length of your program, and, ultimately, your personal spending ability.

How should I bring my spending money?

We recommend bringing \$100 cash in case ATMs may not be available. ATM cards with individual pin numbers from your bank are the most common way to access money while abroad. If possible, acquire a "chip and PIN" card from your bank. Please check your program-specific packing list and our website for additional information on recommendations relating to your country. Please refer to the personal funds section outlining ways to access cash.

In-Country Behavior and Guidelines

Guidelines for Experiment Participants

These guidelines have been developed based on our experience with World Learning programs through the years. We always keep in mind students' welfare, parents' expectations of the program, and our educational goals. We expect participants to adhere to these guidelines. Your group leaders may modify these guidelines in order to adapt to elements of the host culture or for special circumstances.

During orientation, when you and your group, and possibly other Experiment groups, are at a hotel or hostel:

- The in-country Experiment staff establish policies and guidelines in keeping with the host culture.

During the homestay, language study, and/or thematic component:

- Policies and guidelines are those set by the host family and in-country staff and will be in keeping with the laws of the host country.

During city stays, trips/excursions, and other times in public accommodations:

- During the day, participants must be in a group of three or more at all times.
- During evening hours, students must be with a group leader. The group leader may set a curfew if s/he feels a particular situation warrants doing so.



General Rules

Experimenters are responsible for their own behavior.

The Experiment's Code of Conduct has been established for our participants and is appropriate for their summer experience. However, an Experimenter's conduct must be consistent with and respectful of what is expected by host families and others in the program's host country.

The Experiment group itself is multicultural, so each member's conduct must be sensitive to and respectful of all others in the group. Participants' conduct must reflect favorably on World Learning as an international educational organization, which has emphasized cross-cultural awareness, sensitivity, and respect around the world for more than 80 years.

The following activities are prohibited for reasons relating to safety, health, and legal liability: hitchhiking, driving any motorized vehicle, riding in a private aircraft, scuba diving, bungee jumping, body piercing, and/or tattooing. Engaging in these behaviors may lead to dismissal from the program.

Note: Please also see the Conditions of Participation in your secondary application and the Experiment Code of Conduct below for more on the subject of inappropriate behavior that could lead to dismissal.

The Experiment's Alcohol and Drug Policy

Experiment participants may not consume, buy, or possess alcohol at any time or for any reason during the program. Any alcohol infraction or suspected infraction while on an Experiment program will be subject to an administrative review process. If it is determined that a violation of this policy has occurred, the result will be disciplinary sanctions, up to and including dismissal from the program.

Prohibition of the consumption, possession, or purchase of alcohol is in effect for the duration of the program, regardless of legal drinking age or cultural norms/expectations. All program participants shall abstain from any alcohol use throughout this program and are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with this policy.

Experiment participants are not permitted to buy, sell, use, or possess illegal drugs. Any drug infraction while on an Experiment program will be considered a violation of policy and will result in dismissal from the program.

While in a foreign country, US citizens and third-country nationals are subject to that country's laws and regulations, which can differ significantly from those of the United States or home country and which may not afford the protections available elsewhere. The Experiment will not assist in legal matters arising from a participant's involvement with or use of alcohol or drugs.

The Experiment's Swimming Policy

The Experiment has a robust swimming and water policy in place to help minimize any possible accidents involving water. Your group leaders will be highly trained in how to minimize this risk, but it is also your responsibility to listen to their instructions. Even if you are a very strong swimmer, you should exercise extreme caution and follow their instructions. Our policy states that you should never swim without the supervision of your group leader or another adult.

The Experiment's Code of Conduct and Procedures

While enrolled in any Experiment program, participants are representatives of the United States and The Experiment at all times and must abide by the following Code of Conduct for the duration of the program. As a result, anyone enrolled in the program who engages in unbecoming conduct will be violating this code and will be subject to appropriate review and disciplinary sanctions, up to and including dismissal from the program.

Participants and parents must acknowledge and accept that The Experiment has the authority at all times to establish rules of conduct necessary for the operation of the program, which includes participants' free time. They must also agree to accept disciplinary action deemed appropriate by The Experiment, which may include, but is not limited to, dismissal from the program.

Attendance Policy

Experiment participants are expected to attend all scheduled orientations, activities, and excursions. In the case of illness, it is the participant's responsibility to notify Experiment group leaders. Any unauthorized violation of the attendance policy will result in disciplinary sanctions, up to and including dismissal from the program.

Technology

Experiment participants are expected to be mindful of the role technology plays in their experience as well as

the experiences of participants, host families, and staff members. Cell phones, iPods, personal gaming devices, or other technologies that may distract a participant from group activities or engagement are not permitted to be used during those times. Group leaders will ask students to surrender technology used inappropriately and will complete behavior contracts outlining appropriate use. Devices will be held by the group leader until the end of group activities for the day. Group leaders may permit use of cell phones for academic activities related to curriculum and will notify students when this type of use is authorized.

Prohibited Behavior / Reasons for Dismissal

Violations of the Experiment Code of Conduct that can result in dismissal from the program include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- Violation of any of the Experiment Conditions of Participation including leaving the scheduled program at any time without written permission from the program director and, because of the possible danger involved, driving motor or motorized vehicles; riding in noncommercial airplanes, any type of aircraft, or motorized motorcycle; hitchhiking; bungee jumping; scuba diving; and any other activity designated by World Learning, the parent organization of The Experiment in International Living, as dangerous which includes:
- Violation of the alcohol or drug policy
- Criminal behavior or violation of local laws
- Violation of host family guidelines and/or rules
- Self-endangerment, including involvement in activities/behavior that could result in personal harm, including, but not limited to, frequenting dangerous places, associating with criminals, being intoxicated, etc.
- Abusive language toward Experiment staff, host

families, or other participants

- Any form of sexual harassment
- Disorderly, indecent, or obscene conduct, gestures, or actions
- Violent behavior directed toward others
- Theft or vandalism
- Participation in strikes, demonstrations, or other political gatherings
- Property damage to any of the following: Experiment/partner facilities, hotels/hostels, and the host family's property
- Conduct unbecoming of an Experiment participant, including, but not limited to, violation of any Experiment policies

Procedures for the Violation of the Experiment Code of Conduct and Other Experiment Policies

In the event of a violation of the Experiment Code of Conduct or any other Experiment policies, there will be an investigation of the circumstances, and the participant(s) involved will be subject to an administrative review process. The procedures following a violation include:

1. Incident Reporting

If a participant violates the Experiment Code of Conduct, the group leader(s) or in-country partner will contact World Learning staff who will complete an on-site incident report outlining the details of the incident. Involved participants will be provided with the opportunity to give any additional information pertaining to the incident. Any additional information (police reports, photographs, etc.) will be sent to Experiment headquarters in Brattleboro, Vermont, for the administrative review process.

2. Administrative Review Process

The incident report will be reviewed by The Experiment's directors, the dean of students, and/or Student Affairs staff. During this review, disciplinary sanction(s) may be



taken against the participant(s). If the participant(s) denies involvement in the Code of Conduct violation, the review will focus on the available reports and other pertinent information. Participant(s) and parents/guardians will be notified in writing as soon as possible after a decision has been reached. Disciplinary sanctions for violations are in effect as soon as the participant(s) and parents/guardians have been notified either verbally or in writing.

3. Disciplinary Sanctions

Disciplinary sanctions include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- Restitution: Charges to be paid for damages or theft
- Loss of privileges: Use of facilities, participation in activities or excursions. No refund will be given for missed activities or excursions.
- Disciplinary probation: Violation of probationary terms and conditions will result in immediate dismissal from the Experiment program.
- Immediate dismissal: The immediate removal of a participant from the Experiment program

Consequences of Dismissal

Parents and/or guardians of a dismissed participant are responsible for purchasing a one-way return airline ticket and for covering all transportation fees to the airport for their child and accompanying Experiment staff. Dismissed participants will not be entitled to a refund of fees and are responsible for all non-recoverable costs incurred by The Experiment.



World Learning

Education | Development | Exchange

ADVANCING LEADERSHIP FOR 85 YEARS

The Experiment is the flagship program of World Learning, an international nonprofit organization working to empower people and strengthen institutions through education, development, and exchange programs in more than 100 countries. To learn more about World Learning programs, visit

www.worldlearning.org.

The Experiment

1 Kipling Road, PO Box 676
Brattleboro, Vermont
05302-0676
USA

Phone

802 258-3481

Toll-Free Within the US

800 345-2929

Fax

802 258-3427

www.experiment.org

www.worldlearning.org

www.sit.edu

The World Learning family of programs also includes:

SIT STUDY ABROAD

Semester and summer programs for undergraduate students in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East, as well as comparative programs in multiple locations

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE

Academic, professional, and cultural exchanges that bring emerging leaders from 140 countries annually to the US

SIT GRADUATE INSTITUTE

Master's degrees and professional programs in peacebuilding and conflict transformation, international education, sustainable development, and TESOL

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Programs that prepare communities worldwide to address critical issues such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, education gaps, and the need for government accountability

