



**National League  
for Nursing**

*Faculty Preparation for Global Experiences Toolkit©*

This toolkit is an initiative of the International Nursing Education, Services, and Accreditation (INESA) joint taskforce of the National League for Nursing and the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission. INESA was formed in 2004 to provide leadership in bringing together the community of nurse educators from around the world to address and influence issues related to (a) quality nursing education including accreditation; (b) the preparation and ongoing development of faculty; and (c) advancement of the science of nursing education.

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## **Introduction**

In an age of globalization and interdependence characterized by international flow of goods and services, there exists the free exchange of ideas through the Internet. Distance and time are no longer barriers for human activities, including international education exchanges and collaboration. There is increasing importance placed on understanding and integrating concepts of trans-culturalism and diversity into post-secondary education by the United States (US) government and collegiate administrators. Since 1998, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) Higher Education Development (HED) has created over 300 university partnerships involving more than 190 US colleges and universities from 44 states and the District of Columbia ([www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov)).

While international relationships and study abroad opportunities are very common in the arts and humanities, such opportunities are also becoming more common in nursing and allied health. Nursing faculty initiate global activities for many reasons, for example personal interest, encouragement of school administrators, community/public health course expansion, or implementation of global service learning. Opportunities for nursing faculty may be educative, consultative, research, or for clinical experiences. For students, the opportunities may be service, practice, or education. Moreover, graduate students have opportunities for research. In many countries, there is also interest in the accreditation of nursing education programs. The National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) can assist faculty in these nursing education programs to address accreditation standards that accommodate a home country's needs or assist them in initiating the process of applying for NLNAC accreditation ([www.nlnac.org](http://www.nlnac.org)). The National League for Nursing offers faculty development to assist in meeting or exceeding accreditation standards ([www.nln.org](http://www.nln.org)).

Information included in this toolkit is intended to aid those in nursing education in the US who are considering international involvement. The toolkit is divided into five sections plus a bibliography and web links for additional information. At the end of each section are frequently asked questions (FAQs) and resources. Section one, the overview, details the various roles faculty may assume in a host country, such as educator, researcher, or consultant. Practical considerations to help faculty prepare for international travel and general guidelines for faculty/student exchanges and collaboration are provided. Section two discusses issues and perspectives faculty should consider prior to traveling abroad, including how to select a host country. Considerations for determining what is needed prior to departure are included. Section three includes practical recommendations for the physical preparation of traveling long distance to international countries. This section also provides some preparation for embracing or adjusting to unfamiliar customs. Section four highlights the role of faculty in a host country and emphasizes the role of visiting faculty as "guests". Section five provides debriefing tips upon returning to the US. The tips include evaluating the experience, writing

about lessons learned, and designing next steps. Finally, the bibliography and web resources sections add generic resources that may be helpful in the global experience arena.

## **Section One: Overview**

Social, cultural, and political systems dictate differences in beliefs, values, assumptions, and norms between and among residents in all countries. Lack of understanding of these differences may result in misunderstanding and embarrassing and troublesome situations. Further, lack of understanding of these differences may lead to outcomes that are inconsistent with or even against the original intent of both entities. Based on decades of personal and professional cross-cultural experiences, this toolkit provides some tips and advice to US students and faculty interested in engaging in international activities.

The overview highlights the various roles faculty may assume in a host country, provides practical considerations to help faculty prepare for international travel and gives some general guidelines for exchanges and collaboration. The discussion is intended to increase the awareness of Western, including American educators and scholars, of the challenges and opportunities involved in international education exchanges and collaboration. A fundamental goal of such efforts is to maximize their positive effects in order to promote global understanding, collaboration, and peace, and minimize any potential negative effects.

### **Faculty Roles in Global Activities**

Faculty can become involved in international activities in a variety of roles. There may be encouragement by university administrators due to relationships with international colleagues or for other defined reasons.

Faculty who travel to international meetings for presentations, who publish in journals and books, or who have extensive experience in curricular matters may be invited to a school of nursing. Roles may vary as a consultant in nursing education or nursing research, or to a hospital or other clinical agency as a consultant in nursing administration or as a clinician with expertise in a clinical topic.

There are different opportunities for faculty involved in research internationally. Faculty may desire to conduct cross-cultural or comparative research studies in two or more countries. Another option is to be either the principle investigator or part of a US team. In addition, the roles of an external reviewer on a dissertation or thesis completed in another country, or a reviewer for a non-American journal may be available.

Fulbright and other fellowship opportunities exist for faculty who desire global experience. The Fulbright Program is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the US government and designed to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. The Fulbright Program provides chosen participants an opportunity to study, teach and conduct research, exchange ideas, and contribute to finding solutions to shared international concerns.

Many non-governmental organizations (NGOs), church-related missions, and non-sectarian missions provide opportunities for nurses to volunteer their time and expertise in clinical practice. Several reputable organizations provide support for volunteers to teach health education, engage in clinical practice, and work with communities to improve their health. NGO websites can be accessed for more information.

US faculty may serve as consultants and site visitors for nursing education programs seeking national accreditation. Some consultants work with host partnership communities on continuing education for nurses in acute care settings while others may work with faculty on curriculum development in nursing education programs.

### ***Practical Considerations in International Education Exchanges and Collaboration***

Planning is the key to a successful experience for an individual or a group. It may be advisable to initiate a global experience first in a city or country with which the faculty is familiar and preferably, speaks the language. Well-known contacts in foreign countries are invaluable. Links and references that offer help in the process are included throughout the document and in the bibliography and weblinks sections.

#### Issues and Perspectives

Issues and perspectives of international education exchanges and collaboration may vary between the host country and the country of origin. Exchanges and collaboration must begin with a discovery of strengths in the host community. A lack of resources in a developing community is not indicative of a deficit in knowledge and expertise. The flow of knowledge and expertise should be reciprocal between the host country and country of origin. For example, in international education exchanges and collaboration, all are learners. Thus, when a power differential is communicated, the likelihood of a sustainable relationship is challenged. Like the US, developing countries have many reasons for promoting international education exchanges and collaboration.

##### a. Latest developments in nursing

The host country may have a need and motivation to learn, from the latest developments in Western nursing. Because modern nursing started in the United Kingdom (at that time the leader of the industrialized world) and has spread around the world, nursing in the developed world, including nursing in the US, is regarded as leading in global nursing in terms of knowledge development, management systems, innovations, and skills. The leadership position of the West in nursing has been further strengthened by the advanced healthcare technologies developed in the West.

##### b. Opportunities to develop faculty



International exchanges can provide opportunities to develop junior faculty. One of the top challenges and priorities for many nursing programs in developing countries is to educate and develop their faculty into competent educators and productive scholar-researchers. It takes years for junior faculty to become seasoned educators and scholar-researchers. Importantly, there is a frequent shortage of mentors for junior faculty. International exchanges and collaboration provide such exposures and experiences through which these junior scholars can immerse, learn, and grow under the guidance of seasoned mentors.

c. Promoting the home institution

Promoting visibility and the reputation of home institutions is an additional motivator. Often the extent of internationalization of home institutions is one indicator of visibility and reputation. Frequently the more internationalized an institution is, the more prestigious it may be considered to be. As a rule, prestige is one important factor to attract top students and top scholars. For many nursing programs in developing countries, international education exchanges and collaboration provides a short cut and practical venue to enhance their image and visibility and promote their reputation in the global nursing community.

d. Integration into the global nursing community

Integration into the global nursing community can enhance both clinical practice and knowledge development. International education exchanges and collaboration facilitate the process of integrating into the global nursing community because such activities promote awareness, comparison, and self-evaluation. One practical benefit for both students and teachers in developing countries is the opportunity to acquire nursing knowledge in the English language. This is important as many of the publications of research and theory development are in English. In some countries, knowledge of English is a prerequisite for entrance into graduate study programs. Attending international conferences, collaborating with scholars/researchers in studies, and writing joint papers all provide avenues to promote mutual understanding and make clear what is needed to function within the international nursing community. For instance, international nursing education standards established and promoted by the WHO ([www.who.int](http://www.who.int)) and the International Council of Nurses ([www.icn.ch](http://www.icn.ch)) clarify the gap between the current nursing education in a developing country and what is needed to catch up with the developed countries.

e. Ethics involved in exchanges and collaboration.

Before embarking on a consultation visit, a nursing educator must consider his/her own ethics and values in relation to presenting Western ideas and information. For example, is it ethical or culturally appropriate to impose what is perceived to be right in developed countries onto the developing (host) countries? What are the ethical obligations/duties of Western educators and scholars involved in international education exchanges and collaboration?

Although educators and scholars participating in international nursing activities make conscious efforts to learn about the host countries before traveling there, it is unreasonable to expect them to have in-depth knowledge about the culture of the host countries. Further, a lived experience or immersion in the culture along with book knowledge increases the likelihood of avoiding cultural missteps. Western scholars should remain keenly aware of the perception that developed countries exert influence over developing countries. Western scholars and educators should adopt a basic participatory model and approach wherein shared decision-making on substantive and important issues is the norm. Essentially, the more types of input and avenues provided, the more likely the plans will be accepted and take root, and the less likely that ethical principles will be violated.

f. Awareness of cultural values and beliefs

Except for the fundamental principles of hygiene, nutrition and hydration, elimination, and management of the environment, as well as nursing skills and techniques that can readily be transferred across cultures, most nursing concepts and interventions are context-dependent and express specific sets of cultural values. Nursing interventions appropriate in an individualist culture may not be so in collectivist cultures, and vice versa. For example, to teach Dorothy Orem's Self-care Deficit Theory and implement a care model and interventions based on the theory may be inconsistent with some Asian beliefs that patients should be *dependent* during illnesses and recovery. Other key concepts and principles in Western nursing such as diversity, healthcare policy, and autonomy may be incongruent with Asian values and beliefs (Xu, 2000; Xu et al., 2002). Therefore, awareness of the cultural values and beliefs in host countries are a prerequisite to identifying culturally appropriate interventions and building productive and mutually beneficial relationships.

g. Mutuality

Philosophically, people involved in international experiences influence others while being influenced during the process. There may be a perception that Western educators and scholars are the carriers and imparters of knowledge while developing countries are merely receivers of knowledge. In fact, Western scholars and educators also learn from the exchange and collaboration experiences regardless of whether such learning is

conscious, subconscious, or unconscious. For instance, some Western scholars and educators may not realize the impact of their international experience immediately. Only after their return to the US do they realize its effects when the experiences are reflected upon. To a considerable extent, such impact operates at the unconscious or sub-conscious level. There are compelling stories that demonstrate the life-changing impact of international experiences on Western nurse educators and scholars (Fitzpatrick, Schultz, & Aiken, 2010). The influences on Western educators and scholars are manifested in their teaching, research, and scholarship, as well as in personal effects such as a change in perspectives and habits.

### **General Guidelines for International Exchanges and Collaboration**

There are multiple issues to consider before embarking upon an international experience. This section addresses several important considerations.

#### **Win-Win Mindset**

A guiding principle in international education exchanges and collaboration is to strive for a win-win outcome for all parties involved. Such a mindset is most conducive to motivating people to participate and to fostering productive and mutually beneficial relationships. This approach will most likely motivate people, win political support, and garner resources to achieve goals and objectives.

#### **Being a Student before Being a Teacher**

Learning about the host country, its people, and other related issues will facilitate international experiences. In fact, being a student first will make Western educators and scholars more effective and acceptable because of the attitude and humility such an approach embodies. This is especially important during the initial period of international experiences, because each is “sizing up” or assessing the other. The first impressions are likely to have a lasting impact and they are difficult to change once formed.

#### **Political Awareness**

Political sensitivity is one of the most needed skills for anyone involved in international exchanges and collaboration experiences. Failure to have such sensitivity can lead to outcomes ranging from public embarrassment of the host to the visitor being detailed or arrested. Anyone engaged in international experiences must realize that he or she is a visitor or guest in a foreign country and conform to associated behavioral norms consistent with such a role. In most cases, instead of acting as political advocates demanding changes, nurse educators involved in international efforts are genuinely interested in helping the nursing programs in the host country to achieve their goals and objectives. Behavioral considerations to keep in mind when contemplating the need for political sensitivity may include issues such as not criticizing the

government in public, refraining from discussing or debating religious beliefs, or debating public policies that may be controversial for international visitors. While some visitors may plan to participate in political activity or civil disobedience, discussion of intentional political advocacy and civil disobedience is beyond the scope of this paper.

### Frequently Asked Questions

*Q: What are the perceptions of US citizens (Americans) by peoples in other countries?*

Perceptions vary because of different worldviews, ideologies, and national interests. . Many US citizens speak only English while people in many other countries are bilingual or multi-lingual. US nurses are viewed as the most educated leaders of the profession and as such are expected to demonstrate the highest level of nursing knowledge when consulting and practicing abroad.

### Resources

- Aiken, L.M., Pelter, M.M., Carlson, V., Marshall, A. P., Cross, R., McKinley S., Dracup, K. et al. (2008) Effective strategies for implementing a multicenter international clinical trial, *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 40(2), 101-108.
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- Clark, S. P., & Aiken, L.H. (2008). An international hospital outcomes research agenda focused on nursing: Lessons from a decade of collaboration, *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 17 (24), 3317-3323.
- Clark Callister, L., Getmanenko, N. L., Khalaf, I., Gervish, N., Semenic, S., Vehvilainen-Julkunen, K., & Turkina, N. V. (2006). Collaborative international research, *Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, 37(1), 39-45.
- Ekstrom, D. N., & Sigurdsson, H.O. (2002). An international collaboration in nursing education viewed through the lens of critical social theory, *Journal of Nursing Education*, 41(7), 289-294.
- Harper, M. G. (2008). *Evaluation of the antecedents of cultural competence*. Unpublished dissertation. <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdlink?did=1568967191&Fmt=7&clientI d=79356&RQT=309&VName=PQD>.

## **Section Two: Considerations Prior to Travel Abroad**

This section provides tips about preparing to travel to a host country and encourages having a working knowledge of the geography, politics, history, and culture of the host country. Questions in this section help to frame the objectives for the global experience.

### **Faculty Role**

The faculty member is responsible for setting the objectives of the experience, selecting the site of the activities planned, establishing relationships with the hosts, advertising the opportunity (if a course) to recruit students, orienting the students to the course and to course and travel requirements. The faculty can work through a travel agency or make independent arrangements for travel and accommodations. If the faculty will be conducting research, the proposal must have approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the university, and also the IRB or equivalent in the host country. For clinical settings, securing protocols, policies, and procedures from the home agency may prove useful in the international setting.

### **Issues and Perspectives**

#### *a.* Selecting a country

A major factor to consider when selecting a country for an international experience is the purpose of the visit. The nurse faculty member may be traveling to teach a course, to provide consultation in nursing education, administration, or practice, to conduct research or to provide patient care. The time in country will vary based on the purpose and objectives of the visit. This can range from a day or two to several months with repeated visits.

Safety while in the country is an important consideration. The faculty should determine the openness of the government to foreign visitors and investigate personal safety and risks of travel to that country. The US Department of State issues warnings and the website should be consulted periodically prior to travel.

The climate and time of the year are important considerations. Heat, cold, altitude, air quality, and exposure to allergens can affect travelers.

Depending on the purpose of the visit, medications, books, health literature, or medical and nursing equipment may be taken to the country. Some countries require that the health literature that will be distributed in country be approved by the minister of health. Some countries require special student visas if the faculty member plans to take students to participate in the learning environment. It is easier to register students as visitors rather than as students.

When liaisons are already established by the university, planning is facilitated. Having personal contacts within the country is most advantageous. There may be a request by someone from that country for consultation or a faculty member may be interested in learning more about the country.

*b.* Assessment of the country selected for the international experience

The faculty member should learn about nursing in the country including the following:

- The scope of nursing practice
- How and by whom nursing is regulated
- Whether there is a national nursing association
- The system of nursing education
- The number of nurses in the country in comparison to the number of physicians
- Types of health care institutions, type of payment for health care, and access to care
- Health of the people: life expectancy, major health risks, and causes of death, maternal and neonatal statistics, immunizations rates, and HIV statistics

Much of this information can be found in online websites.

*c.* Working with an interpreter

If no faculty or student speaks the language(s) spoken in the country, and there is no English-speaking contact in the host country, an interpreter will be necessary. The host country or organization may be willing to provide an interpreter. Some instruction in working with an interpreter is necessary.

When meeting with nurses and other people, pretend the interpreter is not present. *Speak directly to the person*; do not look at or ask the question of the interpreter. Say one or two sentences, pause to let the interpreter translate, then continue with your comments or questions. When the other person is speaking, the same thing will happen. The person will say a couple of sentences, the interpreter will translate, the person will continue.

Some interpreters do not know medical or other technical terms. Thus, it is useful to be able to describe what you are talking about or to use synonyms or other words to assist the interpreter.

When traveling, you may encounter many people whose native language is not English. People often understand a foreign language better than they can speak it. Due to limited foreign language skills, many people are hesitant or embarrassed to try to communicate in the host country's native language. Most will appreciate your own efforts with their language. It is useful to learn the words for "Hello," "Goodbye," and

“Thank you” at least. In addition, with emerging technologies, language interpretations are available through mobile applications for smart phones or droids.

*d.* Passport

Prior to traveling, a current passport is necessary. The passport must be valid for 6 months after the date of travel and have sufficient pages for immigration stamps and additional visas. Check with the US Department of State or country to be visited to ascertain the need for a visa. Sufficient time must be allowed for processing of these documents. Make a color copy of your passport and any other relevant travel documents, such as vaccination records and visa paperwork, and keep it separate from the original travel documents. Carry with you two color passport photos to facilitate obtaining a new passport in the event your passport is lost or stolen. Be aware that some students will not have a US passport, but have a passport from another country. They may need to obtain a visa while those with US passports will not have this need. The converse may also be true; a traveler with a US passport may need a visa and one holding another passport may not.

*e.* Immunizations

If immunizations in the host country are required, ensure you carry the official record card. Have it available for inspection upon arrival, along with the passport and visa. A travel nurse such as those at Passport Health ([www.passporthealthusa.com/](http://www.passporthealthusa.com/)), your local health department or your personal physician can be consulted for information on the need for immunizations or other medications. Information about required immunizations for travel abroad can be found online as well.

*f.* Contact information

Advise family of your itinerary; leave personal contact information with your department, parents, spouse, relatives, friends, or significant other. Faculty should carry with them a list of students, contact information, medications, allergies, and insurance information. Having a key person at home who is responsible for tracking your activities while you are abroad is of vital importance. For example, should you have to change flight arrangements for a large group of students, or should someone misplace a visa or in the event of an emergency evacuation, it is important to have a point person in the US to assist in handling these emergencies.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

*Q: Should I teach US nursing theories, practice, and educational models in foreign countries?*

Nurses in the host country will likely be interested in theories, practice and educational models in the US but because of differences in social, cultural, political, healthcare (including nursing) systems, some of the core

values and beliefs may not be congruent with those in the home countries. For example, autonomy is an enduring value and belief in US (and Western) nursing where individual determination is valued. However, such values and beliefs may not hold true in countries where collectivism prevails. In collectivist cultures, individuals function as an integral part of family (group) and family input is valued for health care planning and decision-making. Orem's Self-Care Deficit Theory and nursing modalities based on this model may have limited applicability in collectivist cultures. On the other hand, it will serve you well if you take some time to study the history, culture, and sociopolitical systems of the host country before your departure. Such knowledge will prevent or minimize the potential pitfalls on your trip.

More harmful is the often unconscious or sub-conscious assumption of some from the US that "we are from a developed country and what we do in the US is superior." Such a sense of superiority may result in arrogance and blindness that is detrimental to the original intent of international study in the first place. Therefore, self-awareness, open-mindedness, and mutual respect should be the underpinning of international study

*Q: Can I participate in nursing care and procedures in a foreign country?*

It depends on the purpose of the visit and what the nursing regulations say about the involved situations. In almost all countries, nursing is a licensed or regulated profession. In other words, only qualified professionals are allowed legally to work as nurses. In general, observation is allowed in almost all situations for learning purposes. Regarding participation in actual nursing care in the host country, you are advised to know the nursing regulations in the country or consult with your in-country professional colleagues. For example, in Kenya, a temporary license is required to practice nursing for a short term. Generally, participating in nursing care or activities of daily living may be permitted. Some nurses are part of surgical missions and scrub for surgery; midwives may deliver babies; nurses may administer parenteral medications. Such activities require a great deal of advance planning, usually through organizations.

### ***Resources***

CDC – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

US Department of State: [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)

Gardner, D. B. (2005). Ten lessons in collaboration, *OJIN: The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*, 10(1), Manuscript 1.

Garner, B., Metcalfe, S., & Hallyburton, A. (2009). International collaboration: A concept model to engage nursing leaders and promote global nursing education partnerships, *Nurse Education in Practice*, 9(2), 102-108.



Greatrex-White, S. (2008). Uncovering study abroad: Foreignness and its relevance to nurse education and cultural competence, *Nurse Education Today*, 28(5), 530-538.

Haefele, J. (2011). They couldn't let him die, *Nurse Practitioner World News*, 16 (5/6), 16-17, 21-22.

Halabi, J., Majali, S., Carlsson, L., & Bergbom, I. (2011). A model for international nursing collaboration, *Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, 42(4), 154-163.

Hartjes, L., Baumann, L., & Henriques, J. (2009). Travel health risk perceptions and prevention behaviors of US study abroad students, *Journal of Travel Medicine*, 16(5), 338-343.

Lash, A., Lusk, B., & Nelson, M. (2000). American nursing scholars abroad, 1985-1995, *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 32(4), 415-420.

Leffers, J., & Mitchell, E. (2010). Conceptual model for partnership and sustainability in global health, *Public Health Nursing*, 28(1), 91-102.

### **Section Three: Pre-Departure Preparation**

Once a destination has been selected, preparation for international experiences of education exchanges and collaboration involves several domains. (1) A working knowledge of the country, including its politics, society, history, and culture is needed and critical because such knowledge puts the international experience in context. (2) A working knowledge of nursing in the host country, its socioeconomic status, and its state of the art is important for a productive working relationship and for meaningful experiences. (3) Such knowledge puts the goals of the Western educators in context, so that they can assess the gaps between what is and what could be, as well as the likely places for breakthroughs for change. (4) Such knowledge will bring focus onto the work needed to be done in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the collaboration. This is essential, since the international experiences and collaboration are finite and definite, with limited time and resources. (5) Logistics preparation is critical for meeting immediate needs and survival. While logistical arrangements and support are made by hosts in other countries, Western nurse educators and scholars engaged in international experiences are strongly encouraged to be involved in logistics planning from the very start, just in case something does not work out upon arrival.

Finally, consideration must be given to appropriate attire for travel and respect for local customs in the host country. It is critical to know the climate to which you are traveling and pack accordingly.

#### Contingencies and Flexibility

Exceptions and unplanned events and experiences are common. Thus, there is need for thinking about contingencies and flexibility. People involved in international experiences should always have back-up plans in order to deal with the ever-changing and evolving reality. Largely, detailed, comprehensive pre-arrival planning, including first-hand logistics preparation, will certainly enhance the knowledge about the host countries. More importantly, such preparation can facilitate contingent plans in case some scheduled plans do not work out as planned. However, people can take the unexpected opportunities presented by contingencies to learn and experience the host country. Such unexpected opportunities or situations are likely to enhance the knowledge about the host country, as well as enrich one's international experiences, sometimes beyond imagination.

#### Packing for International Travel

Due to varying temperatures in airports and on the plane, it is advisable to wear comfortable clothing. Dress in layers and consider support or anti-embolism hose for long distance plane travel. Wear shoes that can be taken off easily at security points and facilitate walking great distances through large airports. The passport and immunization card showing necessary vaccinations and some money can be carried in a fanny pack or a

small travel purse. Other useful items are tissues, chapstick, sunglasses, glasses, emery board, black ink pen, small writing pad, and a small wallet. Medications should be in carry-on baggage, unless you are going to be in the host country for several months, in which case the amount is such that some will have to be in checked luggage as well as carry-on baggage.

When traveling from the US, review the TSA (Transportation Security Administration) guidelines and comply with them. TSA personnel in different airports may vary in their interpretation of guidelines so be prepared for differences in allowable items in carry-on luggage.

Fresh food is generally not permitted into a country, although processed food may be, so avoid taking any food with you that you do not intend to consume prior to landing. Stiff fines can be levied if you try to carry undeclared foodstuffs into the host country. Fresh food should be left on the aircraft for appropriate disposal. In the arrivals hall, 'sniffer' dogs in many countries check for 'contraband'; i.e., food, and illegal drugs. However, some prescription drugs have a detectable odor for these dogs, and if the dog circles you with intensity, the handler will ask you what it is you have and will wish to see it. Comply by showing what has led to the dog's interest. Put any sharp object such as nail scissors that might be regarded as a weapon in checked baggage because the security agents are likely to confiscate the item from your carry-on baggage.

Respect the culture in the host country and dress accordingly. For example, in some Muslim countries women may be required to cover their heads and wear skirts when entering on official business. If you are the consultant or visiting professor, professional business attire is appropriate. Scrub suits, lab coats, or some type of uniform may be required in clinical areas. Some websites that give excellent tips for travel in all areas of the world are listed below in the resource section.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

*Q: Should I travel somewhere outside the US before seeking an exchange experience?*

It is advisable, but not essential. Becoming familiar with the exigencies of foreign travel before advising others about such travel is important.

*Q: To which country should we travel? What time of the year should we go? How long should we stay?*

Selecting the country will depend on faculty interests and availability of opportunities to meet the objectives of the experience. The internet can provide the names and contact information for a variety of health care agencies. The agencies can be contacted to explore possibilities of visits or exchanges. For travel involving students, travel will occur during winter or spring breaks or summer and the length of the experience will depend on university policies, and often is limited to two to three weeks. A faculty member may spend three months or more if on sabbatical or a leave. Remember that the seasons are opposite in the northern and southern hemispheres. Traveling in the off-season can reduce expenses.

*Q: Can I participate in international educator activities or go on a medical or church-based mission to prepare for the endeavor? Is there an NGO (nongovernmental organization) that I could work through?*

This would be a golden opportunity to determine whether you are prepared to undertake such an endeavor. Traveling internationally with students demands a great deal of thought, planning, and oversight. By participating in an organized international activity, the faculty become cognizant of the details of such an endeavor. Be aware that state supported schools may not condone activities that involve church-related missions.

*Q: Does my institution already have international relationships? If so, with which countries?*

Consult your dean or other administrators and the international office to determine this.

*Q: Is there is a committee that I can serve on that facilitates international and study abroad courses or trips so that I can begin to develop understanding of my organization's perspective?*

This would be an ideal activity if the opportunity exists.

*Q: With whom should I speak? Someone in the university? My dean? An international colleague? Study abroad coordinator?*

It is important to speak to all of these.

*Q: What options do I have? Teaching a course? Integrating the experience into an existing course? Creating a new course? Participating in service learning? Consulting? Clinical practice? Research?*

This will depend on the time and interests of the faculty member.

*Q: Should it be a clinical course, service learning, consultation, or a mission?*

This will depend on the institution, student interest, and faculty desires.

*Q: Will my employer pay all or part of the costs? Are there grant funds available for such activities?*

It is important to determine the availability of financial resources early on in your planning. Ordinarily, students pay tuition and their own expenses for international courses. Faculty may apply for grant funds or a sabbatical to cover part or all of the costs. In the US, these types of activities are tax deductible.

## **Resources**

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Burns, H. K., Brand, S., & Millard, L. (2010). Leveraging differences for collaborative advantage: Enhancing student learning through an international educational collaboration. *International Journal of Nursing Education Scholarship*, 7(1), 45.

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#### Traveling to Europe

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Zabalegui, A., & Cabrera, E. (2009). New nursing education structure in Spain, *Nurse Education Today*, 29(5), 500-504.

#### Traveling to China

Seago, J. (2008). *The global nursing shortage and nurse migration*.

[http://cpath.org/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/seago\\_nurse\\_migration\\_slides.ppt](http://cpath.org/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/seago_nurse_migration_slides.ppt)

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#### Traveling to Africa

Balestra, M. (2011), Volunteering in Namibia, *Nurse Practitioner World News*, 16 (5/6), 18-20.

Mason, C., & Anderson, M. (2007). Developing an international learning experience in The Gambia, West Africa: The rewards and challenges of a complex partnership, *Journal of Cultural Diversity*, 14(1), 35-42.

Wright, D. (2010). Planning a study abroad clinical experience, *Journal of Nursing Education*, 49(5), 280-286.

#### Resources for Packing

Listed below are just a few comprehensive websites about packing for international travel.

- International Travel Packing List: [www.tripresource.com/beforeyougo](http://www.tripresource.com/beforeyougo)
- International travel tips: [www.paramountplaza.com](http://www.paramountplaza.com)
- International travel tips: [www.traveltriptips.com](http://www.traveltriptips.com)
- Leisure/Business Travel Packing List- Travel light (one bag): [www.onebag.com](http://www.onebag.com)
- Packing luggage free travel tips: [www.whosetravel.com](http://www.whosetravel.com)
- Packing tips: [www.travellerspoint.com/packing-tips](http://www.travellerspoint.com/packing-tips)
- The Universal Packing List –a customized list: [upl.codeq.inf](http://upl.codeq.inf)
- Things travelers need to know, luggage and packing: [www.thereareplaces.com](http://www.thereareplaces.com)
- Travel Packing Checklist and Suitcase Packing Checklist: [www.travelguide.com](http://www.travelguide.com)
- Transportation Security Administration: [www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov)
- University of Kansas, International travel tips: [www.kumc.edu/international/travel](http://www.kumc.edu/international/travel)

## **Section Four: Recommendations upon Arrival in a Host Country**

Tips about expectations upon first arriving in a host country are included in this section. Information regarding customs, immigration and contacting the United States Embassy serve to decrease some anxiety during what may be a time-consuming process.

### **Faculty Role**

The U. S. Department of State travel department ([travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov)) provides information on every country in the world. For each country, there is information as to the location of the US embassy and any consular offices. This information is useful whether you need a visa or information about crimes and security, have concerns about health and medical conditions, or desire information on drug penalties as well as localized hot spots.

Passing through customs and immigration in both the host country and on return to the US can be a lengthy process. Be prepared to queue and wait, and be subjected to questions about why one is traveling, which countries will be visited, and how long you will stay. Ensure there is sufficient time between connecting flights. A faculty member with students must ensure that all students clear customs and immigration; obtain their luggage; and assemble for transportation to their destination. Lost luggage must be reported and a forwarding address provided.

Once a consultant arrives in the host country, one of his/her primary responsibilities is to contact the US embassy or consular officer to register his/her presence and inform them of his/her purpose in the country. This is of even greater importance if you are travelling to a “hot spot” country; that is, one that may or may not be regarded as US friendly. Ordinarily a university will not permit travel to a hot spot country.

### **Issues and Perspectives**

#### **a. Currency and credit cards**

Bring some cash, an ATM card, and one credit card (Visa or MasterCard is most useful; Discover Card is not accepted) for purchases, personal tips, and meals that are not included. US credit cards are widely accepted at hotels and major shopping areas. There are ATM machines available at most airports and in larger cities. ATMs provide the local currency generally at a good exchange rate. There is usually a charge by your credit card company to exchange your currency. Prior to travel, check with your credit card company to determine the fees charged. Notify your credit card company that you will be out of the country.



An average amount of currency to carry for other necessities on a two-week program is \$200 to \$300 USD. The bills should be unmarked with no tears and with a recent issue date (preferably within the last 5 years). In many countries, \$20 bills older than 10 years are rejected.

Denominations of \$20, \$10, \$5, and \$1 are useful. The smaller bills can be used in many local markets and for tips.

Funds can generally be exchanged for local currency at a hotel (usually the hotel charges a higher exchange rate than a bank), a bank, or an exchange office. Your host can provide further information on exchange of currency.

#### **b. Taxes and customs**

Airport facility charges and international departure taxes may be required in some countries and must be paid before departure. The charge is usually \$10-\$20 USD, is paid in the local currency (some countries require payment in US dollars), and is collected at international departure points.

US Customs inspectors may ask to inspect your luggage. Be sure to keep track of your purchases as you may be asked to account for any monies you spend. Keeping receipts and notes of daily purchases will help avoid delays.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

*Q: Why should I register with the US embassy when I get to the country?*

By registering your name and address with the US consulate you make it possible for them to contact you, should there be an emergency. Once you arrive in the country, you should register with the embassy letting them know your itinerary.

*Q: What if I am wrongfully accused of a crime while visiting a foreign country?*

Inform the US embassy immediately and seek an appointment to meet with a consular representative.

*Q: Should I participate in anti-government activities during my international trip?*

Absolutely not! As a rule of thumb, remember that you are guest in a foreign country during an international trip. You are advised not to participate in any anti-governmental activities during your international trip, especially those against the home country governments. At a cultural level, such activities may present difficulties to your in-country hosts or host institutions and may have a long-term impact on inter-institutional exchanges. Moreover, they may result in actions from the home country government that may restrict your activities and even your own freedom.

You may feel strongly about what you observe in the host country. Imagine how you should behave when you are an invited guest in a friend's home. However, if your personal freedom or security is threatened or affected, you should contact the nearest US embassy for assistance immediately.

*Q: Will the embassy be available to me if there are local demonstrations?*

US embassies look after their own citizens. Get to the embassy and show proof of who you are.

*Q: Is it advisable to travel to countries that are undergoing elections?*

Maybe Yes, maybe No. Many countries, especially in the developing world, experience a high incidence of demonstrations and disruption of the peace when there are political activities taking place. Always check with the US Department of State before you leave. It regularly issues bulletins on countries undergoing upheaval and it issues "travel advisories."

*Q: Should I bring a telephone with me?*

U. S. phones can be converted to global phones prior to travel. This decreases significantly the cost of calling home. Email is available in many places and can be used to maintain contact with home.

## Resources

Abbott, A., Barrow, S., Lopresti, F., & Hittelman, E. (2005). International employment in clinical practice: Influencing factors for the dental hygienist, *International Journal of Dental Hygiene*, 3(1), 37-44.

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Oxtoby, K. (2004). How to work abroad, *Nursing Times*, 100 (44), 20-22.

Pulcini, J., Jelic, M., Gul, R., & Loke, A. (2010). An international survey on advanced nursing education, practice and regulation, *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 42(1), 31-39.

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Varma, Z. (2003). Nursing abroad stirs the soul, *AORN Journal*, 78(1), 108-115.

## **Section Five: Debriefing Upon Return to the US**

This section provides debriefing tips upon returning to the US, including writing about lessons learned and designing next steps. A post-travel report is useful for justifying expanded travel abroad experiences and reflecting on the international exchange.

### **Faculty Role**

Debriefing is an act that allows for review and reflection. This is an evaluation, summarization, sharing and recounting of learning opportunities for individuals or a team. For students, journaling is often required and includes a record of experiences, reflection on those experiences, and an evaluation. Although debriefing occurs following the international experience, time to reflect should occur during the experience as well. Some faculty find it useful to have daily debriefing time.

### **Issues and Perspectives**

#### **a. Post travel report**

The post-travel report(s) should be prepared according to the policies, procedures, and protocols of the academic facility or institution. Likewise, appreciative recognition (gifting/thank you notes) of the experience should be expressed to the hosts or facilitators. It is important to include a review of the experience, report of expenditures, discussion of both positive and negative outcomes as well as making recommendations for future international/global activities. Assessment of student adaptation to a different culture is part of the debriefing as well as the student evaluation of the experience. This is the time to review current objectives and revise if necessary for future international experiences.

While debriefing of a team may occur on the last days of the trip, conducting the debriefing may be more fruitful in the days following the trip. This gives the team more time for reflection. Framework for the process should focus on review of the goals and objectives for the international experience. Team members should be informed prior to the trip and then reminded at the end regarding the time and modality for the debriefing process. Debriefing may occur in person or utilize technologies such as a conference call, Skype, or other technology, and should be a group activity. Additionally, course or travel surveys may be administered.

#### **b. Planning the next visit**

The lessons learned through the experience and the knowledge gained through the debriefing can guide planning for a future international experiences. The same country can be visited or a new experience planned in a different setting.

c. Inviting international visitors to the US

As host faculty in the US, it is important to recognize that nurses share commonalities, regardless of place and language. It is important to engage the visitors and learn something about them and their country. Prior to their arrival, they may request assistance in finding convenient lodging. Assist them with transportation and understanding of local customs. Be generous with your time showing visitors around the school and clinical agencies and/or your local neighborhood/city/environment. If there are people in your community who are familiar with the culture of your guests or someone from their country who lives in your town or city, arrange introductions. Discreetly inquire about religious and dietary habits they observe, so you can make them feel respected and comfortable.

### Resources

Evanson, T., & Zust, B. (2006). "Bittersweet knowledge:" The long-term effects of an international experience, *Journal of Nursing Education*, 45(10), 412-419.

Green, S.S., Comer, L., Elliott, L., & Neubrandner, J. (2011). Exploring the value of an international service-learning experience in Honduras, *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 33(5), 302-307.

Kostovich, C., & Bermele, C.A. (2011). Lessons learned from teaching a study abroad course, *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 33(5), 308-310.

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D'Avanzo, C. E. (2008). *Mosby's pocket guide series. Cultural health assessment* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). St. Louis: Mosby-Elsevier.

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Halstead, J.A. (2007). *Nurse educator competencies: Creating an evidence-based practice for nurse educators*. New York, NY: National League for Nursing.

Holtz, C. (2008). *Global health care issues and policies*. Boston: Jones and Bartlett.

Merriam, S.B., Courtenay, B.C., & Cervero, R.M. (Eds.) (2006). *Global issues and adult education perspectives from Latin America, southern Africa, and the United States*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

National League for Nursing. (2010). *Outcomes and competencies for graduates of practical/vocational, diploma, associate degree, baccalaureate, master's, practice doctorate and research doctorate programs in nursing*. New York, NY: National League for Nursing.

Plotnick, J., & Leffers, J. *Volunteering at home and abroad: The essential guide for nurses*. Indianapolis: Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society for Nurses.

Stallwood, L.G., & Groh, C. (2011). Service learning in the nursing curriculum: Are we at a level of evidence-based practice? *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 33(5), 297-301.

## **Web Resources**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

*CDC's mission is to collaborate to create the expertise, information, and tools that people and communities need to protect their health – through health promotion, prevention of disease, injury and disability, and preparedness for new health threats. It includes a center for global health.*

Council for International Education Exchanges, Faculty and Student Study Abroad: [www.ciee.org](http://www.ciee.org)

*CIEE is a non-profit, non governmental international exchange organization that helps people gain understanding, acquire knowledge, and develop skills for living in a globally interdependent and culturally diverse world. They develop and administer*

*programs, advocate for the advancement of international education, and build knowledge through CIEE research, publications, and conferences.*

Community Colleges for International Development, Inc.: [www.ccid.org](http://www.ccid.org)

*The mission of CCID is to provide opportunities for building global relationships that strengthen educational programs, and promote economic development.*

CGFNS International: [www.cgfns.org](http://www.cgfns.org)

*The mission of CGFNS International, an immigration neutral non-profit organization (also known as the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools) is to serve the global community through programs and services that verify and promote the knowledge-based practice competency of health care professionals.*

Embassies and Consulates of the US: [www.usembassy.gov/](http://www.usembassy.gov/)

Embassies and Consulates of the World: [www.embassyworld.com](http://www.embassyworld.com)

*Embassy world provides a comprehensive list of contact resources for all the world's diplomatic offices.*

International Council of Nurses: [www.icn.ch](http://www.icn.ch)

*The mission of the International Council of Nurses (ICN), a federation of over 135 national nurses associations, is to represent nursing worldwide, advance nursing worldwide and influence health policy.*

International Education Research Foundation: [www.ierf.org](http://www.ierf.org)

*IERF's mission is to research and disseminate information on world educational systems and to facilitate the integration of individuals educated outside the United States into the US educational environment and work force.*

National League for Nursing: [www.nln.org](http://www.nln.org)

*The National League for Nursing, an organization of over 33,000 individual and 1,200 institutional members, promotes excellence in nursing education to build a strong and diverse nursing workforce to advance the nation's health.*

National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission: [www.nlnac.org](http://www.nlnac.org)

*The National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) is responsible for the specialized accreditation of nursing education programs (Clinical Doctorate, Master's, Baccalaureate, Associate, Diploma, and Practical programs).*

Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing: <http://www.nursingsociety.org>

*The mission of the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International, a global community of nurse leaders in 86 countries, is to support the learning, knowledge and professional development of nurses committed to making a difference in health worldwide.*

Transportation Security Administration: [www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov)

*All passengers and bags traveling via a commercial aircraft today are screened before boarding a flight in the US. International travelers arriving in the US are screened before they meet a connecting flight. Information is provided regarding the screening*

*process, appropriate identification and acceptable items to pack in a carry-on bag or in checked luggage. Tips are provided for specific cultural considerations, religious needs and medical conditions. Tips about traveling with food or gifts are given.*

USAID: [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov)

*USAID is an independent federal government agency that receives overall foreign policy guidance from the Secretary of State. It supports long-term and equitable economic growth and advances US foreign policy objectives by supporting: economic growth, agriculture and trade; global health; and, democracy, conflict prevention and humanitarian assistance.*

U. S. Department of State: [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)

*The mission of the US Department of State is to advance freedom for the benefit of the American people and the international community by helping to build and sustain a more democratic, secure, and prosperous world composed of well-governed states that respond to the needs of their people, reduce widespread poverty, and act responsibly within the international system.*

World Health Organization: [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

*WHO is the directing and coordinating authority for health within the United Nations system. It is responsible for providing leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-based policy options, providing technical support to countries and monitoring and assessing health trends.*

World Volunteer Web: [www.worldvolunteerweb.org/](http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/)

*The World Volunteer Web, a United Nations Volunteer Program, supports the volunteer community by serving as a global clearinghouse for information and resources linked to volunteerism that can be used for campaigning, advocacy and networking. It is an online hub where the community can meet, share resources and coordinate activities to mobilize volunteer action in support of the Millennium Development Goals.*