

# WELCOME BACK!



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The Office of International Programs welcomes you back from the Ithaca College London Center! We hope that your time overseas enabled you to grow personally and intellectually, develop new friendships, learn about another culture, discover new interests and travel to other countries. We encourage you to think of your study abroad experience as the beginning of a life-long global journey. However, you will also need to think your return to Ithaca College. After London's theatre, museums, pubs and clubs and traveling in Europe, life in Ithaca, NY may not seem as exciting. We hope this packet will help you readjust to life at Ithaca College.

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# REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

You probably had many mixed feelings about leaving London and returning to the USA. While you have now been home from London for a while and have probably made the readjustment, being back in Ithaca may cause those feelings to come back. Most people expect to experience a period of adjustment when they travel to another culture but not when they come home. Although it's nice to return to family, friends and familiar places, you probably miss London and the life you led there. After a semester or summer of living in a major city, traveling in European countries and visiting historically and culturally significant sites, it will probably take some time to readjust to life in Ithaca, NY.

## **Back in Ithaca...**

After your adventures in other countries, returning to old friends and routines may seem dull. It is natural to miss the excitement and challenges that are associated with the study abroad experience. Challenge yourself academically by taking classes that allow you to pursue interests you developed overseas. Make an effort to spend time with other students who went to London and can relate to your experiences. Gradually, you can strike a balance between your life at IC and your new international interests.

## **Feeling homesick for another country**

While you were abroad you may have felt homesick for your family or friends or familiar places in the USA. After spending a substantial amount of time in another country, it is common to miss the people, places, attitudes, customs and lifestyles that became familiar while you were abroad. In order to alleviate these feelings, think of ways to go abroad again in the future, keep in touch with other ICLC students, see British films and read about current events in the UK.

## **People aren't interested**

You are probably full of enthusiasm about your time abroad and want to share all of your experiences and cultural observations. Unfortunately, your friends and family may not seem interested in hearing about your adventures. They may not be able to understand or relate to your experiences. Remember that their lives did not stop while you were away, so they may have a lot to share with you, too. Keep in touch with friends from London who can understand your experience and reminisce with you.

## **Renegotiating relationships**

Following a period of time away in another country, people often need to renegotiate relationships and adjust to being together again. Study abroad will have altered some of your ideas and attitudes, and the people at home may not fully understand your new perspectives. Expect that your relationships with relatives and old friends will be different. Be flexible and open as you develop "new" relationships with them.

## **Changes**

Integrating the knowledge you have gained of yourself into your lifestyle in the USA may be a challenge. If you experienced significant personal growth while you were away, it may be difficult to fit into the life you led before you went abroad. Be creative, be patient and use cross cultural adjustment skills to help you through the re-entry process.

## **Your international experiences**

Your memories and experiences will always be a part of you. Hopefully, London will be the first of many international experiences you will enjoy during your lifetime. You can continually build on the skills and interests you developed overseas, and keep your international experiences alive while you are in the USA.

## HOW TO KEEP YOUR INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES ALIVE

- Join the **Cultural Connections Club**. The Cultural Connections Club is for those students who have studied abroad or are interested in studying abroad. Activities will involve promoting international education, sharing past experiences, preparing future students for travel, and celebrating other nations' diverse traditions. If you are interested in promoting international experiences and study abroad to the Ithaca College community, this is a great opportunity. Contact co-presidents Jess Farley at [jfarley1@ithaca.edu](mailto:jfarley1@ithaca.edu) or Megan Henry at [mhenry1@ithaca.edu](mailto:mhenry1@ithaca.edu) for more information.
- Join the **International Club**. The club sponsors social and cultural events for U.S. and international students. Watch for International Club signs for further information or contact the club president, Sushant Shrestha, at [sshrest1@ithaca.edu](mailto:sshrest1@ithaca.edu).
- Volunteer to be a **U.S. Buddy** to an incoming international student. Help a new student adjust to life in the U.S. and at IC and learn more about another country. Contact Diana Dimitrova, Director of International Student Services, at the Office of International Programs for more information. Her email address is [ddimitrova@ithaca.edu](mailto:ddimitrova@ithaca.edu)
- Take classes that are relevant to the UK at IC or at Cornell. Attend events on campus, at Cornell and in the community that are related to the UK or just international in scope.
- Seek people, events and reading material from London. For a small city, Ithaca has an extremely large international population, so it may be possible to develop connections with British people in town.
- Keep in touch with your friends from London.
- Start thinking about your next international adventure! Make plans to study, work, volunteer or travel abroad.
- Become a **STUDY ABROAD AMBASSADOR!** (See below for details)

## SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH OTHER IC STUDENTS

We hope that your London Center experience was so positive that you would like to encourage other IC students to study abroad! If you would like an opportunity to share your experiences and stories with other students, you should consider becoming a **Study Abroad Ambassador**. The Ambassadors are returned study abroad students who are involved in helping with peer advising about international programs, information sessions, orientations, pre-departure socials and other events that promote study abroad on campus. Serving as an ambassador requires only a minimal time commitment, but it will allow you talk about your experiences with an interested audience and encourage others to study abroad.

If you are interested in becoming a **Study Abroad Ambassador**, please complete the Ambassador form and return to the Office of International Programs (the Ambassador form is downloadable from the International Programs website at [http://www.ithaca.edu/oip/SAamb\\_form.pdf](http://www.ithaca.edu/oip/SAamb_form.pdf)). The Ambassador program will be discussed at the Welcome Back Reunion (see below).

## COME TO THE WELCOME BACK REUNION!

There will be a Welcome Back Reunion held on Wednesday, August 27, from 6:00-7:00 in the Klingenstein Lounge, Campus Center. Pizza (and Hobnobs!) will be served. Bring your photos and come reminisce with the Spring and Summer 2008 ICLC groups!