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WELCOME

Dear Boren Scholars and Fellows,

Congratulations again on being awarded the prestigious David L. Boren Fellowship or Scholarship. You join the thousands of Boren awardees who, for 25 years, have been studying critical languages in countries important to U.S. national security. Boren alumni work throughout the U.S. federal government, helping to protect our nation’s security in a variety of vital ways.

The National Security Education Program (NSEP) was established by the National Security Education Act of 1991 to provide undergraduate scholarships, graduate fellowships, and institutional grants to increase the study of critical languages and enhance U.S. students’ international understanding. Since then, over 6,500 Boren Scholars and Fellows have studied abroad in world regions critical to U.S. interests. These Boren awards granted students the opportunity to acquire linguistic skills and experience a new culture, country, and academic system. The skills and experiences that Boren Scholars and Fellows acquire while overseas help prepare them to communicate effectively across borders, understand different perspectives and cultures, as well as analyze the ever-changing and ever-exciting world of international relations.

The Boren Advising team is here to assist you throughout your program experience abroad. This handbook is not intended to replace your own overseas program’s guidelines and travel tips, but to assist and guide you through the policies and rules inherent to the Boren Awards. As recipients of federal government funding, you are subject to a few rules (and laws) that you may not fully understand at the moment. This is our attempt to explain them in a more understandable way and to give other advice that past awardees have found useful.

In addition, we have provided some suggestions on how to successfully integrate into your host country, learn a second language, be a good ambassador of the U.S. and the Boren Awards, and more. We hope you take the time to read this handbook in its entirety and refer to it when you have questions. Your IIE Boren advisor is also available to answer any questions or concerns you may have throughout your Boren funded international experience.

We look forward to working with you throughout your time as a Boren Scholar or Fellow.

Sincerely,

Boren Advising Team
Institute of International Education
Academic Policies

Policies on Internships, Work, and Journalism

Boren Scholarships and Fellowships are intended to fund full time academic study, and the Boren Awardee must remain enrolled in the approved program full time. Acceptance of remunerative employment while abroad violates the conditions of the Boren award.

Prohibition of Government Employment

You may not be employed, including unpaid internships, by the U.S. federal government or any foreign government while receiving Boren funding. You must sign the Government Status Confirmation Form confirming this, and when applicable, attach a letter detailing separation from federal employment as well.

- You may not have a job while on the Boren Scholarship or Fellowship.
- Academic (unpaid) internships are allowed, but only as an integrated part of your study abroad program.
- You cannot work, intern, or volunteer for the U.S. government or a foreign government, while on the Boren Scholarship or Fellowship (if your internship or volunteer activity is with an organization with ties to the U.S. or a foreign government, please contact your Boren advisor).
- You cannot work as a journalist, even if it is freelance or unpaid.

Policy on Foreign Government Funding

You are strongly discouraged from accepting any foreign government funds while you are receiving Boren funding. Examples would include but are not limited to funding through the Chinese Scholarship Council, Qatar Foundation, and the Sultan Qaboos Foundation. Accepting foreign government funding could adversely affect your security clearance in the future.

U.S. Passport Policy

Boren Scholars and Fellows must travel to their overseas programs on a U.S. passport and be recognized as a U.S. national for the duration of their stay in the host country. Awardees must also use their U.S. passport during personal travel while on their overseas programs. Students may not participate in overseas study in a country in which they are a citizen.

Arrangements for Foreign Study

You are responsible for making all arrangements relating to your overseas study, including obtaining necessary visas, research permits (if applicable), and any other necessary permits from your host country. Failure to obtain the necessary the visas, may result in the forfeiture of the Boren Scholarship or Fellowship.

IIE does not assist with visa arrangements, travel arrangements, vaccinations, or medication. Please consult your campus study abroad office or study abroad program regarding these arrangements. If you do require a visa supporting letter confirming your Boren Scholarship or Fellowship, contact your Boren advisor for assistance.
Administrative Policies

Program Changes

You may request program changes prior to the start of the program. Requested program changes must be in the same country (or world region, only in extreme and/or compelling circumstances), and for study of the same language as the original program.

Alternate Program: If you choose to change to the alternate program that you listed in your original application, you must notify IIE in advance in writing, provide an updated budget, explanation of language plan, start and end date, new budget, a letter of support from your U.S. home university advisor, and evidence that you have been admitted to the alternate program. Alternate programs may require additional approval.

New Program or Sponsor: If you would like to change to a new program or sponsor, you must reach out to your IIE Boren advisor for program review and approval. Please provide a detailed description of the new program including a webpage link, explanation of language plan, start and end dates, city location, and a new budget. A letter of support from your U.S. home university, as well as the admission letter to the new program must be provided as well. Requests to switch to a new program will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and will only be granted in extraordinary circumstances.

Program Date Change: Any changes to your originally reported program dates must be communicated to your Boren advisor along with official documentation that indicates the correct program dates.

Length Change: If you need to increase or decrease the length of your program for any reason, you must inform your Boren advisor. You must request the extension in writing to IIE at least six weeks prior to the end date of the study abroad program, as defined in your Grant Document. Extension requests will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and are subject to the availability of funds. Extensions will only be granted with advanced written permission from IIE. Extending your program is encouraged but award amount increases are not guaranteed. In either case, you must submit the rationale for the change, your new budget, the new program dates, and an email from your home institution confirming approval.

Early Withdrawal: You may only withdraw from a study abroad program early with the express and written permission from IIE, and you may be required to return funds already granted. Withdrawal without prior written approval from IIE shall be grounds for scholarship termination, as explained in the IIE Terms and Conditions. You must inform your Boren advisor should a situation arise which affects your ability to complete the Boren-funded program.

Award Amount Increases: It is common for Scholars and Fellows to discover that what they budgeted for a certain line item is different from the actual cost. If so, please email your Boren advisor with your new costs. Keep in mind that award increases are not guaranteed and are only possible if funding is available. Please remember that the Boren funds cannot cover the costs of visas, flight change fees, passports, dependents, medical expenses (such as vaccinations, costs of medication or cost of maintaining medical needs), or personal expenses.

Award Amount Decreases: If you learn that your award amount exceeds your costs, you are required to contact your Boren advisor so we may adjust your award. In addition, you must inform IIE of any additional financial aid awards, grants, or scholarships that could affect the amount of the Boren Scholarship or Fellowship, as benefits may not be duplicated.
Disbursements
You will have an individualized award disbursement schedule which will be available to view on the Self-Service Portal. The disbursement schedule outlines the period in which an awardee is eligible to receive a payment disbursement. Payment disbursements will be based on the length of study and award amount.

Eligibility for payment is determined by:

- The month as outlined on the disbursement schedule
- The submission of all required materials

Payment Process:
IIE administers participant payments using IlePAY, IIE’s digital payment service. With IlePAY, money is transferred directly into your bank account within 3-5 business days after successfully registering with Zelle. A U.S. bank account belonging to the awardee and a valid email address is required to be enrolled in IlePAY. You will receive an email with detailed instructions about registering your U.S. bank account in Zelle, and you will receive payment notifications via email. Make sure to check your spam or junk folder, as the email may be routed there by mistake. You must keep your email address current and on file with IIE. If the primary email address that IIE has on file for you needs to be changed, please notify your Boren advisor immediately.

Payments will not be processed by IIE until all required documents, forms, and contact information are submitted and approved. If one of your disbursements is delayed, it will not push back the dates of the following disbursements. You will find your individualized disbursement schedule uploaded to your Self-Service Portal.

All final payments are contingent upon the completion of the language post-test and submission of all required reports, and NSEPnet information verification (NSEPnet accounts are created in batches by program end dates and you will be notified by IIE once you have been granted access). Failure to complete the requirements within 90 days of completing the Boren-funded program will result in the forfeiture of the final $500 payment. If for any reason you are unable to meet the responsibilities in this timeframe, please be sure to discuss with your Boren advisor well in advance.

Awardee Resource Page and Self-Service Portal
The Awardee Resources page of the Boren website (https://borenawards.org/awardee-resources) has a wealth of information for your time as a Boren awardee. Utilize the resources provided on this page to find out more about the Boren Awards Orientation and Convocation, in-program Boren documentation requirements, and your Service Requirement.

Required Documentation
There are required items that must be uploaded into the Self-Service Portal for you to receive your award disbursements throughout your Boren funded period. There are also additional or altered requirements for African Flagship Languages Initiative (AFLI), Indonesian Flagship Language Initiative (IFLI), South Asian Flagship Languages Initiative (SAFLI), Turkish Flagship Language Initiative (TURFLI), and Flagship awardees.
The requirements due before, during, and after your program are outlined on our website. We encourage you to review and print these checklists to bring with you on your overseas program.

**Using the Self-Service Portal**

Upload all required documents to the Self-Service Portal by the due dates based on the timeline you will receive with your disbursement schedule. When your document is approved or denied, you will receive an automated email with an explanation. **Do not respond to this automated email directly.** If you have any questions, please email your Boren advisor.

**Login & Password:** Your user ID is your primary email address. To obtain a password, click on **forgot password** and enter your email address. A password will be emailed to you.

**Required Documents:** Templates for required documentation can be found in the Self-Service Portal under Documents > Required Documents. Download each file, fill in all your information, and confirm that all details are correct before uploading to the portal.

**How to Upload Documents:** To upload a document for the IIE staff to review, log in [https://connect.iie.org](https://connect.iie.org) and follow these instructions. Please do not email our office your documents.

**Document Specifications:** For a document to be valid, it must fulfill these requirements:

- Must be written in English (including letters of affiliation from foreign institutions)
- Must be rotated correctly (title at the top of the page) and legible

**Using Adobe Acrobat:**

1. Click on Tools, then Pages and select Rotate.
2. A message will pop up that says "Rotate Pages". Select your desired direction.
3. Save your file with the correctly rotated documents.

**Using Rotate PDF:**

1. Go to Rotate PDF.
2. Click Browse in Step 1 and select the appropriate .pdf file from your computer.
3. After selecting the file, choose the rotation angle using the examples indicated on the page.
4. Click Rotate PDF.
5. Click Download to see the rotated file and save the file to your chosen location

- Contain only one attachment per document type (unless IIE staff has requested additional documentation), so if a document has more than one page, it must be combined into one individual PDF.

**Using Adobe Acrobat:**

2. From the getting started window, choose Combine PDFs into PDF, then choose Add Files in the upper left corner.
3. A new dialog box opens so that you can add the files you want to combine. Click the Browse button, navigate to each file, and click the Open button to select it.
4. When you have listed all the files to be included, use the “Move Up” and “Move Down” buttons to rearrange the order of the files or the “Remove” button to delete a particular file.
5. When you are done arranging your files, click Combine Files.
6. Save the combined .pdf file to a designated folder. From the File menu, click Save As and then PDF.

**Using PDFJoin:**

1. Go to PDFJoin.
2. Please note there is a 15MB size limit for each .pdf file uploaded.
3. Click Choose File and select the appropriate .pdf file from your computer. (Repeat step 2 as necessary.)
After selecting the files, click Join. When your files have been combined together a dialogue box will appear. Click Open and save the combined .pdf file to a designated folder.

- Document size limited to 8MB.
- The system will confirm that the document was uploaded successfully by showing a green “Attachment uploaded successfully” banner at the top of your screen.

Checking the Status of Submitted Documents

You can view your uploaded documents list to check its status. Please do not email our office to confirm that the system has uploaded your document, and allow up to two weeks for a status change to appear in the Self-Service Portal.

Once you have uploaded your program requirements to the SSP account there are one of three possible “Review and Approval” statuses.

- **Pending Review**: IIE staff has not reviewed your submitted document.
- **Rejected**: IIE staff has reviewed your submitted document but were unable to approve it due to missing information, improper formatting, or other error. This will be accompanied by an email with an explanation for the rejection and further instructions.
- **Approved**: IIE staff has reviewed your submitted document and approved it until the “Valid Until” date. The “Valid Until” date is a critical part of the approval process. If the “Valid Until” date is:
  - beyond your Boren program end date, then no further action is needed
  - before your Boren program end date, then you are required to update your requirement by that “Valid Until” date indicated to be eligible to receive payments after that date.

You should check your Self-Service portal at least one month prior to your next disbursement while in program to be aware of any upcoming requirements that may delay your payments if not completed.

If you are unable to upload your documents into the Self-Service Portal or are concerned about due dates, please contact your Boren advisor or 1-800-618-NSEP (6737).

Preparing for your time abroad

**Goal Setting**

To truly reap the rewards of your abroad experience, you should set personal, professional, and academic goals before your departure. Here are some ideas to get you going.

**Personal Goals**

- What personal skills do you hope to gain from this experience? Greater sense of independence? More self-confidence? How can you achieve personal growth goals while abroad?
- How will you reflect on your own progress, and how will you push yourself further?
- What can you do to integrate more deeply into the local culture?
**Academic Goals**

- What are your language skills and goals for language acquisition abroad? What are some methods to ensure that you are practicing the target language as much as possible?
- What are you hoping to learn about the host culture that will inform your current academic major or focus?

**Professional Goals**

- What professional skills are you hoping to gain?
- Do you have any specific professional networking goals? How can you make sure to take full advantage of networking opportunities abroad?

**Researching Your Study Abroad Location**

Preparing for your study abroad helps ensure that you have a successful and enjoyable experience. By learning about your host country, you can better equip yourself to communicate with locals, handle some of the cultural differences that might arise, and form realistic expectations.

There is a wealth of information about nearly every country available online and in bookstores.

- The [CIA World Factbook](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/) includes a variety of facts about the countries of the world, and serves as a fantastic information resource for a country’s history, people, government, economy, energy, geography, communications, transportation, military, and transnational issues.
- Review recommendations from the [Center for Disease Control](https://www.cdc.gov) (CDC) for the country you will be living.
- [StudentsAbroad.com](https://www.studentsabroad.com) is a resource that gives you the details necessary to hit the ground running and learn the ins and outs of your destination.
- [What's Up With Culture?](https://www.whatsupwithculture.com) is an online cultural training resource to support and enhance your ability to make successful cultural adjustments both before going overseas and upon returning home from studying abroad.
- [Diversity Abroad Destination Guides](https://www.diversityabroad.com) provides health and safety information and diversity guides for specific countries around the world.
- [Mobility International USA](https://www.mobilityusa.org) and [Abroad with Disabilities](https://www.abroadwithdisabilities.com) are good resources for disability-related questions.

**Basic Things You Should Know Before You Go**

It is important to have some basic facts and knowledge about your host country. This shows your respect for the culture and helps you to be able to engage in conversations.

- Who are the prominent political figures and parties?
- What major religious or spiritual events will occur during your time in country? What is their significance?
• How culturally diverse is your country? What are the major ethnic groups? Is there a large immigrant or refugee population?
• What has been the U.S.’s role in local economy, politics, and culture?

Other cultural references you may want to consider researching. Though pop culture may not always seem relevant, having a grasp of the current cultural references of your host country can give you something to talk about when meeting new people.

• What are popular films in your host country?
• Who are some popular songs, singers, or other entertainers?
• What are some traditional food items in your host country? Do any of them have specific religious or cultural meaning?
• What events in your home country has made it to the news recently? What is a reputable news source in your host country?

Cultural Integration
You should take time to mentally prepare for your program, so that you can make this opportunity an enriching cultural and language exchange. Keep an open mind, be respectful of differences, and above all be adaptable.

Once you arrive at your destination, you should adopt a few behaviors to get the most out of your experience:

• Make an effort to befriend the local people, instead of only hanging out with other students on your program. Ask local people where they go for entertainment and join them.
• Try to engage a wide variety of people. Ask questions, and listen. It is always helpful to remind yourself that you have your own cultural biases that may be clouding your understanding of a comment or situation. Find a cultural informant, someone you can ask about conversations and situations that you experience. This can be staff at your program, local people you live with, and/or friends you make during your time abroad.
• Avoid intense debates, especially when it concerns delicate topics such as religion and politics. One careless or misuse word is all it takes to accidentally offend the very ones you are there to learn from.

Further Resources:

• 7 Strategies for Cultural Immersion: https://www.diversityabroad.com/study-abroad/articles/7-strategies-cultural-immersion
• How to Engage in Challenging Conversations Abroad: https://www.diversityabroad.com/study-abroad/articles/engage-challenging-conversations-abroad

Language Learning Tips
Boren Awardees study a wide range of critical languages, including Arabic, Chinese, Portuguese, and Swahili. Ranging from novice to superior, you are all committed to learning as much as you can during your Boren experience. Besides previously used language learning methods and those suggested to you by your teachers abroad, we encourage you to considering the following tips for meeting your language goals.
• Put new vocabulary to use immediately. Whatever new words you have learned, try to use them in every day speech.
• Ask people to not speak to you in English (including other native English speakers!). Respond to questions and comments in your target language.
• Read a few pages of a novel or magazine in your target language each day.
• Keep a journal and only write in the target language.
• Find a language exchange partner.
• Create language opportunities by becoming a regular at a particular café, restaurant, or other social spot.
• When you make mistakes, roll with it or laugh them off. Don’t lose confidence, there are going to be good days and bad days.

What Not to Do:

• Over studying: People often stress too much on the things such as punctuation, grammar and spelling. Yes, it’s important to learn the basics, but some people get over-reliant on “perfect”.
• Don’t limit learning to the classroom: You will learn far quicker by getting out and about instead of keeping your head in the books. Spend time in local markets and the downtown area to listen to and read the language all around you.

Further Resources:

• 7 Tips for Language Learning Abroad: https://www.gooverseas.com/blog/simple-tips-for-learning-a-language-abroad
• Maintaining A Foreign Language: https://www.iwillteachyoualanguage.com/maintaining-a-foreign-language/
• How to Improve Language Fluency When You’re At A High Level: https://www.mezzoguild.com/improve-when-youre-already-fluent/

Identity and Diversity Abroad
Everyone comes to the abroad experience with a range of identities, from how you identify racially or ethnically, to your sexuality or gender identity, to your religion or lack thereof. It is important to take time to consider how your identity may influence your experience abroad either through your own perception or how others may perceive you. We encourage you to research your host country through the lens of the various identities that you carry with you. If you are studying abroad on a formal program, they should be able to connect you with program alumni. Your home school may have alumni lists of students who have studied in your host country. We have also compiled a list of useful webpages, mostly from Diversity Abroad, to help navigate your identity and the abroad experience. If you have specific concerns about your identity and your host country, you should discuss them openly with your host program, home school, and IIE Boren advisor to determine the best method to prepare yourself for your time aboard.

Further Resources:

• Diversity Abroad Community Forums/Advice: https://www.diversityabroad.com/forums
• Resources to support Underrepresented Students: http://www.globaled.us/plato/resources.html
• Diversity and Identity Abroad: https://www.apistudyabroad.com/students/diversity-and-identity-abroad/
• Racial & Ethnic Minority Students Abroad: https://www.diversityabroad.com/guides/diversity-and-inclusion-abroad-guide/racial-ethnic-minority-students-abroad
• Study Abroad Experience as LGBTQ: https://www.diversityabroad.com/guides/diversity-and-inclusion-abroad-guide/lgbtq-students-abroad
• Religious Diversity Abroad: https://www.diversityabroad.com/guides/diversity-and-inclusion-abroad-guide/religious-diversity-abroad

Being a good cultural ambassador
While you are abroad, you are an ambassador representing the United States, the Boren Awards, and your home institution. It is important to be respectful at all times. Your actions, both positive and negative, are likely to have long-term repercussions for future participants of your program.

Be a good student. After all, you are studying abroad. Attend all classes, do your homework carefully and diligently, and show respect to your professors.

Avoid expressing negative opinions or generalizations about the host country. Such statements usually serve only to reveal the ignorance of the speaker. Remember that you are the guest in someone’s home, school, and country. Be respectful and courteous!

For more information about being a good representative of the U.S. while abroad, refer to the Glimpse Foundation’s guide on American Identity Abroad.

Social Media and Photography
If you plan to use social media while overseas, clean up your accounts, adjust your privacy settings, and remember to be careful of who you friend and be careful what you post!

Clean Up Your Accounts
• Remove personal information (example: residence)
• Delete photos/videos showing government/military connections
• Never select “Keep me logged in” tools and change passwords every 60 days
• Turn off geo-tagging option for photos, videos, and posts and don’t post live updates about your whereabouts
• Delete widgets and games that have access to personal info
• Make sure to adjust your privacy settings on social media accounts, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn.
• Respect other’s privacy and get permission before posting names, photos, or videos. Don’t post pictures or information about your host family
• Don’t post about anything potentially offensive to your host country including anything about drugs or alcohol or religious and political updates
• Don’t accept friend requests from strangers
• If you’re not sure, DON’T POST IT!
Photo and Video Sharing with IIE

We are always interested in hearing about your experiences abroad and encourage you to send us your photos while you are abroad on your Boren funded program. We really love to see action photographs and videos.

- Action photographs that show interaction and engagement between the grantee and the host community are especially welcome. Digital photos are probably the easiest and you can upload to the IIE MediaPort using the guidelines below. Video (even as brief as 3 minutes) that shows interaction and engagement between the grantee and the host community are also welcome.
  - By submitting your photos or videos in MediaPort, you are giving IIE permission to use them for publicity and/or recruitment materials such as posters, brochures, annual reports, and the Boren website.
  - Please be sure to include your name, country, and a short description of the activity being carried out when sending these photos or videos to your IIE program staff.

It is important to note that regardless of whether your photos will be shared with IIE, you should be culturally sensitive as you document your overseas experience. Please use your best judgment in making sure that your photos are appropriate. Refrain from taking pictures of police and military installations and personnel; industrial structures, including harbor, rail, and airport facilities; border areas and, in the exceptional event that these should occur during your travel, scenes of civil disorder, or other public disturbances. For more information on restrictions of this kind it is always prudent to check with the public affairs office, embassy staff, or a local police officer.

Boren Facebook Group

When awarded your Boren Award, you are eligible to join the closed Boren Facebook group “Boren Awards: Current Scholars and Fellows.” This Facebook group is intended to connect with other Boren awardees and alumni to discuss your programs, arrange to meet others in your host country, and give you the ability to share your overseas experiences with others. You can request to join this group at https://www.facebook.com/groups/BorenRecipients. After requesting to join the group, please send an email to boren@iie.org confirming that you made this request. After reviewing your request, we then add you to the group. While we encourage you to use the Facebook group to communicate with one another, please direct any Boren Awards policy-related questions to your Boren advisor, as some decisions are reviewed and made on a case-by-case basis.

Health and Safety Abroad

Health Tips and Resources

For some of you, your Boren experience will be the first time you have lived or traveled overseas. While the experience will certainly be exciting, it may also bring some challenges that you didn’t expect or plan for. Dealing with these challenges properly will ensure that you have a wonderful experience in your host country.
Culture Shock

Culture Shock is a sense of disorientation or confusion from being immersed in a new culture, way of life or set of attitudes. You may think that this will never happen to you, however, it is a normal part of the abroad experience. Part of immersing yourself into a new culture, is allowing yourself to feel disoriented, confused, and unsettled. Culture shock has several phases through which you will move back and forth throughout your time abroad. This is a good thing! You are changing and learning, even though at times it can be upsetting and stressful.

The U-Curve of Culture Shock and Cross-Cultural Adjustment

- **Stage 1, Cultural Euphoria**: This is a fun time. Everything is great, exciting, and new. You love the differences, meeting new people, tasting new foods, seeing different architecture, doing new things. This phase can last days, weeks, or months. Some Scholars and Fellows may never leave this phase!

- **Stage 2, Cultural Confrontation**: During this phase, you're noticing differences, even slight differences, and typically not in a good way. You don't like people's attitudes, you have had enough of the food and just want something familiar. Life is too fast/slow, things are so much "better" at home, they celebrate the wrong holidays, and so forth. During this phase, a person often feels anxious, angry, sad, and/or irritable. Culture shock can trigger depression while overseas and the tips below may help prevent that:
  - **Talk it Out**: Talk to other students or your colleagues. More than likely, they may have already dealt with culture shock and have suggestions on what you can do.
  - **Get Out of Your Comfort Zone**: Push yourself to make local friends. They are experts of their culture and will be able to answer questions you have. As an added bonus, you will get the chance to practice speaking in the local language.

- **Get to Know Your Local Community**: One of the reasons many experience culture shock is because he/she feels like an outsider. To combat that, why not volunteer in your host city, join a
university sports club, or even attend local festivals. By participating in any of these activities, you will begin to feel a part of the community that you live in. Whatever you decide to do, just get involved.

- **Stage 3, Cultural Adjustment**: Essentially, during this phase you decide whether you will succumb to negativity or negotiate past it to make the most of your experience. If you're successful, you regain your sense of perspective, balance, and humor, and move on to the next phase. The tips above can help you move into the adjustment phase.

- **Stage 4, Cultural Adaptation**: You feel more at home with the differences in the new culture. Depending on how big a change a person has experienced, the person may feel as if the culture isn't in fact new, but that they belong, or the person may not exactly feel part of the culture, but they're comfortable enough with it to enjoy the differences and challenges. The person doesn't have to be in love with the new country (as in the honeymoon phase), but they can navigate it without unwarranted anxiety, negativity, and criticism.¹

As noted above, you will move through these phases at your pace, back and forth, from delighted to stressed to feeling contented and comfortable. What you should also keep in mind, is that you are encountering multiple different cultures while on your program. Your cohort will have its own internal culture, you will encounter a new academic culture, a new home-life culture, a new friendship culture, besides a new city, region, and country wide cultural reality. The process of adapting to all these new ways of living may be challenging, however the experience will provide opportunities for personal growth, learning, adaptation, and the discovery of a new way of living and interacting with the world.

All things considered, if you are feeling stressed or that anxiety is affecting your ability to function in your abroad program or experience, please make sure to reach out to your IIE Boren advisor, your program staff, and/or a trusted faculty member or administrator at your home school. We are all here to support you to ensure that you have a fruitful and enjoyable international experience.

**Stress Abroad**

Multiple things can trigger stress and may occur when you least expect it. Everyone deals with stress in their own way, but following the tips below may alleviate some of it during your time overseas:

- **Make a To Do List**: Being able to visualize what you need to accomplish will keep you organized and on track to succeed.

- **Be Present and Realistic**: Your primary responsibility while overseas is language acquisition. Know that you will not see every museum, try every restaurant, or visit every town. While it is encouraged for you to learn as much as possible about the local culture, we also want you to be realistic of the time you have outside of your classroom or research.

- **Learn to Budget**: Financial stress is common for those living overseas and certainly something that you may also face. When in doubt, ask yourself, “Is it worth it?” With a little research, you may find activities or deals that are easier on the wallet.

- **Reach Out**: Do not hesitate to contact your program provider, host/home university advisor, or your Boren advisor if dealing with an issue that you don’t know how to address. Friends,

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colleagues, your host family or resident director are also good resources when dealing with stress.

- **Maintain your regular habits:** Some stress relievers include maintaining habits that can keep you relaxed such as exercising, keeping up with hobbies that you enjoy, or eating foods that make you happy (like peanut butter!), or making time to chat with your best friend from home.

As with Culture Shock, please make sure to reach out to your host program, home school, and/or IIE Boren advisor if you are feeling deeply stressed abroad and struggling to cope. We are here to help!

**Scholars and Fellows with Disabilities or Ongoing Health Issues**

Living overseas for someone with special needs may bring new challenges that you have not faced before. To plan for the unexpected, do your research on what services are provided at your host university/country, talk to your home/host advisor to see if other students faced similar challenges and come up with a plan. With the right plan, nothing should prevent you from having a great experience abroad.

**Disabilities Abroad**

Living abroad with a disability should not stop you from taking advantage of everything your host country offers. You should communicate any concerns you might have to your program provider or host institution as they can provide you with in-country resources. Please see the **Preparing for your Program** section of this handbook for resources.

**Ongoing Health Issues**

If you have any ongoing health issues that you are currently receiving treatment for in the U.S., make sure that you have a plan on how to continue your treatment. The same treatment and services that you are accustomed to receiving in the U.S. may not be available at your host country. Create a plan with your regular physician in the US on how to manage your health while oversees. Be realistic and be prepared. If you have a long-term health issue that is not aggravated currently, being abroad could trigger health issues. Make sure to have frank discussions with your physician about your health and any concerns to help ensure your success oversees.

- **Prescription Policy:** If you will need to take medication for a medical condition while living overseas, check with the embassy of your host country first. Make sure that you may bring those medications with you and confirm if additional documentation is needed (i.e. original prescription, physician’s letter, etc.). Some countries may not allow certain medications (including prescription and non-prescription) and/or may require a note from your medical provider. If bringing medication overseas, take three to six months of your medical prescriptions with you or more, depending on the length of your program or research. Take your medication with you in your carry-on bag rather than in your checked luggage, to minimize the chance of it getting lost. If you will be away from urban areas, bring remedies to treat your most common ailments. The Boren Program cannot assist you in obtaining your medication while abroad.

- **Counseling:** Living overseas can be exciting and challenging. It is common for students to experience culture shock, stress, homesickness, as well as other emotions while studying abroad. If for any reason, you find yourself in need of counseling, we advise you to reach out to your overseas program to see if they have any resources available, as they are likely familiar
with your specific regional and cultural experience. You should also consider contacting your home institution study abroad and/or student counseling office, as well as your overseas health insurance provider for counseling options. Your Boren advisor is also available to discuss any health concerns you may have, and to help you identify resources as best we can.

Medical Issues While Abroad (informing Boren)
Should you become ill while abroad you may contact your abroad program and/or the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate for a list of local doctors, dentists, medical specialists, and other sources of medical information. Identify the location of medical facilities upon arrival in your host country and familiarize yourself with their location. Inform your Boren advisor right away if you seek medical treatment at your host country. Loop in your home institution advisor or host country advisor as well so that everyone is aware and can provide support as needed.

General Safety Abroad
While there is no single resource that can fully prepare you for life in a foreign country, there are resources available to advise you on how to stay safe while overseas.

- **International SOS** – provides country travel and security advice, the latest medical and security alerts, and consultations for any questions related to travel. Please note that you are registered with member services as a Boren recipient, and your membership details are provided by your Boren advisor.
- **U.S. Department of State, International Travel** – provides specific country information, tips while abroad, how to deal with an emergency and many more.
- **U.S. Department of State, World Map** – provides embassy and consulate contact information, along with travel advisories.
- **U.S. Department of State, Traveler’s Checklist** – provides important steps to take before traveling outside of the United States.

Political Demonstration
To ensure your safety, you should avoid participating in any political demonstrations in your host country even if invited by your friends, colleagues or host family.

Alcohol
It is recommended that you research your host country’s attitude and social norms before going overseas. Use good judgment if drinking alcohol and never leave your drink unattended. If drinking in a social setting, always stay with your friends or people that you trust.

Travel Policy
Boren awardees are required to request and receive approval from IIE for any personal travel outside the awardee’s country of study during the award program period. Boren Flagship and FLI awardees must also obtain permission for requested travel from the Resident Director of the NSEP-sponsored overseas program. Note to all awardees: you may also need to submit a separate travel request to your overseas program provider.
• Travel requests must be submitted through the IIE portal using the travel request form. Requests should be submitted as soon as possible, and in no case should a request be submitted less than two weeks prior to the start of planned travel.
• Travel requests must be submitted prior to purchasing any transportation ticket, as not all travel requests will be approved.
• Except in rare and compelling circumstances, IIE will not approve travel that interrupts the awardee’s academic schedule and/or is longer than two weeks in duration. Duration spent in the host country is a factor in determining award amounts, as a result travel outside the host country could potentially reduce award amount provided to the Boren awardee.
• Proposed travel to countries designated as advisory level 2 or 3 under the U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories may have additional restrictions and require approval from NSEP.
• Proposed travel to or transit through advisory level 4 countries will not be approved.
• Following receipt of travel approval from an IIE Boren advisor, Boren Awardees must update their STEP registration with approved travel plans as well as update their International SOS (ISOS) registration with trip details.

Post-Program Travel

You may travel for up to two weeks post-program before returning to the United States. Any post-program travel must still follow the same protocol as during your program for requesting any out of country travel. Please note that you must still adhere to the rules of your study abroad program and/or overseas provider regarding travel requests and restrictions, group travel arrangements, or other related policies.

U.S. and Foreign Laws

Possible grounds for termination of a Boren Award by IIE include violation of any law of the United States or your host country. If you violate the laws of the United States or your host country, IIE may terminate your Boren Scholarship or Fellowship, which means that you would no longer be considered a Boren Scholar or Fellow and that you would need to refund all funds that had been issued, plus interest.

It is also important to understand the risks of violating a law in a foreign country. If you are unsure of how to act or respond in certain situations, don’t risk your safety. Deal only with authorized outlets when you exchange money, buy or sell traveler’s checks, and purchase airline tickets. Do not deliver packages for anyone unless you are certain they do not contain drugs or other contraband. Become familiar with local regulations before you sell personal effects such as clothing, cameras, and jewelry.

Consular officers will do whatever they can to protect your legitimate interests and ensure that you are not discriminated against under local law. However, they cannot get you out of jail. If you are arrested, ask for permission to notify the consular officer at the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. Under international agreements and practice, you have a right to get in touch with the American consul. Remember that you are subject to local laws. American citizenship does not confer immunity.

Foreign Laws and Drugs: Persons caught with illegal drugs in a foreign country are subject to the drug laws of that country, not those of the U.S. If you are arrested on drug charges, the consular officer will do what he/she can. However, he/she cannot get you out of jail or out of the country.

Gender Based Misconduct
Gender based misconduct is a reality regardless of where you are studying. Your safety and well-being is a priority and you should never feel that you can’t ask for help. If for any reason, you feel that you have been involved in a gender-based misconduct, we encourage you to inform your Boren advisor right away for further guidance. It is also recommended for you to reach out to your host university who may be able to help guide you in navigating the local laws or dealing with the police in your host country as well as your home college or university.

**Harassment:** Harassment can be defined as behavior that is persistent and is intended to disturb and upset. While living abroad, you may experience harassment when you least expect it. It could occur while walking down a street and may cause you to feel unsafe. If you find yourself in a situation like this, find a safe location like a restaurant, shop, or other populated location. Your number one priority is your safety and well-being, so do whatever you need to do to get out of the situation. Use your best judgment when going out and surround yourself with individuals that you trust to hopefully avoid any harassment.

- **Buddy system:** We strongly encourage you to use a buddy system when going out, particularly at night and particularly if alcohol is going to be involved. Go out with someone who knows your limits and will be willing to intervene if you need them to.
- **Bystander intervention:** If someone from your cohort or one of your friends appears to be in an uncomfortable situation, please intervene. Intervention does not have to be aggressive or cause a scene. You can simply insert yourself into a conversation or make an excuse as to why you and your classmate need to leave. Trust your gut. It is better to leave early than have a more serious and potentially life-changing situation occur.

**Emergency Protocol**

Whether it is a personal, regional, or national emergency, we want you to be prepared in the case of an emergency. While staying safe should always be your priority, IIE requires that you keep us updated on your status.

In all emergency situations where your academic schedule will be affected or travel will be involved, you need to let us know immediately by sending an email to your Boren advisor. We understand that there are certain emergencies, such as a death or severe illness in the family, or safety issues in your host country, where you may need to begin planning before you receive a response from us. In those cases, email as quickly as possible to inform us of the situation.

If an emergency occurs, please let us know right away by sending an email and include “Emergency” as part of your subject line. A member of the IIE staff will be able to respond to you and provide guidance on the next steps, even on weekends and holidays. Do not hesitate to reach out to us in case of an emergency as we are here to support you while overseas.

In some cases, IIE will email you regarding a situation in your host country and/or you may be required to confirm your safety via the International SOS membership app or online portal. This could include an event in your host city or a situation many miles away from you. Even if the situation does not affect you directly, **we expect a response from you within 24 hours.** We may reach out to your emergency contact at your host country to confirm your safety. If you are unresponsive, we may then reach out to your home emergency contact to confirm your safety.
Please make sure to follow any instructions you receive from the State Department through your STEP account and ISOS alerts.

In very rare occasions, IIE and NSEP may require Boren Scholars or Fellows to leave a host country due to safety or security issues. You are required to comply and follow the directions provided by IIE.

**After the Boren: Employment and Taxes**

**Federal Job Search Policy**

Once you return to the U.S. and you are eligible to begin your job search, we encourage you to review your *Post-Program Checklist*, with special attention to accessing and updating your NSEPnet account. NSEPnet is an online database which allows you to post your resume, search for federal jobs, and maintain your job search history log. You will be sent an email with your username and password once your information has been uploaded into the NSEPnet system. **You should not access the NSEPnet website while abroad.**

**Job Searching While Overseas - Do’s and Don’ts for Boren Awardees**

Please make sure that you read the Boren Academic Policies earlier on in this handbook. Boren Awards are intended to fund full time language and cultural study in their approved program. As a Boren Award recipient, we want to emphasize that you may not be employed, including unpaid internships, by the U.S. Federal Government or any foreign government while on Boren.

**What Not to Do While Overseas**

In the course of your job search you should **not** do the following:

- Do not Access NSEPnet or USAJobs while abroad.
- Do not apply for Federal Jobs while abroad.
- Do not contact any intelligence, military or government agencies. The only exception is contacting the U.S. Embassy in your host country.
- Do not apply for other funding while abroad. If you want to apply for programs after Boren, please send application materials or communications through a trusted home institution contact such as your study abroad advisor, or a family member.
- Do not discuss your future career plans with foreign nationals.
- Do not write to NSEP staff at their email addresses. Additionally, remember that all Boren or service requirement correspondence while abroad should be done through IIE.

**What You Can Do Overseas**

We recommend doing the following to prepare you to hit the ground running upon your return to the U.S.

- Begin working on a resume that will stand out! Use precise language and key words. Demonstrate work experience by describing the jobs you have had.
- Document all the places you live, volunteer, study or travel, including full address, as well as a point-of-contact to verify you have lived at this location. Should you need to complete a background investigation for a security clearance, the required paperwork will ask for this information.
• While abroad and upon your return to the U.S., be mindful of the content you post on personal blogs and/or social networking sites. Be sure to use the highest privacy settings for your accounts.
• Prior to departure, you want to make sure to alert any federal contacts about your overseas plans and ask them to refrain from contacting you while overseas.
• NETWORK! Be in touch with the U.S. Embassy. Meet other Americans working in the country and find out about their jobs. Make friends at your host university or internship sites.
• Make sure to get business cards from other professionals or Embassy staff that you meet. Write down where and when you met them, and a note about your conversation with them.
• If you do meet with U.S. Embassy staff or other professionals who take time to meet with you, make sure to send a thank you note.
• Use the Partnership for Public Service website (www.ourpublicservice.org) to narrow down the types of positions that would most interest you. The website has many great resources, including “The Best Places to Work” annual ranking for Federal Government positions.
• Search registries such as USAID’s Private Voluntary Organizations (PVO) database(www.pvo.net/usaid) to see if there have been U.S. funded projects in the country, and investigate the websites of such organizations to obtain their contact information and to learn more about whether positions may be available in the future.

Be sure to sign up for the Boren Federal Employment Seminar that occurs each September.

Taxes
Boren recipients may be subject to U.S. income taxes. As an awardee, you are responsible for checking your U.S. tax liability and should consult your local IRS representative with any questions pertaining to the financial provisions of the award. IIE does not provide 1099 forms. Therefore, you should maintain accurate records of funds received and how they are expended.

While IIE can’t answer any questions or provide guidance regarding tax liability, there are permanent IRS offices located in many American embassies. If there is not an IRS office at the U.S. embassy in your host country, you may inquire at the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate about IRS “tax expert tours.” These “tours” are when the IRS sends U.S. tax experts on assigned routes through many foreign countries each year from January to June.

Helpful Resources
The IRS issues many helpful publications pertaining to special circumstances and taxes. IRS Publication 970, http://www.irs.gov/publications/p970/, “Tax Benefits for Education,” addresses tax issues related to scholarships that can be helpful when you prepare your federal income tax forms. Publication 54 “Tax Guide for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad” and publication 463 “Travel, Entertainment and Gift Expenses” are also useful documents. To order these publications, call 800-829-3676.

To receive more information on grants and taxes, visit  https://www.irs.gov.