IUHPFL

Mérida Student Handbook

Summer 2016
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IUHPFL OFFICE CONTACT INFORMATION

While abroad this summer, you can reach the IUHPFL Office via e-mail or telephone:

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Managing Director  
ldishong@indiana.edu  
Skype: loni.dishong  
Office: 812-855-7957  
**Cell: 812-369-6333 (for emergencies only)**

**Amy Dowell**  
Program Coordinator  
dowella@indiana.edu  
Office: 812-856-2123

**Denise Humphries**  
Administrative Coordinator  
djhumphr@indiana.edu  
Office: 812-855-5241

**Cheryl Jeffers**  
Accounting Representative  
cjeffers@iu.edu  
Office: 812-856-0623

**General Office Email:** iuhpfl@iu.edu  
**IUHPFL Office Skype:** IUHPFL

The best form of communication with the IUHPFL Office is via e-mail to iuhpfl@iu.edu or by calling 812-855-5241. The team will do its best to return e-mails within 24 hours. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. EST.

During program dates, if there is a time-sensitive matter that needs immediate attention, it is best to contact Managing Director, Loni Dishong directly. Please only call her cell phone in cases of emergency or if that is the number she requests you call.

Please keep in mind that we are a small (but mighty!) staff and that your patience when communicating with us is much appreciated.
WELCOME!

We are pleased to welcome you to the IU Honors Program in Foreign Languages! In 2016, we will celebrate our 54th summer of providing language and culture immersion experiences to Indiana high school students! Thank you for joining us on this exciting journey!

You are now part of a legacy of over 7,500 past IUHPFL participants who currently range between 16 and 72 years of age, live all around the world, work in various professional fields, and, in some cases, have children and grandchildren who have participated in our programs!

The IUHPFL network of onsite coordinators and host families includes hundreds of people and stretches across 6 countries – Austria, Chile, China, France, Mexico, and Spain. In 2017, Japan will join this list, when we launch our Japanese immersion program in Osaka! This is a wonderful time to participate in IUHPFL, as we continue to build upon the expertise and dedication of our predecessors and look toward a future with unprecedented potential for international communication, collaboration, and friendship.

IUHPFL is both an individual and a collective experience. Each student is encouraged to set academic and personal goals and to consider the unique talents and insights that he or she brings to the team. Additionally, each team has a unique identity and vision and works toward accomplishing projects and objectives together. We are eager to see how this program and the friendships you create will enrich your life and we are confident that you, just by being who you are, will make your program site team even better!

We wish you safe and happy travels and will be here to encourage and support you along the way!

IUHPFL Office Team
Loni Dishong – Managing Director
Amy Dowell – Program Coordinator
Denise Humphries – Administrative Coordinator
Cheryl Jeffers – Accounting Representative
Priya Pierie – IUHPFL Alum and Intern
William Niezgodski – IUHPFL Alum and Intern
Dane Fetterer – IUHPFL Alum and Intern
IUHPFL — A UNIQUE STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM

IUHPFL has a long and prestigious history in the state of Indiana for providing high-quality language and culture immersion experiences that transform students’ lives and career paths.

Instructors, Host Families, Onsite Coordinators and our Office Team are working in unison to help every student achieve the following OUTCOMES:

• Greatly improved language proficiency
• Desire to continue studying the language and culture
• Ability to see commonalities between diverse people
• Self-confidence and independence
• Stronger interpersonal skills
• Strategies for problem solving
• Creative thinking and expression
• Clearer vision of their future studies and careers
• Positive relationships with peers, host families, and instructors
• Seeing themselves as global citizens

The 3 Pillars of IUHPFL

We believe that 3 key components, or pillars, make IUHPFL effective:

• Language Commitment
• Academic Excellence
• Host Family Experience

Each one will be discussed more in-depth throughout this handbook.

The 8 Core Values of IUHPFL

IUHPFL wants every participant to have a wonderful, memorable, and transformative experience while abroad. These 8 Core Values express the spirit of IUHPFL, including its Office Team, Instructors, Onsite Coordinators and Host Families.

• Appreciation: Acknowledging the qualities and kind acts of others
• Diligence: Focusing with enthusiasm on academic and personal goals
• Discovery: Being open to new ways of looking at the world and oneself
• Empathy: Choosing words and actions that express compassion and create connection
• Encouragement: Helping others to reach their goals and see their unique talents
• **Honor**: Acting with integrity and adhering to the IUHPFL Honor Code
• **Respect**: Treating others with dignity at all times
• **Unity**: Fostering team spirit and trust

**THIS STUDENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK**

This handbook is designed with students and guardians in mind and provides answers to common questions and concerns that you will have at some during the IUHPFL experience. As part of the IUHPFL Honor Code, it is required that all students read this handbook completely. It is strongly encouraged that guardians also read it in order to have a complete vision of the program’s structure and expectations and to help students meet pre-departure requirements.

Students should take this handbook with them abroad and consult it when necessary. It is the only item in English they are allowed to take with them abroad.

The first section of this handbook contains general information for all IUHPFL students and their guardians. The second section will provide site-specific information.

An electronic copy of this handbook and all other program information can be found at our website: IUHonorsProgram.org.

Note: Parts of this handbook were adapted from the ‘Getting Started’ guide offered by Indiana University’s Office of Overseas Study to university students going abroad. Consequently, many of the links made available are associated with the Office of Overseas Study at Indiana University.

**STUDENT/GUARDIAN ORIENTATION**

Orientation for all participating students and their guardians is held in the Whittenberger Auditorium inside the Indiana Memorial Union (IMU), (900 E. Seventh St., Bloomington, IN 47405) on the IU Bloomington campus. Check-in begins at 9 am, and the event ends at 4 pm EST.

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Orientation is considered to be the first official day of the program, and its purpose is to acquaint students and guardians with:

- Program procedures, policies, and expectations
- Instructors
- Fellow students
- The host culture and its norms

Orientation is extremely important for a student’s acclimation into the program and is therefore mandatory for every student and at least one of his or her guardians. Both general and site-specific sessions will be offered, and students and parents typically feel well informed and ready for their IUHPFL experience afterwards. Most importantly, this is the student’s only chance to meet peers and instructors face-to-face before Departure Day. Teambuilding is an integral part of IUHPFL, and the sooner a student can get to know his or her teammates, the better!

Occasionally a student will have to attend the opposite Orientation for reasons beyond his or her control. In these cases, students should begin to email their instructor team immediately after Orientation and join the team’s Facebook page to be kept informed and to begin to meet his or her teammates. The links to each team’s Facebook page will be provided on our website.

During check-in at Orientation, students receive a name tag to wear during Orientation, as well as on Departure Day and the first days at the program site to help instructors learn names quickly. Students also receive their IUHPFL t-shirt, which they will wear on Departure Day, during excursions, and on Return Day; alums typically keep and wear their t-shirts for years following their IUHPFL summer abroad!

**IUHPFL Course Materials Distributed at Orientation**

Also during check-in at Orientation, students receive the materials pertaining to the courses they will take abroad: Grammar, Culture, Literature, and Phonetics/Linguistics. They might also receive additional information from their instructors about Afternoon Activities (Choir, Dance, Theater, Sports) and excursions, depending on how their instructor team prefers to share this information with students. **For this reason, it is a very good idea to bring a backpack to Orientation!**
PRE-DEPARTURE—GETTING PREPARED

Pre-Departure Checklist

Please be sure to consult the IUHPFL Program Schedule & Checklist, available on our website and sent to you via email, so you are aware of program deadlines and your responsibilities before departure.

Pre-departure considerations include but are not limited to:

- Completing and submitting all Acceptance Materials
- Having doctors and other health professionals complete and sign the Statement of Medical History
- Submitting all Program Fees to IU Accounts Receivable by the May deadline
- Submitting final payment for Airfare to Travel Leaders by the April deadline
- Ensuring that passports (all students) and tourist visas (China only) are acquired before departure and emailing the Office a copy
- Watching your email for program updates and information
- Obtaining a bank debit card and a credit card, both with a security chip
- Informing your bank of the dates of your trip abroad
- Following flight information online to be aware of any changes
- Getting to know your host family via email, social media, and Skype, if possible
- Obtaining $50-$100 worth of the host country’s currency before departure
- Discussing an appropriate travel budget with your guardians
  - All meals are provided, although students should be prepared to purchase 3-4 meals on their own.
  - There will be a few optional excursions for no more than an equivalent of $20 each (going to a movie, bowling, etc.)
  - As a general guideline planning for an equivalent of $50-$100 per week for spending money is a good idea. You might not even spend $50 during one week, but the next you might spend more than $100 while shopping on excursion, etc.
- Journaling about what you want to accomplish academically and personally during your time abroad. Setting and working toward goals is part of the IUHPFL experience.
- Discussing with your guardians how you will deal with limited communication and adhere to the Language Commitment and Honor Code
- Informing your friends and family about your IUHPFL experience, so they are aware of the commitment you have made to IUHPFL and can be supportive of your goals
• Planning what to pack – pack smart and LIGHT!
• Learning more about the host city and host country so you know what to expect and are ready to embrace the culture
• Immersing yourself in your language. Practice, practice, practice!

PASSPORTS AND TOURIST VISAS
Students cannot travel abroad without a passport; students and guardians are encouraged to doublecheck that their passport is in their backpack before leaving for the airport. Do not pack passports inside luggage, as you will show it frequently to officials at the airport.

Students participating in the Hangzhou Program will also need a China Tourist Visa, which is an adhesive ticket that is placed inside the passport by a visa processing company. IUHPFL currently works with CIBT Passport and Visa Expediting Services. Once the passport has been obtained, students must follow the instructions provided to them by the IUHPFL Office and send their passports to CIBT for their China Tourist Visas. Students should allow 3 to 4 weeks for visa processing in order to avoid high fees. One cannot participate in the IUHPFL Hangzhou Program without a China Tourist Visa.

Upon arrival to the host country, all passports will be collected by the instructors and stored safely until return to the US in July. For this reason, it is important that students keep one or two copies of their passports in their luggage. In rare cases when a student might need his or her actual passport while abroad, instructors will be able to provide it easily.

**Note:** It is also important for guardians to keep a copy of the student’s passports at home in the US during the program, as well as copies of any other identification, debit cards, credit cards, etc. that the student might have taken abroad.

Luggage Requirements
**Students are encouraged to visit the airline’s website for more information about the requirements for weight and dimensions of luggage.**

As many of us know, international travel can be hurried, stressful, and often cumbersome, especially if we are hauling too much luggage with us. Although we want students to be prepared with the necessities, we strongly encourage them to pack as light as possible in order to ensure they can move quickly with the group and not be too exhausted during the process. Furthermore, hauling heavy luggage
can result in missing trains and subways and can even cause bodily injury when students are hurrying to make flight connections and so forth.

Here are some tips for packing, selecting luggage, and traveling:

- Pack LIGHT! You’ll thank yourself later – promise!
- We recommend no more than two luggage items, including a backpack.
- Large suitcases are strongly discouraged.
- Be sure your luggage is VERY STURDY and has good wheels.
- Don’t take anything that might be considered dangerous by airport security.
- See the airline’s website for packing advice and restrictions.
- Check off each item as you pack it to ensure you don’t forget it.
- Remember to pack your passport in your backpack, along with one or two copies in your luggage.
- Pack your school photo ID, which will be useful for getting discounts into museums.
- Pack travel sized items; larger quantities will not be allowed by airport security, and you can buy more of every kind of toiletry, cosmetic, etc. in the host country.
- Consider packing or buying while abroad a large canvas bag for gifts and other purchases you will bring back with you to the US.
- Check weight requirements for larger suitcases, so you don’t have to pay to check yours in at the airport; this can be very expensive.
- Keep the items you will need for immediate and frequent access in your backpack, including money, debit and credit cards, passport, and other ID.
- Also pack a few healthy snacks for the flight, such as granola bars or carrots.
- You will need to guard your backpack while traveling, so we recommend keeping it light enough to wear comfortably at all times.
- Wear comfortable shoes and clothing while traveling; sometimes it’s necessary to hustle in order to keep up with the group.

Students are responsible to pay for any expenses related to luggage, including overweight or additional luggage. Students will be responsible for transporting their own luggage while abroad.

In the event that students’ luggage is delayed in arriving abroad, the student should always keep the baggage claim tickets in their backpacks. In case of lost luggage, it is recommended that students pack a few clothing items in their carry-on bags.
General List of What to Pack: Clothing and Incidentals

Students don’t need to take a lot of clothing with them abroad! You will have access to laundry facilities on a regular basis. During Orientation, instructors will provide information on local climate, and they will go over specific items you should pack pertaining to your program site. **Also be sure to see the site-specific section at the end of this handbook for a detailed packing list provided by your instructor team that complements the general list of items below.**

**ALL STUDENTS should remember to pack:**
- Passport and copies
- Student ID for museums, etc.
- Any vitamins or medications that you need or have been prescribed
- Alarm clock
- Digital camera, additional memory card, batteries or charger and appropriate adapter/converter for your host country
- Water bottle
- Backpack
- A hat and sunglasses for hiking and outdoor activities
- Easy-care, wrinkle-free clothing
- Comfortable shoes; one sporty pair and one dressy pair
- Slippers to wear in the host family home; going barefoot is not common in many cultures
- A journal and/or sketchpad for recording memories and personal insights during the program
- Writing utensils and 5 two-pocket folders for their classes and other paperwork

**Recommended Reading before Departure**

For comprehensive information on the study abroad experience, the following book is recommended:


This book is aimed specifically at students who want to make the most of their study abroad experience. Its user-friendly design will help identify and implement a wide variety of language and culture learning strategies. It begins with three inventories designed to help you become more aware of how students currently learn language
and culture. The book contains many helpful tools and creative activities to enhance a student's developed learning strategies and try out new ones. It is recommended that students use this guide as they prepare for departure, as well as after they return, when Reverse Culture Shock can have an impact.

DEPARTURE DAY

During Orientation, instructor teams will give students and guardians specific information pertaining to departure plans. Students will also be given the link to the team’s Facebook page, where students and instructors will communicate prior to and even during Departure Day.

Students and guardians should check online regularly for updates pertaining to the team’s group flight. A simple search of the airline and flight number will provide this information.

Travel to Program Site

It is important to check online for the most up-to-date flight information before departure. Students should also check the team’s Facebook page regularly for updates from their instructors and teammates.

Students are responsible for the cost of travel between the US airport of departure and the host country on the required group flight through Travel Leaders. Students are also responsible for financing their own transportation to and from the airport in the US.

Arrive at the airport early, allowing approximately 3 hours for check-in and security procedures. Instructor teams will inform students and guardians of the expected arrival time at the US international airport.

Communication on Departure Day

Departure day is hectic for students, guardians and instructors alike, therefore general questions and concerns related to the program should be addressed to the Office or instructor team prior to Departure Day. Please prepare in advance so that when the day arrives everyone can focus on departure and make it as stress-free as possible.
In some cases IUHPFL Instructors may be on the same domestic non-group flight as students. However, they will not assume chaperone responsibilities until check-in at the terminal for the group flight.

At least two instructors will fly with the students on the group flight to the host country, and one or two will return to the US with the students at the end of the program. Instructors arrive at the international airport on Departure Day with the list of students, which includes guardian names and cell phone numbers. Students and guardians will also know how to reach instructors on that day, in case there are delays in arriving at the airport. It is critical that students and guardians take every precaution to ensure prompt arrival at the international airport, as the team will not be able to wait for late students.

Note: Due to recent international events, airport security is at an all-time high, which is resulting in long lines and wait times for checking in luggage and going through security check-points. If you student is flying to the international airport, please be sure that he or she will have enough time to claim his or her luggage and arrive at the international terminal to meet up with his or her team.

In the event that connecting flights are delayed or canceled, students and guardians should be prepared to call their instructors immediately to inform them. The instructors will alert Travel Leaders and the IUHPFL Office in an attempt to find alternative ways to transport the student to Chicago or Indianapolis and meet up with the team for departure.

Arrival to Host Country and Program Site

Once students arrive at the international airport abroad, they can expect a bus ride to the program site, ranging anywhere from 30 minutes to six hours. Students will have opportunities to use the restroom and purchase snacks along the way.

When the team arrives in the host country, one of the instructors will eventually contact the IUHPFL Office. Depending on the time of day, the Office will notify guardians via email as soon as possible. Please keep in mind that instructors might not be able to inform the Office right away due to Internet connectivity issues or being busy with helping students with their luggage, finding the bus that will take the team to the program site, etc. In some cases, instructors might not be able to contact the Office until they have arrived at the program site, so we ask for patience and understanding from guardians.
FIRST DAYS OF THE PROGRAM
During the first several days of the program, students will be adjusting to a completely new setting: new people, new foods, new sounds, new architecture, new customs, and so forth. Even though they have been studying the target language for some time, many aspects of the language will be new as well, including nuances of the local dialect and the speed at which people speak. It is very important for students to care for themselves in these early stages of the program by getting plenty of rest, eating well, and staying hydrated. It’s also essential to have a good sense of humor and not take things too seriously during this time and throughout the program. Being patient with yourself and focusing on what you are learning, rather than what you don’t know, is the best way to maintain a healthy attitude and get the most out of your IUHPFL experience.

Among the adjustments and challenges students will face during the first days and throughout the program are:

- Trying to communicate solely in the target language
- Meeting and getting to know host families. The Host Family Experience is discussed later in this handbook.
- Getting over jetlag
- Settling into a new living space
- Learning one’s way around the host city
- Building friendships with teammates
- Becoming acquainted with one’s instructors and understanding program expectations
- Adjusting to new foods, schedules, and customs
- Acclimating to an advanced level of coursework in the target language
- Missing friends and family back home and feeling out-of-touch
- Beginning to discover the breadth of one’s own strengths, qualities and interests

Because of these adjustments and challenges, emotions can run high for some students. Others adjust quite quickly. Each person’s journey is unique, and each person will have challenges somewhere along the way, regardless of how advanced they might be in the target language.

Guardians can best support their students by understanding that this transformation is happening and that it takes time to adjust. The best way to support students during this time is to encourage them, remind them of their goals, and give them the space necessary to settle into their surroundings.
**Student Phone Call to the US**

Students are permitted to call their family once during the program, and that call happens typically between Days 3 and 7 of the program. Each instructor team will have a plan or instructions for this phone call, as protocol varies from site to site. Before Departure Day, students and guardians are advised to discuss a day and time for the call, keeping in mind students’ class and activity schedule and guardians’ work schedules. The call should last no more than 5-10 minutes, because international calls are expensive. Plus, longer calls can exacerbate homesickness at a time when students are already experiencing jetlag and acclimating to a completely new environment.

If for some reason guardians miss the call, the student can call back at a later time. If a student’s parents are divorced or live separately, it is acceptable for the student to make a 5 minute call to each parent.

As mentioned, students can be tired and experiencing a range of emotions during the first days of the program. Therefore, if the student seems distressed during their phone call home, guardians are encouraged not to worry and to remember that they are always welcome to call the IUHPFL Office for updates on their student’s adjustment and well-being.

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**THE STUDENT’S PROGRAM EXPERIENCE**

**Typical Weekday and Weekend Schedules and Expectations**

During a typical weekday, students will attend their academic classes in the morning, which begin between 8:30 and 9:30 am, depending on the host culture. At some program sites, host families pack lunches for students; at others, students eat lunch in school cafeterias or other community venues; at others still, students go home to their host families and have lunch with them. After lunch, students might have additional classwork, depending on what time classes begin. All program sites will have Afternoon Activities, which can include sports and games, dance, choir, theater and art classes.

Students often have time later in the afternoon or early evening to explore their communities with their peers and/or their host family members. Whenever students are out and about together, they are always to be in groups of at least three, as per the Honor Code. Students are to discuss with their host families what time they should arrive home every afternoon and respect the requests and norms of their families.
Weeknights and weekends are reserved for host families, and students are expected to follow their families’ schedules, plans, and requests. Host families often make special plans for their students during these times and put a lot of time and effort into cooking with them, introducing them to family members and friends, and showing them around their cities.

**Note:** As mentioned in the section of this handbook, The Host Family Experience, students may travel with their host families within the host country, as long as they have permission from their instructors and their travel plans do not conflict with the Program Site Calendar and scheduled classes, excursions, and other activities. **Students may NOT travel outside the host country with their host families.**

**Transportation at the Program Site**

A student’s mode of transportation to and from school will depend on the program site. Students may walk or use public transportation, since host families can live in the city or outside the city limits. Public transportation is common abroad and typically very safe; students may be expected to use public transportation as their primary means of commuting to and from the school or classroom facility. A student’s commute could last anywhere from ten minutes to an hour. Students may be required to change buses or trains one or two times. Host families, instructors and Onsite Coordinators will work with students to ensure they travel safely to and from school and that they are confident with transportation options and routes. Students are provided with bus and metro passes within the host city, as needed.

**Note:** As per the Honor Code, students may not operate a motorized vehicle abroad nor be a passenger on a motorcycle. They can be a passenger in a car if the driver is a licensed host family member, Onsite Coordinator, or program instructor.

More information about onsite transportation will be provided by instructors at Orientation.

**Classes and Homework**

IUHPFL is an intensive immersion study program. In addition to living with host families and speaking the target language 100% of the time, students attend weekday classes that address 5 subject areas: Grammar, Culture, Literature, Linguistics/Phonetics, and Communication. Class attendance is mandatory. Students should
expect daily homework in all classes and several assessments throughout the duration of the program.

Students and their classmates will be divided into two or three smaller groups for each of the morning classes. Small class size allows students to hone their speaking skills and receive more individualized attention from instructors. Students are encouraged to be active in their classes and to complete all homework with care. Homework assignments will prompt students to engage with their host families and communities and should not require more than one hour per night to complete.

Afternoon Activities
As mentioned, all students participate in Afternoon Activities, such as sports, games, dance, choir, theater and art classes, all of which are typically related to local culture. Students are given options for the kinds of activities they wish to do as much as possible.

Farewell Show
At each program site, students present a Farewell Show, a stage performance for their host families, Onsite Coordinators, community friends, partner organizations, and sometimes city officials, before departing from the host city. This show involves musical numbers, skits, dance routines, and sometimes comedy or magic acts, depending on the desires and talents of the students on the team. The show is always funny, entertaining and much appreciated by everyone who attends. Students will spend a portion of their Afternoon Activity time creating and rehearsing their Farewell Show.

Individualized Sports or Music Practice
IUHPFL attracts students with solid academic performance, good character, and often impressive athletic or musical talent. It is common for students to request time during the program to practice an instrument or train for a sport, and these arrangements can certainly be made. Students should communicate their needs to the Office before or shortly after Orientation, so that their requests can be communicated to Onsite Coordinators and Host Families.

Community Engagement Activities
When the Viña del Mar, Chile program was established in 2014, Community Engagement activities were included in the program site calendar from the start. Students in that program work with the Mapuche indigenous community as well as other local organizations that focus on the environment, youth issues, and more. In 2015, the
Mérida, Mexico program provided opportunities for students to engage with a community of Maya. Proudly, more program sites will offer Community Engagement to their students in 2016, with a goal of all sites participating by 2017.

Many larger high schools throughout Indiana offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma to their students, which is recognized by universities around the globe. The criteria for the IB include volunteerism, and for this reason students often choose Spring Break and summer programs that focus on community service. IUHPFL prefers the term, “Community Engagement,” because it stresses the mutual respect and benefit that are inherent in these activities between our students and the locals with whom they interact.

Examples of Community Engagement at IUHPFL program sites can include:
- Community gardening
- Visiting senior citizen residences
- Working with young children
- Cleaning up neighborhoods and beaches
- Doing art projects or playing sports with local teens
- And so forth...

Returning instructors and Onsite Coordinators suggest ideas and specific organizations for these activities to the Managing Director. Students are always accompanied by instructors and oftentimes the Onsite Coordinator during these activities, and host families are invited, if an activity is approved and planned during a weekend.

Typically, no more than 2 days or 4 afternoons are dedicated to Community Engagement activities, although students have been known to enjoy them immensely and request more time.

**Support and Success Groups**
Students are divided as equally as possible into groups, one for each instructor, and meet at least once per week in order to set personal goals, address questions and concerns, talk about their host families and experiences, and celebrate their achievements together. Support and Success Groups add yet another network of support and encouragement for students, as the small setting allows them to comfortably share their thoughts, ideas and emotions. Additionally, they fine-tune their conversation skills!
In order for Support and Success Groups to be beneficial for every student, an atmosphere of caring, non-judgement and confidentiality must exist. Once this happens, students are willing to open up about themselves and listen attentively to their peers. Although sharing with others on a personal level, especially in another language, can be intimidating at first, students find that they value these sessions as one of the most beneficial aspects of the IUHPFL model.

Specific objectives of Support & Success Groups include helping students to:

- Adapt to their new environment
- Handle possible miscommunication/issues with the host family
- Manage time and course requirements
- Deal with difficult aspects of the Honor Code
- Set academic and personal goals
- Develop strategies to meet goals and get the most out of their time abroad
- Celebrate their successes with their peers

**Individual Student Meetings**

Many students benefit from a private meeting with their Support and Success Group leader to share personal concerns, asks questions and seek advice and guidance. Individual meetings with students can replace the usual group meeting during a given week, if instructors decide one-to-one time with students is needed or beneficial.

A student can also request to have an individual meeting with an instructor. However, one instructor is not allowed to meet with one student in a private or secluded setting. Either two instructors must be present to talk with the student or one instructor may talk with the student within eyesight yet out of earshot of other adults.

**Excursions – Planned and Optional**

Students at every site enjoy overnight and day excursions of historical and cultural significance. Instructors accompany students on every excursion and teach relevant facts about historical sites beforehand.

**Planned Excursions** are organized primarily by the Onsite Coordinators with input from the Managing Director and program site instructors. They typically involve travel to other cities, possible overnight stays, and are included in the Program Fees. Whereas Onsite Coordinators sometimes accompany the team on Planned
Excursions, host family members are not permitted to participate, because these trips are intended as bonding experiences for the team.

**Optional Excursions** are often decided a few days in advance and are not part of the Program Calendar nor are they paid with Program Fees. Students can decide whether or not they wish to participate, and the cost is less than an equivalent of $20 USD. Examples can include going to the movies, getting ice cream, bowling, and much more. Onsite Coordinators and host family members can attend at the discretion of the instructor team. These experiences allow students to learn more about their communities.

**Program Site Magazines**
Students at each program site work with their instructors to create and compile photos, drawings, stories, poems, letters and other memorabilia, which are then printed and bound into a magazine and presented to Onsite Coordinators and Host Families before students’ return to the US. After the program, more copies of the magazine are printed by the IUHPFL Office and mailed to students as part of their Final Student Evaluation packets. Printed copies are also sent to the program site’s instructors, and one copy is kept in the Office.

**SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR STUDENTS**
It is common for students to experience a transition period abroad when they feel uncomfortable and vulnerable. Having to speak a different language, not having their guardians and friends, living and sleeping in a different home, not having their cell phones and daily access to social media... all of this can feel strange and unsettling. This is called Culture Shock. Dealing with Culture Shock requires flexibility, adaptability and a sense of humor!

It is important for students to remember that their feelings are typical and to be expected. Every student experiences Culture Shock to a certain extent, which is why IUHPFL has strong and extensive support systems in place to help students adjust and have a successful IUHPFL experience.

Support systems for students include (in no particular order):
- Teammates (fellow students)
- Instructors
- Support and Success Groups
- Host Families
- Onsite Coordinators
- IUHPFL Office Team
It is important to note that the students’ US friends and family are not mentioned as a support system, because students have such limited communication with them, per the Honor Code, and because students need to learn to rely on those around them and engage with their surroundings in order to have a fulfilling immersion experience. Additionally, friends and family back home might not have the perspective and cultural experience needed to help with problems or difficulties onsite. IUHPFL does not ask students to withhold information from their US friends and family; it merely recommends that students reach out first to their onsite support systems in order to resolve matters quickly and to avoid excessive worry and stress for all parties.

IUHPFL recognizes that it might be challenging for students not to reach out to friends and family at home when they are struggling to adjust or dealing with difficult situations abroad, however, in order for students to become more independent and accountable for their own success, they must learn to rely on the onsite support systems that have been put in place for them. IUHPFL highly encourages students to be proactive in forming close bonds with fellow students, instructors, and host family members, a process which can start even before departure.

IUHPFL asks students and guardians to trust the well-developed systems and processes that have proven to be highly effective and beneficial for students since the program’s inception in 1962.

GUARDIAN ROLES AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

The role of guardians before, during and after the program dates is essential. Here are just a few ways that guardians can help students be successful:

- Be aware of program deadlines and expectations and help students meet them
- Research the host city and country with students
- Become acquainted with the host family before departure
- Plan with students what to pack
- Talk with students about their feelings and goals before departure
- Encourage students to adhere to the Honor Code, particularly the Language Commitment
- Prepare students for Reverse Culture Shock upon their return to the US and learn ways you can help them reacclimate to US culture
It is also recommended that guardians consider the frequency and content of their online messages to students. Sending one update per week is suggested rather than several messages that will take time to read and reply to. Keeping messages positive and upbeat is also very helpful. Oftentimes, what students need to hear most from their guardians, friends, and loved ones back home are words like, “You can do this,” “You’ll have a wonderful time,” “We know you’ll turn this challenge into an opportunity,” and “We believe in you.”

**Support for Guardians during the Program**

It can be very difficult for guardians to “let go” of their students for 5 to 6 weeks, especially when they are in another country and communication between students and their family and friends in the US is strictly limited. IUHPFL asks guardians that they, too, trust the support systems IUHPFL has in place for students.

Resources for Guardians include:
- The Program Site Blog
- Fellow Guardians
- The IUHPFL Office Team

**Program Site Blog**

The instructor who acts as Public Relations Coordinator will create a blog for the program site before Orientation. This blog is specifically for guardians and will be updated on a weekly basis with photos and descriptions of activities.

**Fellow Guardians** are another source of support during the program. Exchanging e-mail addresses and phone numbers with one another at Orientation is a good idea so you can share stories, ideas and resources with one another.

**IUHPFL Office Team**

If guardians need more support than the blogs and other IUHPFL families can provide, they are encouraged to contact the Office. Our team is always happy to help and can usually offer helpful advice and ideas.

**PROGRAM INSTRUCTORS**

IUHPFL Instructors are highly-qualified educators, who specialize in their respective languages and have diverse professional backgrounds and skills. They are native or near-native speakers of the languages they teach, have traveled extensively, and in most cases have lived
abroad. Additionally, they enjoy working with youth and are able to wear many hats during the program: teacher, mentor, coach, advocate, facilitator, and tour guide, to name a few. Their top priority during the program is each student’s well-being, safety, happiness, and success.

**Note:** Each program site has a team of two, three, or four instructors, depending on the number of students. IUHPFL strives for a 7-9:1 student-instructor ratio at all sites.

Students will become acquainted with their instructors at Orientation. Throughout the program, instructors are the ones who will spend the greatest amount of time with the students, helping them and guiding them at every step. Since most instructors have spent extended amounts of time in countries other than their own, they fully understand the immersion experience and can relate to the stages and challenges of adjusting to a new culture. Students should never hesitate to talk to them about any concerns they might have.

**IUHPFL Instructors must meet the following criteria:**
- Teach the target language as an Assistant Instructor (AI) or Lecturer at IU Bloomington or as a Teacher at an Indiana high school
- Pass the Indiana University Background Check
- Demonstrate excellent knowledge of pedagogy and content area
- Apply outstanding classroom management and student engagement techniques
- Be a native or near-native speaker of the target language
- Have familiarity with the host culture
- Complete 3 all-day IUHPFL Instructor Training sessions
- Work within their instructor teams to develop course materials and plan the team’s vision, schedule, and activities
- Enjoy working with and teaching youth

**Note:** At least one instructor at each program site must be CPR and First Aid certified, and copies of their certification cards are kept by the IUHPFL Office. A fully stocked first aid kit is accessible to instructors at all times at every program site.

**Coordinator Roles of Instructors**

Instructors must work closely together to teach students, facilitate Afternoon Activities, lead excursions, and administer the program onsite. The four administrative roles the instructors fulfill are: Student Coordinator, Finance Coordinator, Logistics Coordinator, and
Public Relations Coordinator. Although these roles encompass various responsibilities, a general description of each is as follows.

**Student Coordinator**
The instructor acting as Student Coordinator is primarily responsible for handling matters pertaining to student well-being and host family situations in collaboration with the Onsite Coordinator.

**Finance Coordinator**
The Finance Coordinator implements the program site budget and oversees and tracks all onsite purchases and expenditures during the program.

**Logistics Coordinator**
This instructor ensures that the Program Calendar and excursion plan are carried out and that all necessary arrangements are made and confirmed to allow the team to travel and tour safely during the program.

**Public Relations Coordinator**
The role of this instructor is also multi-faceted, but primary responsibilities include: documenting the team’s activities through photos and videos; creating and maintaining the Program Site Blog and Facebook Page; arranging for team visits with city officials and inviting local media to attend; and sending newspaper articles, videos, etc. to the Office for posting on the IUHPFL website.

**ONSITE COORDINATORS**
Onsite Coordinators (OSCs) play a vital role in the success of each program site. They are individuals who live in the host city year-round and who are contracted with IUHPFL from January through August. Most of the OSCs have worked with IUHPFL for several years and in some cases decades. All of them are dedicated and caring people, who do a tremendous amount of work on behalf of our students and instructors.

The primary responsibilities of the Onsite Coordinators involve:
- Finding, vetting, and training qualified host families
- Training students and instructors in onsite emergency procedures
- Arranging for transportation and accommodations within the host city and while on excursions
- Organizing special events with the team, such as meetings with city officials
- Being present every day to answer questions and lend support to the team during the program
- Facilitating any necessary host family changes

**THE HOST FAMILY EXPERIENCE**

A student’s host family contributes greatly to both linguistic progress as well as cultural assimilation. Students should spend as much time with their host family as their schedule allows and endeavor to form friendships with them that could last a lifetime. Students are also encouraged to show gratitude and appreciation daily for being welcome in their home.

Students need to be aware that gratitude takes different forms in other countries; in some cultures, it may be more appropriate to give small tokens of appreciation (flowers or chocolates), while in other cultures, words and verbal communication are more appropriate. It may prove particularly challenging for IUHPFL students who are more introverted to express their appreciation verbally; such students should try to step out of their comfort zones and express appreciation to their host families to the best of their ability; doing so will make their experience and relationships better and more enjoyable in the longrun.

**How Host Families are Selected and Matched with Students**

All host families are carefully vetted by the IUHPFL Onsite Coordinator (OSC), including interviews and personal visits to each home. IUHPFL strives to find suitable host families who wish to invite a US student into their home as a member of the family.

Host families receive a stipend for food and utility costs incurred while hosting the students, but the motivation for being a host family should never be monetary. If a family does not show genuine care and concern for their student/s, then the student/s need to inform their instructors right away.

Through the OSC, host families receive general information about IUHPFL, including the Honor Code, Strategies for Hosting Language Learners, and the IUHPFL Property and Liability Policy. They also receive their student’s Personal Information Form and sign a Host Family Agreement, which outlines their responsibilities as an IUHPFL host family.
The Personal Information Form (PIF), which is submitted to the IUHPFL Office as a part of the Acceptance Materials, lists the student’s food, smoke and pet preferences, hobbies and other interests, as well as any medications the student is taking. The PIF is the primary tool the OSC and office team use to match a student with a host family. Students’ needs, allergies, and interests are always taken into account, however students and guardians should understand that the program cannot meet all requests.

Students’ Statement of Medical History, also part of the Acceptance Materials, provides valuable, sometimes lifesaving information about the student. It is safeguarded onsite by the instructor team and is only shared with a host family on a need-to-know basis.

**Getting to Know Your Host Family**

Ideally, all students will have started corresponding with their host families before traveling abroad. In many cases, students will not hear from their host family until right before departure. Students will receive their host family placement via e-mail from the IUHPFL Office by late April or the beginning part of May, depending on the program site. Sometimes matches are finalized even a bit later in May; this is all a normal part of the matching process.

**Note:** It is very important for students and guardians NOT to share host families’ contact information with the public via social media, email or otherwise. This information is to be kept confidential and not given to even the friends or family members of the student.

**Tip:** It is appropriate to bring the host family a small gift upon arriving to their home, perhaps memorabilia from the student’s hometown or a product unique to Indiana. Additionally, it is appropriate to thank them periodically throughout the program with flowers or chocolates, as well as leave them a parting gift before returning to the US. Gift ideas and appropriate ways of expressing gratitude can discussed further with instructors at Orientation or onsite. Do not feel pressured to give expensive gifts; the sentiment behind the gift is truly of greater importance than the gift itself.

**Tip:** In addition to a small gift, the program suggests that each student prepare a "conversation piece" for the first few days after arrival; perhaps a lightweight album or scrapbook, containing photos, postcards and newspaper clippings of the student’s family, town or school. Be creative and ask your US friends and family to help you!
Becoming a Part of a Family Abroad

While being a part of the family implies feeling comfortable in the host family's home, it also implies participating in household activities and chores as any other member of the family would. Students are asked to make their best effort to communicate well with their host family and to be courteous and respectful during the stay at their home.

Upon arrival at the host family's home, the student's host family should discuss the rules of the house. In the off-chance a family does not discuss house rules, students should ask about the ground rules of the house to avoid potential misunderstandings. It is important to consider that the rules of the host family may differ greatly from those of the US family. Students should always ask permission for favors or privileges, including visits to the refrigerator or making local telephone calls, which can be quite expensive.

**Tip:** In order to facilitate communication onsite during the early stages of the program, it is recommended that students make a list of key words and phrases in the target language and practice them often before Departure Day. Household items, as well as phrases like, “I’m tired”, “Can you please repeat that?” “Thank you, I appreciate it”, etc. can be very helpful in easing initial conversation with the host family.

Students spend weekday evenings and the majority of their weekends with their host families. It is therefore important to cultivate a relationship with each member of the host family. Good relationships with the host family will take time, patience and a concerted effort to build, but the more care students put into developing good relationships with their host families, the more benefits they will reap!

**Students’ Minimum Expectations for Host Families**

Above all, students should remember that host families come in all shapes and sizes. Some host parents will be young, some older. Some might be single or widowed. Some families may live on the outskirts of town, or even in the countryside. In many families, both parents work outside the home. Although host families and the “perks” students might gain from their host family experience can vary greatly, students should expect the following minimum criteria from their hosts:

- Privacy while dressing and bathing
- Safety in the presence of all family members and guests in the home
• A separate bed or couch on which to sleep
• A private bedroom or sleeping space OR sharing a room with a family member of the same gender and approximately the same age
• Ample and nutritious meals and snacks
• Eating with family members as often as possible
• Feeling welcome and included; having companionship
• Cleanliness of the home within reasonable standards
• Treated with kindness, patience, and encouragement by all family members and guests in the home
• Respect for and adherence to the Honor Code by all members of the host family
• Accuracy provided by host family on the Host Family Information Form regarding the accommodations provided, family members living in the home, pets, smoking, etc.

If a student feels that these minimum expectations of his or her host family are not being met, he or she should speak with an instructor immediately. Instructors, particularly the one who is acting as the Student Coordinator, will then tactfully assess the situation and give any needed support to the student with assistance and guidance from the Onsite Coordinator.

Host Family Challenges
While most host family experiences are positive, some incompatibilities between a student and host family might arise. Students are asked to follow the protocol outlined below if they experience difficulties with their host family:

• Consider filling out and submitting to the instructor team a Host Family Inventory Form. This form will be available in hard copy to the student by the Instructor Team and is meant to guide the student’s thoughts regarding the issue(s) he/she may be having with his/her host family, what measures have already been taken to improve the situation and what course of action should be taken next.
• Discuss the issue with the host family. The host family will appreciate the student’s honesty and attempt to communicate openly with them.
• If talking with the host family directly does not resolve the issue, or if a student needs assistance with how to address the issue with the host family, these concerns should be raised with the instructor team; they are the student’s advocates during the
program and can be trusted to always have the student's best interest at heart. Students can seek the help of the instructor acting as Student Coordinator or any instructor with whom they feel comfortable. If necessary, an instructor or Onsite Coordinator can visit with the student and host family to help mediate the situation.

Note: Onsite Coordinators must be informed of any and all difficulties or issues between students and host families, since they are responsible for selecting the host families. They know the host families well and can be very valuable in helping to settle conflicts and misunderstandings.

A student who has difficulties with a host family, should communicate with their instructors before telling their US family and friends. Whereas instructors and Onsite Coordinators can help resolve host family situations, friends and family back home cannot. As much as possible, try to save your loved ones from excessive worry by waiting until a solution is underway before telling them about issues onsite. US families will receive weekly updates regarding the health and well-being of their students via the program site blog and during the students' one-hour-per-week Internet time, and serious matters will be addressed with US guardians immediately.

Note: In false or legitimate cases where a host family says that a student has done damage to their property or personal belongings, it is important for students and guardians to be aware of the IUHPFL Property and Liability Policy, which is provided as an appendix to this handbook. This protocol must be followed with guidance from the instructors and Onsite Coordinator.

IUHPFL Policy Regarding Host Family Changes

Host family changes happen rather infrequently, but they do happen and for a variety of reasons.

Should a student face difficulties with their host family, they are asked to follow the previously outlined protocol. If after talking with their host family directly and after seeking out the help (and possible mediation) of the instructor team and/or Onsite Coordinator, incompatibilities and miscommunications persist, then the option of changing host families can be explored. A host family change should happen only as a last resort, and ideally should be agreed upon by all parties (the student, instructors, Onsite Coordinator, and host family).
Grounds for host family changes can include (but are not limited to):

- Student’s physical health or well-being is in jeopardy
- Severe incompatibility of personalities (between student and host family)
- Severe incompatibility of personalities (between two IUHPFL roommates)
- Severe lack of communication between the student and family
- Host family’s lack of time to accommodate student (i.e., student spends most of his/her free time, meals, etc. alone)
- Host family’s failure to comply with the Host Family Agreement or adhere to the IUHPFL Honor Code
- Inappropriate behavior of host family members towards student or vice versa
- Host family providing inaccurate information regarding the accommodations, who is living in the home, smoking, etc. on the Host Family Information Form.

Note: Students and guardians should expect that students will take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks to feel fully comfortable in a host family home. Therefore, IUHPFL strongly encourages students to spend at least a week (i.e., enough time to follow the previously outlined protocol) with their host family before making the request to explore a host family change.

In the event that a permanent host family change is necessary, at least one instructor and the Onsite Coordinator will mediate the situation and help the student to move to a new family. Instructors will provide the Office with a completed Host Family Change Form, which will give the contact information of the new family, and the Office will forward this form to the US guardians as soon as possible, along with details of the situation.

Important Note: In very rare cases when a host family says that they no longer wish to accommodate a student, for any reason, the student will be moved to another family immediately and with help from the instructors and the Onsite Coordinator.

Occasionally, circumstances can arise for a host family that require the student be temporarily relocated to another home. For example, if an out-of-town relative of the host family passes away and the host family needs to travel to attend the funeral, arrangements will be made for the student to live with another IUHPFL student and host family during that time. In the event that any student is temporarily
relocated, IUHPFL instructors will inform all parties (the IUHPFL Office, the student's US family, etc.) of such arrangements.

**Making the Most of the Host Family Experience**

To make the most of any host family experience – positive or challenging - students should:

- Always be respectful
- Have a kind and helpful attitude
- Express appreciation to the host family
- Inquire about expectations and help with household chores
- Keep your space clean
- Have an open mind to assimilating to the new family’s way of life
- Be willing to try new foods and show when you enjoy what they serve you
- Be open to communicating daily with the host family
- Make their best effort to adapt
- Ask lots and lots of questions, both to clarify any information that is not clear and to show interest
- Be an outstanding representative of your school, family, and country!

**Remember:** The more effort you put into getting to know your host family and maintaining a positive attitude, the more you will get out of the Host Family Experience!

**GOAL SETTING AND TEAMBUILDING**

The IUHPFL experience is a journey that requires each student to set personal and academic goals for their time abroad. Regardless of a student’s language proficiency or international activities prior to the program, there are several other skill sets that the program will encourage students to finetune, and this can be challenging for even the most linguistically advanced and travel savvy student.

In addition to personal goals, each program site team will work together to set and reach collective goals. IUHPFL stresses that while students are ultimately responsible for the degree to which they will personally benefit from the program, they are each also responsible for supporting the growth and encouraging the success of their peers and their team.

IUHPFL encourages students to set S.M.A.R.T. Goals (Strategic, Measurable, Action-Oriented, Realistic, and Timebound). You can
find more information about this model online and in the IUHPFL Teambuilding Guide, which is available on our website.

Teambuilding is a core component of our program, and instructors will implement various activities during the Student/Guardian Orientation and throughout the program to enhance team cohesiveness.

Keeping in mind the 8 Core Values of IUHPFL is always a good idea, because they help individuals and teams be the best they can be:

- **Appreciation**: Acknowledging the qualities and kind acts of others
- **Diligence**: Focusing with enthusiasm on academic and personal goals
- **Discovery**: Being open to new ways of looking at the world and oneself
- **Empathy**: Choosing words and actions that express compassion and create connection
- **Encouragement**: Helping others to reach their goals and see their unique talents
- **Honor**: Acting with integrity and adhering to the IUHPFL Honor Code
- **Respect**: Treating others with dignity at all times
- **Unity**: Fostering team spirit and trust

**IUHPFL STUDENT MANAGEMENT**

In addition to having expertise in educating and mentoring youth, IUHPFL instructors genuinely enjoy spending time with students and encouraging them to reach their academic and personal goals. Program wide, instructors, Onsite Coordinators, and host families embrace an Authoritative Management Style that provides firm but kind guidance to the students, seeks their contributions, and honors their opinions and perspectives.
Authoritative vs. Authoritarian Management Style

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<td>o Clear &amp; Respectful Communication</td>
<td>o Communication can be Destructive</td>
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<td>o Seeks Input from Child in Rule Creation and Consequences</td>
<td>o Seeks No Input from Child: “My Way or the Highway”</td>
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<td>o Seeks Ideas and Gives Choices</td>
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will also meet with their instructors to discuss progress throughout
the duration of the program. Instructors are eager to encourage and
help students to succeed and give guidance that is constructive and
useful.

Assessment of Afternoon Activities and Community Engagement
These activities are designed to allow each and every student to
contribute and shine in their own unique way. Students are assessed
based on their attitude and willingness to participate to the best of
their ability; they do not receive letter grades for these activities.
Students are not expected to be athletically or musically inclined, for
example. The goal is for each student to find a way to participate that
they enjoy and that benefits the overall team experience.

Final Student Evaluation
Students receive their IUHPFL Final Student Evaluation by regular
mail in early fall, after they have completed the Student Exit Survey
online. This evaluation is also sent to the student’s language teacher.

The instructors complete this evaluation, which indicates the
student's performance in their coursework, as well as their attitude
and participation in Afternoon Activities, Community Engagement
Activities, and overall success in the program. The Final Student
Evaluation also allows instructors to comment on the students’
success in adhering to the Honor Code and to determine whether or
not the student has earned the IUHPFL Award of Excellence. The
student’s scores on the linguistic progress test administered at the
beginning and end of the program are also included.

Important Note: A student who has completed at least half of the
program before having to return early to the U.S. for any reason, will
receive their Final Student Evaluation. If a student leaves during the first
half of the program, he or she will not receive the Final Student
Evaluation.

IUHPFL Diploma
Students who participate to the best of their ability during the entire
program receive the IUHPFL Diploma along with their Final
Evaluation.

IUHPFL Award of Excellence
Students who meet the following criteria, earn IUHPFL Award of
Excellence:
• A **combined grade** of B+ or higher in all classes, taking into account attitude, effort and improvement
• Participating to the best of their ability and with a good attitude in Afternoon Activities and Community Engagement Activities
• Adhering to the IUHPFL Honor Code and receiving not a single Incident Report.

**Certificate of Participation**
Any student who participates to the best of his or her ability but must leave the program due to circumstances **beyond his or her control** will receive the Certificate of Participation.

**Note:** Students who are expelled from the program due to egregious or defiant behaviors, will not receive the IUHPFL Diploma, the Award of Excellence, or the Certificate of Participation.

**PROGRAM EVALUATIONS**
Students, instructors, and host families participate in various evaluations to help identify potential areas of student and program improvement.

**Evaluations Overview**
Each of the following evaluations is administered once, sometimes twice, during the program. In all cases, evaluators are asked to be fair, encouraging, and respectful in their evaluations of others.

• **Evaluations of Students by Instructors** provide instructors with an opportunity to praise students for their progress in goal setting and achievement, as well as to give constructive and helpful feedback on how to improve in specific areas.
• **Evaluations of Instructors by Students** provide students with a chance to comment on the courses, materials and specific methods and approaches to teaching the various subjects.
• **Students’ Self-Evaluations** offer students important opportunities to reflect upon their IUHPFL experience at different stages of the program and to assess their own progress in working toward personal and collective goals. They also allow them to identify their own strengths and areas for improvement on topics related to their academic progress, adherence to the Honor Code, participation in activities, and overall performance within the program.
• **Evaluation of Students by Host Families** allows host families to express praise and appreciation, as well as any concerns, for the students under their care.

• **Evaluation of Host Families by Students** allows students to discreetly communicate their likes, dislikes, questions and concerns about their Host Family Experience to their instructors.

• **The Host Family Survey** allows host families to comment on their overall impressions of the program, its staff, policies and procedures. Results of this survey are compiled and shared with the Onsite Coordinators by the IUHPFL Office.

• **The Student Exit Survey** is completed online by students after the program and allows them to evaluate all facets of their IUHPFL experience: instructors, courses, materials, excursions, host families, Student/Guardian Orientation, IUHPFL Office support, and so on. **Students must complete this survey before they can receive the IUHPFL Diploma, Award of Excellence (if applicable), program site magazine, and their Final Student Evaluation via mail.**

**LANGUAGE COMMITMENT & COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES**

Students have very limited communication with their US family and friends for the duration of the program and they must speak only in the target language 100% of their time abroad. While these rules and guidelines can seem difficult and sometimes challenging to follow, their purpose is to ensure success for the student. IUHPFL provides a unique, time-tested immersion experience that will significantly increase a student’s language proficiency, create lifelong friendships, and instill the skills and confidence to succeed in a complex global economy.

**Students and guardians are asked to remember the desired OUTCOMES of IUHPFL for each and every student participant:**

• Greatly improved language proficiency
• Desire to continue studying the language and culture
• Ability to see commonalities between diverse people
• Self-confidence and independence
• Stronger interpersonal skills
• Strategies for problem solving
• Creative thinking and expression
• Clearer vision of their future studies and careers
• Positive relationships with peers, host families, and instructors
• Seeing themselves as global citizens

In order for students to achieve these outcomes, it is essential to respect and follow all rules and guidelines and to adhere to the...
Language Commitment, which is one of the 3 Pillars of IUHPFL and part of the Honor Code, as well. You’ll be extremely proud of yourself after the program, because you’ll see the results!

**IUHPFL Language Commitment**

The Language Commitment is one of the 3 Pillars that make IUHPFL a unique and effective program for language learners and applies to each and every program participant, without exception. It is taken seriously by every instructor and Onsite Coordinator and stressed to all host parents. The student’s commitment to speak only the target language during the program, except in cases of emergency, is key to his or her success. This means that no music or books in English are allowed during the program, with the exception of this handbook, which students should take abroad for quick reference. See the IUHPFL Honor Code at the end of this handbook and on our website for more information about the Language Commitment.

**Phone Communication**

The Honor Code indicates that phone communication is limited to one 5 to 10 minute call to the student’s guardians within the first 3 to 7 days after their arrival at the program site. From that point on, calls to the US are to be made only in emergency situations and with permission from the instructor team.

**Internet Access**

Students are allowed to access the Internet for one hour per week from a computer onsite in order to communicate with friends and family in **written** English. No Skyping or speaking English is allowed. This hour can be taken in one 60-minute session or two 30-minute sessions; students will have a more successful assimilation process if they make contact with home just once or twice per week versus multiple times.

IUHPFL suggests that guardians respond to their students only once per week in order to encourage them to uphold the Language Commitment, to help curb homesickness, and to foster their student’s independence.

**Tip:** Students can make the most of their one-hour-per-week Internet time by posting to Facebook or a personal blog, rather than trying to send individual messages to each friend and family member.

**Note:** Please remember that not all host families may own a computer. Students may have to go to an Internet café to access the Internet. The
program instructors can provide suggestions for Internet access at cafés computer labs, etc. at each program site.

Encouragement for Guardians
Until just a few years ago, communication limited itself naturally, because the Internet, inexpensive overseas phone calls, blogs, Skype and Facebook were unavailable. Now, in our technology-saturated society, it seems unthinkable not to be in touch at a moment's notice. This is true for students as well as guardians. When entering a program such as IUHPFL, however, students and guardians must learn to trust the proven process of the program, one that has worked quite effectively since the program's inception in 1962.

The limited access to communication with friends and family in the US serves to empower the students in several ways:
- They become immersed linguistically by relying less on the native language and more on the language of the host culture
- They become immersed culturally and learn new ways of seeing the world, other people, and themselves
- They are less inclined to be homesick, because they are able to focus on the present moment and enjoy their surroundings
- They learn to take control of their own well-being and to rely on their host families, instructors and peers, as needed.

In order for students to be successful in their IUHPFL experience, they need for their guardians to respect these communication restrictions and to support their full immersion while abroad. They need to feel empowered by the adults they love and admire!

While these restrictions on communication between students and guardians can be difficult for both, particularly if the student is having challenges onsite, it can help guardians to remember that, especially at the beginning of the program, students might feel safer expressing their worries, concerns and complaints to their guardians, rather than people in the host country. For this reason, guardians might be learning more about students' negative feelings and experiences than the positive ones.

During times when a student seems sad or discouraged, it's extremely helpful when their guardians encourage them and remind them that challenges are a normal aspect of being abroad and an important part of their personal and academic growth. Oftentimes, just hearing that their loved ones at home believe in them and are cheering them on makes all the difference!
If student communication is uncharacteristically sparse or negative, however, and family members in the US are concerned, they are encouraged to contact the IUHPFL Office Team, who will then reach out to the instructors to assess the student’s state of well-being. The Office Team will report back to the guardians as soon as possible. In most cases, students experience no difficulties and enjoy themselves thoroughly.

Flow of Communication between All IUHPFL Parties

Instructors, guardians and students should all be familiar with how communication should flow between IUHPFL parties, which include the IUHPFL Office, US Families, Students, Host Families, Onsite Coordinators, and Instructors.

Please refer to these guidelines frequently during the program to understand expectations for communication between parties:

- Students, Instructors and Host Families are in communication with each other at all times. These constitute the primary support network for students.
- The IUHPFL Office, Onsite Coordinator, and US Family provide only marginal and crisis support for the students during the program.
- If the student should experience difficulties of any kind during the program, they should first reach out to those they trust within their immediate onsite support system: Instructors, Program Peers, and Host Family.
- The IUHPFL Office acts as a conduit for communication between the US Family and the Instructors. As instructors are typically very busy during the program, the Office seeks to find quick solutions and to ease concerns for all parties. Guardians should not attempt to contact instructors directly.
- The program site’s blog provides weekly and direct communication to US Families from the instructors. Guardians and loved ones are encouraged to visit the blog often to see photos and to read about the team’s activities and excursions.
- The Managing Director and Program Coordinator are in contact with instructor teams and Onsite Coordinators at each site on a daily or at least weekly basis.

Communication during Urgent or Emergency Situations

If there is an emergency or urgent situation onsite, the instructors and/or Onsite Coordinator will immediately reach out to the
Managing Director via cell phone or email, which can be accessed from a cell phone. The Managing Director will then contact the US Family.

The US Family can likewise call or email the Managing Director during times of crisis or emergency. For less urgent matters, please call or email the Office during normal business hours. Contact information is provided at the beginning of this handbook.

**Communication: Infractions against the IUHPFL Honor Code**

The Honor Code is an integral part of the program, and students are expected to follow its stipulations at all times. Upon acceptance into the program, the student agrees to follow the Honor Code and his/her guardian agrees to support him/her in doing so, as well as support the instructor team’s reinforcement of the Honor Code. Students are also expected to hold one another accountable in adhering to the Code.

If the student receives an Incident Report for not adhering to the Honor Code, guardians will be contacted by the Office during the next business day. Once an Incident Report is received the student is no longer eligible for the IUHPFL Award of Excellence. Egregious or repeated infractions will likely result in the student’s expulsion from the program and early return to the US. The student will be accompanied to the international airport by an IUHPFL Instructor.

**Note: Per the Payment Schedule & Terms Agreement that guardians sign, if a student is expelled from the program, no fees or costs will be refunded and the student and guardian are expected to cover any expenses related to accompanying the student to the international airport and flying him or her to his or her home in the US as soon as possible.**

**HONOR CODE INFRACTIONS AND DISCIPLINARY PROTOCOL**

It is important for students and guardians to understand that, while IUHPFL is a challenging program with high expectations of its participants and program outcomes, we also provide students with the tools and a strong support system, so they can succeed. Students are invited to participate in the program, precisely because instructors and administrative staff alike have determined that they have the skills and qualities required a) to benefit greatly from all that the program has to offer, b) to strengthen and support their teammates and c) to be an enjoyable and helpful guest for their host family.
Instructors and host families understand that their primary role in the program is to mentor and coach students and to give them encouragement and praise as often as possible. They enjoy this role immensely and want students to succeed in every facet of the program. They take pride in the fact that students return home with wonderful memories and stories to share, increased language and cultural proficiency, a deeper sense of self-confidence, broader horizons for their future plans, and friendships that will last for years to come!

It is also the responsibility of the instructors to determine suitable disciplinary actions when students engage in behaviors that **blatantly defy** the IUHPFL Honor Code, and this is not a responsibility that any instructor enjoys. In these cases where a student’s actions are **deliberate, repeated and/or openly disrespectful**, the following protocol will be applied by the instructors, with the awareness of the US guardian/s.

**Step 1 - Behavior Action Plan, which will include:**

- Specifics of the misconduct, including the instructors’ and the student’s points of view
- Concrete suggestions for eliminating the behavior
- Ways in which the instructor team will support and encourage the student’s growth and success in completing the requirements of the plan
- At least 3 actions that the student will undertake to rectify or compensate for the behavior, possibly involving community service
- A date by which these actions will be completed
- A reward for completing the plan successfully
- Consequences that will be carried out if not completed successfully, including an Incident Report
- The instructors’ and student’s signatures

The plan will be shared with the Managing Director, the US family, and possibly the Host Family.

**Step 2 - Issuing an Incident Report**

- If the student does not successfully complete the Behavior Action Plan and/or continues with the same type of misconduct against the Honor Code, an Incident Report will be issued.
- At this point, the student cannot receive the IUHPFL Award of Excellence at the end of the program.
• The US family and the Managing Director receive a copy of the Incident Report.

**Step 3 - Student is Sent Home**

• For cases involving ongoing, dangerous or egregious acts that violate the Honor Code and affect the well-being and safety of any one individual or the group and (in most cases) after the steps above have been taken and failed, the only option remaining is to send the student home to his or her US family.

• This measure should not be taken lightly and should be discussed with and condoned by the Managing Director, who will inform the US family and make arrangements for the student’s flight back to the US.

• All expenses related to the student’s early dismissal from the program (expulsion) must be paid by the student’s guardians as stated in the Payment Schedule and Terms Agreement signed by students and guardians prior to departure.

• At this point, the student will not receive the IUHPFL Diploma for completion of the program.

**Important Note:** Although instructors prefer and will always try to follow the above protocol, extreme cases might require that the student be expelled from the program and sent home immediately. The instructors, in consultation with the Onsite Coordinator and with approval from the Managing Director, reserve the right to send a student home to his or her US Family at any point during or to the exclusion of the above protocol, if they determine that the student’s actions or behavior pose an immediate threat to him or herself, another person, or the integrity of the program.

**MANAGING MONEY ABROAD**

With respect to managing money abroad, a few general suggestions follow. Instructor teams will have additional suggestions for their individual program sites at the Student/Guardian Orientation.

• **A Debit Card with SECURITY CHIP and four-digit PIN** is necessary to allow students to withdraw money directly from a US checking account at an ATM. This option is fast and convenient and typically offers a good exchange rate. It also allows guardians to provide spending money to students gradually, which can help them to budget while abroad.
• Students should use their card at least once before leaving the US and search online or ask at the bank for information on overseas ATM fees, as well as limits on a single withdrawal or the number of withdrawals allowed in a 24-hour period, etc.

• ATMs are plentiful throughout all of the host countries, but students need to be sure their particular debit card/bank affiliation will be recognized by ATMs abroad. **Talk to your bank to learn about their partners and affiliates in the host country and ask if they participate in one of the “global ATM alliances”.** **Major banks, like Bank One, Barclays, and Deutsche Bank, are members of large financial networks that allow account holders to use ATM’s worldwide without high withdrawal fees.**

• **A Credit Card with SECURITY CHIP and four-digit PIN** is a good idea for unexpected costs such as visits to hospitals or clinics. These also permit cash advances, if necessary, although fees and high interest can apply. VISA and MasterCard are widely used throughout the world, but Amerian Express, Traveler’s Checks, and Discover are NOT and should be avoided.

**Important Reminder:** Be sure to tell your bank and your credit card companies the dates when these cards will be used abroad and where they will be used. Otherwise, there is a strong possibility that they will block purchases and disable the cards as a security measure against identity theft.

More useful tips on currency exchange and managing money abroad:

• IUHFL recommends exchanging $50-$100 USD for host country currency before departure. This way, students arrive in the host country with the ability to buy snacks and incidentals right away. Instructors and students will locate convenient and low-fee ATM’s during the first few days onsite, as they tour the host city together.

• Students and guardians can plan ahead and order host country currency from a local bank in their town. While it is certainly possible to exchange currency at any international airport, you must arrive with plenty of time to do so and still be able to meet the rest of the team at the check-in counter at the scheduled time. Planning ahead is key to acquiring needed currency before boarding the international flight.
• Students should avoid taking US dollars to exchange at banks abroad. Again, students will not likely get a good exchange rate, and they will need to be physically present at a bank, which will not be possible due to their scheduled classes and afternoon activities.

• Students and guardians should come to an agreement on how much spending money is reasonable for the duration of the program. Each family’s unique financial circumstances should dictate the student’s travel budget. Generally speaking an equivalent of $50-$100 per week provides sufficient spending money; some weeks students will spend less than $50, other weeks they might spend more than $100, especially while on excursions.

• Students should be prepared to purchase 4 of their own meals during the program at an equivalent of $10-$15 per meal. Sometimes when the team is traveling together, it isn’t possible for everyone to eat at the same location. Students will divide into small groups and eat at venues within close proximity. Other than these occasions, all meals and snacks are provided to students and included in the cost of the program.

• Using a debit card or credit card abroad to make purchases will involve additional fees every time, thereby using up a student’s spending money at a rapid pace. The best approach is to use the debit card to withdraw money at ATMs and the credit card for emergencies. Withdrawing money from an ATM will most often incur some fees, as well, so the trick is to know how much to withdraw at one time. Find that comfort zone between having the funds you need for a few days and not having too much money on hand, in case of theft or loss.

• Students should not commit themselves to buying a souvenir for every friend and relative. A good alternative to buying gifts for friends and relatives would be sending them postcards from the host country, as postage abroad is fairly inexpensive in comparison to buying souvenirs.
  o Additionally, large souvenirs and gifts require the purchase of more luggage, which can be quite expensive.
  o If you pack a large canvas bag, as recommended, it can be used to carry a few small gifts and souvenirs back to the US.
Important Note: Under no circumstances are instructors, Onsite Coordinators or the student’s host family permitted to lend money to the student — for purchases large or small, emergency or non-emergency. It is for this reason that we recommend students arrive abroad with at least some local currency, and that all participants have their own credit card while abroad for emergencies.

Financial Issues, Banking Problems
Although increasingly less common, occasionally a student might experience problems accessing funds from their bank accounts. This may be due to a number of different reasons, including faulty ATM machines, wrong PIN numbers, trying to withdraw more money than the bank limit allows, etc. In cases like this, instructors will help the student to locate another ATM or contact their guardians or banks in a timely fashion.

Again, having both a debit card and a credit card, as well as a small amount of currency on-hand at all times provides the student with options and prevents situations where they are without a means to make purchases onsite.

MEDICAL INFORMATION AND HEALTH INSURANCE

Medical History
Living abroad creates emotional and physical stress and may exacerbate pre-existing conditions, requiring adjustments to changes in climate, diet, exercise and living conditions. Therefore, accurate and up-to-date information on the student’s Statement of Medical History is essential to the student’s health and safety, helping the program to acquire the appropriate assistance for a student in case of an accident or illness.

Language barriers, incomplete medical records, and undisclosed medical conditions can delay treatment and threaten a student’s health abroad. For the student’s own well-being, students are encouraged to provide current and complete information about medications they take, drug allergies, and chronic or recurring physical and psychological conditions, including eating disorders, depression and anxiety. To ensure accuracy, students and guardians should inform the IUHPFL Office of any significant changes to the Statement of Medical History before departure.

Students who are currently under medical or psychological care should talk frankly to their physician and/or counselor about the
support they might need abroad and relay that information to the IUHPFL Office. In most cases, the program can accommodate a student’s needs, but only if these needs are known.

For more information on health abroad, visit the websites for the Center for Disease Control and the World Health Organization:

www.cdc.gov/
www.who.int/en/

**Different Abilities**

The passage of legislation such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act has spurred schools in the US to accommodate students with varying abilities. Other countries are not bound by US legislation, of course, and physical facilities and academic resources vary significantly from one overseas site to another.

The IUHPFL complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) and engages in the interactive process required by the ADA to provide reasonable accommodations for eligible students. The first step in this process is disclosure and documentation on the part of the student of a disabling condition(s), e.g. physical, learning, etc. If you anticipate needing disability-related accommodations at your overseas site, submit documentation to the IUHPFL confirming the disability and including information about accommodations you might need, as well as any details relevant to your request for accommodation(s) abroad. If a student chooses not to disclose disability-related needs prior to the program, the IUHPFL will not be able to assist in arranging reasonable accommodations.

**Medications Abroad**

Students who currently take medications should talk to their physician or about arrangements for continuing the medications abroad. Students should make sure to take the amount of medication they will need for the entire five or six weeks. If this is not a possibility, students should ask their physician to provide a typed prescription with the **generic name of the medication** (not the commercial name) clearly indicated in order for adequate supplies to be filled while abroad. **Students should not alter their medication—type, dosage, or frequency of dosage—during the program.**

Any medications carried overseas should be left in their original containers and clearly labeled. Students should also carry a letter
from their physician describing the medical condition and any prescription medications, including the generic name of each medication.

**Travel Insurance**

Included in the Program Fees paid by students and guardians is the premium for health, medical and emergency evacuation insurance coverage. Students in Austria, China, France, and Spain are insured by HTH Worldwide Insurance Services during the program dates. Students in Mexico and Chile are likewise covered through CISI (Cultural Insurance Services International).

Information on the coverage provided by HTH and CISI is provided during the Student/Guardian Orientation.

Should a student become ill while abroad, he or she should not hesitate to see a physician. At all program sites, highly skilled physicians are available to provide excellent care. Either a host family member or instructor will accompany the student to the clinic or hospital. At least one instructor will be present with the student shortly after he or she arrives at the facility, if the student was escorted there by a host family member.

Onsite Coordinators are aware of all clinics and hospitals in the host city and make recommendations to students, instructors, and host families based on the quality, type, and cost of service. Whenever possible, OSCs seek facilities that are already partnered with either HTH or CISI Insurance, in order to save students and their guardians from paying for medical care out-of-pocket. If an arrangement does not exist between the facility and the insurance provider, the student will need to arrange up-front payment with their guardians, who can then submit the following to the insurance provider for reimbursement:

- A claim form (instructors have access to these)
- A description from the doctor of the condition and treatment
- An itemized bill from the hospital or clinic; it MUST be itemized
- Copies of all prescriptions
- Copies of all receipts for payments made

**Note:** It is critical to submit complete and clear records, bills, and receipts to the insurance provider for reimbursement. Otherwise, processing can be lengthy or simply not be granted by the insurance provider.
Note: Per Indiana University policy, the IUHPFL Office, Instructors, Onsite Coordinators, and host families cannot pay for a student’s medical costs or sign any promissory note for payment on behalf of the student or US family.

In rare cases, should care beyond the extensive coverage of HTH or CISI be needed for the student, guardians need to be informed of their family insurance coverage and the provisions for health and medical care available to the student while abroad. Students will want to carry an identification card or other documentation from their insurance company as proof of coverage.

Students who plan to spend some time abroad after the program may need to purchase supplemental medical insurance to cover the additional time. Students are only insured by HTH or CISI for the duration of their specific program dates.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ABROAD

The IUHPFL Office, instructors and Onsite Coordinators are careful to protect students’ health and safety overseas, but students must ultimately take responsibility for the consequences of their decisions, choices and behavior. Students and guardians are encouraged to read this section carefully and to be aware of how they can help ensure a safe and enjoyable summer abroad.

How IUHPFL works to ensure student safety and well-being:

- High qualified and well-informed Onsite Coordinators and host families
- Careful selection and extensive training of instructors
- At least one instructor per site is CPR and First Aid certified
- A well-stocked first-aid kit travels with students at all times
- Travel Insurance for every student
- A licensed therapist or counselor is aware of our students and available at every program site
- Identification of high-quality health and medical facilities at every site
- IUHPFL registers all program participants who are US citizens at the respective US Embassies in each host country
- Careful adherence to Indiana University student safety and study abroad procedures

Note: While the IUHPFL Office can provide information about health and safety issues and crisis management, not all study abroad risks
can be avoided nor can it be ensured that US standards of due process will be applied in legal proceedings outside the US. It is also important to note that due to the fact that IUHPFL is a program for minors, not all student crises can be revealed to the larger group of students and guardians; confidentiality and privacy laws must be respected.

First steps:
• Be sure to read the IUHPFL Honor Code thoroughly to understand how it is intended to keep students safe during the program. It is provided at length at the end of this handbook.
• Before the program, students should consider any special conditions or needs of the student and be sure to disclose these to the Office right away, so reasonable accommodations can be made.
• Guardians and students are also encouraged to consult the US Department of State website for Consular Information Sheets and Travel Alerts or Warnings, and the Centers for Disease Control website:
  o http://travel.state.gov/
  o http://www.cdc.gov/

Emotional Health
Students are likely to experience some form of culture shock during their time abroad, but this should not be confused with a real emotional crisis. If a student feels withdrawn or detached and cannot cope with the environment, he or she needs to talk with an instructor right away. If necessary, the student can see the licensed therapist or counselor onsite.

Public Disturbances and Protests
Students should keep a low profile during political events abroad that may be anti-American in nature. At such times, places that attract Americans should be avoided. Students should dress to fit in with the local culture and be wary of unattended packages or backpacks in public places like subways, trains and buses and report such unclaimed objects to a local authority.

In the event of public disturbances abroad—including violent demonstrations, terrorist acts and natural disasters—the Instructors and Onsite Coordinator will immediately contact all students and their host families about the appropriate protocol. If such an event occurs, the IUHPFL Office will send an email to all US families, informing
them of the students’ safety and whereabouts. If possible, students will also be allowed to contact their guardians, once they are out of harm’s way.

**Sexual Harassment**

If a student feels like he or she is a victim of sexual harassment, it is essential to speak with the instructors immediately. They will help sort out the difference between unacceptable harassment and culturally typical behavior, which may be nonetheless uncomfortable, and they will know how to advocate for and protect the student’s interests in such situations.

**Personal Safety**

When traveling abroad most risks to tourists involve petty theft, such as pickpocketing and purse snatching. However, it is still important to take measures to prevent becoming a victim of a crime.

By following the IUHPFL Honor Code, students will be on the right path to maintaining personal safety. What follows is even more practical advice on how to be safe while in an unfamiliar environment anywhere and while abroad.

**Consider the following:**

- Always remain in groups of three or more, as per the IUHPFL Honor Code
- Take care of your teammates at all times, including telling instructors if one of them is at risk
- Wear clothing that helps you to blend in with your environment
- Do not draw attention to yourself as a non-resident
- Do not appear to be lost or wandering around
- At night, stay in a group and remain in well-lit areas
- Be cognizant of your surroundings at all times
- Never accept food or drink from a stranger
- Avoid areas where protests or demonstrations are taking place
- Do not carry large sums of cash on you and keep your valuables in a secured backpack close to your body
- Know local traffic patterns and pedestrian signs and move through city areas watchfully and with purpose
- Listen to your instructors, Onsite Coordinator and host parents at all times and understand that they care about you and wish to keep you safe and happy!
- Do not consume alcohol or illegal substances under any circumstances
Always be where you should be!

ASSIMILATING TO THE NEW ENVIRONMENT

Consider what it means to be from the USA

Part of a student’s success abroad will depend on how well he or she has prepared for cultural adjustments and personal growth in the host culture.

Before a student can understand another culture, it is important to understand his or her own. What does it mean to be American? What characteristics, values and attitudes define American culture? What generalizations can the student make about American attitudes towards education, gender, family, money, politics, race, relationships, religion, success, time and work? How do American values affect attitudes toward others, friendship patterns, work habits, spending free time and money? How do Americans measure success in life? What role does tradition play in the U.S. culture? A clear understanding of what is characteristically “American” (and its many variations) will give students a better chance of appreciating similarities and differences in another culture.

Every student abroad is inevitably put in the position of having to explain (or even defend) the home country’s political or economic system or its stance on global issues. If a student begins to keep abreast of the US role in global activities now, s/he will be more articulate when questioned about US policies and reactions to world issues. In addition, students often report that they wish they had brushed up on such basics as how a bill becomes a law in the US, the names of the US Presidents, and other aspects of American history, as well as current foreign and domestic affairs, before going abroad. Students should remember, however, that they will not want to get into a hostile debate with questioners or automatically defend everything that is American. A student may want to think of some strategies for deflecting potentially hostile questions so that they lead to conversations in which everybody listens respectfully and everyone learns something new.

One useful point to consider and acknowledge when speaking with people from other countries about global politics: There is always more than one side to every issue, and access to complete and unbiased media coverage can be challenging, no matter where we are from. It’s okay to concede when you haven’t been following an issue or when you don’t know the answer to a question.
Learn about the Host Country
Students are encouraged to learn as much as possible about the country to which they are traveling, since understanding the culture will facilitate their adjustment to living there. Students are encouraged to research the host culture before departure.

Have Realistic Expectations
Students should take a personal inventory of their expectations. What does a student hope to get out of the experience overseas? Does s/he have any hidden or unspoken expectations? Students may want to identify their individual goals — linguistic, academic, personal and career. How can these be achieved? How can personal growth during this experience be measured?

Outlining goals now and keeping a journal abroad in the target language will help map both the inner and outer journeys. Indeed, daily writing, which attempts to interpret the cross-cultural meanings of the experiences, may be a powerful learning tool. Students will be exploring these topics in support groups and should be open to discussing them with peers and the instructor team.

Dress According to Norms of the Host Culture
Students should carefully consider how to dress. US students often comment that their clothing gives them away instantly as tourists. This can make them more vulnerable to derogatory remarks and as potential targets for petty thefts. While it shouldn’t be necessary to buy a new wardrobe for going abroad, students may want to wear clothing that fits in with the local culture.

UNDERSTANDING & RESPECTING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES
Students will adjust in many small ways over a period of time to the new culture, even though the familiar term “Culture Shock,” may indicate a jolting and immediate clash of values. While there are many differences between the US and the host country, the following are particularly significant.

Gender Roles
Both male and female students abroad will discover that growing up in the US has prepared them for different roles in society than the ones their contemporaries in other countries expect. Many events in recent decades have heightened US awareness of gender stereotypes, sexism, and the limitations of traditional male-female roles. However, it is not appropriate to suggest to friends in the host country that US
patterns would also be suitable for their culture. Instead, students may look at gender differences within the host culture from their historical and sociological perspectives and try to be understanding and flexible in their attitudes toward these differences.

**Sexual Orientation**

Just as traditional gender roles have been questioned in the US, we also have had extensive dialogue regarding sexual orientation. It should come as no surprise that distinct cultures approach the question of sexual orientation differently. For more information about sexual orientation and how it may be viewed abroad, the bibliography of international GLBT issues is available at: [http://www.rainbowsig.org/](http://www.rainbowsig.org/)

**Religion**

Few countries have the religious diversity and pluralism found in the US and few have such a strong tradition of separation of church and state. As a result, students may be struck by the number of public holidays that are based on a religious calendar and the extent of public prayer and public religious ceremonies. Students may probe to understand the relationship between the external, ritual manifestations of religion and individual beliefs or the role of religion as a political element or an active social force. The instructor team and the Onsite Coordinator can be good resources for questions regarding religion in the host country.

**Ethnicity**

US citizens often identify strongly with their family’s cultural and ethnic heritage and refer to themselves as Asian-American, Italian-American, African-American or Hispanic-American. In other countries such ethnic differences are often overlooked, and US students report that for the first time they have been identified (and have identified themselves) as simply “American.” Sometimes, students might find that physical features that distinguish them from the host population may result in stares, comments or overt prejudice. Students will explore topics of ethnicity and self-identification in support groups.

**Culture Shock**

“Culture shock” is the term used to describe the disorientation that every student experiences to some degree when spending an extended period of time in a new culture. The common symptoms include homesickness, boredom, withdrawing from the culture by
spending excessive amounts of time alone or with other Americans, excessive sleeping, compulsive eating, irritability, stereotyping or hostile feelings toward locals, weepiness or even some psychosomatic illnesses (physical ailments that result from emotional or psychological stress). Although most students will inevitably experience some degree of culture shock, they certainly won’t have all these symptoms. One of the greatest ways to combat culture shock is to stay busy and active, which is one of the reasons why IUHPFL has established a consistent routine of classes, Afternoon Activities, and Excursions. Students will explore the topic of culture shock consistently in support groups.

The typical stages of Culture Shock are:

1. **Initial Euphoria.** On arrival in the new culture, everything seems wonderful and exciting, and students are struck with how similar people around the world can be.

2. **Irritation and Hostility.** The focus changes from the similarities between cultures to the differences, and the differences become irritating and frustrating. Small problems can seem like major catastrophes.

3. **Gradual Adjustment.** The crisis of adjustment passes. The new culture seems more familiar and the student moves more confidently within it. New friends are made. Students learn to interpret some of the subtle cultural cues.

4. **Adaptation and Biculturalism.** Students are able to function in two cultures with confidence. They are so well adapted to the new culture that returning to the US will provoke a “reverse culture shock.”

There are several ways students can minimize the impact of culture shock:

- Learn as much as they can about their host country before departure
- Keep an open mind
- Combine the best of your host country’s culture and life with all the good things in American culture. This “best of both worlds” approach will help get the most out of the full cultural immersion.
- Be flexible. There will be many surprises, and the more open a student remains to them, the more exciting and wonderful the experience will be.
RE-ENTRY: REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

Expect to find your student changed in ways large and small upon return to the US. Coming home can represent a huge challenge to the student who has just spent time abroad in a country learning a language and culture that is not native to them. Students and guardians alike should take as much time and thought into preparing for re-entry into the US as they spend preparing to leave for the host country.

In particular, some struggles upon re-entry to the US might include:
- Speaking English
- Re-assimilating to the home culture
- Uncertainty of how to deal with increased maturity and independence
- Rollercoaster of emotions: mixed feelings of joy, elation, sadness, depression, being overwhelmed

Once students have adapted to life abroad, coming home will require readjustment to U.S. culture. Students will have to integrate what they learned abroad into their US lives. For many people, re-entry, or reverse culture shock, is more difficult and unexpected than initial culture shock. Most will cope with re-entry at various levels:

1. **Family:** Students may be expected to fit into the U.S. family, but find it difficult to communicate effectively because their families have not shared the international experiences. The family may have difficulty adjusting to the student’s new independence and changed values.

   **Strategies:** Students should try to share their experience with the family (photos, stories, etc.) and let them know how much they appreciate the chance to grow in new ways by studying and traveling overseas.

2. **Friends:** Students and their friends may no longer be as close. Students may need to be sensitive about discussing their experience with them. They may also miss their new friends they made abroad.

   **Strategies:** Students should ask and listen to what their longtime friends experienced in their absence and ask them for updates on local events. Trying to do new things together may get the relationship on a new footing. Students should maintain contact with other IUHPFL alumni.
3. **School:** Students are likely to look at their high school in a new light, and may miss being part of a close-knit group of American students.

   **Strategies:** Students may want to discuss the academic experience abroad with the counselor, especially if considering new career goals as a result of the experience abroad. Students should consider making contact with international students on the high school campus and volunteer to talk to students who plan to study abroad through IUHPFL, including seeking out other students in the community who have studied abroad.

4. **Country:** Aspects of the US may no longer be entirely to the student's liking and he or she might have the sense they no longer fit in. Students will probably evaluate ideas and events in the context of the broader cultural perspective acquired abroad.

   **Strategies:** Students should recognize that we all tend to look past the shortcomings of our home culture when we are away, and to criticize it on the basis of changed perceptions when we return. They may seek out other students interested in international and intercultural matters. Keeping up an interest in local and foreign news through newspapers, literature, music, friends may help.

5. **Self:** Students may have become accustomed to a level of activity and anticipation that the home high school and/or culture might not be able to match. It is natural to feel a little restless or a bit depressed for a while after the return.

   **Strategies:** Students typically require recuperation from the physical journey. They may want to think over the ways they have changed: Which of those are positive? What was learned? How have family and friends reacted to the new you? Keeping a journal may help formulate and evolve thoughts. Talking with other returning students may provide new social outlets and a chance to compare perceptions. It is also very helpful to begin planning for another international trip or study abroad adventure! IUHPFL is just the beginning!
AFTER THE PROGRAM

Whether a student is still attending or has graduated from high school at the time of their participation in IUHPFL, readjusting to life in the US will have its challenges and its rewards. IUHPFL values its alumni and hopes that each and every one will continue to find ways to stay connected to one another and the program overall. There are several opportunities and activities that you will want to be aware of after your program ends:

- Students will want to complete the Student Exit Survey online, which will allow them to express their impressions of the program, as well as particular aspects that they enjoyed or would like to see changed.

- Every fall, alums are invited to submit their photos and videos from the program to the IUHPFL Office for a contest. Contest winners receive special recognition and exhibition of their entries on the IUHPFL website, as well as our annual newsletter, The Polyglot Press!

- Alums who receive the Award of Excellence are encouraged to act as Alumni Ambassadors the following school year and help to give presentations in their schools and around the state to new potential participants.

- Every alum can act as a Class Ambassador and help to maintain their team’s Facebook page, organize ongoing reunions, and keep the Office updated with current contact information for their teammates.

- Alums who attend IU Bloomington can become organizing members of the IUHPFL Alumni Association, which is forming now and throughout the 2016-17 school year on the IUB campus. All alums will be informed of events that they can attend!
APPENDIX A:

STRATEGIES TO PREPARE FOR THE IUHPFL EXPERIENCE

New experiences and unfamiliar situations happen every day during the program. The better prepared participants are, the more confidently they will be able to navigate these experiences. Below are a few suggested strategies to improve proficiency in the target language and help prepare students for some of the cultural challenges that lie ahead.

To improve language proficiency:
1. Participate in a Language Club in your school.
2. Participate in a community conversation group in the target language.
3. Label items around the house.
4. Watch movies & listen to music in the target language.
5. Read books in the target language.
6. Arrange for a language exchange with a native speaker.
7. Change the settings on your cell phone and computer so that the display language is your target language.

Upon arrival at the program site, students will experience different family and friends, different instructors, different city, different culture, and a different language. We highly recommend that participants prepare for this amount of change by getting out of their comfort zone before departure.

Some suggestions to ease cultural adjustment:
1. Research the city/region where you will be spending the summer.
2. Try new foods. Many cultures demonstrate caring through food; refusing to try a meal that has been prepared for you can be very offensive to your host family.
3. Stay at a friend’s home for an extended period (3 days to a week). Note the ways that the routine and expectations are different from your own home.
4. Go without your cell phone and/or social media for an extended period (3 days to a week—or more!).
5. Watch YouTube.com videos about the host city and country, so you are more familiar with the landscape, foods, cultural traditions, and appearance of the city. Knowing what to expect before you arrive can ease culture shock greatly.
6. Consider your routines—whatever it is that you do or eat regularly, places that you often go, even driving routes that you frequent. Recognize these patterns and challenge them!
APPENDIX B: PAYMENTS AND REFUND POLICIES

Guardians should follow instructions for payment of Program Fees as indicated on the Payment Schedule and Terms Agreement on the IUHPFL website.

IUHPFL Refund Policy for Program Fees:

- **Withdrawal before the program begins:** If a student withdraws from the program after they have paid fees but before the program begins, the program will consider a refund amount to be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- **Fees that will NOT be refunded include:**
  - The $750 non-refundable deposit
  - Any fees non-recoverable at the time of withdrawal, which can include housing, meals, transportation and staff compensation that have already been committed or paid on your behalf.
- **Withdrawal after the program begins:** If a student withdraws from the program after it begins, a statement, explaining in detail the reasons for the withdrawal must be sent to the IUHPFL Office.
  - The program will consider a partial refund of fees only if the student developed an illness or was injured while abroad.
  - Early returns to the US due to pre-existing conditions that were not disclosed to the IUHPFL Office prior to departure are addressed on a case-by-case basis, but are likely to not merit refund of program fees and might also involve hotel and airfare costs for the student and a chaperone.
  - Any fees already applied toward program costs on behalf of the student cannot be refunded.
- **Expulsion from the program:** If a student is expelled from the program, no fees or costs will be refunded. A student will also be expected to cover the additional expenses incurred related to the necessary arrangements to change the return flight home.

**Refund of Airfare Fees:**

Any request for refund of airfare or exchanges must be discussed with Travel Leaders directly at 812-339-7800. Travel Leaders must respect and apply the refund policies of the individual airlines they serve.
APPENDIX C: THE IUHPFL HONOR CODE

The IU Honors Program in Foreign Languages (IUHPFL), as an “honors” program, outlines clear norms of conduct for its students to follow and relies upon the individual student’s sense of responsibility and honesty to understand and abide by this Honor Code. In order for a student to participate in the program, he or she must agree to and abide by the following terms:

1. **At all times during the program, students are expected to uphold the 8 Core Values of IUHPFL:** Appreciation, Diligence, Discovery, Empathy, Encouragement, Honor, Respect, and Unity.

2. **IUHPFL Pledge of Excellence:** In the IUHPFL model, the strength of the program as a whole is only as strong as its individual students. This means that the Pledge of Excellence is as much a pledge to one’s team as to oneself. Students recite the pledge in unison at the Student/Guardian Orientation before departure:

   “As I embrace my IUHPFL journey and commit to the Honor Code, I pledge to speak only the target language, uphold the 8 Core Values, celebrate my host family experience, and remain self-disciplined. I will choose to discover the best in myself and others, foster team unity, represent my school, family, and community with pride, and be a good ambassador for IUHPFL.”

3. **Students must understand the 3 Pillars of IUHPFL,** which make it such a unique and prestigious program for high school students:
   
   A. **Language Commitment:** The student’s commitment to speak only the target language during the program, except in cases of emergency, is the first pillar and is key to his or her success.

   - **Communication with U.S. family and friends** is limited to one call home within a few days of arriving to the host country and one hour per week via the Internet. No other contact with U.S. family or friends is allowed, except in cases of emergency and only with instructor permission.

   - **All personal cell phones and all electronic devices with Internet capability are prohibited during the program (including all smart devices, laptops, and tablets),** because such use proves detrimental to the student’s ability to fully immerse in the language and culture and to engage with those around him or her.

   - **No books or music in English are allowed during the program.** If students have summer reading assignments, these need to be completed before or after the program, unless the student can acquire them in the target language. Students may also freely listen to music in the target language, as long as the listening device does not have Internet capability.

   - **A pay-as-you-go program cell phone** will be provided to each student upon arrival at the program site to be used solely by him or her for unlimited local calls and text messages to fellow students, instructors and host family members in the target language. The program will pay a certain amount toward each phone, and if a student exceeds that amount, he or she is welcome to pay for additional minutes. Misuse of the program cell phone might result in
additional costs for which the student will be responsible.

B. Academic Excellence: This second pillar of IUHPFL requires that students give their best effort in all their program coursework, maintaining the highest level of academic honesty and refraining from academic misconduct, which is defined by Indiana University’s Code of Student Responsibilities as “any activity that tends to undermine the academic integrity of the institution,” and in which human, hard-copy or electronic resources are misused.

C. Host Family Experience is the third pillar of IUHPFL: Students are to treat their host families with respect, keep their space clean, and make every effort to follow household norms like a member of the family. Specific policies and procedures described in the Student/Guardian Handbook are designed to ensure student safety and well-being within the host family setting.

4. No Dating Rule: IUHPFL students may not date anyone in the host country during the program, including other program participants at their site, because focusing on one person can be counterproductive to the unity of the student team, the student’s interaction with his or her host family, and his or her overall learning experience.

5. Alcohol, Tobacco, and Prescription Medications: Even though the laws of other countries may differ from those of the U.S. with regard to the consumption of alcohol, tobacco and other substances, IUHPFL students are to conduct themselves abroad as minors from the state of Indiana. This means that students are not allowed to purchase or consume alcohol, tobacco or other substances at any time. Discos and other establishments whose primary business is serving alcoholic beverages are prohibited to IUHPFL students. It is also strictly forbidden to bring alcohol, tobacco and other substances back to the U.S. Students may only purchase, possess and use prescription medications that have been prescribed specifically to them for current medical conditions, and these medications and conditions must be disclosed to the IUHPFL office before departure.

6. Risky Activities: Operating a car or other motorized vehicle is forbidden during the program, as is riding passenger on a motorcycle. Students are only permitted to ride as a passenger in a vehicle with an adult driver who is a member of the host family or has been authorized by the host family or the onsite instructor and coordinator team. Students are also not permitted to engage in risky, high adrenaline activities or get tattoos and/or piercings during the program.

7. Weeknight and Weekend Activities: It is expected and encouraged for students to engage with their host families during weeknights and weekends. During these times, students must be accompanied by a member of the host family at all times. Any weekend travel away from the program site with the host family must have approval from the Instructor Team, be within the host country, and must ensure that the student will not miss class or group activities. Under no circumstances are students allowed to travel without being accompanied by their host parents or program instructors.

8. Rule of Three: Depending on the program site and with permission from their host families, students may spend one or two hours in the town center after daily classes and activities. Whenever students are outside the
classroom facility or the host family home and are not under the direct supervision of their instructors or host parents, they are required to stay in groups of at least three program participants at all times. The only exception to this rule is when students are commuting to and from classes.

9. **Students are not to host or meet up with U.S. or international friends or family** while the program is in session. However, students sometimes travel with their families after the program ends. The official end date for each program is the day when students are scheduled to depart from the host country to the U.S.; students may meet up with family members on that day.

10. **Post-Program Language Commitment:** IUHPFL students commit to helping to their schools’ language programs in any way possible and to continuing to study their foreign language through their senior year in high school or at the university level, if possible.

11. **Honor Code, Handbook and Orientation:** Students are required to read and abide by this Honor Code, as well as the Student/Guardian Handbook. It is also mandatory for students to attend the Student/Guardian Orientation with their guardian(s) before departure, on Indiana University’s Bloomington campus. Final acceptance into the program is contingent upon successful completion of the orientation.

12. **Terms and Conditions:**
   
   **A.** Adherence to this Honor Code is of critical importance. Any infraction against the Honor Code can result in repercussions, including communication with U.S. guardians and possible expulsion from the program.
   
   **B.** In the event that this Honor Code is violated by a large number of students collectively, the consequences can apply to the entire group of students. For this reason, students are highly encouraged to hold one another accountable for their actions and adherence to the Honor Code.
   
   **C.** Any infraction against the Honor Code on the part of a student, either acting alone or with other students, will result in that student not receiving the Award of Excellence at the end of the program.
   
   **D.** A student who is expelled from the program will also not receive the IUHPFL Diploma at the end of the program.
APPENDIX D: IUHPFL 8 CORE VALUES

- **Appreciation** – Acknowledging the qualities and kind acts of others
- **Diligence** – Focusing with enthusiasm on academic and personal goals
- **Discovery** – Being open to new ways of looking at the world and oneself
- **Empathy** – Choosing words and actions that express compassion and create connection
- **Encouragement** – Helping others to reach their goals and see their unique talents
- **Honor** – Acting with integrity and adhering to the Honor Code
- **Respect** – Treating others with dignity at all times
- **Unity** – Fostering team spirit and trust
APPENDIX E: IUHPFL PLEDGE OF EXCELLENCE

IUHPFL Pledge of Excellence: In the IUHPFL model, the strength of the program as a whole is only as strong as its individual students. This means that the Pledge of Excellence is as much a pledge to one’s team as to oneself. Students recite the pledge in unison at the Student/Guardian Orientation before departure:

“As I embrace my IUHPFL journey and commit to the Honor Code, I pledge to speak only the target language, uphold the 8 Core Values, celebrate my host family experience, and remain self-disciplined. I will choose to discover the best in myself and others, foster team unity, represent my school, family, and community with pride, and be a good ambassador for IUHPFL.”
APPENDIX F: IUHPFL PROPERTY AND LIABILITY POLICY

The following policy has been developed by the IUHPFL Office in collaboration with Indiana University Legal Counsel. Its purpose is to a) protect IUHPFL students and their U.S. families from fraudulent or excessive claims of property damage or loss by host families b) to protect host families in cases where their claims of such damage or loss are legitimate c) to prevent fraudulent and excessive claims on the part of host families from occurring in first place and d) providing a way for legitimate claims to be reported and managed quickly and effectively.

The policy reads as follows and is distributed to every IUHPFL host family at all program sites and in the respective host language:

Indiana high school students who are selected to participate in the Indiana University Honors Program in Foreign Languages (IUHPFL) are typically high achieving youth and excellent students. They participate in a variety of school and community activities, often volunteering their time to help others, and are considered excellent role models to their peers by educators and adult mentors. In order to qualify for the program, they must pass a university level exam in their target language, complete an extensive application, receive outstanding recommendations from three adult appraisers, and then be accepted into the program by two screeners, who are program instructors and administrative staff. Some students are further interviewed to ensure their likelihood for success in the program.

Incidents of damage or loss to personal property caused by IUHPFL students in host family homes are extremely rare. In the program’s history since 1962, only a few minor cases have occurred to the present date. Our students take great care to respect their host families and to contribute to their host family households in positive ways. In order to prevent incidents or to address rare cases of damage or loss to property in a host family home, the following IUHPFL policy has been established.

Recommendations regarding coverage:
IUHPFL recommends that host families and U.S. Families include appropriate “general liability” coverage on their homeowners or renters policies. It is advised that host families and U.S. Families
check with their insurance provider to ensure they have the proper type and amount of liability coverage in place before the IUHPFL programs begin.

Storing Items Away:
IUHPFL also recommends that all high-value, non-essential items (e.g., collectibles) and items of high sentimental worth in host family households be stored away by host families prior to the program in order to avoid incidents of damage. Host families, IUHPFL Students, and U.S. Families will be better served, if host families take measures in advance to protect these items from potential damage. It will not be the responsibility of Indiana University, the IUHPFL Office, or Program Instructors to compensate host families for damage to or loss of personal items or property.

Reporting Incidents to Appropriate Parties:
The host family must contact the Onsite Coordinator within 24 hours of discovering an incident of damage or loss. The Onsite Coordinator will immediately inform the Program Instructors and the IUHPFL Office, who will then inform the U.S. Family of the incident as soon as possible.

Visit by Program Instructors:
Within 2 days of an Incident, at least 2 Program Instructors must visit the host family household together to gather evidence pertaining to the incident (e.g., take photos of any damage) and to ensure that the dynamic between the host family and the IUHPFL Student is healthy and safe for everyone in the host family household. When an incident involves bodily injury, a visit is to be conducted within 24 hours.

Statements and Photos of the Incident:
If the host family wishes to seek compensation for any damage or loss of their property incurred by the IUHPFL Student, the following must be provided to the Onsite Coordinator, the IUHPFL Office, and the U.S. Family within 3 days of the incident:

- A statement from the host family describing the incident and stating how they wish to resolve the situation
- Statements from the Program Instructors who visited the host family household describing their impressions of the incident
and making recommendations as to how to best resolve the situation

- A statement of explanation of the incident from the IUHPFL Student
- Photos and/or any other evidence pertaining to the incident from the host family, Program Instructors and/or IUHPFL Student

U.S. Family Response:
After receiving copies of all statements and photos of the incident, the U.S. Family will be encouraged by the IUHPFL Office to respond to the host family via the IUHPFL Office within 2 days in one of the following ways: a) agree to pay the host family the suggested compensation amount directly b) negotiate a different amount c) submit a claim to their insurance provider d) refute or deny the host family claim.

**Permission for IUHPFL Student to Pay Directly:**
The IUHPFL Student is not to compensate the host family directly for any incident of damage, loss or injury in the host family household unless instructed to do so by his or her legal guardian/s.

**IUHPFL Office Facilitation:**
In the event of a dispute between a host family and a Student or a Student’s family in the U.S., Indiana University and IUHPFL will encourage both parties to reach an amicable resolution on their own accord. Under no circumstances are Indiana University or IUHPFL responsible for claims or for dispute resolution between the parties.

**Excessive or Suspicious Claims:**
Host families who make excessive and/or suspicious claims of property damage or loss within their households incurred by IUHPFL Students, as determined by the IUHPFL Office, will not be invited to host IUHPFL Students in future IUHPFL programs.

**Indemnity of IU and IUHPFL:**
Neither Indiana University nor the IU Honors Program in Foreign Languages is responsible for accidental or intentional incidents of bodily injury or damage or loss of items or property in host family households caused by IUHPFL students or other individuals.
Site Specific Handbook:

Mérida

JUNTOS VENCEREMOS

Summer 2016
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Volunteer Work: June 18th, June 25th
Departure from Mérida: July 21st.

Onsite Coordinator

Diana Arízaga

Emergency Contacts
Emergency
066 (from stationary phone)
113 (from cellphone)
Fire Rescue
924 92 42 & 923 29 71
Mérida Police
942 00 60
State Police
930 32 00
Federal Police
946 12 23 & 946 12 03

United States Consulate/Consulado de los Estados Unidos
David Mica
Calle 60 No. 338 K x 29 y 31
Colonia Alcalá Martín, Mérida,
Phone: (999) 942 5700 (dialing within México)
Fax: (011)(52)(999) 942-5777 (dialing from the U.S.)
Méridacons@state.gov
Team Mérida:

Sonia Calpanchay, Public Relations Coordinator and Literature & Composition Instructor

Sonia was born and raised in Buenos Aires, Argentina and came to the United States about five years ago. She has lived in Nashville, TN, where she taught Spanish at an independent school. She is currently finishing her M.A in Latin American and Caribbean Studies at Indiana University. Her main areas of interest are Latin American & Balkan history and the relationship between language and religion in the making of governmental policies on identity-construction. She is currently working on her M.A. thesis, which focuses on the making of indigeneity and the creation of specific frameworks to read violence during the Bolivian Revolution of 1952.

During her free time, she enjoys traveling (her favorite pastime, for sure), enjoying meals and hanging out with friends, and hiking. She is the public relations coordinator for the Mérida program and will be teaching the Literature and Composition course.
Paul “Pablo” Coats
Logistics Coordinator, Grammar Instructor

Pablo completed two MA degrees in Spanish and Linguistics and a TESOL Certificate at the University of South Carolina (2014 & 2016). Although born in Indiana, he grew up in over six different states, including Montana and Wisconsin, before settling in South Carolina. He completed his BA in Spanish at Clemson University and the University of Alicante, Spain. His academic interests include Second Language Acquisition and phonological perception, focusing on improvement of classroom language learning and instruction. He has taught a wide variety of Spanish and Linguistics courses at both USC and IU, including first and second year Spanish, and will begin supervising courses for IU’s Basic Language Program in the fall. When he is not working, Pablo enjoys cooking, practicing other languages, and watching British and Spanish television series. He is the Logistics Coordinator for the 2016 Mérida program, and will be teaching Spanish Grammar for Communication.
Vanessa Elias
Student Coordinator, Culture and Communications Instructor

Vanessa was born and raised in Florida and completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Florida. After receiving her B.A. she went on to receive her M.A. from Arizona State University. At Indiana University, she has recently completed her third year in the PhD program in Hispanic Linguistics. Her academic interests include Spanish Pragmatics, Spanish Sociolinguistics and Bilingual Language Acquisition with a primary interest in Spanish in the U.S. She has taught a wide range of Spanish courses including Elementary Spanish, Intermediate Spanish, and Spanish Composition and Conversation. In her free time, Vanessa enjoys spending time with friends and family, going on hikes, going to the beach in Florida, cooking, watching television, riding her bike around Bloomington, and traveling to new and exciting places. In Mérida, Vanessa is the logistics coordinator and will be teaching culture and communication.
Sean McKinnon
Financial Coordinator, Linguistics/Phonetics Instructor

Sean is from Toledo, Ohio and completed a B.S. in Psychology and Spanish from The Ohio State University. After going on to complete a one-year M.A. program in Theoretical and Applied Linguistics at Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona, Spain, Sean came to Indiana University and has recently finished his third year in the Ph.D. Hispanic Linguistics program. Sean’s overarching research interest is how bilingualism affects pronunciation, having completed projects on Spanish-Catalan and Spanish-Kaqchikel Maya bilinguals, Spanish Heritage speakers in the U.S., and second language learners of Spanish in the classroom. He has taught a variety of courses at IU, including both grammar/language courses, as well as an introduction to linguistics. In his free time, Sean can be found at home cooking and binging on the latest Netflix series, or spending time and traveling with friends. He is the financial coordinator for the Mérida program, and will be teaching the linguistics/phonetics course (Introduction to Hispanic Linguistics).

Our Vision
Our vision for the Mérida site is to help our students grow in multiple ways on multiple levels, as students, as individuals, and as world citizens. Our program is unique in that we will be volunteering in a local Maya community for two Saturdays during the program. Volunteer work is not necessarily about saving the world, but about making time to assist with anything and everything that the community needs.
Throughout the summer, we encourage our students to grow as individuals. It is our belief that personal growth is a transformative, conscious action, and it happens as we make purposeful decisions about who we want to be and how we want to present ourselves to the world. With that in mind, we will follow our vision of building a pyramid to reach success together as a group. Our symbol (the Maya pyramid with triumphant eagle perched above, devouring a serpent) represents the stages of development which lead to our success, beginning with the foundation which represents the formation of strong set of relationships between student peers, instructors and host families—without which the structure will crumble. Once this strong foundation is in place, students then have the resources necessary to develop their language competence and confidence, which in turn builds communicative competence, which helps develop cultural and pragmatic competence, leading to an overall successful and life-shaping journey. Our success culminates in the image of the triumphant eagle (the águila, our mascot) devouring the serpent, which represents our fears and self-doubt. Best of all, each obstacle becomes less and less difficult to overcome the higher we go, as long as we do it together! ¡JUNTOS VENCEREMOS!

**IUHPFL Mérida Online**
Throughout the summer, Sonia Calpanchay, our Public relations coordinator, will maintain a blog for the US Parents. This blog will feature a weekly post, which will contain photos and a recount of the week onsite. The blog can be found at: [http://iuhpflMérida2016.blogspot.com](http://iuhpflMérida2016.blogspot.com)

Additionally, students are encouraged to join the Mérida Facebook group, to connect with each other before leaving. This page is exclusively for the IUHPFL students that will be in Mérida in Summer 2016 and it is a great way to get to know each other before the trip. The group can be found at: [https://www.facebook.com/groups/1523864121252466/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1523864121252466/)
The Program in Mérida

Academic Programs

Course description: Introduction to Hispanic Linguistics
Instructor: Sean McKinnon
The purpose of this course is to offer you an introduction to the theoretical and practical field of linguistics. Linguistics is a broad discipline with many components and areas to study. We will focus on the basic concepts of linguistics and how they relate specifically to Spanish. Some of these areas are phonetics (the physical production of sounds), phonology (the mental organization of sounds), semantics (the study of meaning), morphology (the internal structure of words), history of the Spanish language, and dialectology (how the different varieties of Spanish are distinguished from one another). In this class we will focus on these subfields in order to provide you with a more complete perspective of each one. In order to complement the IUHPFL program in Mérida this summer, this class, aside from providing a general introduction to linguistics as a science and field of study, we will also dedicate time to brief discussions about the linguistic situation in México and Mérida. Additionally, some class time will also be dedicated to pointing out the key differences between Spanish and English pronunciation, as well as practicing problematic sounds for L1 English learners of Spanish.

The structure of this course will vary and while we will predominantly use the course manual, we will also incorporate other audiovisual resources and materials to facilitate learning and practice. Some days we will focus more on readings while others we will put into practice what we have been learning through activities, practice exercises and small projects. There will also be some in class quizzes covering the material of the course. It is expected of each student to come to class prepared each day having read all required material and completed all assigned homework. Furthermore, it is expected that each student actively participate in the classroom during both general discussions and small group activities. Finally, throughout the semester students will record themselves speaking Spanish (recorders will be provided) in order to receive feedback on their progression in improving their Spanish pronunciation.

Course Description: Spanish Grammar for Communication
Instructor: Paul Coats
The purpose of this course is to offer an intensive review of Spanish grammar, with special focus on problematic structures for English
speaking students. Grammar will be taught as a communicative resource, which means recognizing that grammar exists to facilitate communication and give us more tools to express ourselves (not as a rule guide to perfection). We will cover a number of topics, including the distinction between *ser/estar*, the full range of verb tenses, the differences between the subjunctive and the indicative, and direct/indirect objects. It is expected that students should already be familiar with these structures before the summer, but special attention will be paid to problematic uses and exploring each structures communicative value, focusing on what each expresses. The course is intensive, meaning it will be tailored to address students’ specific interests and needs.

Students will be assessed primarily on participation in the course and satisfactory completion of assignments, evaluations, and quizzes, which will be administered as needed throughout the term. The course manual will serve as the primary text, but students will be responsible for finding examples of the structures under study, and will complete a final project focusing on a problematic structure for them. Students will be expected to participate, come to class prepared, and participate in both small group work and classroom discussion.

**Course description: Literature and Composition**

**Instructor: Sonia Calpanchay**

The purpose of this course is to learn some fascinating aspects of the Maya culture and to explore a variety of literary genres through reading and writing. During the first week of classes, we will focus our attention on the Mayas and will get to know part of their history and customs in preparation for the excursions to Chichen Itza, Tulum, and Uxmal.

The rest of the course will be dedicated to exploring in detail certain literary genres: narrative, essay, testimony, and poetry. Each genre is represented by a contemporary example that is connected to different aspects of the diverse Mexican culture. Although not all the selected authors are Mexican, all of them share a genuine interest in a specific aspect of México and its inhabitants and discuss current social issues. Through the study of these authors' visions of México, we will be able not only to gain a better understanding of this country, but also to make connections and comparisons with the United States. The students will, therefore, develop critical thinking, reading and writing skills, as well as learn some editing and revision techniques.
The reading in this course will be done either in class or at home, depending on the length of the text and our goals for each class. The writing, on the other hand, will be mostly completed at home. Nevertheless, Thursdays are going to be special days on which the student will be able to work on compositions, homework, or the final project. Thursdays will be days on which the student can choose what to focus on and ask for peer or instructor feedback. The course manual will be used as the main source of information and guidance, but complementary materials may be supplied by the instructor throughout the course of the program. Homework will involve daily reading assignments but there will only be two pieces of homework that will have to be turned in on a given date. The course manual has a section which contains a calendar with all the important dates to turn in graded assignments such as homework, compositions, and the final project. Your success in this course will depend on daily preparation, individual participation in class discussions and group activities, your effort on the two assigned compositions and pieces of homework, and your final oral presentation. Since there will be no quizzes in this course, turning in on time all the aforementioned graded assignments is crucial. In lieu of a final exam, students will prepare a creative visual-oral presentation of the book that they chose for this project. Some of the best student work will be included in the site student magazine.

Course description: Culture and communication
Instructor: Vanessa Elias
The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the rich and diverse culture that México has to offer. In addition, students will learn to effectively communicate in the Spanish speaking world. We will cover various topics such as food, family, and health in the course, as well as learn about the indigenous groups that reside in México and the Mexican revolution of the late 19th early 20th century. Students will develop strategies for oral communication and will be able to talk about Mexican history.

Most of the readings will be done in class, as well as oral practice of different common situations that students will encounter while in Mérida. The course assessments will be comprised of different reflections about Mexican culture, daily participation, homework assignments that require engaging in conversation with host families and other native Spanish speakers in everyday situations. Students will also have an oral exam at the end of the summer which will assess their oral proficiency skills. The course manual will serve as the primary text in the course, but supplemental materials may be added by the instructor. Lastly, students are
expected to participate and engage in group work and class discussions about the various topics we will cover.

**Departure from Indianapolis & Arrival in Mérida**

**Departure to Mérida:**
- 6/9/16 IND → DFW: American flight 2281 depart at 8:00 AM; arrive at 9:16 AM
- 6/9/16 DFW → MID: American flight 1616 depart at 12:30 PM; arrive at 2:50 PM
Upon arriving in México you will fill out an immigration form (see picture below):

It is important that you keep the bottom half of the form and put it in your passport. Upon leaving the country, you will have to turn this form in to immigration. Without the form, you will not be
allowed to leave México. The instructor team will collect your passports with these forms upon arrival and store them in a safe location for the duration of the program. It is your responsibility to ensure that these forms are handed in to the instructors along with your passports before departing from the airport.

**Return to Indianapolis:**
7/21/16 MID → DFW American flight 1018 depart at 3:50 PM; arrive at 6:20 PM
7/21/16 DFW → IND American flight 2276 depart at 8:25 PM; arrive at 11:40 PM
# Program Calendar

## June/July 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tues</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thurs</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
<th>Sun*</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>June 6</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Arrival in Mérida</td>
<td>Orientatio n with families</td>
<td>Bus tour of city</td>
<td>Activity: Mérida en Domingo</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Family pick-up</td>
<td>Pelota maya 7pm</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>June 13</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exams US Consul orientati on</td>
<td>Classes begin</td>
<td>Sports 6pm-8pm</td>
<td>Excursion: Chichén Itzá &amp; Izamal</td>
<td>Volunte er work</td>
<td>Activity: Museum “Maya World”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>June 20</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sports 6pm-8pm</td>
<td>Excursion: Uxmal &amp; Loltún</td>
<td>Volunte er work</td>
<td>Activity: Lucas de Gálvez Market</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>June 27</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sports 6pm-8pm</td>
<td>Cooking class 5pm-7pm</td>
<td>Optional excursion: Celestún</td>
<td></td>
<td>Activity: Progreso (beach trip)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>July 4</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sports 6pm-8pm</td>
<td>Tulúm excursion meeting</td>
<td>Excursion: Tulúm</td>
<td>Excursion: Tulúm</td>
<td>Excursio n: Tulúm</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>July 11</strong></td>
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<td>Sports 6pm-8pm</td>
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<td><strong>July 18</strong></td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exit Exam 9-11 Rehearsal 11:30-1:30</td>
<td>Rehearsa l 10-1pm Farewell Performance 7-11pm</td>
<td>Families and student s say their goodby es</td>
<td>Travel to Indianapolis</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*All Sunday activities are with families*
**Daily Schedule**

Students will be divided into three different classes, Verdes, Blancos and Rojos, and will take classes with their groups. Below you will find the daily schedule that will be followed Monday through Thursday in Mérida.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Verdes</th>
<th>Blancos</th>
<th>Rojos</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00-9:50</td>
<td>Literature &amp; writing</td>
<td>Hispanic Linguistics</td>
<td>Grammar for communication</td>
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<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:55-10:45</td>
<td>Culture &amp; conversation</td>
<td>Literature &amp; writing</td>
<td>Hispanic Linguistics</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45-11:05</td>
<td>Break and announcements</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:10-12:00</td>
<td>Grammar for communication</td>
<td>Culture &amp; conversation</td>
<td>Literature &amp; writing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:05-12:55</td>
<td>Hispanic Linguistics</td>
<td>Grammar for communication</td>
<td>Culture &amp; conversation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00-2:00</td>
<td>Mon, Wed, Thurs - Song, dance &amp; theatre</td>
<td>Tuesdays – Support &amp; Success Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:00 – 8:00</td>
<td>Sports – Wednesdays</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Afternoon Activities**

During the course of the summer, students and instructors will be collaborating to produce a farewell show. Students will be divided into three groups, choir, dance and theater. Choir will be supervised by Sonia, while Vanessa and Sean will supervise dance. Pablo will lead theatre/improv. The show will consist of a performance from each group, and all students will participate. The instructor team will be counting on your input, creativity, and ideas to pull the show together!

**Excursion Descriptions**

**Chichén Itzá & Izamal (June 17th)**

Chichén Itzá is one of the most popular Maya archeological sites in México. We will see different Maya ruins and there are two large sinkholes, called cenotes, in the area. Izamal is known as the Yellow City because most of its buildings are painted yellow and it is
another Maya archeological site. There will be a combination of a guided tour and free time to explore both archeological sites. We recommend that students buy their souvenirs here as it is cheaper than some of the other archeological sites.

**Uxmal & Loltún (June 24th)**
Uxmal is approximately 40 miles outside of Mérida. It is a Maya archeological site and along with Chichén Itzá it is considered to be one of the most important sites in México. Loltún is a cave in México that contains Maya paintings. It is one of the most extensive caves in México.

**Celestún (July 1st) – Optional excursion**
Celestún is approximately an hour and half outside of Mérida. We will be visiting the biosphere reserve, which is a wetland and home to flamingos. We take a small boat tour of the area and have time to go to the beach. A roundtrip ticket costs approximately $110 pesos and the tour around the reserve costs $200 pesos. Additional costs, such as food and drinks range from $50 to $150 pesos.

**Tulum & Punta Laguna (July 8th - July 10th)**
This excursion is our only overnight trip. Tulum is a beach side Maya archeological site. You will have the opportunity to see some Maya ruins and spend some time at the beach. Punta Laguna is an ecological reserve where we will have the opportunity to see and hear the howling monkeys. There is also a lake in the reserve where you will have the opportunity to go swimming. On our way back to Mérida from Tulum we will stop in Valladolid and explore the town. There is also a cenote in the area that you will be able to visit.
Internet Use Policy

As stipulated by the Honor Code, you are allowed one hour of internet access per week to contact your friends and family back home in the U.S. (TEXT ONLY, NO SKYPING, VOICE OR VIDEO CHAT). The internet use policy is in place to assist you in complete immersion the in target language and culture. It is IUHPFL’s belief that this immersion is a transformative experience and a vital part of the IUHPFL experience. While we acknowledge that contact with your US family can be difficult for both parties, we believe (and have been told!) that it provides a positive life experience, in spite of its challenges.

The week begins on Monday and ends on Sunday, thus you are allowed one hour between those days, and then the week begins again. Please check with your host family if you can use their home computer. If your host family does not own a computer, ask them for the location of the nearest internet café. If you are at all confused about when you are allowed to use your internet hour or your host family does not know the location of the nearest internet café, please consult one of the instructors.

Please remember that this internet restriction is in place for your own benefit, it helps curtail homesickness and it allows you to immerse yourself completely in the host culture and language. Violations to the internet use policy will be dealt with on a case by case basis, but do remember that when you violate this policy you are not only affecting your own experience in a negative way, but that of your peers as well.

Multiple internet violations constitute multiple Honor Code violations and can potentially result in your being sent home. Homesickness is common and everyone experiences it; you are not alone, but please talk to your peers, instructors and host family rather than seeking comfort from friends and family back home—if it will result in an internet violation, it is not worth it! Again, your instructors are always there for you and will answers any questions you may have about the internet policy and use.
Indiana University
Honors Program in Foreign Languages
FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
111 S Jordan Ave
Bloomington, IN 47405-7799 – U.S.A.

El Código de Honor

Como un programa de honor, el Programa de Honor en Idiomas Extranjeros de IU (IU Honors Program in Foreign Languages [IUHFL]) describe claramente las normas de conducta que se espera de los estudiantes y cuenta con que el estudiante tenga el sentido de responsabilidad y honestidad para entender y cumplir este Código de Honor. Para que un/a estudiante participe en este programa, es necesario que éste/a acepte y cumpla los siguientes términos:

1. Se espera que los estudiantes mantengan los 8 valores principales de IUHFL en todo momento:
   - Agradecimiento, Diligencia, Descubrimiento, Empatía, Apoyo, Honor, Respeto, y Unidad

2. Compromiso de excelencia de IUHFL: Según el modelo de IUHFL, la fortaleza del programa en sí sólo es tan fuerte como cada uno de los estudiantes como individuos que forman parte de él. Esto significa que el Compromiso de Excelencia es tanto un compromiso con el programa como es para cada estudiante consigo mismo. Los estudiantes declaran al unísono el compromiso durante la orientación estudiantil antes de la salida:
   "Al emprender la experiencia IUHFL y haber prometido cumplir el Código de Honor, me comprometo a hablar sólo en el idioma meta, adoptar los 8 valores principales, aprovechar la experiencia que tengo con la familia anfitriona, y comportarme bien. Intentaré descubrir lo mejor de mí mismo/a y de los otros, y prometo fomentar la unidad de grupo y representar mi escuela, mi familia, y mi comunidad con respecto. Seré un/a buen/a embajador/a para IUHFL."

3. Los estudiantes deben entender los 3 Pilares de IUHFL, los cuales hacen que el programa sea lo singular y lo prestigioso que es.
   - A. El Compromiso de idioma: La clave para el éxito es el compromiso del estudiante de hablar sólo en el idioma meta durante el programa, a excepción de casos urgentes.
     - La comunicación con la familia y los amigos en EEUU estará restringida a una llamada que se hace dentro de unos días después de que el/la estudiante llegue al país anfitrión y una hora a la semana vía internet. No se permitirá ningún otro tipo de contacto ni con la familia ni con los amigos en EEUU, salvo en casos urgentes. En este caso, se necesitará el permiso de los instructores.
     - Se prohíbe el uso de los móviles y de todos los dispositivos electrónicos que tengan acceso a internet a lo largo del programa (esto incluye los portátiles (laptops) y las tabletas). El uso de tales dispositivos afecta de manera negativa la experiencia del estudiante impidiéndole que se sumerja completamente en el idioma y en la cultura y que se relacione con la gente que lo rodee.
     - No se permiten ni libros ni música en inglés a lo largo del programa. Si los estudiantes tienen deberes o tareas durante el verano, deben completarlos o antes o después del programa, a menos que el/la estudiante los pueda completar en el idioma meta. Se puede escuchar libremente la música en el idioma meta, con tal de que el dispositivo no tenga acceso a internet.
     - El programa le dará un móvil prepago a cada estudiante cuando lleguen al sitio del programa. Este móvil sólo usará el/la estudiante en el idioma meta para hacer llamadas y enviar mensajes ilimitados a los otros estudiantes (del mismo programa), los instructores, y a los miembros de la familia anfitriona. El programa pagará una tarifa para cada móvil, y si se excede esta tarifa, el estudiante tendrá que pagar para recargarle minutos adicionales. Si el mal uso del móvil resulta en costos adicionales, el/la estudiante será responsable.

   - B. La excelencia académica: El segundo pilar de IUHFL requiere que los estudiantes hagan su mejor esfuerzo para completar todo el trabajo del programa, manteniendo el nivel más alto de honestidad académica y absteniéndose de mala conducta académica, la cual se define en El Código de las Responsabilidades Estudiantiles de la Universidad de Indiana como “cualquier actividad que socave la integridad académica de la institución,” y que abusen de recursos humanos, impresos y/o electrónicos.

   - C. El tercer pilar de IUHFL es la experiencia con la familia anfitriona: Los estudiantes deben tratar a su familia anfitriona con respecto, mantener limpio su espacio personal y hacer todo lo posible para seguir las normas de la familia como si fuese un miembro de ella. Las políticas y los procedimientos específicos que se describen en el manual estudiantil son diseñados para asegurar la seguridad y el bienestar del estudiante durante su estancia con la familia anfitriona.
4. La regla contra relaciones románticas: Durante el programa los estudiantes no pueden salir con nadie en el país anfitrión, incluyendo a los estudiantes participando en el programa, puesto que enfocarse en una sola persona puede ser contraproducente para la unidad del equipo estudiantil, la interacción que tiene el/la estudiante con la familia anfitriona, y la experiencia general de aprendizaje.

5. La regla contra el alcohol, el tabaco, y las medicinas recetadas: Aunque las leyes de otros países puedan ser distintas a las de EEUU en lo que concierne el consumo de alcohol, tabaco, y varias drogas, en el extranjero los estudiantes de IUHPFL tienen que comportarse como menores de edad del estado de Indiana. Esto significa que no les están permitido a consumir alcohol, tabaco, ni otras drogas en ningún momento del programa. Se prohíbe que los estudiantes vayan a discotecas y a otros establecimientos cuyo negocio principal sea la venta de alcohol. Además se prohíbe estrictamente que se lleven alcohol, tabaco, y otras drogas a EEUU. En cuanto a medicamentos con receta, los estudiantes sólo pueden comprar, tener y tomarlos por órdenes de un médico se las haya recetado para tratar una condición médica actual. Se tiene que informar a la oficina de IUHPFL de estas medicinas y condiciones de salud antes de la salida.

6. Las actividades arriesgadas: Se prohíbe que los estudiantes conduzcan coches u otros vehículos motorizados. Tampoco están permitidos ir en motocicleta como pasajero. Sólo se permite que vayan en coche con un conductor adulto que sea miembro de la familia anfitriona o que haya sido autorizado por la familia anfitriona o por los instructores. Durante el programa se prohíbe que los estudiantes se involucren en actividades arriesgadas de alta adrenalina, esto incluye tatuarse y hacerse perforaciones corporales.

7. Las actividades de noche y durante los fines de semana: Se espera que los estudiantes se involucren en actividades con las familias anfitrionas cada noche durante la semana y cada fin de semana. Durante este periodo, los estudiantes tienen que ser acompañados por un miembro de la familia en todo momento. Se debe informar a los instructores de cualquier viaje con la familia anfitriona fuera del sitio de programa, es imprescindible que estos viajes sean dentro del país anfitrión y que el/la estudiante no falte clase ni las actividades del grupo. Los estudiantes no están permitido viajar en ningún caso sin la compañía de los padres anfitriones o de los instructores.

8. La regla de 3: Dependiendo del sitio del programa y del permiso de las familias anfitrionas, los estudiantes pueden pasar una o dos horas en el centro de la ciudad después de las clases y las actividades. Cuando los estudiantes estén fuera de las instalaciones académicas y no estén bajo la supervisión de los instructores o de los padres, tienen que estar en grupos de tres participantes del programa por lo menos en todo momento. La única excepción a esta regla es durante el traslado entre la casa de la familia anfitriona y las instalaciones académicas.

9. Los estudiantes no pueden reunirse con amigos o familia estadounidenses o extranjeros durante el programa. Sin embargo, a veces los estudiantes viajan con sus familias después del programa. La fecha de finalización es el día cuando los estudiantes salen del país anfitrión para EEUU; a partir de ese día los estudiantes pueden reunirse con sus familias.

10. El compromiso de idioma después del programa: Los estudiantes de IUHPFL se comprometen a hacer todo lo posible para ayudar los programas de idioma en su escuela o instituto y a seguir estudiando el idioma extranjero hasta el último año en el instituto o al nivel universitario, si resulta posible.

11. El Código de Honor, el Manual, y la Orientación: Se requieren que los estudiantes lean y cumplan tanto el Código como el Manual Estudiantil. Es obligatorio que los estudiantes asistan a la orientación para los estudiantes y los padres en el campus de la Universidad de Indiana en Bloomington antes de la salida. La aceptación final para el programa está supeditada a la realización exitosa de la orientación.

12. Términos y Condiciones:
A. El acatamiento a este Código de Honor es sumamente importante. Cualquier infracción del Código de Honor resultará en alguna sanción, incluyendo la comunicación con la familia en EEUU y posiblemente la expulsión del programa.
B. En el caso de que una gran cantidad de estudiantes violen el Código de Honor, las consecuencias pueden aplicarse al grupo entero de estudiantes. Por esta razón, es muy recomendable que los estudiantes se exijan mutuamente que se asuman la responsabilidad de sus propias acciones y que acaten los términos descritos en el Código de Honor.
C. Cualquier infracción del Código de Honor impedirá que el/la estudiante reciba el premio de excelencia al final del programa.
D. Si el/la estudiante es expulsado/a del programa, no recibirá el diploma de IUHPFL al final del programa.

IUHPFL—111 S Jordan Ave—Bloomington, IN 47405—iuhpfl@iu.edu—iuhonorsprogram.org
Life in Mérida
Where is Mérida?

The city of Mérida is the capital and largest city of the Mexican state of Yucatán. It is located in the northwest part of the state, about 35 kilometres (22 miles) from the Gulf of Mexico coast.
Eating Out
As you know, Mérida is a traditional city with a historic legacy of the Maya civilization. Its culinary offer includes restaurants of different specialties. However, without any doubt, the cuisine from Yucatán is the most representative of the city. It includes influences from the local Maya culture, as well as Caribbean, Mexican, European and Middle Eastern cultures.

Yucatecan food is in many ways different from what people of the U.S. think of when they imagine Mexican food. There will be plenty of rice and beans, yes. But there will also be lots of tropical fruit (Mango, Papaya, Banana, etc.). Pork and Chicken are very common as well.

What about Vegetarians? Soups and Stews also are very common, and there are many foods that are prepared with lots of different spices, flavors, sauces and condiments.

Although there are numerous options, the most popular dishes are the following:

- **Cochinita pibil**, by far the most renowned from the Yucatecan food, this typical dish consists of pork prepared with bitter orange and achiote, wrapped in banana leaves and cooked in the oven. It is served with red onion in lemon juice and sliced habanero pepper.
- **Achiote** a popular spice in the area. It is derived from the hard annatto seed found in the region. The whole seed is ground together with other spices and formed into a reddish seasoning paste, called recado rojo. The other ingredients in the paste include cinnamon, allspice berries, cloves, Mexican oregano, cumin seed, sea salt, mild black peppercorns, apple cider vinegar, and garlic.
- **Hot sauce in Mérida** is usually made from the indigenous chiles in the area which include: Chile Xcatik, Chile Seco de Yucatán, and Chile Habanero.
- **Panucho**, is a typical snack that consists of a fried corn tortilla stuffed with beans, served with roasted chicken, tomato, avocado, and red onion. It is accompanied by **habanero** sauce, commonly used in the southeast area of México. This dish and other snacks from the Mexican state of Yucatán are served at **Eladio’s** restaurant.
- **Sopa de lima**, is a kind of chicken soup with a light taste of lime. It is prepared with shredded chicken, fried corn tortilla, tomato, and onion. If you want to try it, go to **Hacienda Teya** restaurant.
• **Poc-Chuc**, is one of the most famous dishes in the cuisine from Yucatán that consists of pork or chicken meat cooked over a grill and seasoned with bitter orange, oregano, thyme, and onion. If you wish to try it, we recommend you to go to Los Almendros restaurant.

• **Marquesita**, is a sweet snack that consists of wheat flour cooked until it becomes crispy. It is filled mainly with Edam cheese, but you can have it with jam, milk caramel, or Nutella®. You can try it at most of the street food stalls around the city.

• **Salbutes** are soft, cooked tortillas with lettuce, tomato, turkey and avocado on top.

• **Queso Relleno** is a "gourmet" dish featuring ground pork inside of a carved *edam* cheese ball served with tomato sauce

• **Pavo en Relleno Negro** (also known locally as *Chilmole*) is turkey meat stew cooked with a black paste made from roasted chiles, a local version of the *mole de guajalote* found throughout México. The meat soaked in the black soup is also served in tacos, sandwiches and even in *panuchos* or *salbutes*.

• **Bul keken**, (Maya for "beans and pork") is a traditional black bean and pork soup. The soup is served in the home on Mondays in most Yucatán towns. The soup is usually served with chopped onions, radishes, chilies, and tortillas. This dish is also commonly referred to as frijol con puerco.

• **Brazo de reina**, (Spanish for "The Queen’s Arm") is a traditional tamal dish. A long, flat tamal is topped with ground pumpkin seeds and rolled up like a roll cake. The long roll is then cut into slices. The slices are topped with a tomato sauce and a pumpkin seed garnish

• **Papadzules**, elaborated with corn tortillas filled with boiled eggs, dipped in a sauce of pumpkin seeds.

• **Relleno negro**, prepared with turkey and *recado negro*, which is a Maya seasoning;

**WATER**: be sure to keep yourself very hydrated drinking several bottles of water daily as it is very hot and humid in Mérida.

• **Avoid drinking the tap water**, drink only bottled water.

• Bottled water can be purchased very inexpensively at local grocery stores and convenience shops—a liter of water (about 32oz) may be purchased for as little as P$10 pesos (60 cents in the U.S.!)
Students will typically walk to school, although it is possible that some of you will have to take the bus. Most host families live within a 20-minute walking distance of the school.

During the first week in Mérida, your host families will show you the route to and from school and will accompany you until you feel comfortable doing it by yourself. A number of students will live close to each other and we encourage you to find out where each other lives so that you can walk together.

Additionally, during the first week, your host family will show you how to get from your house to the downtown area. In order to get to downtown you will need to take a bus and your host family will show you where the nearest bus stop is and how to get to the city center.

Please remember if you decide to go to the city center for whatever reason you MUST follow the rule of three, no exceptions. If after the first week your family has not shown you how to get to school or how to get to downtown, please talk to one of the instructors immediately.

**Taxis:**
Taxis can be called or found in the downtown area, in El Centro (see contacts below). Taxi fees vary a lot, it can go from P$40 pesos if you go a few blocks to P$80 - P$100-P$250 to the airport and back. At night the prices of taxis go up, especially if you look foreign, unfortunately.

**Contacts for various taxis:**

**Econo Taxi**
Calle 61 No. 589 B between 102 and 104 Francisco I. Madero
Phone: (999) 945 00 00

**Promo Taxi**
Calle 22 No. 86 F between 11 and 60, North
Phone: (999) 920 79 98

**Sitio de Taxis**
Calle 69 No. 533 A, San Juan Grande, Downtown Area
Phone: (999) 928 74 32

**Radio Taximetro del Volante**
Calle 54 No. 590, Downtown Area
Phone: (999) 928 30 30 and 928 30 31
Buses:
Getting around Mérida overall is safe and inexpensive, however, it is a bit slow, so you do have to plan your day carefully and try to learn the rush hours in terms of traffic, when to go where, etc., but it is doable.

Your host family will more than likely be glad to show you the ropes as far as getting around the city, specifically how to get from home to the office and to El Centro, but here are a few general facts: Bus fare is P$7 (43 cents) per ride (no transfers though, remember).

The most uncomfortable thing is, perhaps, that buses do not run with any particular schedule, nor do they have clearly marked bus stops. Some do, but most do not. Buses come by every 15 to 20 minutes and although they do go out to every little colonia (neighborhood), which can be convenient, this can also waste a lot of time.

Buses don't use a transfer system and don't have direct routes.

Aside from the two circuitos (loops): Circuito Colonias y Hospital and Circuito Metropolitano Ruta 1, every other bus line goes to El Centro to get to most other places, so unless you know where the bus passes near your house, you will probably have to go to downtown first. The other two bus lines are Circuito Aviación-Pacabtún and Circuito Poniente y Plazas.

Link to bus routes in the whole city:
http://Mérida.transpublico.com/category/rutas/

Below each line is listed with its destinations:

Circuito Colonias y Hospital
Hospital Juarez (IMSS)
ISSSTE Pensiones
Centro Médico Pensiones
Clínica Mérida
Hospital Agustín O’horán
Facultad de Medicina (UADY)
Facultad de Odontología (UADY)
Ex Peni
Instituto de Bellas Artes
Zoológico del Centenario
Centro Anticanceroso

CREE
Hospital Militar
IMSS Clínica T-1
Preparatoria # 1
Facultad de Educación
Facultad de Química
Plaza Senderos
Plaza Oriente
CONALEP 1
Centro de Estudios CTM
CETIS 112
Facultad de Derecho
Preparatoria México

Circuit Metropolitano Ruta 1
Gran Plaza (Base de referencia)
Siglo XXI
Museo Maya
CINVESTAV Mérida
CBTIS 12
Instituto Tecnológico de Mérida
Colegio Mérida
CIC
UNID Montej
ISSSTE Lindavista
Plaza Dorada
Plaza Las Américas
Fábrica de Hielo Continental
Preparatoria # 2 (UADY)**
Plaza Canek
Central de Abastos de Yucatán
Tianguis de Autos de Mérida
Jardín Bepensa
Fiscalía General del Estado
Conalep Mérida II
Aeropuerto Internacional Manuel Crescencio Rejón (Mérida)**
Observatorio Meteorológico de Mérida Yucatán
Protección Civil Yucatán
Hogar de Niños “Ejército de Salvación”
Universidad Tecnológica Metropolitana
Preparatoria “Serapio Rendón”
Subdelegación Metropolitana Sur IMSS
Unidad Médica Familiar IMSS 42
11’vo Batallón de Infantería (Zona Militar)
CBTIS 95
Estadio Carlos Iturralde Rivero
Unidad Deportiva Kukulkán
Estadio Kukulkán
Universidad Pedagógica Nacional
Hospital de Ortopedia Cruz Roja
Centro de Estudios CTM
Preparatoria México
CETIS 112
Conalep Mérida I
§ Gimnasio “Solidaridad”
§ Gobierno del Estado
§ Instituto Municipal de la Salud
§ Macroplaza
§ SAGARPA Yucatán
§ Plaza Fiesta
§ Laboratorio Central Regional de Mérida Yucatán
§ UNID Vista Alegre
§ Centro Deportivo Bancario de Yucatán
§ Plaza Altabrisa
§ Star Médica
§ Hospital de Alta Especialidad **
§ Plaza Solare
§ Consulado de Alemania
§ El pocito
§ Colegio Ateneo
§ Gran Plaza

Circuito Aviación-Pacabtún:
§ Estadio Carlos Iturralde
§ Unidad Deportiva Kukulkán
§ SECTUR
§ Plaza Oriente
§ Unidad de Ortopedia “Cruz Roja”
§ Instituto Municipal de la Salud
§ CBTIS 95
§ IEGY
§ Base Aérea Militar
§ Bepensa Motriz
§ Observatorio Meteorológico de Mérida
§ Policía Federal
§ INCAY
§ ADO Talleres
§ Aeropuerto Internacional de Mérida “Manuel Cresencio Rejón”
§ CEMEX Planta Mérida
§ Casa SABA
§ Promexma
§ Bachoco Planta Incubadora
§ Bimbo
§ Centro Latinoamericano de la Innovación Logística
§ Secretaría de Desarrollo Rural
§ UTM

Circuito Poniente y Plazas
§ Plaza Fiesta
§ Hospital Juárez
§ Clínica Mérida
§ Parque de Las Américas
§ DIF Miguel Alemán
§ CAM (Centro de Atención Múltiple)
§ Plaza Dorada
§ Plaza Las Américas
§ Preparatoria No. 2 UADY
§ CANACINTRA
§ Bepensa Motriz
§ Policía Federal
§ ADO Talleres
§ Aeropuerto Internacional de Mérida
§ CEMEX
§ Bachoco “Incubadora”
§ BIMBO
§ Centro de Logística UADY
§ Panamericano
§ Parque Ecológico del Poniente
§ Hospital Psiquiátrico de Mérida
§ Av. Canek
§ Av. Tanlum
Contacts for bus stations:

**ADO (CAME Bus Station)**
Calle 70 between 69 and 71 number 555, Downtown Mérida
Phone: (999) 924 83 91 and 924 08 30 ext. 2403, 2406 and 2407
01 800 702 80 00
www.ado.com.mx
www.ticketbus.com.mx

**ADO (2nd Class Bus Station)**
Calle 69 between 68 and 70 number 554, Downtown Mérida
Phone: (999) 924 83 91
www.ado.com.mx

**Fiesta Americana Hotel (Plaza Bonita)**
Companies: Super Expresso, ADO-GL, UNO.
Non-Stop Service to Cancun and Playa del Carmen
Calle 60 by Avenue Colon
Phone: (999) 920 55 23
www.ado.com.mx

**Autoprogreso**
Calle 62 between 65 and 67 number 524, Downtown Mérida
Phone: (999) 924 89 91 and 928 39 65
www.autoprogreso.com
autoprogro@hotmail.com

Info obtained from:

**Other Useful Places:**
**Drug Store:**
There is a drug store on Calle 31A where you can purchase drinks and snacks. When leaving the gate of the school, you walk to the left and turn left on Calle 31A. The drug store is one block up more or less and on the right.

**Free Mérida Maps**
Dirección de Turismo y Promoción Económica
Calle 56-A número 242 enre 56-B y 60 Colonia Alcalá Martín C.P. 97050, Mérida
Copy Shop
There is a copy shop close to Plaza Fiesta, next to Boxito. It is very cheap (30 cents per copy) and you can print there as well with a flashdrive.

Health & Safety
We encourage you to explore the city, but we ask that you always be safe, aware of your surroundings, and always follow the Rule of 3. The Rule of 3 simply asks that you always travel in groups of no less than three students when not accompanied by your host family or an instructor. We encourage you to organize trips with fellow students ahead of time to ensure that there are always three students present.
For phone and emergency numbers, please see first page.

Medical Care
If something medically related happens to you, do not panic. As you should always be in groups of three, someone will wait with you while another goes for help. Remember that your host family cannot pay for your medical bills, you must pay them upfront with a credit card, and then the program insurance will reimburse you. The IUHPFL Mérida team should be informed as soon as possible if you have a medical emergency.

Hospitals/Doctors
Dr. Oswaldo Basto Moguel
943-0045 (h)
944-6682 (w)
9999 473896 (cell)
Calle 17 No. 182 B x 16
Colonia México Oriente
He charges $300 pesos in his office and a bit more for house calls.

There is a laboratory next door.
Q.F.B. Andrea C. Pérez Cardeña
C. 17 No. 182B x 16 Col. México Oriente (Contra esq. Gasolinera Prado Norte)
Monday thru Friday 7am-1pm y 5pm-7pm
Saturdays 7am-12
(999) 948 31 27
Emergencies: (999) 141 05 84
anserlab@prodigy.net.mx
**Hospital Starmedica**  
Calle 26 No. 199 x 15 y 17  
Fraccionamiento Altabrisa  
Tel.: (999) 930 28 80

**Second Choice in Case of Emergency:**  
Hospital Clínica de Mérida  
Avenue Itzáes Nº 242 Calle 32 Col. García Ginerés  
Tels. (999) 942 18 00  
24-hour emergency service

**Medical Centers**  
Centro Médico las Américas  
Calle54 Nº 365 X 33-A y Av. Pérez Ponce  
Tel. (999) 926 21 11  
24-hour emergency service

**Centro Médico Pensiones**  
Av. Barrera Vázquez (calle 7) Nº 215-A Col. García Ginerés  
Tel. (999) 925 81 08 y (999) 920 01 84  
24-hour emergency service

**Money/Currency**  
**General Information**

- México's currency is the **Mexican Peso**. 1 peso = 100 cents (centavos).
- The exchange rate is approximately **1 U.S. dollar = 17 pesos** (i.e. 1 peso = ~5 U.S. cents). Exchange rates fluctuate daily.  
  Check for most current rates online:  
  [http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=1&From=USD&To=MXN](http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=1&From=USD&To=MXN)
- The symbol for the Mexican Peso is $. To distinguish this from the Dollar, you sometimes see it presented as MX$ or the value with the letters "MN" after it, e.g. $100 MN. The MN stands for Moneda Nacional, meaning National Currency.
- Mexican **bank notes** are printed in denominations of $20, $50, $100, $200, and $500 pesos. Smaller peso values are also found in **coins** in denominations of $1, $2, $5, $10, and $20 pesos. These are used frequently in México, especially for paying small tips.
- Mexican **cent coins** are minted in denominations of 5, 10, 20 and 50 cent (centavo) pieces.
Money Exchange in México
Money can be exchanged at airports, banks and money exchange houses. Banks are open at 9am (M-F). Lines may be longer at banks and exchange hours may be limited, but rates are sometimes better than at exchange houses. Money exchange houses or Casas de Cambio will easily exchange money throughout the day and into the early evening with rates varying depending on local competition.

Making Small Change in México
Getting change always seems to be a perennial problem in México: try to make as much change as possible to use with independent traders by spending larger denomination notes in big stores; you will need the smaller notes for taxis, local buses and other small purchases where the traders often don't have the available change to hand.

Payment Options
Cash is the easiest and most preferred method for low-ticket items. Students should arrive in country with some local currency, including large and small bills. Small cash is necessary to pay for small items and bus rides. Debit cards can be used to make purchases or to make cash withdrawals from ATMs. They are widely accepted, though cash is still preferred for low-ticket items. Credit cards are widely accepted for substantial purchases, obtaining cash advances for a small fee, and are recommended in cases for emergency. Your purchases will be charged in pesos, and your bank will convert the amount back to the equivalent in the local currency where your account is held and charge it to your account. Travelers’ checks are NOT recommended.
Sources:
http://www.mexonline.com/Yucatán/Mérida-info.htm

Packing
As you pack for your trip, make sure you know which items are NOT allowed in a carry-on bag: hazardous sharp and flammable objects, liquids, and foods (unless bought past the security checkpoint). Travel-size toiletries are allowed and should be placed in a transparent zip lock bag, which will be checked at security. Check what the weight and size restrictions are on your carry-on on your airline's website. Keep your most important items in your carry-on or purse. For checked luggage, you may want to leave 10-20% of your suitcase space empty for any souvenirs that you would want to
Bring back. Some great general packing tips can be found here: http://www.wikihow.com/Pack-for-a-Trip.

Make a packing checklist, which should include the following essentials:

- US Passport (and 2 copies)
- Student ID and Driver’s License (and 2 copies of each)
- IUHPFL-required documents
- Only travel-size shampoo and conditioner (more can be purchased)
- Lots of sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Sunburn and bug bite relief
- Any vitamins and prescription medication that you may use (make sure it is clearly labeled), an asthma inhaler, contact lenses, glasses, etc.
- Products of personal hygiene, small pack flushable baby wipes, waterproof makeup (it’s humid!)
- Backpack for classes and excursions
- School supplies (writing utensils, notebooks, dictionaries)
- Safe place to carry passport and money
- Travel-size alarm clock
- Lightweight clothing (see below for specific recommendations)
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Flip-flops as house shoes
- Sunglasses, sun hat
- Umbrella
- Camera with extra memory cards and batteries or charger
- iPod
- Water Bottle

Mérida is a large, well-supplied city, so do not over pack. You will be able to find most common necessities there. Be aware that because of humidity and heat, you may want to change clothes more often, and that during the rainy season, your laundry may not dry as quickly. You will want to make sure that most of your clothing is **100% cotton** since synthetic fabrics don’t breathe as easily. As a rule, **short shorts** are not acceptable street attire in the city of Mérida or the surrounding pueblos, but **mid-length shorts** are acceptable within your home, the beach and on some field trips. Be sure to pack a few pairs. You may want to bring exercise/workout clothes. In general, Yucatecans dress up more than most U.S. students. Keep
this in mind while packing. Dress pants or a nice pair of jeans, heels/dress/skirts are the rule, not the exception for evening outings.

Here are some good guidelines and ideas for what to pack for Mérida:

For the young ladies:
- 1 set nice and dressy clothes for formal occasions (including nice shoes)
- 4-5 knit or wash-and-wear shirts (strappy tank tops are discouraged)
- 1-2 pairs jeans/pants (not too heavy)
- 1-2 pairs *mid-length* shorts, bermudas, or capris
- 1-2 *mid-length* dresses/*mid-length* skirts
- 1 sweater or cardigan
- 1-2 sets exercise/sports wear
- 2 pairs *comfortable* shoes for walking/hiking/sports
- 2 sets pajamas
- 5-7 sets of undergarments and socks
- 1 light jacket (or raincoat)
- Swimsuit and towel
- Hair brush and accessories

For the gentlemen:
- 1 set of nice clothes for formal occasions (including nice shoes and a tie)
- 4-5 knit or wash-and-wear shirts (in other words, not dry-clean shirts)
- 1 sweater
- 2-3 pairs jeans/pants (not too heavy)
- 1-2 pairs shorts for sports
- 2-3 t-shirts for sports
- 2 pairs *comfortable* shoes for walking/hiking/sports
- 2 sets pajamas
- 5-7 sets of undergarments and socks
- 1 light jacket (or raincoat)
- Swim trunks and towel

Sources:
http://www.central.edu/abroad/parents/supportDocs/MéridaStudentSurvivalGuide.pdf
http://www.soleducation.com/México/handbook
Pre-Departure
Besides packing, an important step in preparation for the program is gathering as much information as possible about all of its aspects. Knowledge is power.

- Be very familiar with all aspects of the program and its expectations (The Honor Code, academic expectations, and other policies)
- Learn about Mérida and Yucatecan culture (websites, documentaries)
- Learn about traveling and common study abroad issues (blogs, friend testimonies)
- Keep practicing your Spanish (study hard in your Spanish class, chat with friends, watch movies in Spanish, listen to Spanish-language music, change your social media language to Spanish)
- Compose a playlist of Spanish songs on your iPod to listen to while abroad
- Join our Facebook group to get to know each other and your instructors
- Practice such personal qualities as optimism, humility, responsibility, respect, flexibility, and an open mind
- Practice your talents - they will be demanded!

Program Cell Phones
Students will receive a program cell upon arriving in Mérida. They will have to exchange any smart device that they bring with them for the program cell phone. The cell phones will use the Mexican cell phone company TELCEL. The phones will be a pay-as-you-go phone and will come with a preloaded amount of money, but in order to activate the phone, the students will load $50 pesos on the phone. Depending how much the student uses the phone he/she may need to add more money to the phone. Instructors will periodically check how much money is on each students’ cell phone in order to make sure that there is enough money in case of an emergency. Program phones should only be used for emergencies.

Calling Home
Students should expect to call home during the third to seventh day in Mérida. This is will be the only time, aside from a medical emergency, that the student will be able to talk to their family via a voice phone call. All other communication will be limited to chat once a week. Students will use the IFSA-Butler phone to call home. Parents will notify the instructor team of the day and time that works best with their schedule so that their student can phone
Students are only allowed a total of 10 minutes for this phone call, so please use this time wisely.

**Regional History**

Mérida is the capital and largest city in Yucatán State and the cultural and financial capital of the region. It is a modern, cosmopolitan city with museums, art galleries, restaurants, shops, and boutiques. A major center of commerce, Mérida is considered the crossroads of the region and one of the most important places to experience the Maya heritage.

Mérida was founded in 1542 by Francisco de Montejo “el Mozo” (the lad), and built on the site of the ancient Maya city T’ho, meaning “city of five hills.” T’ho was the center of Maya culture and activity in the Yucatán region. After the arrival of the Spanish, the ancient city’s five main pyramids were destroyed and their ruins used in the construction of Mérida’s cathedral (located in the central plaza, or downtown) and other important buildings.

Mérida was built as a walled city and several of the old Spanish city gates remain. The city boasts the second-largest historic center in México; only México City’s historic center is larger. Mérida gets its nickname, La Ciudad Blanca (The White City), from the predominance of white limestone that was used as a building material; although locals today will tell you that it also has to do with the cleanliness of the city’s streets and public areas, not to mention how safe Mérida, México, is.

The central plaza (also called Plaza Principal) is of great social, historical, and cultural interest. Here, you can see The Cathedral, on the east side of the Plaza, Palacio Municipal, which is Mérida’s town hall built in 1735, Casa de Montejo, former home of the conqueror of Yucatán, and Palacio de Gobierno. A variety of stately homes, shops, and quaint restaurants can be seen along the Paseo de Montejo, a historical boulevard fashioned after the famous Champs Elysée in Paris, France, which is only 10 blocks away from the center. One of the Mérida Walmarts is located at the north end of the boulevard, which is quite surprising.

As a result of its unique geographic location, strong Spanish influence, and isolation from other parts of México, Mérida developed a distinct cultural and political identity. The unique culture and traditions that you’ll experience when you travel to Mérida, México, are overwhelmingly apparent in the local dress, language, cuisine, and the observance of holidays and celebrations.
Not only is Spanish spoken with a distinct accent in Yucatán, but Yucatec Maya is spoken by one third of the population of Yucatán State. The cuisine in Mérida Yucatán is also distinct in that it differs from traditional Mexican cuisine and is representative of the local indigenous culture and the Caribbean, Mexican, European, and Middle Eastern influences in the region.

The traditional music and dance of Yucatán is known as Vaquería Regional. It plays an important role in the Vaquerías Feast, which was originally associated with the branding of cattle on Yucatecan haciendas. You can catch weekly performances in Mérida’s central plaza.

Chances are that you’ll spend at least part of your stay shopping for handicrafts. Besides multiple arts and souvenirs, Mérida is famous for the guayabera, a loose fitting men’s shirt with tucks and pockets. Traditional guayaberás are white, made from cotton or linen, and often embroidered. Here you’ll also find hipiles, dresses or tunics worn by the indigenous women of the region. Hipiles are often white with colorful embroidered designs that traditionally convey some sort of meaning within the local community. Hammocks are another popular and practical local craft, and they are very commonly used throughout the region. Those you’ll find in Mérida, Yucatán, are of a high quality and made from cotton string that’s woven into a fine mesh.

Finally, the city is an excellent base from which to explore the rest of the region, including the famous archaeological sites of Chichén Itzá and Uxmal and many other ruins in the vicinity, as well as several ecological wonders, such as cenotes (underwater sinkholes) and exotic bird sanctuaries.

Sources:
http://www.travelYucatán.com/Mérida_México.php
http://studioabroad.is.dePaul.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=programs.ViewProgram&Program_ID=10034
http://www.lonelyplanet.com/México/Yucatán-peninsula/Mérida
http://www.mexperience.com/guide/colonial/Mérida.php
Climate
Mérida, México, is at 20°57’N, 89°39’W, 11 m (36 ft). It has a hot, high-humidity tropical climate with a pronounced dry season in the low-sun months, no cold season, and a wet season in the high-sun months, including June and July. The average high temperature in June and July is around 94F. The average low temperature in June and July is around 74F.

Torrential rains are very frequent in June and July, but mostly happen in the afternoons and are accompanied by a refreshing drop in temperature but a rise in humidity index.