

## UNIVERSITY OF INDIANAPOLIS PERSPECTIVE ON INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCES

The university believes that intercultural awareness through the direct experience of travel is a valuable dimension of a liberal arts education. Your opportunity to travel is likely to be a unique and memorable highlight of your life, and it is desired that you will acquire a sensitivity to and appreciation of the differences that exist between cultures.

A traveler to another culture is likely to encounter ideas and experiences which are contrary to what he/she expects or desires. It is possible that you will find customs of dress, diet, or social behavior that are not in accord with your personal taste. This is a normal and exciting part of discovery of a different culture. Regardless of the circumstances, you will be expected to show respect for the host country, its people, and its customs at all times during your travel. You may, however, choose to disagree without being judgmental. If, beyond the requirements of the course, participation in local customs is contrary to your personal beliefs, you may decline to participate. Your faculty leader will respect these beliefs in the same way that you will be expected to respect those of the people (students and hosts) around you.

You are responsible for developing your own responses to and interpretations of this intercultural experience. Remember as you do so that you travel not only as a representative of this university, but also as a representative of your country. Appropriate social behavior, appreciation of hospitality in all its forms, and tolerance of unfamiliar customs is expected of you throughout your travel, as is fitting from a guest to his/her host.

### *Student Statement*

In choosing to participate in this program, I understand that while the group leader(s) will do everything reasonably possible both before and during the trip to enrich my experience and to ensure my safety, ultimately I must accept responsibility for my own behavior. Since I expect to confront cultural differences for which I may be personally unprepared, I will consider them to be a part of my learning experience and will avoid judging or criticizing them.

I understand that there may be unexpected and even personally undesirable experiences during my trip. I understand that appropriate social behavior is expected of me at all times and that tolerance of unfamiliar or personally distasteful cultural practices is required. I am, in other words, a guest in a new culture, and I must behave accordingly in the presence of my hosts.

I understand that one of the primary purposes of this experience is to observe and learn, and in so doing to become more sensitive to and more appreciative of different cultures. I am aware that this may require me to confront and deal with my own cultural biases.

I understand that wherever I go my behavior reflects upon this university and upon my country.

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signature

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date