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Congratulations on becoming an Office Campus Studies (OCS) Resident Assistant (RA)!

Congratulations on your appointment as Resident Assistant or Program Assistant on a Carleton College Off-Campus Study Program. You hold an important role in developing community among participants on the program and the faculty director. This training manual, adapted specifically for OCS by Residential Life Staff, covers important topics related to community building, common issues you will need to respond to, sexual misconduct, culture shock, and when to consult with your faculty director and seek additional help, among others. Please read it carefully and consult with your faculty director or Residential Life and OCS Staff if you have questions or concerns.
**Community Building & Development**

**Definition of Community:** A group of people sharing a common purpose...living in close proximity and interacting on a regular basis, involved in defining group expectations, taking responsibility for meeting those standards, and respecting individuality within the group.

**Community Development:** The process by which you, as an OCS RA, educate your students both formally through community meetings and informally through role modeling, planning events, knowing the other students, and just doing your job about what life as a Carl while abroad is all about. Community development is what makes living together abroad a more enjoyable experience. It is your role to help build a community, but enlist other students to help so they feel invested in the process and community.

**Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs**

Before a person can achieve their best, they must satisfy their basic needs. The living space provided by Carleton or your OCS program should meet the basic needs for shelter and food, but your role as an RA is to help ensure student needs for safety and belonging are met, thus creating a community.

**More about Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs:**
Community Development Process

Attitude is everything when it comes to community building. You not only have to want it to happen, you have to help make it happen! Assessment and understanding of student needs and wants is an important step. Identifying leaders in the community will help with this assessment and community development as a whole. Goal sharing is a great way for you to assess the needs of the community while setting some expectations for community behavior. Action is key and highly observable by students – make sure you are acting as a positive community role model.

Communities do not develop overnight. Community development is a process that takes time and energy. As communities grow they go through a series of five phases. These phases can be cyclical as communities change and evolve.

Phases:

1. **Getting Started/Acquainted** – this includes preparing for departure as you attend required OCS meetings and get ready for leaving for your program. This phase continues through initial travels, getting settled into the housing accommodations, and the opening meeting.

2. **Communication & Bonding** – this includes communicating individual and group goals, values, needs, and guidelines. Make sure every community member is part of this process.

3. **Trust** – this phase depends upon adherence to community expectations and meeting the needs of one another. It is crucial for OCS RAs to assist students in getting to know one another and feeling more comfortable with one another and the community.

4. **Commitment** – this phase occurs with the willingness to compromise with one another, community members taking responsibility for their own behavior, community member’s self-disclosure of needs, values, etc., and a shared pride in the living community and one’s role within the community.

5. **Community** – this phase includes establishing a strong sense of belonging within the community, unity displayed by students, evident respect in actions and words, and an achieved understanding of self and others within the community.

Community Development Tips

- Create opportunities for relationship building (team builders, small group conversations, outings etc.).
- Encourage students to get to know one another through the pre-departure process and upon arrival.
- Establish an “open door” policy.
- Identify students who do not seem part of the community and get them involved – or better understand their wish to remain on the edge of the community.
- Encourage students to try new things – this is particularly crucial during your group’s time abroad. You will have the opportunity to do many new things during the experience. Take advantage of what your host city and/or country has to offer.
- Be around and available – sometimes just knowing you are available helps students.
- Convey necessary information regularly and efficiently. Communicate regularly with all students.
- If you do not know an answer to a student question, find out and get back to them as quickly as you can.
- Get to know the local resources and services – this will help you make appropriate referrals.
- Hang out in public spaces, study in the lounges or kitchens, etc.
- Involve students in responsibility for living environment, security, programs, etc.
- Help students get to know custodians or other staff who service or work with the living accommodation – by helping to build these relationships, students will better understand what is expected of them and how their behavior has an effect on the greater community.
- Get to know each student as best you can – know their story.
- Plan community programs and activities around birthdays, holidays, or other local events.
• Address community issues or concerns immediately.
• Encourage your residents to organize activities like group meals, local events, etc.
• Ask for community feedback on what has or has not worked thus far or if they are interested in a particular activity or event.
• Be consistent – do not “play favorites” and do not talk behind students’ backs.
• Encourage students to approach one another if conflicts or issues arise.
• Be a role model – follow the same community expectations you want the other students to follow.
• Follow-up on problems and concerns in a timely manner.
• Consult your faculty director when students exhibit serious or long-standing problems.
• Stay committed to the OCS RA role throughout the program.
• Recognize when you have reached your limits and need to get your faculty director involved.
Establishing a “Social Contract” & Holding an Opening Meeting

At the beginning of Fall Term, on campus RAs are expected to establish a Social Contract and host an opening meeting with their students. OCS RAs are encouraged to do the same. This section will provide suggestions for a Social Contract and agenda for the opening meeting.

Suggested Social Contract

Student Rights

- The right to read and study in one’s room free from undue interference (unreasonable noise and other distractions inhibit the exercise of this right).
- The right to sleep without undue disturbance from noise, roommates or floormates, guests, etc.
- The right to expect that roommates will respect each other’s personal belongings.
- The right to a clean environment in which to live.
- The right to free access to one’s room and facilities without pressure from a roommate.
- The right to personal privacy.
- The right to host guests at agreed upon times. Guests are to respect the rights of the host’s roommate and other students in the community. Hosts are responsible for the behavior of their guests.
- The right to be free from harassment, discrimination, and fear of intimidation and physical and/or emotional harms.
- The right to expect that any disagreements will be discussed in an atmosphere of openness and mutual respect, and that it is acceptable to confront a roommate or other students respectfully when they are not fulfilling mutual agreements.

Responsibilities

- To treat other students in the community with respect and consideration, and to guarantee them their individual rights.
- To understand the policies and regulations necessary for the community to function, and to abide by those rules or responsibly face the consequences of violating them.
- To be responsive to the requests of fellow community members.
- To be responsible and cooperative in dealing with OCS RAs, faculty directors, housing accommodation staff, etc.
- To accept responsibility for personal and community safety (i.e. to refrain from misusing safety equipment, refrain from popping open fire doors, losing or forgetting room/building keys, locking personal and exit doors, etc.).
- To recognize that public areas and public area furnishings belong to everyone. The abuse of both public areas and furnishings violates community rights.
- Other responsibilities may apply if you are sharing a living space with students outside of the OCS program, such as locals and/or other groups, etc.
Suggested Opening Meeting Agenda

**Introductions & Icebreaker** – if you have not done them already.

- This is also a good time to introduce housing staff from the host country (front desk staff, custodians, building managers, etc.).

**Following College & Host Country Policies**

Remind students that they are still responsible for following all Carleton College policies (regardless of where they are in the world) – this includes, but is not limited to, academic policies around plagiarism, sexual misconduct policies, alcohol and drug policies, etc. Refer students to the Student Handbook online, should they need a refresher. Not knowing policies and procedures is not an excuse for not following policies and procedures.

**Alcohol**

Drinking looks different in new places and countries. Remind students they should be thoughtful about the host country’s culture around drinking and honoring their comfort level with alcohol. As a guideline, students should not have alcohol in public spaces (including lounges and kitchens). Since tolerance changes in new places and abroad, remind students to be thoughtful about their consumption, particularly early on, and that excessive drinking and behavioral concerns in regard to consumption may be relayed to faculty directors. Additionally, students should not go to bars or pubs alone – travel in groups, just like you would on campus. Remember, the host country is a new place and students should be extra cautious, particularly in the beginning.

**Drugs**

Students should not be using illicit drugs. Know the drug laws and sanctions of your host country. Many countries outside the United States have very strict laws and do not tolerate drug use.

**Noise**

- Create a community agreement about noise. Your housing accommodations may have specific noise hours, if not, create them during this meeting.
- As a point of reference, the on campus quiet hours are as follows:
  - 11:00pm – 7:00am Sunday through Thursday
  - 1:00am – 7:00am Friday and Saturday
- When establishing community quiet hours you will want to consider the following:
  - Who lives in the community beyond the OCS program – other students, locals, etc.?
  - Are there public spaces (kitchens and lounges) that are exceptions due to location or do they follow the same hours?
  - How will quiet hours be enforced?
  - What is “reasonable” and “unreasonable” noise? The community should agree upon definitions for each in regard to quiet hours. Consider: is ANY noise that prevents sleeping or studying considered “unreasonable”?
  - What does “unreasonable” noise look like outside of quiet hours? Is it ever addressed? How?

**Fire Safety**

- If you spot a fire or smoke, sound the alarm immediately. Know what your housing accommodation requires during alarms and what to do in the event of a fire or smoke.
- Be responsible with cooking. Do not leave items on the stove or in the microwave when the room is unoccupied (i.e., popcorn).
- Do not leave anything flammable on the radiators or overload the electrical sockets. Make sure you use converters that are appropriate for your host country.
Security
- Always lock room and public doors. This is particularly important while abroad.

Public Areas – Kitchens and Lounges
- This is all shared space, please be flexible and considerate.
- Please keep the lounges and kitchens clean. You are responsible for your own mess. Wash your own DISHES immediately. Do not leave a mess for building staff and/or other students.

Miscellaneous
- Establish a guest policy if the housing accommodation hasn’t provided one for you.
- Do not move around furniture throughout the building, unless given express permission from the building manager.
- Let them know you will be planning community activities and events. Ask students to give you any ideas of ones they would enjoy.
Common Issues You May Deal With

There are two very common issues you may deal with in your role as an OCS RA: noise and health. This section should help you address these issues in a way that helps build and support the community you have started to build.

Noise
Noise can be a difficult behavior to address. We want our students to have fun and enjoy their time, but excessive noise can be a huge detriment to a cohesive community – particularly if it is a shared community with people outside of the OCS program (other students or locals). This is why it is very important for OCS RAs to be cognizant of noise issues and address them as they arise. One of the following two approaches is recommended:

Educational: Students need to understand the effect of noise on themselves and on their living environments. If students are aware of the potentially destructive effect of noise on other’s personal health as well as the community, they are more likely to behave with consideration for others. Here we assume that informed and concerned individuals will prevent noise problems.

Policy and Practice: As an OCS RA, you must enforce noise policies and work to ensure that students understand them. What this policy and practice looks like will depend on your program and what the community agrees on during the opening meeting (see page 7). The housing accommodations in your host country may also have policies and practices set ahead of time for you to follow and enforce.

Carleton’s Student Handbook states that students have the right to study or sleep in an environment free from undue interference and disruption. Noise can greatly affect this basic student right.

Additionally, students should be encouraged and expected to deal directly with fellow students causing noise or other disturbances. OCS RAs, however, should also be understanding of the hesitancy some students may have in such assertive confrontation, and may need to work with students to help them become comfortable with addressing noise and other issues.

On Campus Quiet Hour Procedures: As a point of reference, the on campus quiet hours are as follows:
- 11:00pm – 7:00am Sunday through Thursday
- 1:00am – 7:00am Friday and Saturday

Things to Consider When Establishing Quiet Hours: During the opening meeting (see page 7-8) your community will assist in establishing quiet hours for your new home (if the housing accommodations do not set them for you). When establishing community quiet hours you will want to consider the following:

- Who lives in the community beyond the OCS program – other students, locals, etc.?
- Are there public spaces (kitchens and lounges) that are exceptions due to location or do they follow the same hours?
- How will quiet hours be enforced?
- What is “reasonable” and “unreasonable” noise? The community should agree upon definitions for each in regard to quiet hours. Consider: is ANY noise that prevents sleeping or studying considered “unreasonable”?
- What does “unreasonable” noise look like outside of quiet hours? Is it ever addressed? How?

If issues continue to persist, please enlist your faculty directors to assist you.
Health:
Student health can be a complicated issue to address, particularly abroad. As an OCS RA, you will have the unique opportunity to get to know many, if not all, of your students on a personal level. This allows you to be a good resource for students in a variety of ways. When it comes to addressing issues of health and wellness you should have a firm understanding of the following:

- Do you need to report health and wellness issues to the faculty directors?
- What resources (free or otherwise) does your host country provide that are near your housing accommodations – both medical and mental health?
- Can students use the health services at the host college or university?
- What are the typical health concerns that may occur in your host country (diarrhea, parasites, bed bugs, homesickness, etc.)?
- Do you have access to a nearby first aid kit, pharmacy, etc.?
- Are you expected to relay homework or assignments for students who cannot attend class due to an illness or health concern?
- Do faculty directors expect students to consult with them before going to a local pharmacy for over the counter medication?
Observing and Addressing Behaviors of Concern

There are a number of behaviors of concern that an OCS RA should watch out for and be aware of when working with students. Some of these may seem “normal” given the changes and experiences that come from studying abroad – but if you take the time to get to know your students better, you will notice if these new changes are concerning.

Examples of “Behaviors of Concern” You May Observe

- Drastic or significant changes in behavior.
- A usually social person who begins to isolate themselves.
- Someone who sleeps all the time.
- Not going to class/skipping classes.
- Frequent binge drinking.
- Not caring about things they used to care about.
- Giving away personal possessions.

When Addressing Behaviors of Concern

- When addressing behaviors of concern, it is important to focus on the behavior, and not the individual.
- When talking with students you are concerned about, be mindful of your body language. You should have a square, open posture. When appropriate, lean into the person and make eye contact. Make sure you are relaxed. If you are closed off and tense, students will have a similar posture.
- Think about how you will address the situation – make sure your language focuses on the behavior and not the individual.
  - When you (describe the behavior you have observed), I feel (tell how seeing that behavior makes you feel) because (tell why their behavior makes you feel that way).
- Key things to remember:
  - Establish a trusting relationship with all residents. This will help you better understand if they are going through concerning changes or displaying behaviors of concern and how you can help them.
  - Remember you are there to notice potential concerns. You are not trained to diagnose situations, but to understand how to make referrals if necessary. Let students self-disclose what they think the issue may be and why they may need help.
  - Focus on supporting students by listening and helping them get assistance if necessary.
  - Report the behavior to faculty directors if the student needs help beyond your training or knowledge.
- DO NOT:
  - Do not be judgmental.
  - Do not enable the person by being too forgiving.
  - Do not rationalize or ignore their behavior.
  - Do not try to talk about the issue before establishing a trusting relationship.
  - Do not try to diagnose and solve a problem – you should work with professional staff to get the student the help they need.
  - Do not make light of the issue or discuss the issue with other students.
Confronting an Incident & Responding to Student Issues

In order to maintain respect and accountability within your community, it is important that you and other residents confront situations where violations of policies or inappropriate behavior is seen, smelled, or heard. OCS RAs must confront incidents when they are observed in the housing accommodation or during OCS RA lead activities. Additionally, these behaviors may need to be reported to faculty directors or others as necessary. Make sure to get support from faculty directors when necessary.

How to Confront or Respond to an Incident

- Ask yourself (before addressing the situation) – “What is the problem?”, “What behavior do you want changed?”, “Will you need to report it to the faculty directors?”.
- Specifically tell the person why you are confronting them (excessive noise, left a mess in the kitchen, etc.). Explain why the behavior is inappropriate in the community (disturbing the neighbors, not allowing others to use the kitchen, etc.).
- Focus on the person’s behavior and its impact on the community.
- Be calm. Be objective. Be honest and straightforward.
- Be aware of the student’s frame-of-mind and tailor your approach accordingly (are they easily stressed, are they intoxicated, etc.).
- Use language that addresses and stops the behavior that is causing the problem (Please turn down the music, please do your dishes immediately, please do not drink in public spaces – could you move to a private room?, etc.).
- Inform the student(s) that the incident will be documented, and a follow-up meeting may be scheduled with the faculty director.
- Maintain confidentiality. Information should never be shared with other students.

Basic Confrontation Techniques

- Be simple and direct as you speak, but proceed openly and smoothly. Rushed encounters of any type are usually not conducive to increased awareness.
- Know the basic facts regarding the behavior you are confronting, but do not try to come across as an expert.
- Be specific and clear in your confrontation. Remember you are confronting the behavior, not the individual.
- Express care and concern. Communicate your interest in the person and ask them clarifying questions (“How do you view your current behavior?”, “What are the reasons behind your actions?”).
- Confront behavior in a positive and constructive manner. Show the student you are concerned with the positive elements of living in a community and how their behavior is negatively affecting that.
- Try to be as objective as possible.
- Be assertive. Do not get defensive or passive-aggressive during the conversation.
- If necessary, discuss long-range consequences for their continued behavior (notification of issue to faculty directors, sanctions, limited use of the kitchen, etc.).
- Avoid statements like “I told you so”, “You are doomed, because I know…”, etc.
- Realize and convey that the confrontation need only be an initial contact, and that referrals and additional conversations can and will happen.
**Addressing Intoxicated Students**

When confronting intoxicated students:

- Confront the immediate behavioral concerns (loud talking, vomit, etc.) and follow up the next day to discuss their overall behavior when intoxicated while they are sober.
- Be sincere, calm, and caring when interacting with intoxicated students.
- Call for help when you need it – discuss with your faculty directors who should be contacted if intoxicated students are causing issues that you cannot handle alone.

**DO NOT:**

- Do not argue or try to reason with a student who is intoxicated.
- Do not threaten students.
- Do not say one thing and do something different.

**The “DOs” and “DO NOTs” of Caring For Students Who Are Intoxicated**

**Do:**

- Keep the person comfortable.
- Consider placing a backpack on their back so they sleep on their sides to avoid choking.
- Assess whether the person is in a life threatening health crisis. If so, get help – know your local contacts and how to contact the faculty directors.
- Monitor the person’s breathing.

**Do Not:**

- Reinforce or condone excessive drinking behavior.
- Do not give the student drugs (even aspirin) to sober them up.
- Do not give the person coffee, tea, or other liquid stimulants to sober them up.
- Do not give the person a cold shower – the shock may cause the person to pass out and injure themselves.
- Do not try to walk, run, or exercise the intoxicated student.
- Do not keep the person awake (UNLESS they are incoherent and you are concerned about alcohol poisoning – in this case you should consider taking them to the local hospital).
- Do not attempt to constrain the person.

**The Signs and Symptoms of Alcohol Poisoning**

- Unresponsive
- Vomiting
- Seizures
- Slow breathing (less than eight breaths a minute)
- Irregular breathing (a gap of more than 10 seconds between breaths)
- Blue-tinged skin or pale skin
- Low body temperature (hypothermia)
- Passing out (unconsciousness) and can't be awakened
Sexual Misconduct

As an OCS RA it is important for you to know and understand all campus policies, including those around Sexual Misconduct. The Sexual Misconduct policy still applies abroad for all Carleton students, faculty, and staff.

For the most updated policy, process and support information, please visit this site: http://apps.carleton.edu/dos/sexual_misconduct/

If you are concerned about an incident, please fill out a Community Concern Form and contact a trusted faculty director.

The Community Concern Form and more information about submitting and follow up can be found here: https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/dos/forms/community_concern/
Mediation Skills

Mediation skills are an important part of being an OCS RA. This section should help you identify the best ways of mediating certain conflicts you may need to address while abroad.

Ground Rules for Mediation
Before you can assist students dealing with conflict or behavior issues, set up specific ground rules that the parties involved must follow in the process.

1. One person talks at a time and always in a respectful manner. No interruptions, no yelling, and no insults will be tolerated.
2. Comments must be made about specific behavior that can be changed, not the individual person.
3. Use “I” statements, not general “blame statements”.
   **Correct: I am uncomfortable in the room when the stereo is so loud.**
   ***Incorrect: You’re a jerk, turn down your stereo.***
4. Each person will get a chance to be a listener, as well as a speaker.
5. Each will talk to the other – NOT the mediator.
6. Each person will be attentive to the other during this process (eye contact, body posture, reflecting statements and feelings).

Mediation Steps
Using the six ground rules above, take students through the following steps:

1. Meet with both students/groups separately before mediation – this will help you better understand the issues.
2. **Problem Recognition** – bring students together for a conference to urge a discussion of the conflict(s).
3. **Problem Definition** – OCS RA listens alternately to both students’ stories, using frequent paraphrasing to achieve full understanding.
4. **Commitment** – OCS RA asks each student if they are willing to solve the problem.
5. **Highlighting Pleasing and Displeasing Behaviors** – If each student agrees to attempt to resolve the conflict, specific pleasing and displeasing behavioral data are obtained about each student – these must be observed. Students should not use judgmental statements such as “Student is sloppy”, but rather “Student never washes his/her dishes, which causes frustration for me as the sink is always full”. Help students understand what the root displeasing issue is so they can overcome their conflict.
6. **Negotiation** – Students trade and negotiate specific behavior to satisfy everyone’s needs. For example: Student A will promise to turn down the music when Student B is studying, but Student B should also be willing to study outside the room if Student A gives advanced notice.
7. **Contracting** – OCS RA helps students develop a contract using specific likes and dislikes of each student. All students must come to an agreement. Contract can be an informal verbal agreement or a formal signed agreement depending on student needs.
8. **Follow-up** – Make sure you follow up with the students as needed. It is recommended that you follow up with each student individually with 72 hours – 1 week depending on the conflict.

Important Reminders
- Students must resolve the conflicts themselves.
- Set a tone that indicates conflict can be healthy when managed correctly.
- Angry feelings and conflict do not mean the end of a relationship.
- Make sure students share their feelings about the situation so all issues can be resolved.
- Search for common ground on all sides. Help them find a compromise as a start toward resolving the conflict(s).
- Remain unbiased. This is not your conflict. Be part of the solution, not the problem.
Facilitating

There are a number of ways an OCS RA might facilitate something. This section will include tips on facilitating programs and small group discussions.

**Facilitating Programs – How to Prepare**

1. Set goals – what results do you want?
2. Assess your audience:
   a. Who are they? Be respectful of culture, race, gender, etc.
   b. Why are they there?
   c. What do they expect from your program?
3. Create your content:
   a. Research your program topic
   b. Brainstorm ideas for your program – be creative
   c. Make sure you have an opening, body, and closing prepared
4. Handouts – do you need/want one?
   a. Summation of the program
5. Rehearsing Your Delivery
   a. As a friend, mentor, etc. for feedback on your program outline
   b. Alleviate anxiety through rehearsing
6. Make any changes if needed
7. Enjoy! Have fun, accept feedback, and learn!

**Facilitating a Group Discussion**

How you facilitate will depend on your abilities, your style, the particular group, and the particular situation. Sometimes your concern will be primarily the content of the discussion, sometimes with the interactions between group members (process), most often both.
The W-Curve is an academic theory on student development and transitions that may help when working with students while abroad. Each student, in their own time, will likely go through the W-Curve. Each student may experience their transition to living and studying abroad differently, however, most students will go through the following stages.

**Honeymoon**
The Honeymoon stage likely starts before you leave Carleton or the US. This stage can occur after being admitted to the program, preparing for the program, the flight over, and/or the first few days or weeks of arrival – remember, for each student timing will be different. During this time it is common for students to begin feeling scared or feelings of homesickness mixed with energy and excitement.

**Culture Shock**
As the newness of this new experience wears off, students will start to feel Culture Shock. This stage can happen upon arrival or a few weeks into the experience. It occurs when the reality of the transition and adjustments of a life abroad set in – new home, new food, new language, etc. Homesickness may also increase during this time as students remember “how good” life at home was.

**Initial Adjustment**
This stage tends to occur when students start to feel some adjustment to their new surroundings. They become more comfortable with the language. They know the route to and from class. They have met some locals. The host country begins to feel like “home”. The Initial Adjustment often comes with a sense of accomplishment as students begin to feel successful in the new environment.

**Mental Isolation**
During this stage, students will really start to compare the home and host country/culture. The host culture has become more familiar, but it is still not “home”. In some ways students can often feel caught between two worlds/homes as they begin to better understand the similarities and differences between the two. This stage can come with increased homesickness and concerns about belonging.

**Acceptance & Integration**
As students become more familiar and connected with the host country, a sense of Acceptance & Integration will occur. With the help of new relationships and an understanding of their host and home culture, students will be able to feel connected to both and accept them for what they are and can be. This stage occurs after successful adaptation to the host country.
Dealing with Culture Shock

**Culture Shock** is the disorientation one can feel when visiting or moving to a new place or experiencing a new way of life. Most students will experience Culture Shock during an OCS program. Oftentimes, Culture Shock can feel like you are a fish out of water. Everything seems new and different – the food, the language, the people, concepts of times, etc. For some students this feeling can be fleeting, while others can experience Culture Shock for most of the program. Culture Shock is a completely normal part of adjustment and being abroad.

**There are many signs that students may be going through Culture Shock.** These signs may include:

- Feeling tired or overwhelmed (being abroad means constant attention to directions, language, etc.)
- Feeling disappointed (the host country may be different than expected)

Knowing these things is actually a good thing – it means students are paying attention. It also means students are starting to compare and analyze the differences between their host and home culture. This creates opportunities for growth and dialogue.

**Techniques to Overcome Culture Shock:**

- Acknowledge that culture shock is normal
- Journal or write down your thoughts, feelings, and experiences
- Try to create goals to help you stay busy and interested in your host culture
- Avoid being judgmental and try to see the positives of the experience
- Take care of yourself – physically, mentally, and emotionally – make sure to get good sleep.
- Have a sense of humor

Remember that feeling Culture Shock is completely normal. Each student may go through Culture Shock differently, help them better understand why they are feeling Culture Shock and what techniques they can use to overcome it.
Talking about Re-Entry & Reverse Culture Shock

Toward the end of the OCS program it will be important to talk about Re-Entry (going back to Carleton and the US) and Reverse Culture Shock. This will help students begin to transition back and be prepared for what to expect. Remind student that the OCS Office is a great place to find help back at Carleton, if they have questions or are struggling with Reverse Culture Shock. The OCS Office even has an online program to help – it is called What’s Up With Culture and can be found here: [http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/index.htm](http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/index.htm). They will also have many programs to help students transition back to campus.

Re-Entry or Reverse Cultural Shock is the often emotional experience of readjusting to daily life in one’s home country and culture after an experience abroad. It can be a very challenging experience and point of adjustment for many students. Most students will have grown to love their host culture or country and are afraid to lose some of the relationships, customs, and cultural experiences they really enjoyed (food, concepts of time, host family, etc.). This transitional time can have many challenges which are listed below. Talking about these challenges before leaving the host country can help students better prepare for them.

**Top Ten Challenges**
- Boredom
- No One Wants to Hear
- You Can’t Explain
- Reverse “Homesickness”
- Things have changed
- Feelings of alienation
- Inability to apply new knowledge and skills
- “Shoeboxing” – loss or compartmentalization of experience

**Techniques for Overcoming Reverse Culture Shock**
- Find ways to explore your host community/country
- Create an “elevator speech” to talk about your experience (3-5 minutes)
- Continue your journal to share your experiences, thought, feelings, etc. after your time abroad
- Find ways to bring the two cultures together (sharing recipes, music, continue using the language)
- Keep in contact with people you met while abroad – maintain relationships through social media, email, letters, etc.
- Acknowledge that you have changed while abroad and that life moved on while you were away – share stories with friends and family who remained in the US and listen to their stories as well
- Attend OCS programming on Re-Entry, volunteer for the World’s Fair, get involved on and off campus
Ice Breakers & Team Builders

Candy Introductions
Candy Introductions is a get-to-know-you game that helps people learn new facts about each other in an easy way. They select various pieces of candy from a bag, and each candy variety is associated with a fact about themselves which they will introduce to the others. This game also goes by other names, including the M&M game, Candy Confessions, the Skittles Game, the Gum Drop game, among others.

Candy Introductions can work with any group size. The icebreaker works best when the group size is limited to 12, so if you have more than 12, divide the larger group and run the icebreaker within the smaller sized groups. This icebreaker works best indoors, and is well suited for classrooms or meeting rooms. Materials required are: candy with about five different variations (color or candy type), and an optional chalkboard/whiteboard.

Setup for Candy Introductions
Purchase several variety packs of candy, enough for each person to be able to have at least five pieces. They can be any candy type, but not too many choices (limit it to around five or six different varieties). Alternatively, you can buy gummy bears, life savers, gum drops, skittles, m&ms, or any other candy that already has a variety of colors.

Instructions for How to Play
Pass around the candy and tell each participant to choose anywhere from 1 to 5 pieces of anything that they want. Instruct them not to eat it yet, though. After they have chosen their candy, you will tell them what each candy type/color represents.

Here are examples of questions you can ask:
- Red – Favorite hobbies
- Green – Favorite place on earth
- Blue – Favorite memory
- Yellow –Dream job
- Orange – Wildcard (tell us anything about yourself!)

If you don’t have the above colors, change the above to match the candy types that you have. Each person takes turns introducing him or herself, beginning with their name and then saying one fact for each candy type that they have. This easy introduction game should go relatively quickly (assuming they weren’t greedy and that they didn’t take too many pieces of candy!). TIP: use candy from your host country for added fun!

Fabulous Flags
Fabulous Flags (also known as the Personal Flags Activity) is a useful icebreaker activity to help people convey what represents them or what is important to them. Each person draws a flag that contains some symbols or objects that symbolizes who they are or what they enjoy.

This get-to-know-you activity is best done indoors. Any number of people can participate. The recommended age is 7 and up. Materials required are: several sheets of paper, pens, and colored pencils/crayons/markers.

Instructions for Fabulous Flags Activity
Pass out a sheet of paper, pens, and colored pencils, crayons, and/or markers to each person. Explain the activity: “We’re now going to draw flags that represent or symbolize us. Please design your own flag of you –
include some symbols or objects that symbolize who you are or what you find enjoyable or important.” You can show your own sample flag if you like. For example, you could draw:

- a guitar (representing your passion for music)
- a tennis racket (someone who enjoys sports)
- a country like India (representing your affiliation with a country)
- a cross and a heart (representing Jesus and His love for the world)

Give everyone a set amount of time to draw (e.g. 15-20 minutes or so) and then reconvene. Ask for volunteers to share their flags and explain the meaning of what they drew. If it is a large group, you can divide everyone into smaller groups and ask them to share their flags with each other, or you can just ask a small number of volunteers to share.

**Variations**

After everyone has finished sharing the individual flags, as a big group you can ask everyone to brainstorm ideas on what to draw for a large class-wide flag. Proceed to delegate individuals to draw certain parts of the class-wide flag. Alternatively, you can collect the individual flags and paste them onto a board to create a “quilt” of individual flags, representing unity. **TIP: this activity could be a good intro when talking about social contracts or house rules.**

**Personal Trivia Baseball**

*Personal Trivia Baseball* is an icebreaker game that involves guessing facts of various difficulty levels to obtain singles, doubles, triples, and home runs. This game helps people discover facts about each other in a fun way. This get-to-know-you game is played with two teams of about six to eight people each. The recommended location for this game is indoors. Materials required are: several sheets of paper and pens. Personal Trivia Baseball is playable by ages 10 and up, including college students and adults in corporate settings.

**Setup for Personal Trivia Baseball**

This game should be played with two teams. Divide the players into two teams of about six to eight people — other team sizes are possible but less ideal, as the game may be too short or too long. You can increase or decrease the number of sheets accordingly, depending on how long you want the game to last.

To prepare for the game, pass out four sheets and a pen to each player. Instruct each person to write “S” on the first sheet, “D” on the second, “T” on the third, and “HR” on the fourth. These letters stand for single, double, triple, and home run, respectively. On each of these sheets, each person writes an interesting fact about themselves. Do not write any names on the sheets, because the goal of the game is to guess whose fact is written on each sheet. The fact written on the single (“S”) sheet should be the easiest to guess; the double (“D”) sheet should be a little harder to figure out; the triple (“T”) even harder; and the home run (“HR”) should be the hardest.

Once everyone is finished writing their clues, collect them and sort them into four piles per team: singles, doubles, triples, home run. Shuffle all the papers and arrange the piles into four different corners of the room, in the shape of a baseball diamond (see image below).
Playing Personal Trivia Baseball
The way Personal Trivia Baseball is played is similar to normal baseball rules. Each team has three “outs” per inning and tries to score as many runs as they can. On a turn, a player chooses to go for a single (easiest), double, triple, or home run (most difficult). He or she picks a sheet from the other team’s piles, reads it, and then guesses which of the people on the other team wrote the fact. Once he or she makes a guess, the guessed person on the other team simply says “yes” or “no”. If the guess is correct, the person successfully gets on base with a single, double, triple, or home run and moves to that part of the room. If the guess is incorrect, then the team adds another “out”. Move on to the next batter and repeat until there are three outs. Once there are three outs, change to the other team and repeat. Keep track of the number of runs each team has scored.

Keep playing until all the clues are revealed, or for a shorter game, set a time limit or a set number of innings. The winner is the team with the higher score at the end.

Culture Shock Discussion
Have each person name one to five places he or she has lived and discuss the challenges and successes that came with each new living experience (maybe they moved around a lot growing up, moving to Carleton, maybe they have lived abroad before, etc.). Then go around in a circle and have each person talk about one expectation, one concern and one hope they have for this cultural experience or living abroad experience. Afterward discuss as a group how these expectations can be met, concerns can be overcome, and hopes can be achieved.

7 Circles
Procedures: Write your name in the center circle and draw seven smaller circles connected to the larger circle. In the smaller circles, write the names of seven groups with which you identify (examples: gender, nationality/ethnicity, religious affiliation, political stance, geographic ties, family role, etc).

Debrief: Ask individuals to get in small groups and answer the following questions:

- Talk about a time when you felt proud to be a member of a certain group.
- When did it feel painful to be a member of a certain group?
- What groups have you found to be an asset or a challenge while abroad?
- How have your identities changed or shifted since coming abroad?
- Have your prominent identities (ones you think about a lot or are most apparent to others) changed since coming abroad?
- What other ideas, emotions, or questions came up for you during this activity?

Modification: You can change the questions to be more or less challenging based on the level of the group.

Pack Your Suitcase
Procedures: Each student receives two index cards. On one they should write something they packed for this program and on the other they should write something weird they would never pack. Everyone puts their cards in a hat and picks out two new cards. Then students go around the circle, introduce themselves, and say what is on their cards and are able to trade with other people. They should explain why they are making a trade (i.e. they don’t need a hair straightener, but they do need toothpaste).

Debrief: This does not require a lot of debriefing but it is a relevant and fun get to know you exercise.
Carleton College Student Position Description

Job Title: Resident Assistant, OCS
Classification: Student Worker (non-exempt)
Name and Address of Employer: Carleton College, 1 N College Street, Northfield, MN 55057

If the position requires the student to working in an off-campus location, provide the name and address here:

Department/Office: OCS
Location where duties performed: on OCS program
Supervisor:
Alternate Supervisor:
Date:

Position overview including purpose of the position within the College:
Student resident on off-campus study programs perform a variety of tasks that support the faculty director and the overall functioning of the program.

Essential Job Functions/Responsibilities/Duties:
- Assist with roommate assignments
- Organize social meetings prior to a program’s departure
- Liaise with building managers and staff in the facilities where students live; respond promptly to concerns on either side
- Perform clerical work for the faculty director such as photocopying, scanning, etc.
- Run errands for the faculty director
- Collect independent travel plan information from students prior to students leaving the program site and submit this information to faculty director (transportation and lodging, contact info, etc.)
- Organize social activities and outings for students throughout the program
- Organize student-only meetings to check-in with the group and report pertinent information to faculty director
- Assist with group organization during excursions, e.g. count heads on buses, lead small groups at sites, assign roommates at hotels/hostels
- Provide frontline counseling and advice to students, reporting any pertinent information to faculty director for appropriate follow-up
- Serve as the director’s “eyes and ears” within the group, paying close attention to group dynamics, socially isolated students, and other social issues

Describe Supervision Received and Exercised:
Supervised by the program faculty director.

Education/Experience/Skills (supported by job duties):
Current Carleton College student.

Preferred:
NOTE: This job description is not intended to be all inclusive. Employee may perform other related duties to meet the ongoing needs of the organization.